Immigrants, Nativists, and the Making of Chicago, 1835-1893

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IMMIGRANTS, NATIVISTS, AND THE MAKING OF CHICAGO, 1835-1893

a dissertation

by

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Between 1835 and 1893, the majority of immigrants who settled in Chicago were of Irish or German birth. Even though the city’s economic leaders’ plans to transform Chicago into a center of international trade required the labor of these immigrants, Irish and German Chicagoans were still the targets of nativism. They were not, however, merely objects of nativism; instead, they were able to challenge nativist-inspired policies and assumptions about the inability of immigrants to become loyal Americans. They demonstrated their allegiance to the U. S. through service in independent ethnic militias and challenged policies that they felt unfairly targeted them, such as temperance laws in the 1850s, militia laws in the 1870s, and educational policy in the 1880s. But after 1865, as Chicago industrialized, labor conflict grew. As a result, the success of immigrants’ efforts to demonstrate their allegiance or combat nativist-inspired policies relied on their willingness to distance themselves from radicalism. While pre-1860 immigrant groups had banded together based on ethnicity, and often courted the support of and shared membership with ethnic labor organizations, by the end of the 1880s the class issues that were dividing the city also divided Irish and German ethnic organizations. After an unknown assailant threw a bomb during a labor rally in 1886, causing widespread fear of social revolution, Irish- and German-American ethnic leaders made clear their rejection of radicalism in order to continue to demonstrate their allegiance to the U. S. and their embrace of social and political views acceptable to the city’s elite. Their rejection of radicalism was in one sense a retreat, but it also assured that they would continue to be part of the process of constructing modern Chicago.
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Introduction

On June 26, 1893, Illinois Governor John P. Altgeld pardoned Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Michael Schwab, ending their life sentences. He based his pardon on five points: the jury was packed in order to obtain convictions; according to the law, the jurors were incompetent, therefore resulting in an illegal trial; the prosecution had not proven that the defendants were guilty of the crime; the prosecuting attorney had admitted that the case against Neebe was ineffectual; and the judge was utterly and completely biased.¹

These men were the remaining three defendants from the Haymarket trial. On May 4, 1886, Chicago anarchists held a rally in Haymarket Square to denounce the killing of workers by the city police when workers had gone on strike for an eight-hour workday. None other than the mayor of Chicago attended the rally, and he deemed the meeting to be peaceful and left early when it started to rain. Despite the mayor having told the local police captain, John Bonfield, to send his men home because the meeting was peaceful, Bonfield ordered his men to march on the meeting. Their phalanx arrived on the scene and Bonfield commanded the meeting to disperse, an unknown person threw a homemade pipe bomb, which exploded and killed at least one police officer. The police opened fire as the crowd fled.

In the aftermath of the Haymarket meeting, eight men, including Fielden, Neebe, and Schwab, were indicted for the murder of police officer Michael Deegan. No one to date has discovered the identity of the person who threw the bomb, but these men were

arrested because they were anarchists who had advised the laboring classes to arm themselves against police brutality.

Among the other defendants, one, Louis Lingg, committed suicide in his jail cell and four others, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engle, and Adolf Fischer were executed by hanging. The Haymarket events unleashed a wave of both anti-radical sentiment and also, because most of the defendants were German, anti-German sentiment, in Chicago. As the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* explained, “nothing has hurt the Germans more in the United States in the eyes of its other population elements than the shocking agitation of the anarchists.”

Six years later, in 1892, John Altgeld was elected as governor of Illinois. He was the first Democrat elected as governor since before the Civil War, the first governor elected from Chicago, and the first elected foreign-born governor. Trained as a lawyer, one of his first objectives as governor was to fully examine the Haymarket case. The pardons were the result of his examination and the decision elicited widespread outrage in the press. The *Illinois Staats Zeitung* reported “a large number of English-American newspapers and some German-American ones display an insane exasperation over Altgeld’s executive clemency to Neebe, Schwab, and Fielden.” But, the newspaper pointed out, “They completely pass over in silence Governor Altgeld’s denunciation and definite condemnation of anarchism; his threat of relentless prosecution whenever this

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3 Francis Hoffmann, a German-born Chicagoan, served as governor for a short time in his duties as Lieutenant Governor when the current governor Richard Yates was called away for military service during the Civil War.
doctrine should assert itself and become an actuality.” The newspaper went on to quote “the bigoted little preacher,” M.L. Gates who said that “Illinois stands discredited with the threefold A…Altgeld, Aliens, and Anarchists!” The paper shamed Gates for “[confusing] a handful of Chicago anarchists with the large number of immigrants from Europe.”

Similarly, the Chicago Tribune also opposed Altgeld’s decision, commenting, “The anarchists believed that he was not merely an alien by birth, but an alien by temperament and sympathies, and they were right.” The paper went on: “He has apparently not a drop of true American blood in his veins. He does not reason like an American, nor feel like one, and consequently does not behave like one.” Nativists believed that radicalism was a non-American ideology and so, even though Albert Parsons, one of the executed and a leader of anarchism in Chicago, was born in the U.S. of American parents, anti-radical nativism was nearly synonymous with anti-foreign nativism.

Altgeld himself spoke openly about anti-foreign nativism. During his bid for the governorship, he touched upon the subject in many of his campaign speeches. He claimed that nativists “disregard the development of those states entirely which have progressed solely on account of ambitious immigrants,” and told how “those who defended our flag in bygone years – nearly half of them were foreign-born or had European parents.”

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6 Chicago Tribune, June 27, 1893. See also Chicago Tribune, June 28, 1893.  
Altgeld did not have patience for those who conflated immigrants with unruly and lawless behavior and he was unafraid of coming afoul of critics like the Tribune when defending what he felt was judicial inequality.  

So, nativism existed, but it did not stop Altgeld from winning the governor’s office, nor did it stop him from making an unpopular decision that resulted in his detractors referring to him as a radical. Altgeld’s experience mirrors the central theme of this dissertation: nativism existed in nineteenth-century Chicago, and it affected immigrants’ lives, but it did not prohibit immigrants from participating in American social and political life. At the outset of this story immigrants had little if any political control in Chicago. As time wore on, however, they gained a political voice through challenging nativist policies and laws. But, as nativism changed as the city began to industrialize, nativism began to focus more on the threat of immigrant radicals to the capitalist system. Only immigrants who embraced the capitalist system were able to continue to challenge nativist laws and policies. And, even those who were not radicals, like Altgeld, were constantly in danger of being labeled as such and therefore were often compelled to explicitly state their rejection of radicalism. Immigrants were only capable of having an influence in so far as their ideologies supported the capitalist state.

**Historiography**

Scholars have created a rich body of works focused on Chicago’s ethnic history. Historians in the late twentieth century, following the trend of many ethnic historians, 

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detailed the arrival, struggle, and, often, social successes of different groups of immigrants in the city. These works, detail social organizations, political involvement, and notable figures, all worthwhile contributions to understanding the history of these ethnic groups and their special place in Chicago’s history.9

Another important group of works on ethnic Chicago details the involvement of immigrants and their American-born children in union building and labor conflicts. For instance, works on the Haymarket Riot reveal the important role that German immigrants, in some cases alongside Americans of diverse ethnicities, played in forming the organizations and ideological movements that literally exploded to the forefront of Chicago history when the bomb was thrown at Haymarket Square in 1886. These authors find that European immigrants may have first encountered trade unions or radical ideologies in Europe or America; but it was specifically their American experiences that shaped their eventual political outlook on life in Chicago.10

With few exceptions, histories of ethnic Chicago have focused on the last third of the nineteenth century and after. This is in part because in 1871, a large fire decimated the city and took many would-be historical sources with it. But recently some historians

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have found a new interest in early Chicago. Ann Keating argues that one of Chicago’s most ethnically diverse eras was in the earliest years of the nineteenth century, when French, French-Canadian, English, Afro-Caribbean, and Native American peoples lived together in a close-knit community. This multi-ethnic society was eventually erased by the westward movement of Anglo-Americans during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{11}

This dissertation relies on this previous literature, but also contributes to our understanding of Chicago’s ethnic history. In particular, the dissertation takes nativism as a central theme, but also places immigrants and their agency at the center of the story. Too often studies of nativism dismiss the role of immigrants in shaping their own experiences or treat immigrants as objects of nativism, incapable of responding. This dissertation understands nativism not as merely an ideology, but as an ideology that drove policy and law making in nineteenth-century Chicago. Furthermore, nativism was not static nor was it monolithic: immigrants and their American-born children had the power – and used that power – to refute nativist claims that ethnic Chicagoans were incapable of becoming true Americans or behaving as true Americans.

While a perfect study of this type would examine every different ethnic group that existed in Chicago in the nineteenth century, I have chosen to focus on German and Irish immigrants as they were the two largest immigrants groups in nineteenth-century Chicago. Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms “German” and “Irish,” both of which are ambiguous terms. There was no German nation for the bulk of the time period

that my dissertation covers. That being said, Chicago’s Germans referred to themselves as German, as did those in the city who were not German. The same is true of the Irish. Only very rarely would someone identify his- or herself as Bavarian or Galwegian, for example. Further, when these terms are used in the sources, it is often impossible to tell if the person or people being referred to are immigrants or the American-born children of immigrants. I take the source, then, at face value: if someone calls his or herself Irish or German, I assume they identify as such. Similarly, if someone refers to someone else as Irish or German, I assume that the speaker believes the person they are speaking of to be Irish or German, whether that means foreign- or native-born. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to both immigrants and ethnic groups. While immigrants are those born outside of the United States, ethnic groups include the children and sometimes grandchildren of immigrants, in addition to the immigrants themselves. In some cases, people outside of the group decide who is and who is not part of an ethnic group. Journalists and politicians may refer to “the Irish” or “the Germans” when they are speaking about immigrants and their American-born children. In other cases, individuals determined their own ethnicity: an American-born second- or third-generation Irish-American or German-American may consider themselves simply, “Irish” or “German.” When possible, I clarify the meaning of the source if it is not obvious. In my own writing, I differentiate between immigrants – Irish-born or German-born – and their American-born offspring – Irish Americans and German Americans.

Chapter Outline
Chapter One begins with an examination of the conflicted relationship that Chicago’s boosters, the land-owning elite, had with the city’s immigrant population in the antebellum years. While immigrants were necessary for the boosters’ plans for the city to grow into a central place of trade for the nation, immigrants also threatened to damage the boosters’ chances of seeing their dreams for the city succeed. Immigrants brought with them poverty, disease, and crime, all of which threatened to keep investors and settlers away.

Chapter Two explores one of the first ways immigrants were able to assert their acceptance of American values. They joined and led independent militias and voted in a democratic fashion for their leaders. They also celebrated American holidays and demonstrated their preparation to defend the city, if need be. But they did not simply imitate American militias; they also developed and asserted their own ethnic identity by selecting names that identified them as Irish or German and by celebrating holidays and people who were important in their own history. Participation in these ethnic militias demonstrated that immigrants could be just as involved in supporting the city as their American-born counterparts.

Chapter Three addresses the Lager Beer Riot of 1855. This chapter demonstrates that instead of a lawless mob of angry immigrants, the Lager Beer protestors were an example of how Chicago’s Irish and German immigrants had taken note of their rights as Americans: they petitioned their government, held public meetings for their causes, and eventually demonstrated against what they felt was an abusive government. Ultimately, their organization, in the context of national political upheaval over the debate about
slavery, resulted in a reorganization of the city’s political parties and greater participation by immigrants, both as voters and as elected and appointed municipal officials.

Chapter Four demonstrates, however, that as the city began to industrialize in the aftermath of the Civil War, people’s abilities to challenge the socio-economic elite changed. Before the war, immigrants had been capable of challenging a dominant social elite by forming political alliances to protect their interests, in a manner that demonstrated their ability to take on the responsibilities of American citizenship. As conflict intensified between workers and employers, however, the economic elite of the city – men who owned and operated factories and large businesses like Phillip Armour, George Pullman, and Marshall Field – began to worry that the growing socialist movement would undermine the capitalist way of life. They took steps to protect themselves, their families, their businesses, and their homes. Socialists, however, did the same by supporting socialist independent militias. Immigrants’ independent militias broke along ideological lines: those who supported the socio-economic status quo and those who did not. Ultimately, the socialist militias were suppressed by the passage of the 1879 militia law, which was influenced by Chicago’s socio-economic elite.

But this did not mean that immigrants completely lacked the power to challenge anti-radical and anti-foreign policies, which were often one and the same. As chapter Five examines, when nativists passed the Edwards Law, a compulsory education law that left Catholic and German private schools open to control by local school boards, Irish and German voters rejected not only the law, but the Republican party that had written it, which led to the election of Illinois’ first Democratic governor since before the Civil War, John Altgeld.
By this time, the Haymarket affair had shattered any remaining belief that the economic elite of the city would allow challenges to their authority. Chapter Six demonstrates that the repercussions of Haymarket were felt not just by radical and socialist groups, but by other ethnic organizations who, in the turmoil of the post-Haymarket years, were linked to radicalism not because of their political stances, but because of their foreignness.

Nativism never presented a complete obstacle to immigrant advancement, as the career of John Peter Altgeld demonstrates. But neither had nativism disappeared by the 1890s, as was evident in the response to Altgeld’s pardons of the anarchists. Nativism continued to thrive, but immigrants and their children had proven that it was not insurmountable when they worked together. And their political voice would be heard in Chicago, as long as they did not challenge capitalism and its most powerful supporters.
Chapter One

Immigrants, Nativists, and the Growth of Chicago, 1833-1860

In 1833, when the town of Chicago first incorporated, it was home to fewer than 400 people. By 1860, it grew to just over 100,000 and became the ninth most populous city in the nation, despite not even having been one of the hundred biggest cities in the 1830s.¹ The city’s growth from a small western outpost into a major American center of trade was aided by the wave of immigrants coming from Europe in these years. Without these immigrants, Chicago’s business and political leaders could not have built the city or their own fortunes. Historians have explored the ways in which Chicago’s real estate and railroad tycoons, referred to as the city’s “boosters,” were keen to make Chicago into a national center of trade and, later, industry.² In order to realize this vision, they needed people: unskilled laborers to build the transportation systems that would expand in all directions from the city; families to populate the hinterlands who would grow and raise the products which would be traded and processed in Chicago; and skilled working men and women to provide the services that the pre-industrial city needed. While the creation of Chicago required vision and leadership, human labor was equally important.

² Boosters included many of the city’s mayors before the Civil War. See Appendix F for a list of antebellum mayors, their primary businesses, and which of them were also real estate and railroad investors. For those that had invested in multiple areas of the city’s economy, the stakes were highest. For a detailed explanation of the boosters and how they helped create Chicago, see William Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991); Jack Harpster, The Railroad Tycoon Who Built Chicago: A Biography of William B. Ogden (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009).
Although the city’s boosters recognized their need for immigrant labor, they also were concerned, not without some justification, with the impact that immigrants could have on the reputation of the city: rising disease, poverty, and crime rates were all associated with a growing immigrant population. The boosters, therefore, sought ways to mitigate the damage that sick or poor immigrants and criminals could have on their city. Even when the booster system gave way to the segmented system, in which residents in certain areas paid special assessments in order to gain improvements in their areas, the government still took some, if a lesser, role in managing problems associated with immigrants.

But those who had the largest financial stake in the city were not the only ones to attend to issues of poverty, disease, and crime. Immigrants themselves, through both ethnic organizations and religious organizations, served their own communities, which enabled them, to an admittedly limited extent, to lessen the burden on the government. This chapter demonstrates, therefore, the role that immigrants played in both achieving and endangering the city leaders’ goals for the city and, in turn, the role they played in shaping municipal policy.

**Immigrants and the Building of Antebellum Chicago**

Changes in political, economic, and social structures in Europe made emigration increasingly attractive for Europeans between the 1830s and 1850s. Ireland and Germany experienced significant demographic changes in this period. In the mid-1840s, famine devastated Ireland, leaving between 1.1 and 1.5 million dead from starvation and disease and forcing over another two million Irish to emigrate between 1845 and 1855, most of
whom made their way to the United States. The demographic changes in the German states, although not as dramatic or disastrous as those in Ireland, were nonetheless significant as they pertained to immigration to America. Political and social instability in Europe in the late 1840s contributed to an already growing stream of emigration: almost 1.4 million German immigrants arrived in America during the 1840s and 1850s.3

Irish and German immigrants accounted for a substantial proportion of Chicago’s growth in this period, as was true in many urban areas in the United States.4 In 1845, on the eve of the massive exodus from Ireland and Germany, Irish-born and German-born residents each made up about 8% of the city’s overall population and together constituted three-fifths of the foreign-born population. Only five years later, 20% of Chicagoans had been born in Ireland and an additional 17% were German-born. In this five-year period, the city’s overall population had increased by almost 18,000; about 12,400 of these were immigrants. The foreign-born population of Chicago hovered around 50% for the remainder of the 1850s.5

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5 In comparison, the foreign-born population of New York City grew from 43% in 1840, to 45% in 1850, to 47% in 1860. Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 1, 413-418, A.T. Andreas, History of
One of the reasons that immigrants were attracted to Chicago was the availability of work. The construction of the Illinois and Michigan (I & M) Canal and the westward expansion of the American railroad system drew both native- and foreign-born workers to Chicago. The development of these transportation routes meant that there was more work to be had in the city as well: processing facilities for goods shipped through the city, factories which supported the rail industry, creating everything from iron rails to upholstered train seats, and the industries, businesses, and services which supplied the everyday needs of the residents of the city. Immigrants were drawn by the prospect of work and became a necessary ingredient in the growth of the city.

The single most important project in Chicago in the 1830s and 1840s was the building of the I & M Canal. Native inhabitants of the area had shown seventeenth-century French explorers Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet a short portage, which was the land link in an otherwise continuous water route between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. Plans to build a canal through this portage site connecting the Chicago River to the Illinois River, which flows into the Mississippi River and on to the Gulf, had been drawn before Illinois became a state in 1818. But a variety of obstacles kept construction of the canal on hold until 1836. Although the first years of construction...
proceeded in fits and starts, the canal was opened for transportation in 1848.\(^6\) Almost as soon as it was created, however, the canal was outdated: the first railroad line into Chicago was laid the same year the canal was opened. The appearance of the Galena and Chicago Railroad marked the start of a massive and rapid increase in the number of railways in the vicinity. Between 1850 and 1860, the American railroad system added over 20,000 miles of track and over 10% of that new track was laid in Illinois, most with termini in Chicago.\(^7\)

The construction of both the I & M Canal and the railroads in Illinois required a massive workforce and the companies running these projects frequently recruited immigrants. In 1836, work on the canal stalled because of a lack of workers. In response, the contractors of the canal advertised abroad in order to attract workers to Illinois, as the managers of more easterly canals had done in previous years. They offered high wages in order to entice workers and, as a result, the contractors of the I & M Canal were the largest employers of Irish immigrants in this period. While the national financial collapse

\(^6\) One of the major obstacles to building the canal was the presence of a sizable native population. However, this roadblock was removed after the Black Hawk War ended in 1832 and the local Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa tribes agreed to permanently move west of the Mississippi River when they signed the Treaty of Chicago in 1833. Milo M. Quaife and G.B. Porter, “The Chicago Treaty of 1833,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 1, no. 3 (March 1918): 287-303.

\(^7\) Plans for the Chicago and Galena line (later the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad) had been in the works since the 1830s, but the first ten miles of track were not laid until 1848. By 1853 the line extended to Freeport, Illinois, over a hundred miles west of Chicago (but still almost fifty miles shy of Galena). By 1856, the Illinois Central Railroad extended in two branches from Cairo, in the extreme southern tip of the state where Illinois meets Missouri and Kentucky, one branch leading to Chicago and the other meeting up with the Galena and Chicago to merge Freeport and Galena. These lines composed only two of the many that crisscrossed Illinois by the 1850s. For details on the expansion of the rail system in Illinois and its importance to the growth of Chicago, see Paul Wallace Gates, *The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934); Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, vol. 2, 35-36, 37-38, 40-67; Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, 65-71; Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 1, 245-263, A.T. Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, vol. 2 (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1884), 142. http://archive.org/details/historyofchicago02andr (accessed August 2011), 128-158.
in 1837 brought the average monthly salary for a laborer on the canal down from $40 in 1836 to barely $16 in 1843, workers continued to flow into Illinois.\(^8\)

When the construction of the railroads began in earnest, the companies actively recruited workers from outside Illinois. For instance, in June 1852, the Illinois Central Railroad advertised available work for 1000 men. After filling those jobs in two months, they then offered another 3000 jobs. By the fall of 1852, the railroad sought 10,000 new employees. Advertisements appeared throughout the eastern United States. One advertisement in the *Maine Farmer* claimed that the railroad company had “ample cash funds in hand” and offered “an excellent opportunity… for employment for two or three years.” While this posting may not have conveyed the dismal conditions in which many railroad employees labored, for over a decade prior to the Civil War, the need for workers to construct railways in Illinois was one of the top draws for new residents to the state.\(^9\)

In addition to advertising in eastern American cities, the Illinois railroad

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companies specifically recruited Irish and German immigrants. They sought two types of immigrants: workers to construct the railroad and settlers to purchase and farm the land along the railroad routes. Those who were hired as workers often eventually settled in Chicago or along the route they had constructed, as canal workers had done when they settled along the canal route in areas and towns like Bridgeport and LaSalle, still heavily Irish-American communities today.\(^{10}\)

The settlers were just as important for the growth of Chicago as those who lived in the city itself were. These settlers would become the first customers of the railroad and canal companies. In many cases, executives of the transportation lines or the railroad companies themselves owned large swaths of land on either side of the routes. They sold land, at a profit, to newcomers, thereby creating the population that would pay to travel on the railroad or canal and who would use the route to transport the goods that they farmed, ranched, and mined. These goods all flowed through Chicago, creating jobs in the city in the packing, processing, and trading industries.\(^{11}\)

Settlers were often recruited by promotional pamphlets printed at the expense of railroad company heads; these men were also likely to be involved in city politics. For example, the *Daily Democratic Press* published a pamphlet titled *The Rail-Roads*,

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\(^{10}\) See for instance *Chicago Tribune*, February 11, 1859. Recruiters for the Illinois Central Railroad, among others, specifically targeted Irish and German immigrants as they entered New York. Although certainly some of these workers remained part of an itinerant workforce once they stopped working on the Illinois Central, many of them were able to take advantage of land grants from the company and settled along the line, becoming small farmers. Others settled at the terminus in Chicago. Paul Wallace Gates estimates that from 1852 to 1856, between 5000 and 10,000 immigrants were enticed to Illinois to work on this single railroad. Gates, *The Illinois Central Railroad*, 96-98; Lightner, “Construction Labor on the Illinois Central Railroad,” 285-86, 301; Way, *Common Labour*, 144, 154, 165, 211, 230, 239, 254-55, 270; Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, vol. 1, 74, 179-180; Ruth M. Piper, “The Irish in Chicago, 1848-1871” (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1936).

\(^{11}\) Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, throughout, but especially chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.
History and Commerce of Chicago. The pamphlet touted the natural benefits of the land surrounding the route of the Southern Wisconsin Railroad. The writer claimed that the ground “yields…cheaply its treasures to the labor of the miner” and that it was “universally conceded that there is not in the wide world a section of country so rich in [lead].” The land also was second to none in terms of its agricultural promise, the pamphlet claimed. Included were statistics that made Chicago appear to be a safe, stable, and profitable place to live: a death rate which was low in comparison to other American cities; population figures which attested to Chicago’s rapid growth and suggested that the city would continue to grow and thus offer ample opportunities to newcomers; a list of churches, synagogues, schools, and colleges in the city, intended to demonstrate that it was a modern and cosmopolitan city; and charts which detailed city industries and wages, and goods being traded, along with their prices, to give potential newcomers an idea of the supposed fortune that awaited them. The pamphlet concluded that Chicago had “to wait but a few short years for the sure development of her ‘Manifest Destiny.’”12

The pamphlet was intended to entice not only people who lived to the east of Chicago in the U.S., but also to attract immigrants to the city. 10,000 copies were printed, half in English and half in German, intended to be distributed at both American and European ports, in hopes that immigrants could be enticed to travel past America’s Atlantic port cities to Chicago. A Chicago banker, R.K. Swift, placed an ad in the pamphlet that explained how those reading the message “in the interior of England, Scotland or Ireland” could rely on his bank to send money to friends not only in Chicago,

but in any western state or territory. Swift was obviously confident that the pamphlet would reach foreign shores.

This pamphlet demonstrates how the men who wanted immigrant settlers and workers in the area stood to benefit in multiple ways from Chicago’s growth. For instance, J.H. Rees and Samuel Kerfoot purchased two of the largest advertisement spaces in the pamphlet for their individual businesses. Rees and Kerfoot ran a land agent business together. Rees also held complete indices of land records for Cook County. But Rees and Kerfoot may have had more than their own personal businesses in mind when they supported the production of this pamphlet intended to draw new residents to the area. Rees was the president of Chicago’s board of real estate and stockbrokers and Kerfoot was the secretary of the same group. The men who belonged to this group would have directly benefitted from an increased population. Real estate prices would theoretically go up as the population grew and new residents sought land to purchase in and around the city and stock brokers would have more goods to trade as the new residents increased both the production and consumption capabilities of the area. Rees and Kerfoot were representative of many early business leaders in Chicago, in that they

14 Although land records are now public records, at the time there was no official government office in Illinois that managed the purchase and sale of land between individuals. Individual businessmen compiled as much information as they could and were then paid by those dealing real estate to legally confirm the transaction.
15 See Appendices G and H for an analysis of the other advertisers in this pamphlet. The vast majority of them dealt in land or ran banking offices. Like most of the mayors, these were the boosters of Chicago: men who stood to financially benefit from the city’s growth and success. Appendix H lists those land dealers and bankers who advertised in the pamphlet and had considerable land holdings in the area themselves, as well as their primary businesses, and the political offices, if they held any. Chicago Daily Democratic Press, “The Rail-Roads, History and Commerce of Chicago” (Chicago: Democratic Press Job and Book Steam Printing Office, 1854).
stood to profit in more than one way if Chicago grew. These efforts no doubt attracted both Americans and immigrants to the area. But the success of Chicago’s businessmen in recruiting immigrants to settle outside of Chicago, along the transportation routes, is clear: in 1859 over a million acres of land along the Illinois Central Railroad alone were sold to immigrants.\(^{16}\)

These new settlers contributed to the economic growth of Chicago. They produced raw goods which they sent to Chicago by railroad and over the I & M Canal. In Chicago, workers processed these goods: logs were sawn into lumber, animals were slaughtered and packaged, and grain was milled. These products were then shipped to eastern markets. Settlers also became the consumers of manufactured goods produced in Chicago and at points further east.\(^{17}\) This exchange of raw and manufactured goods, with Chicago at the center, drove phenomenal growth in Chicago’s manufacturing industries. Between 1850 and 1855 alone, the number of workers employed in manufacturing industries in the city increased from just over 2000 to over 10,500. For most of the 1850s, the top two largest industries in Chicago were the production of ironwork and heavy machinery and the manufacturing of railroad cars and agricultural implements, such as the McCormick reaper. Much of this manufacturing was directly supporting the railroads. Even the agricultural implements indirectly supported the railroads because they increased production of agricultural products which were shipped over the railways. By the end of the 1850s, almost everything needed for the railroad and trains was produced

\(^{16}\) Chicago Tribune, August 1, 1859; “The Future of the Illinois Central Railroad,” American Railway Times, August 6, 1859, 2.

\(^{17}\) For an in depth examination of the connection between the railroads and the grain, lumber, and meat markets in Chicago, see chapters three through five in Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, 97-259.
in Chicago, including the rails themselves.\textsuperscript{18}

The railroad companies and the businesses which sold products to the railroads employed thousands of workers with a range of skill levels. For instance, the railroad companies employed not only the men who laid rails or constructed the trains, they also often employed men in the building trades. The Galena and Chicago Railroad spent about a third of its total expenditures in 1861 on repairs of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on their properties within the city limits. Carpenters, masons, and painters joined the ranks of the company’s employees to accomplish these jobs. Additionally, industries which supplied products to the railroads employed thousands of workers. For instance, the Chicago Rolling Mills employed unskilled workers to create the iron which the railroad companies used to produce their rails and other smaller businesses supplied items like lamps, benches, and staircases for the trains.\textsuperscript{19} As the city grew in the two decades before the Civil War, so did the number of people employed in industries associated with the railroads.\textsuperscript{20}

The city’s expanding economy and building boom meant that people of all skill levels and trades were in demand. Immigrants were able to fill not only the unskilled labor positions in the city, but also such skilled jobs as blacksmiths, bakers, and carpenters.\textsuperscript{21} According to the city directories, the proportion of foreign-born skilled

\textsuperscript{18} Josiah Seymour Currey, \textit{Manufacturing and Wholesale Industries of Chicago}, vol. 1 (Chicago: Thomas B. Poole Company, 1918), 222-235, 238-241, 243-244.


\textsuperscript{21} Currey, “Manufacturing and Wholesale Industries of Chicago,” 220-221. In the censuses of the later nineteenth century, these types of jobs were classified as “Manufacturing and Mechanical”
workers to native-born skilled workers increased between 1839 and 1855. In 1839, a little under 50% of the skilled workers were born outside of the United States; this was comparable to the balance in the general population. In 1855, however, 75% of the skilled workers were immigrants, at a time when immigrants made up about 50% of the general population. The nativity of those within professional fields, such as lawyers, doctors, and teachers, was changing as well. In 1839, every professional was American born. By 1855, 28% of professionals were foreign-born. While immigrants were under-represented in professional fields compared to their proportion in the overall population in 1855, they had nonetheless made considerable strides in sixteen years. Immigrants were increasingly likely to be employed in positions other than unskilled work, even though they dominated that category.

Furthermore, the profile for Irish and German immigrants changed between 1839 and 1855. In 1839, slightly fewer than 50% of the blacksmiths listed in the city directory were Irish born. The rest – over 50% – were American born. While no Germans appeared as blacksmiths in 1839, by 1855 the profession was heavily German: 85% of blacksmiths in 1855 were of German birth. The rest were native born; no Irish appear as blacksmiths

22 The following analysis is drawn from the data in Appendices I and J.
23 This does not mean that 40% and 50% of Chicago’s working people in these years were skilled workers, as unskilled workers were less likely to be included in the business directories. In 1839, there were no laborers listed at all. In 1855, laborers occasionally advertised themselves in the business directory. About 14% of the sample was laborers. However, this is still substantially below their actual proportion of the overall population. These figures are meant to suggest that skilled workers were an important part of the economy in both 1839 and 1855.
in the city directory of 1855. So, while there were certainly plenty of immigrants who undertook unskilled labor, there were ample opportunities for immigrants in Chicago before the Civil War at every level.

In addition to creating thousands of jobs in a variety of fields, the expanding railroad industry also helped Chicago’s population growth by making it easier for people to travel from the east coast to the city. In 1852, the Michigan Southern Railroad reached Chicago from the east. Before that, the quickest way to get from the east coast to Chicago was via a combination of water and rail. Because a substantial portion of the trip took place on the Great Lakes and canals, the possibility, safety, comfort, and speed of travel were all greatly affected by the weather. The journey could take as much as three weeks and at certain times of the year, such as when the water routes froze, it became impossible. But with the completion of the Michigan Southern line, the trip between Chicago and New York was shortened to as few as thirty-six hours and instead of one departure every few days or even weeks, trains regularly departed from Chicago multiple times a day.

24 These figures correspond to the fact that German immigrants were generally slightly more skilled than Irish immigrants during the decade between 1845 and 1855.
25 Even when train lines connected ports on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario with New York City, the trip between Chicago and New York could still take between two and three weeks. In 1849, the Michigan Central Railroad offered the fastest passage between Chicago and New York until that time: under seventy hours. Passengers took a steamboat from Chicago, across Lake Michigan to New Buffalo, Michigan and from there they rode to Detroit by rail. Detroit to Buffalo was traversed by steamboat, followed by a train trip to Albany and then steamboat on the final leg to New York. *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1849; April 23, 1856. Regarding storms on the Great Lakes during which ships were lost, see for instance *Chicago Tribune*, September 7, 1853, April 17, 1856, April 4, 1857, May 11, 1857. Of course, heavy snow could potentially affect rail travel as well, as it did in January of 1856 outside of Buffalo, but with far fewer consequences for life and business. *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1856, April 29, 1856. See also Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, 74-76.
Chicago’s businessmen protested heavily when it seemed the flow of immigrants being carried by train across the eastern portion of the country was being impeded. For instance, New York state charged a tax on each immigrant that was due when the immigrants disembarked their ships from Europe. The Chicagoans feared that the tax would mean fewer immigrants would be able to afford the fare to travel westward after landing in New York and, as a result, many immigrants who might have settled in Chicago instead stayed near the east coast.27

Chicago’s businessmen were also concerned about other hazards that they believed threatened the flow of immigrants to Chicago. Reports of fraud against immigrant travelers, who were often entirely unfamiliar with travel via rail in the United States, were common. In some cases, a person claiming to be a ticket seller for a particular railroad would meet immigrants as they disembarked at the harbor and offer to sell them railroad tickets at what was supposedly a cut rate. These fake ticket sellers were often of the same ethnicity as the immigrants who were disembarking, which made the new arrivals more likely to trust and understand them. Sometimes these tickets were authentic, but the seller, unbeknownst to the immigrant, was making a considerable profit on them. In other cases, the tickets were fakes or were good for only a small segment of the trip westward. The immigrants, having spent most or all of their funds, were then incapable of completing their planned journey. Thieves would also approach immigrants as they disembarked and sell them receipts for their luggage. The seller would then take the immigrant’s money and luggage, in exchange for a receipt that seemed to indicate that the luggage would be awaiting the traveler at their final destination. The immigrant

27 Chicago Tribune, February 11, 1859, October 20, 1870, October 30, 1872.
would never see their luggage again, in addition to having lost a good portion of their traveling money.  

Chicago’s business and political leaders were concerned that these practices would mean that fewer immigrants would make it to Chicago and that the immigrants that did arrive would be without funds or belongings. In response, Chicago’s businessmen advocated measures such as transporting immigrants via express trains, setting uniform discounted fares across multiple railroad lines for foreign-born travelers, and establishing permanent boards to oversee the “adequate protection” of immigrants who traveled westward by train. For instance, in 1854, representatives from Chicago, Boston, New York, and Cincinnati-based railroad companies pledged to take “all such efforts and [give] influence as may be in their power to abate the evils (too rapidly increasing)” of the abuse of “uniformed and unwary” immigrant travelers. They also agreed to honor only tickets purchased through their companies, and not those purchased from independent brokers, many of whom were the source of the crimes against immigrant travelers. Furthermore, these businessmen also agreed to push their respective state legislatures to pass laws protecting foreign travelers.

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28 Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1858, August 8, 1867, November 26, 1870, October 19, 1872, October 30, 1872, November 23, 1872.
30 “Proceedings of a Meeting of Representatives of the Railroad Companies between New York and Boston, and Chicago and Cincinnati, Held at Buffalo, October 25, 1854,” 4-7; Also see Illinois Staats Zeitung, September 7, 1861; Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 2, 5, 7. In 1864, the
The city of Chicago took these actions a step further. When a train carrying immigrants was due, a uniformed police officer, generally one who was of the same background as the travelers and spoke the same language, was positioned at the station to direct the immigrants to the local offices established to assist immigrants, to reputable boarding houses, and to discourage those who might take unfair advantage of new immigrants. Hack drivers were known to charge immigrants up-front, oftentimes charging them more than the allowable fares for “extras” like luggage and additional passengers or children, and charging full rates when the drivers knew that the destination was only a block or two away from the station. Other drivers would demand a rate higher than the expected fare upon arriving at the destination. When immigrants could not or would not pay, the driver would keep their luggage. The presence of a police officer at the station no doubt reduced these crimes, but could not eliminate them completely.  

Chicago’s businessmen took these measures to protect foreign-born travelers because they realized that the immigrants were a benefit to the area’s economy. The Tribune explained that Europe’s loss was America’s gain because American land “would be valueless without labor to till and improve it.” The paper noted that immigrants were available and willing to do the agricultural and manual labor that would allow the United State to prosper economically. William Ogden, the city’s first mayor who made part of his fortune buying and selling real estate in and around Chicago from the 1830s onward, federal government passed “An Act to Encourage Emigration” in order to, as the title stated, encourage the emigration of laborers from Europe to the United States. It included some measures of security for migrants. New York Times, August 3, 1864.

31 Chicago Tribune, July 13, 1869, October 20, 1870.
32 Chicago Tribune, February 14, 1856; September 25, 1857. The Tribune even spoke out against Chinese exclusion laws in California on the grounds that it would hurt the California economy. Chicago Tribune, April 15, 1856.
and who was an executive of a number of railroad companies, explained in an 1859
*Tribune* article that immigrants were a financial benefit to Illinois. He used statistics from
the Illinois Commissioners of Emigration to support his points.\(^{33}\)

Business and political leaders in Chicago, like Ogden, often spoke favorably of
the city’s immigrants. Mayor Isaac Milliken, in his 1854 inaugural speech said that
Chicago’s residents, “a large portion of whom are foreigners by birth...[are] law-abiding,
peaceable and industrious, cheerfully submitting to good and wholesome laws.” He
compared Chicago to other cities “of equal importance in the Union” and claimed that the
“absence of violent outbreaks and riots” in Chicago, as compared to the other cities, was
evidence that Chicago’s residents, both foreign and native-born were “[attached] to our
institutions.”\(^ {34}\)

Among the ranks of the Chicago business and political leaders who wanted to
assure immigrants would make their way to the growing city, were men who were
immigrants themselves. For instance, Henry Greenebaum, a German-born Jewish banker,
often worked on behalf of other German immigrants. The *Tribune* reported in 1863 that
Greenebaum had “for a long time been engaged in the emigrant passage business.”
According to the paper, unlike many others who were independent ticket salespeople,
there was not “one word of complaint” against Greenebaum regarding his work with
immigrants. The paper also explained how Greenebaum did not just sell tickets to
immigrants; in some cases, he and other Chicagoans gathered money to pay for the travel

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\(^{34}\) Inaugural Address of Mayor Isaac L. Milliken, March 15, 1854, Chicago Public Library
http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/mayors/milliken_inaug_1854.php (accessed
July 2012).
costs of immigrants they did not even know. Greenebaum would gather enough funds to cover travel from a particular European port all the way to Chicago. He would then forward a blank ticket to that port, which could be used for any person traveling to Chicago. Greenebaum would then report in the city’s newspapers the arrivals of ships in New York which were full of immigrants whose fares had been paid via this method and would give the approximate arrival date of the group to Chicago. When a train full of immigrants arrived in Chicago, employers needing workers could meet the train and offer work to the arriving passengers.  

Another German immigrant, Francis Hoffmann, also did his part to draw immigrants to Chicago, but in different ways than Greenebaum did. Hoffman had emigrated from Germany in 1840 and lived in or near Chicago since then. He was a preacher, a lawyer, a member of the city council, and an early member of the newly formed Republican Party in Chicago. Hoffmann was elected as the Illinois Lieutenant Governor in 1860 and served as the Governor-pro-tem when President Lincoln called Governor Yates away for military service at the start of the Civil War in 1861. In 1862, while Hoffmann was filling the office of the governor, the Illinois Central Railroad created the post of “Foreign Commissioner” in their Land Department and appointed Hoffmann to the position. The primary mission of the Foreign Commissioner was to “set forth the advantages which the lands of the road offer to European settlers” and also to “deal directly with all foreign immigrants.” The Commissioner would advertise for new settlers in Europe, but would also maintain an office in Chicago from which he

35 Chicago Tribune, January 14, 1863.
would undertake the majority of his business selling the railroad’s lands to European immigrants. Hoffmann was selected for this position, according to the railroad, because he was well-known among Americans and because of this “popularity among all citizens of European birth.” Certainly, Hoffmann’s ability to speak German to potential German settlers was also an important quality.³⁸

But despite the extensive efforts that Chicago’s business and political leaders invested in drawing immigrants to the area, the city’s boosters were not unequivocally comfortable with the success of their efforts. City leaders also feared that the immigrants who were central to the expansion of Chicago’s economy could also ruin it.

**Controlling the Impact of Immigrants**

Despite the city’s need for immigrants, there is considerable evidence of anti-immigrant sentiment in antebellum Chicago. However, Chicago’s nativism took on a different character from nativism in east coast cities like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Irish Catholics were the most likely target of nativist hostilities between the 1830s and the Civil War both in Chicago and in the east coast cities, but Chicago did not experience the type of nativist violence that occurred in some east coast cities, such as the burning of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts in the 1830s or the battles between nativist mobs and armed Catholics in the streets of Philadelphia in the 1840s. And while there was some friction between Chicago’s Catholics and non-Catholics over the issue of the funding of parochial schools, it never caused the political upheaval or

³⁸ *Chicago Tribune*, January 19, 1860.
political divisiveness that it did in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City.39

It is possible that Chicago escaped the serious conflicts of east coast cities in part because some of the oldest residents of the Chicago were Catholic: after all, the city was originally settled by French and Franco-Canadian traders who, if they practiced religion at all, were often Catholic, as were the first recorded Europeans in the area, Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette and the first permanent church in Chicago was Roman Catholic.40 But as the city’s immigrant population grew in the 1840s and 1850s, so did the concern that native-born Protestants harbored about the effect immigrants – whether Catholic or Protestant – would have on their city. Problems common to many urban areas at the time, such as crime, poverty, and disease, increased at the same time that the proportion of foreign-born residents was growing.41 Therefore, when the city’s economic and political leaders began to pass laws and create institutions to address these issues, their efforts often specifically targeted the city’s immigrant and ethnic residents.

But by 1850, Chicago had begun to develop the problems that many big cities faced, including disease, poverty, and crime. The large-scale appearance of these problems in Chicago coincided with the dramatic shift in the city’s population, from mostly American-born to mostly foreign-born. While nativists claimed that this correlation meant that immigrants posed such a significant threat to the city and the

39 Tyler Anbinder details the growth of nativist organizations in east coast cities 1830s and 1840s, as well as outbreaks of mob violence against Catholics, in the first chapter of Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-19.

40 In 1833, thirty-six Catholic families, mostly of French-Canadian or French-Indian descent, requested a priest for the city. The first English-speaking priest arrived four years later. Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 1, 224.

41 As will be demonstrated later, the majority of crimes were committed by those with Irish last names. Whether these were immigrants or second generation immigrants remains unclear.
nation as a whole and should therefore be limited or excluded all together, even those
who championed the increase of the foreign-born population of the city realized the real
dangers that rampant disease, poverty, and crime could pose for the city. In response, the
city’s economic and political leaders first began investigating methods for protecting the
city from sick or poor immigrants and from foreign-born criminals.

Disease was a problem for most cities in this era. Typhoid, smallpox, and
consumption were some of the leading killers of the era but cholera, in particular, spurred
a number of advances in health care in Chicago, especially between 1849 and 1855, the
same years when the immigrant population of the city was rapidly expanding. The first
report of cholera in Chicago was only months after its first appearance in North America.
In 1832, U.S. Army troops sailing to Chicago via the Great Lakes in order to suppress
Black Hawk and his allies brought the disease with them. Deaths from cholera occurred
every year after that but became of epidemic proportions beginning in the late 1840s. In
1849, 1851, 1852, and 1854, about a third of the city’s deaths were from cholera. In these
years, deaths from cholera far surpassed those from other illnesses. For instance, in 1854,
fevers, consumption, and dysentery each only claimed about 6% of all mortalities
recorded in the city. 42

At the time, no one was entirely sure what cholera was or how it was contracted,
but it was obvious to observers in port cities that there was a correlation between the
arrival of boats of migrants and the arrival of the disease. Cholera was originally found
only in south Asia but it blossomed into a worldwide threat in the early nineteenth

42 Statistics are not available for 1850 or 1853. Joseph and Caroline Kirkland, *The Story of
*Chicago Tribune*, January 4, 1856, January 7, 1856; Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 1, 594-597
century. As international travel became faster and easier for humans, travel also became faster and easier for the diseases humans carried.\textsuperscript{43} Therefore, the correlation that city officials frequently drew between the arrival of cholera and immigrants together was not necessarily a product of anti-immigrant sentiment: cholera often arrived in a place when ships of migrants arrived. For instance, the first case of cholera in Chicago in 1849 was the captain of a ship from New Orleans. The ship reportedly had carried “a number of emigrant passengers…several of whom were sick.” Although the sick passengers were never seen or treated by city authorities, the captain was.\textsuperscript{44}

A few years later, B.M. Vickar, Chicago’s city physician, noted in his annual report that 1853 had been one of “unprecedented health,” and that the only cases with “even the most remote resemblance to cholera” were among the city’s immigrants. He bemoaned the fact that “ship fever,” as he called it, was carried to America by immigrants. He therefore recommended that the city construct a quarantine building near the train station which could be used to house any arriving immigrants who were exhibiting signs of cholera or who had been in contact with other cholera patients. The city was slow to respond and in August of 1854, Vickar reported that out of the 139 cases of cholera in the previous thirty-eight days, 113 had been new or very recent immigrants to the city. He recommended that the mayor call for a quarantine of new immigrants at


\textsuperscript{44} Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871, CP 1854/55-1855/56, Box 134, Document 0179A Illinois State Archives, Northeastern Illinois University Depository.
once. This time, the city followed his instructions and established quarantine areas along every main line of travel into the city.\textsuperscript{45}

City officials acknowledged that those who fell to disease were also likely to be impoverished. In 1846 and 1847, the city began sending patients suspected of having communicable diseases to the city almshouse. In September of 1854, Dr. J.H. Bird, the county physician, submitted his monthly report on the health of the almshouse residents to the city council. The report stated that out of 240 inmates, 140 were under medical care for a variety of issues and diseases. Cholera was the most common ailment, with twenty-one cases, followed by fever (twenty cases), diarrhea (twenty cases), typhoid fever (thirteen cases), and dysentery (twelve cases). Bird’s report also noted the ethnicity of the 140 patients, which seemed to reveal that immigrants were more likely to be both sick and poor than Americans were. Fifty-nine of the patients were Irish and fifty-five were German. Only eleven were American. It is unclear whether these inmates were already sick when they arrived at the almshouse or if their sicknesses were contracted while at the almshouse.\textsuperscript{46} Regardless, the report demonstrated to the city council that almshouse inmates were more likely to be sick than not and, furthermore, that immigrants were more likely to be both sick and poor than Americans were.

The annual revival of cholera and its prevalence among new and recently settled immigrants led to some of the city’s most important advances in tending to the public health. The common council established a Board of Health in 1837 in response to a cholera outbreak. This board’s primary duties were to board any arriving vessel upon


\textsuperscript{46} Chicago Tribune, September 14, 1854.
which sick people might be traveling and to ascertain the potential threat to the city.

Between 1837 and 1857, the city improved its sewer system, opened temporary hospitals for impoverished patients and, later, constructed a permanent hospital and medical dispensaries throughout the city, and incorporated the Chicago City Hydraulic Company in order to improve the city’s water quality. All of these efforts were attempts to mitigate the threat specifically of cholera to the city. 47

The correlation between poverty and foreign birth was also not necessarily a product of nativist sentiment. 48 For instance, the report of the poorhouse warden in September 1857 noted that between the end of March and the end of August of that year, 220 people had been inmates at the county poorhouse. Twenty-six of them were American, forty-five were German, and 116 were Irish. 49 These statistics were not too far off from what one observer claimed: “three-fourths of those who say that they are hungry and are in want are Irish. Nine-tenths of the beggars are Irish, and people of no other nation had the art of telling so pitiful a tale as they.” 50 Another commentator told of the “common Irish custom,” whereby the father of the family “had deserted his wife, undoubtedly for the winter only, and by consent and agreement with the wife” so that the family could apply to Protestant charity groups “while the husband is living easily abroad, or laying up funds for the future.” 51 These claims were not far from the truth: immigrants, especially the Irish, were more likely to be impoverished than native-born Americans.

49 An additional ten were English, nine were Norwegian or Swedish, seven were listed as “other,” and seven were children. Chicago Tribune, September 15, 1857.
50 Chicago Tribune, November 23, 1857
51 Chicago Tribune, November 9, 1857.
In some cases, it was a crime to be poor. While the city’s vagrancy laws were not as strictly enforced as some may have liked, these laws provided a range of reasons for arrests and punishments for people accused of begging or vagrancy. A person who could not “establish that he has a fixed place of abode or a legitimate method of earning his bread” could be charged with vagrancy. Generally the accused were issued a fine, ranging from $2 to $50. If a vagrant was unable to pay, he or she was then sent to jail, “to work out [their] fine.” Sentences could be days or months, depending on the opinion of the judge of the particular case. Repeat offenders or those who could not work, such as accused vagrants like John Miller, who the Chicago Tribune described as “a dilapidated specimen of humanity,” or S.P. Walker, who was deemed to be insane, or Henry Stuver, “a miserable drunken vagrant,” were sent directly to the county poorhouse.

Like poverty and disease, crime bore a statistical correlation to ethnicity. For instance, the Bridewell records of arrests for 1855 show that an overwhelming majority of people arrested bore Irish surnames. A conservative estimate shows that 72 of 185, or almost 40%, of the people released from the Bridewell in the first half of 1855 were of Irish descent when the Irish were less than 20% of the population. This would remain true for the rest of the century: in 1880, the Irish were only about 9% of the city’s population, but they accounted for over 17% of arrests that year. Of course, this does not

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52 See, for instance, Chicago Tribune, June 17, 1857.
53 Chicago Tribune, June 17, 1857.
55 Again, it is unclear how many of these people were immigrants and how many were the descendants of immigrants. That being said, Chicago’s population was around 50% immigrant so there is a possibility that many of these people, if not close to all, could have been immigrants.
56 See Appendix K for the data for this analysis.
mean that more Irish-born Chicagoans committed crimes than American-born Chicagoans did - only that the Irish were more frequently arrested for those crimes. Regardless, city officials created and circulated reports that seemed to indicate that immigrants were more likely to be criminals than Americans were.\footnote{Of course, this may mean that more Irish were arrested for crimes. It may not necessarily indicate that immigrants were more likely to commit crimes. Bridewell Keeper’s Reports, 1855/1856, Documents 0212A, 0348B, 0564A, 0837A, 1154A, 1347A, 1586A, 1707A, 1809A, 1984A, 2162A, Illinois State Archives, Northeastern Illinois University Depository; Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 3, 31.}

Disease, poverty, and crime were problems in every big city, but in Chicago they constituted a wider threat. If Chicago gained a reputation for being a place of sickness, poverty, and crime, business and political leaders worried that the city’s growth would be stymied. Potential new residents and workers might choose a different location in which to settle. Producers from outlying areas might be less willing to travel to the city to trade their products. Finally, the growth of the city economically and physically relied on the continued investment of eastern businessmen. The city’s leaders therefore worried that a bad reputation could cause investors to send their money elsewhere, effectively shrinking the economic resources of the city, and, at the same time, undermining the value of the personal investments of the city leaders themselves.

Boosters, men who owned large amounts of land in and around Chicago and often had ties to railroad companies, needed the city to expand if their own investments were to flourish. In order to lure eastern investors to help fund large projects, the boosters worked to make the city as investment-worthy as possible. To this end, boosters, who were often the mayors and the members of the city council, frequently funded the construction of and improvements to infrastructure and allowed the city to reimburse them when funds
were available. The bulk of infrastructure growth in the late 1830s was streets, bridges, and waterways – the fundamental paths by which trade would come and go through the city.\(^{58}\)

While it was important to provide the basic infrastructure to support trade in the city, the boosters on the city council also spent a good deal of time and money addressing public health and poverty. This was not necessarily a philanthropic mission: the boosters were concerned that their eastern investors would balk should the city appear ill of health or to be producing a large population of impoverished residents. Quite to the contrary, the boosters wished to present Chicago as a place of health and riches.\(^{59}\)

The council employed doctors as commissioners of public health and paid these doctors for attending to the medical needs of Chicagoans. These doctors’ services appear to have run the gamut. Dr. Daniel Brainard, submitted a bill in 1837 for “amputating John Shenecker’s limbs.” Other bills submitted to the council by Dr. Brainard and another health commissioner, Dr. Charles Dyer, were for “attendance on sick persons.” Dr. Dyer submitted bills regularly twice a month.\(^{60}\)

The intersection of health and poverty was a special concern of the council. Special committees prepared reports for the council on topics such as “the condition of the poor and the mode of their relief” and whether the relief was dispensed by city or private organizations, the council often funded these measures. Each ward had a city-run and city-funded relief committee that served its area and reported on conditions to the council. In some cases, individuals petitioned the council directly for relief:

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Fox appealed to the city council twice in 1838 for “relief” and Mary O’Connor and Joseph Shumaker each applied once.61 Rich Lappan applied for funds to cover the board of Mary Simon, who had apparently not paid her expenses. Even private organizations received reimbursement from the council for their services to the poor: the Ladies’ Benevolent Association submitted their bill for “articles supplied the poor” in December 1838. This concern for public well-being matched the boosters’ enthusiasm for improving city infrastructure: it all supported the boosters’ investments.62

But by the late 1840s, the method of financing public works projects had turned to what historian Robin Einhorn calls the “segmented system.” When residents wanted to have their street planked, a sidewalk constructed, or a sewer pipe laid, the city charged the affected residents an assessment. Of course, this method of funding meant that there were vast disparities between the living conditions in different neighborhoods. While wealthy areas might have planked streets, raised sidewalks, and sewer service, poor neighborhoods still had muddy streets full of human and animal refuse. The city’s funding for public works therefore decreased.63

But yet the city’s investment in public health expanded during the era of the segmented system. In 1848, smallpox hit the areas around Chicago at epidemic rates. In response, twenty doctors in the city, many of whom were part of the city government at one time and who were among the wealthiest Chicagoans, offered a free inoculation to

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61 Shumaker, or Shoemaker, also later applied for relief due to an injury caused by “the discharge of a cannon.” It is unclear from the records whether or not these two applications were related or if the cannon was owned or operated by the city or its employees. Chicago Common Council Records, 1854-56, Box 134, Documents 2182-2261, Illinois State Archives, Northeastern Illinois University Depository.
63 Einhorn, Property Rules, 61-102.
anyone who could not otherwise afford it. To the same end, the council passed an ordinance in 1849 which appropriated money from the public school fund to pay for school children to be vaccinated for smallpox.\textsuperscript{64}

While illnesses like smallpox were serious threats to Chicagoans in these years, the expansion of the city’s attention to public health was due in no small part to the cholera outbreaks of the 1840s. The council appointed additional city health officers, especially near the slaughterhouses in the city, where cholera rates tended to be higher. Because of the correlation between slaughterhouses and cholera, the council also passed ordinances that forbade the construction of new slaughterhouses or the expansion of existing ones.\textsuperscript{65}

Other ordinances concerning public health also reveal the suspicions that the council and health officials had that cholera had a connection with foul water, animals, and deceased humans. Ordinances called for the city aqueducts, sewers, ditches, gutters, and reservoir to be cleaned, for stagnant waste and water to be cleared from city streets, and for the extension of the existing sewer system. Chicagoans were banned from bathing in the lake, where the drinking water came from, and the council passed regulations “concerning the burial of the dead.” The council also established city scavengers to collect dead animals from the streets in order to “promote public health” and they also put a stop to a long common practice of allowing pigs and horses to roam free in the city. Animals who were found “running at large” in the city were to be impounded by the city pound keeper, whose post was a new creation. Even once the cholera epidemic had

\textsuperscript{64} Andreas vol. 1, 594-595.
ended, these ordinances remained part of the city’s municipal structure. Cholera, in essence, expanded the public health care system and the apparatuses of municipal government concerned with public health. The city physicians and health officers reported to the council nearly every day during the spring and summer of 1849 on the deaths from cholera. These officials suggested a quarantine of both residents who showed signs of cholera and of newly arriving immigrants, where the immigrants could be held for a few days to make sure they were not infected with cholera. Meanwhile, the city also launched plans to establish a city hospital for “indigent cholera victims.”

While the reach of the municipal government in areas of public health had dramatically expanded, another related area had shrunk considerably: the hospital for indigent cholera victims was one of the few measures taken by the council to address poverty in the city. The decline in the city council’s business concerning poverty was concurrent with the expansion of privately funded poor relief and aid societies. In 1850, a number of prominent Chicagoans established the Chicago Relief Society in order to “systematize charity, extended to the needy, and prevent the necessity of common begging.” Ridding the city begging was an important facet of the work of the Relief Society. While a visitor might not see the poorest neighborhoods in the city, beggars in the center of town were considered a nuisance and, as such, were frequently arrested. In other words, the Relief Society was not only helping the poor; the wealthiest Chicagoans formed the organization in order to protect their city.

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Former Mayor James Woodworth chaired the opening meeting of the Relief Society. The members were among the wealthiest and most influential Chicagoans. The Society appointed a number of individuals to “visit and examine carefully the condition of each applicant for charity, and to direct the expenditures and application of whatever aid is bestowed.” The members felt that without proper investigation, the “vicious vagrant” was likely to receive “far more [aid] than the more timid victim of misfortune, who generally suffers long before appealing promiscuously to the public charity.”

So, this was not a wholly benevolent institution: the two biggest concerns of the meeting were assuring that need reached those who they believed truly needed it and reducing begging and vagrancy, not because beggars and vagrants suffered, but because they were a public nuisance.

These native-born wealthy Chicagoans were not the only ones concerned with the plight or potential effects of the poor in the city. Immigrants themselves ran ethnically- or religiously-oriented groups, but these groups tended to focus on helping immigrants before they needed the assistance of the Chicago Relief Society. For example, the Deutsche Gesellschaft von Chicago, the German Aid Society of Chicago, began serving the poor of Chicago in 1854. Chicago’s leading German businessmen, including Henry Greenebaum and Francis Hoffmann, founded and ran the Deutsche Gesellschaft. The Tribune reported that the organization intended “to direct the foreigner on his weary way to his new home,” as well as “to cast the safeguards around him which the longer experience of his countrymen here could provide for him.” The society’s original

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68 Chicago Tribune, December 28, 1850.
constitution did not provide for financial support to be paid directly to immigrants, but rather it laid out plans “to protect him against those harpies who infest our depots and are known as ‘Emigrant Runners,’ and to procure him redress of his grievances.”

During the economic downturn of the late 1850s, however, the society expanded its services “to furnish material aid in a general sense to all the poor of German decent [sic]” in the city. The leading officers donated large sums and organized fundraisers, frequently in the form of picnics, where the sale of refreshments went to support the society. The *Tribune* said of the German Aid Society’s 1858 Fourth of July picnic: “American Germans know how to celebrate the great holiday, and at the same time accomplish a worthy object.” The Fourth of July was a popular picnicking time and therefore served a dual purpose: Germans of Chicago could support their ethnic community while at the same time demonstrating their allegiance to their new homeland.

In 1857, the *Tribune* questioned why Chicago’s Irish were not following the example of the city’s Germans. The article stated that there was “no evidence that the citizens of Irish birth, in Chicago, are following the example of the Germans, and organizing a Relief Society to aid their suffering poor.” The writer claimed that the Irish were, instead, leaving the care of impoverished Irish immigrants to the Catholic church.

While the implication of this statement was that Irish Chicagoans were not doing anything to help other Irishmen and women in Chicago, the truth was quite to the contrary. The *Tribune* had noted that the Irish were leaving relief work to the church; in reality, the Catholic church was synonymous with Irish Chicago by that time. Instead of

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70 *Chicago Tribune*, July 3, 1858. Unfortunately, almost none of the society’s documents from before the 1871 Chicago fire exist.

71 *Chicago Tribune*, July 3, 1858, July 7, 1858.

72 *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1857.
poor relief being managed by wealthy and well-known businessmen, as it was through both the Chicago Relief Society and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*, aid to poor Irish Chicagoans most frequently came from the women religious of Chicago.

The Irish were not ignoring poverty in Chicago; instead, Irish-born Chicagoans were responsible for the first organization wholly dedicated to the care of the poor in the city. The Sisters of Mercy, still in existence today, arrived in the city in 1846 and for nearly a decade were the only community of nuns in Chicago. They were also the primary source of aid for impoverished immigrants in the city. While they did not limit their membership to Irish-born women, for much of the nineteenth century their ranks were heavily, if not entirely, women of Irish birth and descent. The Sisters of Mercy conducted a wide range of services: caring for the sick, educating both children and adults, regardless of religious beliefs, and assisting women in finding employment. By the early 1850s, the Sisters operated Chicago’s first orphanage for Catholic children, as well as the city’s first hospital, which was renamed as Mercy Hospital in their honor in 1851. The Sisters were emblematic of many of the later Catholic aid organizations in the city: they were a local branch of an international organization, bound together by ideology, but largely left to serve the wider community as they saw fit. These women were often Irish immigrants themselves, attending to the needs of other immigrants, Irish or otherwise. While the poor relief measures from Chicago Relief Society and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* were handled by wealthy and often well-known men, the majority of poor relief from Irish Chicagoans came instead from little-known, women religious. Whether it was owing to the Sisters’ religion or their gender, or, perhaps, a bit of both, the *Tribune* overlooked the sizable contribution of Chicago’s Irish in poor relief
measures.\textsuperscript{73}

Although the Sisters of Mercy and other Catholic aid groups likely did as much or even more than the Chicago Relief Society to serve the poor in Chicago, the blindness of the \textit{Tribune} towards the Sisters’ work further highlights that the underlying objective of the Chicago Relief Society was not so much easing the suffering of the poor, but protecting the reputation of Chicago by attempting to erase the visible signs of poverty, disease, and crime. While all of these issues concerned the economic elite of Chicago, the methods of dealing with them over time had changed. In the 1830s and early 1840s, the city’s boosters saw fit to address poverty, crime, and disease like they addressed city infrastructure: it behooved them to support the improvement of the city in all of these areas. By the late 1840s, private individuals and organizations funded local public works projects and poverty relief. Yet public health, especially in terms of communicable disease, was closely attended to by the municipal government, perhaps reflecting the greater risk involved in not properly managing outbreaks of diseases. If the residents of a particular block could not pay to have a new sidewalk or a sewer line, it did not affect those who did not live in or travel to those neighborhoods. But an outbreak of a disease

\textsuperscript{73} Suellen Hoy has explored how the Sisters of Mercy, as well as later communities of Catholic women in Chicago, predated the efforts of Protestant women reformers like Jane Addams by a half century. Yet, they have remained rather unexplored by scholars of the Reform Movement, Catholicism, and feminism. In addition to providing a framework within which later Chicago reformers shaped their own ideas about serving the urban poor, the Sisters of Mercy also reveal an interesting alternative to the narrative of women’s omission from the public sphere in mid-nineteenth century urban life: they often operated independently of male supervision, walked through the city unescorted, purchased and managed property, and engaged in political maneuvering in order to assure the future of their order and their work in the city. Finally, the sisters represent a relatively unexplored motive for emigration: religious and social service. Suellen Hoy, \textit{Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago’s Past} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Suellen Hoy, “The Journey Out: The Recruitment and Emigration of Irish Religious Women to the United States, 1812-1914,” \textit{Journal of Women’s History} 7 no. 1 (Winter 1995): 64.
like cholera could potentially devastate the entire city. This suggests that Einhorn’s
theory of the development of the segmented system is only partially correct. While some
projects were privatized, the leaders of the city seemingly distinguished between those
that they felt should and should not be privatized. Segmentation, then, was applied only
to “local” issues, and not city-wide ones.

Conclusion

Chicago needed workers to build the canal and the railroads, to populate and work
the farmlands, to process the goods of the hinterlands, and to do the work that supported
the city’s population. The socio-economic and political changes that were driving
Europeans from their homelands supplied the workers that Chicago needed. Immigrants
became both the suppliers of the labor that allowed the city to grow and the source of
problems that threatened to derail the plans of Chicago’s economic and political leaders
to make Chicago into the center of North American trade.

Levi Boone, a long-time Chicago resident and a political leader whose personal
wealth depended on the economic growth of the city, encapsulated the conflicted
relationship between immigrants and the city when he said, “A man born in another land,
is just as good as an American, if he knows as much, and behaves as well, and sticks up
for the right principles.” Immigrants were just as good as Americans, but with
qualifiers: they had to act just as Boone assumed Americans acted.

But these were ambiguous terms. What were the “right” principles? What were
the American institutions to which Isaac Milliken claimed Chicago’s immigrants were
“attached” in his 1854 inaugural speech? And what would happen if immigrants

74 Free West, May 17, 1855.
challenged Boone’s and Milliken’s definitions of these values? As Chicago’s immigrant population grew and immigrants began to challenge the dominance of native-born Americans in political, social, and economic circles, the question of what the “right principles” were, was opened to debate. Immigrants demanded to take part in this debate and challenged Boone’s and Milliken’s definitions of what it meant to be a citizen of Chicago.
Chapter Two

The Battle for Lager Beer and the Defeat of Prohibition

On April 21, 1855 protestors clashed with policemen in the streets around City Hall in a violent confrontation that came to be known as the “Lager Beer Riot.” The protestors had marched en masse to the heart of the city that day as about thirty of their comrades were being tried for selling liquor without a license. A month earlier, the city council, led by new mayor Levi Boone and a number of newly elected aldermen, had passed an ordinance that increased the liquor licensing fee from $50 a year to $300 annually, paid in quarterly installments. They also pledged to begin prosecuting violations of a long-ignored ban on selling liquor on Sundays. The substantial licensing increase and the crackdown on Sunday sales was intended to force everyone but the largest liquor distributors, distillers, and brewers out of business. On April 1, licenses began to come up for renewal and city officials began to seek out those who continued to operate without a license. On April 21, thirty businessmen who had been charged with selling liquor without a license awaited the decision of Judge Henry Rucker as their supporters massed outside City Hall where the trial was taking place.¹

Mayor Boone, watching from a second floor window, hastily deputized citizens to act as a police force and sent them out to disperse the crowd. Fist fights and general melee ensued and a number of men fired shots at one another. One police officer, George Hunt, was shot in the arm and one protestor, a shoemaker named Peter Mertens, was shot in the back as he fled. Hunt’s arm was later amputated and Mertens died in jail later that

¹ Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1855; Free West, April 26, 1855; New York Times, April 24, 1855, April 26, 1855.
week. The mayor called on three of the city’s militia regiments to restore order as
protestors were arrested for causing a riot.²

Boone and a number of the newly elected aldermen were supposedly part of the
Know Nothing party, which had won a number of political contests in 1855. The Know
Nothings, part secret fraternity and part political organization, were named by their
opposition due to their tendency to reply that they “knew nothing” when asked about the
existence of their organization. Sometimes also referred to as the American Party and, in
Chicago, the Law and Order Party, the Know Nothings generally supported temperance
or prohibition and pledged to remove immigrants, and especially Catholics, from
government positions, both elected and appointed.³

² Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1855; Free West, April 26, 1855; New York Times, April 24, 1855,
April 26, 1855.
³ Richard Wilson Renner’s article, “In a Perfect Ferment: Chicago, the Know-Nothings, and the
Riot for Lager Beer,” argues that temperance bonded the anti-Catholic and anti-foreign elements
into the Know Nothing Party, while Thomas M. Keefe’s “Chicago’s Flirtation with Political
Nativism, 1854-1856” argues that anti-Catholicism was the lynch pin of the Know Nothings’
triumph. Other authors have seen in the Lager Beer Riot something other than the issue of the
Know Nothings’ rise and fall. Rudolf A. Hofmeister, in his 1976 work on the Germans of
Chicago, paints the Lager Beer Riot as the reaction of the city’s Germans to the hostilities of
nativism and also the politically unifying moment for the city’s brewers, a force untrammeled
until the twentieth century passage of national prohibition. Richard C. Lindberg traces the origins
of the modern Chicago police force to Mayor Levi Boone’s changes to policing during and after
the Lager Beer incident. Finally, Robin Einhorn argues that the Lager Beer Riot is evidence of
Chicagoans’ rejection of city government as a “policy-making institution” and a rejection of the
formation of a homogeneous city-wide definition and standard of the public good. Unfortunately,
Hofmeister’s book and Renner’s article are both bereft of citations and many of the other studies
which use the Lager Beer Riot as an illuminating event, including Lindberg’s and Einhorn’s, use
the previous two works as the foundation of the information on the riot itself. Rudolf Hofmeister,
Robin Einhorn, Property Rules: Political Economy in Chicago, 1833-1872 (Chicago: The
University of Chicago Press, 1991), 144, 153-169; Richard C. Lindberg, To Serve and Collect:
Chicago Police and Police Corruption from the Lager Beer Riot to the Summerdale Scandal,
1855-1960 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 1-12; Richard Wilson Renner,
“In a Perfect Ferment: Chicago, the Know-Nothings, and the Riot for Lager Beer,” Chicago
History 5 (1976): 161-170; Thomas M. Keefe, “Chicago’s Flirtation with Political Nativism,
But the important part of what the Know Nothings stood for was not what everyone knew – their general support for anti-immigrant and anti-liquor policies – but, as their name indicates, what people did not know about their politics: their stance on slavery. When Illinois’ leading Democrat, Stephen Douglas, authored and passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in Congress, anti-slavery northern Whigs were compelled to leave their party and the Democratic party split between those who supported Douglas and those who did not.\(^4\) The Know Nothings, at this point, were little more than a fringe political group. But since they advocated anti-liquor and anti-immigrant positions, they were attractive to disenchanted Whigs and to some anti-slavery Democrats. As Tyler Anbinder explains, “the belief that the Know Nothings would provide an anti-liquor, anti-slavery alternative to the Whig and Democratic parties transformed the Know Nothings from a small fraternal organization to a political party of national importance.”\(^5\) But in

\(^4\) The Act opened the lands that would eventually become the states of Kansas and Nebraska to settlers. Originally, the areas that would become Kansas and Nebraska were intended to be one single territory. Would the new territory allow or forbid slavery? Since 1820, the balance between the numbers of slave states and free states had been carefully guarded so that neither side could gain the upper hand at the national level. The Missouri Compromise (1820) had established that slavery would be outlawed in any new territories north of the parallel 36°30,” excepting the new state of Missouri, that is almost entirely north of the 36°30” parallel. Missouri, accepted as a slave state, was balanced by the admission of Maine as a free state. The proposed Nebraska territory was north of 36°30” and its acceptance as a free territory and its potential future admission as a free state would have upset the balance of slave and free states. Douglas amended the bill and divided the land into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska. More importantly, the revised bill included popular sovereignty: white male residents of the territories would vote to determine whether or not their territory would allow or forbid slavery. This version of the bill was supported by a vast majority of the congressmen from slave states. The votes from free states were split. Northern Whig politicians almost all rejected the bill. However, the Democrats divided. About half supported Douglas and the bill. Many of them believed that this appeal to popular sovereignty was the only way to preserve the Union. The other half broke from the Douglas Democrats and voted with the Whigs. Many of these Democrats were opposed to the potential expansion of slavery in the west because they believed it would undercut the labor market, since slaves would do the work that would otherwise be done by free laborers. Their opposition was not enough to stop passage of the bill. The Kansas-Nebraska Act became law in May 1854.

\(^5\) Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 43.
late 1855, the Know Nothings equivocated on their stance on the extension of slavery at
their national convention, causing those in the party who were firmly opposed to the
extension of slavery to leave the party for the Republican party.6

Two contemporary claims have remained in the historical record, unexamined.
The first is that the newspapers at the time, as well as Boone and his followers, portrayed
the men and women who participated in the Lager Beer Riot as lawless, violent, drunken
immigrants whose rage was nearly spontaneous and unexplainable. Secondly,
contemporaries claimed that immigrants, and specifically those in the immigrant-heavy
seventh ward, had falsified the ballot during the June vote on statewide prohibition in
favor of anti-prohibition. This chapter demonstrates that, on the contrary, the
demonstration on the day of the liquor law trials was attended by mostly small business
owners and their supporters who had waged over a month-long, non-violent protest
against the changes to liquor laws and their enforcement.7 Secondly, this chapter

6 Anbinder, Nativism and Slavery, xiii. See also Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men,
especially chapter 7, “The Republicans and Nativism.” Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men:
The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press,
1995).
7 Several sources are available to the historian, including three signed petitions in the common
council archives, the names of those fined for violating either the Sunday closing law or for
operating a saloon without a license during April and May 1855, and the names printed in the
Chicago Tribune and the New York Times of those arrested after the conflict. An analysis of these
sources for the present study resulted in a list of 263 unique names of people involved in
protesting, in one way or another, the city’s liquor law changes in the spring of 1855. Their names
were referenced with city business directories and the federal census to establish occupations,
home and work addresses, place of birth, and, when applicable, year of immigration, for as many
of these individuals as possible. See appendices O, P, Q, and R. The sources of the names of the
petitioners and the names of the people fined or arrested for violating liquor ordinances or
participating in the Lager Beer Riot were: Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871,
Archives, Northeastern Illinois University Depository; Chicago Tribune, April 4, 1855, April 9,
1855, April 10, 1855, April 11, 1855, April 14, 1855, April 15, 1855, April 23, 1855, April 24,
1855, May 2, 1855, May 5, 1855, May 11, 1855, May 14, 1855, May 15, 1855, May 28, 1855,
demonstrates that contemporaries had no proof but the outcome of the vote in June on
prohibition that there was tampering at the polls. In fact, when the outcome of the vote is
examined by ward in its historical context, it more closely reflects the changing national
political scene combined with the liquor issue than it would reflect vote tampering. In
other words, this chapter argues that foreign-born Chicagoans were able to reject some of
the nativists’ key platforms – anti-liquor and anti-immigrant – while still taking part in
the massive political transformation that found many immigrant Democrats becoming
Republicans near the end of the 1850s.

Temperance, Immigrants, and Nativists in Chicago, 1840s-1855

The laws passed by the city council in the spring of 1855 were part of a larger
temperance movement. The first temperance organization in the city was the Chicago
Temperance Society, founded in 1833. Temperance was also a point of comment in many
mayors’ inaugural addresses from 1842 onward. Benjamin Raymond, mayor of the city in
1842, attributed the “decided and marked improvement in the morals and peace of [the]
city” to the efforts of the Washington Temperance Society. The following year, Mayor Augustus Garrett claimed that there was not a single episode of intemperance at the polls, thanks to “the efforts of the Catholic Temperance and Washingtonian Societies.” As in other places around the nation, temperance meetings and groups were often associated with local churches and offered an opportunity for women to publicly advocate for a moral and political cause.

Temperance, as well as complete prohibition, was gaining popularity throughout the nation. The first statewide ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol was passed by Maine in 1851 and the next four years, a number of other states followed – or attempted to follow – suit. Illinois, like many other states, passed (and, in the case of Illinois, repealed) temperance and prohibitory statutes in the early 1850s. By the mid-1850s, the temperance and prohibition movements were gaining steam. The Sons of Temperance held their national meeting in Chicago in June 1853, drawing leadership from as far away as Canada and South Carolina, as well as Indiana, Michigan, and Iowa. Later that year, the Maine Law State Convention was held in Chicago for the purposes of building

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10 Chicago Tribune, December 25, 1852, September 8, 1853, September 10, 1853, September 20, 1853, September 29, 1853, October 5, 1853.
11 Illinois had passed a law in 1851 which had banned the sale of alcohol in amounts less than one quart, forbade consumption in the same place where liquor was sold, and prohibited sale to anyone under 18. The law was repealed in 1853. “An Act to Prohibit the Retailing of Intoxicating Drinks,” General Laws of the State of Illinois Passed by the Seventeenth General Assembly (Springfield: Lanphier and Walker, Printers, 1851), 18-19. For more on temperance and prohibition in these years, see Ian Tyrrell, Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979).
12 Chicago Tribune, May 25, 1853, May 27, 1853, June 10, 1853.
support for “a strong prohibitory liquor law.” The Tribune invited leaders of all “religious societies and orders, orthodox and heterodox” to work together for temperance. The article took special pains to acknowledge the common Christianity of Catholics and Protestants and to note that temperance could join them together.¹³

Temperance advocates believed that alcohol was the primary source of criminal behavior. For instance, Zebina Eastman wrote in the pages of his Chicago newspaper, the Free West, that “there is not a crime which blackens our calendar, or a vice which festers on the popular heart, that rum has not something to do with.” “The liquor trade,” he declared, “results only in misery, pauperism, crime and death.”¹⁴ Eastman’s temperance articles often presented immigrants as the primary source of intemperance in the city. For instance, the Free West related a story about an argument between a “Maine Law Man” and a “Son of Erin” in December 1853. The Irishman was depicted as ruined by drink and as a nuisance to society.¹⁵

Eastman was not the only newspaper editor to note the crimes of drunken immigrants. Bookseller W.W. Danenhower used the pages of his weekly Literary Budget to speak against intemperance among Chicago’s immigrants. Danenhower noted that

¹³ Chicago Tribune, November 23, 1853.
¹⁴ The Free West regularly covered the activities of the Maine Law Societies not only in Illinois, but also throughout the nation. Eastman believed that America had a mission to prepare the world for the second coming of the Christian Messiah. Eastman believed that an important step was to purge alcohol from the world, as well as to complete abolition slavery. Free West, December 1, 1853, March 1, 1855, March 8, 1855, March 15, 1855.
¹⁵ Maine Law Societies were named after the 1851 law passed in the state of Maine which forbid the sale of alcohol. Despite its fervent anti-alcohol stance, the Free West also regularly ran ads for fresh hops and listed their market prices alongside other products such as wheat, flour, tallow, hay, hides, and lumber. Free West, December 8, 1853.
most of the 675 saloons in Chicago were owned by foreigners.\textsuperscript{16} His paper also printed statistics about pauperism in Massachusetts, reporting that 16,034 of the state’s 26,414 paupers “were probably made so by intemperance” and that 11,874 of those were foreign born, almost all from Ireland.\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{ Literary Budget} also published articles about what the paper claimed were crimes due to intemperance and the culprit was almost always an Irishman. For instance, the paper related the story of John Collins, who had murdered his wife after supposedly drinking too much rum.\textsuperscript{18} Danenhower also published stories about peaceful non-Catholic Irishmen being beaten by drunken Irish Catholics.\textsuperscript{19}

Statistics show that city leaders’ concerns that Irish and German immigrants were making up the bulk of criminal offenses – many for public intoxication – were not entirely fabrications of overactive nativist minds. The Bridewell records of arrests for 1855 show that an overwhelming majority of arrests were for drunken behavior and a majority of those arrested bore Irish or German names.\textsuperscript{20} Whether this mean that drunkenness was truly the most common crime in Chicago at the time, or merely that it was the crime that was most often prosecuted, these records reveal that Irish and German

\textsuperscript{16} William W. Danenhower joined the American Party, the precursor to the Know-Nothings, in 1845. Danenhower was the President of the Illinois State Know-Nothing Council between 1854 and 1856 and he published the Chicago \textit{ Literary Budget} and the \textit{Weekly Native Citizen}, which became the city’s primary sources for nativist commentary in the 1850s. Danenhower was also a close friend of Mayor Levi Boone and was the 1855 captain of the National Guards, one of the first militias Boone called to the Lager Beer Riot. \textit{Free West}, December 15, 1853; \textit{ Chicago Literary Budget}, April 1, 1854; May 13, 1854; \textit{Chicago Tribune}, July 13, 1855; Keefe, “Chicago’s Flirtation with Political Nativism,” 137.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{ Chicago Literary Budget}, February 25, 1854.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ Chicago Literary Budget}, March 18, 1854.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{ Chicago Literary Budget}, August 19, 1854.

immigrants or their descendants were drunk in public – or were perceived of being so – and were arrested more frequently than their native-born fellow-citizens.

Aside from the crimes of drunken immigrants, city leaders feared the effect of alcohol on the ability of immigrants to be good workers. Danenhower often urged immigrants to be hard workers in the same articles in which he addressed intemperance. He implored immigrants to “work – work – anything, everything” because, he explained, “he who works, if his work should be but a hedge or a ditch, is worthy of respect.” Temperance men like Danenhower believed that crime and lack of industrious work were two of the unfortunate outcomes of combining immigrants and alcohol.

The Tribune joined the likes of Eastman and Danenhower to highlight what they believed was the most dangerous aspect of drunken immigrants: destruction of the basic functions of democracy. The Tribune referred to drunken Irishmen as “bad men” who, the paper claimed, were more prevalent in Chicago than other cities and were therefore threatening the future of the city. The paper cited a drunken riot caused by inebriated Irishmen the month before the 1855 mayoral election. It claimed that the fighters were drunk off liquor purchased from Owen McCarthy, the justice of the peace for the north side. The paper pointed to Mayor Milliken, claiming he brushed off the event because he was afraid that the “whiskey paper” in town, the Chicago Times, as well as the city’s Irish population, would no longer support him politically. The Tribune argued that “every vote given for Milliken” – Boone’s opponent – was “a vote given for Whiskey, for

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21 Chicago Literary Budget, May 13, 1854; Weekly Native Citizen, March 1, 1856; Chicago Literary Budget, May 27, 1854; Chicago Literary Budget, February 25, 1854, March 18, 1854, April 1, 1854, May 13, 1854, August 19, 1854; Keefe, “Chicago’s Flirtation with Political Nativism,” 133; Renner, “In a Perfect Ferment,” 163.

22 Keefe, “Chicago’s Flirtation with Political Nativism,” 139.

23 Chicago Tribune, February 3, 1855.
Jesuitism, for Irish rule, for crime and pauperism, and for the ruin of Chicago.” The Times retaliated by claiming that the Tribune’s message was biased. Nonetheless, the purpose of the Tribune’s analysis of the mayoral election was designed to convince its readers that drunkenness was creating criminals and that Milliken, the supposed “whiskey candidate,” was doing nothing to stop Chicago from sliding into ruin. The Tribune described the problem not as too many immigrants, but as too many drinkers who ruled politics and contributed to crime and poverty. The inevitable end point, according to the Tribune, was the destruction of the city.

In January 1855 the Illinois State Legislature passed a bill which, had it been accepted by the people, would have imposed prohibition on the state. The bill was set for a statewide vote at the beginning of June 1855 and temperance supporters as well as anti-temperance advocates were rallying their troops as the city election in March 1855 approached. A few days before the 1855 Chicago mayoral election, temperance advocates met “for the purposes of conferring in regard to the political duties of temperance men, and more especially relative to the approaching municipal election.” H.S. Jennings, a member of the Know-Nothing Party who would later become the party’s state secretary, was appointed Chairman of the various temperance organizations, although he himself was not a teetotaler. The meeting produced resolutions, printed in the Tribune, that stated “a prohibitory law is the first and main objective for Temperance

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24 Chicago Tribune, March 5, 1885.
25 Chicago Times, February 2, 1855, February 8, 1855.
men to labor for” and that this rule should lead the men in their municipal voting selections.26

The Tribune accused the current mayor, Isaac Milliken, who was running for reelection, of “keeping open from three to five hundred Irish and German drinking saloons, every Sabbath the past year.” The paper further claimed that Milliken, who was heavily supported by the Irish and German voters, “during his whole time in office, [had] shown a decided preference for drunken Irishmen for city officers.” The paper implored readers to consider the “importance of securing an efficient Common Council” for the city in the upcoming election.27 Later in the month, the Tribune featured a letter to the editor acknowledging that the “American Party” seemed to be in ascendance in the city. The writer claimed that the city was “overrun by Foreign-groggeries,…and all our riots, fights, etc., are in nine cases out of ten originally commenced by Foreigners and through the effects of their liquor.”28 Boone was nominated by the American Party, which was also know as the “Law, Order, Temperance and Morality” party in the local papers.29 After the election the Tribune gleefully reported the triumph of the American Party candidates for mayor, city treasurer, collector, attorney, surveyor, and police justice and noted that they were all “advocates of the Prohibitory Liquor Law.” The Tribune hoped that the election would have a “salutary effect upon the foreign population of the city.”30

In Chicago, newspapers were either for or against the American Party. Boone and other party members received support from the Free West, the Literary Budget, and the

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26 Chicago Tribune, March 2, 1855.
27 Chicago Tribune, February 6, 1855. See also Chicago Tribune, February 27, 1855.
28 Chicago Tribune, February 15, 1855.
29 Chicago Tribune, March 7, 1855.
30 Chicago Tribune, March 8, 1855, February 8, 1855, February 10, 1855, February 12, 1855, February 13, 1855.
but were opposed by the Chicago Times, the Chicago Journal, and the 2 Democratic Press.31 The Free West acknowledged that Boone had been elected “under the banner of Americanism” but reminded its readers that Boone was “indefatigable in his efforts to reform and purge the city from the multitude of evils and vicious practices which have heretofore had too free a license.”32 In other words, “Americanism” did not simply mean he was pro-native born; rather, Americanism – and the American Party itself – brought together a number of different causes under one banner, as it did in other towns throughout the United States, in order to garner a large enough proportion of the vote to win.

Boone beat incumbent Milliken for the mayoral seat by only about 350 votes, winning a little over 50% of the vote.33 In his inaugural address, he focused on temperance. Boone started by reminding the crowd that he had “been decidedly opposed to licensing any body to sell intoxicating liquors” for “many years.”34 He acknowledged, however, that the city might find this measure too extreme, and he was willing to settle for raising the license fee from $50 annually to $25 quarterly.35 Boone claimed that

31 The Tribune published the names of the candidates, which had been selected in secret, on the day of the election. Chicago Tribune, March 6, 1855.
32 Free West, April 26, 1855.
33 Chicago Tribune, March 7, 1855, March 8, 1855.
35 The result was not only a six-fold increase in the fee annually, but forcing saloon owners to renew their licenses quarterly instead of annually gave the city council more opportunities to reject license applications and to cut down on the number of licenses offered overall. Boone may have backed down from a stance of complete prohibition for fiscal, as well as pro-liquor lobby, reasons. As Mayor James Curtiss had acknowledged in his 1850 inaugural address, “grocery licenses,” the licenses issued to sellers of alcohol, brought in huge sums of money to the city treasury. Having served on the Common Council, Boone knew that his mayorship would be plagued by financial difficulty. In an effort to cut costs, he even refused to use city funds to purchase badges and canes for the aldermen, which was standard practice. The city simply could
raising the licensing fee in the city in April was acting in anticipation of the June vote on prohibition, which he assumed would be approved by the voters. Boone and his cohort of new councilmen planned for April’s licensing fee increase to force most smaller saloons out of business by June, therefore making enforcement of complete prohibition a much easier affair.36

Years later, Boone would claim that he passed the increased fee in anticipation of the passage of statewide prohibition in June. He assumed the increased fee would be impossible for most smaller saloons to pay and that forcing them to renew their license more frequently would cause them to close prior to the June vote. Then, when prohibition passed, he planned that there would be fewer saloons to close. He claimed to pursue this course in order to help Germans and the society as a whole: “appreciating that an abrupt passage from unlimited beer to no beer would be a trial that no well-regulated Teuton could undergo with equanimity,” he determined that “for the good of the community to smooth the way by degrees” would make the transition calm and peaceful. Quite to the contrary, as he admitted years later, the “saloon element…regarded the ordinance in the light of oppression and nothing else, and banded together to defeat its object.”37

**Democratic Participation: Peaceful Assembly and Petitioning**

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36 *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 1855; Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 1 614-616.

37 Andreas, vol. 1, 615.
Local saloon owners and boarding house keepers sprang into action as soon as the new ordinance was passed. The first sign of organized opposition to the new licensing fee appeared in the form of large meetings and petitions sent to the common council asking for changes to the licensing fee. On April 1, less than a week after the council had voted to increase the licensing fee, there was a well-attended anti-prohibition meeting at Weinmann’s Hall. Weinmann himself was a large-scale wine distributor and he also owned a hall that served alcohol to patrons. At the meeting at Weinmann’s, the participants selected representatives from throughout the city to circulate petitions among their neighbors. These petitions, all of which had the same text, asked the city council to lower the licensing fee back to its original rate of $50 annually. On April 2, the city council received another petition, signed by fourteen men, requesting that one particular saloon owner, Edward Steinbrecher, be granted an exemption from the licensing fee increase. The council received these petitions, voted on each one individually, and denied the request of each.

Even though the petitions did not achieve their desired effects, the signatures give us a glimpse into the types of people who were coming together to oppose the licensing fee increase. The men who signed these petitions were generally middle-aged businessmen, many with families for whom the business was either the main or the only form of income. The signatories came from every ward in the city and, although the majority of them were German, there were a number of Irish petitioners as well. These petitions represented the first effort of Chicagoans to protect their personal economic

38 Chicago Tribune, April 1, 1855.
39 For complete transcriptions of these petitions, see Appendices O and P.
40 See Appendix Q.
interests as business owners by reaching out to their neighbors of different classes and ethnicities throughout the city to challenge the common council’s decision.

The petitions appealed to the council on the basis of the importance of saloonkeepers’ businesses to their families’ economic independence. The first petition the common council received was the one written on behalf of Edward Steinbrecher. The author of the petition wrote that Steinbrecher had recently lost both his feet in a railroad accident and that his saloon was the sole support for his wife, two small children, and himself. The author noted that Steinbrecher’s saloon was small and that he “always kept a decent and respectable house.” As “the expenses incurred by [Steinbrecher] in being cured and procuring artificial legs” had left him “pennyless and poor,” the petitioners requested that the council waive the increased licensing fee for Steinbrecher, so that he might continue to support his family. The document emphasized Steinbrecher’s respectability and the extent to which his family relied upon his business as their sole means of support.41

The other petitions that the council received also focused on the economic necessity of the petitioners’ businesses. At the meeting at Weinmann’s Hall, the participants formulated a plan to create and circulate petitions throughout the city requesting the council roll back the licensing fee across the board.42 The petitions stated that the owners of saloons and taverns had generally invested the “greater portion of their property” in those businesses. They also claimed that the signatories could not “afford to pay the increased rate of License contemplated by the recent ordinance” and that, if they

42 Chicago Tribune, April 1, 1855.
could not pay and were “driven now suddenly to close up” their businesses, a “great
many of them will be totally ruined.” If the new licensing fee would have left many
families without means to support themselves, the ranks of the impoverished men,
women, and children in the city would grow. Next to temperance, poverty was one of the
city leaders’ biggest concerns.\textsuperscript{43}

Although the petitions claimed that they were signed by saloon and tavern
owners, only about 50\% of the signatories ran saloons or boarding houses. Another 25\%
of the signatories were engaged in other businesses that sold liquor but would not be
affected by the raised licensing fee.\textsuperscript{44} The host of the meeting that produced these
petitions, John Weinmann was one of these businessmen. Weinmann was a liquor dealer
who specialized in imported wines from the Rhine Valley. Weinmann and his partner,
J.F. Wegner, also owned a large wine cellar not far from their retail store. Other
signatories whose businesses would be impacted by the licensing fee or the prohibition
included grocers, wholesale liquor dealers, hotel owners, and restaurant employees.
While the licensing fee may not have directly affected about half of the signatories,
hearing from Mayor Boone that the licensing fee increase was merely a small step
towards the supposed inevitable passage of the prohibitory law in June may have spurred
these businesspeople into action.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871, CP 1855/56, Document 0150A; Illinois
State Archives, Northeastern Illinois University Depository.
\textsuperscript{44} Another approximately 25\% were in professions unrelated to the sale, production, distribution,
or importation of liquor.
\textsuperscript{45} Another two men who signed the petition, Martin Barth and Johann Thomas, lived together at
Barth’s brother’s boarding house. The remaining ten identified signatories were mostly skilled
workers: a butcher, a shirt manufacturer, a confectioner, a carpenter, a piano maker, a tailor, a
shoemaker, and one laborer. Conrad Niehoff, who was elected as an alderman for the eighth ward
in 1856, signed the petition on behalf of himself and his business by adding “and Co” after his
More than simply keeping their businesses afloat, these men were likely concerned about their ability to support their families. Like most business owners, the petitioners used their business to support not just themselves, but their families as well. The average age of the 13 petitioners for whom we have ages was 35. The youngest was 27 and the eldest was 45. Over half of those for whom age could be established were married with at least one child by the spring of 1856. In other words, these businesses were not merely soaking the city in alcohol; they were supporting families. A threat to these men’s businesses was a threat to their ability to take care of their families.46

It appears that the organizers of the meeting at Weinmann’s orchestrated the distribution of the petitions throughout the city in order to gain as much support as possible, in all wards, and among both foreign and native born Chicagoans. Four representatives were selected from each of the three districts of the city – north, west, and south – to circulate the petitions in their districts. Since common council members were elected by ward and not at large, the greater support for the cause a particular ward or district could demonstrate, the more likely the councilmember would be to listen. Further, each group of four district representatives consisted of two Germans and two native-born representatives; the petitions therefore could be brought to both German and English-speakers in each district. Especially since the vast majority of those at Weinmann’s were foreign-born, selecting native-born English-speakers as half of the petition signature. Niehoff was a successful banker and real estate dealer who had come to the United States from Prussia with his brother sometime before 1850. Since laborers were less frequently (although not entirely uncommonly) listed in the city business directory, it is certainly possible that the remaining signatories were laborers. But since the petitions indicated that the signers were saloon and tavern owners, it is likely that the list was in fact dominated by those with direct interest in the liquor business. 46 See Appendix Q.
representatives seems to indicate a purposeful choice to reach as broad a population as possible.\(^{47}\)

The Steinbrecher petition bears similar marks of the thoughtful leadership of the anti-licensing fee movement. Certainly, because of his injury, Steinbrecher’s situation presented itself as an exemplary trial case of the new licensing fee: if the council were willing to threaten the business of a respectable, quiet, family man who had recently suffered a nearly incapacitating injury, the council would have pity on no one. However, Steinbrecher was a good choice for other reasons as well. Steinbrecher’s saloon was on Randolph Street, a busy thoroughfare of the city and the dividing line between the fifth and sixth wards. Steinbrecher’s regular customers therefore likely came from at least two different wards, allowing the anti-licensing fee forces to rally constituents of more than one alderman.\(^{48}\)

The ethnicities, professions, and home addresses of the men who signed the Steinbrecher petition also seem to reflect a conscious effort to draw as wide support as possible. Two signatories, William Bruns, a shirt maker, and Jospeh Tritch, a tinsmith, both German-born, lived almost a mile apart from one another, and neither were particularly close to Steinbrecher’s saloon. Bruns lived in the north division of the city, and Tritch lived in the south division. Two other signatories, John Dempsey and Owen McCarthy, diversified the supporters of Steinbrecher’s petition even further. Firstly, both men were Irish born. Dempsey was a boarding house keeper and the tax collector for the seventh ward. Owen McCarthy, a grocer, was the justice of the peace for the eighth ward.

\(^{47}\) *Chicago Tribune*, April 1, 1855.

\(^{48}\) Addresses obtained from the 1855 City Directory.
As tax collector and justice of the peace, these men would have already been well known in their respective wards, as their positions required that they know their constituencies personally. They would have been able to bring widespread support to the anti-licensing fee movement from their wards.\textsuperscript{49}

Taken as a group, these petitions and those who signed them reveal a movement that transcended ward boundaries, language differences, ethnic affiliations, and professions. This was not a small or unorganized group of lager beer lovers. It was, instead, businessmen and their neighbors who believed that their ability to support their families was as important as what Mayor Boone and the common council members believed was important for the city. The notion that those who were not the economic elite of the city could possibly understand, let alone have a say in what was best for an antebellum city, was anathema to the elite. It is no surprise, then, that despite the widespread and active anti-licensing fee movement, the common council rejected all requests to have the licensing fee lowered to its previous amount.

Despite the common council’s commitment to the new licensing fee, the anti-prohibition movement continued to gain steam and held public rallies throughout April and May. Anti-temperance speakers did more than enflame the passions of their listeners. They gave specific directions about how to oppose the city’s liquor laws: “pay no more licenses,” one speaker instructed his audience. He explained that if they were then fined for selling without a license, the case could be brought to court. The speaker said that once the cases were brought to trial the anti-prohibition forces would “carry [the issue]}

\textsuperscript{49} Addresses obtained from the 1855 City Directory.
from court to court, and...appeal it at last to the Supreme Court.” About sixty people were brought to trial for selling liquor without a license or selling liquor on a Sunday during April and May of 1855. But this was far more than ignorant immigrants disrespectfully disobeying the laws of the city as the temperance advocates portrayed them; it was a calculated movement which planned to used the judicial system to effect change in a democratic society.

**Democratic Participation: Using the Judicial System**

Most of the defendants in liquor ordinance trials in April were boarding house keepers who were accused of selling liquor on Sundays. The numbers of people fined for selling alcohol on Sundays or for selling liquor without a license rose throughout April. The law forbidding the sale of liquor on Sundays had long been ignored. When the council changed the licensing fee, Mayor Boone also announced that the Sunday closing law would now be enforced. So while this law had not changed, as the licensing fee had, the execution of the law changed and fines for selling liquor on Sundays became even more numerous than fines for selling liquor without a license during the course of April 1855. Boarding house keepers felt that the Sunday closing law did not apply to them, as they served alcohol only to those who boarded with them, and not to the general public like a saloon would. For instance, John Gross, a saloon and boarding house owner was tried in April for selling liquor every Sunday since mid-March. The defense admitted that Gross had served liquor on these Sundays but argued that the men who were drinking

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50 *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 1855.
51 See Appendix S.
were boarders, and not the general public. Therefore, the defense concluded, since the boarders lived at the house, it was their right to drink when they chose, just as any person could choose to drink in their own home. Additionally, if the boarders were served on Sunday but not charged on their room bill until Monday, the alcohol had technically not been sold on Sunday. According to this logic, Gross and other boarding house keepers could not be found guilty of violating the Sunday closing law.52

During the course of the trial, the Tribune argued that making an exception to the laws for boarding houses would cause the Sunday closing law to become entirely moot. The Tribune argued that anyone wanting “to get as much liquor as he wanted” merely had to register as a boarder at a particular place. The drinker need not actually move his abode to a boarding house; he only needed to be charged as a boarder in order to be served alcohol on Sundays. It followed that if a complete prohibition on selling liquor were passed, boarding house keepers could still evade the law: if people could drink in their homes, and boarders lived at boarding houses, they could drink there. The paper reasoned that even small saloons could then convert to boarding houses and anyone wanting a beverage had only to register as a boarder to get one. This, the paper concluded, defeated the entire purpose of the liquor ordinances, which was to force smaller saloons out of business before the June vote on prohibition.53

Judge Henry Rucker, who heard the majority of the liquor ordinance cases, agreed with the Tribune: he found that the “spirit of the ordinance” was against selling liquor to boarders on Sundays. As a result, John Gross was fined $10. The prosecuting attorney,

52 Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1855.
53 Chicago Tribune, April 5, 1855.
John Thompson, noted that as more violations of the Sunday closing law were brought to court, “more and more technicalities” were being raised. But instead of seeing this as evidence that the law itself was flawed, Thompson concluded John Gross’s case was “as clear a case of the violation of the Ordinance [as any other case].” Thompson saw no difference between the cases involving saloon owners and the cases of boarding house owners. Therefore, the Gross case demonstrated that the liquor ordinances were not applicable only to the saloons they originally claimed to target, but to a wider range of businesses that involved the sale of liquor. The cases tried in April and May included seven saloon or restaurant owners, six grocers, and twelve boarding house or hotel keepers.\(^{54}\)

Had Judge Rucker agreed with the defense, the Sunday closing law would have been almost impossible to enforce, as the *Tribune* had pointed out. But the liquor licensing law was also threatened by the appearance in court of those who were accused of selling without a license. When these cases came to trial, almost all of the defendants were represented by Patrick Ballingall, one of the most well-known attorneys in the city. Ballingall launched a defense unexpected by the city officials. Instead of arguing that the defendants were innocent of selling liquor without a license or on a Sunday, he argued that the laws were unjust and therefore the people accused of breaking them should be acquitted. If Ballingall could secure an acquittal on this basis, it would not only absolve

\(^{54}\) In addition to one liquor dealer and one brewer, the specific businesses of thirty-three of those charged with violating one of the liquor ordinances could not be determined. Since a boarding house could have had one boarder or dozens, saloons often doubled as boarding house, and vice versa. *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 1855.
the defendants of their supposed crimes; it would make the laws they were accused of breaking all together obsolete.\textsuperscript{55}

Ballingall admitted that his clients had, in fact, sold liquor without a license. But he argued that, according to the Illinois State Constitution, the city did not have a right to issue liquor licenses at all and therefore the cases should all be dismissed. A few months earlier, in January 1855, the Illinois state legislature had passed “An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance.” Section thirty-six of the state law declared that “all laws authorizing the issuing or granting to sell spirituous or intoxicating or mixed liquors shall be repealed from and after the date of the passage of this act.” Ballingall rested his case on this section of the law, arguing that the city’s liquor licensing requirements were trumped by section thirty-six: the city should not have been issuing licenses. If the licenses were not legally allowed, then the defendants could not have broken the law.\textsuperscript{56}

This seems a solid defense, but the Act for the Suppression of Intemperance was intended to precede the passage of prohibition in June. In other words, when the legislature passed the act, they were writing a law ahead of time: section thirty-six was only enforceable once prohibition took effect. Sections thirty-nine and forty clarified this

\textsuperscript{55} In January 1855, the Illinois state legislature had passed “An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance.” Section thirty-six of the state law declared that “all laws authorizing the issuing or granting to sell spirituous or intoxicating or mixed liquors shall be repealed from and after the date of the passage of this act.” Ballingall rested his case on this section of the law and argued that the city had no legal authority to issue liquor licenses. But sections thirty-nine and forty declared that the law would not go into effect until July 1, 1855; and would only then go into effect if the June 1 vote for a prohibitory law was struck down. Furthermore, section thirty-six also stated that all prosecutions started before the law went into effect would be “carried on to final judgment and execution as if this act had not…been passed.” Ballingall’s defense failed and, with the exception of a handful of Sunday cases that were dismissed due to lack of evidence, the fines were imposed upon the sellers. “Laws of the State of Illinois Passed by the Nineteenth General Assembly, Convened January 1, 1855” (Springfield: Lanphier and Walker, Printers, 1855), 29-30; Chicago Tribune, April 14, 1855.

\textsuperscript{56} Chicago Tribune April 5, 1855, April 14, 1855.
point, declaring that the entire act would not go into effect until July 1, 1855, and would only then go into effect if the June 1 vote for the prohibition law passed. Even more to the point, section thirty-six also stated that all prosecutions started before the law went into effect on July 1 were to be “carried on to final judgment and execution as if this act had not...been passed.” Therefore, Judge Rucker’s ruling against the defendants was supported both by local and state laws. With the exception of a handful of Sunday cases that were dismissed due to lack of evidence, the defendants in the liquor cases were found guilty and were fined accordingly.57

Nonetheless, cases continued to mount throughout April and the court became so bogged down with liquor violations that the judges decided to try only one case and to let the ruling stand for about thirty other offenders. Augustus Baeumer, whose saloon on Randolph street was only a few blocks from Steinbrecher’s, was being tried for selling liquor without a license.58 Since the ruling on Baeumer’s case would also be the ruling for over two-dozen other cases, the date of the trial was preceded by intense activity on the part of the anti-prohibition movement. About a week before the trial, a rally was held in support of the defendants and of the anti-prohibition movement in general. One speaker invited his listeners to join him at city hall for the trial, even though, he said, the courtroom would not “begin to contain the ten thousands” of supporters of the defendants. But he warned the crowd to remain calm: “don’t you go and do something now,” he admonished them. Foreshadowing the events of the next week, the speaker

57 Chicago Tribune, April 14, 1855.
58 Baeumer’s last name appears in a variety of forms: Baer, Baur, Bauman, and Baumann. All other spellings were located in the newspapers while “Baeumer” appeared in the 1855 city business directory. Since Baeumer himself likely supplied his name to the publisher of the business directory and contemporary newspapers often played fast and loose with name spellings, I have selected Baeumer as the spelling to use.
claimed that if the crowd responded with violence to the city council’s “tyranny,” the newspapers, he predicted, would likely refer to the event as a “bloody riot.”

On April 21, the Baeumer trial commenced. The morning of the trial a large crowd assembled near the corner of Randolph and Desplaines, near Baeumer’s saloon. The crowd grew and eventually began blocking the street. Police arrived to clear the way and a fight broke out between the police and the crowd. Among those arrested for what would become only the first fracas of the day was Stephen de la Rue, one of the leaders of the anti-prohibition movement. When the crowd dispersed, a small group of protestors went to city hall to request that the mayor release de la Rue. Meanwhile, a larger crowd, many of whom had personal connections to one or more of the defendants that day, was gathering on Clark street on the north side of the river. The Tribune later reported that the crowd on the north side were marching and drilling with their muskets and were seeming to prepare for a battle. When the mayor received this news, he called on the Chicago Light Guards, the National Guards, and Colonel Swift’s Artillery, three of the city’s independent militia groups, to make their way to the courthouse. Additionally, the mayor deputized a number of citizens who were in the area, requesting that they act

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59 Chicago Tribune, April 17, 1855. The speaker was probably Stephen de la Rue, a German who worked as a bookkeeper for Charles Rivers, a liquor dealer. La Rue became somewhat of a local celebrity owing to his vocal leadership of the anti-temperance movement. As a result, he was elected to fill an open seat on the city council in the fall of 1855 from the seventh ward. He remained active in the Democratic party in the city for the rest of his life and also ran his own liquor dealing business by the 1860s. New York Times, April 30, 1855.

60 Thirty-one years later this area would be the birthing grounds of another famous Chicago riot: the Haymarket bomb throwing.

61 At this time, the police force in Chicago was barely more than a handful of day and evening patrolmen. It was not a professional force. In the months after the Lager Beer Riot, Mayor Boone took steps to professionalize the force and to integrate the day and evening watchmen. Lindberg, To Serve and Collecti, 1-12.

62 The term “police” is used loosely here. Included in the group of men who engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the gathered protestors were three aldermen.
as peacekeepers should the crowd make their way across the river toward the courthouse.\textsuperscript{63}

At the time, the Clark street bridge was the only bridge across the river from the north side. When the bridge tender saw the large gathering of protestors coming from the north side of the city, he swung the bridge so as it make it impossible for them to cross. But as the crowd grew angrier with the lone bridge tender, word was sent to the mayor about the situation. The mayor ordered the bridge to be opened to traffic and, thus, the crowd traversed the river, towards the courthouse. The physical confrontation between the crowd and the supposed peacekeeping force commenced within minutes.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{Citizens Protesting}

As often happens in these kinds of confrontations, there is no clear record of who initiated the violence. An analysis of those who were arrested on April 21 reveals that the protestors were not the unruly, uncivilized, and anti-democratic mob the \textit{Tribune} wanted them to be. In many cases, the protestors on April 21 were the same people who had participated in the organizing, demonstrations, and petitions of the previous weeks. The north side protestors that arrived at city hall on the afternoon of April 21, 1855 were not unruly drunken immigrants, but rather middle-aged business people with families and strong opinions about their rights.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, April 23, 1855. The claim that men were marching and drilling with muskets may not have been a fabrication of the \textit{Tribune}'s occasionally dramatic storytelling. Two of the men arrested during the afternoon affray and six petitioners were all associated with the same German independent militia between 1850 and 1857.

\textsuperscript{64} Andreas, \textit{History of Chicago}, vol. 1, 616.

\textsuperscript{65} The material in this section relies heavily on Appendix T.
The Tribune reported that about a dozen men led a large gang of over two hundred over the bridge that afternoon. The paper said that most men in the crowd were armed with “heavy knives or bludgeons” or carried “swords or long, sharp knives, or pistols” in addition to their clubs. The paper suggested that the men had prepared in advance for a battle, as their swords were “all newly greased, and quite sharp.” The first clash between protestors and police, in the Tribune’s account, indicated pre-meditation as well. The paper reported that “on arriving at the corner…the crowd halted for a moment, gave a terrible yell, and leveled their muskets at the police.” The New York Times similarly claimed that the crowd began firing after a “handkerchief was waved by a German,” which the Times called a “concerted signal.” The descriptions of the “terribly yell,” the leveling of the muskets, and the “concerted signal” all seemed to indicate a well-planned military-style attack. These papers were describing a rebellion of foreigners, not simply a protest of local policies.\footnote{Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1855; New York Times, April 26, 1855.}

Yet, in other articles, the same sources depicted the protestors as disorganized, undisciplined, and uncivilized. As the police arrested members of the crowd, they supposedly confiscated an “incredible number of bludgeons,” the Tribune claimed, while adding that nearly “all” of the “villains” resisted arrest. Early reports from the Tribune that day stated that, of the people arrested, most were “pursued and either shot or knocked down before they would surrender.”\footnote{Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1855; New York Times, April 26, 1855.} The Tribune referred to the group as “infuriated savages” who enacted a “murderous attack on the Police.” This depiction of the group as angry, violent, disorganized, and cowardly savages does not match the
military rebellion that other reporters supposedly witnessed. Nonetheless, these descriptions were similar in that they were both used to contrast the north side protestors with the “peacekeepers” of the day. The policemen and militiamen were noted for their bravery, calm dispositions, fairness towards the “criminals,” and their orderly and controlled behavior. Supposedly, they were men who were upstanding citizens, protecting the peace of the city and supporting the rule of law. The protestors, whether they were foreign rebels or crazed savages, were a threat to the security and peace of the city, according to observers from the Tribune, had no respect for the law. 68

No policemen or militia members were killed that day. Peter Mertens, a German cobbler, was the only reported death. Mertens, the paper claimed, was hiding behind a hackney coach and fired at policeman George Hunt; the shot ripped off Hunt’s arm. Another “well-known citizen” took Hunt’s revolver and chased “the flying Dutchman,” shooting Mertens in the back as he ran. Mertens later died of his wounds while in jail and Hunt, although he lost his arm, went on to a long and illustrious career as a police officer. The Tribune called Hunt a “gallant defender of our city’s honor and safety.” The paper also noted the “pedigree of valor” of other citizens who fought the supposedly beer-crazed mob: City Marshall Darius Knights, Police Captain Luther Nichols, and future private detective Allan Pinkerton, among others. The militias the mayor had called upon were equally praised for their order and control. The Tribune reported that they came “at a quick step…with fixed bayonets and loaded muskets” and took “their position in front

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68 Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1855; New York Times, April 26, 1855.
of the Court House.” While the rioters were bent on destruction but acted without order and discipline, the militiamen were the exact opposite: orderly, in control, and peaceful.69

These newspaper reports give the modern reader very little insight into the reality of who the protestors were, how they behaved, and what their true motivations were. However, the details provided by the names, ages, and birthplaces of many of them reveal more than the Tribune’s coverage did.70 Those who were arrested varied only slightly from those who had petitioned the council or were accused of violating the liquor ordinances. Those arrested on April 21 were slightly younger, slightly less skilled, and slightly more likely to be Irish than those who appeared earlier in the events leading up to April 21. While these slight variations from the earlier protestors could suggest that the actions on April 21 were a result of spontaneous aggression on the part of a rough and tumble crowd of immigrants, the middle-aged German business owner was still a prominent part of this group.71 The violence that broke out on April 21 was therefore not a spontaneous attack at the hands of an angry and lawless mob, but rather the culmination of a month of actions that attempted to peacefully fix what the protestors thought was wrong with the law. Their protest on the day of the trial, whether or not the participants were the originators of the violence, was yet another legal challenge to the law that unfortunately ended in violence.

69 New York Times, April 26, 1855.
70 See Appendix T.
71 Nine people were identified as having been released without charges; twelve charged with disorderly conduct and fined $2 or $3; and fifteen were indicted for participation in rioting, including a number of whom who had bail set for between $500 and $5000.
Of the eighty-two people arrested on April 21, the professions for thirty-two of them could be positively identified. Almost half of these thirty-two were engaged in a business that was affected by the liquor ordinance or had a family member who had a liquor-related business. Henry Hoffmeister, a 26 year-old German hotel proprietor, and John Gross, the owner of the boarding house who earlier in the month had been fined for selling on a Sunday, were both arrested on April 21, as was Adolphus Müller, a 35 year-old German who owned a brewery with his brother and had signed one of the petitions on their business’s behalf, as A.G.H Müller. Of the men who were arrested and who had a personal interest in the battle against the liquor law, ten appear to be of German descent and on average they were in their early thirties, similar to the petitioners and those who had violated the liquor ordinances. In other words, the business owners who had been engaged in the battle against the liquor ordinances for the past month were a substantial proportion of those engaged in the physical protest on April 21. Irish names represented about half of those arrested for disorderly behavior on April 21 but yet almost all contemporary reports focused on Germans. The New York Times went so far as to claim, apparently incorrectly, that “the Irish have covered themselves with glory by keeping out

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72 Nine people were identified as having been released without charges; twelve charged with disorderly conduct and fined $2 or $3; and fifteen were indicted for participation in rioting, including a number of whom who had bail set for between $500 and $5000.

73 At John Gross’s trial, his son testified on his behalf, presumably because the senior Mr. Gross could not speak English. This was a common occurrence at the time. It is unclear if the John Gross arrested was the senior or junior Mr. Gross.

74 Seven of the men arrested who were in liquor-related businesses could be associated with a year of birth. One man, George Landgraff, was born in Germany in 1789. At 66, he skews the average age of the group considerably. When Landgraff is included, the seven men average almost 38 years old. Without Landgraff, the average age of the remaining six men is about 33 years old.
of the affray.” This is yet more proof that the contemporary accounts were oblivious to the reality of the events of the day.\textsuperscript{75}

While the people who were arrested for their participation in the civil disorder on April 21 were slightly younger, slightly less skilled, and slightly more likely to be Irish than the petitions’ signers and those who were charged with violating the liquor ordinances, they were far from the barbaric drunken mob that the \textit{Tribune} described. Further, no matter which side instigated the violence, the substantial presence of people who had previously attempted various methods of legal challenges in order to protest their rights as business owners reveals that their appearance in person on April 21 at the courthouse was not a spontaneous event, intended to cause violence, but rather the culmination of weeks of frustrated attempts to make their voices heard and to encourage the common council to take into account the needs of small business owners when crafting policy for the city.

\textbf{The Seventh Ward and Prohibition: Voter Fraud or Voter Mobilization?}

The battle was not over yet. In the first week of June, the population of Illinois would vote on whether or not to approve prohibition. The champions of prohibition had been confident after the city election in March that things would go their way in June. But the prohibition bill did not win the approval of the voters. While the decisive vote against the measure came from the southern part of the state, Chicago was one of the few areas in the north to vote against prohibition. Prohibitionists in the city claimed illegal voting was the cause of the anti-prohibition win in Chicago. While it is certainly possible

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{New York Times}, April 24, 1855.
that anti-prohibitionists organized illegal voting in the seventh ward, a longer-term analysis of voting trends in the ward, combined with information on the growth of the city and the changes in state and national politics reveal another possibility. Instead of voter fraud, the patterns of voting in Chicago’s seventh ward in June 1855 may reveal a watershed moment in citizen participation and voter mobilization.76

When examined by ward, the outcome of the vote on prohibition did not substantially differ from the outcomes of previous elections. In 1854, Amos Throop ran for mayor on a temperance platform.77 He ran against Isaac Milliken, who eventually won. Milliken was considered by his opposition to be supported by the vast majority of immigrants, who were generally opposed to temperance measures. Since Throop’s mayoral campaign was almost singularly focused on creating stricter temperance laws and Milliken was opposed to such measures, the 1854 mayoral campaign was in essence a test case for the vote on prohibition a year and a half later. In fact, the outcomes of the 1854 mayoral election and the 1855 vote on prohibition were incredibly similar. The wards which most heavily supported the temperance candidate Throop in 1854 were the

76 Admittedly, there is scant hard evidence for the theories I propose in this section; nor is their hard evidence for the theory that there was widespread voting fraud in the seventh ward during the June 1855 prohibition vote, aside from the assertions of known temperance and nativist publications like the Tribune and the Free West. Aside from scattered issues of a few publications, most of the sources social historians would turn to for this kind of argument – such as diaries or letters – if they ever existed, were likely destroyed in the 1871 fire. The most readily available sources are some newspapers and the records of the outcomes of elections that they recorded. This section, therefore, relies heavily on an analysis of voting trends. The newspapers did not consider the 1855 prohibition vote in comparison to any other vote or election other than the March 1855 city election, and of course they had no way of placing the June vote in a longer historical context which included future votes and elections. I therefore submit that, although the evidence for the following argument is speculative rather than empirical, this analysis is formulated on better evidence and with less bias than the conclusions of the contemporary and biased newspapers and opposing politicians.

77 At this time, mayoral candidates, as well as candidates for alderman, did not run for office with specific party alliances.
most intensely pro-prohibition in 1855 and the wards who came out the strongest for Milliken, the anti-prohibition candidate, were also the most heavily anti-prohibition in 1855. Furthermore, the margin of victory for Milliken in 1854 and the anti-prohibitionists in 1855 was almost the same: Milliken won by about 1300 votes overall throughout the city and prohibition was rejected in 1855 by about 1100 votes. The vote against prohibition does not seem that extraordinary when compared to the 1854 mayoral election, which had temperance as its central issue.\(^7^8\)

Instead, the 1855 mayoral election appears to be the anomaly, not, as the *Tribune* claimed, the vote against prohibition in 1855. Boone was elected in March 1855 by a margin of only about 340 votes. In this election, the first, second, and fifth wards all returned majorities for Boone and elected aldermen, by substantial margins, who were associated with the American Party. These three wards were also the strongest supporters of prohibition in June of 1855. The third, fourth, and sixth wards also elected Boone and aldermen associated with the American Party, but only by slight margins in all cases. In June, these three wards rejected prohibition, but by much slighter margins than the first, second, and fifth wards had. Of the swing wards, the third gave the largest margins to Boone and American Party aldermen; the third ward rejected prohibition by a mere twenty votes. In the other two swing wards, the fourth and the sixth, Boone and Milliken had received nearly equal votes in spring of 1855. These wards rejected prohibition by majorities of about 80 and 110 votes, respectively. Thus, the third, fourth, and sixth

\(^7^8\) *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1854, March 5, 1856, March 6, 1856, November 6, 1860; *Free West*, June 7, 1855.
wards were an important part of the American Party’s success in March, yet an important part of the rejection of prohibition in June.\(^\text{79}\)

The *Tribune* based its conclusion that prohibition had been rejected because of voter fraud in the seventh ward because it compared the outcome of the prohibition vote to the mayoral race between Boone and Milliken. But temperance had not been the core issue in that race, as it had been in the 1854 mayoral contest. Throop was almost single-mindedly in support of not only temperance, but eventual prohibition and just like prohibition lost in June of 1855, Throop lost in 1854. Although there is reason to believe Boone represented the temperance movement in the spring of 1855, his ever so slight victory suggests that something other than temperance may have been motivating voters to turn their allegiance from Milliken to Boone.

Pro-temperance forces questioned the voting not in the swing wards, but in the seventh ward, where both Boone and prohibition were decisively defeated. But because there were 300 more votes cast in total in June 1855 than there had been in the March city election, and only 84 out of a total of 927 votes were cast in favor of prohibition, commentators believed that there had been a number of false, duplicate, or otherwise illegal votes cast against prohibition. The *Free West* claimed that the ward’s total votes rising by 50% was partially because, unlike other wards, “no challenging was done” so voters who were not entitled to vote were able to. The *Free West* claimed that 300 of the votes in the seventh ward were illegal, “beyond doubt.”\(^\text{80}\) While an increase of 50% in the number of voters in the span of 3 months does seem suspicious, another explanation is

\(^{79}\) *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1854, March 5, 1856, March 6, 1856, November 6, 1860; *Free West*, June 7, 1855.

\(^{80}\) *Free West*, June 7, 1855.
possible: the rise in votes in the seventh ward was the result of greater political involvement of both the political organizers and the residents of the seventh ward.

In the 1854 mayoral election, the seventh ward returned about 9% of all the votes cast in the city. A year later, the seventh contributed about 10% of all of the city’s votes. In both of these elections, Milliken received his largest margin of victory in the seventh ward, despite having lost the second contest, overall, to Boone. In June of 1855, the seventh ward accounted for 14% of the votes cast in the city: this was the increase, from 10% to 14%, that prohibitionists thought indicated voter fraud. But if it was in fact voter fraud, the seventh ward managed to maintain a surprisingly constant level of voter fraud in future elections. In both the 1856 spring city election and the fall presidential election, the seventh ward accounted for over 13% of total votes cast in the city.81

One reason for the substantial increase between March and June of 1855 might be that the seventh ward contained a higher percentage of people who cared deeply about rejecting prohibition. If all the saloons and boarding houses in the city had been evenly distributed in each ward, there would have been about 11% of them in each ward but of all the saloons and the boarding houses listed in the 1855 city directory, about 12% of them were in the seventh ward.82 So, there were more business owners in the seventh ward who relied on the rejection of the prohibition bill in June 1855 in order to keep their businesses afloat. The high turnout for the June prohibition vote in the seventh ward,

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81 Statistics derived from Free West, June 7, 1855; Chicago Tribune, March 5, 1856, November 6, 1860.
82 There are about 307 saloons and boarding houses listed in the 1855 directory. 1855-6 The Chicago City Directory and Business Advertiser, Fourth Edition, with A New Map of the City (Chicago: Robert Fergus, Book and Job Printer, 1855).
therefore, could be due to the fact that more people cared about rejecting prohibition in the seventh ward than in other wards.

While the purpose of the increased temperance measures put in place by the Boone administration were intended to be a prelude to prohibition, they may have had a hand in the downfall of prohibition by giving the anti-prohibitionists a chance to rally their forces and gain supporters in the city for three months before the prohibition vote. Simon Eichenscherr owned a saloon in the seventh ward and in April, he signed one of the petitions requesting that the city council roll back the licensing fee ordinance. Three weeks after the Lager Beer battle, Eichenscherr became a citizen, enabling him to vote in June.\(^{83}\)

A further explanation of the high voter mobilization and overwhelming rejection of prohibition in the seventh ward is that the issue brought back together two sides of what had at one time been a ward which, having been the ward with the highest percentage of foreign-born residents, had been an easy win for candidates aligned with the Democratic party. Prior to the mid-1850s, foreign-born Chicagoans had very consistently and overwhelmingly supported Democratic party candidates. But a few months before the city election of 1854, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act had begun to tear apart the Democratic party. Settling this area, the present day states of Kansas and Nebraska, was important to many businessmen in Chicago, because they wanted to create a transcontinental railway that would pass through the territory and have its terminus in Chicago. More settlers meant more products to be processed and sold in

Chicago and more passengers for Chicago’s railways: in essence, it would mean the growth of the fortunes of railroad executives and the growth of the city itself.

The debate of the bill divided Democratic voters and local politicians just as it had divided the party in Congress. In Chicago, one of the first Chicagoans to publicly reject the pending bill was George Schneider, the editor of the largest German-language newspaper in the U.S. outside of New York City, the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*. Schneider, a Democrat, organized the city’s first general meeting to oppose the extension of slavery in January of 1854. Schneider was the secretary of another meeting of mostly German Chicagoans which produced a series of resolutions, later published in the pages of the *Illinois-Staats Zeitung*, declaring Stephen Douglas “an ambitious and dangerous demagogue” and that it was their “duty to do our best to rid ourselves of him as quickly as possible.” Schneider also used the pages of the *Staats Zeitung* to implore Chicago’s Germans to oppose the Kansas-Nebraska Act and to promote “free labor and free men.”

Although the 1854 mayoral election took place in the midst of the rising disaffection of many Democrats with Douglas and their party, Throop’s focus on temperance, an issue German voters nearly unanimously opposed, kept German voters, as well as any other voters of similar minds, loyal to Milliken, who was recognized as the Democratic candidate for mayor. But by the time the 1855 mayoral election occurred, the Kansas-Nebraska Act had been passed and the effects of its passage were becoming evident. Pro-slavery forces migrated to Kansas and settled a number of towns, hoping to secure Kansas as a slave state. At the same time, northerners who were opposed to the

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84 Schneider was an exile of the 1848 revolutions in Germany, as were most of the other editors of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* for the remainder of the nineteenth century. *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1854, August 14, 1858.
extension of slavery and a substantial number of abolitionists were also setting up homes in the territory. Although confrontations had been few between the two sides at the time of Chicago’s 1855 city election and Kansas had yet to vote on the issue, tensions were mounting.

Milliken, the incumbent in the 1855 mayoral race was a known Democrat. Boone’s party affiliation was unclear, as was his stance on the extension of slavery.85 Boone won the election by only a slim margin overall in the city and although Milliken received 60% of the vote in the seventh ward, that was a substantially lower proportion of the ward than he had carried in the race against Throop the year before. So the question remains: who were the voters that supported Milliken in 1854 but voted for Boone in 1855, but then rejected Boone’s temperance policies by voting against statewide prohibition in June of 1855?86

They were Democrats who were disenchanted with their party enough so that, instead of voting for the Democrat Milliken, they voted for someone whose party affiliations were not entirely clear. In essence, they did not vote for Boone, as much as they voted against Milliken. Their vote for Boone was their rejection of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and of the Democratic party. This division and realignment of Democrats

85 From 1848 until the election of 1855, candidates for city office did not run with a party; instead, they independently announced their candidacy in the newspapers. This was largely done as a measure to keep the issue of slavery from arising in local political contests. That being said, Chicagoans were well aware of the party affiliations of the 1854 mayoral candidates, as they were both well-known politicians. Milliken later appears in the rosters of the pro-Douglas faction of the Democratic party.

86 There were only 38 more votes cast for mayor overall in the seventh ward in 1855 than there were in 1854 so the closeness of the vote might also be the result of low voter turnout. Germans, feeling disaffected with the Democratic party but unwilling to vote for Boone, who was known to support anti-immigrant policies, simply refused to vote for either Milliken or Boone. Chicago Tribune, March 8, 1854, March 9, 1854, March 6, 1855, March 8, 1855.
from 1854 on is illustrated by Schneider, Dempsey, and McCarthy, who were all
originally Democrats. Dempsey and McCarthy remained with the party but Schneider
was one of the first Republicans in Chicago. During the 1856 presidential election,
Schneider was part of the “Anti-Nebraska Vigilance Committee” in the seventh ward.
The group intended “to ensure the getting out the full anti-Nebraska vote in their
respective wards on the day of election.” Notably, their purpose was not to get out the
Republican vote, even though Schneider, as well as many other former prominent
Chicago Democrats, was a Republican. The group’s purpose, instead, was much broader:
to get out the vote of anyone – Republican, Democrat, Whig – who opposed the Kansas-
Nebraska Act. The results of the 1856 presidential election showed how the seventh
ward, previously a Democratic party stronghold, was divided, just as the Democratic
party was in general. Buchanan, the Democratic candidate, secured only about 52% of the
seventh ward’s votes for president. The rest went to the Republican candidate, Frémont.87

87 The 1856 mayoral election was between two Democrats: Thomas Dyer, who was understood to
be part of the pro-Kansas-Nebraska Act faction and Francis Sherman, who was opposed to the
Kansas-Nebraska Act. Dyer, however, publicly promised to “[fix] the rate of license at a just and
reasonable rate – a rate affording the city a proper revenue, and yet not too high to afford any
excuse for its non-payment.” Knowing that he also needed to assure voters of his feelings about
immigrants, he also pledged to “make no difference against naturalized citizens on account of
their birth.” Meanwhile, the Know Nothing Party openly supported Sherman. Dyer won the city,
taking only 53% of the vote, almost identical to Boone’s victory in 1855. But between Dyer’s
pledge to change the licensing fee rate and the Know Nothing’s support of Sherman, Republican
leaning Germans of the seventh ward may have considered Dyer the lesser of two evils, as Dyer
won over 80% of the seventh ward’s votes. Chicago Tribune, March 8, 1855, March 4, 1856,
November 6, 1860; Weekly Native Citizen, March 1, 1856; National Era, March 20, 1856; Pierce,
A History of Chicago, vol. 2, 506; Chicago Tribune, March 12, 1856; Inaugural address of Mayor
Thomas Dyer, March 11, 1856, Chicago Public Library
http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/mayors/dyer_inaug_1856.php (accessed
July 2012).
But between 1854 and 1856, Schneider, Dempsey, and McCarthy, as well as the voters of the seventh ward, were united on the issues of temperance and prohibition.\(^{88}\) Schneider wrote in the pages of the *Staats Zeitung* that the Prohibitory Law was unconstitutional and that it violated the rights of, specifically, German Chicagoans.\(^{89}\) A number of other Germans who had joined Schneider in rejecting the Kansas-Nebraska Act and leaving the Democratic party also joined him in opposing temperance and prohibition. John Weinmann, the liquor dealer who had hosted one of the first anti-temperance ordinance meetings at his store in the seventh ward and who had also signed one of the petitions requesting that the licensing fee be reduced, was a vice-president of the anti-Nebraska meeting Schneider led in 1854. Including Schneider and Weinmann, at least six of the nine men who chaired the March 1854 Anti-Nebraska meeting were also among the ranks of the leaders of the challenge to the city’s temperance ordinances in 1855.\(^{90}\) Therefore, the relative closeness of the election outcomes in the seventh ward in March 1855 and November 1856 indicated rising disaffection with and, later, abandonment of, the Democratic party. Further, the outcomes of the mayoral election of 1854 and the prohibition vote of June 1855 were also relatively similar. The seventh ward’s decisive rejection of prohibition then represents not an aberration that suggests

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\(^{88}\) Although McCarthy’s saloon was in the eighth ward, it was only steps from the seventh ward. Furthermore, McCarthy was the justice of the peace for the entire north division in 1855 and was elected as the city collector in March of 1856. The seventh ward returned the highest margin of victory for McCarthy – almost 1000 to his challengers’ 250 – of any ward in the city. *Chicago Tribune*, March 6, 1856.

\(^{89}\) Unfortunately, issues of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* before the 1860s no longer exist. Luckily, the *Staats Zeitung* and the *Tribune* engaged in a number of debates on the matter of temperance and prohibition during which the *Tribune* reprinted parts of what the *Staats Zeitung* had printed, translated into English for the *Tribune*, oftentimes by Schneider himself. *Chicago Tribune*, February 13, 1855.

\(^{90}\) *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1854.
vote tampering, but rather a continuity of opinion on the single issue of temperance, even while issues on the national stage divided the almost entirely Democratic ward into a ward populated almost evenly by Democrats and Republicans.

The only evidence we have that there was voter fraud during the June 1855 vote on prohibition is the claims of contemporary newspapers who were openly biased to anti-prohibitionists, immigrants, and Democrats. The newspaper’s most convincing evidence was the seemingly stark difference between the 1855 mayoral election and the June vote. The newspapers seemed to think that anyone who had voted for Boone would have voted for prohibition, but the newspapers were missing the larger picture. Boone’s election was not owed to his anti-immigrant policies or his temperance policies. Boone was elected because the Democratic party was starting to fall apart and by 1856 Democrats were divided among Douglas Democrats, Anti-Douglas Democrats, and Republicans.

Conclusion

The debates over temperance and prohibition did not end with the rejection of the statewide prohibition law in 1855. In the wake of the Civil War, the issue came up again, but Chicagoans wanted to avoid another Lager Beer Riot. A letter in the Tribune cautioned the city council to act with restraint, as considerable “labor and time” were spent to “undo the mischief, and to heal the ill feeling and animosities engendered by that contest and collision.”91 The council, taking heed, did not attempt to change licensing

91 Chicago Tribune, March 21, 1867.
fees or to establish prohibition. However, in June of 1871, the council did reaffirm the validity of the Sunday closing law, which had never been taken off the books.92

While policymakers may have learned to act with restraint regarding changing liquor laws, the citizens who opposed the Sunday closing law also appear to have learned something from the Lager Beer Riot: how to organize and mobilize the citizenry. In the early 1870s a coalition of Irish and German saloonkeepers and boarding house owners joined across party lines to fight the Sunday closing law. By 1874, establishments that sold liquor were allowed to open on Sundays, provided that they kept all doors and windows that opened to city streets closed or covered.

The Lager Beer Riot was therefore one of the first clear incidents when Irish and German immigrants joined forces to challenge the rule of the entirely native-born city council by arguing that both their personal freedoms and their economic rights were worthy of consideration when city leaders made decisions about the future of the city.

Creating political alliances among people of their own ethnicities, but also across ethnic lines, was a political tool that Chicago’s Irish and German immigrants would use

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92 See, for instance, the case of Chicago v. Franz Schwuchow. The Tribune referred to the Sunday closing law as “that obnoxious ordinance” by this time but Schwuchow had been fined numerous times for ignoring the law and the Mayor eventually revoked his selling license. Schwuchow challenged the Mayor’s jurisdiction to revoke a liquor license and continued to sell liquor, for which he was arrested and sent to jail. The judge upheld the Mayor’s right to revoke liquor licenses at the mayor’s discretion. Chicago Tribune, February 5, 1874. Mr. Schwuchow was a leader in the Saloon-Keepers’ Society in Chicago in 1878. Although various organizations of saloon owners had existed before the Civil War, none of them were particularly long lasting or effective in organizing their constituency. But by the late 1870s, the Saloon-Keepers’ Society met regularly, to advocate for their profession and livelihoods en masse. These meetings were frequently held at various Turner halls throughout the city and meetings were occasionally held in German. Although some members were not of German heritage, clearly the bulk of the organization came from the ranks of German Chicago. Chicago Tribune, December 2, 1857, April 18, 1875, March 23, 1878, April 6, 1878; Illinois Staats Zeitung, Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey: German, vol. 1, United States Works Progress Administration, Chicago: Chicago Public Library, April 16, 1881 http://archive.org/details/5418474_1 (accessed July 2012).
repeatedly throughout the nineteenth century, even when it meant working across party lines.

Rather than a fracas caused by a lawless bunch of drunken immigrants, the Lager Beer Riot was a culmination of a series of democratic challenges to native-born political dominance. Whether or not Mayor Boone and his political allies saw it as such, the Lager Beer Riot and the events surrounding it demonstrated that these immigrants fully understood how to be citizens in a democracy and what their rights and responsibilities in a democracy were. While historians have already established that the urban economic and social elite in antebellum America believed they knew what was best for their cities and the people that lived there, this analysis demonstrates that this belief did not go unchallenged. The city elite believed that, had the anti-prohibition forces been responsible citizens, they would have followed the laws that the common council saw fit to pass. The battle waged by the anti-prohibitionists revealed a more inclusive definition of responsible democratic citizenship: that their interests and rights were just as important as those of the economic elites of the city. But pressing for equality by using the legal tools of the democracy is not the only evidence that immigrants understood and embraced American laws and institutions. The next chapter explores how immigrants joined their own American independent militia units and were therefore able to publicly participate in American democratic culture and to demonstrate their understanding and embracement of American democratic culture, while still retaining and even promoting their ethnic heritage.
Chapter Three

Ethnic Militias and Irish-American Nationalism, 1842-1864

In the spring of 1842 Patrick Kelly and William Snowhook organized and armed the Montgomery Guards, Chicago’s first ethnic militia. It was also the city’s first identifiably ethnic organization. As a volunteer militia, the structure of the Montgomery Guards’ organization was identical to that of other independent militias of the day that were constituted of native-born citizens. The volunteer militia was an American creation, rooted in the history of the American Revolutionary army. At the same time, the Montgomery Guards were an immigrant association.

By marching in the streets, picnicking in parks, and meeting in the public halls of Chicago between 1842 and 1861, ethnic militias allowed the groups’ officers to gain important social and political connections in both Irish and native-born circles in the city.¹ Ethnic militias were an effective way for immigrants to demonstrate that they were “respectable American citizens” who were “content to submit to the laws.”² This chapter explores how participation in ethnic militias demonstrated immigrants’ fitness for citizenship and allowed immigrants the benefit of creating social networks that led to better employment and political opportunities. Furthermore, militias’ demonstrations of

¹ While the Montgomery Guards were the first ethnic antebellum militia in Chicago, they were certainly not the only one. By the 1850s, ethnic militias made up a sizable proportion of the nearly thirty independent militias in the city. The Scottish Highland Guards, two Bohemian militias, and at least three German marching groups joined the Montgomery Guards. Furthermore, the growth of the Irish population of the city required new Irish militias. In addition to the Montgomery Guards, the Irish Chicagoans formed and joined the Emmet, Shields, and Jackson Guards prior to the Civil War. Furthermore, since groups banded, disbanded, and joined other groups it is hard to track the exact number of individual organizations represented in the 1850s but twenty-five appears to be a conservative analysis of the available information. Chicago Tribune, January 24, 1861; Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 1, 184-186.
² Chicago Literary Budget, August 19, 1854.
American customs meant that city leaders often relied on even foreign-born militia members to defend the city and the nation.

The militias’ expressions of American loyalty combined with ethnic heritage were not static. This chapter concludes by illuminating the connections in personnel, ideology, and activities between antebellum Irish militias and Civil War-era Irish-American nationalism. The re-organization of antebellum Irish militias into Civil War-era Fenian circles was due in part to developments in Ireland and the efforts of expatriate Young Irelanders to organize an Irish-nationalist organization in the United States. But Fenianism also emerged from the specifically American model of the independent militia. And, it emerged in the context of the Civil War, with an emphasis on republican values such as liberty and equality.\(^3\) Chicago’s antebellum Irish militias and the first Fenian circles demonstrate how Irish immigrants continued to assert their fitness for American citizenship without erasing their Irish heritage, adapting their organizations to changing American conditions.\(^4\)

**Demonstrating Allegiance**

\(^3\) William D’Arcy notes in his study of American Fenianism that “The Irish-American newspapers of the time [1859] contain frequent references to the organization of...Irish military companies.” D’Arcy claims that “Thousands of enthusiastic young Irishmen joined them in order to prepare for the day of reckoning with their ancient foe.” But D’Arcy has missed an important point: in many cases, these military organizations already existed. William D’Arcy, “The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858-1886,” Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America (1947), 1-3, 6-16.

\(^4\) Thomas Brown has argued that the leaders of Irish-American nationalism between 1870 and 1890 sought and gained middle-class respectability and political advantage through their work in Irish-American nationalism. I do not disagree with Brown’s thesis; in fact, I argue that Brown’s can be extended backwards by at least thirty years. Furthermore, I show that the roots of Irish-American nationalism, and not just the purposes, were thoroughly American as well: the antebellum militia.
Militias existed throughout the United States in the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War and served several purposes. In addition to being military units that could be subsumed into national military service when needed, as during the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, these units could be called on to act as a sort of local police force in the case of civil disorder, such as strikes and riots. Beyond their practical peacekeeping and wartime duties, militias served ideological purposes as well. Participation in a militia was considered an expression of patriotism, as it replicated the actions of colonists during the American Revolution. Mid-nineteenth century militias also provided a place where men could demonstrate their embrace of republican democratic principles by joining voluntarily and holding elections to appoint officers. As historian Ricardo A. Herrera points out, “some citizen-soldiers believed that their tradition of self-governance was the single most important quality of the volunteers and the militia.” Militias were also one of the primary sponsors of social events, especially in the Midwest. They were not simply male military organizations; they hosted balls, dinners, picnics, and parades for their members and their families.  

The militias of Illinois and Chicago were no different. As military units, they acted alongside U.S. Army troops in the War of 1812, the Blackhawk War, and the Mexican-American War. A number of residents in the 1830s and 1840s had participated in or witnessed the violence of the Blackhawk War in the early 1830s and although no settlers remained from 1812 in Chicago by the 1830s, the memory of the Potawatomi attack on Americans fleeing Fort Dearborn became a foundational story in the creation of Chicago’s identity.\(^6\) Illinois militias were used to establish and control public order as well. Militias quelled riots and strikes and were the key actors in the hostilities between Mormons and non-Mormons in the early and mid-1840s in Nauvoo, Illinois that resulted in the death of Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith and the expulsion of the Mormons from Illinois.\(^7\) Finally, war with Canada or the British was not out of the question in the antebellum period and Chicagoans wanted to be ready to defend their city or be able to send troops to defend their country.\(^8\)

Participating in military culture was a way for ethnic communities to demonstrate their allegiance to the United States and to prove that they understood the responsibilities of American citizenship. For instance, in 1860, the Chicago Shields Guards published their preamble and resolutions in the local papers, stating that “military culture is one of the necessities of our country, and the bearing of arms and the easy means of education


\(^7\) The Mormon militiamen, organized as the Nauvoo Guards, and the anti-Mormon forces, the Carthage Greys, both attempted to enforce their ideas of public order through force of arms. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Random House, 2005), 541-550.

\(^8\) See, for instance, *Chicago Tribune*, February 24, 1854, February 5, 1856, March 17, 1856.
therein one of its splendid advantages, alike honorable to the citizen and useful to the State." These immigrants were demonstrating that they were willing, ready, and able to defend their adopted city, state, and nation, just as their native-born neighbors were.

The character of many militias was evident in their names. Independent Irish-American militias frequently took the name “Montgomery.” Richard Montgomery was an Irish-born member of the British Army who joined the American Continental Army in 1775 and was killed in battle against the British later that year at Quebec. The Shields Guards, formed in Chicago in 1854, were named after James Shields, an Irish immigrant who settled in Illinois in 1826. He served in the Illinois State Legislature, as well as a justice on the Illinois Supreme Court. He also served as U.S. Senator for Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota, which may explain why many states named Irish militia units after him. He was a Brigadier General in both the Mexican-American and Civil Wars. The Emmet Guards, formed in 1854, were named after Robert Emmet, who led a rebellion against British rule in Ireland in 1803, only to be caught and executed by British forces. The first German militia, formed in 1847, was named the Washington Jaegers.

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9 *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1860.
10 Participation in militias, ethnic or otherwise, was considered an expression of patriotism, handed down from the American Revolution, when colonists formed their own independent militias in order to defend themselves against the tyranny of the British government. Mid-nineteenth century militias also provided a place where men could demonstrate their participation in “republican democratic principles,” by joining of their own free will and holding elections to appoint officers. As historian Ricardo A. Herrera points out, “some citizen-soldiers believed that their tradition of self-governance was the single most important quality of the volunteers and the militia.” Herrera, “Self-Governance and the American Citizen as Soldier,” 47.
“jaeger” being the German word sharpshooter. In each of these cases, the militias’ names referred to both American military roots and also to the members’ European roots.

The militias’ public displays of their activities and the use of public areas and streets was central to demonstrating their loyalty. In 1856, the Shields Guards traveled by boat from Chicago to Waukegan, about 40 miles north of the city along Lake Michigan. They were met at the Waukegan wharf by the Waukegan Shields Guards and together with the Chicago Band, a marching band, paraded through what the newspaper reported were “the principal streets” of Waukegan, to a “delightful ravine” where the companies took target practice together. While they certainly could not have held target practice in an indoor facility, the event was more than simply gathering to hone their military skills. Making a demonstration of their activities in public made it possible for other Americans to see ethnic militias taking part in an American cultural tradition.

It was the nature of militias to gather in public areas, of course, as target practice is an outdoor activity. But military drills and practices were not the only occasions during which ethnic militias gathered in public. In fact, the social events ethnic militias organized were likely even more frequent than their military activities. Like their native-born counterparts, the ethnic marching companies sponsored picnics, balls, and other events, in addition to their regular meetings for drill practice. For instance, the Emmet Guards hosted a ball in April of 1855, within a year of organizing. In 1856, the Montgomery Guards went to Milwaukee “on a pleasure excursion…accompained by

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14 The word “jaeger” translates directly into “hunter” but in military terms it often refers to the infantry members and is frequently translated as rifleman or sharpshooter. Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 1, 285.

15 Chicago Tribune, September 1, 1857, September 7, 1857.

16 Chicago Tribune, April 9, 1855.
some five hundred ladies and gentlemen” and were escorted around Milwaukee for the day by that city’s military clubs.\textsuperscript{17} A year later, the Montgomery and Emmet Guards returned the favor and hosted the Union Guard of Milwaukee at a picnic in Chicago.\textsuperscript{18}

The most frequent public appearance by ethnic militias was during their parading through the city’s streets. In February 1856, the \textit{Chicago Tribune} noted that “various military companies” were planning on parading in honor of George Washington’s birthday. This was not one single parade in which they all participated. Rather, it consisted of various outings organized by multiple independent groups. The \textit{Tribune} listed the marching groups as the Montgomery Guards, the Shields Guards, the Washington Independent Regiment (German), and the Highland Guard (Scottish). The \textit{Tribune} also listed two other companies that did not have an ethnic association.\textsuperscript{19}

Parading on Washington’s birthday was an annual event for Chicago’s ethnic militias.\textsuperscript{20}

Irish companies took advantage not only of American holidays but of Irish ones as well. The St. Patrick’s Day parade was an annual event in Chicago by the early 1850s and the primary participants in the parade were the city’s Irish military companies. In 1856, the Montgomery, Shields, and Emmet Guards were joined by the Chicago Hibernian Benevolent Society in marching through the streets of the city. The paper reported that the military companies “presented a fine and credible appearance” and

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\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, September 9, 1856.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, August 17, 1857, September 1, 1857.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, February 22, 1856, February 23, 1856, February 26, 1856.
\textsuperscript{20} See for instance \textit{Chicago Tribune}, February 23, 1854, February 23, 1855, February 26, 1857, February 23, 1858. This was common in other cities in Illinois as well. In 1858, a correspondent of the \textit{Tribune} in Springfield, Illinois wrote that the German military companies of that city had paraded for Washington’s birthday and “cheers and other civilities interchanged between the different German and American associations, as the various companies reviewed each other, gave evidence of a laudable amiability and fraternal feeling among these public institutions, and between our native and adopted citizens.” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, February 27, 1858.
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afternoon festivities at the West Market Hall “passed off very pleasantly.” Far from being a ragtag group of disorderly Irish immigrants, these immigrants appeared upstanding and well-disciplined. These were upstanding and disciplined military men who were marching through the streets of Chicago promoting their homeland’s national holiday.

The event did not have to be as symbolic as Washington’s birthday or St. Patrick’s Day in order for the ethnic companies to demonstrate their marching skills. In September of 1857, the Tribune reported that the Emmet Guards had paraded in full dress through the city in order to present their commander’s wife with a portrait of her husband. This was certainly not an activity that required a group of men to march through the streets of Chicago. But yet this is precisely the choice the Emmet Guards made. The Tribune remarked that “the Emmets made a fine appearance.” Their public marching garnered them praise from a newspaper that was not generally friendly toward immigrants in the 1850s.

In 1856, the Shields Guards used public space in a similar way when they marched in full dress to a function they were hosting at North Market Hall. Promenading to a social function allowed them an opportunity to remind other Chicagoans of the company’s existence and discipline. The Shields Guards were apparently known for their social events, as the Tribune remarked that the company’s control of the event gave “ample assurance that the occasion will be a most joyous and pleasant one.” An ethnic militia had once again earned praise for its orderly conduct. But militias, ethnic or native-

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21 Chicago Tribune, March 18, 1856. The Highland Guards also celebrated their national holiday, Robert Burns’ birthday, with a public parade and festivities. Chicago Tribune, January 21, 1857.  
22 Chicago Tribune, September 29, 1857.  
23 Chicago Tribune, March 25, 1856.
born, were not only responsible for their own orderly conduct, but for keeping the peace among the general public as well.

**Ethnic Militias as Public Space Peace Keepers**

The regular appearance of these ethnic militias in the streets, parks, and public halls of Chicago, sharply dressed and marching in an orderly fashion, meant that even native-born city leaders trusted them to keep civic order, despite the foreign birth of the militia members. Three dramatically different conflicts demonstrate that city leaders trusted ethnic militias, despite their foreign-born members, to restore civic order on both the local and national level: the LaSalle railroad strike, the Lager Beer Riot, and the Civil War.

In December 1853, workers on the Illinois Central near LaSalle attacked and murdered their contractor when he lowered their daily wages from $1.25 to $1.00. The workers were reportedly all Irish immigrants who had been known to cause violence in the past, supposedly having murdered a German worker the year before. Thirty-two workers were arrested in connection with the 1853 murder of the contractor. The *Tribune* reported that “consternation spread like a prairie on fire” and that local Irish men “assembled in great numbers, many of them in a fury of drunkenness.” The reporter claimed that, because there was no regular militia in LaSalle, “no one knew how to act.” Therefore, he said, “there was every prospect of a breech of peace in the town.” The day after the murder, a telegraph message was sent to Ottawa, Illinois, about fifteen miles east

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of LaSalle, to send help, and a few hours later, about eighty members of the Ottawa Shields Guards arrived via train to restore order. The reporter remarked that “it is not the first time this company has been called out on a similar occasion and they seem firm and determined.” No one noted that the Ottawa Shields Guards were an Irish company. Apparently not all Irish did not know “how to act,” as the Irish Ottawa Shields Guards were entrusted with keeping the peace.

News of the mob killing of the contractor reached Chicago on December 16 and the Tribune reported that “there appears to be a growing feeling against Irish riots, and a determination to use strong measures to put them down hereafter. The paper claimed that, had all thirty-two men accused of killing the contractor been “searched out and shot on the spot” the public “would have sanctioned it at once.” One letter to the editor suggested that “a good military company be formed at LaSalle and Peru immediately.” Militias, then, were the peacekeepers, no matter what their members’ ethnicity or nativity was.

Two years later, Chicago Mayor Levi Boone relied on another ethnic militia, the Montgomery Guards, when violence broke out on the day of the trial of Gustavus Bauemer. Bauemer was being tried for refusing to pay the new, increased liquor licensing fee and selling liquor on a Sunday. The outcome of his trial was to apply to around 30 other defendants. When their supporters gathered outside the courthouse the day of the trial, violence broke out between the supporters and those who wished to defend the courthouse. Mayor Boone called on three volunteer militias as the protestors marched

25 Chicago Tribune, December 17, 1853. Both Lightner’s and Wyman’s accounts of these events also fail to note that the Shield’s Guards were an Irish company called out to suppress Irish workers. This suggests that a consideration of the socio-economic divide between workers and militia members might be worth investigating.

26 Chicago Tribune, December 17, 1853, December 19, 1853, December 20, 1853.
over the Clark Street bridge that afternoon. The first two were native-born. The Chicago Light Artillery, included at least two of Boone’s top police personnel. He also called on the National Guards who counted among their officers William Danenhauer, John Thompson, and Sylvester Sexton. Danenhauer was a personal friend of Boone’s and the head of the Illinois Know-Nothing party and editor of a newspaper which was dedicated to promoting the goals of the Know-Nothing party. Thompson and Sexton had been elected in March 1855 as the city attorney and as an alderman, respectively, and both were members of the Know-Nothing contingent, alongside Boone and Danenhauer.27

Yet Boone, who supposedly wanted to eliminate any foreign-born individuals from city positions and the police, then called on the Irish-born Montgomery Guards. Considering that Know-Nothing politicians had forcibly disbanded Irish militias in east coast cities, it is even more surprising that Boone not only allowed the Irish militias to exist, but enlisted them in service.28 The Montgomery Guards, however, were one of the oldest and most continuously operating militia units in the city and for the thirteen years since they had organized, they had been one of the most visible and active militias in the city. Aside from their Irish membership and name, their activities – marching, drilling, parading, picnicking, socializing – were identical to other American militias. They had spent thirteen years demonstrating their dedication to keeping public order.29

The ultimate evidence that these ethnic militias were dedicated to preserving order in the United States came in 1861. While most ethnic military companies had not

29 The bill paid by the city to the militias which served on April 21 was published in the *Chicago Tribune*, June 12, 1855. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol.1, 237, 244, 274, 276, 284, 294; *Chicago Tribune*, October 31, 1857, November 3, 1857.
been part of the state militia before the Civil War, they were among the first groups to enlist when the war broke out. In May of 1861 the Montgomery Guards called all their members to muster and invited new enlistees.\textsuperscript{30} By early June the \textit{Tribune} reported that the Shields, Montgomery, Jackson and Emmet Guards, as well as the O’Mahoney Rifles, the O’Connell Guards, and a number of German regiments were all preparing to go to war.\textsuperscript{31} In August of 1861, the German Rifle Company announced open recruitment for their company. They assured readers that they would “march against the enemy,” rather than “serve in the ranks of the Home Guards.” The editor of the \textit{Illinois Staats Zeitung} added a note to the announcement, saying that the captain of the company, Mr. H. Eschenburg had given his group “excellent military training” and that his company would be “an excellent one.” The editor encouraged “all you who have hesitated before, our country needs defenders!”\textsuperscript{32} These groups that had once been independent, ethnic, social and military clubs were integrated into the Union Army. The service of Irish and German immigrants in the Civil War demonstrated to many Americans the immigrants’ dedication to their adopted homeland and their ability to become “good Americans.”

The actions of ethnic militias during the LaSalle strike, the Lager Beer Riot, and the Civil War not only demonstrated the faith city leaders had in these immigrant organizations, but further demonstrated that ethnic militia members were fit for citizenship. Their service in these events shows that, even when city leaders were concerned about the affects of immigrants on the social stability of the city and the

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, May 23, 1861.  
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, June 12, 1861.  
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Illinois Zeitung}, Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey: German, vol. 6, United States Works Progress Administration, Chicago: Chicago Public Library, August 17, 1861.  
nation, their fears were not of all immigrants, but rather immigrants who were not following the examples and laws of the native-born socio-economic elite. Nativism, therefore, was not necessarily focused solely on ethnicity, but was also concerned with the question of whether immigrants behaved in ways the city leadership found acceptable as law abiding, peacekeeping citizens.

**Ethnic Alliances and Political Appointments**

Membership in Chicago’s ethnic militias came with social, financial, and political advantages. The officers and members of the Montgomery Guards were better-off financially and socially than the general Irish immigrant, were able to secure elected and appointed political posts, and were able to make the case that their loyalty to America went hand in hand with their desire to free Ireland from British rule. Each of these perks was a result of more than just their visibility among Irish immigrants; native-born Chicagoans, as well as Chicagoans of other ethnicities, bestowed these advantages upon militia leaders.

It is not particularly surprising that the officers of the Montgomery Guards were more skilled and had better financial resources than the average Irish immigrant in antebellum Chicago. These were the men who had both the time and the money to organize socially and purchase uniforms and equipment. But they were not better off than their counterparts in native-born militias. For instance, comparing the leadership of the Montgomery Guards to the officers of the Chicago Cavalry and the Chicago Guards demonstrates that although the Irish officers had about the same balance of skilled
tradesmen, professionals, and small merchants, they were not as financially successful as their native-born counterparts.\textsuperscript{33}

In both the Montgomery Guards and the Chicago Cavalry and Guards, most of the officers owned small stores or ran their own businesses in a skilled trade. The Irish officers most frequently owned grocery and provisions stores while the native-born officers’ stores sold a variety of items. From the native-born militias, Stephen Gale was a printer and owned the city’s first successful book and stationery store while James Sanger ran a cap, hat, and fur store. A number of officers in each organization were also skilled tradesmen: tailors, leatherworkers, and blacksmiths. Only one of the Chicago Cavalry and one of the Montgomery Guardsmen were in a profession that required higher education: Isaac Arnold, of the Cavalry, and Thomas Kinsella, of the Montgomery

\textsuperscript{33} Using census records and the city directories, I was able to compile substantial information about the lives of eleven of the Montgomery Guard’s officers between 1842 and 1861. The Chicago Cavalry was formed a few months after the Montgomery Guards and the Chicago Guards the following year. The Chicago Light Artillery was formed in 1854. All of these militias, except the Montgomery Guards, were led by native-born officers. I use all three of these native-born militias to compare to the Montgomery Guards because the Chicago Cavalry and Guards only existed in the 1840s and the Chicago Light Artillery only existed in the 1850s, while the Montgomery Guards existed from 1842 until the Civil War. Using all three native-born militias also provided me with roughly equivalent numbers of officers to compare with the Montgomery Guards. The names of the officers and their professions, as well as their birthplaces and birth years, when available, can be found in Appendices L, M, and N of this dissertation. What follows is an analysis of that information. Andreas, \textit{History of Chicago}, vol. 1, 284-286; Andreas, \textit{History of Chicago}, vol. 2, 161-162; \textit{Chicago Antiquities, Including Chicago Business Directory for 1839} (Chicago: Eastman and Bartlett, 1875); \textit{General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844 With a Historical Sketch and Statistics Extending from 1837 to 1844} (Chicago: Ellis and Fergus, Printers, 1844); \textit{1855-6 The Chicago City Directory and Business Advertiser, Fourth Edition, with A New Map of the City} (Chicago: Robert Fergus, Book and Job Printer, 1855); Edwards’ \textit{Fourteenth Annual Directory of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies and Manufacturing Establishments of the City of Chicago, Embracing a Complete Business Directory For 1871} (Chicago: Richard Edwards, Publisher, 1871); Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, accessed through ancestry.com; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, accessed through ancestry.com; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, accessed through ancestry.com; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, accessed through ancestry.com.
Guards, were both lawyers. So, the officers of these groups were relatively equal in their educational and professional skill levels.

There was a substantial divide, however, between the Montgomery Guards and the native-born officers when it came to their real estate investments. At least half of the native-born officers invested in real estate in the 1830s in Chicago. In some cases, these men eventually left their original professions to deal solely in real estate and many of them were on the boards of one or more of the local railroad companies. For instance, Silas Cobb, an officer of the Chicago Cavalry in 1842, was a saddle and harness maker by trade but he became one of the most prosperous property owners in the city by the 1850s. In the 1870 federal census, this “retired leather merchant” valued his real estate at $400,000 and his personal estate at $150,000. Furthermore, he was on the boards of a number of different railways, and was an original and lifetime member of the board of directors of the Galena and Chicago line, the first railroad to serve the city. In the city directories of the 1880s and 1890s, his profession was listed simply as “capitalist.” Three of the four Chicago Guards officers and at least two of the eight leaders of the Chicago Cavalry were real estate moguls and railroad tycoons. Conversely, none of the Montgomery Guards officers were involved in the railroad companies and none of the officers from the early 1840s had substantial real estate holdings.34

Real estate holdings and involvement with the railroad companies translated into political offices in antebellum Chicago.\(^\text{35}\) Over half of the native-born officers were involved in politics, holding either elected or appointed offices, prior to their involvement with their militias. Furthermore, those who were involved in politics prior to their militia activities tended to remain in politics after they served as officers and those who were not in politics, with a few exceptions, did not appear in political positions afterwards.\(^\text{36}\) Conversely, none of the Montgomery Guards officers held city office prior to their involvement with the Guards but over half of them appear in a range of elected and appointed positions after serving as officers. A number were elected or appointed as constables or other police positions. Some won political contests for local offices and others were recognized leaders of the Democratic party in the 1850s and beyond. Despite their lack of financial and business connections, these men forged connections and made names for themselves with their service in the Montgomery Guards.

The politically appointed position at the customs house at the port of Chicago offers the best example of how officers in the Montgomery Guards benefitted from their ties to one another. In 1846, Chicago was designated as a federal port of entry. That meant that duties on imports and exports would be charged at the Chicago customs

\(^{35}\) As Robin Einhorn explains, “City government played an active role in promoting urban growth and, thereby, the fortunes of businessmen who had staked their futures on Chicago’s development.” For more on how the “booster model” operated in nineteenth-century Chicago and the role the railroads played in the system, see especially chapter two, “The Booster System of City Government” in Einhorn, *Property Rules*, 28-60; and “Booster Dreams” in chapter one and chapter two, throughout, in Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*.

\(^{36}\) The exceptions are Charles E. Peck and James L. Howe of the Chicago Cavalry. Peck, a saddle and harness maker by trade, was appointed as the city’s fire chief between 1847 and 1849, following the resignation of Stephen Gale, an officer in the Chicago Guards. Howe, the city baker in the 1840s, was elected as the city marshal between 1852 and 1854 and served as the seventh ward alderman in 1855-56. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 1, 183-185.
house. The Collector of the Port, the head of customs in the city, was therefore one of the most powerful and important appointed political positions in the entire area for most of the nineteenth century. The Collector of the Port was in charge of the customs house, where as a sub-treasurer of the U.S. government, all imports and exports and duties charges were under his control. His salary was based on a percentage of the money handled by the customs house. In 1847, only $21.75 were charged in duties. By 1848 this had jumped to over $1000 and in 1855 it reached an antebellum high of over $500,000. In 1857, the value of the imports and exports that passed through the port of Chicago and the duties charged on them was greater than the value of business at any other government department.37

In 1846, William Snowhook was appointed the special surveyor of the port of Chicago and when the port was federalized a few months later, Snowhook became the first Collector of the Port, appointed by President Polk. He served until 1849, when a Whig appointee held the collector’s position until 1853. In 1853, when the Democrats regained the executive office, Snowhook returned to the position of collector. The business of the port had grown by this point so a deputy collector was needed. Thomas Kinsella, captain of the Montgomery Guards in 1849, was appointed to serve under Snowhook. In 1855, Snowhook retired from the collector’s office in order to launch his law career. Kinsella remained as deputy collector and Philip Conley was appointed as the collector. Furthermore, the business of the port had grown so substantial by this time that

37 The Collector of the Port was also the disbursing agent of the federal government and was the custodian of all public buildings in the district. He was able to dictate what needed to be built and to whom contracts would be given, as well as appointments for smaller positions in these buildings. Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 1, 243-244; Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 2, 385.
an aid and a second aid to the collector were appointed. Henry Cunningham, an original
officer of the Montgomery Guards in the early 1840s, and James Stenson, who in 1858
became a second lieutenant in the Guards, were appointed as aids to the collector.\(^{38}\)
Although Philip Conley’s name does not appear in the rosters of the officers of the
Montgomery Guards, in 1855 he was the treasurer of the Hibernian Benevolent
Association, which was formed in 1848. In 1855, the president of the Hibernian
Benevolent Association was Thomas Kinsella and Henry Cunningham and James
Stenson were on the executive board. The connections forged by the associations of these
men in the Montgomery Guards, cemented by their later activities in the Hibernian
Benevolent Association, lead to their appointment to financially powerful political and
business positions in the city.\(^{39}\)

\(^{38}\) The Montgomery Guards were useful in more than simply acquiring positions. In 1859, James
Stenson was suspected of being “in the habit of getting intoxicated and leaving the Custom House
door open at night.” A passing night-watchman discovered the door of the Custom House open
late one evening and when he looked inside, Stenson supposedly “rushed out of the building,
presented a pistol to [the watchman’s] breast,” threatening to shoot the man if he did not leave
promptly. The officer left but later arrived at Stenson’s home with a few other officers. As they
attempted to arrest him, supposedly “a party of his friends [likely Kinsella and Cunningham]
rushed out from the Custom House” and, in the words of the \textit{Tribune}, “rescued the prisoner.”
Stenson’s friends then supposedly locked him inside the Custom House until morning, when he
was again arrested by the authorities. His $1000 bail was posted by Michael Gleeson, the captain
of the Montgomery Guards, who was also Stenson’s brother-in-law. \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October
31, 1859.

\(^{39}\) Further evidence that the Montgomery Guards helped these men create a network of alliances
which lead to political posts which would not otherwise have been open to them, given their lack
of personal wealth is that the appointees other than these men were all native-born and generally
had fathers or other family members who were real estate and railroad industry leaders in the city.
For instance, Charles Pullman, the brother of railroad car tycoon George, worked in the
collector’s office in the early 1870s, after his brother had already made a name for himself in the
city by engineering the raising of central Chicago’s buildings by about six feet in order to
accommodate the city’s new sewer system. Einhorn, \textit{Property Rules}, 137-140; Andreas, \textit{History
of Chicago}, vol. 1, 243-244; Andreas, \textit{History of Chicago}, vol. 2, 385; 1855-6 \textit{The Chicago City
Throughout the 1850s, Snowhook, Cunningham, Kinsella, and Conley, as well as Michael Gleeson, were found wherever Democrats gathered. Although these men were not always the candidates, they were the organizers of meetings, the lead speakers, and the acknowledged leaders of the Democratic party. For instance, when the Democratic party split in 1856 between those who supported Stephen A. Douglas and those who supported President Buchanan, the Tribune often referred to the local pro-Douglas camp as the “Snowhookites.” While not all Irishmen in the city were Democrats, the officers of the Montgomery Guards were.

Partisan politics did not always divide Chicagoans. For instance, when the Civil War broke out, Kinsella and Conley joined with other business and political leaders, across party lines, in a Military Finance Committee, which controlled funds raised in the city in order to equip volunteers who joined the Union Army. Kinsella, Conley, and Gleeson also lead the charge to unite the various Irish militias that by 1861 existed in the city. The result of these efforts was the Illinois Twenty-third Regiment.

On April 20, 1861, Kinsella, Gleeson, and Conley, along with other well-known Irish Chicagoans, signed a letter that appeared in the newspapers, calling “all Irishmen in favor of forming a regiment of Irish volunteers to sustain the Government of the United States in and through the present war.” This rally resulted in the creation of the Twenty-third Regiment. Michael Gleeson had been the captain of the Montgomery Guards since 1853, and he became captain of Company B in the Twenty-third regiment, bringing his

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40 See this and other instances of these men’s leadership of the Democratic party in Chicago: Chicago Tribune, September 2, 1854, March 10, 1856, April 23, 1856, October 23, 1857, October 29, 1857, April 19, 1858, April 20, 1858, February 14, 1860.
42 Chicago Tribune, April 22, 1861, April 24, 1861; Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 2, 190-191.
militiamen with him, including second lieutenant Edward Murray. Also joining the regiment were the Chicago Jackson, Shields Guards, and O’Mahoney Guards, all volunteer independent Irish militias in Chicago founded in the 1850s. Additionally, the Emmet Guards joined the Ninetieth Illinois Regiment and Owen Stuart, who was the First Lieutenant of the Emmet Guards in 1858, rose to the rank of colonel by 1863. James Mulligan, captain of the Shields Guards, and his officers James Quirk and Charles Moore became the colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major, respectively, of the Regiment. It seems that, although the Montgomery Guards had been Chicago’s leading Irish militia for almost twenty years, the Shields Guards were rising in prominence.43

The raising of the Mulligan’s Irish Brigade was the ultimate proof of the loyalty of these Irishmen to their adopted homeland. One letter in the Tribune once again harkened to Revolutionary War hero Montgomery, saying that “Irishmen…are now as true…as when Montgomery led you, to seal with his life’s blood his devotion to the cause of freedom.”44 While the era of the Montgomery Guards was giving way to the era of Mulligan’s Irish Brigade, there were yet other benefits that these Irish-American military men sought from their dedication and demonstration of their loyalty to the United States.

Transforming Irish Militias into Irish-American Nationalism

There were many similarities between the Montgomery Guards and later Irish-American nationalist groups like the Fenian Brotherhood and Clan na Gael. They were all

43 Former members of Chicago’s Irish militias also joined the Illinois Sixty-seventh Regiment, Company B. Peter Caldwell, an officer in the 1858 Montgomery Guards, was first lieutenant of this company. Chicago Tribune, May 23, 1861, June 12, 1861; Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 2, 289, 292, 294.
44 Chicago Tribune, April 24, 1861.
American organizations of Irish and Irish-American men and they all allowed their members to form social and political networks in urban America. All of these groups also supported Irish nationalism. There was a difference, however, between how the Montgomery Guards and later Irish-American nationalist organization balanced their American and Irish goals. The Montgomery Guards emphasized their commitment to the United States with their name selection, organizational structure, and activities, while keeping their Irish identity visible. The Fenian Brotherhood, on the other hand, put the emphasis on Ireland. Nonetheless, their demonstration of their loyalty to America was also very important.

In fact, the Civil War, during which the Fenian movement flourished, made it easier for Irish-American nationalists to translate their hopes for Ireland into the language of Union patriotism. Liberating the oppressed by force of arms struck a familiar chord with most Chicagoans, whether it was through the Union Army or with the Fenian Brotherhood in Ireland. Instead of simply demonstrating their allegiance and fitness for citizenship in the United States, the Fenian Brotherhood in Chicago used the loyalty demonstrated by its ethnic militia predecessors and their participation in the Union Army to gather support for the Irish nationalist movement in Chicago.

Although the Montgomery Guards were in many ways a thoroughly American organization, the Guards generated one of the first public declarations regarding Irish nationalism in Chicago. On July 4, 1842, the Montgomery Guards made their first official public appearance. William Egan, representing the city business and political leaders, presented the Guards’ Captain Patrick Kelly with an American flag to mark the
Egan, an Irish-born Protestant, was also the organizer of the city’s Irish Repeal Association, which existed between 1842 and 1844. At the Montgomery Guards’ opening ceremonies, Egan held the American flag aloft and announced that it “[unfurled] to the breeze the name of the illustrious Montgomery.” Egan reminded them that Montgomery was “but one of the many sons of Erin’s Isle that planted the seed of liberty in a foreign land, and watered it with his blood.” He asked that the spirit of Montgomery “inspire” the men of the militia to “yield an equality to all.” But he also reminded them that Ireland “has claims on you yet.” Captain Kelly responded that the Guards would “[add] fresh laurels to our adopted country.” He compared the American flag, a “harbinger of freedom, the hope of the oppressed and the terror of tyrants,” with the British flag, which, he said had “marked [the globe] with cruelty and oppression.” Kelly pledged that the Guards would “wage unceasing war upon the oppressors of mankind.”

While loyalty to the United States was the supposed first goal of the Montgomery Guards, even these opening marks reveal the seeds of Irish-American nationalism within the ideology of the group.

Ethnic militias often maintained links – ideological or concrete – to causes in their homelands. For instance, German-speaking societies held festivities in honor of their

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45 Egan was an Irish immigrant of the Anglican faith who was one of the city’s first doctors and by 1842 had already made himself a substantial fortune in real estate. He was also one of the city’s most respected orators and was invited to speak at some of the city’s most important occasions. For instance, Egan gave the first address at the ceremonies which marked the opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 1, 168, 234, 276, 132; Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 2, 568; General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844; Illinois Public Land Purchase Records, 1800-1990, accessed through ancestry.com.


Named after the ancient Irish warriors, the Fianna, and their leader Fionn mac Cumhaill, the Fenian Brotherhood was formed in New York City in 1859 as the American counterpart to the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), organized the previous year by Irish nationalist James Stephens. The Fenians dedicated themselves to obtaining Irish nationhood though force of arms, in cooperation with the I.R.B..\footnote{D’Arcy, “The Fenian Movement,” 1-17.} Although the Fenian Brotherhood was an Irish-American nationalist organization, it was supported or at least tolerated by other Americans because, like earlier ethnic militias, participation in Fenianism allowed Irish-Americans to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States. Its leaders actively and successfully courted the support of Americans of various ethnicities and socio-economic statuses by focusing on the commonalities between the Irish nationalist cause and both the American Revolution and Civil War.

The first Fenian circle in Chicago was organized in the late 1850s and supposedly drew on the membership of the Irish militias. Of course, in 1861, these militias were drawn into the Union Army. As other scholars have explored, the Irish regiments of the Union Army were a breeding ground for Fenianism. The Irish regiments that were almost entirely organized in Chicago, the Twenty-Third, the Ninetieth, and the Sixty-Seventh,
were no exception. About a half-dozen men in the Twenty-Third and Ninetieth
Regiments can be positively identified as Fenians in Chicago before the end of the war.
But the Twenty-Third, organized in 1861, and the Ninetieth, organized in 1862, did not
return home until the summer of 1865. While not all of the original members of these
regiments stayed in for the entire course of the war, if these regiments were filled with
Fenians, the bulk of them would not have been in Chicago until after 1865.\(^{50}\)

The 67\(^{th}\) Regiment, however, was a different case. During the Civil War, the
known Fenians in Chicago were most likely to have served in the 67\(^{th}\). The Sixty-Seventh
was enlisted for only three months service in the summer of 1862 so most of these men
were at home for the better part of the war. Company B was led by John F. Scanlan, who,
along with his brother Michael, was one of the first Fenian heads. John Scanlan’s second-
in-command in the 67\(^{th}\) was Peter Caldwell, an officer from the Montgomery Guards.

Alongside Scanlan and Caldwell, at least six more members of Company B can be

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\(^{50}\) In order to trace members from the antebellum militias, to Civil War regiments, to Irish-
American nationalist organizations, I first compiled a list of known Irish-American nationalists in
Chicago from both secondary and primary sources: John C.W. Bailer’s *Chicago City Directory,
For the Year 1864-5* (Chicago: John C.W. Bailey, Publishers, 1864), xlii; *Halpin’s Eighth Annual
Edition Chicago City Directory 1865-6* (Chicago: T.M. Halpin, Compiler and Publisher, 1865),
xxii, accessed through ancestry.com; “Souvenir for the St. Patrick’s Day Centennial Celebration,
compiled a list of militia members from the rosters provided in Andreas, *History of Chicago,* vol.
1, 284-286 and Andreas, *History of Chicago,* vol. 2, 160-162, as well as the rosters of officers
which appear in the city directories of 1844 and 1855. *General Directory and Business Advertiser
of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844 With a Historical Sketch and Statistics Extending from
1837 to 1844* (Chicago: Ellis and Fergus, Printers, 1844); *1855-6 The Chicago City Directory and
Business Advertiser, Fourth Edition, with A New Map of the City* (Chicago: Robert Fergus, Book
and Job Printer, 1855). Finally, I cross-referenced these two lists with each other and with the
Illinois State Archives, *Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls,* RS 301.020, available
sources were used to corroborate or fill in information, they will be listed in the footnotes below
as appropriate.
confirmed as members of either the Fenian Brotherhood or Clan na Gael, the Brotherhood’s Irish-American nationalist successor.\textsuperscript{51}

The 67\textsuperscript{th} Regiment Company B, the Fenian Brotherhood, and the Montgomery Guards are linked in another, if somewhat indirect, way. Michael O’Brien was a soldier in Scanlan’s company and he was also an officer of Chicago’s Fenian Circle in 1864-65. O’Brien was also a leader in Chicago’s boot and shoemaker trade union, which seems to have been fertile ground for Fenianism, as at least three other known Fenians were members. Two of these tradesmen-Fenians were also in Scanlan’s Company B with O’Brien. Finally, Michael Gleeson, captain of the 23\textsuperscript{rd} regiment, Company B, and former captain of the Montgomery Guards, provides the tenuous link between Fenianism and antebellum militias, as Gleeson was also a leader of Chicago’s boot and shoemaker’s union.\textsuperscript{52}

The membership of the 23\textsuperscript{rd} regiment’s companies I and K suggests a final link between the antebellum militias and Fenianism. Contemporary reports note that these companies were formed from the ranks of the Shields Guards.\textsuperscript{53} Among these two companies were some of the most vocal and active Fenians of the 1860s in Chicago. For instance, J. Fitzpatrick, a private in company I, was the lead organizer and contact person

\textsuperscript{51} One of the difficulties in establishing overlaps in the membership of the antebellum Irish militias and Chicago’s Irish Civil War regiments and Fenian Brotherhood circles in the city is that there are no existent records of the rank and file members of the militias. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, militia officers Snowhook, Kinsella, and Gleeson were organizers of the Irish regiments, but, except for Gleeson, did not serve in Civil War regiments themselves. Furthermore, since the militia officers were probably older and wealthier than the rank and file militiamen, they likely left actual wartime service to their juniors. Therefore, there very well could be a substantial overlap between the rank and file members of the militias and the members of Chicago’s Irish Civil War regiments; however, little firm proof exists.

\textsuperscript{52} Chicago Tribune, February 18, 1864; Irish-American, April 9, 1864; Chicago Tribune, April 5, 1864;

\textsuperscript{53} Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 2, 190
for the Fenian Fair in Chicago in 1864. Fitzpatrick served under Company I officers James Fitzgerald and Patrick Ryan, who had both been Shields Guards officers before the war. Also in Company I were antebellum Shields Guards officers J.J. Sullivan and Timothy Shanley. A.L. Morrison, a private in company K, another mid-century Chicago Fenian, served under Owen Cunningham and James Lane during the war, both of whom had been Shields Guards officers prior to 1861. Furthermore, Company K’s captain, Daniel Quirk, was the brother of James Quirk, the Lieutenant Colonel of the 23rd Regiment. Both brothers were Shields Guards before the war and known Fenians after the war.54

While the concrete links between the antebellum militias and Fenianism are few, the connections between the antebellum militias and the Civil War regiments, on one hand, and the Civil War regiments and Fenianism, on the other hand, are fairly certain. Whether or not the antebellum militias and the Fenian Brotherhood shared the bulk of their members, another aspect links these two groups: the Fenian Brotherhood served many of the same social and political purposes that the ethnic militias did. It provided a network of members which helped the Fenians attain professional and political advantages. It also functioned as a social organization which hosted picnics, parades, balls, and banquets.55 But if ethnic militias were the predecessors of the Fenian Brotherhood, the Fenian Brotherhood highlights the ability of ethnic organizations and


their members to respond to the changing atmosphere of their adopted nation. Antebellum militias had demonstrated their ethnic associations through their organizational names and sometimes with their flags and uniforms or when they paraded or picnicked on special days, like St. Patrick’s Day. But for the most part, they operated just as any other antebellum militia would have. They were intent to prove that they could be just like their native-born counterparts. Fenians, on the other hand, emphasized their allegiance to the United States at the same time as they promoted Irish nationalism.

The way in which the Fenians were able to make the cause of Irish nationalism popular among other Americans is best displayed during Chicago’s Fenian Fair of 1864. In November 1863, Fenian leaders from around the United States met in Chicago for their second annual national meeting. At the meeting, they decided to hold a fair the following spring, to raise funds to support an invasion and armed insurrection in Ireland. The fair began in the last week of March 1864. Organizers secured donations from all over the U.S. and Ireland to be sold, the profits going to support the Fenian Brotherhood and its goals in Ireland. Donations ranged from socks knitted by Irishwomen to pieces of bog and crowbars supposedly used to force evicted Irish tenants from their homes. Americans of all ethnicities donated items as well. The Polish Central Committee of the United States sent a portrait titled “Order Reigns in Warsaw” to be sold at the fair. The boot and shoemakers of Chicago, led by Fenians Michael O’Brien and

56 Coverage of the meeting and reports on its proceedings can be found in the Chicago Tribune, November 3, 1863, November 6, 1863, and November 7, 1863.
Thomas Kearns, contributed a number of pairs of their handiwork.\textsuperscript{59} The Chicago Irish Regiments, the 23\textsuperscript{rd} and the 90\textsuperscript{th}, collected funds from among their ranks and sent $483 and $507, respectively, to the fair organizers.\textsuperscript{60} Military equipment, home furnishings, and cash donations poured into the Chicago offices of the organizers in the weeks before the fair.\textsuperscript{61} Overall, the fair raised an estimated $54,000.\textsuperscript{62} The donations and financial support that Americans offered to the Fenian Fair indicates a certain level of acceptance of the Fenian cause.

Fenians made common cause with Americans by highlighting their hatred for England during a time when anti-British sentiment was running high in the Union. For instance, during the November 1863 organizational meeting, the Fenians passed resolutions which were printed in the \textit{Chicago Tribune}. They declared their allegiance, first and foremost, to the United States and the U.S. Constitution and stated that they were prepared to take advantage, in Ireland’s name, of the conflict between England and the Union, caused by, “the hostile attitude assumed by England, her oligarchy, merchants and press, towards the United States.” Younger Fenian members were called to “study military tactics, and apply themselves sedulously to learn the use of arms...to offer their services to the United States Government... against England’s myrmidons.”\textsuperscript{63} The Fenians believed that their hatred for Britain would be well received in the Union.

\textsuperscript{59} Kearns and O’Brien pledged to gather donations from others of their trade from around the nation because they were “believers of the just and holy cause” of the Fenian Brotherhood. As noted earlier, O’Brien and a number of other boot and shoemakers were members of Scanlan’s 67\textsuperscript{th} Regiment, Company B. \textit{Chicago Tribune}, February 18, 1864, April 5, 1864; \textit{Irish-American}, April 9, 1864.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, March 4, 1864, March 26, 1864.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Irish-American}, April 9, 1864.
\textsuperscript{62} Griffin, “‘Scallions, pikes and bog oak,’” 97.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 7, 1863.
The Fenians also explained during their November meeting that the “personal freedom, and equal political rights” they found in America made their mission to free Ireland all the more heartfelt. They invited other Americans who were “loyal to the principles of self-government” to support the Fenian cause and accused their English enemies of wanting to “crush the growth of republican principles, and stop the onward march of freedom in this land.” In January, the Fenians ran an ad in the Chicago Tribune, announcing the fair and its aims, likening the Fenian cause to Poland’s struggle against Russia. The Fenians asked that Americans give them the “same generous greeting Franklin received from an Irish Parliament, when the English Government refused his application for the redress of American Colonial grievances.” By recalling themes of the American Revolution and the Civil War, the Fenians portrayed themselves as both loyal Americans and loyal Irishmen.

These words did not fall on deaf ears. The Tribune reflecting on the Fenian meeting in November, announced that “the resolutions [of] the brotherhood are full of patriotism.” The writer believed that Fenianism would “wed a deeper and stronger feeling of loyalty to the cause of Freedom and the Union” among its members because of their hatred for Britain. The Tribune also reported that Fenianism “should excite the attention not only of the Irish people, but of the American people, who must view with approbation the marching of any enslaved nationality to freedom [and] liberal institutions.” In the weeks before the fair, one writer to the Tribune said that the Fenians were “the only class of Irish Catholics who heartily support the Government in its struggle with the rebels”

64 Chicago Tribune, November 7, 1863.
65 Chicago Tribune, January 28, 1864.
66 Chicago Tribune, November 6, 1863.
67 Chicago Tribune, November 3, 1863.
and therefore, he supported the Fenians unconditionally.\textsuperscript{68} Another writer recognized the value that military training in the U.S. would afford Irish nationalists and he called on them to enlist in order to be trained for their future battles.\textsuperscript{69} These Americans realized that the Fenians could help the Union by fighting in America, even if they only did so in order to gain experience for future battles in Ireland.

Politicians and military leaders, both local and national, also supported the Fenians and their fair. Montgomery Blair, the Postmaster General, sent support to the fair along with a letter saying that he supported the Irish because members of the British aristocracy “openly sympathize with the rebels…notwithstanding their abject horror of slavery, for the perpetuation of which the rebels are fighting.”\textsuperscript{70} At the opening of the fair, Illinois Lieutenant Governor Francis Hoffmann remarked that “England, which in its professions has always been an angel of light, and in its practical operations a devil of darkness,” would hopefully “tremble at the shouts which the free Irishmen of America are…sending forth.”\textsuperscript{71} Brigadier General Julius White wrote that the “oppressor of Ireland” was the same “government who permits ships of war to be built, equipped, manned, and sent forth from their ports, to destroy the commerce of our country, under the flag of rebellion.” He bemoaned the fact the English manufacturers were “furnishing the arms, and the ammunition, by which our brothers, and sons are being daily slaughtered” and said that they aided “in perpetrating the vilest system of slavery ever known.” White encouraged “Irishmen [to] take heart” because “‘Freedom’s battle’” was

\textsuperscript{68} Chicago Tribune, February 9, 1864.
\textsuperscript{69} Chicago Tribune, December 31, 1863.
\textsuperscript{70} The Fenian, March 13, 1864.
\textsuperscript{71} Chicago Tribune, March 29, 1864.
taking place in America and would soon reach Ireland’s shores.\textsuperscript{72} These men echoed the claims of the Fenians: Britain was a common foe of the United States and Ireland. Fenians could assist their homeland and their adopted country at the same time.

Some Americans, while reflecting on Fenianism, used the same discourse about freedom and independence that the Fenians used to promote their cause. Illinois Governor Richard Yates sent a letter to the Fenians, expressing his support for their cause. He said that he had “always felt sincere sympathy with the struggles of the Irish people for independence, and greet in your movement one of the means by which on a not too distant day, may be added another to the list of ‘free nations.’”\textsuperscript{73} Lieutenant Governor Hoffmann spoke in Yates’s place at the opening ceremonies, as the Governor was out of state assisting the President, and said that he hoped that results of the fair showed “that free Americans would like to see down trodden and oppressed Ireland also free.” At the end of Hoffmann’s opening speech to the fair, the Fenian men marched out of the hall, under the Fenian and American flags, to the tune of the Marsellaise.\textsuperscript{74} For many politicians, supporting Irish nationalism may have been a calculated political move, meant to garner the support of Irish voters, but their comments on the fair nonetheless reflect their acceptance of Fenianism as a movement dedicated to principles that also undergirded the American struggles during the Revolution and the Civil War.

The Fenians also appealed to other ethnic groups in Chicago. In addition to sending the portrait of “Order Reigns in Warsaw,” the Polish Central Committee of the United States contributed a number of other paintings and tableaux to be auctioned off at

\textsuperscript{72} The Fenian, March 13, 1864.
\textsuperscript{73} The Fenian, March 13, 1864.
\textsuperscript{74} Chicago Tribune, March 29, 1864.
the fair. One of the committee’s members, Dr. Majewski, was the Polish representative at the fair. The Central Committee sent a letter to the fair organizers, writing of their wish that “every nation [would] enjoy liberty and be delivered from all foreign oppression.”

The German Turners, constituted largely of exiles of the 1848 revolutions, were ardent Republicans, who found common cause with the national goals of Fenianism. They supported the fair by marching in the opening ceremonies alongside the Fenians.

Furthermore, Chicago’s budding labor organizations took an active role in the Fenian Fair. The Journeymen Tailors, predominantly German, marched in the opening parade.

The Iron Molders’, Typographers’, and Horseshoers’ Unions came together to support the Fenians, taking part in the opening day festivities and the Boot and Shoemakers of Chicago sent donations to the fair. While some of the leaders and certainly a large portion of the members of these unions were Irish, many of these trade unions were in fact multi-ethnic.

Support for Fenianism appears to have been widespread in 1864, but opposition to the movement also existed. The most vocal opponent of Fenianism in Chicago was an Irishman, Bishop James Duggan. In January 1864, Bishop Duggan announced from the pulpit that active members of the Fenian Brotherhood would be excluded from the sacraments. He objected to not only the secrecy of the organization, but also the implied

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75 Irish-American, April 9, 1864.
76 Chicago Tribune, March 29, 1864.
77 Chicago Tribune, March 28, 1864.
use of physical force to achieve their goals. Duggan probably did not realize that his denouncement of the Brotherhood would only bring more supporters to the Fenian cause.

Duggan’s attempt to block Fenianism caused non-Irish Chicagoans to comment on the importance of the separation of church and state affairs. One Tribune reader wrote that, although he believed the Fenian quest to be as likely to succeed as Ponce de Leon’s search for the fountain of youth, he felt Bishop Duggan’s interference to “be an unwarrantable interference of the church with political matters” and that Duggan’s speech regarding Fenianism in Chicago was an “attack upon the liberty of thought and action which can never be successful in a land whose mission it is to develop the highest freedom, political, social and religious.” Although this particular Chicagoan may not have specifically supported Fenianism, he supported their right to exist without the interference of the Catholic church.

Fenian leaders echoed this argument, also calling for the separation of church and state. One Fenian wrote to the Tribune that he believed that Duggan was attempting to interfere with Fenians’ “legitimate exercise of our civil and social privilege as freemen under the American Constitution.” The Fenian wrote that this interference was even more abhorrent because it came from someone “who may claim to represent or to receive instructions from any foreign potentate or foreign official.” Less than a decade after the peak of Know-Nothingism, Irish nationalists in Chicago were able to obliquely respond to one of the most common complaints about Irish Catholics: that they were bound to honor the wishes of a foreign monarch, in the form of the Pope. Bishop Duggan’s attacks

79 Chicago Tribune, February 2, 1864.  
80 Chicago Tribune, February 3, 1864.  
81 Chicago Tribune, February 2, 1864. Italics in original.
on Fenianism, while doing nothing to slow the movement’s growth in the city, afforded Fenians an opportunity to disprove nativist fears about Irish-Americans’ supposed allegiance to the Catholic church.

Fenianism, therefore, addressed many of the concerns antebellum nativists had about Irish-Americans. Through their discussion of Irish nationalism, organizers of the 1864 Fenian Fair in Chicago were able to highlight their dual allegiance to Ireland and the United States. Because the U.S. was in the midst of the Civil War, Fenian spokesmen drew parallels between the cause of the Union and Ireland’s struggles. Furthermore, because of Britain’s involvement with the Confederacy, Irish-Americans and northerners found camaraderie as foes of a common enemy. Finally, even attacks on Fenianism from the Catholic leader of Chicago provided Fenians an opportunity to refute nativist claims that the Irish were beholden to a foreign prince and therefore incapable of behaving as responsible citizens in a democracy. Like the ethnic militias that were the forming grounds of the Fenian ranks, Fenianism was an American independent voluntary military organization which gave immigrants an opportunity to assuage the fears of nativists while also allowing immigrants to maintain links to their homeland and their fellow migrants.

Conclusion

Those who were concerned about the effects of immigrants on the future of Chicago were mostly likely to be the city’s boosters, who had invested in the city and required that their largely immigrant workforce contribute to their version of the city’s future. By the 1850s, Chicago was beginning to show the signs of urbanization, the first signs of which included disease, crime, and poverty, which threatened to upend the
boosters’ plans. In response, the city leaders sought ways to mitigate the damage they believed that immigrants were causing the city. But immigrants were not merely the objects of these efforts. Nativism was one half of a conversation between the native-born elite and immigrants. In some cases the conversation was less than civil. This chapter, however, demonstrates that immigrants found ways to gain a certain type of respectability by creating their own versions of American organizations like the antebellum militia. This allowed immigrants to demonstrate their ability to understand and perform the accepted norm of respectable American citizenship, while still retaining their ethnic identity and creating social and political networks with other immigrants and also native-born Chicagoans. These immigrants were demonstrating that they were “respectable American citizens” who were “content to submit to the laws.”

The transformation of Irish independent militias into Civil War regiments and then into Civil War-era Fenianism demonstrates that, just as nativism changed over the course of the nineteenth century, so did the ways in which immigrants responded to nativism. The Civil War gave Irish immigrants an opportunity to even more forcefully advertise both their ethnicity and their loyalty because they could relate the cause of Irish nationalism to the cause of the Union in the United States.

82 Chicago Literary Budget, August 19, 1854.
Chapter Four

Cross-Ethnic Alliances and Educational Policy, 1872-1893

Public education, city leaders believed, was the bulwark of democracy and therefore they believed that immigrant children’s attendance at public school was necessary to assure the next generation valued and upheld democracy. As a result, city leaders implemented and changed educational policy between 1872 and the early 1890s to attempt to have as many immigrant children in public schools as possible. This chapter examines three changes to educational policy in Chicago and Illinois to demonstrate that the urgency of assuring that immigrant children were being educated in a way that would ensure future loyalty increased as fears about social revolution increased. These changes were: the inclusion of German language instruction in public schools, the removal of the King James Bible from public school classrooms, and the enacting of compulsory education measures.

Yet, immigrants were not merely the objects of these changes. When the changes encouraged parents to send their children to public schools, rather than punished those who did not, the Irish and German immigrants and ethnics supported or tolerated the policies. In 1889, however, the state passed the Edwards Law, which allowed local school boards to decide whether or not private schools were fit to operate, by whatever definition the board chose, and also required that English was the main medium of teaching, whether schools were public or private. The Edwards Law infringed on what many immigrants believed were their personal freedoms to educate their children as they saw fit. German Catholics, Irish Catholics, and German Lutherans banded together to make sure the state legislature changed the law. Despite city leaders’ increasing concerns
about immigrant radicalism, Irish and German Chicagoans were able to challenge
nativist-inspired policies by forming a cross-class, cross-ethnic, and cross-religious
cohesion.\footnote{The movement to remove the King James Bible from public schools has been well documented by historians who study anti-Catholicism and nativism. Historical works treating the Edwards law have noted the cross-ethnic alliances created by antagonism to the law, how the Edwards law reflected a growing state control of both public and private education, and ethnic and class codification in response to the law. Very few works even note the occurrence of bi-lingual education in Chicago during the 1870s and none of the studies of nineteenth-century education examine all three of these policies as part of a larger narrative. Therefore, while the works on these topics are incredibly useful, they obscure the longer trajectory of how nativism and immigrants shaped nineteenth-century urban educational policy. John C. McGreevy, Catholicism and American Freedom: A History (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003); Vance Randall, Private Schools and Public Power: A Case for Pluralism (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994); Lloyd Jorgenson, The State and the Non-Public School, 1825-1925 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987); Charles Shanabruch, Chicago’s Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); James Sanders, The Education of an Urban Minority: Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Edward Kantowicz, “The Emergence of the Polish-Democratic Vote in Chicago,” Polish American Studies 29, No. ½ (Spring – Autumn, 1972): 67-80; Ira Katznelson, Kathleen Gille, and Margaret Weir, “Public Schooling and Working-Class Formation: The Case of the United States,” American Journal of Education 90, No. 2 (Feb., 1982): 111-143; Roger E. Wyman, “Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890,” The Wisconsin Magazine of History 51, No. 4 (Summer 1968): 269-293.} In the early American Republic, educational and political leaders argued that public education was integral to the creation of a strong democracy: citizens had to be educated in order to participate in politics. As immigration increased throughout the nineteenth century, education took on new importance. At the end of the Civil War, as Chicago’s policies continued to expand in line with mass immigration, city leaders began to alter the educational policy. They believed immigrants needed to be convinced and in some cases cajoled into sending their children to public schools where they would learn the ways of American democracy. The immigrants responded to these changes and shaped the future of education in Chicago.
While all three of the changes discussed demonstrate the concern of many Chicagoans regarding the effects of immigration on their society, they also show the power immigrants retained in shaping educational policy. As labor conflicts grew later in the century, however, members of the school board and city council realized that these measures were largely ineffective in boosting school attendance. Education policies became progressively stricter, culminating in the 1889 Edwards Law. The backlash of Catholic and German communities against the Edwards Law, was a major contributor to the election, in 1892, of Illinois’ only Democratic governor between 1857 and 1913, the German immigrant John Peter Altgeld.

**Education, Democracy, and Immigrants**

Public schools gave every American child a common experience and a basic understanding of how democracy worked. They also provided a place for immigrant children to learn English and “the right conduct toward public and private property and civil authority.” As a *Chicago Tribune* editorial explained, it was “not only the right, but the duty, of the State to educate its youth,” especially in a republic, as republics were founded on the principle “that man can govern himself. But ignorance and self-

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2 Pierce, *History of Chicago*, vol. 3, 384. Horace Mann, the antebellum public school reformer, believed that a “thorough common-school education” was “vital to the Republic” because citizens needed to be educated not only on specific topics, but in the ability to think critically and examine institutions and arguments so that they could elect responsible leaders and not be swayed by demagogues. Mary Mann, *The Life of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 150, 266. See also Horace Mann, “The Necessity of Education in a Republican Government (1838),” *The Life and Works of Horace Mann*, vol. 2, Mary Mann, ed. (Cambridge, 1867), 143-188. On educating immigrants, see: Charles Shanabruh, *Chicago’s Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 54-77; McGheeey, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 186-187; Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority* (throughout).
government are incompatible." The writer went on to say "there are millions of parents who have not the means of providing an education for their children, and millions who are not alive to its importance." In order to secure the future of democracy, the state had to provide public education for its children.

The first public schools in Chicago were established in the early 1830s, under less than perfect circumstances. Children of all ages were educated together, often nearly 100 students to one teacher, without books, desks, or writing slates. Most of these early classrooms focused on memorization of mostly Biblical verses. By 1850 less than twenty percent of school-aged children attended school in Chicago. In 1854 the city’s first superintendent was appointed, with a mission to reform the schools. Progress was slow and uneven but by 1870 almost 30% of school-aged children attended school daily.

Immigrants were underrepresented in the ranks of the educated throughout this period. Foreign-born residents comprised nearly 50% of the overall population in 1870, but less than 20% of public school children were immigrants. While some school children may have been the native-born sons and daughters of immigrants, adult illiteracy also shows an imbalance between native and foreign-born. In 1870, over 85% of adults who could not read or write were foreign-born. Some of these adults may have been literate in other languages, but at the very least they did not read or write English. Given the large

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3 Chicago Tribune, February 7, 1875.
4 In 1835, the Illinois state legislature established the first free elementary schools. The first Catholic schools were opened in the city about a decade later. Chicago did not have a high school until 1850. Pierce, History of Chicago vol. 1, 279; Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 1, 239-40; Charles Shanabruch, Chicago’s Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 21-24.
percentage of immigrants who were German-speaking, it is no surprise that one of the first moves to improve education in Chicago targeted this population.

In late nineteenth-century Chicago, the largest percentage of immigrants were from German states. They represented between 36 and 37 percent of the foreign-born population of the city in 1870, 1880, and 1890. The next closest group was the Irish, who dropped from about 27% of the foreign born population in 1870, to about 15% in 1890. After the Irish came immigrants from Scandinavia, who only represented about 9% of the population. Immigrants from German-speaking areas of Europe consistently represented about 16% of the overall population of the city. While most of these German immigrants were Lutheran, many were Catholic and they established the city’s first German-speaking Catholic parishes.

No data exists on the extent to which these immigrants and their children spoke English but clearly there was a large German-speaking community in late-nineteenth century Chicago.

In 1865, the Chicago Board of Education passed a measure to provide instruction in German in the grammar and common schools of the city for non-German speaking students. The outlying areas of Chicago were heavily populated by German speaking immigrants and ethnics and therefore trade was frequently conducted in German in the mid-nineteenth century. The Chicago Tribune remarked on “the value of a knowledge

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9 In this period, a “common school” referred to a school that was free for all attendees. A “grammar school” prepared young men (almost exclusively) for college.
10 Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1865.
of the German tongue to any man who proposes to live in the Northwest.”\textsuperscript{11} The high schools had taught German for a number of years, but as a special committee reported to the school board, by the time students had reached high school age, it was nearly too late to learn a foreign language. The committee recommending the change to the curriculum had been appointed by the Board to investigate both the usefulness and feasibility of extending German language instruction. The committee acknowledged that the study of any foreign language enhanced students’ educational experience and improved their English.\textsuperscript{12} But the learning of a foreign language was not merely an academic exercise.

Underpinning the committee’s recommendation to increase German language instruction in the public schools of Chicago was a concern about how best to entice immigrants to send their children to public schools. The committee noted with alarm that attendance by pupils born in Germany had decreased by 50\% between 1860 and 1863, while the number of German immigrants had grown during the same period. They argued that many of these children were being educated in private German language schools or not coming to school at all and that steps must be taken “to induce the foreigners who come to our shores, to avail themselves of the free education tendered to them.” The report stated that “a great number of those German children, who now attend private German-English schools would prefer to be educated under our liberal system of free instruction in the public schools, if they can find there an adequate opportunity to study simultaneously the English and the German language.” The committee proposed that teaching German would allow German parents to continue to communicate with their

\textsuperscript{11} For instance, as late as 1870, all public notices in the city were posted in both German and English. Herrick, \textit{The Chicago Schools}, 60.
\textsuperscript{12} See “Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Education,” as reprinted in \textit{Chicago Tribune}, July 29, 1865.
children in their home language, while the students retained the benefits and, most importantly, the Americanizing influences of the public school system.\textsuperscript{13}

The committee added that children needed to attend the public schools because “only an educated people is able to maintain its liberty, and because education is the very foundation of morality and material success.” They acknowledged the importance of immigration in the United States, by remarking that the country needed “for the further development of its immense and incalculable resources a continued stream of foreign immigration.” The committee sought to identify the immigrants’ “interests with the interests of this country, and make them love and respect our institutions.” The committee stated that “the process of incorporating the foreign element into the great body of the American people would be greatly accelerated” if more immigrants sent their children to public schools. The best – and possibly the only – way to accomplish the incorporation of these immigrants was to have them send “their children to the public schools, there to be instructed in common with the children of American parents.”\textsuperscript{14}

German parents happily supported the inclusion of German instruction in the public schools. Since there were not enough German teachers to have one at every school, the school board dictated that Germans teachers would be posted only at schools where parents submitted a petition to have a German teacher. A number of neighborhoods gathered to get the required number of signatures to have a German teacher installed in their local schools. For instance, parents of 150 students at one school met at a saloon downtown to support German-language education at their local school.

\textsuperscript{13} See “Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Education,” as reprinted in Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1865.
\textsuperscript{14} See “Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Education,” as reprinted in Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1865.
School board member Lorenz Brentano was present at this and other similar meetings which produced similar effects: the expansion of German-language education throughout the Chicago schools.\(^\text{15}\)

The addition of German language instruction at the lower level of schools seemed to have the desired effect. Board of Education member Fritz Goetz looked back from 1893 when German language instruction was on the list of possible money-saving cuts, and defended the cost by commenting “when German tuition was first offered, there were many private schools in the northern part of the city. The parents soon broke off their connections with them and matriculated their children in the public schools.” He also noted that W.T. Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, had supported inclusion of German in the curriculum precisely because “‘the immigrant should be educated in the same schools as the native-born population, if he is to exercise political power.’” The Commissioner claimed that the inclusion of German had caused many German parents to send their children to public schools, and that, therefore, “these German children, under the tutelage of the public schools, grow into American citizens and are just as good as the offspring of Anglo-American citizens…”\(^\text{16}\)

There was some hostility, however, to expanding German language studies in the public schools. A writer to the *Tribune*, who signed his name as “An Anglo-American,” was perturbed that German language instruction was being increased at the expense of tax-payers. Lorenz Brentano, one of the members of the committee which suggested the


expansion of foreign language instruction, responded that this person was sounding as if he was from the days of “Anglo-American Know-Nothingism” and commented that no one was forced to learn another language and that the writer could happily “remain ignorant.”\textsuperscript{17} A “Laboring Man” agreed with Brentano: having long “felt the want of it,” he desired his three children to learn German, but could not afford to send them to private school. He expressed his approval of the Board’s decision and said that he spoke for “three-fourths of the laboring people of Chicago, as they most desire to have their children better educated than they themselves are.”\textsuperscript{18}

By 1866, the school board had determined that its experiment of increasing German language education was a success and the program was expanded to other schools in the city. Every year throughout the 1860s and 1870s the program expanded, despite ongoing public discussion of whether or not instruction of German should be paid for by public tax funds. In 1870 there were eight German teachers in the public schools, teaching 2,597 students. In 1890, nearly a quarter of the student population, over 34,500 students, were being taught German by 242 teachers.\textsuperscript{19} Until the outbreak of World War I, German was a flourishing and important part of education in the Chicago public schools.

The inclusion of German language instruction in all levels of public schooling in Chicago was instituted by those who believed it gave more students a chance to participate in commerce in the polyglot world of nineteenth-century Chicago. But the committee appointed by the school board revealed that their biggest concern was Americanizing immigrant children. Enticing German immigrants to send their children to

\textsuperscript{17} Chicago Tribune, July 7, 1865, July 8, 1865.\textsuperscript{18} Chicago Tribune, August 7, 1865.\textsuperscript{19} Shepherd Johnston, “Historical Sketches of the Public School System of the City of Chicago” (Chicago: Clark and Edwards, Printers, 1880), 74-77; Herrick, The Chicago Schools, 61.
public schools by providing German-language instruction was one of the first measures undertaken in this spirit, but not the last.

**Removing the King James Bible**

The second major change to educational policy in the city came in September 1875, when, with little public discussion beforehand, the Chicago Board of Education amended the rules governing education to eliminate the reading of the Bible and its use as an educational tool in the public school classrooms. All ten of the fifteen Board of Education members present voted in support of the change. Like the addition of German language instruction, the removal of the Bible was undergirded by a desire to entice immigrants to send their children to public schools. But, just as the inclusion of German language instruction targeted Germans, removing the King James Bible targeted Catholics.

If many Americans believed that public schools could create good American citizens out of the children of immigrants, the Catholic church loomed as a formidable foe in this struggle. Many Protestants believed that the Catholic church, by its very structure, was anti-democratic. They viewed the Pope as a foreign prince and believed

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21 Opinions in Chicago regarding removal of the King James Bible from public schools did not differ dramatically from the discussion of the subject in other American cities at the time. The purpose of this section, therefore, is not to argue that the process of removing the Bible from public schools was any different than it was elsewhere; rather, this section seeks to present the policy change as it unfolded in Chicago and to establish that the removal of the King James Bible from public schools in Chicago was part of a series of changes to educational policy in the city that were increasingly concerned with getting immigrant children into public school classrooms.
that Catholics were beholden first to this foreign ruler, and only second to their adopted nation. Protestants feared that children who were educated by the Catholic church would not understand the responsibilities of democratic citizenship because they had been educated in what Protestants believed to be a monarchical institution. They feared Catholic immigrants would follow the instructions of the priests, the Pope, or any anti-democratic demagogue when they voted, rather than examining the issues and candidates with a critical mind. The public schools could provide a powerful antidote to what Protestants believed was anti-democratic poison. For instance, the *Tribune* reported that high crime rates were the fault of immigrants who “never saw the inside of an American School House, but on the contrary are immigrants from Ireland, Spain and other Catholic countries.”

The Catholic church urged their flock to send their children to Catholic schools because, as one writer in Chicago’s Catholic *Western Tablet* explained, sending Catholic children to public schools was like “casting…children into some Ganges…or immolating them to some grim and bloody Moloch…spiritual murder.” The church believed that a moral education, rooted in Catholicism, was necessary for the spiritual health of their children. Chicago’s Catholic hierarchy instead praised the school of the Sisters of Mercy because it gave its pupils a proper Catholic education. The Sisters of Mercy opened the first free school for girls in Chicago in 1847. The *Western Tablet* reported that, in 1852, over 300 children received “an education solid and useful, based upon religion, and pervaded by its spirit.” Evidence that these children were well-educated, the paper

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22 *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1857.
23 Catholic leaders frequently referred to public schools as “godless.” *Western Tablet* as re-printed in *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 1853.
continued, lay in “the piety of the pupils – the frequent reception of the sacraments, and in the silent but no less real influence in the cause of religion and morality which these children exercise in the bosom of their families.” Not only were the souls of the children safe, but the children were assumed to be spreading the virtues of Catholic education to their family members.

Catholics were opposed to public schools because teachers read Bible verses at the opening of the school day and frequently used the Bible to teach reading and writing lessons. Furthermore, public school children were often required to memorize passages from the Bible and recite them on command in class. The Protestant justification for including the Bible in the public school curriculum was that it taught morality, without which no one, Protestants believed, could become a good citizen. Catholics opposed the use of the King James Bible because it was the Protestant version of the Bible and contained, according to many Catholic leaders, errors created when humans translated God’s word into English. As Bishop Van de Velde of Chicago explained in the early 1850s, the King James version of the Bible was, “revised, pruned, and corrected by the king’s commissioners” and that it “still contains a very large number of willful perversion and corruptions, having been converted into the spurious work of man.” He went on to say that the King James Bible presented “heretical opinions as revealed truths, [and] thus insidiously propagating error and heresy, under the pretended sanction of the God of Truth.”

Beginning in the 1840s, Catholic leaders in east coast cities began arguing that since the public schools used the King James Bible, they were in essence Protestant

24 Western Tablet, February 14, 1852.
25 Western Tablet, January 31, 1852.
schools. Therefore, they felt that the public funds which supported public schools should be distributed on an even basis to private Catholic schools. After all, they reasoned, if the state was supporting schools that were, in essence, Protestant schools, they should also support Catholic schools.\textsuperscript{26}

The debate over the division of the school funds was interrupted by the Civil War. There was little talk in Chicago of the topic for most of the 1860s. But in November 1869, the first article appeared in the \textit{Tribune} suggesting that perhaps the Bible should no longer be read in the public schools. The Chicago \textit{Advance}, a Congregationalist newspaper, argued that the public school system was the top priority and to that end, the reading of the Bible in classrooms could be sacrificed if it meant that Catholics would be more likely to send their children to public school. The editor of the \textit{Advance} wrote that the reading of the Bible in public schools was “not consistent with religious freedom, or safe for the schools.” The writer urged his readers to maintain their own religious beliefs, but not to insist that tax dollars supported any creed, Catholic, Protestant, or otherwise. The \textit{Tribune} agreed: “This whole subject is one which has its difficulties, and it should be treated with kindness and toleration to conflicting opinions, and with a view to render the public schools the greatest possible benefit to the greatest possible number.”\textsuperscript{27}

This sentiment was echoed in other publications in the city. The \textit{Western Journal of Education} argued that the Bible was “abused” in the public schools because it was read “in a hap-hazard, unsystematic, humdrum, mechanical way” and it was therefore,

\textsuperscript{26} Charles Shanabruch details the debate over the distribution of public funds between public and private schools in Chicago. While this same battle had reached fever pitch by the mid-1840s in east coast cities, the discussion was not broached in Chicago until almost a full decade later. Shanabruch, \textit{Chicago’s Catholics}, 21-25.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 14, 1869.
“useless as a devotional act.” According to the *Western Journal* the Bible should be removed from the schools because it was a “torment to Catholic children…, a constant taunt to the Jews, and mere trifling in the eyes of…the professed and practical Rationalists.” The writer encouraged Protestants to put themselves in the place of Catholics, and especially Catholic children, who he claimed were ostracized and scorned for not taking part in classroom prayers. He said that the Bible was “kept in the schools by a zealous minority, as a token of sectarian triumph.”

The *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* also supported removing the Bible from the public schools. The paper argued that “not only…the reading of the Bible, praying, and the singing of religious hymns, but also the contents of textbooks” must be “extremely offensive to the children of Jewish parents” and that it was unfair to use public funds to support these supposedly public schools until all traces of a “Protestant tinge” had been removed. Then, and only then, the paper argued, could compulsory education laws be justly put into place.

Although the debate about the Bible had been occurring for a number of years in the pages of the city’s newspapers, it was not particularly heated, nor does it appear that anyone expected the school board to remove the Bible from the public schools in the fall of 1875. But, the school board’s minutes of the weekly meetings reveal that their decision unleashed a fury of activity. On October 8, a petition of teachers was presented to the Board, asking that the Board reconsider the decision. Along with these petitions, from teachers at the Brown School and the Calumet Avenue Primary School, was also a letter

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from the principal of the latter school, asking that the petition be withdrawn.\(^{30}\) Even within a single school, the Board’s decision was creating controversy.

Letters condemning the Board’s action were received from meetings of citizens, a Methodist Preachers’ meeting, and the Presbyterian Ministerial Association.\(^{31}\) One Board member, George C. Clarke, presented an amendment that would have allowed readings of only Psalms and Proverbs since, he claimed, these parts of the Bible were shared by Christians and Jews; his fellow board members voted against this change.\(^{32}\) This attempt having been rejected by the majority of his fellow Board members, Mr. Clarke prepared a minority statement, which he presented at the November 12 meeting. Clarke wrote that the schools established by the state existed in order to “promote in the end the best citizenship.” Like many other Protestants, Clarke believed that this “improved citizenship” would be best achieved by “children led by some simple daily exercise to the recognition of God as supreme” and “His laws.” Clarke wrote that “this recognition of God and His word is one of the plainest points of separation between a civilized and barbarous nation.” He admitted that taxpayers of various religious creeds supported the schools and that the public schools “should not be the medium of sectarian religious instruction” but he also believed that “the same great body of tax-payers recognize God as the Supreme Being, and the Bible as His word, and the source and standard of the highest morality.” The objecting Board member suggested, therefore, that only the Old Testament be read in schools, which he felt would certainly not be objectionable to any Christian or Jew. His suggestions were once again rejected by his fellow Board members.

\(^{30}\) Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, October 8, 1875.
\(^{31}\) Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, October 29, 1875, November 12, 1875.
\(^{32}\) Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, October 29, 1875.
Only two other Board members voted with Clarke: D.S. Covert and Charles H. Reed.\textsuperscript{33} This seemed to contradict Covert’s September 28 vote in support of omitting the Bible from public schools.\textsuperscript{34}

The Board did not entirely ignore the backlash against its decision. Its members continued to debate the subject and held two additional votes on the topic by the beginning of November. In each vote, the Board overwhelmingly agreed to stand by their September decision to remove prayer from the schools. The \textit{Tribune} praised this decision. The paper pointed out that there were two extreme groups with opinions on the matter, extreme Catholics and extreme Protestants and that these two groups agreed on one thing: the public schools were “godless” and this was to the detriment of American society. Protestants meant that the lack of the King James Bible made the schools godless; Catholics felt that the lack of a Catholic education was godless. The Catholic extremists demanded public funds for private schools and the extreme Protestants demanded that the Bible be kept in the public schools. The \textit{Tribune} argued that the Board had done the right thing because “if a proposition to enforce the reading of the Bible in the public schools were submitted to the people, it would be defeated without a doubt by…[an] overwhelming majority.”\textsuperscript{35}

Some Protestants continued to rail against the Board’s decision. In January of 1876, the Reverend S.W. Duffield of the Eighth Presbyterian Church in Chicago spoke at a weekly meeting of Presbyterian ministers about the omission of the Bible from the schools. The \textit{Tribune} reprinted his speech, in which he traced the rise of democracy and

\textsuperscript{33} Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, November 12, 1875.
\textsuperscript{34} Chicago Board of Education Proceedings, September 28, 1875.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 14, 1875.
republican governments to the precepts found in the Bible. Duffield argued that “to put absolute Bible instruction out of the schools is not only the grossest ingratitude, but the weakest paltering with elements destructive to liberty.” He said that “Romanists, Jews, infidels, and the like” were “either behind the present status of civilization or actually hostile to it” and therefore should not be “fostered in their opposition or discontent.” In response to the argument that the Catholic conscience was offended by the King James readings, Duffield argued that “Romanists” tended toward “priestcraft, bigotry, intolerance, superstition, and mental slavery.” To the argument that Catholics were taxed for schools that their children could not attend for reasons of conscience, Duffield answered that what they received in return for their taxes was no less than a republican form of government. Finally, like most who feared the result of “godless schools,” Duffield argued that the Board’s decision would serve to make criminals because only the Bible could teach children how to become upstanding citizens. Duffield said that the Republic had “the right of self-preservation, and should use it by preparing intelligent, loyal citizens, and preventing hostile encroachment upon any part of the methods employed to this end.”

The Tribune stated that Duffield’s opinions were not only not popular, but did not reflect the religious toleration upon which American democracy was founded. The battle over the Bible in the public schools, while it contained aspects of anti-Catholicism, as demonstrated by Protestants such as Reverend Duffield, was primarily a battle over the definitions of democracy and liberty and how best to secure the future of the Republic in

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36 Chicago Tribune, January 10, 1876.
37 Chicago Tribune, January 16, 1876.
a time of mass immigration. Like the expansion of German language education, the Chicago school board removal of the King James Bible to make public schools more appealing to immigrants who might otherwise send their children to private schools. While some opponents of the change felt that the removal of the Bible weakened the public schools’ abilities to create good citizens, the majority of people ultimately felt that having schools which were acceptable to Catholic parents was of greater importance.

**Compulsory Education Laws**

Language and religion, however, were not the only threats to the public schools’ abilities to make good citizens. Throughout the 1870s, labor struggles grew more intense in Chicago. In 1877, the year of the national railroad strike, which had deadly effects in Chicago, the *Tribune* reported that “it is time that we fully realized the fact that we have in this country those who may properly be called [the dangerous classes].” The *Tribune* explained that “immigration has brought to our shores crowds of the worst as well as of the better classes of foreigners, with their ignorance, their prejudices, their hatred of the rich, and their revolutionary doctrines.” It claimed that Americans “now have the Communists on our own soil, and can listen to their revilings of capital and their exhortations to violence in saloons, on the street corners, and at occasional meetings on the public squares and in dingy halls.” The paper cited the “rough, brutal class of laborers, colliers, miners, and railroad strikers, who organize as ‘Molly Maguires,’ and in various ‘leagues’ and ‘unions,’ to intimidate capital.” While the *Tribune* advocated swift and immediate action by the state when rioting and violent strikes broke out, it was also careful to suggest “milder and precautionary measures, which…appeal to the better
susceptibilities of even the worst classes.” Education, the article argued, was one of these methods, along with religion, or moral training.\textsuperscript{38} In addition to removing the Bible from public schools and increasing German language instruction, compulsory education measures first appeared in Chicago in the 1870s.

As labor agitation increased in 1873, the \textit{Tribune} published an article discussing the relationship between violent strikes and education. The less education a population received, the paper claimed, the more inclined they were to rebel with violent strikes against their labor conditions. Educational standards and strike activities were cited from England, Belgium, France and Germany. The article concluded that “the more education, the less waste of productive power and the less wrangling between masters and men.”\textsuperscript{39}

In 1874 the Illinois legislature passed a compulsory education bill. It established that children between nine and fourteen must be sent to school for three months of every year and that clothing and books would be provided to children who were too poor to purchase them. Fines were established for parents who ignored the law: between $1 and $5 per week of absence. But as one article pointed out, the fines were far lower than the amount a child might earn working during the same period. Yet according to the \textit{Tribune}, the passage of the bill would still reduce crime. As the \textit{Tribune} explained, “if the State has the right to hang men…it has a right to educate them, to save them from being hanged.” The article furthermore cited evidence that public school increased a worker’s “producing capacity by 50 per cent, while higher training will increase it 200 or 300 per

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, July 29, 1877.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 18, 1874.
cent.” So, in order to cut future crime and increase future productivity, it was a duty of the State to make sure the children were educated.\textsuperscript{40}

Chicago’s socialists, in many cases the source of labor agitation, also supported a national compulsory education bill. They argued that, as machines run by children and women increasingly replaced skilled workmen “at low wages,” “the gradual extinction of skilled master workmen” was becoming reality. One speaker at the meeting pointed out that “it was deplorable that in this philanthropic community small children, who should be at school learning the elements of manhood and womanhood, are toiling night and day before ponderous machines, earning a scanty pittance at the cost of becoming dwarfed and crippled in body and mind.” They argued that “a National system of compulsory education,” along with industrial education, would “afford the rising generation the choice of a variety of related occupations, instead of limiting every individual worker to the chances of a single handicraft.”\textsuperscript{41} A \textit{Tribune} article in 1883 announced that the main push for a compulsory education bill in Michigan came primarily from “the labor element, which has for the last two years been warring in this State to prevent the employment of children in factories.”\textsuperscript{42} Similarly, in Illinois, the \textit{Tribune} reported that “the object [the compulsory school law] framers had in view, the reduction to a minimum of child-labor and illiteracy” could be easily achieved if the law were enforced properly.\textsuperscript{43}

The 1880 federal census showed that one out of every five men in the U.S. was illiterate, according to the \textit{Tribune}. The paper explained that “this fifth man cannot be reclaimed; it is too late. But his children can and must be educated if our free institutions

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\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, January 19, 1871, January 22, 1874.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 14, 1881.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, May 18, 1883.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, February 14, 1888, December 30, 1888.
\end{footnote}
are to be preserved” and that “upon its early solution depends the life of the Great Republic.” Furthermore, the writer warned that “out of the ranks of the 5,000,000 children for whom we provide no school accommodations tens of thousands of Communists will emerge upon the stage of active life” and that these young Communists would be “ready to deposit the perjured ballot in the sacred urn, and equally ready to carry and apply the torch of the incendiary. Illiteracy is the enemy of property rights.” The Tribune therefore recommended that people reconsider a rejected proposal by Illinois Senator John Logan that “$60,000,000 annually from the whisky excise” be devoted to educational costs in the state. The paper stated that using these funds to get vagrant children into schools was necessary “if the country is to be saved from danger.”

In 1883, a revision of the 1874 law was passed. It required children between eight and fourteen to attend public or private school for a minimum of twelve weeks a year.

Despite the compulsory educational laws, labor agitation continued to grow in the city, as did fear of socialist uprisings. In 1885, the Tribune interpreted an 1875 speech given by then President Grant as having meaning beyond the issue of sectarian and public schools. Grant had declared that he stood firmly against giving public tax funds to Catholic schools. The Tribune reported, “In the ten years that have passed since the delivery of this speech many events have happened to prove that the worst dangers of the future will spring from an ignorant citizenship.” The article stated that among these dangers were “communistic agitation, labor riots, and debauched municipal politics” and were the result of “a citizenship lacking in intelligence and self-respect.” The article

44 Chicago Tribune, April 8, 1883.
45 Chicago Tribune, March 13, 1890.
46 Chicago Tribune, September 30, 1875.
called for stricter compulsory education measures because, “after all that the public schools have done the illiterate voters still hold the balance of power…The public school is not only an agency for the increase of intelligence, but it is a training ground for citizenship.” 47 Education was imperative in the fight against rising labor discord. But the discussion of compulsory education became even more emphatic after the Haymarket bombing.

Fears of a socialist uprising sprang to an all-time high in the city and brought increased consternation over the issue of compulsory education and public school curriculum. On December 20, 1888, the Tribune reported that Der Freisinnige Schulverein was opening a secular Sunday school, not unlike religious Sunday schools, but instead of religion, it proposed to teach science, history and anarchy. The Tribune announced that anarchy’s “dupes and victims, most of them coming here from countries where they knew government only as despotism, and ignorant of our language and of our history, carried with them the superstitions and vagaries learned from fanatical teachers.” The article laid the blame for the bomb throwing at Haymarket at the feet of these immigrants and asked, “what is to prevent these people from raising another generation of Anarchists?” 48

To the Tribune, the answer was clear: improve and enforce compulsory public education. “These children who are to be taught anarchy one day in the week should receive the antidote of it five days in the week,” suggested the writer. The writer assumed that “it is highly probable that many of them are not in any week-day school;” that they

47 Chicago Tribune, August 1, 1885.
48 Chicago Tribune, December 20, 1888.
were instead working during the week. While this may have been an erroneous assumption, it opened the door for the argument for compulsory education. A compulsory education law was on the books, but it held school directors responsible for making sure children in their area attended school and it was generally not enforced. This article called for women to venture into neighborhoods where the families “who are now convinced that society exists only for their oppression and by kindness win them to sending their children to the week-day schools.” The writer argued “what is chiefly needed is to bring the mothers and children into touch with our institutions; to enable them to read for themselves the truth that anarchy has been in every age a folly, crime, and a failure.” In conclusion, the article summarized that “policemen’s clubs,” which had been used time and again in Chicago against striking workers, “cannot disperse the Anarchist schools” but that “their influence can be reduced to a minimum by getting five days’ sound teaching as an offset to one day of unsound teaching.”

The *Tribune* argued that urban immigrants had no training in the principles of American government and so it was “most essential that the vast army of the children of foreigners be tutored in patriotism, and learn as soon as possible those vital principles which distinguish the Republic from all other nations on earth.” It is no surprise, then, that the state of Illinois passed a new compulsory schooling measure on May 24, 1889, three years after the anarchist bomb at Haymarket. The new law amended the schooling ages to between seven and fourteen and extended the school year to a minimum of sixteen weeks. The *Tribune* reported that “it was intended chiefly to correct the abuse of

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49 *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1888.
50 *Chicago Tribune*, November 25, 1888.
child labor in factories and to impose the rudiments of an education upon the thousands of wild little Arabs roaming the streets of Chicago.” But two changes to the law went far beyond previous measures. The first was that private schools could be a substitute for public schools only if “approved” by the local school board. No details were given regarding on what basis private schools should be judged, except that they enforced and operated by the stipulations of this compulsory education bill. Second, the new law stipulated that instruction in all schools, public or private, must be in English. While at one time German language instruction had been supported and promoted in public schools, concerns about Germans – who were thought to be the root of socialism, anarchism, and the events at Haymarket – were tied to their language. Now, in order to protect children, the state decided that German must be eliminated from the curriculum, instead of included. The Edwards Law, as it came to be known, was met with even more consternation than the decision to remove the Bible from the schools fourteen years prior.

**Reaction to the Edwards Law**

Catholic and German-speaking parents and educators immediately spoke out in response to the Edwards law. Their reaction reveals the power that immigrants and ethnics retained and were able to wield, not only to overturn the law itself, but to change the direction of Illinois politics. German-speakers and Catholics believed confronting the Edwards law was a matter of protecting their rights to educate their children as they chose. In November of 1890, the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* reported that 5000 German

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51 *Chicago Tribune*, January 8, 1890.
52 *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 1890. A similar bill was passed in Wisconsin. The Bennett law, as it was called, received backlash from Catholics and Lutherans, just as the Edwards law did in Illinois.
Lutherans met in Chicago in protest of the Edwards law. “With what holy seriousness, with what perseverance and activity the Germans Lutherans have fought against the atrocious compulsory school law, the object of which is the abolition of the German language!” the paper commented, noting that the hall was decorated throughout in the American flag, as if to affirm the crowd’s Americaness. The *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* referred to the Edwards Law as “the attack of the Know-Nothings,” “tyrannical,” and a “crime of liberty in education” that took away parental choice in the matter of schooling.

Catholics were primarily concerned by the stipulation that private schools had to be approved by the local school board and that, in order to avoid being prosecuted for not sending their children to school, parents had to “prove” that their children had attended private school. Catholics were worried that hostile board members could easily claim that the parent had not sufficiently proven the child’s attendance or could deny approval of the school, since very few qualifications for approving or disproving private schools were given. A rumor circulated in late 1889 that the State Superintendent of Education, Richard Edwards, for whom the bill was named, had given local school boards authority to refuse to approve Catholic schools if the aim of the school appeared to be to “draw and keep away children from public schools.” The Assistant Superintendent did not help

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55 *Chicago Tribune*, November 29, 1889.
matters when he publicly announced that no such ruling had been made, adding the phrase, “as far as I know.”

German citizens were concerned about the English language requirement for curriculum: “no such school shall be regarded as a school under this act unless there shall be taught therein in the English language reading, writing, arithmetic, the history and geography of the United States.” State officials seemed unsure about what exactly the language requirement entailed. By the letter of the law, it seemed to say that all teaching must be done in English but legislators clarified in interviews to newspapers, saying that as long as some of the school day was in English – or at least half – these schools would be allowed to teach as they chose. The vagueness made leaders in the German community uneasy.

One writer to the Tribune cited the case of the Lutheran parochial school in Thornton, just south of Chicago. The Cook County school board had refused to approve the school “unless the English branches were taught from the same text-books as are introduced in the public schools there and unless the school would submit to…examinations by the board.” Similar threats were being made against private schools throughout the state. The Illinois Staats-Zeitung said that the worst offenses were taking place “in rural districts by the bucolic school boards and the obliging courts” where officials were opposed to schools “are not based on the fact that they are parochial

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56 Chicago Tribune, November 29, 1889.
57 Chicago Tribune, November 17, 1889.
58 Chicago Tribune, November 17, 1889, November 29, 1889, December 2, 1889.
59 Chicago Tribune, November 29, 1889.
schools, but that they are German schools.” The two major German papers in Chicago held largely the same opinion of the compulsory education law. The *Freie Presse* and the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* both felt that compulsory education was a good measure, but that the current law should be amended to state that teaching should include “English reading and writing” and other subjects, rather than stating that the subjects should be taught in English.\(^{61}\)

Republican and Democratic politicians began to cautiously advocate similar revisions of the law. Former Illinois Governor John M. Palmer, who was running for the U.S. Senate as a Democrat in 1890, suggested that the law, as it was written, left too much discretion to local school boards, where local “prejudices or feelings might lead to injustice” on the matter of whether or not a parochial school should be “approved” and whether or not English was sufficiently taught in the school.\(^{62}\)

At a meeting of the German Lutheran Missouri Synod in August 1889, the Reverend H.C. Schwann denounced the Edwards law, as well as the Bennett law, a similar statute enacted in Wisconsin. Schwann “advised his coreligionists and fellow-countrymen to organize a movement for their repeal,” and “announced that the synod would advise its members to support such candidates [for public office] only as will vote for the withdrawal of those laws.” Schwann wrote to the *Tribune* on December 2, 1889, further explaining his views on the compulsory education law. He said that he spoke both with and for the German Lutheran community when he encouraged German Lutherans

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\(^{61}\) *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1890, April 8, 1890, April 12, 1890.

\(^{62}\) *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1890.

\(^{63}\) *Chicago Tribune*, November 17, 1889.
not to support candidates unless the candidate was going to work to repeal the law because, “As citizens, because we are convinced that said laws are unnecessary, unfair, dangerous, and in many respects absolutely unjust.” He went on to say that “as Lutheran Christians,” they must vote for candidates who would change the law because, as it was, the law would “greatly jeopardize, nay, almost abrogate, that beneficial and most highly cherished institution (dearer to us in this, our new country, than all others) liberty of conscience and religion.”

An organized political movement against the Edwards law had begun.

As the 1890 election neared, conversation over the compulsory schooling law continued. The Reverend C.F.W. Supper, pastor of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Illinois said that he and his church objected to the law because of “the clause [regarding approval of private schools] in the power of any Board of Education or directors to rule out the parochial schools of the Lutheran Church.” The Reverend commented that the law was “‘a Republican one and we must hold the Republican party responsible for it to that extent.’” While he denied directly advising his listeners to vote the Democratic ticket, the political threat in his statement was clear.

The position of Superintendent of Public Instruction was up for election in 1890. Although he had originally said he was not interested in running for office, Henry Raab, who had in December announced his unequivocal opposition to the compulsory education law, declared his candidacy on the Democratic ticket for the position. Raab suggested changes to the Edwards Law, rather than a full repeal. His proposed

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64 *Chicago Tribune*, December 2, 1889.
65 *Chicago Tribune*, March 12, 1890.
amendment stated that “no interference shall be had with the course of study pursued at parochial schools and that the English branches shall not be taught there if not desired.” In other words, he wanted an amendment stating the parochial schools could teach as they saw fit.

The Evangelical Lutheran parishes in and around Chicago held a meeting in April of 1890 with 175 representatives present. They announced that they were “not opposed to Public Schools” and felt that “the state would be delinquent in its duty, if it failed to give the growing youth an opportunity to study the elementary subjects.” Furthermore, they supported the teaching of English and only rejected the Edwards law because it threatened parental choice and, by doing so, challenged the very existence of private schools. They concluded that “they must, therefore resort to votes, if no amendments will be made.”

Germans of other stripes quickly joined the fight. The *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* reported that Germans, whether Catholic, Protestant, or non-religious, would all band together on this question and would likely support Democratic candidates in the upcoming election. *Die Abendpost* claimed that a meeting of German-Catholic organizations in Illinois was being kept secret “to prevent any interference from the

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66 *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 1890.
Republican Party” because of the party’s support for the law. Die Abendpost confirmed that Chicago’s Germans were abandoning the Republican party over the schooling issue. “The German electors are convinced that the party of Benjamin Harrison is very different from the party of Abraham Lincoln. They found it is advantageous to stick to the Democratic party.” The paper further confirmed that Germans saw the schooling measure as part of a nativist mission: “Though the Democrats have their faults and are not all angels, they at least are no fanatics, hating foreigners and are no Monopolists…The Democrats also supported the freedom of conscience and teaching.” Similarly, the Staats-Zeitung accused the Republican party of being overwhelmed by nativist attitudes: “To the many Germans, who once belonged to the party of the noble A. Lincoln, it is indeed painful to know that these intolerant and persecuting persons are active within the Republican party.” The paper stated that “the hatred of these recent Know-Nothings is directed with equal vehemence against the German Lutherans, and other German Protestants, as well as against Catholics, ever since the school controversy started in Illinois.” The Staats-Zeitung threatened that Evangelical Lutheran voters were of substantial number in the state and that, combined with other German Protestant church-

goers and German Catholics, the numbers would be overwhelming.\textsuperscript{72} German voters were turning en masse against the Republican party because of the Edwards law.

But not everyone opposed the Edwards Law. Slason Thompson, a Canadian immigrant living in Chicago, edited America, an anti-immigrant journal, in the late 1880s and early 1890s. He wrote in his autobiography that one of the main aims of America was to stage “a firm but moderate opposition to the political and educational policy of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, [and to promote] an abiding faith in the potency, as well as the necessity, of the American common school as the alembic in which all races, classes and creeds can alone be fused into the best material for American citizenship.”\textsuperscript{73} Thompson railed against those who he believed were opposed to the public school system. He claimed that “republicanism demands that the people be educated at the public expense” but that the goals of “the Roman Church (and in many instances the Lutheran) opposed the system of public education.”\textsuperscript{74} Thompson’s journal published a number of cartoons depicting the battle over the schools. One, in the fall of 1889, depicted a devilish figure, representing the Catholic church, crushing an American schoolhouse underfoot.\textsuperscript{75} Another depicted a stone archway, labeled “American institutions.” The keystone was the schoolhouse. Lady Liberty was depicted, holding her

\textsuperscript{73} Slason Thompson, Way Back When: Recollections of an Octogenarian by Slason Thompson, 1849-1929 (Chicago: A. Kroch, 1931), 289.
\textsuperscript{74} America, July 7, 1888.
\textsuperscript{75} America, November 21, 1889.
torch aloft, underneath the archway. The subtitle reads: “Remove the one stone and Liberty is crushed.”

Thompson wrote in October of 1890 that the Wisconsin Republicans were “fighting the battle of ‘the little schoolhouse’ against the hosts of Rome and of alien prejudice” and were “waging a winning fight upon the foes of universal education in the American language” against the “Roman priesthood and the Lutheran pedagogues” in response to the Bennett law, a measure similar to the Edwards law. But Thompson believed that the Republicans of Illinois were not putting up as much of a fight. He chided Illinois politicians for seeming willing to “surrender the principle of public inspection of private schools, and to forego instruction in English.” He called Illinois Republicans “cowardly and shortsighted.” He noted that “Roman priest and Lutheran pedagogue forget the hatred of three centuries to join hands in their disloyal and selfish warfare upon free schools.”

The discussion of the compulsory school law even sparked a new political party. Members of various “English, Scotch, Welsh, and Canadian societies in Chicago,” in response to the “attitude of the Roman Catholics and Lutherans towards compulsory education in Illinois,” organized a meeting of nearly 400 members “with full power to form an independent political party and declare the unswerving loyalty of the new party to the public school system” and this organization “will pledge its members to vote for no one inimical to the system as existing.” One unnamed leader was quoted as saying, “we will work strictly on American lines and will support none but dyed-in-the-wool

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76 America, October 9, 1890.
77 America, October 9, 1890.
78 America, October 9, 1890, p. 36.
Americans for office.’” He acknowledged that it might appear strange, “coming from a body of men the majority of whom are foreign born,” but they believed it was the only way to accomplish their goals, which were to form a “defense for American ideas.”

Like Thompson, these men were primarily immigrants themselves.

Despite the support of a vocal minority, by early 1890 it was clear that the Edwards law, as written, was doomed because, as the Tribune explained, both the Republican and Democratic parties felt that the “law is defective” that the parties “are agreed as to the features that need amendment.” The question of whether to amend it, replace it, or repeal it completely remained. The Tribune reported in May 1890 that German Lutherans had held a meeting advocating amending the Edwards law. The Republican state committee agreed with the notion that the law was flawed, addressing the issue in their plank by recognizing “the American public school system as the chief agency in securing intelligent citizenship and the chief bulwark of popular liberties.” The committee declared that, while they were in favor of compulsory education laws, they were “opposed to any arbitrary interference with the rights of parents or guardians to educate their children at private schools” and therefore supported an “amendment of the existing Compulsory Education law.” The Democrats offered similar, if slightly more emphatic, promises to amend the law to suit the wishes of German Lutherans.

As the national election of 1892 approached, however, the Edwards bill was still law. The Republicans began supporting complete repeal, and said they would replace the law with a new one “which will secure for each child an elementary education without

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79 Chicago Tribune, April 13, 1890.
80 Chicago Tribune, May 30, 1890.
81 Chicago Tribune, June 26, 1890.
82 For instance, see Chicago Tribune, October 14, 1890.
interfering with the right of parents to say in what school and in what manner a child shall be educated, and without authorizing civil authorities to interfere with private schools.” The Democrats supported complete repeal, but had not yet committed to replacing the bill. In the Democratic Party’s state platform, the Democrats attempted to lay blame for the passage of the Edwards bill at the feet of the Republicans: “We denounce the Republican party for enacting a law which tends to bring the cause of popular education into disrepute.” Since both Republicans and Democrats had worked together to pass the original bill, it was clear that the Republican’s announcement to completely repeal the law – to go above and beyond the measures of the Democrats – was largely an attempt to garner votes, as the national election drew near. While most Catholics were Democrats, German Lutherans hung in the balance.

Another issue at stake in the 1892 election was tariff reform. The Democratic party claimed that the tariff policy of the Republicans had led to “the forced employment of women and children in…factories.” Since the original intention of the Edwards law was supposedly to discourage child labor, the Democrats claimed Republican policies were the very reason the Edwards law had been needed. While running for governor in 1892, John Altgeld claimed that the Edwards law was a result of “Republican Nativists or Know-Nothings.” Although Altgeld publicly supported compulsory education in the late 1880s, as a candidate for governor he advocated repeal of the current law and remained quiet on whether or not it should be replaced.

83 Chicago Tribune, May 7, 1892.
84 Chicago Tribune, May 7, 1892.
85 Chicago Tribune, May 13, 1892.
86 Chicago Tribune, May 14, 1892.
The Democratic political maneuvering appeared to be working. In July, the *Tribune* reported that Republican German Lutherans “will not vote for the free trader Cleveland, but may vote for Altgeld and for the Democratic candidates for Lieutenant-Governor and the Legislature – because of the school question.” Washington Hesing, the editor of the German *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, told presidential candidate Grover Cleveland that the Germans of Illinois were “in opposition to the Republican party,” almost entirely because of the school issue. He noted the 1890 election of Superintendent of Public Instruction Raab, a Democrat, who replaced Edwards, the originator of the offending law. Raab’s election was almost entirely owed to the movement of German Lutherans to the Democratic party. Hesing predicted the same would happen in the 1892 national election.88

Hesing was right. Illinois voted to elect Democrats Altgeld and Cleveland to the governorship and the presidency. Altgeld began his inaugural address by discussing the Edwards law. As the *Tribune* pointed out, this was not entirely surprising since the “law was partly responsible” for his election. To the *Tribune*’s pleasure, Altgeld made a commitment to not only repeal the law, but replace it with another.89 On February 1, 1893, the Illinois state legislature repealed the Edwards Compulsory schooling law. It was repealed without a single member who was present voting against repeal. Republicans immediately proposed a replacement bill but passage was not achieved until later in the year.90 The new bill was not without its issues, but it satisfied religious opponents of the Edwards law and did not provide for local school board infringement on

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87 *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1892.
88 *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 1892, July 27, 1892.
89 *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1893.
90 *Chicago Tribune*, February 2, 1893.
private education. By early 1894, an independent commission had determined that the new compulsory school law was nearly unenforceable, both because of the way it was written and by the sheer difficulty of attempting to wrangle truant children, especially those with parents who did not seem particularly keen on educating their children. Governor Altgeld went on to find other ways to protect children from harsh working conditions, spearheading the movement to pass the Factory Inspection Act (1893) which forbade the employment of children under the age of fourteen, the same age at which children were no longer required to be in school. Instead of attempting to curb child labor for the sake of education and creating a stable democracy, restricting child labor became an end in itself.

**Conclusion**

The changing realities of American urban life meant that the concerns over how immigrants might affect the stability of the city and the nation changed as well. The Civil War fueled concerns over religious strife while labor upheavals brought the focus to bear on how education could combat the growth of socialism. The bomb-throwing at Haymarket motivated educational changes that were meant to directly curtail the influence of private schools, while still attempting to dampen a seemingly increasingly

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91 *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1893, January 20, 1894.
93 This suggests that Progressive Era anti-child labor laws in Chicago grew from a longer history of concerns about education and Americanization, and not necessarily from concern over child welfare, revealing the Reconstruction-era roots of Progressivism. Furthermore, these laws were not solely the work of an Anglo-Protestant reform movement.
threatening socialist influence in the city. But through all of these changes, immigrants retained a measure of control and asserted their rights to educate their children as they saw fit. While Catholics’ demands for public funds for private schools were never fulfilled, their devotion to parochial schools influenced the increasing secularization of public schools. When the educational rights of Catholics and German speakers were threatened by measures intended to curtail the spread of socialism, their actions at the ballot elected the first Democratic governor, a German immigrant, since before the Civil War. In the face of deep concern about how increasing numbers of immigrants would affect the future of American democracy, immigrants retained substantial power in the area of education by pressing their cases to be educated in a public system devoid of religion and amenable to their language, or by retaining the choice to educate their children in private schools. In this way, both the presence of immigrants, and the wielding of political power by immigrants, shaped some of the most important moments in education in late nineteenth-century Chicago. These changes followed the uptick in confrontations between workers and employers over hours, wages, and working conditions. These confrontations were not unique to Chicago: they were a product of industrialization.
Chapter Five

Industrialization and the Illinois Militia

In 1879, Chicago’s political and economic leaders successfully lobbied the Illinois state legislature to pass the 1879 militia law. This law critically changed the organization and activities of socialist militias, which were organized into separate ethnic militias, by eradicating the promotion of intimidation through armed marching in the streets. This watershed moment in the history of Chicago’s independent militias was a direct result of the mounting tensions between labor and capital in the process of industrialization in the years after the Civil War, which also overlapped with a period of increased immigration. While the federal government began to regulate immigration, partly owing to growing radicalism in Europe and America, this chapter demonstrates one way in which the concern about “foreign radicals” changed life for working class immigrants already in the United States.

Immigration and Labor, 1867-1886

Continuing social and economic changes in Europe drove emigration in the latter half of the nineteenth century. After reaching an all-time high in 1854, immigration to the U.S. slowed in the last few years of the 1850s, in part due to financial recession. In 1860, overall immigration to the U.S was about 150,000; almost a third of what it had been four years earlier. With the onset of the Civil War in 1861, immigration numbers dropped even further, to levels not seen since before 1845 and the beginning of Irish famine migration. But during the last two years of the war, immigration rose again, almost
doubling between 1862 and 1864. Changes within Europe, but especially the passing of the Immigration Act of 1864 made it easier and safer for immigrants to travel to the United States. The German states contributed about 30% of all immigrants to the U.S. between 1860 and 1900 while Irish immigrants constituted a declining proportion of all immigrants during the same forty years, ranging from almost 40% in 1860 to around 15% in 1900. Regardless of their contribution to immigration overall, the hard numbers of German immigrants living in the U.S. grew dramatically, from about 1.27 million in 1860 to over 2.6 million in 1900. The numbers of Irish wavered, with only a small uptick overall between 1860 and 1890, from 1.611 million to 1.615 million.¹

Chicago’s population, both native- and foreign-born, continued to grow. Between 1860 and 1870 the city’s population nearly tripled to almost 300,000 and went from the ninth largest American city to the fifth. Twenty years later, the population surpassed a million and Chicago became the country’s second largest city, a position it would hold well into the twentieth century. Over the last four decades of the nineteenth century, the proportion of foreign-born Chicagoans slowly declined from its all-time high of over 50% in the early 1850s. In 1880, immigrants made up about 40% of Chicago’s population and at the dawn of the twentieth century, foreign-born Chicagoans were slightly over a third of the overall population.

Of course, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, the number of Chicagoans with at least one foreign-born parent constituted an increasingly larger proportion of the

Although statistics are not available until 1890, the census for that year gives us an indication of the growth of second generation Chicagoans. In 1890 native-born Chicagoans with at least one Irish- or German-born parent outnumbered the foreign born populations from Ireland and Germany, probably for the first time. There were about 170,000 people in Chicago with at least one German-born parent, and only just over 165,000 German immigrants. Similarly, there were about 108,000 people with at least one Irish-born parent and only slightly over 70,000 Irish-born Chicagoans. While the numbers of Irish- and German-born Chicagoans stayed nearly the same over the next decade, the number of second-generation Irish and German Chicagoans more than doubled. The first and second generations together made up about 16% of the overall population of the city in 1890, but the expansion of the second generation meant that Germans, inclusive of first and second generation, constituted over a third of Chicago’s population by the turn of the century. In the Irish case, the first and second generation together constituted about 10% of the overall population of Chicago in 1890 and almost doubled by 1900. By the turn of the century, then, well over half of Chicagoans were immigrants or the children of immigrants.

These immigrants were not a homogeneous group, of course, but their place of birth went a long way towards determining how they would experience work and life in Chicago. Both Ireland and Germany were undergoing social and economic changes in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, but they were headed in opposite directions. Germany was quickly industrializing, which meant that many Germans had performed semi-skilled and skilled labor before they departed Europe. Some areas of Ireland, by contrast, were

2 See Appendices A, B, C, E, and F.
even less industrialized by the latter half of the nineteenth century than they had been in the century’s early years. The skill level of German emigrants had risen over time, while that of the Irish had stagnated and in some cases, declined. This meant that there was a greater gap between the German and Irish immigrants’ skill level than ever before. These differences were created in Europe but were reflected by the industries and occupations in which Irish and German immigrants worked in Chicago in the late nineteenth century.

Beginning in the 1870 federal census, occupations were divided into one of four categories: Agriculture, Personal and Professional Services, Trade and Transportation, and Manufacturing, Mechanical, and Mining. Chicago’s developing industrial economy is evident in the changing balance between these categories over time. In 1870, Personal and Professional Services employed the largest number of people in the city, roughly 37% of the working population, largely owing to the two largest occupations, domestic servants and laborers, having been included in this category. The Manufacturing, Mechanical, and Mining category was just slightly behind, embracing 36% of working Chicagoans. Ten years later, however, there was a marked shift in this balance. Workers in Personal and Professional Services made up only 31% of the working population in 1880, even though Domestic Service and Laboring remained the two single largest occupations. Meanwhile, as industry expanded, the Manufacturing category grew to employ 40% of working Chicagoans (table 1).

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4 A list of which occupations belonged to each category in 1870 can be found in Appendix U.
Table 1:  
Percentage of Chicago’s Workforce Employed in Major Occupational Categories, 1870-1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Professional Services⁵</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, Mechanical, &amp; Mining⁶</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at the ethnic breakdown of workers in these occupational categories reveals even more about the relationship between place of birth and the likelihood of where one was employed. For instance (table 2), 55% of working Irishmen and Irishwomen in Chicago were employed in Personal and Professional Services in 1870. This figure remained near 50% in 1880 and 1890 (tables 3 and 4). This was because, at all three census decades, over 40% of working Irishmen and Irishwomen in Chicago worked either as laborers or domestic servants, both of which were included under the occupational category of Personal and Professional Services (see table 5). In comparison, the majority of Germans worked in the Manufacturing, Mechanical, and Mining occupations (tables 2, 3, 4), which reflects the fact that Germany had begun industrializing and German immigrants often came to America with more working skills than did the Irish. Finally, American-born Chicagoans were most likely to be found in the Trade and Transportation occupations, many of which, like bankers, merchants, and

⁵ In 1890, Personal and Professional Services was divided into Professional Services, which included occupations such as teaching, medicine, and legal services, and Domestic & Personal Services, including occupations such as housekeepers and footmen. In order to facilitate comparisons with earlier censuses, the figures for 1890 in the Personal & Professional Services represent the combined total of Professional Services and Domestic and Personal Services.

⁶ In the 1890 census, Mining was moved from the Manufacturing and Mechanical category to the Agriculture category. Since both Mining and Agriculture contributed an insignificant number of workers to Chicago’s earlier censuses, the change does not affect the outcome of this analysis.
salesmen, would have required formal education in reading and mathematics and available capital in order to start a business.

**Table 2:**
Major Occupational Categories in which workers, by birthplace, were employed, 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal &amp; Professional Services</th>
<th>Trade &amp; Transportation</th>
<th>Manufacturing, Mechanical, &amp; Mining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3:**
Major Occupational Categories in which workers, by birthplace, were employed, 1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal &amp; Professional Services</th>
<th>Trade &amp; Transportation</th>
<th>Manufacturing, Mechanical, &amp; Mining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4:**
Major Occupational Categories in which workers, by birthplace, were employed, 1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agriculture, Fisheries, &amp; Mining</th>
<th>Personal &amp; Professional Services</th>
<th>Trade &amp; Transportation</th>
<th>Manufacturing, Mechanical, &amp; Mining</th>
<th>Uncategorized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concentration of Irish- and German-born Chicagoans in certain occupations also confirms this analysis. Although both Irish- and German-born workers were most likely to be laborers and domestic servants in 1870, the rate for Germans was much lower than it was for the Irish (see tables 5 and 7). Furthermore, over time, the German position appears to have improved, as a skilled trade took second place in 1880 and merchants, which would have fallen into the Trade and Transportation category, took second place in
1890. The upward trend was more dramatic for German-born Chicagoans than for Irish-born Chicagoans, likely because German immigrants on the whole were increasingly more skilled and educated than their Irish counterparts. Finally, American-born workers in general were more evenly spread out among a variety of occupations than were either Germans or the Irish, indicating a wider range of skill and educational levels (see table 6).

Table 5:
Largest Employers of Irish workers, by percentage of overall Irish-born workforce\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>6631</td>
<td>6861</td>
<td>11,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>2823</td>
<td>5836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen, draymen, and teamsters</td>
<td>1325</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>1746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors, dressmakers, and milliners</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>1559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters and joiners</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>1537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6:
Largest Employers of American workers, by percentage of overall American-born workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th># of workers</th>
<th>% of working Americans</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th># of workers</th>
<th>% of working Americans</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th># of workers</th>
<th>% of working Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Clerks</td>
<td>4,937</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>10,781</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Bookkeepers</td>
<td>22,812</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Traders and dealers</td>
<td>3,926</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Tailors, dressmakers, and milliners</td>
<td>7,192</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Tailors &amp; dressmakers</td>
<td>12,548</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Domestics</td>
<td>3,753</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>6,505</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>11,181</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Laborers</td>
<td>3,522</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Traders and dealers</td>
<td>5,487</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>9,731</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Tailors, dressmakers, and milliners</td>
<td>1,863</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>5,187</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Servants</td>
<td>9,634</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Table 7:
Largest Employers of German workers, by percentage of overall German-born workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of</td>
<td>% of</td>
<td># of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workers</td>
<td>working</td>
<td>workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4307</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>2064</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter and joiners</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traders and dealers</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors, dressmakers, and milliners</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which certain groups entered the workforce, compared to their proportion of the overall population, reveals another connection between nativity and working life in Chicago. In 1870, 1880, and 1890, American-born Chicagoans were underrepresented in the workforce: although they accounted for over 50% of the population, they were well under 50% of the workforce (tables 8, 9, and 10). On the other hand, immigrants, both Irish and German and male and female, were overrepresented in the workforce. The proportion of American-born Chicagoans who worked rose between 1870 and 1890, presumably because the American-born children of immigrants were more likely to work than those born to native-born Americans.

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**Table 8:**
Proportion of each group in the overall population versus their proportion in the workforce, 1870\(^{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativity</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
<th>% of total workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9:**
Proportion of each group in the overall population versus their proportion in the workforce, 1880\(^{11}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativity</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
<th>% of total workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10:**
Proportion of each group in the overall population versus their proportion in the workforce, 1890\(^{12}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativity</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
<th>% of total workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, immigrants were more likely to work and more likely to work in less skilled and less educated positions, with the Irish being the worst off. Germans, although they came from an industrializing country, were worse off than American-born workers but better off than Irish immigrants. These numbers illuminate some basic facts about immigration and labor in Chicago, but to understand that history we must turn now to the

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\(^{10}\) Percentages based on data provided by the 1870 United States Federal Census.

\(^{11}\) Percentages based on data provided by the 1880 United States Federal Census.

\(^{12}\) Percentages based on data provided by the 1890 United States Federal Census.
long hours, low and fluctuating pay, indiscriminate hiring and firing, and a host of other troubles which Chicago’s workers endured.

**Postbellum Labor Conflict**

Although a movement to establish a ten-hour workday had begun in the years before the Civil War, the war all but eradicated a unified labor movement and the push for standardized hours. More and more wage workers joined the Union effort as soldiers throughout the course of the war, while those who remained at home worked longer hours for wages that did not match the rise in living expenses. When workers organized themselves into unions and went on strike, they were often successful. The Molders’ Union, for instance, won wage increases four times over the course of the war at Chicago’s McCormick farm reaper manufacturing plant.¹³ Employers, however, were not ready to accept the growth of trade unions. They joined together to blacklist striking workers or, if they hired these workers, forced them to sign contracts in which they renounced their union memberships.

In response to the increased tension between workers and employers, William Sylvis, the organizer of the Molder’s Union, joined forces with the editor of Chicago’s *Workingman’s Advocate*, Andrew Cameron, to launch the eight-hour day movement in Chicago, a movement initially organized in Massachusetts by a machinist named Ira Steward. The movement aimed to unite various unions into a single Trades Assembly.¹⁴ Sylvis and Cameron gathered twenty-four unions and nearly 8,500 individual members

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¹³ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 17-20.
¹⁴ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 20-23.
into the Trade Assembly by the end of the Civil War. The following summer, the men organized the National Labor Union in Chicago, with Cameron’s newspaper, the *Workingman’s Advocate*, as its mouthpiece. The National Labor Union in Chicago garnered the support of workers and politicians alike, including Illinois Governor Richard Ogelsby, successfully pressing the Illinois state legislature to pass an eight-hour day bill, which was set to go into effect on May 1, 1867. As James Green, historian of the post-Civil War labor movement in Chicago, explains, “nowhere in America did the dream of mutual gains seem more possible than it did in Chicago after the Civil War, a place where the demand for labor seemed insatiable and where the prospects for prosperity seemed unlimited.”

On May 1, tens of thousands of workers marched through the streets of Chicago in celebration. On May 2, however, the employers failed to observe the new law, ordering workers to remain at their posts well beyond the eight-hour limit. Some workers obeyed, others left work after eight hours. Over the next six days, workers protested and rioted against the employers’ actions. Many of them armed, they marched through the streets and broke into factories, destroying machines. The governor more or less turned a blind eye to the events in Chicago, neither supporting the workers nor calling in the state militia as requested by the city’s mayor. Ultimately, the city’s police, along with some of the city’s militia members, successfully suppressed the protests, strikes, and riots and

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16 Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 26-27.
forced the workers back to their jobs. By May 8, the eight-hour day movement was over, for the time being.\(^\text{17}\)

Workers’ frustrations with the failure of the eight-hour day strike were only one source of tension between employers and employees. The rate of immigration rose sharply after the war. Immigrants were arriving every day, looking for work. Some came of their own accord, because of the reputation Chicago had both in the U.S. and abroad as being a city ripe with opportunities. Many of these workers were disappointed to find that the city seemed to have an over-supply of labor. Nonetheless, some obtained work because employers were eager to offer lower wages, further embittering workers who were displaced in the process. Some employers also recruited labor in Europe, with the intention of lowering their labor costs. Tensions arose within the working class and between the working class and their employers.\(^\text{18}\)

The 1871 fire that nearly destroyed the city highlighted these tensions. William Bross, part owner of the Chicago *Tribune*, launched a speaking tour on the east coast only two days after the fire had subsided, in order to use the city’s imminent rebuilding as a way to draw new residents and especially workers to the city. Meanwhile, newspapers around the world ran headlines about the need for workers to rebuild Chicago.\(^\text{19}\) These promises made trade unionists and workers uneasy. Firstly, masons and bricklayers knew that the bulk of their work would come in the spring, owing to the cold weather’s negative effect on their building materials, and they feared an influx of workers before then would mean that wages would be lowered for the little work that could be

\(^\text{17}\) Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 32-33.
\(^\text{18}\) Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 36-38.
\(^\text{19}\) Sawislak, *Smoldering City*, 166-167.
accomplished before winter set in. The spring influx of workers, they feared, would saturate the labor market and lower wages. Although many workers pressed union leaders to call for higher wages, victory might attract even more workers to the city in the spring. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the great fire, workers who did press for higher wages on jobsites were deemed disloyal to their city: it was their duty as it was every Chicagoans’, according to the city newspapers, to assist in rebuilding in any way they could.20

On the positive side for the trade unions was their ability to increase their memberships substantially over the winter of 1871-1872. Workers and labor movement leaders alike saw the rebuilding effort as the best chance they had for strengthening their movement, but this sudden strengthening of the labor movement caused employers and middle-class citizens to recall the skirmishes of the eight-hour strike nearly five years before.21 City leaders requested that the state refurnish the city’s stockpile of arms and ammunition, which had been lost to the fire, for the purpose of quelling any labor disputes that might arise during rebuilding. They “conflated private disputes over terms of employment with a threat to civic order,” as historian Karen Sawislak summarized. Since the work concerned was rebuilding the city, city leaders viewed strikes as a threat to civic order not just because they might be generally disruptive or violent, but because they would halt the efforts to rebuild.22

Just as trade unionists feared, the combination of newspaper articles and city businessmen promoting and sometimes even financially supporting the migration of workers to Chicago after the fire caused a shortage of work by January. To make things

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20 Sawislak, Smoldering City, 169-173.
21 Sawislak, Smoldering City, 173-174.
22 Sawislak, Smoldering City, 174-176.
worse, there was also a severe shortage of cheap housing. By the end of January, even the city newspapers, which had originally feared a shortage of workers, began warning workers from outside the city to stay away. By October 1872, within one year of the fire, between 30,000 and 40,000 new residents had arrived in Chicago. It was difficult for old and new residents alike to find work and when they did, wages were in many cases lower than before the fire.\textsuperscript{23} Trade unions had more grounds for concern than ever, even if they also had a greater number of workers under their banners than before.

This was the scene when, in 1873, a financial panic occurred on the East Coast and by late fall made its way to Chicago, just in time for the annual winter work slowdown. More workers than was typical were laid off and those who were not laid off saw a dramatic drop in their wages. Reports of homeless men, women, and children, begging for food on the streets, grew throughout November and December.\textsuperscript{24} In late December, the city’s small German socialist group organized a meeting in order to demand that the city provide relief for homeless and hungry workers. The meeting drew 5,000 people and speakers in English, German, Polish, French, and Norwegian demanded that the city distribute relief, instead of the private organization that generally handled aid, because the largest private relief organization only gave food to those who were working, which in this case was useless.\textsuperscript{25} The next night, the 5,000 attendees grew into 20,000 people who marched through the streets demanding “bread or work.”\textsuperscript{26} It was at this point that the city’s newspapers registered their awareness of a socialist movement in the city for the first time. By 1874 this movement had developed into the Workingmen’s

\textsuperscript{23} Sawislak, \textit{Smoldering City}, 178-180.
\textsuperscript{24} Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 47.
\textsuperscript{25} Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 47-48.
\textsuperscript{26} As described in Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 48.
Party of Illinois, a largely German but multi-ethnic labor organization dedicated to socialist ideals and, more concretely, to public relief.²⁷

Chicago’s largest employers not only refused the socialists’ demand for the right to work, but began cutting wages further over the next year. The December demonstration had frightened them, but they now banded together and decided to refuse both socialist and union demands. Striking workers were locked out of the city’s major factories, such as the McCormick Reaper Works, and employers cut wages to extreme levels in an effort to force their hand.²⁸ But the city’s economic elite began to believe that it was possible – perhaps even imminent – that the city’s working classes would stage a mass revolt. In that case, homes, lives, and property would need to be protected and the police force was not enough. They turned instead to the idea of forming their own militia.

Chicago’s Independent Volunteer Militias in the 1870s

The unrest of Chicago’s working class in the wake of the 1873 recession put many of the city’s business owners on edge. These men gathered in late 1873 to discuss how they might protect themselves in the event that the working class became more violent or attempted to gain control of the city.²⁹ In April 1874, they began raising funds to support their own militia, a militia that would specifically protect the families and property of the wealthiest Chicagoans if the city’s workers attempted to begin a violent

²⁷ Green, Death in the Haymarket, 48-50.
²⁸ Green, Death in the Haymarket, 48-51.
revolution. These businessmen put forward $17,000 to fund rifles, uniforms, and an armory space for the newly created First Illinois Regiment.\textsuperscript{30} The regiment’s purpose was to provide a trained military force, which would support the city police in case of a class-based rebellion. The regiment’s class-based purpose was no secret. Its officers wrote a public letter, published in a variety of city newspapers, in which they detailed their progress in organizing the regiment. “The right arm and chief support of the civil, is the military power,” the letter explained. The members of the First Regiment said that their organization was a “matter of necessity with Chicago,” as they intended to be “an auxiliary to the civil power in cases of necessity.” The letter went on to ask that citizens, “whose property we are bound to protect” donate funds to help purchase new uniforms for the rapidly growing regiment.\textsuperscript{31} The officers assured their readers that their regiment would “respond with alacrity to the order of their [the citizens’] civil commander.”\textsuperscript{32}

In December 1874, a similar letter published in the \textit{Tribune} was more direct in stating the regiment’s goal: “This regiment is not…a mere organization for holiday purposes, to attend picnics and junketings,” the letter stated. Instead, the regiment was “intended as an organization for the training of a body of men as citizen-soldiers, who, in case there should ever be need of force to suppress disorder and enforce the laws, may be relied upon…at the command of the State.” The letter clarified that the request for funds for uniforms was “not an appeal to public charity; it is an appeal to the self-interest of

\textsuperscript{30} Schneirov, \textit{Labor and Urban Politics}, 58, 66 footnote 34 establishes that the organizers were the city’s leading businessmen. For names of organizers and original officers, see Andreas, \textit{History of Chicago}, vol. 3, 584-585; Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 49.

\textsuperscript{31} Although the wealthy early supporters of the regiment had initially supplied $17,000 with which rifles and uniforms were purchased, the regiment was growing in size and sought additional funds to cover the costs of further supplies. Schneirov, \textit{Labor and Urban Politics}, 59.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 12, 1874.
property-owners” and that the regiment was necessary because, “in case of a riot,” troops could be called from within the city itself, and not from around the state, in order to “protect life and property.” The letter finished by asking: “Can property-holders afford to refuse” what the regiment requested? This was an organization built by and for the wealthy, propertied class in Chicago.

Within a year, Irish Chicagoans began to organize a second regiment, the nucleus of which was drawn from existing Irish militia groups. This regiment, too, was designed to protect life and property from the threat of socialist riots and attacks. In May of 1875 they held a meeting at the Mulligan Zouave hall. The Tribune cited the presence of “many of the Irish-American veterans.” Among those veterans were Captain Gleeson, who had headed the Montgomery Guards before the war and who was now captain of the Clan na Gael Guards. Also present was Colonel James Quirk, who had once headed the Shields Guards. A few days later at another meeting, former Chicago Fenian and leader of the Illinois 67th, Company B, J.F. Scanlan announced that the Clan na Gael Guards and the Ancient Order of Hibernians joined the Second Regiment. The bulk of Chicago’s Irish nationalist and militia members were therefore channeled into a state sanctioned

33 *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1874.
34 In fact, most of the antebellum militias except for those populated by the working-class Irish were effectively defunct by the early 1870s. Adding to the pre-Civil War ranks of the Montgomery, Shields, and Emmet Guards were the Chicago Irish Rifles, the Irish Legion, the Alpine Hunters (likely a German group), the Mulligan Zouaves, and the Clan na Gael Guards. *Chicago Tribune*, August 24, 1868, December 15, 1874, February 24, 1875, March 7, 1875, August 6, 1875.
35 *Chicago Tribune*, May 21, 1875, June 9, 1875.
36 *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1875. For a list of officers, see Andreas, *History of Chicago*, vol. 3, 585.
regiment that was created under the same spirit as the First Regiment. This was the first time, then, that militias were divided not just by ethnicity, but by whether or not they supported or challenged the prevailing socio-economic order. The First and Second Regiments were specifically organized to support the capitalist system.

The Second Regiment was not the only option for the Irish in Chicago who wished to join a militia. By the mid 1870s, workingmen of the Irish community had formed the Irish Labor Guards. This group, although considerably smaller than similar labor groups made up of German-speakers, participated actively in the Chicago socialist scene. They frequently appeared alongside the German Lehr und Wehr Verein (which roughly translates to “Education and Defense Society”), the Jaeger Verein (Hunter’s Society) and the Bohemian Sharpshooters, three other ethnic-based socialist groups. These groups began appearing at nearly the same time the First and Second Regiments came into being.

37 The Third Regiment, consisting of members of the Bohemian Rifles, was formed shortly after the Second Regiment. Turnbaugh, “Ethnicity, Civic Pride, and Commitment,” 114. For a list of names of the officers of the Second Regiment, see Andreas, History of Chicago, vol. 3, 585.
39 “Constitution and by-laws of the Lehr und Wehr Verein: incorporated April 21st, 1875: constitution and by-laws adopted December 30th, 1878” (Chicago: Social-Democratic Print Association, 1878). Jaeger Verein was founded as an offshoot of the Lehr und Wehr Verein over issues of language. The Tribune explained that the Jaeger Verein “wanted the word of command given in German,” indicating that the Lehr und Wehr Verein must have consisted largely of members who spoke English as well as German. Chicago Tribune, June 23, 1879. Another source infers that the Jaeger Verein were Scandinavian. Green, Death in the Haymarket, 88. Green explains that the Bohemian Sharpshooters were commanded by Prokop Hudek, one the most prominent Bohemian socialists who migrated to Chicago before the Civil War, served in the Union Army, and helped found the Workingman’s Party of Illinois in 1874. Green, Death in the Haymarket, 71. No record of the founding of the other groups exists, but they begin to appear in newspaper reports in late 1875 and early 1876. See Christine Heiss, “German Radicals in Industrial America: The Lehr-und-wehr Verein in Gilded Age Chicago,” in Keil and Jentz, eds., German Workers in Industrial Chicago, pp. 211, 214, 224.
The National Railroad Strike of 1877 proved the value of armed defense leagues to both city and socialist leaders. The strike, starting on the east coast, worked its way to Chicago by July 23. The First and Second Regiments turned out alongside the city police to attempt to keep order. Bohemian and Irish workers, some carrying a Fenian banner, joined together to fight the police and the Second Regiment at the train viaduct on Halsted Street, with the police in many cases the primary cause of the violence. The First Regiment attacked men at the Twelfth Street Turner hall, where German cabinetmakers were meeting to peacefully discuss the eight-hour day movement. These attacks on the working class led many people to believe that they must be prepared to protect themselves and as a result, the ranks of organizations like the Lehr und Wehr Verein blossomed after the 1877 strike.

Despite some accusations that the Second Regiment had been soft on rioters, according to the Tribune, they performed admirably. Fears that the working-class Irish boys of the Second Regiment would join the rioters, as had happened in Pittsburgh, were allayed. A reporter who followed the Second Regiment during the strike said that, “the marching of the boys was magnificent, and they would do credit to any military organization.” He noted that they stood “unflinchingly as a shower of Communistic brickbats” were launched at them by a crowd near the Halsted viaduct, where they likely faced other Irishmen and women. The Tribune reported that the Irishmen of the Second Regiment had been “ready to shoulder their muskets and do service to save the property

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40 On the fears of the socialists, see Chicago Tribune, June 29, 1879 and Green, Death in the Haymarket, 74-84.
41 Green, Death in the Haymarket, 78-79.
42 Chicago Tribune, July 30, 1877, June 2, 1878; Green, Death in the Haymarket, 74-80.
43 Chicago Tribune, July 26, 1877, July 27, 1877, July 28, 1877.
of the city from the hands of rioters, even though they were workingmen.” Despite their ethnic and class connection to some of the rioters, the Second Regiment demonstrated their loyalty to protecting property. The 1877 Railroad strike therefore cemented the separation between the ideologies of different militias: the First and Second Regiments demonstrated that they were dedicated to supporting the socio-economic order, while the militias like the Lehr und Wehr Verein and the Irish Labor Guards confirmed their opposition.

Passing the 1879 Illinois Militia Law

The strike proved to city leaders that the militias needed to be supported and improved to prevent future uprisings. Protection against revolution was not enough; the strength of the socialist organizations needed to be undermined. City leaders did not attempt to disband the socialist militias or prevent them from appearing in public in general or hosting social events like picnics and other gatherings; rather, they attacked the socialists’ ability to appear armed in public by creating the 1879 Illinois Militia Law.

After the 1877 strike, some city leaders proposed improving the resources and training of the First and Second Regiments in case of future uprisings. Marshall Field, famous for his department store that remained a fixture of the Chicago merchandising landscape for nearly 150 years, proposed changes to the existing militia law, including new quarters and improved arms for the soldiers, to be paid for by the state of Illinois. He offered land he owned at the corner of Adams and Market streets at a discounted rate to

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44 *Chicago Tribune*, July 23, 1877.
the government in order to house the soldiers.\footnote{Chicago Tribune, June 17, 1878, December 27, 1878. Green, Death in the Haymarket, 80.} H.P. Thompson, alderman of the Thirteenth Ward, wrote to the editor of the Tribune that he believed the First and Second Regiments had done “all that brave men could do,” but were “deficient in point of numbers to contend with a mob of such magnitude….providing such a mob had any effectual organization.” He proposed that the state arm every member of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization consisting of Union veterans.\footnote{The Grand Army of the Republic was founded in 1866 in Decatur, Illinois. Henry C. Cooke, “The History of George H. Thomas Post, No. 5, Department of Illinois, Grand Army of the Republic, for Twenty-Five Years.” Accessed online at http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t8nc62r14 (Accessed on May 15, 2014).} Although the First and Second Regiments had performed admirably during the railroad strike, considering their size and abilities, Chicago’s elite feared that the Regiments would not be able to quell larger, future riots. They believed that a more effective and larger state militia was the key to protecting themselves from the working class.

Their concerns were fueled in part by the increasingly regular appearance of the Lehr und Wehr Verein and other socialist militias in public. The city’s socialist militias marched in parade formation, with, as the Tribune noted, “guns sloped on the shoulder” and followed by masses of union members.\footnote{Chicago Tribune, June 16, 1878, June 17, 1878, September 30, 1878.} They also held regular drill practice on Sundays. These events were a normal part of any militia’s activities, but the socialist militias also began appearing armed at workers’ and unions’ picnics and standing guard outside of workers’ meetings. This was in direct response to the First Regiment’s attack on the cabinetmakers’ meeting at Twelfth Street Turner Hall during the 1877 strike. Militia leaders declared their troops were there for protection and would only act if
attacked, but, by late 1878, this increased “public visibility,” as historian Richard Schneirov notes, further alarmed the city’s leaders.48

When the socialist political party held a rally before the spring city election, the city leaders began to take decisive steps to counteract the public visibility of the socialist militias. The rally drew a crowd reported to number over 40,000. The opening ceremonies included 500 armed socialist militiamen performing military maneuvers at the rally venue, only a few blocks from city hall. These maneuvers were preceded by a parade, with the socialist militias and the organizers of the rally and their friends and families marching together through the heart of the city. As further confirmation of the city’s leaders fears, the socialists had selected the anniversary of the Paris Commune as the day for their rally. Less than a month later, business leaders in the city had raised an additional $30,000 to support the First and Second Regiments.49 Meanwhile, they also began pressing the Illinois legislature to pass a new state militia law that would not only provide more financial support to the First and Second Regiments, but would also forbid the armed marching, parading, and drilling of any group that did not have the governor’s authorization.50 The Tribune said that “armed companies of volunteer soldiers [who are] hostile to all good government,” and groups that gave speeches “urging the listeners to actively rebel against the written and unwritten laws which govern society,” should not be allowed to openly carry arms.51 In response to these concerns, the state legislature proposed a new militia law in early 1879, which prohibited “any and all military

48 Green, Death in the Haymarket, 86.
49 Green, Death in the Haymarket, 87-88.
50 Schneirov, Labor and Urban Politics, 87-89.
51 Chicago Tribune, March 23, 1879.
organizations not organized under the Governor’s command.” Violators would be charged $10 or six months’ imprisonment.\footnote{52}

Although the new law did not specifically forbid socialist militiamen from owning or carrying arms, or even from appearing as a group in public, they were nonetheless infuriated at what they believed was an infringement upon their constitutional rights. In mid-April, \textit{The Socialist}, the English-language socialist newspaper in Chicago, commented on the new militia law: “The Lehr und Vehr Verein…against which body this clause is directed, are highly incensed at the audacity of our capitalistic law-manufacturers in thus defying the constitution of the United States.” The paper, referring to the Lehr und Wehr’s attendance at workers’ picnics and meetings, went on to explain that the socialist militias existed “for the sole purpose of protecting our constitutional rights of free speech and free assemblage from the flagrant and infamous assaults of the capitalistic banditti.” The socialists would not “yield to the treacherous attack upon liberty.” The article also announced that the Lehr und Vehr Verein, the Jaeger Verein, and the Irish Labor Guards were joining together to “make a grand demonstration” in order to challenge what they believed was the unconstitutionality of the militia law. They invited “all Trade and Labor Unions…the Socialist Labor party, and…all other labor organizations who may feel an interest in the cause of constitutional liberty” to join them in a parade in the “principal streets of Chicago in full uniform and under arms.”\footnote{53}

\footnote{53}\textit{Chicago Tribune}, April 18, 1879.
The procession took place on April 20, 1879. The Irish Labor Guards, the Bohemian Sharpshooters, the Jaeger Verein, the Lehr und Wehr Verein, and other labor societies, accompanied by a large beer wagon, marched through the city. The Tribune estimated that 400 armed men marched in the demonstration, along with nearly 800 unarmed men and women. Although the militia law had not yet taken effect, this clear repudiation of its intent made a strong impression upon the law’s supporters, who saw the demonstration as a direct threat to the government. Claiming that the socialists’ stated goal was “‘to show the Legislature and the people of Chicago what they can do,’” the Tribune called the parade “a threat” and a “declaration of war.”54 A few days later, the Tribune ran an editorial calling the demonstration “impertinent” because it consisted of a crowd of “foreigners…many of whom are ignorant of the language of the country” yet who had the audacity to interpret the American Constitution by carrying banners with “mottoes inscribed in foreign tongues.”55

Perhaps the intent of the socialist demonstration was as the Tribune expressed: “a threat, a notification that trouble may be expected if the Legislature passes the pending Militia bill.”56 But the April 20 demonstration had the opposite effect, ensuring that the militia bill became law. When the bill was first proposed, socialists were not the only ones who opposed it. The vast majority of rural representatives in the state legislature at first voted against the bill. These representatives were affiliated with the Granger movement and believed that the new militia law was an unnecessary expansion of government and an intrusion on personal rights. However, these representatives came

54 Chicago Tribune, April 21, 1879.
55 Chicago Tribune, April 22, 1879.
56 Chicago Tribune, April 21, 1879.
from areas far outside of Chicago and they voted based on their own political ideology and without consideration of the concerns of Chicago’s businessmen regarding the city’s socialist militias.57

Within days, when the news of the April 20 demonstration reached Springfield, many of the representatives changed their vote. Representative Fosbinder, a Democrat from Marshall County in central Illinois, claimed that after hearing of the “conduct of the Communists in Chicago…I now fully understand the situation.” Representative Trusdell, also a Democrat, from Lee County, west of Chicago, also changed his vote because of the demonstration in Chicago. Other representatives responded to an article from a socialist newspaper that was read in the House, saying it “showed a defiant attitude” and that they believed the “atrocities of the Parisian Communists were celebrated.” The revised militia law would originally have been voted down, but the events of April 20 guaranteed its success. By the beginning of June, the bill had been passed into law and was slated to go into effect on July 1, 1879.58

Another event, only a few days before the new law went into effect, solidified support for the new law. On June 22, the Bohemian Sharpshooters were engaged to stand guard at the St. Wenceslaus Sunday school picnic at Silver Leaf Grove, on the west side of the city, intended to raise funds for the school. Because the park grounds were at the

57 Chicago Tribune, April 22, 1879, April 22, 1879, April 23, 1879, April 24, 1879; The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry is a fraternal organization of farmers that was organized in 1867. The Grange advocated for its members on a number of topics, from fighting railroad monopolies, to securing grain prices, to improving agricultural education. Their motto is “in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” Its peak membership and involvement in politics was in the late nineteenth century, but it still exists today. Solon Justus Buck, The Granger Movement (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913).
terminus of a number of transportation lines, it was common for crowds – sometimes
uninvited – to gather at festivities held there. When a group of young men attempted to
sneak in without paying, a fight broke out between the Sharpshooters and the crowd
outside the picnic area. The Sharpshooters fired into the crowd, hitting a number of
people and seriously injuring a young man named Donohue. The militiamen calmly
submitted to arrest when the police arrived and were jailed for a number of days. But why
did the Sharpshooters have loaded guns at a school picnic, the Tribune demanded to
know. Why did they fire on an unarmed crowd? Only a week later the militia law would
have been in effect and they would not have been allowed to carry rifles. Since the
Sharpshooters were a well-known socialist organization, this event further tarnished the
reputation of the socialists and their immigrant and ethnic supporters in Chicago.59

On June 29, the Lehr und Wehr Verein held a meeting to discuss their opposition
to the militia law. Nearly 1,000 people attended. The meeting was held in English
because, although heavily German, the crowd contained substantial numbers of Irish and
Bohemian workers, as well. John McAuliffe, one of the first and most radical English-
speaking socialists in Chicago addressed the audience. He explained that the object of the
militia law “was to…freeze out the Socialistic organizations.” He reasoned that the
militia law “was unconstitutional, since it was class legislation, failing to take away the
right to bear arms from Academics, Masons, and Knights of Pythias, but taking it away
from workingmen.” McAuliffe subtly encouraged disobeying the law when he said
“perhaps they can take it [our right to bear arms] away from us…but it takes two to make
a bargain.” His words took a definite radical turn, however, when he commanded his

59 Chicago Tribune, June 23, 1879, June 24, 1879, June 29, 1879.
listeners to “rise and take” their rights, if they were in danger of losing them. He concluded by saying that he would be perfectly content to turn over his gun and those of all socialists – if the First Regiment did the same, which he and his audience knew would never happen.  

Although the leaders of the Lehr und Wehr Verein agreed with McAuliffe that the militia law was unconstitutional according to the Second Amendment, the German socialist militia chose a more conservative route to challenge the law than McAuliffe had counseled. Their lawyer, a member of the Lehr und Wehr Verein himself, worked in conjunction with city officials and planned a day, time, and place for the Lehr und Wehr Verein to stage a peaceful trial of the constitutionality of the law. They decided that a company of the Lehr und Wehr Verein would march, with arms, on July 1, the day the law went into effect, on a side street outside of the center of the city, so as not to raise alarm among the general population.

The city agreed to post policemen along the marching route who would note the names of the militia members. Then, the plan went, warrants would be issued for the arrests of the marching men. The accused would refuse to post bail and therefore would be kept in custody, which would allow the Lehr und Wehr Verein’s lawyer to apply for a writ of habeas corpus. The writ of habeas corpus would challenge the right of the circuit court to keep the men in custody, by asserting that the law under which the authorities

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60 *Chicago Tribune*, June 29, 1879.
were acting was not legal. The writ of habeas corpus turned the state into the defendant, as writs of habeas corpus are charges against the government claiming that a particular law is unjust. The case of the militia law would then go to a federal court, at which time the constitutionality of the law – and not the guilt or innocence of those who disobeyed the law – would be on trial. In short, the plan the Lehr und Wehr Verein devised was meant to force the federal court system to determine whether or not the state of Illinois was constitutionally allowed to enforce the militia law.62

The initial march did not go exactly as planned because it relied upon the ability of the policemen to identify the marching militia members, which they could not. But after restaging the march more than once, the Captain of the Lehr und Wehr Verein, Frank Bielefeldt, eventually managed to force his own arrest. By mid-July, Bielefeldt was tried for violating the militia law, and, as planned, he refused to post bail. He was therefore taken into custody and his lawyer applied for a writ of habeas corpus.63 The habeas corpus case began on July 28. His lawyer, Harry Rubens, argued, firstly, “the right to keep and bear arms was a fundamental right which the [Illinois] Legislature could not take from the people under any general grant of legislative authority.” He went on to argue that the right to keep and bear arms was “auxiliary to the absolute rights of individuals, to the right of personal security, personal liberty, and private property.”64

62 The ability to appeal to federal courts for review of writ of habeas corpus was extended to individuals who were in the custody of state courts during the course of Reconstruction. Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1879.
64 Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1879.
Rubens told the court that the right to keep and bear arms was not only a right, “enjoyed from time immemorial,” but that it was also a duty. Both the right and the duty had existed under English law, he claimed, and then became American law under the Constitution. But Rubens said this was not just an issue of an individual’s rights and duties. He argued that in order to effectively fulfill their duty, the individuals must be formed into organizations in order to drill and train because “a militia would be useless unless the citizens were enabled to exercise themselves in the use of warlike weapons” and that completing these exercises required the formation of organized companies. He concluded that the militia was “meant to be the whole body of the people” and not “people of certain counties, or of a certain religion, or political party.” The law in question was instead a “poorly-disguised attempt to deprive a large and respected class of their natural and constitutional right to keep and bear arms” and that by passing the law, the state of Illinois was “violating fundamental rights and overruling constitutional restraints.”

Counsel for the State of Illinois countered by arguing that the Second Amendment, and, in fact, all of the Bill of Rights, was meant to inhibit the federal government from restricting certain rights. He insisted that the states, as distinct from Congress, had the power to regulate the rights established in the first ten constitutional amendments. The Second Amendment prohibited restriction of – but did not

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65 *Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1879.
66 In the 1920s, the Supreme Court began the process of “incorporation,” whereby amendments were interpreted through the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment states that “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection under the law.” The text is almost identical to
specifically bestow upon individual citizens – the right to keep and bear arms. It was a restriction on the power of Congress, but individual states were not prohibited by the Constitution from regulating the right to keep and bear arms. Therefore, the Illinois state militia law was perfectly legal. The state Legislature, the attorney of the state concluded, retained the right to dictate in which way the militia should be organized. The “right to organize into a military company was not a right of a citizen,” he explained, and therefore military companies could not organize if by doing so they violated the laws of the state.67

The next step in the Lehr und Wehr Verein’s plan was that the federal court judge would declare the law sound, which would allow the Lehr und Wehr Verein to appeal to the Supreme Court. This made the case distinctive, in that both sides wanted the judge to

The Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment; but the Fifth Amendment, like all of the Bill of Rights, was intended to prohibit the federal government from interfering with the rights of individuals. The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868, as part of the Reconstruction Era amendments which attempted to secure rights for former slaves. The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was intended to assure that states could not pass laws which undermined the rights of former slaves; the writers of the Fourteenth Amendment recommended that the Supreme Court immediately begin applying the Fourteenth Amendment to the first eight amendments. The Court ignored this request until its ruling on Gitlow v. New York (1925). In this case the Supreme Court ruled that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment meant that states had to protect the freedom of their citizens’ speech, as specified in the First Amendment.

Once an amendment has been incorporated, it is interpreted to restrict both the federal and state governments from infringing on the rights established in the incorporated amendment. Although parts or all of most of the amendments of the Bill of Rights were incorporated between 1925 and the 1960s, the Second Amendment remained unincorporated until 2010, making it the most recent amendment, as of the writing of this dissertation, to be incorporated. In the case McDonald v. Chicago, the court ruled that, by extending the Fourteenth Amendment to apply to the Second Amendment as well, a Chicago ordinance banning the possession of handguns and placing restrictions on other types of guns, violated the Second Amendment rights of the city’s citizens, thereby incorporating the Second Amendment. Akhil Reed Amar, "The Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment" (1992). Faculty Scholarship Series. Paper 1040. http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/1040 (Accessed January 2014); Brannon P. Denning and Glenn Harlan Reynolds, “Five Takes on McDonald v. Chicago” (March 30,2011). University of Tennessee Legal Studies Research Paper No. 146. http://ssrn.com/abstract=1799480 (Accessed January 2014).

67 Chicago Tribune, July 29, 1879.
find that the law was not unconstitutional. If the judge ruled that the state was illegally holding Bielefeldt for violating the militia law, on the grounds that the law violated the Constitution, that would be the end of the case. Bielefeldt would be released but the law would remain on the books. On the other hand, if the federal judge declared that the state had just cause to hold Bielefeldt because he had not paid bail after being arrested, the Lehr und Wehr Verein could then appeal to the Supreme Court on the grounds that the law under which Bielefeldt was arrested was unconstitutional. To the surprise of both sides, as well as the newspapers that commented on the ruling, the judge found that the state was in fact guilty of holding Bielefeldt without cause. This was not the result that either side wanted. The State did not want to be in the wrong and the Lehr und Vehr Verein wanted to take the case to the Supreme Court; the judge’s ruling would not allow that.

But the Lehr und Wehr Verein was not that easily defeated in its larger project. Since Bielefeldt could not stand trial for the same offence a second time, the organization staged another test of the law, employing a slightly different method to attempt to get the case to the Supreme Court. This time, Hermann Presser, the Commander-in-Chief of the militia, led a group of armed men in a short parade procession. The march had been arranged with the mayor and police, like the previous test case. After the men were arrested, the lawyers decided that all but Presser should pay their bails and that the case against the militia law would be built around Presser only. Presser was indicted by the Grand Jury on September 23, 1879 for violating the militia law. His case was heard in

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68 The judge certainly would have understood the intention of the Lehr und Wehr Verein, so it is possible that, supporting the law himself, he attempted to end the argument against the law in his courtroom. Chicago Tribune, September 2, 1879.
March 1880. Presser’s lawyers submitted a demurrer acknowledging that the defendant did what he was accused of, but arguing that he should be charged with a crime on the grounds that the Illinois Militia Law violated the Second and Fourteenth Amendments of the Federal Constitution.\(^69\)

This time, the Illinois courts cooperated with the Lehr und Wehr’s wishes that the case proceed to the U.S. Supreme Court and upheld the state law. This meant that the Lehr und Vehr Verein could appeal and take the case to the Supreme Court. It took over five years for the case to come up on the Supreme Court docket. Presser’s lawyers argued, first, that the Illinois Legislature had no power to pass the 1879 Militia Law, according to the U.S. Constitution and a variety of federal laws regarding the establishment and maintenance of state militias. Second, they stated that the militia law violated the Second Amendment. And third, they argued that his indictment violated Section 1, Clause 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment: “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”\(^70\)

The court found that the state did, in fact, have the right to pass a militia law, and that the law’s provision that military organizations were forbidden to drill or march unless authorized by law did not violate the Second Amendment. They explained that, as had been argued by the state, the amendment was a limitation only on the Congress and federal government; not on the power of the state.\(^71\) Further clarifying the meaning of the Second Amendment, the court ruled that “military organization and military drill and parade under arms are subjects especially under the control of the government of every

\(^{69}\) *Chicago Tribune*, October 5, 1879, March 16, 1880.


\(^{71}\) The precedent cited was *United States v. Cruikshank*, 92 U. S. 542 (1875).
country. They cannot be claimed as a right independent of law.” These actions, the court ruled, were “subject to the regulation and control of the state and federal governments.”

This power was “necessary to the public peace, safety, and good order” because if the state could not protect itself against such organizations, it could not protect itself against “assemblages organized for sedition and treason” or “armed mobs bent on riot and rapine.” Presser’s indictment and the 1879 Illinois Militia Law was thus confirmed as constitutional by the nation’s highest court in what was only the second Supreme Court ruling on the Second Amendment.

The court also found that Presser’s indictment did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. Like the Second Amendment, the court explained, the Fourteenth limited only the federal government in abridging “privileges or immunities of citizens.” The states, on the other hand, were not forbidden from regulating privileges or immunities of citizens, as long as the regulation did not abridge the privileges and immunities that citizens were entitled to as citizens of the United States. The court ruled that as the right to form military companies not under state or federal authority and to drill and march with arms was “not an attribute of national citizenship,” the Illinois Militia Law did not violate the federal Constitution. If the federal Constitution stated that individuals had a right to join military companies and march and drill with those companies, the state would have been violating Presser’s rights as a national citizen by passing a law that dictated otherwise. But since the Constitution did not expressly state that individual citizens had a right to form independent militias and march and drill openly with them,

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merely that Congress could not prohibit that right in certain ways, the state was not violating the Fourteenth Amendment when it passed a law which forbid those actions.

As a result of the ruling, Presser had to pay a ten-dollar fine. But there were larger implications to this ruling. When the Supreme Court ruled that militias were intended to provide the individual states from “assemblages organized for sedition and treason” and “armed mobs bent on riot and rapine,” the justices reflected the fears of the men who had pushed for, created, and passed the Illinois law, who viewed the socialist militias in just these terms. The Supreme Court ruling, therefore, implied that socialists were seditious and treasonous, whether or not they used “armed mobs bent on riot and rapine.” The threat of violence embodied in socialist militias was in itself tantamount to sedition and treason.

Although the ten-dollar fine does not seem particularly prohibitive even by nineteenth-century standards, the role of armed militias in Chicago had changed drastically in the forty years since the first independent militias began forming. Antebellum Americans believed that independent groups of citizens, armed and prepared for battle, were demonstrating their loyalty to the American republic. In the post-Civil War era, the act of being prepared to battle, depending on the group’s ideology, had become the very expression of disloyalty some feared most: the threatened socialist revolution. While it was once considered a duty to volunteer for these independent groups, the right to arm oneself in public was now strictly controlled by the state. In the years after the Supreme Court ruling, the First and Second Illinois Regiments became the Illinois National Guard and other militias became obsolete. The National Guard was
made up of men who had initially organized specifically for the purpose of protecting capitalism and rejecting socialism.

**Class Conflict and Violence**

During the seven years that the 1879 militia law was being legally reviewed, class tensions had continued to mount in Chicago. In the spring of 1879, the socialists put up Dr. Ernest Schmidt for mayor. He came in third, but split the Republican vote, which resulted in the city electing its first Democratic mayor since before the Civil War. Socialist leaders such as Albert and Lucy Parsons saw this as a victory. But that fall, the socialist candidates failed miserably at the polls and the losses damaged the cohesion of the socialist party in Chicago. Militants began to believe that there was no point in participating in the political process. One major point of contention between the majority of socialists and the militants was the question of whether or not they should be affiliated with the socialist militias. The moderates believed armed groups scared off would-be participants and further alarmed the authorities. Militants argued, not without evidence, that their meetings would be attacked if it were not for the armed guards. The passage of the 1879 militia law only served to confirm for the more radical socialists that the city’s economic elites had complete control of the political system.\(^{73}\)

Albert and Lucy Parsons left the socialist party, as did a small cadre of mostly German-speaking socialist radicals. In 1883 they joined the International Working People’s Association, a London-based anarchist organization, at a mass meeting of radical socialists in Pittsburgh. The group wrote and published the Pittsburgh Manifesto, \(^{73}\)Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 85-91.
which declared that the current capitalist system was not only corrupt but wholly oppressive and left working people without any power by which to change their lives; voting, the manifesto concluded, was a miserable waste of time.\textsuperscript{74}

Meanwhile, Cyrus McCormick, Jr. was making changes at the McCormick Reaper Plant. His father had been known to pay relatively high wages and, unlike at many other factories, the senior McCormick had raised wages at the end of the depression of the 1870s. But in 1881, McCormick, Jr. took over with little firsthand experience in running the plant. He immediately deemed operating costs – and, specifically, wages – to be too high and from then on was much more firm in his resolve against union wage increase requests than his father had been. His second solution to treat high operating costs was to rapidly replace a large number of workers with machines and to speed up the process of production.\textsuperscript{75}

When McCormick, Jr. cut wages in 1885, some of his workers went on strike. He hired strikebreakers and Pinkerton agents to protect them. This increased tensions further, as the Pinkertons were hated by the Irish who lived around the plant and worked there. The Pinkertons had infiltrated the Molly Maguires, a militant Irish coal miners organization, in the 1870s in Pennsylvania and had sent many Mollies to their executions. The Irish who lived in the area of the McCormick plant considered Pinkerton agents to be the enemy of the working class.\textsuperscript{76} For the next year, tensions mounted with increasingly frequent hostile interactions between strikebreakers and Pinkertons or the police. On May

\textsuperscript{74} Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 93, 100.
\textsuperscript{75} Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 104-105.
\textsuperscript{76} Green, \textit{Death in the Haymarket}, 115. For more on the Molly Maguires, see Kevin Kenny, \textit{Making Sense of the Molly Maguires} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
3, 1886, after over a week of daily physical confrontations, the police opened fire on striking workers at the McCormick plant, killing a few of them.  

The next day, four months after the Supreme Court handed down the *Presser v. Illinois* ruling, the city’s anarchists posted flyers around town calling workers to a mass meeting at Haymarket Square that evening. An unknown person launched a homemade bomb towards the police as they attempted to break up an otherwise peaceful meeting. By the end of the evening on May 4, at least one policeman was dead at the hands of the bomb thrower and many had been injured by the explosion and the subsequent melee during which the policemen fired into the crowd. Over the next few weeks and months, the eight Haymarket defendants were indicted and in the fall of 1887, four of them were executed, one committed suicide. The remaining three defendants remained in jail until 1893, when Governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned them on the basis that their trials were bereft of justice.

In the weeks after the Haymarket tragedy, as employers were still steadfastly rejecting their employees’ demands for an eight-hour day, they grew increasingly nervous about how the employees would respond. In response, business leaders called upon Colonel Knox, the commander of the First Regiment of the National Guard, to organize his men and to be at the ready. As historian Jim Green explains, the actions of businessmen to control the police and the National Guard (at one time, independent militias) during the Haymarket crisis constituted a watershed moment in the formation of the bourgeoisie in the United States: businessmen who had spent years competing with one another joined together not only to protect their individual production lines, but to

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77 Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 5.
use every force they could to protect capitalism, even the state’s military. Their monopoly over the military forces of the city had originated in the early 1870s, when they had first formed their own militia and pushed the state government to recognize and support their militia. The passage of the Illinois State Militia Law of 1879 was their culminating triumph.

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78 Green, Death in the Haymarket, 177-178.
In January 1884, P.J. Sheridan, an ardent supporter of the use of force to free Ireland from British rule, visited Chicago. Known in the press as “the apostle of the doctrine of dynamite,” Sheridan was led into Turner Hall in Chicago on January 21 by the Hibernian Rifles and greeted by a crowd of over 3,000 people. Some of the most prominent members of the Irish community in Chicago presided over the meeting. Sheridan encouraged his audience to bring the battle for Ireland into England and said that it was their duty to “do away with the denunciation of dynamite.” He said that only force would “bring England to her knees.” After the speech, a committee gathered in front of the audience and adopted a number of what were called “dynamite resolutions,” all of which directly or indirectly championed the use of dynamite in England in order to

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free Ireland. The crowd cheered Sheridan’s support for immediate violent action in England.

Only three years later, William Fitzpatrick, a self-declared “dynamiter” and lifelong Fenian, entered an Irish nationalist rally in Chicago, carrying flyers about using dynamite in Ireland and loudly proclaiming its benefits. Fitzpatrick was not only thrown out of the meeting by the organizers, but was also arrested by policemen who quickly arrived on the scene. As he was dragged out of the meeting, Fitzpatrick was quoted as saying, “won’t England rejoice when it reaches that country that an Irishman was locked up in Chicago for preaching dynamite.” The key to understanding this shift in attitude among Chicago’s Irish nationalists is the 1886 Haymarket rally and subsequent execution of the Haymarket defendants.

Prior to 1886, Chicago’s Irish nationalists openly proclaimed the necessity of force and the benefits of using dynamite in the Irish nationalist struggle but because Irish-American nationalists, especially in Chicago, used tactics and weapons that were commonly associated with anarchism, other Americans began to believe that they were

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2 The Irish and Irish-American nationalists movement had three distinct, although frequently overlapping, branches by the beginning of the 1880s. Physical-force republicans, such as Sheridan, advocated for the use of force in order to achieve full republican nationhood, apart from the United Kingdom, for Ireland. While physical-force nationalists received a lot of attention, they were not the most popular of the three branches. The Home Rule movement, as led by Charles Stewart Parnell, advocated for Ireland to have a position in the United Kingdom equivalent to that of Scotland today: governed by their own parliament but under the banner of the United Kingdom. Finally, the land reform movement, which sought to bring control of the land into the hands of those who lived and worked on the land. This movement, represented by the Land League, was truly trans-Atlantic, in that it sought reform not just in Ireland, but in America as well. Kenny, *The American Irish*, 171-179.

3 Coverage of Sheridan’s visit and the rally in his honor, including full transcriptions of speeches given can be found in *Chicago Citizen*, January 26, 1884. Commentary and interviews can also be found in *Chicago Tribune*, January 20, 1884; *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, 1884.

4 *Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1887.
yet another ugly head of the monster of “European radicalism.” During the Haymarket defendants’ trials, the state demonstrated its intolerance for radical discourse. Although the linkage with radicalism was hard for Irish nationalists to shake, in the wake of Haymarket, the most vocal of Chicago’s Irish nationalists attempted to distance themselves from anarchist and socialist movements.

German organizations as well sought to distance themselves from the reputation of the German Haymarket martyrs. The men who were executed for inciting violence at Haymarket Square and the vast majority of anarchists in the city were German. As demonstrated in chapter five, some of the most prominent German social organizations, such as the Lehr und Wehr Verein, had become increasingly involved with workers’ rights movements, socialism, and the push for the eight-hour day. These links meant that anti-German sentiment ran high in the months and years following the Haymarket tragedy in Chicago. Anti-German sentiment caused fractures in the German community, splitting their social organizations into conservative and radical groups. Like members of the Irish nationalist community, conservative German community members spoke out publicly against anarchism and attempted to make clear the difference between anarchists, socialists, and the majority of Chicago’s Germans and their organizations.

Because Haymarket fueled anti-radical and anti-immigrant sentiment, immigrants who were not involved with socialist and anarchist organizations were compelled to defend their communities. These defenses shaped the future of two prominent ethnic social movements: Irish-American nationalism and German Turner organizations. This chapter will chart the changing attitude among some of Chicago’s nativist-leaning newspapers towards violent Irish nationalism and will outline how Chicago’s German
community responded to anti-radicalism and anti-German sentiment in the post-Haymarket era.

Historians have discussed at length the degree to which Irish-American nationalism was a radical movement. This chapter argues that, whether or not Irish-American nationalists sought to radically alter the class structure of the U.S., other Americans saw their discourse and methods in the latter half of the nineteenth century as part of a general pattern of European radicalism at work in the United States. This belief grew in strength as owners of capital became increasingly concerned about radicalism in the U.S. in the 1870s and 1880s and culminated in the 1886 Haymarket tragedy. Scholars have revealed the impact of Haymarket on labor organization, state-building, and immigration control. This chapter then builds on previous historical analyses of

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5 Historians have discussed at length the degree to which Irish-American nationalism was a radical movement. Thomas Brown’s seminal work on Irish-American nationalism argued that it was a conservative movement, practiced by Irish-Americans who sought middle-class respectability. However, Eric Foner has pointed out that a substantial number of late nineteenth-century Irish Americans actively worked for social change in both America and Ireland; these immigrants were not seeking middle-class assimilation, but instead were taking part in class conflict. Taking these conclusions one step further, Timothy Messer-Kruse, in his forthcoming book, The Haymarket Conspiracy: Transatlantic Anarchist Networks, reveals the connections between Fenian bombers and New York anarchists. Thomas N. Brown, Irish American Nationalism, 1870-1890 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1966); Eric Foner, Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Timothy Messer-Kruse, The Haymarket Conspiracy: Transatlantic Anarchist Networks (University of Illinois Press, 2011), specifically chapter four, “Dynamite.”

6 John Higham calls the Haymarket Affair “the most important single incident in late nineteenth century nativism.” John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 54. Some scholars have argued that the events at Haymarket Square on the night of May 4, 1886, and the ensuing trials and executions, were created by and fueled an intense period of anti-immigrant, anti-labor, and anti-radical nativism. These scholars find that Haymarket was decisive in curbing America’s socialist movement. Henry David, The History of the Haymarket Affair: A Study in the American Social-Revolutionary and Labor Movements (New York: Russell and Russell, 1958), Paul Avrich, The Haymarket Tragedy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), James Green, Death in the Haymarket. Another group of scholars have argued that the nativism of the 1880s was the catalyst to creating increasingly stricter forms of immigration control. Almost all of these scholars note
Haymarket by demonstrating how the anti-immigrant and anti-radical nativism sparked by Haymarket had affects outside of labor history and immigration policy: Haymarket also affected Irish and German immigrants already in the United States and their American-born descendants who participated in non-anarchist organizations.\(^7\)

**Irish Nationalist “Anarchists”**

The dynamite campaigns of the early 1880s were the most controversial measures Irish-American nationalists had undertaken to date. Clan na Gael was an American organization – it did not exist in Ireland – and it was bent on removing Ireland from English rule. As the leader of the organization, John Devoy, wrote in his memoirs, “from 1871 to 1916 [Fenianism in Ireland] was maintained almost entirely by moral and material support from the Clan na Gael.”\(^8\) Clan na Gael, along with Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and his organization, the United Brotherhood, planned and executed dynamite attacks on England in the name of Irish nationalism throughout the early 1880s. The London *Times* reported that the “chief abiding place” of those running the dynamite movement, outside of New York, was Chicago. The informant added that those in favor

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7 James Green notes that “the Haymarket affair marked a juncture in our history when many Americans came to fear radicals and reformers as dangerous subversives and to view trade unionists as irresponsible troublemakers.” Green also acknowledges that “the Haymarket events provoked a new kind of paranoia among millions of native-born citizens, who grew much more fearful of aliens in their midst.” Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 11.

of dynamite “permeated the Land League.”9 Throughout the 1880s, and throughout the
course of the dynamite campaign, Clan na Gael and the Land League were controlled by
men in Chicago.10

Between 1881 and 1885 there were at least forty instances of the use of dynamite
or discovery of what the authorities referred to as “infernal machines” in England and
Ireland. Although not all of these attacks were directed from the United States, author
Henry Hunt, writing in 1889, noted that between 1881 and 1885 twenty-nine Irish
nationalists from America were imprisoned in England for use, or intended use, of
dynamite. By mid-1881, American and English papers were certain that the majority of
the planning, supplies, and men involved were coming from the United States.11

There was a considerable amount of evidence to support the belief that the
dynamite raids were being planned and launched from America, not the least of which
was the words of Irish-American nationalists themselves. For instance, Irish nationalist
Patrick Crowe, who lived in Peoria, Illinois, about 160 miles outside of Chicago, told the
Tribune that the bombs discovered in Liverpool in January 1881 were manufactured in

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9 London Times, July 5, 1882. The Land League strove to end landlordism in Ireland and turn
ownership over to the poor tenant farmers who worked the land.
10 Funchion, Chicago’s Irish Nationalists. Funchion also argues that violent Irish nationalism
became popular in late nineteenth-century Chicago primarily due to the absence of a strong
oppositional voice from the Catholic church, which was prevalent in most East Coast cities at the
time. Archbishop Patrick Feehan (1880-1902) was a close friend of Alexander Sullivan’s and
other priests were known to be active members of Clan na Gael. Michael Funchion, “Irish
Chicago,” 57-92.
11 It is highly unlikely that all of these events were at the behest of the Chicago Triangle. Some
were probably organized by O’Donovan-Rossa; others may well have been independent efforts.
Michael J. Schaack, also writing in 1889, lists 38 instances of attempted or successful dynamite
usage and attributes at least 11 to American sources. For contemporary newspaper commentary,
see, for instance, Chicago Tribune, March 18, 1881; Chicago Tribune, July 25, 1881; Chicago
Tribune, July 28, 1881; Chicago Tribune, August 7, 1881; London Times, July 5, 1882; New York
Times, April 20, 1884. For a more complete discussion of the dynamite attacks, see Séan
McConville, Irish Political Prisoners, 1848-1922: Theatres of War (New York: Routledge,
2003).
his hometown “and were intended to blow up English ships and English buildings.” The *Tribune* reported that, at a meeting of Irish nationalists in Philadelphia, dynamite appeared to be “more trusted” by Irish-Americans than William Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, indicating Irish-Americans apparent belief that a violent revolution would bring Irish independence before a British constitutional measure would. One attendee, who referred to himself as “a believer in agitation and dynamite,” remarked, “Irishmen are not believers in Mr. Gladstone; he is a man of promises, and invariably his promises are not kept.” He went on to say that he believed England would never willingly give up Ireland and the only way to force England’s hand was “through the medium of dynamite, intelligently administered by Irish patriots.”

John Finerty was another Irish-American nationalist who openly supported the use of dynamite. Finerty edited his own newspaper, *The Citizen*, in Chicago beginning in the early 1880s and was elected to the House of Representatives for one term. In 1885, while serving his Congressional term in Washington, D.C., Finerty engaged in a public argument regarding dynamite with another member of Congress. The *Tribune* reported that Representative Thomas Cobb of Indiana had stated that “dynamite outrages could not right the wrong” Ireland had suffered. Finerty “retorted sharply,” justified the use of dynamite.

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12 *Chicago Tribune*, August 2, 1881.
13 Less radical Irish nationalists supported Gladstone and the Liberal Party. In the 1870s, Gladstone had presented a Land Act bill that attempted to give tenants greater security. The bill ultimately failed to provide substantive changes for the majority of the population and agitation increased throughout the 1870s and 1880s. In 1885, Gladstone introduced the first Home Rule bill, but failed to garner support from even his entire party, and the bill failed. While Gladstone supported these parliamentary reforms in order to garner some form of independence for Ireland, neither his methods nor his goals were extreme enough for many Irish-American nationalists. For the best treatment of the history of the Home Rule movement, see Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
14 *Chicago Tribune*, December 21, 1885.
dynamite in Ireland, and “expressed sympathy with the perpetrators.” Cobb also revealed that Finerty had had words with another member of Congress on the same topic and that Finerty’s “sentiments were those of an assasin [sic].”\(^{15}\) Irish-American nationalists openly admitted their desire to liberate Ireland at any cost.

One of the most powerful proponents of dynamite was Alexander Sullivan. An American-born Chicago lawyer, Sullivan became the national chairman of Clan na Gael in 1881 and was instrumental in organizing many dynamite missions in the 1880s.\(^{16}\) In 1883 he became president of the Irish National League of America but his reputation came under fire from within the organization as early as 1884 because, as a report stated, he was “an active member of several societies of extremists engaged in the Irish cause.”\(^{17}\) Sullivan chose his public words more carefully than men like Finerty, but it was still widely known that Sullivan was an extremist. While the use of dynamite might not have

\(^{15}\) *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1885.


\(^{17}\) *Chicago Tribune*, August 1, 1884.
been popular with all Irish Americans, Sullivan nonetheless controlled Irish-American nationalism in Chicago throughout the 1880s.¹⁸ Men like Finerty and Sullivan assured that Chicago’s Irish nationalists maintained their extremist reputations.

By no means did Irish nationalists in the United States support the use of dynamite. For instance, at a rally in New York in 1882, Michael Davitt, who campaigned for land reform in both Ireland and America, responded to cheers for dynamite by saying, “No, no dynamite. All these cries of dynamite are very foolish, and no sensible man should give voice to them.”¹⁹ Another article announced that “the mass of the Irish in America look with abhorrence upon violent methods of combating her Majesty’s Government” but also acknowledged that there was “an influential Irish clique, whose ramifications extend through the chief cities of the United States who are devoting every energy to the encouragement of what may be called the dynamite policy.”²⁰ In 1884, the Tribune commented on and reprinted parts of an article written by William Dillon. Dillon’s brother John was one of the leaders of the Land League in Ireland and, at the time the Tribune printed a letter from William, the brothers were living together in Colorado. William argued that the use of dynamite would “‘infuriate the English people; it will alienate from Ireland the sympathy of foreign nations; and it will thus make it possible for England to trample upon Ireland with the most perfect impunity.’” Further, Dillon argued that the use of dynamite threatened to “create a breach between the Irish at home, and that the effect will be to more or less weaken the national sentiment in

²⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, July 21, 1882.
Ireland.” Therefore, he felt that the anti-dynamiters in Irish America were “not emphatic enough in their condemnation of it.” The Tribune writer hoped that Dillon’s article would convince “many who are now disposed to sympathize with the dynamite theory of its wickedness and mischievousness.” 21 Despite hostility from both inside and outside that Irish-American community, however, support for the use of dynamite continued throughout the first half of the 1880s.

This support was evident in public speeches and events throughout the early 1880s, such as the 1883 Ladies’ Irish Aid Society meeting at New York City’s Cooper Union. Among the resolutions presented by speakers and supported by the crowd was one that stated “‘the time has arrived for Irishmen to use every weapon which Nature and science have furnished to protect the oppressed against the oppressor.’” 22 P.J. Sheridan, the “apostle of the doctrine of dynamite,” spoke about how some disparaged the use of dynamite but that “moral suasion with England was a failure” and therefore “the Irish people were justified in adopting whatever methods of warfare were most effective in driving the English power from Ireland.” 23

Not only Sheridan’s speeches but also the receptions he received were evident of widespread support for the methods he advocated. In January of 1884, Sheridan spoke in Chicago. Introducing Sheridan to the crowd, P.W. Dunne, a prominent Irish Chicagoan, said that there was only one remaining way to challenge England, “and that was to use what Gladstone called the ‘resources of civilization.’” John Finerty, during his term as an U.S. Congressman sent a telegraph stating that the “meeting has my best wishes.”

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21 Chicago Tribune, April 20, 1884.
22 Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1883.
23 Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1883.
January 25, Sheridan was treated to a tour of the County Building by Judge Prendergast and County Clerk Ryan, both of whom were involved with Clan na Gael and the Land League.24 Chicago’s Irish nationalists’ support for Sheridan and his methods was clear.

Chicago’s Irish nationalists were extremists, but for tactical reasons they were prepared to support constitutional nationalist leaders when they visited the United States. Sheridan’s visit happened to coincide with the arrival of John and William Redmond, brothers and fundraisers for the Irish National League, an organization which supported Irish freedom through parliamentary measures.25 Both brothers were Irish members of the British parliament and thirty years later John Redmond became the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and was responsible for finally getting a Home Rule bill passed. The brothers were interviewed and stated that they whole-heartedly disapproved of the use of dynamite and could only support constitutional reforms in order to secure Irish freedom and, in the rally held in their honor, they gave speeches outlining the parliamentary method for obtaining Irish freedom.26 There were many similarities between the visits of Sheridan and the Redmonds in 1884: both the parliamentarians and the dynamite advocate were greeted by leaders of Irish Chicago; both were escorted by armed Clan na Gael guards and the Hibernian Rifles; both spoke to crowds of thousands. But two years later, only the Redmonds would have been welcomed in Chicago.

While the dynamite campaign in Ireland received considerable support among Irish Americans, it is not particularly surprising that it was unpopular among other

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24 Funchion, *Chicago’s Irish Nationalists*, 37; Chicago Tribune, January 20, 1884; Chicago Tribune, January 26, 1884.
25 As historian Michael Funchion has demonstrated, Clan leaders in Chicago accepted the presence of the Home Rule movement, but at the same time they worked behind the scenes to keep physical force nationalism thriving. Funchion, *Chicago’s Irish Nationalists*, 60.
26 Chicago Citizen, January 26, 1884; Chicago Tribune, January 30, 1884.
Americans. As Irish-American nationalists began openly promoting and using dynamite, nativism had begun to re-emerge as a potent force in late nineteenth-century society. Like the nativism of the 1850s, Gilded Age nativism retained aspects of anti-Catholicism. More virulent, however, was the trend towards anti-radicalism that was growing along with increased labor agitation. Many Americans believed that radicalism was imported to the U.S. with immigrants who had taken part in or experienced class-conflict in Europe. Therefore, instead of examining the ills of the social structure of American industrial life, many Americans instead viewed immigrants as the root of the problem.\(^\text{27}\) While extreme Irish nationalists were clear that their efforts would target British rule in Ireland and not American society, American Irish nationalists’ statuses as immigrants and their usage of dynamite linked them in the minds of many Americans with the immigrant radicals they feared. Even though many Americans had at one time supported Irish nationalism because of its commonalities with the ideologies of republicanism during the Civil War – liberty and freedom – twenty years later, Americans began to see a socialist threat.

While many Americans still sympathized with Ireland’s plight, their toleration stopped when the violence began. As one editorialist wrote, “the assassination [sic] and dynamite policy can have no other effect than the alienation of all Americans” and there would be no sympathy “with a cause that tolerates and inspires violence and crime.”\(^\text{28}\) Another article, reprinted in the Tribune from Harper’s Weekly, stated that “nobody who is familiar with the facts holds that the oppression of Ireland by England is now so cruel


\(^{28}\) Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1883.
and hopeless as to justify armed and bloody revolution.”\textsuperscript{29} The German-language \textit{Illinois Staats Zeitung} condemned the London bombings in 1885: “Reports on the [recent bombings in London] must fill anybody, whose mind is not wholly distorted[,] with terror and shame.” The article went on to say “the Irish plotters, who carried out this crime in cold blood, do not deserve leniency, and should be destroyed the quickest way, as soon as the law has them in custody.”\textsuperscript{30}

But more than viewing the dynamite campaign as simply unsavory or immoral, many Americans had come to believe that Irish-American nationalists’ promotion of and use of dynamite was an indication that they were linked with the growing international threat of violent social revolution.\textsuperscript{31} Some of these links were merely hinted at in newspaper reports. For instance, the \textit{Tribune} reprinted an article from the New York \textit{Times} stating that the “the dynamite business…disturb[s] a good many business-men, manufacturers, and capitalists” because they believed “this dynamite faction in the Irish party would yet give…Americans much trouble.”\textsuperscript{32} While this article did not directly link Irish dynamiters to anarchists or other social revolutionaries, the idea that violent action in England could also be turned against capitalist forces in America shows a blurring of the lines between Irish nationalists and those who were interested in class revolution.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, April 26, 1883.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Illinois Staats Zeitung}, January 26, 1885 CFLPS German Vol. 3.
\textsuperscript{31} M.J. Sewell has explored the connection between Irish nationalism and socialism, anarchism, and communism and how “support for the Irish cooled when American opinion perceived them as moving away from romantic nationalist rebellion, towards the combination of social revolution and terrorism to achieve self-government.” Sewell’s analysis focuses on foreign policy and diplomatic relations between the U.S., its Irish citizens, and Britain. Sewell, “Rebels or Revolutionaries?”
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Chicago Tribune}, April 21, 1883.
\textsuperscript{33} In his work on Haymarket, James Green notes that, “Chicagoans had reason to fear that dynamite bombs would explode in their city, as they had in London that year [1885] – not ignited
Sometimes newspaper reports implied a connection between Irish nationalists and social revolutionaries simply by how they structured their stories about the two groups. For instance, an April 1884 article in the Chicago Tribune, under the heading of “Irish Affairs,” was titled “The Anarchist Section.” It explained the method by which Irishmen transported dynamite to England from French shores.\(^{34}\) One of the most widely reported attacks took place in December of 1884, when Irish-American nationalists attempted to blow up London Bridge. The attack caused some damage but, obviously, left the bridge essentially intact. In the middle of the story about the bombing, the Tribune inserted two lines about “foreign anarchists” and discussed an anarchist on trial in Germany.\(^{35}\) Even the layout of these articles suggested that the two groups were intertwined. The members of the American press were not the only ones linking Irish-American nationalists to foreign social revolutionaries. The London Times labeled John Finerty “Finerty the Dynamitard.”\(^{36}\) Appearing in the early 1880s, the term “dynamitard” was originally used in English to refer specifically to French communist dynamiters.\(^{37}\) While John Finerty was not a communist, the use of the word conjured images of the French Commune of 1871.

In addition to these implied connections, plenty of writers also drew an explicit link between Irish nationalism and anarchism. An April 1884 article in the Tribune began: “The activity of the Irish Anarchists in France continues unabated, Fenian agents

\(^{34}\) Chicago Tribune, April 19, 1884.

\(^{35}\) Chicago Tribune, December 19, 1884.

\(^{36}\) For instance, see London Times, October 23, 1888.

in Paris during the last week received $3,000 from America.” The article also noted that “among the number of the Clan na Gael are a number of Russian Nihilists and four French Communists.”38 A commentator in Harper’s Weekly wrote that “the dynamite policy [of Irish nationalists] is sheer anarchy and social dissolution as against humanity, civilization, and law.” The same writer stated that “every dynamite agent is an enemy of human society,” and urged “every civilized country” to do “whatever can be done, with due regard to the just guarantees of liberty and within the forms of law, to suppress criminal actions.”39 These writers did not merely hint at connections between Irish nationalists and anarchists or communists; they wrote as if these groups were one and the same.

Journalists were not the only ones making the connection between Irish nationalists and anarchists. Michael J. Schaack, commander of a Chicago police station in the 1880s who led the round up of suspected anarchists after the bomb throwing at Haymarket in 1886, published a book in 1889 titled, Anarchy and Anarchists: A History of the Red Terror and the Social Revolution in America and Europe.40 While the book is not the best historical analysis of anarchism, it does reveal how a prominent law enforcement agent lumped together all immigrants who used dynamite as dangerous threats to society. In a chapter that also covered French and Russian nihilists and dynamite makers, Schaack detailed the bombings in England during the 1880s.41 While Schaack never explicitly stated that Irish nationalists were responsible for these incidents,

38 Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1884.
39 Chicago Tribune, April 26, 1883.
40 Green, Death in the Haymarket, 196 and throughout.
the public who read his book would have been well aware of this fact because Irish nationalism and the dynamite campaign were so visible in the newspapers of the day. Furthermore, Schaack blamed “strong European governments, where there is monarchical or strongly centralized government” for the problem of anarchists in America. He argued that persons who could not find liberty in their home countries came to the United States already corrupted by extremism and, because of the liberty they enjoyed in the U.S., were prone to play out their desires for anarchy. The belief that monarchical governments of Europe created the problem and then shipped their damaged and dangerous emigrants to America was clear. Schaack believed that “there is one step from republicanism to Anarchy.” How different this sentiment was from twenty-five years earlier when Americans praised the republican values of the Irish immigrants among them.

Even the man who claimed to teach dynamiters of any stripe how to make their “infernal machines” counted Irish nationalists in the same crowd as “anarchists and Russian nihilists.” This man, who referred to himself as Professor Mezzeroff, spoke at the same Cooper Union meeting in 1883 at which P.J. Sheridan had appeared, in front of a wildly supportive crowd. Mezzeroff announced to the crowd that he was the inventor of the “dynamite system of warfare and meant to keep it up” as the crowd cheered him. It was speeches such as this that confirmed for observers the danger that Irish dynamiters in England posed to Americans.

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42 Schaack, Anarchy and Anarchists, 560.
43 Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1883.
44 Ann Larabee discusses Mezzeroff and his dynamite lectures in “A Brief History of Terrorism in the United States,” in Technology and Terrorism, David Clarke, ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2004). Timothy Messer-Kruse has investigated Professor
Aside from outsiders constructing a connection between Irish nationalism and social revolutionaries like anarchists, there were some real associations between the movements. Chicago’s socialists frequently touted their support for the cause of both hard-line and the more moderate constitutional Irish nationalists. August Spies, who would later be executed for his role in the Haymarket bombing, publicly “condemned the English government” after the arrests of Irish land agitators, such as Charles Stewart Parnell. At a meeting of the Central Committee of Chicago’s Socialists, the group expressed “their sympathy to the Irish revolutionists: Sheridan, Walsh, and Tynan.” These men had been part of the plot that resulted in the murder of two British officials in Dublin’s Phoenix Park. After the murders, they had escaped and the British government was seeking their extradition. Chicago’s socialists announced that, if the American government made “any eventual attempt…to comply with this request,” it would “be met with the most vigorous protest on our part, and we shall resort to any means at our disposal to render such proceedings impossible.” The socialists actively and openly supported some of the most hardline Irish nationalists.

Chicago’s socialists actively recruited Irish members and strove to bring the working-class Irish and German communities of the city together under one banner. At a socialist meeting on the north side, Comrade Wilhelm Lange, responding to what he claimed was the Illinois Staats Zeitung “stirring up feeling against the Irish,” said that “it

Mezzeroff and shown that he was an intimate of both Irish revolutionaries and New York City anarchists. Many men in both circles claimed Mezzeroff had taught them the basics of bomb-making and that he maintained a dynamite factory somewhere in the greater New York area. Timothy Messer-Kruse, The Haymarket Conspiracy: Transatlantic Anarchist Networks (University of Illinois Press, 2011), 196-202.

45 Chicago Arbeiter Zeitung, October, 17, 1881. CFLPS German Vol. 3.
46 Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung, May 5, 1883. CFLPS German Vol. 3.
was up to [the socialists] to take a stand.” In response to this sentiment, Lange and the leadership of the club planned “an Irish and German mass meeting” to protest anti-foreign sentiment and the oppressors of the people, no matter what their ethnicity was. Later the same month, socialists, including future Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons led a large, multi-ethnic meeting, where “[resolutions] against German Irish provocation [were] accepted.” The socialists, true to their international ideal, attempted to cross ethnic lines.

While public opinion had, in the mid-1860s, supported Irish-American nationalism as an extension of republican ideas, the mounting violence surrounding the movement in the 1880s made dynamite-touting Irish nationalists seem less like American Revolutionary or Civil War heroes and more like German anarchists and French Communards. An editorial in the Tribune read: “Such action [as the use of dynamite] is simply diabolism from the American standpoint.” The writer pointed out that the Tribune had “been a friend of Ireland” and believed Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Home Rule party, “to be a safe and patriotic counselor.” “Nothing can hinder the success of these progressive measures of amelioration and freedom but the action of these dynamiters,” as the newspaper put it on January 31, 1885. But still, Irish-American dynamiters had continued to launch missions throughout the first half of the 1880s, even though the use of dynamite in Ireland had damaged Irish nationalists’ reputations in America.

47 Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung, January 2, 1884. CFLPS German Vol. 3.
48 Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung, January 14, 1884. CFLPS German Vol. 3.
49 Chicago Tribune, January 31, 1885.
50 See, for instance, Chicago Tribune, April 20, 1884.
Post-Haymarket Irish-American Nationalism

The Haymarket trial confirmed that individuals who supported crime in any way, and not simply those who perpetrated it, were open to prosecution. Joseph Gary, the judge during the Haymarket trial, instructed his jury that, while “every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects,” everyone was nonetheless “held responsible under the laws for the abuse of liberty so given.” Gary told the jury that freedom of speech was not unlimited and “that no man is allowed to advise the committing of any crime against the person to property of another.” Furthermore, Gary explained that anyone who “stands by and aids, abets and assists,” or even those persons not present who “advised, encouraged, aided or abetted the perpetration of the crime,” were to be “considered as principal, and punished accordingly.”

By this logic, Irish-American nationalist leaders in Chicago had aided, abetted, and assisted perpetrators of crime.

Outsiders observers were aware of the implications of the Haymarket ruling. Police commander Michael Schaack wrote that, during the trial, “[State’s Attorney] Grinnell…showed conclusively that in a conspiracy the men who had advised and abetted the commission of the crime were fully as guilty as the man who had actually made himself the instrument of their deed.” If this were true, then John Finerty and Alexander Sullivan and many other Irish-American nationalists could have been found guilty for their promotion of the dynamite campaigns: they, too had aided, abetted, assisted, advised, and encouraged the perpetration of crimes. When the state clarified its position on this kind of behavior during the Haymarket trial, it sent a message not only to agitators

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51 Schaack, Anarchy and Anarchists, 578.
52 Schaack, Anarchy and Anarchists, 561.
who sought social reform in the U.S., but also to Irish-American nationalists whose
action, never directed at the United States, at the very least violated American neutrality
laws. It is therefore no surprise that Irish-American nationalists, especially in Chicago,
stopped openly supporting violence and turned to parliamentary Irish nationalism.

Less than a month after Haymarket, 4,000 people gathered in Chicago in support
of the Irish Home Rule bill. Two years earlier, the Hibernian Rifles had escorted P.J.
Sheridan into the speaking hall to a crowd who cheered for his support of dynamite.
Conversely, attendees at this May 1886 rally appeared anxious to separate themselves
from any connection to dynamite, violence, and subversive activity and to present
themselves as loyal Americans who opposed radical or extreme political movements. For
instance, both the Hibernian Rifles, again, and the Clan na Gael guards escorted Chicago
Mayor Carter Harrison and Illinois governor Richard Oglesby into the building and onto
the stage. Speaker Alexander Sullivan, the notorious former head of Clan na Gael,
admitted that some Americans might not like the fact that Governor Olgesby was
escorted by “these men, not of the State militia,” although they were “intrusted with
arms” [sic] and why the green flag of Ireland was allowed to be displayed alongside the
American flag. He suggested that the Governor answer any such questions by saying that

53 The Neutrality Act of 1818 stated that “if any citizen of the United States shall, within the
territory or jurisdiction thereof, accept and exercise a commission to serve a foreign prince, state,
colony, district or people in way, by land, or by sea, against any prince, state, colony, district or
people with whom the United States are at peace, the person so offending shall be deemed guilty
of a high misdemeanor, and shall be fined not more than two thousand dollars, and shall be
imprisoned not exceeding three years.” There were also penalties laid out for those who hired or
retained another person, or armed another person, to break the Neutrality laws. Based on these
laws, President Grant issued proclamations against the Irish-Americans who took part in the
Fenian raids on Canada. New York Times, June 8, 1866.
54 This rally was covered, with transcriptions of speeches given, in the Chicago Tribune, May 26,
1886.
“he trusts these men with unwavering confidence. If the Nation ever needs them, if the State ever needs them, only one call will be necessary.” The most hardline Irish nationalists in town, then, were protecting the local heads of state: no anarchist would have done the same.

Sullivan went on to explain that the Irish struggle had “falsely been called rebellious: it was always lawful.” This was the same man who led and controlled Clan na Gael when they implemented dynamite attacks on London only a few years before. While Clan na Gael had never targeted America with its attacks, Sullivan still apparently felt the need to take a firm stance against anarchism and to clearly point out the differences between anarchists and Irish nationalists. Sullivan went on to say that the Irish, “carry no seditious flag. They will not try to abolish God. They will not try to annihilate property.” Sullivan went on to explain that, not only were Irish nationalists not anarchists, they were protectors of America: he claimed that people should “have no fear of the Irish flag, or Irish arms, or of Irish muscle, unless they join the enemies of the Nation or of the State” that enemies would “be treated as the Irish have treated everybody who marched under a flag hostile to American peace and to American law and order.” He claimed the Irish had offered America this protection “from the firing of the first shot of the Revolution down to the day when misguided men marching under a dastard and bastard flag fired a seditious shot in the streets of Chicago.” The point he was attempting to make is clear: the Irish were not dynamiters or anarchists; they were, instead, loyal Americans.

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55 Chicago Tribune, May 26, 1886.
56 Chicago Tribune, May 26, 1886.
Just as they had two years earlier, thousands of Chicagoans had gathered in support of Irish nationalism. But this time, instead of cheering the “apostle of dynamite,” they demonstrated their support for peaceful, constitutional reform. A year later, on May 10, 1887, William Fitzpatrick was arrested for openly supporting the use of dynamite at a meeting of approximately 6000 supporters of Gladstone, Parnell, and parliamentary reform in Ireland.\(^{57}\) While the fact that the Home Rule bill was gaining support daily in England gave the Chicago Irish hope that Irish Home Rule was at hand, it is impossible to ignore the impact that Haymarket had on their demonstrations. Chicago had been the home of Irish radicalism, as Fitzpatrick himself had pointed out when he proclaimed that “England [would] rejoice when it reaches that country that an Irishman was locked up in Chicago for preaching dynamite.”\(^{58}\) It was no longer safe for Irish nationalists in Chicago to openly and loudly support the use of dynamite. Eight men had been arrested for not much more in conjunction with Haymarket. Chicago’s Irish nationalist leaders had distanced themselves from movements, beliefs, and actions that, prior to Haymarket, they had openly embraced.

Despite the fact that Irish-American nationalists in Chicago no longer openly supported a dynamite campaign in England, their reputation as “European radicals” was hard to shake. In 1889 a prominent Irish nationalist in Chicago, Dr. Patrick Henry Cronin, was found bludgeoned to death in a sewer drain just outside city limits. As it became clear that Dr. Cronin had been murdered by other Irish-American nationalists, possibly at the behest of Alexander Sullivan, newspapers began claiming that the murder proved that

\(^{57}\) *Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1887.
\(^{58}\) *Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1887.
Irish-American nationalists were blood-thirsty, lawless criminals who were a danger to the security of the American state, just as the anarchists had been.\textsuperscript{59}

Figure 1 was published on the front page of *America*, a weekly Chicago publication, known for its nativistic attitudes. This image was published just days after Cronin’s body was found. In it, an Irish-American nationalist proclaims his disdain for the government, by proclaiming “I am agin the government,” something that would have reminded any Chicagoan of the anarchists. The editor, Slason Thompson, wrote in the same issue that “the discovery [of the murdered body] brings the public of Illinois and Chicago face to face with something more terrible than murder, something more dangerous than Socialism or Anarchy.” The murder of Dr. Cronin, Thompson continued, proved that the Irish had imported “to this continent the wild and lawless system of assassination that has made the civilization of Ireland a hissing and a reproach in the ears of history for the past 300 years.”

years.” A clearer connection between Clan na Gael and the anarchists was made a few weeks later, on August 22, when *America* featured a two-page illustration of Justice banishing “those who are against her” [Figure 2]. Among the named villains are socialism, anarchy, Clan na Gael, and “dynamite plots.” *America* succeeded in placing Clan na Gael and their activities firmly within the same category of that of the anarchists, and that was in direct opposition to the noble figure of Justice. Irish-American nationalism’s violent reputation was translated as a threat to the American state, even though its target had always been British. In these issues of *America*, the actions of extreme Irish nationalists were not only compared to, but actually placed in the same category of dangerous foreign radicalism as was anarchism.

A third illustration [Figure 3] demonstrates the imagined link between Clan na Gael and the anarchist movement. On October 17, 1889, in the middle of the trial of Dr. Cronin’s accused murderers, this image appeared in *America* in support

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60 *America*, May 30, 1889.
61 *America*, August 22, 1889.
of Chicago’s bid for the World’s Fair. Uncle Sam is shown hosting a contingent of foreign guests and

![Illustration](image)

Figure 3

proudly showing them Lady Justice, who holds a placard stating that the “Red-Handed Anarchists ‘Got There,’ and Clan na Gael Assassins will Get There, all the same.” The destination to which she claims Clan na Gael will arrive is the gallows. She is standing upon two flags, one of which reads “Green Flag” and “Erin go Kill” and shows the Irish harp but with a skeleton where the female form usually appeared. The second flag reads “Red Flag Anarchy.” The subtitle to the illustration quotes Uncle Sam saying to his foreign guests, “This is not so bad for our young country to be able to solve the worst of your old knotty problems.” 62 These two images illustrate that, even after Chicago’s Irish-

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62 *America*, October 17, 1889.
American nationalist leaders attempted to separate themselves from the radical label in the wake of Haymarket, some Americans still considered them one and the same with other “European radicals” and were therefore considered a threat to the stability of the socio-economic system in place.

While this cartoon retained hope that the American justice system could tame the Irish nationalists, another illustration [Figure 4] featuring both Clan na Gael and the anarchists was distinctly less hopeful and decidedly more alarmist. In a two-page illustration published in the November 1889 edition, Justice was featured standing on the same two flags as seen in the cartoon from October 17th. The title of the illustration boldly stated, “Americans! Rule or Be Ruled!” which reads, “Our Nation’s Trial: Let It Be
the Death-Knell of Foreign Rebels among us.” The subtitle explains that Clan na Gael believes that its “commands are superior to the laws of all nations” and that this ideology is a threat to “life and property.” The illustration calls for the expulsion of “foreign rebels claiming our protection under false colors.” It therefore portrays Clan na Gael not only as a group that opposed British rule in Ireland, but also (and more importantly to *America*) one that opposed justice and the American legal system, and was therefore a threat to all Americans, just as the anarchists had been. While the addition of the anarchist symbols were not necessary in order to express the intended opinion, their inclusion allowed the editor of *America* to draw on fears with which Chicagoans were already quite familiar and it reminded them that the Irish posed a similar threat. The cartoons in *America* used the reputation of the anarchists to draw a connection between the two groups. Since both anarchists and Irish-American nationalists were portrayed as threats imported to the United States by immigrants, radicalism became a problem of immigration.

Because nativists believed that immigration was the root of the problem, nativists attacked Germans, often in conjunction with their attacks on Irish-Americans.

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*Figure 5*

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63 *America*, November 7, 1889.
nationalists. The first image of an Irish character and a German character together during the period of the Cronin case was on August 8, 1889. On this date, the cover of America featured an ape-faced Irishman and a pointy-bearded German, both leaning on a ballot box, inscribed with the words, “Take all the Liberty you like with me” [Figure 5].

Uncle Sam sits above them, holding an American flag and asking “Where do I come in?” The sash of the Irishman reads, “Erin go murder,” a play on the popular “Erin go bragh.” *Erin go bragh* translates roughly to “up with Ireland” and therefore “Erin go murder” insinuated that the Irish cheered for murder. Although this cartoon does not specifically mention the anarchists, it does categorize the Irish and the Germans together as being part of a larger group that would push out “real Americans,” as symbolized by Uncle Sam.

Chicago’s Irish nationalists had attempted to make a firm distinction between themselves and the anarchists in the wake of the Haymarket Tragedy but the murder of Dr. Cronin, in the eyes of many other Chicagoans, represented the danger and disorder that immigrants of all types brought to the city. Even John Finerty knew the dangers of radicalism in the wake of Haymarket. As the trial dragged on amidst jury bribing schemes and the suspicious acquittal of Alexander Sullivan, and ultimately ended without confirming a link between the murder and Clan na Gael, Finerty attempted to defend his community in the pages of his newspaper.

While Finerty did not respond directly to attacks launched by *America*, he did do battle with very similar attacks which came from other areas of the Chicago community.

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64 *America*, August 8, 1889.

some with very similar opinions to that of *America*. Insults were traded between Finerty and the editors of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* and *The Inter-Ocean*, a daily Chicago paper. Finerty urged his readers to withhold judgment on the Cronin murder until the courts had processed the case. William Penn Nixon, editor of *The Inter-Ocean*, felt that Finerty was biased. On June 8, under the heading “An Unreasonable Editor,” Finerty wrote a response to Nixon in the pages of the *Citizen*, denying Nixon’s oblique charges that Finerty was obscuring facts in the murder investigation. Finerty further stated that he would not denounce his “own countrymen without due evidence of their complicity.” Finerty went on to remark that, just as all Germans should not have been held accountable for the actions of the Anarchists and all Americans were not held accountable for Lincoln’s assassination, the Irish should not be blamed as a group for Cronin’s murder.

But Slason Thompson’s cartoons had dragged the German community into the Cronin murder. Unsurprisingly, Hermann Raster, editor of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, responded as well. In the wake of the Cronin murder, the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* referred to the “ill-famed order of the Clan na Gael” and the “Clan Na Gael horde of

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66 Although Finerty never responded directly to attacks from *America*, as he did to the comments made by Nixon and Raster, Finerty did, on July 6, mention Nixon, Raster, and Thompson together as editors of local papers who had “become jealous of Clan na Gael.” *The Citizen*, July 6, 1889. Despite being at odds on the pages of their newspapers, Finerty and Thompson were friends. They met shortly after Thompson’s arrival in Chicago in 1880 and Thompson, in his autobiography, referred to being “in delightful fellowship with John F. Finerty, the leading spirit of the Irish cause in America.” He recalled, however, “the best natured exchange” of their group to be one where Finerty called him “only a damned Saxon.” Thompson remarked “how we got along in the discussion of British and Irish affairs in 1880 without coming to blows is a mystery to this day.” Slason Thompson, *Way Back When*, 233. Therefore, Finerty was likely aware of Thompson’s feelings about Clan na Gael.

67 *The Chicago Citizen*, June 8, 1889.
murderers.” It may have been due to Raster’s attacks on Finerty after the Cronin murder that Gordon Murray of the Highland Association of Illinois wrote to Raster in June 1889: “Bravo! Mr Raster for your gallant onslaught on that cowardly blather skite Fenian leader Col. Finnerty [sic]. Any support the conservative German newspaper may have showed for Irish-American nationalism in the earlier part of the decade had died with Dr. Cronin, if not before.

Raster and Finerty battled in their respective newspapers over the meaning of and blame for the Cronin murder. Raster wrote, “what was right for the German Anarchists, let it be just for the Irish murderers,” meaning that if the anarchists had been hung for their alleged crimes, so should the murderers of Dr. Cronin. He added, however, that the two groups were “by no means …on the same level of moral worth.” He said that the Haymarket “originators” were “much above this Irish set of assassins, for they were honest fanatics who in their frenzy had declared a general war against the ‘capitalistic society’ and their ‘bloodhounds’ (the police)” and that the difference between the two groups was “as marked as that between lion and jackel.” This may have been the most forgiving Raster had ever been regarding the anarchists, as he had previously steadfastly denounced them. Finerty responded by calling Raster the “putative editor” of the Illinois Staats Zeitung. Raster went on to suggest that the Irish were so thoroughly entrenched in the Chicago government and the police force that the cause of justice in the Cronin case was all but lost already. Finerty reminded Raster and their readers that, even though

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68 Illinois Staats Zeitung, March 18, 1892, February 2, 1890.
70 The Chicago Citizen, June 8, 1889.
71 The Chicago Tribune, May 28, 1889.
“more Irish policemen fell by the Anarchists’ bomb than officers of any other race,”
Chicago’s Irish community had not called “their German fellow-citizens filthy names, because most of the Anarchists happened to be born in Germany.”

Finerty’s main objective in covering the Cronin case was a defense of the Irish community, in much the same way Raster had defended the German community after Haymarket. Finerty used the pages of The Citizen to respond to the kinds of charges that America was making, which were being made by many different people and organizations throughout the Chicago community. Furthermore, as Finerty began to realize the possibility that it had been an Irishman who had murdered Cronin, he may have remembered that the Haymarket defendants were executed not for their participation in violence, but for their vocal support of it. Finerty “the Dynamitard” may have feared that he himself would be implicated in the Cronin murder because of his former, and very vocal support, of violence.

While the Cronin murder demonstrated to Irish Americans that their loyalty to the United States was still questioned by many Americans, they had by this point ceased the planning and execution of dynamite raids and even the most outspoken supporters of physical force nationalism, such as John Finerty, began almost exclusively to support parliamentary measures. The anti-immigrant and anti-radical impact of Haymarket continued to be felt by the Irish-American community in Chicago even after they had changed their behavior. These lingering connections demonstrate the strength of the links between Irish-American nationalism and anarchism in the years after Haymarket.

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72 The Chicago Citizen, June 8, 1889.
The Post-Haymarket German Community

While Haymarket produced a strong anti-radical sentiment among many Americans, it also spurred a heightened concern about German immigrants in particular. One of the most prominent Haymarket defendants, Albert Parsons, was a Texan by birth, but many of the other defendants and the majority of socialists and anarchists in Chicago were German speakers or German by birth or ethnicity. The German community in Chicago was well aware of this connection.

A number of the Haymarket defendants were involved in militias and less radical labor organizations in the city. Adolf Fischer and August Spies were also members of the Lehr und Wehr Verein and Spies, editor of the *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung*, a German-language anarchist newspaper in Chicago, was not only one of the Haymarket defendants, but also a member of the Aurora Turner Society. The A.T.S. provided Spies with $100.00 in order to fund his defense on the grounds that, “even the worst criminals are assured of some defense and [Spies], so far, [has] not been identified as such.” Furthermore, in a statement issued on the pages of the *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung*, the A.T.S. remarked that “this Society is always ready to give financial support to any of its members if circumstances call for it.” This support, however, could have left the Aurora Turner Society open to attacks on the grounds that it supported anarchists and anarchism. Therefore, the statement announced that “the Aurora Turner Society made also known that it decidedly condemns the Haymarket Riots, which can only harm the labor question” and that the society “has never had any dealing with the rest of the leaders of

Because of these connections, the German community struggled over its connections to radicalism.

The Turner Societies, once regarded as republican organizations, were frequently the target of anti-radical investigations in the post-Haymarket era for their linkage both with labor agitation and in some cases, simply because they were German and the authorities were suspicious of any German organization. For instance, in 1888, the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* reported that a social Turnverein had presented a “living picture” at a festival they hosted and that it seemed to glorify anarchism because they portrayed a scene from the French Revolution. While the presenters denied that they were supporting anarchism, the *Staats Zeitung* called the display “abnoxious” [sic] and said that it “could readily be regarded as pro-anarchist.” The paper commented that “since Americans are very prone to ascribe all anarchistic activities to the Germans, the German clubs should refrain from such questionable conduct” because these kinds of events only served “to nurture American hatred for foreigners.”

The *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, a far more conservative German-language newspaper than the *Chicagoer Arbeiter*, was edited in the latter half of the nineteenth century by Hermann Raster and Wilhelm Rapp, both of whom had been participants in the 1848 uprisings in Germany before emigrating to the United States. In September 1886, the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* printed an article that stated that “nothing has hurt the Germans more in the United States in the eyes of its other population elements than the shocking agitation of the anarchists.” The article went on to admit that most of the anarchists “bear

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74 *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung*, July 6, 1886, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
75 *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, November 29, 1888, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
German names, many talk no other language but German, and the most abominable anarchistic propaganda is printed in German,” and that because of this, “the Germans have been blamed…with the existence of this anarchism.” Even three years later, the *Chicago Tribune* referred to the German newspapers of Chicago as “for the most part organs of the anarchists.”

As late as 1891, Germans were battling the perceived connection between the German population and anarchism, saying that “anarchism is entirely un-German” and that the “weeds of anarchism prospered [in the German community] and made Germanism contemptuous.” The writer demanded “imperatively the cessation of anarchistic agitation” in the German community in order that the “German skilled workers, as well as the steadily increasing middle class” be able to improve their conditions in the United States.

This link between the Germans and the anarchists caused rifts in the social organizations, such as the various Turner groups, that had once brought the Germans of Chicago together. For instance, in 1888, the Conference of the German-North-American Confederation of Athletics put forward a resolution condemning anarchism. It stated, among other things, that, “‘We reject with indignation the reproach of being susceptible to anarchist ideas. We are for law and order, and these we will defend at all times.’” The *Illinois Staats Zeitung* reported that, after a “long, interesting, and, for the most part, orderly debate,” the “conservative element” won out and passed the resolution. The *Staats Zeitung*, calling the Athletic club the “chief representative of German-Americans.”

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76 *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, September 4, 1886, CFLPS German Vol. 3.  
77 *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 1889, CFLPS German Vol. 3.  
78 *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, September 16, 1891, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
applauded this early attempt of a German social organization distancing itself from radicalism because, the paper claimed, it would “remove the fatal issue, which has been used by the English Press to disparage the German element of the population,” noting that the issue had also “caused a serious discord among the members.” But this was not the only organization to face “serious discord” over the anarchist question.

Many of Chicago’s German workers still found their home in the Turner groups. For instance, in 1890, 10,000 workers in the German Turner Societies turned out for a May Day parade. The Tribune bemoaned the fact that “in the olden times May Day used to be warm and pleasant and folks danced on the green” but now May Day was “the day on which labor rises up and makes demands.” The German Turners were there to demand an eight hour work day and carried banners calling for “unity” and “strength.” May Day had become a worker’s holiday for many German Turners. But, in the post-Haymarket era, not all German Turners were supportive of working-class agitation and the rift was growing.

In 1891 the membership of the Chicago Turngemeinde, the oldest and largest German Turner group in Chicago, expelled one of its members, Mr. Vahlteich, “because of his intense anarchistic sentiments.” In turn, the Chicago District Board of Turners expelled the Turngemeinde from their greater organization. Two other Turner groups in the city – the Central Turnverein and the Germania Turnverein – withdrew from the District in response to the expulsion of the Turngemeinde. The Tribune reported that “the fight between the anarchists and conservative elements of this order has been in progress

79 Illinois Staats Zeitung, May 23, 1888, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
80 Chicago Tribune May 2, 1890, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
for some years.” The Turngemeinde represented “the conservative element of German Turners” and the paper predicted that “this fight over Valteich will doubtless be the formation of two national bodies of Turners.” The paper also reported that other Turner groups, in and around Chicago, were preparing to join the Chicago Turngemeinde in seceding. A few days later, at a north-side meeting of the Turngemeinde, the leaders called upon the North American Turn Bund, the national organization of Turners, to “[purify itself] by the expulsion of all the anarchists and socialistic elements which had crept into it” and threatened that, if this did not happen, “all the conservative societies would decline to remain in it, and would form a rival National organization, which would exceed it in wealth and dignity.”

The conservative Turners followed through on their threat. The following May, they held their first annual convention in Chicago, calling themselves the National Turner District. Made up of delegates from the Chicago Turngemeinde, the South Side Turngemeinde, the Germania Turn Verein, and the Central Turn Verein, they discussed the expulsion of Julius Volteich and the subsequent expulsion and secession of their clubs from the Chicago Turner District. They pledged to once more bring their grievances to the North American Turner Bund. Barring a successful outcome, they would continue on their own. The Tribune called the battle a “final fight for supremacy…between the Reds, or Anarchists, and the conservative Turners” and predicted that if the “Reds” won, the conservatives of Chicago would be joined by the Turners of “New York, Minnesota, and several other States.”

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81 Chicago Tribune, August 28, 1891, CFLPS German Vol. 10.
82 Chicago Tribune, September 10, 1891, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
83 Chicago Tribune, May 2, 1892, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
of German descent could find a social home but in the wake of the Haymarket tragedy, the Chicago-area Turners were dividing themselves along ideological and class lines.

The editors of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* suggested that this split along class lines may have reflected different generations of immigrants. They referred to the radical elements of the German community as “greenhorns, who cannot understand the institutions of this country and who have no idea of the hard and long struggle, endured by the Germans to reach their present respected position among the other elements of this country.”

There may be some truth to this assumption. For instance, the editors of the *Staats Zeitung*, Wilhelm Rapp and Hermann Raster, were both born in the 1820s in what would become Germany and emigrated to the United States in the early 1850s. Louis Nettelhorst, the leader of the conservative Turngemeinde, a Chicago Board of Education member from 1886 to 1892, and a prominent businessman, was of a later generation than Raster and Rapp, having been born in 1851, but like the editors, emigrated before the economically turbulent 1870s. On the other hand, the six Haymarket defendants who were born or raised in Germany, all of them ardent anarchist leaders, emigrated to the United States between 1872 and 1885. Their earliest experiences in America coincided with economic downturn and increasing struggles for the working class. So, while date and generation of birth may not necessarily determine radical tendencies, a stronger

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84 *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, September 4, 1886, CFLPS German Vol. 3.
86 Louis Lingg was born in 1864 and emigrated in 1885. George Engle was born in 1836 and emigrated in 1873. Michael Schwab was born in 1853 and emigrated in 1879. August Spies was born in 1855 and emigrated in 1872. Adolf Fischer was born in 1858 and emigrated in 1873. Oscar Neebe was born in 1850 in New York but his parents returned to Germany shortly after his birth. He left Germany for the U.S. shortly before Haymarket. The other two Haymarket defendants, Albert Parsons and Samuel Fielden, were born in the U.S. and England, respectively. Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 60, 91, 94, 135, 139, 140, 142.
correlation may exist, as the editors of the *Staats Zeitung* suggested, between the date of immigration and length of time in the United States and inclination toward radicalism. This would suggest, as the most recent studies of the Haymarket affair have noted, that American anarchism was a product of both Europe and America: immigrants who came to the U.S. later in the nineteenth century would have experienced industrialization in Europe, and quiet possibly have been introduced to anarchism while still in Europe. Their experiences in the United States, however, did not temper their antagonism to capitalism, and may have instead increased their hatred of the capitalist system. Further, the immigrants of the later generation may have experienced a much more closed society than the earlier immigrants had, not only in terms of labor, but also in terms of participation in the already-established German circles in Chicago.

It may be due to Raster’s belief that “greenhorns” were the most trouble in America that he advocated restricting immigration in the post-Haymarket era, despite his own revolutionary activities in 1848 that led to exile and emigration. In a letter to Raster in November of 1887, Andre Matteson, an editor of the *Chicago Times*, called the “administration of our naturalization laws…a grotesque sham and burlesque of judicial procedure” and expressed his belief that an “emigrant passport” would not keep out anarchists, but might keep out “paupers, lunatics and [Italians].” Matteson wrote that he agreed with Raster “fully” that separate methods needed to be put into place that would limit the immigration of “the pernicious foreign [radical].” Raster also wrote in the *Staats Zeitung* that, while “honest and respectable immigrants, not afraid to work,

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wishing to become American citizens in good faith” were welcome, “revolutionary inclined scoundrels are certainly not.” In the same article, Raster quoted the Chicago Times tirade against “offensive foreignism,” which included “the misuse of our nationality and our flag for the furthering of the everlasting Irish row against England.” Raster used the pages of his newspaper to separate himself and his community from radical immigrants.

Despite the attempts of more conservative members of the German community to distance themselves from radicalism, anarchism survived in Chicago in a modified form. The Arbeiter Zeitung claimed triumphantly that “Anarchism…is not extinguished; on the contrary, it has itself never before been more on the horizon then right now.” While this was certainly an overestimation of the strength of the movement, authorities also seemed to have had their doubts that the Haymarket executions had killed anarchism. In the fall of 1888, the city of Chicago attempted to shut down meetings of a new group, the Arbeiter Bund (Workers’ Party) using the anti-conspiracy law passed one year after Haymarket, which stated that speakers who incited revolution or spurred others to action could be tried as conspirators, as the Haymarket defendants had been. Ultimately, the Bund was allowed to meet because they agreed to leave discussion of revolution out of their meeting.

Similarly, policemen were present at the 1891 meeting of anarchists of the Vorwärts Verein, which was held to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the

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88 *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung*, May 3, 1888 CFLPS German Vol. 3.
Haymarket executions. During the speech of a visiting New York anarchist, two policemen mounted the stage and forced the organizers to raise an American flag next to the red anarchist flags. The crowd, including Lucy Parsons, the widow of Albert Parsons, hissed and yelled, but the flags – both the American and the anarchist – remained in place. These incidents show that, while the Haymarket executions and the consternation of the conservative German population did not completely vanquish anarchism, authorities were keeping close watch on the movement. Therefore, while Haymarket affected anarchist groups in Chicago, it also affected German groups which did not associate themselves with anarchism. The wider society’s mistrust of Germans spurred non-anarchist German groups to make a firm distinction between themselves and any hint of anarchism.

Conclusion

Since the Paris Commune of 1871, fears of “European radicals” had been growing in the United States. The 1877 national railroad strike – particularly violent in Chicago – had quite literally brought these fears home. Clan na Gael launched its dynamite attacks on England only a few years later and, although its was a supposedly secret organization, everyone seemed to know about it. This dynamite campaign meant that other American observers, already fearing “European radicals,” began to associate Irish-American nationalists and anarchists. Clan na Gaelers maintained that their hostility was only directed at England – not America. They saw their struggle for Irish independence as an

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90 Illinois Staats Zeitung, November 12, 1891 CFLPS German Vol. 3.
expression of the same republican values that led to the American Revolution and the ending of American slavery.

In the wake of the Haymarket bomb-throwing, anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly of the anti-radical variety, increased. The effects of this anti-immigrant and anti-radical sentiment can be seen in the social organizations of the Irish and German communities in Chicago. Irish nationalism was, at one time, largely accepted by most Americans as a legitimate expression of republican ideology. But, because of its increasing connection with dynamite, many Americans came to believe that Irish nationalism was as dangerous a radical organization as anarchism. After Haymarket, Chicago’s Irish nationalists shied from publicly supporting the use of dynamite and took pains to distance themselves from anarchists and to disavow radicalism. German social organizations, such as the various Turner groups that previously had united the German community and helped them to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States, were divided in the post-Haymarket era. The Turners split into radical and conservative factions. While Haymarket did not kill radicalism entirely, it certainly made many immigrants wary of being associated with any form of radicalism and therefore changed the landscape of immigrant social life and, with it, the landscape of the city of Chicago.
Conclusion

In July of 1840, Abner Snow, a New Englander who had purchased land in Chicago and was invested in the growth of the city, wrote from Chicago to his brother that not only had he been ill, but to make matters worse, he was “surrounded by Irish. The Devils own eye servants, theves… I am hartily sick of the Irish…I had rather have two good green Mountain boys than five Irishmen.”¹ Snow may have disliked and distrusted his Irish workers, but apparently in the absence of American-born men, he made do with the Irish, just like so many others did. Yet, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, despite the power of nativism that existed, immigrants were not without recourse against these sentiments. For most of the nineteenth century, Chicago welcomed newcomers, as they did the work that drove the economy. Furthermore, once immigrants arrived, they resisted nativist notions by taking part in American cultural life, as exemplified by ethnic militias, and by challenging nativist-inspired laws and policies from the liquor ordinances of 1855 to the Edwards Law.

With industrialization, however, came a greater divide between workers and employers, and class conflicts increased after the Civil War until the end of the century. The events on the night of May 4, 1886 at Haymarket Square and the subsequent trials and executions demonstrated that challenges to the established socio-economic system would not be tolerated by the city’s upper classes. All ethnic groups, whether they were Irish nationalists or German Turners, needed to distance themselves from anarchism, and radicalism more generally, in order to retain a place in the city’s range of ethnic social

¹ Abner Snow to brother, July 13, 1840. Snow Collection, Folder 2, Chicago History Museum.
organizations. When it emerged, for example, that the Aurora Turner Society had supplied one of its members, August Spies, with money for his defense during the Haymarket trials, the Society insisted that “even the worst criminals are assured of some defense, but also made known “that it decidedly condemns the Haymarket Riots.”

This dissertation, therefore, relies on previous studies of ethnicity in Chicago but also moves beyond this body of work in a number of ways. First of all, this dissertation extends the chronological period in which immigrants have been closely studied in Chicago. Instead of focusing solely on the late nineteenth century, industrialization, and immigrants’ roles in labor organizations and labor conflict, I demonstrate the pre-Civil War roots of immigrant organizations and their resistance to nativist-inspired policies. Further, I show that immigrants had a distinctive and powerful ability to challenge nativism throughout the time period of this dissertation, although that power was weakened by class divisions in the latter half of this study. I also reveal the degree to which and the situations in which Irish and German ethnics came together and, conversely, when they were divided amongst themselves. Ethnicities were not monolithic, but neither was nativism.

Finally, this dissertation places the Haymarket bomb-throwing and subsequent trials in a new light. Previous historians have detailed the American labor conditions and the European-American ideologies that led to Haymarket. Others have demonstrated that the events surrounding Haymarket were not the end of labor or radical activity in the city, as those who prosecuted the martyrs had hoped. Agreeing with the findings of other

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historians, I have added a piece to the study of Haymarket: I have been able to place Haymarket into a longer history of events like the Lager Beer Riot, the Edwards Law battles, and the struggles over militias’ rights: events that affected immigrants and Irish and German ethnics in ways that, in turn, shaped the social and political history of the city.

This dissertation illuminates the ways in which immigrants were an important part of the building of modern Chicago – not just because of their labor but also because of their participation in social life and political life. They helped determine how policy and law was drafted, challenged, instituted, and, in some cases, changed. The boosters who imagined Chicago’s future, and their own role and wealth in that future, directed much of the city’s development. But Chicago’s Germans and Irish were able to have their voices heard, especially when they worked together and when, in the wake of Haymarket, they forswore radicalism. Their ethnicity was not an impediment to their inclusion in this conversation. Rather, their politics – whether or not they supported the capitalist system in America – determined whether or not they would become the objects of nativism. In other words, immigrants were capable of having an influence on policy only in so far as their demands were acceptable to the city’s socio-economic elite.
Appendices

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Appendix A

Overall population and national rank by size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City Population</th>
<th>National Rank</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4,470</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>29,963</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>109,260</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B

Native-, foreign-, Irish-, and German-born population

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Chicago Pop</th>
<th>Native Born</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>German^</th>
<th>Other Foreign Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>5,324</td>
<td>2,256</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>29,963</td>
<td>14,281</td>
<td>15,682</td>
<td>6,096</td>
<td>5,094</td>
<td>4,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>109,260</td>
<td>54,636</td>
<td>54,624</td>
<td>19,889</td>
<td>22,230</td>
<td>12,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>298,977</td>
<td>154,420</td>
<td>144,557</td>
<td>39,988</td>
<td>59,299</td>
<td>45,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>503,185</td>
<td>298,326</td>
<td>204,859</td>
<td>44,431</td>
<td>76,585</td>
<td>83,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
<td>649,184</td>
<td>450,666</td>
<td>70,060</td>
<td>166,077</td>
<td>214,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>1,111,463</td>
<td>587,112</td>
<td>73,912</td>
<td>170,738</td>
<td>342,462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^ In 1843, this figure represents both Germans and Norwegians. 1850 includes 38 Prussians and 21 Austrians. In 1860 the German figure includes Austrians. In 1870, 1880, and 1890, the figure represents the states of the German Empire of 1871 and Austria.

² For 1843 figures, see Pierce, vol. 1, 415. For 1850, 1860, and 1870 population and nativity, see Pierce vol. 2, 482. For population and nativity for 1870, 1880, and 1890, see Pierce, vol. 3, 516. For 1900 German and Irish populations, see “Table 35: Foreign Born Population, Distributed According to Country of Birth, for Cities Having 25,000 Inhabitants or More: 1900” in Twelfth Census of the United States – 1900, Census Reports Volume 1 – Population Part 1, 796-798.
Appendix C

Native-, foreign-, Irish-, and German-born percentage in the overall population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chicago Population</th>
<th>% Native Born</th>
<th>% Foreign Born</th>
<th>% Irish*</th>
<th>% German*</th>
<th>% Other Foreign Born*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>29,963</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>109,260</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>298,977</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>503,185</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Irish, German, and Other Foreign Born percentages reflect the group’s percentage of the entire population.

These statistics were calculated by the author using the population numbers from Appendices A and B.
Appendix D

Rate of increase of overall population, native-, foreign-, Irish-, and German-born population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Overall Population</th>
<th>Native Born</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Other Foreign Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843-1850</td>
<td>295%</td>
<td>168%</td>
<td>595%</td>
<td>689%</td>
<td>524%</td>
<td>573%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1860</td>
<td>265%</td>
<td>283%</td>
<td>248%</td>
<td>226%</td>
<td>336%</td>
<td>178%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1870</td>
<td>174%</td>
<td>183%</td>
<td>165%</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>167%</td>
<td>262%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1880</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1890</td>
<td>119%</td>
<td>118%</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>117%</td>
<td>156%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1900</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics were calculated by the author using the population numbers from Appendices A and B.
**Appendix E**

**German and Irish first- and second-generation population for 1890 and 1900**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Chicago Population</th>
<th>Native-born with at least one German-born parent (2nd generation)</th>
<th>German-born (1st generation)</th>
<th>1st &amp; 2nd generation German population</th>
<th>% of total population that is 1st or 2nd generation German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1890</strong></td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
<td>171,765</td>
<td>166,077</td>
<td>337,842</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1900</strong></td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>439,666</td>
<td>170,738</td>
<td>610,404</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Chicago Population</th>
<th>Native-born with at least one Irish-born parent (2nd generation)</th>
<th>Irish-born (1st generation)</th>
<th>1st &amp; 2nd generation Irish population</th>
<th>% of total population that is 1st or 2nd generation Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1890</strong></td>
<td>1,099,850</td>
<td>108,831</td>
<td>70,060</td>
<td>178,891</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1900</strong></td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>244,380</td>
<td>73,912</td>
<td>318,292</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Appendix F

#### Mayors, their professions, and investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Elected Mayor</th>
<th>Year Arrived in Chicago</th>
<th>Primary Business Interests</th>
<th>Invested in Real Estate</th>
<th>Railroad Investor</th>
<th>Held Other Political Office(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Land, financial, railroad, lumber company</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Lawyer; Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839, 1842</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Lumber, real estate; Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Builder, contractor, lumber yard owner, proprietor of dry goods and grocery store</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843, 1844, 1845</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Builder, contractor</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Merchant; Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847, 1850</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848, 1849</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Milling business; Hydraulic Mills owner; Director, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851, 1852</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Saddle &amp; leather business; largest tannery in the West. Original director of Board of Trade</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Grain storage; worked with McCormick on reapers. Wholesale grocer. Asst. General Freight Agent for</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Other Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Isaac L. Milliken (D)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Levi D. Boone (AP)</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Insurance, doctor; President, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Thomas Dyer (D)</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Lawyer, editor of Chicago Democrat, politician</td>
<td>y y y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857, 1860</td>
<td>John Wentworth (R)</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Commercial flour mill; President of Illinois Savings Institution</td>
<td>y y y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although municipal elections were technically non-partisan, candidates were well known within their respective parties at the local, state, and often the federal level.

(D) – Democrat
(W) – Whig
(AP) – American Party. Levi D. Boone was a Democrat before running for mayor in 1855.

(R) – Republican. John Wentworth was a Democrat before joining the new Republican party in the late 1850s.

3 Pierce provides a list of railroad directors in 1854, Pierce, History of Chicago, vol. 2, 483-491.
Appendix G

Advertisers in “The Rail-Roads, History and Commerce of Chicago”

On pages 72 through 78, the pamphlet features the names of 78 businessmen who were associated with 41 separate businesses. The types of businesses advertised are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of businesses</th>
<th>Area of business</th>
<th># of individuals associated with these businesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lamps</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wagons and carriages</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Insurance companies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hats, caps, furs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Printing presses</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drugs, medicines, and perfumeries</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Watches</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stationary stores</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Musical instruments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attorneys</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dry goods merchants, local and national</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>China, cutlery, crockery, and glassware</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Buying and selling of land (land agents, real estate brokers, stock brokers, surveyors)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bankers and exchange offices</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Appendix H

Names and Businesses of Bankers and Real Estate dealers with Advertisements in “The Rail-Roads, History and Commerce of Chicago” Who Had Extensive Investments in Land in Illinois*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Political Offices Held</th>
<th>Source code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rees</td>
<td>JH</td>
<td>Land agent and stock broker</td>
<td>Alderman – 1844</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerfoot</td>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Land agent and stock broker</td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanchett</td>
<td>JHY</td>
<td>Land surveyor</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greele(y)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Land surveyor</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>JB</td>
<td>Vice President, Board of Real Estate and Stock Brokers</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchanan</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Land agent &amp; Director, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Polemus D</td>
<td>Real estate broker</td>
<td></td>
<td>AG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayres</td>
<td>Enos</td>
<td>Real estate broker</td>
<td></td>
<td>BD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>JBF</td>
<td>Real estate broker and auctioneer</td>
<td>Original Board of Trade member</td>
<td>BF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeWolf</td>
<td>William F</td>
<td>Real estate broker and auctioneer</td>
<td>Original Board of Trade member</td>
<td>BF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>James A</td>
<td>Real estate broker, auction &amp; commission merchant</td>
<td>CE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>Charles B</td>
<td>Real estate broker, auction &amp; commission merchant</td>
<td>CE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>RK</td>
<td>Foreign &amp; domestic exchange office</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denniston</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Director, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dole</td>
<td>George W</td>
<td>Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>Alderman – 1838, 1842, 1843 City Treasurer - 1839</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickey</td>
<td>Hugh T</td>
<td>Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>Alderman - 1843</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neely</td>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Director, Marine Bank</td>
<td>Original Board of Trade member</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>John H</td>
<td>Director, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodworth</td>
<td>James H</td>
<td>Director, Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>Mayor – 1848, 1849 Alderman – 1845, 1847</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Term(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fay Rice</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boone</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td>Mayor – 1855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alderman – 1846, 1847, 1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronson, Jr</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Merchants’ and Mechanics’ Bank of Chicago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>exchange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scammon</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td>Mayor – 1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alderman – 1839, 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td>Mayor – 1839, 1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alderman – 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td>Mayor – 1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alderman – 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original Board of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trade member, 1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinner</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td>City attorney – 1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapin</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td>Mayor – 1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alderman – 1844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original Board of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trade member, 1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scammon</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Marine Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Forrest Brother Exchange and Banking Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A note on establishing “extensive investment:”*

The amount and worth of real estate these men owned varied over time and between individuals. When possible, the 1860 U.S. Federal Census was used to establish the value of their real estate in order to obtain a comparable value. The 1850 and 1870 censuses were consulted next, sometimes in addition to the Illinois Public Land and Purchase Records and the United States Indexed County Land Ownership Maps.

The census provided a dollar amount equating to the value of the real estate the individual owned. This number was self-reported and is not able to be translated into an...
amount of acreage. The Illinois and U.S. land records, conversely, sometimes provide acreage and purchase amount (although not always) but do not give information about how long the individual owned the land or what it was worth over time. That being said, an extensive analysis of the land records could provide this information in future studies.

42 men were in the sample of bankers and real estate dealers. 31 of these men appear in the list above as having land investments. No real estate values or records of purchases were found for the other 11 men.

8 of the men listed above purchased more than 160 acres of land in Illinois between the early 1830s and 1860, according to the land records. Values could not be ascribed to these holdings.

Real estate values were found for 23 of the above 31 men. The lowest value was $1,000 of real estate owned by James A Marshall in 1870. Marshall, however, was listed in the land records of having received a land grant from the federal government which was in part sold to a railroad company. The rest was along the railroad route, which would have been some of the most valuable antebellum property in Illinois so it is possible that he at some point had land worth much more than $1000.

The two men who had the most valuable real estate were Buckner S. Morris and J. Young Scammon. Both men were trained as lawyers and were among the most respected bankers in the city. Additionally, both were active in politics. Morris was Chicago’s mayor in the
late 1830s, as well as an alderman and Scammon served in the Illinois State Legislature.

The real estate holdings of these men in 1860 were reported as $250,000 each.

The average value of real estate owned by these 23 men was about $50,000 each. When the two smallest and two largest amounts are removed, the average value is about $34,000. The median value of their real estate was $20,000, with eleven men having real estate worth $20,000 or less and eleven men having real estate worth $30,000 or more.

Source Code:

(A) Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013).
(B) Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013).
(C) Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013).
(D) U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013).
Appendix I

Profession and Birthplace of Random Samples from the 1839 & 1855 Business Directories

The data given below is not meant to be a representative sample of every working person in Chicago. For instance, there were no laborers listed in the 1839 business directory even though there were certainly hundreds, if not thousands, of laborers in the city in 1839. By its nature, the chart below represents a self-selecting group: those who wanted to be known within the community for their trade or expertise so others could seek them out. Therefore, these charts do not tell us about the balance between different professional categories within 1839 or 1855; for instance, the educated professionals make up a much larger proportion of the sample than they would have in the general population, especially in 1839. What this data can tell us, however, is how the ethnicity of people in these professions and categories of professions changed over time.

Method of sample selections and analyses:

Both the 1839 and 1855 business directories are available online. First, I checked the birthplace sources (listed below) for the first and last names on each page of the 1839 directory. If I could not identify a birthplace in any of the sources for the individual in question, I moved onto the next name in the directory. After a first pass through the pages

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8 Chicago Antiquities, Including Chicago Business Directory for 1839. (Chicago: Eastman and Bartlett, 1875) [http://archive.org/stream/chicagoantiquiti00chic#page/19/mode/1up](http://archive.org/stream/chicagoantiquiti00chic#page/19/mode/1up) (accessed July 2013); 1855-6 The Chicago City Directory and Business Advertiser, Fourth Edition, with A New Map of the City (Chicago: Robert Fergus, Book and Job Printer, 1855) [http://archive.org/stream/chicagocitydire01unkngoog#page/n145/mode/1up/search/commission](http://archive.org/stream/chicagocitydire01unkngoog#page/n145/mode/1up/search/commission) (accessed July 2013).
of the directory, I expanded my sample size by making multiple passes through the
directory using the same system.

The sample from the 1855 directory was created in a similar manner, but using
every five pages, instead of every page. In many instances a number of individual names
were researched before I was able to identify a birthplace for one. I skipped individuals
who had names which were so common that even in 1855 confirming a match in the
census would have been a futile effort. For instance, I skipped names like John Smith or
Patrick Kelly. I also skipped names for which no profession was listed or if the profession
listed did not have an obvious meaning, such as one individual who was listed as an
“animal magnetist.”

Once I compiled this sample, I organized the individuals into broader categories,
using the occupational categories used in the 1870 federal census: Professional and
Personal Services, Trade and Transportation, and Mechanical, Manufacturing, and
Mining. For a list of jobs included in each category, please see Appendix U. The 1839
directory is relatively brief and its contents therefore set limits on what types of
professions the sample would include. For instance, attorneys were overrepresented in the
1839 directory. This was not necessarily problematic for my sample since the purpose
was not to analyze the balance of individuals engaged in certain trades against those

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9 The 1870 U.S. federal census was the first to organize occupations into larger categories. A complete list of professions and their categories can be found on pages 604 through 614 in “A Compendium of the Ninth Census, 1870” United States Census Office (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872).

10 Attorneys were engaged in overseeing the buying and selling of land and drawing up the necessary contracts for these transactions. Because the buying and selling of land was the largest economic industry in the city at this time, it is possible that attorneys may not be as overrepresented in the 1839 directory as they seem to be.
engaged in other trades, but to identify the shifts, if any, of nativity in particular occupational categories over time. But, in an attempt to make my samples from the two years relatively comparable, I limited my selection of the 1870s category of “Professional and Personal Services” to only doctors and attorneys.

This restriction served an additional purpose. The 1870 federal census included many other occupations under the full heading of “Professional and Personal Services.” In addition to attorneys and physicians, the 1870 version of this group includes such varied professions as domestic servants, hotel-keepers, and actors. However, the purpose of this category as it is constituted in this study is to highlight two professions which would have required a considerable amount of education, time, and, in many cases, financial support. The nativity of this category therefore reveals whether or not foreign-born Chicagoans had access to the necessary education, time, and money to acquire these professions, and whether or not that ability changed between 1839 and 1855.

Similarly, discovering that in 1839 almost every single individual in the 1870 category of “Trade and Transportation” was either a grocer or was engaged in large scale trading of raw materials, I limited my selections which would have fallen under the category of “Trade and Transportation” to local grocers or large-scale traders. To fill out the sample, I returned to the directories and searched for individuals engaged in these businesses on every other page of the 1839 directory and every ten pages (in 1855). As before, I expanded my search to other pages when I could not identify at least one individual’s birthplace on the page or if none of the individuals on the page were engaged in these businesses.
The large-scale merchants, especially in 1839, were some of the most influential men in early Chicago. The men in my sample are indicative of this trend. James Woodworth was a two-time mayor of the city in the late 1840s. Hubbard and Kinzie were some of the first non-native settlers in the city. Fullerton owned a large swath of land, which Fullerton Avenue, a major street even in the nineteenth century, runs through. He also owned extensive lands outside of the city, including most of the modern-day town of Highland Park. George Dole built the first grain storage facility in the city in the 1830s and with a partner was the first Chicagoan to pack pork for export. He is considered the father of the Chicago meatpacking and grain storage industries, which together became the basis for Chicago’s economic success in the second half of the nineteenth century and he also served multiple terms as an alderman. Almost all of these men have a street, public park, or school named after them today.11

While some grocers, like Charles Follansbe and Charles McDonnell, were involved in city government as well, local grocers did not trade on the same scale as the former group did, nor were they as economically and politically powerful on average. Therefore, I decided to separate these two groups. “Traders – National” includes merchants who traded raw materials and their products, generally between areas outside of Chicago. For instance, lumber merchants received wood or lumber from a vast area north and west of the city. They sold this wood or processed lumber to markets to the east of Chicago. Other examples are commission merchants, grain dealers, warehouse owners,  

auctioneers, and meat packers.\textsuperscript{12} Grocers, conversely, traded processed goods to a local community.

In the 1870 federal census, workers who performed a learned trade and sold the products of their trade – occupations such as blacksmiths, tailors, and carpenters – were grouped together under the heading of “Manufacturing, Mechanical, and Mining.” Since there was little, if any, mechanical industries in Chicago prior to the Civil War, and no mining at all, I have labeled this category, simply, “Manufacturing.”

My initial sample also seemed to reveal a pattern among manufacturing occupations: they seemed to be almost entirely native born in 1839 and overwhelmingly foreign born in 1855. In order to examine this trend more carefully, I selected one broad occupational category – woodworkers – to examine specifically for this trend.\textsuperscript{13} While woodworkers already constituted the largest subgroup within the manufacturing sample, I returned to the directories to add more woodworkers. I used the same method for adding individuals to the sample as described previously. Therefore, woodworkers are overrepresented in the manufacturing samples but, again, this does not skew my analysis.

After the tables containing the names, professions, and birthdates, further tables are provided offering statistical analyses of the data. These analyses are the basis of the claims referred to in the text.

\textsuperscript{12} For a comprehensive examination of the role that these large-scale merchants played in creating and maintaining the economy of the city, as well as the role they played in establishing Chicago as a center of international trade, see William Cronon, \textit{Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West} (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991).

\textsuperscript{13} Woodworkers include carpenters, cabinetmakers, and chairmakers, as they use similar techniques and materials and individuals trained as woodworkers could generally find employment in any of the three categories.
The letter in superscript next to the individual’s birthplace indicates the source of this information. The code is as follows:

(a) Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013)
(b) Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013)
(f) Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013)
(g) Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, accessed through ancestry.com (July 2013)

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<th></th>
<th>1840*</th>
<th>% of total population in 1840</th>
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<th>% of total population in 1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>% of total population in 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>4,470</td>
<td>29,963</td>
<td>109,260</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
<td>3,140</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14,281</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>54,636</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15,682</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5,094</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22,230</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6,096</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19,889</td>
<td>18%</td>
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</table>

*The nativity of the population was not recorded in Chicago until 1843 but since immigration rates did not increase dramatically until at least 1845, the proportions of the nativity of the population in 1843 have been used to estimate the nativity of the population in 1840. Admittedly, this is a rough estimate but it is based on the best information we have available. The chart below gives the overall population numbers for 1840 and 1843, the nativity of the population in 1843, and, highlighted and in red ink, the estimated figures for 1840.*
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<thead>
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<th>1843</th>
<th>% of total population in 1843</th>
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<td>2,256</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1839 Manufacturers</th>
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</tr>
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<td>% of total sample</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total in sample</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
<td>0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1839 Carpenters</th>
<th>1855 Carpenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of total sample</td>
<td>% of total sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in sample</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1839 Grocers</th>
<th>1855 Grocers</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>% of total sample</td>
<td>% of total sample</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
<td>3</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1839 Professionals</th>
<th>1855 Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>% of total sample</td>
<td>% of total sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in sample</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Born</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1839 Traders - National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in sample</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
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<td>German Born</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Born</td>
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## Appendix J

### Data from which Appendix I is drawn

#### 1839 Manufacturers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>tailor</td>
<td>Canada[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacock</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>gunsmith</td>
<td>England[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodgson</td>
<td>JH</td>
<td>tailor and clothier</td>
<td>England[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooney</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Germany[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blassy</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>baker</td>
<td>Germany[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmon</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Germany[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfund</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>bread and biscuit maker</td>
<td>Germany[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauter</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>boot and shoemaker</td>
<td>Germany[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getzler</td>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>cap, stock, and umbrella maker</td>
<td>Germany[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heymann</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>watchmaker and jeweler</td>
<td>Germany[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lill</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>brewer</td>
<td>IL[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howe</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>baker</td>
<td>MA[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Philo</td>
<td>druggist and apothecary</td>
<td>MA[^c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Osdell</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>contractor and builder</td>
<td>MD[^e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>John B</td>
<td>boot and shoemaker</td>
<td>ME[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>cabinetmaker</td>
<td>NH[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updike</td>
<td>Peter L</td>
<td>carpenter and builder</td>
<td>NJ[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy</td>
<td>Devotion C</td>
<td>ironmonger</td>
<td>NY[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>JA</td>
<td>hat and cap manufacturer, Smith and Co</td>
<td>NY[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyd</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>carpenter and builder</td>
<td>NY[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>mason</td>
<td>NY[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>John B</td>
<td>cabinetmaker</td>
<td>NY[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison</td>
<td>John C</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>NY[^a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobb</td>
<td>Silas B</td>
<td>saddle, bridle, harness, and trunk maker</td>
<td>VT[^e]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^a]: This indicates a different birthplace.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braunhold</td>
<td>Gustavus</td>
<td>bookbinder</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>cooper</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ort Mayer</td>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>harnessmaker</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rashman</td>
<td>Godfrey</td>
<td>shoemaker</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schroeder</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>tailor</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haas</td>
<td>Ludwig</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duesmann</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Linback</td>
<td>Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jakel</td>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Edmund</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>Napoleon</td>
<td>bricklayer</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrigan</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>William</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haffy</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeling</td>
<td>George</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>McAuley</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madden</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartney</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>shoemaker</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuster</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Ilias</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>chairmaker</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>tailor</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neafee</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>MI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>Henry E</td>
<td>ship carpenter</td>
<td>NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewing</td>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>NJ</td>
</tr>
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<td>Woodward</td>
<td>Lorenzo</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
<td>John</td>
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<td>NY</td>
</tr>
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<td>Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>Elisha C</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>VT</td>
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### 1839 Grocers

<table>
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<th>First Name</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periolat</td>
<td>Francis A</td>
<td>grocer</td>
<td>France (g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malbucher / Malsacher / Mazacher</td>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>grocery and provision store</td>
<td>Germany (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenherty</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>fancy dry goods store</td>
<td>Ireland (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>grocery</td>
<td>Ireland (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonnell</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>grocery and provision store</td>
<td>Ireland (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Ola H</td>
<td>grocery and provision store</td>
<td>Norway (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>John C</td>
<td>grocery and provision store</td>
<td>MA (a)</td>
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### 1855 Grocers

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### 1839 Traders – National

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### 1855 Traders – National

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*John Kinzie’s mother lived in Detroit when he was born. She travelled to visit friends in Canada for a few days when she unexpectedly went into labor. The baby was born in Canada, but both mother and baby returned to the U.S. as soon as they were able. So, for the purposes of this study, Kinzie is considered native-born, as he was not an immigrant.
### 1839 Professionals

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### 1855 Professionals

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Appendix K

Arrest releases, January through June, 1855


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<tr>
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<td>Mrs. Ann</td>
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<td>P.</td>
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<td>Mullett</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Andrew</td>
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<tr>
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<td>John</td>
<td>vagrancy</td>
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<td>George</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Murphy</td>
<td>John</td>
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<td>Murray</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>Lawrence</td>
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<td>Mary</td>
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<td>O’Kealy</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>O’Neal</td>
<td>Dan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Paten</td>
<td>Mary</td>
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<td>Adolph</td>
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<td>Prout</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Quin</td>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>drunkenness</td>
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<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>James</td>
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<td>Rawson</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>Shaw</td>
<td>Michael</td>
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<td>Joseph</td>
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<td>St. Lawrence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Harriet</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Kenny</td>
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<td>Eliza</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>drunkenness</td>
<td></td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>E.F.</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>John</td>
<td>drunkenness</td>
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<td>Williams</td>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>drunkenness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnery</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>forgery</td>
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</table>

A conservative estimate, therefore, is that 76 out of 185 of those who were released from the Bridewell in the first six months of 1855 were of Irish descent.
Appendix L

Montgomery Guards Officers, 1842-1861\(^{15}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Caldwell</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Fruit dealer &amp; confectioner</td>
<td>Known Fenian. 1(^{st}) Lieutenant of Co. B, Illinois 67(^{th}) in 1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Coffee</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Saloon and boarding house keeper</td>
<td>1(^{st}) Lieutenant of Co. B, Illinois 67(^{th}) in 1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Cooney</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Cunningham</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>Owned a considerable amount of land. Known Fenian. Served as constable for a number of years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Curran</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>Known Fenian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Gleeson</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>Owned considerable amount of land. Known Fenian. Captain of Montgomery Guards when the Irish Brigade (Illinois 23(^{rd}) Infantry) was formed in 1861.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Hickey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saloon</td>
<td>On police force in 1860s and 1870s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Kelly*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provisions shop</td>
<td>Known Fenian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Kinsella</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Worked in the customs house: deputy collector &amp; inspector</td>
<td>Recruited the Irish Brigade (Illinois 23(^{rd}) Infantry) in 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Lee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
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<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>William Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Lynch</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James McMullen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Lumber dealer</td>
<td>Known Fenian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel McShellop</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward S. Murray</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>Known Fenian. 2nd Lieutenant under Michael Gleeson in Illinois 23rd Co. B.; later became 1st Lieutenant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Nugent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael O’Brien*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick O’Malley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John O’Neill</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Liquor store and brewer</td>
<td>Considerable amount of property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugene O’Sullivan</td>
<td>1813</td>
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<td>Grocer and saloon owner</td>
<td>Known Fenian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Pillion</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Quigley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Snowhook*</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stinson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Worked at custom’s office; had his own land office</td>
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*1842 original officers
### Appendix M

#### Chicago Calvary and Chicago Guards Officers, 1842-1844\(^6\)

<table>
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<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Profession</th>
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<td>Isaac N. Arnold</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB Cobb</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Leather dealer, real estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel N. Davis</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Lime Burner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chas LP Hogan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dry goods and grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James L. Howe</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>City marshal, 1852-54; owned city bakery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesse Leavenworth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overseer of public works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chas E Peck</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Saddle and harness dealer; Fire chief 1847-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Y. Sanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cap, hat, and fur store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles G. Wicker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dry goods and grocery</td>
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Appendix N

Chicago Light Artillery Officers, 1854-1860

<table>
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<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Profession</th>
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<tr>
<td>E.W. Hadley</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Spears</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Coffee house owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Grannis</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius Knights</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>City Marshal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Davidson</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Boarding house owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.A. Hoyne</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John R. Botsford</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Hardware store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Horen</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Billiard room owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix O

Petition on Behalf of Edward Steinbrecher

To the Honourable the Mayor and Common Council of the city of Chicago:

We the undersigned citizens of Chicago respectfully petition your Honourable body to permit Edward Steinbrecher, a German who keeps a small Saloon on West Randolph Street in said Chicago, and who has always kept a decent and respectable house, to sell spirituous liquors, without requiring him to pay the amount of money fixed for such license. Mr. Steinbrecher a short time ago lost both his feet by a railroad accident and the expenses incurred by him in being cured and procuring artificial legs, have left him penniless and poor and unable to work for a livelyhood. He has hither to by the keeping of this Saloon made a living for himself and his wife and two infant children.

April 2, 1855

---

Appendix P

Petition to Revoke Change to Licensing Fee

To The Honorable the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Chicago

The Petition of the undersigned citizens of the north Division of said City of Chicago Keeping Taverns and Saloons There

Respectfully Therewith

That the recent ordinance passed in regard to Licenses for retailing Spirituous Liquors will operate to the injury and oppression of your Petitioners.

That your petitioners relying on the stability of the commercial and police regulations of said City have, in view of the previous ordinances and customs of said city in respect to Licenses embarked the greater portion of their property in the above business. That they cannot afford to pay the increased rate of License contemplated by the recent ordinance and that if they are driven now suddenly to close up their said business they will be compelled to suffer a heavy pecuniary loss and a great many of them will be totally ruined.

That they are willing to comply cheerfully with all the requisitions of said recent ordinances except as aforesaid.

Your Petitioners therefore respectfully wish that the price of the License may be reduced to the rate of $50 per annum in said recent ordinances.

And your petitioners as in duty bound to it.

---

Appendix Q

Names of Signatories of Petitions Requesting the Revoking of the $300 Licensing Fee\textsuperscript{20}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baierly, Adam</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Saloon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barth, Martin</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Boilermaker; brother Nicholas runs boarding house where Martin lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauer, John</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boarding house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baumann, Th?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baer (Bauer?), H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bechauf, George</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Butcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bergm?, Caspar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry, Vincens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bertels, G</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Betts, Charles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Room tender at hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bollman, John CH</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grocer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandy, H?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruns, William</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shirt manufacturer</td>
</tr>
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<td>Buele, ?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Burth, John</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronicky, Leo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosf, L &amp; Fam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dapper (Lapper?), Peter</td>
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<td>Develin, John</td>
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<td>Eichenscherr, Simon</td>
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<td>Saloon &amp; brewery</td>
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<td>Ellis, Charles B.</td>
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<td>Boarding house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gehrs, C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerlach, Edward</td>
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<td>Glettunn, Josef</td>
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<td>Hartung, John</td>
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<td>Carpenter</td>
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<td>Henderson, J</td>
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<td>Boarding house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hendrick, August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermbrinks, M</td>
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<td>Horn, Louis</td>
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<td>Käffner, Christian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly, Patrick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Saloon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kennedy, Batt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grocer</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Kuhr, M</td>
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<td>Kurth, Friedrich</td>
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<td>Boarding house</td>
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<td>Lapp, S?</td>
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<td>Lauer, Christopher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lehmann, Frederick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leipelt?, H?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lenz, Peter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Laborer</td>
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<td>Lookbihler, Ulrich</td>
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<td>Luhrs, Frederick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luntenbacher, ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mehring, Frederick</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Hotel proprietor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mertens, Peter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metzger, Conrad</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Boarding house/saloon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metzger, Henry</td>
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<td>Boarding house/saloon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer, ?HT</td>
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<td>Meyer, Jacob</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Mohr?, L?</td>
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<td>Müller, AGH*</td>
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<td>1820</td>
<td>Saloon/beerhall</td>
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<td>Neuberger, Hugo</td>
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<td>Saloon</td>
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<td>Niehoff, Conrad L</td>
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<td>Banker / Broker</td>
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<td>Nietschmann, Bernard</td>
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<td>Boarding house/liquor dealer</td>
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<td>Nirrez, Henry</td>
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<td>Nuttall, Thomas</td>
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<td>O’Leary, Conrad</td>
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<td>Pottie, Lewis</td>
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<td>Prans?, Ian</td>
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<td>Reifschneider, George</td>
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<td>Sabini, A</td>
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<td>Sander?, Charles</td>
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<td>Schäffer, T?</td>
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<td>Schaller/Schall, Andrew, Andreas</td>
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<td>Saloon/liquor dealer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schenkell, Joachim</td>
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<td>Schmidt/Schmitt, John</td>
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<td>Schneider, John</td>
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<td>Boarding house</td>
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<td>Schoch, ?</td>
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<td>Schumperli/ Schumparley, John W</td>
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<td>Stein, Charles</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>Boarding house</td>
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<td>Thiele, H or K?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoma(s?), Johann</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Lives at Barth’s boarding house</td>
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<td>Thomeen?, Jaspar?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toffes, Wilk</td>
<td>Restaurant proprietor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ullrich, Michel</td>
<td>Business with A. Sabini</td>
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<td>Vogel</td>
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<td>Volkmann, Michael</td>
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<td>Wagner/Wagoner,</td>
<td>Saloon with Matthew Conley</td>
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<td>Christian/Charles</td>
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<td>Warmuth, Valentin</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Weidinger, Michael</td>
<td>German, 1810, Grocer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weiler, Theodor</td>
<td>Bridewell keeper in 1863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weinmann, John</td>
<td>Wine &amp; liquor dealer</td>
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<td>Westmann, R?</td>
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<td>Wetelk, Peter</td>
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<td>Wisstenfeld, H?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziegler, Ludwig</td>
<td>Saloon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* AGH Müller was actually two brothers: Adolph and GH Müller, who ran a beer hall together at 123 Randolph. Adolph was arrested for his involvement in the protest on April 21, 1855. He was born in 1820. GH’s birth year is unknown.
Appendix R

Names of Signatories Requesting an Exemption of the Licensing Fee Increase on Behalf of Edward Steinbrecher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruns, William H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shirt manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dempsey, John</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ran boarding house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harding, F</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kafner?, Charles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lilson, Stephen</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M?, Siebert</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>McCarthy, Owen</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Justice of the Peace; boarding house owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, E?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinbrecher, Edward</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Saloon &amp; boarding house owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tritch, Joseph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tinsmith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wande, PM</td>
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</table>

Three more names were illegible.

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Appendix S

Names of People Charged with Liquor Ordinance Infractions, April & May 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name, First Name</th>
<th>Selling Without a License</th>
<th>Selling Liquor on Sunday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahton?, Edward</td>
<td>X (B)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baeumer, Gustavus</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bain/Bam, Nicholas</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batterman, Henry C.</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brust, Tuckel</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carleton, Peter</td>
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<td>X (case dismissed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey, Peter</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (case dismissed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conley, Edward</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Conley, Matthew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elliot, Henry</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endlich, Charles</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ersence, Simon</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fay, August</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood, Margaret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardner, O?</td>
<td>X (fined twice)</td>
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<td>Gibie?ostt?, William</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<td>Gosley, Edward</td>
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<td>Gross, John</td>
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<td>Hanalen, JV</td>
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<td>Heill, William</td>
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<td>Hesanbass?, George</td>
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<td>Hoch, George</td>
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<td>Hoffmeister, Henry</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<td>Holt/Heit, William</td>
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<td>Keeren, Patrick</td>
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<td>X (case dismissed)</td>
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<td>Lippard, John</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luberson, Fred</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<td>McKay, Samuel</td>
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<td>Mesthra?, John</td>
<td>X (B) (2 charges)</td>
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<td>Monald, James M.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Myer, Frederick &amp; Herman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nockin, Bernard J.</td>
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<td>Nolan, Patrick</td>
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<td>O’??ah, Michael</td>
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<td>Paty???, Gilbert</td>
<td>X (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pfund, John</td>
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<td>X</td>
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22 Citation and methodology explained in text.
Phelps, Aaron 
Pourbien, Lewis 
Rebecki, Frederick 
Schaeffer, George 
Schafer, Andrew 
Schall, Andrew 
Schlafer, Harman 
Schmidt, George 
Smith, George 
Smith, William 
Smith, ? (not William; might be George) 
S?iguild, David 
Thomas, John R. 
Ulrich, Michael 
Wagoner, Christian 
Wagoner, Church, and Gardner (business) 
Wamack, John 
Wayance, John 
Weiter, Walter 
Wenton, Frederick 
Ziegler, Ludwig 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defendant</th>
<th>X (B)</th>
<th>X (dismissed)</th>
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**TOTAL:** 47 fines  
15 fines (4 dismissed)

*(B) – denotes defendant in April 21 trial, in which Gustavus Baeumer was being tried in place of the 32 other defendants.
## Appendix T

**Arrests on April 21, 1855**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
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<th>Profession</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alert/ Airlight/ Aelight, Charles</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discharged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allen, Richard</td>
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23 Citation and methodology explained in text.
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Appendix U

Select Occupations in Each Occupational Class According to the Census 1870

Agriculture
Agricultural laborers
Dairymen and dairywomen
Farmers and planters
Farm and plantation overseers
Gardeners, nurserymen, and vinegrowers
Stock-raisers
Stock-herders
Turpentine farmers
Turpentine laborers

Personal & Professional Services
Barbers and hairdressers
Billiard and bowling saloon keepers and employés
Boarding and lodging house keepers
Clergymen
Domestic servants
Hotel and restaurant keepers and employés
Journalists
Launderers and launderesses
Lawyers
Livery-stable keepers and hostlers
Officials and employés (civil) of Government
Physicians and surgeons
Soldiers, (U.S.A.)
Teachers, (not specified)
Teachers of painting, dancing, and music

Trade and Transportation
Trade
Traders and dealers
Hucksters, peddlers, and commercial travelers
Clerks, salesmen, and accountants, (in stores)
In banking and brokerage of money and stocks
In insurance
Transportation
Officials and employés of express companies
Officials and employés of railroad companies
Officials and employés of street-railroad companies
Officials and employés of telegraph companies
Carmen, draymen, teamsters, etc.
Sailors, steamboatmen, watermen, etc.

Manufactures and Mining
Bakers
Blacksmiths
Bookbinders and finishers

Boot and shoe makers
Brewers and maltsters
Brick and stone masons, marble and stone cutters
Brick and tile makers
Butchers
Cabinetmakers and upholsterers
Car, carriage, and wagon makers
Carpenters and joiners
Cigarmakers and tobaccoworkers
Clerks and bookkeepers (in manufacturing establishments)
Confectioners
Clerks and bookkeepers (in manufacturing establishments)
Coopers
Cotton and woolen mill operatives
Curriers, tanners, and leather finishers
Distillers and rectifiers of liquors
Fishermen and oystermen
Harness and saddle makers
Hat and cap makers
Iron and steel workers
Lumbermen, raftsmen, and woodchoppers
Machinists
Millers
Milliners, dress and mantua makers
Miners
Painters and varnishers
Papermill operatives
Plasterers
Plumbers and gasfitters
Printers
Quarrymen
Sawmill operative
Ship riggers, calkers, carpenters, and smiths
Tailors, tailoresses, and seamstresses
Tinners
Wheelwrights
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