

The Growth and Destruction of an Ethnic Neighborhood: Portsmouth's Italian North End, 1900–1970

Blake Gumprecht

ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER of Market and Deer streets in Portsmouth, in front of the Sheraton Harborside Hotel, sits a stone bench erected in 1998 to honor sixty-six Italian families who settled in the city's North End in the early 1900s. It is the only reminder of a once-vibrant Italian neighborhood that was eliminated by a city-sponsored urban renewal project in the late 1960s and early 1970s. More than two hundred homes and businesses were demolished. Residents were forced to relocate. Streets were rearranged and some removed entirely. In all, ten city blocks were cleared of buildings. But much of the proposed construction never happened, and development languished for decades. The destruction of the neighborhood remains a source of discontent for former residents and their families, who maintain a strong attachment to the area and the close-knit Italian community that took root there.

Portsmouth's Italian North End emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century in response to increasing migration from Italy, demand for workers for several large building projects in the area, and the deterioration of housing in the neighborhood, which made it affordable to lower-income groups. Italian immigration to the United States grew following the unification of Italy in 1871 and intensified after 1900, driven by poverty in southern Italy and a series of natural

disasters that worsened economic conditions. Boston was a major port of entry for Italian immigrants, particularly after direct steamship service was established between that city and Italy in 1900. Some 150,000 Italian immigrants arrived in Massachusetts over the next decade. Many spread outward from Boston in pursuit of jobs in construction, textile and paper mills, and the granite industry. Major construction projects in the Portsmouth area were often carried out by Boston contractors, and they sometimes imported Italian labor to do the work.¹

Italian immigrants began to settle in Portsmouth's North End about 1905, and they transformed the core of the neighborhood into a conspicuous ethnic enclave where Italians made up a majority of the population, businesses and social organizations emerged that catered to the group, and residents maintained strong ethnic and neighborhood identities. This study will examine how the North End became an Italian district, what the area was like in its heyday, why it was eliminated, and its legacy today.

Development of the North End

The North End is one of the oldest parts of Portsmouth, only slightly younger than Strawberry Banke, where the city began in 1631. The name as it was originally applied simply referred to the northern half of town, north of what is today State Street, though in time it came to refer to the area north of downtown. It is bound on the east by the Piscataqua River, the north by the North Mill Pond, and the west by Bridge Street. The area was primarily agricultural at first, occupied by orchards and gardens. Most of the land was owned by three prominent families, including that of John Cutt, the first president of the New Hampshire colony. The land began to be subdivided after the

BLAKE GUMPRECHT, an associate professor in the Department of Geography at the University of New Hampshire, has written books about the Los Angeles River and the American college town. A historical geographer, he is currently working on a book entitled *The Peopling of New England*, which will examine immigration to the region over the last twelve thousand years.



For more than half a century, an Italian neighborhood flourished in Portsmouth's North End, depicted here in 1930 when the city's Italian immigrant population was at its peak. Map by Blake Gumprecht.

death of the original owners. About 1700 Deer and Fore (now Market) streets appeared, and houses and shops began to be built along them. The areas closest to the river developed first. About 1702 a tavern was built on the river end of Deer Street that had a sign depicting a deer, which gave the street its name.²

Development in the North End intensified in the eighteenth century as Portsmouth grew as a seaport. Wharves and warehouses were built along the river and houses on the opposite side of Fore Street. The north end of Fore Street terminated at the river, where a ferry ran to Kittery, Maine. House construction on Deer Street progressed westward to Vaughan Street and beyond. Several mansions were built by prominent families. By 1750 the river end of the

neighborhood was "thickly settled." Homes began to appear north of Deer Street on what became Russell and Green streets. Rope walks were constructed west of Vaughan Street. Two distilleries were developed in the neighborhood. A bridge was built across the North Mill Pond, and Islington Creek was dammed to power mills. A 1774 map of Portsmouth colors most of the North End in red, typically used to represent urban areas on maps. The same shade was used for the central part of the city, suggesting that much of the North End was already urbanized at this early date. The map also shows thirteen buildings north of Russell Street. An archaeologist who studied the neighborhood after urban renewal reported that the North End was "an identifiable community" by the

American Revolution and that by 1785 the layout of the neighborhood was “firmly established.” The North End was prosperous and stable, home to merchants, mariners, and craftsmen.³

In the early 1800s Portsmouth’s economy began a steady decline because of U.S. government embargoes that hurt overseas trade as well as competition from other ports. The North End’s economic fortunes deteriorated as well. Development slowed, and there was little new building, particularly in the southern part of the neighborhood. In fact, the configuration of house lots and homes south of Russell Street depicted on an 1813 map of Portsmouth remained largely the same for the next 150 years. This is important to understanding the story of Italians in Portsmouth because by the time they began moving to the city much of this

housing, more than a century old, was likely run down and affordable.

The arrival of the railroad in Portsmouth in 1840 stimulated changes on the north side of the neighborhood. The Boston & Maine Railroad built its depot on Deer Street, and its tracks cut through the neighborhood from southwest to northeast. The railroad stimulated manufacturing development in Portsmouth, and the North End waterfront became industrial, with lumber yards, machine shops, and coal distribution facilities. Areas near the railroad were subdivided and built with homes, most of them small houses on small lots, ideal for laborers and immigrants. The North End filled up, as an 1877 bird’s-eye view of Portsmouth showed, becoming densely populated throughout.⁴



The North End from an 1877 bird's-eye view of Portsmouth, drawn by Albert Ruger. The scene, viewed from the north, shows that the area was already densely populated by that date. The neighborhood was originally settled in the late 1600s, and much of the housing, built by the early 1800s, was old and probably run-down by the time Italian immigrants began to move into the neighborhood a century later. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

The North End's socioeconomic character changed as Portsmouth's economy shifted to manufacturing and immigrants moved to the city to work in its textile mills, shoe factories, and breweries. Absentee landlords bought houses and turned them into rentals. Larger homes were converted to rooming houses. The housing stock deteriorated. "Old houses abound," wrote a guidebook author in 1896. Reflecting the downhill slide of the neighborhood, a once "stately" house on Deer Street built by a wealthy family had been "degraded to a low boarding house" and then "pulled down." Equally indicative of the neighborhood's decline was the presence on Green Street of a notorious saloon nicknamed the "Toboggan Slide," which was frequently mentioned in newspaper police reports because of liquor law violations and disorderly conduct by its owner and patrons. The presence of the railroad also made the North End unappealing, as trains rumbled through the neighborhood day and night. As the area changed, so did the economic status of residents. Merchants and mariners were replaced by sawyers, coopers, and general laborers. An increasing number of households were occupied by widows and single women. By 1900 a large proportion of neighborhood residents were Irish immigrants and their children, most of them working class. Russell Street was typical. Nearly all of its residents had Irish roots. They were coal heavers, dockworkers, baggage handlers, and day laborers. But as the Irish advanced economically, they moved across the North Mill Pond to the Creek neighborhood—"up the Creek" in the local vernacular—and made way for a new generation of immigrants.⁵

Arrival of the Italians

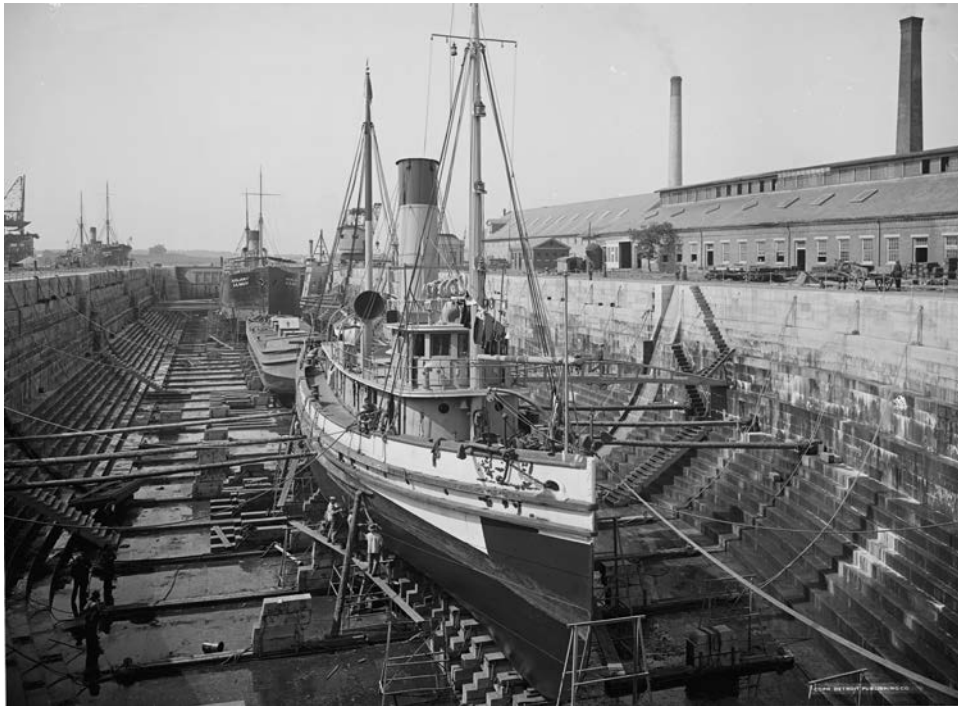
The first significant migration of Italians to Portsmouth began rather suddenly in 1902, stimulated by demand for labor for several large construction and excavation projects. Italians were employed on a project to build a new dry dock at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Soon after, "hundreds of Italians" were hired for a massive project commissioned by the U.S. Navy to remove



Workers with pneumatic drills prepare for the 1905 dynamiting of Henderson's Point, a hazard to navigation in the Piscataqua River. The Massachusetts company contracted to carry out the project brought Italian workers from Boston to Portsmouth to do the work. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

Henderson's Point, a strip of land that jutted into the Piscataqua River from the shipyard and had long been a hazard to navigation. The shipyard was undergoing a major expansion and needed a wider channel to allow large ships to reach the facility. Italian laborers were hired to excavate the site to prepare it to be dynamited. The point was blown up in 1905 in what was called the biggest planned explosion in history. The company hired to carry out the project was based in Boston, which had experienced a huge influx of Italian immigrants in the previous two decades. The Italians working on the removal of Henderson's Point were housed at a camp in Kittery capable of accommodating one thousand people. Some built "rude shacks" at the site, according to a newspaper, and "commenced housekeeping."⁶

Italian laborers were also hired in large numbers to construct a paper mill just upriver from Portsmouth at a location known as Freeman's Point, later site of the Atlantic Shipyard. In May 1902 workers on the Navy's dry dock went on strike, and many of the Italian laborers packed their belongings and went to the paper mill site to obtain employment there. By August that year, 850 Italians were working on the project. They were



New dry dock built with Italian labor at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, c. 1905. Several large construction and excavation projects taking place simultaneously in the early 1900s drew many Italians to Portsmouth. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

housed at the site in a large barn equipped with bunks that could sleep seven hundred, or in one of twenty “huts.” When not working, according to a local newspaper, “they indulge themselves in sports peculiar to themselves.” Italians were also frequently employed for other short-term construction projects, such as digging ditches for water lines and building an electric railway from Dover to York, Maine. The foreman on the railway project told a newspaper that he was “unable to get workers in Dover and he had to send to Boston for the Italians.” Italian workers typically lived in temporary facilities that were often ill-suited for human habitation. The railway workers, for example, were housed in a large hen house.⁷

Although most of the Italian workers were lodged at or near their job sites, they ventured into Portsmouth on days off and also to buy supplies, and their presence inspired frequent comments in local newspapers. The *Portsmouth Herald* noted that “scores of them roam the streets of the city every Sunday” and commented that “they seem to be all right.” They crowded the Portsmouth post office to pick up mail and send letters to their families in Italy, prompting the newspaper to

write, “If the Italian mail business at the local office keeps increasing as it has of late, a branch office with an interpreter will have to be established at Freeman’s Point.” The large influx of Italians also began to stimulate other changes. In October 1902 the *Herald* reported that an Italian grocery store would open on

Bridge Street in the North End. About the same time, an Italian, Frank Lizio, who became an important member of the Italian community, opened another grocery on Market Street.⁸

The Italians were the Mexicans of their day, willing to go anywhere cheap labor was needed, often doing backbreaking, dangerous work. In fact, two Italians were killed in an explosion at the Navy dry dock and another was killed at Henderson’s Point. Many of the Italian workers were temporary and left the area once a job was done, but a few remained, and the Italian population grew as they became settled and encouraged friends and family to move to the city—the chain migration process so important to understanding why ethnic neighborhoods develop.⁹ The Portsmouth city directory for 1903 doesn’t include any Italian names in its residential listings for the North End. No directory was published in 1904, but by 1905 Italians had begun to displace Irish households in the neighborhood. There were eighteen households headed by people with Italian-sounding names. Nearly all lived on the blocks nearest the river. Most were listed merely as “laborers.” As the

permanent Italian population grew, businesses developed to serve their needs. Joseph Sacco, called an "Italian baker" by a newspaper, purchased a building at the corner of Market and Russell streets, where he opened a grocery. He advertised "Italian Red Wine for Family Use" and "Olive Oil Unexcelled." He also acted as a representative of the Banca Italiana, probably to enable local Italians to send money home. Another Italian, Carmen Marotta, opened a bar and café on Market Street. Tony Romeo may have been the first of numerous Italian barbers.¹⁰

Both Italian grocers, Sacco and Lizio, also became Italian labor contractors, advertising in the 1905 city directory that they supplied Italian workers "for all kinds of Work . . . Digging Cellars, Building Foundations, Railway, and Water Work, etc."¹¹ Much has been written, often critically, about the Italian labor broker, called a *padrone* ("boss" in Italian), who often took advantage of immigrant Italians, garnishing a portion of their wages, controlling contracts with employers, and sometimes turning immigrants into virtual slaves confined behind barbed wire in labor camps.¹² It is unknown how Sacco and Lizio worked, but their presence in Portsmouth indicates that the permanent Italian population was growing. In time Lizio would become a major construction contractor in the Portsmouth area. Sacco may also have provided housing for his Italian workers, typical of *padrones* elsewhere, as a large boarding house was located next door to his home in 1910, and in 1913 he built a three-story brick building on Market Street that contained twenty-three rooms upstairs.¹³

The number of Italians living in the North End steadily increased. In 1910 there were 281 Italian immigrants in Portsmouth, and nearly all lived in the neighborhood. A majority had arrived in the United States during the previous eight years. Few spoke English. Most were laborers, many without permanent employment, instead working "odd jobs." They were clustered on the blocks nearest to the river. Eighty Italians lived on Market Street north of Deer Street. More than half of households on Russell Street were Italian. Two short streets,

F. LIZIO & CO.



Italian Labor

Furnished for all kinds of Work. Contractors for Digging Cellars, Building Foundations, Railway, and Water Work, etc.

Italian Grocer Importers

131 MARKET STREET

J. SACCO & CO.

ITALIAN LABORERS FURNISHED

For Railroads, Excavations, Public Works, Etc.

BANCA ITALIANA.

Groceries and Provisions

10 and 14 DEER STREET, PORTSMOUTH

Once Italian laborers began to settle in Portsmouth, two Italian grocers started to advertise their services as labor brokers. From W. A. Greenough & Co.'s 1905 Portsmouth Directory.

Wall Street and Russell Alley, were nearly completely Italian. Many newly arrived Italian men lived in boarding houses or boarded with Italian families. Four boarding houses on Market Street alone housed thirty-five Italian men.¹⁴ Italians in Portsmouth clustered together for the same reasons new immigrants have done so throughout U.S. history—ethnic neighborhoods provide a familiar and supportive social environment in an alien land, where immigrants can speak their native language, buy familiar foods, and practice the cultural traditions of their homeland.

New businesses emerged to serve the growing Italian population. Two Italian bakeries opened by



Event at the Italian Republican Club on Market Street in Portsmouth, 1937. The Italian neighborhood was a close-knit community that developed strong organizations and social networks. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

1910 to take the place of a Boston bakery that had delivered Italian bread to the labor camps. Frank Letterio opened a restaurant on the corner of Market and Green streets. Raphael Paola established a saloon on Market Street. There were multiple Italian barbers and a cobbler. Out-of-town vendors also came to Portsmouth regularly to serve the Italian community. Once a month a truck from Zuffante Foods in Boston's North End went house-to-house taking orders for pasta, cheese, olives, and other Italian specialties. Italian women preferred freshly killed poultry to store-bought meat, and once a week "the chicken man" would come to the North End in a pickup truck piled high with cages containing live chickens. "They were all cackling," recalled Mary Ciotti. "You could hear them from down the corner."¹⁵

The Italian community also formed its own social organizations. The most enduring was the Italian Republican Club, a social rather than political organization despite the name. It was in existence by 1912 and had its own hall on Market Street until the 1960s, complete with bocce courts out back. The Italian Republican Club also established a

cooperative grocery, originally called La Cooperative Italiana and later renamed the People's Co-op and the Italian Cooperative Store.¹⁶ Other Italian organizations included the Santa Lucia Club for women, the Italian-American Progressive Club, and the North End Athletic Club.¹⁷

The Italian North End was a rough-and-tumble neighborhood in its early days, mentioned frequently in police reports in local newspapers. Most residents were young and male—there were three times as many Italian men as women in 1910—and many were single. A significant share of the married men were alone, too, their wives and children still back in Italy. Most of the problems involved alcohol, and fights were common. In 1910 an Italian man stabbed to death another Italian in a quarrel over a card game. The incident was considered so unremarkable that it wasn't even front page news in the *Portsmouth Herald*. On another occasion an Italian man shot a fellow Italian in the chest and arm, and three times through his hat, in a fight on Wall Street over a woman.

Police made frequent raids on Italian businesses and residences selling alcoholic beverages without a license.

Charley Marotta, who owned a saloon on Market Street, was arrested repeatedly for alcohol violations, “keeping a disorderly house,” and even “fornication,” perhaps a euphemism for prostitution. He was eventually ordered to leave the state but later returned. Tony Smith, an Italian who ran a boarding house and market on Green Street, was arrested multiple times for liquor violations and assault, once charged with throwing a can of olive oil at another Italian. At the same time, the Italians came together to protect their own. When a drunken sailor broke a window of an Italian-owned barber shop on Market Street, a dozen Italians grabbed him and prevented him from escaping, while a half dozen others went to retrieve the police.¹⁸

A Working-Class Neighborhood

Over time, the Italian North End settled down and became a respectable working-class neighborhood. Residents obtained more stable employment. The men who had arrived young and single grew older, married, and had families. The married men who emigrated without their wives or children earned enough money to bring their families over. The Italian immigrant population in Portsmouth peaked in 1930, when the city was home to 329 residents born in Italy. The immigrant population fell after that because of the enactment by Congress in 1924 of new immigration restrictions that significantly reduced the volume of immigration. The North End Italian community grew in size, however, because of the birth of children in this country. By 1930 eighty-six Italian-immigrant-headed

households in the neighborhood had 276 children living at home. In all, there were nearly five hundred Italians in the district.¹⁹

The Italian population was concentrated in a triangle formed by the Boston and Maine railroad tracks, Deer Street, and Market Street, and this core remained stable over time. The streets with the highest proportion of Italians were Russell, Wall, and Green streets, where Italians made up a majority of the population. More than one-quarter of the Italian foreign-born lived on two-block long Russell Street, the street most associated with the Italian community. Italians had begun to spread to streets beyond the core, such as Raynes Avenue and Jackson Street, near the North Mill Pond, and School Street, location of the Farragut School. But the Italian-dominated district never encompassed the entire North End as is commonly perceived. The outer edges of the neighborhood were more ethnically mixed, with Greeks, Poles, Irish, English-speaking Canadians, native New Englanders, and a sprinkling of African-Americans among their residents.²⁰

Most Italian men in the neighborhood were laborers. Nearly one-quarter in 1930 worked in the shoe industry, either in one of two shoe factories in Portsmouth or as cobblers (the only remaining shoe repairer in Portsmouth today, in fact, is Italian and traces his ancestry to the North End). A few sons and daughters of Italian immigrants went to work in the shoe factories as early as age fifteen. Other Italians in 1930 worked at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, for the

Portsmouth Shoe Company, where many Italians worked, photograph by Davis Brothers, c. 1890. Perhaps not by coincidence, many Portsmouth Italians came from Romagna, a leading shoe manufacturing region in northern Italy. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.



railroad, or in construction. More than a dozen worked “odd jobs.” A handful were small business owners—barbers, grocers, and restaurateurs. Although most Italian immigrants in the United States came from the poorer southern part of the country, an unusual number in Portsmouth came from the Romagna region in northern Italy, especially the town of Santarcangelo. At least twenty-nine North End families have roots in that community. Romagna was historically one of Italy’s leading shoe manufacturing regions, so perhaps this explains why so many people from Santarcangelo ended up in Portsmouth.²¹

The Paola, Succi, and Zoffoli families, who lived within a block of one another in the North End, were typical of the working-class residents of the neighborhood. Dominic Paola immigrated in 1904 to Boston, where he worked as a baker. Later, he moved to Portsmouth, where his brother owned a saloon. Dominic worked a variety of jobs at first and then

became a blacksmith’s helper at the shipyard, walking two miles to work each day. “He tried everything because he didn’t have an education,” said his daughter, Rose Riden. Nazzareno Succi immigrated in 1911, following a friend from Santarcangelo who had migrated to Portsmouth and found work as a cobbler. Succi likewise got a job as a cobbler, working in a shoe repair shop on Porter Street. Tito Zoffoli immigrated from Santarcangelo in 1912 and worked as a night watchman and general laborer for four decades at the Consolidation Coal Company, which operated a coal distribution facility on the Piscataqua River. “He worked 14 hours a day, 7 days a week,” recalled his son, Dick Zoffoli. “It was the only job he had.” He earned money during Prohibition by selling beer and wine that he made himself. One room in the family house was a drinking parlor. Zoffoli would send two of his boys to roam the neighborhood to drum up business, usually from sailors stationed at the shipyard,



Twelve members of a multi-generational Italian family in front of their home on Deer Street, 1935. The oval decoration on the far chimney bore the date 1705, indicating that this house was more than two centuries old when the family posed for this photograph. From the Historic American Buildings Survey; courtesy of the Library of Congress.

who knew Italian families made their own wine. “He worked hard,” Dick Zoffoli said. “In those days, geez, if you got 25 cents for a beer, that was a lot of money.”²²

The residences where most Italians lived were old, crowded, and lacked the comforts that most Americans had come to expect. Many did not have bathrooms, hot water, or central heating, at least when the first Italians moved into them. Wood or coal stoves were used for cooking and were often the only source of heat. A few homes had no running water or electricity. Most of the houses in the neighborhood, even those erected following the arrival of the railroad, had been built before 1850 and likely had not been updated as they filtered down to lower-income groups. Few of the houses were architecturally distinctive, other than a handful of colonial and federal-type homes on Market and Deer streets built when the North End was home to prosperous merchants and mariners. By the early twentieth century many of those houses were run-down and had been divided into apartments or converted to rooming houses. Most other homes in the neighborhood were non-descript, two-story wood structures built close to the street. Many housed two or three families, and

lots were small.²³ Most Italian families planted their yards with vegetable gardens, essential for supporting large families on meager incomes. They grew tomatoes, corn, and Italian favorites such as escarole and fava beans. A few planted grape vines. Most Italian immigrants to the United States had been peasants in Italy, farming small plots or working as agricultural laborers. Nearly all settled in cities in this country but planted kitchen gardens whenever possible.²⁴

Again, the stories of the Paola, Succi, and Zoffoli families are instructive. Rose Ridsen (née Paola) grew up in a four-bedroom house on Wall Street with her mother, father, and twelve brothers and sisters. The children all had to share a bed with a sibling. When her family first moved into the house, there was no furnace, bath, or hot water. She had to go to a relative’s house in the neighborhood once a week to take a shower. The Succi family rented half of a two-family house on Russell Street that likewise didn’t have a bath or hot water, and the only toilet was in the dirt-floor basement. As a girl, Mary Ciotti (née Succi) took baths in a round tub that her dad would haul upstairs to the kitchen on bath day. Her mother heated water for her baths on a coal stove. She did



Paola's Diner, a popular Italian-owned restaurant and beer parlor on Deer Street in Portsmouth's North End, shown during a family gathering, likely in the 1950s. Paola's was the first restaurant in Portsmouth to serve pizza. Courtesy of the Ridsen/Paola family.



Mario Pesaresi, owner of Mario's Market, in his store on Market Street, 1943. In the early days of Italian settlement, families relied on out-of-town vendors to bring Italian food specialties from Boston, but before long a number of Italian markets opened in the North End to serve the local community. Courtesy of Michael Pesaresi.

not have a bathroom at home until 1948 when she was twenty-six and she and her husband bought a house down the street. The Zoffoli family lived first in an apartment on Deer Street and later bought a four-room house on Russell Alley for \$400. "There was no plumbing, no heat, no nothing," Dick Zoffoli remembered. "We had to install everything." The house originally had two rooms downstairs, two bedrooms upstairs, and an unfinished attic, but had to house nine people. Dick shared the unfinished attic with his father. His mother and two sisters slept in one bedroom, all in the same bed. His two brothers and two other sisters shared two beds in the second bedroom. "It was terrible," he said. "We were the poorest of the poor." Eventually, the Zoffolis built a small addition with a kitchen and bathroom. Italian families improved their homes little by little as they could afford to do so, most of them making the improvements themselves.²⁵

The businesses located in the Italian district reflected the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents. Most served everyday needs. There were barbers, shoe repair shops, and a half dozen corner markets. Cavaretta's bakery on Russell Street had a stone oven that the owners permitted neighborhood women to use to bake their own bread. Mario's Market replaced the traveling Italian food merchants, selling Italian meats and cheeses, olives in barrels, "all

sorts of pasta," and a "wide assortment of Italian specialties." Joseph Mangano's barber shop on Market Street had pool tables in front and was a gathering place for Italian men at night. Once Prohibition was lifted, there were multiple beer parlors, including Marotta's Café and Paola's Diner, which also served food, American and Italian, and was the first restaurant in the city to feature pizza.²⁶

Portsmouth's Italian district, however, was never a miniature version of Boston's North End or Providence's Federal Hill, full of Italian restaurants, bakeries, and specialty stores. It was never a destination for people from outside the neighborhood, did not attract tourists, and its Italian-owned businesses mostly served the needs of nearby residents. There was no Italian Catholic church or cemetery. The neighborhood was not quaint or picturesque and is sometimes today romanticized and imagined as different than it was. The Italians who lived there nonetheless developed a strong attachment to the neighborhood because it was home, because it was where they grew up and raised their children, and because of the strong social networks that developed there.

What people who lived in the North End remember most about the neighborhood was that it was an unusually close-knit, family-oriented place. Many families were related by marriage. Most residents had aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces, cousins, and

in-laws nearby. The majority of women stayed home to raise families, many of them large. They cooked and cleaned, walked their kids to the Farragut School in the morning and welcomed them home for lunch. If they got their chores done before their husbands came home from work, they might spend a half hour socializing on one of the stoops in the neighborhood with other mothers. “Everybody cared for everybody,” Mary Ciotti said. “We knew their names and all their kids. Whenever one of them got married, most all of us went to the wedding. If anybody was sick, we would always go. We went with something—a dozen eggs, a fresh chicken.”²⁷

The neighborhood was an especially attractive place to grow up because there were so many children. They never had to look far for playmates. In 1930, for example, there were nearly one hundred Italian kids on Russell Street alone. The street was their playground. They played hide-and-seek, kick-the-can, relieveo, and a game called Peggy. “We never had to leave our street for entertainment,” said one longtime resident. Neighborhood boys shot dice near “the mountain,” a large outcropping of rock at the end of Russell Alley. They played baseball or basketball at the Farragut School playground. They learned to swim in the North Mill Pond behind Littlefield Lumber (see map on page 51). They fished in the Piscataqua River. Girls danced or pretended they were secretaries. “You look back on it and you think, wow, we had it pretty good,” said Phil Geraci, who grew up on High Street in the 1950s. “[There were] always kids around to play with. There was always a ballgame going on.” It was a neighborhood of good smells wafting from kitchen windows and the happy squeals of children playing. It wasn’t quiet, it was the antithesis of peaceful suburban living, but it was a joyous din. “We were all very poor,” remembered Delfo Caminati, “but we had a great life.”²⁸

Urban Renewal

By the early 1960s, however, the North End began to take on a more unattractive appearance and lose some of its vitality. Most of the housing was old—150 years



The densely settled nature of Portsmouth's North End offered residents, like these women, many opportunities for socializing. Courtesy of the Risdén/Paola family.

old or older. A significant portion of the Italians who remained were retired, so likely had little money to maintain their homes. Most of their kids had grown and moved out of the neighborhood. Other longtime Italian residents died, as evidenced by the two dozen widows and single women living there in 1961. Many homes had been left vacant; there were twenty vacant residential properties in that year, according to city directories. The demographic changes reduced the population in the neighborhood, which hurt businesses that catered to residents. Many ceased to exist. Primo Gobbi's variety store, where Italian kids went for ice cream and penny candy, closed. Bartolo Guiducci's Deer Street Market and Camillo Addorio's corner grocery on Russell Street shut down. Both Paola's Diner and Splaine's Café, popular neighborhood beer joints, closed. The Italian Cooperative Store went out of business. The Farragut School, where so many Italian youths had been educated, was declared unsafe and closed. Empty stores and abandoned homes, some with boarded-up windows, became common. A newspaper reporter observed that the neighborhood had grown “shabbier and shabbier” and called it “a low-rent district.”²⁹ The North End came to be perceived by outsiders as blighted.

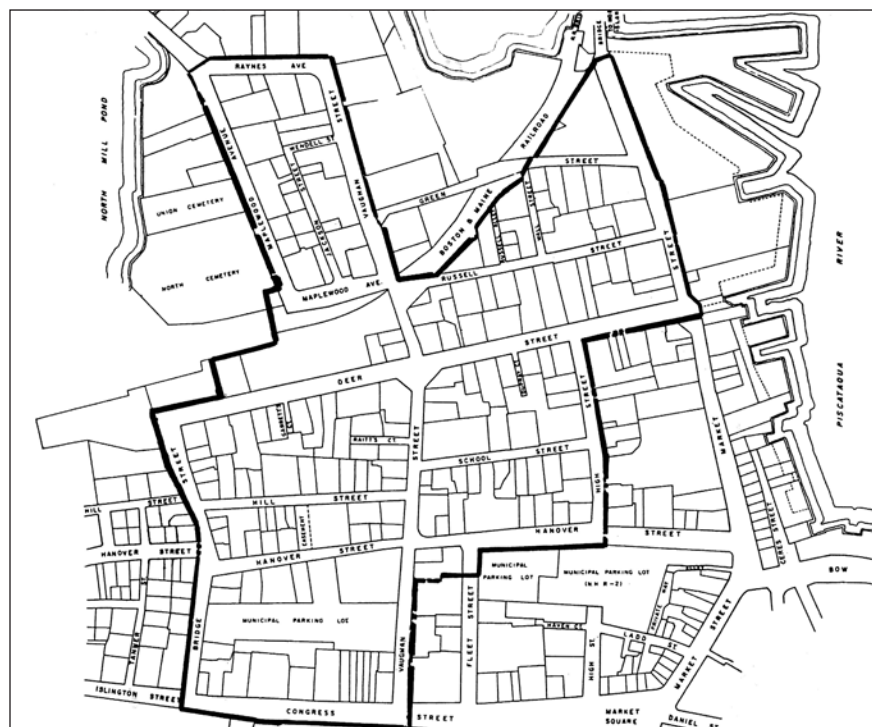
The city as a whole, meanwhile, was experiencing economic malaise. The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the biggest employer in the Seacoast region, was

threatened with closure. Most of Portsmouth's manufacturing companies had left. An out-of-town newspaper called it "an impoverished aristocrat of a city." Government officials were searching for ways to boost the city's economy and revitalize its downtown, which faced increasing competition from automobile-oriented shopping centers elsewhere. They wanted to improve car access to the city center as new highways were built. The North End stood between Interstate 95, the Route 1 Bypass, and downtown. The neighborhood, in that context, was seen as both an obstacle and an opportunity. It was the first part of the city visitors saw as they drove into town, and many felt it made a bad impression. Its street network was convoluted, so made getting to downtown difficult. Its properties were low in value, providing little tax revenue to the city. The federal government, meanwhile, had begun offering cities funding to clear blighted areas as a way to stimulate economic development. Portsmouth had already undertaken two such urban renewal projects.³⁰

In 1960 the city adopted a new master plan that proposed several areas be considered for urban

renewal, including the North End. Three years later the Portsmouth Housing Authority recommended that a study be conducted of the neighborhood to determine the extent of blight and the best way to address it. The city council authorized the study. Residents were interviewed, and the condition of all properties was evaluated. Two-thirds of buildings were rated "substandard," and a Portsmouth Housing Authority report described the entire area as "congested and overcrowded, presenting a serious fire hazard." Former North End residents today insist that city officials classed much of the housing as "substandard" unjustifiably in order to win approval for the project. "It wasn't run down," Mary Ciotti said. "I swear to God everyone kept their homes up. These were men from Italy. They were workers. They were brick layers. They could do anything. They were always fixing up their homes." John Russo, who grew up above his father's barber shop near the North End, said, "Everybody took care of their properties. They were old houses, but you could go into any one of them and they were just as neat and clean as a pin."³¹

A proposal for a \$4 million Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Project, the largest redevelopment initiative in the city's history, was unveiled in May 1966. It called for the relocation of residents and businesses, and demolition of all structures in a thirty-acre area, followed by reconfiguration of the street network and redevelopment of the land for commercial use. "Our purpose," said Portsmouth Housing



Area proposed for clearing by the Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Project, from a Portsmouth Housing Authority brochure. Between 1969 and 1971, despite strong opposition from North End residents and historic preservationists, most buildings in the area were demolished. The federally funded project, intended to revive the area, forced the sudden dispersal of the Italian population and destroyed what was a vital community.

Authority Executive Director Walter J. Murphy, “is to build a new economic heart of the community.” The project required relocation of 60 businesses, 231 families, and 79 single persons. Little thought seems to have been given to the impact urban renewal would have on residents. Portsmouth Mayor John J. Wholey dismissed such concerns, saying any hardship caused by relocation was “the price of progress.” The plan drew strong opposition from North End residents and others. More than three hundred people attended a public hearing on the proposal, and opponents outnumbered supporters two-to-one. John Splaine, whose father once ran Splaine’s Café, led the opposition, saying the project “will hurt the people it should help.” Rev. Ollie Graves of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which faced removal, asked, “Where would we poor Negroes go?” The owner of a commercial property in the area called it a “crooked deal.”³²

The *Portsmouth Herald*, which ultimately benefited from the project because it enabled the newspaper to build a new plant on Maplewood Avenue, published a four-part series on the proposal, but it was remarkably one-sided and reflected the paper’s support for the project, which it endorsed on its editorial page. It described the North End as an area of “ugly dilapidation,” full of buildings that “have no historical significance and which have been abandoned to the ravages of time. It’s a dismal sight. No other part of the city serves more handily as a reminder of the decrepitude that occurs when neglect takes over.”³³ Deer Street homeowner John Splaine, meanwhile, initiated a petition that called on the city to hold a public referendum on the proposal and collected 450 signatures in support of placing the issue on the ballot. The city council dismissed the petition on the



Multi-family house on Russell Street in the heart of the Italian North End in the 1960s, one of hundreds of buildings demolished by urban renewal. The building’s asphalt siding, a once-popular predecessor to aluminum and vinyl siding, was by this time considered cheap looking. Its frequent use gave the area a forlorn appearance. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

grounds that the city’s charter did not allow for referendum and, in June 1966, approved the project by a seven-to-two margin. This vote belied a growing discontent nationally with urban renewal, and the Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Project was reportedly the last such federally funded project to be completed in the country.³⁴ Urban renewal had come under increasing criticism and, because it so often resulted in the relocation of minority groups, was nicknamed “Negro removal.” In New England it could have been called “Italian removal” because urban renewal projects obliterated Italian neighborhoods not only in Portsmouth but also in Boston, Hartford, New Haven, and Portland.³⁵

The city then began the process of buying all properties in the urban renewal area to prepare for demolition. Appraisers in 1967 conducted detailed surveys of every property and produced a multi-page report for each parcel that described its characteristics, assessed its condition, and estimated its value.³⁶ City officials then told owners what they would be paid for their

properties. Some homeowners felt they were offered less than their properties were worth (“I thought my dad was going to kill the guy,” Phil Geraci recalled). There was little negotiating, and residents, many poor immigrants with little education, felt powerless to do anything but comply. Even properties that were judged to be in good condition faced demolition if they were located within the boundaries of the urban renewal area. Because many residents owned multi-family properties and rented out part, they lost income as well when they were forced to move. Demolition began in 1969 and was done incrementally over the next two years. When the dust settled, more than four hundred structures had been demolished.

The destruction of the neighborhood was devastating for many North End residents. Mary Ciotti was born and raised on Russell Street and lived there for nearly five decades until she was forced out by urban renewal. She was working at Mario’s Market the day her house was leveled by a wrecking ball. A customer came into the store to tell her about it and, after she got off work, she and her husband drove to the site. “There’s my house in the backyard in one big heap!” she recalled four decades later. “Wood. Rocks. Junk. Windows. Everything. I said, ‘That’s our house, Larry. That’s where our kids grew up.’” Her voice began to crack, and she was on the verge of tears. “I still can’t talk about it. I get upset. My heart just sank.”³⁷

Once the project was approved, ever-more grandiose proposals for the urban renewal area were presented. One envisioned a “mini-Prudential Center” containing a shopping mall, hotel, underground parking garage, and office complex. The area was suggested as a possible site for a new city hall and state office building. But most of what was proposed never happened, and progress on redevelopment was slow. A shopping center with an A&P supermarket was built on Vaughan Street, but it has since been demolished. Much of the urban renewal area remained vacant for years. The Sheraton Harborside Hotel, built atop the ruins of Russell Street, where the Italian population was concentrated, didn’t open until 1988, some two decades after homes in the area were bulldozed.

Development in the North End has intensified since 2010, particularly in the southern half of the area, where several large-scale structures, anchored by hotels, are transforming the landscape. Still, much of the northern part of the urban renewal zone has never been redeveloped and is still lightly used, occupied by parking lots, or vacant. The vision of urban renewal proponents to create “a new economic heart” for the city has not been realized, and, in retrospect, the clearing of the neighborhood is viewed by many as a mistake that destroyed a community. A few houses in the North End were saved from demolition. Shortly after the urban renewal project was approved, a preservation group emerged that sought to save the most architecturally significant buildings in the urban renewal area. In all, fourteen structures were saved. They were collected in a half-block parcel at the intersection of Deer and High streets in an area now known as “The Hill.” Four houses remained in their original locations; the rest were moved there. The preservation effort succeeded in saving a few houses, but they had already been deprived of the life that made them homes and gave them meaning.³⁸

Following urban renewal, the Italian population of the North End scattered. Portsmouth ceased to have a concentrated Italian district, and the city’s Italians blended into the larger community. Yet they maintained the close connections that began in the neighborhood. In 1972 former North End residents held a reunion and, a decade later, reunions became annual events. In 1986 a Portsmouth librarian videotaped the event, recording the memories of many who attended. A local chapter of the Sons of Italy was established. In 1998 the memorial bench was erected in front of the Sheraton Harborside Hotel. Both the Portsmouth Public Library and Portsmouth Athenaeum have initiated efforts to create archives of photographs and documents representing the neighborhood. Nowadays former North End residents and their families get together often. Some have mounted a campaign to secure a more significant memorial to the North End than the stone bench.³⁹ An Italian-American Heritage Association

has formed, and an annual Italian festival is now celebrated. The attachment former residents have to the North End is remarkable considering that the Italian neighborhood has been gone for nearly half a century. But it demonstrates the enduring value of neighborhood and ethnic community in the face of wrenching change.

Notes

The author thanks Mary Ciotti, Ronan Donohue, Phil Geraci, Michael Pesaresi, Ugo Riciputi, Rose Risdien, Terry Risdien, John Russo, Jim Splaine, and Dick Zoffoli; Carolyn Marvin and James Smith at the Portsmouth Athenaeum; Nicole L. Cloutier at the Portsmouth Public Library; Alix Martin at Strawberry Banke Museum; and Donna-Belle Garvin at the New Hampshire Historical Society.

1. Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale, *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), xiv; William M. DeMarco, *Ethnics and Enclaves: Boston's Italian North End* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1981), 12; Thomas O'Connor, *The Hub: Boston Past and Present* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 168.
2. Stephen Cox and Ronald Lettieri, "Deer Street Project Preliminary Historical Research" (Strawbery Banke Museum, 1981), 2; Charles W. Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth*, 1st series (1869; repr., Somersworth: New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1971), 29–30; Charles W. Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth*, 2nd series (1869; repr., Somersworth: New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1972), 142; Aileen Button Agnew, "The Historic Archaeology of Deer Street, Portsmouth" (unpublished manuscript, Strawberry Banke Museum, 1980).
3. Steven R. Pendery, "Urban Process in Portsmouth, New Hampshire: An Archeological Perspective," in *New England Historical Archaeology*, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, 1977 (Boston: Boston University, 1978), 28; Aileen Button Agnew, "The Archeology of a Neighborhood: Deer Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire," *Historical New Hampshire* 40 (Spring/Summer 1985): 77; Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth*, 2nd series, 79; James Grant, "A Plan of Piscataqua Harbor" (watercolor map), 1774, New Hampshire Historical Society; Agnew, "Historic Archaeology of Deer Street," 11–12.
4. Pendery, "Urban Process in Portsmouth," 32; Agnew, "Historic Archaeology of Deer Street," 2; John Groves Hales, "Map of the Compact Part of the Town of Portsmouth," 1813, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/item/2011589286> (accessed May 20, 2014); Cox and Lettieri, "Deer Street Project," 3; Sanborn Map Co., fire insurance maps for Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1887, Dartmouth College Library Digital Library Collections, <http://libarchive.dartmouth.edu/cdm/search/collection/sanborn> (accessed May 15, 2014); A. Ruger, "Bird's Eye View of Portsmouth, Rockingham County, New Hampshire" (Madison, Wisc.: J. J. Stoner, 1877), Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3744p.pm004921> (accessed May 30, 2014).
5. Aileen B. Agnew, "Women and Property in Early 19th-Century Portsmouth, New Hampshire," *Historical Archaeology* 29:1 (1995): 64; Agnew, "Historic Archaeology of Deer Street," 12–13; Cox and Lettieri, "Deer Street Project," 3; Sarah H. Foster, *The Portsmouth Guide Book* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Portsmouth Journal Job Print, 1896), 80–81; *Portsmouth Journal*, November 8, 1890; September 24, 1892; August 12, 1893; and September 2, 1893; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, population schedules for Portsmouth, N.H., Ward 1, District 207, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed May 20, 2014).
6. Timothy P. Sullivan, "The Portsmouth Navy Yard, the New Dry Dock, and Henderson's Point," *Granite Monthly* 36 (February 1904), 65–88; *Portsmouth Herald*, March 24, 1902; "Tomorrow It Starts: Work on the Removal of Henderson's Point," *Portsmouth Herald*, July 24, 1902; "To Remove Henderson's Point: Boston Concern Gets \$749,000 Contract in Portsmouth Harbor," *Boston Globe*, July 11, 1902; Stephen Puleo, *The Boston Italians: A Story of Pride, Perseverance, and Paesani, from the Years of the Great Immigration to the Present Day* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 90; "Officials are Here: Arrangements Completed for Start on Henderson's Point," *Portsmouth Chronicle*, July 11, 1902; "At Henderson's Point," *Portsmouth Herald*, August 4, 1902.
7. *Portsmouth Herald*, March 26, 1902; April 28, 1902; August 30, 1902; "The Dry Dock Strike," *Portsmouth Herald*, May 6, 1902; "With the Italians," *Portsmouth Herald*, May 8, 1902.

8. *Portsmouth Herald*, May 26, 1902; July 5, 1902; "Italian Grocery," *Portsmouth Herald*, October 2, 1902; "Gleanings from the Past," *Portsmouth Herald*, May 6, 1943.
9. Chain migration is the process by which immigrants follow earlier migrants from the same place of origin to the same destination, forming a human chain. Typically the flow increases as more migrants follow the path and encourage friends and family to join them. In this way concentrations of immigrants from the same place of origin, sometimes even the same village, develop. Ethnic neighborhoods are the result.
10. "Explosion Victims Buried," *Portsmouth Herald*, September 5, 1902; "Removed to Undertaker's," *Portsmouth Herald*, January 19, 1903; *1903 Portsmouth Directory* (Boston: W. W. Greenough & Co., 1903); *1905 Portsmouth Directory* (Boston: W. W. Greenough & Co., 1905); "Purchased by Sacco," *Portsmouth Herald*, February 19, 1906; advertisement, *Portsmouth Herald*, March 20, 1911.
11. *1905 Portsmouth Directory*, 56.
12. Humbert S. Nelli, "The Italian Padrone System in the United States," *Labor History* 5 (May 1964): 153–67; Library of Congress, "Immigration: Italian," <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/italian7.html> (accessed May 21, 2014).
13. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, population schedules for Portsmouth, N.H., Ward 5, District 268, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/> (accessed May 20, 2014); "Fine New Block," *Portsmouth Herald*, April 29, 1913.
14. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, vol. 3: Population, Report By States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, population schedules, Portsmouth, N.H., Ward 5, District 268.
15. *Portsmouth Herald*, October 13, 1902; Mary Ciotti (former North End resident), interview by the author, March 22, 2014, Portsmouth, N.H., recording in possession of author; Laura Pope, "Summer Nights: Memories of an Italian Neighborhood," *Strawbery Banke Newsletter*, October 1992.
16. An undated photo of a house on Vaughan Street shows La Cooperativa Italiana. See "Wanted: Reliable Persons to Rescue 18th Century Houses!" *New Hampshire Profiles*, February 1969.
17. "Form Italian-American Club," *Portsmouth Herald*, March 7, 1927; "North End A[thletic].C[lub]. Will Be Busy," *Portsmouth Herald*, September 22, 1923.
18. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, population schedules, Portsmouth, N.H., Ward 5, District 268; "Stabbed to Death," *Portsmouth Herald*, June 7, 1910; "Italians in Shooting Fray," *Portsmouth Herald*, February 25, 1918; "Marshall Makes Three Raids," *Portsmouth Herald*, December 22, 1902; "Police News," *Portsmouth Herald*, June 10, 1912; *Portsmouth Herald*, May 20, 1907; November 9, 1911; November 10, 1911; "Indictments Found," *Portsmouth Herald*, March 18, 1903; "Police Court," *Portsmouth Herald*, May 9, 1903; "'North End Reserves' On Duty: Marine Thought It was Nothing Less than the Guillotine for Hi[m]," *Portsmouth Herald*, March 29, 1911.
19. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*, Population, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, population schedules for Portsmouth, N.H., Districts 35 and 43, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/> (accessed May 20, 2014).
20. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, population schedules, Portsmouth, N.H., Districts 35 and 43. See also Jim Splaine, "A Story of Portsmouth's Real North End," *Portsmouth Herald*, January 22, 2012.
21. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, population schedules, Portsmouth, N.H., Districts 35 and 43; Italy Trade Agency, "Luxury Footwear? Made in Italy!," <http://www.italtrade.com/focus/5460.htm> (accessed May 28, 2014); Centro Ricerca e Scuola Internazionale Calzaturiera, "A Trip through Time: Since the 1800 Cobbler to the Industry Excellence [sic]," <http://www.distrettocalzaturesanmauropascoli.it/> (accessed May 28, 2014); Russell King, *The Industrial Geography of Italy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 164–65; Michael Pesaresi (former North End resident), e-mail to the author, April 20, 2014.
22. Rose Riden (former North End resident, daughter of Dominic Paola), interview by the author, April 21, 2014, Portsmouth, N.H., recording in possession of author; Ciotti, interview; Dick Zoffoli (former North End resident, son of Tito Zoffoli), interview by the author, May 9, 2014, Rye, N.H., recording in possession of author.
23. Riden, interview; Ciotti, interview; Zoffoli, interview; Sanborn Map Co., fire insurance maps for Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1930.
24. Mangione, *La Storia*, 174–75. The best-known grapevines in the neighborhood belonged to the Minichiello family, who lived on Russell Street. Before the Minichiello home was demolished by

- urban renewal, cuttings from the family grape arbor were removed and planted at Strawberry Banke. See Laura Pope, "Rose Rizza Fiandaca, 1893–1980: North End Matriarch," in *Portsmouth Women: Madams & Matriarchs Who Shaped New Hampshire's Port City*, ed. Laura Pope (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2013), 92; Ridsen, interview.
25. Ridsen, interview; Ciotti, interview; Zoffoli, interview.
 26. *W. A. Greenough Co.'s 1930–31 Portsmouth Directory* (Boston: W. A. Greenough Co., 1931); "Quality Groceries and Italian Specialties at Mario's Market [advertisement]," *Portsmouth Herald*, April 14, 1941; Ronan Donohue, "The Stella/Mangano Family," in *Families from Afar: Settling in Portsmouth, 1900–1930*, ed. Ellen Fineberg (Portsmouth, N.H.: Portsmouth Athenaeum, 1997), 21.
 27. Ciotti, interview.
 28. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, population schedules, Portsmouth, N.H., District 35; Deva Pirini McDonald and Delfo Caminati, interviewed in Al Destefano/Gould Productions, "Russell Street Reunion," VHS videotape, July 12, 1986, Portsmouth Public Library; Ciotti, interview; Ridsen, interview; Phil Geraci (former North End resident), interview by the author, May 21, 2014, Portsmouth, N.H., recording in possession of author.
 29. *Manning's Portsmouth (New Hampshire) and Kittery (Maine) Directory for Year 1961* (Boston: H. A. Manning, Co., 1961); Sydney Williams, "One City's Battle of the Centuries," *Worcester Sunday Telegram*, September 14, 1969, *Feature Parade Magazine*. Information on when businesses closed was compiled by looking year-by-year through Portsmouth city directories.
 30. Williams, "One City's Battle of the Centuries"; "City Council to Weigh North End Renewal," *Portsmouth Herald*, February 27, 1963; Portsmouth Housing Authority, "Urban Renewal Plan as the Redevelopment Plan of Vaughan Street Project, No. N.H. R-10," Portsmouth, N.H.: Portsmouth Housing Authority, 1966; Portsmouth Housing Authority, "Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Project," fold-out poster/brochure, n.d., Portsmouth Athenaeum.
 31. Portsmouth Housing Authority, *Portsmouth's Path to Progress* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Portsmouth Housing Authority, n.d., c. 1971); "Council for High Span, Seeks New GSA Site," *Portsmouth Herald*, March 28, 1963; Portsmouth Housing Authority, "Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Project"; Ciotti, interview; John Russo (lifelong Portsmouth resident), interview by the author, April 14, 2014, Portsmouth, N.H., recording in possession of author.
 32. "Vaughan Street Plan Ready for City Council," *Portsmouth Herald*, May 26, 1966; "Council for High Span, Seeks New GSA Site," *Portsmouth Herald*, March 28, 1963; "300 Attend Vaughan St. Hearing," *Portsmouth Herald*, June 21, 1966; Robert P. Cole, "Portsmouth's North End: A Lesson They Won't Forget," *Portsmouth Magazine*, April 19, 1984, 6.
 33. "Vaughan Street Project Needed [editorial]," *Portsmouth Herald*, June 23, 1966. The four-part series was published in the *Portsmouth Herald*, July 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1966.
 34. "Council Faces Decision on Vaughan Street Plan," *Portsmouth Herald*, July 11, 1966; "Council Okays Vaughan St. Project," *Portsmouth Herald*, July 12, 1966; City of Portsmouth, "Portsmouth Master Plan: Existing Conditions and Trends," July 2003, 13.
 35. See Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 324–31; Armando Perretta, "A Walk on the East Side," *United Aircraft Quarterly Bee-Hive* 39 (Fall 1964): 26–32; Anthony V. Riccio, *The Italian American Experience in New Haven* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 404–34; Hugh French, "Little Italy of Portland," *Salt* 6 (Summer 1984): 34–37.
 36. Many of the appraisers' reports are available in the Portsmouth Public Library's online "North End House History" collection, <http://www.portsmouthexhibits.org/collections/show/1> (accessed May 30, 2014).
 37. Geraci, interview; Ciotti, interview.
 38. "Vaughan Street Plans," *Portsmouth Herald*, February 13, 1969; "Wanted: Reliable Persons"; Richard M. Candee, *Building Portsmouth: The Neighborhoods and Architecture of New Hampshire's Oldest City* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Portsmouth Advocates, 1992), 18–24.
 39. Raymond A. Brighton, *They Came to Fish*, 2 vols. (Portsmouth, N.H.: Peter E. Randall Publisher, 1994), 1:425; Al Destefano/Gould Productions, "Russell Street Reunion"; Joey Cresta, "That's Amore!: Remembering the City's Lost Neighborhood," *Portsmouth Herald*, October 2, 2011; Jenn Vento, "Just Like a Family Reunion," *Portsmouth Herald*, June 8, 1998; Joey Cresta, "Piecing Together City's 'Little Italy,'" *Portsmouth Herald*, March 18, 2012; Joey Cresta, "Some Say North End Bench Not Fitting Tribute," *Portsmouth Herald*, August 24, 2012.