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## The benevolent dictator of North Dighton: A case study in welfare capitalism

Kelsey Lynn Murphy  
*Iowa State University*

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**The benevolent dictator of North Dighton: A case study in welfare capitalism**

by

**Kelsey Lynn Murphy**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

Major: History

Program of Study Committee:

Amy Bix, Major Professor

Simon Cordery

Jane Rongerude

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2020

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**ABSTRACT**

In 1901, J.K. Milliken and his uncle Frank Knowles obtained the financial backing to start a textile finishing plant in Massachusetts. Knowles and Milliken settled upon the small town of Dighton, Massachusetts for the location of their finishing operation. In June of that year the Mount Hope Finishing Company was incorporated. When Knowles died in 1909, Milliken took over the daily operations of the plant and settled into his role as treasurer, which he held until 1951. As the treasurer and leader of the company, In order to establish his control, Milliken crafted his image as a patriarchal authority figure.

By the early 1920s, Milliken instituted a program of welfare capitalism at Mount Hope Finishing Company. They coined this their “constructive labor policy.” Milliken, like other large business owners during the Progressive Era, used the constructive labor policy to inhibit unionization of workers at his company. Yet, his constructive labor policy also dampened a sense of working class identity among the workers at the Mount Hope Finishing Company. Milliken also exploited the built environment of North Dighton to strengthen worker identity with the company, and not with each other.

In contrast to the previous acceptance of Milliken’s paternalism, and supposed non-union sentiments among employees, some workers mounted a strike against Mount Hope in 1951. The goal was to win labor organization under the Textile Workers Union of America. The decisive factor of the strike appears to have been that the 1951 workforce at Mount Hope feared the company planned to move South, leaving them unemployed. Workers voted for union representation, and the day after the election, the company closed in North Dighton and relocated to Butner, North Carolina. That step marks Mount Hope as an example of postwar regional capital flight, further tying it to the trend of deindustrialization of New England textiles.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

### Introduction

On the morning of August 21, 1951, the president and treasurer of the Mount Hope Finishing Company in North Dighton, Massachusetts, J.K. Milliken stood before a crowd of nearly 500 present and former workers of the company. The 76-year-old Milliken invited the workers to his house in North Dighton to inform them about the company's position on the then ongoing strike. In a emotional appeal to the workers, Milliken explained that the strike affected him personally. He exclaimed, "North Dighton is my life. Here my children and grandchildren were born. North Dighton is my home. Here my roots are deeply established and here in North Dighton, God willing, I expect to die."<sup>1</sup> North Dighton was Milliken's life, but also partly his creation. Fifty years earlier in June 1901, Milliken and his uncle Joseph Frank Knowles had established a cotton bleachery in the north part of Dighton. From 1901, Milliken worked to transform and develop North Dighton into a modern mill village for the benefit of his company.

What follows is a case study in the practice of welfare capitalism at the Mount Hope Finishing Company in North Dighton, Massachusetts. Mount Hope was in the business of bleaching and dyeing cotton and silk textiles. North Dighton was also located on the periphery of major textile manufacturing centers in New England because spinning and weaving were larger industries. Labor historians of New England have paid much attention to centers of production such as Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River, and New Bedford, in Massachusetts alone.<sup>2</sup> It is easy to

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<sup>1</sup> "Text of Milliken Talk to Strikers," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, August 21, 1951. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M435TDG436 Roll 435.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Bruce Watson, *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream* (New York: Viking, 2005); Henry F. Bedford, *Socialism and the Workers in Massachusetts, 1886-1920* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966); and Ardis Cameron, *Radicals of the Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Heidi Vernon-Wortzel, *Lowell: The Corporations and the City* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.,

understand, yet also disappointing, why the small, rural, mostly farming community of North Dighton with its one major textile finishing plant had been overlooked in this literature. North Dighton did not possess the historical status of Lowell. Lowell was corporation city, nor did North Dighton have the myth making with historical characters such as the “Lowell Girls.” North Dighton never had the level of industrial strife as in Fall River, New Bedford, and Lawrence, which is what makes it an interesting case study.

Although North Dighton and Mount Hope were dwarfed by these centers of production, their industrial, labor, and civic history is worthy of inquiry for several reasons. First, workers’ apparent acceptance of Milliken’s paternalism suggests valuable insights into local employer-employee relations. Second, local workers’ apparent lack of interest in joining widespread industry unrest and union action during the General Textile Strike of 1934 offers an important contrast to labor protests in nearby towns such as Fall River. Third, in distinct contrast to their lack of action in 1934, North Dighton workers mounted a strike against the company in 1951, with the goal of winning labor organization under the Textile Workers Union of America. The decisive factor appears to have been that the 1951 workforce at Mount Hope feared the company planned to move South, leaving them unemployed. Workers voted for union representation, and the day after the election, the company closed in North Dighton and relocated to Butner, North Carolina. That step marks Mount Hope as an example of postwar regional capital flight, further tying it into the trend of deindustrialization of New England textiles. Despite Mount Hope’s omission from the historiography of the textile industry in New England, it provides an

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1992); and James Besson, "Technology and Learning by Factory Workers: The Stretchout at Lowell, 1842," *The Journal of Economic History* 63, no. 1 (March 2003): 33-64; John T. Cumbler, *Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979).

interesting look into labor relations, working class identity, and the strength of the system of capitalism.

What this case study of the Mount Hope Finishing Company confirms about paternalism is that, at least in this case, it did function to control labor, prevent unionization of the workforce, and protect companies from labor unrest. This thesis argues that Milliken used paternalism to control workers at Mount Hope, and by extension North Dighton, by dampening a sense of working-class identity among the workers from the 1910s up through about 1950. Milliken did this by providing competitive wages and fringe benefits, even in tough economic times, such as during the Great Depression. I argue that workers who lived in North Dighton and in company housing may have experienced a relative sense of security provided by Milliken. Amid deindustrialization and in contrast to the economic decline of centers of textile production such as Lowell, and more locally, Fall River and New Bedford, workers probably recognized they had security in North Dighton. This thesis also reflects on why, under paternalism, workers would accept the Milliken's control over them, and restrictions on their freedom in the workplace and in North Dighton. Part of this answer, at least what from what Mount Hope can tell us, is that material benefits and comforts, along with competitive wages, and a sense of respect workers may have felt from Milliken as owner and patriarch, was enough for several generations of workers to accept their control by Milliken.

The case of Mount Hope Finishing Company more broadly represents a dual win for capitalism. Paternalism kept workers from striking, but it also kept the company free of union interference. Workers at Mount Hope maintained capitalism through their acceptance of paternalism. Chapter two explores J.K. Milliken's construction of himself as a patriarchal authority figure alongside the rise of Mount Hope Finishing Company in North Dighton. Chapter

three examines labor relations and the inner workings of paternalism at Mount Hope from the late 1910s into the 1930s. Chapter four details the built environment of North Dighton and how Milliken exploited it to strengthen worker identity with the company, and not each other. It also shows how Milliken, through the strategic placement of his house, upheld his position as patriarch while reminding workers of their inferior relationship to him. Chapter five covers the non-strike of 1934 and the eventual strike of 1951, to assess why workers decided to finally protest Milliken and his system of corporate paternalism.

### **The History and Historiography of Paternalism and the Workplace**

The first use of the term “paternalism” can be found in an 1873 issue of the magazine *Appleton’s Journal*. An unnamed author of an opinion piece in the column “Minor Mentions” used the word “paternalism” to describe the type of policy British historian James Anthony Froude suggested England take towards Ireland.<sup>3</sup> The idea of paternalism had already existed, but it finally had a name. The origins of paternalism can be traced back to Medieval Europe, to the system of feudalism. Peasants lived on the lord’s manor and were expected to work the land and pay homage to the lord in exchange for protection. This relationship was “patriarchal, yet reciprocal...based on a system of landholding, there grew up the custom that land carried with it distinct and elaborate duties.”<sup>4</sup> As historian Marc Bloch explained of feudal Europe, “in spite of the gulf between the orders of society, the emphasis was on the fundamental element in common: the subordination of one individual to another.”<sup>5</sup> The subordination of one individual to another

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<sup>3</sup> “Minor Mention,” *Appleton’s Journal*, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c3465650&view=1up&seq=294>.

<sup>4</sup> David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1979) 10.

<sup>5</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon (New York: Routledge, 2014), 155.

is a key component to paternalism. Paternalistic social and legal relations continued in England into the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

By the nineteenth century, paternalism developed into a new theory for the organization of political economy. Arthur Helps, who authored in 1845, *The Claims of Labour: An Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed*, advocated for a system of benevolent paternalism within society. Helps called the “employers of labor” the “successors of feudal barons.”<sup>7</sup> According to Helps, employers had a responsibility to the working people to attend “to the welfare” of their “dependents.”<sup>8</sup> Working people deserved more than wages, he contended, citing Christian doctrines of charity and care for one’s neighbor. Industrial paternalism continued to develop in England, and in the United States throughout the nineteenth century as a style of management, especially within the textile industry.

Historians began to use the term paternalism in the twentieth century to describe a set of social relations within society and between labor and capital. Although many historians use the term paternalism, it is not an easy one to define, since it did not always take the same form in every occupation, time, or space. Paternalistic relationships can be found in almost every culture and historical period. One universal feature, mentioned by Bloch, is the subordination of one person to another. It is also a hierarchical relationship. A useful definition of paternalism comes from two sociologists, Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill, who explain, “paternalism is primarily an economic institution concerned with the manner of organizing a productive unit and regulating relationships between subordinates and the owners of the means of production or their

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<sup>6</sup> See, Douglas Hay, “Patronage, Paternalism, and Welfare: Masters, Workers, and Magistrates in Eighteenth Century England,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 53 (Spring 1998): 27-48.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Helps, *The Claims of Labour: An Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed*, (1844), 34, accessed, February 18, 2020, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/30238/30238-h/30238-h.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

agents.”<sup>9</sup> This is both applicable to industrial paternalism and landed paternalism. They identify three main features of paternalism as, first a collective form of social organization. Second, it can become systemized and institutionalized as a form of economic organization. And third, paternalism is a social relationship which covers many aspects of the subordinates life. Negotiation of power is also important to the paternalistic relationship between labor and capital.

Paternalistic social organization in English factory villages during industrialization, Abercrombie and Hill argue, “can be seen as a response to the exigencies of a change in the scale of productive units, which resulted from the introduction of large-scale production methods.”<sup>10</sup> Factory owners turned to paternalism in order to increase control over their workforce, but also teach them how to labor in industrial settings.

Geographer Don Mitchell, who studies worker housing in company towns, argues that paternalism is an incomplete hegemonic ideology, “as a struggle to define the language of legitimation of corporate capitalism in a rapidly industrializing world.”<sup>11</sup> Hegemonic is defined by theorist Antonio Gramsci as an ongoing process of construction of an ideology which is shaped by negotiations of power. Within the workplace, and the company town, the various philosophies of industrial paternalism are constructed through the “process of domination by, and penetration of, an ideology of benevolence that attempts to euphemize the domination of the workers in company towns under the real concern for their mental and physical welfare.”<sup>12</sup> Mitchell considers this an attempt of the paternalist to mask the true nature of the subordinate relationship.

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill, “Paternalism and Patronage,” *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 27 No. 4 (December 1976), 413.

<sup>10</sup> Abercrombie and Hill, “Paternalism and Patronage,” 415-417.

<sup>11</sup> Don Mitchell, “Public Housing in Single-Industry Towns: Changing Landscapes of Paternalism,” in *Place/Culture/Representation* ed. James Duncan and David Ley (New York: Routledge, 1993), 112.

<sup>12</sup> Don Mitchell, “Public Housing in Single-Industry Towns: Changing Landscapes of Paternalism,” 114.

Industrial paternalism became a way, as Michelle Perrot argues, to discipline workers in response to the rapid process of industrialization.<sup>13</sup> Economic historian S.D. Chapman made a similar observation in his book *The Cotton Industry in the Industrial Revolution*. Once a factory owner attracted and secured his workforce, he had to train his workers to be efficient and obedient. The most successful industrialists according to Chapman, “were those who succeeded in imposing their system of work discipline on their labor force.”<sup>14</sup> This system of discipline took place in the factory colony, in which the owner, or manager, acted as the patriarchal authority figure. Paternalists in the early factory colony found themselves accountable for extra amenities to attract workers, often organizing a whole community. Abercrombie and Hill’s explanation of paternalism during the early stages of industrialization agrees with Perrot’s and Chapman’s, as they assert, “organization in the early factory villages was marked by the search for new forms of discipline which were impersonal, relying on formal and written rules rather than personal discretion.”<sup>15</sup>

In the United States, industrial paternalism was imported from England. Yet as industrial capitalism developed, paternalism manifested in a variety of ways, especially within the textile industry. The first example of industrial paternalism in the United States is illustrated by Slater’s Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, established in 1793. Samuel Slater, like other early industrialists, used paternalistic policies to attract labor to his factories. Don Mitchell notes that industrialists rationalized paternalist policies in North America during the early nineteenth century by “referring to a Jeffersonian pastoralism coupled with a Calvinist Protestantism and a

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<sup>13</sup> Michelle Perrot, “The Three Ages of Industrial Discipline in Nineteenth-Century France,” in *Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe* ed. John M. Merriman (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc., 1979), 149-154.

<sup>14</sup> S.D. Chapman, *The Cotton Industry in the Industrial Revolution* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Education, 1987), 47.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill, “Paternalism and Patronage,” *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol 27 No. 4 (Dec. 1976): 418.

sincere sense of *noblesse oblige*.<sup>16</sup> The various mill villages across New England, especially in Rhode Island, relied upon family labor in textile factories. Many of these industrialists had company housing constructed for the families that worked in the mills. The Rhode Island system differed from what became the Waltham, Massachusetts system, as seen in the company town of Lowell by the 1820s. The owners of the factories and founders of that city, known as the Boston Associates, relied on the labor of young, single, female operatives, not the family unit.

The Boston Associates utilized industrial paternalism at Lowell to control the workforce and make them more controlled and efficient for an increase in profit, and their system seemed to represent republican values in the United States. Two monographs that explore this in depth are Thomas Dublin's *Women at Work* and John F. Kasson's *Civilizing the Machine*. The Boston Associates built extensive boarding houses for female workers to live. These boarding houses for women "kept wage levels down, but it was also an instrument of social control. For women company boardinghouses were part of a broader vision of corporate paternalism."<sup>17</sup> That vision stemmed from a perceived responsibility of the corporations in Lowell to protect the virtue and morals of young single American working women from the vices of industrialization. This vision also correlated into the built environment of Lowell, and its rise as the first corporation city in the United States.

The built environment of Lowell represented an attempt to control both space and the body of the worker. The Boston Associates who founded Lowell had no coherent community plan in mind when building mill complexes. Despite not having a plan, the "spatial order of Lowell's mill settlements mirrored precisely the division of labor in the factory... The housing in

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<sup>16</sup> Don Mitchell, "Public Housing in Single-Industry Towns: Changing Landscapes of Paternalism," in *Place/Culture/Representation* ed. James Duncan and David Ley (New York: Routledge, 1993), 115.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 77.

the mill settlements followed vernacular prototypes, adjusted to reflect the factory's hierarchy of status and control."<sup>18</sup> Men who ran the factories at Lowell promised clean, virtuous, and safe living conditions for the young women in order to attract them.

The Boston Associates believed it to be important to protect workers against the social ills of industrialization, as they witnessed in England. Kasson explains that the Boston Associates and other industrialists during the early nineteenth century believed that by "locating American manufactures in the countryside and instituting a strict system of moral supervision, the health and virtue of operatives would be protected."<sup>19</sup> In this way, advocates hoped, industrialization could continue to coexist with and act as a compliment to agricultural life, while also preserving the agrarian culture of the young nation as distinct from aristocratic Europe. As Thomas Dublin notes of Lowell, "Paternalism also served economic purposes in another respect, by helping to mold a tractable, disciplined labor force so vital to smooth the functioning of the productive process."<sup>20</sup> Profit and efficiency occupied the minds of the Boston Associates. Many of the earliest workers recruited to Lowell came from rural settings, newcomers who had to be taught how to be industrial laborers and obey the time-oriented labor process.

Workers did accept paternalism at Lowell for a period of time, but the paternalism failed when female workers decided to go on strike in the 1830s. Thomas Dublin argues that group pressure to conform to the rules at Lowell created a collective identity among the women workers. They had solidarity based on their lived experience, not based on an antagonism

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<sup>18</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 26.

<sup>19</sup> John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976), 62.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 77.

towards the owners of the mills. In 1834, and again in 1836, the female operatives at Lowell protested wage cuts by management. Female operatives formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association (LFLRA) in 1844. The LFLRA participated in the greater labor movement in New England, and the growing solidarity of operatives at Lowell. In the 1840s, the female workers at Lowell started the Ten Hour Movement as a reaction to the speed up and stretch out of production that “transformed the leisurely atmosphere of the early mills.”<sup>21</sup> The entrenched system of paternalism eventually ceased when the labor demographics of the mills changed from young, single, women to Irish men and their families. Owners hoped that the Irish workers could be a source of cheap labor, and easily manipulated. With the change in labor demographics in the Lowell workplaces, various corporations stopped building boarding houses and converted existing ones into tenements for the families that now labored in the mills. In addition, by the 1870s, corporation cities such as Lowell, shifted from a model corporation city to an industrial city. The model corporation city revolved around the corporate paternalism of the Boston Associates. The industrial city that Lowell became in the 1870s, lacked the traces of paternalism in the mills and within the built environment.

Throughout the 1850s and into the early 1900s, companies continued to use paternalism as a management ideology and technique for gaining a more efficient, disciplined and moral workforce. Some examples of this kind of industrial paternalism are detailed in Daniel J. Walkowitz’s study *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* and Tamara K. Hareven’s *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community*. Walkowitz explains that industrial paternalism used at the cotton-goods producing Harmony Mills in the

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work*, 109.

company town of Cohoes in the mid-1800s was defined by its pervasiveness in the private lives of workers. The management also used industrial paternalism for social control over the workforce, which “served to reduce absenteeism and turnovers, encourage company loyalty, discipline the workforce, and inhibit unionization and protest. The company was not primarily motivated by benevolence,” Walkowitz maintained; the object remained profit.<sup>22</sup> Management at Harmony Mills controlled leisure activities in the community to mold workers into better employees, loyal to the company. The discipline of the factory carried over into community. Yet importantly, workers at the Harmony Mills, as in Lowell, “accepted the perquisites of company paternalism which rendered them dependent...”<sup>23</sup> Often workers did accept paternalism and the fringe benefits that came along with it. Yet, mistreatment by employers, or extenuating economic conditions created conditions for strikes and renegotiation of that paternalism.

Tamara K. Haraven notes similar functions of paternalism at the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, formerly located in Manchester, New Hampshire. At the Amoskeag Mills in the 1870s, the managers modeled their management ideology of industrial paternalism rooted in the style of nineteenth century paternalism, as found in Lowell or Cohoes. Again, paternalism in Amoskeag was used for social control over the workforce in order to create an efficient and loyal workforce. Haraven observes that the relationship between labor and capital extended beyond just wages and hinged on “a network of services and obligations that transcended the work relationship in a narrow sense.”<sup>24</sup> The paternalism of Amoskeag extended into its corporation city of Manchester, with the company orchestrating every aspect of

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 186.

<sup>23</sup> Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes New York, 1855-84* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 184.

<sup>24</sup> Tamara K. Haraven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 55.

development. Yet what is most significant about Amoskeag is that its industrial paternalism survived into the twentieth century while it collapsed in Lowell. Amoskeag retained its original management into the 1900s and “was thus uniquely able to perpetuate its paternalistic policies. The continuity in management facilitated the corporation’s control over the city and the introduction of the new welfare programs of the twentieth century.”<sup>25</sup> Haraven mentions a shift in the style of paternalism from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, in which welfare work became a new form of industrial paternalism during the Progressive Era.

Welfare capitalism is defined by historian Stuart D. Brandes as “any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law.”<sup>26</sup> Welfare capitalism grew out of the problems of industrial relations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. David Brody argues that corporations used welfare capitalism as a method that “seriously attempted to minimize the human problems raised by industrialization.”<sup>27</sup> Welfare capitalism is distinct from the industrial paternalism of the nineteenth century because it was an “outgrowth of the Progressive period...whose practice, in turn, established the foundation for modern personnel management.”<sup>28</sup> Welfare capitalism took from developments outside of industry, in the realms of economics, psychology, education, and social workers. These professionals believed in social engineering to make society more efficient and create order.<sup>29</sup> However, historians have disagreed on the reason why employers instituted this management style and workers’ responses.

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<sup>25</sup> Tamara K. Haraven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 58.

<sup>26</sup> Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> David Brody, “The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism,” in *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49.

<sup>28</sup> Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>29</sup> See, Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

Some historians argued that employers only used welfare capitalism to stop unionization among their employees. In 1960, labor historian Irving Bernstein provided the first significant study of welfare capitalism in his book *The Lean Years*. Bernstein argued, “The central purpose of welfare capitalism” was “avoidance of trade unionism.”<sup>30</sup> In his 1967 study on labor relations at the McCormick Company, Robert Ozzane noted that the company used welfare capitalism as a “substitute for unionism.”<sup>31</sup> These historians sharply criticized corporations that used welfare capitalism for organizing labor relations. Scholars known as business revisionists argued against claims that employers, who used welfare work, had duplicitous intentions that lacked true benevolence. Some more recent studies, such as Gerald Zahavi’s *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism* and Stephen Meyer’s *The Five Dollar Day*, expand on the conclusions of Bernstein and Ozanne that corporations used welfare capitalism to stop unionization. Zahavi argues, “Reacting to the disruption of the prewar labor market, as well as to the rising tide of the labor militancy that followed World War I, industries adopted or expanded welfare programs...as a hedge against labor unions.”<sup>32</sup> Additionally, Zahavi explains that companies used welfare capitalism as a form of control, but there was a struggle for control, as workers also negotiated power within industrial relations. Stephen Meyer illustrates that the Ford Motor Company combined scientific management and welfare capitalism as a form of social control over workers and to stop any potential efforts of unionization.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 187.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Ozzane, *A Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 245.

<sup>32</sup> Gerald Zahavi, *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 38.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Meyer, *Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981).

Historian Andrea Tone offers a detailed national overview of welfare capitalism and contextualizes it within the Progressive Era. Other works on welfare capitalism fail to provide a national dynamic and usually restrict their work to a case study. This approach does not allow for a full understanding of how welfare capitalism intersected with politics and labor reforms during the Progressive Era. Tone does not deny that some employers used welfare work to deflect unionization and control workers, but finds that interpretation to be incomplete. In her book *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America*, Tone expands the geographical and theoretical boundaries of welfare work, with an emphasis on the understudied gendered dynamics of welfare capitalism. Tone argues, first, that welfare work “was, at its inception, also a political movement propelled by employers’ desire to halt the advance of the welfare state.”<sup>34</sup> Second, employers used welfare work “to reorganize long-standing patterns of labor control to meet political and social exigencies of the day; recasting older traditions, they created a style of labor management that was recognizably new.”<sup>35</sup> The private sector model that welfare capitalism fit into inhibited the growth of the welfare state in the United States. It also allowed employers to hold more control over the workplace, through a rejection of state-run social welfare and state mandated labor legislation. It also was a response to the evolution of industrial capitalism and the need for a new way of management within the corporation.

Some historians are in disagreement over when and if welfare capitalism ended during the 1930s. Scholars such as Irving Bernstein and Stuart Brandes agree that the Great Depression ended the practice of welfare capitalism as a viable paternalistic management ideology. They presented a view of welfare capitalism as already unstable during the 1920s, and concluded that

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<sup>34</sup> Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>35</sup> Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 6.

the Great Depression brought it to an end. Bernstein argued that welfare capitalism produced an “unstable equilibrium, falling off either into excessive benevolence or excessive stringency. An economic disturbance might easily destroy this precarious balance...The cornerstone of the structure, the company union, had an inherent propensity to disintegrate.”<sup>36</sup> For Bernstein, welfare capitalism was destined to fail. Brandes asserted that interest in welfare work programs declined during the 1920, and by “1930 the growth of welfare capitalism was thus arrested for all practical purposes, the Great Depression terminated the movement as it had existed.”<sup>37</sup> Even David Montgomery noted in *The Fall of the House of Labor* that “there was little advance in corporate welfare practice anywhere in American industry in 1921.”<sup>38</sup> These explanations, as Sanford Jacoby states, “exaggerate the movement’s instability. Part of the problem stems from lumping together disparate companies; the movement as a whole.”<sup>39</sup> Jacoby suggests an alternative interpretation of the supposed end of welfare capitalism in his book *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism since the New Deal*. He argues that welfare capitalism “did not die in the 1930s but instead went underground—out of the public eye and beyond academic scrutiny—where it would reshape itself.”<sup>40</sup> From the 1930s to the 1960s, as welfare capitalism modernized, it kept some of the earlier characteristics, but as Jacoby asserts, benefits were increasingly advertised as supplements to government programs, such as social security. The modernization of welfare capitalism supported a corporate community still in opposition to

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<sup>36</sup> Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 187.

<sup>37</sup> Stuard D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 141-142.

<sup>38</sup> David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, The State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 455.

<sup>39</sup> Sanford M. Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 32.

<sup>40</sup> Sanford M. Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

solidarity in the labor movement and unions. According to Jacoby, the modern rebirth of welfare capitalism became an alternative to state liberalism and unionism.

### **The Evolution of Company Towns**

Paternalism, during its various phases, manifested within the built environment of the company town. There is no one definitive definition of a company town. Company towns varied across time, space, and industry. As Marcelo J. Borges and Susana B. Torres argue in the introduction to the 2012 edited volume *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents*, a “basic characteristic of all company towns, regardless of the specific concept used, is the combination of places of work and workers’ housing, and the consequent company control over both working and resident spaces. This is common no matter how large or small these settlements were...”<sup>41</sup> The actual phrase the “company town” was created in the United States during the late nineteenth century. John S. Garner explains that the term company town “applied first to mining camps and smelters in Appalachia and Monongahela Valley. It was always used pejoratively and has carried a stigma that has not gone away.”<sup>42</sup> Soon, people started to use the phrase “company town” to describe towns engaged in single-enterprise manufacturing.

Scholars attempted to define the company town, one of the first being by Horace Davis in 1937, who suggested that “a community is known as a company town when it is inhabited solely or chiefly by the employees of a single company or a group of companies which also owns a substantial part of the real estate and houses.”<sup>43</sup> Nearly thirty years later, in 1966, historian

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<sup>41</sup> Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres, “Company Towns: Concepts, Historiography, and Approaches,” in *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents* ed. Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 9.

<sup>42</sup> John S. Garner, “Introduction,” in *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* ed. John S. Garner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>43</sup> Horace Davis, “Company Towns,” in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 111.

James B. Allen, in his study *The Company Town in the American West*, defined the company town similarly to Davis as “any community which is owned and controlled by a particular company.”<sup>44</sup> John S. Garner’s definition remains similar to Davis and Allen, “A company town is a settlement built and operated by a single business enterprise.”<sup>45</sup> Yet although these definitions are useful, they are also restricting. As Borges and Torres point out, the classic conception of the company town overlooks and excludes a “variety of arrangements and socioenvironmental conditions as well as adaptations to different sociopolitical conditions.”<sup>46</sup>

Under the classic conception of company town, North Dighton does not fit. Dighton already existed as a functioning town before the major finishing mill arrived, without having been established by one single manufacturing entity. J.K. Milliken and the Mount Hope Finishing Company did not have sole control over the whole town of Dighton. Milliken did not hold exclusive control over the government of Dighton. Rather, the Mount Hope firm came to dominate industrial activities while carving out a distinct space for the company within, but without controlling, the town during the early 1900s.

Yet, although the various definitions of the company town are important, it is also essential to understand how company towns changed throughout different historical periods, and the sorts of values company towns represented. Company towns played an important role in the rise of industrial capitalism, and no example of this is clearer than in the textile industry in both Britain and the United States. But they also became sites of industrial unrest and of the “continuing conflicts between capital and labor, ethnicity and Americanization, and discipline

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<sup>44</sup> James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 6.

<sup>45</sup> John S. Garner, “Introduction,” in *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* ed. John S. Garner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>46</sup> Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres, “Company Towns: Concepts, Historiography, and Approaches,” in *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents* ed. Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

and democracy that marked industrializing America.”<sup>47</sup> Using the fluid definition of the company town from Borges and Torres, the mill villages of the early Industrial Revolution in England were some of the first company towns in western Europe. Early industrialists, such as Richard Arkwright, had to build factories nearby to the source of waterpower, usually away from established towns and cities. Arkwright and others had to recruit labor to these rural mill sites. These mill sites are also known as factory colonies.<sup>48</sup>

The factory colony had to draw in workers and their families. Owners did this by constructing housing, a church, schools, markets, and some infrastructure to provide for basic needs. With these living and working arrangements, mill owners developed methods to control the laborers living in the company town. After securing a labor force, owners trained workers to become obedient and efficient laborers under a time, not task, oriented system. In the factory setting, workers were meant to abide by the clock and had to adjust their way of life from previous patterns of work they experienced. Human ecologist Andreas Malm writes about the early factory colonies that “...the capitalist and his managers could plan the living quarters, write the rules, patrol the streets, inspect workers in their homes...and through numerous other techniques fuse economic and social power in what took on a character similar to that of a totalitarian system.”<sup>49</sup> Essentially, the first company towns functioned to attract and control labor, as well as exploit natural resources.

Robert Owen, an industrialist, social reformer, and theorist, experimented with the industrial company town with New Lanark in Scotland during the early nineteenth century. New

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<sup>47</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 7.

<sup>48</sup> S.D. Chapman, *The Cotton Industry in the Industrial Revolution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan Education, 1987), 48. Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso, 2016), 127.

<sup>49</sup> Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso, 2016), 140.

Lanark was not the usual mill village or factory colony. New Lanark represented a utopian sentiment, but also a certain kind of social relations. David Dale, Owen's father in law, first owned and operated New Lanark before Owen gained control in 1810. Owen started out as a paternalistic entrepreneur and not a socialist. In her recent intellectual biography of Owen, scholar Ophelie Simeon explains New Lanark "was not intended as a mere appendage to its cotton mills, but as a fully-fledged community, where the promotion of interpersonal, deferential relations between master and worker were meant to mitigate the social impact of mass industrialization."<sup>50</sup> What is significant of New Lanark is that it was an early planned community, growing out of trends in the Scottish Enlightenment which believed that village planning was the best path to fuel economic and social progress. In the first phase of Owen's control of New Lanark, he tried to improve industrial relations and working conditions. Like others of his time, he believed in environmental determinism, that external factors shaped people. Like other factory villages, Owen relied on a paternalistic management style and constant surveillance of his workforce to ensure their efficiency.

In the United States, around the same time that Owen's experiment at New Lanark began, another form of the company town, the corporation city, started in Lowell, Massachusetts, as described in the above section on paternalism in the workplace. Lowell represents not only another step in the advance of industrial capitalism, but shows how company towns evolved in the United States to portray abstract values and enforce control over workers' lives outside of work. The transition at Lowell provides insight into the change of the corporation town over time, and within the broader context of capitalist development in the United States. Theorist Michel Aglietta divided American capitalism into three periods. The first phase lasted from

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<sup>50</sup> Ophelie Simeon, *Robert Owen's Experiment at New Lanark: From Paternalism to Socialism* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 13.

1800-1873, which Aglietta defined by a “gradual penetration of the United States by the capitalist organization.”<sup>51</sup> This coincided with the development of Lowell and the rise of the factory system in the United States, helped along by the Boston Associates.

By the 1870s, the capitalist organization of the United States shifted again and “introduced an extensive regime of accumulation based on competitive capitalism.”<sup>52</sup> This second shift correlated with the appearance of Pullman in 1883. As Margaret Crawford argues, these shifts suggest “employers utilized the company town as a regulatory mechanism, a physical setting that aided in accommodating specific groups of workers to new forms of industrial production.”<sup>53</sup> Pullman, located south of Chicago, Illinois, was the next development in the history of the company town, but also a site of industrial strife. In April 1880, George Pullman revealed his plans for a new factory site with worker housing. The Pullman Palace Car Company manufactured railroad cars. His decision to build a company town was partly a reaction to the labor unrest of the 1870s, especially 1877, the year of the first mass strike in the United States. He framed the building of the town as a business investment in his workforce, hopefully to yield higher profits. Similar to Lowell, Pullman represented certain social ideas “while simultaneously preserving and advancing the capitalist, industrialist system.”<sup>54</sup> Modern amenities, recreation spaces, and worker housing were meant to attract workers but also protect the company from strikes and unrest. Pullman, who took an interest in the model tenement and housing reform movements of the late 1800s, believed that nice, attractive homes with basic amenities would

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<sup>51</sup> As cited in Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 6.

<sup>52</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 6.

<sup>53</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 6.

<sup>54</sup> Jane Eva Baxter, “The Paradox of a Capitalist Utopia: Visionary Ideals and Lived Experience in the Pullman Community 1880-1900,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* Vol. 16 No. 4 (December 2012): 654.

solve labor problems among his workforce. These ideas grew out of the socio-culture context of the Gilded Age.

What is significant about Pullman is that it was planned by a professional architect and landscape designer hired by George Pullman. Company towns before Pullman had been partially planned, and the planning of residential and industrial communities had a history in the United States. Jane Eva Baxter makes two important observations about Pullman as a model company town. First, it served to preserve the class hierarchy in the capitalist system, but with the aim of keeping harmonious industrial relations. Second, George Pullman had architect Solon Beman and landscape architect Nathan F. Barret design Pullman so workers regulated their own behavior in public.<sup>55</sup> Other industrialists realized that they could utilize Pullman's model for their own company towns. Despite Pullman being planned as a capitalist utopia with harmonious labor relations, it was not without labor unrest. Paternalism was Pullman's downfall. In 1894, workers went on strike over layoffs, reduced working hours, and institution of piece rate wages. Despite these conditions, Pullman refused to lower rents on company housing. The strike eventually ended and workers returned to their jobs, but the negative coverage of the strike had a long lasting impact. As John S. Garner notes, "To the extent that the model town failed, it failed in its relations between management and labor."<sup>56</sup> But Pullman represented an important step in the evolution of the model company town. The failure of Pullman instituted greater collaboration between professional landscape architects, community planners, and industrialists to create the

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<sup>55</sup> Jane Eva Baxter, "The Paradox of a Capitalist Utopia: Visionary Ideals and Lived Experience in the Pullman Community 1880-1990," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* Vol. 16 No. 4 (December 2012): 652-660. See also Stanley Buder, "Physical Planning and Social Control," in *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 60-74.

<sup>56</sup> John S. Garner, "Introduction," in *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* ed. John S. Garner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 7.

new company town, as it is labeled by Margaret Crawford in her 1995 book *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns*.

Crawford defines the “new” company town as decentralized settlements with single family housing. An essential element of the new company town was the involvement of professional architects, urban planners, and landscape architects in their planning. Corporations and industrialists turned to professionals to design company towns, hoping to quell labor unrest, stop unionization, and reduce labor turnover. Marcelo Borges and Susanna Torres explain of the new company town, “By emphasizing a strong connection between lived environment and behavior, this new phase in company town planning was part of and contributed to larger conversations about urbanism, workers’ housing, social reform, and corporate responsibility...”<sup>57</sup> Professionals socially engineered space to emphasize efficiency, control, and harmonious relations between labor and capital, reflective of ideals of the Progressive Era. The new company town also represented a rejection of state control and regulation by capital. Welfare capitalists believed they could care for the worker and foster labor relations better than any intervention by the government.

### **The Professionals’ Role in the “New” Company Town**

The professionals’ search for a style for the new company town combined trends in urban planning such as housing reform and the English garden city to construct the ideal environment for labor and capital. Planning historian Peter Hall observes that “twentieth-century city planning, as an intellectual and professional movement, essentially represents a reaction to the evils of the nineteenth-century city.”<sup>58</sup> In London, during the late 1800s, some in the middle

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<sup>57</sup> Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres, “Company Towns: Concepts, Historiography, and Approaches,” in *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents* ed. Marcelo J. Borges and Susanna B. Torres (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

classes and government officials feared a violent insurrection by the working-class of the city. Social ills, contemporaries believed, stemmed from housing. The government reacted to this by passing the Housing of the Working Classes Act in 1890 to redevelop areas for building new housing for workers. Within the United States, the middle classes and the government had similar reactions to the conditions of the working-class in New York City. In 1890, photo journalist Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives*. This book exposed the living conditions in the slums while it simultaneously played on contemporary fears of Americans. The fear of “the city as a kind of parasite on the body of the nation, and the immigrant as corrupter of American racial purity and social harmony.”<sup>59</sup> The city formed Tenement House Commissions in 1894 and again in 1900 to investigate the living conditions of the working-class. The commission concluded that a large problem existed, but when it came to a solution, they rejected the British, and European model of public housing. As Peter Hall notes of the Tenement House Commission, “they felt, public housing would mean a ponderous bureaucracy, political patronage, the discouragement of private capital. So it was to be resisted: physical regulation of the private developer was to provide the answer.”<sup>60</sup>

The planning movement in the United States became connected to the search for order and control in American society. Two works that capture this relationship between desire for control and city planning are Paul Boyer’s *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* and M. Christine Boyer’s *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*. Paul Boyer traces the desire for control over urban masses back to the Early Republic. Americans recognized a transformation of society into a period of urban growth. Americans had

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(England: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 7.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880* 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 37.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880* 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 41.

to respond to this perceived problem of urban morality. The effort for urban social-control is present throughout the different periods of American history, Boyer writes. During the Progressive era, moral-control took the shape of “the elevation of character, the inculcation of a ‘higher’ standard of individual behavior, the placing of social duty above private desire, the re-creation of the urban masses in the reformers’ own image.”<sup>61</sup> Boyer argues that the city planning movement sprang from the city beautiful movement, but it “must be viewed against a background of profound apprehension about the moral fate of the city. It was, in fact, the culminating expression of the positive environmentalists to achieve moral and social ends through environmental means.”<sup>62</sup> City planners of the Progressive Era represented the evolution of the moral-control objective.

M. Christine Boyer explains that the understanding of urban improvement shifted in the 1910s from efforts at environmental reform and emphases on neoclassical formula to a focus on the root causes of disease and disorder in the city. Environmental improvements and beautification of the urban environment to uphold morality and virtue, in the mind of reformers, could not sufficiently solve public needs, structural disorganization, and stimulate effective economic growth.<sup>63</sup> A planning mentality developed during the early 1900s, which focused on order, rationality, and regulation. Boyer asserts that “...the control of the urban whole required the development of a concatenated specialization: comprehensive city planning. Thus a new set of needs came forward for which planning would be the response: to impose disciplinary order and supervisory direction over the spatial order of the American city.”<sup>64</sup> Yet in the transition

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 190.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in American, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 268.

<sup>63</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1983), 61.

<sup>64</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge,

from City Beautiful to the professionalization of city planning, the components of morality and control remained key. Planners, argues Boyer, worked to uphold the status quo of capitalist accumulation and promote economic growth, never to overcome that system. Much the same can be seen in the design of model company towns to create a space for maximum profit and efficiency.

The reform-minded professionals that grew out of the city planning movement, such as planners, architects, and landscape architects, viewed the construction of company towns as opportunities to transcribe their beliefs on to the built environment. One such figure was Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr., son of Fredrick Law Olmsted. Olmsted Jr. was involved in the early city planning movement and one of its leading actors. He viewed the city as one cohesive entity and believed that the new profession of city planning made it realistic to address all major needs of the urban environment. Like other planners, he did not care so much about the creation of an ideal city, but rather one that could serve the needs of its citizens and the complexities of modern life. In his earlier years, he believed in the City Beautiful movement and that social and physical reforms were linked. At the Second National Conference on City Planning and Congestion of Population held by the American Civic Association in 1910, Olmsted Jr. gave the introductory address. He explained that the planning of the physical city “shall be so harmonized as to...secure for the people of the city conditions adapted to their attaining the maximum of productive efficiency, of health and of enjoyment of life.”<sup>65</sup> Historian of urban America Susan L. Klaus explains that this view represented Olmsted Jr.’s transition into a new phase of the city

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Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1983), 63.

<sup>65</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., “City Planning: An Introductory Address Delivered by Frederick Law Olmsted, at the Second National Conference on City Planning and Congestion of Population, at Rochester, New York, 1910,” *American Civic Association Series* 11 No. 4 (June 1910): 3-4, accessed February 24, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044103111746&view=1up&seq=8>.

planning movement, “characterized by a pragmatic, utilitarian, and more technical approach to planning, which championed the City Scientific or City Efficient.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, Olmsted never adopted a style of planning that was formulaic. He traveled to Europe in 1908 to study company towns and planned communities in England, France, and Germany. While on his trip, he received a request from the Russell Sage Foundation inquiring if he would take on a project in suburban development, but in the style of the garden city. This suburban development project became known as Forest Hills, New York and the first adaptation of the English garden city in the United States.

This is evident in the use of Ebenezer Howard’s garden city as a model of planning the company town. Howard was not an actual planner, but rather a social theorist. He outlined his idea and plan for the garden city in his 1898 book *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* as a utopian vision of society. Peter Hall notes, “Howard could thus argue that his [garden city] was a third socio-economic system, superior both to Victorian capitalism and to bureaucratic centralized socialism.”<sup>67</sup> The garden city combined both town and country, and inhabitants would settle in the countryside. Howard theorized that if industrialists moved their factories to the garden city, and workers would follow, with space to build their own homes. He projected the garden cities to be placed on a fixed amount of land, and a population limited to around 32,000.

The garden city’s use in the United States was a bastardization of Howard’s original conception. Planners scrapped the more radical versions of Howard’s garden city, such as cooperative ownership and economic self-sufficiency. The garden city became a new way to

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<sup>66</sup> Susan L. Klaus, “Efficiency, Economy, Beauty: The City Planning Reports of Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr., 1905-1915,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* No. 57 Vol. 4, 462.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880* 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 98.

design a town, not a means of societal reform. One example of the form of the garden city used for the design of a company town is the Indian Hill suburb of Worcester, Massachusetts, built throughout the 1910s. The Norton Company hired architect and designer of model housing Grosvenor Atterbury, who had worked with Olmsted Jr. on Forest Hills, to design Indian Hill. Atterbury involved himself in various reform movements, such as worker housing. He found the garden city form useful because it was decentralized and offered opportunity for affordable single family housing for workers. Atterbury combined garden city planning with colonial revival architecture to design Indian Hill. Margaret Crawford explains that from this design, Atterbury constructed an identity for Indian Hill which revolved around “stability, domesticity, and traditional American values...social harmony and industrial peace.”<sup>68</sup> The use of the style of the “Americanized” garden city essentially promoted and enhanced the ideals of welfare capitalism during the Progressive era.

The historiography on paternalism illustrates that companies’ use of paternalism was largely unsuccessful as a measure to stop unionization and to control workforces, as in the cases of Lowell, Pullman, Cohoes, New York, and the Amoskeag mills in the 1920s. I argue that by contrast, in North Dighton Milliken successfully used paternalism over a longer period of time as a management style while eliciting little overt resistance from workers. Milliken was successful in staving off unionization through his paternalism. During the 1916 strike, no workers at Mount Hope joined their fellow workers in solidarity to strike against Milliken. In 1934, workers at Mount Hope did not join textile workers across the country in the General Strike. However, the 1951 strike represented the most overt challenge to Milliken’s paternalism. The 1951 campaign for unionization represented a rejection of paternalism which stemmed from

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<sup>68</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman’s Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 101.

the extenuating context of deindustrialization. It seems that had workers not perceived a threat to their jobs, they probably would not have decided to unionize under the Textile Workers Union of America. Yet the 1951 strike is not a failure of paternalism, but rather a victory of it. It kept various workers compliant to the management of the company for nearly fifty years and protected the company. Milliken successfully avoided unionization when his company closed the day after Mount Hope workers voted for union representation in September 1951.

Dighton was also not a typical company town. It had an existing system of town government since the colonial era, and Mount Hope mill owners did not construct all the infrastructure, nor did industrialists have sole control over town politics. As a section of Dighton, North Dighton was distinct from other parts of town. In the 1920s, Milliken hired the Olmsted Brothers company to redesign the built environment of North Dighton. Milliken needed this section of town to uphold the capitalist system of production and maintain an environment for an efficient workforce. North Dighton originally had the same appearance of South Dighton, a section of town defined by farmland, dirt roads, and houses that dated back to the 1700s. Milliken's modern mill village was constructed instead within the larger context of the "new" company town of the Progressive Era.

## CHAPTER 2. J.K. MILLIKEN THE PATRIARCH AND THE RISE OF MT. HOPE

### Introduction

Every system of paternalistic management needs a patriarch. Joseph Knowles (J.K.) Milliken worked to establish himself as a patriarchal authority figure within both the workplace of Mount Hope and the surrounding community. The creation of his authority was essential to maintain the respect of his workers, reinforce his control over them, but also ensure their loyalty. His personal story was key to the larger story of his relationship to his workers, his workforce, and the town of Dighton. Milliken had a bourgeois upbringing but did not descend from any of the prominent families of Massachusetts industry. He had to relay to others, be it his workers or other industrialists, to show that he belonged in his role as treasurer of Mount Hope and patriarch of North Dighton. When he first started as treasurer at Mount Hope, he was only twenty-six. His age, and his initially subordinate relation in management to his uncle Joseph Frank Knowles, may have played a factor in Milliken's desire to prove himself as a legitimate leader. Milliken's political associations with the Republican party informed his view on both labor and capital, and his ideas about the role that the state should play in that relationship. This chapter argues that Milliken established his authority through his exploitation of North Dighton's history and political connections he fostered with the Republican Party and with trade organizations, both local and regional. The role of the patriarch had to be filled in order to implement the system of paternalism, and eventually Milliken was able to use this authority to dampen his employees' working-class identity.

### Milliken's Youth

J.K. Milliken was born in Salem, Massachusetts on July 5, 1875. J.K. His antecedents had deep roots in New England, dating back to the seventeenth century.<sup>69</sup> His father, Charles Milliken, lived in Maine and later moved into Boston, where he worked as a dry goods salesman. He eventually made his way to Salem, where he met his future wife, Helen Doane Knowles. Helen's family lineage extended to the early settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>70</sup> Joseph Frank Knowles, Helen's brother, had ties to the textile industry dating back to the mid-1870s, and he worked as an upper-level manager in various mills, including the Mount Hope Finishing Company, until his death in 1909. This practice of families sequentially entering management positions in textile mills was fairly typical of New England. In 1811, Col. Joseph Durfee, of the Durfee family, started the first textile mill in Fall River, Massachusetts. Bradford Durfee, a relative of Joseph Durfee, then also entered the textile industry during the 1820s. Richard Borden of Fall River, to cite another example, started several cotton mills in the area during the 1820s and 1830s, with his sons entering the textile industry as well. The same can also be said of the Bourne family, and the Hathaway family of New Bedford. The Hathaway family made their fortune in the China Trade, but also ventured into investment and management of textile mills in the area.

Joseph Frank Knowles, J.K.'s uncle, went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology some time in the 1870s to study engineering. Though he failed to graduate, Knowles went on to a successful career in textile mill management. Throughout his career, Frank Knowles worked in management positions in the textile industry of southeastern Massachusetts. Historian Burke

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<sup>69</sup> *Representative Men and Old Families of Southeastern Massachusetts*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co., 1912. Reprint, London: Dalton House, 2015), 1483.

<sup>70</sup> *Representative Men and Old Families of Southeastern Massachusetts*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co., 1912. Reprint, London: Dalton House, 2015), 192.

Davis, the biographer of the Millikens, proclaimed that Knowles was “one of the region’s leading textile magnates.”<sup>71</sup> Knowles established connections with local industrialists and businessmen, teaming up with four prominent men from New Bedford around 1900 to start a textile finishing plant to finish, bleach, and dye fabrics produced in the cotton mills of New England, some of which these men already owned. His partners were William W. Crapo, Thomas S. Hathaway, James E. Stanton Jr., and Henry L. Tiffany. Crapo was an attorney by trade who had interests in the textile industry. He also served as a congressman in Massachusetts from 1875-1883. Hathaway and Stanton Jr., worked as officers at the Acushnet and Hathaway Mills. The Hathaway family imported tea, hemp, and other goods to the United States in the China trade and had interests in the New Bedford whaling industry. Tiffany was related to the Tiffany’s jewelry family of New York. He founded the Kilburn Mill of New Bedford in 1904. The initial capital for Mount Hope came from Knowles, who invested \$50,000 for five hundred shares, and Knowles’s nephew, Milliken, who contributed \$5,000.<sup>72</sup>

J.K. Milliken maintained a close relationship with his uncle Joseph throughout his youth and into his adult life. Knowles acted as a father figure to Milliken and his younger brother, Charles Alfred (C.A.), after their parents separated and Charles Milliken moved back to Maine. One biographer described it as a “close understanding relationship that only ended with Frank’s death.”<sup>73</sup> Milliken and his brother attended Friends Academy in New Bedford, Massachusetts, an independent day school founded by Quakers in 1810. By the 1880s, when the two Millikens attended, the school had lost its connection to Quakerism and had become a secular private school. An 1876 historical sketch of the Friends Academy explained, “...the school became

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<sup>71</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

secular only, and at present day the name of Friends Academy alone remains to indicate the religious principles and purposes of those who reared the institution.”<sup>74</sup> It does not appear that Quakerism or any other religion had a strong impact on Milliken. Throughout his life he identified as Unitarian, but maintained a “lack of partiality in religious matters...he was not a church goer.”<sup>75</sup> Instead of church on Sundays, he went to the Mount Hope Finishing Company to work.<sup>76</sup> It does not appear that religion had any influence on Milliken’s paternalism at Mount Hope.

After graduating from Friends Academy, Milliken studied at Harvard University. He entered Harvard in 1892 and graduated in 1895 with an A.B. As a freshman at Harvard, Milliken would have taken mandatory classes in rhetoric and English composition, chemistry, French or German, and a choice of elective classes such as Greek, Latin, music, history, geology, and law.<sup>77</sup> As a sophomore, junior, and senior he would have had a choice of electives, but had to take Themes and Forensics. Reportedly, Joseph Frank Knowles wanted Milliken to focus on chemistry to make him competitive as a textile plant manager, but Milliken failed to “heed this advice.”<sup>78</sup> Knowles ultimately persuaded his nephew to take on a career in the textile industry. After graduating, Milliken returned to New Bedford and worked as a manager at the Dunnell Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Shortly after, in 1899, he joined his uncle at the Hathaway Mill

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<sup>74</sup> Friends Academy, *Historical Sketch of the Friends Academy: Prepared for the Centennial Year: To Which is Appended a Presentation of the Course and Methods of Instruction at Present Pursued* (New Bedford: Fesseden & Baker Printers, 1876), 30, accessed November 25, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015048461217&view=1up&seq=7>.

<sup>75</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 36.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>77</sup> Harvard University, *The Harvard University Catalogue 1892-1893* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1892), 193-198, accessed December 2, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3030729&view=1up&seq=9>.

<sup>78</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 20.

in New Bedford as a bookkeeper. It appears that bookkeeper in a textile mill was a bit of an odd direction for a Harvard graduate of the 1890s. Only one member, Thomas Wood Andrews, from Milliken's graduating class at Harvard took a similar path, entering management at the Pequea Mills located in Philadelphia, that manufactured woolen and worsted goods.<sup>79</sup> Another, Edward Dow Armstrong, worked as a chemist for a textile finishing company in Lewinston, Maine, after graduation.<sup>80</sup> Many went into law, medicine, or professorships at universities, not textile manufacturing.

### **The Rise of Mount Hope Finishing Company**

In January 1901, Knowles and Milliken arrived in the town of North Dighton, Massachusetts to scout a potential factory location for their new textile-finishing venture, in partnership with Crapo, Hathaway, Stanton, and Tiffany. Milliken and his uncle found the landscape of North Dighton "dreary" but also acknowledged "there was an air of history about the place."<sup>81</sup> A company publication later described North Dighton at this time as a town of "unkempt roads and shabby houses" that "breathed an atmosphere of desertion, of failure, of despondency, as though the struggle had been too much..."<sup>82</sup> The language used by the company to describe Milliken's first encounter with Dighton is misleading, and framed Milliken as both a savior and a visionary. However, North Dighton was far from deserted, failed, or despondent. The north part of town already had several economically-valuable industries before the establishment of Mount Hope Finishing Company. The most prominent of these industries was

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<sup>79</sup> "Thomas Wood Andrews," *Harvard College Class of 1896 Secretary's Fifth Report* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 6, accessed February 9, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044107299992&view=1up&seq=5>.

<sup>80</sup> "Edward Dow Armstrong," *Harvard College Class of 1896 Secretary's Fifth Report* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1916), 9, accessed February 9, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044107299992&view=1up&seq=5>.

<sup>81</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

the Lincoln Paper Company, which had been in existence since 1850. Prior to becoming part of Mount Hope Finishing Company, the existing mill on Spring Street had been home to the Stafford and Co., William Mason Manufacturing Co., and then the North Dighton Cotton Co. in succession between 1879 and 1900. There were also a number of houses, two churches, a foundry, livery stable, and a store. The roads were dirt, but that was not uncommon for a small town in New England at the turn of the century.

In the south part of town, several factories also operated, at the time of Mount Hope's opening in 1901. The Anchor Color and Gum Works on Main Street had manufactured soap and cornstarch products since 1862. The Dighton Stove Linings Co. was incorporated in 1874, and a canning factory off of Main Street near the freight railroad lines assisted the many local farmers of Dighton. The local economy was strong and new business continued to emerge. For example, when the canning factory closed in 1903, the Crossman Tack Co. moved into the vacated building. South Dighton also contained numerous sites of historical importance which included the Council Oak Tree, a former meeting site of the Wampanoags, and Richmond's Hill, the highest point between Boston and Newport, Rhode Island. The Dighton Rock Park, built in 1896 along the banks of the Taunton River, hosted outings, clambakes, dances, bowling, and swimming.

An already existing cotton mill stood on the Mount Hope property. Milliken and Knowles may have known the history of the mill when they went to visit it. Against the wishes of the president of Mount Hope, Joseph Frank Knowles, Milliken retained the original wooden structure and built additions to it. On June 25, 1901, workers broke ground for an addition to the original structure: a brick building that would house the grey room, singe room, kiers, bleach house, and drying cans. It appears that Milliken took an interest in history; in 1912, Milliken

served as the treasurer of Dighton's Bicentennial Committee, and in 1923, he authored a booklet about the early years of his own company, *The Story of the Mill of the Mount Hope Privilege in North Dighton*. Milliken also exploited history to give his twentieth-century firm an aura of older patriotic tradition. Milliken's own account of his company, published sometime during the early 1920s, maintained that the original mill had been raised on July 4, 1810, the holiday of American Independence by "people far and near" who were fueled by "a liberal supply of punch...of straight liquor with no dilution from ice or water."<sup>83</sup> Later company accounts asserted that this mill was where in 1812, "the first attempt in New England chemically to bleach cotton was made."<sup>84</sup> The retention of the original mill building represented a connection to the past and present but also a narrative of progress.

Mount Hope started production in December 1901, just six months after construction began. In its early months of operation, Mount Hope finished 150,000 to 250,000 yards of cloth each week. The location of Mount Hope near the center of Bristol County proved to be strategic. Rail lines in Dighton connected to Fall River and Taunton. Taunton, which neighbors Dighton, was home to several cotton textile mills in the city. Fall River was known as the spindle city and had long been recognized as a center of textile production in New England. Bleaching, dyeing, and finishing textiles required expensive and newer machinery, and the type of finishing varied. Instead of handling those operations internally, cotton textile producers contracted with companies that specialized in the finishing trade. With many cotton textile mills nearby in the first decades of the twentieth-century, and numerous connections to the industrialists who owned the mills, Mount Hope had an early advantage. Just in the period from 1904-1907, annual profits

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<sup>83</sup> J.K. Milliken, *The Story of the Mill at the Mount Hope Privilege in North Dighton*, (Privately Printed: 1923), 6.

<sup>84</sup> Harriet O'Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company*, (Privately Printed: 1927), 13. Folder VM863H, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

increased from \$1,300 to \$35,000.<sup>85</sup> In 1910, the plant produced a profit of \$47,000.<sup>86</sup> As business increased, the company added to the physical plant. It added buildings constructed with reinforced concrete, updated engines, electric generators and turbines, and research laboratories for chemicals and dyes. The company's self-descriptions proudly proclaimed in 1927 that it was under Milliken's "wise guidance," that the Mount Hope Finishing Company grew "from a child to a giant among industries."<sup>87</sup>

### **The Creation of Milliken's Authority**

As Mount Hope Finishing Company grew, so did Milliken's influence in town politics in Dighton. In 1907 Milliken began his official involvement with town government when local citizens voted him onto a budget committee and further legitimized his power as a patriarchal figure. Apparently, some were still ready to resist Milliken and other employees of Mount Hope who held positions in town government. The next year the Fall River Daily Evening News reported tensions at the elections for town offices and hinted at a rivalry between two major businesses in North Dighton: "the real cause of so strenuous a fight this year for the honors is said to have been for the purpose of ousting the candidates who were employees in the Mount Hope Finishing Works...It is stated that the Lincoln Paper Works was back of the other machine."<sup>88</sup> The Lincoln Paper Works strategy to fund opponents of candidates from Mount Hope failed. The opposition did not stop Milliken, and over the next fifteen years, he held

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>87</sup> Harriet O'Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company*, (Privately Printed: 1927), 15. Folder VM863H, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>88</sup> "Dighton Town Meeting," *Fall River Daily Evening News* March 3, 1908, 3. [https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39358077/1908\\_dighton\\_town\\_meeting\\_mount\\_hope/](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39358077/1908_dighton_town_meeting_mount_hope/), accessed December 1, 2019.

numerous positions in town government, including the Appropriation Committee, Road Commission, and School Committee.

Milliken's direct role in town government provided an opportunity to extend the power of Mount Hope. He served continuously as the chairman of Dighton's Finance Committee from 1921 to 1950. The Finance Committee advised the elected officials of Dighton on issues of finance, such as budget allocations, during town meetings. Mount Hope paid a large amount of taxes to Dighton and leading the Finance Committee guaranteed Milliken's input into how the town spent its tax money. Town historian Helen H. Lane argued in her 1962 book *History of the Town of Dighton*, "The 'management' had felt it to be necessary to take an active part in the affairs of the town. This had been done largely by arranging that company officials were appointed to served on the Town Finance Committee, and that important committees included workers at the Finishing Company."<sup>89</sup> Lane herself lived in town while the company operated and her father, Dwight F. Lane, served as a selectman, for many years.<sup>90</sup>

Milliken further extended his company's influence in town, when several Mount Hope employees served either as selectmen or on committees. For example, the company employed Lyman Briggs as the Superintendent of the Tenement Office, which handled company-owned worker housing.<sup>91</sup> For nearly twenty years, Briggs served on three local boards: Selectman, Public Welfare, Public Health, and the School Committee. The company publication *Mount Hope News* boasted that Briggs was "the political Matahmma of North Dighton."<sup>92</sup> At the 1923

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<sup>89</sup> Helen Lane, *A History of the Town of Dighton, Massachusetts: The South Purchase, May 30, 1712*, (Dighton: Town of Dighton, 1962), 195.

<sup>90</sup> A selectman is an elected official to a local government board, of three to five members, which is common in the towns of New England.

<sup>91</sup> The Tenement Office at Mount Hope Finishing Company was where employees went when they wanted to rent or buy a house from the company. The Tenement Office was also responsible for interior and exterior repairs to company owned houses.

<sup>92</sup> Alfred R. White, "Our Annual Town Meeting," *Mount Hope News* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1923), 5-6. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

town meeting, those in attendance voted to fill a vacancy on the School Committee. The “married woman...inexperienced in politics” who challenged Briggs was no match for his “political prestige,” and he won the position.<sup>93</sup> The town elected him as Superintendent of Streets in 1933, a post he held for over five years. In addition to being active in town politics, he served as Chairman of the Board of Investment for the North Dighton Co-Operative Bank, located in the building of the North Dighton Co-Operative Store. In his position, Briggs “refused to pass any loans unless he was sure that the applicant could pay the dues” to the Co-Operative Bank.<sup>94</sup> E.T. Crocker, another Mount Hope employee, served as the President for the co-operative bank. The management at Mount Hope sponsored the co-operative bank and praised Briggs for “the conservative manner in which it has been conducted, as well as the economical way in which it has done business.”<sup>95</sup> Milliken mostly likely influenced the conservative financial practices at the Co-Operative Bank. He thought that “debts encouraged bad habits. If an employee needed some essential item...he could borrow from Mount Hope without interest.”<sup>96</sup> Milliken did not allow loans to employees for radios, phonographs, or pianos, which he considered luxury items in the age of consumerism. Only allowing loans for certain items, and arranging for employees to come directly to Mount Hope to borrow money, was another way of exerting economic power over his employees. These loans were a way that Milliken could exert control over his workers, but also display his economic authority.

Another way Milliken created his public authority was by becoming active in civic affairs beyond the town of Dighton. He participated in various professional organizations at the local,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>94</sup> Alfred R. White, “North Dighton Co-Operative Bank,” *Mount Hope News* Vol. 10 No. 2-3 (August-September 1930): 17. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>96</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 47.

regional, and state levels. On the local level, he joined the board of directors of the Machinists National Bank in Taunton. He became the president of the bank in 1925 after the sudden death of then President William C. Davenport. Milliken held this position until 1951. Additionally, he secured long-term positions as a director of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. and the Fall River Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Co. On the regional level, Milliken “played a leading role in founding the National Association of Finishers of Textile Fabrics, which was formed to help solve the industry’s problems” in 1914.<sup>97</sup> The National Association of Finishers of Textile Fabrics united thirty-five of the leading finishing firms. The association elected him vice-president in 1921. This association eventually led Milliken to become involved in starting an Open Price Association for the textile finishing industry.<sup>98</sup>

Milliken’s loyalty to the Republican Party influenced his management style at Mount Hope and assisted him in the creation of his authority and power. During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, the Republican party in the United States was deeply divided between Progressive reformers and pro-business advocates. William McKinley, president from 1897-1901, represented the latter, but when Vice President Theodore Roosevelt ascended to the presidency following McKinley’s assassination, the Progressive wing had a new champion. Progressive control of the Republican Party did not

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 26. And “Manufacturing Shares: Mount Hope Finishing Company,” *American Wool and Cotton Reporter*, Vol. 31 No. 33 (August 1917), 19.

<sup>98</sup> “Manufacturing Shares: Mount Hope Finishing Company,” 19. Open Price Associations extended beyond textiles and into other industries such as lumber, iron, and steel. It was a system to fix prices and have more knowledge of market conditions. The theory derived from a Chicago Lawyer named Jerome Eddy. He worked as a legal consultant for several of the firms involved in the National Association of Finishers of Textile Fabrics. Open Price Associations wanted to cut competition and set prices by sharing information about a firm’s shipments, stock, tonnage, prices, discounts and rebates. See H.R. Tosdal, “Open Price Association,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (June 1917), 331-352. Milton Nelson, “Open Price Association,” PhD diss., (University of Illinois, 1921), accessed December 5, 2019, [https://books.google.com/books?id=d8ZJAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=open+price+association&source=bl&ots=UwY6nRYOvS&sig=ACfU3U33gx0lb0\\_QJtv9xNUxouj8TZCHmA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjaoeS5ip\\_mAhVC7J4KHeZpDM8Q6AEwAnoECAyQAO#v=onepage&q=open%20price%20association&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=d8ZJAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=open+price+association&source=bl&ots=UwY6nRYOvS&sig=ACfU3U33gx0lb0_QJtv9xNUxouj8TZCHmA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjaoeS5ip_mAhVC7J4KHeZpDM8Q6AEwAnoECAyQAO#v=onepage&q=open%20price%20association&f=false).

outlive Roosevelt's presidency. When Roosevelt lost the Republican nomination upon his return to politics in 1912, the progressives defected from the Republican Party, leaving it to be defeated by Woodrow Wilson's own brand of progressivism within the Democratic Party.

Beginning in the 1920s, Milliken started a friendship with Republican congressman Joseph W. Martin Jr., from Attleboro, Massachusetts. Milliken established this relationship because he appreciated Martin's track record of supporting legislation that helped New England industry. He financially supported Martin and in return expected the congressman to exert "his growing influence to aid the Massachusetts textile industry on issues such as the maintenance of high tariffs on imported cotton and woolen products and matters of taxation."<sup>99</sup> In his autobiography, Martin attested, "On the behalf of the textile industry I worked for higher tariffs on cotton and wool products..."<sup>100</sup> He witnessed directly the "hardships of New England mill towns" and took action to protect them from growing Southern competition.<sup>101</sup>

Besides the association with Martin, Milliken displayed his loyalty to the Republicans by using the grounds of Mount Hope Finishing Company to hold political events. Milliken allowed fellow Republican and the Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts Louis A. Frothingham to come to the machine shop in Mount Hope and hold a rally on his October 1911 tour of the southeastern part of Massachusetts. Nearly 150 people attended, and the local paper reported that Frothingham was "cordially received."<sup>102</sup> Milliken arranged numerous clambakes and dinners with guest speakers for the Republican Party on Mount Hope property. In August 1920, Joseph E. Warner, Republican and Massachusetts State Representative, was the guest speaker at a

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<sup>99</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The story of Mount hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 35.

<sup>100</sup> Joseph W. Martin Jr., *My First Fifty Years in Politics*, 56.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>102</sup> "Frothingham Pays Flying Visit," *Fall River Daily Evening News*, November 1, 1911 [https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39218101/frothingham\\_visit\\_held\\_rally\\_in\\_machine/](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39218101/frothingham_visit_held_rally_in_machine/), accessed December 1, 2019.

clambake hosted by Milliken at the Mount Hope athletic club and attended by “about 300 businessmen and political leaders.”<sup>103</sup> Several years later, in 1928, the Bristol County Republican Association used the Mount Hope Club House to host their annual clambake. Using Mount Hope to host political events was representative of Milliken’s patriarchal power, but also a way to establish his authority over workers and citizens of Dighton. It displayed his political power on a regional and state level.

In his private life, Milliken became a literal patriarch to his own growing family. He and his wife, Carrie Dodds Milliken, moved to South Dighton from New Bedford a short time after Mount Hope began operations. Milliken met Dodds while she worked as a nurse in New Bedford for a sick relative of the Knowles family, and they married in 1903. Carrie Dodds was born in 1877 and grew up in Champlain, New York. Her father worked as a farmer and her mother kept house. She attended nursing school at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston. After graduation, she moved to New Bedford and found work as a nurse. She gave birth to her and Milliken’s first child, a son, Robert Dodds Milliken, in 1904. Another son, J.K. Milliken Jr., known by his nickname Pete, was born in 1907. As a former nurse, Dodds defied the typical social status of a woman that a rising New England industrialist like Milliken usually married. Milliken’s cousins, Joseph Frank Knowles Jr. and George B. Knowles, both married bourgeois women from New Bedford. Knowles Jr. married Emily Stanton and George Knowles married Alice P. Tiffany.

In the mid-1920s, Milliken “brought his sons into the business to prepare for carrying on the family tradition into a new generation.”<sup>104</sup> After he finished Prep school in 1924, Milliken Jr.

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<sup>103</sup> “Warner Again Discusses Budget,” *Fall River Daily Evening News*, August 13, 1920 [https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39362112/republican\\_warner\\_speaks\\_at\\_clambake\\_at/](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39362112/republican_warner_speaks_at_clambake_at/), accessed December 1, 2019.

<sup>104</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its*

started work at Mount Hope instead of attending college, eventually becoming the general superintendent. Milliken Jr., like his father, became involved in town government and politics. He served on Dighton's small police force from 1925 to 1926.<sup>105</sup> The town selectmen appointed Milliken Jr. as one of six constables for Dighton in 1928, a post he continued to hold until at least 1939.<sup>106</sup> In 1947 the School Committee appointed Milliken Jr. to a Planning Committee for the building of a new elementary school, and in 1950 he became chairman of the finance committee when his father resigned.<sup>107</sup>

Robert Milliken followed a slightly different trajectory than his brother Pete: he graduated from Harvard in 1925 and worked for a year at a different textile company. He started at Mount Hope alongside his father and brother in 1928 and gained experience in "a little of everything except the nightshift," according to family accounts, but soon "found his calling in sales and finance, selling in Boston and New York and developing important customers."<sup>108</sup> Robert Milliken travelled to New York for most of the week and came back to North Dighton on the weekends. According to biographer Burke Davis, Robert Milliken lived a cosmopolitan life. In New York he was "an exuberant participant in the Jazz Age, given to wearing a raccoon coat, driving fast automobiles, and playing cards and dining out with the sales staff."<sup>109</sup> He enjoyed a different level of material consumption than the average Mount Hope worker back in North

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*Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 37-38.

<sup>105</sup> See Howard C. Briggs "Auditors Report," *Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1925* (Taunton, Massachusetts: C.A. Hack & Son, Inc., Printers, 1926), 75. Howard C. Briggs, "Auditors Report," *Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1926* (New Bedford, Massachusetts: The Universal Press, 1927), 99.

<sup>106</sup> Dwight F. Lane "Town Clerks Report," *Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1928* (Taunton, Massachusetts: C.A. Hack & Son, Inc., Printers, 1929), 67.

<sup>107</sup> John Bolger, Clayton H. Atwood, and George V. Tinkham, "Report of the Selectman," *Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1947* (North Attleborough: The North Attleborough Chronicle Company, 1948), 11. "Town Officers for 1950," *Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1950* (Printed, 1951), 4.

<sup>108</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 39.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

Dighton. By the 1940s, both brothers had become chief executives of the company, but J.K. Milliken was still involved in the day-to-day operations in the running of the plant.

Other family members joined J.K. Milliken at Mount Hope in positions of upper-level management and on the board of directors. Milliken's brother, C.A., graduated from Harvard in 1901 and joined the company soon after. He worked in marketing, sales, and served as the associate editor for the internal company publication *Mount Hope News* alongside Albert R. White into the 1930s. His younger cousin Eliot Knowles recalled of C.A., "He never seemed to win the acclaim of the other Milliken's, but he was a genius at marketing."<sup>110</sup> C.A. Milliken retired in the 1940s and died in 1949 at the Mount Hope Hospital in North Dighton. J.K. Milliken's cousins George B. Knowles, Joseph Frank Knowles Jr., and Eliot Knowles secured spots on the board of directors. However, in the late 1940s the Millikens and all three Knowles cousins disagreed over the decisions of a newly hired business consultant and outsider, Frank Daylor. Eliot Knowles regarded Daylor as "a divisive influence at Mount Hope almost from the start" and "felt that Daylor might have had ambitions to take over control."<sup>111</sup> In 1948 George B. Knowles was forced from the board of directors, and Eliot Knowles followed shortly after in 1949. The sale of the Knowles, Crapo, and Tiffany stock in 1949 meant that for the first time the Milliken family held complete control over the Mount Hope Finishing Company. Eliot Knowles recalled the Milliken takeover as one of "self-preservation."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 65.

### Publications as Mythmaking for Milliken and His Company

The Mount Hope Finishing Company funded several publications that produced myths and propaganda about the company, and J.K. Milliken. One of the first, was *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* authored by Harriet E. O'Brien, a writer at the Walton Advertising and Printing Company from Boston, Massachusetts. The company most likely used *From Grey to Beauty* as a form of advertising to be circulated and sent out to potential customers. It highlighted the company's manufacturing process, as well as its investment in modern technology and finishing techniques. This text in particular contributed to the portrayal of Milliken as the patriarchal authority figure of Mount Hope and North Dighton. O'Brien, makes no mention of the other investors in Mount Hope, only that, "...together with his uncle, Joseph F. Knowles, established," Mount Hope and its successes was "largely due to his [J.K.'s] foresight and wise guidance."<sup>113</sup>

The second source of mythmaking of Mount Hope's history comes from the Milliken family funded biography, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* written by popular military historian, Burke Davis.<sup>114</sup> It is unclear how the Millikens contacted Davis to write *A Fierce Personal Pride*, but a potential connection could be through John L. Moorhead who authored the forward to the book. He explained "As a friend of Burke since college days, and of the Millikens since they came south, I feel richly rewarded for bringing the writer and story together, and I believe readers will

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<sup>113</sup> Harriet O'Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company*, (Privately Printed: 1927), 14-15. Folder VM863H, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>114</sup> See For Example, Burke Davis, *The Called Him Stonewall: A Life of Lieutenant General T.J. Jackson, CSA* (New York: Reinhart, 1954). Burke Davis, *Gray Fox: Robert E. Lee and the Civil War* (Fairfax, 1981). Burke Davis, *The Long Surrender: The Dramatic Account of the Collapse of the Confederacy and the Pursuit of Jefferson Davis* (New York: Random House, 1985).

feel the same.”<sup>115</sup> Burke Davis obviously favored the story of Mount Hope, and J.K. Milliken’s role as treasurer. One major drawback of Davis’s book is that there are no footnotes or references in the text to indicate from where he drew his evidence. He also excludes certain historic events, such as the 1916 strike, and that there were union workers at Mount Hope for a time. He presents an overall positive portrait of the Millikens and excludes their anti-labor actions during the 1934 General Textile Strike and the 1951 strike. Another omission by Davis is Mount Hope’s hiring of the Olmsted Brother’s Firm to redesign parts of North Dighton’s built environment. Davis obscured historical realities of Mount Hope through his mythmaking. His work is problematic, only if one takes it as fact, but it is one of the only secondary sources on Mount Hope available. It is useful as an indication of Milliken’s mindset and the corporate culture he sought at Mount Hope. The main primary source documents that survive in the local archives are all company produced, including *Mount Hope News*, *From Grey to Beauty*, and *A Fierce Personal Pride*. These sources have maintained a certain view in local history of J.K. Milliken as a benevolent businessman that invested in his employee’s happiness.

### **Conclusion**

J.K. Milliken worked to establish himself as a patriarchal figure to create his authority and legitimate to those he managed at Mount Hope. He did this by exploiting the history of the mill that existed already in North Dighton. Linking his new enterprise to that older industry helped Milliken to craft his legitimacy because it incorporated him into a narrative of progress. As an outsider to North Dighton, it assisted him in establishing knowledge of and a connection to the town’s past. It enabled him to generate legitimacy for his presence in North Dighton, as if his

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<sup>115</sup> John L. Moorhead foreword to Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), x.

role as industrialist was natural in that place. His power extended into the world of business as a member of various professional and trade organizations on the state and regional level. Locally, he had economic and political power through his longstanding position as the chairman of the Finance Board. Milliken displayed his loyalty to the Republican Party, but also his political connections by hosting party events on Mount Hope property and establishing a relationship with congressman Joseph W. Martin Jr. His family also had claim to being some of the first settlers from England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Labor historian Philip Scranton argues, “Effective Paternalism required that the master have broader claims than merely his role of employer...His connections to a noted local family, long experience and expertise in the practice of manufacture...would all contribute to the creation of durable paternalistic social relations.”<sup>116</sup> These various legitimizations of Milliken’s authority were essential to his control at Mount Hope. Company self-descriptions boasted that from the earliest days at the plant, in Milliken’s “personal relationship with his employees he started right, in that he impressed upon them that every business must have a head who should be respected and obeyed.”<sup>117</sup> Labor relations hinged upon this patriarchal relationship between Milliken and the employees.

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<sup>116</sup> Philip Scranton, "Varieties of Paternalism: Industrial Structures and the Social Relations of Production in American Textiles," *American Quarterly* No. 2 (Summer, 1984): 238.

<sup>117</sup> Albert R. White, "Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant," *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 34, accessed February 8, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

### CHAPTER 3. LABOR RELATIONS AT MOUNT HOPE

#### Introduction

1916 marked a point of contention between workers and management at Mount Hope Finishing Company. Thirty-eight workers who had organized under the Folders Union Local 651, a subset of the United Textile Workers (UTW), decided to go on strike. As early as 1908, the folders at Mount Hope were unionized by the UTW. The UTW headquarters opened in Fall River, Massachusetts soon after its founding.<sup>118</sup> On the national level, membership grew, and by 1914 the UTW had close to 20,000 workers within its ranks. At Mount Hope, several departments employed union members, including the hooking machine operatives, folders, stitchers, and workers in the ticketing and papering room, all occupations related to the inspection phase of production.

Those who worked the hooking machines and in the packing room were mostly young women, some of them teenagers. A company publication described the hooking machine workers as “clear-eyed, intelligent girls who never for an instant let their gaze wander.”<sup>119</sup> After the cloth passed through the hooking machines, the set of workers known as folders inspected cloth for defects. Those folders, usually men, also ensured that each set of material had the correct length, width, color, and lot number. After inspection, they then folded the cloth and sent it to the stitchers. The stitchers, mostly young women, then sewed every piece of cloth with two stitches of thread, to keep the soft folds in the cloth before it was packed for shipping. Once stitched, the papering and ticketing workers, mostly young women, wrapped the cloth in paper packaging. Packers then packed the wrapped packages into wooden boxes and stored them for shipping.

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas F. McMahon, *United Textile Workers of America: Their History and Policies* (New York: The Workers Education Bureau Press, 1926), 21.

<sup>119</sup> Harriet O’Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed, 1927), 66.

The inspection process was vital in textile finishing because it was the last phase of production where the company could ensure a quality product for their customers. In the 1916 strike, it was the members of the Folders Union who expressed dissatisfaction over working conditions and wages in the Folding Department.

Biographer Burke Davis's narrative of Milliken and labor relations at Mount Hope claimed that he neither hired union workers nor experienced any kind of labor unrest until the strike of 1951. Davis proclaimed, "From the start, unionism had no place in Mount Hope's concept of management."<sup>120</sup> It did not, but Milliken hired union workers in the early days of the company in order to build his workforce. Davis made no mention of the 1916 strike nor that the company ever had union workers. He reconstructed a myth of harmonious labor relations at Mount Hope that overlooked the company's full history. This myth-making obscured Milliken's relations to workers who questioned his authority. Before 1916, the company utilized elements of paternalistic management policies, such as worker housing, an internal company news publication, and a farm that provided fresh produce for workers at a discount. The strike of 1916 did not seek to combat Milliken's style of management, but rather represented a dispute over wages and over the parameters of apprenticeship in the folding room. Other workers in the plant who were non-union did not join the strike and it remained contained to some in the Folding Department. That non-union workers did not take the chance to join the strike suggests satisfaction with Milliken's workplace policies, and particularly with the fringe benefits offered during the earlier years of the company. However, some of Milliken's behavior towards workers who went on strike could potentially deter other workers from walking out in solidarity.

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<sup>120</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 7.

### Trade Unionism in Massachusetts Textile Production

The UTW was established in 1900 through the American Federation of Labor (AFL) at a meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. James Duncan, an organizer for the AFL, united the various local textile unions into a federation of textile unions. A year later, in 1901, the new federation organized formally in Washington D.C. as the United Textile Workers of America and affiliated with the AFL.<sup>121</sup> The AFL had been formed in 1886 by a combination of craft unionists and workers who left the Knights of Labor.<sup>122</sup> While the Knights of Labor collapsed by the late 1880s, the AFL ascended into prominence in the United States labor movement. In the earlier years, Samuel Gompers, the first and longest serving president of the AFL, supported labor's right to strike, the emancipation of the working class from the capitalist system, and an aim of strengthening international solidarity of labor.<sup>123</sup> The AFL survived the economic depression of the 1890s, after which the group came to adopt more conservative policies. These more conservative policies included the elimination of wildcat strikes and a belief in the dominance of

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<sup>121</sup> Thomas F. McMahon, *United Textile Workers of America: Their History and Policies* (New York: The Workers Education Bureau Press, 1926), 22.

<sup>122</sup> A group of white, male, garment workers formed The Knights of Labor in Philadelphia in 1869. During the earlier years of the union, they emphasized craft unionism. But after the influence of the Knights of Labor started to spread, the focus on craft unionism faltered. During the economic depression of 1873-1878, trade unionism suffered, and membership in unions declined. Since the Knights of Labor survived the depression, they formed a pillar of the beginnings of the modern labor movement in the United States. They organized both the skilled and unskilled workers into their ranks. Before 1878, the Knights of Labor were not centralized, nor did they have a platform or constitution. When they did centralize into a national body, but local chapters were mostly autonomous. They accepted skilled, unskilled, day laborers, and some immigrants into their ranks. The Knights of Labor succeeded in organizing workers where other unions failed, because numerous trades could be represented in the local assemblies. Just as quickly as the organization grew, however, it declined. By 1886-1887, most members had abandoned the Knights of Labor. There were several causes of decline, including the organizational structure, conflicting interests between union members of different trades, and the struggle with the rising American Federation of Labor. Many members were forced out by employers, and some disagreed with the pro-employer sentiments of the Order's leader Terrence V. Powderly. See Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Volume I: From Colonial Times to the Found of the American Federation of Labor* (New York: International Publisher, 1947).

<sup>123</sup> Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Volume II: From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism* (International Publishers: New York, 1955), 182-185.

the national union over local labor. Historian Julie Greene notes that the AFL adopted “membership practices that excluded most women, nonwhites, and unskilled workers from the organization.”<sup>124</sup> Gompers, as union president, rejected “radical challenges to the economic system in favor of concrete collective bargaining over wages, hours, and working conditions.”<sup>125</sup>

By the early twentieth century, trade unionism in the textile industry was split between more radical organizations such as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) and especially the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, popularly known as the Wobblies), and more conservative unions under the AFL, such as the United Garment Workers of America. The gender and ethnic make-up of unions also marked a division of trade unionism in the textile industry. The Wobblies formed in 1905 as a radical labor union, bringing together anarchism, syndicalism, and socialism. The IWW focused on class struggle and the eventual overthrow of the capitalist system. Article 1, Section 1 of the IWW’s constitution stated, “No workingman or woman shall be excluded from membership in local unions because of creed or color.”<sup>126</sup> Founders of the Wobblies “made this point clear because of the noted racism, sexism, and xenophobia of many unionists in the AFL, as well as in organizations claiming to be socialist.”<sup>127</sup> The different factions of the IWW united, over their contempt for the AFL.

One of the IWW’s greatest and most important victories took place at the 1912 Lawrence Textile Strike. Some of the women unionized in the mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts held membership in the AFL through its affiliate, the UTW. As the IWW campaigned to extend its

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<sup>124</sup> Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political Activism, 1881-1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36.

<sup>125</sup> Stephen J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 19.

<sup>126</sup> As quoted in, Peter Cole, David Struthers, and Kenyon Zimmer, “Introduction,” in *Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* ed. Peter Cole, David Struthers, and Kenyon Zimmer, (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 4.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

influence and successfully made a foothold in the area, more immigrant workers joined the Wobblies. Italian women led the strike, and when the AFL refused to step in to assist them because of their lack of skill, their gender, and immigrant status, the IWW intervened. Meanwhile, the head of the UTW, John Golden, denounced the strike. He explained to the *Boston Globe* that the immigrant workers at Lawrence "...are foreign to our institutions and unacquainted with the spirit of Massachusetts. Teaching them our methods is a slow process and their ignorance makes them susceptible to the influence of unwise leaders. They are eager to follow leaders who are ignorant of the Massachusetts spirit as they are..."<sup>128</sup> By unwise leaders, Golden meant the IWW. The UTW even tried to break the strike, but workers sided with the IWW. Since some workers at Mount Hope were organized under the UTW, it is possible that they shared similar sentiments of those expressed by union president Golden. These sentiments included a negative perception of workers of Eastern European descent and those who believed in leftist ideologies.

The 1912 strike at Lawrence ended with a victory of the IWW, and the largely immigrant, unskilled, and female workforce. They won an increase in wages and overtime compensation. Yet nearly a year later, the strength of the IWW in Lawrence faded. The Wobblies turned their attention and resources to the Patterson Silk Strike of 1913, which turned out to be a major defeat for the IWW. Although there is no direct connection between the 1912 Lawrence textile strike and the 1916 strike at Mount Hope, the small number of union employees at Mount Hope organized under the UTW probably had a good understanding of this "Massachusetts Spirit" Golden spoke of. The following section explores the demographics of some of the

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<sup>128</sup> "Golden Fears a Long Strike Textile Union Chief on Lawrence Varied Nationalities Held to Hamper a Settlement. Declared Ignorant of the Massachusetts Spirit," *Boston Daily Globe (1872-1922)*, Jan 19, 1912, accessed February 1, 2020, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.iastate.edu/docview/501882928?accountid=10906>.

striking employees in the Folders Union Local 651, which consisted mainly of native-born, white men or immigrants from western European countries such as England and Scotland.

### **Demographics of Workers at Mount Hope in 1910**

The names of most of the individual members of the Folders Union at Mount Hope do not survive, but the names of the grievance committee do. John McInnes was the president of the union local and the grievance committee at Mount Hope consisted of employees James Coyle, William A. Garvey, John Promfret, John McInnes, and John McAlpine. McAlpine also served as the local delegate to the UTW, and on the Committee on Presidents Report in 1910, selected by President John Golden. The official publication for the UTW, *Textile Worker*, described McAlpine in 1915 as "...one of the best-known labor men in this city [Taunton] having been a representative of the Folders' in the Central Labor union...At the present time he holds an important position at the Mount Hope Finishing Co."<sup>129</sup> John McAlpine most likely never made his home in North Dighton; rather, he seems to have lived closer to union headquarters in Fall River. John Promfret served as the treasurer for the Folders Protective Association, holding this "respective position for a number of years."<sup>130</sup> In 1910, Promfret lived on Dighton Avenue in Taunton, just over the town line from Dighton. He was born in England in 1871 and immigrated to the United States in 1904. He worked at Mount Hope as a cloth looker, which also meant an inspector. By 1910, three of his children also worked at Mount Hope as a cloth looker, a bookkeeper, and an apprentice.<sup>131</sup> His son Frank Promfret, a cloth looker, was a member of the

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<sup>129</sup> "Cloth Folders Installation," *The Textile Worker* Vol. 3 No. 9 (February 1915): 22, accessed February 1, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.li1k3b&view=1up&seq=105>.

<sup>130</sup> "Cloth Folders Installation," *The Textile Worker* Vol. 3 No. 9 (February 1915): 21, accessed February 1, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.li1k3b&view=1up&seq=105>.

<sup>131</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RVW-XHC?cc=1727033&wc=QZZ7-BNP%3A133638101%2C133638902%2C136652301%2C1589092226>), Massachusetts Bristol > Taunton Ward 1 > ED 230 > image 7 of 22; citing NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

Folders Union as well. Another striker named in the *Taunton Daily Gazette* was Frederick Smith. He was born in Rhode Island, and as of 1910 lived on Pearl Street in North Dighton in company housing. He committed suicide on October 1, 1916, amid the strike.<sup>132</sup> Those in the Folders Union Local 651, at Mount Hope, were either native born, or primarily from Western Europe, groups accepted by the more conservative craft unionism of the AFL and UTW. A wider view of the workforce at Mount Hope around in 1910 is needed to gain a better understanding of the labor demographics.

Census records provide some insight into the demographics of the workforce of Mount Hope before the 1916 strike, and of those who worked as folders, even if they were not members of the union. From a sample size of 134 workers who lived in North Dighton in 1910, 47 were born in England, and out of that group, most emigrated to the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>133</sup> Sixteen were born in Portugal, three in Canada, one in Germany, one in Austria. This makes a total of 68 workers out of 134 foreign born, but overwhelmingly from Western Europe. Out of the sample size, 18 workers were listed in the census as folders, and 11 of those were born in England. From the sources that exist, it appears that none of the folders on the grievance committee lived in North Dighton, but John Promfret lived nearby in Taunton. By 1910 several families worked at Mount Hope. This included the Promfret, Sankey, Bowden, Bell, Enos, O'Connor, Gagner, Williams, and the Jacob families.

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<sup>132</sup> "Massachusetts State Vital Records, 1841-1920," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RPD-KMV?cc=1928860&wc=M6S9-RTG%3A223963801%2C224040501> : 20 May 2014), Deaths > Deaths 1916 vol 19 Dedham-Dudley > image 279 of 505; State Archives, Boston.

<sup>133</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RVW-XHC?cc=1727033&wc=QZZ7-BNP%3A133638101%2C133638902%2C136652301%2C1589092226>), Massachusetts Bristol > Taunton Ward 1 > ED 230 > image 7 of 22; citing NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

Out of the 134 workers sampled from North Dighton, 41 were single men who lived as boarders or with their parents, and 61 men were married. Job advertisements from the company in local papers throughout the first decade of the twentieth century regularly called for experienced men for work in a bleachery.<sup>134</sup>

The workforce at Mount Hope around the time of the 1916 strike was comprised mostly of workers born in Massachusetts or in England. The company did have a significant number of workers from Portugal and of Portuguese descent. Massachusetts was one of the main areas of settlements for Portuguese immigrants in the United States. The Portuguese who came to Massachusetts were mostly unskilled and drawn from the rural islands of the Azores.<sup>135</sup> They found employment opportunities in unskilled occupations in the mills of Taunton and Fall River. In North Dighton, the Portuguese workers' occupation at Mount Hope is listed in the 1910 census as laborers, which would have meant unskilled work. Some of the Portuguese workers would have worked as custodians, in the bleaching room, or as laborers for the various infrastructure projects the company undertook in North Dighton. The 1922 Constitution for the Mount Hope Employees Mutual Relief Association included sections translated into Portuguese, Polish, and Italian. This suggests that the company employed a number of Polish and Italian workers.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> See, for example, Mount Hope Finishing Company, "Wanted—Family Help," *Fall River Daily Evening News* August 9, 1906, accessed February 2, 2020,

[https://www.newspapers.com/image/?clipping\\_id=39356659&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJ1MDU3MjMxOCwiaWF0IjoxNTgwNjY0Mjg0LCJleHAiOiJlODAzNTA2ODR9.9aUu9fCOpQ6fF\\_zVO3Qd6ceO7cPOEGKEEiRJR1O9v2g](https://www.newspapers.com/image/?clipping_id=39356659&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJ1MDU3MjMxOCwiaWF0IjoxNTgwNjY0Mjg0LCJleHAiOiJlODAzNTA2ODR9.9aUu9fCOpQ6fF_zVO3Qd6ceO7cPOEGKEEiRJR1O9v2g). Mount Hope Finishing Company, "Wanted—Family Help," *Fall River Daily Evening News* August 14, 1906, accessed February 20, 2020,

[https://www.newspapers.com/image/?clipping\\_id=39356745&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJ1MDU3MjczNiwiWF0IjoxNTgwNjY0NDk2LCJleHAiOiJlODAzNTA4OTZ9.XCWiff4znoIHNaNYTVfuJmh9R2zdCIDnm1rbrmLRqF0](https://www.newspapers.com/image/?clipping_id=39356745&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJ1MDU3MjczNiwiWF0IjoxNTgwNjY0NDk2LCJleHAiOiJlODAzNTA4OTZ9.XCWiff4znoIHNaNYTVfuJmh9R2zdCIDnm1rbrmLRqF0).

<sup>135</sup> Maria Ioannis Benis Baganha, "The Social Mobility of Portuguese Immigrants in the United States at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *The International Migration Review* Vol. 25 No. 2: 278-279.

<sup>136</sup> The 1944 edition of the Constitution had no such translated sections, which indicates suggests that by that time, during World War II, the factory employed a mainly native-born population, or second and third generation descendants from immigrants. See, *Articles of Agreement, Constitution and By-Laws of the Mount Hope Employees'*

### The Strike of 1916 at Mount Hope Finishing Company

In September 1916, thirty-eight unionized folders at Mount Hope decided to go on strike, citing dissatisfaction over wages, issues surrounding apprenticeships in the shop, and working conditions in the folding room. The frustration over working conditions partly stemmed from what UTW organizer Thomas J. McMahon described as Milliken's fanaticism "for the (open shop) Taylor system, or any system that will make servants and slaves out of his employees."<sup>137</sup>

An open-shop is a system where employees of company are not required to join a union as a condition of employment, even if a union already exists at the company. The open-shop policy most likely extended from a campaign that the National Association of Manufacturers had launched in 1902, which aimed to stifle the formation of unions by providing strikebreakers and industrial spies to member companies and by blacklisting union activists.<sup>138</sup> Philip Foner explained that at the turn of the century, "Employers' Associations, organized solely to destroy trade unions" and "to convert these communities into open-shop citadels."<sup>139</sup>

The Taylor system that McMahon criticized was a form of scientific management developed around the 1890s by mechanical engineer, Fredrick Winslow Taylor, which many company owners of the early twentieth-century rapidly embraced. Taylorism was both a theory and practice of scientific management that sought to improve the labor relations and economic efficiency for firms.

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*Mutual Relief Association 1944*. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>137</sup> "Report of Organizer Thomas F. McMahon," *Proceedings from the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the United Textile Workers* (New York: The Frevtag Printing Co., 1916), 42, accessed November 25, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiuo.ark:/13960/t2x38662x&view=1up&seq=7>.

<sup>138</sup> Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 61. See also, Philip Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Vol. 3: The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor 1900-1909* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 36-42.

<sup>139</sup> Philip Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Vol. 3: The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor 1900-1909* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 32.

Taylor intended the version of the piece rate system he designed to be a partial solution to the labor problems that had plagued industry during the second half of the nineteenth century. To regain control over workplace discipline, and respond to the challenge from labor, managers and owners turned to two general approaches, scientific management and corporate welfare programs. These both strove to achieve an efficient, loyal, and conservative workforce. During the last years of the Gilded Age and into the Progressive Era, management and labor clashed often. Steven J. Diner explains, “Numerous strikes, frequent worker turnover and absenteeism, and concerted efforts by workers to restrict the pace of production limited managers’ control of production.”<sup>140</sup> Taylor argued that one “chief advantage derived” from the differential piece rate system was that it promoted a “friendly feeling between the men and their employers, and so renders labor unions and strikes unnecessary.”<sup>141</sup> Taylor himself harbored a condescending view of the average worker, which he elaborated on his 1911 book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Taylor detested workers’ alleged practice of “soldiering” as the antithesis of efficiency. Soldiering meant to “underwork” or “deliberately working slowly so as to avoid doing a full day’s work.”<sup>142</sup> Workers, according to Taylor, believed in the “fallacious idea” that it is “against their best interests for each man to turn out each day as much work as possible.”<sup>143</sup> Accordingly, his system of scientific management sought to prevent soldiering by imposing prescribed work patterns and expected output rates.

Organized labor began to criticize the implementation and ideology of Taylorism and other forms of scientific management in the workplace. A contemporary of Taylor explained that

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<sup>140</sup> Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 34.

<sup>141</sup> Fredrick Winslow Taylor, “A Piece-Rate System,” *Economic Studies* Vol. 1 No. 2 (June 1896): 92.

<sup>142</sup> Fredrick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1919), 13.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

from the 1880s until 1911 there were no recorded strikes that targeted the introduction of scientific management. The first strike against Taylorism occurred in August 1911 at the Watertown Arsenal at Watertown, Massachusetts. The molders there disagreed with a time study the management conducted and voted to go on strike. The strike itself was short, only lasting one week. However, this small strike held significance, because “it had become something of a cause celebre; it had precipitated a major political drive against scientific management by the unions...”<sup>144</sup> After this strike, the AFL attacked the methods of time study.<sup>145</sup>

In 1913 the AFL took a hardline stance against Taylorism, and more broadly scientific management techniques in the workplace. The AFL condemned what it called the ...the inhuman and hideous so-called Taylor system of scientific management...A more diabolical scheme for the reduction of the human being to the condition of a mere machine was never conceived by the human brain. No tyrant, nor slave driver in the ecstasy of his most delirious dream ever sought to place up on abject slaves a condition more repugnant to commonly accepted notions of freedom of action or liberty of person than is comprehended by this Taylor system...this convention again place itself on record as being unalterably opposed to the adoption of the Taylor or any other system of so-called scientific management which has for its purpose the speeding up and driving of the worker beyond his natural and normal capacity for production...<sup>146</sup>

This statement from the Annual Convention in 1913 expressed concern for the way Taylorism reduced workers to machines and forced them to unnaturally speed up. Taylorism also clashed

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<sup>144</sup> Hugh G. J. Aitken, *Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal: Scientific Management in Action, 1908-1915* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), 5-6.

<sup>145</sup> Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 69.

<sup>146</sup> “Eighth Day- Tuesday Afternoon Session,” *Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of The American Federation of Labor* (Washington D.C., The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1913), 299.

with the principles of unionization and collective bargaining. In order to protect the power of collective bargaining, the AFL denounced scientific management. Historian Samuel Haber explains, “Yet it was difficult to find a place for unions in Taylor’s scheme of things. Under scientific management, wages, hours, and working conditions were subjects for scientific determination rather than for bargaining. Many Taylorites believed that unions were addicted to the limitation of production.”<sup>147</sup> As Steven Diner has noted, the AFL favored “concrete collective bargaining over wages, hours, and working conditions” over more radical reform of economic systems.<sup>148</sup> Robert F. Hoxie, an early twentieth-century economist who studied labor, pinpointed the fundamental incompatibility between the two ideologies: “scientific management can function successfully only on the basis of constant and indefinite change of industrial conditions...on the other hand, trade unionism of the dominant type can function successfully only through the maintenance of a fixed industrial situation and conditions.”<sup>149</sup> Under scientific management, working conditions would constantly be in a state of flux, whereas unions sought fixed rates. The AFL rejection of Taylorism represented part of the larger struggle of workers to gain industrial control.

At Mount Hope by 1916, management had embraced a system of differential piece rates and bonuses, reasoning that “it was necessary that any wage plan adopted should so be figured out that the worker would have to earn that wage.”<sup>150</sup> McMahon’s complaints towards Milliken’s adoption of Taylorism reflected that development. It is entirely possible that Milliken also tried

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<sup>147</sup> Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 33.

<sup>148</sup> Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998), 19.

<sup>149</sup> R.F. Hoxie, “Why Organized Labor Opposes Scientific Management,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 31 No. 1 (Nov. 1916): 78.

<sup>150</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 29, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=lup&seq=8>.

to institute other methods of the Taylor system, such as time-and-motion studies, in order to increase worker output, but the historical record remains scant on the strike of 1916.

The folders union spoke with McMahon, as the union organizer, after they walked off the job in September 1916. After that, the group decided to go back to work until they held a conference with Milliken, who was out of town at the time. Meanwhile, according to the local paper, the management of the company claimed that out of the nearly 750 workers, “only a small percentage of the total number of employees has expressed dissatisfaction” with working conditions and wages.<sup>151</sup> The folders agreed to return to work on September 25 to complete a large order. Upon Milliken’s return to North Dighton, the union attempted to set up a meeting with him. Milliken decided to set a meeting without consulting with the union first. The local newspaper reported that on the night of September 27, 1916, Milliken, plus the assistant manager of Mount Hope, Albert R. White, and Foreman Andrews of the Folding Department, and C.A. Milliken, manager and Milliken’s brother, waited for the grievance committee of the folders to arrive at White’s office in Taunton. The grievance committee did not show up because they believed that they had been given too short notice.<sup>152</sup> The next day, on September 28, 1916, the union set another meeting with Milliken for that night. Instead of attending the meeting, Milliken ate dinner at the Taunton Inn, only a few blocks from the designated meeting place at the office of assistant manager of Mount Hope, Albert R. White.

On Milliken’s way to dinner, he drove by the Folders’ grievance committee as they stood on the street corner by White’s office waiting for the meeting to begin. Milliken stopped his car a

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<sup>151</sup> “Employees at Mt. Hope Co. Are Working Today,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 22, 1916, 1. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>152</sup> “Attempt to Have Another Conference with Treasurer Milliken Last Evening Failed—Picketing Starts at the Plant—Mr. Milliken Says that he has Enough Help,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 29, 1916, 1. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

few feet away from them, bought the evening paper, and proceeded to dinner without any acknowledgement of his striking employees.<sup>153</sup> The grievance committee did talk some things over with White, such as issues with wages and the volume of work, but the two parties did not reach any agreement. When the grievance committee realized Milliken would not show up, they walked out. The potential for dialogue fell apart because Milliken skipped the meeting.

Milliken's actions seem to reflect a sense of disloyalty he felt from the union workers who decided to strike, but also a desire to control negotiations. Milliken felt that the folders should have stayed on the job until he returned from New York.<sup>154</sup> In the local paper, Milliken never specifically explained why he did not attend the meeting. He kept his comments reserved and rejected any sense of trouble in the folding room, or the factory. In a phone call to White on the night of September 28, 1916, he reportedly told him, "...if the men were ready to compromise it must be on his terms. Their jobs were open for them, and if they wanted to come back to work...they could at the conditions that existed."<sup>155</sup>

Subsequently, the national body of the folders union, the AFL, sanctioned the strike, and the folders received strike benefits of eight dollars a week. The folders began to picket on the morning of September 29, 1916. Milliken insisted to the press that the trouble in the folding department had ceased and he possessed all the help that he needed. The management hired replacement workers and shifted employees from other departments to fill the positions of the thirty-eight folders on strike. According to the local paper, Milliken relied on "the loyalty of the

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<sup>153</sup> "Attempt to have Another Conference with Treasurer Milliken Last Evening Failed—Picketing Starts at the Plant—Mr. Milliken says that he has Help Enough," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 29, 1916, 1. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>154</sup> "Attempt to Have Another Conference with Treasurer Milliken Last Evening Failed-Picketing Starts at the Plant-Mr. Milliken Says the he has Enough Help," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 29, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>155</sup> "Attempt to Have Another Conference with Treasurer Milliken Last Evening Failed-Picketing Starts at the Plant-Mr. Milliken Says the he has Enough Help," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 29, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

help to the company to nullify the efforts...made to spread the difficulty to other departments.”<sup>156</sup> Meanwhile, also through the local paper, McMahon expressed confusion as to why Milliken had rejected the opportunity to openly negotiate with them. The *Taunton Daily Gazette* summarized a statement from McMahon in which he explained, “Mr. Milliken had been fair and he [McMahon] was at a loss to understand why he [Milliken] had ducked away twice from appointments. In his experience heretofore it had not seemed to him that Mr. Milliken was built this way.”<sup>157</sup> On Saturday, September 30, with frustrations mounting at Milliken’s obstinate attitude, the other workers in the Folders Union Local 651, at Mount Hope, such as the hooking-machine operatives met and voted on a sympathy strike with the folders. Some, but not all of the unionized hooking-machine workers voted to go on strike in solidarity, while the paper girls and stitchers did not and decided to stay on the job. The strike did not spread to any non-union departments.

On Monday morning the hooking-machine female operatives picketed outside the plant to spread word of the strike, and close to twenty dyers did not attend work. These dyers consisted mostly of Portuguese workers. Their walkout did not directly relate to the causes of the strike in the Folding Department. On October 3, 1916, only four days into the strike, six out of the thirty-eight striking folders broke rank and went back to work.<sup>158</sup> The company told the local paper that it had all the help that it needed and that despite the folders walking out, things were running smoothly. The *Taunton Daily Gazette* reported on October 3 that “if [the strikers] applied

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<sup>156</sup> “Union Help at Mt. Hope Co. Meets Today,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 30, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>157</sup> “Attempt to Have Another Conference With Treasurer Milliken Last Evening Failed-Picketing Starts at the Plant-Mr. Milliken Says the he has Enough Help,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 29, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>158</sup> “Striking Cloth Workers Apply for Their Jobs: Six of the Employees of the Mt. Hope Finishing Co. Back at Work After Applying for Their Jobs Today—Everything is Quiet,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, October 3, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

now...there was room for only a very few, with the [six] that had already been secured from the outside and the men that had been shifted from other departments to learn folding and inspecting.”<sup>159</sup> An unknown portion of the folders who walked out had found work elsewhere and left Mount Hope, thus abandoning the strike. That the plant ran smoothly during the strike suggests two potential scenarios. First, that other non-union workers in the company felt satisfied with Milliken’s wages and treatment of them that they did not want to join the strike. Second, that non-union workers felt threatened by Milliken and his tactics against the strikers. It is possible the *Taunton Daily Gazette* favored Milliken and had a bias against striking employees.

Milliken responded to the picketing with a display of authority by hiring twenty armed guards from the Manning Agency in New Jersey to come to North Dighton and protect Mount Hope property. The management did not believe the strike presented a serious threat to the running of the plant. They hired the armed guards as a precautionary measure, in case violence escalated between the union and the company. The armed guards and detectives tried to infiltrate the folders union to get insider information, and in an act of intimidation they allegedly trailed strike leaders.<sup>160</sup>

Milliken exercised his patriarchal authority over his company and indeed, over the entire area of North Dighton, in other actions against strikers. He fired the family members of strikers for supposed “disloyalty or trying to make trouble.”<sup>161</sup> By early October, striking employees who lived in company housing began to move out of North Dighton. Milliken threatened to have them legally ejected from company housing on October 10, 1916, but several families vacated before

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<sup>159</sup> “Striking Cloth Workers Apply for Their Jobs: Six of the Employees of the Mt. Hope Finishing Co. Back at Work After Applying for Their Jobs Today—Everything is Quiet,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, October 3, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>160</sup> “Cloth Folders Want State Board to Come,” *Taunton Daily Gazette* October 10, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>161</sup> Girl Pickets are Doing Duty Today at No. Dighton,” *Taunton Daily Gazette* October 2, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

this order. As an act of economic warfare, Milliken bought other houses that strike leaders rented, specifically in order to evict them. The members of the folders union claimed Milliken and other managers had offered exorbitant amounts of money for the properties. In a statement to the *Taunton Daily Gazette*, Milliken maintained, “We have bought three houses recently in North Dighton...none of the three were occupied by persons who were in the employ of our company.”<sup>162</sup> This ran counter to the claims of the union workers that were evicted by Milliken.

By October 10, 1916, the cloth folders union requested that the Massachusetts Board of Arbitration and Conciliation come to Taunton to help negotiate a settlement with the company and on the issue of Milliken evicting workers from their houses. It appears that this was of no avail, because Milliken fought the union and won. Town historian Helen Lane wrote, “in 1916, Mr. Milliken fought a strike of the folders. When the strike was over, there was no folders union.”<sup>163</sup> Writing a few years later, in 1921, management representative Albert White claimed that even after the strike, there was “no discrimination whatever against hiring a man with a union card, for some reason union men do not apply for work. Perhaps it is because they fear ready conversion to the sane labor policy in vogue.”<sup>164</sup> Coverage of the arbitration situation in the *Taunton Daily Gazette* stopped after October 10, 1916. It is unclear whether the state board of arbitration ever actually came to North Dighton. On October 11, 1916, the *Taunton Daily Gazette* ran the article “Mt. Hope Co. Running Full; All is Quiet.” Milliken invited reporters from the paper to tour the plant and North Dighton. The paper reported, “The big business [ran] quietly and smoothly...A tour about North Dighton showed it to be very quiet and

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<sup>162</sup> “Mt. Hope Co. is Running Full; All is Quiet: No Outward Indications of Any Labor Disturbance at North Dighton Either in Plant or Village—Mr. Milliken Tells Us Why Three Houses Were Bought,” *Taunton Daily Gazette* October 11, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>163</sup> Helen H. Lane, *History of the town of Dighton, Massachusetts: The South purchase, May 30, 1712*. (Dighton: Town of Dighton, 1962), 196.

<sup>164</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 18 (October 29, 1921): 49, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=lup&seq=8>.

orderly...There was absolutely no indication of any labor disturbance whatever.”<sup>165</sup> The exact end date of the strike is also unclear, but it probably ended in October when McMahon failed to secure support from the national body of the UTW to support the strike. Although part of the workforce had indeed decided to go on strike, Milliken ultimately maintained his authority against what he considered the outside interference of a union.

The UTW, still a new organization, had struggled in its first fifteen years to secure dues and implement a membership fee that all locals could afford to pay to the national organization.<sup>166</sup> It is not surprising that Milliken defeated the union. In numerous trades such as meat packing and textiles, David Brody states, “bitter strikes were fought against the open shop and the deadly new efficiency systems. Still the weight of advantage lay with management” and “the unions mostly went down to defeat.”<sup>167</sup> Trade unionism was inimical to Milliken’s control and power within his workforce. As a member of the Republican party, most likely a member of the McKinley faction as a pro-business advocate, Milliken would have rejected trade unionism, and disagreed with progressive reforms favorable to an expansion of the welfare state.

At the national convention of the UTW on October 16, 1916 in New York City, organizer McMahon addressed his fellow union members and expressed aggravation with Milliken and the events at Mount Hope:

He loudly boasts he is going to smash the Union and drive the leaders out of the labor movement. I dwell on this particular place because I feel that our International should use everything it possess to show this swelled up employer that Labor is strong in its

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<sup>165</sup> “Mt. Hope Co. Running Full; All is Quiet: No Outward Indications of Any Labor Disturbance at North Dighton Either in Plant or Village—Mr. Milliken Tells why Three Houses were Bought,” *Taunton Daily Gazette* October 11, 1916. Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection. Roll 200 TDG Reel 201.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas J. McMahon, *United Textile Workers of America: Their History and Policies*, (New York: The Workers Education Bureau Press, 1926), 25.

<sup>167</sup> David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 31.

resources. The man is now buying up all the real estate in which any of our strikers live and ordering them out or evicting them. Here is the true exemplification of manufacturers when they have the power, our men and women evicted, and all for the stubbornness of Mr. J.K. Milliken, the owner who refused to keep his appointment made through his lawyer, Mr. White or Taunton.<sup>168</sup>

Nevertheless, the AFL did not heed McMahon's call to exert its resources to assist in the strike at Mount Hope.

### **The Constructive Labor at Mount Hope**

With the union challenge resolved, Milliken continued to reap profits from the economic boom of World War I. These profits assisted Milliken to implement a constructive labor policy.<sup>169</sup> Still, this strike appeared to be a turning point in labor relations at the company. After 1916, the company adopted an open shop policy and began what it labeled a "constructive labor policy." The constructive labor policy was Milliken's rendition of welfare work. Milliken used the constructive labor policy in ways typical of other industrialists who practiced welfare work. This included strategies to keep and maintain an efficient and loyal workforce and inhibit unionization. Through this policy, Milliken asserted that he, as a private sector employer, could provide for his employees better than the state. Around the time Milliken implemented the constructive labor policy, the company employed close to 1,000 workers. The constructive labor policy also dampened a working-class identity among workers at Mount Hope. The constructive

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<sup>168</sup> "Report of Organizer Thomas F. McMahon," *Proceedings from the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the United Textile Workers* (New York: The Frevtag Printing Co., 1916), 42, accessed November 25, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiuo.ark:/13960/t2x38662x&view=1up&seq=7>.

<sup>169</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 28.

labor policy, and Milliken's status as patriarchal authority figure, worked together to create a sense of security for workers, while also displaying clear lines of authority.

Milliken paid his workers wages competitive with union pay rates of other finishing companies in the region. In January 1922, a local newspaper, *The Fall River Evening News*, explained that Mount Hope "...posted a notice at its factory...that although competitors in the textile industry in Rhode Island have posted a notice of a 20 percent cut in wages [Mount Hope] will continue the present wage scale as long as conditions warrant..."<sup>170</sup> Milliken also provided fringe benefits, material comforts, and recreation spaces for his workers. With the sense of security that workers probably felt under Milliken, most apparently did not feel like they needed to turn to a union for representation or at least did not feel that union involvement offered them anything valuable enough to compensate for arousing management hostility.

For the constructive labor policy to work, it relied on three components for success. The first was Milliken's carefully constructed image of himself as a patriarchal authority figure, to legitimate his style of management, as discussed in chapter two. The second component was this sense of direct negotiation between worker and company, which is illustrated through the provision of company housing and management's policy of individual contracts. The third was psychological, through both Americanization and general education classes hosted by the company, to teach workers how to be better employees. Milliken believed that the best relationship between worker and management was one of individuality, and direct negotiation was exemplified in the company policy around housing. Company housing was one of the pillars of the constructive labor policy. In 1901, the company bought thirteen tenements located on Mount Hope Lane, which had been built originally as worker housing for the previously existing

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<sup>170</sup> "Won't Cut Pay: Mount Hope Plant at North Dighton to Retain Schedule," *Fall River Evening News* January 28, 1922, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/603726388/>.

mill. A housing program was instituted and by 1920, the company had paid for the construction of nearly 200 houses in North Dighton. The Tenement Department within Mount Hope managed the building, renting, renovating and maintenance of company houses. Milliken reasoned that “a faithful intelligent worker must be well housed and well fed to keep his efficiency up and keep him well contented.”<sup>171</sup> The policy of direct negotiation extended to company housing. At one point, a real estate firm independent of the company supposedly offered to buy the original thirteen houses and lease them as tenement properties to workers.<sup>172</sup> Milliken rejected this offer and later wrote that he “did not feel it was possible for any outsider to come between the Mount Hope Company and its employees with any expectation of bringing them to a better understanding than could be reached by direct negotiation with one another.”<sup>173</sup> Milliken allowed no outsider, be it a real estate company or a union, to wrestle control away from him.

To rent, buy, or build their own house, a Mount Hope employee had to first go to the Tenement Department. This was only if a worker wanted the company to help them with a lease or purchase of a home. Milliken did not control all of the property in North Dighton, but he owned over 50 acres of undeveloped land to the south of the plant. It does not appear that he owned any land in any other part of Dighton. In theory a worker could buy a lot of their own, or a house in another part of town without working through the Tenement Department. The company financed the building of houses until their completion. After the company built the house, workers then had to secure a mortgage from the North Dighton co-operative bank (which as seen in chapter two, was sponsored by company management). Mount Hope then took out a

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<sup>171</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 29, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

<sup>172</sup> Joseph Knowles Milliken, *Story of the Mill at the Mount Hope Privilege in North Dighton* (Privately Printed, 1923), 14.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

second mortgage on the completed house.<sup>174</sup> The company rented houses based on a “competitive bidding basis” which it claimed enabled “an employee to make his own price.”<sup>175</sup> There are no surviving documents that detail how the competitive bidding process actually worked at Mount Hope. In 1927, the cost to rent a house owned by Mount Hope ranged from \$1.25 to \$7.00.<sup>176</sup> Company publications boasted that the bungalows were modern, attractive, and spacious. Houses that were equipped with modern amenities such hot and cold water, steam heat, electric lights, gas, sanitary closets, and a sewer connection cost the most rent. The company took care to utilize a “variety of types of construction” styles for houses, to “avoid the dull monotony of many older mill villages.”<sup>177</sup> To keep homes heated efficiently, Milliken bought coal in bulk and sold it to employees at a fraction of the cost. Just as the company took much care to preserve company homes, they also kept “boiler plant, the engines, and the electrical equipment at the peak of *efficiency*.”<sup>178</sup>

Attending not just to workers’ living conditions but to their mental state, the company’s constructive labor policy included a psychological element to not only keep workers efficient but to flatten any potential radical tendencies that clashed with Milliken’s paternalistic management style. According to company representative Albert White, Milliken believed that “The achievement of man must be brought about through some form of bodily activity and bodily activity is caused, controlled, and directed by the mind.”<sup>179</sup> White interpreted Milliken’s idea as

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<sup>174</sup> “North Dighton a Modern Mill Village,” *Mount Hope News* Vol. 2 No. 2 (July 1922): 11. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>175</sup> Harriet O’Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company*, (Privately Printed: 1927), 77. Folder VM863H, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Joseph Knowles Milliken, *Story of the Mill at the Mount Hope Privilege in North Dighton* (Privately Printed, 1923), 16.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>179</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 34, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=lup&seq=8>.

to “successfully sell workers his ideas, and not try to brand those ideas upon their very souls by the misuse of his power as an employer.”<sup>180</sup>

The company used mind-training classes as another way to get to the body of the worker. Mount Hope used education to reproduce power relations within the company. The plant housed a makeshift classroom, curtained aside to block it off from the factory floor. The classroom had the capacity to hold twenty-four workers at one time. Off to the side of the classroom hung a large American flag, serving to remind both the foreign and native-born citizen of supposed American values, such as efficiency. The company also held Americanization classes starting in 1919, in which workers were taught the English language and lessons aimed to instill what were considered proper cultural values of Americans. As Mount Hope proclaimed in a 1919 issue of the *Mount Hope News*, “Americans cannot be manufactured from the aliens like sausages or shoes from pork or leather. They must be twice born men.”<sup>181</sup> During the 1910s and early 1920s, company-taught Americanization classes were common. Historian Stephen Meyer notes that the Ford Motor Company used Americanization classes to mold unskilled immigrant workers into efficient employees and to fit the culture of the company and the country. Meyer notes, “Americanization was the social and cultural assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream of American life” and a method to resolve “the problem of work-discipline and of the adaptation of new workers to the factory environment.”<sup>182</sup> Mount Hope used Americanization classes in a similar way to help assimilate the Portuguese, Italian, and Polish workers to factory culture, and

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> “First National Conference in Americanization,” *The Mount Hope News* (July 1919). Folder VM863, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>182</sup> Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 149.

to teach them English and cultural values. It is unclear when Mount Hope stopped teaching Americanization classes.

The company offered literacy classes to employees whose “early education advantages were next to nothing” so they could “intelligently keep the simple records required and read such printed directions as are necessary for conducting their work.”<sup>183</sup> These helped with efficiency of the worker. Another kind of course for workers in the Mount Hope class was a form of mind training. General Manager Albert R. White explained that “a special effort is made to train their minds to think in terms of the company, to think that they are part of it, vitally interested in its ultimate success and to perform their various duties as outlined by the treasurer.”<sup>184</sup> There are no existing sources that reveal what type of courses and lessons the company taught in the classes. If these courses actively condemned radical ideologies such as socialism, Marxism, and unionization, this is not known. But the provision of such classes itself illustrates the way that Milliken needed to invest in his workers in order to dampen any sense that a union, or alternative ideologies such as Marxism, socialism or communism would be better than belonging to a entirely non-union workforce at Mount Hope. Through this form of mind training, Milliken sought to make his workers subjects of the company.

Management at Mount Hope paid special attention to workers who may have harbored a sense of radicalism. Albert R. White singled out for discussion one type of employee found in the industrial setting, who did the work “satisfactorily” but imagined “he is a socialist, communist, or bolshevist.”<sup>185</sup> He indicated that such workers at Mount Hope were “neither tarred or feathered nor ridden out of town” but rather “reserved as the special prey” for Albert R. White

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<sup>183</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 18 (October 29, 1921): 49, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

or even Milliken himself.<sup>186</sup> White detested Karl Marx and sought to convince workers that Marx was a “radical, without a country and without a religion, a dreamer, who if put to the task, would have disputed very few of the provisions of our own Constitution had he been able to visualize them in his saner moments.”<sup>187</sup> It appears that White took workers into his office and read to them parts of the United States Constitution, until the person in question had appeared to have shed their prior conviction. This technique, according to White, would not have worked at a radical meeting in New York but it functioned “beautifully in an individual argument in one’s own office.”<sup>188</sup> White’s supposed actions against workers who harbored radical sentiments is one example of an unequal power relationship at the company.

Milliken pursued an efficient workforce and worker control through industrial safety measurements common during the period of welfare capitalism. As historians have described, the Du Pont Corporation was one well-known example of experimentation with industrial safety to improve efficiency. Managers at Du Pont learned about Taylorism and wanted to implement its techniques to increase production. They soon realized “efficient methods of production could promote safety, and the waste resulting from unsafe conditions was inefficient.”<sup>189</sup> Du Pont eliminated the Efficiency Division and started a Safety Division in 1916. It appears that Mount Hope never had a safety division like Du Pont. However, references to a Permanent Safety Committee at Mount Hope started during the early 1920s in their company publication, the *Mount Hope News*.<sup>190</sup> A recurring column titled “Safety Notes” provided the workers with ideas on how to practice safety on the job and throughout the community of North Dighton. Mount

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Donald R. Stabile, “The Du Pont Experiment in Scientific Management: Efficiency and Safety, 1911-1919,” *The Business History Review* Vol. 61 No. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 366.

<sup>190</sup> G.C. Johnson, “Safety Notes,” *Mount Hope News* Vol. 3 No. 3 June 1923, 10. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

Hope appeared to be reacting to the demands of their insurance company, the Arrow Mutual Liability Insurance Company of Massachusetts, for increased safety against fire and workplace accidents and to avoid higher insurance premiums.

Even though the insurance company reportedly considered Mount Hope a “model plant” it was not without its dangers.<sup>191</sup> Mount Hope had experienced explosions, fires, industrial accidents, and worker deaths. On an August afternoon in 1912, a chemical shed exploded on the property and shook an area within a half mile radius of the plant. A few minutes before the shed exploded, some workers had discovered the fire and evacuated the premises, and no one was injured. Another fire erupted two years later inside the walls of the plant. Charles Lemieux from Taunton suffocated to death when a fire started in the singeing room in 1914. He and some other workmen tried to extinguish the fire, but they failed to control it. Some rushed out of the room, accidentally leaving Lemieux behind.<sup>192</sup> A worker once fell inside a kier, a large pressure vat that measured fifteen feet in diameter and thirty feet in depth used to bleach cloth, and was boiled to death.<sup>193</sup> The plant had a first-aid room to attend to workers with minor injuries. Minor injuries were common, especially in textile finishing plants, for several reasons. Daily hazards for the average worker in a finishing and dyeing plant included exposure to chemicals and dyes, slippery floors in the bleaching room, bumping up against objects, insufficient lifting equipment, and moving objects.<sup>194</sup> The Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics categorized injuries in finishing and dye plants as either disabling or non-disabling. Disabling injuries

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> “Suffocated While Fighting Mill Fire-Charles Lemieux Killed at North Dighton,” *The Boston Globe* (Boston, Massachusetts), April 22 1924, accessed December 12, 2019 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/430657292/>.

<sup>193</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 30.

<sup>194</sup> United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Injuries and Accident Causes in Textile Dyeing and Finishing: A Detailed Analysis of Hazards and 1945 Injury-Frequency Rates by Region, Size of Plant, and Occupation* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 22.

included hernias, strains, bruises, contusions, and burns to the eyes and skin by chemicals and hot liquids. Non-disabling injuries consisted of burns, cuts, dermatosis, and minor strains and sprains.<sup>195</sup> Mount Hope workers experienced these hazards and injuries on the job.

Sometime in 1927, a tank car that contained chlorine tipped over in the yard. The spill exposed an unnamed employee to fumes before it could be cleaned up. The day after this incident, the employee went to work with a rash and told the company he had been poisoned by the chlorine spill. The company doctor examined the worker and diagnosed him with a “nice case of hives which could be easily remedied by a slight change of diet...the doctor put him straight which ended the matter.”<sup>196</sup> It is possible that the exposure to chlorine did cause the worker’s hives, rather than from whatever mysterious source the company doctor claimed. The company probably did not want to take responsibility for the injury, or have other workers realize their injuries could be workplace related. Exposure to chlorine and other chemicals was a common injury for workers in the cotton textile finishing industry. A 1930 edition of the *Mount Hope News*, perhaps in an attempt at some transparency, reported on plant injuries. Over the course of two months, ten injuries occurred, but there could have been more unreported by workers and the company. Edward Jesso burned his back on a steam pipe, Oscar Brunell sustained a sprained knee in the cotton finishing room, and Frank Oliver injured his foot when he slipped on the floor in the bleach house.<sup>197</sup>

Workers formed a mutual relief society in 1912 to provide financial support for members who fell ill or were injured on the job. It is unclear if management made them do this, or played a

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 17-21.

<sup>196</sup> Albert R. White “More Accidents,” *Mount Hope News*, Vol. 6 No. 9 June 1927, 17. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>197</sup> “Accidents,” *Mount Hope News*, Vol. 10 No. 2-3 August-September 1930, 17. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

significant role in the formation of the mutual relief society. Not every worker had to become a member. The Mount Hope Employees Mutual Relief Association required an admission fee and payment of weekly dues, and no member could draw more than thirteen weeks benefit in a calendar year.<sup>198</sup> In an effort to encourage moral behavior among fellow workers, the relief association refused to administer any benefits to a worker sick from “intemperance, Venereal Diseases, or any immoral act on the part of any member, or by undue carelessness, such as wrestling, fighting, or hazardous exercise.”<sup>199</sup> This form of employee insurance lasted until 1943, when the company changed to a group insurance policy underwritten by the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company. Under the new group policy plan of 1943, a worker became eligible for health insurance benefits after three months of continuous employment.<sup>200</sup>

As a supplement to the mutual relief association and the subsequent group insurance plan, employees received discounted medical care at the company-built Mount Hope Hospital in North Dighton. The Mount Hope Hospital contributed to worker efficiency and extended Milliken’s paternalism from inside the plant into North Dighton. In 1915, the company bought and converted the home of former Dighton resident Nathaniel Wheeler into the Mount Hope Hospital. Milliken’s wife Carrie, who had previously worked as a nurse, played an instrumental part in the founding and management of the hospital. Although it first served employees and their families at a discounted price, it also provided care to those residents without any connection to the company. The extended care to non-employees was one way Milliken’s paternalism extended beyond the company walls and how he made North Dighton and Mount

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<sup>198</sup> Mount Hope Employees’ Mutual Relief Association, *Articles of Agreement and By-Laws of the Mount Hope Employees’ Mutual Relief Association* (Privately Printed: 1922), 11. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> “General Provisions of the Plan,” *Mount Hope Finishing Company Group Insurance Plan* (Privately Printed: 1948), 2. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

Hope one entity. The hospital contained fifteen beds, four private rooms, a men's ward, a women's ward, and a small operating room. Workers did not have to travel to Morton Hospital in Taunton or to Fall River for medical care, the company provided it to them.

Milliken preferred that workers went to the company hospital and avoided turning to outside entities for medical procedures. This is illustrated in the case of a Portuguese worker injured in 1927 while sweeping in the basement of the plant, when a bale of unfinished cotton cloth fell over and hit his arm. His son recommended that he go to a hospital in New Bedford to be checked out. Two high-ranking employees, John Synan and Harry Bridgeford, apparently commented that they found this suspicious because "if the man really thought that he ought to be sick he had better be put to bed in the Mount Hope Hospital, and kept there, as he could be better taken care of by the nurses than anyone else."<sup>201</sup> Albert R. White agreed with Synan and Bridgeford when he adamantly proclaimed, "There is apparently nothing the matter with him, and never will be as the result of the slight accident he sustained. This we know is a fake case and is one we will fight."<sup>202</sup> It is unclear what the company meant by "fight." There is no record if the worker threatened to sue the company, or that he demanded compensation. Regardless, the aggressive attitude here shows management trying to control access to medical care by signaling to workers potential ramifications if they turned to other hospitals or doctors outside the orbit of the company. Employees had choices they could make in personal healthcare. However, this Portuguese worker may have gone to New Bedford and not the Mount Hope Hospital as a way to protest against the company. Workers may have found other subtle ways to resist the power of Milliken and the company.

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<sup>201</sup> Albert R. White "More Accidents," *Mount Hope News*, Vol. 6 No. 9 June 1927, 17. Mount Hope Finishing Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

### **Conclusion**

For the most part, it appears that workers accepted Milliken's paternalism and the constructive labor policy. The key question is, did workers accept the constructive labor policy because they considered what the company had to offer them during the late 1910s and 1920s was good, or did they accept Milliken's constructive labor grudgingly, seeing no other choice? Milliken had squashed the union in 1916 and showed his existing workforce that he took measures to fight attempts at unionization, and thus managed to undercut striking employees through his stubbornness and economic warfare. The AFL had not supported the UTW's attempt to sustain a strike to combat Milliken, further illustrating the potential weakness of labor resistance. With Milliken's hardhanded actions and the AFL's inaction, workers might have felt that they did not have any real chance at succeeding if they tried to resist again.

In 1916, the strike remained contained. Some of the folders defected and rejoined the company, probably giving up their union cards in the process. These actions by workers suggest that they did have some satisfaction with Milliken and his style of management, or least were prepared to accept the situation as the best available alternative. There is also no evidence in the written record suggesting that Mount Hope workers attempted to strike or unionize again during the 1920s, at the height of the company's welfare capitalism. Workers generally accepted the inducements of the constructive labor policy, such as recreation, high wages, and material comforts, in exchange for their workplace autonomy. Yet it was not only the constructive labor policy that workers welcomed. They also consented to Milliken's role as patriarchal authority figure. In essence, Milliken as the capitalist played a key role in formulating the working-class culture of North Dighton. Turnover rate of the company would offer another source of evidence that could provide some insight into the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of workers. However, no

employment or payroll records from Mount Hope exist, so any full reconstruction of turnover rates is not possible.

Certainly, the company publicity claimed success in keeping its employees happy. Albert R. White boasted in 1921 that “Without question, the employees of the company are satisfied that the management can run the business better than they can...they know they will get a square deal. It would take more than an agitator...to convince them that they ought to be interested in the direction of the business.”<sup>203</sup> In May 1924, the company held a contest for the best essay explaining why the author would rather work at Mount Hope than another industrial establishment. As quoted in the company’s own publication, John L. Boomer, who won first prize for his response, wrote that from the management he “never had a squarer deal than I have from them.”<sup>204</sup> It could be a coincidence, or a successful case of mind training, that he used the same language as White. The third prize winner, James Hindle, praised the management for the good wages he and others earned, despite being “really unskilled labor.” Hindle continued, “to earn high wages paid in some other plants it is necessary to be a specialist in some line, which necessitates a tedious apprenticeship and low wages for a considerable period.”<sup>205</sup> These essays could be truthful, but they should be taken with caution. They essentially functioned as propaganda for the company. It is unclear how many entries the *Mount Hope News* received for this contest, what the essay prompt contained, and most importantly, just how many workers would have agreed with Boomer and Hindle. The comments in these prize-winning essays reflect

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<sup>203</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 18 (October 29, 1921): 49, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

<sup>204</sup> “The Prize Contest,” *Mount Hope News* Vol. 4 No. 6 June 1924, 18. Mount Hope Finishing Company Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

the messages of the management and the constructive labor policy. These comments are not an effective way to fully gauge worker acceptance of the constructive labor policy.

The constructive labor policy conducted by the company attempted to control the body and mind of the worker through not only education, but through the piece rate system, scientific management, and access to medical care. Milliken's paternalism extended to North Dighton through company housing and recreational spaces. Starting in the 1920s, with the help of the Olmsted Brothers firm, Milliken further impressed paternalism on the built environment of North Dighton, as detailed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4. “FROM GREY TO BEAUTY”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH DIGHTON 1901-1929

### Introduction

As noted in a previous chapter, Mount Hope Finishing Company histories maintained that when Milliken and Frank Knowles first arrived in North Dighton in January 1901, they were unimpressed. A 1922 article in the company magazine declared that the two men came upon a place that “retained all the primitive features characteristic of an early New England Mill settlement...with insanitary surroundings, pig pens and poorly conditioned roads.”<sup>206</sup> As detailed earlier, evidence suggests that the town was not really in such bad shape. But by portraying this version of history, the company could position itself as the local savior. Part of Milliken’s authority over North Dighton is in the built environment of the area that surrounded Mount Hope. Since the company started in 1901, Milliken set on a trajectory of improvements to the infrastructure of North Dighton to support the growth of his company. The improvements did not stop at infrastructure. The company made improvements to North Dighton’s landscape to attract workers and maintain their loyalty to the company. The years 1901 to 1921 marked the first phase of village development. Milliken’s paternalism during this period can be seen in the construction of company housing, roads, and other forms of infrastructure such as waterlines, gas lines, and village electrification. All of these elements helped him implement and conduct the constructive labor policy designed to ensure worker loyalty and control.

The second phase of development in North Dighton stretched from 1922-1929. In 1921, the Mount Hope Finishing Company first contacted landscape architecture firm Olmsted Brothers Company to design a park in North Dighton. That Mount Hope and Milliken reached

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<sup>206</sup> “North Dighton a Modern Mill Village,” *Mount Hope News*, Vol. 2 No. 2 July 1922, 10. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

out to the Olmsted Brothers is significant for two reasons: it further cemented his status as a leading industrialist; and for the reputation of the Olmsted Brothers. The Olmsted firm carried a sense of prestige. Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. was one of the premier landscape architects in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. Some of the major projects Olmsted Sr. designed were Central Park in New York City, the chain of parks in Boston, Massachusetts known as the Emerald Necklace, and the Yosemite Valley Scenic Reservation. Olmsted Sr. retired in 1895, but his sons, John Charles Olmsted, and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., carried on his legacy in their own firm, Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, founded in 1898.

The work of the Olmsted Brothers in North Dighton also carried out parts of Milliken's constructive labor policy with physical beautification of the built environment, as well as recreational spaces such as parks for employees. The Olmsted Brothers also designed Milliken's home for him, as well as the layout of streets and homes around it. The position of Milliken's house also functioned as part of the constructive labor policy, serving to remind workers of their subordination to him, establishing a sense of connection to his workforce while maintaining clear lines of authority. The physical elements of paternalism of the constructive labor policy appeared in the built environment of North Dighton, as well as in the position of Milliken's house in relation to other workers. The end result strengthened employee identification with, and reliance on, Mount Hope.

### **First Phase of Village Development, 1901-1921: Company Housing**

Company housing was a cornerstone of the constructive labor policy at Mount Hope. Thirteen houses came with the original mill when Milliken and Knowles purchased it. The previous occupant, the Dighton Manufacturing Company, had built these houses for their employees in the late 1800s. Milliken and Knowles decided to keep these houses and to repair

them for occupancy.<sup>207</sup> The company had plumbing and electricity installed. Reportedly, Frank Knowles cautioned Milliken (for reasons unknown) against building more mill housing, but eventually agreed with his nephew's plans.<sup>208</sup> Manager Albert R. White stated in a 1921 article on the constructive labor policy that Milliken "decided early...that a faithful, intelligent worker must be well housed and well fed to keep his efficiency up...and contented, so that the housing program was put into effect as soon as the young business warranted it."<sup>209</sup> The exact year the Mount Hope Tenement Department started is unclear, but this department built and maintained the houses they rented out to employees. The Tenement Department was responsible for repairs to company housing, and it reserved the right to reject repair requests. White, criticized employees in a company publication for requesting too many repairs. He wrote, "No landlord ever thinks of repapering and painting a rented house [more often] than once in five years...These rental properties instead of being a source of income to the company...are a source of expense."<sup>210</sup> This phrasing made the company appear more benevolent, because it highlighted that in order to care for its employees, the company was willing to spend money, even if grudgingly. In some cases, Mount Hope bought houses already constructed in North Dighton and remodeled them for employees to rent.

Not all workers at Mount Hope lived in North Dighton. Milliken owned a large majority of land and real estate in North Dighton, as well as land and houses just over the town line in Taunton. Not every worker had to live in a company-built house, but company publications made

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<sup>207</sup> Harriet O'Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed: 1927), 77.

<sup>208</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 9.

<sup>209</sup> Albert R. White, "Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant," *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 29, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

<sup>210</sup> Albert R. White, "Housing Problems," *Mount Hope News* (May 1922), Vol. 1 No. 12, 3. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

it appear that they were in high demand.<sup>211</sup> Mount Hope did not have any “particular drive to get employees in a frame of mind to own their own property, leaving it to the employee to come forward himself and ask for a house when he thinks it is time to be a householder.”<sup>212</sup> Although workers were all entitled to the same benefits under paternalism, that the company had workers come to them on an individual basis for homeownership is significant. It most likely fostered a sense of an individual relationship between worker and company. Workers who wanted to rent a vacated house, or a newly built one, assembled “and bid up the rent among them. In this way the person making the highest bid obtains the house at his own estimation and worth.”<sup>213</sup> This method the company used to rent housing essentially pitted workers against each other in bidding. In some cases, this may have created some tension between fellow workers.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to know if workers found ways to undermine Mount Hope management in this rental process, such as colluding during the bidding process to keep rents lower.

A 1922 article in the *Mount Hope News* written by the superintendent of the Tenement Department, Albert R. White, hinted at some hierarchy in the rental process. Employees put their name on a list to be considered for a vacant house, but it did not mean they were guaranteed the first one that became available. The company retained the right to give a rental to an employee with more seniority despite a newer worker being higher on the list. White explained, “to do justice in that case, we are bound to consider the application of the oldest employee in point of service.”<sup>214</sup> This hierarchy could have contributed to animosity between workers, but also worker

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<sup>211</sup> See, Albert R. White, “Housing Problems,” *Mount Hope News* (May 1922), Vol. 1 No. 12, 3. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>212</sup> Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 29, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00085062w&view=1up&seq=8>.

<sup>213</sup> Harriet O’Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed: 1927), 77.

<sup>214</sup> Albert R. White, “Housing Problems,” *Mount Hope News* (May 1922), Vol. 1 No. 12, 4. Mount Hope Finishing

resentment towards the company. If any resentment towards the company housing policies ever existed, they never manifested in any open forms of resistance. This could be attributed to Milliken's hard-handed style of crushing employees that went on strike in 1916, or out of loyalty to the company in which workers accepted the hierarchical elements to the rental process at Mount Hope.

There also appeared to be some form of discrimination by the company against certain employees who wanted to rent houses. White noted that when the company assigned houses, they tried "to be governed by the wishes and desires of employees in the immediate vicinity; in other words we wouldn't think of renting a house to an employee that was objectionable to other employees in that locality."<sup>215</sup> White kept the phrasing vague, and his 1922 article did not go into any detail about what made certain employees objectionable to others. An objectionable employee may have been an unmarried male immigrant from Portugal who did not speak English, a family of immigrants from eastern or southern Europe, or a worker with a family who might have held leftist political sentiments. In any case, the company seemed to try to create a particular sense of community in North Dighton. M.L. Griffith, whose connection to Mount Hope is unclear, boasted in a 1922 article in *Mount Hope News*, that Mount Hope "created a most unusual community with few equals. It is leaving nothing undone and sparing no pains to make it a healthful, clean and beautiful place for the people to live."<sup>216</sup>

A 1927 company publication claimed that rents ranged from \$1.25 to \$7.00 per week.<sup>217</sup> No payroll records exist, so it is impossible to gauge exactly how much Mount Hope workers

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Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>215</sup> Albert R. White, "Housing Problems," *Mount Hope News*, (May 1922), Vol. 1 No. 12, 4. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>216</sup> M.L. Griffith, "The Kitchen Garden," *Mount Hope News*, (May 1922), Vol. 1 No. 12, 9. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>217</sup> Harriet O'Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed: 1927), 77.

made per week, and how affordable rents were in proportion to their income. It appears that the company may have capped rents at a certain price in the bidding process. In his account of the company, Burke Davis claimed that during the 1910s and 1920s, “Rents ranged from \$1.25 to \$3 weekly, at a time when the average salary for workers was from \$40 to \$50 weekly.” These weekly earnings seem unlikely, compared to wages in the textile finishing industry around 1916. For example, a male laborer in the bleach house on average made less than a male folder. Looking at the U.S. textile industry as a whole, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that in 1916 a male laborer in the bleach house earned on average \$9.90.<sup>218</sup> Per week, a male folder made on average \$17.00.<sup>219</sup> Milliken is said to have paid competitive wages, but Davis’s wage figures appear inflated as compared to industry averages in 1916. It is not known what foremen, supervisors, and clerical workers earned at Mount Hope compared to workers on the shop floor.

Milliken invested significant attention on the development of worker housing and the shaping of the North Dighton community. During the first phase of village development, in 1913, Milliken contracted the architecture firm Joseph M. Darling & Son from Fall River, Massachusetts to design and build fifteen houses for Mount Hope.<sup>220</sup> These houses were located on Bedford Street on lot sizes ranging from 0.1 to 0.3 acres, and designed in the style of Colonial Revival. Colonial Revival architecture was common for company housing in the Midwest and Eastern United States during the Progressive Era. It was first popularized during the 1876 centennial celebrations in the United States and came to hold symbolic meanings of American

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<sup>218</sup> Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in Cotton Goods Manufacturing and Finishing, 1916*, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 239 (April 1918), 132, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/3913/item/476874>.

<sup>219</sup> Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in Cotton Goods Manufacturing and Finishing, 1916*, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 239 (April 1918), 134, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/3913/item/476874>.

<sup>220</sup> National Fire Proofing Company, “Mt. Hope Finishing Co. Houses,” in *Industrial Housing Bulletin* 172 (Philadelphia: Privately Printed, 1918), 5, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/IndustrialHousing/page/n5>.

values. Colonial styles appealed to white, native-born Americans because they projected “nostalgic impression of times simpler, earlier, and, above all, more secure...”<sup>221</sup> Americans concerned with the rise of immigration at the turn of the century also used the Colonial Revival style in their efforts to Americanize immigrants. For example, reformers and architects in New York City constructed settlement houses in the Colonial Revival style to further expose immigrants to American values.<sup>222</sup> The use of the Colonial Revival style for company housing, such as at Indian Hill, was intended to reinforce the values of republicanism to foreign born workers.<sup>223</sup> The houses in North Dighton built by Mount Hope had a similar symbolic function.

During another building expansion in 1916, Mount Hope placed an advertisement in the local *Fall River Daily News* for contractors to bid on the building of ten two-family houses designed by another architecture firm, Kilham and Hopkins. This call for some two-family homes in North Dighton may have been partly an experiment for Milliken beyond the more standard option of the single-family house. It does not seem that the company had all ten of the two-family homes built. World War I may have slowed down the building process during the 1910s. Three were built on Spring Street, and three were built on School street. Out of the almost two hundred homes the company owned, it seems that a very small number of these were two-family dwellings. These houses were originally designed for the private company Salem Rebuilding Trust in 1914, then duplicated in North Dighton. After a June 25, 1914 fire in Salem, Massachusetts destroyed nearly 12,000 homes, the Salem Rebuilding Trust hired Kilham & Hopkins to help redevelop the city by designing “a group of affordable double, semidetached

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<sup>221</sup> Alan Gowans, *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 150.

<sup>222</sup> William B. Rhodes, “The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants,” in *The Colonial Revival in America* ed. Alan Axelrod (New York: Norton, 1985), 341-361.

<sup>223</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman’s Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (New York: Verso, 1995), 119.

houses... These homes were to be ‘model dwellings’ that could be ‘duplicated by others profitably.’”<sup>224</sup>

Milliken’s use of Kilham and Hopkins’ housing designs further tied company housing in North Dighton to the larger context of housing reform in the Progressive Era and the concerns with environmental determinism. Walter H. Kilham participated in the tenement reform movement during the 1910s. He advocated for the end of the tenement home, or the triple decker as it was informally known, and supported workers’ individual ownership of a single-family home. In his 1916 article “Planning the Low-Cost Home” he explained that he was thinking about the “horny-fisted son of toil, unionized or not, who faces the financial problem of bringing up a large family... This portion of the population needs clean, well-lighted houses, in healthful surroundings...”<sup>225</sup> For worker-housing to remain affordable, it needed only the fundamentals, so features such as “fireplaces, furnaces, and piazzas are likely to be out of the reach of the laborer and useless considering offering them to him.”<sup>226</sup> Kilham and Hopkins executed these ideals in the houses they designed for the Salem Rebuilding Trust in 1914, then duplicated in North Dighton for Mount Hope in 1916. These houses were designed in line with new housing regulations Massachusetts state government passed in 1913. Starting in 1913, “Massachusetts legislature enabled towns to forbid construction of wooden tenements higher than two and a half stories; twenty communities adopted the ordinances” between 1913 and 1915.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Richard M. Candee and Greer Hardwicke, “Early Twentieth-Century Reform Housing by Kilham and Hopkins, Architects of Boston,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1987): 57.

<sup>225</sup> Walter H. Kilham, “Planning the Low-Cost House,” *Buildings and Buildings Management* Vol. XVI No. 7 (July 1916): 40.

<sup>226</sup> Walter H. Kilham, “Planning the Low-Cost House,” *Buildings and Buildings Management* Vol. XVI No. 7 (July 1916): 40.

<sup>227</sup> Richard M. Candee and Greer Hardwicke, “Early Twentieth-Century Reform Housing by Kilham and Hopkins, Architects of Boston,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1987): 59.

After 1921, Mount Hope continued to build and repair houses for workers. The Great Depression most likely slowed the building of new homes. Company Housing was an important aspect of the constructive labor policy. It also illustrates Milliken's concern with the environment his workers lived in, and how that could possibly determine their actions. The provision and accompanying regulation of company housing was another way in which Milliken, and the management of his mill more generally, exercised both obvious and more subtle methods of worker control. Specifically, some elements of the housing policy at Mount Hope encouraged workers to identify a loyalty to the company, and not a loyalty to each other. This included the competitive bidding process, and a system that apparently allowed some employees to veto having neighbors they found objectionable.

#### **First Phase of Village Development, 1901-1921: Infrastructure**

Milliken further exercised his patriarchal authority over the built environment of North Dighton, and Dighton proper, through improvements to infrastructure, including improved roads, waterlines, gas lines, and electrification, all of which served to maintain the capitalist mode of production. For example, the early dirt roads of North Dighton presented difficulties of moving goods. Where Mount Hope was located, there were initially in 1901 no existing connection to gas or water lines, nor any electricity. As the treasurer, and in various positions he held in the town government, Milliken often facilitated repairs and infrastructure improvements. As mentioned in chapter 2, some workers at Mount Hope also served in positions for town government and could help advocate for changes in infrastructure the company wanted to make.

Roads were a practical feature, but also symbolic of Milliken's paternalism and authority of North Dighton. The company often paid for the building of new roads and the repair of existing ones, while the community of Dighton shared some expenses too. In 1901, the only macadam road in Dighton extended for a mile on the state highway from Taunton to Providence,

Rhode Island.<sup>228</sup> Milliken needed more roads to connect the company to New Bedford and Fall River, two cities from which his mill received much unfinished cotton. A 1927 company publication stated, “Much of the construction of the fine roads which now intersect North Dighton has been made at the expense of the company.”<sup>229</sup> The yearly Town Reports can attest to this claim by the company. The 1903 Town Report noted, “A section of Spring Street westerly from the Mount Hope Finishing Co.’s works has been improved at their expense, and the town has rebuilt a section easterly from their works to Pearl street...”<sup>230</sup> The improvement of the roads continued well into the 1940s. For example, in 1924, the town reported that “Spring Street from Summer to Pearl Street has been improved with a reinforced cement construction, the town paying \$8000 and the rest of the expense was met by the Mount Hope Finishing Co..”<sup>231</sup> Roads made the plant accessible, and “As once all roads led to Rome, so do all roads in North Dighton lead to the plant of the Mount Hope Finishing Company, where they form a wide avenue which curves around a little park.”<sup>232</sup> Milliken wanted his company to be a central feature of Dighton.

Other forms of infrastructure improvement during the first phase of development included building waterlines and the electrification of North Dighton. These improvements further set North Dighton apart from other parts of town, that were less developed in terms of macadam roads, electricity, and running water. Access to a clean source of water for bleaching and dyeing cotton is essential for any textile finishing operation. Part of the reason why the

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<sup>228</sup> A macadam is a form of pavement. In the modern construction of macadam roads, crushed stone is placed on top of compacted base. The crushed stone is then bound together with asphalt cement.

<sup>229</sup> Harriet O’Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed: 1927), 78.

<sup>230</sup> Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton for the Year Ending December 31, 1903, (Fall River: Press of Samuel E. Fiske, 1904), 1

<sup>231</sup> Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton For the Year Ending December 31, 1923, (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Son Inc., 1924), 5.

<sup>232</sup> Harriet O’Brien and the Walton Staff, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed: 1927), 78.

location of Mount Hope appealed to Milliken and the other founders was its ready access to a mill pond, and the three-mile river that ran through Dighton. During the early 1900s, the need to extend running water to company housing and North Dighton inspired the Mount Hope firm to sign a contract with Taunton to install water pipes throughout the area. By 1909, at no cost to Dighton, the project was completed. “Pipes have been laid and hydrants erected by the Mount Hope Finishing Company to furnish water for North Dighton They have contracted with the City of Taunton.”<sup>233</sup> The town sometimes owed money to the Mount Hope firm for the installation and repair of water pipes across North Dighton. In 1912, Dighton granted Mount Hope the right to “dig up streets at North Dighton, to lay pipes for furnishing water for citizens on Lincoln Ave. and Summer Streets.”<sup>234</sup> The Mount Hope company also played a role in electrifying Dighton. As early as 1912, the town had a Committee on Electricity, which in that same year, granted Mount Hope permission to “furnish electricity for lighting purposes in North Dighton Fire District.”<sup>235</sup> These are just a few examples of Mount Hope’s involvement in infrastructure improvement in North Dighton from the first phase of village development. These measures improved life for citizens, but also helped the company expand and make its production more efficient, and carry out Milliken’s constructive labor policy.

### **Second Phase of Village Development, 1922-1929: Olmsted Brothers**

As with other business owners, especially those that practiced welfare capitalism, Milliken turned to the developing professions of landscape architecture and urban planning to design company towns to uphold the capitalist mode of production. Mount Hope first contacted

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<sup>233</sup> *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton For the Year Ending December 31, 1909*, (Taunton: Harrington Press, 1910), 6.

<sup>234</sup> *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton For the Year Ending December 31, 1912*, (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Sons Printers, 1913), 53.

<sup>235</sup> *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton For the Year Ending December 31, 1912*, (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Sons Printers, 1913), 53.

the Olmsted Brothers in September of 1921 to design and build an ornamental park in North Dighton. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. wrote in a September 22, 1921 report that “Mr. Arthur C. King [of Mount Hope Finishing Company] called and talked with me about a project for an ornamental park...I told him we should first make a preli. [sic] visit and then make a proposition as to what would best be done.”<sup>236</sup> Although it started with a park, Mount Hope soon contracted with the Olmsted Brothers to plan the extension of roads, development of land for housing lots, and to design planting plans for lawns of the numerous company-owned houses. The Olmsted Brothers helped to create a beautiful and rationalized landscape in North Dighton, furthering Milliken’s constructive labor policy in village development for the efficient and loyal worker.

Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. first started a landscape architecture firm in 1857 with senior partner and fellow landscape architect Calvert Vaux. By 1872, Olmsted entered into a partnership with his son, John Charles Olmsted, forming the company Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect. In 1895, F.L. Olmsted’s other son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., entered into a partnership with his father and brother. Senility forced F.L. Olmsted to retire in 1895, and the two brothers took over leadership of the firm. In 1898, they changed the name to Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects. The Olmsted Brothers went on to complete thousands of projects in landscape architecture throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the Mount Hope project just being one of them. Mount Hope requested to work with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. directly, but the firm denied them. Rather, other landscape architects in the offices handled the Mount Hope project, one being Henry V. Hubbard.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> F.L. Olmsted, “Mt. Hope Finishing Company, C.E. North Dighton Mass.,” September 21, 1921, 1921, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass: 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

<sup>237</sup> Henry Vincent Hubbard (1875-1947) was from Taunton, Massachusetts. He studied at Harvard University under F.L. Olmsted Jr. and earned a degree in landscape architecture in 1901. Hubbard joined the Olmsted Brothers firm in 1905, but left to pursue other interests. In 1917, Hubbard and Theodora Kimball, his fellow colleague and future

No official company-generated literature makes any mention of Olmsted Brothers redesigning parts of the landscape of North Dighton. This is a significant omission, but not a surprising one. The 1927 company funded book, which reads more like an advertisement for potential customers, explained, “Both the village of North Dighton and the plant of [Mount Hope]...are the creation of man whose business acumen...has within the short span of twenty-six years nurtured an infant industry to sturdy manhood.”<sup>238</sup> All company publications positioned Milliken as the sole figure who developed North Dighton, without help from any outside entity. This legitimized his position as the patriarchal authority figure. If company publications had credited the Olmsted Brothers with redesigning parts of North Dighton, it might have taken away from the prestige of Milliken as the sole visionary.

Milliken’s interactions with the landscape architects illustrated his desire for control in the development of North Dighton, even when he enlisted the help of professionals. In order to exercise authority and expertise in the design of company towns, professionals demanded more control in the process. Yet industrialists “did not hesitate to ignore, alter, or abandon their designer’s plans...”<sup>239</sup> Milliken was no exception to this rule and he retained control throughout the process. In a letter addressed to Hubbard, Milliken explained, “if we do not look out we shall leave too much to chance between the design and its execution...the more hands we let this go through...the more chance we take of getting away from your plan.”<sup>240</sup> Milliken did not approve of all plans given to him by the Olmsted Brothers, and he sometimes offered suggestions to

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wife, authored the textbook, *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*. In 1920, Hubbard rejoined the Olmsted Brothers becoming a partner.

<sup>238</sup> Harriet E. O’Brien, *From Grey to Beauty: An Account of the Industry Carried on at North Dighton by the Mount Hope Finishing Company* (Privately Printed, 1927), 77.

<sup>239</sup> Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman’s Paradise: The Design of the American Company Town* (New York: Verso, 1995), 79-80.

<sup>240</sup> Letter, J.K. Milliken to Henry V. Hubbard, April 22, 1922, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass: 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

Hubbard. On September 8, 1922, Hubbard visited North Dighton to write up a progress report. He revealed that Milliken had proposed to him to “change the design of the lower portion of the park...It is a different conception but to my mind not bad enough worth opposing.”<sup>241</sup> This reflected Milliken’s desire for control over the design, and its proper execution according to his vision, filtered through Olmsted Brothers plans.

### **Second Phase of Village Development, 1922-1929: Milliken’s Private Estate**

Milliken, as the patriarchal leader of North Dighton, engaged in a negotiation with the planners at the Olmsted Brothers regarding the location of his house. Milliken rejected the preliminary location planned in November 1921 by Hubbard for his private estate in North Dighton. When production first began at Mount Hope, Milliken had moved to the southern section of Dighton and resided in the Eddy Boarding House. After he married, he rented a house until 1911, also in the south part of town. During this time, Milliken made his presence known in town, and rode horseback to and from the plant each day. Some time after 1911, he bought a house in Taunton, located only a few miles from the plant, and lived there until 1924 when he moved to North Dighton and into his newly constructed house.

Hubbard planned the preliminary location for Milliken’s private estate on Forest Street, roughly a half mile from the closest worker housing, and a mile from the plant. Milliken owned over 50 acres of land in North Dighton and his private estate would sit on this land. The original plans of November 1921 set aside a “considerable area...for possible development as a private estate for Mr. Milliken.”<sup>242</sup> The architects placed a large house at the end of a long circular drive.

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<sup>241</sup> Henry V. Hubbard, “Report on the Mount Hope Finishing Company Work. Friday, September 8, 1922,” 1922, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

<sup>242</sup> Letter, Henry V. Hubbard to J.K. Milliken, April 6, 1922, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

The plans also included room for an orchard, pasture, horse stables, terrace, garden, a service wing, garage, and a service road that would provide a direct connection to the village. This plan included typical features of a private estate, as laid out by Hubbard and Theodora Kimball in their textbook, *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design*.<sup>243</sup> The land of the estate was not supposed to be economically productive, but rather a place for leisure and entertainment. As the professionals, the landscape architects at Olmsted Brothers interpreted the desires of Milliken, the client, and expressed them in the plan for his private estate. Features such as the horse stables, orchard, and pasture reflected Milliken's own interest in farming, and horse riding. As it turned out, Milliken decided against the original Forest Street site for his private estate, and had workers dig a cellar for his new house at the end of Chase Street. He did not contact the Olmsted Brothers when he made this change. When Hubbard visited North Dighton on September 8, 1922, he noted, "Mr. Milliken has already constructed a cellar for his house beyond the end of Chace [sic] Street, having abandoned the previous location of his house and undertaken only a small house. He authorized me to prepare plans for the layout immediately around the house..."<sup>244</sup> Hubbard's phrasing makes apparent that the shift came as a surprise to him. The historical documents provide no indication of Milliken's thinking, but there could be several possibilities as to why he moved the location for his house.

The first explanation could be financial. Milliken may not have wanted to pay for the building of the estate, complete with an orchard, horse stables, and barn, and for the upkeep for these features. New plans drawn up by the Olmsted Brothers only retained the service wing, and

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<sup>243</sup> See, Henry V. Hubbard and Theodora Kimball, *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* (Boston: The Cuneo Press of New England, 1967), 247-274.

<sup>244</sup> Henry V. Hubbard, "Report on the Mount Hope Finishing Company Work. Friday, September 8, 1922," 1922, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

the garden off the side of the house. The planners eliminated the terrace, orchard, horse stables, and barn from the final layout. The land that his estate would have occupied could have been potentially profitable if he decided to build more roads or housing, instead of using the land for personal leisure purposes. As an industrialist, he no doubt had a concern for the best and most efficient use of his land. With the economic struggle of the Northern textile industry and the looming threat of deindustrialization in 1922, he may not have wanted to make such a steep investment in a private estate.

Another possibility that could explain why Milliken moved his house was to uphold his position as patriarchal authority figure in relation to his workers while being physically closer to them. It appears that he wanted to keep a sense of connection to his workers while maintaining clear lines of authority. The property had other distinctions from company houses in North Dighton, starting with its formal name, Green Acres. Another distinction he tried to give to his new home was a claim to a sense of historical legitimacy. Milliken had a plaque made for his property that read, "Green Acres Created 1923/ Joseph Knowles Milliken/ Thomas Sergeant Baylies 1748-1835/ his mill stone driven by the waters of the Three Mile River." The site of the Baylies Iron Forge did not sit on the site of Green Acres; rather, it had been located on present day Spring Street, down the street from where the Mount Hope plant would stand. There was no actual physical or other connection between Green Acres and Baylies. Rather, it seems that Milliken picked Baylies as his historic reference for prestige and for political rhetoric purposes, because the location of Baylies's iron forge served further emphasize Milliken's right to use the water from the Three Mile River for production at Mount Hope. Baylies, in his day, had been a prominent resident and businessman in Dighton, active in town affairs, similar to Milliken. Milliken would have been aware of Baylies's role in local history, as Milliken served on the

1912 bicentennial celebration committee for Dighton. Milliken also took an interest in local history by authoring the short booklet *The Story of the Mill at the Mount Hope Privilege* sometime in the early 1920s.

It does not appear that Milliken repositioned his house in order to maintain surveillance over his workforce, nor does the new location reflect the typical Foucauldian technology of power based upon Bentham's concept of the panopticon. As the patriarch, Milliken may have seen himself more as representing formal authority to be followed by his employees, rather than a dictator who needed to keep constant surveillance over his workforce. He may have trusted his workers to live without his direct surveillance. The paternalism of the constructive labor policy did not need to be enforced through strict surveillance, given Milliken's belief that his other policies were ensuring his employees' loyalty to him and the company. Some labor historians and industrial archaeologists have used Foucauldian conceptions of power to explain how owners exerted authority over workers through the built environment. Foucault identified Jeremy Bentham's eighteenth-century prison design of the panopticon as a technology of power. The Panopticon's major effect was to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."<sup>245</sup> The architecture of the Panopticon was a vehicle that created and sustained a relationship of power, even in the temporary absence of the person who exercises it. It ensured that the inmate always felt as though they were being observed, since they never actually knew if they were being watched by an authority figure. This would cause, in theory, the inmate to monitor themselves. Anthropologist and industrial archaeologist Sarah Cowie explains, "much of the power of surveillance does not hinge on what

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<sup>245</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 201.

actually can be seen. Rather the technique of power rests upon the perception that one might be seen.”<sup>246</sup>

This form of surveillance and power relations, again, does not appear to have been the determining factor in the physical relationship of Milliken’s residence to that of his workers. However, the panoptic built environment has been a useful way to understand power relations in industrial settings elsewhere. Panoptic built environments have been found not only in company towns all over the world, but in a variety of other historical settings such as plantations and government buildings, as a means of control and surveillance over workers, slaves, and citizens.<sup>247</sup> One example of a company town with a panoptic built environment in the United States is Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, which stands in contrast with North Dighton. Harper’s Ferry grew as a government-operated arms manufacturing town during the late 1790s with civilian employees. Workers built their own houses without the assistance of the company. When the U.S. military took over the armory, its managers reordered the built environment into something more rational and panoptic, with the intent to increase the companies visibility over workers. To instill discipline, the army began a surveillance strategy of building “walls to contain activities and reorganization of space in order to allow activities to be viewed from a central place.”<sup>248</sup> Lieutenant John Symington, who took over as the superintendent of the armory, assigned the houses on the hill in Harper’s Ferry exclusively to army supervisors. By 1848, “the superintendent’s quarters and several other supervisors’ quarters were built on Camp Hill, which

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<sup>246</sup> Sarah E. Cowie, *The Plurality of Power: An Archaeology of Industrial Capitalism* (New York: Springer, 2011), 119.

<sup>247</sup> See, Paul A. Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology: An Archaeology of the Early American Industrial Era* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996). Mark P. Leone, “A Historical Archaeology of Capitalism,” *American Anthropologist* (1995): 251-268. David R. Carlson and Amy Jordan, “Visibility and Power: Preliminary Analysis of Social Control on a Bandanese Plantation Compound, Eastern Indonesia,” *Asian Perspectives* Vol. 52 No. 2 (Fall 2013): 213-243.

<sup>248</sup> Paul A. Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology: An Archaeology of the Early American Industrial Era* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 74.

was one of the highest points in Harper's Ferry and had a commanding view of the armory grounds."<sup>249</sup> Shackel concludes that Symington purposefully placed the superintendents' houses to use the threat of being watched to control workers behavior.

In North Dighton, the placement of Milliken's house does not appear to have had the intention to manipulate his workers into thinking he may be watching them. Green Acres lacked a higher elevation than the houses of the workers and Milliken had it set back on a long driveway at the end of a dead-end road. This is an important contrast, and marker of class as compared to the 0.1 to 0.3 acre lots company built homes resided on. Milliken's new house was close to 5,000 square feet, which dwarfed even the largest company-built homes for regular workers. Burke Davis, the company biographer, and therefore obviously biased, argued that "even J.K.'s large house, 'Green Acres,' did not seem a mansion by comparison with the homes of workers."<sup>250</sup> David wanted Milliken's house to seem reasonable, and not have Milliken appear to be the wealthy capitalist that he really was. Davis's bias portrayed Milliken as socially aware and considerate of his workers, so as not to emphasize this ostentatious display of wealth in his full private estate.

It does appear that Milliken desired a sense of privacy. The front of the house faced a lawn, and beyond the lawn, a wooded area. The side of the house with the porch garden faced away from the mill village and towards the woods, and the other undeveloped land that Milliken owned. Due to the landscaping and construction projects of the 1920s, the vegetation of North Dighton would have been sparse, allowing for more to be viewed from the Milliken property. However, by the 1940s when the vegetation grew, it would have become more difficult to see

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<sup>249</sup> Paul A. Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology: An Archaeology of the Early American Industrial Era* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 78.

<sup>250</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 48.

any company housing from Milliken's property. Moreover, Milliken's house, along with that of his daughter Helen and her husband, his brother C.A. Milliken, and superintendent Charles Ewing were grouped together. After Helen's death in the mid-1930s, Robert Milliken and his family moved into her house. J.K., C.A., and Robert Milliken were three of the highest-ranking employees in the company. If Milliken really did want to prioritize surveillance of his workers, it would have made more sense to strategically locate high ranking employees and members of the Milliken family around North Dighton. Pete Milliken, who lived on Park Street, was an exception to this. But there is no evidence that he remained on Park Street to keep surveillance over employees.

Even though Milliken apparently valued his privacy, he still interacted with residents of North Dighton, who reportedly "grew accustomed to seeing J.K. walk from his home to the plant early every morning at his brisk, erect stride, stooping now and then to pick up bits of paper and other litter..."<sup>251</sup> Those who lived in company housing were aware that Milliken walked to and from the plant daily. This may have caused workers to monitor their own behavior, since they could be directly observed at certain times. Or, if they knew what time Milliken came and went, and the path that he took to the plant, then they could adjust their behavior accordingly. What the position of Milliken's house reveals about his constructive labor policy is that it did not need the typical surveillance of workers in order to be successful. Yet, it also allowed him to further position himself as the patriarchal authority figure among his workers. Although Milliken retained his privacy within his home, workers did not always have such a luxury since welfare capitalism often blurred the boundaries of home, work, and leisure.

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<sup>251</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 51.

## Second Phase of Village Development, 1922-1929: Recreation Spaces

The recreational spaces built and maintained by Mount Hope not only fulfilled a key goal of the constructive labor policy, but also provided another indirect way for the company to control workers' free time. Employers who practiced welfare capitalism believed that what employees did in their free time affected their performance and so sought to regulate and control their personal time. Milliken played a key role in orchestrating the community life and culture in North Dighton. For example, sports teams served as a form of official, company-sponsored recreation, an "indoctrination" that according to historian Stuart Brandes shows how "recreation could be used to imbue the worker with the right attitude, to help build and strengthen 'character.'"<sup>252</sup> Labor historians have noted that sports teams created a sense of loyalty to the company and promoted team work.<sup>253</sup> At Mount Hope, sports teams were used in a similar manner.

Sports and recreation further fostered a connection to the company, but not a connection to the rest of the workforce. Team members, of course, connected with each other, and indirectly to fellow workers who supported them as game spectators, but the company identity remained paramount. Mount Hope had an official baseball team, bowling team, dart team, and billiard team. The company built a homefield for the baseball team behind the Mount Hope Club House, which Kilham and Hopkins designed for the company in 1920.<sup>254</sup> A company publication labeled it as the "center of general village activities," though since Mount Hope owned the club, it was

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<sup>252</sup> Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 82.

<sup>253</sup> See Joan Sangster, "The Soft Ball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers and the Operation of Paternalism at Westlox, 1923-1960," *Labour/ Le Travail* Vol. 32 (Fall 1993): 167-199; Wilma Pesavento, "Sport and Recreation in the Pullman Experiment, 1880-1900," *Journal of Sport History* Vol. 9 No. 2 (Summer 1982): 38-62; Stephen Gelber, "Working at Playing: The Culture of the Workplace and the Rise of Baseball," *Journal of Social History* Vol. 16 No. 4 (Summer 1983): 3-22.

<sup>254</sup> Richard M. Candee and Greer Hardwicke, "Early Twentieth-Century Reform Housing By Kilham and Hopkins, Architects of Boston," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1987): 59.

private property, giving it some exclusivity.<sup>255</sup> Only residents of North Dighton or a person who lived within ten miles of North Dighton could visit the club, and then only with an accompanying member.<sup>256</sup> Workers at Mount Hope did not have to become members of the Mount Hope club, but it offered tempting amenities, including a billiard room, bowling alley, gymnasium, lounge and reading room, and a card room. Such clubs essentially, as historian Andrea Tone has written, “invited workers’ emotional, spiritual, and intellectual transcendence on company grounds and on company terms without challenging the structural hierarchy that kept workers subordinate.”<sup>257</sup>

In addition to the Mount Hope Club House, Milliken also had other public recreational spaces built, such as parks designed by the Olmsted Brothers. The building of small parks around North Dighton was a part of the company’s general plan for village development in the constructive labor policy.<sup>258</sup> Any worker could use the parks Milliken built, in opposition to the Mount Hope Club where not every worker was a member. The original Olmsted Brothers plans showed a large central park in North Dighton, with many trees, a play meadow, and a pond for ice skating in the winter. Henry Hubbard wrote to Milliken that he thought such a space would provide “the outdoor recreation now furnished by the unoccupied land all about.”<sup>259</sup> The large park that Hubbard planned would center recreation and keep it in space that had once been

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<sup>255</sup> Mount Hope Finishing Company, “Mount Hope Club Officers Board of Governors and Committees By-Laws and House Rules,” 1920. Mount Hope Finishing Company, Folder VM863, File M836H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>256</sup> <sup>256</sup> Mount Hope Finishing Company, “Mount Hope Club Officers Board of Governors and Committees By-Laws and House Rules,” 1920. Mount Hope Finishing Company, Folder VM863, File M836H, Old Colony History Museum.

<sup>257</sup> Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 71.

<sup>258</sup> See, Albert R. White, “Industrial Relations at Mount Hope Plant,” *Textile World* Vol. 60 No. 17 (October 22, 1921): 29.

<sup>259</sup> Letter, from Henry V. Hubbard to J.K. Milliken, April 6, 1922, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985: Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1921-1924, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

controlled by the company. However, one large park was not what Milliken envisioned for North Dighton; and by 1922, he decided not to continue with the development of the park. It is possible that Milliken sensed that the presence of a large central park in North Dighton would have taken away from the feeling of North Dighton as a quintessential mill village, an image that Milliken spent time and money to create. Instead, the Olmsted Brothers planned the largest park in North Dighton for a different location, directly in front of the plant, in between Spring Street and Park Street. When participating in recreational activities hosted by the company or recreating on their own, the workers had a constant view of the plant, contributing to the town and the company as one single entity. The placement of this park is one example where one can see perhaps a more subtle use of the panopticon, a prevalent reminder of the company's dominance without overtly intrusive domination.

The Olmsted Brothers plans also called for a hotel and an ornate civic center. It is unclear why Milliken did not follow through with these plans, but again, economic complications may have discouraged such ambitions, or perhaps Milliken may have determined that such development could have taken away from his vision of North Dighton as a mill village. Although Milliken did not need to fully worry about labor unrest in North Dighton, in a larger context, parks were seen as methods of social control in communities in the United States. Reformers during the Gilded Age understood parks as “a way of diverting workers’ attention from the world of work, while partially compensating them for the alienation and debilitating effects of that work.”<sup>260</sup> Parks were part of most improvement plans for small and large towns, including North Dighton. As Olmsted Brothers took on the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., they appropriated official discourses surrounding the use of neighborhood parks for community

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<sup>260</sup> Richard E. Fogelson, *Planning the Capitalist City: The Colonial Era to the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 91.

order. Olmsted Sr.'s "objectives in park building were clearly social. He saw the park as an antidote to the 'enervating' forces of urban and commercial life."<sup>261</sup> He was a conservative reformer, not worried with upending the system of capitalism, but rather giving the urban masses a way to relax outside of the factory.<sup>262</sup> Historian Christine Boyer states, "By the end of the nineteenth century the discourse on urban parks intensified. Now the essential element of park improvement was found in exercise of normative controls and disciplinary order."<sup>263</sup> As a well-connected industrial capitalist who practiced welfare capitalism, Milliken would have understood the construction of parks as a business investment for their supposed ability to quell labor disorder and create a rational environment for the worker.

### **Conclusion**

By 1928, correspondence between the Olmsted Brothers, Mount Hope, and Milliken, increasingly revolved around the development of the personal properties of the Milliken family, not the wider planning or the design of the town.<sup>264</sup> Milliken might not have wanted to continue to spend extra money on development of North Dighton if he thought that the changes he already made were sufficient to maintain the happiness, loyalty, and efficiency of his workforce. One employee for the Olmsted Brothers, Francis Head, who worked directly with Milliken, and other high-ranking employees at Mount Hope, noted in his May 1928 official report that development in North Dighton had stalled. He explained he was "Buttonholed' [by] Mr. Milliken as he came down on his way to lunch. He gave me about two minutes of his time. I wished to find out where

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>262</sup> See, Geoffrey Blodgett, "Fredrick Law Olmsted: Landscape Architecture as Conservative Reform," *Journal of American History* No. 62 (March 1976): 869-889.

<sup>263</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1983), 37.

<sup>264</sup> See, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1921-1924, Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton Mass; 1925-1946, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 1: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Folder 2: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

Olmsted stood with regard to planning at North Dighton. The town wasn't growing any. They weren't building anything new."<sup>265</sup> Head believed that Milliken had brushed him off in frustration at the textile strike happening in New Bedford from where "60% of their 'grey cloth' comes..."<sup>266</sup> The strike in New Bedford would have affected the regular conduct of business at Mount Hope, as well as company profits. Milliken might have also been annoyed at labor in general for this display of unrest. In June 1928, Albert R. White authored "The Problem of Distribution," for the *Mount Hope News*. White commented on the New Bedford strike, and reasons that hint at why Milliken brushed Head off that day: "If the New Bedford mill workers had understood the economics of the situation...they perhaps might not have walked out so hastily, assuming that New Bedford mill workers are as intelligent as average textile employees throughout New England."<sup>267</sup> This reveals Mount Hope management's conception of organized labor as an enemy to the normal functioning of capitalism. It also put forward the message that they wanted to portray Mount Hope workers as more intelligent than the unionized textile worker because they did not go on strike and disrupt capitalism.

The stock market crash of October 1929, coupled with the gradual shift of the New England's textile industry to the south, likely increased Milliken's disinclination for further development. By 1929, most major changes to occur to the built environment of North Dighton by Mount Hope had been completed. The years 1901-1929 had marked two phases of village development in North Dighton. The first, from 1901-1921, included company housing, and infrastructural changes. Company housing helped Milliken construct his paternalistic labor

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<sup>265</sup> Francis Head, "Report of Conference by F. Head," May 7, 1928, 1928, Olmsted Associates Records: Jobs Files, 1863-1971; Files 6985; Mount Hope Finishing Co.; North Dighton, Mass; 1924-1946, mss52571, Box B388, Reel 334, Folder 2: Mount Hope Finishing Company North Dighton Mass., Library of Congress.

<sup>266</sup> Francis Head, "Report of Conference by F. Head," May 7, 1928, 1928.

<sup>267</sup> Albert R. White, "The Problem with Distribution," *Mount Hope News*, Vol. VII No. 10, June 1928, 4-5, Folder VM8638, File M863H, Old Colony History Museum.

policy by strengthening worker identity with the company, and not with each other as a collective working-class. Infrastructure changes depended on Milliken's place in local government, but also his position as patriarchal authority figure in the town. Infrastructure improvement, and company housing, assisted Milliken to maintain profits and the capitalist mode of production in North Dighton. The second phase of development from 1922-1929 was marked by the hiring of Olmsted Brothers, the building of Milliken's house, and company funded recreation spaces, both private and public. The second phase of development is significant because it helped Milliken display his status as wealthy industrialist who hired professionals to design and beautify his enclave of North Dighton. The developments in the second phase, such as the placement of Milliken's personal home, reinforced his position as patriarchal authority figure in comparison to his workers. Recreational spaces promoted worker identity and loyalty to the company, and not to each other. The built environment of North Dighton reinforced loyalty to the company.

## CHAPTER 5. THE GENERAL TEXTILE STRIKE OF 1934 AND THE BREAKDOWN OF PATERNALISM, 1934-1951

### Introduction

By 1934, the combination of increased migration of cotton textile production from the North to the South and the Great Depression had an adverse effect on the economy of New England. Even before the market crash of 1929, plant closures in mill cities across Massachusetts devastated local economies and created Depression-like conditions.<sup>268</sup> Mills that could not compete with Southern competition liquidated during the 1920s. One journalist, Louis Adamic, travelled to New England to document the conditions of the “tragic towns” subjected to deindustrialization.<sup>269</sup> Adamic recounted the depressed economic conditions in former strongholds of textile production such as Lowell, Fall River, and New Bedford. In Lowell, Adamic described former textile workers as “standing on street corners singly or in two or threes; pathetic, silent, middle-aged men in torn, frayed overcoats...slumped in postures of hopeless discontent.”<sup>270</sup> In Fall River, he found much the same. Historian John T. Cumbler, in his study of the working-class in Fall River, explained, “The process of decline in profits, production, and wages which began in the 1920s continued and was never reversed...Unemployment crippled the city during its decline and Depression years.”<sup>271</sup>

Workers employed at Mount Hope, who lived in North Dighton, did not experience the full reality of industrial migration. Milliken’s paternalism and continued fringe benefits during

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<sup>268</sup> David Koistinen, “The Causes of Deindustrialization: The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South.” *Enterprise & Society* 3, no. 3 (09, 2002): 483, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.iastate.edu/docview/218609510?accountid=10906>, accessed December 1, 2019.

<sup>269</sup> Louis Adamic, “The Tragic Towns of New England: 1930,” in *My America: 1928-1938* (New York: DeCapo Press, 1976), 263.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, 268.

<sup>271</sup> John T. Cumbler, “Fall River: Dizzying Heights to Depths of Depression,” in *Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), 139.

the depression protected workers from deindustrialization. This is a large part of why Mount Hope employees did not join the 1934 General Textile Strike. Workers accepted his authority and style of management and believed that joining the union would not benefit them. In the larger context of deindustrialization Milliken as an industry leader in manufacturing joined efforts to combat the loss of cotton textile production in the North.

### **Deindustrialization in New England and the Textile Industry**

Within the Southern United States, a cotton textile industry developed during Reconstruction, financed by Southern capital.<sup>272</sup> The transformation of the Piedmont region coincided with the development of the ring-spindle, which simplified the spinning process and deskilled labor. As southern manufacturers built mills in the early 1900s, they were able to install these new ring-spindles, which offered potentially significant increases in profits. By contrast, northern mill owners who tried to replace old-style mule spindles faced opposition from the skilled workers who operated them.<sup>273</sup> These skilled workers feared being displaced by lower-wage unskilled machine-tenders. New England textile-making remained competitive until after World War I but prices for print clothing and sales for cotton cloth dropped in the first half of the 1920s. Southern mills had newer, more modern technology, were closer to the source of cotton, and paid lower taxes and wages. As compared to a state such as Massachusetts, those in the South such as North Carolina had lax labor regulations.

Mill owners and those who held prominent places in industry in New England developed three strategies to combat the migration of cotton textiles during the 1920s and 1930s:

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<sup>272</sup> David Koistinen, "The causes of industrialization: The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South," *Enterprise & Society* Vol. 3 No. 3 (Sept. 2002): 487.

<sup>273</sup> John D. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 3.

retrenchment, federal assistance, and economic development.<sup>274</sup> Retrenchment, as historian David Koistinen explains, “entailed a push by business interests to reduce the government burden on industry by rolling back legislation and cutting taxes and public spending...Pressure for retrenchment commenced in the early 1920s”<sup>275</sup> As an industry leader, Milliken probably favored retrenchment. Mount Hope participated in the larger conversation on retrenchment through articles published in *Mount Hope News*. These articles, written by employees in upper-level management positions, illustrated not only their support of retrenchment policies, but their dislike of labor regulations that unions prized.

Among other measures, the retrenchment campaign targeted state laws that restricted the working hours for women. A 1919 Massachusetts law allowed women to work no more than 48 hours per week in any industry and banned female employees in textile plants from laboring after 6:00 p.m.<sup>276</sup> Women were a major part of the labor force in the textile industry, and this policy effectively stopped them from working the night shift. Albert R. White, general manager of Mount Hope, critiqued this law in a July 1922 article titled, “Will Massachusetts Hold its Present Place in the Production of Cotton Textiles?” He argued that Southern states held a competitive edge over New England because they “are not hampered with strict labor laws like Massachusetts. They don’t know anything about a 48 hour law for women and minors. If a mill wants to run two shifts in the south, it is not unlawful for a woman to work after six o’clock in the evening.”<sup>277</sup> The battle over social legislation in Massachusetts continued to rage throughout the 1920s. White published another article a few years later that again condemned the laws that

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<sup>274</sup> See, David Koistinen, *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013).

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>277</sup> Albert R. White, “Will Massachusetts Hold Its Present Place in the Production of Cotton Textiles?” *Mount Hope News* July 1922 Vol. 2 No. 2, 2. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

restricted working hours. He stated, “Massachusetts carries the banner and has the most laws affecting the employment of labor, of any State in the Union, engaged in textile work...Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire...have more liberal laws than we do.”<sup>278</sup>

White and the management at Mount Hope viewed the protective labor legislation in Massachusetts as a hinderance on industry in Massachusetts. The decline of cotton production in the North directly affected Mount Hope, especially in terms of shipping costs and loss of suppliers geographically close to them.

Another way the management at Mount Hope showed their support for retrenchment was through calls for reduction in corporate taxes at the local level. During the 1920s in Massachusetts, local and state spending increased, which drove tax hikes. Expenditures increased, due to “Dramatic increases in the services provided by local government...great expansion of the public schools. Growing use of automobiles also pushed up budgets as local governments made large outlays for roads...”<sup>279</sup> Throughout the 1920s, Dighton routinely improved existing roads or built new ones, but often Mount Hope paid most of the cost of these expenses.<sup>280</sup> Within Dighton, as Albert R. White explained, “The Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Dighton Manufacturing Company, directly and indirectly, pay about half of the taxes that are assessed in the town.”<sup>281</sup> Milliken’s position on the town finance board did

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<sup>278</sup> Albert R. White, “Labor Laws in Different States,” *Mount Hope News* July 1925 Vol. 4 No. 6, 4. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>279</sup> David Koistinen, *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 55.

<sup>280</sup> See Lyman E. Briggs, Charles S. Chase, and George B. Glidden, “Selectmen’s Report,” in *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1923* (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Son, Inc., Printers, 1924) 5-7. Dwight F. Lane, “Town Clerk’s Report” in *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending 1924* (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Son, Inc., Printers, 1925), 86-89. Lyman E. Briggs, Charles S. Chase, and George B. Glidden, “Selectmen’s Report,” in *Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Dighton Year Ending December 31, 1925* (Taunton: C.A. Hack & Son Inc., Printers, 1926), 5-8.

<sup>281</sup> Albert R. White, “Taxation,” *Mount Hope News* Vol. 6 No. 9, 8. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

allow him some control over how the town used the revenue his company paid in taxes.

Nevertheless, as a prominent member of the textile industry, Milliken wanted Dighton to lower the corporate tax rate. He penned a brief introduction, titled “Facts That Apply to us at Mount Hope,” to a reprinted 1928 speech by Massachusetts Republican Governor Alvan T. Fuller on taxation in industry which appeared in *The Mount Hope News*. Milliken explained:

In his references to the need of lessening the taxes on industry are the same views that I am continually preaching in connection with the administration of the affairs of the Town of Dighton. The difficult position in which the manufacturer finds himself in Massachusetts is admirably set out and it is well for all who are interested in the welfare of our business of the Town and of the State to give heed to the governor’s words.<sup>282</sup>

Lower taxes would mean the company could retain more profits or invest that money where the management desired. Despite these various efforts on the part of industry and government in Massachusetts, the textile industry continued to migrate south. Massachusetts legislators did not change any of the work laws. According to historian David Koistinen, Massachusetts lawmakers “...maintained the status quo due largely to pressure from unions and reform organizations.”<sup>283</sup> However, during the 1920s and 1930s, textile manufacturers had more success with fiscal change, winning tax reductions on company property at the local level. Textile industrialists and other manufacturers succeeded in these efforts because they faced no opposition from organized labor or other reform groups.<sup>284</sup> In textile cities that encountered plant closures during the 1920s, lower taxes become a method to stimulate economic recovery.

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<sup>282</sup> J.K. Milliken, “Facts that Apply to us at Mount Hope,” *Mount Hope News* 1928 Vol. 7 No. 6, 4. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>283</sup> David Koistinen, *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 27.

<sup>284</sup> David Koistinen, *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 27.

Additionally, in 1936, the state of Massachusetts exempted “manufacturing machinery from local property taxes.”<sup>285</sup> Industrialists had the most success in gaining tax cuts, rather than in stopping social legislation.

But all was not well in the South. Southern textile workers faced unemployment and difficulties with management throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Employers in the south used scientific management techniques and new machinery in the production process. What resulted was what millhands called the “stretch-out, since such restructuring invariably resulted in heavier loads for some workers while causing others to be laid off.”<sup>286</sup> This stretch-out created competition among workers and upset the balance of community and family life for the southern worker. To exert themselves as political actors, Southern textile workers joined existing unions, such as the National Textile Workers Union (NTWU) and the United Textile Workers (UTW), to protest the policy of the stretch-out. When Franklin Roosevelt won the presidency, southern workers in particular thought they could gain the backing of the federal government in a campaign for more favorable labor regulations. But Roosevelt’s relationship to the southern Democrats, who consisted mostly of the south’s economic elite, complicated the political landscape. The president needed their support to get New Deal programs passed in Congress. Janet Irons argues, “The workers failure to secure the full backing of the New Deal government proved decisive in...the decision to hold a general strike.”<sup>287</sup>

Workers had faith that the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933 would help solve the problem of stretch-outs and overproduction, through its new regulation. The NIRA

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<sup>285</sup> David Koistinen, *Confronting Decline: The Political Economy of Deindustrialization in Twentieth-Century New England* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 54.

<sup>286</sup> Janet Irons, *Testing the New Deal: The General Textile Strike of 1934 in the American South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

allowed business leaders to create codes for fair competition, fixed prices, and controlled output. Members of the trade association Cotton Textile Institute (CTI) formed the Cotton Textile Industry Committee in 1933, with representation from both southern and northern manufacturers, to draft a code of competition. The government approved the Cotton Textile Code in 1933. It included provisions such as a minimum weekly wage in the South and the North, and it limited plants to two forty-hour shifts.<sup>288</sup> The code went into effect on July 17, 1933, and workers hoped that employers would end the stretch-out, resulting in workers getting their jobs back. Managers in Southern textile mills used the method of the stretch out starting with the collapse of the economic boom of World War I. Various strategies of the stretch-out included replacement of human labor with machines, increased the number of looms an operative ran, institution of piece work, more supervisors on the job, and restriction of breaks and bathroom visits.<sup>289</sup> But in practice, the result was that managers sped up machinery to force a higher output, so workers had to do more in an eight-hour day than they did in ten or twelve, which they saw as a continuation of the stretch-out.<sup>290</sup> Southern workers joined the UTW in large numbers in 1933 and 1934.

### **The General Textile Strike of 1934**

The strike began on the morning of September 1, 1934 after Francis Gorman, the vice president of the UTW, issued the strike order on August 30, for local unions organized under the UTW. He felt frustration over dealing with the National Cotton Textile Industrial Relations Board and the National Recovery Administration, both of which the union felt had not sufficiently addressed the stubbornness of mill owners and their lack of enforcement of the cotton code. Workers in the south initiated a move for a strike over the issues of the stretch-out,

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<sup>288</sup> John A. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 28.

<sup>289</sup> John D. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama*, 8-9.

<sup>290</sup> Janet Irons, 65.

employers' lack of union recognition, and low wages. Southern workers walked off the job in Alabama and began striking as early as July 1934. The spread of the General Textile Strike throughout New England was marked by violence, especially in Rhode Island. The Governor of Rhode Island, T.F. Green, mobilized the Rhode Island National Guard to quell rioting outside the Sayles Finishing Plant in Lincoln on September 10, 1934. By contrast, in Massachusetts, cities such as Fall River and New Bedford experienced little violence during the strike. Workers from New Bedford and Fall River did make special trips to North Dighton, aiming to convince Mount Hope workers to go on strike and join the UTW. Going into 1934, there is no evidence that any workers at Mount Hope were unionized. In the coverage of events by the local paper, *Taunton Daily Gazette*, no members of the UTW who came to North Dighton made any mention of union workers at Mount Hope. The local paper described Mount Hope as the largest non-unionized plant in the area. Milliken's paternalism and propaganda had discouraged unionization at his company for years. The lack of union representation among the workers at Mount Hope was unusual for textile plants in the area, such as in Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Rhode Island.

During the early days of the General Textile Strike, North Dighton and neighboring Taunton remained relatively untouched. The *Taunton Daily Gazette*, reported on September 5, four days after the start of the strike, that "Mt. Hope...which employs over 1000 workers...[is] operating and no trouble is expected."<sup>291</sup> That same evening, despite the official reports that no trouble was expected at North Dighton, Milliken hired armed guards to protect the plant and the town. According to a later corporate history, Milliken and his two sons, Pete and Robert, had learned that union agitators and "irate strikers planned an invasion of North Dighton led by Ann

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<sup>291</sup> "Local Mills Feel Further Effect of Picketing," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 5, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

‘The Red’ Burlak and another radical organizer Mariano Bishop.”<sup>292</sup> Burlak worked as an organizer and eventual general secretary for the Communist-led National Textile Workers Union (NTWU). Thomas McMahon, President of the UTW, warned unions to not cooperate with her during the General Textile Strike because of her radical ideas. At a strike rally in Fall River, the UTW refused to give her permission to speak. Upon learning about these supposed plans, Milliken hired seventy-five armed guards from New Jersey to protect the plant, in addition to the watchmen employed regularly by Mount Hope to supplement the three-man police force of North Dighton and the armed guards. Fifty employees were “deputized” by the Millikens.<sup>293</sup>

On September 6, 1934, union members from Fall River indeed traveled to North Dighton, though local accounts did not mention specifically whether it was members of the UTW or NTWU who made the attempt. The *Taunton Daily Gazette* also made no reference to either Burlak or Bishop.<sup>294</sup> A later article specified that it was the UTW that had tried to enter North Dighton.<sup>295</sup> Strikers arrived at North Dighton in forty cars and two trucks, but police stopped them at the corner of School Street and Lincoln Avenue, within walking distance to the plant. The police officer then escorted the strikers roughly five miles to the Dighton-Somerset town line and sent them back to Fall River. Meanwhile, the company set up barricades of sand and wooden sawhorses on roads leading into North Dighton and stationed armed guards at them. The *Taunton Daily Gazette* described the situation as a “virtual state of martial law” within “a half mile radius of the Mount Hope Finishing Company.”<sup>296</sup> Rumors flew that the UTW allegedly

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<sup>292</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 44.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> “Mt. Hope Finishing Company Guarding All Approaches to the Big No. Dighton Plant,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 6, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

<sup>295</sup> “No Trouble Met at the Mt. Hope During the Night, Armed Guard May be Augmented Later, Difference in Opinion Among Strike Leaders of J.K. Milliken,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 8, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

<sup>296</sup> “Mt. Hope Finishing Company Guarding All Approaches to the Big No. Dighton Plant,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*,

had plans to invade North Dighton, and in reaction, Milliken grew more militant by hiring more armed guards and buying more guns to be distributed at the barricades.

This was not the first time Milliken battled the UTW. He had already challenged labor organization during the 1916 strike at the company when he defeated the Folders Union. This time he might have felt the stakes to be higher due to the economic conditions during the Great Depression and the deindustrialization of New England. The spectacle of his militancy sent a message to the UTW that he would protect his property and his authority at all costs. One unnamed strike leader did not view Milliken's actions as problematic and reportedly told the *Taunton Daily Gazette*, "...what Mr. Milliken did with his mill was his business. He isn't so bad to his help. If all bosses were like him maybe there wouldn't be any strike."<sup>297</sup> This statement should be read with caution. With Milliken's local connections, he could have had the *Taunton Daily Gazette* include a fabricated quote to make him appear as benevolent and a fair employer.

By September 10, 1934, Milliken had nearly 400 men guarding North Dighton. That same day, George B. Glidden, chairman of the Dighton Board of Selectman, issued a public statement directed toward the UTW and any other labor agitators:

The town of Dighton has no cotton or textile mills; its chief industry—the Mount Hope Finishing Company—is one that is not engaged in spinning, nor in weaving, nor in any other activity pertaining to the manufacture of cotton goods or other textiles. The Company is engaged merely in finishing fabrics already manufactured. The help employed therein are, without exception eager, to continue in their employment. The conditions of employment are satisfactory to them and have been for years. Not a single of the hundreds of employed has left his

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September 6, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

<sup>297</sup> "No Trouble Met at the Mt. Hope During the Night, Armed Guard May be Augmented Later, Difference in Opinion Among Strike Leaders of J.K. Milliken," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 8, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

employment or desires to do so. None has made any complaint about the working conditions. But our peaceful town has been subjected to invasion by strangers.<sup>298</sup>

This statement exemplified the local government principle that Mount Hope and North Dighton were intertwined as one single entity. It appears that the town tried to convince the UTW that Mount Hope workers did not need to go on strike because they did not participate directly in the manufacturing of cotton textiles. Mount Hope workers had to have recognized the inherent connection of their finishing work to the wider economic health of American textile industries, and their personal connection to wider labor issues, such as deindustrialization and relocation to the South. It is unknown how Mount Hope workers in general felt about Depression-era labor militancy, but there seemed to be a fair number of employees who did not want to strike and were satisfied with the working conditions. For their part, the selectmen and other members of Dighton's government probably feared violence erupting if the union broke Milliken's barricades. The statement by Glidden thus projected an idealized image of the success of the constructive labor policy instituted by Milliken during the late 1910s, in which workers remained loyal to Milliken due to his paternalistic management style. The company and the town government had close ties. North Dighton was a small community and rejected strikers as others, as dangerous troublemakers. No outsiders, in Milliken's philosophy of management, could come in between the company and the individual worker. Glidden's wording made it appear that because Mount Hope workers did not engage in the manufacturing of cotton goods, that they had no reason to go on strike.

Milliken apparently placated employees with his style of management, competitive wages, and continued fringe benefits during the Great Depression, although direct evidence is

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<sup>298</sup> "Glidden Issues Statement," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 10, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

limited, since no corporate records survive. Information about employment conditions at Mount Hope during the Great Depression thus comes from local newspaper coverage of the company, and company biographer Burke Davis, both sources to be approached with a certain skepticism. In July 1933, the *Boston Globe* reported that the Mount Hope Finishing Company ran at full capacity, and the greater textile industry of New England did not face a summer lull in production.<sup>299</sup> Davis devoted only one paragraph in *A Fierce Personal Pride* to employment conditions at Mount Hope during the Great Depression. According to Davis, business indeed suffered, so in early 1936 Milliken instituted “a short-time schedule but set all employees to washing windows, scrubbing floors, chopping brush, or mowing lawns, all at their usual rate of pay.”<sup>300</sup> However as conditions failed to improve, Milliken ordered “further cuts.”<sup>301</sup> Davis did not go into detail about these further cuts, but they were probably reduction in hours, or lay-offs. Yet that same year, in December 1936, the *Boston Globe* reported that Mount Hope Finishing Company “announced a general increase in wages for the 1200 employees, according to Joseph K. Milliken, treasurer. The amount of increase was not stated. Business at the mill the treasurer stated, is good at present.”<sup>302</sup> Davis claimed that the company still retained a profit during these years, but it is unclear how Milliken managed to continue paying competitive wages. Newspapers and Davis’s account do not allow for a full account of employment conditions at Mount Hope, but from what scant information these sources provide, Milliken appeared to try and keep employees on the job anyway possible and wages competitive.

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<sup>299</sup> “No Summer Lull for New England: Globe Survey Finds Improvement Continues to Spread to Additional Industries,” *Daily Boston Globe* (1928-1960), Jul 09, 1933, accessed February 16, 2020, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.iastate.edu/docview/757481855?accountid=10906>.

<sup>300</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of the Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family*, (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 50.

<sup>301</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride*, 50.

<sup>302</sup> “North Dighton Announces Pay Raise,” *Daily Boston Globe* (1928-1960), Dec 06, 1936, accessed February 16, 2020, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.iastate.edu/docview/847891341?accountid=10906>.

Even as Milliken kept nearly four hundred men guarding North Dighton, the company issued a new contract on September 13, 1934, which was later extended to December 1935. Milliken probably continued to pay wages competitive with union rates in the Providence district into 1935 and 1936. No payroll records from Mount Hope exist. However, a 1933 joint study on wages conducted by the Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics provides some insight into the average wages of workers employed in textile finishing in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The BLS based its study on data from 93 textile finishing plants across several different states. The analysts reported that in 1932, a typical employee in a textile finishing plant worked close to 50 hours a week on average, and earned close to \$20.00 per week.<sup>303</sup> Across all occupations in textile finishing, male workers in Rhode Island earned on average, \$3.27 more a week than male workers in Massachusetts. Female workers in textile finishing in Rhode Island earned on average \$1.65 more than the female workers in Massachusetts textile finishing.<sup>304</sup> Assuming Milliken did pay the competitive wages he claimed, the workers at Mount Hope would have made on average more money a week than other workers in Massachusetts textile finishing.

It also appears that Milliken continued providing some of the earlier era's fringe benefits to workers, which included medical care at the Mount Hope Hospital, recreational activities through the Mount Hope Club, and access to fresh produce, dairy, and eggs from the Mount Hope Farm. Throughout the 1930s, the Mount Hope Club regularly hosted social events such as carnivals, minstrel shows, and dinners. In 1939, the company sponsored a skiing trip to New

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<sup>303</sup> United States Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in the Dyeing and Finishing of Textiles, 1932* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), 28, accessed, February 16, 2020, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/3920/item/493169>.

<sup>304</sup> United States Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in the Dyeing and Finishing of Textiles, 1932* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), 28, accessed, February 16, 2020, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/3920/item/493169>.

Hampshire for nearly 650 of its employees.<sup>305</sup> Davis explained that it was company policy to provide these sorts of recreational activities for employees such as “ski trains to New Hampshire...and excursions to eastern Cape Cod for lobster bakes...”<sup>306</sup> The Mount Hope Club hosted festivities for members throughout the year, with sporting events that included pool, bowling, and dart leagues. To keep up company morale and employee loyalty, some departments in the company had their own social clubs. These included the Maintenance, Silk Finishing, and Cotton Finishing Departments. Departments often hosted banquets and dinners at the Mount Hope Club. During the General Textile Strike, Burke Davis argued, “The plant continued to run at its normal pace, and workers clung to their anti-union attitudes.” At least some employees at Mount Hope probably felt that they had it better than other workers in the textile industry and did not want to join the strikers.<sup>307</sup>

It is most likely that not all workers at the company harbored such sentiments. They may have feared retaliation by Milliken and other workers, not to mention the large number of armed guards stationed around town. Milliken’s staff also knew that they at least had steady employment at Mount Hope during the Great Depression, so they did not want to risk being fired by signing a union card or be seen associating with strikers who approached barricades. Milliken’s show of force against the union also sent a message to his employees about what might happen if they decided to walk out.

As noted above, on September 13, 1934, amidst the general atmosphere of labor unrest in the textile industry, Mount Hope released a new employment contract for workers to sign. This

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<sup>305</sup> “4000 Skiers Pack Trains From North,” *Daily Boston Globe (1928-1960)*, Feb 06, 1939, accessed February 16, 2020, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.iastate.edu/docview/820642242?accountid=10906>.

<sup>306</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 48.

<sup>307</sup> Burke Davis, 44.

contract, drawn up by the company, functioned as an agreement not to strike or join the union. Aiming to stop the formation of labor unions, many American employers used these “yellow-dog” contracts to require workers to agree not to join a labor union, as a condition of employment.<sup>308</sup> The passage of the Norris-LaGuardia Act in 1932 made yellow-dog contracts illegal, but Mount Hope used vague language to circumvent the illegality of the document. The signer agreed that “...he will not, at any time, during the continuance of this agreement or after the expiration or termination thereof, annoy, molest, or otherwise, directly or indirectly, interfere with the employees, customers, property or business of the employer.”<sup>309</sup> This vague language left much open to interpretation for the company to determine whether a worker was breaking the contract. The contract started on September 13, 1934 and ended on December 31, 1935. It is unknown if this contract replaced any previously existing employment contracts between Mount Hope and its workers. Considering Milliken’s combative stance towards organized labor, it is possible to guess that the company dismissed any workers who did not sign the contract. There is some language in the contract that hints at automatic dismissal if a worker refused to sign. The first clause of the contract states, “The employee hereby agrees to remain in the employ of the employer until the expiration or prior termination of this agreement, as hereinafter set forth.”<sup>310</sup> This clause appears to indicate that if the employee did not sign the contract, then they did not agree to remain employed at Mount Hope.

Milliken may have had this contract drawn up as an extra measure against the perceived threat of union encroachment. This document can also be understood as an extension of

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<sup>308</sup> Joel I. Seidman, “The Yellow Dog Contract,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 46 No. 2 (Feb. 1932): 348-349.

<sup>309</sup> Mount Hope Finishing Company, Employment Agreement Contract, September 13, 1934. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>310</sup> Mount Hope Finishing Company, Employment Agreement Contract, September 13, 1934. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

Milliken's paternalism and protection of his power, his control over the bodies of the workers that made them subjects of the company through discipline. Michel de Certeau argues that a legislative document, such as a contract, "refers to what is printed on our body, brands it...the mark of the Name and of the Law, and ultimately affects it...so as to turn it into a symbol of the Other, something *said, called, named*."<sup>311</sup> The contract controlled the employee's physical behavior. According to de Certeau, in order for law to be inscribed on bodies, "an apparatus is required that can mediate the relations between the former and the latter."<sup>312</sup> The apparatus used by the company could be the foreman, the timeclock, or the threat of unemployment.

It turns out that Milliken did not have much to worry about. The days of the strike passed without much excitement in North Dighton. On September 17, 1934, Milliken filed an injunction in the Taunton Superior Court against specific members of the UTW, including President Thomas J. McMahon, the man who had organized the folders in the Mount Hope strike eighteen years earlier, Vice President Francis J. Gorman, and several other high ranking members. The court granted the injunction against the union and restrained the specific defendants named and "each and every one of the members of the said United Textile Workers Union of America, and of said locals, their servants, agents, and attorneys...from intimidation, threatening, annoying, molesting, or hindering any person or persons in the employ of the plaintiff..."<sup>313</sup> Mount Hope Finishing Company entered a legal battle with the UTW for a permanent injunction against them. The company did not win a permanent injunction, but the strike soon ended. Southern employers refused to recognize the UTW or enforce code regulations. The threat of the UTW in North

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<sup>311</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Steven F. Rendell (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1984), 140.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>313</sup> "Temporary Restraint is Ordered by Judge Greenhalge on Petition Filed in the Superior Court by Mount Hope Finishing Company," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 18, 1934, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M311TDG312 Roll 311.

Dighton diminished and on September 25, four days after the end of the strike, Milliken called off 300 of his armed guards, reducing the number to 200, with more cuts soon to follow. A sense of normalcy returned to North Dighton. However, as an extra measure of security, the Mount Hope militia, composed of workers and townspeople, drilled for a few months after the strike, making their presence known as they marched through the streets. But as time passed, the militia's members lost interest.<sup>314</sup>

Mount Hope workers' voices are nearly absent from the historical record of the General Textile Strike. Their apparent lack of involvement with the unrest spreading through the rest of the textile industry in 1934 may suggest that at least some remained satisfied with Milliken and the relatively comfortable living and working conditions he provided during the Great Depression. Milliken's investment in benefits and creating a model mill village during previous years may well have benefited him during the Great Depression by discouraging his workers from joining the General Textile Strike. The working conditions at Mount Hope may have shaped attitudes of employees. They apparently did not face the same struggles of wages, stretch-outs, issues over union recognition, and disillusionment with New Deal policies as other workers in the North, and in the South. Milliken's relationship with Republican Congressman Joseph R. Martin, who thought that the New Deal was certain to "undermine and destroy" the United States and resisted reforms vehemently, might have also influenced workers.<sup>315</sup> If Milliken's workers did not share Southern workers' sense of faith in the NIRA and clause 7a, which guaranteed workers the right to form unions, then they would not have had that same sense of frustration. Mount Hope managers also sent employees the message that textile-industry unrest was already hurting them, because the city-wide mill shutdowns in New Bedford and Fall River endangered

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<sup>314</sup> Burke Davis, 45.

<sup>315</sup> Joseph R. Martin and Robert Donovan, *My First Fifty Years in Politics* (McGraw-Hill: New York, 1960), 66.

the flow of finishing work at Mount Hope. Finally, Mount Hope workers might have felt a lack of solidarity with union workers, and Milliken's pseudo-yellow-dog contract likely would have dampened any sense of embryonic unionism.

### **The 1951 Strike**

During the period between 1934 and 1951, Mount Hope appeared to have moderate financial success. The company survived the Great Depression and profited from the economic boom of World War II. By the 1940s, J.K. Milliken remained active in the affairs of the company but ceded the everyday running of the plant to Pete and Robert Milliken. Both sons became Chief Executive Officers of Mount Hope. Burke Davis argued "The approach of World War II found Mount Hope prosperous and its workers secure in their jobs and sheltered by a system of benefits..."<sup>316</sup> World War II also brought changes to the workforce at Mount Hope. The company hired new workers to keep up with production and replace men who went off to fight. By 1951 the company had close to 750 employees. Despite the financial success claimed by Davis, the threat of Southern competition within the textile industry still loomed. Pete Milliken wrote to workers in the April 1942 edition of the *Mount Hope News*:

Our transition to government work has been slow. This has been due to causes beyond our control... You have probably wondered why the army orders have been so small. In the first place there are many more cotton mills in the South and many fewer in the North than there were in the last war. The situation in New England is like the "vanishing Indians" of decades ago and there are not many mills left to vanish... Secondly, wages and freight charges are closely related

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<sup>316</sup> Burke Davis, *A Fierce Personal Pride: The Story of Mount Hope Finishing Company and the Challenges to its Founding Family* (Butner, North Carolina: The Mount Hope Finishing Company, 1981), 47.

to the situation. It costs approximately 1/2c per yard to ship most army greige goods from the South to New England.<sup>317</sup>

This article made workers aware of the growing threat of the South, while it highlighted some of the problems that faced Northern industry during wartime. Given the apparent advantages for Southern factory owners, moving their own operation to the South might well have looked like an increasingly attractive business opportunity. But a move South for J.K. Milliken would have meant abandoning the mill village that he had constructed and renouncing his patriarchal control over North Dighton. It was J.K. Milliken's semi-retirement and the increased role of his sons that ultimately made it easier for the company to envision a move to a southern state.

The company seemed to have experienced some financial trouble during the 1940s and into the 1950s, but it is impossible to know the exact figures. In August 1942, the company announced to all employees that due to an increase in the wage scale, "... the strain on the Mount Hope Finishing Co. is terrific. Because of price ceilings we cannot raise our prices to recover even a small part of the increase we have given...we simply cannot stay in business unless all of us are producing while we are on the pay roll."<sup>318</sup> Finances must have been a concern for the Millikens, because they hired Frank Daylor, the former chief of the Internal Revenue office in Fall River, as a business consultant sometime in the late 1940s. The way Burke Davis presented it in *A Fierce Personal Pride*, Daylor became the brainchild behind the company's decision to move south. In the winter of 1950-1951, the Millikens and Frank Daylor traveled to North

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<sup>317</sup> J.K. Milliken Jr., "Why Our Government Orders Have Been Few," *Mount Hope News* Vol. 1 No. 5 April 1942, 4. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

<sup>318</sup> "Employees Please Note," *Mount Hope News* Vol. 1 No. 7 July-August 1942, 5. Mount Hope Finishing Company Collection, Dighton Historical Society.

Carolina to scout a location for a new textile plant. Daylor, J.K., and Robert Milliken “were strongly in favor of working toward a move southward,” while Pete Milliken opposed it.<sup>319</sup>

Meanwhile, workers at Mount Hope probably sensed a threat to their jobs and turned to union representation and collective bargaining, aimed to stop the company from closing and moving to the South. Local historian Helen Lane explained that in May of 1951, a small group of “dissatisfied employees began to meet to discuss organizing the employees. Other areas of annoyance—long latent—came to the surface.”<sup>320</sup> Unfortunately, these long-latent grievances are lost to history. Nevertheless, by the summer, some workers signed union cards with the Textile Workers Union of America. It is not known what happened with the pseudo-yellow-dog-contracts of 1934 or if management decided to keep them. Management might not have thought that it was necessary to extend such tough labor contracts after the General Textile Strike of 1934 subsided. Milliken may have thought that the threat of union agitation after September 1934 diminished. There is no existing record indicating that Mount Hope employees in between 1934 and 1951 had to sign any contracts promising not to join any labor unions. It does not appear that any workers at Mount Hope were in unions from 1934 to 1951.

There are a few potential reasons why workers in 1951 turned to union representation when they had not in 1934, or any time after 1916. The first is that the apparent immediate threat of factory relocation meant that workers truly felt only the union could save them from losing their jobs and stopping Mount Hope from joining the contemporary capital flight. But there also seemed to be a shift in mentality among workers by the 1950s, who did not share the earlier generations’ perspective on the benefits of paternalism and welfare capitalism.

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<sup>319</sup> Burke Davis, 69.

<sup>320</sup> Helen H. Lane, *History of the Town of Dighton: the South Purchase, May 30, 1712* (Dighton: Town of Dighton, 1962), 197.

By the 1930s, welfare capitalism shifted away from the insular world of the workplace and company town of the Progressive era, increasingly moving to incorporate national political engagement into management concepts. Sanford Jacoby argues that one reason for this shift was that in the 1930s, government became more active in American life through the growth of the welfare state, and in businesses through government legislation.<sup>321</sup> Companies that practiced welfare capitalism after the New Deal increasingly focused on issues beyond their particular workplace, such as wider labor reform, social security, and utilization of developments in the behavioral sciences to change workers' attitudes.

While factory owners acknowledged developments in the world beyond the plant, their workers did too. The Great Depression altered the political landscape and a more assertive and unified working class developed. By the 1930s and 1940s, "Reticence and ethnic parochialism gradually were replaced by a sense of entitlement and Americanism, sentiments that attracted people to industrial unions and the New Deal."<sup>322</sup> In the postwar period, organized labor was weakened by the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which made substantial changes to the pro-labor Wagner Act of 1935. The Taft-Hartley Act essentially denied the rights organized labor had won over the previous fifteen years. It proposed to give management more control over the conduct of union-representation elections and to let states to pass "right to work" legislation, which undermined the closed shop.<sup>323</sup> Management also had on their side the political climate of the second Red Scare, as organized labor in the United States became linked with communism and

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<sup>321</sup> Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 193.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>323</sup> Philip Dray, *There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 496-497.

radicalism. Ellen Schrecker explains, “Red-baiting offered anti-union employers a way to legitimize opposition to organize labor without having to refer to economic issues.”<sup>324</sup>

As discussed above, paternalism and welfare capitalism had been strong forces in American industry for decades, shaping behavior, ideas, and interactions of workers, managers, and owners alike. Looking at the late nineteenth century company town of Fayette, Michigan, historian Sarah Cowie argues that the process of control over workers “made the town’s residents their subjects; it created a chain of paternalistic authority, inaugurated by the company and then passed down through the heads of household.”<sup>325</sup> This probably happened in North Dighton too, when the sons and daughters of plant employees also got jobs at Mount Hope. Through their parents, they experienced Milliken’s paternalism and authority. But World War II had brought new workers into the company. Some of the young men employed at Mount Hope went off to fight, and they needed to be replaced. By 1951, employees who could afford cars, or take public transport, increasingly lived outside of North Dighton. In surrounding cities and towns such as Taunton and Somerset, Massachusetts, these workers were not constantly under the control of the company by living in its houses and walking through the streets that the company had shaped. By the early 1950s, the younger generations to work at the plant grew up in a different socio-political context than their parents had.

On July 24, 1951, 323 Mount Hope employees applied for membership with the Textile Workers Union of America-C.I.O. (TWUA) as their collective bargaining agent.<sup>326</sup> In the

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<sup>324</sup> Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 49.

<sup>325</sup> Sarah Cowie, *The Plurality of Power: An Archaeology of Industrial Capitalism* (New York: Springer, 2011), 114.

<sup>326</sup> Intermediate report of Case Docket No. 1-CA-1085 In the Matter of Mount Hope Finishing Company, Mount Hope Finishing Company, Inc. Joseph K. Milliken, Frank L. Daylor and Robert D. Milliken and Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, IR-830 Taunton, Mass, 3, MSS 396 Box 238 Folder Mount Hope, Wisconsin Historical Society, Textile Workers Union of America Records, 1915-1994.

*Taunton Daily Gazette* on July 26, Robert Milliken denied the rumors that circulated about “the Mount Hope Finishing plant... would be sold and the concern moved to the Carolinas...”<sup>327</sup> At first, Mount Hope did not attempt to lay off workers who signed union cards. On July 28, vice president Pete Milliken received a letter from the TWUA, requesting the company recognize the union as the collective bargaining agent for its employees.<sup>328</sup> The company then decided to lay off 185 workers on July 30, only two days after the union asked for recognition. Before the layoffs, Mount Hope had a total of 615 employees on the payroll, and after the layoffs it retained only 425 employees. Out of the 615 employees, around 53% signed union cards and out of the 185 employees laid off, 69% had signed union cards, suggesting a targeted layoff and a violation of fair labor practices.<sup>329</sup> On August 3, Mount Hope management responded to the union’s July 28 letter with a declaration that the company was “unable and unwilling” to recognize the TWUA “as representing the majority of the employees... unless your Union has been duly certified as the collective bargaining agent for the employees by the appropriate governmental agency,” the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).<sup>330</sup> The Millikens prepared to fight the union with everything that they could.

On Friday, August 10, the legal team for Mount Hope and the Millikens met with NLRB representatives in North Dighton to discuss the parameters of a union election, but they denied the TWUA the right to sit in on the meeting. This refusal to allow the union to attend discussion frustrated workers, so that same evening, the close to 300 employees who had signed union cards

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<sup>327</sup> “Mount Hope Plant Stable; Firm Eyes Southern Branch, *Taunton Daily Gazette*, July 26, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG436 Roll 434.

<sup>328</sup> “Mt Hope Company Questions Union’s Claim of Majority Representation,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, August 7, 1951, 2, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG436 Roll 435.

<sup>329</sup> Kelsey Murphy, “The Politics of Paternalism: New England’s Textile Industry from Corporate Capitalism to the Second Red Scare,” 37, BSU Honors Program Theses and Projects, accessed January 16, 2020, [https://vc.bridgew.edu/honors\\_proj/215](https://vc.bridgew.edu/honors_proj/215).

<sup>330</sup> “Mt Hope Company Questions Union’s Claim of Majority Representation,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, August 7, 1951, 2, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG436 Roll 435.

met and voted to strike on the following Monday, August 13, 1951.<sup>331</sup> At the time of the strike, workers had no existing employment contract with Mount Hope.<sup>332</sup> The Millikens planned to keep the plant running as usual, with their 363 production workers working two shifts. On the morning of August 13, seventy-five striking employees picketed the entrances to the plant, while sixty non-striking production workers, as well as clerical and administrative staff, crossed the lines. The next day, the picket line grew by forty-seven workers to a total of 122, and only fifteen production workers crossed into the plant.<sup>333</sup> Picketing of the plant continued throughout the duration of the strike, and workers usually crossed the picket lines without much incident.

On September 10, 1951, Mount Hope sought an injunction against TWUA pickets in the Suffolk County Superior court in Boston. This injunction was probably sought to challenge the union, and because of some tensions that arose between striking and non-striking employees. Supposedly, striking employees threw tomatoes at non-striking employees and their automobiles. Police Chief of Dighton and former Mount Hope employee John W. Synan claimed that strikers had poured sugar in the gas tank of an employee's car, threw nails down near the entrances of the plant, and launched a can of paint at a non-striker's car.<sup>334</sup> Some allegedly threw stones at company property; others supposedly removed company-owned benches in the park outside of the plant and threw caustic lime on the grass in order to kill it. The Board of Selectmen in

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<sup>331</sup> "Mount Hope-C.I.O. Row Reaches Crisis as 300 Vote to Strike Monday: Union Disputes Company Claim on LRB Talk; Counsel for Firm Says Plant 'Open as Usual Monday,'" *Taunton Daily Gazette*, August 11, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 434.

<sup>332</sup> "60 Cross Mt. Hope Picket Lines: North Dighton Strike Peaceful This Morning," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, August 13, 1951, 3, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 434.

<sup>333</sup> "Mt. Hope Plant Pickets Add 47; 15 Cross Lines: Company Position 'Unchanged'; LRB Sets Hearing 23d," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 14, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 435.

<sup>334</sup> "Armed Violence Erupts as Mob of Dighton Strikers Goes Amok in 'Riotous' Nocturnal Parade," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 12, 1951, 8, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 436.

Dighton requested assistance from the police force in neighboring Taunton, but the Taunton Police Force could not spare the extra men to patrol North Dighton.

During the strike, Mount Hope management and lawyers tried to fight the workers' right to hold a union election. After almost a month-long legal battle between the company, the union, and the NLRB to set a date for the union election, workers received news on September 11 that the election had been granted for September 17. The NLRB ruled that the 190 workers laid off by the company in July could vote in the union election. Workers celebrated and paraded through the streets of North Dighton, throwing rocks at the homes of non-striking employees along the way. The *Taunton Daily Gazette* did not label it a celebration, rather a "Riotous' Nocturnal Parade."<sup>335</sup> An unknown striker allegedly hit Edith O'Connell, the wife of a non-striking employee, in the face with a rock. O'Connell had been outside her home on Summer Street, allegedly dousing strikers in water with a garden hose. This prompted her husband Edward O'Connell to fire his gun above the heads of the crowd of strikers. The police did not break up the crowd of strikers until 1 a.m. the next morning.<sup>336</sup>

On September 17, 1951, Mount Hope employees voted 369-210 in favor of union representation. Voting took place inside the Mount Hope Club. Officials from the NLRB presided over the voting. A crowd of workers gathered outside after the close of voting, and when NLRB field examiner William J. Sheehan announced the union victory, workers erupted into cheers. Most traveled to the nearby Portuguese Club on Baker Road in Taunton to celebrate. Before the workers left, union organizer Mariano S. Bishop from Fall River reminded workers

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<sup>335</sup> "Armed Violence Erupts as Mob of Dighton Strikers Goes Amok in 'Riotous' Nocturnal Parade," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 12, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 436.

<sup>336</sup> "Armed Violence Erupts as Mob of Dighton Strikers Goes Amok in 'Riotous' Nocturnal Parade," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 12, 1951, 8, Old Colony History Museum Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 436.

that picketing had to continue until the company negotiated with the union for a contract.<sup>337</sup>

However, the joy of victory was short lived. The next day, Robert Milliken announced that the Mount Hope Finishing Company had decided to cease operations, this decision coming less than 24 hours after the TWUA-CIO won collective bargaining rights. In a statement to the *Taunton Daily Gazette*, Milliken stated, “When you can’t do business with the union you’ve got stop operations,” but he also denied that the closure had anything to do with the TWUA victory.<sup>338</sup>

The Mount Hope Finishing Company officially closed in North Dighton on October 20, 1951. Before the closure, Milliken sold equipment from Mount Hope to the Creedmore Company of Butner, North Carolina, which soon re-incorporated as the Mount Hope Finishing Company of Butner, North Carolina. Pete Milliken sold his shares and severed ties with Mount Hope and remained in Massachusetts. Frank Daylor bought Milliken’s shares on October 26 and became the new Vice President of the re-located Mount Hope Finishing Company. Close to twenty former Mount Hope employees made the trip to Butner, North Carolina to work at the new Creedmore Company.

Citing the episode as a case of capital flight to avoid collective bargaining, the NLRB filed a complaint against Mount Hope Finishing Company, Joseph K. Milliken, Frank L. Daylor and Robert D. Milliken in 1952 for several violations of the Taft-Hartley Act. After a string of hearings in Taunton, the trial examiner C.W. Whittmore found that the respondents had engaged in unfair labor practices by discriminating against union employees in the July 30 lay off and refusing to engage in collective bargaining in violation of the Taft-Hartley Act. In addition, he ordered them to offer jobs at the new plant in Butner to the employees from Dighton who were

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<sup>337</sup> “Mt. Hope Officials Satisfied CIO 369-210 Victory Reflects Wishes of Employees,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 18, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 436.

<sup>338</sup> “Mt. Hope Plant Will Close: Decision Comes from Meeting of Officials,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, September 19, 1951, 1, Old Colony History Microfilm Collection, M436TDG437, Roll 436.

discharged or locked out on September 19, 1951, and also to pay for their moving expenses if they decided to work at the new Mount Hope, and provide them back-pay. The company appealed and won a hearing in the NLRB Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1954. Judge Morris A. Soper who wrote the decision overturned C.W. Whittmore's earlier conclusion, declaring:

...it was obvious to the company that if it could not make a go of the business prior to 1951, before the union was formed, it would be no better able to succeed after the pressure of the union was added to its existing difficulties. It is noteworthy that neither in its opinion nor in its brief does the Board dwell upon the unfavorable economic conditions which for years have confronted the textile industry in New England. The union was not the cause that closed the business in Massachusetts.<sup>339</sup>

Mount Hope moved for industry-wide economic reasons, not specifically to avoid the union, according to this ruling. The new ruling did not change the fact that Mount Hope had discriminated in laying off employees and avoided collective bargaining. Economic conditions were difficult in New England by the 1950s, but the union victory most likely influenced Mount Hope's decision to move South as soon as possible.

### **Conclusion**

Milliken's investments in welfare capitalism and improvements to North Dighton, along with his measures to control local conditions, apparently paid off when his workers remained loyal to him during the 1934 General Textile Strike. By then, workers were fully ensconced in Milliken's paternalism, especially those who had been with the company following World War I,

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<sup>339</sup> "Mount Hope Finishing Co. et al. v. National Labor Relations Board. Textile Workers Union of America (CIO), v. National Labor Relations Board et al, 211 F.2d 365 (4<sup>th</sup> Circ. 1954)," accessed, February 16, 2020, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/211/365/187008/>.

when Milliken started to invest more heavily in company housing, the constructive labor policy, and village improvement. The paternalism workers experienced was often passed to their family members, some of whom also worked for the company. But by the end of World War II, the socio-political landscape had changed, along with some components of the company. J.K. Milliken did not participate in the day-to-day operations of the plant, and was not as active as he had been. The respect he fostered, through his visibility in town affairs and in the mill, might not have been passed to his sons, especially Robert, who often travelled to the New York office. Robert and Pete did not have the same authority as their father. Younger, newer workers who joined the company in the years after 1934 and perhaps especially after World War II did not share the older workers' experiences with Mount Hope's paternalism and corporate welfare. In the years after 1934, Milliken's paternalism and control over North Dighton started to diminish. By the early 1950s, workers feared that their jobs could move South and turned to union representation to protect them. That it failed to do so was a consequence of action beyond its control.

Through the economic ups and downs between 1916 and 1951, it appears that the bulk of Mount Hope workers accepted Milliken's authority and style of management and believed that joining the union would not benefit them. They most likely felt protected and sheltered from the realities of deindustrialization that many of their fellow workers in the textile industry faced. Milliken used competitive wages and fringe benefits to induce his employees to remain loyal to him throughout the years and not to turn to a union throughout the 1920s to the 1950s. The industrial enclave he created in North Dighton, with the help of the designs of Olmsted Brothers, meant that North Dighton came to reflect, in its built environment, the constructive labor policy of the company. Certain aspects of the built environment, such as uniform lot sizes and similarly

designed houses, created an illusion of classlessness for those that lived in one of the hundreds of company-built houses. The lack of direct surveillance of his workers in North Dighton, in contrast to some other industrial towns, hints at Milliken's expectation of loyalty from his employees.

In a sense, the history of the Mount Hope Finishing Company represented a win for the system of capitalism. Milliken successfully utilized paternalism through the constructive labor policy to formulate a corporate ethos that dampened a sense of working-class identity among shop floor employees. Paternalism is a collective form of social organization. All of Milliken's subordinates, or his employees, were all entitled to the same benefits. Much of company propaganda, in the *Mount Hope News*, various company funded booklets, and the rhetoric of the constructive labor policy relayed a sense of individual responsibility to the company, and not a collective responsibility of the workers to each other. Yet workers generally had at least some freedom to accept this system of paternalism, with fringe benefits, competitive wages, and respect from their employer. This style of management and duty became part of the corporate culture of Mount Hope. Milliken made his presence known in the plant, and around North Dighton. This message sought to assure these employees, for many of the years in which the company operated in North Dighton, that they did not need to turn to the outside protection of a union to advance their interests. Only in 1951, when the company decided to move South and abandon operations in North Dighton, did employees turn to the TWUA to protect their interests. Paternalism had done its job to stop unionization of workers for nearly fifty years. The result was a strike to protect their jobs from the volatile system of capitalism, but also a rejection of the paternalism, and authority of the Milliken family.

This case study of paternalism at Mount Hope Finishing Company is an example of how capitalists manufacture consent of employees, in order to have control over them.<sup>340</sup> Milliken skillfully combined both fear and expectations of loyalty, in order to keep his workforce from turning against him and unionizing. Milliken utilized hard-handed methods of control such as his influence over town politics, and governance over community life, and his crackdown on labor organization during the 1916 strike. In 1934, Milliken embraced the use of armed force against any potential unionization. This study also illustrates the complex nature of the relationship between labor and capital. Some of the less overt methods of control came from inducements such as workers' recreation, the payment of competitive wages, and Milliken's construction of the built environment of his enclave of North Dighton. Workers mostly accepted Milliken's style of management, but that does not mean that every worker accepted it, even as they lived and worked amidst the corporate ethos of Mount Hope.

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<sup>340</sup> Robert Storey, "Unionization versus Corporate Welfare: The "Dofasco Way,"" *Labour/ Le Travail*, Vol. 12 (Autumn, 1983): 7-42.

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