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Photos taken by members of Environmental Planning (ENVI 302) during Fall 1995.
Introduction to the Research Guide

About North Adams

The city of North Adams, MA is situated in the northwest corner of Massachusetts. Once home to over 20,000 residents, this former industrial stronghold has seen its population decrease to approximately 16,000 in recent years.

North Adams was originally part of the neighboring town of Adams, but residents voted to make it a separate entity in the late nineteenth century, and it was incorporated as a city in the 1890's. From its first decades, it became apparent that North Adams' source of prosperity would not be in agriculture (the soil being rather poor for that endeavor) but its abundant water power. This attracted both local and regional investors, and lent the town an industrial bent once infrastructural improvements permitted manufacturers to reach extensive markets for their goods. Trains proved to be a huge factor in this process, and North Adams businessmen lobbied to ensure secure routes of transit. By the mid-nineteenth century, manufacturing was booming: the big industries of the time were textiles and shoes, but production of all kinds of goods was prolific and varied, spurring the town's rapid growth in both population and physical size. Manufacturing in North Adams not only determined the business make-up of the town, but also affected its demographics as a flood of immigrant workers of Irish, Italian, and French Canadian descent (the dominant places of origin) migrated to the city in search of work in the city's mills and factories. These immigrants soon became the dominant ethnic groups, and the newcomers' churches, clubs, and schools have helped to form the character of the city. Although factory owners began to distance themselves from the newcomers over time, the workers have a rich history of labor activity of their own which, though sometimes obscured by time and news coverage, sought to advance their status even though this also put them at odds with their employers at times.
The textile industry remained the dominant industry despite some tough periods through the turn of the century, with the Arnold Print Works leading the way from its sprawling mill complex on Marshall Street. The Arnold Print Works, according to several North Adams residents, was the driving force keeping North Adams workers and the city's economy afloat during the Depression years, as other manufacturers fell by the wayside.

The Depression also brought a new player to town, a fledgling electronic components manufacturer called Sprague Specialties Corporation. Sprague struggled through the Depression, but surged with government contracts during World War II, just as the owners of the Arnold Print Works decided to liquidate the company after being unable to obtain government orders. The sprawling complex on Marshall Street was not vacant for long: soon Sprague (now known as Sprague Electric) moved into the site for what would prove to be a forty-plus year occupation.

During this time, North Adams essentially became a company town—at one point, about a quarter of the city's workers were employed by the company. A distinct workers' society sprung up within Sprague—replete with publications, parties, and banquets—which won the loyalty of many, even as their unions only slowly managed to get Sprague to increase the wages and benefits offered by the company to its employees.

Eventually, Sprague's tenure also came to an end—this time due to corporate takeovers and souring employee-management relations. The complex on Marshall Street—largely vacated in 1986—once again faced a period of uncertainty and transition, with many of its former workers left feeling betrayed and bitter by the company's evacuation and confused about what to do next. Although the idea of bringing in another manufacturer to take Sprague's place was bandied about, the potential for traditional industry endeavors in western Massachusetts was rather limited, and instead plans for a new museum featuring contemporary art were developed, proposing to change the city's economic focus from traditional production-oriented facilities to one based on new "high" technologically-oriented fields and tourism. The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA) is scheduled to open in 1998, after a decade-long battle to obtain adequate funding and iron out a feasible development plan. It proposes to provide a boost to the struggling economy of the city, but will not employ nearly as many people (at least directly) as its predecessors. The nature of the project also leaves many residents wondering how the character of their living environment will be affected by the project, and looking to the past to help explain the present and move on toward the future.
Using this Research Guide

The history of North Adams is a complex one, with many interesting facets to explore, including business trends, narratives of labor and immigration, and architectural and structural development. The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance for those interested in doing research on North Adams, especially as it pertains to industry and the Marshall Street complex which once held the Arnold Print Works and Sprague Electric. There are many sources about a variety of topics concerning North Adams, but they are scattered about at different libraries and other sites, making research a bit time-consuming and tedious.

In the process of compiling this guide, I did a lot of this legwork, and hopefully the result currently in your hands can help make hunting down sources a bit easier. The bibliography covers a variety of topics, and sources are listed according to their corresponding topics, often more than once. The sources are a diverse lot, ranging from conventional books and articles to interviews, videos, and even a dramatic presentation. The bibliography lists the title, publishing information, and location(s) of each source, and within each sections items are in a roughly chronological order. A corresponding set of detailed summaries (arranged alphabetically by the name of the author or collection) is provided to help you decide which sources are likely to be relevant to your needs and interests. The contacts list lets you know how to get in touch with the individuals or institutions holding the materials, and how they go about allowing you to access them. In addition, a separate site map section is provided to help you get a feel for the city and the Marshall Street complex.

Enjoy, and if you have any comments, please feel free to send them to

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Research Contacts

Amherst College Library (ACL)

Additional copies of some of the books listed here may be found at Amherst College's Library. Call [Ph. (413) 542-2319] or visit the library’s web site (http://www.amherst.edu/~library) for hours of operation, contacts, catalogues, etc.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)

Formerly known as North Adams State College Library, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library is located on Church Street in the Freel Building. Call for hours of operation [Ph. (413) 662-5321], or see the library’s web site (http://www.mcla.mass.edu/nascinfo/library). Permanent residents of Berkshire County and students at any Massachusetts State College may check out books (the latter through an walk-in version of Inter-library loan); Williams College students must fill out an application from the Williams College library before doing so. The electronic catalog system here is currently a bit cumbersome; one might do better to use the card catalog. Director Ann Terryberry and reference librarian Susan Denault are quite knowledgeable about the local history collection. Most of the local reference books and other items here are in a vault and need to be specifically requested at the circulation desk.

Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA)

MassMoCA, a museum focusing on contemporary art which is scheduled to open in 1998, has offices at 87 Marshall Street in North Adams (01247). The site of the former Sprague Electric and Arnold Print Work complex is currently being renovated for museum exhibition, performance,
and production spaces. Plans for the site, program, and community outreach are available at MassMoCA or on their web page (http://www.massmoca.org). A copy of the museum's Feasibility Study and numerous artifacts relating to Sprague's tenure in the buildings exist here; if you wish to examine these call [Ph. (413) 664-4481] or fax [Ph. (413) 663-8548] ahead of time to arrange your visit with the museum staff.

North Adams Public Library (NAPL)

The North Adams Public Library is located on Church Street in North Adams. [Ph. (413) 662-3133] Open from Monday-Saturday during the school year, Monday-Friday during the summer (except for national holidays), hours vary. A library card is needed to check out materials, with a special application for those who wish to take out videos. Temporary residents of the area may also apply for a card—a local phone number is needed to verify residence.

North Adams allows a fair portion of its local history section to go into circulation and also has a number of articles in its vault. Vault items are often not marked in the card catalog (usually when there is another copy in circulation), though librarians are willing to look for items if given the call number, title, and author.

North Adams State College Library

North Adams State College was recently renamed the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; please see that listing.

Files of Maynard Seider (MS)

A professor of sociology at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Seider is an avid local historian and has written a number of articles about union activity in North Adams. He maintains a small collection of papers and essays regarding local history in his office in Murdoch Hall, where he also has a number of video and audio tapes of interest, including coverage of a Sprague "Fun Fair" during the 1980's, a tape of R.C. Sprague being interviewed on the company's radio program, and a performance of the play The Sprague Years at the College (with an additional tape featuring a Q & A session with R.C.'s son John following one of the performances). Seider may be reached at his office at (413) 662-5476, or in writing at Department of Sociology, Murdoch Hall, Church St., Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, MA 01247.
Williams College Sawyer Library (WCL)

Opened every day during the school year (with limited summer hours), the library [Ph. (413) 597-2501] maintains a computerized card catalog system, Francis, which also lists most of the items in its subsidiary libraries on campus, including the College Archives and the Matt Cole Library at the Center for Environmental Studies. Hours, information, and the on-line catalog are available on the library's web pages. (http://www.williams.edu:803/library/library.www/wcl.html) Williams students, alumni, faculty, and Williamstown residents may take out books after obtaining a library card, and anyone is welcome to read books inside the library.

Williams College Archives (WCA)

Located on the first floor of Stetson Hall (adjacent to Sawyer Library), this non-circulating collection contains a number of local histories and documents, as well as several student theses which are germane to the study of the Arnold Print Works and Sprague Electric, as well as the general development of industry and town demographics. Since the Arnold Print Works operated a subsidiary company in Williamstown (the Williamstown Manufacturing Company), a number of relevant works deal with Williamstown.

The College Archives [Ph. (413) 597-2568] are generally open from 8:30AM-4:30PM weekdays, year-round (except holidays). To request to see a work, give the archivist the title, author, and call number. In the case of student theses, give the title, author, year and department in which the thesis was written. All works must be examined in the archives room, though special requests may be made for the photocopy of some materials.

Matt Cole Library, Center for Environmental Studies, Williams College (CES)

A branch of Williams' Sawyer Library, the Matt Cole Library [Ph. (413) 597-2500] in Kellogg House has a number of specific sources about the Marshall Street site in North Adams—including a clippings file on MassMoCA. There are also several books dedicated to Berkshire County in general in which information on North Adams and its industries may be found. The Library maintains extensive hours throughout the week during the school year, and is open from 8:30AM-4:30PM weekdays during most of the summer and some of the school year vacations.
University of Massachusetts at Amherst: W.E.B. DuBois Library—Special Collections (UMAW)

The UMass-Amherst Library has duplicates of a few of works listed in this bibliography. Hours of operation and other information are available either by calling the library directly [Ph. (413) 545-0414] or through the DuBois Library web page (http://www.library.umass.edu)

In addition, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Special Collections department [Ph. (413) 545-2780] has a collection of papers covering the activities of Sprague production workers' Independent Condenser Workers' Union (ICW #2) and its successor, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE Local #200). The collection, MS #315, is contained in four boxes, measuring two linear feet. Special Collections is located on the 25th floor of the W.E.B. Library.
Bibliography

I. General History and Indices
   A. General Development
   B. Hoosac Tunnel
   C. Arnold Print Works
   D. Sprague Electric
   E. Local Business Leaders
   F. Miscellaneous Manufacturers

II. Business
   A. General Development
   B. Hoosac Tunnel
   C. Arnold Print Works
   D. Sprague Electric
   E. Local Business Leaders
   F. Miscellaneous Manufacturers

III. Labor
   A. General Works
   B. Immigration
   C. Unions

IV. Social Conditions
   A. Churches
   B. Schools
   C. Clubs, Sports Teams, etc.
   D. Miscellaneous

V. Local Politics

VI. Architectural/Structural Development and Transportation

I. General Histories and Indices

Published Sources:


II. Business
   A. General Development

**Published Sources:**


* North Adams and Adams: Their Representative Businessmen and Points of Interest. New York: Mercantile Illustrating Company, c. 1894. (NAPL)


**Unpublished Sources:**


**Videos, Artifacts, and Records:**

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B. Hoosac Tunnel

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:

Videos, Artifacts, and Records:
C. Arnold Print Works

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:


**Video, Artifacts, and Records:**


**D. Sprague Electric**

**Published Sources:**


**Unpublished Sources:**


**Videos, Artifacts, and Records:**


**E. Local Business Leaders**

**Published Sources:**


* North Adams and Adams: Their Representative Businessmen and Points of Interest. New York: Mercantile Illustrating Company, c. 1894. (NAPL)


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


F. Miscellaneous Manufacturers

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


III. Labor
A. General

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


B. Immigration

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Unpublished Sources:


**Videos, Artifacts, and Records:**


**C. Unions**

**Published Sources:**


* Burns, Stewart. "Like a Family? Women Workers at Sprague Electric, 1930-1980," a report for *Shifting Gears: The Changing Meaning of Work in Massachusetts*, a project of...
the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy. North Adams: Western Gateway Heritage State Park, c. 1989. (MS)


Unpublished Sources:
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Videos, Artifacts, and Records:
*


IV. Social Conditions

A. Churches

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


B. Schools

Published Sources:


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


C. Clubs, Sports Teams, etc.

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Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


D. Miscellaneous

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V. Local Politics

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Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


VI. Architectural/Structural Development and Transportation

Published Sources:


* North Adams and Adams: Their Representative Businessmen and Points of Interest. New York: Mercantile Illustrating Company, c. 1894. (NAPL)


Unpublished Sources:


Videos, Artifacts, and Records:


Location(s): Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library (Periodicals)

Baker's essay for the HJM is apparently a condensed version of her undergraduate thesis of the same title (Purchase, NY: Manhattanville College, April 18, 1980), and focuses on the town of Blackinton, which was incorporated into North Adams in the late nineteenth century. Named after prominent North Adams manufacturer Sanford Blackinton, the area was then dominated by his woollen factory, the Blackinton Mill (est. 1821). Baker devotes her essay to studying the evolution of the increasingly distanced relationship between Blackinton and the mill's labor force, and the effects that these changes had on their experience of the work place.

During the early years of his factory's development, Blackinton remained close to his workers, living in a modest home near their own residences and maintaining a strong presence in the day-to-day operations of the mill. However, this feeling of closeness and "industrial harmony" deteriorated along with working conditions in the mills as profits soared for the mill as a result of the Civil War and as the workforce began to be dominated by immigrant Welsh laborers. Blackinton himself withdrew to an ostentatious mansion in the heart of North Adams, and the workers found themselves facing a series of pay cuts and lay-offs, which they protested without much success. After one lay-off in 1876, workers who were re-hired for a shorter working day discovered that they were only being paid for an 8 hour shift and working almost an hour extra each day without pay. When the company admitted the error but did nothing about it, the workers reacted by striking. This eight day strike was ultimately unsuccessful in obtaining compensation for the extra time—due in part to draconian methods employed by the mill's management. Even so, Baker argues that it was nevertheless important for the workers in that the experience allowed them to redefine the terrain of the working environment, take pride in their labor and their ethnic solidarity, and also positioned them to fight for their right to bargain with companies in the future.

Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Call No. Ref. 728B)

Baldessarini focuses on trends in North Adams architectural projects over the course of a century as he forms connections between architectural and societal developments. He covers both owner and worker housing, and finds that the expansion of industrial endeavors in North Adams gradually created distinctive working and owner class neighborhoods, which had quite disparate housing standards. During the first half of the nineteenth century, when hard currency was scarce and transport modes for supporting extensive commerce almost altogether lacking, mill ownership did not necessarily indicate unusual wealth, and owners lived in the simple style of their workers, with earthen-floored, small homes. However, as North Adams manufacturers grew progressively wealthier and its work force increasingly non-native, owners built houses which in their grandeur and imposing stature—as well as their non-local design—emphasized a greater physical and architectural differentiation from the tenement homes of the working class.

Baldessarini provides a history of the homes of manufacturers and the development of worker housing in the city, as well as the conditions created by the city's construction history. In assessing the state of North Adams housing conditions at the time (1958), he finds that although the city doesn't face much trouble via domination by old, deteriorating mill housing, there does need to be a greater amount of forward thinking and cooperation if residents are to avoid being dominated by the reckless subdivision of existing housing and the fault-ridden construction of "warmed-over Cape Cods" that began after World War II. Since businessmen and factory owners of the previous century were often able to guide the shape of the town simply by their choice of lot divisions and building specifications, Baldessarini argues that this has created a sort of architectural selfishness in North Adams that could prove harmful if left unchecked.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Ref. 385B)
Bird's book provides a good sample of the arguments of those who fought against the Hoosac Tunnel as it was being planned and built in the mid-nineteenth century. Bird was apparently as passionate about his side of the fray as Harrison (The Great Bore: A Souvenir of the Hoosac Tunnel: A History of the Tunnel) was for the ultimately triumphant tunnel supporters, and perhaps even more so. With great fervor and a highly melodramatic tone he attacks the project as an "all-devouring maelstrom." In the process he cites the outrageously over-budget expenses of the then eighteen year long process, alleges corruption on the part of one of the project directors and various politicians, and argues that the Troy and Greenfield Railroad— which the tunnel was to service— would be a waste since the southern route of the Boston and Albany Railroad could by his calculations easily handle all of the shipping requirements of northern Massachusetts. Bird's account includes figures on the costs of tunnel construction and information on taxation by town and county, as well as excerpts of testimony regarding the project to the Massachusetts state legislature.


Location(s): Williams College Archives, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library (Call No. hv F7475 S7 B5)

Drawing extensively on business and union records, newspaper articles, and personal interviews, Bliss deftly constructs the development of unions at Sprague, from the original locals to the gradual infiltration of national unions. Bliss traces the ups and downs of unions to a variety of factors, including economic conditions, managerial-employee relations, and the ethnic/generational composition of the Sprague work force. Throughout, he examines the decisions made about and by unions from the perspective of business, union, and labor interests, and explores the implications of broad national trends as well as events specific to North Adams and Sprague Electric, such as the strikes of 1941 and 1970.

Bliss divides the union history of Sprague into three distinct periods. In the first period (1929- mid 1960's), the union scene is dominated by the local, possibly company-instituted Independent Condenser Workers' union (ICW). The ICW worked closely with management most
of the time, avoiding strikes whenever possible and fending off attempts by AFL-CIO national affiliates to infiltrate their ranks. Bliss attributes this reluctance towards joining national unions to both the ICW's (and Sprague workers') close ties to management and to a largely immigrant labor force frightened by the proposals of strikes floated by national unions and loathe to give more of their hard-earned money in dues to support the supposedly extravagant lifestyles of top union officials.

This era of local unions worked as long as Sprague relied on the labor of North Adams residents alone and remained prosperous, but was developing problems as World War II approached, Sprague expanded its base of operations, and the local union proved unable to negotiate effectively as management curtailed their relative power. During World War II, a long wildcat strike (1941) and several walkouts demonstrated the increasing ineffectuality of the ICW to deal with the grievances of its members and negotiate secure and binding contracts with the management. The nationals made headway, claiming the small machinists' department in 1949, but the ICW managed to maintain the loyalty of its members by developing an increasingly antagonistic tone towards management and by raising its dues in 1964 (to 25 cents/week from 10 cents) to attempt to become a more effective force in negotiations and grievance processing.

In the second phase of union history— the mid-1960's— Bliss covers the eventually successful bid by the national AFL-CIO affiliated International Union of Electrical workers' union (IUE) for the right to represent labor at Sprague, after a long, hard battle with management and the ICW. Bliss depicts this change as a result of the efforts of a younger, native-born, and more militant labor force willing to fight for their perceived due, as well as the inability of the local union to negotiate effectively for workers' rights in a corporation that was becoming increasingly international in scope and relying less and less on the North Adams labor force. Having won the representation vote by a slim margin, the nationalization of the Sprague unions continued as the clerical and white collar workers were united under the American Federation of Technical Engineers. (AFTE)

In the final stage of union history, the national unions struggled to get Sprague to commit to continuing contract improvements, binding arbitration in the event of contract disputes, and an agency shop clause requiring all workers to join the union. By the time of the ten week-long strike of 1970, Bliss argues that the Sprague work force had matured to the point where it was able to agitate for salary guarantees, and the fact that negotiations eventually went to Washington, D.C. indicates that the power of the national union proved a formidable force to be reckoned with by Sprague executives.
However, the victory was not without its costs to North Adams workers. Although the union had proved that it could stand up to management, the strike also brought on the loss of hundreds of jobs for North Adams residents and accelerated Sprague's decision to further remove its production— and more jobs— to places where the local labor market was a bit more docile. According to Bliss' interpretation, the rise of the national union and the increasing militancy of the Sprague laborers indicated that the work force had matured, but that this maturation also signaled its downfall in an era of international labor competition. In essence, the management always remained one step ahead of local labor efforts to pin them down.


Location(s): Clipping in "Chinese in North Adams" Vertical File, North Adams Public Library

Bowen's is a short article which describes the schooling of an eager and well-behaved Chinese work force in Calvin Sampson's North Adams shoe factory. One of the few times Sampson allowed any reporters to enter the facilities, this article was obviously aimed at humanizing the Chinese workers and normalizing their presence. Although their future status in the U.S. was viewed as uncertain by Bowen, who reserves comment on Sampson's strike-breaking tactics, he asserts that the Chinese are essentially good people doing their best to survive in a foreign land without the support of their families.


Location(s): Files of Maynard Seider.

Burns' article is based upon a series of interviews by trained volunteers with women who worked at Sprague Electric during the aforementioned time period, and is an attempt to try to evaluate the experience of working at the electronics giant from their own perspective. The
women's working patterns, feelings of loyalty to the company and its founder, and views on the labor unions and strikes are examined in some detail, and it becomes apparent that women workers at Sprague both upheld and shattered expectations in their working careers. While the range of experiences was appropriately diverse, several trends appeared. In general, women professed a profound admiration for R.C. Sprague, recalled fondly the olden days of luncheon parties and singing at their work stations, became dismayed as their workplace became increasingly prone to psychological stressfulness, and displayed a great deal of ambivalence over the role of the unions and the strike of 1970, even if they had been and were still active union members.

Women workers at Sprague were often career production workers, working even after marriage and childbirth at greater rates than might have been expected for the middle decades of the twentieth century, and at the encouragement of Sprague management— an unusual move for the times. At the same time, women were hardly likely to raise protests against gender discrimination, even though they were certainly aware of its existence. Burns and to some extent the women themselves now attribute this behavior to a combination of gender limitations given the time period and the docility supposedly instilled by the Catholic religion of many of the workers, although his successor (see Gabrielsky) comes to a somewhat different conclusion.


Chambers' essay is devoted to outlining the rhetorical and actual development of the high school in general, and in the towns of Williamstown and North Adams in particular. He follows the development of the free public high school from its inception in the early decades of the nineteenth century to its decades of struggling to survive and form a coherent identity in the middle of the century to its acceptance as institution by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Massachusetts was a pioneer in promoting public high schools in the nineteenth century, requiring by 1826 that towns of over 500 families support a high school. However, as Chambers points out, this and other laws were more of a guideline than a strictly enforced rule, and smaller towns like North Adams and Williamstown, lacking the benefit of a substantial capital base, lagged far behind in following the law. Chambers argues that it was the emerging prominent businessmen...
over all activities of the company— as a father to some, an oppressor to others, and somewhere in between for most.

The strike of 1970 and the eventual closing of the plant in the mid-80's depict the increasingly virulent antagonism between Sprague management, laborers, and the world economy. The long-lived strike and the introduction of federal mediators appears to have convinced Sprague management to continue moving their production and management facilities elsewhere, and sour feelings abounded all around. By the end of Sprague's tenure in North Adams, residents and management ask themselves how things might have gone differently, had they not struck or had the city retained another major factory. The play's ending portrays these "what if's?" with sympathy, but attempts to push viewers— who are presumably mainly North Adams residents— to move onwards and reclaim their city for themselves.

The Sprague Years uses dialogue and remembrances from former employees of the company and also employs slides of company-related photographs and news clippings throughout the play. These translate into video fairly well most of the time, but it occasionally produces a somewhat disjointed effect.


Location(s): Williams College Archives

Parise's thesis details the long battle— and disappointing results— to have the Hoosac Tunnel built during the mid-nineteenth century, exploring the hopes and dreams of increased prosperity North Adams residents attached to the Tunnel's completion. Unfortunately, these dreams never really came to fruition for the city, even after the tunnel was operational.

As a somewhat isolated town in western Massachusetts in the early nineteenth century, the increasingly industrial North Adams looked to improvements in transportation— in the form of canals and then trains— in order to have their products reach other markets. This was obviously a necessary step that allowed manufacturers to procure the necessary capital and reason to expand their base of operations in North Adams. Parise maintains that once North Adams residents saw the increased prosperity brought by the Worcester and Western railroad— whose main line was
twenty miles south in Pittsfield—they naturally assumed that more of a good thing was even better. Pushing along with the City of Troy and interested businessmen, North Adams residents helped to found the Troy and Greenfield railroad, which sets about laying a more direct route from Boston through the "neglected" northern part of the state over to Troy, with a direct link in North Adams.

This would prove to be a lengthy battle of over twenty years in duration, as the tunnel's construction was halted numerous times due to lack of funds, inadequate machinery, and catastrophic accidents. Parise charts the status of the Tunnel over time, using newspaper articles and other histories of the tunnel, underlining the continued confidence of North Adams residents in the Tunnel's ability to secure their continued prosperity.

When the Troy and Greenfield finally made its first full run through the Tunnel in 1875, the much-anticipated event was heralded with glee and confidence that the Tunnel would soon prove worth the twenty years, $29 million cost, and scores of lives lost in the process. Instead, the Tunnel was an economic disappointment for North Adams, allowing eastern cities such as Fitchburg to take advantage over markets where North Adams had formerly been dominant. Nevertheless, as North Adams recovered from the brutal recession of the mid-1870's—through no help of the Tunnel—the Hoosac Tunnel remained associated with "Progress" in the minds of North Adams citizens, who viewed it as a tangible symbol of their industrial prowess.

Parise tracks down the progress, completion, and long-range effects of the Tunnel through *North Adams Transcript* articles, business and general histories of the Tunnel and Western Massachusetts and Troy, NY, and Massachusetts Census records in the decades before and after the completion of the tunnel.

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Location(s): Sawyer Library, Williams College (Call No. TK140 S6 P3)

Passer provides an account of the conditions behind and evolution of urban mass transport in the late nineteenth century, crediting Frank Julian Sprague for providing the inventions,
managerial organization, and commitment it took to convince cities to adopt electric railways and allow horse and steam-powered rails to yield to the former mode's superiority. Sprague is also given credit for revolutionizing elevator transport.

Passer primarily uses articles—about half written by Sprague, half by fellow engineers—from technology and engineering journals of the time to build his case for promoting Sprague as the true father of electric traction over Thomas Alva Edison, who seems to have picked up the credit in the popular consciousness. Passer traces in intricate detail the ins and outs of Sprague's training, inventions, and business deals, delineating both his genius and his business acumen. Although Sprague's acumen for electronic design was significant, Passer maintains that it was Sprague's tenacity, ability to find newly-formed, open-minded companies not already entrenched in the older methods of urban transport, and willingness to put himself and his reputation (echoes of Albert C. Houghton and the Arnold Print Works) on the line that ensured that his lines were successful and efficient. As with Harriet C.J. Sprague's account, Passer wishes to preserve F.J. Sprague's standing and give him the credit often given to Edison, but Passer's mission isn't quite as personal, which gives him more room to explore Sprague's inventions and business deals.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Call No. Ref. 917.44P); Amherst College Library (Call No. 917.2 P592ol)

Several chapters in this Englishman's anthropological tour of New England cover items pertaining to North Adams, specifically his sections on the Chinese workers in Calvin Sampson's shoe factory in the 1870's, and the construction of the Hoosac Tunnel. Pidgeon decries the persecution of Asian workers in the U.S., portraying the sentiment against them as selfish and un-American. His take on Sampson is rather flattering, painting a sympathetic Sampson who regretfully bade the Chinese good-bye only after being pressured to do so by whites in the town, rather than an opportunistic strike-breaker.

Location(s): Sawyer Library, Williams College (Call No. NA6400 P5: v. 1-2)

Pierson's doctoral thesis centers upon the study of the development and implementation of industrial architecture in the Berkshires as it evolved from its domestic and English predecessors and counterparts. Asserting that industrial architecture was a lamentably underrated field at the time, he eagerly delves into the simple and often beautiful clarity and clever ingenuity which resulted from the mill's unique synthesis between architecture and engineering.

This piece is an impressively thorough coverage of the factory form's predecessors and origins in England in the eighteenth century to its arrival and adaptation in New England and subsequently the Berkshires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specific buildings and complexes are described in great detail and become part of a narrative on the changing nature of industrial building and its adaptations according to the specific needs of various places and uses.

Since industrial architecture was intrinsically and intriguingly interwoven with societal, technological, and economic development, Pierson's thesis devotes as much time to these issues as he does to the actual structure and ornamentation of the mill buildings themselves. In the process, the mill becomes a complex object which is useful to us in telling of a community's needs, resources, and character at each stage of its maturation.

His sections on the Berkshires are highly informative, providing another take on industrial development in the area—from the simplest grist mills to the large complexes of the paper and textile industries. Industrialists in the Berkshires, as he illustrates with numerous examples, followed the conventions of Rhode Island and Lowell as they became feasible, but with their adaptations especially suited to the talents of their builders and the character and resources of the region. Pierson maintains that it was especially in more isolated regions such as the Berkshires that the plans of engineers conquered the whims of professional architects, creating a remarkable sense of clarity and unity in mill buildings around the middle of the nineteenth century. He is quite critical of the haphazard, profit-oriented construction that produced the new Arnold Print Works complex on Marshall Street in the latter part of the century, asserting that this style of building
reflected an era in which businessmen were no longer concerned with maintaining a sense of harmony with and receiving the respect of their communities but rather thrust their will upon them. This is a tenet also reflected in the widening chasm between the residences of owners and their workers. (See also Baldessarini's paper and the video Forgotten Glory by the North Adams Historical Society) It is highly interesting that Pierson should choose to single out the APW complex as an undesirable form given that MassMoCA currently finds it very appealing, perhaps revealing a modern predilection for the chaotic sprawl represented by the complex. Whatever the case, Pierson's text makes for a highly informative and contextualized study of industrial architecture.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Ref. 974.44P)

Possons provides another brief history of North Adams, in this instance distinguished by its many photographs of the North Adams area in addition to the usual listing of statistics and descriptions of the city designed to appeal to the interests of business and manufacturing. North Adams' prominent residents are highlighted through descriptions of their activities and pictures of their houses, and the local infrastructure and rail connections to the outside world are described in detail. Accounts and numerous photographs are given of the churches, clubs, schools, businesses, and factories of the area, with emphasis given to larger concerns such as the Arnold Print Works.


Location(s): Williams College Archives

Powell's main concern in this thesis is to uncover the "other," industrial side of Williamstown which at one point was the town's largest employer, but never quite dominated its
character. He traces the development of Williamstown manufacturers from the earliest grist mills of the late eighteenth century to the dying days of the Williamstown Manufacturing Company—by then known as the Greylock Mills—during the Depression of the present century.

Powell suggests that Williamstown manufacturing concerns grew slowly for reasons similar to those in neighboring North Adams—lack of adequate capital, transport capabilities, and limited supplies of labor and technological innovations—and although both places eventually overcame these obstacles, Williamstown never really succeeded in manufacturing nor relied on it to the same extent that North Adams did. Nevertheless, numerous entrepreneurs founded a variety of cotton textile factories during the nineteenth century, and Powell gives full treatment to their beginnings, progress, failures, and changes of ownership. Manufacturing in Williamstown was usually not the only occupation for owners, and true, lasting success was rarely enjoyed by factory owners. Power supplies and access to transportation was still limited—though much improved with the appearance of the Troy and Greenfield Railroad in 1859—and the completion of the Hoosac Tunnel (1875) only worsened the harmful effects of competition. Thus, the post-1875 period was marked by numerous closings, with only the larger, more efficient Williamstown Manufacturing Company able to weather the storm and survive into the twentieth century.

Just as the fact that the owners were not—or could not—be dependent on factories as their sole source of income, so did the locations and employees of these factories serve to distance factory life from the rest of the town. The textile plants tended to locate on the Green and Hoosac Rivers, physically separated from the center of town. This was especially true of the Williamstown Manufacturing Company, which further distanced the worker population by creating small, self-sufficient developments near its plant on the Hoosac River, north of town. The predominance of French Canadians amongst immigrant workers also served to create a separate community—these workers spoke French, were Catholic, and though viewed as rather docile workers, proved less assimilable into the wider community than the Irish or Italians in North Adams. Although their tendency to desire ownership of their own land might have encouraged these immigrants to persist in Williamstown, land in town was rather limited and many pressed further West in search of better opportunities. The town seems not to miss much from the departure of the textile industry; although it benefited economically from these factories, the town's character had not been molded into an industrial one (such as was the case with North Adams) because industry was never really a stable force within the town to the extent that Williams College was and is. Textile workers certainly lost out when their means of supporting themselves disappeared, but since they had generally remained separate from the town proper, only the [almost] invisible fringes of town remain as testaments to Williamstown's manufacturing past.
Powell's sources include extensive use of U.S. and Massachusetts Census data, business records, local histories and personal memoirs, and general regional or industrial histories.


Location(s): Williams College Archives

After beginning with a brief general history of North Adams, Roberts details the reasons French Canadians had for leaving their homes in Canada to seek work in the mills of Western Massachusetts. Passage from the United States to and from Canada was relatively easy, and the lingering of the world depression of 1873 forced many of the Quebecois—originally farmers—to seek work in the U.S.

At first, workers only came seasonally, earning enough money to keep the farms at home going the rest of the year. Soon, however, French Canadians were permanently emigrating from Canada into the U.S. The prosperity of North Adams during the Houghton era looked especially appealing to a fair number of the immigrants, who would go from being virtually non-existent in the town in 1860 to approximately 25% of the population in 1909. French Canadians were appealing to management because of their supposed docility and reluctance to strike, which put them at odds with more boisterous ethnic groups, especially the Irish. The French Canadians remained segregated via their retention of religious and language customs, living in separate neighborhoods with their own social institutions. Though salaries were easily greater than in their homelands, the American culture was something of a shock. French Canadians were less likely to take advantage of educational systems than other immigrant groups, placing their children into a never-ending cycle of dependence upon mill work. The Roman Catholic Church was their dominant institution, and a source of town resentment, and the French Canadians were left without leaders in town politics and affairs. Gradually, the barriers of language and ethnic separateness broke down through increasing education, a de-emphasis on French language instruction, and intermarriage—Roberts tells us that today only their names and the occasional French-speaking elder remain to remind us of their heritage.
Roberts employs Canadian, American, and local histories, census data, baptismal records, an interview, and a number of papers written by Williams students.


Location(s): Clipping in "Chinese in North Adams" Vertical File, North Adams Public Library

Rudolph's article presents a pro-labor portrayal of North Adams shoe-maker Calvin Sampson's strike-breaking effort in the face of a Crispin strike in 1870. While remaining somewhat sympathetic to the Chinese workers caught in the middle of the struggle, Rudolph presents Sampson as part of a developing elite in North Adams who saw nothing wrong with building magnificent homes for themselves while simultaneously underpaying their workers. As a result, a growing sense of class consciousness developed in formerly unstratified North Adams, and the Crispin brotherhood emerged in attempt to protect skilled workers from replacement by unskilled ones.

In North Adams, this struggle eventually led to a drawn-out strike against Sampson's factory in 1870 (previous shorter ones had occurred earlier), which radiated outwards into sympathy strikes at other plants. Sampson's decision to import Chinese laborers effectively ended the sympathy strikes and prompted the Crispins to attempt to recruit the Chinese and to form a cooperatively owned factory of their own. These attempts, however, were undermined by Sampson's success and the Depression of 1873. In the end, Rudolph's Sampson remains an exemplar of a Horatio Alger success story who then turned around and actively trod upon those who were trying to follow its script themselves.

Location(s): Williams College Archives

Ruger's thesis examines the hopes and fears that manufacturing in Williamstown elicited during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing upon the creation and character of the developing working class within the rural town. Using census data, interviews, and local records and histories, Ruger depicts a working class that did not simply allow itself to be dominated by a grasping, de-humanizing industrial machine, as opposed to the independence represented by agriculture. Instead, he paints a more gradual and uneven process of industrial expansion and a more autonomous working class who owned their own property, financed churches to support their own faiths, and even set their own production ceilings to the consternation of their helpless managers.

Even as the work force included increasing numbers of immigrants—especially French Canadians—it still proved cohesive, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of its kinship and workplace networks. The twentieth century, with its corresponding factory closings, weakened the infrastructure of the industrial community somewhat, as workers were forced to find jobs in other fields—or towns. However, throughout the years in which Williamstown had a substantial industrial presence, its working class proved able to constantly adapt their "established modes of thought and behavior within the newly emerging opportunities and constraints of industrialization." (90) They found—and actively took part in creating—new rhythms of leisure, work, and physical and social mobility.

Ruger's thesis proves relevant to students of North Adams history because of his focus on the Williamstown Manufacturing Company, one of Williamstown's major manufacturing concerns and a tributary of the Arnold Print Works.

Location(s): Files of Maynard Seider

This essay details the events in labor history of the aforementioned decades, covering the textile industry and the growing presence of Sprague Electric. Seider describes the scope of the over thirty local unions covering the area for a variety of crafts, industries, and companies. Workers of this era proved to have been quite active in the unions, and Seider describes extensively a number of area strikes, including one which went national in 1934.

The 1934 strike, called by the United Textile Workers of America after textile manufacturers nationwide fought compliance with new minimum wage laws, proves to overturn many of our scholarly preconceptions of the North Adams area work force during this era. Whereas textile workers in Lowell and other long-established working communities simply ignored the strike and kept working, the supposedly docile workers of Adams and North Adams rallied to support the strike. By organizing into "flying squadrons," workers from plants in the area successfully convinced most workers in area cotton textile production facilities to take part in the strike. However, the national unions eventually caved to pressure from FDR and called off the strike after refusing mediation by the NLRB. As a result, the national union lost a fair amount of its prestige amongst the locals, and this event might possibly explain some of the work force's later aversion to national union representation. When a similar strike occurred on a small scale in the Berkshires the following year, the locals refused an offer for help from the national organization. This strike was broken up when companies divided the work force by negotiating better contracts with some influential groups of laborers.

Seider also discusses some of the early labor history of Sprague Electric, covering the major accomplishments of the ICW #1 (getting a guaranteed 4 hour work day and forbidding favoritism in dealing out tasks), but ends by calling for more research to be done on the evolution of North Adams from a town with diversified manufacturers and labor representation to a "company town."

Location(s): Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library (Periodicals); Files of Maynard Seider

In this article, Seider undertakes the explanation of an event obscured by time—the reasons behind the Sprague union changing from ICW Local #1 to ICW Local #2—and his findings indicate that the IUE made greater headway during this time than most people might have thought. As early as the late 1930's, union workers were becoming less convinced of their small local's (ICW #1) ability to handle grievances and research adequately, with the result that they were often forced to take Sprague managers on their word regarding the company's financial status. The IUE, a CIO affiliate, had unions in the General Electric plants in nearby Pittsfield, and organizers were sent in to spread information about the advantages of national union representation.

In spite of opposition from within ICW #1 and the management at Sprague, the IUE was actually voted in by the workers in 1938, contradicting the assumption that the IUE was unable to gain a significant stronghold within the company until the 1960's. The IUE's tenure in Sprague was to prove rather short: Soon after, the ICW #2 was formed to take the place of its inefficient predecessor, and voted in by a small percentage of the Sprague work force. The IUE, which was at the time growing in size despite attempts by the company to stamp them out, filed suit with the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB concluded that while the ICW #1 had indeed been a company union and therefore was illegal, its successor (ICW #2) was independently formed and operated. As a result of this decision, the IUE lost its position within the company, and the ICW #2 gained legitimacy as the proper union.

The IUE did not quietly fade away, however, and after a largely unsuccessful wildcat strike in 1941 which seemed to indicate that the ineffectiveness of ICW #2, began to once again woo the affections of Sprague workers in the mid-1940's. A fierce propaganda campaign ensued, with the ICW capitalizing on local loyalty and fears about big-spending national union officials wasting their hard-earned wages and the IUE emphasizing the inability of the small local to keep its promises of strong negotiation. This time the ICW came out the unquestionable winner, which Seider maintains is not that surprising since it was by that time an established, known quantity, as opposed to the unknown represented by the IUE. In addition, R.C. Sprague proved to be quite a shrewd paternal capitalist, portraying himself as the aggrieved father throughout the proceedings.
and implementing a series of small but very worker-friendly benefits—including sponsoring sports teams, allowing radio shows to play at work, publishing the newsletter the Log—which established a sort of "moral economy" in which workers felt a great deal of loyalty to him.


Location(s): Files of Maynard Seider

This article is a general survey of trends in business and labor in North Adams during the 1800's, which as Seider points out originated from both national and local conditions and circumstances. Seider is especially interested in denting our notions of the docility of the North Adams labor force during this period. The absence or inefficiency of such activity, commented upon by researchers from Rudolph to Bliss, is largely due to the selectivity of contemporary accounts. The sympathies of the North Adams Transcript and historians such as W.F. Spear were decidedly on the side of manufacturers and businessmen, and thus strikers and labor groups hardly merited entries in their articles or histories. Seider's subsequent research, using the more comprehensive Massachusetts Bureau of the Statistics of Labor records and an assortment of union and other papers, uncovers an impressive amount of labor activity, including strikes which achieved various degrees of success and the institutionalization of a large annual Labor Day celebration. Various trends splintered the power of the work force as the turn of the century neared, but this does not change the fact that North Adams laborers struck during this period with a frequency and success rate that was at the very least on par with other major manufacturing communities in the state.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Video 153) N.B. The picture quality of the tape in the Public Library is rather poor.
This video documentary tells the stories of the workers of the Marshall Street complex, during both its Arnold Print Works and Sprague Electric years, in attempt to reconcile the old, bustling North Adams with its present state of stagnation. Interviews of former workers relate their experiences of working conditions, wages, and strikes as well as about the communities formed through their working relationships. Feelings regarding R.C. Sprague's paternalistic policies and their eventual failure are remembered vividly—fondly by those who felt it had been a decent place to work, resentfully by others who felt they had left themselves open to exploitation. The closing of Sprague's operations on Marshall Street left residents bitter and feeling betrayed by the company to which many gave a good portion of their lives. Only with the fledging MassMoCA were they allowed back into the Sprague complex, and 1989 found them at a moment of transition that is obviously and understandably painful.


Location(s): Transcripts at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library; Original tapes at Center for Lowell History

This set of 40+ interviews was commissioned in the late 1980's project (Shifting Gears) to examine the changing meaning and culture of the workplace from 1920-1980. They were carried out over a period of two years by trained volunteers and Western Gateway scholars-in-residence Stewart Burns and Robert Gabrielsky. A wide variety of workers from the Arnold Print Works and Sprague are represented, from managers to technicians to production workers to current high school students and even a few MassMoCA workers. Each interview provides a fairly detailed history of that person's family background, residence in the area, work history, and community involvement, with extensive attention paid to the changing experience of the workplace and attitudes towards labor unions at the companies. N.B. Although the interviews are generally quite good and informative regarding the experiences of their informants, the actual transcriptions are rather mediocre. In addition to a host of grammatical mistakes ("euthanasia" is transcribed "Youth in Asia" in one interview), numerous names of local landmarks (e.g. the Hoosic River) and even important figures in the narrative (such as union leader Jack Boulger) are butchered. Therefore, it
may be wise to familiarize oneself with general works regarding the history of the companies and the area so that the mistakes aren't accidentally perpetuated.


A Drury High School (DHS) student, Kelton muses about her jobs so far, the stereotypes which distance North Adams and Williamstown, and the wisdom of putting all of North Adams' "eggs in one basket" with MassMoCA.


A student at DHS, Bill recalls a grandmother who worked at Sprague and became ill from exposure to chemicals, sees MassMoCA as the area's only real hope for revitalization, and shares what he likes and dislikes about the community.


Ruth, a former production worker at Sprague who began working there during World War II (a familiar theme with many of the interviewees), recalls her years at the company. Like many women from the production line, she remembers a quickly learned job with short but sociable breaks, small raises that never really signaled a promotion, and juggling household duties with her husband by working different shifts. She was briefly a steward in both the ICW #2 and IUE, saw the 1970 strike as having a deleterious effect on North Adams workers. She says she never really had a problem with management, though she was laid off several times. Her husband and two children also worked for Sprague.


Birk, originally from the New York metropolitan area, became an overseas marketing executive at Sprague in the 1950's after leaving another electronics manufacturer to do so. Much of the interview centers around the duties of his seventy hour work week, the growing competitiveness in Sprague as time wore on and Sprague was bought by conglomerates, and Birk's own community activities.


Jack Boulger, a 1952 graduate of DHS who began working for Sprague soon after graduation as a specification writer, went on to become active in the IUE and oversaw the transition of the office and clerical workers from the ICW to the AFTE in 1969, as well as the strike of 1970. In this long and very detailed interview, he describes the process of the strike as
well as his union duties in some detail, and shares his insider's perspective on the withdrawal of Sprague from North Adams.


A DHS student born (in Guam while her dad was in the military) to North Adams residents, Ellie was bound for Bowdoin College at the time of the interview. Having worked and attended junior high in Williamstown, she discusses the mutual problems in the relationship between North Adams and Williamstown, calls MassMoCA a "quality project," and talks about the advantages of raising kids in a small town (emphasis mine) like North Adams.


Rose, of French Canadian and Irish descent, began working at Sprague in 1942 (after a stint as a secretary and marriage in 1933) during the war with her sister. Having never really had conflicts with the management, she was never very active in the unions. During the 1970 strike, she stayed out of work but did not picket, and her end analysis is that "unions really spoiled Sprague's." She also talks about the Quarter Century Club (which she joined with her sister in 1967), the annual picnics and dances sponsored by the company, and her pension.


DeMayo, who was born in North Adams and grew up in Williamstown, helped work on the legislation that provided the initial funding agreement for MassMoCA while working for State Sen. Peter Webber. She was later hired by MassMoCA to do grant applications and public outreach, and talks about the museum and planning a life for herself in the area.


Bob Diodati, of Italian descent, was a Williamstown H.S. grad who began working at Sprague as an inspector in the 1950's after the film company he was working for closed. He became really active in union affairs in the mid-60's, winning a position on the negotiating committee. He was opposed to the shifting of union representation to the IUE, and remained president of the decimated ICW #2 until 1969, though he did work with the national union. He also describes his transition in the 1970's to Industrial Manager, maintains that working conditions at Sprague were peachy, and discusses the unfortunate but in his opinion necessary decision to pull out of North Adams.

Fitzgerald, born in Williamstown, began at Sprague around 1940 in material control. In 1941, he was requested to move to sales by Neil Welch. A one-time president of the ICW #2, Fitzgerald maintained that amicable relations were the goal of Sprague management, whom he represented on the negotiating committee. He discusses the 1970 strike as an ill-timed venture which hurt the company's reputation with its customers, thus hastening the demise of Sprague in North Adams.


Gould, of Italian descent, was a 1931 grad of DHS who worked at Sprague from 1934-1974 on the production lines. She discusses her various production jobs, the bickering over "good" jobs after the institution of the bonus system, and the slowly accruing benefits won by the unions. She spent a good deal of the 1970 strike working in the IUE coffee hall on Main Street, and became a union steward for the union as well.


Born in Cheshire; paternal residence dating back to the Revolutionary era, mother from Berlin, NY. A graduate of Adams H.S., she quickly married, had two children, and went into production work at Sprague during World War II, leaving her children with her mother-in-law. After a stint in production (she was also briefly a supervisor during the war), she took a job in payroll as a clerk and remained for an additional 25 years. Her sympathies were with the independent union, and she was good friends with her managers. She dropped her union membership when the IUE was voted in, and though she did not cross the picket lines in 1970, nevertheless considered the IUE a bunch of "gangsters" for instituting an agency shop with mandatory dues.


Born in North Adams, Esther was the daughter of a man who help lure Welch workers to the textile mills of western Massachusetts. A 1930 graduate of DHS, she worked in offices at the Arnold Print Works and Sprague until her marriage in 1948, and again after her husband's death in the early fifties. A salaried worker, Esther was George Flood's secretary and traveled a bit during her time working for him. Although she was pushed by union workers when she crossed the picket lines in 1970, she now has a more sympathetic attitude towards the strikers and wishes that she had been more assertive about her own value to the company as she looks at her low pension.

Hulse, of Dutch German descent, grew up in New York State, winding up in North Adams accidentally in 1972 while working on his teacher's certificate at North Adams State College. However, he soon discovered that the part-time work he was doing at Sprague actually paid more than teaching, and stayed. He worked nights as a computer operator, and although he was a member of the AFTE, he was not really part of union meetings or workplace socials and had little interaction with management. He thus speaks with a sort of cultivated distance as he compares the confusion resulting from Sprague withdrawal from North Adams as "like a Chinese fire drill."


Jones came to North Adams after 22 years of marriage in 1946, got her GED at age 46 from McCann Tech, and started in the "rolling" department at Sprague in 1946. She describes a cycle of slowly increasing rates and occasional lay-offs, and though she generally got along with her bosses, she felt that the ICW played into the company's hands too often. Gradually this quiet former farm girl became very active in union affairs, was elected to the union's board in 1952, after which "nobody could stop me." She talks about her learning the job, her tenure as vice-president of the IUE, how she liked negotiating and helping people out, and managing household and child care by working days while her husband worked nights.


A DHS student with teachers for parents, Jordan feels he doesn't really have ties here, especially since his parents were not from the area and don't like it much here. He asserts that North Adams has become a ghost town of sorts and advocates bringing in technologically advanced jobs to the area to give it a boost.


Born in North Adams in 1933, Kelly graduated from McCann Tech and entered into an apprenticeship in the tool room at Sprague. He recalls the incremental increases in wages and benefits over the years, and becoming active in the IAM after the 1970 strike. A member of the negotiating committee since 1973, he prides himself on not picking on petty matters and maintaining a good relationship with management.


DHS student; parents separated—dad down South, mom working at the Orchards. She hates the exploitative quality of the jobs available to young people in North Adams, and laments the lack of a suitable place to "hang out." She says the educational system is only so-so, but that extra
effort helps you get by, and has mixed feelings about MassMoCA and the possibility of an even wider gap between rich and poor.


Born in North Adams and a graduate of DHS, Lamb began working in the Arnold Print Works in 1929, where he was in charge of controlling the inventory and shipments, and eventually landing a New York City-based sales position. When APW faced liquidation in 1942, he left to take a similar job at Macy's, then returned to North Adams to run a stationery store with his brother after a stint in the Navy during the war. He recalls his business connections with Sprague and community involvement, and is delighted by the MassMoCA project.


Born in Stamford, VT, raised in Clarksburg, Mabel started working at Sprague in 1934 at age 25 after stints at textile and shoe factories. After a lay-off, she was back at Sprague full-time in 1936, and she and her husband got their twenty-fifth anniversary watches together. She discusses her various jobs at the plant, safety conditions, the decline of the usefulness of the unions over time (in her opinion), and mentions her concern for R.C. Sprague, Sr.'s health. She also talks about the social life in the plant, the ups and downs of bonus production, and how she and her husband divided child care responsibilities and relied on a cousin to baby-sit.


Grew up in Iowa, but moved to North Adams after marrying a woman from the city. After working at Cornish Wire for 18 years, he then worked in a variety of departments at Sprague. Having had no problems with managers, he only joined the union in 1970 because he had to, and retired in 1973. Also describes his Depression-era wanderings in some detail.


Livingston, of Italian descent, was born in North Adams in 1918, went to DHS, and married in June 1947. After high school she resisted her mother's urging to attend college and worked in production at Sprague. She relates the busy atmosphere of the workplace during World War II, and the gradual hardening of supervisors and the petty conflicts engendered by the bonus system. Since some member of the family was always home, she saw no problem with working. Although she supported the unions at the time, she held ambivalent feelings about the 1970 strike afterwards.
Manion started at Sprague in tracking production after a severe financial crisis hit her family, and soon moved to the local Industrial Relations (IR) office where she attempted to help resolve the "people problems" of the company. In 1958, she moved to the Corporate IR office, in 1964 she was made manager of publications (including the Log), and in 1971 she moved back to the local IR office to become Manager of Employee Relations. She was grateful for her rather unusual career advancement since it helped her support her young children after her divorce, though at one point she was one of only seven women (plus 200 men) in the company's Management Club. She discusses crossing the picket line in 1970, and though yelled at, certain strikers would let her through the line with a wink. Her opinion of the strike was that it was ill-timed, but certainly not the primary reason for Sprague's self-extrication from North Adams.

Markarian, of Armenian descent was born in Lowell and graduated from the Lowell Textile Institute with a B.S. in Chemistry— in 1936, the height of the Depression. After circuiting the northeast looking for a job, he finally landed a job at the Arnold Print Works monitoring the water supply and electroplating baths. His brother drove him there, and Markarian describes the years he spent in a boarding house and eating at diners. When the APW was in the process of folding during the war, he was laid off, and got a call from Sprague asking him to work for them. Though the machinery was different, he had little trouble adjusting, and went on to work in the organic chemistry department. He remembers being disturbed by the strikers in 1970, feeling that he belonged to a "whole other group" and shouldn't be affected, and feels that the company could have stayed in North Adams had they wanted to but were plowed under by some disastrous upper management positions.

McGowan was born in Williamstown and had by 1989 lived for 42 years in the same house. A Mount Greylock H.S. grad of 1965, she married, had a son, and divorced in quick succession, forcing her to seek work as a secretary. She worked in numerous places over the years, including a stint at Sprague, before winding up working for MassMoCA, where she says she relishes the combination of independence and female companionship.

Kelly, a DHS student, calls for more money to be invested in North Adams schools, discusses the attitude and drug problems in the school and city, and believes that MassMoCA would have less impact on the community than the proposed Greylock Glen project.
*SG-NA-T036  Informant: Catherine O’Neill. May 26, year unknown.

Catherine was with Sprague almost from the beginning of its reign in North Adams, applying to work at rolling condensers by hand in 1930. She remembers being laid off and re-hired every few weeks, and what it was like to work at Sprague before they instituted coffee breaks in 1935. After the war, during which she became a shift supervisor and shared household duties with her husband, she left the company. Although she worked at other places, she never went back to Sprague.


Mildred, born in North Adams of Irish and French Canadian parentage, joined Sprague in 1942 with her sister after a stint as a telephone operator. In her 32 years of working with the company, she made many friends and believes that the increasing activity of the unions made the workplace stricter over the years.


James, whose grandfather was killed during the building of the Hoosac Tunnel, was born in North Adams, where his dad was a bus driver and his mom a worker at Sprague and other establishments. He graduated from DHS in 1952, and began to work for Sprague as a technician. He supported both the IUE and the 1970 strike, citing difficulties with getting grievances handled properly and successfully negotiating contracts favorable to the workers. Although his relations with his managers were initially good, they had soured by the time Sprague announced that it was withdrawing its North Adams operations almost entirely in the mid-1980’s.


June, whose father worked at a variety of establishments from shoes manufacturers to textile mills to Sprague, graduated from DHS in 1946. After a few years of work at a shoe shop and Sears, she joined Sprague in 1951, working in purchasing, the machine shop (where she was the only woman at the time), and the exports department. During the 1970 strike, which she felt was necessary but sad, she was a union officer for the AFTE. Still an officer, she attends
meetings and remembers her sadness and dismay when Sprague withdrew from North Adams earlier in the decade.


Of French Canadian descent, Sears attended St. Joseph's School and DHS, although she had to finish her degree in evening classes when she took a job as a roller at Sprague at age 16. Her "first and only job was Sprague Electric," and she worked there until 1988. She is critical of strikes, maintaining that workers never make back what they lose while striking, and prefers instead to continue talking things over with management. Since she was out on a medical leave of absence, she was one of the first workers called back once the strike ended; however, many of her friends lost their jobs. She also discusses sharing chores with her husband.

*SG-NA-T042 Informant: Emily Smatchetti. Date unrecorded.

Emily, a DHS student who was born in Adams, discusses her jobs, the beauty and problems in North Adams, and suggests numerous ways of improving the high school curriculum. She is hopeful yet cautious regarding Greylock Glen and MassMoCA, maintaining that the city shouldn't try to rely entirely on tourism.


N.B. The first half of the first side of the tape was apparently blank. Starting in 1950 and retiring 26 years later, Sobon migrated from production at Sprague to other departments, including clerking and then working in the shipping department. She discusses sharing household duties with her husband ("just like everybody else"), her dislike for the bonus system, the annual company parties, and her role as a Log reporter. She also mentions her pension, her relations with supervisors, and the occasional lay-offs which punctuated her years at Sprague. She remembers not getting involved with the 1970 strike because she disliked the resulting divisions and bitterness.


Stackpole, born in Williamstown in 1909, dropped out of Williamstown High School during his senior year and attended Bliss Business School in North Adams briefly before dropping out there as well. He then worked for a hotel chain in Williamstown and the mid-West. By 1937 he was back in Williamstown again, and studied machine work at Drury Trade School. After working for a while at the GE plant in Pittsfield—a job he disliked—Stackpole took a job with Sprague Electric and fought to keep the ICW #2 as the workers' union representation during an IUE (which he felt was dominated by Communists) challenge in the late 1940's. He was president
of the local for about 25 years, working on negotiating contracts and settling grievances, maintaining that working conditions at Sprague were excellent. Offended at the charge that the local was a company union, he feels that eventual IUE president Walter Wood was something of a backstabber and says that the IUE hasn't done any better than the local did in protecting the interests of workers. Although he retired in 1974, he feels that the pull-out of Sprague was both calculated and cold.


Talarico, a nearly lifelong resident of Italian descent, attended DHS and Bryant College, where he received his BS in Business Administration. Graduating during the Depression, he eventually wound up at the Arnold Print Works, which he says was responsible for keeping the city afloat during the Depression years. When World War II broke out, he left the area while working for the Civil Service, but returned to the area with his wife in 1948 because his parents were aging and he wasn't fond of the pace of big city life. He worked for an auto dealer before going into stock brokering, and is now semi-retired. He recalls how his brother worked for Sprague for years without receiving the benefits his skills deserved simply because he didn't have a college degree.

*SG-NA-T046 informant: Ann Thibert. Date unrecorded.

Thibert, whose parents both worked at Sprague Electric for many years, attended high school at St. Joseph's before beginning work at Sprague as a part-time secretary, part-time lab tech. She remembers that Dr. John Sprague was an "excellent man to work for" when he supervised her department, and never liked strikes because the losses were always so much greater than the gains. She remembers her mother watching her children, realizes that today she would fight for gendered pay equity, and says that she can understand how competition might force Sprague to fold its North Adams base, sad as the results re.


Born of Italian immigrants, Vera was born in North Adams and graduated from DHS in 1935. She started to work at Sprague soon after, and eventually moved from rolling to the payroll office. She describes the slow improvements in wages and benefits, the limitation of roles for women within the company, and the transition to computers from a paper-based system. She did not cross the picket line in 1970 at first, but eventually was forced to do so after receiving a warning from her bosses. She feels that the strike hurt North Adams, and discusses her impressions of company figures Boulger, R.C. Sprague Jr., and John Sprague, suggesting that John decided to withdraw from North Adams after seeing the strike as an affront.

Of French Canadian descent, Wheeler quit Notre Dame High School after one year to work for Sprague rolling. She made gas masks during World War II, stopped working briefly to have her two children, and returned to work after each child was born, with her mom living with them and caring for the kids. In Sprague she moved around to several departments, and she discusses the comparative social atmosphere at several of the departments. She found the gradually increasing wage and benefits satisfying, and says that the job improved her marriage because she was able to contribute financially to the household bills and the children's educational expenses. She believes that the 1970 strike hurt both the company and the city, and speculates as to who made the decision to leave North Adams.


Of Polish descent, Stella grew up in Adams during the Depression, working at her uncle's store and as a domestic in Albany. Her husband worked for GE, but was restless and took off for the West. Since she didn't want to leave the area to join him, she raised her daughter here, moving back in with her mother and working at a cotton mill and a variety of sweatshops before a niece got her a job at Sprague in 1960. She remembers her almost 20 years there fondly, since they represented a sizable jump in wages, benefits, and sociability. She remembers R.C. Sr. with great fondness, saying that at parties he was always "one of us."


N.B. This tape may be misnumbered; other possibilities are T007 and T017. Griswold, born and schooled in Adams, began working for Sprague during World War II. Her tenure there lasted from 1943-1985, though she did experience occasional lay-offs. She would leave the house at 5:15 AM to get to work by 6 AM, and although she was friendly with her co-workers, most of her friends were back home in Adams. She was a member of the ICW and the IUE, though more for protection then anything else, and now believes that people really need to back unions for them to actually work.


Location(s): Williams College Archives (Call No. 99S 53r)
This paper examines the development and devolution of the separate identity of the southern part of Williamstown, which Smith connects with the industrial and professional development of the Northern part of town and developments in the transportation industry. She finds that as these conditions pushed the sectors towards economic integration, social and institutional barriers crumbled.

Covered here are figures on occupations and wages over the years, a history of the various schools, churches, and enterprises in South Williamstown, and an evaluation of how the development of railroads and autos which aided North Adams and Williamstown industry effected this primarily agricultural area. Appendices at the end draw from census data and surveys, and Smith draws heavily upon church records, directories of Williamstown, and various local histories.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Video 7)

This short program is devoted to the celebration of the Italians in North Adams and their heritage, focusing on their migration to the city and eventual acceptance therein, their generational differences, and their lasting customs and rituals. A fair portion of the tape is devoted to tracing the development of Saint Anthony’s church and its once-renowned sports program. Another portion of the tape is devoted to short biographies of the town’s leading Italian businessmen and public officials.


Locations: Williams College Archives (Call No. 99S 55h); North Adams Public Library (Call No. 974.44N, multiple copies)
This book covers the early settlement and development of North Adams, from its incipient status as a fortified area and northern township of Adams to its industrial development and maturation in the nineteenth century. It reads like a "Who's Who" volume, paying homage to the men who helped develop the town into a bustling manufacturers' haven. The development of institutions such as local churches, schools, and public houses are charted, almost every sector of the late nineteenth century city economy is described in some detail, and lists of the local lawyers, justices, and even postmasters through the Spear's publication date are compiled.


Location(s): Williams College Archives (listed under Sprague Electric Company Records: ca. 1938-1970, Acc. No. 89-063); Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library

The Log was for decades a venue through which news was disseminated throughout the Sprague Electric work force. Employees had the opportunity to become department reporters, sharing the news of the department with the rest of the company. Birth, death, and marriage announcements abounded in the Log, as did announcements about the company's status in various plants throughout the world, management announcements, and plans for the future. Since the Log mainly functioned as a company newsletter, union activities were scarcely mentioned. In fact, some articles and comics in the issues are not-so-subtle attempts to sway workers towards company-centered thinking and away from union activity and asking too much from the company. Even so, the publication remains a valuable resource for glimpsing a view of life in a company town where the company-sponsored summer picnics, winter Christmas parties, and year-round sporting activities became a valued tradition lamented by workers as their relationship with Sprague deteriorated after the 1970 strike. It is quite telling that the Log also disappeared in the years after the strike.

The company's Annual Report manages to be both informative in its delivery of the facts of Sprague's financial status to its employees and at the same time seeks to remind them that they are lucky to be getting as much of the company's income as they do. The 1970 report boasts of 1969's record sales— the same record sales that prompted union workers to strike for higher wages in the Spring of that year— but warns of the coming period of economic vacillation and stiff competition which forced them to maintain a fiscally conservative mindset. Featured stories
accompany each report, including those focusing on the opening of a new research center (1962) and Sprague-sponsored continuing education programs (1963). The 1965 report also contains a ten year financial summary.

The Williams College Archives has a fairly extensive set of Logs, though seemingly none from periods during which workers had recently been on strike. There are also a number of Annual Reports which are generally scattered amongst the collection with Logs according to their publication date. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Library also has fairly extensive set of the Logs; I am not certain whether they also have the Annual Reports.


Location(s): Sawyer Library, Williams College (Call No. TK140 S6 S6)

This short pamphlet is dedicated to setting the general citizenry's minds straight when it comes to assigning credit for the successful development of systems of electric railway cars, the multi-unit controller for less troublesome navigation of tracks, and a variety of advances in elevator technology. In each of these cases, the true inventor was Sprague, and yet somehow Thomas Alva Edison wound up getting all of the credit. Without wishing to deny Edison credit for the accomplishments that were indeed his, Sprague sets out to preserve F.J. Sprague's place in engineering history and the public consciousness. In doing so, she utilizes an interesting collection of newspaper and journal articles, company records, and letters from a tribute held in Sprague's honor on his 75th birthday in 1932, some of which are quoted in their entirety.


Location(s): North Adams Public Library (Call No. 621S); North Adams State College (Call No. hv WF74 75 S7); UMass-Amherst DuBois Library (Call No. 9696 .A3 .U614)
This book by the former president of Sprague Electric— and son of founder R.C. Sprague— is an comparative analysis of the economic, industrial, and social advantages the Japan and the United States each hold. It has a more anecdotal quality than most business analysis literature, and Sprague freely admits that part of his mission is to determine what conditions and mistakes led to Sprague's demise. Of particular interest to scholars of Sprague's operations in North Adams are his discussions of labor force characteristics and research developments in the two countries throughout the book, and management's take on the 1970 strike at the North Adams plant. (pp. 111-114)


Location(s): Williams College Archives

From an apparently mutual pool of interviewees, Tavelli and Hauck explore the social and political lives of Italian residents in North Adams. Tavelli focuses on an exploration of the important religious and social institutions of the Italian community, relying on Church records and the North Adams Directory to help him describe the accomplishments and goals of the Italian populace, which he identifies as having distinct generational differences. Tavelli's account of Italians in North Adams highlights their work culture, their social interactions, and their interconnections with the city at large, an effort which naturally leads into Hauck's political analysis, which recounts the numerous contributions of Italians in political office and civil servant positions.


Location(s): Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Terryberry's ANADEX is an extremely comprehensive index of a score of historical works covering the two towns. One can look up topics such as strike activity, public figures such as A.C. Houghton, and entities such as Sprague Electric and find both the relevant works and even
the page(s) on which said topics receive mention. This is quite useful for several reasons, not the least of which is that many of these are older works which lack indices of their own. In addition, given the age and fragility of some of the volumes covered, looking topics up in the ANADEX will save these books from needless wear and tear.