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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Broadside, 1866, attacking Radical Republican gubernatorial candidate John White Geary for his support of black rights. Andrew Diemer's article, "Reconstructing Philadelphia," examines the ways in which racial politics in postwar Philadelphia contributed to Philadelphians' ambivalence about Reconstruction in the South.

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ERRATA: On page 425 of the October 2008 issue, Smedley Darlington Butler is identified as a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. Butler was awarded the Medal of Honor. The award is often incorrectly referred to as the “Congressional Medal of Honor” because it is awarded in the name of Congress.



*The Lancaster County Cholera
Epidemic of 1854 and the
Challenge to the Miasma Theory of
Disease*

EARLY ON THE MORNING OF SUNDAY, September 10, 1854, the fellows of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia received an urgent appeal for medical aid from the hastily assembled Sanitary Committee of Columbia, Pennsylvania, seventy-five miles to the west, on the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River. Cholera had broken out in the town, and by Saturday, September 9, it had killed thirty people, including one of the town's six physicians. The desperate townspeople turned naturally to the College of Physicians. Founded in 1777 by a group of prominent medical men in Philadelphia to advance the medical profession and to promote public health, the college had become the most prestigious medical society in the country. Henry Hartshorne, MD, a fellow of the college and noted Quaker humanitarian, responded immediately, leaving for Columbia that day. T. Heber Jackson, MD, of Philadelphia, arrived the same day. The next day, Monday, September 11, the college held a special meeting and resolved that a delegation of five fellows be sent to Columbia, including the eminent physicians Wilson Jewell and Rene La Roche. They arrived in Columbia on September 12,

joining other volunteer physicians in aiding the sick and instituting measures intended to curb the further spread of the disease.¹ Believing they knew the etiology of cholera, they came to Columbia to discover its source, not its cause.

The committee that went to Columbia was made up of outspoken advocates of the miasma theory and were convinced that cholera was spread by foul air emanating from filth. The committee's observations in Columbia confirmed their beliefs, and the fellows focused their efforts on finding the source of filth they believed to be responsible for the miasma. When they discovered rotting carcasses of animals in the river, they deduced that these were the sources of the corruption responsible for the epidemic. Having prescribed sanitary measures for the city, the majority of the fellows returned to Philadelphia the next day convinced that "the prevailing affection presented no peculiar features."²

Dr. Jackson remained in Columbia gathering data on the disease, and he reassessed the validity of the miasma theory subscribed to by the fellows. Little is known about T. Heber Jackson. His name does not appear on the rolls of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia or in either contemporary or modern medical biographical dictionaries. Like Jackson, John Atlee, a physician and associate fellow of the College of Physicians, found that his observations of a less severe cholera outbreak in nearby Lancaster could not be explained by the conventional miasma theory. The professional debate that ensued between Jackson and Atlee and the leadership of the College of Physicians can be pieced together from articles in medical journals, essays, and the records of the meetings of the College of Physicians. Their efforts were part of a larger challenge to then current medical orthodoxy and helped to pave the way for the rejection of the miasma theory of disease and the acceptance of the germ theory in America.

Cholera, which was endemic to India, escaped the subcontinent in 1817, striking Moscow in September 1830. It then spread westward

¹ *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, n.s., 2 (1856): 313; Whitfield J. Bell, *The College of Physicians of Philadelphia* (Canton, MA, 1987), 97–98; *Cummings' Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia), Sept. 13, 1854; *American and Commercial Advertiser* (Baltimore), Sept. 15, 1854; T. Heber Jackson, "Account of the Asiatic Cholera, as It Prevailed in Columbia, Lancaster County, Pa., in the Autumn of 1855," *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 58 (1855): 336–47, reprinted as "Report of T. Heber Jackson, M.D." in "Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 62 (1958): 127.

² *Cummings' Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13 and 14, 1854; *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians* (1856): 314.

across Europe, reaching England in 1831 and North America in 1832. The pandemic would return to Europe and America in 1849, 1854, and 1866, each time filling the population with terror and revulsion; the mystery surrounding the cause of the disease only exacerbated the situation. Its effects were both rapid and devastating, and death was agonizing to those who succumbed to the disease. The victims were attacked by diarrhea and vomiting, followed by intense thirst, cramps in the trunk and legs, shortness of breath, and a radical shrinking of the flesh as the body became dehydrated. The afflicted person's bodily fluids were excreted as "rice water." He or she collapsed and turned blue, with death following quickly for the more fortunate ones. As many as 50 percent of those who contracted cholera died.

The etiology of cholera, not proven with certainty until the 1880s, was a bacterium, *vibrio cholerae*, transmitted through the ingestion of human feces, primarily through drinking polluted water. With no certain knowledge as to the cause of cholera, speculation about its etiology divided European and American physicians into two camps: those who believed it to be spread by contagion and those who thought it was caused by miasmatic vapors emanating from filth and rotting organic matter. Each of these theories had roots in antiquity. From the time of the ancient Jews, it had been recognized that certain diseases were transmitted either through direct contact between humans or through objects or animals that had been in physical contact with a victim. By the sixteenth century, plague, smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, rabies, and syphilis were recognized as diseases spread by contagion.³ The advocates of the contagion theory for cholera justified their position on the grounds that cholera followed trade routes and often broke out first among those newly arrived in cities. Believing as they did that contagious diseases were always spread by individual contact with a victim or things with which a victim had come into direct contact, the contagionists were unable to explain why outbreaks of cholera could occur over long distances and attack whole districts at once. They were unaware of either the existence of the cholera bacterium or that the ingestion of water containing this bacterium was the primary means by which large numbers of people some distance from the original victim could be infected. Thus their narrow definition of a contagious disease as one that spread through individual human contact and their lack of understanding of the etiology of cholera left the conta-

³ Peter Baldwin, *Contagion and the State in Europe, 1830–1930* (Cambridge, 1999), 2–3.

gionists with no evidence to substantiate their theory.

The rival miasma theory also had ancient roots. Both Hippocrates and Galen believed that many epidemic diseases were caused by atmospheric and climatic conditions. By the eighteenth century, this belief had been refined into the theory that epidemic diseases were caused by environmental conditions, such as noxious gasses emanating from human wastes, unhygienic living conditions, rotting animal and vegetable matter, and swamps. As these conditions could be ameliorated by human intervention, advocates of the miasma theory began to subscribe to sanitarianism, or the theory that providing humanity with hygienic living conditions could eliminate disease. They also came to believe that differences among epidemic diseases were due to variations in local conditions. Unable to account for the fact that miasmas sickened some people and not others living in the same atmospheric conditions, the supporters of the miasma theory posited that certain individuals had a predisposition to catching epidemic diseases due to physical infirmity, diet, corrupted morals, and emotional excitement.⁴

In his seminal essay on the rise of anticontagionism, the eminent pioneer medical historian Erwin H. Ackerknecht demonstrated that, with insufficient medical knowledge to make a scientific judgment on the question, the medical community often took sides in the contagion-miasma dispute based on social, economic, and political considerations. The advocates of the contagion theory believed the best way to control the disease was through the traditional practice of state-run quarantine. As autocratic bureaucracies in Russia and Prussia used the theory to justify quarantines, liberal physicians, in an age of laissez-faire liberalism, viewed it as a tool of repressive governments and an enemy of trade and commerce.⁵ With the arrival of cholera in the West, the contagion theory quickly fell into disfavor in Great Britain and the United States. Also aiding in the demise of the contagion theory was the failure of quarantine to contain cholera. Thus, because of the lack of conclusive evidence about the etiology of cholera, the miasma theory, with its accompanying stress on sanitary reform, triumphed in medical circles for political and hygienic reasons. The miasma theory “reached its highest peak of elaboration, acceptance,

⁴ Ibid., 2–3, 127–28.

⁵ Erwin H. Ackerknecht, “Anticontagionism between 1821 and 1867,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 22 (1948): 567, 588–89.

and scientific respectability on the eve of the cholera epidemics of 1854.”⁶

American physicians refused to admit that the epidemic was a new disease imported by European immigrants. Even before cholera’s first arrival in the Americas in 1832, the College of Physicians of Philadelphia had concluded that the disease was merely a more virulent form of a diarrhea-producing disease known since ancient times and named cholera by Hippocrates.⁷ Members of the college who went to Montreal in 1832 to study the first outbreak of cholera in the New World returned convinced that the disease they had witnessed was neither imported nor spread by contagion, a conviction they continued to hold in 1854.⁸

The anticontagionist beliefs of the fellows of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia were strongly influenced by their commitment to sanitarianism, a doctrine that stressed that cities must be cleansed and the conditions of the lower classes improved if the spread of epidemic diseases was to be controlled. They subscribed to the doctrines of Edwin Chadwick, the English leader of this movement, who claimed that “all smell is disease.”⁹ He had been the driving force behind the creation of the British Central Board of Health in 1848 to police the sanitation of Britain’s cities. Believing that the deadly cholera miasma was generated in filth, sanitarians such as the fellows of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia were certain that cleaning up cities would end the pestilence. This conviction was confirmed for them as early as 1832, during the first American cholera epidemic, when the city of Philadelphia’s cholera death rate was one-quarter that of New York’s and one-twelfth that of Montreal’s. The medical community attributed this success in part to the fact that the city used clean water from the Fairmount Reservoir to wash the filth from the streets.¹⁰ Ironically, while the fellows of the College of Physicians searched for sources of airborne miasmas to explain the cholera epidemic, it was Philadelphia’s unique supply of clean drinking water from the Fairmount Reservoir that spared the city, as Philadelphia’s drinking water was not polluted by human feces, which spread the bacterium cholera.

⁶ Ackerknecht, “Anticontagionism between 1821 and 1867,” 565.

⁷ John B. Osborne, “Preparing for the Pandemic: City Boards of Health and the Arrival of Cholera in Montreal, New York, and Philadelphia in 1832,” *Urban History Review* 36 (spring 2008): 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹ Baldwin, *Contagion and the State in Europe*, 127.

¹⁰ Osborne, “Preparing for the Pandemic,” 38.

Cholera outbreaks in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Broad Street, London, in late August and early September 1854 provided case studies for physicians attempting to discover the true etiology of the disease. Dr. John Snow in London and Drs. T. Heber Jackson and John Atlee in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, would use data gathered during these outbreaks to question the widely held medical belief that cholera was generated in filth and spread through the air by miasma. Theorizing that cholera was spread by some form of contagion, these physicians challenged the prevalent sanitarian, anticontagionist theories of the time. They also questioned the generally accepted doctrine of predisposing causes, which posited that ethnicity, class, and one's physical, hygienic, and moral condition dictated the likelihood of one's catching the disease.

Snow's research, which enabled him to prove that cholera was spread primarily through contaminated drinking water, made him justifiably famous in medical circles. In recent years, Snow has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies and popular biographies.¹¹ The March 2003 issue of the journal *Hospital Doctor* selected him as the most important doctor of all time. However, as Charles Rosenberg, the author of the classic account of cholera in the United States, has pointed out, Snow was not alone in challenging medical opinion on the etiology of cholera. His was one of dozens of theories on the cause of cholera being put forward in the early 1850s. Yet, he was set apart from the rest by the exhaustive and comprehensive nature of the research data upon which he based his theory of the etiology of the disease.¹²

Dr. Jackson's and Dr. Atlee's theories on the cholera epidemics in provincial Lancaster County in 1854 were neither as comprehensive as Snow's, nor based upon detailed data like that which Snow assembled. However, like Snow, who disputed the anticontagionist theories of the British General Board of Health and the professional leadership of the three medical corporations of London, Jackson and Atlee raised doubts

¹¹ Most prominent among these studies are: Peter Vinten-Johansen et al., *Cholera, Chloroform, and the Science of Medicine: A Life of John Snow* (New York, 2003); Tom Koch, *Cartographies of Disease: Maps, Mapping, and Medicine* (Redlands, CA, 2005); Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* (New York, 2006); and Sandra Hempel, *The Strange Case of the Broad Street Pump: John Snow and the Mystery of Cholera* (Berkeley, CA, 2007).

¹² Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830–1910* (Oxford, 1987), 268; Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chicago, 1987), 193.

about the validity of the miasma theory.¹³ They also challenged the opinions of members of the prestigious College of Physicians of Philadelphia who had come to Columbia to study the epidemic.

Both the London, England, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, cholera epidemics claimed huge numbers of victims. As many as 697 people died in the densely populated London district of Soho.¹⁴ Dr. Snow was able to trace the source of the Soho epidemic to a pump on Broad Street and thence to a sewer that leaked the original victim's excrement into the well. His findings provided the evidence needed to confirm his 1849–54 studies connecting outbreaks of cholera with local water supplies. Although Snow was not immediately successful in persuading England's medical elite of the validity of his theory, within a decade his work became the new medical orthodoxy. Like Snow in London, T. Heber Jackson and John L. Atlee discovered that the miasma theories for cholera espoused by their colleagues failed to explain the progression of the disease that they observed in Lancaster County. All three drew upon innovative medical technology such as microscopy, statistics, and epidemiological mapping to gather the evidence needed to make their cases.

Columbia had been untouched by cholera until September 1854. The town is located on the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River and, in 1854, was one of the great transportation and industrial centers of Pennsylvania. It was the terminus of two canals and three railroads. A canal on the west bank at Wrightsville linked Columbia to the Chesapeake Bay. A canal starting at Columbia on the east bank went as far north as the mouth of the Juniata River north of Harrisburg. A dam below the town provided the water to feed the Chesapeake canal and created a basin in which barges could be loaded and unloaded. Columbia was connected to Philadelphia, Lancaster, Harrisburg, and Port Deposit, Maryland, by rail and became a major transfer point for coal brought down the river. Each spring, log rafts from forests in the central part of the state were floated down the river to sawmills in the town. Iron ore, discovered near Columbia, led to the establishment of foundries and a rolling mill to serve the railroads. Silk mills also provided a major source of employment in the town. Trade and commerce generated by this activity transformed the main street of Columbia into a commercial center that some said rivaled the shopping districts of Philadelphia. The

¹³ On Snow, see Vinten-Johansen et al., *Cholera, Chloroform, and the Science of Medicine*, 341.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 334.

Columbia Bank, with five hundred thousand dollars in capitalization, was the largest bank in the county. Founded by Quakers, the town became a haven for runaway slaves. A mile-long bridge that connected the town with the western bank of the Susquehanna provided a convenient crossing point for runaway slaves coming north as well as for immigrants going west. By 1850, almost 20 percent of the population of Columbia was African American. Numerous German and Irish immigrants also lived in the town, drawn there by employment in the railroads, canals, coal yards, and warehouses.¹⁵

In August 1854, the inhabitants of a house in Columbia fell victim to what was diagnosed as cholera, and the house in which they lived was ordered destroyed by the town authorities. No further cholera cases were recorded until September 6, 1854, when two German immigrants, sick with cholera, were left at the railroad terminus in Columbia while their party continued west. The men died the next day. Four Columbians who had tried to aid them came down with cholera and died shortly thereafter.¹⁶ By September 9, cholera had spread to almost every section of the town, and 30 people had died, many of whom had visited the stricken immigrants. Physicians had no doubt that the disease that they were witnessing was cholera. The virulence of the epidemic that struck Columbia caused Jackson to observe that two-thirds of the victims died within five hours of showing symptoms of the disease.¹⁷ Although only 127 victims died in Columbia—out of a population of five thousand—Dr. Wilson Jewell of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and president of the Philadelphia Board of Health estimated that if a similar outbreak had occurred in Philadelphia, it would have killed 75 people an hour.¹⁸

Columbia's rail link to Philadelphia was a conduit for medical assistance as well as cholera. Drs. Hartshorne, La Roche, and Jewell, who traveled to Columbia from Philadelphia by rail, were all outspoken sanitarians and anti-contagionists. They were committed to creating new public health standards

¹⁵ H. M. J. Kline, *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, A History* (New York, 1924), 307–8, 314; Frederic Shriver Klein, *Lancaster County, 1841–1941* (Lancaster, PA, 1941), 33; Leroy Hopkins, "Bethel African Methodist Church in Lancaster; Prolegomenon to a Social History," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 90 (1986): 226; Jackson, "Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854," 123.

¹⁶ Jackson, "Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854," 124; John L. Atlee, *Report to the Sanitary Committee of Lancaster County, May 26, 1855, Extracted from the Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1855), 7.

¹⁷ *American and Commercial Advertiser*, Sept. 15, 1854.

¹⁸ *Cummings' Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13, 1854.

that would address city sanitation, water supply, and waste disposal and thus improve the dismal state of public hygiene in American cities. All three fellows were convinced that filth was the primary threat to the health of both Columbia and Philadelphia.

An 1848 report on the public health of Philadelphia written for the American Medical Association described the sanitary conditions in that city as being atrocious; streets were never cleaned, sewers were clogged, and water supplies were contaminated. The report criticized the Board of Health for inactivity and lack of control over those responsible for cleaning the streets. Even though Philadelphia responded to the criticism of the AMA report by attempting to cleanse itself, these efforts did not meet the College of Physicians' standards.¹⁹ At a June 26, 1849, meeting of the college, Dr. Charles D. Meigs, who would be appointed chairman of the committee that went to Columbia, decried the lack of support politicians gave the medical community. He commented, "Were our municipal and state governments aware of their duty and responsibility as guardians of the people, they would take measures to reach the reason and conscience of every citizen" on the importance of civic hygiene in the control of cholera.²⁰

Meigs and the fellows of the college who traveled to Columbia would have concurred with Dr. Hartshorne "that mortality from cholera is almost invariably commensurate with the filth and destitution of the inhabitants and their abodes."²¹ For Hartshorne, the filth that was endemic in mid-nineteenth-century cities provided an incubator for diseases and was most prevalent among the poor. He gave credence to the idea that microscopic life might be responsible for causing cholera, although he avoided speculating on how the cholera "germs" came to be in the offending filth. Hartshorne observed that "cholera is generated only in the presence of a certain unknown contingent, whose capriciousness of migration, partial subjection to temperature, and other habitudes, suggest the probability of the animalcular hypothesis."²² Hartshorne was more interested in practical solutions for defeating cholera than in hypo-

¹⁹ Bell, *College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, 92–94; Elizabeth M. Geffen, "Industrial Development and Social Crisis, 1841–1854," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York, 1982), 318.

²⁰ *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* 2 (1849): 433.

²¹ Henry Hartshorne, *On Animal Decomposition as the Chief Promotive Cause of Cholera* (Philadelphia, 1855), 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 12.

thetical explanations of its nature. He concluded that:

Whatever the theory, the lesson from all the facts is one . . . of hygiene and prevention. Cities should be built and regulated to prevent epidemics, as they should be to afford security from conflagrations. The laws of public benevolence, like those of private morality, are an essential part of the economy of the world. As personal vice brings misery, by violation of the physical laws, so the aggregate vice of communities, and the neglect of the higher classes to do their best for those around them, meet with retribution, in those scourges, which under the forms of plague, cholera, typhus, and yellow fever, desolate populations almost in proportion to the errors of their local life.²³

Hartshorne strongly objected to the practice of personal quarantine against cholera, arguing that it was noncontagious and that the only protection against the disease was “local, municipal and domestic sanitation.”²⁴ He believed communities, led by the upper orders of society, should work together to promote the health of their citizens. It was a responsibility that civic leaders neglected to fulfill.

Rene La Roche was a member of the Philadelphia Board of Health, and his anticontagionism theory dominated the board’s thinking in the 1850s.²⁵ His book on the history, pathology, and etiology of yellow fever was considered to be the definitive study of the disease when it was published in 1855. He was more skeptical than Hartshorne of the idea that cholera might be caused by microscopic “germs.” In an address given before the College of Physicians on April 5, 1854, he commented that while he was willing to admit the possibility that diseases might be caused by “microscopic beings produced out of pre-existing germs under peculiar and favorable circumstances of locality and atmosphere,” he found the idea to “smack more of poetry than sound theory.”²⁶ Like Hartshorne, he contended that the source of cholera was local in origin.²⁷ Believing filth and local meteorological and geographic conditions to be responsible for

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 8 (New York, 1898), 203.

²⁵ Edward T. Morman, “Scientific Medicine Comes to Philadelphia: Public Health Transformed, 1854–1899” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986), 77–78.

²⁶ *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians* (1856): 260–61.

²⁷ John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* (New York, 1999), s.v. “Rene La Roche,” by Smita Dutta.

the creation of the disease, he was therefore an ardent advocate of sanitary reform.

Wilson Jewell was president of the Philadelphia Board of Health and a prime mover in the creation of the national Quarantine and Sanitary Commission that met annually between 1857 and 1860.²⁸ His writings demonstrate the validity of Ackerknecht's observation that the debate over contagion was never just a theoretical one, but was always tied to the question of quarantines and the bureaucracies that enforced them.²⁹ Jewell observed that:

The doctrine . . . of specific contagion, or the spread of epidemic diseases by contagion, which was universally received when quarantines were first instituted, has, within the present century, undergone almost an entire revolution. . . . A judicious modification of the present unsound, ill-advised and ancient code of quarantine law is therefore not only called for, but absolutely necessary.³⁰

Arriving in Columbia with preconceived ideas as to the causes of cholera, and determined to collect evidence to support their sanitarian and public-health reform agenda, the fellows from the College of Physicians of Philadelphia quickly became convinced that they had discovered the source of the deadly disease in the filth from the river. They disputed newspaper reports that attributed the epidemic to waterborne pollution. A telegraphic newspaper dispatch from Columbia on September 13 reported that "the river is very low, and at the point where the water is drawn up into the basin of the water works, two slaughter houses empty their garbage. There being no current to carry the filth off, the water became strongly impregnated with the poisonous matter, and was freely drunk by our unsuspecting inhabitants." It was further reported that "while those who used water from that source [the town reservoir, whose water came from the polluted river] have perished by dozens, those who used spring water have not been affected."³¹

²⁸ Howard A. Kelly and Walter L. Burrage, *Dictionary of American Medical Biography: Lives of Eminent Physicians of the United States and Canada, from the Earliest Times* (1928; repr. Boston, 1971), s.v. "Wilson Jewell."

²⁹ Ackerknecht, "Anticontagionism between 1821 and 1867," 567.

³⁰ Wilson Jewell, *Historical Sketches of Quarantine. Address Delivered before the Philadelphia County Medical Society* (Philadelphia, 1857), 27.

³¹ *Cummings' Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13, 1854; *National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), Sept. 16, 1854.

Convinced of the validity of the miasma theory, the doctors from the College of Physicians rejected the idea that the epidemic was spread through the town's water supply. Dr. Jewell challenged the idea that only those who drank from the reservoir became ill. He was emphatic that the "exciting cause of this epidemic is in the atmosphere, and not the water, as the victims have been indiscriminately from among those who used the water from the reservoir, and those who drink nothing but spring water."³²

Hartshorne gave a somewhat different description of the condition in which he found the river and the town reservoir, but he still emphasized that the epidemic was due to airborne miasma:

an exceeding drought had reduced the channel of the river to an unusually low ebb, and that, in its bed, a short space above the town, a number of carcasses [sic] of sheep and other animals, thrown from the railroad trains, etc., were putrefying rankly in the sun. A reservoir which supplied many of the people with drinking water was filled from the river not far from that spot, and the wind blew from it directly over the town. If we are correctly informed, the first subsidence of the disease attended a change of the wind.

In his 1855 essay on cholera, Hartshorne described and rejected Snow's theory, put forward in an 1853 article, that cholera was transmitted from victim to victim through the water supply, writing, "water cannot be shewn to consist in its serving as a vehicle for a poison, a contagion, generating specially in the bodies of those who have suffered from the disease. We have seen that this cannot be, since there *is no such* contagion generally speaking, if it even can exist." While denying that the vomit and diarrhea of victims propagated cholera, he argued that if left at a specific temperature for several days, these discharges would give off miasma. He believed they "undergo a process of fermentation; they are then capable of exciting cholera in healthy individuals."³³

Not surprisingly, the Philadelphia physicians, with their strong commitment to sanitarianism, "on their arrival . . . had met the resident physicians, and . . . sanitary measures were agreed upon and published. Means were also adopted for obtaining supplies for the place." This latter action addressed a major problem because, convinced that cholera was conta-

³² *Cummings' Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13, 1854.

³³ Hartshorne, *On Animal Decomposition*, 8, 9, 11.

gious, the “country people round the devastated town refuse[d] to hold any intercourse with the citizens, and much suffering from the want of wholesome food ha[d] been the result.” According to Jackson, a “notable improvement in the health of the town” followed the supplying of the population with food.³⁴

The doctors’ recommendations were standard treatment for the time. They prescribed that victims be given large doses of opium combined with an astringent, with opium enemata to be administered in severe cases. Beef teas and broths rehydrated the victims, while preparations of mercury and bleeding were used as a last resort. The fellows from the College of Physicians found little that was unique in the Columbia epidemic, concluding that “the prevailing affection presented no peculiar features.” Having no further interest in the epidemic, several of the physicians, including Jewell, returned to Philadelphia on Wednesday, September 13.³⁵

However, believing that the intensity of the Columbia epidemic provided optimum conditions for studying cholera’s causes, T. Heber Jackson remained in Columbia. He envisioned Columbia as a laboratory and a relatively contained environment that would enable him to study the “conditions under which cholera prevails.” He hoped “to discover its cause, and the laws by which it is governed” and noted that “it is no easy matter to follow distinctly the progress of an epidemic when it prevails extensively in a large and populous city; but in a small town, its origin and progress can be more readily traced.”³⁶ Historian Charles Rosenberg has observed that during the 1849–54 epidemics, as in 1832, the general public viewed cholera as “a disease of poverty and sin”:

By 1849 the connection between cholera and vice had become almost a verbal reflex. The relationship between vice and poverty was a mental reflex even more firmly established. . . . Cholera was an exercise of God’s will. The religious of every sect, in 1849, as in 1832, accepted cholera as a chastisement appropriate to a nation sunk in materialism and sin.³⁷

³⁴ “Report by Dr. Morris to College of Physicians, 4 October 1854,” *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians* (1856): 314; *Cummings’ Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13, 1854; Jackson, “Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854,” 129.

³⁵ Jackson, “Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854,” 129–30; *Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians* (1856): 314; *Cummings’ Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 13, 1854.

³⁶ Jackson, “Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854,” 123.

³⁷ Rosenberg, *Cholera Years*, 120–21.

Ebenezer Erskine, Columbia's Presbyterian minister, was most fervent in his advocacy that cholera was sent by God to punish sinners. Erskine was not an unknown, uneducated preacher. He had earned his bachelor's degree from Jefferson (now Washington and Jefferson) College in Pennsylvania and graduated from the Presbyterian Seminary at Princeton.³⁸ In his October 1854 sermons, Erskine compared the Columbia cholera epidemic to the plague. He cited 2 Samuel 24:15, in which "the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel" to "punish the people for their transgressions." Erskine had no doubt that one must "acknowledge such a pestilence to be a message from God . . . to chastise communities for their impiety and wickedness." He saw drunkenness, gambling, licentiousness, an absence of brotherly love and charity among the business classes, impiety and irreligion, a spirit of lawlessness among the young, profanation of the Sabbath and of God's name, and a "cold formal, worldly spirit . . . among the professed people of God" as having influenced God to inflict the people with cholera.³⁹

Erskine, like both the public and the medical establishment of the time, believed that cholera most readily struck the poor and certain ethnic groups. He singled out the poor and immigrants for special condemnation, focusing especially on Irish Roman Catholics whom, he claimed, lived in the thrall of "a besotted and rapacious priesthood who teach their unhappy and deluded followers" false doctrines. Erskine belittled the physicians' attempts to discover the cause of cholera, saying that "the most eminent in medical science were compelled to acknowledge that the law of its progress was veiled in mystery." Employing an odd use of the new science of statistics for one who was dismissive of scientific enquiry, Erskine pointed out that only six pious individuals had died during the epidemic, in contrast to the hundred sinners who professed no religion. He observed that what was a severe judgment upon the ungodly "might be only a fatherly chastisement to the people of God."⁴⁰

The popular press mirrored Erskine's judgments. The editor of the Wrightsville newspaper also saw God's hand in the epidemic, commenting that "truly the lord has visited in sore judgment; may we learn right-

³⁸ *Necrological Report*, vol. 3, *Alumni Association of Princeton Theological Seminary* (Princeton, NJ, 1900), 126–27.

³⁹ Ebenezer Erskine, *God in the Pestilence, or Cholera a Visitation from God* (Philadelphia, 1854), 2, 12, 13–18.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 11, 19, 30.

eousness, and humble ourselves under his mighty hand.” The Lancaster *Inland Weekly* echoed this assessment, noting that “it is a visitation from Deity . . . to teach us all, as we jog along, a valuable lesson.”⁴¹

In contrast, Jackson drew upon his observations in Columbia to challenge this widely accepted belief that poverty, ethnicity, and filth bred cholera. He reported his findings on the disease the next year in the *American Journal of Medical Science*. Neither Jackson nor the other Philadelphia physicians gave credence to the popular theory that cholera was a punishment from God. However, “the closely related doctrine of predisposing causes, which claimed that physical and psychological conditions made certain individuals susceptible to the disease, was unquestioned by the medical profession.”⁴² The fellows of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the vast majority of their medical colleagues believed that cholera was predominantly a disease of the poor and the profligate, a consequence of ethnic background, immorality, poor health, or living in a filthy environment. Filth, endemic in nineteenth-century cities, was seen as providing the catalyst for the growth of the cholera poison—perhaps by zymotic action. The wind was thought to carry the resulting miasma to the victims. Because the disease was believed to be airborne, many thought it began in the lungs. The fact that it would strike some while passing over others was explained by the theory that certain people had a constitutional predisposition to catching the disease.

Neither the College of Physicians’ assumptions that the poor, intemperate, and certain ethnic groups were predisposed to catching cholera, nor popular leaders’ beliefs that it was God’s revenge, were ultimately born out by the events in Columbia. The *Harrisburg Morning Herald* announced with alarm that “some of the most prominent citizens, including two physicians, are reported being among the victims. The epidemic is confined to no locality or class of citizen but prevails in all parts of the town, and strikes down the high and low, the rich and poor, the healthy and feeble.” The *Lancaster Examiner and Herald* was even more explicit in its astonishment, commenting that cholera had attacked “not only the vicious and imprudent but those who have been remarkable for the

⁴¹ *York County Star and Wrightsville Advertiser*, Sept. 21, 1854; *Inland Weekly*, Sept. 30, 1854.

⁴² Charles Rosenberg, “The Cause of Cholera,” in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, eds. Ron Numbers and J. W. Leavitt (Madison, WI, 1978), 261.

consistency and regularity of their lives.”⁴³ There was general agreement that Columbia’s ethnic minorities were the ones who suffered most from the epidemic. However, while the press believed that the large poor black population was most affected by the disease, Jackson found that it was the poor German laborers who fell ill most frequently.⁴⁴ The fact that the Columbia epidemic spared neither the prosperous nor the virtuous, but struck rich and poor, virtuous and profligate, and various ethnic groups alike, led Jackson to question the validity of the theory of predisposing causes.

Jackson believed that poor people’s inability to escape the town made it appear that “the working class was much more obnoxious to the disease than they really were.” Jackson reported that during the first night the epidemic broke out “all portions of the town, all classes of people were compelled impartially to contribute victims to the merciless pestilence.” A panic “seized upon the citizens, and many of those whose means enabled them to leave, fled from the devoted town.” By Monday, he noted, “more than half the population . . . had left, and numerous persons left daily, until the week was far advanced. . . . [H]ad all the citizens remained, no distinction of class would have availed as a protection, but all would have suffered alike, in proportion to their numbers.” Like Snow, Jackson rejected the idea that degeneration and lack of cleanliness among the poor made them uniquely susceptible to cholera.⁴⁵

Jackson and Snow used maps to demonstrate the validity of their theories. Jackson referred his readers to “the accompanying plan of the town,” on which he had marked the sites of the early victims’ dwellings. He argued that it “will clearly appear” that the epidemic struck the homes of the prosperous and poor alike.⁴⁶ Similarly, Snow used a map of the Broad Street neighborhood to demonstrate that it was those who depended upon the deadly pump for their water who caught cholera, regardless of class or other factors. Snow also used maps to illustrate the connection between sources of household water supply and the percentage of cholera deaths in the areas supplied by two London water companies.⁴⁷

⁴³ *Harrisburg Morning Herald*, Sept. 12, 1854; *Lancaster Examiner and Herald*, Sept. 13, 1854.

⁴⁴ *York Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1854; *Cummings’ Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 12, 1854; Jackson, “Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854,” 124.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 124, 125–26; Vinten-Johansen et al., *Cholera, Chloroform, and the Science of Medicine*, 352.

⁴⁶ Jackson, “Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854,” 124, 132.

⁴⁷ Koch, *Cartographies of Disease*, 90–101.

Jackson expanded his enquiry into the cause of the disease and evaluated Jewell and La Roche's miasma theory against his own data. He found that his Philadelphia colleagues had failed to explain the phenomenon he had observed. Jackson argued that:

Before it is determined that emanations from the river, wafted into the town by this southeast wind, were productive of the cholera it will be worth while to remember that during a long series of years Columbia had been exposed to precisely the same influences, the same combination of circumstances and yet remained happily free from cholera. It is not denied that the condition of the river air . . . might have afforded a suitable nidus for the disease. . . . [I]f the river and its shores are to be accused of having generated the cholera poison, why and how did the people of Wrightsville, on the opposite bank from Columbia, escape? especially when, as on Sunday, the strong northerly wind was blowing. And yet escape they did, without a single case.⁴⁸

Jackson was of two minds about the possibility that cholera in Columbia was propagated by contagion. He questioned the popular belief that the epidemic had been spread by the two German immigrants just because they, and those who had communicated directly with them, were the first victims. He pointed out that between midnight of the evening the immigrants died and dawn, there were thirty reported cases of cholera. Subscribing to the contemporary belief that contagion depended on person-to-person contact, Jackson observed that "contagious diseases do not seize upon great numbers at once, but progress from case to case." Therefore, it did not appear that the disease was simply contagious. On the other hand, an individual who visited Columbia during the epidemic fell sick and died of the disease only when he reached home, seventeen miles away. The friend who attended him and the individual who buried him also contracted cholera and died. Jackson believed that the only way these two people could have contracted cholera was from the man who had visited Columbia. Thus, it was very probable that cholera was, in this case, contagious. Faced with contradictory evidence, Jackson refused to ascribe the epidemic to any single cause and ultimately left the question of contagion open.⁴⁹ While Jackson raised serious doubts about the validity of the miasma theory and its corollary doctrine of predisposing causes,

⁴⁸ Jackson, "Cholera in Lancaster and Columbia in 1854," 126.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 125–26, 127.

he did not believe that he had the evidence necessary to advocate a contagionist theory of cholera's etiology.

Unlike T. Heber Jackson, John Atlee was a well-known and prominent physician. He received his MD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1820 and from 1850 to 1852 studied medicine in Paris and Berlin, where, in all likelihood, he developed his skills as a microscopist.⁵⁰ Atlee's entire medical career was spent in Lancaster, where he earned the accolades of his colleagues for his skills as a surgeon. He was an associate member of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and a founder of the Lancaster County Medical Society (1844) and the Pennsylvania Medical Society (1848), serving a term as president of each of those organizations. Atlee also was a founding member of the American Medical Association (1847), where he held both the office of vice president (1865) and president (1882). His assessments of the cholera outbreak in Lancaster, while differing from Jackson's evaluation of the Columbia epidemic, were equally critical of the miasma theory to which the fellows of the College of Physicians subscribed.

The city of Lancaster, where Atlee had his practice, was a little over ten miles east of Columbia and was also visited by cholera late in the summer of 1854. The city of Lancaster was the county seat, and with an estimated population of fourteen thousand, it was almost three times the size of Columbia. The city was undergoing a period of rapid growth, which was reflected in the major civic, commercial, and academic construction projects; a new courthouse, market house, jail, opera house, and city reservoir were built in the early 1850s. In addition, the newly merged Franklin and Marshall College was constructing a campus on College Hill. Situated in or near the city were a thriving rifle works, textile mills, and the Lancaster Locomotive Engine and Machine Manufacturing Company as well as other foundries and over one hundred licensed retail establishments.⁵¹

Lancaster was set in what contemporaries considered to be a healthy location on high ground a mile north of the Conestoga River, a tributary of the Susquehanna, where it was presumably relatively free from the river's miasmatic mists. Despite its location, though, Lancaster, like all

⁵⁰ Garraty and Carnes, eds., *American National Biography*, s.v. "John Light Atlee," by Monique Bourque; Martin Kaufman, S. Galishoff, and T. L. Savitt, eds., *Dictionary of American Medical Biography*, vol. 1 (Westport, CT, 1984), 20.

⁵¹ J. D. B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States; A Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, DC, 1854); Klein, *Lancaster County*, 17–26

other cities of the era, was extremely unhygienic. The editor of the Lancaster *Inland Daily* subscribed to the filth theory of disease and chastised the city's fathers for not ordering the city's cleaning:

The streets are, some of them, very filthy. Stagnant waters, impure matter and filthy gutters are to be found in many of our streets. This is wrong. The streets should be kept clean and in good order, and if the private premises of our citizens be also kept clean and pure, and people are prudent, there need be little fear of the cholera.⁵²

In the summer of 1854, Atlee was in charge of both the Lancaster County hospital and the almshouse. His actions, intended to minimize the potential for a cholera outbreak in those facilities, suggest that he gave some credence to the filth theory of disease. Having heard of the prevalence of cholera in Philadelphia, Atlee ordered that both institutions be thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed, that the sewers be cleansed, and that decomposed animal and vegetable materials be removed. The out-houses were purified with lime to remove the noxious odors that were believed to carry the disease.⁵³

On August 2, Patrick Tute, the first cholera victim in Lancaster, arrived at the railroad station from Philadelphia, collapsed, and was placed in the county hospital without the medical authorities' knowledge. On August 4, John Carr, the second Lancaster cholera victim, was brought to the hospital from Columbia after suffering from diarrhea. In his *Report to the Sanitary Committee of Lancaster County*, Atlee implied that Tute and Carr introduced the disease to the hospital. Although there were three hundred inmates in the hospital and the adjacent almshouse when cholera broke out in August 1854, Atlee believed his actions had kept the disease in check. Only twenty-six people died of cholera, most of whom, according to Atlee, were aged and insane. Atlee's observation suggests that he still gave some credence to the theory of predisposing causes. He also had not yet completely rejected the theory that miasma could spread the epidemic. Atlee noted that "it was remarked that during the prevalence of warm southerly winds blowing directly from the river, there were more cases of the disease." But Atlee then proceeded to speculate on the etiology of the disease and identified "a few cases that

⁵² *Inland Daily*, July 29, 1854.

⁵³ Atlee, *Report to the Sanitary Committee of Lancaster County*, 4.

which in my opinion bear very decidedly upon this point.”⁵⁴ These cases demonstrated that he subscribed to the theory that cholera could be spread by contagion.

In early August, a Lancaster city resident and her sister went to Cleveland to help a daughter who had caught cholera. The daughter died immediately after their arrival. She had been nursing a doctor who had contracted cholera while helping victims of the disease and who boarded in her house with his family. The doctor, his wife, and their child all died of cholera, as did the daughter’s younger sister and hired girl. After settling the daughter’s affairs, the women returned to Lancaster with the victim’s five-month-old child and a bundle of the deceased woman’s clothes. Shortly after her arrival in Lancaster, the child died of a cholera-like disease. Within two weeks, four more members of the family died. All had had contact with the child. Further supporting his suspicions about the contagious nature of cholera was the fact that one of the dead family members had worn a dress that had belonged to her diseased sister. Another of the victims had contracted the disease after washing the clothing that was brought from Cleveland. Atlee was convinced that the disease was brought to Lancaster on the victim’s clothing and was spread by contagion to the other family members. According to Atlee, “No case of cholera existed in or near the city at this time, except at the hospital; nor were there, at any time any cases in . . . the northwest portion of it.” He did not believe that the cholera could have come from any other source, as the house in which the family lived was in “a high and healthy quarter of this city, but thinly built up, and having in its immediate vicinity no stagnant water, nor source of miasma.”⁵⁵

While discounting the idea that cholera was self-generating in filth, Atlee did acknowledge the possibility that heat, moisture, putrefying animal and vegetable matter, and improper cleanliness and diet could encourage the spread of the disease.⁵⁶ However, though he felt that filth probably propagated cholera, Atlee thought that the disease itself was imported and did not develop spontaneously in the locality. His study of the cholera epidemics in Columbia and at the Lancaster County hospital and almshouse led him to reassess his belief in the miasma theory and caused him to hypothesize that the disease was spread through contagion

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4–5, 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 5–7, 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 8–9.

by immigrants passing through Lancaster on their way west. He posited that these same immigrants carried cholera with them to Columbia, infecting the inhabitants of the house that was burned down some weeks before the epidemic struck. From this evidence Dr. Atlee concluded:

From a careful and unprejudiced survey of the above facts and circumstances, it appears to me that but one conclusion can be arrived at—one until now, opposed to my own opinion as to the etiology of cholera, viz: That a specific poison emanating from the bodies of the sick, was eliminated, which produced a similar disease in those who were exposed to it. Call it contagion, infection, or by any other name we please, it has the same characteristic properties as the poison of smallpox, of measles, and of scarlatina—that of reproducing in those susceptible of its influence the same specific disease.⁵⁷

Atlee cited eminent British physicians who had great experience in the treatment of the disease to justify further his conviction that cholera was spread by contagion. He commented critically that “we have been deceived upon this subject since its first appearance in India in 1817.” One of these physicians, Dr. Copland of Edinburgh, had pointed out that medical officers in India had sent “a mass of testimony which to his mind was conclusive upon the contagiousness of cholera; yet those whose duty it was to make up the general reports for publication, whether from pre-conceived opinion, or from a different view of the testimony, strongly opposed this idea, and attributed the diseases exclusively to atmospheric influences.”⁵⁸

Atlee’s medical studies in France in the early 1850s, where the theory of epidemic contagionism was regaining support in medical circles, undoubtedly helped to persuade him of the contagious nature of cholera.⁵⁹ Like Jackson, Atlee’s primary concern was to develop a rational, scientific explanation for the means by which cholera was spread through populations. They both advocated putting aside traditional medical theories in favor of what would come to be regarded as an epidemiological approach to the disease. As Atlee explained:

⁵⁷ Ibid., 7–8.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁹ On medical theory in France, see Baldwin, *Contagion and the State in Europe*, 147.

Let us endeavor, casting aside all preconceived opinion, to arrive at the truth. The sooner it is known, the sooner shall we be enabled to contend against this fell destroyer. It is only by the careful collection of facts in the history of any epidemic, and the logical deduction from them, that correct principles can be formed, and successful practice established.⁶⁰

Unlike the doctors from the College of Physicians, whose preconceived ideas about the causes of the disease and generalized beliefs about filth resulted in hasty judgments about the source of the Columbia epidemic, Atlee investigated the spread of the disease scientifically. He described his research as an attempt to discover the etiology of the disease and suggested that it was zymotic in nature. Atlee drew upon the new medical methods to which he must have been exposed, either in Europe, or perhaps from Professor Samuel Jackson, MD (no relation to Dr. T. Heber Jackson), who was professor of the institutes of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Jackson had been sent to Montreal in the spring of 1832 and was put in charge of cholera hospitals in Philadelphia during the 1832 epidemic. At an emergency meeting of the college to address the cholera crisis of 1849, Professor Jackson had called for the lesions of the intestinal mucous membrane to be examined microscopically, "systematically and thoroughly, without prejudice and unbiassed by the authority of names or systems."⁶¹ Atlee also called for an unbiased scientific investigation of the cause of cholera, observing that "the means of investigation are rapidly multiplying. Chemical analysis and microscopic investigation are continually exposing the errors of earlier observers, and unfolding new views of the phenomena of healthy and diseased action."⁶²

While Jackson and Snow were using statistics and maps to present their data, another methodology, microscopy, developed in Paris and Berlin, was being used by Dr. Atlee in Lancaster to challenge the validity of the miasma theory. Unlike most of his colleagues, Atlee either owned or had access to a powerful microscope. By examining discharges from the bowels and stomachs of different cholera victims, he discovered extremely minute foreign bodies, which he suspected might be causing the disease. Atlee did not speculate on whether these microscopic objects were living

⁶⁰ Atlee, *Report to the Sanitary Committee of Lancaster County*, 9.

⁶¹ Bell, *College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, 97.

⁶² Atlee, *Report to the Sanitary Committee of Lancaster County*, 9–10.

organisms or merely chemical compounds. He sent a drawing of the particles to Professor Jackson at the University of Pennsylvania.⁶³

Atlee was not the first physician to observe microscopic particles that he presumed were associated with cholera. Dr. William Budd described the microscopic particles he discovered in the excreta of cholera victims in 1849. Filippo Pacini published a report in Florence in 1854 in which he described the cholera bacterium he found in the excreta and intestinal contents with such accuracy that it still bears the name he gave to it. Snow had read about Pacini's discovery in December 1854 and, according to historian Richard J. Evans, "at least four other scientists working along similar lines in the 1850s also have a claim to be regarded as the discoverers of the bacillus, though in every case their claim is a good deal less strong."⁶⁴

Dr. Atlee appears not to have continued his microscopic research, perhaps because like so many American doctors, the daily challenges and demands of his medical practice consumed his time.⁶⁵ Atlee and the other researchers lacked the scientific methodology for furthering their investigations. Neither Louis Pasteur's seminal discovery that a disease organism can be cultured outside the body nor Robert Koch's perfection of the pure-culture techniques for doing so had been developed. It would be two decades before Koch created the analytical techniques needed to isolate, examine, and propagate the cholera bacillus. He applied these medical research methods to identify the cause of cholera definitively in 1883.

There is no written record of direct attacks from the medical establishment upon Atlee and Jackson after the publication of their articles challenging the orthodox view of cholera's etiology. However, from the comments of Hartshorne, Jewell, and others, there is little doubt that many of the fellows of the College of Physicians strongly disagreed with Atlee's and Jackson's conclusions. Atlee specifically referred to being challenged by Philadelphia doctors because of an article he wrote proving that cholera was contagious. In his "Reminiscences," he recounted, "when in a medical convention in Baltimore some of the Philadelphia physicians took exception to an article that I had published to this effect in a med-

⁶³ Ibid., 10

⁶⁴ Kenneth F. Kiple, ed., *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease* (Cambridge, 1993), 643; Vinten-Johansen et al., *Cholera, Chloroform, and the Science of Medicine*, 303; Evans, *Death in Hamburg*, 268.

⁶⁵ W. F. Bynam, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), 102.

ical review, I easily controverted them with an account of our experience in 1832, and demonstrated that with a proper quarantine in Philadelphia, Lancaster would have been protected from the spread of the disease hither.”⁶⁶

In 1854, the editor of the York, Pennsylvania, *People's Advocate* put little faith in the powers of medical science to discover the cause of cholera, “for the cure of the disease physicians have much or—if we should judge from their want of success at Columbia—everything to learn.” Considering how many years had passed since cholera first appeared in America, “we almost despair of its ever being brought . . . within the power of medicine.”⁶⁷ Despite this pessimistic assessment, the dispute over the etiology of cholera raised by Jackson and Atlee and the question of contagion, quarantine, and public health that was so forcefully argued by the doctors from the College of Physicians of Philadelphia would be settled within the next two decades. The miasma theory would fall into disrepute after the Civil War, invalidated by a new contagion theory based on John Snow's research and the growing acceptance of the germ theory. What, to the editor of the York newspaper, appeared to be the hopeless impotence of the medical profession should be seen instead as an example of how scientific disputation and the application of the latest medical theory and methodology permitted researchers to find the cause of, and a possible prevention for, cholera.

As Ackerknecht has pointed out, in an era that saw the triumph of anticontagion, the efforts of a handful of physicians to challenge the miasma theory of etiology and their attempts to use scientific enquiry to develop a valid contagion theory helped pave the way for the acceptance of the work of Snow and others.⁶⁸ Within a decade of the Broad Street epidemic, Snow's views would become accepted orthodoxy. Although the work of Drs. T. Heber Jackson and John Atlee are little known, their challenges to the miasma theory of cholera demonstrated a growing skepticism of that paradigm, which led to its eventual rejection by the medical community.

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⁶⁶ “70 Years in Medicine, Reminiscences of an Active Professional Career in Lancaster,” Lancaster Historical Society, MG22, 4.

⁶⁷ *People's Advocate*, Sept. 19, 1854.

⁶⁸ Ackerknecht, “Anticontagionism between 1821 and 1867,” 590.

Reconstructing Philadelphia: African Americans and Politics in the Post–Civil War North

AS ROBERT E. LEE and the Army of Northern Virginia moved north into central Pennsylvania in June 1863, some panicked Philadelphians began to reconsider what had been previously unthinkable. Since the summer of 1862, when Lincoln had authorized the recruitment of black soldiers, some of Philadelphia's black men had been drilling in anticipation of service in the Union army. Decades of antiblack violence on the city's streets, however, had led many of Philadelphia's political elite to fear the reaction to any effort to recruit black troops. As Lee advanced toward Gettysburg, Philadelphia's black community sprang into action, organizing a black company comprised of many of the most promising young men. Mayor Alexander Henry, who had earlier opposed the enlistment of black men, became convinced that Lee's army posed a greater threat to Philadelphia than did the potential reaction of its own negrophobic citizens.¹

The service of black troops in the Union army, in addition to being of crucial military importance, would prove to be a turning point in black Philadelphia politics. Throughout the antebellum North, free blacks had fought not just to end slavery, but for equal rights as well. Once it became clear that the Civil War was to become a war for emancipation, black Philadelphians joined the war effort with an almost unmatched patriotism, but also with a determination that, to quote one black veteran,

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¹ Harry C. Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant: Octavius V. Catto (1839–1871)," *Pennsylvania History* 44 (1977): 59; Alexander Henry to Andrew Curtin, June 17, 1863, Alexander Henry Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

"Soldiers in War be Citizens in Peace."² In the coming decade, the service of black men in the Union army, and the loyalty of black civilians to the Union cause, would become the most important focus of black claims to full citizenship. Perhaps just as important, many of the men who marched off in June 1863 to defend their city against Lee's invading army would become leaders in the effort to secure the fruits of their war effort for black Philadelphians.

If African Americans saw the war and emancipation as forces that would transform the position of northern blacks, there were many in the city of Philadelphia who saw things differently. Sidney George Fisher, a cantankerous Philadelphia patrician and staunch Lincoln supporter, wrote in his diary on July 8, 1863, "The abolitionists are trying to make what they can out of the enlistment of Negro soldiers & are likely to cause a reaction & injure their own cause and the real interest of the Negro. . . . The orators claim equality for the Negro race, the right of suffrage, &c. All this is as absurd as it is dangerous."³ The Democratic Party of Philadelphia made opposition to black rights a centerpiece of its political culture. As black activists seeking to reconstruct Philadelphia increasingly allied themselves with state and national Republicans in order to fight for racial equality and full citizenship, Philadelphia Democrats—and even some Republicans—came to see parallels between the Reconstruction of the Confederate states and the efforts of the state and federal governments to interfere in matters they felt to be purely of local concern. This resistance to state and federal interference would shape not only the response to efforts to secure the rights of black Philadelphians, but it would, in turn, contribute to the ambivalence many Philadelphians had toward efforts to secure the rights of southern blacks.

For much of the twentieth century, most American historians viewed the tumultuous years following the Civil War as a time in which corrupt northern politicians exploited the South through their allies—the carpet-baggers and the ignorant freedmen; Radicalism was largely a mask for the interests of northern businessmen. For this school of thought, most associated with the work of historian William Dunning, the year 1877 was significant because it marked the restoration of southern home rule and

² Philip S. Foner, "The Battle to End Discrimination against Negroes on Philadelphia Streetcars: (Part I) Background and Beginning of the Battle," *Pennsylvania History* 40 (1973): 269–71; *Christian Recorder*, Apr. 22, 1865.

³ Sidney George Fisher, *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, Covering the Years 1834–1871*, ed. Nicholas B. Wainwright (Philadelphia, 1967), 456.

the end of a corrupt era. Though black historians, most prominently W. E. B. Du Bois, countered this view, scholars largely ignored them. By the middle of the century, C. Vann Woodward and others rejected the racism of the Dunning school, but continued to put questions of economics at the center of the withdrawal of the federal troops from the South and the end of Reconstruction. Woodward contended that the end of Reconstruction was brought about by a rejuvenation of Whiggery and the desire of many southern Whigs-turned-Democrats both to be rid of carpetbaggers and to rebuild the southern economy.⁴

In the 1960s, historians, in part inspired by the civil rights movement of that era, began to view the efforts of Radical Reconstruction in a more favorable light. James McPherson, a Woodward student, argued that abolitionists continued to fight for racial egalitarianism and “to rally the conscience of a nation”; ultimately though, “the nation refused to follow their leadership.” John Hope Franklin argued that black leaders in the South had pursued a moderate course and that the white “carpetbaggers” were hardly the corrupt spoilsmen that the Dunning school had depicted. Hans Trefousse suggested that the Radical Republicans had, in fact, been a “vanguard for racial justice.” While these works did not focus specifically on the end of Reconstruction, they argued, at least implicitly, that Reconstruction had failed due to the persistence of northern racism.⁵

If much of Reconstruction historiography has focused on what transpired in the South, historians who have tried to account for the end of Reconstruction have paid particular attention to the flight of Liberal Republican reformers from the ranks of the Republican Party in the North. David Montgomery, using “the labor question” as a “prism with which to study the political spectrum of Reconstruction America,” places class conflict at the center of the ultimate rejection of Radical Reconstruction. Montgomery argues that the Radical vision of postwar America was, at least initially, consistent with the aims of the advocates of labor and that “the most aware and active spokesmen of the working

⁴ See William Archibald Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1898; New York, 1965); W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880*, intro by David Levering Lewis (1935; New York, 1992); C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (Boston, 1951).

⁵ James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton, NJ, 1964), 431; John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction: After the Civil War* (Chicago, 1961); Hans Louis Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice* (New York, 1968).

classes found themselves drawn into close-functioning relationships with the Radicals.” This loose coalition failed, however, when labor began to fight for legislation to assure the worker an eight-hour day. Radicals resisted legislation that would benefit any one class of citizens. While Radicals supported equality before the law, they opposed workers’ efforts to move “beyond equality.” Ultimately, according to Montgomery, “class conflict . . . was the submerged shoal on which Radical dreams foundered.”⁶

Much recent work, following Montgomery, has tended to see economic questions as the key to understanding the end of northern support for Reconstruction. Michael Les Benedict has argued that “the Radicals’ flirtation with a policy of land confiscation and redistribution in the South” alienated those who had embraced the doctrines of laissez-faire with an “almost idolatrous faith.” Reformers began to see freedmen as composing a “dangerous class” that threatened liberty. Heather Cox Richardson maintains that northerners, viewing the South through the lens of northern class conflict, increasingly saw the majority of ex-slaves as “the face of ‘communism’ or ‘socialism.’” Northerners turned against African Americans not because of racism (though she acknowledges that most were, in fact, racists) but because “black citizens, it seemed, threatened the core of American society.”⁷

Yet, if persistent northern racism does not provide a sufficient explanation for Reconstruction’s failure, the politics of postwar Philadelphia suggest that any understanding of northern attitudes toward efforts to reconstruct the South needs to be attuned to ongoing struggles over the place of African Americans in the North. Mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia begs a reconsideration of traditional geographic boundaries. The story of Reconstruction in Philadelphia more closely resembles the narrative commonly associated with the South than it does the account many recent historians have told of the post-Civil War North. In

⁶ David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872* (New York, 1967), x.

⁷ Michael Les Benedict, “Reform Republicans and the Retreat from Reconstruction,” in *The Facts of Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of John Hope Franklin*, eds. Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr. (Baton Rouge, LA, 1991), 53–78; Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865–1901* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 244–45; see also her more recent *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven, CT, 2007). The most influential recent historian of Reconstruction, Eric Foner, has advanced an explanation along these lines both in his *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988), and earlier in “Thaddeus Stevens, Confiscation and Reconstruction,” in *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1980), 128–49.

Philadelphia, the retreat from Radical politics was largely a result of the local political conflict surrounding the struggle for black equality. Crucial to the outcome of this political struggle were the ways in which Philadelphians saw, or did not see, connections between what was happening in the South and events transpiring on their own streets.

* * *

The fight for black equality dated to the first years of the early republic. Philadelphia was a center of the struggle for the abolition of slavery, and black Philadelphians had been at the forefront of opposition to the American Colonization Society. Barely a month after the founding of the ACS, a group meeting at Philadelphia's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church expressed its overwhelming aversion to colonization, arguing that it was a plan to strengthen slavery by removing free blacks from the South. They also contended that colonization undermined their attempts to fight for equality in the North. African American opposition to the ACS proved to be a catalyst for antebellum black politics. According to historian Leonard Sweet, "the commotion over the meaning, methods and motives of the American Colonization Society did more to generate black solidarity and engender a sense of identity among the black community than any other single issue in the first half of the nineteenth century." It was this newly energized black activism that constituted the crucial push leading some white abolitionists, most notably William Lloyd Garrison, to embrace the immediate abolition of slavery in the early 1830s.⁸

Philadelphia remained a nexus of black abolition for some time, but by the 1840s, violent attacks on Philadelphia abolitionists, and blacks in particular, had made some black Philadelphians wary of overt political action. Pennsylvania Hall opened in May 1838 as a meeting place for antislavery groups. Abolitionists from across the country, including William Lloyd Garrison, Angelina and Sarah Grimké, and Maria Chapman, gathered to celebrate the opening, but a few days later, a mob, citing concerns about racial "amalgamation," burned the hall to the ground while the police and fire department looked on. A number of other assaults on black Philadelphians followed, and by the late 1840s,

⁸ Leonard I. Sweet, *Black Images of America, 1784–1870* (New York, 1976), 35–68, quote on 39–40.

some of the most important black churches in Philadelphia refused to allow Frederick Douglass to speak from their pulpits.⁹

If many black Philadelphians withdrew from public abolitionism, it was often to pursue the fight against slavery by more clandestine means. Some black Philadelphians became involved in the vigilance committees that sought to undermine the activity of the fugitive slave law and to protect free blacks from kidnappers. Perhaps most prominently, wealthy black coal merchant William Still became one of the leaders of the loose association known as the Underground Railroad. Though much of Still's work remained secretive, in 1859 he wrote a letter to the conservative—formerly Whig—newspaper, the *North American*. In an August 31 letter, Still, writing as “a colored man, and constant reader of your paper,” humbly criticized the denial of the right to ride on the newly constructed streetcars to black Philadelphians “however unwell or aged, genteel or neatly attired.” He assured his readers that the residents of the poorer black sections of Philadelphia, upon whom he believed many whites had based their impressions of an entire race, were by no means representative of “the great body of colored people residing in Philadelphia.”¹⁰

If Still's letter strikes a modern reader as overly obsequious, it is worth noting two points. First, emphasizing the “respectability” of African Americans was a common antebellum rhetorical strategy. If Still's letter takes this strategy to an extreme, he was hardly an innovator.¹¹ Second, it is clear that Still's argument was aimed at a conservative audience. If he had wanted to address a more radical readership, he probably would have written to one of the other, more radical, Philadelphia newspapers. Still likely figured that a cautious letter would appeal to conservatives who were not otherwise disposed to support his fight for desegregation.

Though the city had elected a Republican mayor and had given a majority of its vote to Lincoln in 1860, it was by no means a friendly place for African Americans. Following an early 1862 visit to the city, Frederick Douglass wrote that “there is not perhaps anywhere to be found a city in which prejudice against color is more rampant than in Philadelphia.”

⁹ Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787–1848* (Philadelphia, 1988), 146–48; Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia, 1968), 132–37.

¹⁰ William Still, *A Brief Narrative of the Struggle for the Rights of the Colored People of Philadelphia in the City Railway Cars; and a Defence of William Still, Relating to His Agency Touching the Passage of the Late Bill* (1867; repr. Philadelphia, 1969), 4–5.

¹¹ On “respectability” as a strategy for black equality, see Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 202, 204–6.

When the People's Literary Institute scheduled white abolitionist orator George William Curtis, Mayor Henry advised the institute that "the appearance of [Curtis] as a lecturer before the People's Literary Institute on Thursday evening next will be extremely unwise. If I possessed the lawful power I would not permit his presence on that occasion." His previous appearance in the city had been on the occasion of John Brown's death, and a riot had followed. Curtis withdrew from the engagement, still insisting that "the right of free speech is undeniable."¹² Mayor Henry was primarily concerned with the preservation of public order.

Black Philadelphians continued their fight for equality, despite the ambivalence, if not outright hostility, of their elected officials. In 1860, a number of black Philadelphians, including William Still, established the Social, Civil and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Philadelphia. The purpose of the Statistical Association was "to labor earnestly for the right of suffrage . . . and to gather statistics with regard to the condition and wants of the colored people in general." The Statistical Association also offered a lecture series and in general promoted a sense of the cultural sophistication of black Philadelphia.¹³

In 1861, the Statistical Association, on the suggestion of William Still, established a "car committee." The first task of this committee would be to collect the signatures of prominent Philadelphians who were opposed to the segregation of the streetcars. The resulting petition, requesting that the Board of Presidents of the City Railways end segregation of its own free will, was printed in the *Evening Bulletin*. Despite these efforts, little progress was made. When action was taken in the state legislature, it came not from the representatives of Philadelphia, but at the hands of Morrow Lowry, a Radical state senator from the far end of the state. In 1861, Lowry introduced a bill prohibiting segregation in public transportation, but it was bottled up in the Judiciary Committee.¹⁴

From the start, black leaders connected the war with the issue of black civil rights and coupled their call for the enlistment of black troops with demands for equal suffrage. The annual conference of the African

¹² *Douglass' Monthly*, Feb. 1862; Alexander Henry to People's Literary Institute, Dec. 11, 1860, and George William Curtis to Alexander Henry, Dec. 13, 1860, Alexander Henry Papers.

¹³ "Constitution of the Social, Civil and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Philadelphia," American Negro Historical Society Collection, 1790–1905 (hereafter ANHSC), (microfilm ed.) reel 4, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁴ Still, *Brief Narrative*, 4–6; Philip S. Foner, "The Battle to End Discrimination against Negroes on Philadelphia Streetcars: (Part II) The Victory," *Pennsylvania History* 40 (1973): 362–63.

Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in Philadelphia, declared “that the freedom of the enslaved colored people of the South, and the desire to enjoy the right to equal suffrage, by the disfranchised colored people of the North, more than all other emoluments combined, have induced these people to enlist in the military service of the United States.” The admission of black troops to the Union armies would both “advance the cause of human liberty and true Christianity, through those benighted regions of the South” and “necessarily embrace the long neglected interests of the entire colored population.”¹⁵

The enlistment of black soldiers in the Union army also brought new life to the effort to desegregate the Philadelphia streetcars. One of the first black Philadelphians to enlist was the charismatic young school teacher Octavius V. Catto. He would lead a newly formed company. Catto eventually ascended to the rank of major and spent the duration of the war in Philadelphia, helping to organize the troops being raised in the city. Through his military service, Catto established ties with the national Republican Party and with national black political organizations. He attended the October 1864 National Convention of Colored Men, held in Syracuse, and in November of that year he helped to found the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League. Catto was selected as the first corresponding secretary of the organization and by February had helped to establish auxiliaries in sixteen cities. The Equal Rights League’s express purpose was the advocacy of black suffrage, but it also addressed other issues, including the conditions in black schools and the segregation of streetcars.¹⁶

Black Philadelphians continued their fight for equality, but many white leaders of the city’s Republican Party remained resistant. Though he had contributed his substantial literary talents to the cause of Lincoln’s reelection, Sidney Fisher expressed fear that Lincoln’s success would lead the Republican Party closer to Radicalism. He refused to join the Union League out of conviction that the organization supported black equality. If Mayor Henry had belatedly come around to supporting the enlistment of black troops, he had hardly become a racial egalitarian. When black leaders requested that he prevent the police force from taking a hand in

¹⁵ *Christian Recorder*, May 23, 1863.

¹⁶ Silcox, “Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant,” 61–62; on the Equal Rights League, see also Hugh Davis, “The Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League and the Northern Black Struggle for Legal Equality, 1864–1877,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 126 (2002): 611–34.

the ejection of black passengers from the streetcars, he refused, stating frankly that he did not wish “the ladies of his family to ride with colored people.” George Fahnestock, a wealthy Philadelphia Republican, applauded the enlistment of black troops for the reason that “we have been pouring out the best blood of the nation” in this Civil War “while the black man has hardly the privilege of digging ditches.”¹⁷

The tactics of the Statistical Association and the Equal Rights League differed in some respects, though perhaps not as much as some have suggested. The Statistical Association tended to take a more cautious course, especially in the early 1860s, pursuing what might be called a type of moral suasion within the city. By presenting a more accurate picture of black Philadelphians, and in many cases emphasizing the refinement of the black elite, its members intended to undermine the rationale for inequality. After the enlistment of black troops, this approach especially involved the publication of letters from wounded black soldiers who had been denied access to the streetcars. The Equal Rights League, on the other hand, sought to attack inequality more directly through political channels. It tended to lobby legislators and to build alliances with Radicals outside of the city, both in Harrisburg and in Washington. By 1866, however, the Statistical Association was raising money for congressional Radicals, and members were expressing frustration with their negotiations with Philadelphia streetcar owners. By that time, both Catto and his friend and fellow black Philadelphian and political activist Jacob C. White were members of both organizations. On certain issues, such as the fight for the desegregation of the streetcars, the two organizations worked in concert.¹⁸

Thanks in large part to the efforts of black Philadelphians, a few rail lines abandoned the policy of segregation in early 1865. This change was short-lived, however, as, according to one streetcar line, “the admission of colored people caused such pecuniary loss that they were compelled to refuse them thereafter.” Though the Republicans controlled both houses of the state legislature, as well as the mayor’s office, they proved reluctant to act on the streetcar issue. Senator Lowry, in Harrisburg, continued to

¹⁷ Fisher, *Philadelphia Perspective*, 471–72, 487–88; Foner, “Part II: The Victory,” 357; George W. Fahnestock diary, Mar. 26, 1863, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁸ Foner, “Part I: Background and Beginning of the Battle,” 282; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Association, Apr. 3 and Dec. 7, 1866, ANHSC, reel 4; Minutes of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, June 20, 1865, ANHSC, reel 1; Davis, “Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League,” 614–15.

champion the rights of black Philadelphians to ride on the streetcars. "The efforts of Mr. Lowry will be upon record," noted the *Christian Recorder*, "and will never be forgotten by the people of color in this country, nor by their friends." The Lowry bill did pass the senate by a slim margin, but it was defeated in the house by Philadelphia Republicans who claimed that voting for the bill would cost them their seats in the next election. In October 1865, Morton McMichael, editor of the conservative Republican newspaper the *North American*, was elected mayor of Philadelphia. He proved to be a weak and rather colorless mayor. Throughout 1866, neither the Republican nor Democratic parties of Philadelphia made any move to address the segregation of the streetcars.¹⁹

In March 1866, William D. Forten, Octavius Catto, and John C. Bowers traveled to Harrisburg to press the Equal Rights League's case on the streetcar issue. According to Forten, he had received promises of support from a number of state legislators. They also continued to raise money to aid Congressman William Kelley in his effort to fight for universal manhood suffrage on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. Kelley, speaking at the dedication of the new Liberty Hall on Lombard Street, trumpeted his support for "enfranchising *all* citizens," which would "thus settle the question of suffrage upon the basis of justice and equality." Nevertheless, frustration mounted. At a December 7 meeting of the Statistical Association, black abolitionist Steven Smith expressed his "entire lack of confidence" in the white people of Philadelphia.²⁰

* * *

As Philadelphians marked the start of 1867, the *Public Ledger*, an independent daily with the widest circulation in the city, applauded the efforts of Mayor McMichael to restrain the "rowdyism on the streets,"

¹⁹J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884* (Philadelphia, 1884), 821; *Christian Recorder*, Jan. 28, 1865; Dorothy Gondos Beers, "The Centennial City, 1865–1876," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York, 1982), 440; Foner, "Part II: The Victory," 366.

²⁰Minutes of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, Mar. 24 and Apr. 1, 1866, ANHSC, reel 1; *Christian Recorder*, Nov. 17, 1866; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Association, Dec. 7, 1866, ANHSC, reel 4. Though especially concerned with advancing the suffrage of black men, Kelley was also an early advocate of extending the vote to women. See Ira V. Brown, "William D. Kelley and Radical Reconstruction," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (1961): 329.

and it celebrated the general “healthfulness” of the city. The notable local events of the past year were enumerated in some detail, and the paper expressed its wishes for the city’s continued prosperity. The paper then turned its attention to events beyond the city’s borders. “Our *nation* too, has its hopes. It trusts that this year is to see North and South heartily reconciled and fully one again, politically and socially.”²¹

Similarly, black Philadelphians took the celebration of the New Year as an opportunity to reflect on their own continuing struggles for full citizenship and equality. Black veterans from across the country met in Philadelphia on January 5 to celebrate their loyalty to the Union cause and to call for the enfranchisement of African American men. The *Christian Recorder*, a paper published in Philadelphia by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, touted various achievements of the Radical Republicans in Congress, especially the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. There were, it noted, two black men sitting in the Massachusetts legislature. This accomplishment, it insisted, was but the beginning. “On! On! The wheel of progression goes, until we have colored Governors, Senators and Presidents. Let us never be backward in the well doing of any good and useful thing, and the Lord will bless us.”²²

If the struggles of 1866 had not yet produced tangible results for black Philadelphians, there was good reason to expect that the next year would bear more fruit. In February, the Pennsylvania legislature ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League continued its close contact with its allies in the state house. On February 5, Senator Lowry reintroduced legislation which had been written, at least in part, by the Equal Rights League’s car committee. The bill made it illegal for a Pennsylvania railroad corporation to make any distinction (some companies had already tried running separate white and black cars) based on race or color. On February 19, John C. Bowers reported to the executive board of the Equal Rights League that “prospects for its passage through the House are cheering . . . the [car] committee are sanguine that the governor will sign it without hesitancy.” Octavius Catto added, somewhat optimistically, that the “Philadelphia public” had endorsed the actions of the committee.²³

²¹ *Public Ledger*, Jan. 1, 1867.

²² *Christian Recorder*, Jan. 5 and 12, 1867.

²³ Foner, “Part II: The Victory,” 369; Still, *Brief Narrative*, 21; Minutes of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, Feb. 19, 1867, ANHSC, reel 1.

On March 22, despite some last-minute parliamentary subterfuge by Democratic legislators, the house and senate passed the Lowry bill on a nearly party-line vote. "Gov. Geary! has signed the Bill to force us to ride with negroes or be compelled to walk," wrote Philadelphia diarist William Armstrong, though he insisted that Geary had done so despite the wishes of a vast majority of Philadelphians. "The passage of this car bill," announced the *Christian Recorder*, "is a triumph of *right*." The *Recorder* felt it necessary, however, to challenge reports that African Americans had had an inappropriate influence on the bill's success. "Whatever force corrupt influences may have in engineering bills through a state Legislature, no one is so stupid as to suppose that our people had the resources to bring them to bear."²⁴ Obviously, there was some anxiety among white Philadelphians as to the influence black members of their community seemed to have exerted over the legislation. This anxiety over black political participation would prove crucial in undermining support for Reconstruction, both in the North and South.

The Radical Republican journal the *Press* applauded the law which "put an end to the unjust distinction which has too long been maintained, and afford[ed] a much needed convenience to a large number of worthy citizens." Tellingly, however, it used the passage of the Lowry bill to criticize the refusal of the state legislature to allow Philadelphia to run streetcars on Sunday. This issue, in fact, had received much more coverage in the local press than had the fight over desegregation. Republican Mayor Morton McMichael, in his annual message, decried the "legislative interference" in "the supervision of our thoroughfares." The city's "functions are usurped or disregarded," he insisted, and "measures affecting the city and the city only are adopted without our sanction." Senator Lowry stood out as a chief opponent of allowing the cars to run on Sunday.²⁵

The Philadelphia Democratic Party sought both to exploit this split in the Republican ranks and to shine a light on that party's "friendly" attitude toward African Americans. During the debate over the bill in the senate, Philadelphian W. H. McCandless had stated bluntly, "I do not desire to ride with them." The *Democratic Age* denounced the supposed inconsistency of the Republican Party's position on the streetcars and suggested that the Republican legislators both supported streetcar inte-

²⁴ Entry of Mar. 23, 1867, William G. Armstrong diary, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; *Christian Recorder*, Mar. 23, 1867.

²⁵ *Press*, Mar. 24 and 29, 1867; *Public Ledger*, Mar. 29, 1867.

gration and opposed the running of cars on Sunday because they were wealthy enough to ride in their own carriages and did not need the public cars. If Republicans were sometimes hesitant to play up their support for the rights of African Americans, Democrats were not quite so shy. "The unity of the Radical Party," insisted the *Age*, "depends upon the agitation of the negro question." Without it, the paper argued, the party would fall apart.²⁶

The Radicals who had spearheaded the Lowry bill in the Pennsylvania legislature made it clear that they welcomed the contributions of Philadelphia's black political activists. They singled out the efforts of William Forten, David Bowser, and Octavius Catto in a letter that was read before a mass meeting held at Liberty Hall in celebration of the passage of the bill. "Gentlemen," it began, "the undersigned feel it due to you to make this statement, setting forth the services you have rendered your race . . . the bill is essentially your own, having been drawn by your chairman, Mr. Forten." The Liberty Hall meeting celebrated the alliance between Radical state legislators and black Philadelphians, and many participants took advantage of the opportunity to denounce the more cautious efforts of those who had tried to cultivate the support of conservative Republicans. William Still was a particular target of scorn. "There will be a funeral at the coal yard now!" shouted one celebrant.²⁷

Black Philadelphians immediately set to work testing the new legislation. On March 25, three days after the passage of the Lowry bill, a conductor of the Tenth and Eleventh Street Railway was arrested on the complaint of "a mulatto woman named Caroline R. Lacount" (who happened to be Octavius Catto's fiancée). She claimed to have been ejected from the car on account of her race. The conductor was ultimately convicted and fined one hundred dollars. Black women, invariably characterized as light skinned and respectable, had long been a crucial element in the fight to end streetcar segregation despite criticism from some black men.²⁸

²⁶ Ira V. Brown, "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro, 1865–1887," *Pennsylvania History* 28 (1961): 49; *Age*, Mar. 27 and 30, 1867.

²⁷ *Press*, Mar. 28, 1867; Still, *Brief Narrative*, 2.

²⁸ *Press*, Mar. 27, 1867; Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant," 64–65. My understanding of the importance of women in challenging the segregation of Philadelphia's streetcars has been informed by Judith Giesberg, "Civil War, Civil Rights: Philadelphia Women's Street Car Battle, 1861–1867" (paper presented at Underground Railroad and Black History Conference, Temple University, Feb. 2006).

The Radical press picked up on this strategy and printed a “scene in a passenger car” on March 25. According to the *Press*’s correspondent, he witnessed a scene in which “a car pretty well filled with a promiscuous body of white people stopped at a street intersection. An elderly, well-dressed, colored woman entered.” There was no seat vacant, so a middle-aged white “gentleman” rose and offered her his seat. “Thank you sir,” she replied, “I do not wish to impose.” “Not at all, madame,” he insisted. In the meantime, two “vulgar” and “boorish” young men uttered some comments about “niggers riding in the cars.” One approached the gentleman who had given up his seat and asked him if he was “fond of niggers.” “I am not aware,” responded the gentleman, “that this respectable, well-dressed and well behaved colored woman, who is old enough perhaps to be your grandmother, is a nigger.” “Well she’s a nigger anyhow, and niggers oughtn’t to be allowed to ride in the cars.” “Oh shut up,” interposed a rough looking working man, “you’re more of a nigger than she is.”²⁹

The scene captures what Radical Republicans, both black and white, hoped would be the larger narrative of the desegregation of the streetcars. There is clearly a contrast between the “respectable, well-dressed and well behaved” black woman and the “vulgar” and “boorish” young ruffians. The white gentleman, of course, gives up his seat and is willing to defend the woman against insult; he links racial tolerance with manly respect for women. If the primary defender of racial tolerance is the white gentleman, the day is finally won when his—and the “respectable” woman’s—argument wins over the “rough looking working man.” It is he who makes explicit the challenge to a race-based hierarchy represented in the contrast between the black woman and the two white men.

Not all Philadelphia Republicans were as supportive of black equality as were the editors of the *Press*. Sidney George Fisher remained opposed to the rights of black Philadelphians, though he saw black suffrage as just punishment for the disloyalty of the South. “This is poetical justice, and though I hate negro suffrage and all . . . as much as anyone,” he wrote in his diary, “I cannot help a feeling of satisfaction at beholding it.” Philadelphia Democrats seem to have recognized that many Republicans who supported efforts to defend blacks in the South would not support similar efforts in their own city. Philadelphia Democrats had tried to frame the elections of 1866 as a contest over black rights, even insisting that “Every man who votes for Geary or for a Radical Candidate for

²⁹ *Press*, Mar. 25, 1867.

Congress, votes as surely for Negro Suffrage and Negro Equality, as if they were printed on his ballot" (figure 1). In the wake of the desegregation of the streetcars, they attacked the pro-black sympathies of Radicals with a renewed vigor. "If the Republican Party in this state is in favor of Negro suffrage," argued the *Democratic Age*, "let them fly that flag openly. So far they have not done so. Ours is a white man's flag, and white men will uphold and protect it." Philadelphia Democrats sought to link the efforts of Radicals in Congress to reconstruct the South with the efforts of Radicals in the state legislature (and their black allies) to impose racial equality on the city of Philadelphia. They celebrated the defeat of the Republican Party in Connecticut in spring elections as a rejection of "Connecticut Reconstruction." As the editors of the *Age* explained, "they would not bow down to the mandates of a minority faction, which having desolated the southern portion of the nation, threatened to invade and subjugate the North."³⁰

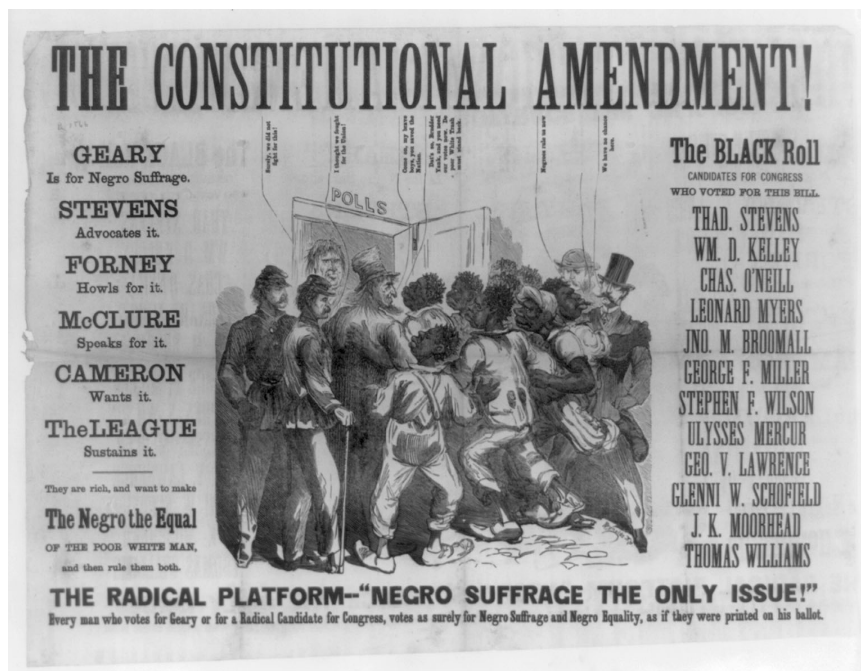


Figure 1. "The Constitutional Amendment! Geary Is for Negro Suffrage . . .," political cartoon, 1866. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

³⁰ Fisher, *Philadelphia Perspective*, 526; "The Constitutional Amendment! Geary Is for Negro Suffrage . . .," political cartoon, 1866; *Age*, Mar. 8 and Apr. 3, 1867.



Figure 2. "The Two Platforms," 1866. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

While black Philadelphians shifted their emphasis from desegregation to suffrage, Democrats sought to exploit differences within the Republican coalition. Radicals continued to trumpet the rights of black Philadelphians, but the more conservative editors of the *North American* sought to defend the Reconstruction of the southern states. Yet, they downplayed "local issues," and made no mention of legislation concerning blacks in Philadelphia. As the October elections drew near, the Democratic press sought both to emphasize the inconsistency in the Republican ranks and to portray the efforts of local Republicans as an effort to "reconstruct" Philadelphia. "They have declared that the negroes shall vote in the southern states . . . Proceeding upon this assumed power, they now declare their intention to force negro suffrage upon this state." While Philadelphia Democrats had a long tradition of tarring their opponents as the friends of African Americans (whether or not such an allegation was justified), the use of federal power to enforce black equality in the South, and the specter of the same in the North, gave their racial appeals new resonance.³¹

³¹ Minutes of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, Aug. 15, 1867, ANHSC, reel 1; *North American*, Oct. 1 and 7, 1867; *Age*, Oct. 4 and 5, 1867. On Philadelphia Democrats' tradi-

The Democratic Party carried the day, winning election of its entire local ticket, headed by Peter Lyle, its candidate for sheriff. "We have been defeated," admitted the *North American*. Philadelphia Democrats celebrated their first significant electoral victory since the start of the Civil War. Amid the usual allegations of fraud at the polls, Republicans attributed the defeat to honest—and healthy—disagreements within the party and insisted that "the next election, learned through the results of this, will bring our strength together again." Sidney Fisher was more specific and assigned blame for his party's loss to "Negro suffrage and Sunday liquor laws . . . The gross corruption and mismanagement of our city government had nothing to do with the result in this city." Fisher, disgusted with the radical politics of his own Republican Party, had, in fact, refused to vote at all.³²

Fisher was not alone in his assessment of the election results. "*The opposition to Negro Suffrage in the South*, as well as the North, has been the principle cause of our triumph everywhere," insisted ex-president James Buchanan. "Abandon this, & we are gone." The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* worried that the election would lead to the decline of Republican support for black equality. "The milk-and-water Republicans" immediately sought to form a new party, it noted. "The essential characteristic of the proposed new party is the omission of the negro." A piece of postelection satire celebrated "The Great Negro Party—Born, 1856—Died, Oct. 8, 1867" (figure 3).³³

Nevertheless, Radicals in the Pennsylvania legislature did not back off in their advocacy of black equality. In January 1868, John Hickman, a state legislator from Chester County (just southwest of Philadelphia), introduced a resolution to strike from the state constitution the word "white" while also adding a literacy requirement. When it finally came to a vote, however, a majority of Republicans joined the Democrats in defeating it by a tally of sixty-eight to fourteen. William Kelley scolded

tional racial politics, see Eric Ledell Smith's discussion of the partisan political context of the disfranchisement of black Pennsylvanians in "The End of Black Voting Rights in Pennsylvania: African Americans and the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1837–1838," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (1998): 279–99.

³² Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 834; *North American*, Oct., 10, 1867; Fisher, *Philadelphia Perspective*, 533.

³³ James Buchanan to Augustus Schell, Nov. 9, 1867, in *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, ed. John Bassett Moore (New York, 1960); *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Oct. 19, 1867; "The Salt River Gazette—Extra. Wednesday, Oct 9. 1867," political cartoon, 1866, Library Company of Philadelphia.

The Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League remained active. Its “Address to the Colored People of the South,” published in 1868, warned the freedmen of the South against “our old insidious foe, Colonization.” In the years following the end of the Civil War, various organizations, both in the North and in the South, continued to advocate and promote the colonization of African Americans. Some southern freedmen, in the face of rising racial violence, saw emigration to the west coast of Africa as their best option. The Equal Rights League insisted that attempts to induce freedmen to leave the United States were intended to undermine the efforts of Radical Republicans to support racial equality.³⁵ Clearly, the members of the Equal Rights League saw that their own fight for equality in Pennsylvania was inextricably bound to national political struggles over the place of African Americans in postwar society.

The *Christian Recorder* also drew parallels between conflict in the South and the suffrage struggles of black Philadelphians. It termed recent riots in Georgia “an expression of the old rebel and pro-slavery malignity, encouraged by the forbearance of the North and by the open sympathies of the Democratic party.” Such violence, argued the *Recorder*, only served to aid the cause of black suffrage. “In the blindness of their passion, they fail to see how every such murderous deed reacts upon the North, repels quiet thinking people from the idea of trusting power into such hands.” The actions of these individuals led those who would otherwise have been opposed to black suffrage to instead support “the elevation of the loyal of whatever complexion.” Black Philadelphians continued to emphasize loyalty as a prime argument for black suffrage.³⁶

In the October 1868 elections, Philadelphia Democrats sought to repeat their successes of the previous year. This time the prize at the top of the ticket was the mayor’s office. Mayor McMichael declined to run for a second term, and in his place Republicans nominated Hector Tyndale. Democrats ran veteran politician Daniel Fox. Once again, their campaign leaned heavily on their opposition to black equality. The Democratic Age warned that, if given the chance, Republicans would do in Philadelphia what they were doing in the South. “Continue the Radicals in authority and what security is there that Negro suffrage and equality will not be

³⁵ “Address to the Colored People of the South,” Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League records, ANHSC, reel 1; on the colonization movement in the postwar South, see Claude A. Clegg III, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 249–70.

³⁶ *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 3, 1868.

forced upon the North as it has been upon the South by 'a small rectangular piece of steel.'"³⁷

Philadelphia Radicals continued to advocate for black equality, but the more conservative *North American* backed off somewhat. Its extensive lists of reasons "Why" the voters of Philadelphia should vote for the Republican Party referred mostly to economic issues, particularly the protective tariff. The list included no mention of issues relating to black equality or even to Reconstruction. The *North American* did cite the wartime "disloyalty" of Democratic "copperheads," but protection was the overwhelming theme of its partisan advocacy.³⁸

The Democrats focused on what appeared to be the Republican weakness—refusing to fight an election on the grounds of economic issues. "The Radicals in our state legislature passed the law which forced negroes into the cars against the will of the majority of the people," insisted an editorial in the *Age*. The Democrats of Philadelphia, on the other hand, stood with the people and with the constitution. "The people will decide whether negroes shall vote and hold office in Pennsylvania, in defiance of the Constitution of the state." On the morning of the election, the paper explained that the election hinged on one question: "Do you believe there is a difference between the negro and the white man?"³⁹

Once again, the Democratic Party of Philadelphia won convincing victories at the polls. Fox defeated Tyndale by a margin of two thousand votes. Democrats elected seven men to the state house versus the Republicans' eleven (as compared to three versus fifteen just two years before). The *North American* suggested that the result was largely determined by fraud. According to an early twentieth-century historian of Philadelphia, Democratic sheriff Peter Lyle had sworn in "a large posse of bartenders, brothel keepers, and proprietors of rat and dog pits" to police the polls and allowed voters imported from Baltimore to swell the Democratic vote.⁴⁰ Considering the roughly 50 percent increase in turnout over the previous mayoral election, there is no doubt some truth to allegations of fraud. On the other hand, despite the Democratic gains of 1867, much of the city remained in Republican hands. Even if

³⁷ *Age*, Oct. 3, 1868.

³⁸ *North American*, Oct. 3 and 6, 1868.

³⁹ *Age*, Oct. 5 and 13, 1868.

⁴⁰ *North American*, Oct. 15, 1868; Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and Its People: A Record of 225 Years* (Philadelphia, 1912), 2:399.

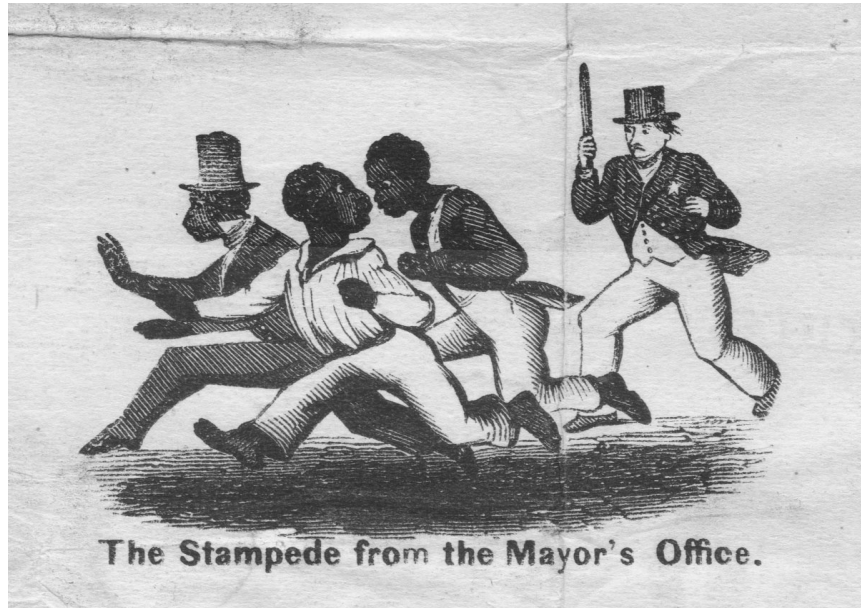


Figure 4. Detail from the “Salt River Express. Wednesday, October 14, 1868.” Library Company of Philadelphia.

Republicans had not yet perfected the techniques that would establish their dominance over the city in the next decade, it is hard to imagine that their own vote was not inflated somewhat.

Alexander McClure, Republican politician and future leader of the Liberal faction of the Philadelphia party, suggested that Tyndale lost because he was “not entirely orthodox in faith,” and he noted that the results of the election “gave little promise of future Republican mastery in the city that was claimed to be the great loyal city of the nation.” There is no question that the results of the election cannot be attributed to a single cause. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Philadelphia’s Democratic Party had been victorious for two years in a row, running primarily on its opposition to black equality. A postelection cartoon titled “The Stampede from the Mayor’s Office” depicted three black men being chased by a white police officer (figure 4).⁴¹

⁴¹ Alexander Kelly McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1905), 233; “Salt River Express. Wednesday, October 14, 1868,” political cartoon, 1868, Library Company of Philadelphia.

If some Philadelphia Republicans had begun to de-emphasize the party's support for African American rights, black Philadelphians continued to press for the right to vote. Following the overwhelming defeat of the suffrage bill in the Pennsylvania legislature, they increasingly focused on lobbying Radical Republicans in Congress. Jacob C. White petitioned Philadelphia Radical congressman William D. Kelley to support a proposed amendment to the constitution that would guarantee black men the right to vote. "I am happy to inform you," replied Kelley on December 7, 1868, "that I introduced just such an amendment this morning." Kelley would later claim responsibility for helping to guide the amendment through the Judiciary Committee.⁴²

Early in 1869, Congress submitted the suffrage amendment to the states for ratification. Democratic leaders in Pennsylvania, once again framing themselves as the defenders of popular opinion, argued that the matter should not be decided by the state legislature but should be submitted to a popular referendum. Instead, in March, the Republicans in both houses voted to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment in a strictly party-line vote. Philadelphia Democrats denounced Republicans for going back on their insistence in the 1868 election that "the question of suffrage in all the loyal states properly belongs to the people of those states." Democrats played on the divisions within the Republican Party on the question of black equality, refusing to allow conservative Republicans to dodge the issue. "They want to invest the Radical majority in Congress with the power to make Chinese and negro voters in Pennsylvania at pleasure," trumpeted the *Age*. The conservative *North American* offered a weak defense of black suffrage, suggesting that Democrats opposed the enfranchising of black voters out of fear that they would all vote for the Republican Party.⁴³

In response to the party's waning fortunes, especially in Philadelphia, Republicans in the state legislature passed a registry law on April 19, 1869. This law, which applied only to the city of Philadelphia, placed the city's entire voting administration in the hands of the Republican Party. The Board of Canvassers, under the direction of Republican district attorney William B. Mann, had the final say on who was eligible to vote. The law's purpose was to combat the fraud that had supposedly led the

⁴² William D. Kelley to Jacob C. White Jr., Dec. 7, 1868, ANHSC, reel 1; Brown, "William D. Kelley," 329.

⁴³ Brown, "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro," 52; *Age*, Oct. 6, 1869; *North American*, Oct. 5 and 6, 1869.

Democrats to victory in the last two local elections. In reality, it allowed the Republican Party of Philadelphia to establish control over the city. "It was this registry law," wrote reformer Alexander McClure, that led to "the debauchery of the ballot."⁴⁴

There is little doubt that the act helped stop the decline of the Republican Party in the state's largest city. Republican governor John White Geary won reelection based on a solid victory in Philadelphia (95 percent of his margin of victory came from the city). Philadelphia Democrats had run, once again, on their opposition to black equality. "The next movement of Geary and his friends," insisted the *Age*, "will be to force [the negro] into the legislature, the jury box, upon the bench and into hotels and all places of amusement." They attributed their failure to "the neglect of duty and apathy of our friends." Others, however, insisted that Republican victory, and the surprisingly low turnout, was a result of the suppression of the Democratic vote under the registry law.⁴⁵

By the middle of 1870, the efforts of Republican leaders of Philadelphia to counter the party's decline in the city had produced their own problems. After taking beatings at the hands of the Democratic Party for two years over the issue of black equality, Republicans had once again seized control of Philadelphia. In 1865, James McManes, a Republican political organizer, had become a trustee of the city's Gas Trust. From this post, he established himself as perhaps the most powerful and influential man in Philadelphia, controlling thousands of patronage jobs, not to mention lucrative government contracts. By 1870, many considered him the "King" of Philadelphia, and using the registry law, he and a few others dominated the city's politics, establishing a machine to rival William M. Tweed's in New York.⁴⁶

The success of Philadelphia's Republican machine was not without its critics. In the summer of 1870, a group of Independent Republicans decided to support its own candidates for the fall elections. According to Alexander McClure, who became a leader of this group, the reasons for the disillusionment with the regular Republican Party were several. "The reconstruction policy of the government as administered under Grant became especially offensive to many of the most thoughtful Republicans."

⁴⁴ Erwin Stanley Bradley, *The Triumph of Militant Republicanism: A Study of Pennsylvania and Presidential Politics, 1860-1872* (Philadelphia, 1964), 364; McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 239.

⁴⁵ Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 354-56; *Age*, Oct. 11 and 16, 1869.

⁴⁶ Beers, "Centennial City," 438-39.

Others were alienated by the “severe factional mastery in Grant’s administration.” Above all, however, McClure cited the corrupt party management of Philadelphia under the registry law as his own reason for rejecting the party. The Liberal Republicans were concerned about corruption in the Reconstruction South, but they were more concerned about the political situation at home. McClure also argued that the Republican Party’s support for the Fifteenth Amendment diminished its appeal. “There is no reason to doubt that the advent of colored suffrage was the chief, if not the sole, obstacle to Republican success in the state in the contest of 1870.” Democrats sought to depict the newly enfranchised black voters as the tools of corrupt Republican politicians. In a curious inversion of the Democratic depiction of Reconstruction in the South, they alleged that black men were surreptitiously being shipped north from Baltimore in order to “vote the radical ticket” and to “kill any colored man that voted for a democrat.”⁴⁷

This was the atmosphere in which black Philadelphians were to cast their first votes since 1838. Democrats declined to run candidates for most offices, hoping for a majority from the combined Democratic and Liberal Republican vote. Radicals, recognizing that the defection of Liberals posed a threat, even with the advantage of the registry law, hoped that the new black voters would take the Liberals’ place. At a meeting held in April 1870 to celebrate the success of the Fifteenth Amendment, Octavius Catto declared that “the black man knows on which side of the line to vote.” The *Radical Press* printed an address issued by the State Equal Rights League calling upon all black men to support the Republican Party and to reject “any Democratic, Independent or Conservative candidate for office. They are all one and the same.”⁴⁸

Both the *Press* and the conservative *North American* mentioned the Republican Party’s economic issues above all else. The *Press*, however, trumpeted the enfranchisement of black men and offered assurances of their suitability as citizens. It also warned that “The partisan police force of Mayor Fox will no doubt interfere in every possible manner with the election tomorrow.” The *North American*, on the other hand, while supporting the regular Republican ticket, entirely avoided the issue of black voting, offering the vague statement, “municipal independence is of as

⁴⁷ Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 359, 367–69; McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 237–39, 293, 441; *Sun* (Baltimore), Oct. 10, 1870.

⁴⁸ Brown, “Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro,” 53; *Public Ledger*, Apr. 27, 1870; *Press*, Oct. 6, 1870.

much consequence as state independence, though of late our cities have become the footballs of state legislatures.”⁴⁹

On the morning of the election, the *Press* predicted that there would be violence at the polls. Nevertheless, the Radical editors of the *Press* observed, “it is the right and duty of every colored man to get in his vote today.” They continued, “To die at the polls in defense of civil freedom is not a less grand or acceptable sacrifice than death on the field.” By noon, it seemed as if the words of the *Press* might have been prophetic. Recognizing the potentially explosive situation on their hands, the election authorities in one ward decided that white and black voters would vote separately, first white, then black. A rumor spread that the black voters, who had formed a line to wait their turn, would not be allowed to vote at all. According to the *Press*, Mayor Fox’s police force took the lead in keeping black voters from the polls, and “it became evident that a superior authority was needed,” both to prevent violence and to ensure the right of black men to vote. Under the terms of the Force Act, which had been intended to curb the terrorist activity of the Ku Klux Klan in the South, General E. M. Gregory, U.S. marshal for eastern Pennsylvania, sent a company of marines to Philadelphia under Colonel Forney. William Armstrong had a different take: “Voted Dem Ticket—No Niggers visible at our division. . . . Forney’s drunken son took possession of the polls at 5th and Lombard with a company of marines. US Marshalls also controlled the election—illegal nigger repeaters were arrested after voting 3 times. Many other similar outrages were perpetrated.”⁵⁰

The election results were mixed. Incumbent Republican congressman for the Second District Charles O’Neill lost to the Liberal Republican candidate, John V. Creeley. Colonel Robert Dechert scored an unexpected victory against a Republican incumbent to give the Democrats a one-seat majority in the state senate. For the most part, however, the regular Republicans held onto their seats. Alexander McClure predictably attributed this success to the registry law and to “the negroes” who “were aroused on the subject.” Mayor Fox telegraphed the governor, denouncing the decision to send federal troops to police the city. “I am amply able to maintain the peace of the city,” he insisted. The Democratic press questioned the constitutionality of the presence of federal troops on the streets

⁴⁹ *Press*, Oct. 10, 1870; *North American*, Oct. 10, 1870.

⁵⁰ *Press*, Oct. 12, 1870; Brown, “Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro,” 53; Silcox, “Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant,” 72; Entry for Oct. 11, 1870, William G. Armstrong diary.

of Philadelphia.⁵¹

Throughout the North, the Democratic press cited the events in Philadelphia as proof that the tyranny of the federal government over the South was leading inexorably toward a similar tyranny in the North. It was predicted, ominously, that New York would be the next city in which federal troops would be used to secure Republican victory. *Pomeroy's Democrat* printed a satirical letter of President Grant's cousin, "Terence McGrant," insisting that the president was being pressured into sending troops to New York, though he did not want to do so, because "he sent throops to North Carolina, and they helped the Democrats get the most terrible majority ever known." Less comically, the *Macon Weekly Telegraph* predicted a backlash against the Republican Party now that northerners were suffering that which had been intended only for the South.⁵²

That backlash came quite soon to Pennsylvania. In his New Year's message, erstwhile Radical Republican governor John White Geary called for the end of the use of troops to patrol polling places throughout the South. He linked this practice with events in Philadelphia. As early as January 1870, Geary had privately expressed his frustration with having to carry the burden of the "sins of both state and national Governments, the questions relating to reconstruction, the 15th Amendment with the whole question of Negro Suffrage." Events in Philadelphia gave him an opportunity to escape from these troublesome issues. "At the last October election, troops were stationed in Philadelphia for the avowed purpose of enforcing the election laws." This was done, he insisted, "without the consent or even the knowledge of the civil authorities of either the city or state, and without any expressed desire on the part of the citizens." He went on to call the use of federal troops to police the election in Philadelphia "*a measure which meets my unqualified disapproval.*"⁵³

Both the *Press* and the *North American* printed the governor's message, but they did not comment on the section concerning the use of troops in Philadelphia. The *Age* displayed no such reticence. "It is cer-

⁵¹ Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 359; Brown, "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro," 53; McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 284–86; *Press*, Oct. 13, 1870; *Age*, Jan. 5, 1871.

⁵² *New Hampshire Patriot*, Oct. 19, 1870; *Sun*, Oct. 21, 1870; *Pomeroy's Democrat* (New York), Oct. 26, 1870; *Macon (GA) Weekly Telegraph*, Oct. 25, 1870.

⁵³ *North American*, Jan. 5, 1871; John White Geary to Rev. Edward R. Geary, Jan. 7, 1870, John White Geary Collection, Pennsylvania State Archives.

tainly an encouraging sign of the times that our radical governor wakes up, though rather tardily, to the military outrage perpetrated in this state, upon the election day this October last." It returned to an old theme, noting that "it was a part of the general conspiracy to obtrude the military power into elections, and to extend, gradually to the North, the system of military coercion that was introduced in the Southern states."⁵⁴ This section of Geary's speech was widely reproduced in papers throughout the nation and provoked predictions of the demise of Radical Republicanism. "When such pronounced and influential Radicals join in the condemnation of this Congressional usurpation," insisted Georgia's *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, "we are encouraged to hope for its speedy repeal."⁵⁵

All factions prepared for an October election in which the Democrat-controlled police would be the only force securing the Philadelphia polls. On October 6, an item in the *Age* declared that "negro repeaters are the hope of the 'Ring' in the 5th, 7th and 8th wards." Another report noted "the colonizers and repeaters who have congregated in the vicinity of Tenth and Lombard Streets, are being watched" and warned that "any attempt to cast an illegal vote, in the First Precinct of the Seventh Ward, will be visited with condign punishment." Later that week, the paper stated ominously that "negro repeaters will receive a warm welcome at the polls tomorrow."⁵⁶

Philadelphia's Republicans sought to rally black voters to the cause. "Colored citizens!" announced the *Press*, "Do not be intimidated by your Democratic enemies An organized system of violence may be expected tomorrow." In response to the criticism of Liberal Republicans, the party also sought to assume the mantle of reform. The proposed reforms would "banish vice and crime from our city," but they would especially "put an end to the frauds upon the ballot box by the Fourth Ward Democracy," which Republicans compared to Boss Tweed's Tammany Hall.⁵⁷

On election day, violence erupted between black and white voters—unsurprisingly, in the very areas where the *Age* had predicted it would. Octavius Catto left the Institute for Colored Youth, which closed at the first sign of disturbance, in order to go to the polls. White ruffians threatened him a number of times. Finally, as he was walking down Ninth

⁵⁴ *Press*, Jan. 5, 1871; *North American*, Jan. 5, 1871; *Age*, Jan. 5, 1871.

⁵⁵ *New Hampshire Patriot*, Jan. 11, 1871; *Weekly Patriot* (Harrisburg), Jan. 11, 1871; *Eastern Argus* (Portland, ME), Jan. 26, 1871; *Columbus (GA) Ledger-Enquirer*, Jan. 8, 1871.

⁵⁶ *Age*, Oct. 6 and 9, 1871.

⁵⁷ *Press*, Oct. 9 and 10, 1871.

Street toward South Street, a white man came up behind him and called out his name. Catto, who had with him an unloaded gun, moved away from the man later identified as Frank Kelly, an associate of Democratic politician William McMullen. Kelly shot him three times, killing him instantly, and then fled the scene. Two other black men were also killed in election day violence.⁵⁸

Republican newspapers blamed the day's violence on Mayor Fox. The *Press* lamented the death of Catto, who "believed in his race, and in the great principles of that party which has always championed it. And for this cause he died." The *North American* observed "how base and dastardly the police had really become, let the record of yesterday's riot bear witness." The *Democratic Age*, on the other hand, blamed the violence on "colored radical roughs" and praised the conduct of Mayor Fox and the police force. "Radical negroes," it claimed, "beat their own race from the polls, at the late election, who desired to vote the Democratic ticket, and that was the cause of the disturbance. The blood shed is on their heads." Even the *Age*, though, had complimentary words for Catto, "a man of culture and prominence among our colored citizens," though it suggested that he had probably instigated the conflict that cost him his life.⁵⁹

At a mass meeting on October 21, black and white citizens protested the events of the past election and called for an inquiry into the police force's actions. The investigation resulted in no convictions. The death of one man was ruled "accidental," owing to the fact that he had a chronic kidney disorder, which eventually would have killed him anyway. "It was common in those days," noted Alexander McClure, "for Republican speakers to accuse the South of hindering negro suffrage by violence, and at times by murder." But in Philadelphia, "the Republican citadel of the state, three murders were committed . . . solely because they attempted to exercise their rights as citizens and electors, and not a single criminal was brought to punishment."⁶⁰

McClure would become a leader of the Pennsylvania Liberal Republicans, who sought to prevent the reelection of President Grant in 1872. Historians have long recognized the importance of these reformers to the decline of Radicalism and have agreed that the revolt of the Liberal

⁵⁸ Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant," 72–73; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish became White* (New York, 1995), 171.

⁵⁹ *Press*, Oct. 11, 1871; *North American*, Oct. 11, 1871; *Age*, Oct. 11, 1871.

⁶⁰ Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant," 73; Ignatiev, *How the Irish became White*, 171; McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 287–89.

Republican movement, in the words of historian Michael Les Benedict, “would sap the [Republican] party of much of its intellectual vigor and its crusading spirit.” They have, of course, disagreed over the causes of this defection. In Philadelphia, the Liberals fused their critique of corruption and federal control in the former Confederate states with a critique of the same in their own city and state. They called for an end to Reconstruction, both North and South. Not only did they criticize the use of federal force to police elections—a force that had been a necessary guarantee of the right of black men to vote—but their denunciations of corruption implicitly leaned on the association of black voters with allegedly fraudulent Republican electoral practices. The quest to defeat Grant was, of course, unsuccessful, but in the long run, Liberals helped to undermine Radical Republicanism in Pennsylvania. Many of the conservatives who remained regular Republicans had never been supportive of black equality, except as a means of undermining the power of disloyal former Confederates in the South. By the late 1870s, even staunch Radicals, such as William D. Kelley, drifted away from the fight for black equality, and in 1877, the once-Radical *Press* declared that the nation was “weary of sectional agitations and sectional issues.”⁶¹

The riots of 1871 marked the retreat of the Philadelphia Republican Party from aggressive local defense of black equality as well. Black Philadelphians remained an important part of the Republican electoral coalition, but the violence at the polls led to a general retreat from most other political activity. According to one late nineteenth-century history of Philadelphia, “the shooting of Catto awakened a bitterness of feeling in his race which was not allayed for years afterward.” In 1872, the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League moved its headquarters from Philadelphia to Reading. Isaiah Wears assumed leadership of the city’s black Republicans, but he exhibited none of Catto’s charisma and steered a cautious course. It would not be until 1887 that the state legislature would pass a law to fine schools that continued to exclude black students. In the Republican city of Philadelphia, blacks were expected to vote, but they were largely denied political office. There would be no black police officers in Philadelphia until the 1880s. If Philadelphia did continue to

⁶¹ Benedict, “Reform Republicans and the Retreat from Reconstruction,” 54–55; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Apr. 22 and May 7, 1872; Brown, “William D. Kelley,” 329; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 577; *Press*, Mar. 28, 1877.

make progress in its support of black equality, it lagged behind much of the North.⁶²

* * *

The narrative is familiar: black resistance—local white intransigence—federal intervention—cries of corruption—redemption and retreat. If the events of Reconstruction Philadelphia do parallel those that occurred in the South, it is important, however, not to take this comparison too far. The Republican Party of Philadelphia ceased to pursue black equality aggressively, but it did defend the rights that had already been won. Black Philadelphians were not deprived of the right to vote—if only because they tended to support the Republican Party. Nevertheless, the promise of the achievements of black Philadelphians and their Radical Republican allies settled into a long, slow, gradual compromise with white resistance to equal rights.

The retreat from the Radical defense of black equality in Philadelphia occurred not primarily because of Radical support for economic redistribution in the South, as Montgomery and Richardson would suggest, or because the freedmen of the South were increasingly perceived as economic radicals. White Philadelphians were primarily interested in the actions of their own black neighbors, who insisted that it was not only the South that was in need of reconstruction. Philadelphia Democrats picked up on these links in order to undermine the already lukewarm support of many conservative Republicans for black equality and to appeal to Liberal Republicans concerned with corruption, both in the South and in Philadelphia. This conflict, and the reaction of the Philadelphia Republican Party, would continue to shape city politics and the role of black Philadelphians within it for years to come.

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⁶² Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 837; Brown, "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro," 53–57; Silcox, "Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Black Militant," 74–75; McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 289.

The Assimilation of German Immigrants into a Pennsylvania German Township, 1840–1900

CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE in the field of German American immigration history since Kathleen Neils Conzen lamented in 1980 that “almost no attention has been paid to the large numbers of Germans who settled in rural areas.” Excellent studies of pioneering settlements on the agricultural frontier have subsequently appeared.¹ Not all rural German settlements, however, were found in the newly developed lands of the Midwest and the Great Plains. This article examines an exception of the sort Conzen has called a “side channel” of the nineteenth-century immigration tide—namely, those German-speaking immigrants who settled in Nockamixon Township, a lightly populated, rural Pennsylvania Dutch township of northern (“Upper”) Bucks County in southeastern Pennsylvania.² It tells the story of their adaptation to

The author wishes to thank Philip Gleason, Walter Kamphoefner, Roy Domenico, and the two anonymous *PMHB* reviewers for insightful suggestions that contributed to the improvement of this article.

¹ Kathleen Neils Conzen, “The Writing of German-American History,” *Immigration History Newsletter* 12 (Nov. 1980): 8; Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, NJ, 1987); Terry G. Jordan, “A Religious Geography of the Hill Country Germans of Texas,” in *Ethnicity on the Great Plains*, ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln, NE, 1980); Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Urbana, IL, 1996); Jon Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830–1917* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997); Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer* (New York, 1990); Carol Coburn, *Life at Four Corners: Religion, Gender, and Education in a German-Lutheran Community, 1848–1945* (Lawrence, KS, 1992); David Peterson, “From Bone Depth: German-American Communities in Rural Minnesota before the Great War,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (Winter 1992): 27–55.

² Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (Fall 1991): 5. In 1850, Nockamixon Township included a sector abutting the Delaware River known as the Bridgeton District. This study includes that area, even after 1890 when it became an independent township. *Bucks County Intelligencer*, May 29, 1855; *Doylestown Democrat*, Apr. 1, 1890.

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America, which was unusually rapid and successful because of the special environment in which they settled.

Through the lens of assimilation theory, the experience of these newcomers and their progeny suggests a cultural-pluralist paradigm. However, they did not create a local, pluralist society by establishing a non-Anglo-American immigrant subculture (as was possible, for instance, on the frontier with Conzen's Stearns County, Minnesota, Germans³), but rather they melded into and reinforced one element in a pluralist culture already extant among Bucks County natives. More specifically, these emigrants from Germanic Europe, in what might be called cognate assimilation, blended into a predominantly "Pennsylvania Dutch" society, one with which they shared many values and customs, including religious affiliations and traditions, occupational and political orientation, and, most noticeably, facility in a non-English language. Thus, they found it unnecessary to create an ethnic subcommunity with its typical array of institutions. Instead, they integrated rapidly into the local community, quickly moving through Elliott Barkan's six stages, "From Contact to Assimilation," in one generation.⁴ This "Dutch" "core culture," however, was itself in flux and slowly and reluctantly anglicizing, a process promoted by a minority in the township and by the "English" elements from the more southerly part of the county that dominated county government.⁵

More partial to the plow than the pen, Nockamixon people were not inclined to speculate about the ethnic nature of their community. But, William J. Buck, a township native, descendant of colonial Rhineland immigrants, and an enthusiastic amateur local historian, did express his opinion on the role of Bucks County "Germans" (by which he meant primarily indigenous residents of German ancestry) in the wider society, a belief that can be transposed into modern assimilation theory.

³ Conzen, *Making Their Own America*.

⁴ Elliot Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14 (Winter 1995): 51–64. Barkan's six stages of accommodation are: contact, acculturation, adaptation, accommodation, integration, and assimilation. "Assimilation" implies that an ethnic group's "political and cultural norms, cultural and social activities, language usage, residential locations, friends, associates, spouses, identities, and loyalties have by and large become indistinguishable—or insignificantly different—from those aspects of [the ambient] general society and core culture" (47–48).

⁵ On the persistent pull of an Anglo-American core in the wider society (and the nettlesome modern problem of identifying it), see Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 437–71.

Uninfluenced by the social scientific labels of the twentieth century, he vigorously rejected what we would call “Anglo-conformity” for his people and, in an 1882 article, posited a version of the “melting pot” theory. Yet, this was a melting pot that simmered so slowly that it might reasonably be labeled a version of the rather elastic concept of “cultural pluralism.” He noted that Bucks County “has now been occupied fully two centuries by different European nationalities” and that these raw materials were “harmoniously blending to form our American citizens.” Nonetheless, he advocated the preservation of the “German” language in America (a variety of which he had learned growing up in Upper Bucks and still spoke), expressed admiration for certain German American personality traits, and seemed in no hurry to promote the blending process. His concluding remarks suggested that “*two more* centuries of amalgamation will leave but few of pure German, English or other nationality.”⁶

The phenomenon of immigrants merging readily with a native culture rooted in prerevolutionary America is unusual but not entirely unique. It has long been recognized that many British newcomers (the “invisible immigrants”) assimilated seamlessly. Among the non-British, the clearest parallel is found among French-speaking immigrants to Creole New Orleans in the early nineteenth century, although their culture crumbled more quickly than that of the Bucks County Dutch. Pre-1880 German migrants to New Mexico also confronted a non-Anglo way of life, derived from the Spanish heritage of the area. They acculturated to this base society to a degree, which obviously required that they move beyond their ethnic heritage, but, when supplemented by reinforcements from the Old Country after 1880, they became more ethnocentric.⁷ The clearest replication of the Nockamixon experience can almost certainly be found

⁶ “The German Population in Bucks County,” in *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 1 ([1908]): 59–65. Quotations from page 65. Italics added. Thus, perhaps, Buck describes an example of the pre-Horace Kallen “vernacular” pluralism discussed in a recent article by Russell A. Kazal. See “The Lost World of Pennsylvania Pluralism: Immigrants, Regions, and the Early Origins of Pluralist Ideologies in America,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27 (Spring 2008): 1–18.

⁷ Paul F. Lachance, “The Foreign French,” in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, eds. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992), 101–2, 105, 112, 118–20, 130; Tomas Jaehn, *Germans in the Southwest, 1850–1920* (Albuquerque, NM, 2005), 1–3, 33, 108, 113, 116–17, 140–41. A curious variation of this phenomenon can be found in the experience of many Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Though they constituted the base culture (and thus were not “immigrants”), they were partially Americanized in situ by European Jesuit missionaries, who (bicultural themselves) did so with considerable concern for the preservation of native languages and culture. Gerald McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919* (Stanford, CA, 2007), chap. 7.

among the smaller numbers of German immigrants scattered about the other Pennsylvania Dutch townships of Upper Bucks County in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps researchers will find other such instances in the greater Dutch community of Pennsylvania.

German immigration to Nockamixon Township was slow in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, increased slightly in the 1830s, peaked in the 1840s and 1850s, and tapered off to scattered instances in the final three decades of the century.⁸ While not large in absolute numbers, these immigrants did constitute a substantial minority in the township. German-born heads of household (including several Alsatians) totaled 8.4 percent of all household heads in the township in 1850, 13.1 percent in 1860, 11.8 percent in 1880, and 7 percent in 1900.⁹

The vast majority of these immigrants came from the Upper Rhine region, and a majority of those came from Baden. Furthermore, most of the Badener derived from Oberhausen and Niederhausen, two small villages located less than a kilometer apart on the Rhine River. Chain migration, now recognized as normative in migration history, largely accounted for the clustering of these newcomers in America. The pioneer from Oberhausen/Niederhausen was Xaver Meyer ("John X. Moyer" here), who arrived in 1841; he was followed by Landolin Frueh ("Freeh" here) and his family in 1842. Many of their relatives and neighbors, including, prominently, members of the Fleck, Stehlin, Phillip, and Schwer clans, emigrated soon after. Other, smaller chains emanated from Koenigsbach, Baden, and several small towns on the other side of the Rhine in Alsace.¹⁰

⁸ German born were identified primarily from census records. These names were then matched with names in the Nockamixon Township tax records, yielding the following totals of new, taxed, German-speaking immigrants into the township by decade: 1830s—2; 1840s—22; 1850s—49. Since the vast majority of these individuals were heads of household, the grand total of German newcomers far exceeded the above numbers. Manuscript tax records and microfilmed Bucks County census records are available at the Spruance Library of the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, PA.

⁹ These and subsequent statistics and cross-tabulations in this paper were provided by Vincent F. Merkel, senior consultant at the University of Scranton's Desktop and Instructional Resources Center. His skilled and persevering assistance was critical to the completion of the project. He built upon the data entries and preliminary calculations done by a series of student assistants over the years: Donald Reed, Robert Kleck, Wendy Cimoch, Michael Sebastian, Gregory Boyle, Joseph Yessen, and Dawn Daria. All statistics in this study are based on 100 percent samples.

¹⁰ Family connections and times of arrival are derived from the following: S. B. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Aug. 28, 1985; L. F. (M), interview, Bursonville, PA, June 8, 1999 (These and all subsequent interviews were by the author. All interviewees cited in this paper were born between 1885 and 1930 and were either brought up and/or lived substantial portions of their lives in Nockamixon Township or the immediate vicinity. To protect their privacy, I will refer to them only by their ini-

Regardless of how they got there, German-speaking immigrants concentrated in only one specific section of Bucks County. As of 1880, while 11.8 percent of heads of families in Nockamixon Township claimed Germanic birthplaces, fewer than 1 percent did so in Solebury and Lower Makefield Townships in Lower Bucks County. Interestingly, these areas were like Nockamixon in their agrarian character and location on the Delaware River and Canal. Even the other Dutch townships on Nockamixon's borders recorded much lower percentages of German immigrant families, except for Tinicum Township (8 percent in 1880) to the immediate south, where (for reasons to be noted) the environment was similar.

In considering why the Rhinelanders gravitated to this particular area of southeastern Pennsylvania and why they subsequently remained there in large numbers (over 40 percent of the immigrant family heads in the 1860 census were still heads in 1880),¹¹ one must first consider the economic motives behind their emigration. By the mid-nineteenth century, several factors threatened livelihoods in the small villages of the Upper Rhine. Families found that their traditional methods of sustaining themselves through a combination of agriculture and handicrafts became less viable because of a burgeoning population, partible heritage, and deteriorating opportunities in the skilled trades, attributable in part to the impact of the industrial revolution. Spinning and weaving were especially hard hit.¹² The practice of subdividing property among offspring and the ero-

tials, noting also whether they were male [M] or female [F].); Fay Schwar Cox, "The Ancestors and Descendants of Sebastian Schwar and His Wife Theresia Philipp and Melchior Free and His Wife Magdalena Fleck Who Emigrated to America" (unpublished typescript, Allentown, PA, 1982), ii, v-vi, 11, 16, 42, 60, 159-60, copy in the possession of William J. Reinbold, Ottsville, PA; parish registers of Catholic churches in Niederhausen, Oberhausen, and Rust in Baden and Zinswiller and Rheinau in Alsace (available on microfilm at libraries of the Church of the Latter Day Saints); parish register, St. John the Baptist Church, Haycock, PA, microfilm, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; parish register, St. Joseph's Church, Easton, PA; Nockamixon Township tax records, manuscript, Spruance Library; Daniel F. Mergenthaler, "Descendants of Daniel and Katrina Stoeckel Trautz" (unpublished typescript, Doylestown, PA, 1938), 5-6, 22, Spruance Library.

¹¹ The percentage of persisters would be about 50 percent if nonhead persisters in the 1880 Nockamixon Township census and persisters who had drifted into neighboring townships were included. Nockamixon German twenty-year persistence rates notably exceed even the decennial rates found among Germans in nineteenth-century Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and South Bend, Indiana. Dean R. Esslinger, *Immigrants and the City: Ethnicity and Mobility in a Nineteenth Century Midwestern Community* (Port Washington, NY, 1975), 42-43; Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, MA, 1976), 42.

¹² Wolfgang Koellmann and Peter Marschalck, "German Emigration to the United States," *Perspectives in American History* 7 (1973): 528, 532n; Lesley Kawaguchi, "The Making of

sion of artisans' prospects doubtlessly contributed to the "famine" reported in the Niederhausen town records in 1853. A few years later, Achaz Fleck, in his petition for permission to leave the village and join his sister's family in Bucks County, noted that he had six children to provide for and added that "here there is no outlet for better pay since the mechanics position is overfilled."¹³

Nockamixon Township, then, offered people such as Fleck an opportunity, unique in some respects, to salvage their economic status and to do so in a familiar manner; it provided them an opportunity to own their own farmland and, to some degree, to practice their Old World crafts. Yet, given that German immigrants, in general, came to America "less to build something new than to conserve something old,"¹⁴ it seems odd that the Nockamixon Township settlers' major entrée into the local workforce was canal work, which seemingly neither required Old World craft skills nor appeared readily compatible with farming. Nevertheless, in the 1850s and 1860s, more than one-half of all employed male Germans in the township over the age of fifteen worked as boatmen (see table 1). This was more than three times the ratio among native-born males and represented a sharp contrast with the general pattern among German immigrants in America. Hutchinson's analysis of the 1870 U.S. Census found the German-born drastically underrepresented in this occupational area.¹⁵

The Nockamixon anomaly can be explained largely by the presence of the Delaware Canal near the township's eastern border and by the special character and needs of the immigrants. This waterway, constructed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was completed in the early 1830s and became the major avenue for commerce in Bucks County. Paralleling the often unnavigable Delaware River, it ran from Easton, in adjacent Northampton County, on the north, where it connected with the Lehigh

Philadelphia's German-America: Ethnic Group and Community Development, 1830–1883" (PhD diss., UCLA, 1983), 96–101, 105–6; Robert E. Dickinson, *The Regions of Germany* (New York, 1945), 110–11.

¹³ Quotation is found in Cox, "Ancestors and Descendants of Sebastian Schwar," v. The rest of the information on Niederhausen is from Cox, p. vi, and from Anton Wild, "Zur Geschichte der Doerfer Ober-und Niederhausen," in *Ortssippenbuch Rheinhausen* (Ober-und Niederhausen): *Landkreis Emmendingen in Baden*, by Albert Koebele and Margarete Kirner (Grafenhausen bei Lahr, Ger., 1975), 12–13.

¹⁴ Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 69.

¹⁵ See table 21 in E. P. Hutchinson, *Immigrants and Their Children, 1850–1950* (New York, 1956), 82.

Canal and thus the lower anthracite coal fields, through the length of Bucks County to its southern terminus at Bristol, whence goods were shipped through the tidal head of the river to and from Philadelphia. The enterprise flourished in the antebellum era, though it very gradually lost out to the growing network of railroads after the Civil War.¹⁶ By 1850, canal boating had become the second-most-popular occupation among employed male heads of household in the township—but still a distant second to farming—and would remain second or third for the rest of the century.¹⁷

| Table 1 | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employed Male Work Force over the Age of 15 Working as Boatmen | | | | |
| | 1850 | 1860 | 1880 | 1900 |
| American-born | 11.6% (N55) | 15.7% (N98) | 13.9% (N98) | 20.8% (N113) |
| German-born | 58.8% (N30) | 54.7% (N47) | 15.7% (N11) | 11.1% (N3) |
| All | 16.7% (N91) | 20.8% (N153) | 13.9% (N109) | 20.3% (N117) |

Though atypical, the Nockamixon Germans' gravitation to this line of work did not necessarily represent a radical departure from Old World experience. Oberhausen and Niederhausen, which provided the core of the German community in the township, had the Rhine River nearby to their west and the Elz River even closer to their east, where it flowed northward to confluence with the Rhine. The Leopoldskanal, which connected the two rivers, ran east-west just south of the villages. Surely residents of the two towns were familiar with canal life, and some, in fact, did make their living by fishing and hauling freight on the rivers and, most likely, on the canal as well. John Moyer had been a *Schiffknecht* (ship worker) in his home village. This experience may explain, in part, why he became the first from his hometown to settle his family in Nockamixon Township, where he and his oldest sons made their living as boatmen. Several subsequent immigrants from the Niederhausen area were the sons of fathers who made their livings on the water (a fisherman and a ship

¹⁶ Willis M. Rivinus, *A Wayfarers Guide to the Delaware Canal along the Delaware River between Bristol and Easton, Pennsylvania*, 4th ed. (n.p., 1964), 5–8.

¹⁷ Based on computer-generated statistics derived from information in 1850, 1860, 1880, and 1900, Nockamixon Township microfilmed U.S. Census records.

captain), which apparently facilitated their adoption of the boatman's occupation here.¹⁸

The larger reason for the Rhinelanders' heavy concentration in canal work echoes the experience of so many immigrants in all eras: it provided an available niche. Boating on the canal did not attract native-born laborers in sufficient numbers. It was a rough occupation (fights among boatmen were common when vying for position at the locks), pay was minimal, and the work year was shortened by winter and occasional heavy rains, which caused breaches in the canal's earthen banks. Since a boatman's income usually could not sustain a family, a married man would often try to supplement the family income in various ways, either by working other jobs in winter (where possible) or by having his wife and children operate a small family farm, as was commonly the case in Nockamixon Township.¹⁹

While boating clearly constituted the dominant occupational opportunity for Rhinelanders in this area, the local economy also offered some of the newcomers opportunities in skilled labor commensurate with their Old World trades. Nockamixon Township provided a favorable environment because at midcentury it retained much of its preindustrial character. Although farming predominated in 1850, almost one-quarter of all employed males over the age of fifteen worked at a craft. Carpenters, shoemakers, masons, and blacksmiths were the most widely practiced trades throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.²⁰ Of seven immigrants whose European trades can be confidently identified, a majority found work here in their areas of expertise—a mason, a tile maker (who became a potter), a shoemaker, and a blacksmith. Each benefited from local circumstances—the mason (whose sons did similar work here and eventually opened a stone quarry) from the local preference for stone houses and the need for curbing in nearby towns, the tile maker from the existence of potteries in certain clayey areas of the township, the shoemaker from the widespread need for custom-made shoes, and the blacksmith from the canal boat traffic. Two of those who did not find compatible work opportunities here practiced the weaving trade, which,

¹⁸ Catholic church register, Niederhausen, Church of Latter Day Saints libraries; Wild, "Zur Geschichte," 12–13.

¹⁹ *Doylestown Democrat*, Apr. 8, 1846; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Apr. 19, 1853, Dec. 24, 1854, Oct. 24, 1877, Dec. 11, 1886; C. P. "Bill" Yoder, *Delaware Canal Journal: A Definitive History of the Canal and the River Valley through Which It Flows* (Bethlehem, PA, 1972), 159–60, 167–68, 185; S. H. (M), interview, Rupletown, PA, Aug. 26, 1982.

²⁰ Based on calculations from 1850, 1860, 1880, and 1900 U.S. Census records.

though viable in 1850, had virtually disappeared by 1880, thus mirroring the early deleterious impact of the industrial revolution on the textile business in the Rhineland.²¹ Whether related to talents brought from the Old World or not, as table 2 indicates, an increasing number of German immigrants entered the skilled workforce after 1850; in 1860 and 1880, now mostly well established, they did so in proportions comparable to those of the native population.

| Table 2 | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Skilled Workers among All Employed Male Workers over the Age of 15 | | | | |
| | 1850 | 1860 | 1880 | 1900 |
| American-born | 25.0% (N119) | 18.4% (N115) | 14.8% (N105) | 13.6% (N74) |
| German-born | 9.8% (N5) | 15.1% (N13) | 15.7% (N11) | 7.4% (N2) |
| All | 23.3% (N127) | 17.8% (N131) | 14.9% (N117) | 13.4% (N77) |

The Old World tradition of mixing agricultural and nonagricultural employment persisted to a degree in the Nockamixon area and would have been familiar to the Rhineland immigrants. In an 1871 county directory, over 20 percent of all the tradesmen and businessmen in the township also appear in its list of farmers. That this statistic might reflect the Germanic traditions of the area is suggested by comparing Nockamixon with Upper Makefield Township, a non-Germanic Bucks County jurisdiction of comparable size, economy, and location, where the crossover was less than 1 percent.²²

Another economic incentive for settling in Nockamixon Township, and certainly a major inducement to remain there, can be found in the prospects for farming and for owning farmland. Coming from rural villages where land was becoming increasingly scarce, most of the Bucks

²¹ Catholic church register, Niederhausen, Church of Latter Day Saints libraries; Nancy D. Singer, "The Simon Singer Pottery," *Mercer Mosaic* 3 (May/June 1986): 61; U.S. Census, 1880, for Nockamixon Township; M. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1991; Mergenthaler, "Descendants of Daniel and Katrina Stoeckel Trautz," 28.

²² Also note that about twenty household heads identified as boatmen in the 1870 U.S. Census were listed as farmers in the same county directory. S. Hersey, comp., *Business Directory and Gazetteer of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Containing the Names, Business, and Post Office Address of Merchants, Manufacturers, Professional Men and Farmers* (Wilmington, DE, 1871), 147–52, 216–21.

County Rhinelanders hoped to fulfill their traditional aspirations in America by acquiring “family farms.” As table 3 testifies, German immigrants to the township moved impressively into agriculture. Among all employed male German settlers over the age of fifteen, the percentage of farmers rose from 17.4 percent in 1860 to 54.3 percent in 1880 and remained above 50 percent in 1900. In 1880 and 1900, German-born were about twice as likely as native-born residents to be farmers.²³ Conversely, the German-born were dramatically underrepresented in the “farm laborer” category, although differences between them and natives in this occupation largely disappeared by 1900.²⁴

| Table 3 | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employed Male Work Force over the Age of 15 Working as Farmers | | | | |
| | 1850 | 1860 | 1880 | 1900 |
| American-born | 32.6% (N155) | 28.8% (N180) | 30.0% (N212) | 25.2% (N137) |
| German-born | 11.8% (N6) | 17.4% (N15) | 54.3% (N38) | 51.9% (N14) |
| All | 30.0% (N163) | 27.2% (N200) | 32.4% (N254) | 26.6% (N153) |

German immigrant farmers also moved quickly to own their farmland, however modest the size. Even in 1850, in the early stages of the migratory movement when the numbers were small, 80 percent of the heads of household whose primary occupation was agriculture owned their own land. By 1860, ownership soared to 100 percent and would remain at 95–100 percent for the rest of the century. Thus, once established, the newcomers exceeded the high ownership rates of native-born Nockamixon farmers (see table 4).

The peculiar natural environment of Nockamixon Township permitted immigrants to own land. The better farmlands and the major transportation facilities could be found in the narrow Delaware River Valley along a segment of the eastern edge of the township and in the limestone-rich soil of the western third, which was served by the Durham Road and

²³ These percentages are derived from the relevant decennial U.S. Census records.

²⁴ The underrepresentation is consistent with Hutchinson's analysis of all German Americans in the 1870 U.S. Census. See table 21, *Immigrants and Their Children*, 82.

its branches. The land in between was largely undeveloped at the time the bulk of the newcomers arrived and uncongenial to farm use. Strewn with glacially deposited trap and granite rocks, the heavy, clay subsoil in many areas left the surface damp for extended periods of time and earned the region its popular local moniker, “the Swamp.”²⁵ Thus, it contained an abundance of trees and a paucity of inhabitants.

| Table 4 | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Property Ownership Patterns among Male Farmers (Heads of Household Appearing in Township Tax Records) | | | | |
| | American-born | | German-born | |
| | Owned | Rented | Owned | Rented |
| 1850 | 88.1% (N126) | 11.9% (N17) | 80.0% (N4) | 20.0% (N1) |
| 1860 | 93.6% (N117) | 6.4% (N8) | 100.0% (N10) | 0.0% |
| 1880 | 79.9% (N151) | 20.1% (N38) | 94.6% (N35) | 5.4% (N2) |
| 1900 | 79.4% (N104) | 20.6% (N27) | 100.0% (N13) | 0.0% |

The area, however, had a certain appeal to German-speaking immigrants. U.S. Census records and the names of property holders on local maps published in 1850 and 1876 demonstrate that the newcomers clustered, somewhat loosely but clearly, in this Swamp region of central Nockamixon, which extended, as did German settlement, across the southern border into adjacent Tinicum Township.²⁶ The pioneers—John Moyer, Landolin Freeh, and Nicholas Mich—put down roots in close proximity to one another along the only east-west road through this damp, rocky section at a site about four to five miles west of Upper Black Eddy, where the road met the canal and the Delaware River. Virtually all succeeding Rhinelanders settled nearby.

This land's primary appeal was its price. Lots here clearly cost less than the largely treeless and rock-free parcels outside the Swamp. Unsurprisingly, tax records during the period of maximum immigration

²⁵ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Aug. 5, 1897; *Doylestown Democrat*, Jan. 8, 1889; *Combined Atlases of Bucks County, Pennsylvania: 1876 by J. D. Scott and 1891 by E. P. Noll and Co.* (Mt. Vernon, IN, 1992), Noll map section, 108.

²⁶ The 1850 township maps are on file at the Spruance Library. The 1876 maps can be found in *Combined Atlases*. See also Robert K. Buehrle, “The Swamp of Tinicum and Nockamixon,” *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 4 (1917): 85.

reveal that Nockamixon Township could claim one of the two lowest average per-acre assessments in Bucks County. Thus, German immigrant landholders in the township generally started on the bottom rungs of the real estate ladder. In 1850, they held real property whose mean value was \$391, while that of native-born Americans was \$897; roughly the same disparity could be found in 1862, as the German settlement in the Swamp grew.²⁷ Even as late as 1897, a local historian could note that “for a few hundred dollars a man could buy enough land to keep a cow or two, and have enough timber to build a log house and barn.”²⁸ Consequently, immigrants, including a number of boatmen, could afford to own small farms while plying their trades.

The immigrants’ desires to replicate the small farming enterprises of their homelands are evidenced by the efforts they expended to clear their land holdings in the Swamp. This was no simple endeavor. Robert Buehrle, whose immigrant parents participated in this land clearing, recorded how the German settlers organized communal work projects, called “frolics,” and “transformed what had been practically a wilderness of rocks, morasses . . . and forests . . . into well-cultivated fertile lands well fenced in with stones taken from the land in the process of clearing.”²⁹

Since most of these small plot holders worked on the canal, the question naturally arises as to how they could work their small farms when the boating season coincided with the most demanding times of the farming calendar. And, of course, livestock required daily care. The traditional role of the German farm wife proved to be critical. The women of Oberhausen/Niederhausen had worked in the fields and barns, supplementing the work of the men, many of whom, as we have seen, were engaged to one degree or another in craft work. As Buehrle noted of farm life in the Swamp, “The women-folk, as might be expected, performed most of the little agricultural labor to which they had been accustomed in ‘the fatherland,’ and acted as managers for the heavier work—they hired

²⁷ “Triennial Valuation of Bucks County, for the Year 1855,” in “Election Returns of Bucks County 1812–1906,” comp. W. W. H. Davis, unpaginated scrapbook, Spruance Library. The numbers are based on information drawn from the manuscript Nockamixon Township tax records for 1850 and 1862 (Spruance Library) correlated with birth places found in U.S. censuses. The relevant tax records for 1860 and 1861 are not extant. Dollar amounts have been rounded off.

²⁸ *Doylestown Democrat*, Aug. 5, 1897, 2.

²⁹ Buehrle, “Swamp,” 85.

such help and teams as were needed from the owners of larger farms.”³⁰ Significant female participation in family agrarian endeavors, including harvesting the field crops, reflected not only Old World practices but also those of the Pennsylvania Dutch of the area and, in fact, persisted over several generations and well into the twentieth century. This imported custom thus presented no obstacle to assimilation into the local community.

Whether or not they engaged in their preferred occupation of farming, immigrants who remained in the Nockamixon area experienced significant economic gains over time. Of the thirty-one German-born family heads (all male) listed in the 1860 federal census for Nockamixon Township who could still be found as heads of household in the vicinity in 1880, twenty-two realized an increase in their county property-value assessment, an increase that averaged 85 percent. Of the nine whose property value declined, more than half (five) were over seventy years of age in 1880 and thus beyond their peak occupational years. Another, according to the 1880 census, was disabled with a spinal injury.³¹

The occupational patterns of the immigrants’ children suggest a continuing adaptation to the larger society, attended with something of their parents’ preference for farming. Computer-generated data for the 1880 and 1900 censuses show that, among second-generation male heads and their male children over the age of fifteen, the percentages employed in boating now only slightly surpassed those of men of native-born stock. As full-fledged farmers, they fell distinctly between the immigrant generation (over half of whom remained on farms) and those of native stock (of whom 25–30 percent farmed).

While similar economic opportunities existed in both the Rhineland and in Nockamixon Township, other, less tangible factors contributed not only to the immigrants’ initial settlement but also to their decision to remain. As they moved from boating and other transitional occupations to farming as a primary livelihood, they, to a considerable degree, stayed

³⁰ Ibid., 87. The rest of the paragraph is from Wild, “Zur Geschichte,” 12; Walter Rinderle and Bernard Norling, *The Nazi Impact on a German Village* (Lexington, KY, 1993), 28, 30; Benjamin Rush, “An Account of the Manners of the German Inhabitants of Pennsylvania,” *Essays, Literary, Moral, and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1798), 232; Pickle, *Contented among Strangers*, 29, 183; M. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Aug. 21, 1991; F. K. (F), interview, Kintnersville, PA, June 6, 1985; M. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Jan. 11, 1984; L. R. (F), interview, Bridgeton Township, PA, Aug. 25, 1982.

³¹ Township tax records for Nockamixon Township in 1862 and 1880, Durham Township in 1880, and Tinicum Township in 1880, Spruance Library.

in the area. Indeed, as noted earlier, over 40 percent of the German-born household heads present in Nockamixon Township in 1860 could be found among the heads there in 1880. Cultural issues, important to women as well as men, certainly played a role.

Significantly, as suggested above by the importance of women to agricultural labor, Rhinelanders found, in this corner of America, a Germanic culture that was, in many respects, recognizable. Originally lightly settled by British and Irish colonists, Nockamixon Township subsequently welcomed large numbers of Pennsylvanians of German ancestry, commonly labeled "Pennsylvania Dutch" by the English; they migrated into the township and other areas of northern Bucks County mainly in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, largely displacing or absorbing the earlier culture, except on its eastern rim along the Delaware River. This development placed Nockamixon on the eastern edge of the Pennsylvania Dutch region, an arc which extended from the Maryland border west of Philadelphia north and east virtually to the New Jersey border. It was thus situated among what the locals called the "German townships" of northern Bucks (in contrast with the rest of the county, where Anglo-Americans prevailed). Many of the relocating families became deeply rooted and, to a considerable degree, preserved their "Dutch" culture through the first half of the nineteenth century; indeed, they even expanded their area of settlement in the mid-nineteenth century southward into central Bucks County.³² These are the people who will be referred to as Pennsylvania Dutch throughout the rest of this paper. Here we have, then, an instance of an eighteenth-century, largely non-English community evolving into an ethnically distinctive, regional "American" base culture in the nineteenth century.³³

The Pennsylvania Dutch subculture, in general, derived from colonial immigrants who originated primarily in the Upper Rhine region; over time, it absorbed influences from some other parts of Germany and from

³² Warren S. Ely, "The Tohickon Settlers," *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 3 (1909): 296–97; T. A. McNealy and F. Waite, "Bucks County's Germanic Population 1775/8 and 1784," unpublished map, Spruance Library; William T. Parsons, *The Pennsylvania Dutch: A Persistent Minority* (Boston, 1976), 54.

³³ Conzen, "Mainstreams and Side Channels," 5–20, defines this theory. Steven M. Nolt makes the case generally for the evolution of Pennsylvania Germania into a self-consciously American ethnic subculture by the middle of the nineteenth century. *Foreigners in Their Own Land: Pennsylvania Germans in the Early Republic* (University Park, PA, 2002), 7–8, 28, and *passim*.

peoples of other European heritage.³⁴ While in some ways unique, this nineteenth-century subculture, owing to the tenacity of Germans (whether in Pennsylvania or the Rhineland) in preserving their mores, had much in common with that found in the Old World. Steven Nolt reports that one mid-nineteenth-century German tourist observed that the residents of Pennsylvania Dutch country, “in manners, dress, speech, and custom, . . . appeared to him to be Germans who had transported Old World ways of life to another continent.”³⁵ Nockamixon Dutchmen of this era, whose ancestors had arrived in America in the eighteenth century and whose lineage could be traced, all came from the Upper Rhine (a plurality from the Palatinate).³⁶ Although they were “church” people, and thus somewhat more open to assimilation than “sectarians” like the Amish and, uniquely, included a significant minority of Catholics, they also preserved many of the old folkways. As such, they helped buffer the transition of nineteenth-century immigrants.

More specifically, the presence of a Germanic culture meant that the newcomers did not need a crash course in English to cope with life in their corner of America. “*Pennsilfaanish*” or “Pennsylvania Dutch,” a blending of various Pennsylvania German dialects that had evolved in the late eighteenth century, persisted into the nineteenth century in Nockamixon Township (even among some families of Irish heritage who had intermarried with Germans) and was largely comprehensible to new arrivals who came from the same general area of Germanic Europe as had the ancestors of the Nockamixon Dutch.³⁷ Indeed, *Pennsilfaanish* was easier for them to understand than the dialect of many Old World countrymen who lived outside the Rhineland.³⁸ Thus, immigrants could com-

³⁴ Don Yoder, “The Palatine Connection: The Pennsylvania German Culture and Its European Roots,” in *Germans in America: Retrospect and Prospect: Tricentennial Lectures Delivered at the German Society of Pennsylvania in 1983*, ed. Randall M. Miller (Philadelphia, 1984), 93, 95, 107.

³⁵ Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 1.

³⁶ Families were traced in the following sources: John A. Ruth, scrapbooks, 3:65, 81, 86, 90, 95, 6:44, and 9:131, Spruance Library; *Doylestown Democrat*, Mar. 22, 1894; William W. H. Davis, *History of Bucks County Pennsylvania, From the Discovery of the Delaware to the Present Time*, 2nd ed. (Pipersville, PA, 1975), 2:151, 3:53; Donald M. Biehn, *Biehn/Bean Family of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and Ontario, Canada, 1700–1986* (Baltimore, 1987).

³⁷ Oscar Kuhns, “The German and Swiss Settlements of Colonial Pennsylvania: A Study of the So-Called Pennsylvania Dutch,” *Penn Germania* 1 (1912): 400; *Doylestown Democrat*, Sept. 23, 1879; M. K. (F), interview, Dec. 26, 1999.

³⁸ William W. Donner, “We Are What We Make of Ourselves’: Abraham Reeser Horne and the Education of Pennsylvania Germans,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 124 (2000): 523n; Juergen Eichhoff, “The German Language in America,” *America and the Germans: An*

municate immediately and effectively in their native dialects with many of their new American neighbors. Their children and many of their grandchildren initially learned German from the immigrant generation, but, curiously, in many instances they picked up some or all of the local patois as part of the assimilation process.³⁹ Though nonimmigrants had an easier time speaking German than reading it, the foreign born as well as the native born had access to German-language newspapers, the most important of which was the *Bucks County Express*, which circulated widely in Nockamixon Township and the rest of Upper Bucks in the 1850s and 1860s and remained in print until World War I. Germans of all stripes also used German-language voting tickets, at least in the early 1880s—and probably before.⁴⁰

Furthermore, it was through and with the established Pennsylvania Dutch community that the newcomers and their children learned English. The colonial English and Irish settlers of the area had established English as the base language; it was spoken by their descendants and by most Americans of German ancestry in the nineteenth century. By the 1890s, the Pennsylvania Dutch and most immigrants and their children were bilingual, though, for many, English was, in modern parlance, a “second language.” An 1896 traveler through Nockamixon and the adjacent townships of Durham and Springfield to the north concluded, with some exaggeration, that “the universal home language is the soft, musical Pennsylvania Dutch, although English . . . is spoken, read, and written with fluency by all.”⁴¹

As was the general case in the northern part of the United States in this era, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through a series of laws

Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History, eds. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia, 1985), 1:230–34.

³⁹ K. S. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Mar. 24, 1990; C. F. (M), interview, Ottsville, PA, Jan. 29, 1990; Ch. F. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, July 15, 1990; J. S. (M), interview, Ottsville, PA, June 29, 1999; S. R. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1991; G. R. (M), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1981; M. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Jan. 11, 1984; P. R. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, May 24, 1999; A. W. (M), interview, Ottsville, PA, Jan. 8, 1981.

⁴⁰ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Nov. 11, 1856, Sept. 10, 1861, Mar. 11, 1876, Oct. 16, 1886; Ruth Salisbury, ed., *Pennsylvania Newspapers: A Bibliography and Union List* (Pittsburgh, 1969), 28; Buck, “German Population in Bucks County,” 61.

⁴¹ Reprint from the *American Agriculturist* in *Doylestown Democrat*, May 7, 1896. The rest of the paragraph is from William J. Buck, in *Doylestown Democrat*, Dec. 2, 1879; *Doylestown Democrat*, Nov. 2, 1905; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Aug. 11, 1885; F. E. Tourscher, ed., *Diary and Visitation Record of the Right Rev. Francis Patrick Kenrick, Administrator and Bishop of Philadelphia, 1830–1851* (Lancaster, PA, 1916), 85; John A. Ruth, scrapbooks, 2:43.

beginning in 1834, gradually created a tax-supported public school system. One of its main purposes was to inculcate American culture in the youth and to teach proper use of the English language. Pennsylvania Dutchmen and German immigrants alike lacked enthusiasm for this program, which jeopardized their cultural traditions. Consequently, they minimized the impact of the new system in several ways. For decades, township option allowed them to limit the school year to about five months, half the length of the school year in the many "English" townships in Lower Bucks. They also often implemented local bilingual public education, including the formal teaching of the German language, which lasted in some areas into the 1860s. The latter was not an accommodation to immigrants, though obviously appealing to them where available. Indeed, it persisted longest not in Nockamixon Township but in the more uniformly Pennsylvania Dutch areas on Nockamixon's western borders. Though textbooks were in English and Anglo-American superintendents of schools in the county increasingly demanded exclusive use of English in formal lessons, its absorption, particularly in spoken form, came slowly in areas of Upper Bucks, where teachers conversed with students in Pennsylvania German into the 1880s.⁴²

Nonetheless, use of English inexorably gained ground in Nockamixon during the latter years of the century as the Americanizing impact of the schools was abetted by compulsory attendance laws and expanded school years. The introduction of modern transportation—the railroad in the nineteenth century and a trolley line and the automobile in the early twentieth century—all brought increased commercial and social interaction with English speakers and promoted the same end.⁴³ To this should be added the death of many of the large immigrant generation of the mid-nineteenth century, who had generally used their native tongue when speaking with their children and older grandchildren, but not with the younger grandchildren growing up around the turn of the new century. Still, German and Dutch dialects could be heard in the western part of

⁴² "Schools in Durham" (unattributed manuscript), George L. Laubach, scrapbooks, Spruance Library, 2:1–4, 28–29; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Feb. 26, 1856, Feb. 17, 1857, Mar. 12, 1858, Dec. 16, 1882; Intelligencer Clippings File, 1850–1900, "Bucks Co. EDUCATION-TEACHERS," Spruance Library (see clippings for 1862 and 1863); Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 44. The preference for male teachers in Nockamixon and other German townships, persisting into the 1880s, echoed Old World customs. Pickle, *Contented among Strangers*, 82; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Mar. 23, 1875.

⁴³ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Oct. 16, 1886; *Doylestown Intelligencer*, Aug. 15, 1899; Davis, *History of Bucks County*, 1:426n.

the township until the 1930s—"till Hitler," as one interviewee put it. The victory of English in Nockamixon in the early twentieth century did not differ significantly in its timing from that in American *Deutschtum* at large. Distinctively, however, it was a victory not only over the mother tongue of the few remaining immigrants but also over the indigenous Pennsylvania Dutch language, the presence of which had helped prolong the bilingualism of earlier first- and second-generation German Americans.⁴⁴

Even as English prevailed, the transition from German came somewhat more easily for immigrants and their offspring because the English they learned to speak had a distinctively compatible character. Both they and their fourth- and fifth-generation German American neighbors "talked Dutchy," i.e., spoke with an accent and grammatical constructions derived from the Old World language. Substitutions of "Ws" for English "Vs," as well as many other Pennsylvania Dutch usages, were common in Nockamixon well into the twentieth century.⁴⁵

Churches also played a vital role in assimilating immigrants and their children to life in Pennsylvania. For rural German Americans, generally, houses of worship were commonly "the major focus" of communal life.⁴⁶ In Nockamixon Township, this held true for both immigrants and native-born. Unlike the larger aggregations of German immigrants on the frontier or in the cities, which founded their own ethnic parishes, Nockamixon Germans blended rather readily into existing religious congregations. The majority of the church-affiliated newcomers belonged to the Catholic Church. Others, in descending order, identified with the Lutheran and the Reformed churches.⁴⁷

The only Catholic church in Upper Bucks County in 1850, St. John the Baptist, stood along Haycock Run in Haycock Township—and was thus commonly referred to as "the Haycock church"—just across the western border of Nockamixon. The church register of baptisms and mar-

⁴⁴ F. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Aug. 2, 1999; Ch. F. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, July 15, 1990; R. T. (F), interview, Flemington, NJ, July 27, 1992; P. R. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, May 24, 1999; M. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Jan. 11, 1984; Heinz Kloss, "German-American Language Maintenance Efforts," in *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague, 1966), 218–19; La Vern J. Rippley, *The German-Americans* (Boston, 1976), 164–66.

⁴⁵ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Apr. 1, 1876, Dec. 16, 1882; author's on-site recollections.

⁴⁶ Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Patterns of German-American History," in *Germans in America*, 31.

⁴⁷ *Doylestown Democrat*, Aug. 21, 1913; author's correlations of census and church records.

riages clearly indicates that most German Catholic immigrants in the area joined this parish. It surely provided a significant reason for settling and remaining where they did. Although its eighteenth-century founders and a number of its mid-nineteenth-century members were Irish, the fact that many of its native-born congregants claimed German ancestry and spoke the local German dialect appealed to German Catholic immigrants. Furthermore, between 1850 and the 1920s, the pastors at St. John's, with few exceptions, came from Germanic areas of Europe and could converse in German. In 1892, the church was still sufficiently ethnic to be listed in a national survey of German Catholic parishes.⁴⁸

accessible, and it is likely no coincidence that they concentrated in the western sector of the Swamp, which was nearer the Catholic church. Some later settled or resettled outside the Swamp on properties closer to the church. Nonetheless, the original "Swampers" had to travel at least four miles to get to St. John's Church. An energetic young German-born pastor, Rev. Henry Stommel, better met the needs of those in the western Swamp by overseeing the construction of a filial church there in 1872. St. Joseph's, with its simple Gothic edifice, was set amidst the rocks and woods along the east-west road that connected the thoroughfares in the western part of the township with the canal and river on the eastern edge. Father Stommel unofficially christened this desolate, boulder-strewn spot "Marienstein" (Mary's Stone), which became the common appellation for the church and the adjacent road as well as that whole region of the Swamp. By 1892, "St. Joe's" was well established, counting eighty families in its fold.⁴⁹

In 1863, local Catholics, predominantly, but not exclusively, German in name, founded the St. John the Baptist Society, a beneficial organization. It was arguably the local manifestation of the *Unterstützungs-Vereine* found in some parts of the Rhineland and commonly associated with other German American Catholic parishes, although, in its financial purposes, it also much resembled the secular Doylestown Beneficial

⁴⁸ Johannes Nep. Enzlberger, *Eine Festgabe zum Columbus-Jubiläum. Schematismus der katholischen Geistlichkeit deutscher Zunge in den Vereinigten Staaten Amerikas* (Milwaukee, 1892), 235. Names of pastors are derived from the parish register. Their birthplaces are identified through the U.S. Census, Haycock Township, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1920, 1930 and *Bucks County Intelligencer*, May 29, 1880; *Doylestown Democrat*, June 2, 1892, Feb. 1, 1900.

⁴⁹ J. H. Fitzgerald, "Saint John the Baptist Church of Haycock," *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 4 (1917): 123–24; S. R. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Nov. 24, 1988; Enzlberger, *Eine Festgabe*, 235.

Society, founded in the “English” part of the county in the 1830s.⁵⁰ In providing sickness and death benefits as well as communal religious exercises and socializing opportunities, the St. John the Baptist Society proved to be a stabilizing force for the Nockamixon immigrants and their descendants until the latter part of the twentieth century. Although dominated by German immigrants in its early stages, membership extended to a substantial number of native-born Catholics, some of them with non-Germanic names. Despite that circumstance, the constitution of the society required the minutes to be kept in the German language, further suggesting the Germanic character of the wider local community.⁵¹

The only German Protestant church edifice in Nockamixon in the mid-nineteenth century was St. Luke’s, near the village now known as Ferndale, in the center of the township. Lutheran and Reformed congregations, both established prior to the American Revolution, shared this house of worship, which they first constructed in 1813 and replaced, at the same site, in 1875.⁵² Such “union churches” had long been widely used among the Pennsylvania Dutch and may well have been familiar to the nineteenth-century immigrants, since parallel institutions had been established in Baden and surrounding jurisdictions in the 1810s and 1820s.⁵³ Protestants on the periphery of the township attended similar union churches over the borders to the north and south.

Regardless of creed, the Catholic and Protestant churches helped ease the assimilation of immigrants into local society and the sectarian subcultures thereof. They not only provided familiar forms of worship and spiritual solace but also pastors and native-born fellow parishioners who communicated with them in their native tongue. Abundant evidence suggests that over the latter half of the nineteenth century—and, to some degree, into the twentieth—immigrant members of the Lutheran and Reformed congregations, like the Catholics, availed themselves of services in German.

⁵⁰ Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York’s Irish and German Catholics, 1815–1865* (Baltimore, 1975), 80; “Constitution of St. John the Baptist Society,” Miscellaneous Docket Book No. 14, Recorder of Deeds Office, Bucks County Court House, Doylestown, PA; Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), 30–32; “Constitution, By-Laws, and List of Members of the Doylestown Beneficial Society of Pennsylvania,” Bucks County Penna. Miscellaneous Papers, vol. 4, Spruance Library.

⁵¹ “Constitution of St. John the Baptist Society,” 462.

⁵² John A. Ruth, scrapbooks, 8:169–70.

⁵³ Kuhns, “German and Swiss Settlements,” 482; Joseph Michael White, “Religion and Community: Cincinnati Germans, 1814–1870” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1980), 64.

Though the Protestant pastors were American-born, they were bilingual, at least until World War I. They were preaching in German (probably a form of High German sometimes called “sermon German”) to their Pennsylvania Dutch congregations *before* the immigration waves of the mid-nineteenth century. Occasional use of English was introduced into Nockamixon Lutheran services in the 1820s and into Reformed services probably in the 1840s. By the 1870s, ministers in both congregations were delivering sermons in German and English on alternate Sundays. Thereafter, the latter gained ground so that on the eve of World War I, *Deutsch* was heard only infrequently.⁵⁴

The role of the German language in the assimilation experience of Catholic immigrants and their children roughly parallels that of the Protestants, though the details differ. Even in the 1830s, prior to the influx of Rhinelanders, the bishop of Philadelphia appointed a German-born priest to St. John’s because so many parishioners spoke some form of German. That experiment was short-lived, but from the 1850s on, German-speaking priests were able to meet the linguistic needs of immigrant Catholics (and, at least, some of the Pennsylvania Dutch Catholics) in such matters as hearing confessions and preaching. Though Masses, the primary form of Catholic communal worship, were in Latin, the clergymen delivered their sermons (as did itinerant priests at annual parish “missions”) twice, once in English and once in German, in the latter decades of the nineteenth century—and, inferentially, before that.⁵⁵ Thus, immigrants could worship comfortably, while at the same time subtly receiving a mini-lesson in English.

Bilingual sermons at the Haycock and Marienstein churches were encouraged by a smattering of newer German-speaking immigrants and persisted into the first decades of the twentieth century. English, however, did gain ground among the congregants, as evidenced by the revised 1909 constitution of the St. John the Baptist Society, which stipulated that henceforth its minutes should be kept in English and not in German. By the 1920s, German had largely disappeared from sermons, except for

⁵⁴ George L. Laubach, scrapbooks, 2:105–6, 119–22, 129–30; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, June 13, 1877, Sept. 19, 1919; K. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Jan. 11, 1984; Yoder, “Palatine Connection,” 104; Thomas G. Myers, transcriber, *Church Records of St. Luke’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nockamixon Twp. 1766–1921* (Doylestown, PA, 1996), 234; *Doylestown Democrat*, Aug. 21, 1913.

⁵⁵ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, June 18, 1879, Nov. 19, 1881; *Doylestown Democrat*, Feb. 2, 1900; M. K. (F), interview, Perkasic, PA, Jan. 2, 1997; Tourscher, *Diary*, 85.

special occasions such as Christmas.⁵⁶

The small parochial school that operated near St. John's Church from the 1860s to the early 1910s cushioned the transition of many of the immigrants' children into the local culture. The nuns that taught there, at least from the 1870s on, were almost all German-born and taught classes in their native tongue, almost certainly in conjunction with English. However, they abandoned formal instruction in German by the turn of the twentieth century, offering it subsequently on a voluntary basis.⁵⁷

Thus, Nockamixon's immigrants of all the major religious denominations—and their descendants—experienced a very gradual and relatively gentle transition from German to English usage in their religious institutions. Coming to the New World largely in the 1850s and 1860s, and though only a small percentage of the local population, they enjoyed the services of bilingual pastors and religious educators until well into the twentieth century, thanks, in good part, to the fact that many of their coreligionists spoke Pennsylvania Dutch as well as English. Conversely, it can be reasonably inferred that immigration, particularly in the case of the Catholic Church, reinforced the use of German in the parishes—and the concomitant choice of pastors—and helped delay its demise.

Certain familiar Rhineland religious and quasi-religious practices and customs also prevailed in nineteenth-century Nockamixon Township. Organ music was a central component of their worship services. Even among Catholics nationally, this predilection helped distinguish Germans from the predominant Irish.⁵⁸ Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed churches in Nockamixon and on its borders acquired organs before the major nineteenth-century immigration wave and, in some cases, upgraded them in the latter half of the century.⁵⁹ The church edifices themselves,

⁵⁶ K. S. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, July 27, 1990; S. R. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Sept. 20, 1989; M. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, July 27, 1990; Ch. F. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, July 15, 1990; J. A. (M), interview, Ottsville, PA, Aug. 6, 1993; P. R. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, May 24, 1999; A. K. (F), interview, Bucksville, PA, Apr. 21, 1999; R. T. (F), interview, Ringoes, NJ, July 26, 1990; *Constitution and By-Laws of St. John the Baptist Society* (Doylestown, PA, 1909), 21.

⁵⁷ Leo Gregory Fink, ed., *Buckingham Palisades of the Delaware River: Historical Symposium of the Catholic Church in Bucks County, Pennsylvania* (New York, 1960), 45–46; U.S. Census, Haycock Township, 1880; A. K. (F), interview, Bucksville, PA, Jan. 25, 1995; K. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Nov. 3, 1981.

⁵⁸ Dolan, *Immigrant Church*, 79; Buck, "German Population in Bucks County," 64.

⁵⁹ Davis, *History of Bucks County*, 2:44; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Mar. 20, 1880; manuscript account book of Sybilla Beam (church organist), 1880s, in possession of author; George L. Laubach, scrapbooks, 2:127, 151, 155–58, 171, 177; *Doylestown Democrat*, Dec. 17, 1891.

done in Gothic or Romanesque styles popular on the Continent, certainly provided a clear and familiar contrast to the meetinghouses of the Quakers and Mennonites in other Bucks County townships. Stained-glass windows and interior decorations, including statuary in the case of the Catholics, also characterized these structures. For Catholics, bells rang out to call all within earshot to come to Mass, to pray the Angelus, or to attend a funeral. The construction of the churches immediately adjacent to graveyards also reflected both Pennsylvania Dutch and Old World tradition.⁶⁰

Newcomers from the Rhineland would have also recognized—or at least found acceptable—many folk aspects of religious practice in latter nineteenth-century Nockamixon Township. While newly arrived Germans largely maintained their distinctive denominational affiliations, the prevailing churches in the area—Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed—followed a similar annual cycle of liturgical observances, all with attendant social customs. Thus, they separated themselves, on some issues, from the “plain people” among the Pennsylvania Dutch—Amish, Mennonites, and related groups—who kept only Biblically sanctioned holy days, rejecting others added by the medieval Church. The Society of Friends, prominent in Lower Bucks County, went further and scuttled all holy days. Spearheaded by the Lutheran and Reformed churches, which were generally popular among colonial German immigrants and their nineteenth-century descendants in Nockamixon, the Pennsylvania Dutch had established distinctive ways of commemorating Good Friday, Easter, Whitsunday (Pentecost), Whitmonday, Ascension Day, and Christmas. Conversely, the Dutch had little inclination to celebrate Thanksgiving, though the state government had promoted it since 1843. Indeed, certain of these Germanic folk traditions more or less mutated and gained wider acceptance in Bucks County and other parts of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁶¹

⁶⁰ A. R. Horne, “The Worth and Character of the Pennsylvania Germans,” *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 1 ([1908]): 334; K. S. (F), interview, Harrow, PA, Nov. 3, 1981; R. T. (F), interview, Livingston, NJ, Jan. 27, 1985; observations of author in Nockamixon Township and Niederhausen, Baden.

⁶¹ Don Yoder, “Introduction: The Folk Cultural Background,” in *Christmas in Pennsylvania: A Folk Cultural Study*, by Albert L. Shoemaker (Kutztown, PA, 1959), 4, 9, 14n; Alfred L. Shoemaker, *Easter tide in Pennsylvania: A Folk Cultural Study* (Kutztown, PA, 1960), 19–20, 70–71, 77; Buck, “German Population in Bucks County,” 64; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Dec. 13, 1843, Oct. 24, 1854.

Christmas provided the best example of this convergence of immigrant and indigenous customs. It had been widely celebrated among the Pennsylvania Dutch since at least the early nineteenth century. Of more direct relevance, the prevailing denominations of Nockamixon Township all celebrated the holy day, in part, in their churches—Catholics with Mass and Lutherans and Reformed with combined “Sunday School Christmas” festivities in their church basements. The Lutheran and Reformed celebrations, a development from the American Sunday school movement, became popular in “union” churches of the area by the 1870s. The event combined Scripture reading and socializing—including singing and the giving of gifts to children—and was almost certainly bilingual.⁶²

Important components of Christmas celebrations were evergreen trees, which people decorated on Christmas Eve, and Belsnickel. The latter, a corruption of “Pelz-Nicol,” or “Fur-clad Nicholas,” involved the appearance of a friend or relative, usually on the day before Christmas, disguised in a mask and fur coat, to ask the children of the house about their past behavior and to reward or punish them accordingly. Both Christmas trees and Belsnickel had become well established among the Pennsylvania Dutch by the mid-nineteenth century and were familiar to the Rhineland immigrants of that era. In Nockamixon Township, these customs were passed on to the children and grandchildren of the newcomers and carried over well into the twentieth century. However, by then Belsnickel was gradually being replaced by the more uniformly benign “Kriss Kringle” or Santa Claus.⁶³

Many Pennsylvania Dutch traditionally had engaged in a variety of other religiously associated folk customs pertaining to Lent and the Easter season—from Shrove Tuesday to Whitmonday—that non-German Pennsylvanians widely eschewed. Yet, such celebrations would not have been alien to newcomers from the Rhineland. One of these concerned the observance of Good Friday. Reporting in 1864, the *Bucks*

⁶² Yoder, “Introduction,” 1, 3, 4, 8, 14–15, 17; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Dec. 30, 1876, Dec. 29, 1877.

⁶³ Shoemaker, *Christmas in Pennsylvania*, 21, 43, 46–47, 52, 54, 59, 61, 80–81; Henry C. Mercer et al., “Remarks on the Christmas Tree,” *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 4 (1917): 553–55; S. R. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1982; A. K. (F), interview, Bucksville, PA, Apr. 21, 1999; Mergenthaler, “Descendants of Daniel and Katrina Stoeckel Trautz,” 4; R. T. (F), interview, Livingston, NJ, Jan. 27, 1985; S. H. (M), interview, Rupletown, PA, Aug. 26, 1982; P. R. (M), interview, Bucksville, PA, May 24, 1999; M. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1991.

County Intelligencer commented that, "Last Friday, 'Good Friday,' was, as has been the custom from time immemorial, generally observed as a holiday in the German districts of this county. There is usually very little labor performed in that section on that day."⁶⁴ Conversely, the English-dominated areas of Doylestown and Lower Bucks, even after the state government established Good Friday as a legal holiday, generally ignored it and continued business as usual.

A similar cultural alignment occurred with the Pennsylvania Dutch celebration of Easter and Ascension Thursday. Early English settlers, excepting Catholics and Episcopalians, did not observe Easter, while the Dutch did. Palatines from the Upper Rhine introduced the folkloric Easter rabbit and attendant custom of coloring Easter eggs and distributing them to children. This quaint practice was "fortified" by nineteenth-century German immigrants and gradually won acceptance among people of other ancestry in Bucks County and the wider Pennsylvania community. The descendants of the immigrants perpetuated these customs well into the twentieth century.⁶⁵ Pennsylvania Dutch were also distinctive in their observation of Ascension Thursday. A Doylestown newspaper found the day generally ignored in the county in 1865, "except in the German districts, where it was observed this year as usual in many quarters by religious services in the churches, and by a cessation from labor."⁶⁶ Pennsylvania Dutch everywhere abstained from work and, uniquely, went fishing. Nineteenth-century Rhineland immigrants to Upper Bucks clearly did not introduce this Ascension Day celebration, though, since they were largely Catholics for whom it was a holy day of obligation, they would have found it compatible with their practices. As with Easter customs, the angling tradition persisted among the newcomers' offspring well into the next century.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Mar. 29, 1864. The rest of the information in this paragraph is from Shoemaker, *Eastertide in Pennsylvania*, 4, 19; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Apr. 15, 1873, Mar. 30, 1875.

⁶⁵ Shoemaker, *Eastertide in Pennsylvania*, xiii, 45–48; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Apr. 15, 1873, Apr. 16, 1879, Apr. 15, 1882; Blanche M. Kimenhour, unpublished diary, 1933–39, entries of Apr. 11, 1936, and Apr. 16, 1938, in possession of author; S. B. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, June 18, 1985.

⁶⁶ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, May 30, 1865.

⁶⁷ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, May 27, 1873; *Doylestown Democrat*, May 21, 1896, June 3, 1897; Shoemaker, *Eastertide in Pennsylvania*, 70, 72, 74; A. K. (F), interview, Bucksville, PA, Jan. 25, 1995, and June 1, 2000; B. H. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, July 9, 1984; K. S. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, July 3, 1991.

The dominant culture in Nockamixon Township regarding alcohol also facilitated the assimilation of nineteenth-century immigrants into local society. Alcoholic beverages were “of almost universal use” on the western border of the township in the 1830s.⁶⁸ Taverns, which served as both hotels and social centers along the township’s major transportation routes, such as the stage-coach roads and the Delaware River/Canal, had long been more numerous in Nockamixon and the other German townships than in Quaker-dominated Lower Bucks County. They were frequented by local males and by the late nineteenth century were sponsoring dances for young persons.⁶⁹

Immigrant attitudes on this issue were quite compatible with prevailing mores in Nockamixon Township and the vicinity. Badener and other Rhinelanders familiar with *Gasthaeuser* in their homeland, and accustomed to routine alcohol consumption during their workday, adapted naturally to the local custom of patronizing these establishments. Indeed, an Alsatian immigrant family operated one of these hotels, located near the western edge of the Swamp, from 1870 to 1916. Even the grape-growing and wine-making skills, which the immigrants brought with them and handed down to their descendants, were not out of place since the manufacture and consumption of vinous liquors was already well established among the native born.⁷⁰ A continuing appreciation for wine notwithstanding, the newcomers, in a very tangible example of accommodation to local practices, readily took to the more popular American drink, whiskey. Cheap and potent, it helped brighten communal labor projects, though it was rare that anyone drank so much as to be unable to work.

⁶⁸ William J. Buck, “Prices of Store Goods, Produce and Labor from 1826 to 1836,” William J. Buck Papers, MSC 16, fol. 3, Spruance Library.

⁶⁹ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, June 6, 1885; yearly lists of taverns in the manuscript tax records for Bucks County townships, Spruance Library; “A list of persons recommended and continued upon former recommendations to keep Houses of Public Entertainment in the County of Bucks for the year ensuing from June Sessions 1772,” Miscellaneous Papers, 1745–1850, in Bucks County Papers, 1682–1850, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; George M. Grim, “Historic Sketch of Ottsville and Vicinity,” *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society* 4 (1917): 105; R. T. (F), interview, Livingston, NJ, Jan. 27, 1985.

⁷⁰ Rinderle and Norling, *Nazi Impact*, 21, 35; *Easton Express*, Sept. 28, 1917; Frank L. Love, comp., *Bucks County Tavern License Petitions, 1869–1923* (Doylestown, PA, 1996), vol. 2; M. K. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 25, 1991; S. R. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Dec. 28, 1991; K. S. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, Mar. 24, 1990; S. B. (F), interview, Ottsville, PA, June 18, 1985; George L. Laubach, scrapbooks, 1:89; U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Schedule 4.—Production of Agriculture,” 1860, Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, PA; U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Schedule 2.—Production of Agriculture,” 1880, Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, PA, microfilm, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Indeed, both Pennsylvania Dutch and Rhineland mores frowned upon drunkenness.⁷¹

Russell A. Kazal suggests that protection of the right to use alcohol quite possibly exceeded language as a unifying force among German Americans in Philadelphia. This concern galvanized their opposition to the largely Anglo-American temperance movement, which had emerged in the 1840s and persisted into the 1920s and which they perceived as a threat, not to the abuse of alcohol, but to legitimate social activity.⁷² The same could be said of the Nockamixon Germans, both native and foreign born, who were united in opposition to the persistent, statewide prohibition movement of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Quakers of central and lower Bucks supported prohibition. In an 1854 poll, the township voted against prohibition by a tally of 363 to 22. In 1873, it again overwhelmingly rejected prohibition under an 1872 "local option" law passed by the legislature that permitted counties to outlaw alcohol sales by referendum. In the 1890s, Nockamixon lent no support to Prohibition Party candidates.⁷³

The emergence of the temperance movement and, in the 1850s, of a county Know-Nothing Party stimulated interest in the right to vote. Mirroring the tendency among church-affiliated Germans in western settlements, once naturalized, Nockamixon's Catholic and Protestant immigrants joined the Democratic Party, which opposed both prohibition and nativism.⁷⁴ The recent arrivals, in following their natural, conservative political proclivities, readily melded into the local political culture. The "German townships" of Upper Bucks in general and Nockamixon Township in particular had long been bastions of Democratic strength in the county. Before, during, and after the German influx of the mid-nineteenth

⁷¹ Buehrle, "Swamp," 85–86; Daniel F. Mergenthaler, "Reminiscences," MacReynolds Papers, Miscellaneous, fol. 33, p. 1, Spruance Library; William Beidelman, *The Story of Pennsylvania Germans Embracing an Account of Their Origin, Their History, and Their Dialect* (Easton, PA, 1898), 146, 148–49; Horne, "Worth and Character of the Pennsylvania Germans," 339.

⁷² Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), 40–41, 92; Rippley, *German-Americans*, 18, 53, 55, 109, 118.

⁷³ Terry A. McNealy, "A Forgotten Tavern," *Mercer Mosaic*, July/Aug. 1985, 15; "Election Returns of Bucks County, 1812–1906," W. W. H. Davis, scrapbook; *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Apr. 2, 1872, Mar. 18, 1873, Mar. 25, 1873, Apr. 4, 1873.

⁷⁴ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Oct. 16, 1855; *Doylestown Democrat*, Oct. 17, 1854; Gjerde, *Minds of the West*, 261, 263, 269, 273, 280–81, 309. Contrary to Paul Kleppner's findings among other German Americans, Lutherans in Nockamixon evidently did not turn away from the Democratic Party when "brought into social interaction with German Catholics." *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850–1900* (New York, 1970), 47.

century, Nockamixon Township voted consistently and in landslide proportions—four or five to one—for the Democratic Party's candidates over opposition candidates, be they Whigs, Republicans, or others.⁷⁵

This political orientation—and the value system behind it—translated into lukewarm support for the Civil War by both natives and immigrants in Nockamixon and other German townships. As a result, several local Lutheran pastors of an abolitionist bent were forced to resign and local recruiting quotas were difficult to fill. Both Rhineland-born township residents and those who were native-born but of German ancestry sought exemption from the draft and failed to report and deserted in roughly proportionate numbers. In November 1864, township voters cast 41 ballots for Lincoln and 315 for Democrat George B. McClellan.⁷⁶

* * *

German immigrants and their children in Nockamixon Township experienced a relatively seamless adjustment to their corner of America. Economic opportunity commensurate with their skills and preferences produced notable material progress. The prevailing native culture, imbued with Germanic linguistic and cultural traits, created a comfortable social environment. The existing churches reflected their Old World affiliations and welcomed the newcomers with familiar services in a language they could comprehend.

Some historians have argued that German immigrants to Pennsylvania established subcultures distinct from and, to some degree, in conflict with that of the Pennsylvania Dutch.⁷⁷ In counterpoint, however, it can be noted that these historians were speaking primarily about large urban immigrant aggregations, which included many non-Rhinelanders, had large enough numbers to create their own institutional networks, and, influenced disproportionately by Forty-Eighters, maintained an active public interest in the political future of their homeland. Conditions dif-

⁷⁵ "Election Returns of Bucks County, 1812–1906," W. W. H. Davis, scrapbook; Mergenthaler, "Descendants of Daniel and Katrina Stoeckel Trautz," 5.

⁷⁶ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Sept. 10, 1861, Aug. 25, 1863, Nov. 15, 1864, Feb., 21, 1865, Mar. 28, 1865; Edmund Ellis Bieber, *Springfield Church: A Brief History of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Springfield Township Bucks County, Pa. From 1751 to 1953* (Pleasant Valley, PA, 1953), 65–68; "List of Non-Reporting Drafted Men and Deserters," Pennsylvania Quarter Sessions of Bucks County 1866, Spruance Library.

⁷⁷ Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 21–22; Yoder, "Pennsylvania Germans," 51, 53; Donner, "We Are What We Make of Ourselves," 542.

ferred in Bucks County, where the immigrant community was smaller and overwhelmingly from the Upper Rhine, created no entirely German American institution, joined existing nonpietistic churches, and manifested little interest in Old World politics. Despite the advantages Nockamixon offered the immigrants, their life there was, of course, not utopian. Canal boating and farming were arduous and often dangerous occupations. Furthermore, while the newcomers did share many values and customs with the native born, some of the latter raised objections. The Know-Nothing Party made an appearance in the township—and county generally—in 1854. It contributed to an election day barroom brawl between immigrants and natives in March 1855. This was the only incident even resembling antforeign violence in the township in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The new third party failed to chip away at the dominance of the local Democratic Party, which emphatically denounced it and its attendant nativism. The Know-Nothing spirit was largely confined to the less Germanic, eastern edge of the original township, where it would be absorbed by the emerging, but never thriving, Republican Party.⁷⁸

Thus, Nockamixon Township's economic, social, and cultural traits attracted Bucks County's only significant German immigrant population in the nineteenth century. They induced large numbers of them and their children to remain and to blend into a distinctive, multireligious Pennsylvania Dutch side channel of American life, which contributed to its expansion from northern into parts of central Bucks. In the process, the Rhinelanders learned English and participated in the local economic and political systems while retaining a modified version of their mores as they assimilated to the native Pennsylvania Dutch society around them. With this community, their descendants drifted slowly and calmly into the mainstream of Anglo-American culture in the twentieth century.

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⁷⁸ *Bucks County Intelligencer*, May 1, 1855, Sept. 4, 1855, Oct. 9, 1855; *Doylestown Democrat*, Oct. 17, 1854; "Election Returns of Bucks County, 1812–1906," W. W. H. Davis, scrapbook, *passim*.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Newly Available and Processed Collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE DESCRIPTIONS of some of the collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that have either been acquired within the past year or more fully processed and are therefore more available and accessible to researchers. Full finding aids for these processed collections, and many others, can be found online at <http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=35>.

Recently Processed Collections

Presbyterian Ministers' Fund Records, 1718–1962, n.d. (bulk 1798–1899)

1 box, 42 volumes, 1 flat file
Collection 3101

Shortly after its establishment around 1716, the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia created the “Fund for Pious Uses.” This charitable organization was intended to assist local Presbyterian ministers. In 1759, the organization became The Corporation for Relief of Poor and Distressed Presbyterian Ministers and of the Poor and Distressed Widows and Children of Presbyterian Ministers. In 1888, it became the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund (PMF), and it is recognized as the oldest life insurance company in America. PMF provided insurance policies to Protestant evangelical ministers and their families, and the corporation remained in existence for over two hundred years, until it was bought out in the early 1990s. This collection, which spans 225 years, contains cashbooks, daybooks, journals, and ledgers. It also consists of sample policies, policy

receipts, a scrapbook, and a book of meeting minutes pertaining to the purchase of an organ for the Old Pine Street Church in Philadelphia. It includes four volumes that relate to the Methodist Ministers Relief Association and the Ministers Life Insurance Company of Boston, Massachusetts.

Daniel Parker Papers, ca. 1792–1848 (bulk 1802–1843)

26 boxes

Collection 466

Daniel Parker served as chief clerk of the United States War Department during the early 1800s. In 1814, the Senate nominated and appointed him to the office of adjutant and inspector general for the War Department, a position he held until he became paymaster general of the army in 1821. The Parker collection is comprised largely of War Department correspondence from the first half of the nineteenth century. It includes letters from Secretary of War William Eustis, Major General Andrew Jackson, Colonel Henry Leavenworth, and Major Sylvanus Thayer. The Parker Papers also contain incoming and outgoing correspondence from several presidents, including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and William Henry Harrison. Other correspondents are prominent military figures such as General Winfield Scott. Many of Jefferson's letters concern Native American tribes and their actions for or against American soldiers and settlers. There are several reports from Meriwether Lewis on his survey of Louisiana and the western territories. Other materials focus on war agitation, embargoes, and military preparedness, Aaron Burr as a conspirator and traitor, and raising the defenses of the port city of New Orleans. The collection contains numerous letters pertaining to the War of 1812, including information on battles, troop movements, military campaigns, and mobilization plans. Other miscellaneous documents concern Parker's personal correspondence with his brother, as well as various military papers, printed materials, and maps.

Society Print Collection, ca. 1800–ca. 1950

75 boxes, 167 flat files

Collection V89

The Society Print Collection is focused primarily on Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. It includes reproductions of prints, drawings, lithographs, etchings, woodcuts, and photographs, many of which have been clipped from newspapers, magazines, and calendars. It also contains postcards, greeting cards, invitations, and original watercolors, drawings, and photographs. The collection is arranged by image size (small, medium, and large), and it is further organized alphabetically according to subject within each size category. Subjects within the collection are quite varied and include everything from banks, insurance companies, museums, and libraries, to stadiums, churches, bridges, mills, schools, and amusement parks. Images under the heading “foreign views” show mostly landscapes, cityscapes, and landmarks from European nations such as Germany, Italy, and France; however, there are also views from countries like Cuba, Brazil, and Liberia. Those pictures under the “groups” heading depict groups of people in various civil, historical, and military situations. Another sizeable group of images are those categorized as “residences,” which show primarily the houses of famous Pennsylvanians, such as James Logan, Robert Morris, and various members of the Penn family. There are also several folders of images of famous ships, such as the *Alabama*, the *Constitution*, and the *Mayflower*. Under the heading “stores and factories,” images are arranged according to what was being sold or manufactured (e.g., chemical supplies, dry goods, glass, iron, marble, pianos). Those seeking images related to Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln will find them under the headings “Frankliniana,” “Washingtoniana,” and “Lincolniana.” Two other significant groups of images are listed under “Pennsylvania” and “United States,” and they depict views from across the state and most of the nation, respectively.

Sword Family Papers, 1751–ca. 1940 (bulk 1836–1845)

9 boxes

Collection 1878

The Swords, a merchant family from Philadelphia and New Castle, Delaware, participated in the China trade during the mid-nineteenth century. John Dorsey Sword traveled widely in the West Indies, South America, and China, and his wife, Mary Parry Sword, accompanied him to South America from 1837 to 1838 and to China from 1841 to 1845. While in China, she resided in Macao while he conducted business at Canton. Their papers, which date from 1836 to 1850, comprise the bulk of this collection. Their letters and journals focus on various aspects of the China trade, including their voyage to Canton, the Opium War of 1838, and the social life of westerners in Macao. John D. Sword's papers also include business correspondence with his business partner, John B. Trott. Mary's papers contain outgoing letters from Brazil, Chile, and China, letters to her husband in Canton, travel diaries from South America and China, and letters from her brother Thomas Parry on life in Philadelphia. The collection also consists of the papers of several other family members.

**Mary Elizabeth Hallock Greenewalt Papers, 1769–1950
(bulk 1879–1950)**

39 boxes, 23 flat files, 29 volumes

Collection 867

Musician, inventor, lecturer, writer, and political activist Mary Elizabeth Hallock Greenewalt was born on September 8, 1871, in Beirut, Lebanon. Her mother, Sara (Tabet) Hallock, descended from an aristocratic Syrian family, and her father, Samuel Hallock, was a U.S. consul. Mary Elizabeth arrived in Philadelphia in 1882 at the age of eleven. She graduated from Philadelphia's Musical Academy in 1893, and in 1897 she went to Vienna to study piano with Theodore Leschetizky. She married Dr. Frank L. Greenewalt, physician-in-chief at Girard College, in 1898. Greenewalt was an accomplished pianist who was noted for her interpretation of Chopin. In the early 1900s, she began studying how graduated colored lighting could enhance the emotional expression of music. She obtained

eleven patents for an organ that projected a sequence of colored lighting arranged for specific musical programs. She believed that she created a new fine art with her combination of light and color as a single performance; she called it “Nourathar,” or essence of light. Greenewalt also lectured on music and served as a delegate to the National Woman’s Party, which was instrumental in winning woman suffrage. She died in 1950. This collection contains a diverse array of materials, including correspondence, which details the development and manufacture of Greenewalt’s invention, a photo album, an autobiography, a family history, copies of patents, blue prints and drawings, concert programs, scrapbooks, and a recording of Chopin that she made in 1920.

New Century Trust Records, ca. 1854–2004 (bulk 1882–2000)

103 boxes, 73 volumes, 3 flat files

Collection 3097

The New Century Trust was founded in 1893 as the incorporated body of The New Century Working Woman’s Guild. In 1895, the organization shortened its name to The New Century Guild and became a member of the Federation of Women’s Clubs of Pennsylvania. The trust oversaw and lent financial support to the guild’s activities for women in the workforce, and its programs included lectures and evening classes. The guild provided working women with low-cost meals, sleeping accommodations, and emergency financial assistance. It began publishing the *Journal of Women’s Work* in 1887. Written by and for guild members, the newspaper offered event calendars, advice columns, short stories, and poems. The guild eventually established its own library, gymnasium, and several internal committees on which members could serve. The collection includes board and committee meeting minutes, administrative files, membership materials and information cards, financial records, photographs, artifacts, clippings, and ephemera.

Helen C. Perkins Scrapbooks, 1875–1912 (bulk 1900–1912)

37 boxes

Collection V72

The Perkins collection is comprised of over eighty scrapbooks. Most of the books contain newspaper clippings, black-and-white prints, and photographs of various buildings and scenic views throughout Philadelphia and its neighborhoods and suburbs. Some of the images are accompanied by newspaper articles or Perkins's handwritten notations, and she frequently included a history of a location or building site and its occupants. She took many of the photographs herself and occasionally noted the conditions or occurrences on the street at the time they were shot. Other topics covered to a lesser degree include colonial families, statuary and centennial buildings, and public schools and scenes of New Jersey. The collection also includes a handwritten copy of "Souder's History of Chestnut Street," which was published in the *Sunday Dispatch* from April 1858 to October 1859.

Horace Trumbauer Collection, ca. 1898–ca. 1947

2 boxes, 112 flat files, 6 rolled items

Collection V36

Famed architect Horace Trumbauer was born in Philadelphia in 1868. He established his own firm in 1890 and focused initially on designing private residences. In 1894, he completed Gray Towers for William Welsh Harrison in Glenside, Pennsylvania. He subsequently designed Chelton House for George W. Elkins and Lynnewood Hall for P. A. B. Widener, both in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. Trumbauer also created various residences in New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. By the middle of his career, he turned his attention to commercial and public buildings. He is best known for designing, with architect Julian Abele, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and much of Duke University's campus in Durham, North Carolina. From the mid-1920s through the late 1930s, he designed Duke's West Campus in the gothic style and its East Campus in the Georgian style. He also designed buildings for Jefferson Medical College and Hahneman Medical College, parts of the Free Library of Philadelphia, and Widener Library at Harvard University. Trumbauer

died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1938 and Abele, the first black architecture graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and William O. Frank continued and finished Trumbauer's commissioned work under the name "Office of Horace Trumbauer." This collection is comprised of architectural drawings, blueprints, floor plans, elevations, and sections and details for dwellings, estates, and other buildings located in and around Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, Washington, DC, and Rhode Island. There are also some photographs, prints, and negatives. There are two boxes of manuscript material that primarily pertain to Duke University and include photographs, prints, printed materials, and floor plans.

Recently Acquired Collections (Currently Being Processed)

Joseph Smith Harris Correspondence, 1853–1906

2 volumes

Joseph Smith Harris (1836–1910) of Chester County and Philadelphia was a civil engineer, surveyor, and railroad administrator. In 1853, after attending Philadelphia's Central High School, he took a job as a topographer with the Easton and Water Gap Railroad (later the North Pennsylvania Railroad). He then worked for the U.S. Coast Survey from 1854 to 1864. In this capacity he assisted with the Northwest Boundary Survey, which established the U.S.-Canadian border along the forty-ninth parallel. He also participated in combat operations in Louisiana in 1862 during the Civil War. After 1864, he held positions with various railroad companies, rising to become president of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. In 1893, he became president of the bankrupt Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and he led the company's successful reorganization into the new Reading Company; he resigned as company president eight years later. The collection consists of about 150 letters—both professional and personal in nature—to and from Harris. Many of the letters have been transcribed, and the collection includes biographical excerpts and a few scans of photographs and maps.

Mary A. Varallo Photographs and Memorabilia, ca. 1945–ca. 1968

1 box, ca. 25 framed items

Mary A. Varallo of Philadelphia served as a Democrat in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from 1945 to 1960 and as a Philadelphia City Council member at large from 1960 to 1968. As a representative, she sponsored the Women's Equal Rights law of 1945, among many other bills, and rose to become minority whip and then majority whip for the Democratic caucus. She served as an alternate delegate to the 1956 Democratic National Convention and as a delegate to the 1960 and 1964 conventions. She sat on many boards and committees and received numerous awards and honors for her work related to women's rights, health care, the Roman Catholic Church, Italians and Italian Americans, and other issues. The collection includes photographs depicting Ms. Varallo at numerous public events (political, church, cultural, etc.) and with various local, state, and national public figures, including presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, among many others. Also included are several certificates and awards presented to Ms. Varallo and several typescripts and one clipping containing biographical information about her.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*ERIC KLINEK AND
HSP ARCHIVES STAFF

BOOK REVIEWS

Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654–1800. By WILLIAM PENCAK. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005. xiv, 321 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$29.95.)

William Pencak has written a first-rate study of Jews in colonial and revolutionary America. Jews constituted perhaps one-twentieth of 1 percent of the total population at the end of the eighteenth century; it is estimated that their total number may have been as high as 1,300 in the 1770s and perhaps 3,000 in the 1790s. Their major colonial settlements were in Newport, Rhode Island, New York City, Philadelphia, Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. In Philadelphia, where the largest contingent dwelled, there were perhaps fifty Jewish families at the time of the Revolution; in the 1770s, as few as sixteen Jews could be found in Savannah, the smallest of the settlements. By the late 1760s, the Rhode Island Jewish community had evaporated.

One may wonder why a historian would devote so many years to studying such a small group of people. Pencak argues that their influence far exceeded their numbers. They were among the most prominent merchants in several locales, were disproportionately represented among the colonial elite, and originated many of the ideas upon which the United States was founded. The Puritans had considered themselves the “New Israel” and had tried to model their society on principles laid out in the Old Testament. At the time of the Revolution, Pencak writes, “the new nation had succeeded both Massachusetts and Israel as God’s chosen, republican people,” while the “Hebrew Bible . . . contains almost all the relevant discussions of government and the moral mission of a nation specially favored by God” (1).

This extremely detailed work, based on extensive research in both primary and secondary sources, will be appreciated by students of American Jewish and American ethnic history. Pencak’s analysis is subtle, nuanced, and substantial. He spends an entire introductory chapter on anti-Semitism, where it existed, and how it compared in intensity with European manifestations. He acknowledges that it was much more prevalent in the Old World, and though settlers brought their feelings and attitudes with them when they arrived in the British colonies, they were meliorated by preexisting thoughts and conditions there. In times of crisis, populist (i.e. lower-class) anti-Semitism seemed more virulent, but attitudes toward Jews were not class based: almost all Christians believed Jews were inferior and misguided and that society would be best served if they converted to the true faith. Perhaps one-third of the Jews did just that, while a large proportion of them refrained from marrying or bearing heirs.

On the other hand, despite cultural hostility, many individual Jews were welcomed and praised for their “contributions” to a society desperately in need of labor, capital, and connections with European financiers. Moreover, there were many instances when Jews and gentiles developed warm relations with one another. During the Revolution, most, but not all, Jews supported the cause in whatever ways they could. Therefore, from a “Jewish” point of view, they were entitled to equal treatment and opportunity—which rarely existed in colonial America or the new nation—as they were, indeed, among the first families of the nation. Sometimes politicians’ rhetoric endorsed that sentiment, but rarely did their practices.

University of Arizona

LEONARD DINNERSTEIN

Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution. By NICOLE EUSTACE. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. x, 613 pp. Illustrations, figures, tables, appendices, notes, index. \$45.)

This fascinating book examines the place that eighteenth-century Americans of British descent accorded emotion in the articulation of social and political identities. Focusing on the specific cultural context of Pennsylvania, Nicole Eustace argues that colonists there saw the cultivation and expression of emotion as an important marker of gender, class, ethnicity, and race—alongside the exercise of reason, which has received so much attention from historians of this period. In privileging particular kinds of emotion as being indicative of gentility, civility, and manliness, colonial elites distinguished themselves from other North American inhabitants—white commoners, Indians, and black slaves—whose lack or excess of emotion signified their deficiencies.

Eustace begins by discussing colonial responses to Alexander Pope’s ideas. His reconciliation of passion with civic virtue proved increasingly popular among Pennsylvanians during the middle third of the eighteenth century, despite considerable opposition from some quarters, not least the powerful Quaker presence in the colony. In subsequent chapters, she examines a spectrum of emotional exchanges—in public and private settings—that expressed feelings such as love, rage, sympathy, and grief. In each chapter, she shows the ways in which privileged Pennsylvanians carefully distinguished between worthy and unworthy forms of passion. Eustace demonstrates compellingly that the expression of emotion was critical to the delineation of social status and political power.

At every turn Eustace is sensitive to contestations that threatened to disrupt these convenient distinctions, such as the Paxton “boys,” who, in the 1760s, responded to elites’ denials of their full manhood by scornfully recasting emotional refinement as a form of effeminacy. Throughout the latter part of the book,

she charts the gradual emergence of an alternative paradigm that originated in Pennsylvania's political struggles and also in the broader imperial crisis. That new paradigm emphasized the universality of emotions; it blended masculine power with a civilized sensibility and presented passion as the natural ally of classical virtue. Eustace insists that the emotional language which pervades anti-British writings from the 1760s and 1770s should be understood not merely as rhetorical flourish but as a substantive and crucial component of the radical message that took form during those years. How that played out in the final decades of the eighteenth century, as citizens became increasingly divided over how radical their revolution should become, is not addressed here. This may frustrate some readers, but of course one can only do so much in one book. Given the ambitious scope of this study as it stands, Eustace was doubtless wise not to extend its reach into the early republic.

Eustace marshals an impressive body of evidence that incorporates personal journals, commonplace books, correspondence, political and religious tracts, public records, and newspapers. The author is clearly well versed in recent theoretical contributions to the history of emotion, but she deploys that knowledge with a light touch. Her prose is accessible and engaging, even when she examines complex ideas or issues that, in the hands of a less accomplished writer, could easily become recondite.

This is a very long book, which might perhaps have benefited from some judicious pruning, but the writing is of such quality and the details so engrossing that few readers are likely to find themselves skimming. Particularly impressive is the author's constant attention to the connotations that specific words would have carried in the eighteenth century and the often subtle distinctions between words that prove telling if paid the attention that they deserve. Most important of all, the author never loses sight of the human beings whose feelings and ideas are being discussed. This is an eminently humane piece of scholarship.

University of Miami

RICHARD GODBEER

Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America, 1760–1800. By MAURICE J. BRIC. (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2008. xix, 363 pp. Notes, appendices, tables, biographical notes, select bibliography, index. \$65.)

Prior to the American Revolution, Irish immigrants came to America primarily from the northern province of Ulster. The eighteenth-century passenger trade, closely linked to the flaxseed trade that supported the linen industry in Ulster, facilitated emigration from Londonderry and Belfast to Newcastle, Delaware, and Philadelphia. Between 1771 and 1774, when linen weaving fell victim to the British credit crisis, at least 18,600 sailed into the ports of the

Delaware Valley. These Scotch-Irish, as they were known in America, typically did not settle in the port towns but pushed on to find homes in the backcountry. They became politicized in 1764 in the aftermath of the Paxton killings and the formation of the Presbyterian committee, whose leaders were Philadelphia merchants in the flaxseed trade; they continued to be active in Pennsylvania politics by supporting the Constitution of 1776.

Maurice Bric summarizes this familiar story, and his focus is on “the new Irish,” or those who arrived between 1783 and 1800. His chapter on “Perceptions, Management, and Flow” is a thorough and perceptive look into every aspect of Irish immigration in those years. Bric acknowledges considerable continuity with prewar patterns. Many of the same merchants in the same ports controlled the passenger trade, and it was still largely a migration of Ulster Protestants, though he fails to note contemporary comments on the greater number of Catholics who were sailing to America from Ulster ports in the 1780s. The significant difference in these “new Irish” was the change in attitudes in both Ireland and America that influenced them; they had a stronger sense of national identity and of individual rights.

Bric has made a case, too, for a heightened sense of ethnic identity among Irish immigrants. Earlier Philadelphia associations, such as the Hibernia Fire Company (1752) and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick (1771), were elite social clubs. The Hibernian Society for the Relief of Emigrants from Ireland was formed in 1790 to support all who “fly to the Asylum established here for the oppressed of all nations” (157). While many of the newcomers were seeking a better life in Pennsylvania, others were exiles who were conscious of political trends in their old homeland and concerned with movements there. As the United Irish looked to France as a model and source of aid, so did they.

They became involved in Pennsylvania politics, sympathizing with Jeffersonian Republicans. One Federalist saw these “new Irish” as “United Irishmen, Free Masons, and the most God-provoking Democrats on this side of Hell” (229). Federalists responded with a more restricted Naturalization Act (1795) and the Alien Acts (1798). But, the election of Governor Thomas McKean in 1799 benefitted these new Irish immigrants.

Bric’s research is nearly flawless, which is befitting of one of Jack Greene’s doctoral students, and a bare summary cannot do justice to the breadth of his study. His stress on the “new Irish” is not always helpful. Since their political leaders in the 1790s—men like George Bryan, Blair McClenachan, Thomas McKean, and others—were active from the 1760s onward, there clearly was more continuity than Bric seems to allow. He understandably focuses on high-profile figures, but the reader is left wondering about the ordinary Irish men and women in Philadelphia who joined their societies and voted for them.

University of Florida

RICHARD K. MACMASTER

Collected Works of James Wilson, 2 vols. Edited by KERMIT L. HALL and MARK DAVID HALL. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2007. xxvii, 1,262 pp. Bibliographical glossary, index. Cloth, \$40; paper, \$20.)

Kermit Hall, in his introduction to the new edition of James Wilson's works, indicates that these volumes are "the most comprehensive collection of materials ever assembled by and about James Wilson" (xxvi). The books also include a bibliographical essay—really a history of Wilson's law lectures—by political scientist Mark David Hall (no relation to Kermit Hall), who published *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson* (1997).

This edition, however, does not contain many of the charges Wilson made to the grand juries when he was associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Rather, the editors included the two that "merit serious consideration" (xxvi). Similarly, only two of his Supreme Court opinions, *Chisholm v. Georgia* (1793) and *Ware v. Hilton* (1796), appear in the volume. Among other items found in the collection are the speeches that Wilson gave at the Federal Convention of 1787, the widely reprinted and controversial speech of October 6, 1787, which he gave at the Pennsylvania State House in defense of the Constitution, and the speeches he delivered during the Pennsylvania ratifying convention.

All of the texts in these volumes seem to be transcribed accurately, which is the editors' most important responsibility. The law lectures are based on the 1804 edition, published by Wilson's son, Bird. However, it is often not clear what copy text was used for other items in the edition. For instance, no source is given for Madison's notes of the debates in the Federal Convention. Hall and Hall cite Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* as "the most complete record of the convention's proceedings" (80), but they did not rely on him for the transcription or annotation. Similarly, they provide no source for the October 6, 1787, speech, though it appears to be taken from volume 13 of Merrill Jensen et al., eds., *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. The debates in the Pennsylvania Convention derive from Jonathan Elliot, *Debates in the Several State Conventions*, rather than from Jensen, *Documentary History*, volume 2, which the editors consider as the "most complete account" (178). Unfortunately, because this edition relies on Elliot, not all versions of Wilson's speeches are included, particularly those printed by Alexander J. Dallas in the *Pennsylvania Herald*. Also absent are the notes of his speeches that other convention delegates, and Wilson himself, took during the sessions. The great speech of November 24 is misdated November 26, as it is in Elliot (and in Thomas Lloyd's 1788 edition).

Other editorial problems occur in the annotations. Wilson's own annotations are retained, and they appear as a kind of shorthand legal citation common in the eighteenth century and are not readily understood today. These are elucidated in footnotes and at the end of the second volume in a "Bibliographical Glossary."

Though awkward to use, these references place citations to obscure but valuable sources all in one place. Most of the biographical entries are far too brief or describe careers well after their relevant time.

More seriously, the editors leave historical references unexplained. In Wilson's "Speech Delivered in the Convention of the Province of Pennsylvania . . . in January 1775" (not sourced), opaque references to the Townshend Duties (33), the Association (34), the Declaratory Act (34), the Tea Act (34), and the Boston Massacre trial (35) are not explained and will not be understood by the lay reader. They also do not appear in the index (which is frequently the case), though the Tea Act is indexed as "Tea, duty on." I fear that many readers will not appreciate the allusions.

Kermit Hall argues that Wilson's lectures are a "genuinely systematic view of the law" (xiv) and a "serious contribution to the literature of the law that no student of its early national origins can ignore" (xv). He is certainly right. The added material makes the volumes even more valuable. But, their utility would have been enhanced had it been better edited.

University of Wisconsin-Madison

RICHARD LEFFLER

Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers. By RICHARD NEWMAN. (New York: New York University Press, 2008). xiii, 359 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

In the preface to his book, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, Richard Newman recounts a conversation with his editor in which she asked, "why can't biographers just let go of their subjects?!" (ix). It is very clear that Newman struggled with this dilemma. His refusal to "let go" has produced a monumental contribution to the discipline of early American history and, perhaps, one of the very best biographies concerned with that era.

As Newman suggests, biography is still one of the most interesting forms of historical writing, and this new and fastidiously researched biography of Richard Allen is one of the very few books dedicated to exploring the lives of eighteenth-century people of African descent. *Freedom's Prophet* not only explores Allen's importance in shaping postrevolutionary African American life, but it also examines the complex shift from slavery to freedom among African Americans in the North. Newman borrows from David Levering Lewis's important work on W. E. B. Du Bois by stating that Allen's life story provides "a biography of his race" during the early republic (4). Through the lens of Allen's life, Newman helps to define important issues such as race relations, the advent of the black church, the rise of black leadership, abolitionism, and the African American struggle to cap-

ture and maintain freedom in the ever-changing urban landscape of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America. Newman writes that, "Richard Allen's world was filled with high hopes and dashing disappointments" (5).

Although Richard Allen is most widely known for founding the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, he shared similar experiences with the men and women of African descent who lived and worked in the urban North. Allen began his own autobiography by writing, "I was born a slave to Benjamin Chew, of Philadelphia. My mother and father and four of us children were then sold into Delaware state" (28). As was the case with tens of thousands of black northerners, Allen was born into slavery but was able to use religion and hard work to purchase his own freedom. Newman states that "Allen shrewdly used Methodist preaching to shame his master into bargaining slavery down into a contract for freedom" (42). Allen's freedom and religion led to the famous walk-out of St. George's segregated church in 1792 or 1793 and the founding of the AME Church, the first independent black church in America. Allen positioned himself as a "black founder" during the early years of the republic, creating a space for free people of color to worship, to educate themselves, and to involve themselves in the politics of the "City of Brotherly Love" and in the politics of a new nation.

Perhaps one of the most important contributions of Newman's book is that it offers a balanced perspective regarding the immense hope and the spirit of change experienced by African Americans in the beginning of the nineteenth century. With the joys of freedom, a new church, and a growing free black population came the terrible setbacks of heightened racial tension and eventual disfranchisement. Although he was one of the most important and influential black leaders of his era, Richard Allen contemplated the feasibility of black success in America. Newman's depiction of Allen's strong support for Haitian emigration demonstrates a very real pessimism among black men and women. Newman writes, "Allen believed that Haitian emigration offered African Americans something white citizens increasingly enjoyed: a frontier outlet" (239). He understood that black men and women needed a "safety valve" and hoped that African American migration would "change the racial politics of the Atlantic world" (261). Allen's hopes with respect to migration did not materialize. However, his death in 1831 ushered in a new abolitionist era that would challenge slavery and notions of citizenship in America. Richard Newman's work is a tour de force and a joy to read.

University of Delaware

ERICA ARMSTRONG DUNBAR

For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s. By RONALD P. FORMISANO. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. viii, 315 pp. Notes, index. \$35.)

Ever since popular sovereignty replaced parliamentary sovereignty, citizens have contested its implications. Popular sovereignty meant that the people retained power, limited only by its possessors' choice not to wield it. It potentially justified citizens' perpetual, direct intervention in public affairs, and the people used their unlimited power to ratify hard-to-amend constitutions. As a result, subsequent behavior would be measured against these constitutions. Temporary majorities, no matter how large, were not "the people" and could not violate the people's will as represented in their constitutional statements.

Formisano argues that populism was the result of the constraint of the democratic conception of popular sovereignty. Populist movements arose when groups believed that their republican values and institutions were threatened. Populists hoped to use their sovereignty to alter conditions so that the requirements for citizenship—defined differently by various movements—were available to those they considered to be citizens.

Formisano discusses multifarious populist movements, such as: rural insurgents in the 1780s and 1790s; Anti-Federalists; democratic republican societies; antibanking movements after the Panic of 1819; workingmen's political parties; the Anti-Masons; the Dorr rebels; the New York antirenters; and the Know-Nothing Party. Populism had progressive and reactionary impulses, which explains the diversity evident in Formisano's study. Depending on how populists understood the threats to their values, they challenged the powerful and scapegoated minority religions and vulnerable immigrants. Yet, this insight does not teach a simple Manichean lesson. The Know-Nothings, for example, desegregated schools and greatly increased welfare spending.

The strongest part of the book, and the longest discussion, concerns the Anti-Masons. Before their rise, mainstream politics remained animated by eighteenth-century notions of deference and hierarchy. Formisano observes that the Anti-Masons "substantially influenced the creation of a populist political culture and an expansion and invigoration of the public sphere." As a result, "Anti-Masonry's major legacy . . . was [to shift] the rhetoric of most spokesmen for the major political parties . . . to full blown egalitarianism—at least in style" (141, 158).

At times, Formisano's conception of populism is so broad that it labels rather than analyzes. His treatment of progressive and reactionary populisms fails to explain how Anti-Masons, generally prosperous middle-class evangelicals of the Burned-Over-District, and the workingmen's parties, who feared and despised middle-class evangelicals, shared the same tradition. Formisano contends that there was a clear "tie between egalitarian religion and radical populism" (88), especially Unitarianism, except when such a link did not exist and when Anti-

Masons targeted Unitarians as threats to the proper culture of evangelical republicanism.

Is this simply reactionary populism? Upwardly mobile evangelicals who feared Masons, Unitarians, and freethinkers were ensconced in a region where a culture existed that largely fit their needs and upheld their values because they had so much power to decide what happened there. The opposite was true of workingmen who were wary of an aggressive new political economy that marginalized them. The first movement flourished because its participants had the ability to punish those who did not measure up to their well-developed sense of moral superiority. The second arose because artisans' traditional values and self-worth were being destroyed. Somewhere in this distinction, and the fundamental material difference that produced it, is a need for further explanation of a spectrum that contained reactionary and progressive impulses within populism.

Formisano's theme is crucial in American history. Since the Revolution, citizens, especially those of the lower classes, have sought an expansion of democracy, more direct involvement in the political process, and more power over their lives than their leaders have wanted them to acquire. Though this populist desire has been widespread, populist language, when used by those who were leery of populist movements, never redressed those movements' grievances. As populist language became the dominant American political idiom, hypocrisy and spin became the dominant political praxis.

Rutgers University, Camden

ANDREW SHANKMAN

A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City. By ERICA ARMSTRONG DUNBAR. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. xvi, 196 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.)

Among the many dramatic changes of the 1960s was a new focus in American historical writing, a focus that initiated a narrative that was more inclusive of the variety of Americans' backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. But that inclusiveness was often lurching and fragmented; as Gloria T. Hull noted in her review of black women's studies, "all the women are white, all the blacks are men." Erica Armstrong Dunbar's *A Fragile Freedom* is among the best and richest of the number of new historical works that aim to meld the "sub-topical" groups of the American narrative. It offers readers a more well-rounded synthesis of some of the social dynamics of antebellum America.

Dunbar's work does several things well. First, it helps add specifics to what historians know intuitively: that African Americans in antebellum "free" states made conscious decisions to remain in a sort of demimonde of emancipation.

This ranged from indenturing themselves and/or their children to remaining in service to protective former masters in order to avoid kidnapping. They also did so to seek the umbrella of “belonging” that was so crucial in a society with no public version of social security.

Second, in a seamless motion, Dunbar shifts her readers from the relationships between black semifree women and the white world to the relationships among women who shared a similar racial identity but not the same culture, values, or notions of decorum. Quilting together a fascinating patchwork from scraps of court records, church committee minutes, newspaper advertisements, city directories, and letters, Dunbar gives us a glimpse as to how cultural norms were navigated and negotiated within particular sectors of Philadelphia’s black communities. She focuses in particular on the importance of church committees in setting and enforcing of these norms.

Finally, by examining the exchange of gift books among middle- and upper-class black women, Dunbar takes us to the “mental and moral feast” laid out by these women as they made a space for themselves in the emerging print culture that fed, and was fed by, the developing market revolution of America’s early decades. Concluding that what was at stake was a quest for autonomy and the attempt to fashion a new political landscape, she makes us wish that she had compressed chapters 1 and 2—which repeat information easily found elsewhere—and given even more analysis in chapters 5 and 6, which introduce heretofore unexplored primary data and tantalizing ideas about how that data might be exploited.

A highly readable style and comprehensive bibliography that stretches across more than a century of scholarship add to the value of this short study. Dunbar has laid the groundwork and created an intriguing template for integrating upper- and lower-class interactions, issues, and tensions with other variables such as geography, religion, and behaviors. Let’s hope that other scholars take the opportunity to expand upon Dunbar’s work.

Haverford College

EMMA LAPSANSKY-WERNER

Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880–1910. By KALI N. GROSS. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. xii, 260 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$21.95.)

Kali N. Gross’s *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880–1910* is a well-documented study that provides demographic data on the crimes, class, and geographic origins of Philadelphia’s black female population. But this study is also much more. It offers the reader a glimpse into the social milieu of the world in which these women lived, worked,

and committed crimes, and it contextualizes it within the discourses of urban and penal reform. Gross contends that “black women’s criminal experiences elucidate the ways in which race, gender, and sexuality are mediated and how black womanhood is negotiated within the criminal justice system” (2). Moreover, she explores the meaning of democracy and argues persuasively that the actions of the courts and the penal institutions, reform advocates, and the press were designed to preserve white supremacy at the expense of justice for black womanhood. *Colored Amazons* is significant because it also sheds light on the lives of a segment of working-class and poor black women whose experiences largely had been ignored by feminist historians and African Americanists whose studies focused on the black middle and upper classes.

Gross observes that crimes committed by black women reflected their poverty and marginalization in the city and nationwide. She notes that black women received disproportionate conviction and sentencing rates in comparison to white women and black and white men in the criminal justice systems. Gross attributes this phenomenon to the negative stereotypes of black women that were so pervasive during the pre-Civil War era and that intensified during the late nineteenth century with the proliferation of a pseudoscientific body of literature. She argues that the negative images “essentially maligned black female virtue and made all black women visual metaphors of female immorality” (10). These racist beliefs governed black women’s treatment in the criminal justice system—from the decisions that judges handed down to the quality of their lives in prison to the way the mainstream press reported their crimes.

The general population was imbued with these same stereotypes. The subordinate status to which black women had been relegated limited their access to housing and jobs and assured that they would remain isolated from the pulse of the city and would have to live in high-crime areas. Gross contends that some prisoners developed healthy self-concepts and values that contradicted the negative stereotypes that circumscribed their lives. These women exercised agency despite society’s negative and hostile depictions of their race and gender and, in some instances, because of them. For some, crime became a business, an extra-legal source of income, and they manipulated the system to their benefit. “Badgers” who attacked their “johns” received moderate sentences, or none at all, for their sex crimes because their assaults on white men acted as a means “to protect” them from immorality. But, ultimately, even they capitulated to the system.

The prisoners whose lives Gross examines entered the historical record only when they became involved in the criminal justice system. Through intake registers and penitentiary dockets, trial transcripts, police and corrections reports, and newspaper accounts, she skillfully weaves a portrayal of their world and documents the historical role that racism played in it. Her analysis sheds new light on black women and crime—whether they were victims of racism and gender bias, or consumed by greed, psychological illnesses, or predatory behavior. Scholars

interested in urban studies, criminal justice, African American studies, sociology, and women's studies will find *Colored Amazons* essential reading.

University at Buffalo, SUNY

LILLIAN SERECE WILLIAMS

Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia. By PETER COLE. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007. x, 227 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.)

Peter Cole has high ambitions: to rescue Local 8 of the National Industrial Union of Marine Transport Workers from obscurity. He succeeds admirably. Local 8, based along the Philadelphia waterfront, deserves serious scholarly treatment. It was the largest and most enduring union formed under the aegis of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the first decades of the twentieth century. Local 8 represented a remarkable alliance of white and black workers, and the union, while pragmatically fighting for improved working conditions for its member longshoremen, held to revolutionary principles. In unearthing the history of Local 8, Cole revives interest in the IWW, contributes to longstanding debates on American trade unions and the lives of African American workers, and illuminates a period in the labor history of Philadelphia that has been greatly neglected.

Cole first describes the backbreaking and perilous work of Philadelphia longshoremen, hostile ethnic and racial relations among dockworkers in the city during the nineteenth century, and successive failures at unionization. In the spring of 1913, IWW organizers began mobilizing sugar refinery workers, and the initiative spread to nearby docks. On May 14, 1913, thousands of longshoremen walked off their jobs in an IWW-inspired strike. Within two weeks, following street fighting among strikers, strikebreakers, and the police, ship owners conceded, granting wage increases, overtime pay, and reduced hours. Abiding by their anarcho-syndicalist ideals, IWW leaders refused to sign and be bound by a contract, insisting that the dockworkers could strike whenever they saw fit.

Local 8 thus emerged and maintained a stronghold for nine years. Cole offers no single explanation for the IWW's success on the Philadelphia waterfront. The union benefited from extraordinary local leadership, most notably that of Benjamin Fletcher, an African American dockworker. The IWW committed to mobilizing across ethnic and racial lines, and with African Americans comprising a majority of the longshoremen, Local 8 repelled employers' efforts to break the union by hiring black strikebreakers. The employers themselves were divided, and Local 8 also faced minimal challenges from mainstream unions (the International Longshoremen's Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, had not earmarked Philadelphia for organization).

Local 8 withstood economic downturns and government repression when its leaders were imprisoned for sedition during World War I. However, the union did not survive rifts within the IWW that were spurred by the Bolshevik Revolution, divides within the African American community that accompanied the arrival of new migrants from the south, and a unified campaign by employers in Philadelphia in the early 1920s against Local 8 and for operating on an open-shop basis (hiring black workers new to both the city and the solidarities forged by the IWW). On splits among radical trade unionists, Cole relates—as well as he can with the available sparse evidence—the efforts of Communists to dissolve Local 8 for the union's anarcho-syndicalism—the so-called Philadelphia Controversy.

Cole's research and engaging narrative are to be applauded. But, Local 8's radical, interracial trade unionism still remains elusive. Perhaps greater attention by the author to the community lives of dockworkers would have afforded deeper understanding. Also, brief comparisons with other instances of enduring organizing of white and black workers would have also clarified whether Local 8 was a story of unique circumstances.

University of Pennsylvania

WALTER LICHT

Rising from the Wilderness: J. W. Gitt and His Legendary Newspaper, the Gazette and Daily of York, Pa. By MARY A. HAMILTON. (York, PA: York County Heritage Trust, 2007, xvi, 342 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

For more than fifty years, the *Gazette and Daily* of York was one of the most remarkable and controversial newspapers ever published in Pennsylvania. Owned by Josiah William (J. W.) Gitt, the newspaper earned a reputation as an extremely liberal daily. Gitt transformed a struggling paper into a vehicle for his radical views, one that backed a Progressive Party candidate for president, questioned the cold war, and supported the civil rights movement.

In her exhaustively researched book, Mary A. Hamilton provides an insightful look at Gitt and his unusual newspaper. Hamilton, a retired professor of journalism and former staff member at the *Gazette and Daily*, uses Gitt's personal correspondence, interviews with former staff members, and the paper's archives to tell the curious story of how the unwavering liberal voice not only emerged, but managed to survive, in conservative York County. Some in the community labeled Gitt a "Communist" and called his publication a "nigger" paper. Yet, to others he was a voice of reason during a pivotal period in American history.

Born in Hanover, Gitt graduated from Franklin and Marshall College and attended the University of Pennsylvania's School of Law. He practiced law for

seven years, until 1914, when his uncle sold the *York Gazette*. Gitt and a partner purchased the paper, and they bought another local paper, the *York Daily*, three years later; they combined the two newspapers to form the *Gazette and Daily*. Shortly before his death in 1970, Gitt sold the paper to a local group, and it changed the name to the *York Daily Record*.

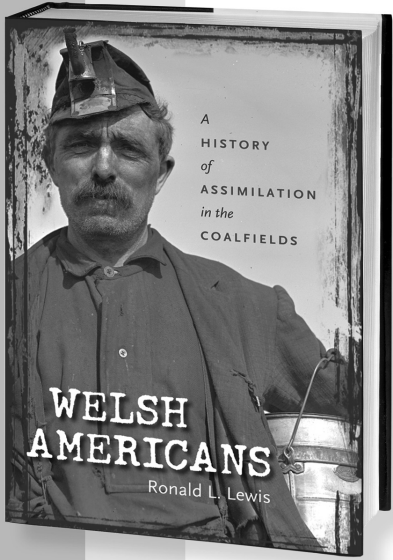
Hamilton argues that Gitt was not motivated by wealth, but by a desire to improve the local community and society in general. Few newspapers in the country were as consistently liberal as the *Gazette and Daily*. Though Gitt rankled many in the York establishment, the “stubborn Dutchman,” as Gitt often called himself, was undeterred. The *Gazette and Daily* was the only mainstream newspaper in the country to endorse Henry Wallace, the Progressive Party’s candidate for president in 1948. And while many in the press supported the Committee on Un-American Activities during the cold war, the paper was an outspoken critic.

Although he largely left the operation of the newsroom to others, Gitt took great pride in the paper’s editorial and opinion pages. The *Gazette and Daily* added a second editorial page long before other major metropolitan papers did so. These pages often featured material from leftist columnists who wrote specifically for the paper. Opponents often claimed that the *Gazette and Daily*’s liberal slant colored its news coverage, and those accusations seemed to be confirmed when the paper refused to run ads for the Republican Party during the 1964 presidential election. As Gitt believed that Republican Barry Goldwater was unfit to be president because of his support for the Vietnam War, he decided that the paper could not accept Goldwater advertising in good conscience. Many criticized Gitt for his decision, and the paper lost some subscribers. The *Gazette and Daily* also was one of the first papers in the country to oppose American involvement in Southeast Asia, and for twenty years the paper argued that the United States should not be involved in what it said was a civil war in Vietnam.

Hamilton clearly has affection for the *Gazette and Daily*, but she is generally evenhanded in telling its history under Gitt’s ownership. She also does not ignore some of the family’s problems, including the ironic fact that one daughter’s marriage to an African American man strained relations with some family members, especially Gitt’s wife. Hamilton relies heavily on Gitt’s correspondence, perhaps too much in some places. But, otherwise she has told the compelling story of a courageous newspaper that was not afraid to take unpopular stands.

Pennsylvania State University

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