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Rebecca Dirnfeld

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (History)

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FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

**Controlling the “Chinese” of the Eastern States?
Maine’s Constitutional Amendment of 1893, Electoral Reform, and Anti-French-Canadian Bias**

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Dr. Béatrice Craig

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Dr. Yves Frenette

Dr. Galen Perras

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Controlling the “Chinese” of the Eastern States?
Maine’s Constitutional Amendment of 1893, Electoral
Reform, and Anti-French-Canadian Bias

Rebecca B. Dirnfeld

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Abstract

This thesis examines a constitutional amendment adopted by the State of Maine in 1893 as part of an electoral reform package. It stated that any man who could not read the State Constitution in English or write his name on or after January 3, 1893 was not qualified to vote. Although some of the amendment's supporters claimed the measure would raise the quality of the state electorate, most supported it because it targeted immigrants, more particularly, French Canadian immigrants. Anglo-Republicans who supported the amendment discriminated against French-Canadians, who were Catholic, spoke French, and chose acculturation rather than assimilation. The amendment was meant to disenfranchise a large proportion of these voters, as many of them were illiterate, French speaking migrants. However, the impact of the amendment proved to be limited. It did not affect Franco-American allegiances to politicians or political parties they thought best supported their wants and needs. This may be why the amendment was quickly forgotten and is not mentioned in any published history of Maine. Statistics collected from the 1910 census, English and French language newspapers of Lewiston, and an out of state newspaper provide much of the primary sources for this work.

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This thesis is in memory of my two grandmothers, now passed, Joan McInnes and Bat-Sheva Dirnfeld.

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Introduction

On April 3, 1891, the Maine State Legislature voted to propose to the state electors the following constitutional amendment:

No person shall have the right to vote or be eligible to office under the constitution of this State who shall not be able to read the constitution in the English language, and write his name; *provided, however,* that the provisions of this amendment shall not apply to any person prevented by a physical disability from complying with its requisitions, nor to any person who now has the right to vote, nor to any person who shall be sixty years of age or upwards at the time this amendment shall take effect.¹

The vote was to take place during the next local elections, scheduled for September 1892.

The amendment was approved by 23, 775 electors and voted against by 18, 061 (sixty percent). In Portland, the state's largest city, 2029 voted yes, while 1666 voted no. In Augusta, Maine's capital, 340 voted yes, while 231 voted no. The amendment, which came into effect January 4, 1893, disenfranchised citizens who could neither read English nor write their name. Officially, this amendment was part of a larger voter reform package. Since 1891, voters had to use secret ballots, and had to be registered by a special board if they voted in cities to prevent fraud. The amendment aimed at ensuring that Maine's electorate was knowledgeable about the issues at each election. The Republican-controlled legislature believed these measures would reform and improve the democratic institutions of the state. The amendment was only removed from the state's constitution in the 1960s.

The amendment, indeed the electoral reform package it belonged to, was adopted during the Progressive era, and can be viewed as a typical anti-electoral corruption

¹"Amendment XXIX, Chapter 109," *Acts and Resolves of the Sixty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Maine, 1891*. Augusta, Me.: Burleigh and Flynt, Printers to the State, 1893.

progressive package. Recent articles on this topic have been written by Justin Nordstrom, Eric A. Lindgren, Charles W Calhoun, and Maureen A. Flanagan.² Their findings show that during the Progressive era, Americans changed how they approached the problems of their society. Progressive reforms were designed to clean up the republic, prevent fraudulent activity, and to ensure only knowledgeable citizens voted. Some works also suggest that anti-Catholicism played an important role in this process. Research on Progressivism in Maine is much more limited, focusing largely on prohibition, women's rights and death penalty issues.³ Literature on electoral reform in the United States is also limited. Little has been written about the introduction of educational qualifications, and most of what does exist concerns the south.⁴ African-Americans and uneducated white foreigners lost suffrage rights when they could not pass literacy tests beginning in the 1850s. The 1893 Maine amendment has not yet been studied by historians, and is not mentioned by either old or more recent histories of the state.⁵ Why was this amendment proposed by the state legislature in 1891? Who did it target? Why was it forgotten?

² Charles W. Calhoun, *Conceiving a New Republic: The Republican Party and the Southern Question, 1869-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Justin Nordstrom, *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); for a more general history of Progressivism, Charles W. Calhoun, *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Maureen A. Flanagan, *America reformed: Progressives and progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³ William David Barry and Nan Cumming, *Rum, riot, and reform: Maine and the History of American Drinking* (Portland, ME: Maine Historical Society, 1998). This is one of the only text published on reform in that period.

⁴ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism* (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990); James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

⁵ Louis Clinton Hatch, *Maine; a history* Centennial edition (New York, NY: The American historical society, 1919); Harrie B. Coe, ed., *Maine : resources, attractions, and its people : a history* (New York : The Lewis historical publishing company, Inc., 1928); Richard A. Hebert, *Modern Maine : its historic background, people, and resources* (New York, NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1951); Charles E. Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977); Harold B. Clifford,

In the late nineteenth century, Franco-Americans constituted the largest minority group that spoke French instead of English in New England. Until 1850, French-Canadian migration to New England totaled less than 20,000 persons, but the numbers steadily increased between 1850 and 1880. Concentrations of French-Canadians began to appear in twenty-four Massachusetts towns, and in Rhode Island and New Hampshire.⁶ In the 1880s, economic prosperity in certain industrial centers drew high volumes of French-Canadian migrants to Maine, western Vermont, upper New York State and central and southeastern New England.⁷ The two largest Franco-American centers in Maine were Biddeford-Saco and Lewiston-Auburn, where Francophones made up more than 20 percent of the total population.⁸ The French-speaking population in Lewiston doubled between 1880 and 1900, from 4,475 to 10,000. By then, Franco-Americans constituted 42 percent of Lewiston's total population, making them the largest non-English speaking minority in the town.⁹

Between 1860 and 1880, French-Canadians were a transient community and rarely naturalized. But this population became more stable after 1880 and was also more likely to naturalize. Franco-American leaders played a key role in this process. They encouraged their countrymen to become American citizens while retaining their French-Canadian heritage, including their language and faith. Anglo-Americans disapproved,

Maine and her people (Freeport, Me.: Bond Wheelwright Co, 1957); Neil Rolde, *Maine : a narrative history* (Gardiner, Me.: Tilbury House, 1990); R.W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill and Joel W. Eastman. *Maine, The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present* (Orono, Me: University of Maine press, 1995).

⁶ Gerard J. Brault, *The Franco-American Heritage in New England*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2- 3.

⁸ Appendix A, "Size and percentage of the Franco-American population in selected urban areas in central and southeastern New England – High Franco American Population (more than 5,000) and high percentage of the total population (more than 20 percent)," *Ibid.*, 185.

⁹ Yves Frenette, "Understanding the Franco-Americans of Lewiston, 1860-1900," in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader* Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 111 and 117.

asserting that this kind of naturalization did not show a “willingness [by Franco-Americans]...to become true citizens of the republic, in spirit as well as in residence”.¹⁰

In the eyes of Anglo-Americans, the French-speaking migrants evidently did not fulfill the criteria for American citizenship. Instead, their actions showed that they were unwilling to conform to the customs, attitudes, and lifestyle of their host society.

Although Franco-Americans were the likely target of the 1893 Amendment, this is not mentioned in any history of Franco-Americans in Maine or in New England.¹¹ The amendment is not even mentioned by studies of Franco-American politics.¹² The only historian who has acknowledged the existence of this amendment is Mark Paul Richard,

¹⁰ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism* (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 46.

¹¹ Edward Shriver, Ed. *The French in New England, Acadia and Québec* (Maine: New England Atlantic Provinces-Québec Center, 1972); C. Stewart Doty, *The First Franco-Americans: New England Life Histories From the Federal Writer's Project: 1938-1939* (Maine: University of Maine at Orono Press, 1985); Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986); François Weil, *Les Franco-Américains, 1860-1980* (Tours, France: Mame Imprimeurs, 1989); Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1776-1930* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 1990). Dean R. Louder, *Le Québec et les francophones de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1991); Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants to the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991); Dean Louder and Eric Waddell, eds. *French America: Mobility, Identity, and Minority Experience Across the Continent* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Claire Quintal, *Religion Catholique et Appartenance Franco-Américaine: Franco-Americans and Religion: Impact and Influence* (French Institut of Assumption College, 1993); Pierre Anctil, “The Franco-Americans of New England,” in *French America: Mobility, Identity, and Minority Experience Across the Continent*, eds. Dean Louder and Eric Waddell (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Yves Roby, “Émigrés Canadiens-français, Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre et images de la société américaine,” dans Gérard Bouchard et Yvan Lamonde, dir., *Québécois et Américains. La culture québécoise aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, (Montréal: Fides, 1995), pp. 131-156. Armand Chartier, *The Franco-Americans of New England: A History* (Manchester, NH: ACA Assurance and the Institut français, Assumption College, 1999); Yves Roby, *Hisotire d'un rêve brisé?: les Canadiens français aux États-Unis* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2007).

¹² David B. Walker, *Politics and Ethnocentrism: The Case of the Franco-Americans* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdin College, Bureau for Research in Municipal Government, 1961); David B. Walker, “The Presidential Politics of the Franco-Americans,” *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 28 (1962), 353-363; Florence Marie Chevalier, “The Role of French National Societies in the Sociocultural Evolution of the Franco-Americans of New England from 1860 to the Present: An Analytical Macrosociological Case Study in Ethnic Integration Based on Current Social System Models” (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1972); Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism* (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990).

in his PhD dissertation “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”.¹³

Who had the right to become a citizen, and what rights citizens could enjoy had been debated since the American Declaration of Independence. Before 1840, citizenship remained easy to obtain, and immigration was barely regulated.¹⁴ But the topic of who should benefit from the full range of citizenship rights was sometimes hotly debated through the century. In particular, the right of specific groups to participate in the political process through the vote was often questioned. Nativists objected to easy naturalization because naturalized citizens gained political rights. This concern frequently led to restrictions of the franchise at the state level, based on perceived innate abilities to be a good citizen and a true American. These abilities included understanding the institutions of the country, and respecting the values and republican virtues of the United States. Many believed these abilities were biological. Race increasingly became a requirement in the nineteenth century. By 1855 twenty-five states in the Union excluded blacks from the franchise.¹⁵ Large scale non-English speaking, non-Protestant immigration, especially after 1850, led Nativists to distinguish between different categories of “white”. The Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and English all constituted the white

¹³ Mark Paul Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present” (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001).

¹⁴ Frederick Van Dyne, *Citizenship of the United States* (Rochester, NY: E.R. Andrews Printing Company, 1903); Samuel MacClintock, *Aliens under the Federal Laws of the United States* (Chicago, IL: Illinois Law Review, 1909); Frank George Franklin, *The Legislative History of Naturalization in the United States* (New York, NY: Arnold Press, Inc., 1969); James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ These states were: Virginia (1762), Georgia (1777), South Carolina (1790), Delaware (1792), Kentucky (1799), Maryland (1801 by statute, 1810 by constitutional amendment), Ohio (1803), New Jersey (1807 by statute, 1844 by constitution), Louisiana (1812), Indiana (1816), Mississippi (1817), Connecticut (1818), Illinois (1818), Alabama (1819), Missouri (1821), New York (1821), Tennessee (1834), North Carolina (1835), Arkansas (1836), Michigan (1837), Pennsylvania (1838), Florida (1845), Texas (1845), Iowa (1846), Wisconsin (1848), and California (1850).

'races' of Great Britain. Yet, while they were all British in theory, a noticeable hierarchy emerged, with the Irish at the bottom and the English at the top. Thus, some of the white groups were deemed innately less fit for citizenship than others.¹⁶ When the federal government was unwilling to drastically tighten naturalization laws in the late 19th century, largely because immigrants provided cheap labour for growing American industries, Nativists pressed individual states to restrict the franchise.

Maine's original Constitution in 1820 provided voting rights to "every male citizen of the United States of the age of twenty-one years and upwards...having his residence established in this State for the term of three months".¹⁷ At this time, Nativism was a strong political force in Maine. Only *white* males over the age of twenty one were considered as qualified to vote, although this was not listed as an actual requirement. The history of nativism in Maine is well covered for the antebellum period, but much less for the progressive era. Historian Béatrice Craig's discussion of Anglo-Mainers's attitudes towards Madawaska French in the antebellum period has traced the growth of this prejudice.¹⁸ There is also some literature about the Ku Klux Klan after the First World

¹⁶ J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (Yale University Press, 1974); Elizabeth Frost and Kathryn Cullen-Dupont *Women's Suffrage in America: An Eyewitness History* (New York: Facts on File, 1992); Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Mark Lawrence Kornbluh, *Why America Stopped Voting: The Decline of Participatory Democracy and the Emergence of Modern American Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Robert A. Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* 2nd Ed. (New Haven: Yale Note Bene, 2003); Glen Feldman, *The Disfranchisement Myth: Poor Whites and Suffrage Restriction in Alabama* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004). Few of these books discuss educational qualifications.

¹⁷ "Article II, Sec.1," *The Constitution of the State of Maine, 1820* (Portland, ME: Francis Douglas, 1820), x.

¹⁸ Béatrice Craig, "Before Borderlands: Yankees, British, and the St John Valley French," in Stephen J. Hornsby and John G. Reid, eds, *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, 74-93. Other titles on Reform during the Antebellum period include: Calvin Montague Clark *American Slavery and Maine Congregationalists* (Bangor, ME: The author, 1940); Frank L. Byrne, *Prophet of Prohibition: Neal Dow and his Crusade*, (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1961); Edward O. Schriver *Go free: the antislavery impulse in Maine, 1833-1855* (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1970); James Doyle, *Yankees in Canada : a collection of nineteenth-century travel narratives / edited, with introduction, notes, and bibliography*

War.¹⁹ As Maine had very few black residents, the Ku Klux Klan was primarily anti-Catholic and “anti-hyphenism” - i.e. Franco-American, Irish-American - which made it anti-French.

By the 1880s, open immigration and a few barriers to naturalization were no longer acceptable for Nativists who found another way to limit voting rights. In Maine, this was Amendment XXIX, and Maine thus became the seventh state to implement an educational qualification for voters.²⁰ Did the Anglo-Americans of Maine call for Amendment XXIX because naturalized Franco-Americans did not fit the definition of what an American citizen should be? Was this triggered by the actions of Franco-American leaders, who were trying to define a Franco-American citizenship that allowed these migrants to be American while still preserving their Catholic faith, and elements of their identity that were inextricably linked to their faith? In the end, did the amendment fade from Mainers’ consciousness because it did not have the impact one group expected and the other group feared?

This study explores how Anglo-Americans and Franco-Americans disagreed on what constituted an American citizen, and the constitutional amendment that was triggered by these opposing viewpoints. Native-born Americans believed citizenship

(Downsview, Ontario: ECW Press, 1980); James Doyle, *North of America : images of Canada in the literature of the United States, 1775-1900* (Toronto, Ontario: ECW Press, 1983); Richard E. Westcott, *New Men, New Issues: The Formation of the Republican Party in Maine* (Portland, ME: Portland Maine Historical Society, 1986); Wayne M. O’Leary, “Fish and Politics in Jacksonian Maine,” *The New England Quarterly* 67 (1994), pp. 92-114. Reform is also covered in State histories.

¹⁹ Mark Paul Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present” (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001); John Syrett, “Principle and Expediency” The Ku Klux Klan and Ralph Owen Brewster in 1924,” *Maine History* 39 (2000), pp. 215-239.

²⁰ The first state was Connecticut. In 1854 the legislature voted in favour of an amendment to the Connecticut constitution, 114:81; Connecticut (1855); Massachusetts (1857), Missouri (1865 approved, 1876 put in action); Colorado (1876), Wyoming (1889), and Mississippi (1890). Table A.13, “Literacy Requirements for Suffrage: 1870-1924, Alexander Keyssar, *The Right To Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

should only be granted to Franco-Americans who “were willing and capable of the change of heart needed to relinquish their previous national loyalty and identity and [become] Americans in spirit”.²¹ One of the measures used to assess whether a Franco-American met those criteria was to create special requirements for the right to vote. The first English literacy tests were introduced in Connecticut in 1855 and Massachusetts in 1857.²² Anglos thereby measured a Franco-American’s commitment to his new society by whether he chose to learn English and set aside his native language. The number of French-speaking immigrants who decided to learn English demonstrated the commitment of the group to accept and conform to the institutions of their new home. By 1890, six states had literacy requirements for suffrage.²³

This study looks at the amendment in the context of one town rather than state wide, as Franco-Americans did not live in all areas of the state. Franco-Americans were concentrated in two zones, the Madawaska valley and a few southern mill-towns: Old Town, the Kennebec Valley, Lewiston-Auburn and Biddeford-Saco. In Madawaska, 90% of the population was of Acadian and French-Canadian origin and spoke French. This meant that there was often very little interaction between French-speakers and Anglo-Americans. But in the mill towns, French-Canadian migrants joined Anglo-Protestant populations. As their population increased, some of their Anglo-Protestant neighbours became more concerned by their presence, and the issue of political rights for Franco-Americans was a more sensitive one in those towns than elsewhere.

²¹ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism*, 46.

²² Sandra Del Valle, *Language Rights & the Law in the United States* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2003), 88-89.

²³ Table A.13, “Literacy Requirements for Suffrage: 1870-1924, Alexander Keyssar, *The Right To Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

Lewiston has been chosen as a case study because it was the major Franco-American center in Maine. Migration and settlement occurred between 1850 and 1900. Between 1880 and 1900, the Franco-American community thrived. It became more active as French-Canadians naturalized, and like the Irish got involved in politics. The descendants of the Massachusetts Protestants who had settled in Lewiston during the American Revolution were upset by this transformation, and particularly resented the immigration of Catholics. Further, not only were the Franco-American immigrants Catholic, they spoke French instead of English. At the time of the amendment, Franco-Americans had replaced the Irish as the largest immigrant group in the city. By 1900, Franco-Americans constituted 42 percent of Lewiston's total population, and were the largest non-English speaking minority in the town. This also made Lewiston the city with the largest proportion- and the highest number- of Franco-Americans in the state.²⁴

Ordinary Lewistonians, whether English or French, have left no accounts of their reaction to the amendment. Thus, there are no accounts of the amendment by Franco-Americans anywhere in the state. What do exist are newspapers. The biggest French language newspaper in the state, *Le Messenger*, based in Lewiston, began publication in 1880; it changed ownership in 1893 and became a tabloid type paper prone to sensationalism.²⁵ This transformation, however, boosted circulation and allowed it to survive into the twentieth century. *Le Messenger* outlived *La Justice de Biddeford* from Biddeford-Saco, which was founded in 1896. *Le Messenger* did not include Op-Ed pages

²⁴ Yves Frenette, "Understanding the Franco-Americans of Lewiston, 1860-1900," in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader* Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 111 and 117.

²⁵ Gerard J. Brault, "Le Journalisme de langue française aux États-Unis," in *Vie française, Situation de la recherche sur la Franco américane*, Calire Quintal ed. (Québec: Council de la vie Française en Amérique, 1984); Paul M. Paré, "Les vingt premières années du Messenger de Lewiston, Maine", in *Vie française, Situation de la recherche sur la Franco américane*, Claire Quintal ed. (Québec: Council de la vie Française en Amérique, 1984), pp. 81-96.

or letters to the editor; what it conveyed were the opinions of the militant segment of Lewiston's Franco-American elites. Since it was the elite that encouraged ordinary people to naturalize and vote, this perspective is useful. This will be balanced by an English language newspaper, the *Lewiston Evening Journal* (published between 1866 and 1979), and the *Daily Kennebec Journal* from Augusta. Founded in 1825, the *Daily Kennebec Journal* frequently discussed state politics, including the voter reform package and the amendment. The amendment did not escape the notice of Americans outside the state. It was discussed by the *New York Times*. This newspaper discussed Franco-American issues fairly regularly and provides a broad, and rather liberal, Anglo-perspective (it also has the advantage of being indexed). Another source is the 1910 Census. As will be shown in chapter four, the census contains enough information to determine the impact of the amendment on different categories of voters.

Historian Mark Richard's concept of acculturation best explains how Franco-Americans negotiated their admission into Anglo-American society in Lewiston.²⁶ Richard shares historian Dirk Hoerder's definition of acculturation to explain how immigrants adjust to new societies. In his 1996 article "From Migrants to Ethnic: Acculturation in a Societal Framework," Hoerder has asserted that before migrants physically move to their new society, they experience two phases; the first, "socialization in the home culture," and second, "the transition or voyage". The first phase gives migrants the "cultural baggage" that they bring with them to their new destination. The second phase deals with the migrant's slow adjustment from their old home to their new one, sometimes caused by difficulties in adapting to the unfamiliar:

²⁶ Mark Paul Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of Franco-American Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present".

...acculturation is defined as a process of migrant's coming to terms with a new culture after having developed a full personality in the culture of origin...It implies a gradual withering of old roots while sinking new ones at the same time, a process that often takes place unconsciously.²⁷

This concept of acculturation explains well the action of Franco-American leaders, who tried to preserve the French-Canadian identity while encouraging these migrants to become American citizens. French-Canadians were opposed to absorption into the prevailing culture of their Anglo hosts. Historian Michael Guignard, in his study of the ethnic survival of Franco-Americans in Biddeford, Maine, explained how Franco-Americans fought against assimilation in their host society. Guignard defines assimilation as "the disappearance of a group into the American mainstream" resulting in a loss of connectedness or shared feeling among group members.²⁸ Guignard proposed that the Franco-American community in Biddeford was able to resist assimilation, in part, due to its slow rate, because of that community's density in the city, as well as their proximity to the homeland.²⁹ In the neighbouring city of Lewiston, Franco-Americans resisted assimilation and instead acculturated and preserved their ethnic heritage while becoming citizens: they continued to speak French, practiced Catholicism, established social and political institutions, and preserved their cultural traditions. All this was meant to preserve Catholicism, the French language, and French traditions-the three pillars of *La*

²⁷ Dirk Hoerder, "From Migrants to Ethnics: Acculturation in a Societal Framework," in *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* eds. Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 211-212.

Mark Paul Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of Franco-American Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present," 8.

²⁸ Michael James Guignard, "Ethnic Survival in a New England Mill Town: The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine," (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1972), 3.

²⁹ For more information on Franco-American rates of assimilation in Biddeford, Maine, see chapter two of Michael James Guignard, "Ethnic Survival in a New England Mill Town: The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine."

Survivance. Anglo and Irish antagonism during this period also encouraged ethnic cohesion among Franco-Americans and made them resistant to assimilation.³⁰

Historians who have studied French-Canadian migration to New England have agreed this group followed certain migration patterns. Historian Bruno Ramirez, Dean Louder, Pierre Anctil, and geographer James P. Allen have studied the process of return migration, whereby French-Canadians, rather than settling permanently in New England, instead, after a certain period of time, returned to their native land.³¹ Historian Tamara K. Hareven and Allen have presented the concept of chain migration.³² A chain of immigration occurred when the friends and relatives of French-Canadians from the home country migrated to the location of previously settled migrants. French-Canadians participated in chain migration while they were transient and also permanent migrants. Historian Yves Frenette, having studied both of these migration patterns in the context of French-Canadians migrating to Lewiston, has categorized French-Canadian migration

³⁰ Anglo and Irish antagonism towards self preservation of Franco-Americans in Maine: Kenneth B. Woodbury, "An Incident Between the French-Canadians and the Irish in the Diocese of Maine in 1906," *The New England Quarterly* 40 (1967), pp. 260-269; Michael Guignard, "Ethnic Survival in a New England Milltown: The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1976). Irish antagonism to linguistic preservation outside of Quebec was widespread. Martin S. Spigelman, "Race et religion: les Acadiens et la hiérarchie catholique irlandaise du Nouveau-Brunswick," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 29 (1975), pp. 69-85; Jack Cecillon, "Turbulent Times in the Diocese of London: Bishop Fallon and the French-Language Controversy, 1910-18," *Ontario History* 87 (1995), pp. 369-395. Frederick J. McEvoy, "Naturally I Am Passionate, Ill-Tempered, And Arrogant . . .": Father Matthew J. Whelan And French-English Conflict In Ontario, 1881-1922," *Historical Studies: Canadian Catholic Historical Association* 72 (2006), pp.54-70.

³¹ Dean R. Louder, *Le Québec Et Les Francophones De La Nouvelle-Angleterre* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1991); Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants to the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991); Dean Louder and Eric Waddell, eds. *French America: Mobility, Identity, and Minority Experience Across the Continent* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Pierre Anctil, "The Franco-Americans of New England," in *French America: Mobility, Identity, and Minority Experience Across the Continent*, eds. Dean Louder and Eric Waddell (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); James P. Allen, "Migration Fields of French Canadian Immigrants to Southern Maine," *Geographical Review* 62 (1972), 366-383.

³² James P. Allen, "Migration Fields of French Canadian Immigrants to Southern Maine," *Geographical Review* 62 (1972), 366-383; Tamara K. Hareven, "The Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 84 (1978), 151-182; Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the family and work in a New England industrial community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

into two periods: the first had a high degree of transience; the second demonstrated more permanent settlement.³³

During the mid to late nineteenth century Maine Nativists viewed Franco-Americans as unfit for citizenship because they were Catholic, did not speak English, and did not assimilate. They therefore did not deserve the right to vote. Amendment XXIX was proposed by the State Legislature in 1891 as part of an electoral reform package targeting this immigrant group. However, only a relatively small proportion of Franco-Americans were actually disenfranchised by the amendment. Ordinary Franco-Americans were not too concerned with its implementation and the amendment did not affect their allegiances towards politicians or political parties they thought best supported their wants and needs. This outraged local Franco-American elites who wanted voters to unite and protect their civil liberties from further Anglo-American agitation. However, because the impact of the amendment was largely muted in future elections, it was quickly forgotten and faded from the Mainer's consciousness during the 20th century.

³³ Yves Frenette, "La genèse d'une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre; Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," in Maine, *The Pine Tree State From Prehistory to the Present*, eds. Richard Judd et al (Ottawa, ON: Bonanza Press, 1989), pp.75-99.

Chapter One

The Acculturation of French-Canadians in Lewiston

The first French-Canadians to arrive in Lewiston brought with them a faith, a language, and cultural traditions that were largely foreign to their new American neighbours. French-Canadians arrived between 1860 and 1880 when the town was evolving from a Protestant agricultural community to a manufacturing center that relied on immigrant workers. Two waves of French-Canadians migrated to Lewiston, the first between 1860 and 1880, and the second from 1880 and 1900. The first wave migrants were transient people, many of whom returned to Canada, while the second wave was more stable and settled in Lewiston.³⁴ Institutional and non-institutional factors worked together to encourage ethnic cohesion among Lewiston's Franco-Americans. The French Catholic Parish was the fundamental institution that protected ethnic survival. It served as the focal point for the religious, educational, social, and cultural activities of the community. A French language newspaper, *Le Messager* and a national society were two other institutions that supported the Church in these efforts to protect Franco-American ethnic identity. Two factors facilitated these efforts—Lewiston's geographical proximity to Québec and the town's relatively small size. These institutions were not to the liking of many Anglo-Mainers, who did not approve of how Franco-Americans chose to Americanize and who viewed this as a threat to Maine's republican institutions.

³⁴ Yves Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader*, Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 108.

From Frontier Settlement to Industrial City

Lewiston was originally settled in 1768 by Massachusetts residents who had been granted land on the eastern side of the Androscoggin River. On February 18, 1795, Lewiston was incorporated as a town. Most residents were farmers and long distances to available markets led to a high degree of local self sufficiency.³⁵ A dam built in 1808-1809 to capture the water of the Androscoggin Falls, harnessed the river's water power and led to the construction of grist, saw and fulling mills. In 1845, Lewiston businessmen created the Lewiston Water Power Company (LWPC). The LWPC relied on capital from local investors, Boston entrepreneurs and to a lesser degree, businessmen from Rhode Island. By this time Lewiston and Auburn, on the river's opposite side, had greatly expanded. Boston entrepreneurs acquired most of the rights to the water power in 1847.³⁶ Between 1852 and 1857, the shareholders of the LWPC built two textile mills, some machine shops, grist and saw mills, boarding houses and apartments for the workers. The textile mills were viewed by their founders as "neatly blending profit for their owners, character development for their operatives (primarily female) and prosperity for the community".³⁷

In 1857, the Franklin Company took control of the LWPC. One of its most important shareholders, the man who had engineered the LWPC's acquisition, was Benjamin Bates. Afterwards, rights to the Androscoggin River, and its banks had to be bought or leased from the Franklin Company. Bates and associates consequently made large profits. As the Franklin Company was managed from Boston, the company

³⁵ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 108.

³⁶ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 17.

³⁷ Charles A. Scontras, *Collective Efforts Among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations, 1820-1880*, (Orono, ME: The Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 1994), 81.

appointed an agent to supervise its Lewiston assets. By 1860, the textile industry dominated Lewiston's manufacturing.³⁸ In 1871 Lewiston hosted seventeen cotton mills worth \$7 million.³⁹ In 1872 the total production of cotton cloth and woolen cloth amounted to over 32,000,000 yards and 700,000 yards respectively.⁴⁰

Bates was also a textile manufacturer in his own right. By the late 1860s, he owned five cotton mills in Lewiston, and the Bates manufacturing company being the largest in town; In 1857 it paid more than half the taxes levied in the town. Bate's success flowed from his business savvy, for he accumulated a large supply of raw cotton before the Civil War which enabled his cotton mills to stay open during the war. Bate's mills were therefore not affected by the 'cotton famine' that led to skyrocketing prices for raw material and led to massive unemployment in the textile centers of England.⁴¹

Manufacturing changed Lewiston's demography as the mills needed large numbers of workers. Irish immigrants arrived in Lewiston during the late 1840s to work as labourers on the railroad and canals and in the mills.⁴² Between 1840 and 1870, Irish emigrated from Ireland and also from the Maritimes, Boston, and Québec where they had already established tight knit communities.⁴³ Over one million Irish migrated to the United States between 1847 and 1853, following the Great Famine.⁴⁴ A mixed population of Irish from Ireland and Irish-born Americans arrived in Lewiston between 1840 and

³⁸ In 1860, there were 81,000 cotton mill workers in New England. Maine ranked fifth for the number of cotton mill workers. Maine also had 1,027 of New England's 25,583 woolen mill workers, and 2,901 of the region's 74,292 workers in the shoe and boot industry. Charles E. Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), 135.

³⁹ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 108.

⁴⁰ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 17.

⁴¹ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 108.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 108-109.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁴⁴ Matthew Frye Jacobson. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43.

1870; thus by 1870, the Irish constituted almost 22 percent of Lewiston's foreign-born population.⁴⁵ Almost a quarter of Lewiston's inhabitants were thus transatlantic migrants. The Irish, mostly poor and Roman Catholic, were perceived by their American neighbours as fatalistic and uninterested in improving their position. They were willing to work for lower wages than native workers and "worked like brutes at whatever menial tasks were available".⁴⁶

Labour disputes with Anglo-American workers motivated mill owners to replace them with Irish ones. In April of 1854 Anglo American women from the Lincoln Mill and Bates Mill No. 1 went on strike to demand an eleven-hour work day.⁴⁷ One of the strike leaders, Miss. Sarah Wilson, spoke out against the long work day, demanding that "the number of hours for labor should be fixed by some body and not left to the selfishness or whim of the employer". Female textile operatives had been working up to fifteen hours a day until they managed to get an eleven hour work day in November 1853. In April 1854 the company decided to increase the work day once again to 12 hours. This caused the strike, and about two-thirds of the workers in these mills walked out in protest.⁴⁸ The strike was unsuccessful and mill managers replaced these women with Irish workers.⁴⁹ The Irish steadily changed the composition of textile workers in

⁴⁵ Lewiston's population doubled between 1850 and 1880. Yves Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 108.

⁴⁶ Leonard Dinnerstein et al., *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 94. For more information on the Irish in Lewiston see Margaret Buker Jay, "The Irish Experience in Lewiston, 1850-1880: Opportunity and Social Mobility on the Urban Frontier," in *They Change their Sky: The Irish in Maine* Ed. Michael C. Connelly (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 2004), pp. 187-211.

⁴⁷ Scontras, *Collective Efforts Among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations, 1820-1880*, 155.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴⁹ For more on the transition from a native-born work force to an immigrant work force in New England, see Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 19.

Lewiston. There was never a shortage of immigrant male and female workers who could replace native-born female laborers.⁵⁰

As unskilled labourers, Irish immigrants “could not be considered an economic threat to skilled mechanics or to labor generally”.⁵¹ This did not mean that they did not generate hostility. They made up a large proportion of the labour force in Lewiston: seventy-five percent by 1850.⁵² This led Americans to fear Irish participation in state politics.

Irish Catholics comprised the first large group of non-Protestants to arrive in America. Hitherto, Catholics had formed a very small percentage of colonial American population. At the time of the American Revolution they were only 1% of the total population, a mere twenty-five thousand. By 1860 there were three and a half million Catholics across the country.⁵³ Anglo-Americans were hostile towards the poverty-stricken Irish. The latter’s arrival created anxiety because their Catholicism was in conflict with Protestantism.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Irish naturalized quickly and participated in urban ethnic politics where they recruited other Catholic migrants to support the Jacksonian Democrats.⁵⁵ Most Irish voters identified with this party. Irish communities

⁵⁰ Scontras, *Collective Efforts Among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations, 1820-1880*, 99.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵² Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”, 22.

⁵³ Roger Daniels, *Coming To America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 138; Timothy Walch, “Roman Catholicism,” in *The Encyclopedia of New England Culture* Eds. Burt Feintuch and David H Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 1322-1324.

⁵⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein et al., *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans*, 94.

⁵⁵ Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), 144. For further reading on Catholic immigrants and politics in New England see Lawrence J. Kapp, “Roman Catholics and Politics,” in *The Encyclopedia of New England Culture* Eds. Burt Feintuch and David H Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 1261-1263.

voted for politicians who supported their interests and who identified themselves as friends of Catholics. National Democrats, Whigs, and later Republicans viewed this as placing group interests above the greater good of the country and threatening the Republic.

Protestant ministers encouraged Anglo-Americans to protect American institutions from followers of a Pope who condemned American liberties. Pope Pius IX, who reigned from 1846 to 1878, had rejected as contrary to the will of God the principles of the French Revolution of 1789.⁵⁶ The principles were expressions of 18th century enlightenment and the foundation of 19th century Liberalism. They included freedom of thought and expression, of religion, and right to self determination. They were derived from the same Enlightenment philosophy as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of 1787. Thus, by condemning the principles of 1789, the Pope also had condemned the foundation of the American political system. In his 1854 Syllabus of Errors, the Pope also rejected the notion that Church and state should be separate. As Protestants imagined that Catholics obeyed the Pope without discussion, especially after the proclamation of Papal infallibility in 1870, Catholicism was perceived to threaten American liberties and institutions.⁵⁷

Hostility towards Irish Catholics across the country led to the creation of an anti-Catholic political group, the Know-Nothing Party founded in New York in 1852. It was a

⁵⁴ Robert R. Hull, *The Syllabus of Errors of Pope Pius IX* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1926); David I. Kreutzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Pope's Secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004).

⁵⁵ "The Syllabus of Errors Condemned by Pius IX." Papal Encyclicals Online. 2008. 11 September 2008 <<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>>.

secret organization that acquired its name from members who would say “I don’t know” when questioned about it.⁵⁸ The Know-Nothing Party, which had over one million members across the United States by 1854, desired to protect America’s institutions from the evils of Catholicism, to place only Protestant citizens in positions of power, and to protect and uphold the country and its Constitution against this perceived menace.⁵⁹ Membership in the organization was restricted to native-born Protestants, at least 21 years old, who were not married to a Catholic.

The Know Nothing movement started in Maine in 1854-1855. Support and membership were drawn from middle and lower class Maine Protestants.⁶⁰ On one occasion, they believed Catholics were trying to undermine public schools. In 1853, Father John Bapst of Ellsworth encouraged Catholic children not to participate in Bible readings at school, while a group of Catholic vandals burned Protestant Bibles. In retaliation, outraged Protestants tarred and feathered Father Bapst. On two separate occasions, members of the Know-Nothing movement burned Catholic Churches.⁶¹ In 1855, the Catholic Chapel of the Lincoln Mill in Lewiston burnt to the ground because the fire truck had been sabotaged.⁶² Although no responsibility was attributed to the Know-Nothing Party, the blaze was blamed on a few members who were “misguided”.⁶³

⁵⁸ Allan R. Whitmore, “‘A Guard of Faithful Sentinels’: The Know-Nothing Appeal in Maine, 1854-1855,” *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 20 (1981), pp. 165, 170, 172-176.

⁵⁹ Thomas J. Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930*, (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1975), 59.

⁶⁰ Fregus Macdonald, *The Catholic Church and the Secret Societies in the United States* (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1946) and William Leo Lucey, S.J., *The Catholic Church in Maine* (Francestown, New Hampshire: Marshall Jones Co., 1957).

⁶¹ The burning of churches and tar and feathering occurred, for example, in the coastal regions of Bath and Ellsworth, Maine. The priest of Ellsworth was tarred and feathered. Mark Paul Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”, 20.

⁶² Yves Frenette, “La genèse d’une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880,” (PhD dissertation, Université Laval, 1988), 89.

⁶³ The citation is from the *Democratic Advocate* and was spoken by an Irish Catholic witness to the blaze. *Ibid.* 21.

The responsible arsonists were never found but the fire was condemned by some newspapers. The *Lewiston Falls Journal* defended the Know-Nothing Party and believed false blame had been placed on party members; nonetheless it requested that the church, “which has been thus maliciously and wickedly destroyed” be repaired.⁶⁴ The fires were also denounced by Maine’s Nativist leaders. It was within this context of Protestant-Catholic conflict that the first French-Canadians arrived in Lewiston.

Le Petit Canada de Lewiston

French-Canadian migration from Quebec began in the 1830s, and it intensified with the construction of the railways in the mid-1850s, during the height of Know Nothing activism. During the 1830s, French-Canadians took advantage of the economic prospects along the Maine coast. They traveled from Québec City along the south shore of the St. Lawrence River and from Beauce County along the Chaudière River.⁶⁵ They worked seasonal jobs such as “chopping wood, working the spring drives on the rivers, raking hay, and laboring in the brickyard” then returned to Québec to be with their families.⁶⁶ Due to Québec’s close proximity, many viewed their stay in New England as temporary. But permanent migration to Maine became more common by the 1840s thanks to Québec’s struggling economy. Until the 1830s, wheat had been the most important cash crop in Lower Canada. Subsequently, Québec farmers had difficulties selling their products in the market due to competition from the Great Lakes. In the late 1830s the West flooded the East with cheap wheat. Productivity was also affected by a slight cooling of the climate and a pest invasion that swept through New England and the

⁶⁴ Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”, 21.

⁶⁵ James P. Allen, “Migration Fields of French Canadian Immigrants to Southern Maine,” *Geographical Review* 62 (1972), 369.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 369.

Maritimes.⁶⁷ This led farmers in French Canada and New England to give up wheat production.⁶⁸ Wheat production in Québec fell seventy percent between 1827 and 1844 only to rebound temporarily in the 1850s. However, the real problem lay not with low productivity and crop failure but with available land for the next generation, as Québec's population had skyrocketed from 60,000 to 670,000 between 1751 and 1851.⁶⁹ Rural families often had to hire out their children to work as manual labourers for wealthier farmers or as workers in the forest industry to supplement lost revenue from crop failures and shrinking markets. Unable to support such a rapid population growth, Québec lost thousands of people to the United States. Between 1840 and 1860, over 105,000 French-Canadians left Québec.⁷⁰ French-Canadian migration followed two directions. Some migrants traveled to the upper mid-western states including Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, where they became farmers like their parents had been in Québec. The Midwest attracted many lumbermen who were as poor as those who went to New England.⁷¹ These migrants were looking for temporary work in New England's bustling industry, hoping to earn enough money to purchase a farm back home in Québec. According to Bruno Ramirez, return migration in the 1870s and 1880s was most common among families where the male was "in his prime working age" and the female "was in

⁶⁷ John McCallum, *Unequal beginnings: agriculture and economic development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870*, (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 25-44.

⁶⁸ Frank Lewis and Marvin McNinnis, "The Efficiency of the French-Canadian Farmer in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History*, 60 (1980), 497; John McCallum, *Unequal beginnings: agriculture and economic development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1980). Marvin McNinnis and Frank D. Lewis, "Agricultural Output and Efficiency in Lower Canada, 1851," in *Research in Economic History*, vol. 9, Ed. Paul Uselding (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1984), pp. 45-87.

⁶⁹ Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 52.

⁷⁰ Yolande Lavoie, *L'émigration des Québécois aux États-Unis de 1840 à 1930* (Québec: Éditeur Officiel du Québec, 1979), 45.

⁷¹ Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 52-53. Also see Jean Lamarre, *The French-Canadians of Michigan: Their Contribution to the Development of the Saginaw Valley and the Keweenaw Peninsula, 1840-1914*, chapter three.

her prime childbearing age”.⁷² If it moved to a manufacturing and textile region of the United States, “a family unit could survive only if several members contributed to the family wage and, in most cases, if the earnings of at least one or two children could be relied on”.⁷³

A railroad line completed in 1849 ended the remoteness of Lewiston and made immigration easier. The Maine Central Railroad was extended from Yarmouth to Lewiston in 1849. In 1853-54, the Atlantic and St. Lawrence railway linked Montreal and Portland, its tracks paralleling the Maine Central between Portland, Yarmouth, and Danville Junction, south of Lewiston. The Atlantic and St. Lawrence became part of the Canadian Grand Trunk railway in 1853. Both the Maine Central system and the Grand Trunk railway were the most popular routes for Canadian immigration to Maine, and the Grand Trunk was the chief route into Lewiston.⁷⁴ These new routes did not, however, create immediate settlement of French-Canadian migrants in Lewiston. Lewiston did not attract French-Canadians before the Civil War because Anglo-Americans monopolized factory jobs, especially farm girls. Thus, seasonal migration gave rise to some small, semi-permanent French-Canadian communities, but no substantial settlement occurred until after the Civil War.⁷⁵

Some families decided to remain in New England mill towns. In the mid nineteenth century, French-Canadian migration to Lewiston fell into one of three types. There was a large through migration: migrants traveled to a town such as Lewiston,

⁷² Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), 40-41.

⁷³ Ramirez explores the return migration of French-Canadians from Berthier County, Quebec. His information is derived from Canadian census manuscript schedules. *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁴ Allen, “Migration Fields of French-Canadian Immigrants to Southern Maine,” 374.

⁷⁵ Ralph Vicero, “Immigration of French-Canadians to New England, 1840-1900: A Geographical Analysis,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968), 160-180.

stayed for a short while, and then continued further. Between 1860 and 1880, French-Canadians who chose to settle in Lewiston “were not immigrants but migrants who had no intention to settle [there] permanently”.⁷⁶ Before 1880, most French-Canadian migrants coming over the Grand Trunk stopped in Lewiston before moving to other New England cities to find better job opportunities. French-Canadians also took part in circular migration, arriving in Lewiston for a short while and then returning back home to Québec. According to geographer James Allen, French-Canadians were a migrant group that “frequently return[ed] to their points of origin, for visits or temporarily during periods of economic depression...sometimes permanently”.⁷⁷ After the construction of the railway system, return migration between Québec and New England was “frequent”. The final pattern was permanent migration. Families relocated permanently in one of New England’s mill towns and raised their children there.

Chain migration was the most common migratory pattern for French-Canadians settling in Lewiston and the rest of New England. Chain migration occurs when “kinship and friendship contacts play the major role in directing later migrants toward particular destinations”.⁷⁸ The French-Canadians, who had set up a new home in Lewiston, remained in contact with family and friends back in Québec, and encouraged them to join them. The migration of friends and relatives from the home country to the location of previous migrants resulted in a chain of immigration. Historian Tamara K. Hareven has studied the dynamics of chain migration in the French-Canadian community of Manchester, New Hampshire. She examined immigrant workers who adjusted to migration and manufacturing conditions in their new home by using kinship between

⁷⁶ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 111.

⁷⁷ Allen, “Migration Fields of French Canadian Immigrants to Southern Maine,” 376.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 367.

1880 and 1930. Kin participated in the recruitment of new immigrants to the textile industry, found job placements, and supported new workers during economic hardships, such as periods of unemployment.⁷⁹ Manchester industrial companies relied on workers to recruit family members from Canada and encouraged workers to bring their relatives to Manchester. When immigrants arrived in Manchester and were greeted by kin, they “had already received some firsthand descriptions of the place to which they were going”.⁸⁰ After finding work and housing, French-Canadian men and women across New England wrote letters home to their families “forcefully point[ing] out the advantages of living and working in New England mill towns”, notably the existence of local parishes served by French-Canadian priests.⁸¹ Descriptive letters and word-of-mouth brought French-Canadian families to New England mill towns. French-Canadian migrants were nonetheless a heterogeneous group, as some came directly from the Québec countryside while others had previously lived in Canadian towns or other regions of the United States.⁸² Although occurring much more frequently during the 1880s and 1890s, chain migration did not replace return migration. According to Hareven chain migration co-existed with return migration, as migrants also had kin who were still living in Canada. If they needed to leave Manchester for economic or personal reasons, “there was still a place to which they could return”.⁸³

Chain migration, according Yves Frenette, structured French-Canadian migration to Lewiston, resulting in a French-Canadian community composed mostly of related

⁷⁹ Tamara K. Hareven, “The Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 84 (1978), 151.

⁸⁰ Hareven, “The Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community,” 157.

⁸¹ Often immigrants would also speak this way to their families when coming home to visit them in Canada. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 55.

⁸² Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 111.

⁸³ Hareven, “The Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community,” 157.

families. Census data shows that between 1860 and 1900 French-Canadians living in Lewiston had more than one relative living in their household.⁸⁴ Often migrants who traveled to Lewiston came with their parents and siblings, and it was common for families to have up to ten children. As French-Canadians in Lewiston found stable employment in the factories, relatives and friends from Québec joined them. Frenette has noted that stereotyping French-Canadians as going “‘from farm to factory’ insufficiently defines the background of French-Canadian immigrants to Lewiston”.⁸⁵ Families who lived in rural counties “had been exposed to industrial time schedules, through the employment of other family members”.⁸⁶

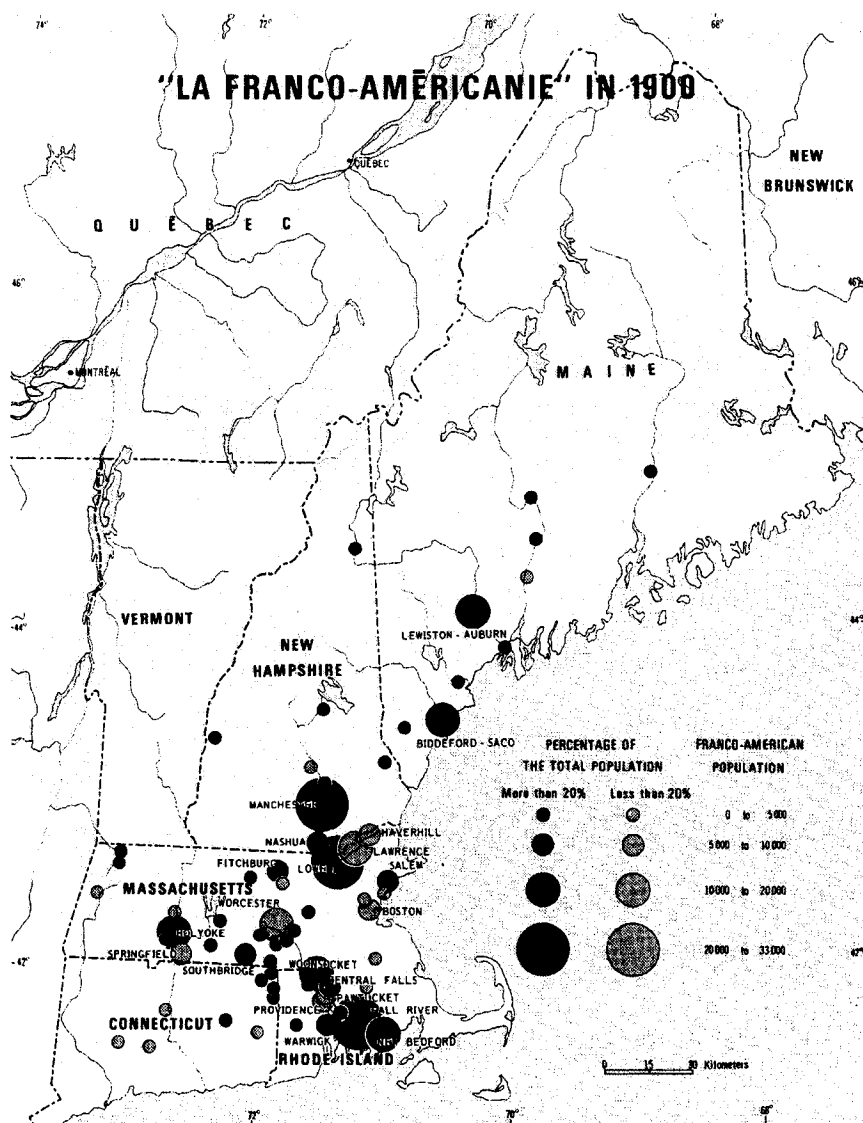
Continuous migration helped build the Franco-American community in Lewiston. The first wave of French-Canadian migration to Lewiston took place between 1860 and 1880. In 1860, less than 1% of Lewiston’s population was French-Canadian; by 1870 that number had risen to 3.6%. During this period, French-Canadians demonstrated a high rate of transience. By 1870, 720 French-Canadians permanently resided in Lewiston, but in 1880, “only one-third of Lewiston’s French-Canadians enumerated in 1870 [could] be found”.⁸⁷ This population was also poor, and living in inadequate conditions. Neighbourhoods were overcrowded and often unsanitary. An inadequate sewage system facilitated the spread of disease. During this period, French-Canadian men worked as casual laborers rather than in the textile mills and earned low wages. These men often had to travel to find work. Families moved, looking for better living conditions and work opportunities.

⁸⁴ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 111.

⁸⁵ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 111.

⁸⁶ Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 123.

⁸⁷ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 111.



Major Franco-American population centers in New England in 1900.

Source: Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), xvi.

During the second wave of migration, from 1880 and 1900, this population became much more residentially stable as more families settled permanently. More French-Canadians were recruited by mill owners and brought other family members from Québec to join them. By 1880, 18.4% of Lewiston's French-Canadian population, and

20.6% in 1890, were first generation migrants.⁸⁸ Permanent settlers formed close knit neighbourhood communities, which came to be known as “Little Canadas”. These tenements were located close to the mills, between Lisbon Street and the Androscoggin River. By 1880 over 50% of families of French-Canadian origin lived in a 0.06 square kilometer area.⁸⁹ The “Little Canadas” served two purposes; they were a clearly defined neighbourhood in a restricted in urban space; gradually they also became an institutional milieu created by the migrants. They gave French-Canadians a space in which they could build their own religious and political institutions while having minimal interactions with the Anglo community. The French Parish, the parochial school, mutual aid societies, and a French language newspaper served the purpose of turning the “Little Canada” into a thriving community.

Resisting Assimilation

The parish church became the core of Franco-American society and a symbol of its continued existence as a distinct ethnic group.⁹⁰ Three characteristics separated French-Canadians from New Englanders and contributed to defining their identity: their Catholicism, their language, and their minority status. The connection between language and faith was at the time the crucial components of the French-Canadian identity. Language was “the guardian of one’s faith, and the loss of language would lead to the loss of faith, and ultimately to the loss of one’s ethnic identity”.⁹¹ As a minority group

⁸⁸ Table 3. “Decade of Migration of First-Generation Residents of Lewiston in 1920 (in percentages),” Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”, 247.

⁸⁹ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 113.

⁹⁰ Claire Quintal, “Preface,” in *The Little Canadas of New England* Ed. Claire Quintal (Worcester, MA: French Institute/ Assumption College, 1983), vii.

⁹¹ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism*, Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 28-29.

living in an Anglo-Protestant community, French-Canadians had to be particularly vigilant to protect their distinctiveness.

French-Canadians also resisted the Irish-American Catholic Church hierarchy's desire to keep parishes American and prevent national parishes. French-Canadians wanted to set up separate national parishes with a French speaking priest. The Irish hierarchy refused and insisted that French-Canadians join territorial parishes, whether or not served by a priest who could speak French.⁹² The first French-Canadians to arrive in Lewiston had to attend services in the Anglo-Irish St. Joseph's Church. There were no church services in French.⁹³ In 1869, the congregation was divided, and the larger group of French speakers began to gather in the basement to hear Mass said in French by a Flemish priest. In 1870, because of their growing numbers, they separated completely, meeting first in a relief Chapel until they built their own Church, St. Pierre, in 1873, under the leadership of Father Pierre Hévey.⁹⁴ By the 1880s, the Church was the central part of the French-Canadian social system in Lewiston. It was also used to protect the community's national identity.

French-Canadian priests believed the next generation of Franco-Americans needed to learn the French language to preserve their culture and protect their faith, and also foster their acculturation. Parochial schools were constructed to educate the children of first generation migrants.⁹⁵ The French Catholic clergy hoped that teaching the French

⁹² Fergus Macdonald, *The Catholic Church and the Secret Societies in the United States* (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1946) and William Leo Lucey, S.J., *The Catholic Church in Maine* (Francestown, New Hampshire: Marshall Jones Co., 1957).

⁹³ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 115.

⁹⁴ Father Hévey arrived in Lewiston in 1871. Hévey's idea to raise money for the building of the church consisted of French-Canadians lending money to the parish in the way of a savings bank. Yves Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 115.

⁹⁵ Father Clement Thibodeau, "The French Catholics in Maine," in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader*, Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 201.

language would protect the faith.⁹⁶ The saying “Perdre sa langue c’est perdre sa foi” was repeated in every French parish in Maine.⁹⁷ Under Father Hévey’s guidance, a parochial bilingual school was established in 1878 by three Grey Nuns from Saint-Hyacinthe. The day was divided into two parts. The first half was taught in French and focused on music, Bible study, drawing, catechism and the history of French Canada. The second half, taught in English, included instruction in American history, mathematics, English and geography.⁹⁸ This bicultural curriculum was effective in educating young Franco-Americans about their origins and the history of their new home, while preserving their language and faith.

Socio-cultural institutions were fundamental in protecting Franco-American interests. The Société Saint-Jean Baptiste was one of largest societies and had branches across New England. It was created by journalist Ludger Duvernay in Québec on June 24, 1834 to encourage French-Canadians to protect their cultural and linguistic heritage. It operated as a mutual aid society. The society organized large celebrations on June 24 to celebrate the Saint’s day. Guest speakers were invited to speak about the future of the French-Canadians and what they could do to protect their religion and national heritage. Fourteen years later the first branch of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste was established in Malone, New York.⁹⁹ The French-Canadians in the United States held national conventions to ensure that these organizations pursued the same goals. However, as E. Billing has noted,

⁹⁶ Ibid., 201.

⁹⁷ This saying is translated as “loss of the language leads to the loss of the faith;” Thibodeau, “The French Catholics in Maine,” 201.

⁹⁸ Jacques Ducharme, *The Shadow of the Trees: The Story of French-Canadians in New England* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1943), 105.

⁹⁹ Edward Billings Ham, “French National Societies in New England,” *The New England Quarterly* 12 (1939), 316.

the ephemeral character of these meetings made increasingly apparent the need for agencies which would be more stable and more cohesive, and which would function with continuity.¹⁰⁰

Historian Oscar Handlin has contended that an immigrant's involvement in mutual aid societies led to his Americanization. Organizations helped immigrants adapt to their new environment, and an immigrant's involvement in group activities "was the general pattern of association in the United States".¹⁰¹ However, Handlin also has asserted that mutual aid societies were also instrumental in limiting full assimilation. While the immigrant was becoming Americanized through these societies, "he [also] found himself more often and more completely operating inside the limits of these cultural and social enclaves".¹⁰² Immigrants therefore adapted to their new environment in ways that demonstrated their differences as a particular ethnic group. Handlin has observed that during this process, immigrants became more, rather than less aware of their own oddities and differences. What occurred was a process of Americanization, where an immigrant adjusted to his new home while recognizing that he did not share all the common characteristics of this environment. Certain migrant groups embraced this realization and tried to adjust to their new community while retaining the characteristics that differentiated them from their hosts.¹⁰³ The French-Canadians were one of them.

At Hévey's urging, a branch of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste was established in Lewiston in January 1872. Hévey appointed Ulric Delisle, a baker, as the first leader of the organization. It was a "fraternal organization" that provided death, disability, and

¹⁰⁰ These conventions lasted from 1865 to 1901. Edward Billings Ham, "French National Societies in New England," 316.

¹⁰¹ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* 2nd Edition (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 165.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

illness benefits.¹⁰⁴ It also aimed to safeguard the faith of Franco-Americans and their national spirit. The society was a worker's movement that attracted ordinary French-Canadians, many of whom were labourers. The society tried to achieve its goals through different measures. For example, money earned by the society was used to help French education. Literature promoting French causes such as benefit insurance, and the preservation of the French language and Catholic faith was published. However, the society had difficulty collecting enough money to realize these goals. Hévey also had difficulty recruiting and keeping members. Some members were uninterested in organizing public events and celebrations with the money they paid to the society for insurance. For this reason the Society decided not to send delegates to a celebration of Saint-Jean-Baptiste day in Montreal in 1874.¹⁰⁵

While Hévey was struggling to maintain the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, Dr. Louis J. Martel arrived in Lewiston. He arrived in Lewiston in 1873 at the invitation of Pastor Hévey. He was the first Franco-American doctor to live there. As a militant advocate for the preservation of Franco-American culture, Dr. Martel soon became the spokesperson for the Franco-American community. He was elected to the State House in 1884 for a term of two years. He founded the first Catholic hospital in Lewiston in 1888, where patients could be helped in French, and became chairman of Lewiston's Board of Alderman in 1891-92. He also founded Lewiston's French language newspaper, *Le Messenger* in 1888.

In 1874 Dr. Martel set up a literature society called the Institut Jacques Cartier. Dr. Martel was more interested in issues of cultural preservation than mutual aid. Unlike

¹⁰⁴ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 115.

¹⁰⁵ Frenette, "La genèse d'une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," 286.

the working class emphasis of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, Martel's elitist Institut recruited young and educated members of the French-Canadian community instead of those in the working class.¹⁰⁶ The Institut Jacques-Cartier thus became a literary club, its membership dominated by professionals, and organized plays and concerts. Under Martel's leadership, it also became involved in the naturalization of working class French-Canadians.

In 1874, when the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste failed to organize Lewiston's first *St. Jean-Baptiste* day celebration, Dr. Martel and members of the Institut Jacques-Cartier stepped in. He and other members of the organization traveled to Montréal to participate in the fortieth anniversary of *St. Jean-Baptiste* Day. One year later, they organized their own celebration in Lewiston. This led to the fusion of the two societies in 1875. The new merger took the name of the Institut Jacques Cartier but kept the bylaws of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste.¹⁰⁷ Dr. Martel became the president. The merger led to leadership conflicts, as members of the old Institut Jacques Cartier did not show much concern for the troubles of workers, who had made up the membership of the old Société Saint-Jean Baptiste. Thus, in 1879, 37 men, most of whom were members of the old Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, opened a chapter of the Union St. Joseph in response to these conflicts. It was organized as another mutual aid society with goals much like the former Société Saint-Jean Baptiste. Led by Republican P.X. Angers, the new body catered to working class Franco-Americans and its committee members socialized closely with Anglo-

¹⁰⁶ Yves Frenette, "La genèse d'une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre; Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," *The Pine Tree State From Prehistory to the Present*, eds. Richard Judd et al (Ottawa, ON: Bonanza Press, 1989), 97. Incorrect citation- La genese is not in the Pine Tree State and 97 is the first page of the chapter on the Wabanakis Frontier to 1678!

¹⁰⁷ Frenette, "La genèse d'une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," 289.

Americans. It also participated in naturalization campaigns. In 1880 both the Union St. Joseph and the Institut Jacques Cartier had 150 members.¹⁰⁸

Since its inception, *Saint Jean-Baptiste* day fostered ethnic preservation among Lewiston's French population. In 1888 Dr. Martel and other Franco-Americans were present when Québec Prime Minister Honoré Mercier spoke of the "shared roots" of francophones at the celebration of *St. Jean-Baptiste* day in Québec City, where Francophones from Lewiston and other New England cities were in attendance. He encouraged Franco-Americans to keep alive their language and faith so that they would not forget where their heritage came from: "Parlez français et soyez catholiques; les Anglais et les Américains respectent toujours les Français qui ont le courage de parler leur langue et de professer leur religion".¹⁰⁹ Dr. Martel called Québec City "le berceau de notre nationalité". However, as demonstrated by historian Mark Richard, Franco-American involvement in *Saint-Jean-Baptiste* celebrations in Lewiston also showed their "noncompeting loyalties" to their French-Canadian heritage *and* American society.¹¹⁰ At the annual celebration held on June 24, 1897, The Institut Jacques-Cartier set up a banner in front of its assembly hall in Lewiston. The banner read "Not foreigners but Americans, Let us be fair". Another slogan frequently used at this and other celebrations was "Loyaux mais Français".¹¹¹ Richard has contended that francophone expressions of loyalty to a French heritage and to American institutions during *St. Jean-Baptiste*

¹⁰⁸ Frenette, "La genèse d'une communauté canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," 293.

¹⁰⁹ "Speak French and be Catholic; the English and the Americans always respect the French who have the courage to speak their language and profess their faith". Mark Paul Richard, "Negotiating Ethnic Identity: St. Jean-Baptiste Day Celebrations in Francophone Lewiston, Maine," in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader*, Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 213.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

celebrations allowed these migrants to negotiate their admission into American society. One of the ways this was done was to disassociate Lewiston's francophone community from their home country, Canada. During the annual celebrations Franco-Americans hung the French flag throughout Lewiston.¹¹² They also displayed French flags on their picnic tables and the band played the French national anthem La Marseillaise while people ate. During the parade, floats portrayed French, French-Canadian, and American themes. French-Canadians dressed up as war heroes from the American and French revolutionary wars. These activities and symbols emphasized the distinction between Francophones in the United States and their Canadian neighbours. Dr. Martel stated in 1897: "When this nation was yet in childhood and struggling for her rights, for her independence, Canada's mother, France, came to the aid of the thirteen colonies."¹¹³ Also, attorney Émile Tardivel stated in *Le Messager* on July 2 1897: "Ce que nous voulons, pardessus toutes choses, c'est conserver notre langue et nos traditions dans la vie privée et parler la langue du pays et nous soumettre aux institutions américaines dans la vie publique."¹¹⁴ As Richard has pointed out, by the twentieth century, French-Canadians had begun calling themselves Franco-Americans.¹¹⁵ Richard also notes that the elite highlighted the historic connections between France and America.

¹¹² Ibid., 213.

¹¹³ Ibid. 214.

¹¹⁴ "What we want, above all things, is to conserve our language and our traditions in private life and to speak the language of the country and to submit to American institutions in public life." Mark Paul Richard, "Negotiating Ethnic Identity: St. Jean-Baptiste Day Celebrations in Francophone Lewiston, Maine," 215.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 214. Emile Tardival (also spelt Tardivel) was a Franco-American lawyer and Democrat who resided in New England. He was born in Quebec on May 16, 1859 and received his degree from Laval University. He went on to study law and in 1883 moved to St. Johnsbury, Vermont for one year. He then lived in Lewiston from 1884 to 1888 until he moved to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he resided until 1892. In 1894 he was admitted to the bar. In 1894 he was elected to the legislature of Massachusetts by a large majority of the state electors.

During the 1880s, some Anglo Lewistonians responded positively to the way Franco-Americans negotiated their entry into American society. Franco-Americans were viewed as careful with money, non confrontational, and usually honest.¹¹⁶ Lewiston Anglo-Americans, especially the businessmen who employed Franco Americans, showed their appreciation of those qualities by participating in *St. Jean-Baptiste* celebrations. Anglo American shops were decorated. Lewiston's mayor and local politicians also participated in the parade and ceremonies. Members of the board of aldermen joined the picnic and evening festivities that were carried out in front of the city hall. As Mark Richard has asserted, this involvement "testified to the growing economic and political influence of Lewiston's French-Canadian population at the end of the nineteenth century".¹¹⁷

A French language newspaper was established at the same time as migrants developed a network of parishes, schools and mutual aid societies. In March 1880, Dr. Martel and other members of the Lewiston French elite founded *Le Messager*. This newspaper was owned by Martel and his associates until 1893. It promoted *La survivance*.¹¹⁸ By mid nineteenth century the French Catholic Church promoted a nationalist ideology. It was the duty of every French-Canadian to fulfill the mission of being devoted Catholics and protecting the French language, by staying on the land and

¹¹⁶ Nelson Henry Loomis, "French-Canadians in New England," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 87 (1893), 186.

¹¹⁷ Another example of French-Canadian influence in Lewiston was American businesses that put signs up in their windows like "Ici on parle français" (French is spoken here) to attract Franco-American consumers. Mark Paul Richard, "Negotiating Ethnic Identity: St. Jean-Baptiste Day Celebrations in Francophone Lewiston, Maine," 216.

¹¹⁸ Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 7. For more information on messianism, see Michel Brunet, *La Présence Anglaise et les Canadiens: études sur l'histoire et la pensée des deux Canadas* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1964); Paul M. Paré, "Les vingt premières années du Messager de Lewiston, Maine," in *Vie française, Situation de la recherche sur la Franco américane*, Claire Quintal ed. (Québec: Council de la vie Française en Amérique, 1984), pp. 81-96.

practicing Catholicism. If people preserved their religion, language, and participated in their institutions, they would continue to live as a distinct group separate from the English. For historian Michel Brunet, *La Survivance* was a form of messianism. In the eyes of the elite, the habitants were children of the Church who were placed on earth to carry out the Church's apostolic vocation. This way of life would conserve and protect their cultural identity. *Le Messenger* also became the most effective avenue for Dr. Martel to be "a voice" for the Franco-American community.¹¹⁹ But the paper, which focused initially on Lewiston's Franco-American community as well as news from Canada, was purchased in 1893 by Jean-Baptiste Couture who expanded the coverage to American politics and sports. *Le Messenger's* motto did not change however: "*Religion et Nationalité*" was supported by the "three pillars of *survivance*: the French language, the Roman Catholic faith, and French-Canadian traditions".¹²⁰ *Le Messenger* was also used as a medium to shape the image of Franco-Americans who had made Lewiston their permanent home. An 1892 article identified Georges Carignan as the first French-speaking resident of the city who came in 1860. The census bears evidence of his arrival. Carignan's claim to be the first francophone in Lewiston was used by Franco-Americans in the 1890s to assert that French-Canadians had lived in Lewiston since the early years of development. This conveyed a sense of permanence of French-Canadians living in Lewiston.¹²¹ By the beginning of the twentieth century, over 3,000 people subscribed to *Le Messenger*.

¹¹⁹ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 121.

¹²⁰ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 61.

¹²¹ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 24.

The efforts made by Hévey and Martel to establish a distinct Franco-American culture in Lewiston bore fruits after 1880. National parishes, parochial schools, mutual aid societies, and a French language newspaper promoted cultural preservation and mutual assistance. Their most immediate purposes were to set up and support French schools and churches, provide financial assistance, and celebrate St. Jean Baptist Day. Ultimately, all this was meant to preserve Catholicism, the French language, and French traditions – the three pillars of *La survivance*. In addition, these institutions allowed Franco-Americans not to sacrifice their ethnic identity while adapting to American society.

The Shift to Acculturation

In 1881, a new religious order arrived in Lewiston: Dominicans fleeing religious discrimination in France. They were looking for missions in Canada and the United States. Rejecting a request by the Bishop of New Orleans and Louisiana to serve as priests in his diocese, the Dominicans instead accepted the offer of the Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe in Québec in 1873 to staff his parishes.¹²² After recruiting a large number of new members in Québec, they looked for work in the United States. Bishop James Augustin Healy of Portland, having wanted to get rid of Hévey since he had been appointed Bishop in 1873, seized upon the Dominicans' offer of service to achieve this goal. Healy, who was hostile to the kind of national parishes that Hévey had created in Lewiston could remove Hévey and deflect Franco-American resentment by replacing him with other French-speaking priests. As the Dominicans belonged to the regular clergy,

¹²² Richard, "The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 1881-1986," *Québec Studies* 33 (2002), 83.

they owed him obeisance in a way secular priests did not.¹²³ After Hévey's removal in 1881, the Dominicans endeavored to create a more united Franco-American community so that it would have more power at the political and social level.¹²⁴ The Dominicans opened the Dominican Block, a building providing Franco-Americans with space for business, classrooms, and meetings. Its purpose was to strengthen the network of associations developed by Hévey during his ten years in Lewiston. Ethnic associations, notably l'Association Saint-Dominique and les Dames de Sainte-Anne held their meetings in the Block.¹²⁵ Membership to these associations was offered to young men, and to women, including widowed and married women.¹²⁶

Le Club National, a French language organization, also held meetings in the Dominican block. The Dominicans thus seized the opportunity to attend the meetings of *Le Club National* in 1882 and 1883 in order to promote the naturalization of Lewiston's Franco-Americans. Naturalization was an issue the Dominicans felt very strongly about. Painfully aware of Anglo hostility toward Catholic communities, the Dominicans did not feel comfortable wearing their habit in public. At the 1885 St. Jean-Baptiste celebration, the Dominican Provincial, who had traveled from Québec to attend the festivities, noted the paradox of a republic which advocated freedom of religion but in reality was prejudiced against non-Protestants.¹²⁷ The Dominicans concluded it was in the best

¹²³ In a regular clergy, priests belong to a religious order governed by a Rule. They take vows, one being obedience. Ordinary priests belong to the Secular clergy and they do not take a vow of obedience. They are merely in the employ of the Bishop.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

¹²⁵ L'Association Saint-Dominique was founded for young men and les Dames de Sainte-Anne was founded for widowed or married women. Mark Paul Richard, "The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 1881-1986," 84.

¹²⁶ Hévey had founded Les Enfants de Marie for young women and L'Union Saint-Joseph for men. *Ibid.*, 84.

¹²⁷ Richard, "The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 1881-1986," 84.

interest of Lewiston Franco-Americans to develop ethnic networks that would protect their community from hostile Anglos and preserve their religion, language, and culture. During the 1880s and 1890s, the Dominicans encouraged Franco-Americans to pursue this goal. In 1886 and 1892, they invited The Marist Brothers (1886) and the Dames of Sion (1892) from Europe to join them in Lewiston.¹²⁸ Members of these religious orders had been trained in England to teach Francophone children French and English. The work of these teachers in parish schools “simultaneously encouraged the preservation of the French language and the adoption of English language skills”.¹²⁹

By the late 1880s, the Dominicans became less concerned with Anglo-American antagonism towards Catholic immigrants. The Lewiston francophone population was larger, more stable, and had developed institutions that promoted its heritage. These developments changed the Dominicans’ view of the United States as a hostile environment for Catholic immigrants. America was now seen as a land of opportunity where French Catholics could preserve their traditions and practice their religion, while teaching their children their heritage and the institutions of their new home. The Dominicans displayed a pro American attitude and a belief in the benefits of American life and institutions.¹³⁰ They also believed that Franco-Americans had to learn English and naturalize to compel Anglo-Americans to acknowledge their political presence. Through learning English, Franco-Americans would quickly learn about American institutions and how to benefit from them. Thus, Franco-Americans could adapt to American society while still preserving their language, faith, and traditions. The

¹²⁸ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 120.

¹²⁹ Richard, “The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 1881-1986,” 84.

¹³⁰ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 120.

Dominicans worked with *Le Club National* to encourage naturalization among the Franco-American community. One of its founding members was J. D. Montmarquet, the first editor of *Le Messager*. Montmarquet's editorials argued that voting would give Franco-Americans influence in an Anglo society.¹³¹ It would also give Franco-Americans the chance to stay "Canadiens de coeurs et de pensée" and "perpétuer sous le drapeau Américain les traditions et les vertues de sang français".¹³² Pastor Alexandre-Louis Mothon at a meeting of *Le Club National* in February 1882 urged "the men of the parish to naturalize "dans l'intérêt de leur situation et de leur influence aux États-Unis".¹³³ Mothon encouraged parishioners to promote naturalization among Church members. The Dominicans allowed *Le Club National* to use the parish lists to find men who could be naturalized, and paid part of the cost of filing naturalization papers.¹³⁴ The Dominicans' efforts led to an increase in naturalization during the 1880s and 1890s. Out of the corpus of 1000 men of voting age in the 1910 census used in chapter four, 10% were naturalized before 1880. 12.6% were naturalized between 1880 and 1889 and 39.8% were naturalized between 1890 and 1909. Lewiston's Franco-Americans had transitioned from uneducated transient migrants to stable, better educated, and politically motivated residents during the later half of the nineteenth century. They also entered the political sphere and by 1890, began playing a significant role in state and local politics, to the dismay of their Anglo-Protestant neighbours, as we will see in the next chapter.

¹³¹ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 63.

¹³² Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism*, 52.

¹³³ Richard, "The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 1881-1986," 85.

¹³⁴ Richard, "The Ethnicity of Clerical Leadership: the Dominicans in francophone Lewiston, Maine, 85.

French-Canadians comprised the largest immigrant group in Lewiston by the end of the nineteenth century. The need for undemanding industrial labour and the development of a good communication network with Québec had led to this increase. Chain migration and language encouraged the constitution of districts that were heavily French-Canadian known as *Petits Canada*. *Survivance* ideology developed by the Québec clergy compelled French-Canadians in Lewiston to press for national parishes that were French. Under the leadership of a priest from Québec name Hévey, and of their own Elite, the French-Canadian community developed a network of institutions aiming at preserving faith, language, and tradition. These ideas found their public expression in the celebration of *St. Jean Baptist*. Assimilation had to be resisted as the French Catholic clergy believed Anglicization would lead to apostasy. The arrival of the Dominicans hastened the transition of Lewiston's French speaking community from French-Canadian migrants to Franco-Americans. The Dominicans quickly developed a positive view of American culture and institutions and vigorously encouraged naturalization so that Franco-Americans could fully participate in decision making processes and political life. The Dominicans and Franco-American elite now advocated acculturation as a third way between ethnic separation and assimilation. However, this process was not to the liking of all Anglo-American Mainers, who did not like Franco-American involvement in state politics, and disapproved the way in which the Dominicans Americanized the Franco-American community.

Chapter Two

Nativism, anti-Catholicism in Maine

Nativism appeared in Maine in the middle of the nineteenth century. Nativists, who were invariably anti-Catholics, were a political force in the state and had to be reckoned with by all Anglo-Mainers. Nativists intended to “reform” the state and protect Maine’s republican institutions from uneducated foreigners. Irish Catholics were the first group to be targeted. During the late 1800s, Franco-American involvement in state politics also triggered a Nativist response. The adoption of Amendment XXIX, officially part of a larger package of measure designed to clean up the electoral system, prevent frauds, and ensure only knowledgeable citizens voted, was perceived by contemporaries as a Nativist reaction to Franco-American participation in state politics and the franchise.

Reform movements in Maine: Antebellum to Progressive Era

Characterized by historian Richard A. Herbert as “growing pains” of the state, reform was not new in Maine.¹³⁵ Reform movements had emerged in the 1820s and 1830s. They left a legacy of anti-Catholicism and Xenophobia. For example, Maine became the first liquorless state when it passed a prohibition law in 1846. In 1858 the prohibition law was included in the State Constitution.¹³⁶ Prohibition remained in force until 1933, but the question of its repeal was regularly raised during the Progressive era. Catholics and Democrats, by and large, opposed prohibition, which had the support of Evangelical Protestants.

¹³⁵ Anti-Masonry, Prohibition, Anti-Slavery, and Know-Nothingism were all reform movements in Maine. They are discussed in detail in Richard A. Hebert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People, and Resources* (New York, NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1951), 176-195.

¹³⁶ “Bitter Fight in Maine to Wipe Out Prohibition,” *The New York Times*, September 7, 1911, 12.

A second period of reform occurred at the end of the nineteenth century during the Progressive Era.¹³⁷ The Progressive movement attracted middle class Protestants who supported women's suffrage, regulation of big business, child labour laws, prohibition laws, as well as fought political corruption.¹³⁸ During the first period of reform, Mainers were not unanimous when it came to abolitionism of slavery or support for the Know Nothing Movement.¹³⁹ Nativism and anti-Catholicism was always a force to be reckoned with in the Maine Legislature, but Mainers repeatedly expressed their distaste for public displays of anti-Catholic sentiment. During the gubernatorial election of 1843 Edward Kavanagh, a Catholic, was not nominated as candidate by the Democrats. Kavanagh had served as the first Catholic Governor of Maine after he replaced Governor Fairfield in 1843. It was expected that he would be chosen as candidate at the Democratic caucus in June. Instead, the Protestant Hugh J. Anderson was nominated by a vote of 162 to 124. Although the Party denied religion was the reason in this choice, many believed Kavanagh's elimination was based on religious prejudice. And indeed, Kavanagh received 3,221 votes by Mainers who wrote his name on the ballot ticket. Anderson won.¹⁴⁰

At the height of the Know Nothing Movement, many Mainers were angered by violent displays of anti-Catholicism. For example, in 1853, when Father John Bapst of Ellsworth encouraged Catholic children to avoid Bible readings at school, outraged

¹³⁷ For an overview of the American Progressive period see Faulkner, Harold U., "Politics, Reform, and Expansion," in *New American Nation Series* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, *The American Nation: A History of the United States Vol. 2* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007).

¹³⁸ Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13-33.

¹³⁹ Richard A. Hebert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People, and Resources*, 183-186.

¹⁴⁰ The final vote tabulation for the 1843 gubernatorial election was Hugh J. Anderson (Dem)-32,029, Edward Robinson (Whig)-26,973, James Appleton (Anti-Slavery)-6,746 and Edward Kavanagh (Dem)-3,221. Richard A. Hebert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People, and Resources*, 195-196.

Protestants and members of the Know Nothing Party tarred and feathered him. This and other incidents were denounced as “mob-action, bigotry, and persecution of a [Catholic] minority”.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, the Kavanagh incident and the presence of the Know Nothing movement showed that antebellum reform already contained an anti-foreigner and anti-Catholic streak. Nonetheless, Maine politicians were careful not to express their nativist feelings openly while they participated in local politics. One example includes Samuel P. Morrill. Morrill was a Republican from Maine and a supporter of the Know Nothing party. He was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1868. He served in this position from 1869 to 1871. His Nativist views were generally known at the time of his election, but he ran as a Prohibitionist.

Late nineteenth century Progressivism in Maine produced a number of reforms aimed at eliminating corruption and guaranteeing an informed electorate. Nativism and anti-Catholicism, prohibition, women’s suffrage, child labour laws, and electoral reform were ostensibly part of “reforming” the state. Yet, many measures that fell under the “reform” label would nowadays be considered regressive, offensive, or contrary to human rights. For example, Nativism and anti-Catholicism played a role in Progressive era reformism. Many reformers were Republicans who targeted Catholic immigrants and accused the Catholic Church of posing a threat to the republic.¹⁴²

Child labour and women’s suffrage were two other issues that received some attention in Maine. In 1892, the Deputy Commissioner took a trip around the textile cities of the state to investigate the enforcement of the child labour law. He found that there was a “marked improvement” with regards to mill owners abiding by the law. However,

¹⁴¹ Hebert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People, and Resources*, 194.

¹⁴² Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s*, 107.

he argued that not enough children were attending school to the age of fifteen, and that too many did not know how to read or write English. The projected constitutional amendment requiring an educational qualification for voters was, according to the Deputy Minister, a progressive measure which would encourage parents to send their children to school.¹⁴³ The role of women also received some attention in Maine, but because of the state's conservative political body and tendency to maintain the status quo, women's issues did not have much of an impact during the 1890s. Nonetheless, in 1893 the *Daily Kennebec Journal* wrote that women's suffrage was "making rapid headway" across the United States, and was sure to come to Maine in the near future.¹⁴⁴ The newspaper demanded why *ladies* of the state were not enfranchised, given that illiterate immigrants and emancipated slaves could vote. This comparison demonstrated that progressive reform did not always benefit every member of a community, as the newspaper clearly did not feel it was appropriate for foreigners or blacks to be enfranchised.

Electoral Reform in Maine

In 1891 the issue of electoral reform was at the forefront of Maine politics, as the Legislature passed the Secret Ballot Bill, an educational amendment (to be approved by Maine electors), and a voter registration bill. The secret ballot and voter registration were considered the two most important new laws passed by the Sixty-Fifth Legislature. The *Lewiston Evening Journal* asserted that no other legislature since the 1820s enacted such "radical legislation".¹⁴⁵ The Secret Ballot Bill, a copy of the Massachusetts law with a few modifications, had been first introduced to the Maine Legislature in 1889 by Mr.

¹⁴³ *Daily Kennebec Journal*, October 13, 1892.

¹⁴⁴ *Daily Kennebec Journal*, March 23, 1893.

¹⁴⁵ The article cited about 1000 pages of public laws had been approved by the legislature, which was two hundred more than two years before. *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 30, 1891.

Looney, a Republican. When it did not pass, it was reintroduced in 1891 by Looney, who spoke in favour of the bill at a Judiciary Committee meeting. It had a certain amount of Democratic support, but some leading Democrats opposed it.¹⁴⁶ It was re-introduced by Republican Oliver B. Clason on January 14, 1891, who had also supported the bill in the previous Legislature.¹⁴⁷ There were important provisions to this act. The ballot had to be official and list all candidates and all parties running in the election. The state or municipalities were to issue these official ballots. Voters had to privately mark the name of the candidate of their choice. The ballot then had to be folded and dropped into a box without anyone having an occasion to see how the elector voted.¹⁴⁸ No literacy test was involved in this kind of ballot reform.

At a hearing held on February 6, 1891 in Augusta, men arrived at the Representatives Hall to listen to the session of the Judiciary Committee on the ballot bill. John Garner of Lewiston was the first to speak in favour of the bill. He spoke of the success of the secret ballot in Massachusetts, which made voting more secure and

¹⁴⁶ These men included Mr. Dickey of Fort Kent, a habitual champion of Northern Maine Franco Americans. Dickey had been accused of unduly influencing voters in 1858. A committee of the Senate of the Thirty-Eighth legislature wrote a report on this misconduct. The principle fraud occurred in Hancock plantation, where Dickey was a Custom House officer and was running as Democratic Candidate. He was accused of examining the votes and fixing them to his liking. His behaviour at the 1858 elections is exactly what reformers wanted to prevent in the future with registration and secret ballot. "Report", Thirty-Eighth Legislature (Maine: Stevens & Sayward, 1859), 4-5. Mr. Talbot of Machias, and Mr. Madigan of Houlton. "The Truth About the Ballot Bill," *Daily Kennebec Journal*, April 2, 1891. This article was from the *Portland Press* and was reprinted in the *Daily Kennebec Journal*.

¹⁴⁷ Section 26 of the Secret Ballot Bill provided aid for any registered voter who was unable to mark his ballot by himself due to a certain disability. It read: Any voter who declares to the presiding election officer that he cannot read his ballot, or that by blindness or other physical disability he is unable to mark his ballot, shall, upon request, receive the assistance of one or two of the election officers in the marking thereof, such officer to be selected by the voter, and such officer or officers shall certify on the out side thereof that it was so marked with his or their assistance, and shall thereafter give no information regarding the same. The presiding officer may, in his discretion, require such declaration of disability to be made by the voter under oath before him, and he is hereby qualified to minister the same. *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Wednesday, March 25, 1891.

¹⁴⁸ "The Work of the Legislature," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 4, 1891.

produced “more honest elections”.¹⁴⁹ Mr. Looney of Portland supported the bill as it made it “a physical impossibility to discover how a man voted” and it prevented bribery.¹⁵⁰ Other supporters included labour organizations, younger elements of the Republican Party, and some Democrats.¹⁵¹

Although the bill was a Republican initiative, its major opponents were Republicans who denied that bribery existed in state and local elections, and resented the accusation that the old system was corrupt. Republicans accused Democrats of supporting the bill as “they had everything to gain and nothing to lose”.¹⁵² Republican politicians worried that passing the bill would give Democrats an advantage at election time. Although this concern remained publicly unstated, a Secret Ballot would make it more difficult for Republicans to tamper with electoral results in districts populated by less educated voters. For years the Republicans in Maine had held a majority in the House and Senate through bribery and the intimidation of voters. Under the Secret Ballot system, bribed voters could no longer prove that they had voted for a Republican candidate, thus making bribery futile for the Republican Party. This threatened the majority Republicans held in the State Legislature. Republican A. L. Lumbert of Houlton, claiming that the people of Washington, Aroostook, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, Lincoln, Franklin, and Sagadahoc counties opposed the measure, declared that the bill would not prevent bribery and would make it difficult for some residents of Aroostook to vote as they could not

¹⁴⁹ The law was given this title because it originated in Australia during the 1850s, “Ballot Reform in Maine,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1891, 1. Quote from “The Secret Ballot Hearing at Augusta, Thursday P.M.,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 6, 1891.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 10, 1891; “Ballot Reform in Maine,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1891, 1.

¹⁵² This comment was made by Judge George C. Wing, a Republican from Auburn. *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 6, 1891. For Democratic support and Republican opposition see “Ballot Reform in Maine,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1891, 1.

read and understand the ballot.¹⁵³ An article in *The New York Times* indirectly refuted Lumbert's claims, when it reported that the Aroostook Pomona Grange, the largest organization of farmers in the state, "unanimously adopted resolutions demanding the passage of the bill".¹⁵⁴ When a petition in favour of the bill was signed by 1,100 residents of Portland, and letters were written by electors demanding its passage, some Republican law makers realized that their distaste for the bill did not match the sentiment of Maine's electors. A Republican controlled Legislature passed the ballot law on March 30, 1891; the House of Representatives voted 76 to 60 in favour of the law; the Senate voted 21 to 10 in favour.¹⁵⁵ *The New York Times*, who showed their distaste for Republican corruption at the polls, referred to it as a great victory for the Democratic Party, who now had a better chance of getting more elected seats in the House of Representatives.¹⁵⁶ As well, the passing of the secret ballot indicated that although the Democrats were a minority in the House and Senate, they were successful in taking control of a Legislature having a Republican majority and "securing the passage of the only measure specifically championed by the Democratic Party caucus".¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Gen. H. L. Mitchell also did not support the bill, as he stated that the current system of voting was pure and that there was no corruption in Bangor because no man had ever tried to buy his vote. *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 6, 1891. Also see "The Secret Ballot Bill," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 6, 1891.

¹⁵⁴ "Ballot Reform in Maine," *The New York Times*, March 31, 1891, 1.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵⁶ The political composition of the Legislature in 1891 was as follows: 4 Democrats and 27 Republicans in the Senate; 41 Democrats and 110 Republicans in the House of Commons. Republicans resented assertions that they did not support the bill. *The Portland Press* printed an article on April 2, 1891 defending Republican support for the bill and accused the Democrats of taking more credit for the adoption of the bill: "It is no misrepresentation to say that the most aggressive support of the ballot bill two years ago came from Republicans and Republican newspapers. We think the same may be said of the agitation this year. We know of but two or three Republican daily newspapers out of the ten or more in the State that have opposed the reform. The rest of the ten have advocated it strongly. The Republican governor of the State recommended it in his message, a Republican representative championed the bill, and in one legislative body the Senate, the bill was passed by an overwhelming Republican majority." Although this was true, Republican approval of the bill only occurred after many residents of the state pushed for its implementation. The article was printed in the *Daily Kennebec Journal*, April 2, 1891.

¹⁵⁷ "Ballot Reform in Maine," *The New York Times*, March 31, 1891, 1.

When Republican Governor Edwin C. Burleigh gave his inaugural address on January 8, 1891, he was “firmly convinced” that the secret ballot would benefit the state. Over one third of the states already had this system of voting. If the Australian ballot could ensure that elections reflected each registered vote, then “the closer will [elections] conform to the true spirit of our institution.”¹⁵⁸ The *Rockland Courier Gazette* and the *Lewiston Evening Journal* applauded Burleigh’s “firm stand” on the matter and the Legislature’s support of the bill.¹⁵⁹ The secret ballot took effect on Sept. 1, 1892, and applied to all state elections, including town or city elections, after that date.

Voter registration was introduced at the same time. The creation of boards of registration in the larger cities of the state had first been proposed by Mr. William T. Haines, a Republican and member of the Maine State Senate, in 1891.¹⁶⁰ Registration boards were established in cities having 4,000 or more inhabitants. In towns of 500 or more inhabitants (but less than 4,000), regular municipal officers were in charge of the list of voters.¹⁶¹ This board was to take over the job of establishing voters’ lists from the aldermen. This was an important alteration for it was alleged that Boards of Aldermen were corrupt when it came to voters’ lists. For example, an incident on September 6,

¹⁵⁸ Burleigh, Edwin C, *Inaugural Address of Edwin C. Burleigh to the Legislature of the State of Maine, January 8, 1891* (Augusta, ME: Burleigh and Flynt, Printers to the State, 1891), 15.

¹⁵⁹ Both newspapers cited the same article, claiming that Burleigh’s views on the amendment were consistent with the voters of the state despite a few papers criticizing Burleigh’s view on the matter. “One or two papers are having a fling at Governor Burleigh for the firm stand he took on the subject, but the Governor need feel no concern, that which he has done has placed him firmer than ever in the good graces of “we, the public”. All honor to our big Governor for his honorable and consistent course, and congratulations to our law makers, who by their honest votes have turned our State toward the morning, and set her right before the country.” “Press Expressions on the Ballot Law, Don’t Fret Governor, the People are “Wid Ya,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 3, 1891.

¹⁶⁰ William T. Haines was from of Waterville, Kennebec County. He was a Republican and a lawyer and a member of the Maine state senate from 1889-1893. He then became a member of the Maine state house of representatives in 1895. Haines was Governor of Maine from 1913-15. *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 30, 1891.

¹⁶¹ “Chapter five: The qualification and Registration of Voters,” *The Revised Statutes of the State of Maine* (Augusta, ME: Kennebec Journal Print, 1904) 1903.

1890 in Lewiston was cited by the *Lewiston Evening Journal* to prove this point. The aldermen were adjusting the voting lists in the Common Council Rooms with the help of ward politicians. A Democrat claimed that Dr. W. S. Howe, a Civil War veteran, be removed from the voting lists because he was not naturalized. The Republican men present argued that Howe had been a resident of Lewiston for several years. When Dr. Howe was questioned by the Democrat in front of the board as to whether he was naturalized, Dr. Howe replied, "I voted for Lincoln in front of Petersburg, sir".¹⁶² Upon further questioning, Howe explained he had made a trip to Bangor in 1867 to become naturalized so that he could vote in the election of that year. He still had his naturalization papers with him on the day of his questioning. Dr. Howe's name was kept on the voter registration list, and the *Lewiston Evening Journal* noted that "the Democrat who thought he had a chance to reduce the republican vote by one ballot had to acknowledge himself beaten".¹⁶³

The boards created in 1891 were to be made up of three members. The first was to be appointed by the governor and would serve a term of four years. The other two members were chosen by the city committees. One was to come from the political party having the highest number of votes, and the other from the political party polling the next largest number.¹⁶⁴ The board had the authority to determine whether a person was

¹⁶² "Had Been Naturalized," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, September 8, 1890.

¹⁶³ The Journal emphasized the point that Dr. Howe was not only a naturalized citizen of Lewiston but was also a veteran of the late war. He was born in St. John New Brunswick. He had been a captain in the First Maine Cavalry and had been injured during his service with a wound to the abdomen. During the election of 1867 he went to vote on crutches due to his injury. When he was told he could not vote because he was not yet naturalized he traveled to Bangor, Maine and returned in time to vote with his papers. "Had Been Naturalized," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, September 8, 1890.

¹⁶⁴ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 30, 1891.

qualified to vote and could use witnesses for this purpose. The law was applied to the first municipal elections of 1892.¹⁶⁵

Support and opposition to the registration bill both before and after it was passed was divided among party lines. The Republicans supported the bill, calling it an “important measure” that would “secure fair elections”.¹⁶⁶ *The Lewiston Evening Journal* supported the measure. It reported that voter registration had to be taken away from the Boards of Alderman in Maine’s major cities to ensure that only those eligible voted. Under the new law, registration “will remove from city elections almost the only existing inducement to run them on partisan lines.”¹⁶⁷ *The Daily Kennebec Journal* reported the Democrats opposed the measure. In Biddeford, they were allegedly threatening a brother of a legislator who was suspected of favouring the bill. Labeled as the “corrupt democratic ring in Biddeford...famous for its defiance of law and order,” the Democrats were accused, even at the national level, of opposing a bill that would reduce electoral fraud.¹⁶⁸ The article asked its readers, “do we want an honest registration or to leave the doors open to the illegal voter?”¹⁶⁹ Whereas the Democrats feared voter registration would reduce their voting base, the Republicans declared that these people were not even qualified to vote. This was not necessarily true in Maine, as the only qualifications for voting were that a man be 21 years old and naturalized. Republicans in the 1891

¹⁶⁵ More specifically, the board was to listen to evidence and determine if a person had all of the qualifications for voting in the city where the board was established. The board members administered oaths and prepared the registration lists to be posted in the city where they worked. In cities of over 10,000 persons the board had to be in session for six days prior to the election. In cities less than 10,000 the board had to be in session for four days. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ “The Work of the Legislature,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 4, 1891.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Monday February 22, 1891.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Legislature did not think that this was enough. The educational amendment addressed this issue and would complete the electoral reform package.

Maine was the seventh state to pass an educational qualification for voters as part of ballot reform. When the House and Senate approved the state's twenty-ninth Amendment on April 2, 1891, the *Boston Journal* congratulated the Maine legislature:

An honest ballot and an intelligent ballot go properly together. The Maine House of Representatives has done well to pass a bill providing for an educational qualification for voters. It is a worthy supplement of the ballot reform measure.¹⁷⁰

The text of the amendment was copied almost word for word from the Massachusetts amendment adopted in 1857. Opposition to the amendment in the legislature was minimal.¹⁷¹ The House and Senate both voted in favour of the resolve, the House 114 to 11 and the Senate 26 to 1.¹⁷² When the amendment was put to the electors of Maine however, it was not a landslide victory. In Lewiston, 765 voted yes to the amendment and 1145 voted no. In Aroostook County and in the former Madawaska territory, where the population was largely made up of Acadians and French-Canadian migrants, only 1.2 % of the voting population was in favour of the amendment.¹⁷³ In Portland, Maine's largest city, 2029 voted yes and 1666 voted no. In Augusta, the state capital, 340 voted yes and 231 voted no. The adoption of the amendment by a 60% majority shows that state voters did not support it unanimously, and that even the English-speaking population was

¹⁷⁰ This piece was reprinted in the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 30, 1891.

¹⁷¹ The text of the debate in the House and Senate for those years have not be preserved. There is also no record in the roll calls and thus we do not know who voted for what.

¹⁷² George H. Haynes, "Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 13 (1898), 498.

¹⁷³ The list of French towns and their vote tabulations is as follows. I have organized the yes and no as (Y:N). Fort Kent (1:267), Frenchville (0:361), Grand Island (8:112), Madawaska (0:212), Van Buren (8:152), Allagash (0:31), Cyr Plantation (2:68), Eagle Lake (0:49), Hammond (0:73), Saint Francis (1:80), Saint John (0:27), Wallgarass (0:103). Maine State Archives, Secretary of State, Election Returns, Official Vote Tabulations.

divided. Franco-Americans on the other hand were almost unanimously opposed.

Although the electoral reform package was typical of Progressive legislation, it was passed at a time when Main Franco-Americans were getting actively involved in politics – an involvement that did not please all Anglo Mainers, especially the Republicans.

Franco-American involvement in state politics triggers Nativist response

By the 1880s Franco-Americans had entered Maine's political sphere and by 1890 they had begun playing a significant role in state and local politics. Since they lived together in concentrated pockets, Franco-American votes could decide the outcome of local elections. In 1893, in every New England state except Vermont, it was presumed that "votes equal in number to the solid French-Canadian vote would suffice to reverse the political supremacy if they should be transferred from the prevailing party to the minority".¹⁷⁴ The Franco-American elite, aware of this potential power, encouraged French-Canadian migrants to naturalize. At the 1881 Franco-American convention in Lawrence, Massachusetts, delegates discussed how "to adopt a system of speedy, but legitimate naturalization".¹⁷⁵ It was also the first convention held after Carroll D. Wright, Massachusetts's Commissioner for Labour Statistics, had expressed his very negative views of Franco-Americans working and living in the United States. In 1881, Wright had launched a scathing attack on the French-Canadian community in New England:

The Canadian French *are the Chinese of the Eastern States*. They care nothing about our institutions, civil, political, or educational... They are a hoard of industrial invaders, not a stream of stable settlers. Voting, with all that implies, they care nothing about. Rarely does one of them become naturalized. *They will not send their children to school if they can help it, but*

¹⁷⁴ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism* (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 79.

¹⁷⁵ The convention was held on Tuesday, August 23. "Convention of French Canadians," *The New York Times*, August 24, 1881.

*endeavor to crowd them into the mills at the earliest possible age.*¹⁷⁶

According to Wright, the French-Canadians were solely interested in finding industrial jobs to “gather out of [New England] what will satisfy their ends”.¹⁷⁷ To this end, children were put to work in the factories and were not sent to school. French-Canadians, like the Irish and the Chinese, lacked the capacity for self government. Because these immigrants were lacking this capacity, they threatened the survival of the Anglo-Saxon breed. According to Wright, since French-Canadians rarely naturalized and made little effort to assimilate, the existence of American culture and democracy was also threatened.¹⁷⁸

Unsurprisingly, French-Canadian leaders greatly resented Wright’s comparison of French-Canadians to the Chinese. The convention was an opportunity for Franco-American leaders to discuss Wright’s accusations and refute his “distorted image” concerning the labour practices, lifestyle, and citizenship behaviour of French Canadians.¹⁷⁹ When Franco-American leaders confronted Wright about his image of the francophone population, Wright boldly proclaimed “you cannot be loyal Americans and

¹⁷⁶ Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, *Twelfth Annual Report* (Boston, 1881), 469. Italics mine.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 469.

¹⁷⁸ On May 6, 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed into law. Among other clauses, the Act prevented Chinese from becoming citizens. The Chinese Exclusion Act brought to a standstill Chinese immigration for ten years and prevented Chinese persons from becoming American citizens. For further discussion of the Chinese of the East see Pierre Anctil, “Chinese of the Eastern States, 1881,” *Recherches Sociographiques* 22 (1981), pp. 125-131; Pierre Anctil, “L’identité de l’immigrant québécois en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Le Rapport Wright de 1882”, in *Recherches Sociographiques*, Vol. 22 (1981): 331-360; Normand Lafleur, *Les “Chinois” de l’est, ou, La vie quotidienne des Québécois émigrés aux Etats-Unis de 1840 à nos jours* Ottawa : Lemeac, 1981; Yves, Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle- Angleterre (1776-1930)* (Sillery, Quebec: Septentrion, 2004), pp. 63-67.

¹⁷⁹ Franco-American leaders met with Wright on October 25, 1881 at Boston’s State House to discuss the description of Franco-Americans in the Twelfth Annual Report of his Bureau. The Franco-Americans present at the meeting were newspaper editors, professionals, and parish priests. Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), 111-112.

loyal French Canadians at the same time”.¹⁸⁰ If Wright left that meeting still convinced that Franco-American loyalty was still split between Canada and the United States, at least he was better informed of the lifestyle of Franco-Americans and included these correctives in the Thirteenth Annual Report of the Bureau. This was, of course, always a topic of concern for delegates at the conventions. They wanted Franco-Americans to preserve their Catholic faith and French language while still playing an active role in the larger community. This could only be achieved if Franco-Americans became active in local and state politics. In June 1888, large delegations, especially from Lewiston and Biddeford, were sent to the annual National convention in Nashua, New Hampshire. The *Lewiston Evening Journal* noted that this convention “was the most important gathering in the history of the race in the States”.¹⁸¹ The topic of the convention was naturalization and the preservation of French language and religion. In Lewiston, the Dominicans had advocated naturalization as early as the 1880s, and at the convention, General Secretary Emile Tardivel of Lewiston encouraged it too. Dr. Martel was the toastmaster at the convention.

The gathering marked an important development in the political action of Franco-Americans in two ways. By the late 1880s, the “organized resistance to assimilation” by Franco-American national societies was dependent upon large numbers of naturalized Franco-Americans who could vote, thus increasing Franco-American representation at the local and state level.¹⁸² Franco-American men who ran for office had a better chance of being elected, providing that Francophones supported candidates from their own

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

¹⁸¹ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, June 23, 1888.

¹⁸² Edward Billings Ham, “French National Societies in New England,” *The New England Quarterly* 12 (1939), 315.

community. Franco-Americans in Lewiston elected their first councilman in 1880. Dr. Martel won a seat in the State House of Representatives in 1884. Franco-Americans were also appointed to important political positions. Major Edmond Mallet, a loyal Democrat, became “the official voice of French-Canadians in Washington” when he served as a civil servant in the United States Department of the Interior.¹⁸³ A strong francophone electorate also encouraged Anglo Republicans and Democrats to pay attention to the wants and needs of the Franco-American community. Agents from both parties attended the Franco-American National Convention of 1884 in Albany, New York, to obtain support for their presidential candidates. Republican agents from Maine were sent to get an endorsement for James Blaine who was from Maine; the Democrats looked for support for Governor Grover Cleveland of New York. The members of the convention were “thrown in an uproar” when it was announced that Cleveland had invited them to visit him at the state capital.¹⁸⁴ One French delegate, Mr. Falardeau, warned that if the invitation was accepted, it would be assumed that the French leaders supported the Democratic Party. At the afternoon session of the Convention, a resolution was put forth to the delegates that outlined the Franco-American position:

Resolved, That this convention desires to have the French-Canadians of the United States take part in the public affairs of the country, but that it is not deemed wise to make a declaration favoring one political party in

¹⁸³ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader*, Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 123. Major Edmond Mallet was a soldier in the Civil War. He served in the Union Army. He was wounded during the battle of Cold Harbor in 1864 and was promoted to Major for his bravery in charging enemy trenches during the battle. Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 53.

¹⁸⁴ It is not specified who made this announcement. It could very well have been one of Maine’s Democrats special agents who attended the National Convention. Since leading francophones at the convention showed their support for Mr. Blaine, the Democrats may have used this tactic to persuade the French elites to change their mind. “The French Canadians; Visiting Gov. Cleveland, But Refusing to Make a Political Declaration,” *The New York Times*, August 7, 1884.

preference to another, leaving the question of politics to the various localities according to the respective interests.¹⁸⁵

Unlike the Irish who were loyal Democrats, Franco-Americans made it clear they would vote for any candidate or party able to best accommodate their wants and needs. Anglo politicians would have to make every effort to secure the patronage of the francophone electorate. In a letter written to Franco-American leaders at the National Convention in 1888, President Cleveland apologized for being unable to accept an invitation to attend the convention. His prose spoke highly of Franco-American citizens. Cleveland went so far as to acknowledge the Franco-American's "regard...for American citizenship, and their readiness to assume its obligations and avail themselves of its advantages".¹⁸⁶

At the local level, ensuring political support was also important, as by 1900, the Franco-American community comprised 23 percent of voters in Lewiston.¹⁸⁷ In Lewiston, francophone elites and religious leaders viewed political participation as a means to protect Franco-American rights. The editors of *Le Messenger* encouraged their readers to show interest in elections. Electors were told to vote for candidates who would best represent the interests of the Catholic community. As Yves Frenette has written, during the 1880s, Francophone elites in Lewiston planted the seeds of support for the Democratic Party. Dr. Louis Martel was a member of this elite. As the founder of *Le Messenger*, which by 1883 was a Democratic newspaper, Martel viewed Republicanism as anti-Catholic, anti-immigration, and conservative. He associated the Republican Party of

¹⁸⁵ This resolution was quoted in "The French Canadians; Visiting Gov. Cleveland, But Refusing to Make a Political Declaration," *The New York Times*, August 7, 1884.

¹⁸⁶ Major Mallet read the letter aloud to the delegates at the convention. "French-Canadians; Mr. Cleveland Regrets He Cannot Be With Them," *The New York Times*, June 27, 1888.

¹⁸⁷ Frenette, "Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900," 123.

Maine with the Conservative Party of Canada, and held the latter responsible for the economic difficulties French-Canadians faced during the 1880s, and which had forced them to migrate.¹⁸⁸ The Conservative Party, it was believed, was also controlled by the Orange Order. This movement was anti-Catholic and its members were “desirous of supporting to the utmost of their power the principles and precepts of the Protestant religion”.¹⁸⁹

For their part, Republicans accused the Franco-Americans and Irish of being rum sellers.¹⁹⁰ Prohibition was a central political issue in Maine. The legislature of 1883 submitted to the electors a constitutional amendment that banned the sale of liquor, except cider. The amendment was approved by the voters by a great majority at the 1884 election.¹⁹¹ Prohibition also received attention at the local level. Lewiston’s Democratic mayor William H. Newell dedicated a large section of his Mayor’s address to the discussion of prohibition in 1892. Poor enforcement of the prohibition law made it impossible to distinguish between the rum seller, the rum supporter, those who promoted temperance, and those who opposed it.¹⁹² When Republicans accused Franco-Americans of selling rum, prohibition became one of the issues that encouraged French elites to turn the Franco-Americans into a cohesive political constituency.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 122.

¹⁸⁹ “What Orangeism Means.; The Constitution of the American Order The Aims and Purposes of the Organization Qualifications and Obligations of Membership,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 1871, 1.

¹⁹⁰ Yves Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” in *Voyages: A Maine Franco-American Reader*, Eds. Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2007), 123.

¹⁹¹ The total vote was 70,783 for the amendment and 23,811 against. Richard A. Herbert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People, and Resources*, 248.

¹⁹² William H. Newell, “Mayor’s Address,” *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Lewiston, for the Fiscal Year Ending February 29, 1892* (Lewiston, ME: Le Messenger Office, 1892), 22.

¹⁹³ Frenette, “Understanding the French-Canadians of Lewiston, 1860-1900,” 123.

Schooling soon became an area of contention between the Franco-Americans and Anglo-Protestants. Some Anglo-Americans were willing to consider Franco-American children as assets to the country because they grew up in the Republic surrounded by its institutions. *The New York Times* wrote that a Franco-American's children "may be as good citizens as if their ancestors for generations had been born upon our soil".¹⁹⁴ However, Americanization was the condition of their becoming good citizens. This worried Franco-American elites who thought that Franco-American children would be corrupted by Republican politicians who wanted to Anglicize them and gain their vote in future elections. Another *New York Times* article suggested that to Americanize French children meant to impress upon them the values of the republic. Otherwise, these native born citizens would, like their parents, not understand the duties of citizenship.¹⁹⁵

Lewiston authorities also believed Franco-American children should be raised as Anglo-Americans. In August of 1890 Lewiston's school superintendent asked the Dominican pastor to send Franco-American children to the public schools. The president of the school committee, Edward H. Hill argued that it was in the community's best interest for francophone children to mix with different kinds of students and be taught how American institutions functioned. Hill argued: "There must be more 'serious Americanism' and federation of common interests".¹⁹⁶ To prevent the emergence of a second generation of culturally and linguistically different people, American's should make it "a patriotic duty" to "insist upon maintaining American political principles

¹⁹⁴ This was only possible if the parents of these children were Americanized and impressed upon their children to be the same. "The French Canadians," *The New York Times*, July 5 1889, 4.

¹⁹⁵ P.G. Wiggin, "French-Canadians in New England," *The New York Times* Oct. 13 1891, 17.

¹⁹⁶ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001), 104. 106-107. For more information on Nativists' approach to parish schools, see Mason Wade, "The French Parish and survival in nineteenth century New England," *Catholic Historical Review* XXXVI (1950), 163-189.

against all assaults”.¹⁹⁷ In Lewiston, ironically, some schools introduced French language instruction in order to attract Franco-American children. Despite this setback, the Dominicans were successful in establishing a school for French children. In 1890, English instruction was introduced in the parish schools.¹⁹⁸ In September 1891, *Le Messenger* printed an ad informing parents that one of Lewiston’s public schools gave students English and French instruction.

Another indicated that the teacher of the school knew both languages.¹⁹⁹ Public schools were also attractive because they did not charge tuition fees. City authorities also refused to co-operate with private schools. They refused funding to the Dominicans to help them build an evening school. Another incident occurred in 1891 as an Anglo reaction to the parish school system. City officials decided to use a building that had been vacant for eight years as a new public school even though they had already given permission to a French-Canadian woman to use the building to privately teach French-speaking children. She was told to evacuate when city officials showed interest in the building. Although there were two other schools on the same street that were not being used to full capacity, officials employed “aggressive strategies” to keep Franco-American children from attending French Catholic schools.²⁰⁰ The Dominicans allowed the woman to teach in one of the rooms of the Dominican Block until they could build another school for her and her students. The number of children attending Anglo schools dropped by 450 between 1880 and 1890. Irish children had declined by almost fifty percent. This was

¹⁹⁷ “The French Canadians,” *The New York Times*, July 5 1889, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present” (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001), 104.

¹⁹⁹ *Le Messenger*, May 7, 1891.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

quite a significant decrease when compared to French-Canadian children, whose population rose by over 1, 700 in that decade.²⁰¹

Another attempt to Americanize Franco-American children came in 1895 when the use of French language was banned in public schools. A bill was introduced in the State Legislature prohibiting the use of tax money to support schools that did not instruct students entirely in English. This measure was primarily aimed at schools in Madawaska, where 90% of the population was Franco-American, but would also have prevented Lewiston's public schools from offering French instruction to French speakers. Major Dickey, a Democratic politician very involved in Madawaska politics, argued against the bill. He asked the legislature:

Would it be equitable to confiscate [children's] rights to education, because, being born of French parents and having learned in their prime infancy but the French tongue...they labor, as a matter of course, under the want that French may be, more or less, spoken to them for school discipline and instruction?²⁰²

The House decided to vote against the bill because it was also opposed by the Governor. During the 1880s and early 1890s there were significant tensions between Franco-American elites and Republican Anglos over issues of naturalization and Anglicization.

There had been open attempts at disenfranchising Franco-American electors on technicalities in the years leading to the amendment. In 1889, Republican Judge Libbey of the Maine's Supreme Court had claimed that some naturalization in the Lewiston Municipal Court were "were null and void",²⁰³ thanks to an United States Revised Statute

²⁰¹ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2001), 104.

²⁰² Rev. F.X. Burque, *Major Dickey: Sketch of his life* (Bangor, ME: Bangor Commercial Print, 1900), 14.

²⁰³ "A Way to Re-Elect Reed; Five Hundred Democrats To Be Disenfranchised. An Outrageous Twisting of the Law By Which The Maine Republicans Hope to Be Benefited," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1890.

that gave authority to “any court of record of any of the States having common law jurisdiction and a seal and a *Clerk*” to naturalize foreigners.²⁰⁴ Libbey asserted that as the Lewiston Municipal Court did not have a Clerk, its naturalizations were invalid. The people “naturalized” by that court could not vote. Although this incident did not amount to anything further, as Libbey’s decision was withdrawn after he was informed that the municipal court did have a clerk, it instigated other Republicans to push for a much more aggressive disenfranchisement policy against Franco-Americans.

That same year, Republican officials in Biddeford sought to emulate Libbey’s actions. In 1889, Republicans brought forth to Justice Webb, also a Republican, of the United States Circuit Court, the case of a Biddeford resident who wanted to know if his naturalization papers were valid. The Judge decided that the resident’s first naturalization papers had not been issued by a Clerk and thus were void. Republicans then appeared before the Board of Aldermen and demanded that 514 names of men naturalized in Biddeford be removed from the registration lists because the Municipal Court of Biddeford had no Clerk, and was “not a court of Record”. When the Board of Aldermen refused to remove the names, Republican registration officials threatened to arrest those men if they tried to vote on Election Day.²⁰⁵

Desiring their candidate Thomas Reed to be re-elected to Congress, in 1890 Maine Republicans successfully petitioned the Supreme Court of Maine to invalidate the naturalization papers of the 514 Democrats. As Biddeford attracted large numbers of French-Canadians, one can assume Franco-Americans were over-represented among those Democrats. The Judges based their decision on the fact the naturalization papers of

²⁰⁴ Italics mine, Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

these residents had been issued by the “Recorder” of the Municipal Court of Biddeford.²⁰⁶ The Supreme Court Judges were all Republicans.²⁰⁷ A *New York Times* editorial harshly criticized their decision. It “shows how far partisanship of the lowest kind may sway even judges upon the highest bench of that state”.²⁰⁸

Matters, however, took a turn for the worst. On Wednesday, August 28, 1890, *The New York Times* printed a front page article describing a “new phase of the Biddeford disfranchisement outrage”. The Board of Aldermen in Biddeford had been arrested on August 27, accused of conspiring to not comply with the decision from the Supreme Court of Maine. The men were charged with conspiracy against the United States because they had not yet removed the names of the disenfranchised voters off of the registration lists. Hearings were adjourned until September 10, 1891. This was just two days after the State election.²⁰⁹ *The New York Times* described the arrests as having a “peculiar character” because there was no evidence that the Board of Aldermen was going to conspire against the Supreme Court’s orders to remove any person who was not entitled to vote. In fact, the men were arrested between the time when the voting lists had been given to the town Clerk and before the time that, by law, they were legally allowed to look at the lists and decide upon the qualification of all voters.²¹⁰ Ten days before the

²⁰⁶ *The New York Times*, August 27, 1890.

²⁰⁷ “Reed’s Outrageous Methods to Secure Re-Election,” *The New York Times*, August 28, 1890.

²⁰⁸ *The New York Times*, August 27, 1890.

²⁰⁹ The men were held in jail under bonds of \$1000 each. They were arrested under section 5,440 and section 5, 312 of the United States Revised Statutes. Section 5,440 states that if two or persons try to defraud the United States in any manner and if one or more persons carries out the object of the conspiracy to defraud these persons can be fined up to \$10,000 or can be imprisoned for up to two years. Section 5,512 states that any officer registering a voter who does not fulfill the citizenship requirements for voting will be fined up to \$500 or sent to prison for up to three years, or both. “Reed’s Outrageous Methods to Secure Re-Election,” *The New York Times*, August 28, 1890.

²¹⁰ The voting lists had been made up and had been filed with the Town Clerk before the session of Aldermen was to take place. This session could legally take place only four days before the election was held. At the session the Aldermen would consider any objections to the qualifications of certain voters or

arrest, Biddeford Republicans voiced their concern that the 514 disenfranchised residents and the board of aldermen would seek to bypass the ruling when their voter registration lists were prepared for the election. Following the initial report of the arrest, *The New York Times* printed another article that confirmed the arrests were the brainchild of Republican candidate Thomas Reed. *The New York Times* wrote that Reed was called upon by Biddeford Republicans to guarantee that the voters and Aldermen did not have their way.²¹¹

The response of the disenfranchised voters was *not* to disobey the Supreme Court ruling and vote anyway, but to naturalize and to achieve legal voting status before the election day arrived. A Biddeford attorney dedicated his days before the election to prepare candidates for naturalization. At least 600 Franco-Americans were expected to be naturalized in a Federal court in Biddeford over a ten day period before the election. When sixty-nine men arrived at the courthouse on the morning of August 29, 1890, only 18 were naturalized by the time the court adjourned at 4 P.M.²¹² Republican Justice Webb supervised the naturalizations. *The New York Times* asserted that Webb could have naturalized more than double on that day, had he wanted to. When the Biddeford men left the Federal court discouraged, because so few had been naturalized, *The New York Times* declared that the Federal court was not inclined to help or protect these men from unfair

free voters who had been restricted from voting to do an error in the lists. Section five of the State statutes stated:

“After such lists are thus prepared, deposited with the Clerk, and posted, the Selectmen shall not add thereto nor strike therefrom the name of any person, except in open session on one of the days prescribed by law for receiving evidence of the qualifications of voters, nor shall they strike from said list the name of any person residing in the town without notice first given that his right to vote is questioned and an opportunity for hearing on one of such days.”

²¹¹ Reed himself also worried that the decision of the Supreme Court would not be acceptable to the Board of Aldermen and would therefore not fulfill the goal it had set out to accomplish. He sought help from the Department of Justice to ensure that the Board complied with the court’s decision. This was a measure of intimidation and threat to the members of the Board. “More of Mr. Reed’s Tricks,” *The New York Times*, August 29, 1890.

²¹² “More of Mr. Reed’s Tricks,” *The New York Times*, August 29, 1890.

policies of the Republican City Committee.²¹³ Reed was re-elected as the Republican representative to Congress. The disenfranchisement of Biddeford's Franco-Americans foreshadowed the next step in the Republican legislatures attempt to "reform" the ballot box; the voter reform package of 1891.

The package, on its face, was a Republican attempt to reduce the number of Democrat voters, not a policy to "Americanize" immigrant voters. Had they been Republicans, their naturalization would not have been challenged. However, most Democrats in Biddeford were likely to be Franco-Americans. Some of them had been voting in Biddeford for over twenty years. Those disenfranchised would have perceived the move as much as an attack on their ethnicity than as a partisan one. This is certainly how *The New York Times* saw it. One article stated that the Franco-Americans in Biddeford were "suffering persecution" for being Democrats.²¹⁴ The Biddeford incident demonstrated nativist apprehensions towards non Republican and unassimilated foreigners. There were no such incidents involving Irish Democrats. In early 1893, the newly elected Republican controlled State Legislature also tightened control over naturalization laws by transferring jurisdiction away from municipal courts, and reserving it to superior state courts (federal courts could still naturalize).²¹⁵ This shift created a bottleneck as superior court judges did not have time to process naturalization papers.²¹⁶

²¹³ "A Way to Re-Elect Reed; Five Hundred Democrats To Be Disenfranchised. An Outrageous Twisting of the Law By Which The Maine Republicans Hope to Be Benefited," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1890.

²¹³ *The New York Times*, August 27, 1890.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ In 1893, the House of Representatives consisted of 107 Republicans and 44 Democrats. In the Senate there was 1 Democrat and 30 Republicans.

²¹⁶ Sect.1. The Supreme judicial and superior courts shall respectively have jurisdiction of applications for naturalization.

Sect. 2. No other court established by this state shall entertain any primary or final declaration or application made by or in behalf of an alien to become a citizen of the United States, or entertain

Reform movements in Maine during the 19th century included Nativist attempts to control new immigrants. During the Progressive era, anti-Catholicism was used to institute reforms in order to Americanize these newcomers. In 1891 a voter reform package, including an educational amendment, was approved at a time when Franco-Americans were becoming a stronger political force in the state. Republican Anglos had tried to hinder this political force in 1890, when Franco-American names were removed from the voter registration lists in Biddeford. In 1895, they tried to ban the use of French in public schools and encourage Franco-American children to attend English institutions. The electoral reform package, the Biddeford incident, and the public school episode all suggest that the amendment was as likely to be a way to attack the Franco-American communities in the state and reduce their political power, than a sincere attempt at reforming the electoral process by ensuring voters understood the issues and were not subjected to outside pressure. Although there is no evidence openly and directly linking anti-French and anti-Catholic opinions to the amendment, the context shows clearly that the amendment was a way to attack Franco-Americans and diminish their political power. Pursuing this policy meant direct disenfranchisement for new immigrants not fit for self government. Some Americans believed this was the only way they could protect their democratic institution from foreigners who they believed were unfit for American citizenship, which was debated at the national and state level.

jurisdiction of the naturalization of aliens. This public law was published as Chapter 310 of the Acts and Resolves of the Sixty-Sixth Legislature.

Chapter Three:

Citizenship debates and the right to vote

Definitions of citizenship and the rights that went with it were debated at the national and state level throughout the nineteenth century. How a person became a citizen was decided at the federal level. However, some Congressmen believed that a mere number of years of residence alone were insufficient to qualify for citizenship as some people by their very nature were considered unfit for citizenship. Others believed that as long as a person was white, free, and male, he was qualified for citizenship. A rather lenient naturalization act in 1800 had set only a five year residency requirement and other minor qualifications for citizenship. During the 1850s, when a large number of European immigrants arrived in the United States, the federal government refused to tighten naturalization laws or limit immigration in any significant ways. Some state governments condemned laxity and tightened their franchise laws to prevent the undesirable from having their say in how the state and the nation were to be run. In the eyes of the Nativists, to be a proper citizen, an immigrant had to speak English, naturalize and assimilate, and vote in the best interest of the whole. Acculturation was not sufficient, on the contrary, only complete assimilation would do. Language was the most visible evidence that newcomers were not assimilating and becoming genuine Americans. Triggered by nativist apprehensions at the arrival of non English speaking French-Canadians in Maine, the amendment targeted immigrants who could not read or speak English. It therefore served two purposes: to clean up the electoral process and withhold the suffrage from unassimilated migrants.

Citizenship laws in the new republic

The “dissolution of the imperial bonds” with Great Britain after the American Revolution’s success left the thirteen state governments free to grant citizenship to foreigners as they saw fit.²¹⁷ Although naturalization procedures varied from state to state, there were common points. To qualify for citizenship, foreigners had to publicly swear allegiance to the state and sometimes renounce their former allegiance to their home country. Almost all states also required that a foreigner reside for a specific period of time within their borders before being naturalized. The goal of a residency requirement was to make sure naturalized citizens were familiar with republican principles before gaining political responsibility.²¹⁸

But as naturalized citizens traveled across state lines and even moved to other states, this made different naturalization policies confusing. In the *Federalist* No. 42 James Madison expressed his distaste for the variation in the rules of naturalization:

The very improper power would still be retained by each State, of naturalizing aliens in every other State. In one State residence for a short term confers all the rights of citizenship. In another, qualifications of greater importance are required. An alien therefore legally incapacitated for certain rights in the latter, may by previous residence only in the former, elude his incapacity; and thus the law of one State, be preposterously rendered paramount to the law of another, within the jurisdiction of the other.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Requirements for state citizenship began in 1776. The state constitutions of Pennsylvania, Vermont, North Carolina (1776) were the first to contain provisions for naturalization, followed by the state of New York in 1777. James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 213-214.

²¹⁸ Outlined in the Declaration of Independence adopted on July 4, 1776, these were the founding principles on which American were, in theory, founded.

²¹⁹ James Madison, “The Federalist No. 43: Madison”, in *The Federalist Papers by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 216-217. United States Constitution, Article I, section 8 now reads: “The Congress shall have the power...to establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States”. In the Committee of Detail Report dated August 6, 1787 a uniform rule of naturalization was cited in Article VII, section I.

He proposed instead that the new Constitution authorize the government “to establish an uniform rule of naturalization” across the United States.²²⁰ Members of the Constitutional Convention debated whether naturalized citizens deserved the same political rights as native born citizens. The final text of the Constitution of 1787 allowed naturalized foreigners to be elected senator or representative but only for the state in which they resided. No naturalized American was eligible to run for president. The Constitution also provided for citizens of one state to be entitled to the same rights and privileges as citizens of another state.²²¹ Congress passed the first Naturalization Act in 1790. The Act provided:

That any alien, being a free white person, who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for the term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof.²²²

Non-whites were not eligible for naturalization. In 1790, the relationship between whiteness and citizenship was so natural that no one questioned its racial dimension. The act also stipulated that a man had to be of good character. Children of an alien who were under the age of twenty-one when their father naturalized were automatically naturalized.

Events outside the United States led to a tightening of naturalization rules in the late 1790s, as the French Revolution demonstrated “the fragility of republican institutions

²¹⁹ Frank George Franklin, *The Legislative History of Naturalization in the United States* (New York, NY: Arnold Press, Inc., 1969), 22.

²²⁰ James Madison, “The Federalist No. 43: Madison”, in *The Federalist Papers by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay*, 216-217. United States Constitution, Article I, section 8 now reads: “The Congress shall have the power...to establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States”. In the Committee of Detail Report dated August 6, 1787 a uniform rule of naturalization was cited in Article VII, section I.

²²¹ Franklin, *The Legislative History of Naturalization in the United States*, 32.

²²² Act of March 26, 1790: An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization, in *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues*, Eds. Michael Lemay and Elliot Robert Barkan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 11.

and the inability of Europeans to maintain that form of government”.²²³ Americans were divided over the best course to follow when war was declared between Great Britain and France. Pro-British Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans sympathetic too France both feared that foreigners coming from either Britain or France would support the opposing party.²²⁴ According to historian James H. Kettner, “In general, Federalists favored requirements designed to discourage “democratic ‘disorganizers’ ...while the Jeffersonians aimed at making citizenship difficult for merchants and aristocrats, whose “anti republican principles” threatened to pervert the manners and ideals of the American community”.²²⁵ James Madison agreed that the Naturalization Act of 1790 needed to be revised.²²⁶ Consequentially, a much stricter naturalization policy was implemented in 1795. The new Naturalization Act stipulated that “any alien, being a free white person, may be admitted a citizen of the United States, or any of them, on the following conditions, and not *otherwise*”. Those conditions were a five year residency requirement, and naturalized aliens were required to renounce their allegiance and loyalty to a foreign sovereign or state. The process of naturalization was changed from a one-step to a two-step procedure. A foreigner had first to declare his intention and then formally request naturalization two years later.²²⁷

²²³ Marilyn C. Baseler, ‘Asylum for Mankind’: *America, 1607-1800*, 260.

²²⁴ Baseler, ‘Asylum for Mankind’: *America, 1607-1800*, 260.

²²⁵ James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870*, 240. For more information on the politics of the French Revolution see Alexander DeConde, *The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1791-1801* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966). Baseler, ‘Asylum for Mankind’: *America, 1607-1800*, 260-264.

²²⁶ Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870*, 240.

²²⁷ Act of January 29, 1795: An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization; and to Repeal the Act Heretofore Passed on That Subject, in *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues*, Eds. Michael Lemay and Elliot Robert Barkan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 12. Italics mine.

In 1798 Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts.²²⁸ They were designed to “increase national security at a time when war with France seemed imminent”.²²⁹ The first Act increased the residency requirement from five to fourteen years. Aliens who were from a country at war with the United States were not allowed to naturalize.²³⁰ Aliens had to register, and the President was also given the power to deport or imprison any alien who was suspected of activities that threatened the national government. In 1800 newly-elected President Thomas Jefferson reduced the residency requirements from fourteen to five years, and restored most of the more lenient requirements established in 1795.²³¹ Naturalization was still reserved for whites. A two hundred year history of encounter with non-white, and an almost as long history of Black Slavery in the south led to the belief only whites should be citizens. By the time of the first Naturalization Act, the franchise had already been limited to white males in Georgia (1777) and South Carolina (1790).²³² The Naturalization Act of 1800 survived the nineteenth century with

²²⁸ Act of June 18, 1798 (Amends Naturalization Act of 1795) in *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues*, 13-14.

²²⁹ The Alien and Sedition Acts were four bills passed in 1798. The bills were as follows: 1. An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization; and to Repeal the Act Heretofore Passed on That Subject (June 18, 1798) 2. An Act Concerning Aliens (June 25, 1798); 3. An Act Respecting Alien Enemies (July 6, 1798); 4. An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes against the United States (July 6, 1798). Of all four acts the only one still enacted is An Act Respecting Alien Enemies. The Acts were allowed to lapse or were repealed under Jefferson, except the Act respecting Alien Enemies which is still in force. For more information on these bills see John C. Miller, *Crisis in Freedom: The Alien and Sedition Acts*.

²³⁰ The act also stipulated that Aliens had to report “to the clerk of the district court of the district...who shall be authorized by the President of the United States to register aliens”. A fee of fifty cents was charged to aliens for the cost of registration and certification. Clerks were to file lists of registered aliens with the Secretary of State each month. Section five stipulated that a fine of two dollars was to be given to aliens who did not register “with any justice of the peace for surety of the peace”.

²³¹ Aside from the residency requirement, an alien had to renounce any titles or allegiance to foreign governments, swear upon the principles of the Constitution, and show that he had good moral character. Registration for all immigrants was included in the act, and aliens whose country was at war with the United States were excluded from naturalization. James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870*, 245-246.

²³² In Georgia, the franchise was limited to whites only in the 1777 state Constitution. However, the state constitutions of 1789 and 1798 did not include these limitations. Historians agree that blacks were still not allowed to vote. Appendix: State Suffrage Laws, 1775-1920, Table A.4. Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

few major changes. Instead, Congress passed a series of immigration laws during the late 1800s to limit immigrants from entering the country. These laws were still very relaxed for only convicts, prostitutes, polygamists, paupers, and persons suffering from a contagious disease were prohibited entry.²³³ Conditions for citizenship remained rather liberal, and only race was a factor of exclusion.

Nativist response to lenient naturalization laws

At the state level, property and racial qualifications were used to restrict unfit citizens from voting.²³⁴ In 1790, ten states had property requirements. By the mid 1800s however, most property requirements were dropped as states became more somewhat less concerned with citizenship laws. Rhode Island, New York, and South Carolina were the only states that had this requirement in 1855. Yet, in Rhode Island, native born Americans were exempted from this requirement. In New York, African Americans were the only group who had to own property to vote.²³⁵ Race requirements were much more common. The number of states that excluded non-whites from the suffrage increased throughout the 1800s. By 1850, 25 out of 31 states had races exclusions.²³⁶ In both cases, these requirements supported anti-black views that some people were not capable of self determination, either because they were dependent on another for their income, or because of innate deficiency (blacks).

²³³ Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*.

²³⁴ Connecticut adopted a property requirement in 1715 and terminated it in 1817. It then reintroduced the requirement in 1818 with taxpaying and militia alternatives but terminated it in 1845. Table A.3, "Property Requirements for Suffrage between 1790 and 1855," Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*.

²³⁵ Table A.3, "Chronology of Property Requirements for Suffrage: 1790-1855," Ibid.

²³⁶ These states were Virginia(1762), Georgia(1777), South Carolina(1790), Delaware(1792), Kentucky(1799), Maryland(1801-statute;1810-constitutional amendment), Ohio(1803), New Jersey(1807-statute; 1844-constitutional amendment), Louisiana(1812), Indiana(1816), Mississippi(1817), Connecticut(1818), Illinois(1818), Alabama(1819), Missouri(1821), New York(1821), Tennessee(1834), North Carolina(1835), Arkansas(1836), Michigan(1837), Pennsylvania(1838), Florida(1845), Texas(1845), Iowa(1846), Wisconsin(1848) and California (1850). Table A.5, "Chronology of Race Exclusions: 1790-1855," Alexander Keyssar, Ibid.

In the 1830s, Nativists emerged as a response to the new waves of non-English speaking, non-Protestant migrants who were arriving in the country. Nativists wanted to raise the residency requirement to make sure new immigrants had enough time to learn about American institutions and the importance of citizenship. They did not believe new immigrants made desirable citizens, at least not in the immediate sense. One reason Nativists objected to easy naturalization was that newly naturalized citizens gained political rights. Soon, members of state legislatures were debating who was a suitable citizen, and what could be done to make sure those unsuitable were not given civic privileges, especially the franchise.²³⁷

By the mid-nineteenth century, white foreigners were subcategorized into separate white races, some deemed genetically unfit for citizenship. Thanks to a massive influx of immigrants, more than three million immigrants arrived on America's shores from 1846-1855, the two largest groups being the Irish and Germans.²³⁸ The Irish potato famine resulted in large scale emigration out of Ireland to the United States. By 1860 the population of foreign-born in the United States had increased to four million, 1,288,307 of whom were Irish.²³⁹ Most Anglo-Protestants believed Catholics were incapable of becoming good American republicans. Their incompetence stemmed from their Catholic faith. Daniel Ullman, a leader of the Know-Nothing Party in New York, believed Catholicism threatened American democratic institutions. In a speech delivered in 1868, Ullman stated that Catholic immigrants "would taint this polity of independent

²³⁷ Richard Bradley, "Nativism and Anglo-Saxonism," in *The Encyclopedia of New England Culture* Eds. Burt Feintuch and David H Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 388-389.

²³⁸ Of the 3,031,339 immigrants who arrived in the United States, 1,288,307 were from Ireland and 976,711 were from Germany. Matthew Frye Jacobson. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

freemen...because they would obey their priests as demigods".²⁴⁰ For Ullman however, the problem was not merely one of faith. The republic needed to be populated by a superior race, which he defined as the Anglo-Saxon people, a part of the larger Caucasian race.²⁴¹ The depiction of Irish as biologically inferior to Anglo Saxons was symptomatic of the ways in which the Anglo community was fundamentally redefining what it meant to be a "true American" citizen. It was no longer enough to be white and free; one had to be innately capable of self-government. By defining many white immigrant groups as lacking this ability, Nativists effectively 'othered' people like the Italians, Jews, Poles, and Greeks – and in Maine, French-Canadians.

In Boston, Anglo-Protestants erected social barriers between themselves and the Irish, who were considered biologically incapable of becoming genuine Americans.²⁴² Americans could not remold Irish immigrants into perfect Yankees.²⁴³ Bostonian scholars asserted Anglo-Saxon superiority and claimed the Irish were incapable of becoming Americans. Influenced by Charles Darwin's work on evolution, scientific racism became a respectable theory, used in scholarly work to explain why the Anglo-Saxon stock needed to be preserved in order to keep the United States a true democracy.²⁴⁴ The Irish were perceived as the largest threat to republican institutions.

²⁴⁰ Jacobson. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, 70.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 71.

²⁴² Many Irish had integrated into Bostonian society and were active members in social and political institutions, but had not assimilated into this society. Some of the positions Irish held were as labourers, legislators, and mayors. They were also Democrats. As the Irish became more influential in political and social life, New Englanders became skeptical that the preservation of an Anglo-Saxon community in Boston was not feasible. Barbara Miller Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), 59-81.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁴⁴ Henry Adams in the 1870s attempted to prove that democratic institutions migrated with Germanic tribes to Britain. The English migrants then carried these institutions to the New World. Adam's work inspired other scholars like Henry Cabot Lodge, Barrett Wendell and A. Lawrence Lowell. John Fiske and Herbert Baxter Adams were the most influential scholars who promoted a Teutonist Orthodoxy when

But Congress did not seem to heed the Nativists' message. During the 1850s, the federal government made no serious attempts to tighten naturalization laws or restrict immigration, largely due to its desire for cheap labour across the country to feed economic prosperity. The undesirable could move in freely, become citizens, and in most cases, this gave them the right to vote. In 1868 the Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof" and forbade any state from infringing upon a citizen's privileges.²⁴⁵ Citizens were protected under the equal protection clause, which granted the "right to equal treatment which demands that every person have the same access to particular protected interests" including voting.²⁴⁶ The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified on February 3, 1870, prevented any state government from restricting the right to vote based on a citizen's race, colour, or previous position as a slave. Some believed the notion of giving the vote to all was dangerous and this surfaced during the debates over the Fifteenth Amendment. During the Congressional debate, some raised the issues of ethnicity and class. Representatives from California strongly opposed the amendment because they feared it would enfranchise the Chinese. In Rhode Island, the Republicans worried that the amendment would make the state property requirement for the franchise unconstitutional as discriminatory against the Irish.²⁴⁷ Nativist objections to easy naturalization, coupled with the federal governments unwillingness to drastically tighten

defending Anglo-Saxon superiority over other ethnicities. Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition*, 61-81.

²⁴⁵ Amendment XIV. "United States Constitution." The Avalon Project at Yale Law School. 1996-2007. University of Yale. 11 September 2008 <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/usconst.htm>>.

²⁴⁶ Sandra Del Valle, *Language Rights & the Law in the United States* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2003), 24.

²⁴⁷ Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*, 102.

naturalization laws, led Nativists to turn to the states, and press for restrictions to the franchise.

Literacy tests as a means to disenfranchise undesirables

Literacy tests were used as a measure to restrict the voting rights of the undesirables. They disadvantaged non-English speakers, the poor, people with limited education, and therefore, had a disproportionate impact on working class people and immigrants. The first English literacy tests were introduced in Connecticut in 1855 and in Massachusetts in 1857.²⁴⁸ In Massachusetts, the requirement was a response to Irish migration. The Irish population was highest in that state and the state Legislature feared their political influence. The Irish had to be barred from the vote. Recognizing that many of these immigrants were illiterate, the State Legislature passed an educational qualification. To be allowed to vote in Massachusetts, a citizen had to “read the Constitution in English and write his name”.²⁴⁹ By 1890, six states had literacy requirements for suffrage.²⁵⁰

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Americans were defining rather precisely what they expected from immigrants. Only newcomers who renounced their loyalty to their mother country and their old national identity were ready for citizenship,

²⁴⁸ Del Valle, *Language Rights & the Law in the United States*, 88-89.

²⁴⁹ Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 46.

²⁵⁰ Colorado (1876) – “The General Assembly may prescribe, by law, an educational qualification for electors, but no such law shall take effect prior to 1890”; Connecticut (1855)-Must be able to read any article of the Constitution or any section of the state statutes; Massachusetts (1857)-Must be able to read the Constitution in English and write his name; Mississippi (1890)-“On or after the first day of January AD, 1892, every elector shall...be able to read any section of the Constitution of this State; or he shall be able to understand the same when read to him, or give a reasonable interpretation thereof”; Missouri (1865)-After 1 January 1876, must be able to read and write; North Carolina (1876)-Must be able to read and write any section of the constitution in English; Wyoming (1889)-Must be able to read state constitution. Wyoming’s law came into effect when it reached statehood in 1890. Table A.13, “Literacy Requirements for Suffrage: 1870-1924, Keyssar, *The Right To Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*.

and more particularly, the franchise. They had to become Americans in spirit.²⁵¹ Historian Ronald A. Petrin has identified three criteria that were used by native-born Americans to distinguish desirable immigrants from other newcomers: an ability to speak English; the rate of naturalization of an immigrant group; and the voting pattern of enfranchised immigrants. Immigrants, as a group, showed their commitment to their new country when they learned English and limited the use of their mother tongue. Part of the process of naturalization entailed relinquishing an old national identity and assuming an American one. The political choices immigrants made were supposed to reflect this. The voting patterns of naturalized immigrants should reflect, Americans hoped, identification with their new home, and not their ethnic group.²⁵² Along with speaking one's native tongue, Americans viewed it as unpatriotic for a citizen to bring his former national identity with him to the voting booth. Naturalized immigrants were expected to vote for the best candidate despite what the candidate's national origin might be, or what the group interest of the immigrant community might be.

By the end of the century, several state governments had approved literacy tests as a way to test an immigrant's fitness for citizenship and loyalty to the state. Those in favour of literacy tests argued that they would improve the intelligence of a state's electorate and keep ignorant and uneducated citizens from the polls. Other Anglo-Americans debated the constitutionality of educational qualifications as a progressive measure. What was the real purpose behind its enactment? Were Nativists trying to disenfranchise electors they viewed as racially unfit, and as a political threat?

²⁵¹ Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism*, 46.

²⁵² *Ibid.* 46.

During the ratification of educational qualifications in Southern states, *The New York Times* published a series of articles questioning the constitutionality of literacy tests because of the large percentage of black persons that were affected. A constitutional clause that disqualified a particular class of citizens seemed to contradict the Fourteenth Amendment, which was intended to prevent the disenfranchisement of freed Negroes. One article compared black disenfranchisement in Mississippi to the restriction on the suffrage of foreign-born Irishmen in Massachusetts after the rise of Know-Nothingism.²⁵³ In an article titled “Disenfranchisement or Education?” racial prejudice was viewed as an obstacle for Southern states to actually educate their illiterate populations after approving an educational qualification. Was South Carolina “particularly anxious” to educate illiterate Negroes?²⁵⁴ There was danger of a tendency to keep the illiterate population in ignorance after the clause was initiated, so they still would not vote.

In 1898, historian George H. Haynes wrote an article that favoured educational qualifications as a progressive measure. It was his opinion that Wyoming, Maine, and Delaware had adopted an educational qualification *after* the height of Nativism, and “not in the heat of passion or as a party measure”.²⁵⁵ The objective of these states, as well as of Massachusetts, was to improve voters’ intellectual capacity since voters determined the fate of the state. The educational qualifications, however, stated that no one already enfranchised would lose their right to vote as a consequence of new qualification requirements. According to Haynes, this type of reform differed from other states, where

²⁵³ “The Educational Qualification in Mississippi,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 1892, 4.

²⁵⁴ “Disenfranchisement or Education?” *The New York Times*, December 10, 1888, 4.

²⁵⁵ Connecticut and Massachusetts passed educational qualifications during the Know Nothing phase of American politics, when Nativism was at its height. Massachusetts passed an educational requirement for voting after a proposed amendment was voted down in the legislature in 1855. Haynes, “Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States,” *Political Science Quarterly* 13 (1898), 499.

an educational test was intentionally used to “keep from the ballot box a vast number of voters of proved incapacity for self-government”.²⁵⁶ In the state of Mississippi, where the ratio of blacks to whites was 3:2, the literacy test was used to reduce the number of black voters at the polls. In the gubernatorial election of 1896, 105,101 white men were registered to vote compared to only 15, 268 blacks.²⁵⁷ Some blacks felt that a literacy test encouraged men of their communities to educate themselves and obtain property so as to be qualified to vote. One man who wrote to Haynes stated the educational test was helping the Black community in Mississippi because more men were getting educated and acquiring property so they could have the right to vote. The same man also stated however that the test largely diminished the Negro vote. In 1895, the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina debated the qualifications for suffrage and decided that all men who became registered voters after January 1, 1898 had to be able to read and write any part of the constitution given to them by a registration officer or must show that they owned property valued at three hundred dollars or more.²⁵⁸

Haynes did not oppose restricting the suffrage of citizens, like uneducated blacks, who were deemed unfit by state legislatures. He asked his readers: “is it the natural right of all citizens [to vote], or is it the privilege, the *legal* right of certain classes?”²⁵⁹ In defending his views that the franchise was not the natural right of citizens, Haynes argued that the right to partake in government was a right given by the state. The state thus had

²⁵⁶ Haynes, “Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States,” *Political Science Quarterly* 13 (1898), 506.

²⁵⁷ In Mississippi over four-fifths of Blacks voters were disenfranchised by the educational qualification. *Ibid.* 506.

²⁵⁸ The qualifier must also show that has paid all of his taxes collected on the property he owns, which must be worth \$300 or more. George H. Haynes, “Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States,” 502.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 509.

to ensure that those who did participate had some intelligence and understanding of issues at stake:

Integrity, intelligence, independence of judgment, disinterestedness, a consciousness of the citizen's debt to the state – these are the qualities of a good citizen. It is with the prevalence of these that the future of democracy rests. They may all be present without the ability to read or write or “cipher,” yet in such communities as our own *the lack of such ability in a man affords strong presumptive evidence that in him some, at least, of these qualities are wanting.*²⁶⁰

According to Haynes, the educational qualification was a measure to ensure that men who were granted the franchise could demonstrate these qualities.

Debates at the federal and state level over granting citizenship and citizenship rights had swept across the nation by the late 1800s. Doubts were raised over the constitutionality of franchise laws, especially in Southern states. Some, like Haynes, believed literacy tests were a progressive measure to ensure the maintenance of republican institutions. This debate would soon reach Maine, when, in 1892, the State Legislature approved a literacy test as part of a long term plan “to deal with a future increment of ignorance”.²⁶¹ Here, some viewed the educational qualification as a necessary precondition to participate in the electoral process and as a way to improve the intellectual capacity of the electorate. For others, it was deemed as purposely disenfranchising one particular class of citizens, the Franco-Americans.

²⁶⁰ Italics mine. Haynes, “Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States,” 512-513.

²⁶¹ Haynes also states that this was also the case in Massachusetts and Delaware. *Ibid.*, 505.

Chapter Four:

Franco-American reactions to the amendment

The amendment, and the voter reform package it belonged to, triggered two different responses among French Lewistonians, one from the elites and one from ordinary Franco-Americans. The elites, who attacked the electoral reform package as disenfranchising Franco-Americans, responded by encouraging ordinary persons to naturalize before it came into affect. They argued that a unified bloc of electors would increase their political influence in the state. Until this time, ordinary Franco-Americans had shown allegiance to either the Democratic and Republican parties. *Le Messenger* was the elite's voice, publishing numerous articles on the subject of naturalization and voter restrictions throughout the 1890s and wanting all Franco-Americans to support the Democratic Party. The demanding and negative tone of its articles indicates that ordinary Franco-Americans were not only indifferent to naturalization and voting qualifications, but were resistant to voter unification. While *Le Messenger* does not represent the entire story of this issue, it demonstrates how it was viewed by a French-Canadian newspaper.

Franco American leaders' opposition to the electoral reform package

Professionals from the Franco-American community lashed out against the voter registration law in *Le Messenger* and at political assemblies. Registration, which applied only to incorporated cities, was described as a Republican measure to disenfranchise Franco-American Democrats by removing their names from the voter registration lists. The paper listed men from each ward who were no longer registered. *Le Messenger*

encouraged its readers to review the lists to make sure their names had not been removed “par hasard”.²⁶²

Franco-American leaders also debated the changes made to the registration process at a political assembly on February 22, 1892. Speaking to over 600 persons, Dr. Martel, F.X. Belleau, Napoleon Lajeunesse, Frank Pelletier, and W.P. Lambert represented the Democratic Party. P.X. Angers and M. Lizzotte, represented the Republican Party. Dr. Martel showed no reluctance to take off the gloves, directly accusing the Republicans of taking the right to vote away from 125 French-Canadians living in five districts in Lewiston. Challenging Martel’s accusation, Lizotte accused *Le Messenger* of lying to the public when it printed the names. But the crowd applauded loudly when Lambert refuted Lizotte’s argument. *Le Messenger* reported that Democratic success at the assembly was an encouraging sign that Franco-Americans were becoming less inclined to support the Republican Party.²⁶³ Claiming that 80 per cent of Franco-Americans supported the Democratic Party in 1892, the paper was confident that the Republicans would receive very little support from the Franco-American community at the municipal and presidential elections.²⁶⁴

Before the spring municipal elections, Franco-American Democrats warned electors not to vote Republican as the amendment was a Republican measure that, if passed, would disenfranchise many in the community. F.X. Belleau cautioned Franco-Americans to think twice before voting for the Republican Party: “Si vous votez le ticket républicain, l’automne prochain on passera une loi empêchant de voter les Canadiens qui

²⁶² Two articles on this topic were on page two, and one on page three. *Le Messenger*, February 2, 1892.

²⁶³ *Le Messenger*, February 23, 1892.

²⁶⁴ *Le Messenger*, July 12, 1892.

ne savent pas lire et écrire l'anglais".²⁶⁵ An article printed in *Le Messenger* on August 19, 1892 asked why tax paying Franco-Americans who were educated in their own language should not be able to vote:

Et parce que certains des no compatriotes adoptifs, instruits dans leur langue, dans la langue français, par exemple, ne pourrait pas lire la constitution des Etats-Unis a la satisfaction de quelque member grincheux du registration board, on lui refuserait le droit de vote!²⁶⁶

The newspaper editor compared naturalized men who would soon be disenfranchised to the French-Canadian soldiers who had fought during the Civil War. According to the editor, both groups of men were good upstanding citizens who contributed to the development of the nation. Yet, no one had cared whether the soldiers spoke English. Now their descendants were required to do so to qualify for the vote.²⁶⁷

Le Messenger also criticized the timing of the amendment. Under different circumstances, the paper noted, Franco-Americans could support educational qualifications, as Franco-American elites understood the importance of teaching English to French-speaking adults and their children. Bilingual voters would understand the issues of an election and vote for the party that best supported their interests as Franco-Americans. Of course, *Le Messenger* hoped this would be the Democratic Party. It admitted that the educational qualification did not apply to persons who could vote before 1892. However, the educational qualification came at a time when the largest Franco-American communities in Biddeford and Lewiston were voting for Democrats, and the Democrats were under attack by Republican dominated boards and courts. Just before the

²⁶⁵ *Le Messenger*, February 23, 1892.

²⁶⁶ "And because some of our people, which we educated in our own language, could not read the constitution to the approval of a few bitter members of the registration board, they cannot vote!" *Le Messenger*, August 19, 1892.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

gubernatorial election of 1890, over 500 Biddeford Democrats had been removed from the voter registration lists. As some of Lewiston's Franco-Americans faced the same fate, *Le Messenger* therefore concluded that the educational qualification was to be used by a Republican Legislature to further reduce the Democratic vote, via a deliberate attack on Franco-American voters. As *Le Messenger* stated: "Nous ne puissions pas voir à travers le petit jeu de nos bons amis le républicains".²⁶⁸ To protect their voting rights Franco-Americans had to protest and vote against the amendment.

The naturalization campaign of the early 1890s

In 1892, immediately after the passing of the amendment, local leaders and the Dominicans ran a vigorous campaign to naturalize Franco-Americans. They encouraged naturalization before the law went into effect in January 1893, as the amendment would not apply to anyone who became a citizen before this date. Fundraisers were organized by *Le Club National* to assist with court costs. Attorneys F.X. Belleau (Democrat) and P.X. Angers (Republican) processed the paperwork Franco-Americans needed to naturalize. In 1892, 228 Franco-American men of voting age took out their final naturalization papers.²⁶⁹ This was the highest number of naturalizations for this immigrant group in any year during the nineteenth century.

The editor of *Le Messenger* argued in 1893 that naturalization was the only way Franco-Americans could protect their nationality. They had to become American citizens and play a role in the political life of the state. To reinforce this point, maintaining that Franco-Americans must realize they were not going to one day return to their native land,

²⁶⁸ *Le Messenger*, February 19, 1892.

²⁶⁹ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 80.

Le Messenger urged its readers to naturalize and to become a strong voting bloc.²⁷⁰ The editor asked “Si les législatures prenaient un bon jour fantaisie d’être injustes à notre égard, comment nous protégerons-nous si nous n’avons pas de représentants dans les conseils de la nation?”²⁷¹ Immigrants were told to take advantage of the opportunity to be a voting member of their adoptive country.²⁷² They had nothing to lose in becoming American citizens and getting involved in American politics, the paper argued.²⁷³ Another benefit of naturalization was eligibility for public help for poor families. *Le Messenger* wrote that many Americans who were not citizens, including Franco-Americans, did not have enough resources to provide for their families. For example, families would go to bed without eating dinner. Those who naturalized could receive public assistance because municipalities only assisted American citizens.²⁷⁴ Franco-Americans who were uninterested in political issues may have wanted to naturalize for material reasons.

Franco-Americans shifting political allegiance

Although Franco-American leaders managed to naturalize some Franco-Americans, they failed to turn them into a solid Democratic voting block. Even worse, during the mid 1890s Franco-Americans began to desert the Democrats in favour of the Republicans. Their voting patterns were inconsistent from state to state, and locality to locality. In places where the Irish dominated the Democratic Party, as in Rhode Island, Franco-Americans were more likely to vote Republican. In places where Nativists

²⁷⁰ *Le Messenger*, November 7, 1893.

²⁷¹ “If the American legislature decided to attack our nationality, how could we defend ourselves if we don’t have any representatives in the various councils of this nation?” *Le Messenger*, November 7, 1893.

²⁷² “Let’s Understand our Duty,” *Le Messenger*, February 9, 1894.

²⁷³ *Le Messenger*, January 22, 1891.

²⁷⁴ *Le Messenger*, November 7, 1893.

dominated the Republican Party – New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine – Franco Americans voted for the Democrats.²⁷⁵ Thus, by the 1890s Franco-Americans in New England “found no completely satisfactory political domicile”.²⁷⁶ Instead, they rallied behind the political party that was least hostile towards them. Between 1880 and 1892, Franco-Americans in general tended to side with the Democratic Party. Most Franco-Americans supported Democrat Hancock and Cleveland during the presidential elections of 1880 and 1892.²⁷⁷ Cleveland worked hard to preserve the Franco-American vote, and the Democrats gave substantial funds to French language newspapers to promote Cleveland’s candidacy.

Franco-American support for the Democrats waned during the Panic of 1893.²⁷⁸ The Democratic Party nominated William Jennings Bryan for presidential candidate in 1896, 1900, and 1908. Franco-Americans, like other urban immigrant groups in New England were dismayed by Bryan’s controversial economic ideas. Bryan, a leader of the Free Silver Movement, advocated bimetallism, or dollars backed by gold and silver, a policy that would lead to inflation, in order to benefit farmers, many of whom were

²⁷⁵ Petrin disagrees with Walker’s analysis of Franco-American voting patterns in Massachusetts during the years 1896 and 1924. Walker concluded that Franco-Americans voted Republican in thirty New England communities he studied with large Franco-American populations. Walker looked at nine Massachusetts communities in his analysis. His analysis demonstrated that because the average Democratic vote in these communities was usually less than fifty percent of the total vote, Franco-Americans displayed a preference for voting Republican. When Petrin studied a larger population of Franco-Americans in Massachusetts he found that “a comparison of the average Democratic vote in Walker’s communities shows these averages were higher than the percentage of the two-party vote received by Democratic candidates statewide in presidential elections.” Ronald A. Petrin, *French-Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915: Ethnicity and Political Pragmatism* (Philadelphia, PA: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 64-74, 158, Quote from David B. Walker, *Politics and Ethnocentrism: The Case of the Franco-Americans* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdin College, Bureau for Research in Municipal Government, 1961), 24.

²⁷⁶ Walker, *Politics and Ethnocentrism: The Case of the Franco-Americans*, 24.

²⁷⁷ Walker, “The Presidential Politics of the Franco-Americans,” 354.

²⁷⁸ The Panic of 1893 was a significant economic depression in the United States. It resulted from the overbuilding of railroads and unstable railroad financing that instigated bank failures. In the early months of 1893 businesses became bankrupt. The panic lasted ten months and came before the long depression. This was the worst economic crisis to hit the United States since the birth of the nation. See E. G. Campbell, *The Reorganization of the American Railroad System, 1893-1900* (New York, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1938). Information for this footnote taken from pp. 25.

deeply in debt. Factory workers (which included a high proportion of immigrants) were opposed to this program as inflation would have resulted in a higher cost of living, a point Bryan's Republican opponent William McKinley, emphasized. Many viewed Bryan's program as favoring "fundamentalist, agrarian Protestantism".²⁷⁹ Bryan incidentally was also a prohibitionist and Franco-Americans were opposed to prohibition. This presidential election marked the beginning of the Franco-American shift to the Republican Party. Franco-American support for the Republican Party continued until the 1930s, when another depression shook their faith in the party's abilities.

With regards to political allegiances, Maine Franco-Americans were not fundamentally different from Franco-Americans in the rest of New England. Maine's Franco-American leaders had tried for two decades to naturalize and unite voters in support of one political party. These elites were most often composed of Democrats, but there were also a small handful of Republican politicians. Attempts were not fruitful, as Franco-American voters supported both Republicans and Democrats in different municipal, and state and federal elections (see table 1 and 2). Until 1892, a small majority of Lewiston electors voted Democrat at gubernatorial elections. Afterwards, the proportions were reversed. By the time the voter reform package arrived, Democratic elites argued that Franco-Americans were not naturalizing enough or uniting as a uniform bloc and were therefore being taken advantage of by a Republican controlled legislature.

²⁷⁹ In the 1896 presidential election, Quote from David B. Walker, "The Presidential Politics of the Franco-Americans," 355.

Table 1
Lewiston Gubernatorial Election Results: Selected Years²⁸⁰

Year	Democrats	Republican	% Republican
1884	1598	1512	48.6
1890	1428	1419	49.8
1892	1727	1410	44.9
1894	1272	1816	58.8
1896	1063	2071	66.1
1900	1310	1956	59.9

Table 2
Lewiston Presidential Election Results: Selected Years²⁸¹

Year	Democrats	Republican	% Republican
1892	1459	1424	49.4
1896	1012	1887	65.1
1900	1339	1585	54.2

²⁸⁰ Maine State Archives, Secretary of State Election Returns Official Vote Tabulations.

²⁸¹ There is no table for Congressional Elections because the official results do not give the party affiliation of the candidate. The state histories identify the governor's party affiliation, but rarely discuss the state's congressmen. Maine State Archives, Secretary of State Election Returns Official Vote Tabulations.

Le Messenger contended that the Republicans had taken jurisdiction over naturalization away from municipal courts in order to make it difficult for foreigners to acquire citizenship. It explained that the bill was adopted at the end of a legislative session, when a majority of Democrats had left the legislature. Despite protests from remaining Democrats, the bill was passed. *Le Messenger* stated the law was unconstitutional: “La constitution nous protégé, les lois nous accordant certains privilèges. Peut on nous les enlever? Impossible!” Under federal law, superior court judges were not allowed to refuse to naturalize a foreigner because they were too busy, as naturalizing new immigrants was one of their duties. The editor therefore demanded that Franco-Americans assert their right to get their final naturalization papers signed by them.²⁸²

Nonetheless, in the spring of 1894, just before the municipal elections were held, over 100 French-Canadians were turned away by the Auburn Superior Court; the judge refused to naturalize them claiming he did not have enough time.²⁸³ In the end, only one French-Canadian from Lewiston was naturalized in Auburn; eighty-one received their final papers in Portland. After the election *Le Messenger* wrote that not enough Franco-Americans had naturalized to allow them to vote as a bloc. Although there were 10,000 Franco-Americans lived in Lewiston, the newspaper contended that only 1100 were registered.²⁸⁴ The English language amendment was one reason why these men could not vote, and *Le Messenger* commended those men who were learning English because they understood the importance of their vote. Even learning just enough English to naturalize

²⁸² “The constitution protects us, and the law gives us certain rights. Can someone take these away? Impossible!” *Le Messenger*, February 27, 1894.

²⁸³ Richard, “From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present”, 78.

²⁸⁴ “Are We Ready?” *Le Messenger*, July 20, 1894.

was important. *Le Messenger* proposed that an English elementary course be offered to Franco-Americans who only wanted to naturalize. For those who were already qualified to vote, but had not yet registered, *Le Messenger* asserted such men were committing moral suicide and threatening the survival of their own community by not naturalizing.²⁸⁵

During the mid to late 1890s *Le Messenger* had focused its attention on trying to unify Franco-Americans voters. At the municipal elections, *Le Messenger* told Franco-Americans to put aside their differences and align themselves behind the same candidate. Unfortunately for the local Democratic leadership, a majority of Franco-Americans did not vote in favour of Democratic tickets. When Dr. Martel's 1894 mayoral run was defeated by a Republican candidate, *Le Messenger* blamed his loss on the fact that Franco-Americans had voted Republican, over the issue of alcohol and a refusal to with the Irish in voting Democrat.²⁸⁶

At the 1896 gubernatorial election Republican Llewellyn Powers received 65% of Lewiston's votes²⁸⁷. French-speaking Republican candidates also won more city government seats. In 1896 four Republicans and two Democrats were elected. *Le Messenger* congratulated one of the Republican winners, William Sabourin, whose father was Franco-American, and who had gained a seat on the Board of Alderman for his perfect English and presented him as a role model for other men to learn English and become naturalized. Despite scolding Franco-Americans for voting Republican, *Le Messenger* knew that even a Franco-American Republican representative in local

²⁸⁵ "Are We Ready?" *Le Messenger*, July 20, 1894.

²⁸⁶ Richard, "From Canadien to American: the Acculturation of French-Canadian Descendants in Lewiston, Maine, 1860 to the present", 99.

²⁸⁷ Power was the Republican who had helped William Dickey defeat the school language law the previous year. Burke, *Major Dickey: Sketch of his life* (Bangor, ME: Bangor Commercial Print, 1900), 13-14.

government was better than nothing. Just before the presidential election of 1896 *Le Messenger* tried again to convince Franco-Americans to support the Democratic candidate. The newspaper claimed that the Democrat Party had always been, and still was, the party that supported religious freedoms and liberty.²⁸⁸ According to *Le Messenger*, the 1896 presidential program reasserted freedom of religion. The paper also depicted Bryan as the candidate of the masses.²⁸⁹ Their efforts were not fruitful. At the election, Lewiston, Androscoggin County, and the state all voted in favour of Republican candidate William McKinley who had campaigned for conservative monetary policies and in support of industry (he was a protectionist).²⁹⁰ McKinley argued against bimetallism and affirmed that it would create inflation but no new jobs. Bryan ran again for president in 1900, but Franco-American preferred Theodore Roosevelt.

During the late 1890s *Le Messenger* tried to convince Franco-Americans to elect Democratic candidates at the local level. Before the municipal elections of 1897, the newspaper agonized over the fact former Democrats were now voting for Republicans. The editor encouraged a strong Democratic leader to come forward to reverse the trend: “Je suis convaincu qu’il ne faut qu’un cri de ralliement d’un de nos chefs pour faire sortir de leur torpeur nos lutteurs de jadis”.²⁹¹ Until 1900, however, Franco Americans in Lewiston continued voting for Republican candidates.

During the 1890s, the educational qualification and the tightening of voter registration and naturalization laws by a Republican controlled Legislature did not affect

²⁸⁸ *Le Messenger*, July 17, 1896

²⁸⁹ *Le Messenger*, August 21, 1896; *Le Messenger*, September 18, 1896

²⁹⁰ In Lewiston, McKinley received 1887 of votes, Bryan 1012. The County voted 5,348 in favour of McKinley and 2,283 in favour of Bryan. The whole state gave McKinley 80,461 votes and Bryan 34,567. Maine State Archives, Secretary of State, Election Returns, Official Vote Tabulations.

²⁹¹ “I am convinced that it would only take a good rallying cry from one of our leaders to gain them back to our fold”, *Le Messenger*, February 19, 1897.

the political allegiances of ordinary Franco-American voters. Franco-Americans voted for the politician or political party they thought best supported their wants and needs. In Lewiston, this infuriated local elites who wanted voters to unite and support one political party. *Le Messenger*, a Democratic newspaper, encouraged voters to support the Democratic Party. Despite these efforts, Lewiston's Franco-Americans were indifferent to bloc voting and still voted independently, no matter what their elite told them.

Chapter Five:

The overall impact of the Amendment on Lewiston's Franco-American community

In 1904 Dr. Thomas Pelletier wrote in *Le Journal du Madawaska* that the amendment already “deprived half our [Franco-American] population of the suffrage, and [will] reduce our voting population by 9/10 in a few years.”²⁹² Was such a dire prediction justified? What was the overall effect of the amendment on Franco-Americans in Lewiston? Using data from the 1910 census, this chapter will explore to what degree Franco-Americans were affected by the amendment. The data shows the amendment did not have the impact as its proponents and opponents desired or feared.

The 1910 census provides information about a person's age, birth place, date of entry into the US if applicable, naturalization status, and literacy. One question asked was whether the person could speak English, and if not, what language he or she spoke. But the census had some shortcomings. Some pertain to the census taking process itself, others to the questions that are not asked. In 1910, the census taker collected information from the head of the household or from another family member. The census taker then transcribed the original data onto a new copy for the federal Census Bureau. This latter copy is what is currently found on microfilm, and is not the original source of collected data. Transferring data by hand might have resulted in mistakes. It may explain why some information is missing.

²⁹²Dr. Thomas Pelletier asserted that Franco-American political strength in Maine was already reduced by the educational amendment. He denounced those behind the amendment and asserted that it had been an anti-French and anti-Catholic Republican measure. He wrote that the act “annihilated our right to vote”. He predicted that the amendment would take away the balance of political power from the French population in Madawaska so that Anglo-Americans could remain “masters of the political situation”. Pelletier's angry outburst against the amendment indicated that Anglo-American views on language were inextricably linked to anti-French and anti-Catholic opinions. *Le Journal du Madawaska*, June 1, 1904; *Le Journal du Madawaska*, July 13, 1904.

The date of immigration and whether a person was naturalized was not always recorded (Unknown in Table 1). More problematic, the census did not record the date of naturalization. Thus, we cannot know from this source how many Franco-Americans were naturalized before 1893, and thus were not affected by the amendment.

Unfortunately one also cannot calculate the exact number of naturalized males who were disenfranchised. However, it was possible to calculate low and high estimates of naturalized males who did not meet voting qualifications. These limitations did not outweigh the value of the data. The census contains enough information to calculate reasonable estimates of the percentages of disenfranchised voters, and compare data between native born, naturalized, and unnaturalized Franco-Americans.

The Corpus

The 1910 census was used because the amendment grandfathered existing citizens, and enough time had elapsed to see what impact it had. We used a corpus of 1000 Franco-American men, made of the first 1000 men of voting age, listed in the five wards of Lewiston making up the Petit Canada. These 1000 men represent approximately one in ten Franco-American men in Lewiston. The men in this cohort were distributed into four groups: US born Franco-Americans, naturalized French-Canadians, unnaturalized French-Canadians, and unknown. Table 1 shows the breakdown into each group.

Table 3
 Percentage of native born, naturalized, and not naturalized
 Franco-American males, 21 years of age or older
 in 1910, living in Lewiston (from 1000 corpus)

	N	Percentage
Native-born males, 21 years of age or older	207	20.7%
Canadian-born naturalized males, 21 years of age or older	349	34.9%
Subtotal: Franco-Americans who are US citizens	551	55.1%
Canadian-born not naturalized males, 21 years of age or older	356	35.6%
Citizenship or date of entry unknown	92	9.2%
Grand Total	1000	100%

Data

To determine how many men lost the vote on account of the amendment, each of the first two groups was further divided between those who were of voting age when the amendment came into effect (January 1893) and the others. Then, the proportion of men of voting age after 1892 who could not read or speak English in each category was calculated. Among the US born Franco-Americans, twenty-one were of voting age in 1893 (and close to a quarter did not meet the amendment requirements); 186 reached 21 on or after 1893. Twenty-two or 11.8% did not meet the requirements.

Table 4
 Native born Franco-Americans of voting age after 1893
 who did not meet educational qualifications for voting

	Minor in 1893	Of age in 1893
Number	186	21
N of those who could not read	1	4
N who could not speak English	21	0
N who could do neither	0	1
Total N not meeting qualifications	22	5
% not meeting qualifications	11.8	23.8

Doing the same calculation for naturalized Franco-Americans is impossible, because we do not know their naturalization date. But we can calculate two estimates. The low estimate assumes everybody naturalized as soon as they qualified. The high estimate assumes no one naturalized until the amendment was passed. The real number is within that range. We know the immigration date of 344 naturalized Franco-Americans. 194 arrived before 1888, and had resided long enough in the state to be naturalized by 1893. 150 arrived after 1888. However, 42 of those who arrived before 1888 were still minors in 1893. If they were naturalized before the amendment took effect, because their father became a citizen, they were still affected by the amendment. Of those 42 Franco-Americans, 6 did not meet the requirements for voting after 1893. The 150 who arrived after 1888 could not have naturalized before the amendment came into effect. 29 of those men also did not meet qualifications for voting. The low estimate of disqualified naturalized Franco-Americans is therefore 10.2%. The high estimate assumes that all naturalized Franco-Americans got their citizenship papers after 1893. Of 344 naturalized men, 42 men arriving before 1888 and 29 men arriving after 1888 did not meet voting qualifications. The high estimate of disqualified naturalized Franco-Americans is 20.6%, the low estimate 10%.

Table 5
Proportion of disenfranchised naturalized Franco-Americans

		N	Missing Information	Could not read	Could not speak English	Could do neither	Total not meeting requirements	% not meeting requirements
A	Arrived before 1888 but under age in 1893	42		3	3	0	6	14.3
B	Arrived before 1888 and of age in 1893	152		22	8	6	36	23.7
C	Arrived 1888 or later	150	1	14	12	3	29	19.3
	Minimum number of disqualified voters (A+C)	192	1	17	15	3	35	
	Low estimate of % of disqualified voters ((35*100)/344)							10.2
	High estimate (A+B+C)	344	1	39	23	9	71	20.6

What was the impact of the amendment on the population? Two estimates must also be calculated for this group. The corpus is made of 207 native born citizens and 344 naturalized citizens, and the minimum number of affected naturalized citizens is 192. The total number of naturalized and native born affected is 378 (192+186). Of this total, 57 did not meet voting qualifications. Thus, the low estimate of total disqualified citizens is 15.1%. The high estimate assumes that all naturalized citizens were affected, and the total number of affected citizens is 530. The total number not meeting qualifications from this group is 93. The high estimate of total disqualified Franco-American citizens is 17.5%. The bracket is very narrow (2.4%) and may be smaller than the statistical margin of error. It can be assumed then that 16% of Franco-Americans lost the vote because of the amendment (see table 4, row 5).

Table 6
Franco-Americans disqualified by the amendment

		Total	N	N	Disqualified
		Low estimate	High estimate	Low estimate	High estimate
1	Native born, of age in 1893	21	21	0	0
2	Native born, under age in 1893	186	186	22	22
3	Naturalized after the amendment or naturalized before the amendment but under age in 1893	192	344	35	71
4	Affected by the amendment	378	530	57	93
5	Percentage of those affected by the amendment who were disqualified			15.1	17.5
6	Total number of Franco-American citizens		551	57	93
7	Percentage of all Franco-American citizens who lost the vote			10.3	16.9

Over half of the males age 21 and over in our corpus were US citizens in 1910. Between 10 and 17% of these men, native born or naturalized, did not meet voting qualifications (see table 4, row 7). A comparison between citizens and unnaturalized men who did not meet voting qualifications indicates that 45.12% of the men who could have been naturalized in 1910 would have been disenfranchised *if* they had become US citizens (Table 5). 19.3% of the men who could naturalize only after the amendment were disenfranchised, while 14.29% of native born men of voting age after 1892 were disenfranchised. Thus, men born in the United States were the least affected by the amendment.

Table 7
 Franco-Americans not naturalized who did
 not meet voting qualifications and affected
 by amendment IF naturalized

	N	Cannot read or speak English	Cannot read	Cannot speak English	Not meeting qualifications	Percentage
French- Canadians not naturalized who arrived in US after 1905	105	18	10	42	70	66.66
French- Canadians not naturalized who arrived in US before 1905	246	41	32	38	111	45.1
Total number of French- Canadians not naturalized in 1910	351	59	42	80	181	51.56%

Unnaturalized males of voting age were the group least likely to satisfy voting qualifications. On average, unnaturalized men had not lived in the United States as long as naturalized men. The longer males lived in the United States after 1892, the more likely they were to be literate and to speak English well enough to meet voting qualifications. 28.8% of the unnaturalized men were illiterate compared to 14% of naturalized men, and 2.9% of the native born. This indicates that men who spent their childhood in Québec where elementary schooling was not compulsory until 1941 had a more limited education. Maine made elementary education compulsory in 1887. Canadian-born males who arrived in Maine before school age had a better opportunity to learn how to read in American schools. 21.03% of unnaturalized males who arrived in the US before the age of 7 were illiterate, compared to 35.48% of unnaturalized men who arrived in the US after age 17 (past school age). The fact that native born Franco-

Americans who were educated in the United States were the least likely group to be illiterate reinforces this hypothesis.

There are two other possibilities as to why unnaturalized males were not qualified to vote in 1910 that cannot be proven from census data. Naturalization was a self-selecting process. After 1892, males who did not meet voting qualifications might not have taken out naturalization papers because they would still be disenfranchised, as they could not read or speak English. Naturalization cost time and money, and for the average Franco-American male, it was often not worth the bother if he could not vote anyway. Also, males who did not meet voting qualifications in 1910 might have in 1915, and those who met them in 1910 might not have in 1900. For example, the proportion of men who could speak English increased with the number of years they spent in the US (Table 6). The only inconsistency lies between the years 1890 and 1899, when the percentage was lower (18.57%) than between 1879 and 1889 (21.35%). This may be because the Dominicans and French elites were running a vigorous naturalization campaign after the amendment was passed by voters in 1892. Men were being encouraged to naturalize quickly, and may have been less reluctant to do so because their English was still limited. The ability to speak English increased with the time spent in the United States. 57.1% of the unnaturalized men who arrived after 1905 spoke no English, compared to 32.11% of those who arrived before. 10% of naturalized and native born citizens spoke no English.

Table 8
 Percentage of non English speaking naturalized and
 Unnaturalized Franco-Americans in U.S. over 50 year period

Number of years in the U.S.	Less than 10 (1900-1910)	10-19 (1890-1899)	20-29 (1880-1889)	30-39 (1870-1879)	40-49 (1860-1869)
% not speaking English	42.2	18.57	21.35	14.4	5.8

Conclusions

The amendment disenfranchised between 1 in 7 and 1 in 5 Franco-American citizens in Lewiston. Among the US citizens, naturalized males were more affected than native born Franco-Americans because they were less likely to meet voting qualifications *after* the amendment was implemented. Still, the small proportion of men losing the vote was enough to tilt a close election. However, not every man of voting age in Lewiston, either Franco-American or otherwise, voted. Therefore the impact of the amendment was probably more muted than the figure suggests. If an election was not close, it likely did not make a difference. And in the long run, Franco-Americans learned English merely by living in the state and or by taking evening classes like the ones organized by the Dominicans. This allowed those who needed it to learn to read. The situation was not likely to get worse, despite what some Franco-American leaders thought.

Conclusion

Amendment XXIX was repealed in the 1960s. By then, every resident of the state could read and speak English, and the test was a mere formality. It was removed as a result of federal civil rights laws, likely as discriminatory against citizens with learning disabilities. Yet, only one hundred years before, its adoption had been viewed by Anglo Mainers as a progressive measure to ‘improve’ the electoral system. Some supporters of the amendment may have been sincere when they claimed they wanted to raise the quality of the electorate, but most viewed it as one element in an anti-immigrant electoral reform package, and in Maine’s context, an anti-French one.

Immigrants in Maine could not negotiate the terms of their integration to American society – they had to remake themselves into “American”. All immigrants were expected to assimilate and become indistinguishable from mainstream Anglo-Protestants; anything less was unacceptable. Immigrants who refused to assimilate completely were insinuating that American society and culture, as well as American republican institutions, were imperfect. French-Canadians rejected assimilation in favour of acculturation, as there could not be assimilation without forsaking French and endangering their faith. Franco-Americans tried to be Americans while remaining French and Catholic. They became citizens and learned English in school, but they continued to speak French at home, at church, at work, and to learn the language at school. They continued to practice Catholicism, created social and political institutions, and preserved their cultural traditions. Their Catholic faith was, at the time, much detested by many Americans, as it was perceived as threatening Republican institutions. A fair percentage

of Anglo-Mainers therefore believed Franco-Americans were not desirable citizens. US commissioner of labour Carroll D. Wright's views that French-Canadians had no interest in the social and political institutions of the country were also shared by some outside of Massachusetts. Republican nativists believed that if Franco-American naturalization could not be prevented, their right to vote at least should be limited under state law.

Franco-American leaders were outraged at the educational amendment and believed it would inevitably reduce significantly the number of Franco-American voters. Dr. Pelletier's prediction in *Le Journal du Madawaska* was a case in point, as he predicted 9 out of 10 voters would be disenfranchised in the first decade of the 20th century. In *Le Messager*, Franco-American elites vigorously encouraged their readers to naturalize, and tried to unite them to get them to vote for one political party, the Democratic Party. Otherwise, elites claimed Franco-Americans generally risked becoming victims of Republican-backed initiatives to diminish their rights.

Nativist prejudices against Franco-Americans blinded them to the fact that these migrants were increasingly supporting the Republican Party. Republican politicians had been building a small constituency among Maine's Franco-American voters during the 1880s, which grew larger during the 1890s. Franco-Americans supported the Republicans because the Irish in Maine dominated the Democratic Party. The Irish were even more assimilationist than some Anglo-Americans. This was visible in the Church, as the Irish Catholic hierarchy tried to Anglicize everybody. Ironically, the Republican reformers who supported the amendment would have suffered politically if their plan to disenfranchise large numbers of Franco-Americans had gone as expected.

In the end, nativists did not pay too much for their wrongdoing, for the amendment did not have as much of an impact as its proponents and opponents expected. The force of the amendment was muted as only one in five Franco-American voters was disenfranchised before World War One. There was also no guarantee that all those disenfranchised would even have voted if they had been allowed to begin with. Thus, the impact of the amendment on future electoral results was largely marginal. Also, increasing proportions of citizens spoke English and were literate in the decades after the amendment was proposed. The amendment did not raise the quality of the electorate, but the quality of the electorate improved nonetheless. This may be the reason why the amendment quickly faded from Mainers' consciousness. The context surrounding the educational amendment demonstrates that Anglo-Mainers overreacted to a perceived, but unfounded, Franco-American threat in their community. Using what they viewed as a progressive measure, nativists implemented an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant electoral reform package to protect their vision of the American republic.

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Appendices

Table 1

Distribution of French Canadians in New England, 1860-1880

State	Population in 1860	% of French distribution	Population in 1880	% of French distribution
Maine	7,490	20.0	29,000	13.9
New Hampshire	1,780	4.7	26,200	12.6
Vermont	16,580	44.3	33,500	16.1
Massachusetts	7,780	20.8	81,000	38.9
Rhode Island	1,810	5.0	19,800	9.5
Connecticut	1,980	5.3	18,500	8.9
Total	37,420	100.0	208,100	100.0

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Table 2

Distribution of Franco-Americans* in New England, 1900-1930

State	Population in 1900	% of French distribution	Population in 1930	% of French distribution
Maine	58,583	11.3	99,765	13.4
New Hampshire	74,598	14.4	101,324	13.6
Vermont	41,286	8.0	46,956	6.4
Massachusetts	250,024	48.1	336,871	45.3
Rhode Island	56,382	10.9	91,173	12.3
Connecticut	37,914	7.3	67,130	9.0
Total	518,887	100.0	743,219	100.0

*Persons born in Canada, or in the United States of one or two French-Canadian parents.

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