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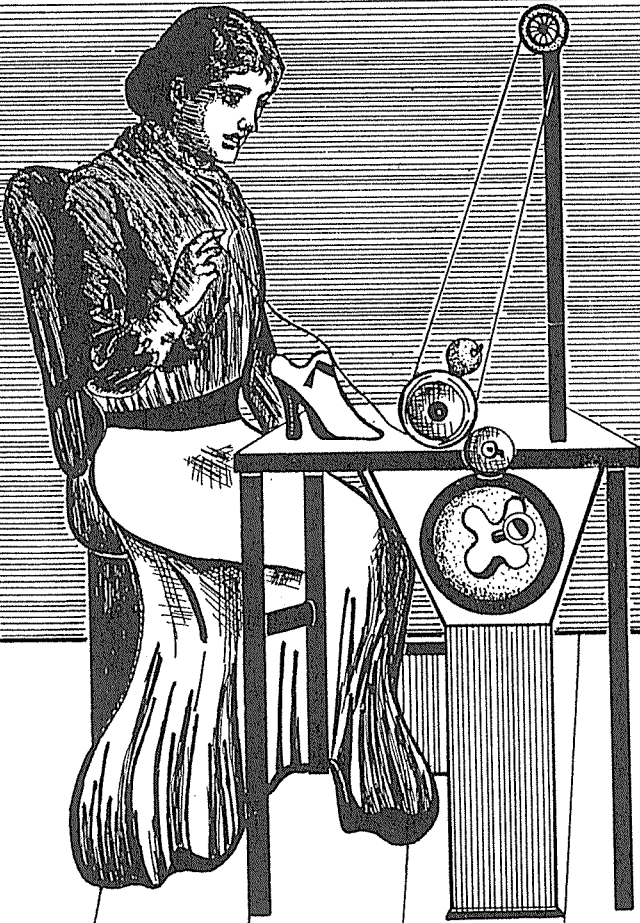
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# HAVERRHILL



# An Experiment in Labor Peace: Haverhill, 1890-1930

PAUL H. TEDESCO

On December 13, 1923, Joseph C. Kimball, president of the Haverhill Shoe Manufacturers' Association, and Austin E. Gill, general agent of the Shoe Workers' Protective Union, signed what the *Haverhill Evening Gazette* called the "Peace Pact," an agreement to govern relations between the shoe manufacturers and shoe workers for the next five years. It was that same "Peace Pact" that a year later *The New Republic* called "The Haverhill Experiment," an experiment which was "all the more interesting to note" because "the women's shoe industry of Haverhill, Massachusetts, has in a period of disillusionment and depression turned to an arbitrator of the clothing industry type for a solution of its difficulties."<sup>1</sup> Whether this was as innovative as *The New Republic* wanted its readers to believe, the fact is that it was the nature of the shoe industry, and particularly the manner in which it developed in Haverhill, to seek help outside the industry.<sup>2</sup>

Haverhill is an old colonial river port on the Merrimack River. As a small Yankee market town, Haverhill was ideally located between the Merrimack River and the New Hampshire border to serve the agricultural interests of the surrounding region during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. When the Industrial Revolution swept through the Merrimack River Valley, Haverhill was transformed, but not in the same manner or at the same pace, as its neighboring textile centers of Lawrence and Lowell. Haverhill was an established area into which the shoe industry was inserted on a grand scale. With origins dating back to 1648, Haverhill's shoe industry was traditionally a part of the domestic economic structure tied to the agricultural economy of the region.<sup>3</sup> Those local farmers moved their shoe-making out of the house, into the "ten footers," and then into the three and four story red brick factories along Merrimack Street. But the shift from domestic to factory manufacture was slower. The new machinery was introduced with less urgency than in the massive textile factories up river. Hand labor was only slowly replaced by machine labor. This transformation created chaos in an industry which by its very nature was labor intensive.

From the beginning of its activities in the shoe industry, Haverhill shoe manufacturers concentrated upon the production of "turned shoes" that utilized thin leathers—goat, kid, and sheep skin in the form of morocco—making it possible to produce light, neat, cheap, and comparatively durable women's shoes. Haver-

hill has long been known as the "Queen slipper city." That label clearly separated it from the other "Queen city" of New England—Manchester, New Hampshire. This distinction is extremely important in understanding what took place in the shoe industry in Haverhill between the years from 1890 to 1930, since "The Haverhill Experiment" concerns the manufacture of "slippers," the trade term for women's shoes. Massachusetts' other shoe centers, Brockton and Lynn in particular, concentrated on the men's shoe production.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, this concentration on women's shoes meant that Haverhill was constantly dependent upon the "whims and caprices of the consuming public."<sup>5</sup> This also meant that the women's shoe industry was marked by an atomization in the form of numerous secondary specialty manufacturers who responded to "whims and caprices" in the form of bows in various colorful materials and dye leathers; buckles of all sizes, shapes, and materials; rhinestone ornaments and straps in all sorts of materials; buttons in leather, metal, and plastic, as well as numerous leather rosettes; beaded additions; and with the advent of the wooden heel and the covered celluloid process, heels in many many styles, colors, and heights. This specialty aspect of the industry made it extremely difficult for the shoe manufacturer to fix a proper price—in fact, price was more often a result of showing styles in Chicago, New York, and St. Louis in the spring and fall and agreeing to manufacture at a fixed lot price.<sup>6</sup> The result of this system of style and price was the piece-rate system, a system of establishing a cost, i.e. a wage, for each phase of the shoe's production carried out by a specialized workman—cutter, stitcher, laster, and so forth.

The shoe industry was from its beginnings labor intensive, whether it was performed on a cobbler's bench in a dimly-lit farmhouse kitchen, a well-lighted "ten footer" built alongside the main dwelling house, or on the third floor rented space of a newly-organized shoe firm on Essex Street. The result of this heavy emphasis upon the individual worker in a specialty-based industry was to create a continuously fractious union movement. Not only was the shoe industry labor intensive, the necessary machinery was controlled under a centralized ownership system. The United Shoe Machinery Corporation's development of a lease system allowed for greater and equalized competition by allowing low capitalization for entry into the industry. This small scale and ease of entry increased the number of manufacturers, but kept the labor unit size at an average of around fifty workers. This did not mean that Haverhill did not have large factories of 300 or 500 workers as Brockton, because it did. What it really meant was that Haverhill, with its greater number of small manufacturers, had variable-sized labor units in each production unit, making it more and more difficult to reach decisions concerning wages, hours, and job security. There was seemingly little common ground that could be achieved in an environment where both the number of employers and workers was so often in flux.

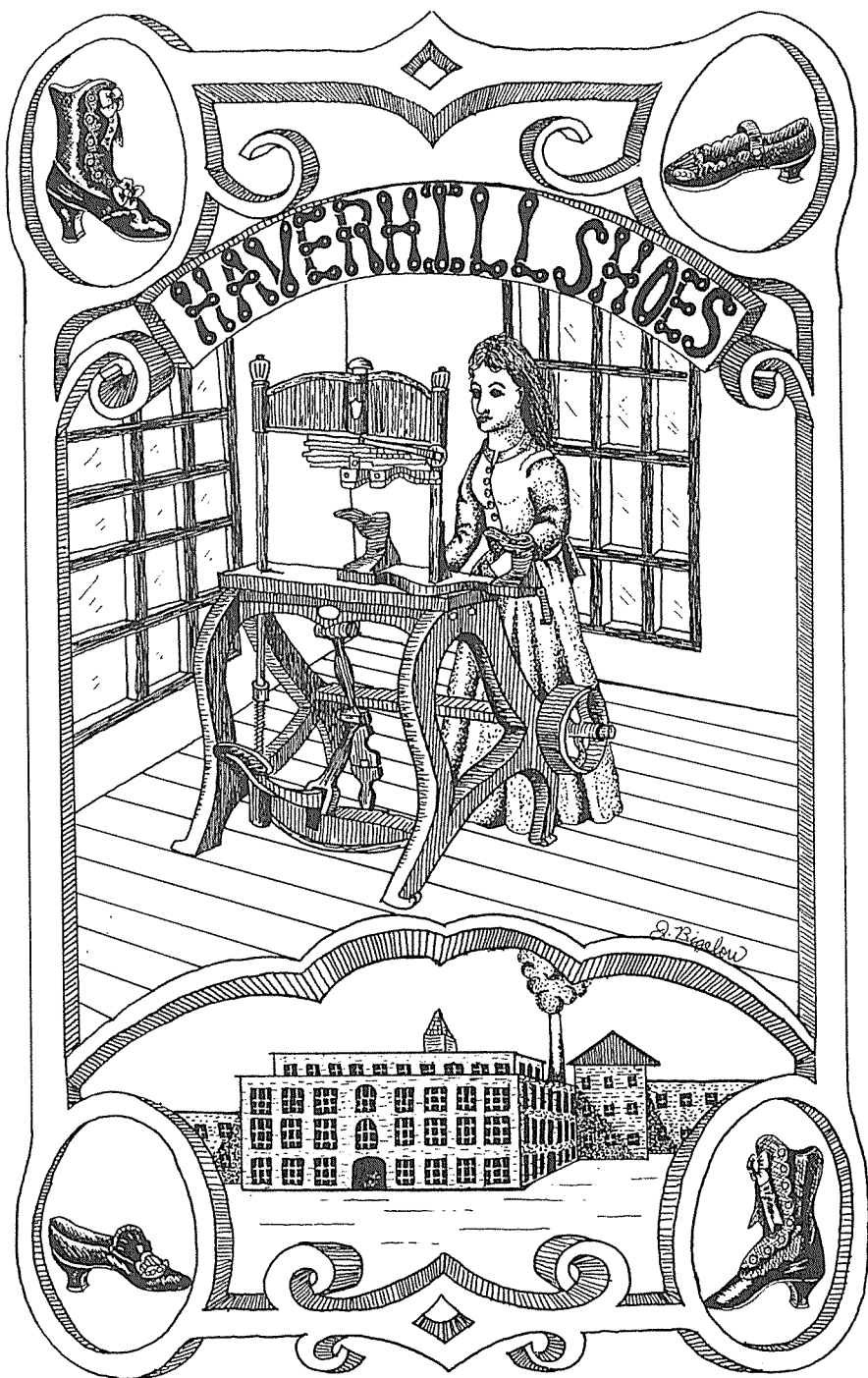
The women's shoe industry was highly dependent upon a seasonal production pattern. Increased production coincided with the annual style shows held in the major shoe centers of New York, Chicago, and St. Louis. The ability to respond quickly to style changes was made possible by the invention and perfection of the McKay (1858) and Goodyear (1862) machines. After 1875, Haverhill quickly established itself as a manufacturing center of high grade turned shoes, which increased its production of women's "slippers."<sup>7</sup> The

advent of the stitching machine also added to the constant chaos in the industry by allowing the introduction of contract stitching shops. These independent shops competed directly with the stitchers employed by shops which had all phases of production located in the factory. The stitching problem had been central to the Shoe Strike of 1895, in which the female stitching locals played a most important part. The parts of the production process could be brought into direct competition with each other and thus produce reductions by forcing labor to accept cuts in wages if they wanted to survive.

In 1889, Haverhill produced 7.3 percent of the total value of shoes produced in the United States, ranking it in the top five shoe centers; in 1899 that figure was 5.9; in 1909 5.7; in 1919 5.2; and 1923 3.6.<sup>8</sup> By 1929 New York produced 8.5 percent of the total value of shoes produced, St. Louis 4.8 percent, and Milwaukee 3.5 percent. Haverhill's role was clearly in decline.<sup>9</sup> Even more significant for the New England region as a whole was that in the period from 1849 to 1933 its total shoe distribution went from 51.3 percent to 35 percent, while the Midwest rose from 7.6 percent to 36.3 percent.<sup>10</sup> It was clear that during the period from 1890 to 1930, the American shoe industry was moving west as costs were effectively reduced by aligning production closer to market demand. Since 1900, and especially since 1919, the growing importance of style as a factor in the production of women's shoes emphasized both the nearness-to-market argument and the migratory nature of the shoe industry.

In 1907, when wooden heels covered with celluloid were introduced, novelty shoe production in Haverhill increased rapidly. However, increased world conflict, foreign imports, and the changing patterns of the American shoe industry began causing Haverhill some difficulty. When foreign firms such as T. & A. Bata of Czechoslovakia adapted their operations to use American shoe machinery, Haverhill suffered even further, especially by the second and third decades of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> In 1923, Haverhill was the major center of women's novelty footwear. By 1928, the city was in economic crisis. On January 1, 1920, there were 122 firms doing business in Haverhill. By August 1, 1928, 189 firms began operations in Haverhill. On December 31, 1928, only 102 businesses were in production in Haverhill. In that same period, 219 firms went out of business or removed themselves to neighboring New Hampshire, where no labor unions dared enter. Of the 102 concerns in operation on August 1, 1928, only 40 had been in operation on January 1, 1925.<sup>12</sup> Such statistics clearly indicate the volatility of the industry.

The chaos in the Haverhill women's shoe industry that is demonstrated by these statistics most likely resulted from the lack of working capital, bad management practices, and the lack of cooperation between the manufacturers and workers.<sup>13</sup> There was constant pressure by management to reduce the cost of production by controlling the costs of materials and labor. The manufacturers could control the cost of labor inside Haverhill, but not the cost of materials from the outside. They were particularly vulnerable to fluctuating transportation costs. This heightened the difficulties of maintaining a stable environment in an industry which lacked a long-term perspective on labor and which had a labor movement unable to develop a stability of its own.



A. Bigelow

Historically, when one mentions labor in the context of Haverhill's shoe industry, one can immediately establish the link between the city and the Socialist Labor movement in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.<sup>14</sup> As another outside influence on the Haverhill shoe economy between the years from 1890 to 1912, the Socialist Labor movement made Haverhill an integral part of the national labor scene. Leaders in the socialist movement such as Eugene V. Debs visited the city on several occasions. The labor interest excited the community to the point that it elected and re-elected the first socialist mayor in the United States, John C. Chase. However, Haverhill's flirtation with socialism and its proximity to the Industrial Workers of the World's activities in the famous Lawrence Strike of 1912 were efforts that "seemed to lack spontaneity" and lasting philosophical intent.<sup>15</sup> The city also elected James T. Carey, "Weeping James," as a socialist member to the Haverhill City Council and as state representative to the General Court. Carey and Chase "allied Haverhill's socialists with the less dogmatic Eugene V. Debs and his Social Democracy Party. The workers of Haverhill were able to assimilate the issue of being un-American by their happy coincidence of a populist tradition alive with honest leadership of local constituents."<sup>16</sup>

Total union membership in the United States leather industries, with the major part in boots and shoes, was 2.1 million in 1910, 2.2 in 1920, 1.5 in 1925 and 1.3 in 1930. Union organization in boot and shoe unions peaked in 1920 before the general decline of the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> However, this was not necessarily true in Haverhill where unionism was much more individual and independent. The Boot and Shoe Worker's Union Strike of 1895 had publicized the animosity between the union and the Haverhill shoe manufacturers. It also suggested the inherent difficulty in trying to organize an industry that involves many craftsmen such as cutters, stitchers, and lasters.

The multiple craft aspect of the industry led to the formation of the Independent Turn Workers Union in 1899, when the national Boot and Shoe Worker's Union attempted to impose higher dues on the membership. This was followed, in 1901, by the formation of the Shoe Worker's Protective Union, formed by the dissident craft locals and the Independent Turn Worker's Union.<sup>18</sup> In 1899, the BSWU had 4,300 members, having declined from 12,500 members in 1897, while the ITWU began with 2,500 in 1899, with most of its membership in Haverhill. In 1923, the SWPU had 26,000 members, with most members still concentrated in the Haverhill area. By 1932, the BSWU had 17,000 members while the SWPU membership had fallen to 13,000.<sup>19</sup> The effect of this organizational pattern was to allow the Haverhill SWPU to operate independently of any national control.

The development of the Shoe Workers' Protective Union in Haverhill resulted for more reasons than as a simple dispute over dues. The independent union movement in Haverhill is closely associated with the manufacturer of the turn shoe. The union locals in the SWPU were organized in each separate manufacturing unit according to process and operation. The locals were directed by agents and secretary/treasurers who met as a council and approved the price lists and the piece-rates, and were the only group that could authorize a strike.<sup>20</sup> Up until 1917, the SWPU was really an old-line craft union, in which each craft believed that it had the ability to negotiate its own contract with management. In fact,

most workers were against any outside interference, especially in the form of arbitration which had become the traditional adjudication process in the textile industry. Since the SWPU was mainly a Haverhill union and both managers and workers came from the community, there developed a very parochial attitude towards the resolution of conflict. In 1917, the SWPU expanded its activities to include the cutters. However, the advent of World War I delayed any further consolidation in the SWPU as manufacturing activities shifted into wartime production of military webbing, tents, and other military equipment, and labor agitation was put on a national hold. However, since 1917 all union locals in Haverhill had been working under agreements which provided for settlement by arbitration. But even so, in 1919 it was apparent that even with arbitration agreements by locals, unions and management did not honor the spirit of the arrangements.

Several factors had now become apparent in trying to reach effective wage, hour, and job security settlements. Although it was agreed that work would be for forty-eight hours per week, for example, it was not hours that dictated the wage, but the number of pieces that each worker could produce each day. The result was that contracts dealt with costs in hundredths of cents, .625, .075, or .085 per unit per hour, etc. The rate books were fat and wearying and amply illustrated the SWPU's commitment to a piece-rate system which, in turn fostered constant labor unrest. As the industry shifted from a craft base to one of unskilled machine operations, the changes in the level of skill needed, from high to low, constantly effected the output of workers. The nature of shoe production also created extreme economic problems associated with material waste and labor lag. "In shoe factories, where the highly competitive market and frequent style changes made workers shift frequently from one job to another, employers were notoriously lax about planning and routing work through the plants . . . the waiting piece workers were on the job but earned nothing." However, the lag created unrest and uneasiness on the part of both employees and employers.<sup>21</sup> The problem in Haverhill, then, was a problem that was being exacerbated each year since the 1895 strike and which seemed never ending—how to establish a fair wage and hour system and develop job security in an industry marked by employer anti-unionism and by a union with no strong sense of labor unity. Trying to form an effective union in a conservative Yankee community which lacked a labor consciousness as well as an effective class consciousness led to an attitude where labor most often sought help through the appointment of professionals and academics to assist them in resolving conflict.<sup>22</sup>

In general, the period from 1895 to 1930 was marked by constant agitation over wages, hours, and job security. Wage labor saw management using them to reduce the cost differential in the industry. The unrest caused by the constant squabble over wage rates heightened the internal and external union disputes, whether through the political activities of the Socialist Labor Party, the IWW, or the Knights of Labor, the organizational battles between the BSWU and the SWPU, or the internal factionalism within the SWPU itself. The pressure for a strong local union in Haverhill was to present a united front to the Haverhill Shoe Manufacturers' Association. Unsettled disputes led to frequent walk-outs, strikes, and general disruption in the community, a community which by 1920 was totally dependent upon the shoe industry. The HSMA tried to utilize the



contract system, worker blacklists, and the lockout to force workers into line. It was evident by 1920 that some better way to generate labor peace was needed.<sup>23</sup>

By 1917 the use of arbitration had become common practice among the members of the Haverhill Shoe Manufacturers' Association in treating with separate local contracts. Arbitration, itself, was a policy that had become very much a part of the national and state labor scene in the period after 1900. Indeed, it was a part of the progressive political movement. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there was a state body monitoring labor disputes on the local level as well as providing arbitration services. So the movement for the first "Peace Pact" in 1920 was clearly understood by both parties and, when signed on November 12, 1920, it represented the first uniform agreement between the HSMA and the SWPU. The agreement called for no strikes and no lockouts, and that all differences not amicably adjusted between the union business agents and the HSMA secretary would be submitted to arbitration. The agreement would be in force until December 31, 1922, but all through the Spring of 1921 the agreement was "marred by repeated strikes and work slowdowns."<sup>24</sup> Neither party presented a solid front in support of the 1920 agreement. The basic difficulty was in developing the wage rates, the price of the piece-rates.

The situation became serious enough to establish a citizens' group. A community group of representatives from the SWPU, the HSMA, the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, and the local press was appointed by the mayor to study the issues, travel to other major American shoe centers, and report back to the community as to its findings. Henry G. Wells, the local Chamber of Commerce member, gave a public address to the community following the completion of the committee's report. In general, Wells reported the committee had found that

if the Haverhill manufacturer feels he is being injured by competition, it must be attributed to two things—first to the fact he has to pay more extras; second, to the fact that unskilled labor is being paid unwarrantably higher wages than in other centers. Success of western business is in large measure due to efficient organizations, trained supervisors, and personal contact with workers. When the time comes, when all will sit around the table and reason together, a revival is coming to Haverhill, regardless of prices, hours, or wages. We must forget the past; it is a new deal from now on, and we must start anew with a clean slate and an open mind.<sup>25</sup>

But that new deal was not to come. Wells' observations were quite correct, suggesting very clearly that both managers and workers knew what was happening in the New England shoe industry, but were unwilling to change. On the whole, the "Peace Pact" of 1920 was unable to bring "peace." It took too much time to negotiate wage lists that were violated almost immediately after signing. In the spring of 1921, the union locals began to build up their reserve funds in anticipation that the HSMA would extend the pact and that a general strike in

the industry would follow. The HSMA did announce that they wanted an extension, but an agreement was not signed until February 27, 1923, extending the contract to January 1, 1924.<sup>26</sup>

In October of 1923, the HSMA wrote to the SWPU asking that negotiations for a new "peace pact" be opened. The union accepted and discussions began on November 4, 1923. The HSMA wanted a return to the forty-eight hour week, while the SWPU wished to continue the 44-45 hour week clause of the 1920 pact; the HSMA wanted a wage list prepared after signing the agreement, while the SWPU wanted the wage list before signing. The wage list was an important facet of the spring and fall style show offerings where shoes were sold on a projected cost basis. The negotiations became so intense that several large firms publicly informed the negotiators that they would remove their operations to New Hampshire unless the mayor interceded as a neutral arbitrator. This was not an unusual tactic on the part of members of the HSMA, but the mayor did step into the controversy. He appointed a citizen's committee which met on December 10, 1923, in a non-stop twenty-hour negotiation period which produced an agreement. The December 13 agreement which was signed by all parties on December 19 was the "Peace Pact" heralded by *The New Republic*. It was this "Peace Pact" which the Haverhill community celebrated at a Peace Banquet on January 9, 1924.<sup>27</sup>

"The Haverhill Experiment" contained an attempt at adjusting wages, hours, and job security. The agreement included an adjustment of working hours—during the months of June, July, and August regular working time would be five days at nine hours each and no Saturday work; during the remaining months of the year, work would be five and one-half days for forty-eight hours. But, the issue was not really hours—it was the piece-rate system. The development of the flexible hours and the establishment of wage lists before signing did not insure job security in the form of a standard wage return. However, the heart of the agreement was the establishment of an arbitration board, serving for a designated term.<sup>28</sup> That fact may have been all that was really attainable by the neutral citizens' committee and there is an implication in the reporting of the event that the arbitration board was the first step to overcoming the real issue—the piece rate system.

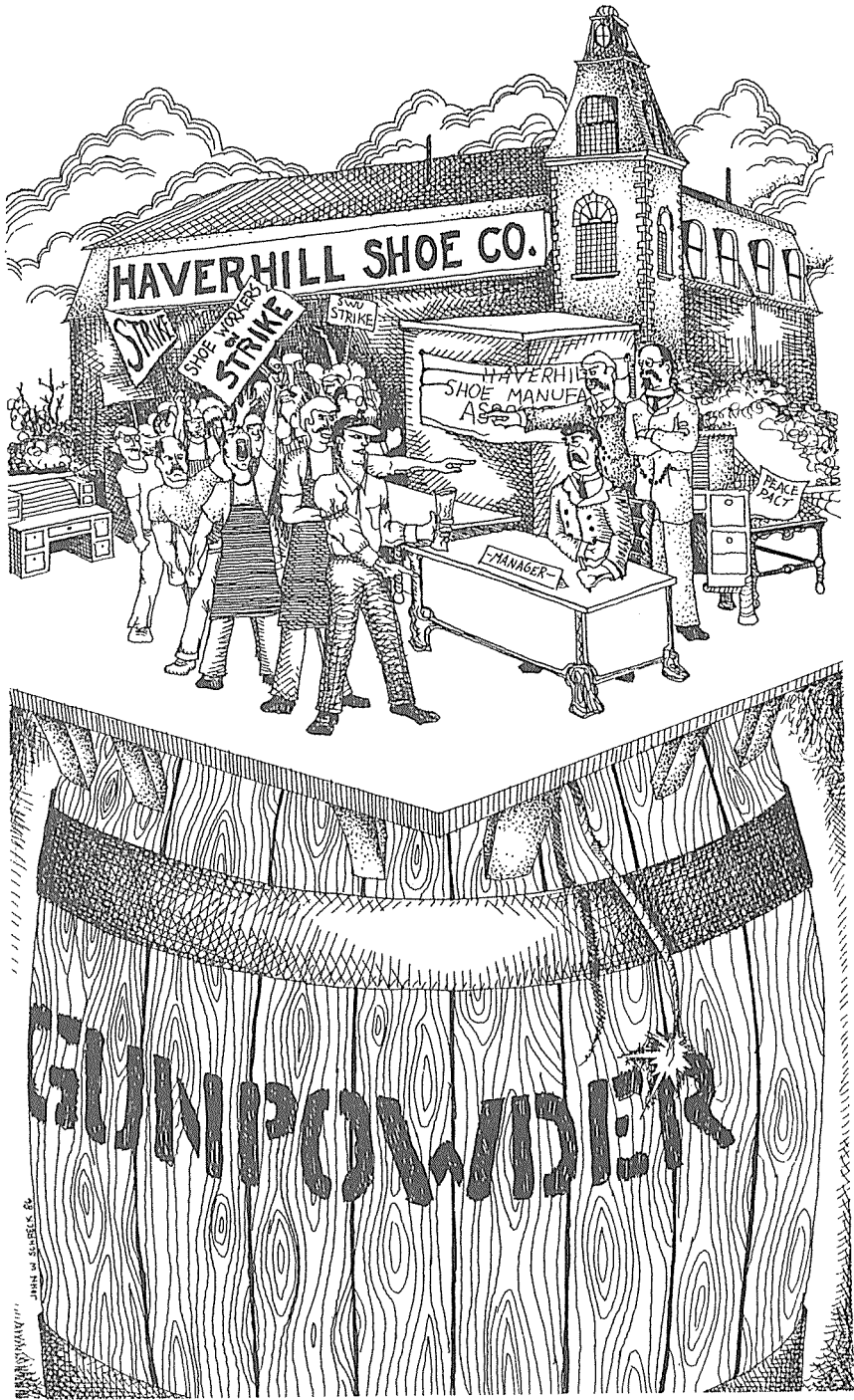
The arbitration board was, in fact, just an impartial chairman agreed to by both parties and for the life of the agreement acting as a board with complete jurisdiction in all matters which might arise. To find the chairman, each group, the HSMA and the SWPU, submitted a list of candidates to a seven-member citizens' committee headed by the mayor. The committee's choice would then be voted on by each part; hopefully they would agree with the citizens. The first list contained three names, who represented that trend in the shoe industry for the outside professional or academic: Edwin Newdick, an economist and statistician with prior service with the National War Labor Board and the Labor Board, Inc., of Boston; Eugene Szepesi, a Boston industrial engineer; and Ralph O. Reed, an Amesbury efficiency expert. Newdick was the nominee of the SWPU and Szepesi and Reed were nominated by the HSMA. The choice was Newdick.<sup>29</sup>

Edwin Newdick served as chairman of the Haverhill Shoe Board from February 1924 to May 1927, when he was removed by action of the Massachusetts Superior Court. During that five year period, Newdick dealt with some 1,400 cases, which gives some indication of the work-load placed upon the HSB. Unfortunately, even though he did an excellent job, a fact noted by the Superior Court judge who removed him, the optimism with which he originally saw his role as chairman was eventually overcome by the pressures of the job. On May 20, 1927, just prior to negotiations over wages, Newdick stated that wages in the industry were too high. The fact that he made this observation prior to negotiations and that his comments were widely reported in the local press led the SPWU to accuse him of violating his office and to petition the Superior Court for his removal.<sup>30</sup> Newdick had become frustrated by the lack of power that had become apparent as he rendered all those decisions in case after case, decisions that were freely violated by both parties. In fact, Newdick had also stated that he did "not personally desire to serve through another general wage revision."<sup>31</sup> On August 8, 1928, the court removed Newdick as he was no longer capable of being the neutral arbiter.

In October, the Haverhill Citizens' Committee appointed Frank Richardson, a former local union official as the neutral arbiter to serve until the expiration of the agreement on December 31, 1928. Richardson was sorely pressed in January of 1928 by a massive strike against the 1928 wage scale. The five thousand striking shoe workers eventually agreed to return under the 1927 rates and to form a six-member fact-finding committee, three from the HSMA and three from the SWPU, to attempt to amend the "Peace Pact." In addition, that committee of six was also empowered to "inquire into the conditions prevailing in the industry," and report their findings to the community.<sup>32</sup>

It was now painfully apparent that the 1923 "Peace Pact" was not working. Even as the "impartial" fact-finding committee was being organized, rumors spread that the members of the HSMA were going to move their operations as soon as the Easter rush was over. Such rumors, typical of the environment that had existed in Haverhill for decades, did nothing to resolve the fears that gripped the community. Joseph Bearak, the SWPU's Boston attorney, stepped forward and recommended that the union seek help from the United States Department of Labor. This proposal was supported by both the HSMA and the SWPU.<sup>33</sup> A Federal survey would be carried out by an impartial commission hearing testimony from all parties.

With the acceptance of a Federal survey, there was no hiding the fact that the "Peace Pact" movement had broken down. In his short tenure leading "The Haverhill Experiment," Frank Richardson had to rule on some 428 cases, fifty-seven percent decided in labor's favor.<sup>34</sup> *The Federal Survey of the Haverhill Shoe Industry* was released on December 14, 1928. Commissioner of Conciliation Charles G. Wood of the U.S. Department of Labor announced that he would present the findings at a public meeting in Haverhill City Hall on December 18. The SWPU announced, with no stated reasons, that they would send no representative to that meeting. The HSMA did announce that they would send their board of trustees to the meeting. Frank Richardson, as chairman of the HSB, contended that the Federal survey supported the issue of wage difficulties



in the Haverhill shoe industry with its finding that the Haverhill wage scale was out of line with other centers doing comparable work. Richardson also noted the survey's findings that there was little cooperation between management and labor in the city.<sup>35</sup> But such findings were no different than those of the 1921 citizens' committee that had done its own survey of Haverhill and the United States shoe industry. Seven years later nothing had really changed, despite the attempt at "The Haverhill Experiment."

Union general president John D. Nolan did attend the meeting at the Haverhill City Hall, but he publicly declared that the survey was incomplete, especially the issues of overhead costs and the economics of the waste factor in production.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the SWPU's attorney, Joseph Bearak, thought that "the report made by the U.S. Department of Labor was excellent," and that the additional idea of a conference to discuss its results would be most fruitful.<sup>37</sup> In general, however, the union thought that the survey was negative and openly favored a shoe pact of any kind, as the arbitration clauses in the new agreements continued to be a problem. Most specifically, the return to individual agreements made an issue of the cost of arbitration decisions, something which each party avoided now that their only paid employee, the impartial arbiter, was no longer in place. Such discussions simply mitigated against solving the problem. By December of 1928, the *Haverhill Evening Gazette* was again full of articles concerning strikes, strike votes, signing of agreements, and an increasing demand in the New England wooden heel industry for an open shop.<sup>38</sup>

Even with all these difficulties, the HSMA and SWPU did draft another "peace pact" in June of 1929. But while negotiating this new agreement, the union had decided in March that it needed to reorganize the union itself as a means of bringing order to an increasingly chaotic situation. The SWPU asked the Labor Bureau, Inc., of New York, to come to its assistance. Alfred L. Bernheim was sent to Haverhill to undertake an analysis of the SWPU. Bernheim submitted his report to the union early in August. He recommended that the business agents of the various locals be eliminated and all power to control the SWPU be placed in the hands of a district manager and a committee of as many members as thought best to conduct union business; the committee members would be, in effect, assistant district managers appointed by the district manager. By a vote of 1,277 to 631, the union accepted the reorganization recommended by Bernheim on August 10.<sup>39</sup> Once again the shoe industry union movement had accepted the advice of an outside professional.

After the acceptance of his report, Bernheim agreed to stay in Haverhill as temporary district manager. On August 12, he informed the union that he was going to recommend that Norman Ware, professor of economics at Wesleyan University, be appointed permanent district manager of the SWPU. Ware had been associated with the activities of Labor Bureau, Inc. in Haverhill and was familiar with the area and its problems. Actually, Ware had already been serving the SWPU as Bernheim's assistant district manager shortly after his arrival back in Haverhill on August 12.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the HSMA accepted the 1929 agreement and the union began considering its terms.

Although the new pact proposed no changes in wages and hours, its mere existence raised the ire of the local stitcher's groups. The new agreement did contain the powers of the district manager and established firmly the reorganization of the SWPU, removing the role and power of the local agents in the Haverhill shoe industry. Like all the other pacts, the 1929 agreement would be in force for five years. To insure its support, Norman Ware appeared before every union mass meeting to explain the issues involved and the position of the district manager in asking for the union's acceptance of the pact. At one such meeting, Ware tangled with his major nemesis, Mrs. Eleanor Rooney, agent of Local 10-A of the Stitcher's Union. When asked what would happen to the agents, he answered that "they would all go," and then he told the audience that "every local must live up to the agreement if it is accepted." When asked if he would consider Mrs. Rooney as one of his assistants, he replied that he wasn't district manager, but that "I don't think I would." As he returned to his seat he was heard to say "I know I wouldn't."<sup>41</sup> The stitchers had been a problem since 1894.

On August 17, 1929, by a vote of 1,705 to 1,093, the SWPU accepted the new pact and the final reorganization procedures contained in it. With this vote, despite a five percent vote slippage on the affirmative side, the SWPU took a major step to trying to re-establish effective communications with the HSMA and brought to an end an eleven-week strike that had affected some thirty firms and six thousand workers. The final agreement was signed by both parties on August 19, 1929. That same day, the SWPU District Council met and ratified the union's previous vote. With that they took up the issue of Ware's contract as the new district manager of the SWPU. The council approved Ware as district manager and wired him in New York to that effect, as he had left Haverhill after his mass meeting circuit. His contract was for \$7,500 per annum for the life of the agreement, but he could be removed for cause. His first task was to undertake the completion of the union reorganization plan, no small task given the union's acceptance vote.<sup>42</sup>

Professor Ware immediately returned to Haverhill and took up his appointment as district manager of the SWPU, a position that he would leave within the year as yet another period of wage and hour demands renewed the acrimony on both sides. When *The New Republic* wrote again of the hope of "The Haverhill Experiment" in 1929, that prominent journal concluded that

with such substantial evidence that the members of the union have been converted to a more coherent policy, it is hoped that the internal difficulties which have been causing so much trouble can be ironed out. Further than that, intelligent cooperation between a really unified organization of labor, under the guidance of an expert, and the manufacturers' association may do something to cope with the serious external difficulties.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately history has not been so kind to Haverhill and its shoe industry. Once again the outside expert failed to mediate the issues and bring peace to the community.

The U.S. Department of Labor's 1928 Report on the Haverhill shoe industry was correct in its conclusions. There was an "absence of friendly and helpful cooperation between shoe workers and shoe manufacturers." There was a "need of more effective cooperation between the SWPU and the HSMA." The report also noted that "higher wage rates in the manufacture of shoes in factories in Haverhill than in factories in cities near Haverhill and in most all other cities in the United States in which the manufacturer of shoes is of material importance." Those were conclusions that the HSMA, the SWPU, and the Haverhill community really did not want to hear. Despite all the evidence as to what was wrong, the Haverhill shoe industry simply could not resolve the issues of wages, hours, and job security in an industry that was so completely fragmented.

On the other hand, despite the devastating conclusions of the Federal survey, the attempts by both the SWPU and the HSMA to negotiate "peace pacts" in the 1920s, within a continually-depressed New England shoe industry, were open and public attempts to resolve a difficult situation. These attempts were an honest approach to try and achieve industrial peace in an economic environment where orderliness was sorely needed. The primary aim of the industrial peace movement in Haverhill was "to preserve peace in the industry with protection of the vital interests of both parties" and "to provide work for the employees and profit for the employers."<sup>44</sup> None of this happened. What did happen was that the New England shoe industry, and Haverhill in particular, continued to decline despite such efforts as the "peace pacts" of the 1920s.

## NOTES

1. "The Haverhill Experiment," *The New Republic*, XLIV (September 9, 1925), pp. 63-4.
2. Horace B. Davis, *Shoes: The Workers and the Industry* (New York, 1940), pp. 186-187.
3. Orra L. Stone, *History of Massachusetts Industries* (Boston, 1930), I, pp. 345-346.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
5. There are two general studies of Haverhill from which much information in this paper is taken: Thomas L. Norton, *Trade-Union Policies in the Massachusetts Shoe Industry 1919-1929* (New York, 1932) and Edgar M. Hoover, Jr., *Location Theory and the Shoe and Leather Industries* (Cambridge, 1938). The two Federal studies of the Haverhill shoe industry which are relevant to the topic under discussion in this paper are Robert S. Billups and Phillip L. Jones, *Labor Conditions in the Shoe Industry in Massachusetts, 1920-1924*, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 384 (Washington, 1925) and *Conditions in the Shoe Industry in Haverhill, Mass., 1928*, Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 483 (Washington, 1929). Two unpublished manuscripts are also relevant to the issue of this paper: Grant Miller, "The Shoe Industry of Haverhill, Massachusetts, from 1905 to 1930," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1974) and Patricia Long Skibee, "The Decline of the Shoe Industry in Haverhill, Massachusetts, in the 1920's," (unpublished mss, no place of publication, December 11, 1984).
6. This is partially an observation from reading various sources but it is also a personal response having grown up in the women's shoe industry and listened to my father, a manufacturer of women's novelty shoes, discuss such matters at various style shows during the 1930s.
7. Norton, *Trade Union Policies*, pp. 77-88.
8. Hoover, *Location Theory*, p. 253.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Hoover, *Location Theory*, p. 180.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-174; Miller, "The Shoe Industry," p. 71.
12. Norton, *Trade Union Policies*, pp. 34-36; Hoover, *Location Theory*, pp. 173-198.
13. *Conditions in Haverhill Shoe Industry*, 1928, p. 2.
14. See Henry F. Bedford, *Socialism and the Workers in Massachusetts, 1886-1912* (Amherst, 1966) for the best study of socialism in this period. Paul Hudon, *The Valley & Its People: An Illustrated History of the Lower Merrimack* (Woodlands Hills, California, 1982).



15. Bedford, *Socialism*, p. 260.
16. Hudon, *The Valley*, p. 75.
17. Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends, *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (New York, 1933), II, pp. 832 and 834.
18. Hoover, *Location Theory*, p. 233; and relevant issues of the *Haverhill Evening Gazette* for 1899 and 1901. Hereafter the *Gazette* will be cited as HEG.
19. Hoover, *Location Theory*, pp. 234-235.
20. Hoover, *Location Theory*, pp. 233-235 and Norton, *Trade Union Policies*, pp. 188-198.
21. David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge, England, 1979), pp. 37-38. See any of the wage lists that can be found in HEG for the appropriate years. Robert W. Eisenmenger, *The Dynamics of Growth in New England's Economy, 1870-1964* (Middletown, Connecticut, 1967), *passim*, is the best general discussion of most of the issues found in specific in this paper.
22. For the strike of 1895 in general see Mary H. Blewett, "The Union of Sex and Craft in the Haverhill Shoe Strike of 1895," *Labor History*, (Summer 1979), 352-75. See also Davis, *Shoes*, p. 187.
23. HEG *Labor Scrapbooks*, Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library.
24. HEG *Labor Scrapbooks* entries for 1920. See HEG issues for May.
25. HEG, March 18, 1921.
26. HEG, December 1, 1923, See *Labor Condition in Massachusetts 1920-1924*, pp. 9-15.
27. HEG, January 9 and 10, 1924.
28. HEG, December 1, 1923, and *Labor Conditions in Massachusetts 1920-1924*, p. 11.
29. HEG, February 5, 1924.
30. HEG, April 2, 1924; May 8, 1924; August 11, 1924; January 3, 1925; October 27, 1925; December 1, 1925; December 31, 1925; May 28, 1927; and May 31, 1927.
31. HEG, May 20, 1927.
32. HEG, August 8, 1927; September 28, 1927; January 30, 1928; and January 31, 1928.
33. HEG, March 21, 22, and 23, 1928.

34. HEG, November 10, 1928.
35. HEG, December 18, 1928.
36. HEG, December 15, 18, and 19, 1928.
37. HEG, December 18, 1928.
38. See HEG.
39. HEG, August 10, 1929.
40. HEG, August 12, 1929. Note also Davis, *Shoes*, p. 187.
41. HEG, August 17, 1929.
42. HEG, August 19, 1929.
43. "Haverhill Looks Forward," *The New Republic*, September 4, 1929.
44. Norton, *Trade Union Policies*, p. 327.