NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Identifying and Mapping Ethnicity in Philadelphia in the Early Republic

ABSTRACT: This essay focuses on issues of ethnicity and race in Philadelphia during the final decade of the eighteenth century. It draws on an older methodology of name identification to determine the ethnic background of thousands of the inhabitants and then maps those people to explain how and why Europeans and African Americans arranged themselves in the city. In residential and commercial terms, integrated rather than segregated neighborhoods characterized the urban center. The diverse urban population scattered across neighborhoods—living, shopping, drinking, and sharing housing with people from various European backgrounds and, more than occasionally, even across racial lines. All figures are available at http://hsp.org/publications/pennsylvania-magazine-of-history-biography/pmhb-october-2016.

NATIVISM HAS WAXED AND WANED in American history. Today, we live in an era of intense xenophobia. Both heated political rhetoric and polls indicate that many Americans, especially those who identify as white, are fearful of peoples of other ethnic and racial backgrounds. Undocumented people are commonly designated "illegal aliens," as if they were another species. They also stand accused by prominent politicians of committing various heinous crimes, from rape to murder. Many Americans stereotype Hispanic and Muslim immigrants as welfare cheats or terrorists. Some 2016 presidential candidates have garnered considerable popularity from their anti-immigrant rhetoric. Whether the majority of ordinary Americans agree with that position is arguable, but much of the anti-immigrant sentiment responds to issues that actually have lessened in intensity during the recent past. For the past decade, for example, more Mexicans have left the United States than have arrived, and the number of undocumented people has declined rather than increased.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, crimes rates are lower, not higher, in migrant communities. Moreover, since 2008, more immigrants have arrived from Asia than from Latin America, and that trend is increasing.[1]

This essay focuses on Philadelphia during the late eighteenth century, when anti-immigrant sentiment, as well as more welcoming attitudes, ebbed and flowed. The "Athens of America," as contemporaries hailed it, served as the cultural, economic, and intellectual center of the country as well as its federal capital during the 1790s. Long a city containing peoples from many nations and frequently praised for its tolerance, it also drew more European migrants than any other port. Numerous scholars, including Rosalind Beiler, Susan E. Klepp, Joyce D. Goodfriend, Albrecht Koschnik, Ned C. Landsman, Gary B. Nash, Liam Riordan, Jessica Chopin Roney, Sally Swartz, and Aaron Sullivan, to mention just a few, have provided rich histories of ethnicity and race in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the surrounding Middle Atlantic region.[2] This essay supplements their studies by employing different methodologies to identify, measure, and map various ethnic groups in the City of Brotherly Love.

These findings concerning ethnicity have emerged from our "Mapping Early Philadelphia" project. As explained more fully on our website, we

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[1] Donald Trump's anti-immigrant and racist comments are well known and too numerous to cite. For one recent article, see "Donald Trump Gambles on Immigration but Sends Conflicting Signals," *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 2016. For public opinion polls about migrants as well as statistics about recent migration, see Pew Research Center, "Unauthorized Immigrants: Who They Are and What the Public Thinks," Jan. 15, 2015, http://www.pewresearch.org/key-data-points/immigration/; "Unauthorized Immigration Population Trends for States, Birth Countries and Regions," Dec. 11, 2014, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/12/11/unauthorized-trends/; and "Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change through 2065," Sept. 28, 2015, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/.

[2] Rosalind Beiler, *Immigrant and Entrepreneur: The Atlantic World of Caspar Wistar, 1650–1750* (University Park, PA, 2008); Susan E. Klepp, *Philadelphia in Transition* (New York, 1990); Liam Riordan, *Many Identities, One Nation: The Revolution and Its Legacy in the Mid-Atlantic* (Philadelphia, 2008); Ned C. Landsman, *Crossroads of Empire: The Middle Colonies in British North America* (Baltimore, 2010); Jessica Choppin Roney, *Governed by a Spirit of Opposition: The Origins of American Political Practice in Colonial Philadelphia* (Baltimore, 2014); Aaron Sullivan, "'That Charity which begins at Home': Ethnic Societies and Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134 (2010): 305–37; Joyce D. Goodfriend, *"Who Should Rule at Home?": The Struggle over Cultural Authority in British New York City* (Ithaca, NY, forthcoming); Albrecht Koschnik, *"Let a Common Interest Bind Us Together": Associations, Partisanship, and Culture in Philadelphia, 1775–1840* (Charlottesville, VA, 2007); Liam Riordan, "'The Complexion of My Country': The German as 'Other' in Colonial Pennsylvania," in *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*, ed. Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemunden, and Susanne Zantop (Lincoln, NE, 2002); Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).

have compiled data about tens of thousands of residents and transients in Philadelphia during the decade when it functioned as the nation's capital. In the process, we have identified, for the first time, the ethnic backgrounds of many of those people. We now want to make that statistical evidence, in both visual and tabular forms, available for use by other scholars. We also consider various ethnic groups, especially those who were most numerous, interpreting some of their demographic, economic, and geographic characteristics during the 1790s.[3]

Here, briefly, are some of our findings. Philadelphia's ethnic and racial diversity was intense at midcentury and grew even more so during the following five decades. In both residential and commercial terms, integration rather than segregation characterized the city. A single ethnic group never dominated all the houses in a single block. Irish, Scots and Scots-Irish (called Scots in this article for ease of language), German-speaking (called Germans hereafter), Welsh, and English shopkeepers, for example, did not restrict their businesses to specific areas of Philadelphia to cater to others of their own ethnic background. The diverse urban population scattered across the city—living, shopping, drinking, and sharing housing with people from various European backgrounds and, more than occasionally, even across racial lines.

Our geographic analysis suggests that daily interactions among residents speaking English with considerably different accents or talking in other languages were virtually unavoidable. Far from breeding contempt, familiarity with people of other cultures frequently, at least according to modern psychological and sociological studies, undermines prejudices and negative attitudes of the "other." Physical and ideological conflicts occurred among the various ethnic groups, as evidenced by newspaper stories, but they did not often rise to the level of mob violence. Instead, and while taking care not to romanticize early Philadelphia or to apply a modern consciousness of tolerance to its residents, we emphasize that thousands of people engaged with one another every day in a civil, respectful fashion—an important reminder in our own times.[4]

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[3] Data, maps, and explanation of our project are available at Mapping Early Philadelphia: Recreating Life in America's First City, http://www.mappinghistoricphiladelphia.org/home.html.

[4] Elijah Anderson, the well-known sociologist who has studied modern Philadelphia for decades, recently argued that interactions at Reading Terminal Market demonstrate how peoples hailing from nations across the world can and do interact civilly and peacefully (a fact that many contemporary American nativists seem to have forgotten). Anderson, *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life* (New York, 2011).

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Officials did not record much information on the ethnic backgrounds of large groups of residents of early America and the new nation. To determine ethnicity, we modified a procedure that a handful of historians employed forty years ago but about which historians have seemingly remained suspicious. We used surnames unique to specific European regions, from Scotland to Ireland to German-speaking provinces, to identify the ethnic heritage of tens of thousands of Philadelphians. We employed this approach with some confidence, bolstered by numerous recent studies of modern areas that have confirmed the validity of this methodology. Geographers, population biologists, and demographers have used people's surnames to classify their ethnic background, applying this strategy to modern areas where other sources of information, particularly censuses, are limited. To test the validity of the approach, social scientists used twenty-first-century records and sophisticated name identification computer programs in areas where census data was available. The results of the ethnic classification developed from censuses and other official records in which individuals specify their own ethnic background are remarkably similar to studies based solely on unique surname identification. With this assurance, we classified ethnicity by unique surname in three tax lists, one census, and two city directories extant for Philadelphia between 1756 and 1801, although our primary focus in this article is on the 1790s.[5]

The procedure, developed by modern social scientists and a few historians decades ago, is straightforward. Not every name is a candidate for ethnic classification because not all surnames are associated with only one European geographical region. (The name "Smith," for example, reveals little about ethnicity.) However, a number of surnames are closely associated with a specific region, for example, eighteenth-century Scotland or the German-speaking Palatinate. Using lists of unique surnames developed by other scholars, we identified the probable ethnic background of eight groups of Europeans in Philadelphia: English, Dutch, Swedish, Irish, Welsh, Germans, French, and Scots. We then used a "multiplier," based on the percentage of unique names in a specific European region, to estimate the correct proportion of each ethnic group in Philadelphia. While the

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[5] The modern technical literature discussing ethnic classifications by unique surnames (and first names) is vast. The following offer reviews of the literature: Pablo Mateos, "A Review of Name-based Ethnicity Classification Methods and their Potential in Population Studies," *Population, Space, and Place* 13 (2007): 243–63; James Cheshire, Pablo Mateos, and Paul A. Longley, "Delineating Europe's Cultural Regions: Population Structure and Surname Clustering," *Human Biology* 83 (2011): 573–98.

results are not failproof, they should be generally reliable.[6] Most import-
ant, the procedure enables historians, for the first time and with some pre-
cision, to measure the ethnic heritage of thousands of early Americans.[7]

We also mapped Philadelphia during the 1790s, relying on the tech-
nological bells and whistles of ArcGIS, a computer program, and an
extraordinarily detailed map created by John Hills in 1796.[8] To analyze
large amounts of data, we computerized detailed demographic, economic,
occupational, ethnic, and geographic information about thousands of
Philadelphians at two points: 1789–91 and 1800. Geographic Information
Systems (GIS) allows us to create accurate graphical representations of this
eighteenth-century American urban center. Our methodology belongs, in
part, to the recent trends of digital humanities and the "spatial turn" in
historical analysis. Because of the confluence of an unusually rich set of
historical sources, we have been able to reconstruct the human habitation
pattern in detail never previously possible for other eighteenth-century
American cities. This geographic approach reveals characteristics of the
city that until now have been obscure or unknown.[9]

[6] One confirmation arises from birth and death records during the 1790s from Philadelphia
churches closely associated with specific ethnic groups. Our estimates of the size of ethnic groups
based on church records were similar to estimates derived from name identification. See Susan E.
Klepp, "Zachariah Poulson's Bills of Mortality, 1788–1801," in *Life in Early Philadelphia: Documents
from the Revolutionary and Early National Periods*, ed. Billy G. Smith (University Park, PA, 1991),
233–42.

[7] We identified ethnicity by names unique to certain European nationalities or regions in the
eighteenth century based on several studies published in the *William and Mary Quarterly*: Forrest
McDonald and Ellen Shapiro McDonald, "The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790,"
William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 37 (1980): 179–99; Thomas L. Purvis, "The European Ancestry
of the United States Population, 1790," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 41 (1984): 85–101; and
McDonald and Shapiro McDonald, "Commentary," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 41 (1984):
129–35. See also Thomas L. Purvis, "Patterns of Ethnic Settlement in Late Eighteenth-Century
Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 70 (1987): 107–22.

[8] The map by John Hills depicts not only the streets and alleys in the city but also outlines many of
the buildings, thereby recreating Philadelphia in considerably more detail than did any earlier maps. Its
accuracy was confirmed by our GIS team when it discovered that the center street lines today match,
almost exactly, those in the map by Hills. The authors thank the members of the GIS mapping team:
Stuart Challender, Alex Schwab, Tara Chelsey-Preston, and Alice Hecht.

[9] Our quest to locate comparable studies using GIS to reconstruct other eighteenth-century cities
in this amount of detail has been bootless. Included in our databases is a variety of demographic, eco-
nomic, and occupational information about 8,365 people on the 1790 census, 7,125 householders in
the 1791 city directory, and 3,176 taxpayers on the 1789 provincial tax list. The first two sets of records
cover all wards in Philadelphia and the suburbs of Southwark and the Northern Liberties. The tax data
consists of a random sample of 60 percent of taxpayers in the city of Philadelphia only. Although likely
underreported, African Americans usually were identified in all three sets of records. Combining three
sets of records allowed us to make appropriate adjustments in the black population. The original map
is John Hills, "This plan of the city of Philadelphia and its environs (showing its improved parts),"
1796, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress. A detailed explanation of our methodology,

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In 1790, Philadelphia not only became the capital of the United States; it was also the nation's largest urban center, with a population of 44,096. Historians and contemporaries alike have noted the ethnic diversity of the city, both before and after the American Revolution. Indeed, it likely numbered among the most ethnically heterogeneous cities in the western world. One way to understand the extent of human variety is by calculating a "diversity index," a modern measurement developed by sociologists and geographers that predicts the probability of random encounters in an area. Philadelphia's diversity index, as measured using the unique surnames on the 1789 tax list and the 1791 city directory, was 0.78. Thus, if a woman stood for several hours at an outdoor market while everyone in the city strolled by, there was a 78 percent chance that the next person she saw was ethnically or racially different from herself. By comparison, Philadelphia in our own times has less diversity. If a construction worker eating a cannoli, for example, stood outside the Reading Terminal Market in 2010 while every resident drove or walked by, there was only a 66 percent chance that the next person he saw would hail from a different racial or ethnic makeup than the cannoli eater. Philadelphia in our own times is among the most diverse cities in the nation, further highlighting the mixture of humans in the eighteenth-century city.[10]

Ethnic and racial variety in the city intensified during the second half of the eighteenth century. Name analysis of extant tax lists in 1756 and 1772 and an 1801 city directory reveal that the diversity index increased from 0.66 in 1756 to 0.79 in 1801 (fig. 1).[11] Philadelphia's population was considerably more diverse at the end of the century than it was in 1756. The greatest growth in the diversity index occurred between 1756 and the beginning of the war for independence. The diversity index remained stable during the 1790s, although that statistic conceals several offsetting

a list of unique ethnic names, the Philadelphia datasets themselves, and the sources are all available at our website, http://www.mappinghistoricphiladelphia.org/home.html.

[10] We have been unable to locate other studies that calculate the "diversity index" in other urban areas of eighteenth-century America or Europe. Sean F. Reardon and Glenn Firebaugh, "Measures of Multigroup Segregation," *Sociological Methodology* 32 (2002): 33–67; Richard Florida, "The Economic Geography of Talent," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92 (2002): 743–45 . On diversity in 2010, see Nate Silver, "The Most Diverse Cities Are Often the Most Segregated," *FiveThirtyEight*, May 1, 2015, http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-most-diverse-cities-are-often-the-most-segregated/. The modern US Census Bureau also commonly uses the diversity index as a means of analysis.

[11] The figures in this essay and explanations of their sources and how they were constructed are available at http://www.mappinghistoricphiladelphia.org/home.html and the journal's website, http://hsp.org/publications/pennsylvania-magazine-of-history-biography/pmhb-october-2016.

trends. The number of free African Americans nearly doubled, while the number of Germans declined significantly.[12]

Daily interactions with people from different backgrounds mattered then, as they often do now, in shaping human perceptions and behavior. For the past half century, sociologists, geographers, psychologists, and other social scientists have theorized and measured the effects of "lived diversity." Using evidence ranging from high-level abstraction to street-level mapping, scholars have demonstrated how the experience of daily contact frequently undermines stereotypes of the "other." During the eighteenth century, Enlightenment philosophers persuaded some well-educated Americans to rethink their ideas about tolerance and acceptance— at least of other Europeans. Moreover, the American Revolution, the emerging commitment to nationalism, and the mass mobilization for war, as Liam Riordan argues, allowed various ethnic groups to claim a more central place in the new nation. For many urban Americans, relations with other ethnic groups mattered in shaping their perspectives. Just as life on board eighteenth-century ships forced people to work in a coordinated fashion—as Peter Linebaugh, Marcus Rediker, and Stuart Swartz have contended—intermingling in a diverse city also had an important liberalizing impact on attitudes toward the "other."[13]

Three ethnic groups dominated the population in 1790, each one accounting for roughly one-quarter of the city's householders: the English, the Germans, and the Scots. The Scots-Irish (included here in the category "Scots") consisted of migrants, overwhelmingly Presbyterians, from Ulster, Ireland. People of Irish and Welsh descent composed approximately 7 percent each of the city's householders, while African Americans, both free and enslaved, numbered 5 percent of the total residents included on the first federal census (fig. 2). The Swedes, Dutch, and French each composed 1 percent of householders

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[12] Every tax list, city directory, and census underreported African Americans in the city. We have used other sources, as explained below in the section about black Philadelphians, and studies by other historians to estimate the number of black residents, both enslaved and free. Susan E. Klepp, "Seasoning and Society: Racial Differences in Mortality in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, ser. 3, 51 (1994): 473–506; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, chap. 5.

[13] The classic book on the topic is Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961). Terje Wessel reviewed the literature and issues concerning "lived diversity" in "Does Diversity in Urban Space Enhance Intergroup Contact and Tolerance?" *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 91 (2009): 5–17. Riordan, *Many Identities, One Nation*; Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000); Stuart Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven, CT, 2009).

who appeared on the census or on the 1791 city directory. Just strolling or riding a horse through the city's streets would have provided a linguistic adventure. Philadelphians heard a medley of tongues—not just different dialects of English but also Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Gaelic, as well as a smattering of African and Native American languages.[14]

The ethnic variety of the city resulted primarily from heavy European migration throughout the era as well as French refugees and their slaves from Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) after 1790 (fig. 3).[15] During the late colonial era, Philadelphia had been the leading immigrant port in America, and it remained the primary place of landing for migrants during the final decades of the eighteenth century. While relatively few passengers arrived on ships during the turmoil of the Revolutionary War, transatlantic migration quickened at the end of the conflict. Between 1783 and 1799, more than 60,000 people arrived on sailing vessels from Ireland, German-speaking areas, Scotland, England, Wales, and the Caribbean, as well as on foot, horses, and wagons from the American countryside.

The river of immigrants shifted its course from the 1780s to the 1790s. Approximately 15,000 Irish people, many of them traveling as indentured servants, constituted the majority of the passengers disembarking from ships between 1783 and 1790. Irish migration declined by a third during the 1790s, however, even as Ireland suffered intense political and social upheaval that pushed many residents to leave their country. American sentiment turned against bondage for white people, however, and funding for carrying the Irish to America withered. Also during the 1790s, migration from Scotland, Wales, England, and German-speaking regions increased but remained at modest levels.[16]

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[14] Except for the African American population, each of the percentages is of householders as recorded in the census and city directory. *Heads of Families of the First Census of the United States taken in the Year 1790: Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1908); Clement Biddle, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia, 1791).

[15] Figure 3 is based on a modification of data calculated primarily by Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States in the Early National Period, 1783–1820," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989): 190–214; and Grabbe, *Vor der großen Flut: Die europäische Migration in die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika 1783–1820* (Stuttgart, Ger., 2001), 33–39. Grabbe wavered about how to count refugees, so he included only 50 percent of the "refugees" from France and the Caribbean in his counts of immigrants to Philadelphia. However, in agreement with Aaron Fogleman that refugees should be counted fully as migrants, we modified Grabbe's table 1 by doubling the number of passengers arriving from France and the Caribbean between 1783 and 1790. Aaron S. Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 85 (1998): 73–74.

[16] Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers," 64–65.

During the 1780s, few French people settled in the city. After about 1790, as brutal class- and race-based wars broke out in France and Saint-Domingue, many French people, along with their slaves, poured into Philadelphia and other North American ports. Some of the slaves gained their freedom, taking advantage of the Pennsylvania law that liberated them if their owners kept them in the state for more than six months. Unfortunately, our major dataset dating from 1789 to 1791 does not allow us to map the influx of white French immigrants in the early and mid-1790s. Nor can we disaggregate slaves arriving from the Caribbean from other groups of African Americans, both slave and free, who contributed to Philadelphia's population growth during the 1790s.[17]

Although most new arrivals passed through Philadelphia and moved to rural areas, the best scholarly estimate is that approximately 21,000 of them settled in the urban center during the 1790s, compensating for the lives lost during severe yellow fever epidemics. As a result, the city's population grew at the rate of 48 percent during the decade, from about 44,000 in 1790 to almost 68,000 by 1800. While exceptionally rapid by modern standards, Philadelphia did not expand quite as quickly as the North American cities that did not suffer as heavily from epidemics. The elevated rate of migrants arriving at the docks, combined with the high number of new arrivals who took up residence there, meant that Philadelphia remained an immigrant city, much as it had in the late colonial era.[18]

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The remainder of this essay explores some of the largest ethnic and racial groups in the city in 1790. Our data, based on a tax lists, censuses, and city directories, allows us to describe and draw inferences about the geographic patterns, occupational characteristics, and, in some cases, associations and churches founded by various groups. The final section discusses how many, though certainly not all, Philadelphians seemed enthusiastic about a new nation that comprised people of different European

[17] However, on these two groups, see François Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (New York, 2014); and Gary B. Nash, "Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Dominguans in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (1998): 44–73. Refugees and officials from the revolutions in France and Saint Domingue began arriving in the city in 1792 and 1793. The majority of them no longer lived in Philadelphia by the end of the century. Our datasets include the 1789 tax list, the 1790 census, and the 1791 and 1801 city directories, meaning that the resulting maps could not capture the French presence in the mid-1790s.

[18] Klepp, "Bills of Mortality, 1788–1801," 230–31, 240; Billy G. Smith, "Death and Life in a Colonial Immigrant City: A Demographic Analysis of Philadelphia," *Journal of Economic History* 37 (1977): 863–89.

and Protestant backgrounds, although few went so far as to include free African Americans in that vision.

Germans were among the largest ethnic group in the nation's capital, accounting for one of every four inhabitants in 1790. More than any other ethnic group, its members tended to crowd into particular areas of the city, in part because many did not speak English. Northwest Philadelphia and, to a lesser extent, the Northern Liberties had contained vibrant, lively communities since well before the Revolution (figs. 4 and 5). In the mid-eighteenth century, they took formal action to help other migrants from German-speaking areas, forming the *Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvania* to aid immigrants and to press the legislature, often success-fully, for laws improving the conditions of indentured servants on ships. For decades, the society met in the German Lutheran churches located in blocks where Germans were concentrated residentially.[19]

Germans also constructed some churches (including the Holy Trinity German Catholic Church) in neighborhoods where they were far from a majority of the residents. They also operated shops in both the prime commercial district along Market Street and in the poorer southern sub-urb of Southwark, even though neither of those areas was predominantly German. Moreover, German householders, by either choice or economic necessity, frequently lived next door to members of other ethnic and racial groups. A deeper analysis of a single block of Green Street, located in the Northern Liberties, where German householders predominated, is revealing (fig. 6). Germans shared the block with Welsh, Scots, African Americans, and other ethnic peoples not easily identified by our method-ology of name identification. Significantly, then, even in the areas of high concentration, many other ethnic groups rented or owned apartments, houses, workshops, and stores. Germans did not crowd them out.

Many Philadelphians of German heritage seem to have fit relatively well into Philadelphia society, at least in occupational terms. Based on our data, Germans worked in as wide of a variety of jobs, as did residents of Scottish or English heritage. Slightly more Germans than other Philadelphians operated businesses as shopkeepers, grocers, and bakers (fig. 7). Like other urban ethnic groups, about 14 percent of German inhabitants worked as lower-paid artisans (fig. 8). These business and craftspeople surely often

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[19] Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park, PA, 1999); Birte Pfleger, "German Immigration to Philadelphia from the Colonial Period through the Twentieth Century," *Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities Old and New*, ed. Ayumi Takenaka and Mary Johnson Osirim (Philadelphia, 2010), 129–31.

served German-speaking inhabitants in areas where Germans predom-
inated; still, a good many shops operated by Germans were located in
multiethnic neighborhoods.

Germans were considerably overrepresented among "laborers," an
occupation identified in tax records, censuses, and city directories. These
men worked with their hands and their backs, carrying wood among con-
struction sites, hauling materials to and from shipbuilders, and loading and
unloading ship cargoes. Because so many newly arrived Palatines were des-
perately poor and possessed few skills suitable to the urban environment,
they occupied the lower rungs on the occupational ladder. At the other end
of the economic hierarchy, few Germans operated as wholesale merchants,
among the most lucrative urban professions, and virtually none appeared
in the records as ship captains. Language barriers and a lack of connections
with British merchant houses across the Atlantic both must have limited
the occupational possibilities for most non-English speakers.[20]

Many Germans and their institutions seemingly found an important
place in the city and new nation. Politically, first- and second-generation
Germans often won elections to statewide and federal offices. Of the six-
teen representatives from Pennsylvania in the first US Congress, four
were of German heritage, and Frederick Muhlenberg served as the first
speaker of the House of Representatives. Socially, Philadelphians often
attended events in the German area of town. The vice president of the
American Philosophical Society eulogized Benjamin Franklin at the
German Lutheran Church. Likewise, at the end of the century, more
than 4,000 people assembled in the German Zion Church to remember
George Washington.[21]

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People of Scottish descent, like Germans, also accounted for about one-
fourth of the city's householders during the early 1790s. They tended to
congregate in higher frequency both in the southern suburbs and in the
wholesale commercial areas along the docks (fig. 9). Unlike Germans, they
were well represented, comparable to their proportion of the population,

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[20] Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, chap. 2.

[21] "Congress Profiles: 1st Congress (1789–1791)," US House of Representatives History, Art,
and Archives website, accessed Feb. 28, 2016, http://history.house.gov/Congressional-Overview/
Profiles/1st/. The Franklin eulogy was reported in the Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal, or the North
American Intelligencer*, Mar. 9, 1792, and Washington's remembrance was noted in Elaine Forman
Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker: The Life Cycle of an Eighteenth-Century Woman*, abridged
ed. (Boston, 1994), 168.

among merchants (fig. 10). About 4 percent of Scottish householders (twice the proportion in the entire city) captained ships. Locating their shops, warehouses, and homes along the wharves provided many of them easy access to ships and the maritime trade vital to their livelihoods. Scots resided in most areas of the city, reflecting their occupational, social, and political integration into society.

The Scots had moved to North America throughout the colonial era, and they continued to arrive in significant numbers during the 1790s. In contrast to other ethnic groups, Scottish migrants tended to be, in the words of historian Ned C. Landsman, "skilled, trained, and educated persons of middling status or above." Merchants, clergy, doctors, and officials all floated in the emigrant tide. Spreading across the British Empire, many Scots also embraced a cosmopolitan, internationalist perspective.[22]

Their background and experiences served many Scots well in Philadelphia, at least in economic terms. Also contributing to their success was, perhaps, a city with relatively little bias against them, particularly since they spoke English. Their representation in the high-paying professions and as middle-class artisans mirrored the city's entire population. About 10 percent of householders of Scottish descent—approximately the same percentage of all households in the city—were poorly paid laborers (fig. 11).

A group of relatively affluent Scots founded the St. Andrew's Society in 1747 to aid and assist new arrivals in Philadelphia from their homeland. It dispensed small sums of cash, especially targeting struggling widows, children, and families of first- and second-generation families from Scotland. The society continued operating throughout the 1790s (and still exists today) as a charitable and social institution. It met annually at prestigious taverns to celebrate St. Andrew, honoring not only the saint but also Scotland (the "Land of Cakes," by their toasts) and George Washington. It reached out to other European heritage groups as well, offering official toasts reprinted in newspapers, as well as invitations to other ethnic societies, including the Sons of St. George, the Sons of Hibernia, and the German Society.[23]

[22] Landsman, *Crossroads of Empire*, 131–38; Ned C. Landsman, "Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600–1800," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 463–75.

[23] Sullivan, "That Charity which begins at Home," 310, 318. The meetings and toasts were reported frequently by such newspapers as the *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*; see, for example, "Sons of St. George," Dec. 8, 1792.

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Social unrest, English exploitation, and outright rebellion combined with severe economic distress to create an Irish diaspora during the final decades of the eighteenth century. According to a 1790 report from Dublin, "the people are everywhere panting to go to America" because of the "calamities they endure at home." More than 25,000 of them arrived in Philadelphia between the end of the revolution and 1800 (fig. 3). The nature and size of the migration tide changed significantly during those seventeen years. Two distinctive waves of refugees landed in Philadelphia, one between 1783 and roughly 1792, and the other during the final years of the century.[24]

Immediately after the revolution, dozens of ships resumed sailing from Ireland to North America, their holds packed tightly with people. During the remainder of the 1780s and the early 1790s, captains sold them as indentured servants, their passage paid for by their promise to work for four to seven years as virtual slaves in Philadelphia or nearby areas. However, as Aaron Fogleman and Maurice Bric have argued, indentured servitude among the Irish declined precipitously, in part because of growing resistance to the idea of white bondage in an era of freedom and liberty. Still, during the early 1790s, newspaper printers continued to marvel at the numbers of Irish people, mostly from "lower and middling classes," who boarded vessels bound for American ports. By one 1792 report, "from eight to ten thousand persons" left Londonderry during the first half of that year alone. After 1793, Irish migration to the American capital declined for a few years, as most passengers now had to pay for their own passage.[25]

Approximately one of every twelve householders in Philadelphia claimed Irish heritage in 1790, and their proportion increased to 9 percent by 1801. While the Germans congregated in the northern blocks of the city, the Irish assembled more often in the southern blocks, frequently in an area labeled by one diarist as "Irish-Town," although it is unclear if this term was commonly used by the general populace (fig. 12). However, they also dispersed across the city, notably to the northern

[24] The quotes are from "Extract of a Letter from Dublin," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Mar. 17, 1790. Marianne S. Wokeck, "German and Irish Immigration to Colonial Philadelphia," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989): 128–43.

[25] Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers," 64–65; Maurice Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia, and the Re-Invention of America, 1760–1800* (Dublin, 2008). Quotes, respectively, from *The Diary, or, Loudon's Register*, Aug. 1, 1792, and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 18, 1792.

blocks, containing a good number of Germans, as well as to Southwark. Part of the reason was economic; the Irish tended to be, as measured by both their occupations and their high proportion among almshouse inmates, among the poorest ethnic groups in the city. The cost of housing and rooms was cheapest in the suburbs, where a good many Irish settled.[26]

The occupational structure of the Philadelphia Irish reflected, in part, the impoverished condition in which many arrived. Except for African Americans, they occupied the highest proportion of jobs near the bottom of the economic ladder. Moreover, in the early nineteenth century, about 25 percent of people admitted to the almshouse were Irish, far exceeding their proportion of the city's population.[27] Irish men worked as laborers more than twice as often as did other male householders in Philadelphia (fig. 11). They were also overrepresented among such lower-income artisans as shoemakers, tailors, and brushmakers (fig. 8). Some Irish residents enjoyed success, at least as measured in occupational terms. About 5 percent of them served as wholesale merchants. Another 12 percent, a greater proportion than most other Philadelphians, operated shops or grocery stores, many in the commercial center of town (fig. 13). A number of small shopkeepers opened their businesses in predominantly German blocks, suggesting, if only circumstantially, that other ethnic peoples may have frequented their establishments.

Founded in 1790, the Hibernian Society for the Relief of Emigrants from Ireland operated in accordance with its name. Because so many Irish migrants arrived in extreme distress, pushed out of Ireland more than pulled to America, they desperately needed the assistance the society provided. Its members had already been busy in previous years as they attempted to visit every vessel arriving from Ireland, both to assist its passengers and to monitor conditions on the ship. Thomas McKean, the club's president in the early 1790s, demonstrated the suppleness of ethnic identity among some Philadelphians. While his parents were Ulster Scots, McKean aided Irish migrants regardless of their affiliation with either Catholicism or Presbyterianism. Moreover, the physical meeting place of the Hibernian club was telling. Rather than select a tavern in majority-Irish blocks to symbolize their ethnic unity, the club met at

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[26] The 1801 Irish proportion of the population is based on our computer analysis of William Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1801* (Philadelphia, 1801). Elizabeth Drinker used the term "Irish town," although it has not appeared in any other records; Crane, *Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, 117.

[27] On the Irish proportion of the almshouse inmates, see Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 126.

taverns in what is now Center City and in blocks where relatively few of them lived. They seemed to be comfortable gathering in areas with few Irish residents.[28]

During the mid-1790s, a rising tide of ethnic persecution washed over the city and the nation. As is often the case during eras of intensified anti-immigrant feelings, it was largely politically motivated. Many Federalists believed, probably quite accurately, that Irish immigrants had helped Thomas Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans win several elections, especially in cities like Philadelphia. In 1795, Congress passed a new Naturalization Act, which lengthened the residence requirement from two to five years. The following year, the Irish urban vote in the presidential election went overwhelmingly Democratic-Republican.[29]

In a move foreshadowing our own times, politicians acted to limit both paths to citizenship and the exercise of the franchise. Harrison Gray Otis, a Federalist congressperson from Boston, gave an alarmist speech on the House floor. He supported a heavy tax on certificates of naturalization, arguing that it would prevent "hoards of wild Irishmen" from becoming citizens and exercising the franchise. His proposal would bar the "mass of vicious and disorganizing characters who can not live peaceably at home, and who, after unfurling the standard of rebellion in their own countries, may come hither to revolutionize ours."[30]

The Democratic-Republicans opposed the scheme to disenfranchise voters since it would limit the number of Irish voters, who supported their party, but they ultimately lost the vote in Congress. The Alien Acts passed in 1798, extending the time of residence for naturalization from five to seventeen years. They did not stand for long. Jefferson and his party won in 1800 and repealed the laws two years later. The Federalists never again won the presidency.[31]

[28] Sullivan, "That Charity which begins at Home," 312–13; Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1884), 2:1462–68; "Hibernian Society," *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post*, Mar. 19, 1790.

[29] Edward C. Carter II, "A 'Wild Irishman' under Every Federalist's Bed: Naturalization in Philadelphia, 1789–1806," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 94 (1970): 331–46. For a more nuanced view of the Federalists, see Doron S. Ben-Atar and Barbara B. Oberg, eds., *Federalists Reconsidered* (Charlottesville, VA, 1999).

[30] Otis as quoted in Aristide R. Zolber, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 93; Carter, "'Wild Irishman' under Every Federalist's Bed," 333–34.

[31] Carter, "'Wild Irishman' under Every Federalist's Bed," 334. See also "Citizen Burk's Letter to Harrison G. Otis," *Aurora General Advertiser*, Sept. 7, 1797. Ironically, Jefferson won in part because of racism; the three-fifths clause in the Constitution allotted an extra 60 percent of electoral votes to southern states even though slaves could not vote.

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The number of free black Philadelphians expanded from about 2,150 in 1790 to slightly more than 6,000 in 1800, meaning that their decennial growth rate was a phenomenal 183 percent—four times the growth rate of whites. The increase in the black population resulted from migration from the American countryside and from the influx of slaves brought by their masters from Saint-Domingue who had managed to gain their freedom. Runaway and manumitted slaves, as well as bound people who had purchased or negotiated their freedom, accounted for the majority of the migrants.[32]

Slavery, somewhat ironically, created a racially integrated city in 1790, as is evident in the map showing residences (fig. 14). Slave owners and their several thousand bondspeople spread almost evenly across the nation's capital, with a slightly heavier concentration of them south of Market Street. Few slaves lived in separate quarters—as did the eight bound people brought to Philadelphia by President Washington—since only a handful of the city's masters possessed more than three slaves. Most slaves found space in stables, attics, or basements or occupied small, out-of-the-way rooms in their owner's home. A few hired themselves out, usually living in households headed by other black people. The everyday interaction of blacks and whites in integrated neighborhoods may well have accounted for some of the softening of racial attitudes that Gary B. Nash found among whites during the 1790s.[33]

Slaves in Philadelphia and the surrounding environs were extremely active in freeing themselves. Pennsylvania's gradual emancipation law in 1780 freed only the future children of slaves once they reached adulthood; it liberated no slaves alive when the legislature passed the law. Its impact was small in legal terms. Slaves, however, aggressively took advantage of changing conditions, especially the declining power of masters. As the moral and legal power of slave owners in Pennsylvania declined after the revolution, some bondspeople seized the initiative and refused to obey their masters. Others simply took to their heels, testing to see if their masters would pursue them. With fewer lawful disciplinary options (like whipping or selling them out of state), frustrated owners frequently incarcerated their bondspeople in jail, but to little avail. By refusing to work or

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[32] On the population of African Americans in Philadelphia during the eighteenth century, see Klepp, "Seasoning and Society," 475–76; and Klepp, "Bills of Mortality, 1788–1801," 241.

[33] Nash, *Forging Freedom*; Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750– 1800* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), chap. 7.

to return to their owners, many slaves negotiated freedom contracts, often drawn up by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. Usually the contract stipulated that slaves agree to serve their owners faithfully as indentured servants for a specified number of years, after which they would gain their liberty. The nearly 2,000 slaves in the city in 1790 declined dramatically, to only fifty-five by 1800.[34]

Free black Philadelphians congregated in two areas of the city (figs. 15 and 16). A few blocks north of the State House (later named Independence Hall), a sympathetic white Quaker rented housing to them in the predominantly working-class and German neighborhood. Another group settled along South Fifth Street, creating what would become a central neighborhood for black inhabitants. The expanding, vibrant community of black residents created two new churches: the Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, both founded during the early 1790s. These churches were located close to where most free blacks resided. The concentration of black households on those blocks surely facilitated their establishment in that neighborhood.[35]

The households of African Americans were considerably larger than households headed by whites, often containing between six and fifteen people. They may have preferred to live in groups, not only to save money and for self-protection but also because many of them had fled as individuals and probably wanted to live with other people of their own race. These households lined South Sixth Street in 1790. By 1800, according to the second federal census, black householders extended the neighborhood west of the AME church to South Seventh and Eighth Streets. Their geographic location on the city's southwestern boundary, where few other people lived, is highly suggestive. Many runaways traveling overland likely would have arrived from the south on roads entering that part of Philadelphia. We know that black householders and the AME church

[34] Vagrancy Docket, July 2, 1794, Philadelphia City Archives. On freedom contracts, see Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (New York, 1991). These contracts are available in box 4A: Manumissions, Indentures, and Other Legal Papers, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers (Collection 490), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. See also Kirsten Sword, "Remembering Dinah Nevil: Strategic Deceptions in Eighteenth-Century Antislavery," *Journal of American History* 97 (2010): 315–43; and Billy G. Smith, "Black Women Who Stole Themselves in Eighteenth-Century America," in *Inequality in Early America*, ed. Carla Gardina Pestana and Sharon V. Salinger (Hanover, NH, 1999), 134–59.

[35] Dee E. Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760–1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1992); Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 130–31.

in particular assisted runaways for more than half a century, as the city became a stop on the Underground Railroad. When escapees arrived in the southwestern portion of the city, they may have found quick refuge among black householders there. Tellingly, the inhabitants of these households refused to provide their names to white census takers in 1800. White officials thus listed almost all of them simply as "blacks," in contrast to other parts of the city where black householders gave their names.[36]

The successful escape of Oney Judge, a slave of George and Martha Washington, reveals how black Philadelphians, sometimes assisted by white Quaker abolitionists, helped runaway slaves. In 1796, during the hubbub in the Washington household as its members prepared to move back to Virginia, Oney Judge packed her bags and walked out the door. She must have planned in advance, since she disappeared immediately into the underground. She stayed out of sight for two or three weeks, relying on the help of "colored people," she noted later. One night she boarded the *Nancy*, perhaps helped by a black mariner or dockworker, just before it weighed anchor for Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and freedom. Like many masters, an outraged Washington pursued and even negotiated with Judge for decades. In her last reply to him, she stated it simply: "I am free now and choose to remain so." She did remain free, although several times she needed to flee slave catchers sent by the former president.[37]

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The digital humanities have been a promising addition to the toolbox historians use to understand the past. Sitting in their offices and clicking a few buttons allows scholars to access information almost too vast to analyze. A computer search of early American newspapers, magazines, and books uncovers thousands of characterizations, some positive, others negative, of different ethnic racial groups. Which should scholars highlight? Which should they de-emphasize in interpreting Philadelphia in the early republic?

Newer methodologies in combination with traditional approaches can help scholars address these questions more effectively. GIS and ethnic identification by surnames permitted us to analyze and depict this type

[36] The information in this paragraph is based primarily on our analysis of the 1800 federal census: US Census Office, *Return of the Whole Number of Persons within the Several Districts of the United States: Second Census* (Washington, DC, 1800). On the central role of Philadelphia in assisting runaway slaves, see Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York, 2015), 12–13, 158–65.

[37] Judge as quoted in Henry Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America* (New York, 2003), 327–28, 332.

of "big data" in a fashion not possible in the past. We can now visualize, quite literally and for the first time, the configuration of how people lived by constructing and inspecting maps of the city.

Among our findings is that the spatial reality of daily life in Philadelphia required its inhabitants to interact with a diverse group of people. Most Philadelphians, whether walking to work, buying bread at a bakery, or shopping at an outdoor market, encountered people of different linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds. The great majority of Philadelphians not only jostled a variety of people on the street but rented or owned houses next door to them. To the extent that lived diversity can undermine easy negative stereotyping and encourage more tolerance, residents of the nation's capital during the 1790s were well situated to more easily adopt those ideals.

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