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# CINCINNATI IN 1840: A COMMUNITY PROFILE

by

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A B S T R A C T

CINCINNATI IN 1840: A COMMUNITY PROFILE

by

Walter Stix Glazer

Chairman: John Higham

This "community profile" of Cincinnati in 1840 uses qualitative and quantitative evidence to discuss three major questions of social analysis: social structure, associational activity, and mobility. Certain techniques are developed for the analysis of quantitative sources and a paradigm is suggested which could be used in comparative studies of historical communities.

Social Structure: Five variables--nativity, occupation, wealth, religion, and residence--are described and evaluated from the impressionistic evidence and analyzed statistically from the evidence in the 1840 Census, the Shaffer Directory for Cincinnati in 1840, the 1838 Tax List, available church records, and maps. The evidence suggests two important divisions within the social structure, which differentiated the "elite," "middle class," and "lower class" of the local society. First, only two-thirds of the total adult white male population (over 12,000) reported in the 1840 Census were included in the Shaffer Directory (approximately 8,500

names). Those excluded from the Directory, primarily rivermen, transients, and recent arrivals, can be described as the "lower class," outside the recognized, responsible "community." Second, the "community," defined as the "householders" included in the Directory, can be broken down into the "middle class" and the "elite." The "elite" was distinguished by its New England origins, professional or mercantile occupational status, property-ownership, and affiliation with a fashionable church. The "elite" comprised approximately 15% of the total population, or a fourth of the "community"; the "middle class" comprised 50% of the total population, or three-fourths of the "community"; and the "lower class" comprised 35% of the total population, but was excluded from the "community."

Associational Activity: Newspaper lists of "participants" in various "informal" meetings, and sections in the Directory and Cincinnati in 1841 which listed the officers of "formal" organizations, the "power elite," provide the names of over 1,200 "activists" in local associational life. Compared to the total group of "householders," these "activists" included a disproportionately large number of New Englanders, professionals and merchants, property-holders, and church members. But there were also important internal differences within the group of "activists," as demonstrated

by an analysis of the socio-economic composition of 438 Whigs and 336 Democrats. Finally, a distinction is made between minimum (52%), moderate (38%), and maximum (10%) "activists," depending on the variety and number of their associational activities. From this evidence Cincinnati is described as a "pluralistic" society, in which there was a successful combination of widespread popular participation and leadership by a responsible, civic-minded elite.

Mobility: Tracing individuals through city directories and tax lists provides information on length of residence and occupational, residential, and wealth mobility during the period, 1820-1860. The majority of the "householders" in Cincinnati in 1840 were not adult residents of the city a decade prior, in 1830, or a decade hence, in 1850; the average length of residence was approximately ten years. During a period marked by the proliferation and specialization of occupations, most Cincinnatians maintained their general occupational level; of those who changed, slightly more improved their status than dropped in status. During a period marked by a constricting proportion of property-owners, and the concentration of wealth, there was a high degree of fluctuation in individual estates. During a period of rapid physical expansion and specialization of land use in Cincinnati, "householders" changed their residence within the city approximately every five years.

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# INTRODUCTION

## A COMMUNITY PROFILE

> We are very pleased with the visit we have just made to Cincinnati, it was most interesting. . . . All that there is of good or of bad in American society is to be found there in such strong relief that one would be tempted to call it one of those books printed in large letters for teaching children to read; everything there is in violent contrast, exaggerated; nothing has fallen into its final place: society is growing more rapidly than man.
>
> Alexis de Tocqueville, 1831

In December, 1831 the French traveler Alexis de Tocqueville visited Cincinnati. Stepping ashore from his steamboat, Tocqueville saw a "singular spectacle." Here was a city which seem[ed] to rise too quickly for people to have any system or plan about it. Great buildings, thatched cottages, streets encumbered with debris, houses under construction, no names on the streets, no numbers on the houses, no outward luxury, but the image of industry and labor at every step.[1]

Tocqueville spent nearly four days in the Queen City. Here, in this booming young western metropolis, he

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[1]George W. Pierson, Tocqueville and Beaumont in America (New York, 1938), 52.

could observe the spectacle of democracy in action. As he mingled with the people on the streets, Tocqueville overheard their animated conversations, noted their effusive habits, and imbibed the heady egalitarian atmosphere. At the same time, interviewing some of the leading members of the local society, Tocqueville heard many proud stories about the rapid rise of the young metropolis, questioned them about the development of judicial, educational, and penal institutions, and traded guarded criticisms of the excesses of democracy.

Repeatedly, talk turned to the topic of the pervasive power of the people. "We have carried Democracy to its last limits," declared Salmon P. Chase, the young lawyer from New Hampshire who would become Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court during Reconstruction. "We have yielded too much to Democracy here," was the comment of Bellamy Storer, prominent local attorney, reformer, and Whig politician. "Our Democracy is without limits," agreed Cincinnati's foremost physician, Daniel Drake. "We are at this moment trying out a Democracy without limits; everything is going that way," concluded Timothy Walker, the young Harvard graduate who had just settled in the city. "But shall we be able to endure it? As yet no one can say so positively."[2]

[2] Ibid., 555, 557, 561, 565.

Since these criticisms confirmed Tocqueville's own preconceptions about American society, they made a strong impression on him and he emphasized the excesses and dangers of egalitarianism in his analysis, Democracy in America. In doing so, however, he ignored or minimized the import of Chase's remark: "In spite of everything, it's still the influence of men of talent which rules us." Tocqueville also failed to take account of the fact that he was immediately able to contact the most prominent men in the community and that they were so widely recognized as its outstanding citizens and spokesmen. Finally, Tocqueville disregarded the evidence of the illustrious careers and reputations of his informants. These men were all successful, highly respected, and influential leaders in Cincinnati. Their success, prestige, and power were dramatic proof that civilized, accomplished gentlemen could rise to positions of great prominence in this egalitarian society.[3]

## A. The "Masses" and the "Men of Talent"

According to Tocqueville,and many other contemporary commentators, the second quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of dangerous disorder, in which the "masses" challenged and defeated the "men

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[3] Ibid., 557.

of talent" who had hitherto ruled the country, and rampant democracy replaced the traditional deferential social order. After the outstanding achievement of the "Revolutionary Generation"--the native-born aristocracy of ability and experience who guided the young Republic through the perilous years of independence, confederation, and constitution-making--such "men of talent" gradually lost their commanding position in public life. The fiasco of the Hartford Convention, the demise of the Federalist Party, and the successive deaths of the old statesmen and Revolutionary heroes who had served the young Republic left the country without a strong, aggressive, responsible elite.

The election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 marked the final defeat of these "men of talent" and the triumph of the "masses." Through the extension of the franchise, the abundant opportunities for economic success, and a general disregard for tradition or quality, the "common man" rode roughshod across America. Men of genteel background, education, and ability abdicated their accustomed roles as leaders and counselors in public affairs and retired into their private worlds of family, friends, and study.[4]

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[4]This interpretation is implicit in much of the history written since the 1830's, when the first generation of "nationalist" historians, particularly Bancroft, extolled the triumph of democracy in America. It is

Concomitant with this argument are certain assumptions about the political, economic, and social life of the Jacksonian Period. Rhetoric and prejudices, rather than reason, marked much of the political activity of the period. Unlimited opportunities as well as bold enterprise propelled the country into an advanced stage of economic development. Constant physical mobility, changing fortunes, and the lack of any established social hierarchy characterized society. After years of relative simplicity, at the beginning of the century, America went through a period of reckless excess and radical flux.[5]

The consequences for man and society, according to this interpretation, were disastrous. For Tocqueville, democracy meant the leveling of society, the absence of extremes of wealth and poverty, power and impotence,

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argued, explicitly, in two recent essays: David Donald, "Toward a Reconsideration of the Abolitionists" in Lincoln Reconsidered (New York, 1955), and Rowland Berthoff, "The American Social Order: A Conservative Hypothesis," American Historical Review, LXV (1960), 495-515.

[5]These arguments are evident in numerous accounts of the period, but most particularly in the following: John W. Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York, 1955), Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (Palo Alto, 1960), George R. Taylor, The Transportation Revolution (New York, 1962), George W. Pierson, "The "M" Factor in American History," American Quarterly, XIV (1962, Summer Supplement) and "A Restless Temper . . . ," American Historical Review, LXIX (1964), 969-90: and, for a general survey emphasizing these points, Frank Thistletwaite, The Great Experiment (New York, 1955).

knowledge and ignorance, but the result was a pervasive mediocrity in the quality of life. A broad diffusion of competence was gained at the cost of individual cases of excellence. Individualism--the term Tocqueville used to describe the condition of man in this new egalitarian society--resulted in isolation and loneliness for the individual. Competent and confident of his own ability, refusing to admit superior knowledge or experience in any of his fellow men, the individual turned within himself with a kind of anarchic self-reliance. Equality of condition, thereby, precluded the possibility of a stable, cohesive society with a responsible, effective elite. Thus, under the acid influence of democracy, the aristocratic traditions and social order which were the pride of the old world had become diluted or dissolved.

This analysis rests on certain basic assumptions about the character and quality of life in America during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It assumes the general irrelevance of tradition, background, experience, or ability in the routine of daily life or the structure of society. It assumes the presence of generous opportunities for economic achievement and social success, the prevalence and importance of mobility--in status as well as residence--and a general pattern of accomplishment and rising status for individuals.

Further, it assumes a "democratic" society, in which a substantial majority of men held property, voted, participated in public affairs, and belonged to some ill-defined but ascendent "middle class." Finally, this analysis assumes that these conditions made stability and community cohesion impossible, and that the dominance of the "masses" weighed against the possibility of an important, influential elite.

The central thesis of this analysis of American society during the pre-Civil War years was expressed succinctly by Tocqueville's traveling companion, Gustave Beaumont, soon after their arrival in Cincinnati. "The character of this society," wrote Beaumont, "Is that of having none." Certainly, there was good reason for observers like Tocqueville and Beaumont, accustomed and inclined to an old, settled, deferential form of society, to have this reaction. Everything in America--the conditions, customs, and character--was new to them. The novelty of the experience emphasized the extreme aspects of the society which, along with their personal prejudices and preconceptions, undoubtedly distorted their perception and analysis of American society.

Moreover, in 1831, when Tocqueville visited America, the country had just gone through a major transition, which had been a traumatic experience for

many citizens. The election of Andrew Jackson seemed to many Americans, especially the better sort, to mark the end of a noble experiment and the beginning of anarchy. Perhaps at no other time during the first half of the nineteenth century were men of genteel background, education, and eminence so disturbed and doubtful about the validity or future of democracy. Their fears, poured forth on such sympathetic listeners as Tocqueville and Beaumont, doubtless compounded the negative and hostile impressions of these young Frenchmen.

The subsequent popularity of this analysis of the Jacksonian Period results from the influence of Democracy in America and the common assumptions of American historians. The brilliance of insight, the cogency of argument, and the contemporary appeal of the analysis have made Democracy in America one of the most important and widely-accepted interpretations of the Jacksonian Period. Despite the obvious distortions of the argument, reflecting the author's strong prejudices and preconceptions--his highly selective use of specific evidence and his preference for broad philosophical generalization, and his dialectical framework, in which the achievements of the old aristocratic world and the excesses of the new democratic society are seen as irreconcilable--Democracy in America is generally accepted as an accurate analysis of Jacksonian society.

Moreover, liking it or not, historians have accepted as fact the ascendance of democracy during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and the concomitant breakdown of orderly society and the demise of a deferential social order. Those who welcome the triumph of the "common man" and those who deplore the loss of order and leadership both agree that this was, in fact, what happened.

The question remains, however, whether this was the actual state of society at the time. What exactly did Tocqueville's informants mean by "democracy" and what did they consider to be its proper "limits"? Was Salmon P. Chase's statement, "We have carried Democracy to its last limits," a more accurate description of the prevailing conditions than his remark, "In spite of everything, it's still the influence of men of talent that rules us," and are these two necessarily mutually exclusive? Moreover, was there any disparity between the way in which contemporaries, particularly hostile, articulate observers, perceived the conditions of the time and the actual conditions in themselves?

## B. Timothy Walker on Cincinnati Society

One of Tocqueville's most "important" informants in Cincinnati, he wrote in his diary, and underlined, was Timothy Walker. Three years older than Tocqueville,

at 29, this young Harvard graduate arrived in the Queen City in the summer of 1830. He originally intended to stay for only a year, in order to gain admission to the Ohio Bar, which in lieu of seven years apprenticeship at home, would permit him to practice law in Massachusetts. But he soon became infatuated with the thriving Ohio River metropolis and decided to stay in the west. Armed with a Harvard diploma, and letters of introduction from men like President Quincy and George Bancroft, fortified by a good mind and Yankee self-assurance, Walker soon had a prosperous law practice and became a prominent member of the local society. Described as "one of those universal men who will grow mightily in any soil," Walker secured his position in 1832 when he "married $50,000 and a very interesting damsel."[6]

Walker, like Chase, described for Tocqueville the power of the "masses," the excesses of democracy, and expressed some fears about the possible outcome.

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[6]Jewett to Willard (?) Cincinnati, May 8, 1832; in the Jewett Papers, quoted from Daniel Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West" (Harvard Ph.D., 1942), 74. Aaron seems to have been the first person to appreciate the career and writings of Timothy Walker, and much of the following description follows his account. There is a good short biography of Walker in the Dictionary of American Biography and a longer account, including excerpts from some of his writings, in Clara Longworth deChambrum, The Making of Nicholas Longworth (New York, 1933), 55-73.

But he, too, was basically optimistic and enthusiastic about the character of the community and the quality of local life. In his description Walker undoubtedly repeated or referred to his comments on the subject, written for the New England Magazine the preceding fall. Here, in a short "Letter from Ohio," Walker presented a classic description of the new western society and an analysis which closely anticipated that of Tocqueville.[7]

In this article the young New England emigrant recorded his initial impressions of Cincinnati. First, he commented on the beautiful natural setting of the city, "where nature performed her chef d'oeuvre," the young and enterprising inhabitants, whose maxim was "possunt quia posse videntur--they can prevail because they think they can," and the marvelous prospects of the western city. He warned his Boston friends that unless they quickened their pace, the Queen City would soon bypass the proud old Yankee center. Walker made no effort to impress his readers with the literary institutions,

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[7]There is no evidence that Tocqueville ever saw Walker's article. Pierson mentions Tocqueville's interview with Walker, and his high opinion of the young lawyer, but does not mention the New England Magazine article. Aaron, who quotes the article extensively and has identified it as Walker's, never explicitly draws the connection between the analyses of these two men, particularly the close correspondence between their concepts of "individualism." Walker's reaction to Democracy in America was that it was "often able and ingenious but abounding in errors. What is extraordinary is that he should understand America so well." Chambrun, The Making of Nicholas Longworth, 61.

the public monuments, or the polished manners of the citizens, for he readily admitted they had none. But "for native resolution, sound practical sense, clear perceptions of expediency, prevailing frugality, and untiring activity," he concluded, "I know not where to look for a superior."

Turning to the structure of the society, Walker wrote:

> If you ask who among us are lions, I shall be obliged to answer, all or none. We have few trees towering much above the rest, and hold to the doctrine of equality most pertinaciously. The upright man is the gentleman, no matter what his calling.

In this "free and easy" society, Walker continued:

> All power is in the hands of the people, and never did the miser guard his treasure with greater vigilance. Wealth exerts a comparatively trifling influence. In fact, there are as yet no overgrown fortunes. The richest among us began with nothing. Of course we hear little of affluent connections and family alliances. To use the homely but significant phrase, every man stands upon his own bottom . . . Standing thus alone and unallied, our motto in action is 'each for himself, and heaven for us all.'

Thus, in 1830, before Tocqueville arrived in America, Timothy Walker found in Cincinnati what would soon be called "individualism." His description of the quality could hardly be improved upon by Tocqueville:[8]

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[8] New England Magazine, I (1831), 30-5; The article was signed "W," but Aaron says he has conclusive evidence that the author was, in fact, Timothy Walker. This is supported by the similarity in style and phraseology between this article and other contemporary Walker articles.

> Necessity teaches us to be self-confident and self-dependent; and probably no people abound more in moral courage, which sometimes degenerates into modest assurance. This keeps the individual from being merged with the mass, and furnishes ample occasion for developing the strongest traits of character.

And yet, unlike Tocqueville, Walker did not foresee mediocrity as the result of this egalitarian climate. As he wrote in 1837:

> Where the actual equality of condition approaches so nearly to the theoretical equality of rights--where, instead of here and there an overgrown fortune, glaring out from the midst of general poverty, we see some very rich and some very poor, but all commanding the necessities of life, and looking forward gradually to its luxuries--the leveling disposition will work upward, instead of downward. The many may strive to elevate themselves, rather than to pull down the few who happen to be above them; and in a free and generous competition, the whole will press onward and upward.

Less sanguine than he was in 1830, but still optimistic about the prospects of democratic society, and the general improvement of mankind, Walker saw no irreconcilable conflict between the "masses" and the "men of talent."[9]

Despite their recognition of the power of the "masses" in Cincinnati, men like Walker and Chase did not fear the Jacobinical excesses which plagued Tocqueville's mind. Instead, as their own experience

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[9]Timothy Walker, Annual Discourse Delivered at the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society at Columbus on the 23rd of December, 1837 (Cincinnati, 1838), 16. Walker's own term for the excesses of democracy was "agrarianism," but he saw little chance that it would arise here.

and careers had demonstrated, the new egalitarian society was generally stable and cohesive, and "men of talent" were able to exert considerable control and direct community affairs. The ascendency of democracy, according to these two successful young lawyers, who had moved quickly into the ranks of select society here, did not preclude the possibility of great individual achievement or general social order. Tocqueville's dichotomy between the excesses of democracy and the advantages of aristocracy, therefore, did not exist in the minds of Timothy Walker or Salmon P. Chase. For them, and for many other Cincinnatians, both conditions existed side-by-side. There was a remarkable combination of Tocquevillian democracy and aristocracy which contributed to the successful, optimistic, and harmonious character of the community at this time.

## C. Cincinnati as Microcosm

During the years before the Civil War, Cincinnati was one of the largest and most important cities in the United States, a community which interested not only local partisans and visitors from abroad, but anyone concerned with the American scene. In a period of extremely self-conscious introspection by Americans and excessive probing by foreigners for the elusive key to the national character, the Queen City was a popular

subject of study. Drawn from all parts of the Union, and many European countries, having faced many of the peculiarly American conditions of the frontier, Cincinnatians, according to many contemporary commentators, formed a virtual microcosm of American society.

Since the founding of the community in 1788, Cincinnati had maintained a dominant position along the main channel of westward expansion, the Ohio River, and soon emerged as the pre-eminent metropolis of the entire trans-Appalachian region. Within the course of a generation the small frontier outpost had grown into a prosperous trading center of over 10,000 residents; within another generation it would emerge as a diversified metropolis of over 100,000, the fifth largest city and the second largest manufacturing center in the United States. During the seven decades preceding the Civil War no other American city had experienced such a spectacular rise and few enjoyed such splendid ambitions for future growth and greatness. Cincinnati was, indeed, the first of the great boom cities of the nineteenth century, preceding Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles.

During these years the Queen City was an exciting, dynamic community. For the first half of the nineteenth century the population doubled, or better, nearly every decade, due largely to the large influx of immigrants

from the eastern states and Europe who hoped to realize their dreams in this western metropolis. Here they found a vibrant economy, based initially on river commerce but, during the 1830's and 1840's, increasingly on manufacturing. In a young community like this--where a man's present accomplishments were more important than his prior advantages, where ability and a "go-ahead" spirit were of more value than a distinguished background and the social graces--opportunity seemed to beckon the ambitious and enterprising young men of the period.

The opportunities and excitement of the place infected nearly everyone. Foreign visitors were invariably impressed with the size and development of the young city and charmed by the easy-going, egalitarian atmosphere and attitudes of the citizens. Immigrants generally found jobs, friends, and a prevailing spirit of toleration in their new home and often sent enthusiastic letters home, encouraging relatives or old neighbors to follow them. Throughout the period a constant barrage of booster literature--in newspapers, guidebooks, and speeches--promoted the further growth of the city and aroused the citizens to greater heights of community pride.

This spectacular success of the Queen City--its rapid growth and widespread popularity--made it the subject of intensive analysis. Usually the comments

were favorable, as in the case of such distinguished visitors as Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, and Horace Greeley; sometimes, as in the case of Mrs. Trollope, the comments were highly critical. But, in either case, the attention centered on Cincinnati was a reflection of its contemporary importance. The Queen City was, indeed, as Tocqueville noted, a good place in which to study American society in the Jacksonian Period.

## D. A Community Profile

In order to determine more clearly the conditions of the Jacksonian Period--both the conditions as they actually existed and the ways in which contemporary observers perceived them--it is desirable to study a single community intensively for a limited period of time. In such a microscopic analysis, using all of the many diverse sources available, both qualitative and quantitative, it is possible to penetrate more deeply into the character and conditions of a period than has hitherto been possible. The resulting community profile can provide suggestive support or corrections to the prevailing interpretation of the state of society during the years preceding the Civil War.[10]

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[10]This type of intensive, quantitative microscopic analysis of a single community within a limited period of time has been applied to the study of English society, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth

The following analysis of Cincinnati in 1840 is an attempt to use a great wealth and variety of hitherto untapped biographical resources, along with the more obvious, traditional sources, to establish a detailed community profile. Certain techniques are developed for the analysis of quantitative information about a sizeable proportion of the adult males in the community and a paradigm for community profiles is suggested which could be used in comparative studies. Current sociological theory and techniques are utilized insofar as the data and conditions warrant.

The year 1840 serves as the focal point of this study for two reasons: first, because there is a great wealth and variety of data from the years 1838 to 1842 which are necessary for such a study, and, second, because 1840 seems to mark a crucial turning point in the history of the city. With the tremendous growth of the population, the large influx of German immigrants, and the emergence of industry as the leading component of the local economy during the fifteen years following 1835, Cincinnati became rapidly transformed from a relativey small, homogeneous, cohesive community, with a clearly defined set of values and sense of purpose,

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century, and, more recently, for the Colonial Period in New England. The only such study of the nineteenth century, however, is the admirable analysis of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, testing the Turner Thesis, by Merle Curti, The Making of An American Community (Palo Alto, 1959).

into a large, heterogeneous, divisive metropolis, fraught with internal strife and conflicting ambitions.

In 1840 Cincinnati retained, at least on the surface, much of the appearance and character of its earlier stage of development. And yet, below the surface, forces were at work which would propel the city in the coming years into its second stage of development. The purpose of this study is not to describe or interpret this transformation which occurred in the years before the Civil War, but only to analyze some of the conditions which contributed to it. And yet, some knowledge of developments before and after 1840 is necessary to put the present study into a historical perspective. Therefore, a short discussion of developments up to 1840 opens the study and a short discussion of developments following 1840 closes the work.

Three major questions of social analysis--social structure, associational activity, and mobility--form the core of this study, each of which provides the focus of a chapter. First, what was the character and composition of the Cincinnati population in 1840? Here an analysis of the distribution of the population according to the variables of nativity, occupation, wealth, religion, and wealth is drawn from the impressionistic and quantitative evidence. Second, what was the extent of citizen participation in community associations and

to what degree was the power of office-holding concentrated? Here a comparison is made between the social characteristics of the participants and non-participants, between the participants in different associations, and of the holders of important offices in community organizations. Third, what were the changes in the general occupational, wealth, and residential structure of Cincinnati between 1820 and 1860, and the patterns of mobility of individuals during this period? Here individual changes in occupation, wealth, and residence are described within the context of the developments of the total social structure.

## E. The Quantitative Sources, Techniques, and Terminology

The sources of quantitative information for this analysis of Cincinnati in 1840 are the United States Census of 1840 for Hamilton County (City of Cincinnati), the 1838 Tax List for Cincinnati, David Shaffer's Cincinnati Directory for 1840, Charles Cist's guidebook, Cincinnati in 1841, the seven daily newspapers printed during this period, church membership records, association rosters and histories, and the large collection of biographical and manuscript material collected at the Cincinnati Historical Society.

In the following discussion a distinction will be made between the total adult white male population of the

city, numbering more than 12,000, and the smaller group of "householders," numbering approximately 8,500. The former group includes everyone in Cincinnati at the time of the census, including a good number of transient rivermen, migrants, and recently arrived immigrants who were not fully settled or integrated into the life of the community. The latter group includes most of the stable citizens, men with families, steady jobs, and established residences, who had been in the city long enough to feel some commitment to the community. The "householders," therefore, refers to the more permanent, stable, and responsible element within the total population of the city. Although many "householders" had families and some owned property, the term "householder" does not necessarily correspond to "head of family" or "homeowner." In the following discussion of the total adult white male population of the city information will be taken from the U.S. Census; in the discussion of the well established, stable, responsible "householders," however, information will be taken from the Cincinnati Directory for 1840.[11]

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[11] In 1840 there were 44,142 white and 2,258 black residents in Cincinnati. All of the evidence, both impressionistic and quantitative, points to the fact that there was a separate white and black community, and that the two overlapped to only a slight extent. The Census data includes Negroes, and the Directory includes the names of a few prominent Negroes, but the Cincinnati Negro was virtually excluded from the social structure, the associations, and the opportunities for mobility one which this study focuses. The Negro, therefore, is completely omitted from discussion in this community profile.

The Cincinnati Directory for 1840, surveyed and published by David H. Shaffer in late 1839, includes the names of approximately 8,500 residents. It indicates the nativity, residence, and occupation of the "householders." Compared with the 1840 Census, Shaffer's Directory seems to have been a fairly comprehensive accurate enumeration of the permanent members of the community, omitting primarily the German newcomers and transient rivermen, and some of the unskilled mechanics and laborers as reported in the 1840 Census. In the following discussion the term "community" will be used to refer to the "householders," the 8,500 men whose names appear in the Shaffer Directory.

Due to the considerable size of the total population in the Cincinnati Directory for 1840 sampling techniques were necessary. In order to get a general impression of the character and composition of the "householders," a sample of one name from the bottom of each page of the directory was taken to form a group of 329 people, which, from several independent tests, appears to have been fairly representative of the total Shaffer population. This "Shaffer sample" provides the basis for generalizations concerning the character and composition of the "community," defined as the 8,500 "householders" included in the Shaffer Directory.

Information on the associational activities of Cincinnatians is derived for membership rosters, local newspaper lists, and the Shaffer Directory and Cincinnati in 1841. During this period, at least in Cincinnati, the newspapers regularly published articles on the activities of various informal associations--meetings, committees, and other groups--including a listing of the names of many of the participants. By copying the lists from the seven different newspapers which were active during the three-year period, 1839-1842, an extensive and varied collection of associational participant lists was assembled. These lists were then indexed, making a file of the 1,894 participants whose names appeared on these lists at least once. Cist's Cincinnati in 1841 and Shaffer's Directory both included sections on the major formal organizations in the city during this period, with lists of their officers. These formal organizations included banks and insurance companies, benevolent, mutual aid and educational groups, fraternal lodges, fire companies, and the officials of the city government. The result was a file of the 406 men who held offices in Cincinnati's formal organizations. Together, these two files of men active in local informal and formal associations comprise the "activist file."

"Participation" in the following discussion refers to activity in any meeting, committee, or other informal group which was reported in the local press. Sometimes

it was the result of having spoken at a meeting, or served on a committee; at other times it resulted from the signing of a petition or statement; and in some cases the criteria for inclusion in a list are unknown. These lists clearly did not include the names of every citizen who attended such meetings or served on such committees, nor do they always indicate the character of interest or involvement, but they may be taken to provide a fairly accurate and comprehensive basic index of participation in the community.

"Power" in the following discussion is used to designate the holding of an office in a formal organization, such as a bank director, a city councilman, a masonic officer, or a school trustee. While the character of these offices differed greatly, and many of these men had little "power" in the sense of authority, influence, or prestige, they were, by virtue of their names appearing regularly in the newspapers or in the directory or guidebook, the most visible and clearly-defined leadership group in the community.[12]

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[12]These terms "participation" and "power" are used in the special sense defined above, which corresponds only imperfectly with the common sense of the words. The distinction is based on the character of the source--newspaper versus guidebook or directory--but this incorporates the distinction between ephemereal "informal" groups and permanent "formal" organizations. Thus a man "participates" in an "informal" group--whatever his role or its function--but he has "power" if he is an officer in a "formal" organization. The implication, which is intentional, is that there is greater opportunity for democratic participation

In order to determine the degree of "participation" and "power" of an individual, an "associational index" is used in the following discussion. This index is an arbitrary measure of involvement in different types of informal and formal associational activity, counting "participation" in each type of informal group as one point, and every formal position of "power" as two points. Thus, the combined total of "participation" and "power" points determines the "associational index."

Certainly, the newspapers did not report every activity in the community, nor did the names of participants include every citizen who was actually involved in these groups. Similarly, the directory and guidebook did not include all of the associations in Cincinnati with the names of all of their officers. But a check against other sources--general histories, associational records, biographies and manuscript collections--suggests that most of the major associations were reported, and that these sources included, in most cases, the names of the prominent and active participants and officers in these groups. The most important possible omission was German immigrant associations, formed in the late 1830's, which were not generally reported in the English-language press, but

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in informal than formal associations and that there is greater potential for power by an elite through a formal than an informal association.

probably in the German press (unfortunately, not available for these years). The striking fact about these newspaper lists, Cincinnati Directory for 1840 and Cincinnati in 1841, however, was the remarkably comprehensive character of their information concerning the organization and operation of associations in the city.

Moreover, these sources--the local newspapers, guidebooks, and directories--because of their widespread circulation and semi-public character, had a kind of legitimizing function whereby inclusion in their pages not only reflected the importance of an association, but in some cases helped to establish an association's reputation and influence. Thus, listing in the newspapers, guidebooks, and directories represents a standard of minimum community importance and recognition and thereby provides a convenient common criterion of importance, as well as data, for a study of the associational activity of the community. The "activist file," therefore, does not include every participant or officeholder in every associational activity in Cincinnati but, rather, only those citizens who were active in the associations which were considered important enough to be reported in the local press or in some other community publication. And yet, because of the nature of these sources, this criterion provides a fairly reasonable, minimum standard of associational activity.

Only the residents of Cincinnati whose names appeared in the Shaffer Directory and could be matched up with names in the "activist file" are included in this analysis. And yet, a remarkably high proportion of the "activists," particularly the prominent ones, was included in the Directory and identified. Almost all of the prominent residents and approximately two-thirds of the total group of 1,933 "activists" were identified and included in the study.

All of the names which appeared in the "activist file" were checked in the Shaffer Cincinnati Directory for 1840. In most cases the names were present in the Directory and there was no doubt that the name in the file and the name in the Directory were, in fact, synonymous. In certain cases, however, such as with common names or a change in spelling, the identification was questionable. Sometimes supplementary information, such as information of residence or occupation compared with the nature of the organization, resolved the difficulty. But in those cases where any doubt remained, rather than connecting the name from the file with the wrong name from the Directory, this name was left unidentified. Also, approximately a fourth of the names in the file could not be found at all in the Directory. These people either arrived in Cincinnati after the Directory census had been taken, had moved within the city recently, lived outside

the city limits but participated in at least some Cincinnati activities, or were simply overlooked.

Of the 1,933 names which appeared on at least one list during this period, only 1,195 were positively identified. An analysis of the 738 names which were not matched with names in the Shaffer Directory indicates that most were active in only one association, and not in an important capacity. A few, particularly the common names, where it may have been one person who was quite active, or several persons with the same name active only once or twice, were dropped only if there was no clue as to the correct identity of the individual.[13]

Supplementary information on the "Shaffer sample" and the "activists" was derived from four principal sources: the 1838 Taxt List, which established whether an individual was a property-holder and, if so, the value of his property; the available church records, which identified the religious affiliation of 247 individuals; the various biographical indexes at the Cincinnati Historical Society, which contain a wealth of information about the backgrounds and careers of many prominent or old residents; and the Cincinnati directories, which suggested approximately when an individual arrived in the city or reached adulthood, and traced the changes in occupation and residence for the duration of his stay here.

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[13] See Appendix for an analysis of the 738 activists not listed in Shaffer.

The 1838 Tax List includes the names of 2,559 property-holders owning real estate within the city limits, both residents and non-residents, individuals and corporations or estates. The large majority of these people, over 90% of the total number of entries, owned less than $5,000 in real estate, usually a single piece of property and a home, and can be considered as the small property-holders of "home-owners." Less than 10% of the total number of names on the list, 178 taxpayers, owned more than $5,000 in real estate. In almost every case this was a large piece of property or many different parcels of property, and these large property-holders can be considered as the "investor-speculators."[14]

Information on religious affiliation was available for only 38 men in the Shaffer sample and 226 of the 1,196 "activists." This information came from the membership lists of the two Episcopalian Churches--Christ Church and St. Paul's--the First, Second, and Fifth Presbyterian Churches, the Wesley Methodist Church and the Ninth Street

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[14]The 1838 Tax List for Hamilton County (Cincinnati) is the last one which was saved and avaialble in its complete and original form. The two year difference between the time of the Tax List and the central date and major sources for this study, 1840, explains why some prominent tax payers did not appear in the Shaffer Directory (at least some of them are known to have died), but it does not seem to be a serious defect in establishing the wealth of Cincinnatians in 1840, since there was no major turnover in property, or change in evaluation, during this period.

Baptist Church. These were the largest churches in the city, aside from the Catholic Churches, and represented the most important congregations of the major denominations. They represent only 7 of the 42 churches in the city, however; unfortunately, no information was available for the remaining 35 churches.[15]

All of the names in the "Shaffer sample" and many of the names of the "activists" were checked in the biographical indexes of the Cincinnati Historical Society. These indexes include rich data on the early residents of the city--culled from property deeds, newspapers, cemetery records, death notices, as well as the major histories of the city--which are completely indexed. These indexes not only provide information about the date of birth, or arrival, or the religion of an individual, but in many cases they also suggested his degree of importance, role, and prestige. Often a man whose position in Cincinnati was minor in 1840, but whose name appeared

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[15]These church membership lists were checked for the names in the Shaffer sample and the activists. In some cases the names appeared on the lists of members, or communicants, indicating clearly an affiliation with the church. In other cases, however, the name appeared in a recording of a baptism of a child, indicating that the man, although not a formal member of the church, used it on special occasions and had at least some identification with it. Finally in some cases there was some mention of church affiliation in a biography or biographical extract, or in the record of a cemetery burial.

prominently in these indexes, proved to have been important at an earlier or later date. Usually, when a prominent Cincinnatian in 1840 did not appear in these indexes it turned out that the individual was in the city for only a short period of time and, despite his temporary prominence, he had little lasting significance in the history of the city. And yet, in a surprisingly large number of instances, the men who were most active and influential in the city in 1840 were well represented in the biographical indexes which indicates some degree of lasting prominence in the community.

Finally, all of the "Shaffer sample" and some of the "activists" group were traced backward and forward through the city directories to determine how long the individual was in the city and how his occupation and residence had changed. Since there were ten directories between 1819 and 1850, coming in fairly regular intervals, and one every year after 1850, it was possible to establish the duration of residence and patterns of mobility with considerable accuracy.

In the discussion of mobility a distinction is made between the "old-timers," the residents whose names can be traced back 10 years to the 1829 directory, and the "new-comers," whose names first appear in the 1840 directory. In order to get more information on the "old-timers" all of the names in the 1819 directory were

checked against those in the 1840 directory, resulting in a list of 167 residents who had been in the community for at least twenty years. Similarly, the names of "old-timers" which appeared on the 1817 Tax List as well as the 1838 Tax List were used for an analysis of economic mobility during this period.

Analysis of occupational mobility is based on an arbitrary, but, hopefully, fairly accurate ranking of the major occupational divisions within the occupational structure. These occupation divisions are ranked in descending order: professionals, merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, minor public and private officials, mechanics, clerks, laborers and draymen, and rivermen. The first three groups--professionals, merchants and manufacturers--clearly represented the upper class, occupationally, in the city. The mechanics, who comprise over half of the city's working force, certainly included several important gradations, but they are impossible to determine from the evidence in the directories. A distinction is made between "merchants" and "shopkeepers," and between "mechanics" and "manufacturers" according to whether the occupation is listed by the name of the establishment, indicating at least partial ownership, or by the type of work done. Thus a wholesale produce merchant is listed "Jones and Smith" while the proprietor of a small neighborhood grocery is listed as

"grocer." Similarly, when Mr. Green changes from a mechanic to the owner of a foundry, his occupational listing changes from "blacksmith" to "Green Iron Works."[16]

## F. A Comparative Framework for Historical Community Studies

Contemporary social scientists, concerned with questions of social structure, associational activity, and mobility, have developed certain concepts and methods of quantitative analysis which are potentially useful to the historian. Historical data are not always comparable to those derived from personal interviews or modern census surveys, certainly, but there is no reason why the historian cannot approach this material, keeping these important differences in mind, in terms of the techniques and theories of the sociologist and political scientist. Obviously, the historian will have to adapt the technique to the peculiar character of his data, and modify his conclusions according to the limitations of his information. Still, such judicious borrowing from the other social sciences seems to be the most promising path leading the historian out of the restrictions of a discrete subject--isolated in time and space--into the more challenging arena of comparative history. Indeed, only through the development of such quantitative techniques of

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[16]For a more complete description of this occupational classification, see the Appendix.

analysis, as well as the incorporation of current theories of the social scientists can the historian make meaningful comparisons to contemporary situations and to conditions in other places and periods of time.

The following community profile of Cincinnati in 1840 attempts to deal with some of the questions which social scientists study in contemporary society. Techniques of historical analysis are used which correspond, roughly, with those of the sociologist and political scientist. A paradigm of historical community analysis is suggested which could be used in comparative studies of other historical communities and, with caution, to compare changes within a single community over time.

The three major questions considered here--social structure, associational activity, and mobility--have been the subject of extensive analysis by social scientists. The work of W. Lloyd Warner, Joseph Kahl, and Otis Duncan, for example, attempts to describe differences within the social structure and determine the degree of stratification. The work of Robert and Helen Lynd, Floyd Hunter, and Robert Dahl, as well as others, discusses the degree of citizen participation and elite power in modern American communities. The work of Sidney Goldstein, Seymour Lipset, and E. Digby Baltzell has developed methods as well as theories about mobility and the formation of aristocracies. Most of these studies,

at least implicitly, deal with the degree to which perceptions of conditions correspond with the actual conditions defined statistically.

Recently, historians such as Lee Benson, Allan Bogue, Merle Curti, Charles Grant, Samuel Hays, Sumner Powell, Stephan Thernstrom, and Sam Warner have attempted to adapt some of the concepts and methods of social scientists to the analysis of historical problems. These efforts have not been entirely successful, and have raised many problems and objections. Still, it seems that this analytical approach is promising, and it is in this spirit that the present study is presented.

# CHAPTER I

## THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

> If there be one half century in the history of any people, upon which the mind may dwell, with scarcely a wish that it had been different, such I regard the first half century of our history.
>
> Timothy Walker, 1838

On the day after Christmas, December 26, 1838, Cincinnati celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. At sunrise a salvo of thirteen guns, one for each of the original states of the Union, broke the clear, cold morning air and ushered in the Semi-Centennial Day festivities. Later in the morning a grand procession formed along Walnut Street. At the head of the line stood four militia companies, followed by several bands of music, a group of distinguished old pioneers, the city officials, the celebration committee, and a large number of solid citizens, who brought up the rear. First the procession headed south toward the river, but at Front Street it turned east one block to Main Street, where the procession then turned north and marched three blocks up the hill to the First Presbyterian Church. The old church was already filled with women and children dressed in their holiday best, but the members of the procession made their way in, filling every corner of the

building and overflowing into the narrow aisles. The gathering then settled down to hear the opening ceremonies and the main feature of the day, the Anniversary Oration.

The orator for the honored occasion was Daniel Drake, local physician, writer, teacher, and community leader, an old pioneer who had arrived in Cincinnati at the beginning of the century and had been a guiding spirit in the city's development ever since. As much as any man present at the celebration, Dr. Daniel Drake epitomized the achievement of his beloved city. When Drake arose to take the podium a shudder ran through the crowd, an instinctive response to the tremendous pile of manuscript in his hand. The good doctor immediately assured his audience that they were free to leave whenever they became fatigued, and then launched into his topic, the growth and progress of Cincinnati. Step-by-step the orator spun out the story of the city's rise out of the frontier wilderness and flowering into the "Queen of the West." For three and a half hours Drake reviewed the familiar story, in infinite detail, and with many interesting anecdotes. Finally, in mid-afternoon, the extended discourse, which one reviewer called "a perfect mastodon," came to a close.

As the assembled citizens spilled out of the church some of them headed to the Pearl Street House, where the city fathers, the old pioneers, and nearly two

hundred other distinguished citizens sat down to a Public Dinner. Presiding over the affair was Nathan Guilford, a prominent lawyer and merchant, sponsor of many educational and cultural activities in the community, and a supporter of all good causes. Like Dr. Drake, Nathan Guilford was one of the men who had built Cincinnati and he, too, was a choice representative of the best of its citizens. The Public Dinner, like the Anniversary Oration, was designed on a grand scale. The diners had their choice of venison, meat, poultry, game, and oysters, all kinds of vegetables, puddings, pies, jellies, fruits, and nuts, washed down with gallons of Champagne, Sherry, and Madeira. After eating their fill of this "sumptuous and elegant meal," the gentlemen settled back in their chairs and drank the evening away with unnumbered toasts to the past, present, and future. At nightfall another twenty-six gun salute, one for each of the present states in the Union, punctuated their reverie and marked the grand finale of the Semi-Centennial Day Celebration.

Later that night, as Cincinnatians made their way through the dark streets to their homes, they might well have reflected that the day's festivities were a fitting tribute to their remarkable accomplishments. The Semi-Centennial Celebration commemorated an "extraordinary revolution," one resident wrote, the transformation of a "perfect wilderness, inhabited alone by savages and wild

beasts" in the short span of fifty years into a community of nearly fifty thousand souls, the largest city in the west, and a metropolis which "vies with any of its Atlantic contemporaries in the elegance of its buildings, the refinement of its manners, the luxuries of its living, and the intelligence and enterprise of its citizens."[1]

## A. The Spirit of Expansive Optimism

Hyperbole, and other excesses, are the standard fare of anniversaries. But the grandiose proportions

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[1]Cincinnati Chronicle, December 29, 1838; Cincinnati Whig, December 27, 1838; January 2, 1839; Daily Evening Post, December 24, 26, 28 1838; Cincinnati Republican, December 28, 1838; Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette, January 10, 1839; Charles Theodore Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens (Chicago, 1904), 605-6. Inexplicably, there was no formal review of the celebration, nor was Drake's speech ever published. The newspapers carried only brief accounts of the day's activities, probably in anticipation of a full, official report, but this never appeared. This curious omission may have been the result of a controversy which developed immediately after the celebration between the City Council and the Celebration Committee over the financing of the Public Dinner and which threw a damper on the whole affair. More curious still is the failure to publish Drake's speech. He was a prominent and popular author, who had published many of his previous speeches, including an anniversay oration delivered three years earlier. It is possible that the Semi-Centennial Day Oration was too similar to the earlier speech, or that it was poorly received, but this remarkable omission is regrettable both for the history of Cincinnati and the biography of Daniel Drake.

and the grandiloquent rhetoric of the Cincinnati Semi-Centennial Day Celebration were, in fact, characteristic of the general spirit of the times. Indeed, the enthusiastic, expansive, and extravagant spirit of Cincinnatians was the product of their common experience and an integral part of their daily lives. All around them the people of the Queen City saw evidence of their great achievements: the bustling waterfront, warehouses bulging with goods, the broad, straight streets which ran as far as the eye could see, and many handsome buildings which graced the local panorama. Every day along the streets of the city they encountered the men who directed the myriad enterprises producing the wealth and well-being which were the pride of the community. And, lest anyone fail to appreciate these accomplishments, there was a constant flood of literature which recited and repeated the whole story, ad infinitum, to remind the wayward and initiate the newcomer.[2]

The argument usually went something like this: Cincinnati had grown from a small, frontier outpost,

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[2]For a perceptive general discussion of such "booster literature, see Daniel Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York, 1965), 124-34; This flood of local propaganda, one Cincinnati editor noted, in a moment of critical detachment, became "dull to the westerner by repetition and vexations to the easterner by contrast." Hesperian III (1839), 497. A more positive assessment of such pieces of self-congratulation was that this "vainglorious boasting" was, in fact, "prophetic and true." C. P. James, Address Delivered at Camp McRae Before the Citizen Guard (Cincinnati, 1842), 5.

huddled along the Ohio River bank and surrounded by hostile Indians, to become a modest, prosperous village, serving the early nineteenth century migrants who passed through on their way west. With the development of river and canal commerce in the 1820's and 1830's, Cincinnati emerged as the most prominent and diversified metropolis west of the Allegheny Mountains. The original settlement, just a handful of hearty pioneers, had grown into a community of nearly fifty thousand souls while the town had spread out from the confines of old Fort Washington to a distance of more than a mile in radius. As Cincinnati grew the economy became diversified, with pork-packinghouses and ship building shops to complement the earlier grain mills and mercantile houses. At the same time there was a proliferation of public and private institutions which offered residents most of the opportunities for good works, self-improvement, and entertainment of which eastern cities boasted.

During the short span of fifty years Cincinnatians had suffered through flood, fire, and pestilence, just as they had survived economic depression, political division, and inter-urban competition. First the city had passed Lexington and Louisville, then it had overcome the challenge of Pittsburgh, and it kept on growing and prospering, at an ever-increasing rate, so that there seemed to be no end in sight. And yet, most remarkable

of all, this had all occurred within the lifetime of men who were still alive and active in the community. The story of Cincinnati's swift rise and spectacular success was a source of constant amazement and pride, shared by the community.[3]

Most Cincinnatians were less interested in the specifics of the story of the city's success, however, than in its general significance and future implications. What, they asked, were the particular advantages and attributes of the Queen City, and what were its ambitions for the future? During the 1830's and early 1840's discussion on these questions filled newspaper columns, the pages of letters, diaries and journals, and the speeches and publications of prominent citizens. At the same time a number of foreign travelers--for whom Cincinnati was a prime attraction of the grand tour--recorded their impressions of the community. Just as local enthusiasm and optimism infected these travelers, who helped to propagate the message of Cincinnati's fabulous rise and brilliant future, so laudatory accounts from abroad encouraged the community boosters to greater and greater heights of narcissistic praised.

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[3]Such reviews were presented in numerous newspaper articles and travel accounts but, most importantly, in the many guide-books of the period. The paradigm of this kind of literature--a model in its pervasive enthusiasm, extensive documentation, and general accuracy--is Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841; Its Early Annals and Future Prospects (Cincinnati, 1841).

By 1840 the story of Cincinnati's past achievements, present character, and future prospects had been repeated over and over and refined into a definite pattern of arguments which defined its particular advantages, attributes, and ambitions. Cincinnati was, first and foremost, blessed with a strategic location and a beautiful setting. Second, because of the flood of new settlers into the city, this was a dynamic, cosmopolitan community with a well-developed economy, a thriving local culture, and a strong civic spirit. Finally, as a result of these fortuitous conditions, and the nature of national development in the coming years, the Queen City enjoyed the happy prospect of unlimited growth and permanent prosperity.

Part fact, part fancy, these basic arguments had been repeated over and over and became the accepted assumptions of Cincinnatians by the time of the Semi-Centennial Celebration, and in the years which immediately followed. If some people knew that certain aspects of the argument were inaccurate, or misleading, constant repetition in the local press and continual reverberations from abroad gave them authority, if not authenticity. Piece by piece, the patterns of praise and prediction became woven into a fabric of self-fulfilling prophecy. It articulated the spirit of expansive optimism which infected the entire community.

## B. Strategic Location

Cincinnati's first and foremost advantage, local boosters and foreign travelers agreed, was its strategic location on the Ohio River. Situated on the northern bank of "La Belle Riviere," as the residents affectionately called her, across from the mouth of the Licking River, the pioneer village immediately became an important way station and provisioning center for the wave of western migrants in the early nineteenth century. The pioneers came through the Cumberland Road, changed to flatboats at Pittsburgh, and floated down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, where they fanned out north into the rich country of the Miami Valley, or prepared themselves to tackle the frontier further west.

Later, in the 1820's, with the triumph of the steamboat on the western rivers, Cincinnati secured its supremacy on the Ohio River by becoming a major boat-building center and the great midway port on the long haul from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. The river was, indeed, the life blood of the Cincinnati economy during this period. Every spring and fall as many as fifty steamers stood side-by-side along the riverfront quay, loading and unloading cargoes, which local merchants and middlemen sold at handsome profits. No less important were the profits which East End ship-builders

made from the sale of more than thirty boats yearly. It was only fitting that a Cincinnatian pronounced:

> . . . the name of Fulton should be cherished here with that of Washington: If the one conducted us to liberty, the other has given us prosperity--if the one broke the chains that bound us to a foreign country, the other has extended the channels of intercourse, and multiplied the ties which bind us to each other.

During the 1830's and early 1840's, as more and more high-stacked, triple-decked steamers crowded along the Cincinnati waterfront, most residents believed that the reign of the Ohio River steamboat would continue indefinitely, and with it the city's burgeoning fortunes.[4]

As the city grew, and the surrounding countryside became settled, Cincinnatians came to appreciate a second, supplementary advantage of their physical situation. They "seemed to be," as one resident wrote later, in the middle of a "land flowing with milk and honey." The fertile Miami Valley, to the north and west of the city, was an immensely rich natural breadbasket, where, during the late summer months, the undulating fields of grain spread across the horizon, "tall enough to cover a man on horseback," and "green as a bank of moss." The price of land was so low, and wages for labor so high, that, in the early years, a man could

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[4]James Hall, Statistics of the West: at the Close of the Year 1836 (Cincinnati, 1837), 217.

purchase an acre of land with a day's work. With cultivation of the land surrounding the city, Cincinnatians reaped the harvest, literally, of the farmers who carried their grain and livestock in the city's mills and slaughterhouses. Meat-packing was, by the 1830's, Cincinnati's leading industry, and the reason for the infamous sobriquet, "Porkopolis."[5]

In order to secure the flow of grain and pigs from its bountiful hinterland, Cincinnati pushed through the construction of the Miami Canal. In the late 1820's and early 1830's, after it had reached Dayton and then the area of central Ohio, the Miami Canal proved to be an enormously profitable feeder which swelled the Queen City's commerce. Cincinnati reached out in other directions; too, with turnpikes to siphon off the rich resources of the entire Ohio Valley. During the 1830's Cincinnatians showed considerable foresight and expended large sums of money in promoting internal improvements, to complement their river trade. A review of this transportation network described the achievements as well as the ambitions of the Cincinnati promoters:

> A canal already connects the interior with Cincinnati, and in a few years, beyond a doubt, the whole region from that city to

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[5]James Handasyd Perkins, Memoir and Writings of James Handasyd Perkins, edited by William H. Channing (Cincinnati, 1851) II, 367; Cincinnati Commercial and Literary Gazette, August 31, 1833.

> Lake Erie will be traversed by a canal and a railroad; while in Cincinnati, as a centre, will radiate, in addition to these, a most admirable McAdamized turnpike-road . . . 'a canal and a railroad' to Indiana; three other McAdam turnpikes, already constructed in part, two to meet the National Road in Ohio, the third to reach the centre of Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Carolina, with branches to North Carolina and Georgia, is to rival the Mississippi, and make the West and the South one, as the West and the Southwest are already one.

Needless to say, Cincinnati would be the hub of this new transportation system the "Western Emporium" for all of the trade in the "North American Valley."[6]

At this time Cincinnatians assumed that their central location in the Ohio Valley, dominating the river trade and controlling the network of internal canals and roads, assured their continued growth and prosperity. Straddling a vast three state area, from the Great Lakes to Tennessee, from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi River, Cincinnati stood at the center of the richest inland empire of agricultural and mineral wealth in the United States. After reviewing this situation, a local guide-book concluded:[7]

> The region thus connected by this system of public works, embraces within its bounds as least half a million persons, and must speedily quadruple that number, and may easily sustain eight millions of people without being excessively

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[6]Perkins, Memoir and Writings, II, 402; Cist, 1841, 289.

[7]Cist, 1841, 82.

> populous. It is by contemplating this fact, in connection with the vast internal commerce, arising from the wants and industry of such a people . . . that we can adequately comprehend the rapid and permanent growth of Cincinnati.

## C. Beautiful City

Just as Cincinnati exploited the advantage of its strategic location and became the major entrepot of the Ohio Valley, so Cincinnatians appreciated the advantages of their physical setting, and built a remarkably beautiful city. In the winter of 1788, when the original settlers floated down the Ohio River in search of a new home, they passed many sites which would have been suitable for their small party. But they waited until they came to a wide break in the hilly, wooded river banks, where a long, level plain spread out, surrounded by high-rising hills on three sides. Here, in a corner of this natural amphitheatre, the founders stopped, and built the first crude huts which were the basis for the future metropolis.[8]

Along the river's edge was a marshy beach bottom, spotted with an assortment of sycamore, cottonwoods, and

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[8]For a detailed description of the founding of Cincinnati, and the relationship between the three "original" settlements, Columbia, Losantiville, and North Bend, see Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati, 142-316; Cist, 1841, 14-29; and Francis W. Miller, Cincinnati Beginnings: Missing Chapters in the Early History of the City and the Miami Purchase (Cincinnati, 1880).

water maples, and inhabited by racoons and opposums. This low-lying riverfront area extended approximately eight hundred feet to the north, where a short but very steep slope marked the line of a higher, dryer plateau, where beech, yellow poplar, and hickory trees receded into the distance. Along the eastern and western fringes of this second plateau two shallow creeks meandered, until they emptied into the Ohio River. Beyond, to the east, north, and west, arose seven hills, to an average height of three hundred feet, in a semicircular arc which enclosed the natural amphitheatre. It was, everyone agreed, an ideal setting for a great city and large enough for Cincinnati to grow indefinitely.

For travelers coming down the Ohio River in the 1830's the appearance of Cincinnati was a thrilling sight. After passing miles and miles of thickly wooded shores and clay bluffs rising two to three hundred feet above the water's edge, with only an occasional cabin or small village to break the monotony of endless wilderness, it seemed like an apparition to see a large city, with homes, churches, warehouses, and factories beyond number spread out before their eyes. The public landing, which extended a thousand feet along the riverfront and covered an area of ten acres, was the heart of the city's business activity. Behind, on the north side of Front Street, stood the warehouses, stores, and ships which

transacted most of the river trade. To the east, along lower Broadway, were many of the important public buildings, banks, and hotels. Beyond, to the north, along Broadway and on the brow of the second terrace, which was Fourth Street, stood many of Cincinnati's finest residences. Up-river, along the Miami Canal east of the city, were many of the city's large foundries, shipbuilding yards and packinghouses. To the west, beyond Western Row, lay the Mill Creek meadows and a few scattered brick and lumber yards.

For the first forty years Cincinnati grew within the confines of the long lower plateau, called "the Bottom." It was not until the 1830's that residents ascended the second plateau, called "the Hill," to take advantage of the healthier climate and the commanding view. In 1840, however, much activity was still concentrated in "the Bottom," where the line of square one-, two-, and three-story buildings was broken only by the streets which ran, at regular intervals, north-south, and east-west. The Miami Canal, which flowed into the city from the north-west, cut east across the city a mile north of the river, and then ran south along the Deer Creek into the Ohio River, marked the limits of population concentration in the city. Although some visitors complained about the want of design in the city's appearance, and the lack of open spaces or

parks, most marveled at the sight of a "real city," comparable to those which they had seen in the East, springing up in the midst of the western wilderness.[9]

Although nearly fifty thousand people were living in the city in 1840, Cincinnati still had the appearance of an overgrown town rather than a large city. Nearly everyone lived within walking distance of the places where they worked and shopped, within a concentrated mile-square area. Most of the warehouses were near the waterfront, on Front and Pearl Street, and many of the retail stores were not yet completely separated

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[9]See, for example, Charles Fenno Hoffman, A Winter in the West (New York, 1835), 129; James Stuart, Three Years in North America (Edinburgh, 1833), 474-5; Charles Augustus Murray, Travels in North America During the Years, 1834, 1835, and 1836 (London, 1839), 202-4; Godfrey T. Vigne, Six Months in America (Philadelphia, 1833), 133-4; James Edward Alexander, Transatlantic Sketches Comprising Visits to the Most Interesting Scenes in North and South America (London, 1833), II 123-4; Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (London, (London, 1838), II, 215-69; Thomas Hamilton, Men and Manners in America (Edinburgh, 1833), II, 168-73; "Journal of Cyrus P. Bradley," Ohio Archeological and Historical Quarterly XV (1906), 217-20; Charles Dickens, American Notes (New York, 1842), 195-6; James S. Buckingham, The Eastern and Western States of America (London, 1842), II, II, 381-6; Patrick Shirreff, A Tour through North America (Edinburgh, 1835), 281. The large number of favorable accounts of the city's appearance, by nearly every visitor during this period, suggests that Mr. Trollope's infamous acidulous account reflects more about her peculiar character than the actual condition of the city. Francis Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, edited by Donald Smalley (New York, 1949), 39-42.

from residential areas, and elegant stone mansions were often in close juxtaposition to run-down frame tenements. Many people lived and worked together within a densely-settled, integrated, and generally harmonious community.[10]

At this time Cincinnati was remarkably free from the soot and smoke which marred the appearance of most large industrial cities. This was due to the fact that much of the work here, such as shoe and clothing manufacturing, was done by hand, in the "upper stories, or in the rear shops of the warehouses, out of sight." The large foundries and ship-building shops were concentrated in the "Flatiron District," along the river and canal south-east of the city, run by water-power and steam engines rather than the noxious coal-burning furnaces. And the notorious slaughterhouses, where the screams and stench of the victims pierced the air, and from which a steady stream of blood and gore

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[10]This description of the physical growth and layout of the city is based on a careful analysis of the series of maps of the city, location maps for 1840, city views, and numerous contemporary accounts and later reminiscences. The problem here, with a rapidly growing and changing city, is to try to capture the character of the city in 1840, not of an earlier period, as indicated by maps which were not corrected as they were updated, or later, as with reminiscences, which projected later any conditions backward on an earlier period.

Any description of the city's physical configuration, which attempts to characterize it as "integrated" or "harmonious" is necessarily relative, but it is still striking that such a large, diversified population was able to live in such a small, compact area. For a fuller discussion of this, see Chapter II, Section F.

ran into the Deer Creek, were located a good distance east of the main residential and business sections of the city.[11]

It was a "beautiful city," wrote Charles Dickens after his visit in 1842. This caustic critic was "quite charmed" by the city with its "clean houses of red and white, its well-paved roads and footways of bright tile." At this time the city had a remarkably clear and fresh appearance, since many of the brick and frame buildings were less than ten years old. Although the city had its architectural abortions, notably Mrs. Trollope's Bazaar, most visitors were pleased with the variety of the architecture and the design of the city. Dickens declared the "invention and fancy in the varying styles" of buildings to be "perfectly delightful" and commended Cincinnatians for their "broad and airy streets," the "elegance and neatness" of their residences, and their "refreshing and agreeable" gardens. Looking down on the city from Mount Auburn, north of the city, Charles Dickens surveyed the entire city spread out below. It was, he concluded, "a picture of remarkable beauty."[12]

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[11]For a vivid, yet apparently accurate description of the slaughterhouses, and their streamlined, mass production operations, see Hoffman, Winter in the West, 133-4. Cist, 1841, 238.

[12]Charles Dickens, American Notes, 195-8; for Dickens' private comments on the city, which in this case were no less laudatory than his published account, see Charles Sumner Van Tassel, Charles Dickens 1842 Visit to Ohio (n.p., 1937). Of the 6,781 buildings in Cincinnati

## D. Mature and Diversified Economy

During the 1830's Cincinnati enjoyed almost uninterrupted prosperity as local enterprise matured into a well-diversified and stable economic system. Riding the wave of increased western settlement in the 1830's, which provided a demand for goods and a supply of foodstuffs unaffected by artificial economic crises such as the Jackson Bank veto and the Panic of 1837, most sectors of the local economy made handsome advances during this period. Despite individual difficulties and periodic fears, it was a time, an editor asserted, when:

> The only change which has occurred . . . is the gradual one from poverty to comparative wealth. . . . That goes on unchecked; never . . . was there a period of greater abundance in all the advantages and facilities of successful industry than what now prevails.

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in 1840, 3,315 had been built during the 1830's. This rose-colored description of Cincinnati's appearance was repeated by the numerous other travelers' accounts cited above and represented, graphically, in the several paintings and lithographs of the city done during this period. See especially the four street scene paintings of Cincinnati, by J. C. Wild, done in the 1830's which the Cincinnati Historical Society owns; the undersigned print of the waterfront in Robinson and Jones, Cincinnati Directory for 1846 (Cincinnati, 1846). The Klauprecht and Menzel print in the David Henry Shaffer. The Cincinnati Directory for 1840 (Cincinnati, 1839), presents a slightly cruder picture, which is probably more accurate, considering the actual appearance in 1848, captured in the remarkable Fontayne and Porter daguerreotypes, Carl Vitz, The Cincinnati Waterfront--1848," The Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio VI (April, 1948), 28-40.

In the winter of 1840-1 and again in 1841-2, Cincinnati suffered a short economic relapse due primarily to the frozen river trade and curtailment of building in the cold weather. But as long as the flood of westward migration continued, the economy of the Queen City seemed secure.[13]

By 1840 the foundation of the local economy continued to be the provisioning of migrants and new settlers, who purchased here many of the staples and household utensils necessary in their new homes. But Cincinnatians began to produce more of the goods they sold. Instead of buying all of their merchandise in the east, from Philadelphia and New York manufacturers, and confining themselves to middleman profits, enterprising local merchants began to make the furniture, farm implements, clothing, saddles, pottery, and paper which they sold to the newcomers and an increasing number of peddlers and small town dealers who distributed these goods throughout the hinterland. Thus Cincinnatians profited doubly, as the local economy swelled with both mercantile and manufacturing revenue.

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[13]For a series of discussions of economic conditions in Cincinnati during this period, which describes the impact and character of the depression, see the Cincinnati Commercial, February 28, April 16, 1840, January 6, 20, March 4, 11, 1841; Cincinnati Republican, April 8, 1842; Cincinnati Gazette, October 1, 1842. For an indication of the importance of construction in maintaining the local economy in the face of the reduction of specie, see David Shaffer, The Cincinnati Directory for 1840 (Cincinnati, 1839), 483.

In 1840 commerce was the leading sector of the Cincinnati economy. According to Charles Cist, who took the federal census in the city, there was more than $18,000,000 invested in local mercantile houses--$5,200,000 in wholesale businesses, $12,877,000 in retail stores. The city imported more than $11,000.000 worth of foodstuffs--flour, whiskey, corn, beef, pork, and lard principally--and exported an estimated $9,000,000 in processed foods and manufactures. The large mercantile emporiums along Front and Pearl Streets--the clearinghouses and warehouses of the local merchant princes--were the scene of daily transactions which contributed a major share to Cincinnati's prosperity.[14]

During the 1830's industry had developed so "silently and gradually" in Cincinnati, a local authority remarked, that "few, even of our own citizens, are aware of the extent and importance of manufacturing interest." This development was a source of special satisfaction to Cincinnatians, since it decreased their dependenc on the East and helped to balance the general economy, which formerly suffered during the slow winter months, when river trade was virtually cut off. Although there was

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[14]Cist, 1841, 49; Niles' National Register, May 8, 1841; Proceedings of a Public Meeting of the Citizens of Cincinnati on the Subject of a Western National Armory (Cincinnati, 1841), 18-19.

some difference of opinion as to the quality of the products made here--local boosters described them as being "of superior quality" while Michael Chevalier indicated that they were of no more than "ordinary quality"--there was general agreement that the city possessed a wide variety of competent mechanics and a sufficient amount of technical knowledge and experience to challenge the industrial centers of the East. The 1838 Exhibition of local products at the Ohio Mechanics Institute--which included everything from carriages to corsets, saddles to scientific instruments, books to boilers, and prize hams to delicate harmonicas--marked the formal opening of this industrial challenge which would catapult Cincinnati into third place as a manufacturing center of the United States at mid-century.[15]

In 1840 pork-packing was the leading industry in Cincinnati. The opening of the Miami Canal and other internal roads in the Ohio Valley opened the way for the shipment of hogs raised and fattened by farmers in the interior, and for the natural ice necessary for storing the fresh meat. By 1830 Cincinnati abattoirs were

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[15]Cist, 1841, 236; Western National Armory, 14-17; Michael Chevalier, Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States (Boston, 1839), 203. For a general discussion of the growth of industry in Cincinnati, see Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1851 (Cincinnati, 1851), 169-262; Cincinnati Commercial, September 14, 1859; and the Federal Writers' Project, They Built a City: 150 Years of Industrial Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1938).

processing more than 50,000 hogs a year, which meant the western metropolis had bypassed Baltimore as the pork-packing capital of the United States, and the number increased steadily through 1839, when 199,000 hogs were slaughtered in the city. In 1850, the apex year in the reign of "Porkopolis," Cincinnati was the principle hog market in the world, greater even than the Irish centers of Cork and Belfast.[16]

Pork-packing was important to the Cincinnati economy not only because of the large number of men employed and the annual volume of business--1,220 hands working in 48 packinghouses, which earned better than $3,000,000 in 1840--but also because of the successful use made of the by-products. In the 1830's the fats and carcasses from the slaughterhouses began to be boiled down into soap and candles while tanners and shoemakers turned the animal hides into useful, profitable consumer goods. In 1837 two young men, William Proctor and James Gamble, pooled their savings of $7,500, to start a soap and candle factory in a small shack on the corner of Sixth and Main Streets. During the first year--when the partners took turns manning the boiling kettles and selling their products door-to-door from a wheelbarrow--their sales exceeded $50,000 and the new firm was on the way to fame and fortune.[17]

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[16] Cist, 1851, 278-88; They Built a City, 80-3.

[17] Ibid., 102-3.

During this period there were two industries, besides pork-packing, which were particularly important in the local economy. Building, in 1840, was the second most important domestic industry in Cincinnati. The steady stream of newcomers in the 1830's--when the population increased from 24,831 to 46,382--created a demand for housing which resulted in the building of over 3,100 structures. And yet, despite the fact that the number of buildings in the city doubled in less than a decade, there was still an acute housing shortage in 1840, and houses were going at premium prices to anxious renters and buyers. As a result, the 1,568 men engaged in the building trades--as carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, painters, and masons--had steady work at high wages while the real estate speculators and salesmen, merchants of building supplies, and other related entrepeneurs made handsome profits.

The other industry in which Cincinnatians took particular pride was the building of the magnificant floating palaces which navigated the inland waterways. Capable of carrying over 500 tons of cargo, yet offering "all of the comforts and conveniences of home," these noble steamboats were the epitome of mechanical achievement and artistic ingenuity of the day. In 1840 there were 33 steamboats built in the city, at a combined

cost of nearly $600,000. The industry not only employed a large number of mechanics, engineers, carpenters, and other laborers, but it also supported a wide variety of subsidiary industries, from bell-foundries to rope-makers.[18]

The most notable thing about manufacturing in the Queen City at this time, however, was the variety of the products and the small-scale of most of the operations. In 1840 there were 1,594 different manufacturing establishments, employing 10,608 men, which produced goods worth $17,328,651. Although the pork-packinghouses, shipbuilding yards, foundries, engine shops, and rolling mills were already large, specialized factory operations, the large majority of the manufacturing in the city was done in small shops, employing less than ten men, where the master mechanic-owner worked alongside his journeymen and apprentice-hands. The differences were striking: cabinetware factories and steamboat yards both employed over 300 hands and made products worth more than $500,000, yet the former work was carried on in 48 different establishments while the later was concentrated in just 5 yards. The 48 pork-packinghouses averaged 25 hands each, and the annual income of over $60,000 each while the 86 establishments which made clothing averaged less than 10 employees each, and an annual income of less than

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[18]Cist, 1841, 252-5.

$15,000. In the building trades there were less than five men in each establishment, and the 332 men who owned these establishments averaged less than $3,000 yearly. The variety of many different, small-scale manufacturers, and the general lack of concentration and consolation, was considered to be a positive advantage in 1840.[19]

Property investment can be considered as the third sector of the Cincinnati economy in 1840. Since the founding of the city property speculation was a popular and often profitable form of investment, and the wealth of many of the early leaders of the community was based largely on the increased value of their real estate holdings. The high-risk of commercial ventures, the failure of the U.S. Bank in 1819, and the need for mechanical skill or large amounts of money to enter manufacturing, caused many Cincinnatians with extra money to invest in property and watch its value increase with the growth of the city. The profits of land speculators "defy any parallel," one enthusiastic local booster exclaimed, "except what may be found in the legend of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp." There was, for example, the lot on the corner of Main and Front Street, which had cost the original owner exactly $2.00 in 1789. In 1840 there were thirteen stores on the

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[19] Ibid., 54-8.

property, which paid an estimated rent of $14,250. This meant, Charles Cist noted, that by a conservative evaluation the land was now worth $237,000, or that the property had doubled in value every three years. Such increases in property values explain why many Cincinnatians accepted as a rule-of-thumb that "the ground alone is worth more than it is with the buildings added to it."[20]

The entire Cincinnati economy rested upon a local banking system which, in 1840, seemed to be firmly established and secure. In the early days of the city, banks had lacked specie and been overly optimistic in their speculation. The failure of the first United States Bank in 1819 had ruined some of the leading members of the community and retarded the local economy for several years. But during the 1830's the state legislature chartered a number of new banks, which were able to weather the Panic of 1837. Even though the amount of their working capital was severely reduced, there were no failures, and most Cincinnatians rode out the storm with renewed confidence in the stability and sobriety of their economic system. As a report in 1841 proclaimed:[21]

> The fact that this immense amount ($3,276,193) was deducted in one year from the business

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[20]Cincinnati Gazette, December 14, 1836; Cist, 1841, 263-8.

[21]Western National Armory, 29.

> capital of the city, without producing bankruptcies . . . forms conclusive proof that our money operations were based on a sound and healthy business, and that our mechanics and merchants sustain a high commercial character.

A thorough review of the Cincinnati economy in a period of national economic depression, this report pointed to three critical factors. First was the diversity of the economy:

> The three great interests of manufacturing, commerce, and the produce business divide the wealth and industry of our citizens; it seldom happens that all interests are paralyzed at the same time, and when one of them is depressed, there is usually a sustaining power in the others.

Second, Cincinnati produced a wide variety of essential articles for which there was a steady demand. The mechanics who made these goods generally worked in small shops, free from debt, and thus were uneffected by fluctuations in the money market. Indeed, as Michael Chevalier had observed several years earlier, "the prosperity of of Cincinnati rests upon the sure basis of the prosperity of the west, upon the supply of articles of the first necessity of the bulk of the community." Finally, there was a general diffusion of wealth thoughout the entire population, which protected the community from disaster caused by a few failures, and provided a strong and steady market for local goods:[22]

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[22] Ibid, 29; Chevalier, Society, Manners, and Politics, 203.

> Our active business capital is distributed into many hands. Instead of having a few heavy capitalists, we have a great number of persons of moderate means. The temptation to imprudent speculation, as well as to extravagant living, is modified by the distribution of wealth; and as a general rule our capital is active, and employed in fair business operations.

Cincinnati attributed this remarkable economic health during the late 1830's to these special conditions. "The rapid growth of Cincinnati during a period of general financial embarrassment and of much commercial depression," provided, a local newspaper declared in 1840, "the highest evidence that the foundations of her prosperity are laid deep and strong." A mature and diversified economy, an industrious, prudent population, and a wide distribution of wealth guaranteed the continued growth and prosperity of the Queen City. The underlying basis for this prosperity, which most citizens took for granted, was the continued growth of the community and the surrounding hinterland, and the city's domination of the western market. "No place in the world has superior advantages for internal trade than Cincinnati," asserted an 1840 editorial, "and none has experienced an equal growth in all that constitutes either commercial or moral superiority. It will be the fault of her own citizens if the advantages of her

position are not realized in her commercial prosperity through centuries to come."[23]

## E. Culture and the Arts

In 1841 a group of prominent Cincinnatians tried to persuade Congress to establish a national armory in the Queen City. It would bring new people and prosperity into the community and provide additional proof that Cincinnati was, indeed, the Colossus of the West. To promote the good cause they published a brief pamphlet which included a description of the city and its principal advantages. After enumerating the advantages of its location on the Ohio River, its close proximity to abundant agricultural and mineral resources, and its position as the financial, commercial, and manufacturing metropolis of the west, the argument turned to the pleasures of living in the community.

There was, the pamphlet promised, a salubrious climate here, "unsurpassed" in its healthiness and exemption from the dreaded epidemics of southern cities. Because it was the commercial and manufacturing center of the west, Cincinnati was able to provide "all the necessities and many of the luxuries of life, at a cost within the reach of the mechanic." The city also provided for the children of its citizens. There was a

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[23]Cincinnati Commercial, January 3, April 16, 1840.

system of common schools--nine schools, employing 69 teachers, giving free instruction to all young people between the ages of six and sixteen years--which "are fully equal to the best private schools of the same grade, and furnish all the education that is desirable, and in most cases attainable for the common purposes of life." Finally, the community promised for its residents "in complete operation, all the institutions of social order. The many useful and liberal institutions established here . . . give employment to their leisure hours, and elevate them to their proper standing in society."[24]

Cincinnati boasted, in short, all the advantages of health, wealth, and happiness. Other cities might have some comparable assets, but none of the competing cities could provide all these aspects of culture and civilization. Despite its youth and dynamism, the Queen City was, according to the boosters, a fully developed, complete, and self-contained society. As the pamphlet summarized its argument, "of health, of a cheap and comfortable subsistance, of the advantages of society, or of the means of education and religious instruction. We offer them all these." It was for this reason that the city had enjoyed such a dramatic growth,

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[24]Western National Armory, 20-1.

and continued to attract newcomers and kept the children of its older residents at home.[25]

Education was the first and most important area which Cincinnati's civic leaders turned to in the establishment of institutions. The first log schoolhouse opened in 1792; by 1800 a private school offered a curriculum including the dead languages, navigation, astronomy, and rhetoric; and in 1815 the city fathers chartered a Lancasterian school. During the next 25 years a wide variety of academies, institutions, colleges, and professional schools gave the city the reputation of the "Athens of the West." More importantly, during the 1820's as a result of efforts by Cincinnatians like Nathan Guilford, Ohio instituted free public schools. By 1840 a local editor found that "abroad Cincinnati is talked of more as the founder of a liberal system of schools, and as the site and promoter of the College of Teachers, than for any other thing, save perhaps the swine killing."[26]

To most people who visited the Queen City in the 1830's, however, the most noteworthy ornament here was Mrs. Trollope's Bazaar. Established in 1828 by this

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[25] Ibid., 20.

[26] Cist, 1841, 111-22; 256-60; Cincinnati Chronicle, September 28, 1838. See also, John P. Foote, The Schools of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1855).

eccentric Englishwoman, for the edification and amusement of Cincinnati's untutored population, this Byzantine gift shop proved to be a grand flop. By 1830 Mrs. Trollope had left the city, convinced that its residents would never appreciate the finer things in life, and the onion-domed edifice stood vacant. But, despite its initial failure and odd appearance, the Bazaar lived to serve its original purpose. The Ohio Mechanics Institute, a group organized in 1828 for the instruction of all interested workingmen in the city, bought the building and turned its showrooms into classrooms and halls where the products of local mechanics and artisans could be exhibited. Cincinnatians had little use for the exotic knick-knacks at inflated prices which Mrs. Trollope tried to pass of on them, but when an opportunity for self-improvement and the promotion of local industry was offered, it was a great success.[27]

Education was vigorously supported by Cincinnatians not only for its utilitarian value, but also because it helped to socialize the new members of society. Along with the basic skills, the public schools provided students with training in proper conduct and respect for law and order. Similarly, the Ohio

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[27] Historical Sketch of the Ohio Mechanics Institute (Cincinnati, 1878).

Mechanic Institute lectures discussed the subject of religion, morality, and the responsibilities of citizenship as often as the more mundane matters of technical innovations and ways in which to improve one's skills. The public schools, Sunday schools, and the various libraries and institutes for workingmen and immigrant groups, therefore, all played an important part in the process of community indoctrination. As Rev. Benjamin P. Aydelotte, President of Woodward College and one of the religious and educational leaders of the community wrote, such institutions "best prepare us for our peculiar duties as citizens of a free country."[28]

By the 1830's Cincinnati boasted of a number of talented local artists, including Hiram Powers, who would go on to international fame as the sculptor of the "Greek Slave." These artists were a source of enormous community pride and were patronized by a number of prominent local citizens. But Cincinnatians tended to be moved as much by the civic implications of the development of these artists as by an aesthetic sensitivity to their works. These artists, according to local boosters, reflected the vitality of the community and the good taste of its members no less than the natural talent of the artists themselves. The quantity

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[28]Benjamin P. Aydelotte, American Education (Cincinnati, 1837), 16.

of local artists tended to be stressed, therefore, rather than the quality of their works, and this was cited more as an index of the progress of the community as a whole than as a result of individual achievement.[29]

And yet, despite the utilitarian, chauvinistic orientation of this booster literature, which probably represented the criteria by which most Cincinnatians judged their local culture, a number of remarkable intellectuals were able to work productively and compatibly here in 1840. Dr. Daniel Drake did pioneering work in epidemiology, John Locke was carrying on important geological investigations, Ormsby M. Mitchel would soon take a commanding position in the study of astronomy in the United States,and men like Joshua Wilson, Lyman Beecher, Timothey Walker, Salmon P. Chase, Charles Hammond, Edward D. Mansfield, and William McGuffey all stood in the forefront of the ranks of ministers, lawyers, editors, writers, and educators of their day. Every fortnight these men, and other educated, refined men and women of the community gathered at the Semi-Colon Club to discuss literature and to present their own works. When young Harriet Beecher arrived in Cincinnati in 1831 she expressed considerable surprise and

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[29]Cist, 1841, 133-43; Louis Leonard Tucker, "Hiram Powers and Cincinnati," Bulletin of the Cincinnati Historical Society XXV (January, 1967), 21-49.

relief when she found that there were men and women here as refined and cultured as those she had known in the East. Cincinnati was, many other emigrants from New England agreed, the next best thing to being back in Boston. But despite the accomplishments of the local illuminati, and the high tone of the meetings of the Semi-Colon Club, it is still true, as Edward D. Mansfield wrote, that the arts grew as an "appendage to commerce" and not as a "part of the very body of society."[30]

## F. A Mandate for Progress

In 1840 Cincinnatians had their first chance to put a fellow-citizen into the White House. In the fall of that year local voters turned out in record number to poll a decisive majority for William Henry Harrison, the Whig candidate for President, who was an old resident of the community. The election was hotly contested, but the large Harrison majority, 1,430 out of 6,213 votes, was an indication of community pride as well as partisan strength. Most residents relished the idea of a neighbor and old friend directing affairs in Washington, and saw his election as a reflection of the city's rising

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[30]Louis Leonard Tucker, "Cincinnati: Athens of the West: 1830-1861," Ohio History LXXV (January, 1966), 10-26. Edward D. Mansfield, Memoirs of the Life and Services of Daniel Drake (Cincinnati, 1855), 156.

national prominence and prestige.[31]

During the 1830's, the Whigs dominated Cincinnati politics. Despite the efforts of local Democratic leaders, many of whom held federal patronage offices under the Jackson and Van Buren administrations, Whig candidates in national and state elections generally carried the city's five wards and got at least 60% of the Cincinnati vote. And yet, every election was a contest, since the Whigs had to roll up a large enough margin in the city to offset the Democratic majorities in the surrounding townships of Hamilton County. Throughout the decade, therefore, the urban Whigs and the rural Democrats battled for control of the Hamilton County vote.[32]

These party divisions did not enter into local elections, however. Races for the City Council and other municipal office every spring were run by the individuals involved and on issues of immediate local interest. Most of the men who held these offices were Whigs in national politics--although they were not generally included among the leaders of the local party

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[31]This is not to discount the importance of political allegiance, or the strong partisan feelings generated by this "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign. But the size of the Harrison margin and the community pride evidenced in local editorials and correspondence, suggests that the personality factor was of some importance in Cincinnati.

[32]For the election returns of this period see Appendix.

and were not prominent in the fall electioneering--but the rigid party lines and bitter partisan animosity seemed inappropriate or undesirable within the confines of the community. Certain prominent Democrats were active and influential in municipal government, to be sure, but they usually were not men who were strongly identified with the Hamilton County Democratic Party.

The Whigs clearly dominated Cincinnati politics in 1840. The Whig tone of unquestioned superiority was set by Charles Hammond, influential editor of the leading local newspaper, the Cincinnati Gazette. Despite constant provocation and not a little billingsgate from his adversary, Moses Dawson, the vitriolic Democratic editor of the Advertiser and Journal, Hammond kept their running political controversies on a fairly high level, and rarely lost the upper hand. The local Democrats seemed more of a nuisance than a threat, and Dawson a pugnacious but under-sized sparring partner who kept the Cincinnati Whigs in political trim.

The Whig-Democrat dichotomy, therefore, was not a critical division within the community or the best indicator of its local political sentiments. The local political attitudes of Cincinnatians were demonstrated most clearly in a series of special elections between 1837 and 1842, concerning the role of municipal government in various spheres of civic life.

During this five-year period Cincinnatians voted in five different elections which gave them a choice on sharply defined issues of immediate importance: municipal assistance for internal improvements, public ownership of the Waterworks, the relationship between the city and the residents of the outlying townships, reform of the city charter, and the licencing of coffee-houses. Voter turnout in these spring elections was light, compared to that of the national elections in the fall, but in each case there was a decisive majority. The modest turnout at these elections--never more than half of the number of votes cast in the 1840 Presidential race--suggests not so much a lack of interest in the issues as a general agreement as to what was proper and necessary. Other than the Advertiser and Journal, which seemed to be a voice crying out in the wilderness, the local press devoted little space and editorial energy to these elections, beyond stating their support or opposition. There appeared to be a general assumption that all right thinking, forward looking Cincinnatians understood what was good for the community, and would act accordingly. The election returns support this assumption: in every election the majority was over 70% and only in the vote on the Waterworks purchase did any ward vote in opposition to the prevailing

sentiments of the city as a whole.[33]

These elections, taken together, provide a fairly reliable and comprehensive outline of the prevailing attitude of Cincinnatians toward local government. They demonstrate a continued belief in the corporate concept of municipal government--in which a small number of prominent citizens were elected and given broad powers to interpret and implement the general welfare--as well as an increasing recognition of the responsibilities of municipal government--in which the city should become a more active agent in the promotion of the progress and prosperity of the community.[34]

During this period Cincinnatians voted several large loans of municipal funds to support internal improvement works. In 1837 a large majority of citizens agreed that the city should loan $600,000 for the building of the Little Miami Railroad, the Whitewater Canal, and the proposed Charleston Railroad. Later, when the Charleston Railroad plans fell through, the voters agreed to transfer the $200,000 granted to the

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[33]For the vote on these five issues, see Appendix.

[34]For a good review of the Cincinnati attitude toward the role of the municipal government before 1838, which was uniformly negative, see Daniel Aaron, "Cincinnati: 1818-1838: S Study in Attitudes in the Urban West" (Harvard Ph.D., 1942), Chapter III.

railroad to the Whitewater Canal. Then, in 1841 when the Canal ran into more difficulties, the city put another $200,000 into the enterprise. Thus, in a short five year period, marked by national depression, Cincinnatian voted to spend $800,000 for various projects to promote progress and prosperity in the city.[35]

In 1839, after 15 years of steadfast opposition to the idead, the Cincinnati voters finally agreed to buy the Cincinnati Waterworks. Built in 1824, by a group of prominent local businessmen who hoped to turn it over to the city with some compensation for their efforts, the Waterworks immediately became a symbol of potential municipal intrusion into private enterprise and the unjustified expansion of civic responsibility. Despite constant complaints about the company's services and changes, the local electorate rejected four different offers in the early 1830's to sell the Waterworks to the city. Then in 1838, in a heated campaign marked by several sensational stories which suggested that the company was polluting their water, the voters agreed to purchase the Waterworks for $300,000, or 15 times the the price at which it was originally offered. This election marked the beginning of the expansion of municipal services and responsibilities, such as the

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[35]Cincinnati Gazette, May 6, 1834; April 5, 1844.

paid fire department and police force, in the decades which followed.[36]

At the beginning of 1840 another issue, the "Market Wagon War," aroused public opinion about the rights and responsibilities of outsiders using the city's facilities. Farmers from around Cincinnati often brought their produce to the local markets and sold it off the backs of their wagons. In 1839 the City Council voted to impose a small tax, "as compensation for the injuries inflicted on the pavements by the stamping of horses, and in remuneration for the expense of removing the filth they deposited." Cincinnati Democrats, who had a particular affection for these outsiders, took up the cause of the farmers and argued that the tax was unjust and unlawful. The state courts, controlled by the Democrats, declared the tax unlawful but Cincinnatians strongly disagreed. In the 1840 spring elections, which turned largely on this issue, local voters turned out all of the men who had contested the tax and elected men who promised to

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[36]In 1841 the City Council granted an individual the rights to supply gas to residents; in 1852 the city organized a paid professional fire department and the next year a salaried police force. There was a previous vote on the sale of the Waterworks, on October 24, 1838, when the electorate agreed by a vote of 1,573 to 512. But certain opponents contested this election, and demanded another one to verify the decision. The 1839 vote was smaller, but the outcome was the same: 728 to 553. Cincinnati Gazette, May 4, 6, 1839.

enforce it, even against the ruling of the state court.[37]

The 1840 municipal election also indicated that the majority of Cincinnati voters were satisfied with the existing form of local government, one which gave broad powers to the City Council, which was dominated by the old elite. Early in the year a group of Democrats, led by Moses Dawson, proposed a revision of the city charter which would have limited the authority and privileges of the City Council, by prohibiting members from holding any outside position where they might profit from work done for the city, and by making all civic officers elective rather than appointive. The Democrats' purpose, they said, was to allow the citizens to have a greater control over the selection of their constables, watchmen, and inspectors, and to end the alleged corruption in government contracts. But the opponents of the Charter revision, who posed as "Good Order Men," argued that this was an attempt to undermine the laws and turn the government over to the "disreputable" elements in society. When voters turned down the proposed revision by an overwhelming majority of 2,141 to 190, they seemed to

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[37]Cincinnati Advertiser and Journal, January 1, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, February 1, 3, 8, 1840; Cincinnati Gazette, January 7, 28, February 4, 8, March 27, April 3, 24, 27, 28, 1840; Cincinnati Commercial, March 20, 24, 1840.

agree with "An Aged Citizen," who maintained that the present government was adequate and effective, that the Councilmen acted in the best interests of the entire community, and that election of civic officers would have meant dissensions in local and personal strife. The "Good Order" victory in April, 1840, suggested that a confident, corporate concept of government, rather than a suspicious, divisive attitude, still prevailed in Cincinnati.[38]

There were, however, limits to which this corporate concept of government could be effectively applied. In 1838 citizens had voted into office a group of new Councilmen who promised to curb the licensing of "coffeehouses" and try to stop the spread of intemperance and other vice in the city. This reform effort coincided with a general temperance crusade during the late 1830's, led by the churches, and supported by many of the leading members of the community. The ostensible purpose was to combat the evils of liquor but an underlying motive may well have been the fear of the "excesses" of the yet "uncivilized" German immigrants, who arrived in increasing numbers in the late 1830's, and

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[38]For a running commentary on these two issues in the 1840 election see the Cincinnati Gazette and Advertiser and Journal from January through April. The proposed new charter was printed in the Gazette, February 17, 1840; the letter from "An Aged Citizen," in the February 15, 1840 issue.

brought with them a fondness for beer. Thus, however noble its initial intent may have been, this temperance crusade had the actual effect of antagonizing the newcomers, and driving a wedge between the old, native-born community and the new German residents. After a year's attempt to curtail the flow of liquor in the city--by stopping the sale of new licenses and the refusal to renew old ones--the temperance impulse subsided. In 1841 the community saw the futility and divisiveness of such a venture, and decisively defeated the temperance Councilmen. From this point on, while Cincinnatians continued to support government efforts to improve and encourage the general welfare of the community, there were no more serious efforts to restrict or oppose the rights of any particular group of citizens. Harmony and freedom were thereby insured, at the expense of possible improvement and social control.[39]

## G. A Boundless Future

Already the "Queen City of the West"--the sixth largest city in the United States, the great commercial and manufacturing center of the Ohio Valley, and the home of nearly fifty thousand souls--Cincinnati's success during the 1830's only whetted citizens' appetites

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[39]Cincinnati Gazette, April 10, 1840; Cincinnati Republican April 7, 1841.

for greater triumphs. It seemed, one orator declared, that there was a "magical agency" which was guiding the city's dramatic development. Years of continued growth and prosperity gave the community a sense of legitimacy and momentum which encouraged her boosters and admirers to extravagant claims for the future. As the country developed, and the population spread across the entire continent, Cincinnati could not help but become the largest city in America. With the gradual growth and distribution of the population, Cincinnati would become the commercial, manufacturing, and cultural center of the country. Once people realized her primacy, it was inevitable that the capital of the federal government should move to the new Colussus of the West. And, beyond this, there was no reason why Cincinnati should not become the largest city in the world.[40]

Like most Americans during the Jacksonian Period, the people of Cincinnati ferverently believed in the infinite possibilities for economic, social, and cultural improvement which the new world provided, and they were impatient to realize them in their own lifetime. Success, therefore, was not an end in itself, but only an impetus to further success. The remarkable

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[40]Jacob Burnet, The Annual Address, Delivered Before the Cincinnati Astronomical Society, June 3, 1844 (Cincinnati, 1844), 3.

achievements for which Cincinnatians constantly congratulated themselves were no cause for complacency; instead, they only fed the fires of ambition, provided the fuel for the accelerating drive to "press forward in the development of these destinies which cannot be contemplated without rapture."[41]

Newspapers carried a running box score on the facts and figures that proved that Cincinnati's population and economy were increasing faster than those of its competitors. The city was seldom mentioned without the addition of a flattering epithet such as "the Wonderful," "Queen of the West," or "The Precocious Daughter of the West." Even Cincinnati's competitors recognized the city's widespread fame. In 1838, after reviewing Cincinnati's growth and achievements, a Cleveland newspaper assured readers that the story of this success had "a fame as extended as the broad south and west."[42]

The boundless confidence and euphoric optimism of Cincinnatians, "grotesque at time, great always," caused them to design plans for elaborate undertakings and to dream of impossible enterprises. Promoters planned railroads to the four corners of the country,

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[41]Cincinnati Commercial and Literary Gazette, August 4, 1838.

[42]Annals of Cleveland, XXI, Pt. I, 350.

a bridge (perhaps even a tunnel) to cross the Ohio River, and hotels and public palaces large enough to accommodate the entire Cincinnati population. The city's mechanics held an exhibition to demonstrate to the world "the ingenuity and skill of western artists," who could make surgical instruments and spinning machines, artificial eyes and fire engines, corsets and carriages. There was even talk, for a while of a machine rumored tt "cut down a forest, plow the ground where it grew, plant it, hoe it, and reap it." And if anyone doubted that such things were possible, Cincinnatians simply pointed to the long list of "impossible" projects which had succeeded in the past.[43]

Cincinnatians emphasized their material achievements and spoke of the future largely in terms of physical growth and the accumulation of wealth. This mercenary attitude reflected a basic premise of the community, that quantitative growth was more important than qualitative improvement, which was an inevitable but secondary by-product of the former. Education and the arts were encouraged for their utilitarian or ornamental value. The public school system was commended because of "the powerful indirect impulse [which] is

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[43]Cincinnati Commercial and Literary Gazette, February 7, 1835.

given to business," and for "the elevation of character which it creates." An artist like Hiram Powers was honored by his fellow citizens because of his international fame, which reflected favorably on the city. As "Algernon" complained in 1840, "a spirit of utility" dominated inCincinnati, "to the entire exclusion of almost every other principle of action."[44]

Considering the advantages of Cincinnati, and its marvelous accomplishment in the past fifty years, it seemed inevitable that this progress and prosperity would continue indefinitely, and that the city would soon become the largest city in the United States, the capital of the federal government, or, perhaps even the largest city in the world. In 1830 a new resident of the community predicted that Cincinnati would be the largest city in America within twenty years. Five years later, when Harriet Martineau arrived in Cincinnati, she found residents "already consulting as to where the Capital shall stand," and heard on good authority that the move would take place as soon as the great southern railroad opened. In 1838 there was a proposal in Congress to move the Capital to Cincinnati

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[44]Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, 260; Cincinnati Commercial, January 7, 1840.

immediately and thereby resolve the slavery controversy in the District of Columbia.[45]

By 1841 a local guidebook presented a detailed review of the arguments by an expert on the subject, J. W. Scott. Scott described in great detail the gradual settlement of the interior of the country and provided a statistical analysis proving that "an adaptation to internal trade--other things being equal--is worth nine times as much as an adaptation to foreign commerce." Having put down the futures of such Atlantic ports as New York, Philadelphia and Boston, Scott proceeded to determine the location of the future interior metropolis. By a complicated geographical analysis, establishing Cincinnati on a main line running through the center of the country from Baltimore to St. Louis, in the heart of the richest natural resources of the country, Scott concluded that "by the year of our Lord two thousand Cincinnati will be the greatest city in the world."[46]

Scott's analysis, based on the latest and most sophisticated theories of economics and geography,

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[45]New England Magazine, I (1830), 31; Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (Cincinnati, 1838), 240; Cincinnati Gazette, November 20, 1838; Weekly Messenger, July 24, 1843.

[46]Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, 275-89. For a good discussion of J. W. Scott and the evolution of his theory of "geographical determinism" see Charles

provided Cincinnatians with an expert opinion which corroborated their own assumptions of the city's brilliant future. For anyone who questioned the validity of Scott's prediction, there was always the sobering example of previous "impossible" predictions which had become realities within the short history of the city. As Charles Cist wrote, in recommendation of this unanswerable argument, "if the anticipations of J. W. Scott . . . be not fulfilled, it will be the first case of the kind, which has not been accomplished far beyond the measure, and far within the date, for which the calculations have been made." Several years later, in another review of the brilliant prospects of the Queen City, which predicted its future pre-eminence, a local editor confidently concluded: "There is nothing to prevent it; there is nothing that can prevent it."[47]

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Glaab, "Jessup W. Scott and a West of Cities" Ohio History, LXXIII (Winter, 1964), 3-13.

[47]Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, X-XL; Weekly Messenger, July 24, 1843.

## CHAPTER II

## CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION

The sound of her workmen in every street,
Is heard--and contentment we everywhere meet;
And each one is striving to get all he can;
For money, dear money's the making of man.

Tho some may be poor and some rich there may be,
Yet all are contented, and happy and free!

May each trade and profession join heart and hand;
To cherish the arts and keep peace in the land.
Each apprentice and journeyman join in the song,
And let the brisk chorus go bounding along.

Excerpts from "Rhymes to Suit the Times,"
The Cincinnati Directory for 1840
(Cincinnati, 1840), 478.

In June, 1840, Charles Cist began the United States Census of Cincinnati. Every day, for nearly five months, he trudged from door to door, visiting homes, shops, and factories collecting information on the backgrounds and activities of his fellow citizens. Sometimes, when it was hot, or he met an interesting informant, Cist sat down and listened to stories about the early days of the city and the changes which had occurred in recent years. Cist heard tales of great personal successes and failures, bitter condemnations and lavish praises of the Queen City, and many comments--both shrewd and crackpot--on the

character of the community. At the same time he formed his own impressions of the city and its people, testing generalizations and noting peculiarities, which made Cist the outstanding authority on Cincinnati of his day. By the end of the year Charles Cist had surveyed the entire city--over 12,000 households--8,500 recorded and tabulated his data in the large manuscript books which he sent to Washington, and then prepared his material for publication in a popular guide-book Cincinnati in 1841.

While he was taking the Census, Charles Cist sent periodic reports of his findings--both statistical data and personal impressions--to the local newspapers. These articles, which provided a detailed and informative account of Cincinnati's growth and present character, were closely followed in the community and widely reprinted abroad. They supplied accurate, authoritative ammunition to support the city's claims of spectacular growth and progress. As the ward by ward reports came in citizens speculated on the final population figure for the city. In 1830 the city boasted 24,831 residents, better than double the 1820 figure, but few Cincinnatians expected the pattern to continue. Most estimates predicted a population of 40,000 or possibly as high as 45,000. Cist's announcement in November that the official population of Cincinnati was 46,382, therefore, came as a considerable

surprise and became the source or renewed community pride and promises of further growth.[1]

After he finished the Census Charles Cist received numerous requests for this material in book form, and he collected the census data, the stories he heard, and his own impressions of the city, filled this out with information on the history of the city, its climate, topography, economy, and institutions, and published the guide-book, Cincinnati in 1841. Similar to Drake and Mansfield's, Cincinnati in 1826, and the numerous other guide-books put out by other cities, Cist's volume was intended to publicize the progress and prosperity of the Queen City, and to promote its further growth. Many copies were printed, over 400 copies were sent to Europe alone, and Cist looked back with considerable pride, later, on its contribution to the growth of Cincinnati during its period of greatest progress and prosperity.[2]

No less important, the publication of Cincinnati in 1841 launched Cist on a career as the unofficial booster, chronicler, and statistician of the Queen City during the

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[1]In fact, the 1840 Census figure did not double the 1830 population, but Cist argued that some Cincinnatians were now living outside the corporation limits of the city, in the nearby townships, and that if their numbers be included in the actual population of Cincinnati the figure would reach 60,000. Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, 35.

[2]Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1851 (Cincinnati, 1851), Preface; See also Cist, 1841, Preface and 233-6.

two decades preceding the Civil War. Born in 1792, the son of a prominent Philadelphia printer, Cist moved west after the War of 1812, working at an assortment of different jobs in Harmonie, Pittsburgh, Zelienople, and Camprun, Pennsylvania, acquiring a wife and five children in the process, and then settling down in Cincinnati in 1827. He engaged in various local businesses here, and became involved in Democratic politics. During the 1830's Cist was a strong supporter of the Jackson Administration in the city and served as a city councilman from the Second Ward for several years. According to newspaper accounts in 1836, when he momentarily lost $100,000 entrusted to him, Cist was an active, responsible, and well-respected member of the Cincinnati community.[3]

In 1840, partly in return for his political services to the party, and partly as an effort to assist him during some personal financial difficulties, the Van Buren administration appointed Charles Cist as the official census-taker in Cincinnati. Although there were no special qualifications or training for the job, which was often done in a cursory manner by party retainers, Cist proved to be an unusually capable and conscientious census-taker.

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[3]The best short biography of Charles Cist is in the Dictionary of American Biography. Additional information, including the story of Cist's $100,000 escapade, are presented in a typescript summary of his life, by Frank Cist, sent the author on January 27, 1967, and deposited with the Cincinnati Historical Society.

He had had some experience, taking the 1820 Census in Harmonie, Pennsylvania, and soon demonstrated a natural talent for surveying and statistical work. According to his reports, he was particularly careful to visit every household in the congested city, and his records reveal his accurate reporting and tabulation of the data. Although it was long, hot, hard work--personally surveying a city of nearly 50,000 residents--Cist evidently enjoyed the work, and repeated the job every few years, despite the city's burgeoning size.[4]

Following the publication of Cincinnati in 1841, Cist compiled and published a city directory in 1842 and 1843, and then started his own newspaper, Cist's Weekly Advertiser. This four-page weekly, and a short lived daily edition, offered commercial and financial news, antiquarian stories and documents, and the statistical data on population and building developments which Cist collected in his periodic surveys of the city. An indefatigable observer and writer, with a clear, easy, and unaffected style, Cist did most of the reporting and writing for the paper himself during its nine-year existence. He also managed to publish some of the newspaper material in book form, in the two-volume Miscellany, and brought out new editions of his guide-book, with major revisions, in

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[4]There is a microfilm copy of the MSS Census of Hamilton County in the Cincinnati Historical Society.

1851 and 1859. Then, probably because of old age and perhaps because of some disillusionment with the city's development in the late 1850's, Cist retired to his farm in College Hill, a neighboring village, where he died in 1868.[5]

## A. Elements of Diversity and Toleration

In the course of his survey in the summer of 1840 two things particularly impressed Charles Cist about Cincinnati: the eclectic composition of the local population and the prevailing toleration of the diverse groups, classes, and sects which made up the community. There were residents here from every state in the Union and from most European countries, from England to the Isle of Man. There was such a variety of occupations, from attorneys to xylographic printers, that Cist found it impossible to enumerate them individually. There were 42 churches in the community, representing not only the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, and Catholic faiths, but also less prominent denominations such as the Universalists, Jews, and Friends. The city had six daily newspapers and

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[5]The impression that Cist became disillusioned by 1859 is based on the general change in the tone and character in the newspaper the last few years, and in the last guide-book, Cincinnati in 1859. Significantly, this volume looked more to the past than the future, with an extensive section on "Early Annals" and no essay on the city's "Progress and Prospects," as there had been in 1841 and 1851.

more than 20 foreign language, religious, professional, and philanthropic journals which offered Cincinnatians a wide variety of local interest.

At this time Cincinnati was one of the first large urban melting pots, with a cosmopolitan population which equaled, if not exceeded, that of the larger Eastern centers of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. No other city of comparable size had such a large proportion of immigrants, both from the eastern United States and from Europe, and few could boast such a variety of occupations, churches, and journals of opinion relative to the size of the local population. A young New Englander, who arrived in the Queen City in 1839, noted the various elements in the community:[6]

> Of the people I can truly say they are a motley crew. We have Germans and Dutch, English and French,

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[6]"A Correspondent's View of Cincinnati in 1839," edited by Larry Gara, Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio Quarterly, IX (1951), 134-5. There is no comprehensive, uniform data on the proportion of immigrants in the major cities in 1840, but it seems clear that the new western cities, undoubtedly, had the largest proportion of migrants, and Cincinnati was at the time indisputable the largest of the western cities. In 1840 only 10% of the adult males in Cincinnati had been born in Ohio. By 1850, when such data is available from the U.S. Census, at least concerning the foreign-born immigrant population of the major cities, Cincinnati had 60,558 residents born in the United States and 54,420 born elsewhere. Only Chicago (13,693-15,682), Milwaukee (7,181-12,782), and St. Louis (36,529-38,397) and New York (277,732-235,733) had immigrant populations as large, proportionally, as Cincinnati. Compendium of the United States Census for 1850 (Washington, 1854), 399.

> Irish and Scotch, Yankess and Buckeyes, and the lordly Virginian and the chivalrous Kentuck . . . all with their peculiar habits . . . In such a mass of population you will of course expect to find religious denominations as various as the clans of which it is composed and accordingly we have our Catholics and Covenaters [sic], Campbellites and Dissenters, Reformed Dutch and Low Germans, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists, Swedenbourgians and Quakers, and a host of others the names of which I do not even remember.

The effect of this polyglot population composition was a good deal of surface friction but a basic acceptance of the variety. Everyone brought with him his own "peculiar habits and sectional prejudices," this observer noted, and denominational, professional, and political controversies broke out periodically, which divided the participants into bitter adversaries and entertained the rest of the citizenry with their excesses. But most people were concerned with the more mundane business of earning a living, raising a family, and seeking out of the ordinary pleasures of the day. Despite several ugly anti-Catholic incidents in the late 1830's, and some fear among the native-born residents in 1840 at the news of the surprisingly large proportion of Germans in the city, the polyglot population remained remarkably peaceful. Charles Cist expressed the prevailing view when he wrote that the newcomers were "good neighbors and good citizens"

who "are becoming one people with ourselves."[7]

In 1840, therefore, the Queen City welcomed the flood of newcomers, particularly Germans, who swelled the local population, and made light of their differences in background and habit. This does not mean that Cincinnatians failed to notice the difference between the civil, supercilious Yankee, the generous, gregarious Virginian, and the dull, plodding Dutchman, but these differences were more the source of amusement and local color than of fear, hostility, or contempt. Calvin Stowe, a recognized authority of the Germans in Cincinnati, assured the community that the newcomers would not only lose their desire to "set at defiance or undermine existing institutions, or engage in popular commotions" once they had settled down in their new homes, but that "their deep and quiet enthusiasm, a speculative tendency, a romance . . . would mingle with and modify our too strong earthliness of disposition, and our too eager pursuit of immediate utility." As another community leader put it: "mixture tends to make man less bigoted, and more catholic in

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[7]Cincinnati Advertiser and Journal, August 5, 1840. For a good discussion of nativism in this period which, necessarily but unfortunately, stresses the incidents of discord at the expense of the prevailing periods of relative harmony, see William Baughin, "Nativism in Cincinnati Before the Civil War" (University of Cincinnati M.A. Thesis, 1963), especially Ch. I and II.

spirit."[8]

This prevailing liberal attitude, which would turn into one of increasing tension and antagonism by mid-century, as the German numbers and influence steadily increased, was the result of several factors. This toleration was partially the result of the new and fragmented character of the population in 1840, when no group had a clear majority and most people had not settled long enough to have established their identity with a particular group in the community or to consolidate their antagonism against any single element in the society. As a city of newcomers, one editor remarked, with as much resignation as approval:[9]

> Necessity compels us to lay aside sectional, political, and religious differences--and to unit as brothers--we are taken away from the local prejudices and accidental influences which at home would have bound us down to one eternal routine of thought and action, and brought into contact with strange beings in a strange land--we find them human beings like ourselves, torn like us from the sphere of early associations; we need their society, their friendship, their confidence, their help; at any rate, we are forced to endure their company--and like reasonable folk, we make the best of it.

The cynicism of this remark, however accurately it expressed the attitude of some individuals, failed to

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[8] Transactions of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Western Literary Institute and College of Professional Teachers (Cincinnati, 1836), 80. James H. Perkins, Memoirs and Writings, II, 425.

[9] Cincinnati Commercial and Literary Gazette, January 31, 1835.

account for another, equally important influence: the spirit of "Buckeyeism." Cincinnatians strongly believed, as a part of the Semi-Centennial spirit of expansive optimism, that the climate and conditions of the new western community would dissolve any harmful ingredients from the newcomers' backgrounds and, at the same time, nurture their special contributions to the local society. It was this confidence in the power of the community to acculturate and assimilate the immigrants, as much as the lack of established cliques and antagonisms, which contributed to the degree of toleration existing in Cincinnati in 1840.

## B. Nativity

In 1840 Cincinnati was a city of immigrants. Less than 10% of the men in the community had been born in Ohio, Cist reported in Cincinnati in 1841. Instead, "every state in the Union and almost every part of Europe are represented in the population of the city." This population was nearly evenly divided between native-born Americans and emigrants from Europe. Of the native-born residents, roughly a fifth came from New England, a fifth from New York and New Jersey, a fifth from the Border and Southern states, a fifth from neighboring Pennsylvania, and a fifth had been born in Ohio and the other western states.

TABLE I

NATIVITY OF CINCINNATI POPULATION IN 1840

| Nativity | Total Population (Adult White Males) | | Shaffer Sample | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ohio | 1,112 | ( 9%) | 51 | (15%) |
| Western States | 80 | ( 1%) | 1 | ( 0%) |
| New England | 990 | ( 8%) | 35 | (10%) |
| New York-New Jersey | 1,467 | (12%) | 44 | (13%) |
| Pennsylvania | 1,210 | (11%) | 34 | (10%) |
| Border States | 1,034 | ( 9%) | 31 | (10%) |
| Southern States | 633 | ( 5%) | 16 | ( 5%) |
| England-Scotland | 1,230 | (10%) | 29 | ( 9%) |
| Ireland | 743 | ( 6%) | 23 | ( 7%) |
| Germany | 3,440 | (28%) | 63 | ( 7%) |
| Other-None | 285 | ( 2%) | 6 | ( 2%) |
| Total | 12,292 | (100%) | 334 | (100%) |

According to several recollections of the community at this time, local society was divided into two fairly distinct groups, the "Yankees," and the "Buckeyes." The "Yankees" were a "more or less intellectual and artistic set [who lived] along Fourth Street." Their entertainments were "vastly simpler and cleverer and pleasanter. . . . In this circle there was more home music, more extemporized dancing, and lighter suppers; the clothes were simpler and the talk merrier." The center of this society and the epitome of its interests was the Semi-Colon Club. The "Buckeyes"--a loosely-defined group of emigrants from the middle and southern states, as well as those born in

Ohio--were "a more or less fashionable set on Broadway and east of it." Here there was more interest in horse-racing, sumptuous dinners, and ostentatious display. The differences between the "east End" and "west End" circles changed over time, and many people circulated in both sets, but as a prominent Unitarian minister recalled, "like people drew to their kind, and roughly the camps kept apart."[10]

It was the "Yankees" in particular who gave the community its distinctive personality. As Michael Chevalier wrote, after a visit in 1835:

> The founders of Cincinnati brought with them nothing but sharp-sighted, wakeful, untiring industry, the only patrimony which they inherited from their New England Fathers, and other inhabitants have scrupulously followed their example and adopted their habits.

Life here was "more like Boston than any other city in the United States" another visitor to the Queen City wrote. "Conversation was chiefly of a literary cast--free, easy, entertaining, instructive without restraint and without formality." Although the "Yankees" comprised less than 10% of the total population of the city, they had an influential, strategic position in Cincinnati. "The great passport to society and its emoluments," wrote a resident some years later, "was to be from New England or of

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[10] Owl's Nest: A Tribute to Sara Elliott Perkins by Her Granddaughter Edith Perkins Cunningham (n. p., 1907), 68.

New England birth."[11]

The roster of sons of New England who cast their fortune with the western metropolis includes the names of many of its finest and most renowned citizens. Men like the Guilfords and the Foote brothers, leaders in local commerce, professionals like James H. Perkins, Samuel Lewis, Salmon P. Chase, and Edward P. Mansfield, and ministers like William H. Channing and Lyman Beecher, all brought with them a sense of Yankee superiority and industry, along with the ability to make them leaders in any society.

Emigrants from the middle and southern states, who tended to be thrown together in the general category of "Buckeyes," included a good number of outstanding Cincinnatians also. Most of the original settlers came from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, along with such prominent early residents as Nicholas Longworth and the Burnets from New Jersey, Daniel Drake and Ormsby M. Mitchel from Kentucky, Rev. Joshua Wilson and Charles Hammond from Virginia, and Charles Cist and James McCandless from the Keystone State. They were, according to local legend, the men who founded most of the financial and commercial

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[11]Michael Chevalier, Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States (Boston, 1839), 200-1; "An Eastern Doctor Visits Cincinnati," ed. by Phillip Jordan, Ohio State Medical Journal, XLI (1945), 1120; Alfred G. W. Carter, The Old Court-House (Cincinnati, 1880), 120.

operations in the city, relying on personal contacts and political favors to insure their success. While the "Buckeyes" and the "Yankees" often fought over sectional differences of major and minor import, they generally joined hands in politics, local government, and civic improvement efforts, and shared the profits of the city's progress and prosperity.

Despite its close geographical proximity to the south, along the Ohio River which later divided the states during the Civil War, Cincinnati was relatively free from any divisive southern influence in her internal affairs. Of the adult population in 1840, only 5% came from southern states--largely from Virginia--and 9% came from the border states of Maryland, Delaware, and Kentucky. A continuing southern influence could be seen in the split between the New School and Old School Presbyterians during the 1830's, and in the enthusiasm of some residents for southern recreations such as horse-racing, but not particularly in the areas of politics or race relations. It was residents from all sections, particularly those who traded with the south, who agitated for the removal of the Negroes in 1829, and against the Abolitionist press of James G. Birney in 1837. Free Negroes in the city had more to fear from "raiders" from across the Ohio River than from any local residents with southern sympathies. Later, when Cincinnati's prosperity became more dependent on trade with the lower Mississippi Valley, southern sympathies increased, but in 1840 they

were hardly evident in the community.[12]

As the Queen City grew, the native-born proportion of the population gradually decreased. Between 1825 and 1840 the proportion of men from New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in the total population decreased by nearly a half--from 58% to 33%--while the proportion from the Border and Southern states remained fairly constant. The big increase during this period was in the number of residents born in Ohio and Germany: the former group increased from 2.5% in 1825 to 10% in 1840, while the latter group increased from 2.5% to 28%.

Indeed, what was unique about Cincinnati in 1840 was the large proportion of foreign-born residents, particularly the Germans. Since the founding of the city there had been a fair proportion of emigrants from Europe in the local population, many of whom made important contributions and became prominent members of the community. But these foreign-born residents came largely from the British Isles: in 1825 of the 20% foreign-born population in Cincinnati, 10.5% came from England, Scotland, and Wales; 7% from Ireland; and 2.5% from Germany.

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[12]Bernard E. McClellan, "Cincinnati's Response to Abolitionism, 1835-1845" (University of Cincinnati M.A. Thesis, 1963), 65-73.

This German contingent, although small, included a number of outstanding pioneers, such as Martin Baum, the founder of the Miami Export Bank, Albert Stein, the builder of the Cincinnati Water Works, and David Ziegler, the first mayor of the town. These Germans set the tone for the other immigrants from their homeland; conservative politically, frugal economically and relatively well-off, these "Zwanzigers" were careful to soften their native customs and attachments so as not to offend their native-born neighbors. The result was that they fit easily into the total community, were respected and accepted as friends and citizens, and gave Cincinnatians little reason for concern over the arrival of more and more Germans during the late 1830's.[13]

By 1840, however, the proportion of foreign-born men in the total population of Cincinnati had more than doubled--from 20% in 1825 to 48% in 1840--largely as the result of the large influx of Germans in the late 1830's. Cist found more than 14,000 Germans living in the city, including 3,440 men, who represented 28% of the total adult white male population. This increase in the size and proportion of the German group in the total population--from 2.5% in 1825 to 28% in 1840--was largely the result of difficulties in the homeland during the 1830's

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[13]Henry and Kate Ford, History of Cincinnati, Ohio (Cleveland, 1881), 127-46.

and the favorable reports about Cincinnati which the "Zwanzigers" sent to their German friends and relatives.

Consequently, during the 1830's, particularly during the last five years of the decade, over 10,000 German emigrants arrived in the Queen City. Although better off financially, and more acceptable socially and politically than the later waves of immigrants who came to America, these "Dreissigern" seemed very different to most Cincinnatians than the "Zwanzigers" they had come to know and accept. Not surprisingly, the new German arrivals generally did not speak English and tended to live and associate with their own kind, whom they could understand and whose habits were more similar to their own. This natural tendency of the "Dreissigern" to cluster together resulted in an unfortunate lack of communication between the new immigrants and natives, which led to some suspicion and fear, and a magnified impression of the size and peculiarity of this group.

And yet, before 1840, this separation of the German immigrants from the rest of the Cincinnati community, and the resulting tensions and fears, were not sufficiently manifest to produce any overt collision. Cincinnatians welcomed the assistance of the Germans in the work of building the city, readily accepted their money in payment for household goods, food, and rent, and appreciated their contribution to the rapid progress

and prosperity of the city. Although they seemed "radical" compared to the "Zwanzigers," and had a strong admiration and affection for President Andrew Jackson, the majority of these "Dreissigern" had not yet registered as voters, or consolidated their group vote to a degree which was evident in the elections before 1840. Similarly, although the "Dreissigerns" organized certain German activities, such as a singing group and militia company, and started their own newspaper, the Volksblatt, a Democratic journal, these organizations were not yet considered a threat to the prevailing institutions and order of the community. As long as the Germans worked hard, were law-abiding, and did not threaten the authority and control of the native-born citizens, their separateness, their peculiar customs, and their alleged excesses in drinking and singing were accepted by the rest of the community.[14]

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[14] Significantly, the Shaffer Cincinnati Directory for 1840 included less than 20% German-born residents, compared with the 1840 Census, which found 28% Germans in the total adult white male population. This omission of Germans was undoubtedly due to their recent arrival, but also to their relative isolation within the German community and the difficulties of natives in finding them, or even learning their names. Cist, in the Preface of this Cincinnati in 1851, relates the story of a German who bought a Directory (for 1842 or 1843) only to find his name not included. "How do people know where he kits his sour krout?" the indignant German demanded. Such an omission, multiplied hundreds of times, undoubtedly reflected as well as contributed to the lack of communication between the native and immigrant groups.

## C. Occupation

"Cheerful, thriving, and animated" were the words Charles Dickens used to describe Cincinnati after his visit in 1842. There was a dynamic atmosphere in the community which impressed even the most superficial observer. "You would suppose, to see our bustling," wrote Timothy Walker to his eastern friends, "that we had been forewarned that we had not six hours to live, and were yet to begin the settlement of our worldly affairs." The hustle-bustle of the waterfront, the scurrying clerks of the commercial houses, the agitation of the peddlers and traders in the outdoor markets all suggested that Cincinnati was, as one widely-traveled visitor remarked, "one of the most industrious places in the world." According to the 1840 Census there were 14,544 men engaged in a profession, commerce, navigation, or a mechanical trade.[15]

In 1840, 377 men or less than 3% of the total working force were engaged in some profession. There were 94 physicians, 96 attorneys, 72 clergymen, and a lesser number of teachers, editors, artists, etc. The numbers were more than adequate--a condition which

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[15]Dickens, American Notes (Boston, 1842), 199; New England Magazine, I (1830), 30' Thomas Nichols, Forty Years of American Life (London, 1854), 150-1; Cist, 1841, 42-3.

existed from the early years of the city through mid-century--which resulted in considerable competition by members of the profession for the available business. Although admission to the ranks of the professions was relatively easy--a short apprenticeship in the office of a recognized man prepared many of the attorneys and physicians instead of a college education--it was often difficult to raise the money necessary to open an office or to gain the connections which led to clients. For every young man who succeeded, like Timothy Walker, there were several, like James Taylor, who arrived in the Queen City with great confidence and high hopes, but after a year or so became disgusted or defeated by the competition of the big city. Consequently there were two fairly distinct layers of professionals: the successful, self-supporting members and the rest, who earned a living from other work, or from an independent income, or lived frugally from day-to-day.[16]

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[16]For a good description of the experiences of professionals, particularly lawyers, and the difficulties in getting a start, see Peter Zinn Diary, Cincinnati Historical Society; and James Wickes Taylor, A Choice Nook of Memory: The Diary of a Cincinnati Clerk, 1842-1844, edited by James Taylor Dunn (Columbus, 1950). For the careers of Cincinnati's more successful lawyers during this period, see Alfred G. W. Carter, The Old Court-House (Cincinnati, 1880); Robert B. Warden, The Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati, 1874), 182-231; Lewis A. Leonard, Life of Alphonso Taft (New York, 1920), 35-45; and for conditions by mid-century, The Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes, edited by Charles R. Williams (Columbus, 1922), Vol. I.

TABLE 2

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF CINCINNATI LABOR FORCE IN 1840

| Occupational Category | 1840 Census | Shaffer Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Professionals | 377 ( 3%) | 13 ( 4%) |
| Commerce | 2,044 (14%) | 84 (25%) |
| Merchants and Bankers | -------- | 14 ( 4%) |
| Shopkeepers, etc. | -------- | 41 (12%) |
| Public and Private Officials | -------- | 5 ( 2%) |
| Clerks | -------- | 24 ( 7%) |
| Manufacturing and Mechanical Trades | 10,287 (70%) | 194 (60%) |
| Manufacturers | -------- | 16 ( 5%) |
| Iron Metal Workers | 1,711 (12%) | 33 (10%) |
| Clothing-Leather | 2,060 (13%) | 32 (10%) |
| Wood Products | 1,557 (10%) | 18 ( 6%) |
| Building Trades | 1,568 (11%) | 41 (13%) |
| Food Products | 1,567 (11%) | -------- |
| Paper Products | 512 ( 4%) | 6 ( 2%) |
| Instrument Makers, etc. | 1,672 (11%) | 14 ( 4%) |
| Laborers | -------- | 23 ( 7%) |
| Draymen | -------- | 11 ( 3%) |
| River Navigation | 1,748 (12%) | -------- |
| Agriculture | 80 ( 1%) | -------- |
| None Listed | -------- | 30 (10%) |
| Total | 14,536 (100%) | 334 (100%) |

Because of the general lack of long, strict training, and the intense competition among colleagues, most attorneys, and to a lesser extent physicians, editors, and even clergymen, often engaged in various activities outside their chosen profession. Land speculation was the most popular activity, but business and farming became profitable side-lines for some of these men. Politics and appointed political offices attracted others. Among the careers attesting to such diversity were those of Daniel Drake, writer, teacher, and local booster as well as physician; of Nicholas Longworth, land speculator, and horticulturist as well as attorney; and of William Burke, postmaster and Methodist minister.

In 1840 there were 2,044 men engaged in commercial activities in Cincinnati. As in the professional group, the men in commerce can be divided into two distinct categories: the large-scale, wholesale merchants--who comprised only a fraction of the total number, but were its most active and influential members--and the much larger group of men who owned small retail stores. Here, as in the professions, success and prominence depended on contacts and ability as well as family position and training. The perils of commercial enterprise were as great as the rewards--Charles Cist found that only four of the more than 400 men in commerce in 1828 were still in

business in 1843--and the leading merchants were truly an aristocracy of achievement, having proved their mettle in the uncertain fires of transportation calamities, financial fluctuations, and merchandising competition.[17]

Cincinnati's merchant princes comprised a small, select group of no more than a hundred men. Those who ran the large commercial houses traded throughout the west and southwest. They dealt in produce, dry goods, hardware, as well as the raw agricultural and mineral products, and, indirectly, in credit. In the scope and style of their activities they differed completely from the small retail store keepers. Success depended on connections and credit extensive enough to buy in the east and sell in the southern and western states. It depended on a thorough knowledge of merchandise and customers, and an ability to make the right gambles in purchasing, pricing, and shipping their goods. Every day these free-wheeling commercial entrepreneurs made decisions which could bring ruin or fabulous fortunes.

The retailers, the large majority of the commercial group, who had small groceries, tobacco shops,

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[17]The primacy of Cincinnati merchants in local life during the first fifty years of the city's life is indicated in Richard Wade, The Urban Frontier (Cambridge, 1959), 105-8; and documented more fully in Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1819-1838," passim.

taverns, hotels, and other stores where the local residents did their shopping, were generally members of the middle ranks of the local society. They often owned a little property--their store, over which they sometimes lived--and had most of their capital invested in their merchandise. Economically they were more closely tied to their local clientele than to the outside sources of their goods or credit, which gave them a quite limited, localistic frame of mind. Good customer relations were more important than a knowledge of national economic or political conditions, an understanding of the peculiar needs of their customers was more important than a mastery of the problems of credit or transportation, and sympathy and similarity to their neighbors was as necessary as business acumen. Tied down to their store, completely dependent on their customers, susceptible to the slightest changes in local conditions, these shopkeepers really had more in common with the skilled mechanics and artisans in the community than the merchant princes.

In 1840, 10,287 men, or better than 70% of the total Cincinnati working force were engaged in "manufacturing and the mechanical arts." At this time most men still worked in small shops--employee alongside employer--and no attempt was made to distinguish the workers from the owners in the 1840 Census. Similarly,

most of the work was not yet sufficiently specialized to justify classification by skill, and no distinction was made between a skilled artisan and a common laborer. Instead, these men were classified according to the materials in which they worked: 1,557 in the manufacture of wooden products; 1,568 in the building trades; 1,711 in iron and metal products; 1,567 in food processing; 888 in leather goods; 994 in clothing shops; and the remaining number in assorted other trades.[18]

Still, there were some fairly obvious distinctions within the ranks of the mechanics. In 1840 there were already a few large manufacturers: John W. Coleman in pork-packing, James McCandless, an iron founder, George C. Miller, a coach-maker, and Miles Greenwood, whose Eagle Foundry was one of the largest factories in the city. These men sometimes, as with Greenwood, started out as working mechanics, but by the time they were running large-scale operations they had more in common with the merchant princes than the mechanics who worked for them. Others, like Coleman, started out in commerce or finance, and knew little about the running of the factories, which they left to managers, but concentrated instead on efficiency and profits. These men felt more at home in the Chamber of Commerce than the Ohio

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[18] Cist, 1841, 54-8. The Shaffer Directory, however, does distinguish the particular occupations, and will be used in the following analysis.

Mechanics Institute. In background, interests, and outlook, these men had more in common with the commercial and professional elite than with the majority of the local mechanics.

Among the working mechanics there were three different levels: the master mechanics, most of whom owned the shop or business in which they worked; the skilled journeymen, whose security rested on their expertise and the demand for their skills; and the large majority of remaining unskilled workers, whose employment fluctuated with the uncertain conditions of production and consumption. Although this large group of mechanics--numbering over 10,000 men--differed greatly in their training, income, and security, they had a strong sense of common identity, and distrust of the remaining "non-productive" workers in society. They were known in the community collectively as "the bone and sinew" of the city, a term which combined both the gratitude and condescension of the civic spokesmen.[19]

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[19]Discussion of the differences and divisions within this total group of working mechanics--comprising approximately 60% of the Cincinnati working force in 1840--is imprecise and difficult. The most obvious divisions--those of master mechanic, journeymen, apprentice, and unskilled laborer--were not recorded in the city directories or census; information on the character of the products and the number of workers involved is available in the aggregate, but does not indicate the variety of worker specialization and status within that particular industry. Dictionaries of occupations for

During the 1830's there was a "Trades' Union Society" which was organized for "the consideration of their rights and privileges" of Queen City workers and to present a solid front against their employers, "the Crafty classes." The society represented cabinet-makers, coopers, cordwainers, curriers, hatters, plane makers, printers, saddlers, harness makers, tin plate workers and tailors. Members paid monthly dues of 6-1/4 cents, which went into a strike benefit fund. A Central Council decided on and ran the strikes, paid $5.00 toward travel expenses of members who wished to leave the city during a strike, and made sure that there was no "scabbing." The "General Trades Union" was aided in its efforts to develop labor solidarity in Cincinnati by the Workingman's Friend, which argued that unions were not a foreign conspiracy, that combination for mutual improvement was a legitimate and time-honored American tradition, and that laborers should work to better themselves through education and political participation. Despite strong opposition from the conservative press, pulpit, and civic leaders, the union and its editorial ally held on for several years.[20]

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the late nineteenth and twentieth century are unsatisfactory, since the nature and status of many jobs changed greatly over the period.

[20]For a good, thorough discussion of the "General Trades Union" and the Working Man's Friend, see Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838," 91-8.

During the 1840's there was revived interest in the organization of the city's workers to improve their conditions and stature in the community. In 1842 some mechanics in the Third and Fourth Wards, along the waterfront, organized a "Working Man's Party" to run candidates in the spring municipal election. Led by David Snellbaker, a cooper, David Griffey, a blacksmith, and Lewis Shalley, a carpenter, the party had little success in the election but helped stimulate interest in other areas of labor agitation. The following two years there were a series of strikes by mechanics, particularly in the building trades, which gained members higher wages.

This agitation, however, should not obscure the fact that the condition of Cincinnati's mechanics were generally better than that of workers elsewhere. Usually there was plenty of work, wages were good, and the degrading working conditions of large mass-production factories was not yet prevalent. "The style of living of workingmen here is superior to anything I have hitherto seen," an English weaver declared, after working in Cincinnati for a year. Wages ran from $7.00 to $14.00 a week, and a single man could get a good board and lodging for $2.50 a week. For men with families, a newspaper reported in 1842, there was always "plenty to eat and drink, and a plain but beautiful and well situated house and lot were the certain wages of some two

or three years' industry." Workers referred familiarly to their employers as "Boss" while they, in return, answered their employees with "Yes sir" and "No sir."[21]

Among the total group of mechanics, however, there were great differences in wealth, security, and standing in the community. A few, like David Griffey, had some property, held an office in an important organization like the Ohio Mechanics Institute, and participated in local affairs actively and vociferously. Others, like Oliver Lovell, who had a sign-painting shop in the Flatiron District, had been in the community for decades, building up a steady clientele and solid reputation, investing in real estate on the side, assuming the responsibilities and honors which went with civic positions, such as trustee of the Woodward College, and ward delegate to the Whig state convention. The radical Griffey and the conservative Lowell both represented the attitudes and aspirations of the city's workers, but their careers were clearly exceptional.

Finally, there were in 1840 1,756 men who were engaged in "navigation," men who worked in various capacities on the river and were, as such, transients.

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[21]William Thomson, A Tradesman's Travels in the United States and Canada in the Years, 1840, 1841 and 1842 (Edinburgh, 1842), cited in Alvin Harlow, The Serene Cincinnatians (New York, 1950), 75-6; Cincinnati Republican, March 3, 1842; Cincinnati Atlas, December 6, 1843.

These men comprised the lowest and most disreputable group in the community, living in the waterfront wards, carousing in the nearby coffee-houses and brothels, and disrupting order periodically with their fights and riots. Because of their transitory residence in the community, and their general disregard for the community order and its activities, these rivermen can be considered as living outside the effective "community" in 1840.

## D. Wealth

In 1840 James H. Perkins published a series of articles in the Cincinnati Gazette "Life in Cincinnati in 1840." In seven different scenes, based on his experience as City Missionary, Perkins described the "varieties of life which now, at this hour, have their being in this city." Going on the assumption that "few of us know how our neighbors live," Perkins hoped to acquaint his fellow-citizens with the facts of life in Cincinnati, and thereby "put off prejudice and error, and acquire in their stead liberality and wisdom." Despite this rather overblown introduction, and the rhetorical excesses of his prose style, Perkins presented a valuable and apparently accurate picture of the extremes of poverty and wealth, depravity and virtue which existed in the local society.

In the First Scene, a room twelve by eight feet, a mother and her five children, abandoned by the father, face starvation and freezing. Despite every effort, and an "honest, industrious and religious" upbringing, the family has "no money, no meat, and no bread; a little lard, a few pounds of flour, a 'drawing' or two of coffee, without milk or sugar. With no friends, and their faith in God slipping, the temptations of whiskey and prostitution seem the only solution. In the Second Scene, a room twenty-three by eighteen feet, lavishly decorated, two women of local social prominence are lounging when the mother in the first scene calls, to ask payment for the washing she had done for them. She is turned away and accused of being a thief. In the next two scenes a family sits down to say grace before a modest but wholesome meal. Despite the injury of the father, a carpenter who hurt himself in a fall, the family is kept together and provided for by the mother, who has gone to work. In the Fifth Scene an ambitious young man, new to the city, turns to whiskey in his discouragement at not being able to find work. In the next scene the newcomer lies, drunk, cold, and hungry in the middle of the street, a soul lost to the evils of drink. In the final scene this young man has taken up with a lawless, consumptive riverman, gambling, drinking, and planning some act of violence. The reader is left at this point, with the fates of each

of the characters unresolved, but with the very clear message of the dangers of poverty and alcohol, as well as the irresponsibility of the idle rich. Both extremes were clearly present in Cincinnati in 1840.

Despite the overriding moral purpose of the articles, Perkins' experiences with the poor people of Cincinnati provided a factual basis for his stories. Perkins emphasized a side of life--the seamy side--which Cincinnatians tended to ignore. In the midst of general prosperity and plenty they sometimes forgot the plight of the poor deserted mother, the family with a disabled breadwinner or the unemployed youth in a strange city. Although not widespread, and less prevalent than in the older, eastern cities, such conditions were as much a part of Cincinnati life as the families with "two homes, both well staffed, and all the appendages of luxury and splendor in each" which Charles Cist encountered in his rounds of the city.[22]

Charles Cist often boasted that Cincinnati had a larger proportion of residents who owned their homes than any other major city in the United States. In Cincinnati in 1841 he wrote that "almost every man owns the house he occupies." This assertion, plus the well-publicized

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[22]These articles, which appeared first in the Cincinnati Gazette from March 11-24, are reprinted in The Memoir and Writing of James Handasyd Perkins, edited by William Henry Channing (Cincinnati, 1851), 499-508. The Cist description was reported in the Cincinnati Gazette, August 21, 1840.

contention that workingmen could buy a house after only a few years work in the city, suggests that a large number of the residents belonged within the ranks of the secure homeowners, with a modest competency. This impression is contradicted, however, by the evidence from the 1838 Tax List for Cincinnati. At this time roughly two-thirds of the taxable wealth in Cincinnati was real estate. Although the Tax List records only the value of property, and undoubtedly overlooks or under-estimates the wealth of the merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers, who had most of their money invested in merchandise and products, it is a fairly accurate index of the distribution of wealth in the community.[23]

In 1838 there were 2,559 taxpayers who owned property valuated at $4,935,500. Of these taxpayers, 674 were estates, companies, or groups of individuals; there were, therefore, 1,885 individual taxpayers. Of these 1,885 individuals, 1,012 were not listed in the Directory. Only 873 of the individual taxpayers, therefore, could be positively identified as residents of the city in 1840. The evidence suggests that a substantial proportion of the Cincinnati taxpayers were absentee landowners, and

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[23]Cist, 1841, 235; Cist, 1851, 73; in 1838 the Ohio tax rate was two mills. Real estate was valued at $80,000,000 and personal estate at $27,000,000. In the City the personal estate was undoubtedly a higher proportion of the total taxable property. Nelson W. Evans, A History of Taxation in Ohio (Cincinnati, 1903), 127-9.

that, combined with the estates, companies, and groups of individuals who owned property, they represented well over half of the local taxpayers. Only 873 of the approximately 8,500 householders listed in the Shaffer Directory owned any property in Cincinnati in 1838.[24]

The 1838 Tax List also contradicts the impression that wealth was fairly distributed in Cincinnati. Of the total number of 2,559 taxpayers, 178 owned property worth $5,000 or more, and can be considered as "investor-speculators," while 2,381 taxpayers were "homeowners" whose property was valued at $5,000 or less. These "investor-speculators," who represented just 7% of the Cincinnati taxpayers, controlled nearly half of the local real estate; the "homeowners," who comprised 93% of the taxpayers, owned the remaining half of the property in Cincinnati. Broken down into deciles, the top 10% of the property was owned by just seven taxpayers--Nicholas Longworth, the United States Bank, James Ferguson, George W. Jones, William Thomas, George N. Hunt, and the William Barr Estate--while the lowest 10% of the property was owned by 1,354 individuals.[25]

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[24]This evidence--that only 11% of the householders in Cincinnati in 1840 were taxpayers in 1838--is corroborated by the fact that only 38 individuals in the Shaffer Sample of 334 were taxpayers.

[25]This analysis is based on an analysis of the MSS Tax Records for Hamilton County (Cincinnati) for 1838 in the Ohio State Historical Society. This was the last year for which these records were available, which explains

TABLE 3

1838 TAX LIST

| | Number of Taxpayers | | | Value of Real Estate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Cumulative | % | Amount | Cumulative | % |
| Over $40,000.: | 7 | 7 | .3 | 487,220. | 487,220. | 10 |
| $20,000-40,000.: | 19 | 26 | .9 | 496,370. | 983,590. | 10 |
| $12,000-20,000.: | 33 | 59 | 1.3 | 502,540. | 1,486,130. | 10 |
| $ 8,000-12,000.: | 45 | 104 | 1.8 | 465,950. | 1,952,080. | 10 |
| $ 5,000.-8,000.: | 74 | 178 | .3 | 472,544. | 2,424,624. | 10 |
| $ 2,000.-5,000.: | 334 | 512 | 13 | 1,169,000. | 3,593,624. | 23 |
| $ 1,000.-2,000.: | 477 | 989 | 18 | 715,500. | 4,309,124. | 14 |
| $ 500.-1,000.: | 516 | 1505 | 20% | 387,000. | 4,696,124. | 7 |
| Under $ 500.: | 1054 | 2559 | 41 | 263,500. | 4,959,624. | 6 |

why the 1840 records were not used here. But there is no reason to believe that the general pattern of property ownership changed much during these two years, or that the delayed local recession from the 1837 Depression would have effected a significant number of estates differently in 1840 than in 1838. This impression is confirmed by a newspaper article on the 3,612 Property-holders in Cincinnati in 1844. It shows that:

This evidence suggests that Charles Cist and his contemporaries probably exaggerated the prevalence of property-ownership in the city and did not appreciate the degree of concentration of wealth among a small proportion of the population. There was, indeed, a definite elite of real estate owners in the community, who derived large incomes from rents as well as from the spiraling value of their property.[26]

Despite their considerable wealth, these large property holders did not exhibit the attitudes or trappings of an idle plutocracy. Many of them were actively involved in the economic development of the city, and participated in cultural, philanthropic, and social affairs. As Michael Chevalier noted several years earlier:

> There is . . . no such thing in Cincinnati as a class of men of leisure, living without any regular profession on their patrimony, or the wealth acquired by their own enterprise in early life.

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | man | held | property | worth | at least | $500,000. |
| 6 | men | " | " | " | " | $200,000. |
| 26 | men | " | " | " | " | $100,000. |
| 43 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 50,000. |
| 56 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 30,000. |
| 73 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 20,000. |
| 82 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 15,000. |
| 118 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 10,000. |
| 423 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 5,000. |
| 645 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 2,000. |
| 826 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 1,000. |
| 1,313 | men | " | " | " | " | $ 100. |

Cincinnati Business Directory for 1844 (Cincinnati, 1844), vi.

[26]For a discussion of the changes in the structure of the total group of taxpayers during the period before the Civil War, and the evolution of some of the large estates, see Chapter IV, Part E.

This generation of wealthy Cincinnatians, who had made their fortunes by their own hard work and enterprise, was strongly imbued with the Protestant ethic. Nicholas Longworth, acknowledged as the richest man in the city at this time, set the tone by his diligent horticultural efforts, his unpretentious living standards, and his sense of responsibility to the community. When the son of one of Cincinnati's wealthy elite returned from college in the east, planning to live the life of leaisure, he became, according to Chevalier, "wearied out with his solitary leisure, burdened with the weight of his own person, [and] could find no other relief than to open a fancy-goods shop." Cincinnatians had little use for the idle rich, and there was a strong sense of responsibility to apply one's efforts and abilities to promote the progress and prosperity of the city.[27]

## E. Religion

In July, 1840 a pious New York gentle-woman, Mrs. Eliza Steele, visited Cincinnati. Her main activity while in the city, according to her letters, was visiting the local churches; her most important observation abour the community was that "the state of religion and morals in this place are such as would please every lover of Jesus

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[27]Chevalier, Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States, 206.

and of good order." She praised the citizens for their support of over 30 churches and of none of the theatres and places of dissipation which made many of the larger cities of the United States and the Europe notorious. "The people keep the Sabbath and are respectable and happy," she wrote, concluding, "how pleasant it is to find this region, which so lately resounded with savage merriment or war cries, now echoing the truth as it is in Jesus."[28]

Friends and boosters of the Queen City generally agreed that the progress of morality and Christianity here was no less spectacular than that of the growth of the city's population and its economy. Soon after the first settlers arrived in the city, picked out and cleared their land, they organized a church. In January, 1792--after several years of informal meetings in private homes--over a hundred men signed a subscription list, pledging to help pay for the erection of the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of Main and Fourth Streets. By 1819, when the city was formally chartered, there were 10 houses of worship, one with an estimated 700 communicants. During the next two decades over 30 new churches were started in the city, so that in 1840 David Shaffer could boast in his Directory that "the number of

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[28]Eliza Steele, A Summer Journey in the West (New York, 1841), 244-6.

churches is greater, in proportion to the [number of] inhabitants, than any city in the United States."[29]

During the first half of the nineteenth century religion was an important part of community life, especially in the new western settlements. Certainly, the hand of God and the authority of the church were not as potent as they had been two centuries before. Much of the Puritan orthodoxy had been dissipated and diffused by the time of the American Revolution and then transformed, more recently, by the Revivalism that swept through the west. But the issues of church doctrine and polity, and the personalities of local ministers and leading members were still popular subjects of conversation and controversy, which sometimes rocked the community to its foundations. During the first fifty years Cincinnatians had weathered the storm of the Old School-New School controversy, in which two Presbyterian giants, Lyman Beecher and Joshua Wilson, clashed, as well as the debates of popular, prosaic Alexander Campbell with the infidel Robert Owens and the Catholic priest, J. B. Purcell.[30]

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[29]The Cincinnati Directory of 1819 (Cincinnati, 1819), 40-2; Shaffer, The Cincinnati Directory for 1840 (Cincinnati, 1839), 482.

[30]Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838," Chapter VI provides a thorough account of these religious controversies.

Although the church assiduously avoided direct involvement in civic affairs, the clergy exercised a formidable influence from the pulpit and through their social position in the community. Lyman Beecher, Joshua Wilson, the leading New and Old School Presbyterians in the city, Benjamin P. Aydelotte, the Episcopalian minister of Christ Church, S. W. Lynd and William H. Brisbane, Baptists, and the Catholic bishop, Rev. J. B. Purcell, were all respected and responsible leaders in the life of the community. Avoiding political and economic affairs, these men took the lead in the city's educational, benevolent, and social activities, directly through their roles as members and leaders of various organizations, and indirectly through their influence on their congregations, particularly the women.

For every church with a well-established minister, a large and permanent congregation, and a strong and prestigious group of lay leaders, there were many which kept changing ministers yearly, with concommitant fluctuations in the size and quality of the congregation. In such a highly mobile population, ministers usually had their roots no more deeply planted than those of their congregation; all but a few churches changed ministers at least two or three times in a decade. One of the main items of business at church meetings was the acceptance of new members, the dismissal of recalcitrant or

dissatisfied old members, and the constant, never-ending push for better attendance at church functions. The minutes of such meetings of some of the largest and most popular churches in the city suggest that the appearance of stability and success in church efforts was often only a front, covering constant internal controversies and crises.[31]

Still, despite their minimal influence on many of the men in the community, and the instability and tensions which marked their internal affairs, the church played a necessary and valuable role in the community. The church served as a relatively stable anchor in the ever-changing and uncertain waters of new and mobile communities, a place where men turned primarily in times of birth, marriage, and death. Compared to the total number of citizens who used the churches on these occasions the number of members or communicants was relatively small, and consisted primarily of women. Many prominent men in Cincinnati had their children baptised in a certain church, sent their children to its Sunday School, had relatives buried in its cemetery, and even attended Sunday services without ever becoming communicants. The small group of church members who were

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[31]This analysis is based on a scanning of the minute books of the leading Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Unitarian, Methodist, and Baptist churches in Cincinnati in 1840.

prominent citizens in the community, therefore, were saddled with the responsibilities of the temporal affairs of the church.

The size and proportion of the major denominations and congregations in the community is impossible to determine exactly, but certain evidence is instructive. In 1839 the well-known English traveler, James S. Buckingham, visited Cincinnati and made a survey of the city's churches. He found:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12,000 | Roman Catholics | 2,000 | Episcopalians |
| 6,000 | Presbyterians | 1,000 | Unitarians |
| 5,000 | Methodists | 500 | Universalists |
| 4,000 | Baptists | 100 | Dunkards |

This survey, which accounted for 30,600 residents, or two-thirds of the total population of the city, certainly exaggerated the number of Catholics and overlooked most of the small sects other than the Dunkards, but it suggests roughly the proportion of the total population which adherred to the major denominations. It also suggests that approximately a third of the residents did not belong, even informally, to any religious group, and can be considered as agnostics or athiests.[32]

From Buckingham's survey, and several other contemporary records of interments and Sunday School attendance, it seems clear that the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists were the major

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[32]Buckingham, Travels, II, 393.

denominations in the city, comprising a good majority of the total religious community, and that they were roughly equal in size. Buckhingham's figure of 12,000 Roman Catholics is undoubtedly exaggerated, reflecting Nativist fears in the community after the Campbell-Purcell debates, and the fact that they were already the most active, most zealous, and most rapidly increasing denomination in the city. But it is also evident that the two large Catholic churches--St. Peter's (English) Cathedral and the Church of the Holy Trinity (German)--were over-crowded, forcing the building of nine new churches during the 1840's. A better index of the size of the Catholic population in Cincinnati around 1840 is the fact that 22% of the interments in 1839 were in the Catholic Cemetery. The Methodist and Baptist cemeteries had about the same number. Fewer took place in the already overcrowded Presbyterian cemetery.[33]

While Buckingham's survey suggests that about two-thirds of the Cincinnati population was affiliated with some denomination, most of these people were certainly not communicants or formal members of churches. In 1840 the two Episcopalian churches had 259 communicants, or about 12% of the 2,000 Episcopalians Buckingham found.

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[33]For the interment figures, see the Cincinnati Gazette, January 9, 1840.

The same year the four New Schools Presbyterian churches had 1,234 communicants, and two of the three Old School Presbyterian churches reported a total 607 communicants the previous year, which suggests that the total number of Presbyterian communicants was around 2,000, or about a third of Buckingham's figure. In 1840 there were 40 pew-holders in the First Congregation (Unitarian) church, while Buckingham found 1,000 Unitarians in the city.

Although there is no evidence that attendance or even membership at any church was restricted, it is nevertheless clear that the members of congregations often showed a high degree of similarity in backgrounds, interests, and outlook. The First Congregational Church, the two Episcopal Churches, Beecher's New School Second Presbyterian Church and Wilson's Old School First Presbyterian Church all stood on a plateau well above the majority of the churches, and included many of the leading citizens of the community. The two Episcopal churches, and Wilson's congregation were reputedly the most fashionable and conservative, drawing primarily from migrants from the southern and middle states. Beecher's church and the Unitarian church were made up largely of New Englanders, and assumed a liberal and socially-conscious posture in the community.

Of the seven Baptist churches the Ninth Street Church and the First Baptist Church were clearly the most

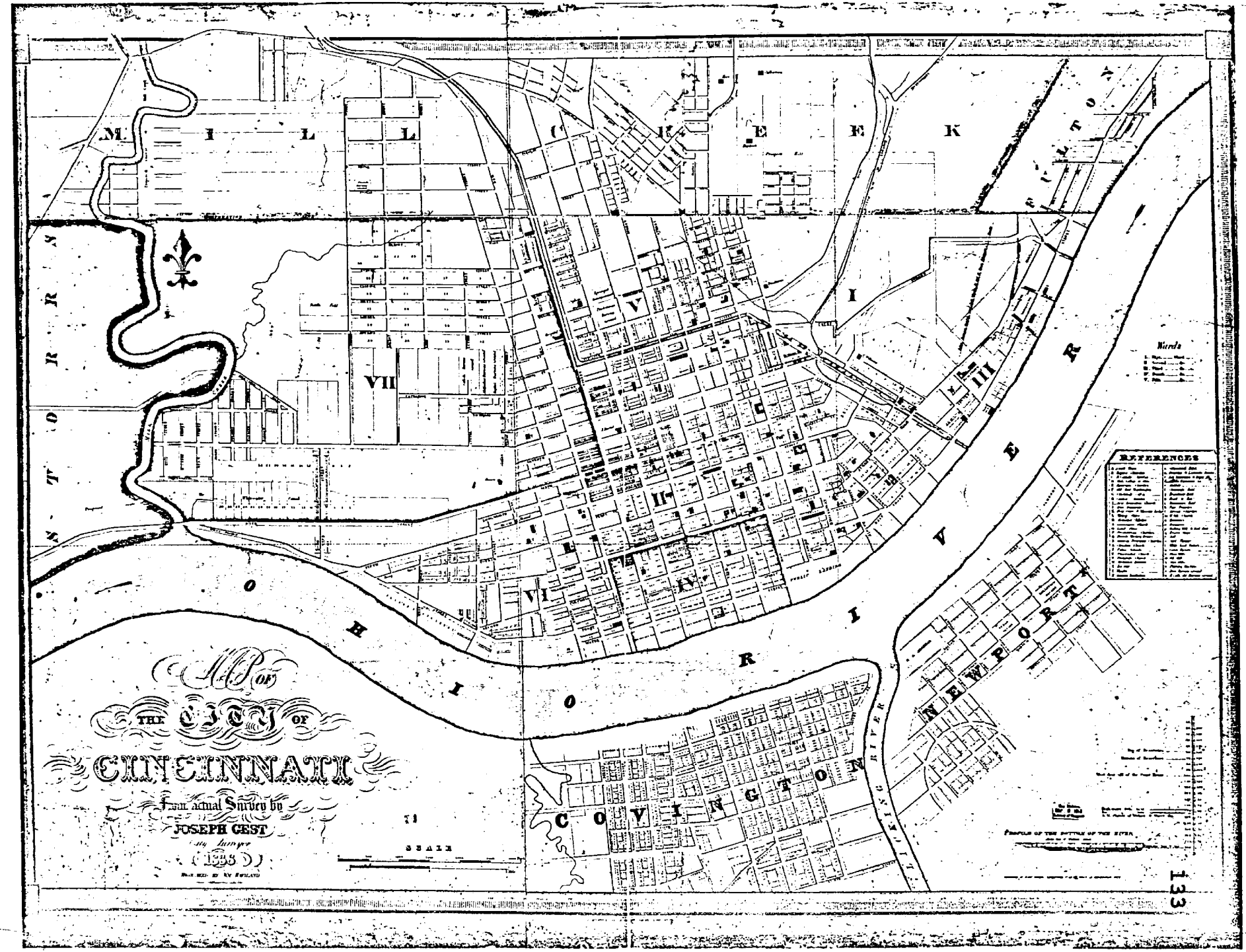
prominent, including some of the leading men in Cincinnati, but the congregation was generally undistinguished and made up of men of moderate means and middling backgrounds. The largest and most popular Methodist church, Wesley Chapel, was the only Methodist church which had any real reputation or impact on the community at this time. Of the two Catholic churches, St. Peter's (English) Cathedral was clearly the more prestigious, but there were few prominent Catholics in Cincinnati, and Catholic influence in the community was largely the result of the leadership of Bishop Purcell and their burgeoning numbers, rather than the character of their following.[34]

## F. Residence

In 1840 Cincinnati resembled the small riverfront town of 1819 more closely in its layout and appearance than the sprawling industrial metropolis which it would become in the next twenty years. Although the population had increased five-fold since its incorporation, from 9,602 to 46,381, the city was still concentrated within the mile-square area originally laid out in the southeastern corner of the basin. Most people lived within

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[34]On Bishop Purcell and the rise of Catholicism, see Marvin J. Steffes, "Archbishop John B. Purcell, A Cincinnati in Controversy" (University of Cincinnati MA, Thesis, 1964).


MILL
CREEK
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MILL CREEK
I
V
VII
III
II
IV
VI
Wards
REFERENCES
OHIO RIVER
NEWPORT
COVINGTON
LICKING RIVER
Map of
THE CITY OF
CINCINNATI
From actual Survey by
JOSEPH GEST
in January
(1838)
SCALE
133

four blocks of the corner of Fourth and Main, the center of the local shopping district. Since travel on foot was often treacherous, and few families had carriages, it was necessary to live near the place where one worked and the markethouses. In 1840 Cincinnati was still a "walking city."[35]

During the first fifty years Cincinnati gradually grew out from the site of old Fort Washington, near the corner of Third and Broadway, toward the Miami Canal on the north and east, and Western Row on the west. The city developed without design, and at first there was no clear distinction between business and residential areas, or sections where the rich or poor lived. Instead, business establishments, churches, coffee-houses, and residences often crowded together in a single block. Poor families, servants, and Negroes lived along the alleys which ran behind elegant homes of Cincinnati's leading families. There were no vacant blocks in the settled area; grass, trees, and open spaces were less important than the

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[35]The following discussion of the physical evolution of Cincinnati is based on a study of the maps in the CHS collection, particularly Doolittle and Munson, Cincinnati in 1831 and Cincinnati in 1841, and Joseph Gest, Cincinnati in 1838. Gest was the city surveyor from 1830 to 1850 and his notebooks in the CHS give a detailed history of the development of the city. Also helpful were numerous newspaper notes from this period and later which discussed building developments in the city.

convenience of having everything within a tightly-knit city.[36]

As the city grew certain parts began to have a particular function or character. The rapid rise in the river trade caused an inevitable concentration of warehouses and other commercial establishments along Front, Second, and Pearl Streets. After the opening of the Miami Canal manufacturing and Pork-packing developed in the Deer Creek Valley. The Flood of 1832, which dramatically demonstrated the dangers of living too near the river, started a gradual residential exodus to "the Hill," the upper plateau north of Third Street. When immigrants began to arrive in large numbers in the late 1830's the Irish took over the old abandoned accommodations along the riverfront, while the Germans built homes on the northern rim of the city, near the Canal.[37]

But as long as solid citizens were content to make their daily rounds on foot, and until the pressures from immigration and industry became a formidable problem, the core of the city continued to serve as a magnet which drew the community together. Prominent

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[36]See "Notes from George W. Jones" in Kings' Picket-Book of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1879), 59-60, for a good description of the city at this time.

[37]Cist, 1851, 47-8.

families remained in their old homes along lower Broadway and on Fourth Street, west of Walnut, and merchants and mechanics still lived in apartments above their shops. Men met daily with their fellow citizens along the streets and women chatted with their neighbors in the central markets. Churches remained in their original buildings; if the congregation became too large a group broke off and formed a new church. Residents seldom ventured beyond the boundries of the Miami Canal and Western Row, since every facet of community life was concentrated within that small, compact, integrated area.

In 1840 Cincinnati was divided into seven wards. The previous year two new wards had been added to the original five, as a result of the westward expansion of the city, and the boundary dividing Wards I and II from III and IV had been moved half a block south, to distribute the population more evenly. At this time wards were still intended as arbitrary subdivisions within the city, circumscribing no distinctive group of residents and reflecting no special political interests of attitudes. And yet, with the rapid growth and movement of the population during the late 1830's, ward differences and characteristics gradually emerged. When Charles Cist took the Census in 1840 he noted some of these developments, which were also apparent in the demographic data.

TABLE 4

RESIDENCE: 1840

| | Total Pop. (Adult White Males) | Shaffer Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Wart I: | 2,457 (17%) | 54 (16%) |
| Ward II: | 1,475 (11%) | 29 ( 9%) |
| Ward III: | 3,144 (24%) | 38 (11%) |
| Ward IV: | 1,884 (14%) | 35 (10%) |
| Ward V: | 2,442 (17%) | 59 (18%) |
| Ward VI: | 1,072 ( 8%) | 16 ( 5%) |
| Ward VII: | 1,238 ( 9%) | 26 ( 8%) |
| Board: | - - - - - - | 45 (12%) |
| None Listed | - - - - - - | 42 (11%) |
| | 13,712, (100%) | 334 (100%) |

On the lower plateau of the city, bordering the Ohio River, were Wards III and IV. Here, in the oldest part of the city, lived better than a third of the Cincinnati population. Before 1832 nearly everyone had lived in this area, but the effects of the flood, the increase in the number of commercial warehouses, and the influx of immigrants drove some families north, to the open land on the upper plateau. As a result the population here in 1840 had a high concentration of men, particularly the transient rivermen, who patronized the numerous taverns and brothels which lined the

waterfront streets. Ward III, east of Main Street, had half of the 1,756 men engaged in "navigation" and many foundries, boiler yards, and stables; Ward IV, which ran from Main Street to Western Row, had a large concentration of Irish immigrants, a disreputable Negro section around Green Street, and a number of cheap boardinghouses for the transients and, as Cist put it, "deserted women."

North of Wards III and IV, on the upper plateau, were Wards I and II. Ward I ran from the corner of Fourth and Main to the Corporation Line. It had a large and varied population. Cist noted that there were many emigrants from Pennsylvania living here, but there was also a large group of Germans, who concentrated around the Canal, and an old settlement of Negroes living in the New Street area. Many prominent Cincinnatians--Nicholas Longworth, Timothy Walker, James Perkins--and a high proportion of the city's doctors and lawyers lived here. West of Main Street, running across to Western Row and up to Sixth Street, was Ward II. This was the center of the business district, where many shopkeepers lived in apartments above their stores. This was also the area of the more reputable boardinghouses and hotels, where recent arrivals and single gentlemen lived. With the Fifth Street Market House, the majority of the city's retail establishments, and numerous

churches, Ward II was the center of the daytime activities of many Cincinnatians.

North of Ward II, above Sixth Street, was Ward V. In the area south of the Miami Canal was the popular new residential district. Homes here were noted for their attractive architecture, their handsome yards and gardens,and a favorite Sunday pastime was taking a "promenade" along these tree-lined streets. Ward V had the highest proportion of children, and the best schools in the city; it was a convenient, respectable "neighborhood," to use the term which was first used by Cincinnatians in reference to this area. And yet, relatively few of the most prominent and wealthy citizens lived here, and of the five churches in the ward, three were Baptist. Above the Miami Canal was the area which in the 1840's would come to be known as the "Over the Rhine" district. In 1840 there were already many Germans living here, with their own groceries, taverns, and schools. But the German atmosphere of the area was not yet sufficiently developed, or perhaps Cincinnatians were not yet conscious of it, and Cist and his contemporaries made little mention of any distinctive German character here.

The area west of Western Row was opened for residential development in the late 1830's. Ward VI

ran from the corner of Sixth and Western Row to the Ohio River; Ward VII ran north and west to the Corporation line. Cist remarked about the rapid transformation of the area, with the many new streets, but in 1840 only 17% of the city's population lived here, and there were still several large farms, brickyards, and vacant lots. This part of the city was the least desirable to live in, since much of Ward VI was on low ground, and considered unhealthy, while Ward VII was almost a mile from the heart of the business district. Consequently, much of the housing was cheap, of wooden construction, and most of the residents were recent immigrants and workers of modest means.

Despite these differences and characteristics which distinguished the seven wards in 1840, there was, as yet, no real fragmentation or isolation of the local population in any area. Every ward had as least some rivermen and Negroes, as well as a portion of professionals and wealthy residents, and the major element in the city's working force--the mechanics--were fairly evenly distributed throughout the city. Within every ward there wide differences in the composition of the population, internal differences which were as great as those which distinguished any one ward from another. Moreover, many residents in 1840--12% of the Shaffer Sample--lived in boardinghouses, and had no fixed ties in any

given area. Compared to the changes which would take place by mid-century, the physical configuration of the city in 1840 was still remarkably like that in 1820.[38]

## G. The Structure of the Society

From the impressionistic evidence of the local press, guidebooks, letters, speeches, and travel accounts there is little indication of any major, clear-cut divisions within the Cincinnati population. Certainly, differences in nativity, occupation, wealth, religion, and the like were acknowledged. And yet such personal qualities were not considered to be a mark of inherent inferiority, or superiority, but rather something which, if desired, could be overcome or changed. Most discussion of the character and composition of the community, therefore, stressed the basic cosmopolitanism of the society, and not its internal classes or conflicts.

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[38]This impression of the internal heterogeneity of the wards is supported by a reading of the MSS Census for 1840. Although there were clusters of economic and nativity groupings, running for perhaps a page or two, a very different grouping would precede or follow. These groupings probably represented a street or block of the ward. The evidence from the voting returns for the wards, particularly those concerning local issues which are discussed in Chapter I Part G, suggests the relative homogeneity (external) of the entire city, and lack of any major differences between the seven wards.

The evidence from the 1840 Census, the Shaffer Directory, the 1838 Tax List, and church records, however, clearly indicates divisions within the local population. By a variety of criteria--nativity, occupation, wealth, and religion--differences were obvious. There were differences between Yankees and Buckeyes as well as a burgeoning immigrant population, particularly from Germany. Most of the men worked as unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, with little security or chance for improvement. The large majority of the men did not own any property, even their place of residence. And most of them did not belong, at least formally, to a church. While such divisions were not necessarily permanent, and may not have seemed critically important to people at this time, they still represent real distinctions in the population character and composition.

It appears that within the classifications of nativity, occupation, wealth, and religion there was a definite hierarchy of status which distinguished a small minority, or elite, from the large majority of the "community." In nativity it was the old Yankees, in occupation it was the successful professionals and merchants, in wealth it was the tax-payers, particularly the investor-speculators, and in religion it was the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Unitarians who belonged to the fashionable congregations of the city. Within each

of these classifications the elite represented probably no more than a tenth of the total number of "householders."

More importantly, some of the same names reappear on the Tax Lists, the church membership lists, the rosters of prominent professionals and merchants, and the men who came from the northeastern United States. Thus, there was some correspondence between the nativity, occupational, wealth, and religious elites, a pattern of congruence which suggests the possible existence of a socio-economic elite in Cincinnati in 1840.

Although the evidence is fragmentary, such an elite is apparent within the Shaffer sample. Taking out of the total group of 329 individuals in the sample the 32 who were born in New England, the 27 professionals and merchants, the 37 tax-payers, and the seven church members, a group of 74 individuals who appear in at least one socio-economic elite category emerges. Of these 74 individuals, 59 appear in only one elite category, 14 in two categories, and one individual, Robert Bowler, appeared in all four elite categories.[39]

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[39]Athough the 14 individuals in two elite categories do not greatly exceed the mathematical possibilities of such congruence, the possibilities of a person being included in all four elite categories makes Bowler a remarkable case. If this were a random sample, mathematical probabilities would suggest that of the 74 individuals in the group about ten would be included in two categories. The possibility of a person being included in all four categories, however, is approximately one in 50,000.

Based on the evidence from the Shaffer sample, it appears that of the total Cincinnati "community" of 8,500 individuals, approximately 25% were included in at least one elite category of nativity, occupation, wealth, or church membership, that perhaps 10% were included in two such categories, and that there may have been as many as 25-50 individuals who were included in three or four elite categories.

This evidence suggests the existence of a general socio-economic elite of approximately 25%. To the degree to which Cincinnatians recognized differences in nativity, occupation, wealth, and religion, and respected those individuals who came from New England, engaged in professional or mercantile occupations, owned property, and belonged to a fashionable church, approximately 2,000 men in the "community" had a favorite position in the local social structure. And yet, the fact that the large majority of these favored individuals were included in only one elite category--nativity, occupation, wealth, or religion--suggests that this was not a particularly closely-knit, integrated, exclusive group at this time.

Within this general elite group, however, there was a small nucleus of 25-50 individuals who were included in 3-4 elite categories. To the extent that such congruence--inclusion in more than one elite category--is a valid indice of high elite status, they stood at the

apex of the local social structure. Supplementary biographical information suggests that men like Robert Bowler, Timothy Walker, James H. Perkins did, indeed, represent the leaders of Cincinnati society.[40]

For the remaining 75% of the "community" who were not included in any of these elite categories, however, differences in nativity, occupation, wealth, and religion were less important. Yankees, merchants and professionals, tax-payers, and church members may have stood out in the local social structure, but the divisions between Pennsylvanians and Southerners, mechanics and shopkeepers, renters and boarders, and casual church-goers and non-church-goers were much less distinct. Certainly, differences were noticed, and had some influence, but the importance of these particular divisions were not yet sufficiently clear to establish any definite hierarchy. For the large majority of the Cincinnati population, therefore, such criteria and categories were relatively unimportant. This group could be described as the "middle class" of the local social structure. For them, the diversity and toleration reported in the impressionistic accounts of Cincinnati society were probably effective in maintaining an open

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[40]This impression is based both on the biographical data on the activities and careers of these men and the prominent place they hold in the standard histories of the city.

society, in which they enjoyed considerable freedom and opportunity.

Finally, the "newcomers" and transients not yet listed in the city directory, and therefore not yet integrated into the Cincinnati "community," may be considered as the "lower class" in the city. This group, approximately 35% of the total Cincinnati adult white male population, appears to have been the least distinguished in nativity, occupation, wealth, and religious affiliation. Moreover, the lack of well-established ties with the "community," of these individuals and, in many cases, their lack of family responsibilities, made them the least committed to the values, institutions, and interests of the "community." Due to these basic differences, the approximately 4,000 "newcomers" and transients may be considered as standing at the bottom of the social structure, outside the "community" in Cincinnati in 1840.

# CHAPTER III

## PARTICIPATION AND POWER

> Every city is composed of a vast multitude of people, collected together; all actuated by various and different motives and passions; among the latter, that of self interest is the most predominant. The divisions of a city consist of little communities, or neighborhoods: and seldom does it happen but what each has some individuals so devoted to the public good--so silent upon the welfare of all within their several dominions--that they are willing, and indeed take pleasure, in neglecting their own affairs, and devoting themselves entirely to the business of their neighbors.
>
> Cincinnati Chronicle and Literary Gazette, 1833

In November, 1943, John Quincy Adams made the long, arduous journey from Boston to Cincinnati to dedicate the new Observatory of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society. For the seventy-six year old ex-President, who was in poor health, the trip was a severe strain, but he had accepted the invitation because it provided, he wrote, a heaven-sent opportunity "to turn this transcient gust of enthusiasm for the science of astronomy of Cincinnati into a permanent and perserving national pursuit." The dedication of the Cincinnati Observatory was a chance for Adams to promote his Smithsonian bill in Congress,

to establish "lighthouses in the sky" in America.[1]

For the proud people of Cincinnati, however, the appearance of the venerable old ex-President was of more immediate significance. His dedication of the new Observatory of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society proclaimed to the world the importance of their undertaking and the magnitude of their achievement. Since the spring of 1842, when Professor Ormsby M. Mitchel began promoting the project with a series of popular lectures on astronomy, the decision to built a great observatory in the Queen City had become the focus of community activity and aspirations. In May, 1842 the Cincinnati Astronomical Society formed to sell 300 shares of stock at $25.00 a share. Immediately citizens pledged $6,500.00 to pay for the telescope and Mitchel set off for Europe to purchase the instrument and to visit the leading observatories of the old world.[2]

With the laying of the cornerstone the following November, the Observatory became the symbol of the city's new interests and identity. By this time Cincinnatians were dissatisfied with the city's reputation as "Porkopolis" and desired recognition of their more sophisticated accomplishments. Already renowned for their

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[1]Samuel Flagg Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Union (New York, 1965), 515.

[2]Cist, 1851, 341; Greve, History of Cincinnati, 898-9.

spectacular growth and material success, they were anxious to improve their image as a center of refinement and culture. And astronomy, as Mitchel said repeatedly, was the supreme measure of the refinement of a civilization. With the building of the Observatory, Cincinnati became the home of the largest refracting telescope in the world, save for a slightly larger one at the Imperial Observatory in Russia, and a center of astronomical study in the United States.[3]

The establishment of the Observatory of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society was also significant in another respect. Not only did it represent the sophisticated new aspirations of Cincinnatians, reflecting a growing emphasis on the finer things in life, but it also demonstrated their ability to accomplish such a large-scale project. The Observatory represented one of the early efforts of "public and private improvement" in Cincinnati. The story of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society and the building of the Observatory, therefore, is a good example of the organization and operation of the community in the early 1840's.

Contemporary accounts suggest two quite different interpretations of how and by whom the Cincinnati

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[3]Russell McCormmich, "Ormsby MacNight Mitchel's Sideral Messenger, 1846-1848," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 110, No. 1 (February, 1966), 36.

Observatory was built. According to the popular version, the entire community supported the project enthusiastically and the Observatory was financed with money collected from a cross-section of the local population: butchers as well as bankers, plasterers as well as physicians, mechanics as well as merchants. And once the Observatory was completed the great telescope was open to anyone who wanted to take a peek at the heavens. The Cincinnati Observatory, according to this version, was "the only one in the world constructed and put into operation by the people--the masses," and, as Mitchel pointed out, he was the first democratically elected astronomer in history. This "democratic" interpretation suggests that the Observatory was built as the result of a groundswell of public interest, financed by the people themselves, and that it was open for the pleasure and edification of the general public.[4]

According to the personal account of Ormsby Mitchel, however, it was his own determination and direction of the project, and the financial backing of a small group of prominent, wealthy citizens, which were largely responsible for the successful completion of the Observatory. After a short period of initial enthusiasm the community lost interest and the stockholders refused

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[4]Cist, 1851, 341; McCormich, 43.

to honor their pledges. In order to raise $3,000.00 to pay outstanding bills Mitchel had to dun the recalcitrant stockholders, sometimes a dozen times without success, for over a month. When the building costs exceeded his original estimates, and work fell behind schedule, Mitchel had to take over the supervision and some of the construction work himself. And once the Observatory was finished, Mitchel and a small select Board of Control dictated the affairs of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society. Looking back on the experience, Mitchel pointed to Nicholas Longworth, who donated the land on which the Observatory was built, and a handful of wealthy citizens, who donated the money necessary to meet the final building expenses, as his main supporters in the enterprise.[5]

Both versions of the Observatory story--the popular, "democratic" account and Mitchel's "elitist" account--are clearly distortions, reflecting, on the one hand, the popular assumptions of the period, and, on the other hand, the personal vanity of Ormsby Mitchel. Charles Cist, who had been an active supporter of the Observatory, offered a more balanced account when he wrote:

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[5]Cist, 1841, 341-6.

> It was an example of what may be accomplished by the public spirit of a community when its energies are stimulated into activity by the enthusiasm, intelligence, vigor, and perseverance of one man, of competent ability to direct it to a successful issue.

Cist's account suggests that, in fact, the Cincinnati Observatory was a product of the combined efforts of an aroused public and a responsible elite. Michel provided the idea of an Observatory, and directed the entire project to its successful conclusion. The public supported the enterprise with its initial enthusiasm and much of the necessary funds, and helped define the purpose of the Observatory. Longworth and a small group of local leaders gave money, advice, and time in the administration of the Society. The Observatory story, according to Cist, demonstrated the efficacy of cooperation and a strong civic spirit.[6]

These three accounts of the Observatory story--the popular "democratic" version, Mitchel's "elitist" version, and Cist's "pluralistic" version--represent caricatures of different forms of community structure. Cincinnati was not organized and did not operate according to any of these pure models, certainly, but they serve as a useful paradigm in which to analyze the actual structure of the community. The popular "democratic" version suggests that a large proportion of the residents

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[6]Cist, 1841, 341.

participated in local activities and that the "common people" controlled their own affairs. Mitchel's "elitist" version suggests that a small nucleus of citizens, the most prominent, wealthy, and well-born, ran the affairs of the community and that it was the initiative and direction of a few interested individuals which determined the success of a local enterprise. Cist's "pluralistic" version suggests that there was a successful combination here of widespread popular support, from a broad cross-section of the local population, and leadership by a responsible, civic-minded elite.

## A. Associations: Function

In 1840 Cincinnati had a large number and wide variety of associations in which residents could participate and through which interested citizens could accomplish together what they could not do alone. Some were formal, permanent institutions--like schools, banks, and clubs--while others were more informal and ephemeral groups--like banquets, political meetings, and groups formed to accomplish a single specific end. Some groups, such as the fire companies, were popular, well-established associations, with large memberships and open to the general public. Others, such as the Semi-Colon Club, were private, select associations which represented the exclusive tastes of its members. Some institutions were

made up largely of men of specialized interests and backgrounds: bank and insurance company directors were generally wealthy, successful, commercial men; the trustees of local schools and colleges were usually prominent citizens with some intellectual ability; immigrant aid societies were made up of recent, successful emigrants from the home country. Other institutions were more eclectic in their composition: the city council was made up of an assortment of men whose only common denominator was an interest in local government and the ability to win an election; the fraternal clubs were composed of a diverse population which shared only a desire for good fellowship and some enthusiasm for exotic doctrine and ritual; the members of mutual aid societies joined only in their mutual desire to improve their individual conditions.[7]

Despite this diversity, these associations together formed a loose network of citizen participation and power. For the new and lonely, they often served as a place to meet other residents and a chance to take the first step into community life. For a number of men in

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[7]In the following discussion I use the term "association" to designate any group, formal or informal, permanent or ephemeral, open or restricted, which was organized for the common benefit of its members and in which participation was voluntary. In general, this definition corresponds to the usage which Tocqueville used in his classic discussion of associations during this period [Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II, 106-10 (New York, 1945)].

the community these associations served as an excuse to get together with their friends and a sense of belonging to the larger society in which they lived. For the ambitious and successful citizens, these associations became channels of influence and power and the means through which they could direct the attitudes and energies of the community. In such a young, mobile, and individualistic society, associations were an important and necessary part of community life.

Cincinnatians appreciated the importance of these associations. Local booster literature and newspapers always listed the various associations in the community, often described their activities, and sometimes gave a detailed description of their histories, purposes, and membership. Obituaries usually listed the associations in which the deceased had participated, implying that associational activity, along with a man's family life and his business career, formed an important part of a happy and successful life. Associations were even praised as promoting a sense of Christian brotherhood and patriotism. One editor wrote in 1838 that associations allowed "all sects, political and religious, all castes and classes, all ages, both sexes, and emigrants no less than natives" to be "brought into sympathy with one another . . . to unite in a common anthem of patriotism."[8]

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[8]Cincinnati Chronicle and Literary Gazette, August 4, 1838.

Cincinnati writers and orators also recognized the function and value of associations. Timothy Walker argued that associations were necessary in any community, particularly a young one like Cincinnati, if the "social dispositions" of the residents were to be effectively organized, and that without them "only a bare and miserable skeleton of social existence would remain." Associations, therefore, were a socializing and integrating force, which would contribute to the order and stability of the community. Walker then described the associative process:

> Some individual conceives a high or useful enterprise. He has not the means to execute it himself; but he proposes it to those around him, and they, if it be reasonable, concur in his views. The flame once kindled spreads like a fire in the forest. A society is formed, and funds began to accumulate. . . . This drop of charity grows into a stream, the stream swells into a river, and the river pours its accumulated treasures into an ocean of social benevolence.

In 1838 James H. Perkins published an essay on "Associations, A Vital Form of Social Action," in which he developed the argument that associations in American replaced many of the functions of aristocratic institutions in the old world. With the triumph of democracy, Perkins began, Americans had to "give up classes, and corporate bodies of every kind, and come to simple direct individualism." Due to the "prevailing antagonism to all corporations, all privileged bodies, and casts of every kind," there was a curious condition of things: "no

recognized orders, no church, and yet much of the same desire for action which had always existed, and must exist until ignorance and vice cease from the earth." As a result of this vacuum there has been the "production of voluntary associations to an immense extent" which, Perkins concluded were the "true LIVING MODE OF ACTION on the part of society" in America.[9]

The significance of these associations were three-fold: first, they generally improved or assisted the individuals who participated in them; second, they helped to integrate the members of the society by serving as a foci of local activities; third, they served as one of the most important channels of information and influence in community affairs. The importance of such associations, both for the individual and the community, in a rapidly growing city like Cincinnati is reflected in the fact that they seemed to increase by almost geometric proportions as the population of the city increased. The growing size, complexity, and impersonality of the community seemed to compound the need for these associations. As one newspaper remarked, during an

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[9]Both Walker and Perkins in their discussions of associations closely parallel the analysis of Tocqueville in Democracy in America. Walker's discussion, at least in the form presented in his Journal, was composed before Tocqueville's book appeared; Perkins' essay was published just afterward. There is no internal evidence, however, that either man based his ideas or argument on that of Tocqueville. Walker, MSS Journal, C.H.S.; Perkins, Memoir and Writings, I, 165-72.

earlier period of expansion: there was a "violent mania" which provoked Cincinnatians to become "society mad."[10]

Most associations were utilitarian, Timothy Walker noted, and the implicit assumption in every group was: We mean to receive as much as we give, and we ask others to join us on that principle." Whether it was the intellectual improvement offered by the Young Men's Mercantile Library, the sense of spiritual improvement offered by a temperance society, or the assurance of protection offered by the fire companies, these associations all existed because their members felt that participation was worth their time, effort, and expense. Sometimes the utilitarian value derived was indirect, as in the advantages of friendships gained through membership in a fraternal club, or the sense of civic responsibility and the knowledge of increased prestige gained by participation in a benevolent association. Associations were not, therefore, a threat to individualism; rather, they were simply a means of achieving one's own ends more readily through cooperation and combination.[11]

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[10]Cincinnati Chronicle and Literary Gazette, September 4, 1830. The impression that associations increased by a geometric, rather than an arithmetic progression, as a community grew in population is suggested in the increase in the number of fire companies during this period [1810: 1; 1820: 3; 1830: 10; 1840: 25; History of the Cincinnati Fire Department (Cincinnati, 1895)] or Masonic Lodges: [1819: 2; 1829: 5; 1840: 7; 1851: 35; 1860: 53].

[11]Walker MSS Journal, 60.

Associations also served as an antidote for the growing impersonalization and anomie which were the inevitable consequence of the rapid expansion of Cincinnati's population. Previously, when the city was still small enough for a resident to know most of his fellow-citizens personally and meet them on the streets regularly, there was little need of formal organizations for the purpose of fellowship, mutual assistance, or the settling of common affairs. The demands of the public and the desires of local leaders were made known by word-of-mouth, the needs of the poor and the obligations of the richer citizens were taken care of on a person-to-person basis.

But, during the 1820's and 1830's, as the city grew, and more and more strangers and transients filled the streets, citizens turned more and more to formal channels of political, benevolent, fraternal, and self-help activity. When the informal, word-of-mouth and person-to-person network of communication became outgrown, citizens turned to formal organizations and meetings to take care of affairs of common concern. Interested citizens attended political meetings to express their demands and to hear the opinions of their fellow citizens. The needy in the community turned to formal organizations--such as the Boatmen's Bethel, or the immigrant aid societies--for food, clothing, and

assistance. Local leaders soon found that they could reach more people and handle their responsibilities more efficiently through these formal channels than through the old, informal network of communication.

Through their cooperative efforts and common sense of purpose, these associations became an important integrative force in the community. As the city grew in size a man's sphere of acquaintances and friends came to encompass a smaller and smaller proportion of the total population. As more and more newcomers arrived in the city the earlier esprit de corps and sense of community identity and pride declined. For the increasingly isolated individual, as well as the newcomer, the associations served as an important channel of information and influence in the community. The associations became, in effect, a marketplace of opinions and power. Moreover, they gave residents a sense of belonging to the community and participating in its affairs. As Timothy Walker put it, the result was "a noble and expansive feeling which identifies self with community." Thus associations were an important force in the maintainance of community cohesion, direction, and order.[12]

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[12]Walker MSS, C.H.S.

## B. Associations: General Character

The associations which were active in Cincinnati in 1840 can be divided into two broad groups; the permanent, formal organizations such as banks, educational institutions, masonic lodges, and fire companies; and the ephemeral, informal meetings, committees, and other groups which met for some immediate purpose. Although this distinction is arbitrary in some cases--such as the groups which were formal, permanent organizations but met irregularly and whose membership changed consistantly--most associations can be distinguished according to this criteria.

The formal, permanent organizations generally had regularly elected officers, standard requirements for membership, and some well-defined, on-going purpose. Such groups included the Cincinnati Savings Institution, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, The Young Men's Bible Society, the Novae Caesarae Harmony Masonic Lodge, and the Washington Fire Company. These organizations were generally listed in Cist's Cincinnati in 1841 and Shaffer's Cincinnati Directory for 1840, often with the names of their officers.

The informal, ephemeral groups were generally organized temporarily for a single, immediate purpose,

had appointed or popularly elected officers for the duration of its existence, and were usually open to any interested citizens. Sometimes these were meetings, such as a political ward meeting at the local fire house to elect delegates or candidates, a meeting at the College Hall to promote free banking, or a banquet honoring a distinguished citizen or visitor. Other groups were committees formed to sponsor some project, such as the candidacy of a local politician, or to thank a visiting artist or actor, or to promote some particular business, cultural, or philanthropic enterprise. These meetings and committees were generally reported in the local newspapers, with a description of their business and a list of the officers and participants.

One of the earliest, largest, and most important formal organizations in Cincinnati was the volunteer fire department. In 1802, the year that Cincinnati received its village charter, an ordinance was passed charging every householder with the purchase of a two and a half gallon black jack leather bucket and service any time the cry "fire" was called. In 1810 a formal fire company, the Washington Company No. I, formed which purchased an engine and other equipment and accepted responsibility for answering any fire alarm. By 1819 there were three such companies, a decade later the number had increased to ten, and by 1840 25 fire companies served the burgeoning city.

During the early years nearly every able-bodied man in the community belonged to a fire company. Members took great pride in their companies, purchasing expensive equipment and outfitting themselves in extravagent uniforms. Most companies had a fire house, which became a neighborhood hang-out for the men and children of the area, and a social center for the company members and their families. Competing against the other companies of the city in the elegance of their equipment and uniforms, as well as in their performances fighting fires, the volunteer fire companies were a strong source of local pride and cohesion. Although this competitive spirit turned into hostile feuding during the 1840's and then, in 1851, into overt fighting between companies, the volunteer fire companies were one of the most popular and exemplary organizations in Cincinnati during the first half of the nineteenth century.[13]

Less open in their membership, but no less popular or important to their members, were the numerous fraternal lodges in Cincinnati. In 1794, just five years after the founding of Cincinnati, the Novae Caesarea Harmony Lodge was organized by some of the leading citizens of the small community. During the following years many prominent residents were associated with the Lodge, and it

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[13]See History of the Cincinnati Fire Department, passim, for a detailed discussion of these developments.

played an important part in the development of the city. The membership and activities of most fraternal organizations, however, were less illustrious. Made up primarily of mechanics and petty shopkeepers, with a desire for good fellowship and some romance and mystery in their mundane lives, the lodges provided relaxation, entertainment, and assistance to their members and their families. The popularity of fraternal groups during this period reflected the increasing population and impersonality of the city, and the desire among many citizens for a small, stable center of activity and friendship.[14]

A highly selective membership, and an ambitious, high-minded purpose characterized the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge. Founded in 1840, as an indirect descendant of the College of Teachers, by a group of 159 prominent, education-minded citizens, this organization meant to improve its members by "mutual instruction" in "regular courses of popular lectures." The entire body of human knowledge was divided into 14 separate areas, and members selected one area, which they studied in an intensive weekly seminar for an extended period of time. Also, the Society gave regular lectures, on a variety of subjects of more general interest, which were open to the public. Thus the members improved themselves, made their knowledge and

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[14] A History of Novae Caesarea Harmony Lodge (Cincinnati, 1928).

resources available to the larger community, and hoped to encourage "a general taste for moral, intellectual, and social progress."[15]

During the three year period, 1839 to 1842, there were over a hundred different meetings, committees, and other informal groups which met in Cincinnati. These groups were organized for many different purposes, varied widely in size and composition of participants, and had mixed results, but they were all part of the associational activity of the community. These groups, and the total number of participants in them, can be divided into the following general categories:

| Associational Category: | | Total Number of "Participants": |
|---|---|---|
| Political: | Whigs | 600 |
| | Democrats | 650 |
| Benevolent | | 300 |
| Mutual Aid | | 115 |
| Slavery Issue | | 205 |
| Patrons of the Arts | | 85 |
| Friends of the South | | 45 |
| Professional Groups | | 350 |
| Banking Issue | | 185 |

As might be expected, the majority of these groups which had the largest proportion of participants were the political meetings and committees. Every year both parties held numerous meetings throughout the city

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[15]Cist, 1841, 133-6. For a good description of the activities of the Society, particularly the seminars, see the Diary of William Stanley Merrell, 1840, in the C.H.S.

to nominate delegates and candidates, to arouse the loyal into action, and to try to win over the members of the opposition. Like all political affairs of the period, there was always a group of distinguished party leaders on the platform, who directed the meeting and delivered impassioned speeches, perhaps a few honored guests or featured speakers, and the assembled citizens who made up the audience. During the 1840 campaign, according to Edward Mansfield, such meetings were held almost every night during the weeks preceding the election. Then, on one of the last evenings of the campaign, each party held a grand rally, the Democrats at the Court House, the Whigs at the Fifth Street Market:[16]

> The Democrats rallied their forces at the public landing at the river, and marched from there to the court-house. I was sitting in my mother's, on Third Street, near Broadway, when I heard huzzas and the heavy tramp of feet going up Broadway. Not remembering the Democratic procession, I rushed out to see what was the matter. It was the Democratic procession, marching by platoons to the court-house. The whole street seemed to be dark with them. Each man seemed to carry a club, which he struck against the ground, and hurraed for Van Buren. Many were Germans and Irish. "Hurra for Van Buren," was constantly heard in the deep gutteral voices, which seemed to be so earnest and determined. I had never before seen so large a procession moving that way, and felt alarmed for the result. Going immediately to the Fifth Street market, I was undeceived; there I saw the space filled with thousands of people. Four or five different speaker's stands were erected, and

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[16]Edward Mansfield, Personal Memories: Social, Political, and Literary (Cincinnati, 1879), 320-2.

> the most popular orators of the day were speaking to the multitude in animated terms.

Most political meetings, however, were much smaller. These meetings, often held at the local fire house or in a large church or public hall, were the most common and widely-attended associational activities in the community. For many residents attendance at such a meeting was the result of curiosity or a minimal sense of party responsibility; for the ambitious, aspiring politician, however, such meetings and committees served as the ladder through which one rose to positions of power or candidacy. In addition, there were numerous small meetings, dinners, committees, and other city-wide groups which directed party policy, honored the faithful and successful, and demonstrated who was supporting which party in elections. These groups generally consisted of the most active and influential politicians on the ward level, and can be described as a city-wide leadership group. Although there was an important difference between the men who simply indicated their support of the party by attendance of a mass rally, and a ward delegate or member of the party's central committee, all of these men who demonstrated a minimum degree of interest and identification with the Whig or Democratic party are to be considered as the political participants in the community.

There were also 12 different meetings which supported causes such as temperance and penitentary reform,

or worked to raise money for the poor; these meetings are included in the category of "Benevolent" Associations. The "Mutual Aid" category includes three meetings which organized a local Fuel Oil Company. The "Slavery Issue" category includes nine different meetings of Colonizationists, Abolitionists, and Anti-Abolitionists. The three different groups which bought or lent paintings for community exhibitions are designated as "Patrons of the Arts" associations. The "Friends of the South" category includes four meetings which attempted to improve commercial relations with the South, and build a railroad to Charleston. The 11 meetings such as the committees of the Ohio Mechanics Institute Fair, the Merchants Meeting which organized the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, and several Workingmen's Meetings are included in the "Professional Group" category. And a meeting of the supporters of Free Banking, a committee which opposed the repeal of the state bankruptcy laws, and three other similar groups are included in the "Banking Issue" category. The number and variety of these meetings, committees, and other informal groups indicate the extent of associational activity in Cincinnati during this period.

## C. The Participants: Character and Composition

One thousand one hundred and ninety-four men listed in the Shaffer Cincinnati Directory for 1840, or approximately 15% of the total number of men included, were active in some informal meeting during the three year period, 1839-1842. Of the 329 residents included in the Shaffer sample, 62, or 20%, were active in some such associational activity. This suggest that considerably less than a fourth, but more than a tenth of the men who were sufficiently established in Cincinnati to be included in the 1840 Directory participated in a community activity during these three years.

In order to determine the character and composition of this group of "participants," compared with that of the total population listed in the 1840 Directory, an analysis was made of their nativity, occupation, wealth, and religious affiliation. From this comparison several striking characteristics appeared, which distinguished the "participants" as a group.

In nativity, the "participants" had a disproportionately large representation from the northeastern states and a very small representation of German-born immigrants. There were approximately a third more men from New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in the "participant" group than in the Shaffer sample. The proportion of "participants" from the border, southern,

and western states, however, was roughly comparable to that in the Shaffer sample. The same was true of the immigrants from the British Isles. The proportion of Germans in the "participant" group, however, was two-thirds less than the proportion in the Shaffer sample, which was, itself, only 60% of the proportion reported in the 1840 Census. Clearly, the newly-arrived Germans had not yet moved into the associational life of the community at this time, which was still dominated by the early emigrants from the northeastern United States.

In occupation, a similar disparity was evident, with a disproportionately high number of men engaged in professional and mercantile occupations appeared in the "participant" group, together with a much smaller number of mechanics and laborers than were represented in the Shaffer sample. The wholesale merchants had the strongest representation, over four times as many, proportionally in the "participant" group as in the Shaffer sample. The professionals and public officials had approximately three times as great a representation as their number in the Shaffer sample suggested. Together, these men who comprised less than 10% of the Cincinnati working population, made up better than a third of the community's "participants." The bulk of the city's workers, the shopkeepers, mechanics, and manufacturers, were under-represented, in proportion to their number in the Shaffer

TABLE 5

CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION OF "PARTICIPANTS"

| | Participants | | Shaffer Sample | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nativity: | | | | |
| Ohio-West | 168 | (14%) | 53 | (16%) |
| New England | 186 | (15%) | 32 | (10%) |
| New York-New Jersey | 220 | (18%) | 43 | (13%) |
| Pennsylvania | 175 | (14%) | 32 | (10%) |
| Border States | 104 | ( 9%) | 30 | ( 9%) |
| Southern States | 80 | ( 6%) | 14 | ( 4%) |
| England-Scotland | 98 | ( 8%) | 26 | ( 8%) |
| Ireland | 54 | ( 5%) | 23 | ( 7%) |
| Germany | 56 | ( 5%) | 56 | (17%) |
| Other | 55 | ( 5%) | 20 | ( 6%) |
| Occupation: | | | | |
| Professional | 138 | (11%) | 13 | ( 4%) |
| Merchant | 223 | (18%) | 14 | ( 4%) |
| Manufacturer | 58 | ( 5%) | 16 | ( 5%) |
| Shopkeeper | 150 | (12%) | 31 | ( 9%) |
| Official | 90 | ( 7%) | 5 | ( 2%) |
| Mechanic | 345 | (28%) | 150 | (45%) |
| Clerk | 81 | ( 6%) | 24 | ( 7%) |
| Laborer | 13 | ( 3%) | 34 | (12%) |
| None | 96 | ( 8%) | 30 | ( 9%) |
| Wealth: | | | | |
| Over $10,000 | 35 | ( 3%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| $5,000-10,000 | 38 | ( 3%) | 2 | ( 1%) |
| $2,000- 5,000 | 98 | ( 8%) | 9 | ( 3%) |
| $1,000- 2,000 | 94 | ( 9%) | 9 | ( 3%) |
| $ 500- 1,000 | 62 | ( 5%) | 8 | ( 2%) |
| $Under $500 | 90 | ( 8%) | 10 | ( 3%) |
| None | 777 | (65%) | 291 | (87%) |
| Religion: | | | | |
| Unitarian | 32 | ( 3%) | 1 | (.5%) |
| Episcopal | 37 | ( 3%) | 1 | (.5%) |
| New School Presbyterian | 30 | ( 3%) | 1 | (.5%) |
| Old School Presbyterian | 27 | ( 2%) | 1 | (.5%) |
| Swedenbourgian | 24 | ( 2%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| Methodist | 56 | ( 5%) | 2 | ( 1%) |
| Baptist | 18 | ( 2%) | 1 | (.5%) |
| None | 970 | (80%) | 322 | (98%) |

sample, by almost a third in the "participant" group. And the clerks, draymen, and laborers were represented by less than half of the proportion in the Shaffer sample in the "participant" group.

Not surprisingly, the "participants" included a much higher proportion of property-holders listed in the 1838 Tax List than the Shaffer sample. Four hundred and twenty-four "participants," or 35% of the total group, had paid tax on some property in 1838, compared with only 11% of the Shaffer sample. There was also a definite correlation between the amount of property held, and the likelihood of community activity. Thirty-five "participants" owned property worth more than $10,000.00 and 38 owned between $5,000.00 and $10,000.00; thus, better than half of the men in the wealthiest category, and more than 40% of the group of "investors-speculators" were participants in some community activity. At the other extreme, 152 "participants" held less than $1,000.00 in property, which represented less than 10% of the total number of property-holders in the city in this category. Put another way, comparing the proportion of property-holders in the Shaffer Sample with those in the "participant" group: there were three times as many "participants" with over $5,000.00 property proportionally as in the Shaffer Sample, and almost a third less in the large category of "home owners" whose property was worth less than $1,000.00.

The religious affiliations of 226 "participants," or 18% of the total group suggest a disproportionally heavy concentration in the more fashionable and sophisticated Unitarian, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian churches, and a lighter representation of Methodists and Baptists. Doubtless, complete information on the church membership of the total community would increase the proportion of Baptists and Catholics, for which there was only fragmentary information, but it would probably not change the general picture of a high degree of church membership, compared with the total population, and a heavy concentration in the high-status churches of the city.

As a group, the "participants" included some representatives from every nativity, occupation, and probably every significant religious group in the city. But, compared to the composition of the total population, the "participant" group included a disproportionately large number of men from the north-eastern states, engaged in some professional, public, or mercantile occupation, belonging to a higher-status church, and owning at least some property. This group of "participants" included significantly smaller proportions of Germans, mechanics and laborers, and non-property holders than the community as a whole. The "participants" were most characteristically the prominent, successful, well-established members of the community.

## D. Internal Differences: The Whigs and Democrats

There were, however, important internal differences within this total group of "participants." A member of a mutual aid association was very different from an art patron or a participant in the Benevolent Ball, generally, in background and economic and occupational position in the community. Less striking than the differences between the "participants" and "non-participants," and sometimes differences only in relatively small degree, these internal differences between particular groups of "participants" are important, primarily, in suggesting the particular character and composition of these groups. An example of the differences between the Democrats and the Whigs will indicate the magnitude of such differences in an important and dramatic example.

During the three-year period, 1839-1842, 774 residents of Cincinnati who were listed in the Shaffer Directory were also listed in some newspaper account which identified their political affiliation. In many cases their names appeared on long lists of the names of people supporting the party, which appeared in the local press just before election day. Some were officers or participants at meetings, or had offered their services as members of party "vigilance committees" for election day. These 774 Cincinnatians whose political affiliation is known--438 Whigs and 336 Democrats--represented 13% of

the 6,213 citizens who voted in the 1840 election. Although certainly not a "representative sample" of the total Cincinnati electorate, these 774 Cincinnatians included primarily rank-and-file political "participants," and were far more representative of the total electorate than a sampling of loyal party leaders, or a study of the correlation between election returns and the gross characteristics of the general population.[17]

First, and most important, is the fact that of the total number of names included in the Whig and Democratic newspaper lists, 76% of the Whigs appeared in the Shaffer Directory, but only 55% of the Democratic names appeared here. The Whigs, therefore, included almost a third more members of the "community" than the Democrats; or, looking at this from the opposite perspective, the Democrats had almost twice as many participants not included in the "community" as the Democrats. The fact that only slightly more than half of the Democrats were listed in the Directory probably reflects the high number of Democrats from the outlying townships, where the Democratic strength was concentrated, who were active in the Cincinnati party. It also suggests that the Democrats were less well established in the "community" than the Whigs. The fact

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[17]These two methods of determining the differences between political parties has been practiced most notably by Lee Benson in The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1959).

that better than three-fourths of the Whigs were listed in the Directory indicates, conversely, that the Whig strength was concentrated within the city and that the party included many of the better-established citizens in the total population.

Comparable information for the 438 Whigs and 336 Democrats listed in the Cincinnati Directory for 1840 is available according to nativity, occupation, wealth, and religion. By every variable, the evidence strongly suggests that the Whigs were, as a group, better established, more successful, and more deeply involved in community affairs than the Democrats.

In nativity, the Whigs and Democrats both included a disproportionately large representation of natives, and a much smaller group of immigrants, particularly Germans, than the total Cincinnati population. The strongest Whig concentration was in the New England-New York area, however, while the Democratic strength lay in the New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania-Ohio group of states. Both parties included similar and fairly representative proportions of men from the Border and Southern states.

Turning to the foreign-born citizens represented in the two parties, it is apparent that although neither party had nearly as large a proportion of Germans as the total population of the city, or even the Shaffer sample, but that the Democrats had twice as many Germans as the

TABLE 6

WHIGS-DEMOCRATS: 1839-1842

| | | 438 Whigs | | 336 Democrats | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nativity: | Ohio-West | 54 | (12%) | 62 | (19%) |
| | New England | 81 | (18%) | 26 | ( 8%) |
| | New York-New Jersey | 85 | (20%) | 56 | (17%) |
| | Pennsylvania | 61 | (14%) | 49 | (15%) |
| | Border-South | 66 | (15%) | 49 | (15%) |
| | England-Scotland | 42 | (10%) | 18 | ( 6%) |
| | Ireland | 11 | ( 3%) | 31 | ( 9%) |
| | Germany | 20 | ( 4%) | 28 | ( 8%) |
| | Other | 17 | ( 4%) | 17 | ( 5%) |
| Occupation: | Professional | 42 | (10%) | 23 | ( 7%) |
| | Merchant | 90 | (21%) | 39 | (12%) |
| | Manufacturer | 22 | ( 5%) | 12 | ( 4%) |
| | Shopkeeper | 62 | (15%) | 51 | (16%) |
| | Official | 29 | ( 6%) | 19 | ( 6%) |
| | Mechanic | 128 | (30%) | 136 | (40%) |
| | Clerk-Drayman | 24 | ( 5%) | 32 | (10%) |
| | Laborer | 4 | ( 1%) | 6 | ( 2%) |
| | None | 37 | ( 8%) | 18 | ( 5%) |
| Wealth: | Over $10,000 | 18 | ( 4%) | 2 | ( 1%) |
| | $5,000-10,000 | 20 | ( 4%) | 1 | ( 0%) |
| | $2,000-5,000 | 57 | (13%) | 19 | ( 6%) |
| | $1,000-2,000 | 35 | ( 8%) | 23 | ( 7%) |
| | $500-1,000 | 33 | ( 7%) | 13 | ( 4%) |
| | Under $500 | 37 | ( 8%) | 28 | ( 8%) |
| | None | 238 | (66%) | 240 | (75%) |
| Religion: | Unitarian | 12 | (66%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| | Episcopalian | 20 | ( 5%) | 3 | ( 1%) |
| | New Presbyterian | 9 | ( 2%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| | Old Presbyterian | 12 | ( 3%) | 6 | ( 2%) |
| | Methodist | 27 | ( 6%) | 9 | ( 3%) |
| | Baptist | 6 | ( 1%) | 6 | ( 2%) |
| | New Jerusalem | 8 | ( 2%) | 1 | ( 0%) |
| | None | 324 | (78%) | 311 | (92%) |

Whigs. Clearly, the Germans were under-represented in politics in 1840, but they were already moving into political activity through the Democratic party. Of the immigrants from Great Britain, the English and Scotch clearly favored the Whigs, while the Irish joined the Democrats, both in somewhat greater degree than their proportion of the total population indicated. Thus, it was the German immigrants, alone, who were under-represented politically in Cincinnati in 1840.

In occupation, the Whigs had a significantly larger proportion of high-status professionals and merchants while the Democrats included primarily middle and lower status shopkeepers, mechanics, and laborers. The most significant difference was in the group of merchants: the Whigs had more than twice the number of men engaged in wholesale commerce and banking as the Democrats. Conversely, although there were better than a fourth more Whigs than Democrats in the total number of political "participants," the Democrats working as mechanics, laborers, clerks, and draymen out-numbered the Whigs in these occupations 174 to 156.

This high-status orientation of the Whigs, and the comparatively lower status of the Democrats is also indicated in the wealth of these two political groups. Two hundred and five Whig "participants," or nearly half of the total group owned some property in 1838 while less

than a fourth of the Democratic "participants" were taxpayers in that year. Moreover 38 Whigs, but only three Democrats were included among the "investor-speculator" group. At the other end of the scale, almost a third of the Democratic property-holders owned less than $500.00 worth of real estate, while only 18% of the Whigs owned property in this lowest category. As in their occupational composition, the Whigs and Democrats "participants" were both better off financially than the general population, but the Whigs were significantly better off than the Democrats.

Finally, from the fragmentary information of the religious affiliations of the political activists, it appears that the Whigs included a larger share of church members than the Democrats, and that their religious orientation was more toward the Unitarian, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian denominations, while the Democrats were primarily Methodists, Baptists, and old-school Presybterians. This dichotomy, however, should not obscure the fact that there were as many, or more Whigs in every denomination as Democrats, suggesting that there was no simple, clear-cut division between the parties according to religion.

## E. The Power Elite

In 1840 there were five banks and 11 insurance companies, 18 educational and philanthropic organizations,

15 fraternal societies, 12 fire companies, and several bodies of civic officials which comprised the major formal organizations in the city. Four hundred and four Cincinnatians listed in the Shaffer Directory, or approximately 5% of the total number of men included, were officers of at least one such formal organization during the three-year period, 1839-1842. Of the 329 individuals included in the Shaffer sample, 14, or 4%, were officers of such formal organizations. This evidence suggests that the "power elite" in Cincinnati included a considerably smaller group of citizens than the "participants," and that it numbered no more than 5% of the total population of the community.

There were 168 officers of banks and insurance companies, 69 officers of educational and philanthropic organizations, 147 officers of the city council, the school board, and lesser municipal bodies, 44 fraternal leaders, and 59 officers of local fire companies. The large majority of these individuals, 326 of the total 404 "power elite," were officers of only one formal organization; 70 individuals were officers of two such organizations; and eight individuals were officers of three different formal organizations.

As a group, the "power elite" was quite similar in character and composition of the "participants." In nativity there was a disproportionately large

TABLE 7

THE "POWER ELITE"

| | | Total Power Elite (404) | Bank and Insurance (168) | Philanthropic and Education (69) | Civic (147) | Fraternal (44) | Fire Company (59) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nativity: | Ohio-West | 45 (11%) | 14 | 7 | 16 | 4 | 8 |
| | New England | 80 (20%) | 39 | 16 | 34 | 11 | 4 |
| | New York-New Jersey | 78 (20%) | 26 | 14 | 38 | 4 | 12 |
| | Pennsylvania | 65 (16%) | 27 | 10 | 25 | 11 | 10 |
| | Border States | 48 (12%) | 17 | 10 | 16 | 5 | 12 |
| | Southern States | 25 ( 6%) | 12 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| | England-Scotland | 30 ( 7%) | 15 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 7 |
| | Ireland | 10 ( 2%) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| | Germany | 5 ( 1%) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| | Other | 17 ( 5%) | 9 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Occupation: | Professional | 50 (13%) | 10 | 25 | 21 | 5 | 1 |
| | Merchant | 94 (24%) | 69 | 8 | 19 | 7 | 4 |
| | Manufacture | 16 ( 4%) | 6 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| | Shopkeeper | 41 (10%) | 20 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 6 |
| | Official | 67 (17%) | 14 | 8 | 55 | 7 | 3 |
| | Mechanic | 79 (20%) | 22 | 9 | 23 | 14 | 31 |
| | Clerk | 17 ( 4%) | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| | Laborer | 1 ( 0%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | None: | 39 (10%) | 20 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 6 |

TABLE 7--continued

| | | Total Power Elite (404) | Bank and Insurance (168) | Philanthropic and Education (69) | Civic (147) | Fraternal (44) | Fire Company (59) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wealth: | Over $10,000 | 26 | 19 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| | $5,000-10,000 | 22 | 16 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| | $2,000-5,000 | 43 | 25 | 9 | 18 | 4 | 4 |
| | $1,000-2,000 | 40 | 25 | 3 | 19 | 5 | 4 |
| | $500-1,000 | 27 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 4 | 5 |
| | Under $500 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 7 | 5 |
| | None | 211 | 62 | 39 | 70 | 21 | 40 |
| Religion: | Unitarian | 19 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Episcopal | 19 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| | New School Presbyterian | 17 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| | Old School Presbyterian | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| | Swedenbourgian | 13 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| | Methodist | 25 | 13 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| | Baptist | 11 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| | None | | | | | | |

representation from the northeastern states and very few recent immigrants from Germany. In occupation there was a large concentration of professionals and merchants, with a disproportionately small representation of mechanics and laborers. Almost half of the "power elite" were property-owners, 48 of them investor-speculators. And over a fourth of them were members of one of the prestigous churches in the city. Finally, 65% of the power elite were participants and nearly 20% of them were officers of at least two different formal organizations.

Certainly, there were important differences within this total group of the "power elite," between bank officers and the officers of masonic lodges, between the city councilmen and the trustees of a school or library, between the officers of a fire company and the officers of a benevolent organization. For this reason it seems worthwhile to describe briefly the special characteristics and composition of each of these five major groups within the "power elite" separately.

The bank and insurance company officers included an unusually high proportion of New Englanders, but had at least some representation from every major nativity group in the city, including four Germans. As might be expected, 40% of this group were merchants, but only 6% were professionals and 15% were mechanics. Sixty per cent of this group owned some property, and 35 of them

were investor-speculators. Forty per cent of the bank and insurance company officers were members of some prestigous church, particularly the Unitarians and Episcopal denominations. And 30% of this group were also officers of some other formal organization, but only 60% were "participants."

The officers of the philanthropic and educational organizations in Cincinnati included a large proportion of New Englanders but no Germans. In occupation, there were 35% professionals, and only 14% mechanics and 11% merchants. Thirty of the 69 men in this group were property-owners, and 11 of them were investor-speculators. Almost half of them were formally affiliated with some church, particularly the Presbyterian denomination. Over a third of the officers of benevolent and educational organizations were also officers of some other formal organization, and 80% of them were also "participants."

The civic officers included a particularly high proportion of men from New York and New Jersey but no Germans. Since many of these men considered their civic office as an occupation, nearly a third of this group were included in the occupational category of officials. The majority of the rest were mechanics, professionals, merchants, and shopkeepers. Just over half of the civic officers owned property and 14 of them were investor-speculators. Just over a quarter of them were affiliated with one of the prestigious churches, particularly the

Wesley Methodist and Ninth Street Baptist Church. Nearly 80% of the civic officers were "participants," and 30% of them were also officers of some other formal organization.

The officers of the city's 15 fraternal societies included a large representation from New England and Pennsylvania and two German immigrants. In occupation the group included primarily mechanics, shopkeepers, and officials. Just over half of the fraternal officers owned some property, and three of them were investor-speculators. Only seven of the 44 fraternal officers were formally affiliated with one of the city's prestigous churches, particularly the Methodist and Baptist denominations.

Finally, the 59 officers of the fire companies included a very small representation from New England, with a large group of men from New York and New Jersey and from the South. Over half of them were mechanics, and less than 10% were merchants or professionals. Surprisingly, only 31% of the fire company officers owned property, and only one of them was an investor-speculator. Less than a third of the fire company officers were church members, and they were predominantly Methodists and Baptists. Sixty per cent of the fire company officers were "participants" and 35% of them were officers of other formal organizations.

This evidence suggests certain internal differences between these five groups within the "power elite" in terms of nativity, occupation, wealth, religious affiliation, and degree of "participation" and "power." The bank and insurance company officers, and the benevolent and educational organization officers included a significantly higher representation of the socio-economic elite of the community than the civic, fraternal, or fire company officers. But these internal differences are much less important than the fact that each of these five groups within the "power elite" included a much higher proportion of Yankess, merchants and professionals, property-owners, and members of prestigious churchs than the general population of the community. This indicates a correlation between the socio-economic elite and the "power elite" of the community in 1840.

## F. Minimum, Moderate, and Maximum Activists

Of the total group of "activists," the majority were participants in only one kind of community association, usually a political meeting, and they participated in it only once. Six hundred and eighteen Cincinnatians, or 52% of the total group of "activists," can be included in this category of "minimum activists." As a group, these minimum "activists" were the least distinguished of the total group of "activists." They most resembled in

background, occupation, wealth, and duration of residence with the general population.

Four hundred and seventy-three Cincinnatians, or 38% of the total group of "activists," had an index of activity of more than one and less than five. These "moderate Activists" were somewhat more distinguished in their character and composition than the minimum activists, and included a good number of the most respected, successful, and wealthy citizens of the community.

Lyman Beecher, for example, participated in several benevolent meetings and was on the Board of Trustees of Lane Seminary during this period, giving him a participation index of three. Timothy Walker, who complained in his diary in 1840 that his law practice, the Law School, and a new wife gave him little free time, also had a participation index of three, having attended a large Whig rally during the summer of 1840, and serving as the head of the Law School of the Cincinnati College. This group also included some men who held important positions in the community. Jesse Justice, for example, who was the chairman of the Hamilton County Whig Party, held no office in any formal organization during this period, and participated in only two other kinds of meetings, a Natchez Relief Meeting and the Mechanics and Citizens Ball.

TABLE 8

"INDEX OF ACTIVITY"

| Index of Activity: | | Number | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Minimum | 1 | 618 | 618 (52%) |
| Moderate | 2 | 259 | 473 (38%) |
| | 3 | 134 | |
| | 4 | 81 | |
| Maximum | 5 | 44 | 117 (10%) |
| | 6 | 27 | |
| | 7 | 18 | |
| | 8 | 19 | |
| | 9 | 4 | |
| | 10 | 4 | |
| | 11 | 1 | |

One hundred and seventeen Cincinnatians, or 10% of the total group of "activists," had an index of activity of five or more, and can be considered as the "maximum activists" in Cincinnati. Forty-four of these maximum activists had an index of five, 27 had an index of six, 18 had an index of seven, 19 had an index of eight, four had an index of nine, four had an index of ten, and one had an index of 11. This small group of 117 Cincinnatians, who represent less than 10% of the total group of activists and less than 1% of the total number of adult white males in the community, had a remarkably high degree of representation in the most important Cincinnati organizations at this time. They included 18 out of the 50 Bank directors, 36 out of the 118 Insurance Company officers, 22 out of the 47 Councilmen, eight out of the 25 Whig County officers, and three of the 18 Democratic officers.

TABLE 9

CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION OF "MAXIMUM ACTIVISTS"

| | 117 Maximum Activists | 329 Shaffer Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Nativity: | | |
| Ohio-West | 11 ( 9%) | 53 (16%) |
| New England | 24 (21%) | 32 (10%) |
| New York-New Jersey | 24 (21%) | 43 (13%) |
| Pennsylvania | 25 (22%) | 32 (10%) |
| Border States | 15 (12%) | 30 ( 9%) |
| Southern States | 6 ( 4%) | 14 ( 4%) |
| England-Scotland | 8 ( 7%) | 26 ( 8%) |
| Ireland | 1 ( 1%) | 23 ( 7%) |
| Germany | 2 ( 2%) | 56 (17%) |
| Other | 1 ( 1%) | 20 ( 6%) |
| Occupation: | | |
| Professional | 17 (15%) | 13 ( 4%) |
| Merchant | 35 (30%) | 14 ( 4%) |
| Manufacturer | 8 ( 7%) | 16 ( 5%) |
| Shopkeeper | 9 ( 8%) | 31 ( 9%) |
| Official | 24 (21%) | 5 ( 2%) |
| Mechanic | 18 (16%) | 150 (45%) |
| Clerk | 1 ( 1%) | 24 ( 7%) |
| Laborer | 0 ( 0%) | 34 (12%) |
| None | 5 ( 4%) | 30 ( 9%) |
| Wealth: | | |
| Over $10,000 | 17 (15%) | 0 ( 0%) |
| $5,000-10,000 | 11 (10%) | 2 ( 1%) |
| $2,000- 5,000 | 22 (20%) | 9 ( 3%) |
| $1,000- 2,000 | 12 (10%) | 9 ( 3%) |
| $ 500- 1,000 | 11 (10%) | 8 ( 2%) |
| Under $500 | 6 ( 5%) | 10 ( 3%) |
| None | 38 (32%) | 291 (87%) |
| Religion | | |
| Unitarian | 8 ( 7%) | 1 (.5%) |
| Episcopalian | 10 ( 9%) | 1 (.5%) |
| New School Presbyterian | 4 ( 4%) | 1 (.5%) |
| Old School Presbyterian | 8 ( 7%) | 1 (.5%) |
| Swedenbourgian | 2 ( 2%) | 0 ( 0%) |
| Methodist | 11 (10%) | 2 ( 1%) |
| Baptist | 5 ( 4%) | 1 (.5%) |
| None | 69 (57%) | 322 (98%) |

Also, they included 28 of the 178 large investor-speculator property-holders.

Although these 117 men included representatives of every major nativity group, occupation, religion, economic group, and age category, most of the maximum activists had quite similar backgrounds. In nativity 95 came from the eastern United States, while only 11 were immigrants, and eight of these men came from England. In occupation 86 were professionals, merchants, manufacturers, or public officials; there were only 18 mechanics and nine shop-keepers included in the group. Seventy-nine of the maximum activists owned some property in 1838, 28 of them owning more than $5,000.00 worth of real estate. The religious affiliation of 48 of these men is known, and the data suggests a high degree of church membership, particularly in the higher status churches.

The man with the highest index of activity, 11, was Robert Buchanan. During the three-year period, 1839-1842, Buchanan was officer of two formal organizations--President of the Canal Insurance Company and President of the Western Academy of Natural Sciences--and a participant in seven different types of meetings. Buchanan participated in at least four different Whig meetings, serving as an officer of the County Executive Committee; he attended the Benevolent Ball and was a manager of the Boatmen's Bethel; he was a sponsor of the Cincinnati Fuel Oil Company,

attended the meeting organized to purchase a painting of Americo Vespucci, and three different meetings to improve commercial relations with the South; he also served as a judge of the Ohio Mechanic Institute Exhibition and as a chairman of the Merchant's Meeting; finally, he signed his name to a petition not to repeal the bankruptcy law, a petition in favor of Free Banking, and of a committee to study the Free Banking Law. When these responsibilities left him some free time, Buchanan could attend the meetings of the four other associations of which he was a member: the Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Mechanics Institute, the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, and the Washington Fire Company.

Buchanan's career epitomizes that of many of the group of maximum activists. Born in Meadville, Pennsylvania in 1797, he left home by canoe at the age of 14, "having all my worldly possessions tied in a pocket hankerchief." For five years he served as a merchant's apprentice in Pittsburgh, then engaged in business in West Union, Ohio, until 1821, and then he acted as Captain of the steamboat Maysville, which plyed between New Orleans and Cincinnati. In 1823 Buchanan went into the grocery business in Cincinnati, first with Charles Macalester and Company, later in his own firm. During the next half century, Buchanan wrote, he was "concerned in six commercial houses, three cotton factories, one steam engine factory, one rolling mill, three banks and five steamboats."

In his "Sketch of a Busy Life" Buchanan listed over 40 offices, "some of them of trust, others of a commercial, social, and benevolent character" which were "given without the slightest solicitation on my part, and many others were refused, especially those of a political nature." Buchanan's obvious pride in these many offices, and in his important role in the development of many Cincinnati associations and economic enterprises, is not only a reflection of personal vanity, but also an indication of the accepted and honored pattern of action in the community. Men were active in local affairs during this period, and accepted offices of power and influence as a responsibility and reflection of their ability and reputation in the community. The degree of activity and responsibility of an individual was, thus, a measure of his success and status in the local society.[18]

Elam P. Langdon, who had an index of activity of 10, represents a very different type of maximum activist in background and interests. Born in Massachusetts in 1794, the son of a prominent Methodist preacher, Elam came to Cincinnati in 1806, to live with relatives, and entered the Post Office as a clerk at the age of 20. For the next 36 years he remained with the Post Office, most of the time as the Assistant Post Master. Early in his

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[18]For Buchanan's "Sketch of a Busy Life," as well as his Obituaries, see Wright Obituaries, C.H.S.

career Langdon became a strong supporter of education, helping to establish an Apprentice's Library in 1821, and serving as a Public School Trustee and trustee of Woodward College for many years. In 1850 Langdon retired from the Post Office, 14 years later he died. Langdon's relatively modest position in Cincinnati, his singular maintenance of this position for 36 years, and his limited but persevering involvement in community affairs is a striking contrast to the career of Robert Buchanan.

During the three-year period, 1839-1842, Elam P. Langdon was a Public School School trustee, a Woodward trustee, Vice-President of the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, a director of the Cincinnati Savings Institute and the Equitable Insurance Company, and the treasurer of the local Odd-Fellows Lodge. Besides these offices in formal organizations, Langdon participated in four different Democratic function, was on a ward temperance committee, loaned a painting for a Fine Arts benefit, and attended a teacher's meeting. He was also a member of the Independent Fire Company and, later, was a stockholder in the Cincinnati Astronomical Society.[19]

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[19]For Langdon's life, see the Langdon Papers, C.H.S.

## G. The Web of Associational Activity

In the 1840 Presidential election, which drew more Cincinnatians to the polls than any previous election, there were 6,340 votes cast in the community. Although there was great interest in the election, which offered residents their first chance to put a fellow-Cincinnatian in the White House, and a prominent local editor reported that "nearly the entire vote of the city was polled," this figure represented only half of the total adult white male population of the city. During the period, 1839-1842, there was no single community activity which involved more than half of the residents, and in most cases the proportion was considerably smaller.[20]

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[20]Mansfield, Personal Memories, 323. It is impossible to determine the exact percentage of the electorate here who voted. Sufferage qualifications, although vague and probably not well enforced, seemed to allow all white male adults who had been in the city for a year to vote. Property qualifications in the 1808 state constitution had been amended to allow renters who paid a minimal yearly rent to vote, and this was probably ignored entirely. Germans, who had not been in the city for the required time, were generally restricted. However in estimating the percentage of adult white males who voted I have used the method McCormick followed in his study, Richard McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics, American Historical Review, LXV (January, 1960), 288-301. This is only a rough estimate, however, since the vote may have been inflated by "pipe-laying," i.e., men from Kentucky who came across the river to vote, which Democratic editors charged was the reason for their defeat. For the other elections during this three-year period there was a smaller turnout. The 1840 city election drew approximately 4,000 voters and several elections on local issues such as the revision of the city charter and loans for internal improvements drew 3,000 votes or less.

Membership lists of formal organizations suggest that, at most, 10% of the potential members of such groups were actual members. The volunteer fire companies--which were the pride of the city and whose work affected every citizen--numbered approximately 1,000 men out of the total adult white male population of more than 12,000. Of the 2,044 Cincinnatians engaged in commerce, only 270 of them belonged to the Chamber of Commerce. Although there were over 10,000 mechanics and factory workers in the city, the Ohio Mechanics Institute numbered only 201 members. And the Young Men's Mercantile Library, which promoted education among all classes of the population, numbered no more than 501 members in 1840. Clearly, only a small minority of Cincinnatians belonged to such organizations at this time.

Further, the available evidence indicates that only 15% of the adult white males of the Cincinnati community were "participants," and only 5% held any office of "power" in a formal organization. The "participants" and "power elite," moreover, were hardly representative of the general population of the community. They included a disproportionately high number of New Englanders, merchants and professionals, property-holders, and church members. They included a much smaller proportion of mechanics and Germans than the total population of the community. The "participants" and "power elite,"

therefore, were dominated by favored minority of the community who comprised the socio-economic elite.

The quantitative evidence suggests that there was a definite "elite" in Cincinnati in 1840, which dominated its organization and operation. The fact that a small group of citizens was extremely active in community associations and held most of the offices in local organizations supports this argument. And yet, the argument that Cincinnati had an "elite," and that the "elite" was composed largely of the men who were most active in local associations and held the important offices in community organizations, rests upon two implicit but unproven assumptions: (1) the importance of "participation" and "power" in the general life of the community, and (2) the popular recognition of the "participants" and the "power elite" as the most influential and effective leaders in Cincinnati.

The Observatory story provides a good example which suggests the validity of these two assumptions. After Ormsby Mitchel aroused the interest of the community in the idea of building an observatory, he, and a few other men who supported the project, organized the Cincinnati Astronomical Society to raise the necessary money and run the Observatory after it was built. Rather than turning to the city government, or to a private

corporation to carry out the project, these Cincinnatians formed a public organization to accomplish their purpose. And the Cincinnati Astronomical Society, which included every citizen who had bought stock in the Observatory, was composed primarily of the same group of men whose names appeared on the lists of "participants" and men with "power." When Mitchel needed additional money to complete the furnishing of the Observatory he turned to a few "wealthy and liberal citizens." He made out a list of names:

> . . . eight names had the sum of two hundred dollars opposite them, ten names were marked one hundred dollars each, and the remaining ones, fifty dollars each. Such was the singular accuracy of this calculation that . . . it failed in but one solitary instance.

The fact that Mitchel was able to make out such a list, and that the citizens he named paid the sums requested, confirms the argument that there was a clearly-identified and responsible "elite" in Cincinnati at this time.[23]

Cincinnatians did not generally discuss the structure of their community or the names of the local leaders but, instead, seemed to accept as natural and proper the concentration of influence and authority among a small group of prominent citizens. There was an implicit assumption that the men who were the directors of the local banks, trustees of the city schools and colleges,

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[24]Cist, 1851, 342.

and who sat on the platform at community meetings should dominate and direct the affairs of the community. When an important community decision or crisis arose, the people turned instinctively to men like Robert Buchanan or Elam Langdon for advice and leadership.

To return to the three "caricatures" of community structure suggested in the Observatory story--the popular "democratic" version, Mitchel's "elitist" version, and Cist's "pluralistic" version--it is clear that Cincinnati in 1840 corresponded most accurately to the Cist "pluralistic" version. The community's associational life combined widespread popular support from a broad cross-section of the local population and leadership by a responsible, civic-minded elite. This "pluralistic" character of the community was most evident on special public occasions, like the Fourth of July, when Cincinnatians all joined to celebrate together. Every group in the community--the fire companies, the trade associations, the temperance clubs, the Sunday School children--was represented, each forming a separate platform, yet all keeping in uniform step behind the marshall and

committee of community leaders who marched at the head of the line.[25]

[25]See, for example, the Cincinnati Gazette, July 7, 1840 for a description of such a parade. This does not mean that these parades included all of the groups or all of the community leaders, or that such a clearly-defined collection could be organized. Obviously, the group of "community leaders" was not precisely defined and there were a number of marginal "community leaders." The point here is the relationship between the groups and the "community leaders" in the parade.

# CHAPTER IV

## OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

> Few People are aware of the Ups and Downs of society, beyond the present moment. We see one man rise by some fortunate conjecture of events, to honor, power, or fortune, whose decendents, perhaps whose children, may be steeped in poverty or infamy to the very lips. But the same generation, in this case, rarely witnesses the ascent and descent of the ladder; it is only by inquiry or recorded history, that we are called to contrast the affluence or the dignity of the past, with the destitutions or insignificance of the present.
>
> Charles Cist, 1841

In 1847 Charles Cist published an article, "Mercantile Life," in which he described the careers of some of Cincinnati's merchants during the last two decades. The article, based on the experiences of over four hundred men who were in business in the city in 1827, included the following examples:

No. 1. Broke, afterwards resumed business, has since left Cincinnati.
No. 2. Broke, resides now in Indiana.
No. 3. Broke, and now engages in collecting accounts.
No. 4. Died.
No. 5. Now Captain of a Steamboat.
No. 6. Left merchandising to put up pork, which business he also quit in time to save his bacon--independent in circumstances.
No. 7. Dead.

No. 8. Broke, resides now in St. Louis.
No. 9. A firm, one of the partners dies, the other out of business, both insolvent.
No. 10. Partners, both died.
No. 11. Partners, broke, one now a bookkeeper, the other dead.
No. 12. Became embarrassed and swallowed poison.
No. 13. A firm, broke.
No. 14. A firm, broke, one of the partners died a common sort, the other left the city.
No. 15. A firm, broke and left the city.
No. 16. A firm, all its members out of business.
No. 17. A firm, senior partner dead.
No. 18. A firm, senior partner dead, junior resides in Toledo.
No. 19. Is now a clerk, and left Cincinnati after becoming intemperate.
No. 20. A firm, two of the partners dead, one of whom died intemperate, the other is now engaged in other business.
No. 21. A firm, senior partner died intemperate, junior now a paster of a Presbyterian Church.
No. 22. Died of Madeira wine.
No. 23. do
No. 24. A firm, one of the partners dead, the other now in business in Pearl Street.
No. 25. A firm, junior partner in business on Pearl Street.
No. 26. A firm, broke, one of the partners now in other business, one removed to New York, and the third a clerk.
No. 27. Broke, and drowned himself in the Ohio River.
No. 28. Broke, resides in Baltimore.
No. 29. Removed to Baltimore.
No. 30. A firm, senior partner dead, the other partners dealing in real estate.
No. 31. Out of business, having broke three times.
No. 32. Broke, now dealing in flour.
No. 33. Died of Cholera.
No. 34. A firm, senior partner dead, junior gone to New Orleans.
No. 35. Broke, removed to New Orleans.
No. 36. Broke, removed to Illinois.
No. 37. Broke, removed to Missouri.

Cist concluded his list of examples with the observation:

"I know of but five now in business who were so twenty

years since. Such is mercantile success."[1]

This remarkable analysis, based on Cist's own intimate knowledge of the city and its business activity, as well as his personal experience since arriving in Cincinnati, gave dramatic support to the author's contention that young men who entered mercantile life were "venturing in a lottery in which there are many blanks to one prize." Perhaps exaggerated--reflecting Cist's personal disenchantment with mercantile life, due to the failure of his salt business--the general conclusions of this survey must have been valid, and the data accurate, since such articles were read avidly by other old-timers in the community, who would have been quick to point up any errors or distortions. The evidence of this prevailing pattern of failure and removal among the leading commercial men of Cincinnati, during this period of great growth and prosperity, suggests the high degree of uncertainty and mobility in the business community.

The patterns of mobility in Cincinnati, particularly the cases of dramatic successes and failures, were a subject of special interest to Charles Cist, which resulted in several similar surveys which described the careers of different Cincinnatians. These studies,

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[1]Although Cist said he based his conclusions on the careers of over 400 merchants, these 37 examples were the only evidence he cited in the article. Cist's Advertiser, July 27, 1847.

although hardly comprehensive or representative of the career-patterns of the total community, suggest conclusions very different from the popular assertions of great opportunities and assumptions about success during this period. Certainly, Cist was not writing these articles to discourage the further growth of the city, nor, from all of the available evidence, was he obsessed with a morbid fascination with failure; and yet, he did seem to be strongly impressed by the uncertainties of life, and by the conviction: "A few acquire the object of their pursuit, the mass sink into obscurity and insignificance."[2]

In Cincinnati in 1841 Cist included a section, "Reverses in Fortunes," in which he described some of the cases of "the ups and downs of society" he had encountered in his census-taking experience. The instances of great success and wealth were widely publicized, and did not need repetition, Cist noted, but the cases of failure and degeneration were usually overlooked. He found the daughter of one of the leading clergymen in Philadelphia, and the niece of a congressman from New York, working as a public prostitute in Cincinnati, "whom no remonstrance can rouse, nor recollections shame." He met a former friend from Pittsburgh, who had owned $50,000.00 worth of real estate when he knew him last, now a hopeless drunkard and vagabond. And he described the story of a

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[2]Cist's Weekly Advertiser, July 27, 1847.

Scotchman, who had been the proprietor of a large foundry there, now working as a common day laborer in the iron works in Cincinnati. In part a warning against the dangers of drink and vice, the only explicit conclusion Cist drew from the stories of these unfortunate Cincinnatians was the laconic comment: "Such is human life."[3]

Stories of spectacular success, especially in cases of special obstacles or unappreciated talent, delighted Cist equally. There was a boy who had sold apples for his family's only income now a "heavy business man" and a bank director. There was a man who had exhibited a monkey through the city streets for a living in 1837 now worth $30,000.00. There was an individual who had been refused credit for a stove worth twelve dollars in 1830, who owned at least $150,000.00 in property in 1845. And there was the man who made a fortune of $50,000.00 between 1830 and 1837, lost it, made another fortune of $100,000.00 and lost it in 1841, and was now working on his third fortune, worth at least $20,000.00. For Cist such stories demonstrated the romance of "the realities of human life."[4]

In 1852, Cist published an article, "The Way to Wealth," which complemented "Mercantile Life" by presenting

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[3]Cist, Cincinnati in 1841, 260-2.

[4]This boy who sold apples was Miles Greenwood, the owner of the Eagle Foundry. Cist, Miscellany, I, 162.

a similar list of individuals who had succeeded dramatically during the same period. Here, too, he cited his examples by number:

No. 1. A carpenter, twenty years ago bought property with the avails of his industry; one of the richest men in the city.
No. 2. A carpenter, ten years ago did not own a house in the city, now worth thirty thousand dollars.
No. 3. A tinner, one of the wealthiest men in Cincinnati.
No. 4. A tanner and currier, began without a dollar, independently rich.
No. 5. A tallow chandler, do.
No. 6. A tobacconist, a large property holder in and adjacent to Cincinnati.
No. 7. A tanner, a large property holder.
No. 8. A bricklayer, died a few weeks since, owning property extensively.
No. 9. A blacksmith, now extremely rich.
No. 10. A turner, changed his business and now proprietor of a large foundry, very rich.
No. 11. A printer, now a large property holder.
No. 12. A carpenter, so poor in 1828, that with his wife and five children he occupied a garret as a residence, now worth fifty thousand dollars.
No. 13. A tin and copper smith, independent in worldly circumstances.
No. 14. A painter, owns three or four fine dwelling houses.
No. 15. A firm in the foundry business, extremely wealthy, made all they are worth in less than twelve years.
No. 16. A machinist in prosperous circumstances.
No. 17. A foundry proprietor, one of the most extensive in the city, made all he is worth by industry, and without capital.

Cist's conclusion from this evidence was that "mechanical employment, in the long run, leads men generally to independence, if not riches." The evidence also suggests that shrewd property investment, or the successful transition

from commerce to large-scale industrialization were the main roads to wealth in Cincinnati by the mid-nineteenth century.[5]

## A. The Open Society

"Everything here is free, open, active," wrote a visitor to the Queen City in 1839. "To be useful one must lay aside all narrow tastes and exclusive feeling, and from a pure spirit of humanity plunge into life around him." For outsiders, almost without exception, the most striking thing about Cincinnati was the open, informal, egalitarian atmosphere of the community. Some visitors, like Mrs. Trollope, found the rough democracy of the untutored population to be offensive; others, like Tocqueville, heard of the fears and discomfort which certain refined citizens felt in the western metropolis. But most visitors agreed that the egalitarian climate in Cincinnati was a refreshing change from the stuffy, sedentary atmosphere in the east.[6]

This egalitarian atmosphere which was the source of so much comment during the period was, of course, relative, but it formed the basis of the city's reputed opportunities. When James Perkins arrived here in 1831:

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[5] Cist's Advertiser, November 5, 1852.

[6] James Freeman Clark, Autobiography, edited by E. E. Hale (Boston, 1891), 104.

> he found himself moving among a pleasant company of hospitable, easy, confiding, plain-spoken cheerful friends, gathered from all parts of the Union, and loosened at once by choice and promiscuous intercourse from the tramels of bigotry and conventional prejudice. He breathed for once freely, and felt with joy the blood flowing quick and warm throughout his spiritual frame. He caught, too, the buoyant hopefulness that animates a young, vigorous, and growing community, and mingled delightedly with groups of high-hearted enterprising men, just entering on new careers, and impelled by the hope of generous service in literary, professional, or commercial life.

This was an open society, where a man received recognition for his abilities and, simply by hard work and conscientious living, he could secure the good things in life for himself and his family. It was a community, as Timothy Walker observed in 1830, where "the upright man is a gentleman, no matter what his calling."[7]

This does not mean that Cincinnatians refused to acknowledge differences in position, knowledge or ability, but only that they refused to defer to artificial distinctions. As James Perkins put it: there was "a continual striving for social equality, which is, in substance, an antagonism to a reverence for mere wealth or professional knowledge, unsupported by ability or worth." This, indeed, was the essence of the open egalitarian character of the Cincinnati community. It was a

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[7]Perkins, Memoirs, I, 60; New England Magazine, I (1830), 24.

society based on ability and achievement. "I know of no people," Timothy Walker remarked in 1837, "who manifest so little deference for mere wealth, family, or station; and, at the same time, show so much respect for meritious labor, in whatever sphere."[8]

Implicit in the argument of an open, egalitarian society, in which an individual could achieve success through ability and enterprise, was an assumption that perseverence would result in some degree of success. Certainly, the individual who worked hard and conscientiously could not help but improve his condition as the city progressed and prospered. Some would succeed more than others, and a few might fall behind, due to misfortune or a lapse in dedication, but the prevailing pattern would be one of a steady rise through the ranks of society.

This assumption was valid in the cases of many Cincinnatians, but it rests on two questionable premises. First, there is the premise that people generally remained in the city for a considerable period of time, long enough to benefit from the advantages and to enjoy some measure of success. Second, there is the premise that these people who remained in the city did, in fact,

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[8]Timothy Walker pointed to the crux of the matter when he spoke of the difference between "equality of right" and "the right to equality of condition." Chambrum, Making, 70; Perkins, Memoirs, II, 245; Walker, Annual Discourse, 25-6.

improve their condition or status.

The open character of the local society, however, implied not only opportunity, or fluidity within the community, but also a high degree of movement into and out-of the community. Despite its dominant size and reputed attractions, Cincinnati in 1840 still served primarily as an entrepot for the Ohio Valley and West, and probably lost the majority of the migrants who arrived here, stayed awhile, and then passed on. The result was that for many newcomers Cincinnati was a jumping-off point or a testing ground, but not a permanent residence.

Also, the open character of the society implied mobility but not necessarily a prevailing pattern of success. Despite the enormous opportunities which the city offered, few individuals were able to take advantage of them. Opportunity did not flow through all levels of society and most people switched from place to place and from job to job in the vain search for success. Also, there were enormous risks involved in endeavors which promised success, and perhaps as many individuals failed as succeeded.

During the pre-Civil War period, particularly the years 1820-1860, Cincinnati grew and prospered at an ever-increasing rate. And yet, this pattern of general growth and prosperity involved certain major changes in

the character and composition of the community, and it effected every individual differently. While the total Cincinnati population doubled, or better, nearly every decade, there was also a less noticeable but equally important trend of restlessness and mobility among the resident population. In the course of every ten-year period many, perhaps the majority, of the residents left the community or died, and those who stayed moved from home to home at least once. Concomitant with the general pattern of prosperity and increased wealth of the total community was a trend of concentration of wealth in a smaller and smaller proportion of the population, and a high degree of fluctuation in individual fortunes. At the same time that the local economy was expanding, diversifying, and industry was overtaking commerce as the leading component, the occupational structure was becoming increasingly specialized and stratified, and certain individuals benefited while others suffered from these changes.

In order to appreciate these particular developments within the community during this period of rapid growth and prosperity it is necessary to describe certain changes in the social structure and the experiences of certain individuals. For most Cincinnatians changes in these internal conditions, and their personal experiences, were as important, if not more so, than the influx of

newcomers or the increase in the general economy. In short, only by focusing on the composite careers of individuals--their residential, occupational, and wealth mobility--within the changing composition of the local population, its occupational and wealth structure, can the implications of this open society as it affected individual Cincinnatians be understood.

## B. Priority and Persistence

In the 1838 Semi-Contennial Celebration special recognition was given to a group of 37 Cincinnatians who had lived in the city for more than 30 years. These "old pioneers," as they were affectionately called, had grown up with the city and could attest to its dramatic progress and prosperity. They provided a living link between the past and the present, a sense of continuity in a period of rapid change.

The special affection and attention accorded these "old pioneers" may also have been prompted by a sense of their uniqueness. In a community which doubled its population nearly every decade, and which was distinctive for its youthful and migrant composition, such a length of residence and stability was a rare thing. The popularity of stories recounting the city's early days and the general interest among citizens in the city's history reflected, in part, the fact that many

Cincinnatians lacked, but longed for roots in the city's past.

During the period before the Civil War the population of Cincinnati doubled, or better, nearly every decade, rising from an estimated 750 in 1800, to 2,540 in 1810, to 9,602 in 1820, to 24,381 in 1830, to 46,382 in 1840, to 115,438 in 1850, to 161,044 in 1860. This population growth was largely the result of immigration, which provided the community with an unusually high percentage of young adults and recently arrived migrants.

The high proportion of young people in the community impressed one local observer, who wrote later that "such an amount of youthful blood gave a peculiar air of life and activity to the community." Compared with the national population, Cincinnati had a third less citizens over the age of fifty, and a sixth less children under the age of ten. "It was a rare thing to see an old man" in the young western metropolis, this observer noted. Likewise, according to another local account, the young couples who settled here put off starting a family until they had been settled for several years. These demographic conditions, representative of a dynamic young community, provided Cincinnati with an unusually large proportion of workers and relatively few children or old people who required special attention and assistance. This fact helps to explain why Cincinnati was commonly called "the

workingman of cities."[9]

A majority of the men in Cincinnati in 1840 had been residents of the community for less than ten years. Although the population of the city did not quite double during the decade, at least some of the 24,831 residents in 1830 had died, or moved, and been replaced by the increasing flood of immigrants during the 1830's. Estimates of the yearly population increase during these years are unreliable--based on increases in the number of votes or the new buildings erected during the year--but it is clear that the population rose slowly between 1830 and 1835--a period of fiscal uncertainty, a destructive flood, and a demoralizing fire--and then accelerated rapidly through 1840 and onward until mid-century. During the 1820's the population had increased by an annual average of 1,500; from 1830 through 1835

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[9]The Christian Examiner, LXVII (1851), 14; Cist, 1841, 32-8; Cincinnati Gazette, August 21, 1840. For the age structure of the national population see J. Potter, "The Growth of Population in America, 1700-1860" in Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography, edited by D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (Chicago, 1965), 670-1. For an interesting discussion of the proportion of the total population engaged in some occupation before 1840, which puts this in better perspective, see Maurice Neufeld, "Three Aspects of the Economic Life of Cincinnati from 1815 to 1840," OSA&HQ, XLIV (1934), 65-80. For example, in 1820 only 17% of the total population was engaged in an occupation, and it was not until 1870 that more than 35% of the total population were employed. In 1840 the Census showed only 13% of the Louisville population working, and less than 16% of the Pittsburgh population.

it dropped to 1,000 a year; during the next five years the annual rate of increase rose to 4,000. But this pace--which seemed fantastic in 1840--would soon be outstripped during the next ten years, when the population increased by an average of 7,000 each year.[10]

These two conditions--the youthful composition of the population and the large proportion of recent immigrants--suggest that most of the men in Cincinnati in 1840 had been adult residents of the community for less than ten years. Some of them, those who had grown up in the city, only reached adulthood during the 1830's. Others, those who came from the outside as migrants, settled in the community within this period. Consequently, in 1840 the large majority of the residents had less than a decade of experience as adults in Cincinnati.

An analysis of the experience of the Shaffer sample, in order to determine their priority of residence, illustrates this point. Over half of the names taken from the 1840 Directory--185 of the 329 individuals in the sample--did not appear in the 1837 directory, or any

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[10]The estimated population during this twenty-year period is as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1830: 24,831 | 1835: 29,000 | 1840: 46,381 | 1845: 74,699 |
| 1831: 26,071 | 1836: ------ | 1841: 51,010 | 1846: 82,167 |
| 1832: 28,014 | 1837: ------ | 1842: 55,112 | 1847: 90,384 |
| 1833: 27,645 | 1838: ------ | 1843: 61,034 | 1848: 99,422 |
| 1834: ------ | 1839: ------ | 1844: 67,907 | 1849: 109,314 |
| | | | 1850: 115,438 |

From Cist, 1841, 38 and Annual Report . . . City of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1901), 850-1.

preceding directory. This suggests that these "newcomers" had arrived in the city or reached adulthood sometime within the last five years. Seventy-two individuals in the Shaffer sample first appeared in the 1837 or 1834 directory, but not in the 1831 directory, and probably had been adult residents of the community for less than ten years. Together, these 257 individuals who had been adults in Cincinnati for less than a decade represent better than three-fourths of the total Shaffer sample.

TABLE 10

Priority of Shaffer Sample

| First Appear in Directory for: | Number |
|---|---|
| 1840 | 185 |
| 1837 | 37 |
| 1834 | 35 |
| 1831 | 33 |
| 1829 | 20 |
| 1825 | 11 |
| 1819 | 7 |

Of the remaining 71 individuals in the Shaffer sample, 33 first appeared in the 1831 directory, 11 in the 1825 directory, and seven in the 1819 directory. The individuals who appeared in the 1831 directory, but not in

the 1829 directory, seem to have been adult members of the community for approximately a decade. The 38 individuals whose names appear in the 1829 directory clearly had been in Cincinnati for more than a decade. These "old-timers" represent 12% of the total Shaffer sample.

As a group the "new-comers," the 185 individuals whose names did not appear in any preceding directory, included a much larger proportion of foreign immigrants and a greater concentration of mechanics and laborers than the general Shaffer population. Nearly 30% of the "new-comers" were born in Germany, a proportion which corresponds with the percentage of German-born residents recorded in the census, but which is a third larger than the percentage of German-born residents included in Shaffer. Apparently, these German "new-comers" were the first representatives of the immigrant influx of the late 1830's to become part of the Cincinnati community.

The occupational composition of the "new-comers" in the Shaffer sample reveals a much smaller proportion of professionals and merchants, and a much larger proportion of mechanics and laborers than are included in the total Shaffer sample population. This evidence suggests that the young men and recent arrivals who were starting out in the city began as hired workers, not in the higher ranks of the local occupational structure. The impression

TABLE 11

Comparison Between Old-Timers and New-Comers

| Nativity | 185 "New-Comers" | 38 "Old-Timers" |
|---|---|---|
| Ohio | 30(16%) | 7(18%) |
| N.E. | 14( 8%) | 5(13%) |
| N.Y.-N.J. | 20(10%) | 8(20%) |
| Penn. | 14( 8%) | 4(10%) |
| Border | 10( 6%) | 3( 7%) |
| South | 8( 4%) | 3( 7%) |
| Eng.-Scot. | 16( 9%) | 5(13%) |
| Ireland | 17( 9%) | 1( 2%) |
| Germany | 52(28%) | 2( 5%) |
| Other | 3( 2%) | 0 |
| None | 1( 0%) | 0 |
| **Occupation** | | |
| Profess. | 4( 2%) | 2( 5%) |
| Merchant | 1( 0%) | 3( 8%) |
| Manufact. | 4( 2%) | 1( 2%) |
| Shopkeep | 14( 8%) | 3( 7%) |
| Official | 1( 0%) | 3( 7%) |
| Mechanic | 90(48%) | 15(38%) |
| Clerk | 22(12%) | 2( 5%) |
| Laborer | 23(13%) | 0( 0%) |
| None | 23(13%) | 9(24%) |

that many of these "new-comers" did not establish strong ties in the city is corroborated by the fact that over half of their number--102 out of the 185 "new-comers"--did not appear in any directory after 1840, and probably left the city soon after they had arrived.

An analysis of the "old-timers," the 38 individuals who appeared in at least one directory before 1830, indicates certain marked differences in background. Only 8 of the "old-timers"--less than 20% of the group--had been born outside the United States, and only two came from

Germany. Only 15 of the 38 "old-timers" were mechanics, and none were laborers in 1840. Almost half of those who listed some occupation were engaged in a profession, commerce, or as a public or private office-holder. Not surprisingly, nine of the 38 "old-timers" were retired. And yet, despite their more advanced age, compared with the "new-comers," only 10 of the 38 individuals in the group disappeared from the city directories after 1840; in fact, 21 of them remained in the city at least through 1850. This evidence suggests that the "old-timers" who had planted their roots in the city before 1830 tended to stay there.

Turning to the experience of the Shaffer sample in the years following 1840, in order to determine their persistance of residence, a similar pattern emerges. One hundred and twenty-six individuals, or nearly 40% of the sample, do not appear in any subsequent directory and probably left the community soon after 1840. Seventy other individuals in the Shaffer sample disappear by 1850 and probably died or moved at some time during the decade. Thus nearly 60% of the Shaffer sample was not living in Cincinnati by mid-century.

The remaining 131 individuals in the Shaffer sample remained in the city through 1850. Thirty-one of them appeared last in the 1850 directory, 28 of them disappeared after the 1855 directory, but 72 of them were

still listed in the 1861 directory. These 72 individuals, representing a fourth of the total Shaffer sample that was traced from 1840 through 1861, lived in Cincinnati for at least two decades after 1840.

TABLE 12

Persistance: 1840-1860

| Last appear in Directory for: | "Number" |
|---|---|
| 1840 | 126 |
| 1844 | 38 |
| 1846 | 32 |
| 1850 | 31 |
| 1855 | 28 |
| 1861 | 72 |

A comparison between the 126 individuals in the Shaffer sample who disappeared from the directories after 1840 and the 131 who were listed in the 1850 directory suggests certain differences between these two groups in terms of nativity and occupation. Almost a third of the former group, but less than 10% of the latter group were Germans, which indicates that a good number of Germans left Cincinnati, or died, during the 1840's. Almost 20% of the latter group, but less than 10% of the former group were born in Ohio, suggesting that individuals born in or near Cincinnati tended to remain there. Of the group

which left after 1840, better than half were mechanics, and 15% were laborers,while there were only three shopkeepers, one merchant, one manufacturer, and no officials. Of the group which remained after 1850, however, just less than half were mechanics, but there were only three laborers, 15 shopkeepers, six merchants, four manufacturers, and six officials. This evidence suggests that while the mechanics left and remained in the city after 1840 in roughly the proportion of their total representation, the laborers, who had no strong occupational ties in the city, tended to leave but the merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, and officials, who had a commitment here, tended to remain.

Finally, looking at the total experience of the Shaffer sample from 1820 through 1860, in order to determine the duration of their listing in the directories, it is clear that the average length of adult residence in Cincinnati was approximately ten years. One hundred and seventy-five individuals appeared in the Cincinnati directoriesfor less than ten years, and 153 individuals appeared in the city directories for more than ten years. One hundred and three of these 153 individuals appeared in the directories for more than 20 years, and there were 27 of them who appeared over a 30 year period, or longer. This suggests that, despite the city's proclaimed attractions and prosperity, most residents did not remain in

Cincinnati throughout their full adult life.

TABLE 13

Total Length of Residence, 1820-1860
of Shaffer Sample

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 - 4 Years | 128 |
| 5 - 9 Years | 47 |
| 10 - 14 Years | 24 |
| 15 - 19 Years | 26 |
| 20 - 24 Years | 35 |
| 25 - 29 Years | 31 |
| 30 - 34 Years | 25 |
| 25 - 39 Years | 2 |
| | 329 |

This impression is supported by the evidence collected by the Pioneer Association in 1856. This organization, an outgrowth of the group of 37 "old pioneers" honored in the Semi-Centennial Celebration, was made up of all residents of the city who had been in the city before 1812. They held periodic meetings, to reminisce and record the depletion of their ranks. In 1856 they collected a list of "the old ones at home," those who had resided in the city for 30 years or more. This list included the names of 72 Cincinnatians, 15 of whom had been living in the city for at least 50 years. Clearly, by the time the city had reached a population of

over 150,000 there were few Cincinnatians who had been residents of the community during the majority of the years of its growth.

## C. Physical Expansion and Fragmentation

In 1848 a prominent Cincinnati businessman wrote to Hiram Powers, the city's world-famous sculptor, now living in Italy, about the changes which had occurred since he had left in 1834. The city was "wonderfully changed" Reuben Springer wrote;

> the tide of settlement is now leaving the valley and spreading out over all the surrounding hills, east, north, and west, and ground within one or two miles of the Court House (on the corner of Main Street and the Canal) is selling by the foot.

He described the "large fortunes" which Cincinnati capitalists had made in real estate. Power's patron, Nicholas Longworth, for example, had seen his property increase ten-fold in value since 1838, and was said to be worth more than $3,000,000.[11]

During the 1840's Cincinnati spread rapidly across the basin area and up the surrounding hillsides. The population explosion fed a building boom which continued without interruption through 1850. The 1840-1842 depression, which revealed the dangers of commercial

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[11] R. P. Springer to H. Powers, 9-19-48, in the Powers Collection, C.H.S.

and railroad speculation to Cincinnatians, prompted local investors to diversify their investments, and put some of their money into safe, steady real estate. The introduction of large amounts of investment capital into the building industry made large-scale projects possible for the first time. Large estates and farms on the edge of the city were bought, broken up into small lots, and filled with modest houses and tenements. Whole blocks in the center of the city were torn down and replaced with large four- and five-story brick "blocks." But the building boom could not keep pace with the population explosion, and a housing shortage and high rents continued until the end of the decade.[12]

In 1840 the total number of new buildings topped 400, and the figure increased by approximately 100 units every year thereafter through 1850, when 1,418 new buildings were erected in the Queen City. Every year hundreds of houses went up on the northern and western perimeter of the city while large commercial buildings and factories were erected in the heart of the city and along Deer Creek. In 1845 the 221 foot spiral of St. Peter's Cathedral pierced the Cincinnati panorama and by 1850 Deer Creek boasted the largest structure in the city, a seven-story factory. By 1850 there were 14,868 buildings in

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[12]For discussion of new capitalist builders, see Cist's Advertiser, January 15, 1845.

the city, covering an area which extended to a distance of nearly three miles from the corner of Fourth and Main Streets, and citizens began to complain about the "extensive territorial distances within our city limits."[13]

This physical expansion, combined with the effects of the immigrant influx and large-scale industrialization during the 1840's, caused the gradual fragmentation of the physical community. As the dirt and noise from nearby factories and commercial activity increased, and the poorer and more disreputable elements began to take over the riverfront wards most decent families moved out of the core area of the city. The elegant old homes were converted into boardinghouses and offices; the apartments over the shops were turned into work-rooms; and the alleys became disreputable dens for a variety of illicit activities. Many of the prominent old congregations sold their buildings in the heart of the city to poorer immigrant groups, or tore them down, and moved to the residential sections north of Sixth Street, called the "suburbs."[14]

As the business and residential dichotomy increased, the core of the city no longer drew the community

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[13]Cist, 1851, 20, Cincinnati Commercial, June 2, 1852.

[14]These developments are reported in notices throughout the 1840's in the Cincinnati Gazette, Inquirer and particularly Cist's Advertiser. For the church changes in 1847, see Cist's Advertiser, March 29, 1847.

together but, instead, gradually repelled citizens, driving them into their own particular ghetto-like areas. As property values and rents in the core area increased, many small merchants and artisans moved their shops out to the suburbs, near their homes and those of their customers. As the newspaper accounts of nefarious activities along Bank Alley, Church Alley, and Hoop Pole Row increased, women gradually stopped shopping in the Lower Market Street and Fifth Street markets and turned instead to their local shopping districts. By 1850 each of the suburbs has its own markets, churches, and public halls, and a smaller and smaller proportion of Cincinnatians had any reason or desire to come into the center of the city regularly.

As residents moved out of the core area, and old buildings were torn down, the business district took on a new appearance. "The old landmarks of village days are rapidly disappearing," an editor remarked in 1844. A series of large new warehouses went up along the water front, giving the city a handsome and uniform appearance from the river. Several "squatty dilapidations" along Broadway were removed and replaced with modern buildings, giving this street "a lofty array of the noblest structures in the city." In the late 1840's thirteen large public buildings were erected in the central business district, between Third and Fourth Streets, east of

Walnut. By 1850 the core of the city had evolved from the multi-purpose center of community activity into a specialized commercial and financial district.[15]

Because the suburbs were developed rapidly, often by a few capitalists who put up whole blocks of buildings, most of them had a fairly uniform character and appeal. Land north of the Canal was assumed to be for Germans, the area on the western part of the city, which was built quickly and cheaply, soon became run-down and within the means of all but the poorest families, while the residents of certain areas, like west Fourth Street and the section between Sixth Street and the Canal, kept their property in larger lots and maintained their houses in an elegant style. Cincinnatians knew immediately the differences between the different parts of the city: "the Flatiron Ward," "Raging Tad," "Old Swamp," and "little Germany," just as they knew what went on in "Bucktown" or along "Gas Alley." By mid-century local newspapers referred to citizens as residents of a particular district, or a habitue of a notorious alley, rather than as "Cincinnatians."

From a compact, multi-purpose, integrated unit the city changed by mid-century into an extended coalition

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[15]Cincinnati Gazette, August 3, 1944; Cincinnati Commercial, February 14, 1852; Cist, 1851, 325-30.

of separate, clearly-defined sections, each with a distinctive function or character. "The Bottom" became a miserable slum, with large run-down tenements, raucous coffee-houses, disreputable boardinghouses, and various haunts of vice and corruption crowded together with the large warehouses and mercantile establishments. Between Third and Sixth Street were the market houses and the major retail shops, banks, and business offices; also, along the western end of Fourth and Sixth Streets were some of the finest residences. From Sixth Street to the Miami Canal was the residential area where fashionable men and women promenaded on Sundays. And north of the Miami Canal was the "over-the-Rhine" area, the exclusive district of Cincinnati's German-born population.

## D. Residential Mobility

In his report on his survey of the city for the 1840 Census Charles Cist remarked that he found an old family living in Ward IV, which had resided in the same house for more than 20 years. Cist's special mention of this family, and the constant newspaper accounts of people moving within the city, suggest that there was a general pattern of residential mobility within the city during the pre-Civil War period. The first day of May was the date at which old leases were terminated, and new ones started, and it seemed to some observers that everyone

in the city packed up his belongings and moved at that time.[16]

The residential careers of the Shaffer sample and the old-timers illustrates the degree of residential mobility within the city during the period preceding 1840. Of the 38 individuals in the Shaffer sample who were in the city for at least 10 years, and were included in at least four directories, none maintained the same address throughout this period: six individuals changed residence once, 18 changed residence twice, nine changed residence three times, two changed residences four times, and three changed residences five times. On an average, therefore, these individuals changed their residence very other directory, suggesting that they moved at least every five years they were in the city.

The evidence of residential mobility of the "old-timers" listed in both the 1819 and 1840 directories indicates the same pattern of residential change. Of these 155 "old-timers" who were listed in four or more directories, 16 listed only one address, 22 listed two different addresses, 40 listed three addresses, 40 listed four addresses, 37 listed five addresses, and three listed six addresses. Since not all of these "old-timers" were listed in all seven directories from 1819 to 1840, a better

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[16]Cincinnati Gazette, August 13, 1840.

measure of residential mobility compares the number of different addresses listed with the number of directories listed in. Of the 66 individuals who were listed in all seven directories, seven maintained the same address throughout this period, 18 moved once, 21 twice, 12 moved three times, seven moved four times, and one moved five times. This evidence suggests that while there were a few "old-timers who remained at the same address from 1819 through 1840, the general pattern was one of movement at least three times during this 20 year period, or almost every six years.

TABLE 14

Residential Mobility: 1820-1840

| Number of Directory Listings: | Number of Residences Listed: | | | | | | | Total: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | x | x | x | 9 |
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 10 | x | x | 30 |
| 6 | 7 | 6 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 2 | x | 50 |
| 7 | 7 | 18 | 21 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 66 |
| Total | 16 | 29 | 40 | 40 | 37 | 3 | 0 | 155 |

A similar pattern of frequent residential turnover is evident in the experience of the 131 individuals in the Shaffer sample who were in Cincinnati through 1850, and were included in at least four directories. Here, only one listed one residence, 17 listed two addresses,

27 listed 3 addresses, 46 listed four addresses, 37 listed five address, and 11 listed six addresses. The average number of listings for those individuals included in four directories was three different addresses; the average for those included in four directories was three different addresses; the average for those included in five directories was four addresses; and the average for those in all six directories was four addresses. Clearly, in the period from 1840 to 1860, Cincinnatians continued to change their residence at least every five years.

TABLE 15

Residential Mobility: 1840-1860

| Number of Directory Listings: | Number of Residences Listed | | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| 4 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 12 | x | x | 29 |
| 5 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 14 | x | 34 |
| 6 | 0 | 5 | 14 | 23 | 23 | 11 | 76 |
| Total: | 1 | 17 | 27 | 46 | 37 | 11 | 139 |

## E. Concentration of Wealth

During the pre-Civil War period the common road to economic fortune was through investment in real estate. Property ownership was generally considered to be the safest and, according to some people, the most profitable form of investment available at this time. Real estate values increased as the population and prosperity

of the city grew. A typical story was that of a German gardener who bought two and a half acres at the west end of Eighth Street in 1838 for $2,500 and sold the lot in 1851 for $52,000. Or there was the case of Nicholas Longworth, Cincinnati's leading property-holder in 1838, who owned over a hundred pieces of real estate, valued at $118,000.

In 1804, at the age of 21, the impoverished son of a New Jersey Tory, Nicholas Longworth arrived in Cincinnati. He took up the profession of the law but, like many other men of his generation, his mind turned to land speculation. Once, for defending a man accused of horse-stealing, Longworth received two second-hand copper stills in payment. Since they were full, and Longworth had no interest in liquor-selling, he traded the stills to a tavern-keeper for a thirty-three acre lot to the west of the city. At the time men throught Longworth was crazy but this property, and other pieces acquired over the years, eventually made Longworth the wealthiest man in the city, and the second largest tax-payer in the United States.

By 1828, Longworth was able to retire from his legal practice and live off of the profits of his property. In an effort to increase the value of his unused land, and to promote new industry in the community, Longworth began to plant vineyards along the rocky slopes above

the Ohio River. After years of experimentation he found that the native Catawba grape flourished in the Cincinnati climate, and the Longworth wine-cellars were in business. Eventually Nicholas Longworth was more renowned and revered as the patron of Dionysus in the Ohio Valley than as the "Croesus of the West."

According to local tradition Longworth was a generous man, but one who was extremely eccentric in his ways. He was open with his money, both in making it and giving it away. He often financed poor residents who wanted to buy homes, contributing to the large number of home-owners in the city at the same time he increased the value of his own fortune. Every day his office was crowded with twenty, thirty, fifty or more residents seeking charity, and he listened to each case patiently, and often provided relief "on a system which protects itself from being made a means of fostering idleness or mendacity." He was also known to turn down a request. Once, hearing a request for a loan to a deserving widow of excellent character he replied:

> I shan't give a cent. Such persons will always find plenty to relieve them. I shall assist none but the idle, drunken, worthless vagabonds that nobody else will help. If you meet with such cases call upon me.[17]

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[17]Longworth's "system" of charity is described, but never clearly defined in Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1851 (Cincinnati, 1851) 333-8. In many cases he put his

For Longworth, and many other Cincinnatians, personal economic success paralleled the spectacular rise in the total value of real estate in Cincinnati. In 1788, at the original donation of lots, the 30 settlers received their initial share of an in-lot and out-lot for the total price of less than $200. Ten years later, in 1798, property in Cincinnati was taxed at a value of $133,889. Two decades later, in 1817, the value of Cincinnati real estate had increased over ten-fold, to $1,708,296. In 1838 this figure had increased to $4,935,500. By 1850 the value of property in the city was assessed at $34,194,430; and eight years later, in 1858, the total value of Cincinnati real estate was $63,746,316.[18]

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supplicants to work at his numerous enterprises, as he did with Irish laborers, who worked his stone quarries during the 1849 hard times for less than $3 a week. But he also gave generously, and continuously, with no apparent compensation to the famous Cincinnati artist, Hiram Powers, thereby allowing him to go to Italy and sculpture full time. A somewhat uncritical account is given by his great-grand-daughter, Clara Longworth de Chambrun, in her biography of the second Nicholas Longworth, The Making of Nicholas Longworth (New York, 1933), 27-55. Cist wrote that he had "never met a more decided original" than Longworth (CA, February 28, 1849), an impression which can be readily corroborated by reading the Powers-Longworth Correspondence in the Hiram Powers Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society. Longworth gave his own description of his career at the development of Cincinnati in a speech printed in Daily Cincinnati Chronicle, February 25, 1859.

[18]Greve, History of Cincinnati, 189-90; The modest increase in the value of property between 1817 and 1838 was due to the fact that it was under-assessed at the latter date; a new assessment in 1848 helps to explain the six-fold increase in value by 1850.

During the first fifty years of Cincinnati's history property became concentrated in the hands of a few men quite quickly. Soon after the original donation of lots in 1788, when the first settlers drew an equal number of in-lots and out-lots, the process of concentration began. Of the 30 men who participated in the original donation, only two actually took up their deeds. Of the men who took part in the second donation, only about 20% of them actually settled here. By 1800 most of the land in the original donations were abandoned or transferred, and the 1799 tax-list included only a few names of the original recipients of property here.[19]

In 1799 there were 185 property-holders in the community which numbered less than 750 residents. Many, if not most, of these property holders were investors who did not live here; of the total population of adult white males who were citizens, however, everyone owned some property. The distribution of the property in 1799, evaluated at $133,889, already indicated a concentration of the majority of the land in the hands of a few taxpayers. Ten per cent of the property was owned by three men, each of whom owned more than $3,000 worth of property. Fifty per cent of the property was owned by 36 men, each of whom owned property worth more than $1,300, and together

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[19] Ibid., 189-92; Cincinnati Commercial, July 15, 1859.

comprised 20% of the total number of tax-payers. Over half of the tax-payers owned property worth less than $500, which represented less than 20% of the total amount of property in the city.

Two decades later, in 1817, the population of Cincinnati had climbed to 9,120, the value of property had risen to $1,780,296, and the number of tax-payers had increased to 659. In the course of this period property-ownership changed from being a characteristic of the entire citizen population into a privilege of less than 30% of the total adult white male population while the percentage of the total population of the city who owned real estate declined from nearly 25% to less than 7%. Despite the increase in the number of tax-payers and the value of property, however, nearly 10% of the property was still controlled by only three tax-payers: John H. Piatt with $86,500, the Cincinnati Steam Mill with $40,000, and O. M. Spencer with $39,000. Eighty-one men, who comprised 12% of the total tax-payer group, and owned property worth at least $5,000 a piece, together owned 56% of the property in the city. Almost half of the tax-payers in the city, 333 men, owned property worth less than $1,000 which together comprised less than 10% of the total population in the city.[20]

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[20]This analysis is based on the MSS Census for Cincinnati in 1817, in the Cincinnati Historical Society.

By 1838, two decades later, the total population of Cincinnati was over 40,000, the value of property had increased to $4,935,500, and the number of tax-payers had risen to 2,559. Yet, despite talk of astronomical increases in the value of real estate during these years, the assessed value of property did not change significantly since 1817. The nearly three-fold increase in the value of Cincinnati property was due to the increased amount of property being taxed, and the four-fold increase in the number of tax-payers, rather than to any increase in the assessment of a given piece of property. In spite of probable increases in the value of their holdings, there was no pattern of a general increase in the property assessment of individuals between 1817 and 1838. The result is probably a distortion of the actual wealth of the property-holders, particularly the wealthiest ones, which under-estimated the value of their estates.

Still, the pattern of a constricted proportion of the citizenry owning property, and the concentration of wealth in a smaller and smaller percentage of the general population continued. During the two decades, 1817 to 1838, the proportion of adult white males owning some real estate declined from nearly 30% to less than 20% and the proportion of the total population owning property decreased from 7% to approximately 5%. There was also a comparable pattern of concentration of wealth.

Ten per cent of the property in 1817 was owned by three men, who comprised .5% of the tax-payers of the city; in 1830 10% of the property was owned by seven men, but they now comprised only .3% of the city's tax-payers. In 1817 50% of the property was owned by 81 men who made up 12.5% of the tax-payers; in 1838 50% of the property was owned by 178 men, who represented just 7% of the total number of tax-payers. Those owning less than $1,000 worth of real estate increased from 50% to 60%.

During the 1840's many of Cincinnati's capitalists saw their fortunes increase ten-fold, or more, as the result of the building and industrial boom. The real estate of Nicholas Longworth increased in value from $118,000 in 1838 to over $1,000,000 in 1850; John Baker's estate, the second largest in the city at mid-century, increased from $14,000 to over $300,000; during the same period many small investors in 1840, such as Griffin Taylor and R. R. Springer, became members of the city's economic elite as the result of increased land values.

The result, however, was an increasing concentration of the city's wealth in a decreasing proportion of the total population. Although the value of real estate increased nearly ten-fold--from $4,935,500 in 1838 to $38,230,246 in 1850, the number of property holders less than doubled, from 2,559 to 5,360. While the population of the city increased nearly three-fold,

the number of men controlling a fourth of the total real estate in the city increased by little more than a half--from 62 to 98--a number which represented less than one-half per cent of the total number of householders in the city in 1850.[21]

## F. Economic Mobility

The economic careers of some of the 1838 Taxpayers illustrate individual differences within this pattern of a general increase in property values in Cincinnati. Property was changing hands constantly, and personal holdings expanded or contracted depending on the success or failure of the individual. Jacob Burnet, for example, who was one of the largest property-holders in 1818, lost most of his real estate after the Panic of 1819, and his estate in 1838 represented property acquired within the period which followed.

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[21]Unfortunately, comparable information about the value of individual estates and the distribution of wealth among the total population is not available. In 1858 the Cincinnati Commercial published the names of value of property of individuals owning property worth more than $500. But it failed to include information for two wards, I and XV, which makes aggregation of the data and distribution of the wealth among the ranks of property-holders impossible. In 1860 the census reported 27,055 residents who owned some estate--real or personal--but this was based on personal estimates and not assessed value. One thousand six hundred and forty-two of these individuals who estimated their estates at over $10,000 owned over 70% of the total wealth reported in the census. This analysis is based on Lenard Harding, "The Negro in Cincinnati, 1860-1870: A Demographic Study of a Transitional Decade" (University of Cincinnati, M.A., 1966).

Thus, the value of his estate decreased slightly, from $41,150 in 1817 to $38,160 in 1838. Other individuals, who had little or no property in 1817, enjoyed a dramatic increase in the value of their estates during this period. Oliver Fairchild, who owned property worth $320 in 1817, increased the value of his holding over 40 times, to $12,580 in 1838.

Two hundred and seventeen of the names listed on the 1838 Tax List are also included on the 1817 Tax List, either as property-owners or as residents of the city with no taxable property. Of these 217 individuals, 88 owned no property in 1817, and of the 129 who owned property in 1817, 50 increased the value of their estates, 55 decreased the value of their estates, and 24 maintained the value of their estates over this 20 year period. The evidence suggests that while 138 individuals enjoyed some degree of economic success, particularly the acquiring of some property during this period, 79 of the 129 individuals who owned some property in 1817 were unable to increase the value of their holdings between 1817 and 1838.

Turning to the economic careers of the 1838 taxpayers after 1838, a similar pattern emerges. The total value of Cincinnati real estate in 1850 was $34,194,430, or approximately seven times the value in 1838. A list of 178 taxpayers who estates were worth at

least $30,000 includes the names of 120 men listed on the 1838 Tax List. All of these taxpayers increased the value of their estates during this period, but not all in proportion to the general increase in the total value of Cincinnati property. Seventy of them increased their estates seven times or more between 1838 and 1850 while 50 of them had their estates multiply less than seven times in value.

This evidence clearly indicates that not all Cincinnati tax-payers enjoyed equal economic success and that perhaps as many individuals lost pace with the general increase in the value of Cincinnati property during this period as exceeded this pace. The men included in the top decile of tax-payers in 1838 included only a few of those included in the top decile two decades earlier, in 1817. Similarly, the list of 178 tax-payers worth more than $30,000 in 1850 included only 46 of the 178 investor-speculators of 1838. Thus, the majority of the top tax-payers in 1838, and again in 1850, were not top tax-payers in the preceding period, and at least half of the top tax-payers in 1818 and 1838 were not top tax-payers in the subsequent period. This indicates a degree of fluidity in the ranks of property-holders and opportunities for great economic gain, or considerable loss, in a relatively short period of time.

## G. The Occupational Structure

Before 1840 the Cincinnati working population was composed primarily of mechanics, generally unskilled or semi-skilled, who moved from job to job and task to task with relative ease. Because the economy was highly diversified, and there were few industries which demanded special skills, occupations were not precisely defined or stratified. Certainly an owner stood above his workers in prestiges and wealth, just as a wholesale merchant stood above a retail grocer, or a physician above a clerk, but the majority of the men in the community worked in ill-defined "mechanical arts."

As the local economy developed and large scale industrialization set in, however, specialization and stratification increased. Occupations came to be defined increasingly by the kind of work done, rather than the medium in which one worked. Similarly, as the work in many industries became more complex and, in many cases, routinized, distinctions between degrees of skill became more important. The result was a proliferation in the number of occupations as well as a process of increasing occupational stratification.

The proliferation in the number of occupations in Cincinnati during this period is indicated by the differences between an 1831 and 1851 list of occupations in which Cincinnatians were employed. These lists,

which included both the common jobs like bricklayer and baker, as well as the bizarre, like "thief" and "gentleman," recorded every occupational category which had at least one representative. It is, therefore, a fairly accurate measure of the number of different occupations which Cincinnatians were engaged in, and the changes in occupational definitions.

The 1831 list included 164 occupational categories, the 1851 list reported 407 such categories. Thus, during this 20 year period, the number of occupations increased by approximately two and a half times. This increase, which was largely a reflection of occupational specialization, can be seen in the increase in the number of special categories in a general field of work. In 1831 there were six occupations listed in the field of clothing-making: hatter, milliner, shoe-maker, seamstress, tailor, and umbrella-maker. By 1851 this number had increased to 14, due to the inclusion of the following additional specialties: belt-maker, cap-maker, dressmaker, clothier, glove-maker, pocketbook-maker, stocking-maker, and wig-maker. This proliferation of occupational categories also reflected the process of large-scale industrialization, in which a job was defined by the particular product rather than the general character of the work. In 1831 the large majority of the men who worked in wood were listed simply as carpenters; in 1851,

most of them were listed as the makers of bedsteads, chairs, cabinets, coffins, etc.

This process was equally evident in commerce. In 1831 most retail establishments were general or multi-purpose stores. By 1851, however, many of the general dry-good stores had been replaced by specialized stores featuring shoes, or hats, or yard goods, or by men's, women's, or children's apparel. There were also a number of specialty shops, selling jewelry, or books, or household items. There was, as a local editor noted in 1847, a definite trend toward the "individualization of business" during this period.[22]

At the same time there was a gradual process of increasing stratification of occupations. Work specialization resulted in less changing of occupations, or the pursuit of more than one form of work, with the result that people tended to become more identified with their particular occupation. This process was manifest in the organization during the 1840's of particular occupational associations or unions, such as Cincinnati Medical Society, the Lawyers Library, the Chamber of Commerce, and the numerous craft unions.

The actual hierarchy of this occupational structure, and the lines dividing the particular groups, are

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[22]Cincinnati Commercial, May 28, 1847.

not clear, but there is some evidence that such a process of stratification occurred during this period. In 1852 the Cincinnati Commercial took up a campaign to increase the number and improve the status of mechanics. It complained that parents urged their children to become "professional men" and that the result was a scarcity of able mechanics. The reason for this unfortunate situation was clear: "the low esteem in which [mechanics] have so long been held" and a "vague and undefined notion of social rank" associated with a profession.[23]

During this period there were also certain changes in the general composition of the Cincinnati working force. This is demonstrated by an analysis of the occupations listed by a sample of men included in the city directories for 1819, 1831, 1840, 1850, and 1860.

Throughout the period, 1820-1860, certain occupational groups maintained a fairly stable level. Professionals remained at approximately 4% of the total working force, officials at between 1-2%, and the proportion of shopkeepers remained around 11%, fluctuating only 2% either way.

The shift in the Cincinnati economy from commerce to manufacturing can be seen in the relative

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[23] Ibid., April 15, 1852; January 3, 1853.

TABLE 16

OCCUPATIONAL COMPOSITION: 1820-1860

| | 1819 | 1831 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional: | 4% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| Merchant: | 7% | 6% | 4% | 5% | 3% |
| Manufacturer: | 2% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 4% |
| Shopkeeper: | 11% | 10% | 9% | 13% | 11% |
| Official: | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Mechanic: | 46% | 47% | 45% | 34% | 34% |
| Clerk: | 1% | 3% | 7% | 5% | 8% |
| Laborer: | 12% | 14% | 12% | 14% | 14% |
| None: | 11% | 14% | 9% | 17% | 20% |
| Total in Sample | 1,685 | 259 | 329 | 674 | 823 |

decrease in the proportion of merchants and the increase in the proportion of manufacturers in the occupational structure. Between 1820 and 1860 the proportion of merchants decreased from 7% to 3% while the proportion of manufacturers increased from 2% to 4%.

The most dramatic changes in the Cincinnati occupational structure during these years occurred in the categories of mechanics, laborers, and clerks. There was a noticeable decrease in the proportion of mechanics during this period from 46% in 1820 to 34% in 1860. At the same time there was an increase in the proportion of laborers from 12% to 14% and an increase in the proportion of clerks from 1% to 8%. Finally, there was a

steady increase in the proportion of men who listed no occupation, from 11% in 1820 to 20% in 1860.

And yet, despite these particular changes within the occupational structure, the general composition of the Cincinnati working force remained fairly stable during these years. The categories of mechanics, clerks, and laborers, which included primarily unskilled and semi-skilled hired workers, comprised over half of the total number of adult males in the community. The remaining portion of men were fairly evenly divided between the group with no occupation, those in the high status occupations of professionals, merchants, and manufacturers, and those in the middle ranks of shopkeepers and officials.

## H. Occupational Mobility

The occupational careers of the 167 "old-timers" and the 131 individuals in the Shaffer sample who were in Cincinnati through 1850 indicates a prevailing pattern of occupational stability during the period 1820-1860. During each two decade period--1820-1840 and 1840-1860--most of these men changed their occupation at least once, but the majority of them did not improve or drop in their occupation category. This evidence suggests that during the general process of occupational proliferation and stratification most individuals did not noticeably

improve their status in the local working force.

During the period, 1820-1840, most of the "old-timers" changed occupation at least once, but only 28 of them changed four times or more, the average number of times they changed residence. Thus, the average number of occupational changes was two, with almost as many men not changing occupation at all as those who changed three times or more. Clearly, the 51 "old-timers" who maintained the same occupation throughout this period maintained the same occupational level as well. Of the 115 "old-timers" who did change their occupation, however, only 42% improved their status, while 19% dropped in status, and 39% maintained the same occupational status. The 48 "old-timers" who improved their status did so by moving up an average of two occupational categories, but some jumped as many as five categories, for example from clerk to merchant. The 22 "old-timers" who dropped in status did so by moving down an average of one occupational category, although three of them dropped four categories, from merchant to mechanic, or manufacturer to clerk.

During the period, 1840-1860, a similar pattern emerges. Of the 131 individuals in the Shaffer sample who were in Cincinnati at least through 1850, 46 maintained the same occupation over this period, 56 changed occupation once, 26 twice, and three of them changed

TABLE 17

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY: 1820-1860

| Number of Occupations Listed | 1820-1840 | 1840-1860 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 52 | 46 |
| 2 | 56 | 56 |
| 3 | 31 | 26 |
| 4 | 20 | 3 |
| 5 | 6 | 0 |
| 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Mobility: | | |
| Up | 48 (29%) | 41 (31%) |
| Stable | 97 (58%) | 80 (61%) |
| Down | 22 (13%) | 10 ( 8%) |
| Total | 167 | 131 |

occupation three times. Here, again, occupational mobility was less prevalent than residential mobility. Eighty of the 131 individuals in this group did not change their occupational category; of the 51 who did the large majority moved upward. Forty-one individuals improved their occupational ranking, generally by two categories, while only ten dropped in occupational rank, no more than three categories. This evidence suggests that while there was a continued pattern of prevailing occupational stability throughout the pre-Civil War

period, there was somewhat more upward mobility during the period 1840-1860 than during the previous period, 1820-1840.

## I. The Burnet House Soiree

On Friday evening May 3, 1850, the Burnet House opened with a magnificent soiree, "the most brilliant affair of the kind ever witnessed in the west." At nine o'clock the corner of Third and Vine was thronged with carriages carrying the members of Cincinnati's elite and their distinguished guests. As they entered the Main Hall--a spacious, ornamental room 70 feet long and 40 feet wide--the company was conducted on a tour of the entire building, visiting the apartments, bath rooms, servant halls, and then descending into the kitchen, laundry, and boiler room. At ten o'clock the Grand Ball opened in the Gentlemen's Ordinary, brilliantly lighted with eleven chandeliers. The orchestra of Messrs. Torro and Mines played for the assembled party of over 1,500 guests. A little before midnight the doors to the Supper Room opened, where five tables, each 40 feet long, were ladened with a magnificant fare. Dancing and dining continued until three o'clock in the morning, when the festivities finally came to an end.[24]

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[24]The National Era, May 30, 1850; Cincinnati Commercial, May 4, 1850.

The "Burnet House Soiree," as this affair came to be called, was the outstanding event in Cincinnati at mid-century, celebrating the accomplishments of the past decade and inaugurating the still greater ambitions for the coming years. During the 1840's the Semi-Centennial predictions and aspirations rapidly became reality, as the population more than doubled, the economy expanded at an even faster rate, and Cincinnati emerged as the fifth largest city in the United States and the second largest manufacturing center. Such progress and prosperity seemed to require a suitable monument of this success, and it was in this spirit that Cincinnatians conceived the idea of building the world's largest and most elegant hotel in the Queen City.

The Burnet House was built, therefore, as a symbol of the city's achievements and aspirations. In July, 1848, a group of over a hundred enterprising Cincinnatians contributed $2,500,000.00 for the building of a hotel "commensurate with her size, business, and necessities." The eminent Boston architect, Isiah Rogers, designed the building in "Bracketed Italian" style, five stories high, and over two hundred feet square. The building contained 342 private rooms, which could accommodate over 550 guests, and a number of public rooms for special occasions. The Burnet House immediately became known as "one of the most stupendous and most magnificent establishments suited for

the reception of the traveling public now in existence in either of the two great continents of the world.[25]

The opening of the Burnet House in May 1850 was the preeminent social event of the season. For months prior to the opening meetings were held, committees appointed, and managers assigned to direct the elaborate affair. An "Executive Committee," composed of the leading gentlemen of Cincinnati society, was made responsible for the arrangements and guests lists. Admission to the Soiree required a $10.00 ticket and guests were requested to dress in formal attire. Delegations of the leading members of society in Louisville, Dayton, Maysville, and Madison, "the belles of the west," were invited to compliment the local contingent of guests. And, for years afterward, Cincinnatians established their social standing in the community by referring to their presence at the opening of the Burnet House.[26]

The Burnet House Soiree is significant, therefore, not only as an indication of local achievement and ambitions, but also as the critical event in the emergence

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[25] Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion, May 31, 1850.

[26] Cincinnati Commercial, April 25, 1850. The subsequent importance of the Burnet House Soiree in the formation of Cincinnati Society is evident throughout the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century, but it is most conveniently captured in the article in the Cincinnati Times-Star, April 9, 1927.

of formal society in Cincinnati. By mid-century a group of prominent, successful Cincinnatians had turned their attention from the progress and prosperity of the community to the solidification of their position at the apex of the local society. In doing so they gradually formalized the informal ties which had existed in the past, through certain groups, like the New England Society, and a series of intermarriages. By the late 1840's the local press began to speak of the "Upper Fives" and reported social occasions in a chatty, informal, gossipy style, including the names of the residents in attendance.

The dimensions of this transformation, which occurred during the 1840's, can be seen in the contrast between the 1838 Semi-Centennial Celebration and the Burnet House Soiree in 1850. The former was a civic celebration, open to the public, which proclaimed the progress and prosperity of the city. The latter was a social event, open only to those who were invited and had the money and dress necessary for admission, which marked the maturity of the local society. The contrast between the style and substance of these two events relfects the gradual transformation of the community.

The 1,500 ladies and gentlemen in attendance at the Burnet House Soiree, therefore, were the elite of Cincinnati society in 1850. They included many of the

members of the socio-economic elite, the men who dominated the associational activity of the community, and many of them were individuals who had risen most dramatically in wealth and occupation. These Cincinnatians were the fortunate few who through background, ability, and circumstance had succeeded most spectacularly under the open, egalitarian conditions of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. For them, the rhetoric of opportunity in the Queen City represented reality, and they benefited most from the general progess and prosperity of the city.[27]

The large majority of Cincinnatians, however, never enjoyed this success. Many of them moved around in the vain search for the main chance, while others were resigned to a life of modest security and stability. These Cincinnatians stood among the middle and lower ranks of society, generally did not participate in the institutional life of the community, and often failed to achieve any measure of success through mobility. Certainly, few of them expected to achieve spectacular success. But for them the rhetorical promises of opportunity and success were never to be realized in life.

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[27]For a partial list of the names of these people, see the Cincinnati Commercial, April 25, May 4, 1850.

## APPENDIX 1

## NATIONAL ELECTIONS
## 1828-1838

| | 1828 | | 1830 | | 1832 | | 1834 | | 1836 | | 1838 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | W | J | W | J | W | J | W | J | W | J | W | J |
| I | 315 | 331 | 276 | 289 | | | | | 220 | | 481 | |
| II | 468 | 430 | 390 | 349 | | | | | 381 | | 392 | |
| III | 341 | 336 | 350 | 287 | | | | | | 63 | 24 | |
| IV | 266 | 307 | 209 | 281 | | | | | 72 | | 124 | |
| V | 295 | 339 | 505 | 288 | | | | | 296 | | 202 | |
| VI | | | | | | | | | | | 69 | |
| VII | | | | | | | | | | | 55 | |
| Majority | 172 | | 236 | | 707 | | 1245 | | 1016 | | 1247 | |
| Total Vote | 3086 | | 3224 | | 3761 | | 4007 | | 4620 | | 4561 | |
| Source + Race | CA 11-1-28 Presidential Elector Race Nov. 4, 1828 | | Amer 10-18-30 Bentram (Clay) Findlay (Jackson) | | | | | | Spirit of the times 10-12-40 10-14-40 President | | Spirit of the times 10-12-40 10-14-40 Congress | |

NATIONAL ELECTIONS
1840-1850

| | 1840 Congress W | VB | 1840 H Maj. | Total Vote | 1842 W | D | 1844 W | D | 1846 | 1848 W | D | 1850 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 182 | | 144 | 963 | 554 | 646 | 474 | 217 | | | | |
| II | 433 | | 363 | 880 | 596 | 306 | 826 | 408 | | | | |
| III | 201 | | 226 | 1022 | 597 | 409 | 579 | 531 | | | | |
| IV | 209 | | 227 | 859 | 541 | 366 | 471 | 491 | | | | |
| V | 247 | | 226 | 1254 | 817 | 728 | 678 | 810 | | | | |
| VI | 152 | | 131 | 596 | 432 | 275 | 533 | 396 | | | | |
| VII | 135 | | 113 | 629 | 538 | 467 | 665 | 597 | | | | |
| VIII | | | | | | | 435 | 443 | | | | |
| IX | | | | | | | 374 | 746 | | | | |
| X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| XI | | | 62% | | | | | | | | | |
| Whig Majority | | | 1430 | | 603 | | 271 | DG | | | | |
| Total | 6240 | | 6213 | | 7271 | | 9,497 | 10-11-44 | | 5899 | 6570 | |
| | Spirit of the Times 10-12-40 | | Pres DG 11-2-40 | | Senator DG 10-17-42 Strader Jones | | President DL 11-2-44 Clay Polk | | | President Cass Taylor | | |

## APPENDIX 2

### INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, AMENDMENTS, ETC. 1837-1842

| | 1 | | 2 | | X | | 3 | | X | | 4 | | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date | Jan. 3, 1837 | | Oct. 23, 1838 | | | | May 1839 | | May 1839 | | Feb. 1840 | | Feb. 1841 | |
| Issue | 600,000 for White Water C. Little Miami RR & Charleston RR | | Purchase Cincinnati Water Works | | To Transfer 200,000 from Charleston RR to White Water | | To Amend City Charter ? | | To Purchase Cincinnati Water Works | | To Revise City Charter | | To Loan White Water Canal 200,000 | |
| Position | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea |
| I | 351 | 40 | 290 | 50 | 288 | 99 | 188 | 37 | 165 | 69 | 15 | 421 | 288 | 99 |
| II | 530 | 76 | 403 | 76 | 412 | 98 | 192 | 74 | 185 | 76 | 19 | 552 | 412 | 98 |
| III | 347 | 79 | 165 | 200 | 386 | 130 | 134 | 63 | 66 | 133 | 21 | 224 | 388 | 150 |
| IV | 245 | 79 | 193 | 65 | 395 | 45 | 137 | 52 | 109 | 78 | 55 | 215 | 395 | 45 |
| V | 402 | 97 | 321 | 29 | 388 | 176 | 122 | 66 | 114 | 80 | 32 | 394 | 388 | 175 |
| VI | | | 96 | 56 | 345 | 46 | 57 | 48 | 40 | 66 | 17 | 140 | 344 | 46 |
| VII | | | 105 | 36 | 207 | 81 | 63 | 34 | 49 | 51 | 31 | 195 | 207 | 81 |
| VIII | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IX | | | | | | | | | | | "A small | | | |
| X | | | | | | | | | | | vote" | | | |
| | 1875 | 371 | 1573 | 512 | 2421 | 675 | 893 | 374 | 728 | 553 | 190 | 2141 | 2422 | 694 |
| Source | DG 3-20-44 | | DG 3-29-44 | | DG 3-29-44 | | DG 5-6-39 | | DG 5-6-39 | | DG 2-18-40 | | DC 2-17-41 | |

## INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, AMENDMENTS, ETC.
## 1844–1849

| Date | April 1844 | | Feb. 1845 | | 1845 | | Spring 1846 | Spring 1846 | Spring 1849 | | Spring 1849 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Loan 100,000 to Little Miami RR | | 100,000 for new City Hall | | School Tax [?] | | White Water Canal Loan | Charter Convention | Loan to Cincinnati & St. Louis RR | | White Water Loan 200,000 |
| Position | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | Yea | Nea | | | Yea | Nea | |
| I | 395 | 20 | 205 | 120 | 176 | 13 | | | 363 | 82 | |
| II | 678 | 94 | 377 | 250 | | | | | 584 | 103 | |
| III | 502 | 108 | 250 | 197 | | | | | 290 | 170 | |
| IV | 395 | 96 | 379 | 161 | | | | | 468 | 101 | |
| V | 587 | 144 | 266 | 632 | | | | | 240 | 63 | |
| VI | 250 | 232 | 155 | 221 | 213 | 20 | | | 615 | 105 | |
| VII | 414 | 224 | 218 | 488 | 234 | 53 | | | 384 | 99 | |
| VIII | 247 | 178 | 110 | 293 | 286 | 42 | | | 562 | 103 | |
| IX | 528 | 135 | 116 | 435 | 213 | 36 | | | 398 | 102 | |
| X | | | | | | | Small Vote | Small Vote | 284 | 269 | |
| Total | 3986 | 1231 | 2076 | 2797 | 1264 | 174 | Passed | Passed | 4188 | 1237 | Passed by Wide Margin |
| Source | DG 4–5–44 | | DE 2–26–45 | | DCC 4–9–45 | | | | DCC 3–31–49 | | DCC 4–3–49 |

## APPENDIX 3

### CITY COUNCIL COMPOSITION
### 1840-1860

| | W | D | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1840 | | | A "Good Order of Whig victory; oppose charter amendment |
| 1841 | | | Turned solely on license issue; Temperance defeat; no party spirit |
| 1842 | 3/4 Whigs | | No party spirit. Workingmen Party not successful; 13 new men |
| 1843 | 17 | 10 | 22 License; 7 Temperance; no party spirit in election |
| 1844 | 22 | 5 | 17 License 10 Temperance Locofoco charge Whigs responsible for debt is repudiated; Whigs divided by Temperance issue; Locos force party divisions into election |
| 1845 | -- | -- | A very "mixed up" election |
| 1846 | 19 | 11 | Quiet election equally divided on Temperance issue |
| 1847 | | | |
| 1848 | 18 | 12 | Quiet election--heavy turnout majority pro-License |
| 1849 | 17 | 13 | Whig and Annex Victory |
| 1850 | 13 (2 independent) | 21 | Democratic majority first time in 20 years larger vote than ever before by several thousand |
| 1851 | 24 | 24 | |
| 1853 | | | Party lines ignored Free school triumph |
| 1855 | | | |

| | W | D | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1856 | 8 Know Nothing<br>1 Independent | 8 | Democratic<br>Know nothing Triumph |
| 1858 | 22 Opposition | 13 | Anti-Democratic victory<br>13 out of 18 elected and--<br>LeComptasites |
| 1859 | 24 Opposition | 9 | 12 Opposition<br>5 Democratic elected |
| 1860 | 18 Opposition | (9) | Little partisan conflict |

## APPENDIX 4

### 738 PARTICIPANTS AND POWER ELITE NOT FOUND IN SHAFFER DIRECTORY

| Participation Index | Number |
|---|---|
| 1 | 661 |
| 2 | 25 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 4 | 1 |
| 5 or more | 3 |
| Total | 695 |

| Power Index | Number |
|---|---|
| 1 | 49 |
| 2 | 2 |
| Total | 51 |

| Participation | Number |
|---|---|
| Whig | 137 |
| Democrat | 283 |
| Benevolent | 43 |
| Mutual Aid | 29 |
| Slavery | 55 |
| Patron | 7 |
| South | 1 |
| Professional | 47 |
| Banking Issue | 45 |

| Power | Number |
|---|---|
| Banking | 12 |
| Education-Philanthropic | 15 |
| Civic Officer | 12 |
| Fraternal Officer | 6 |
| Fire Company Officer | 7 |

## APPENDIX 5

## CODING KEY

| COLUMN | | CATEGORIES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-15 | NAME | | |
| 16 | NATIVITY: | (1) Ohio | (6) Southern State |
| | | (2) New England | (7) England-Scotland |
| | | (3) N.Y.-N.J. | (8) Ireland |
| | | (4) Pennsylvania | (9) Germany |
| | | (5) Border State | (0) None Listed/Other/ Conflicting |
| 17 | BIRTH: | (1) 1820 thru 1829 | (6) 1770 thru 1779 |
| | | (2) 1810 thru 1819 | (7) 1760 thru 1769 |
| | | (3) 1800 thru 1809 | (8) 1750 thru 1759 |
| | | (4) 1790 thru 1799 | (9) Before 1749 |
| | | (5) 1789 thru 1789 | (0) No Information/ Conflicting |
| 18 | ARRIVE ON: | (1) 1840 | (6) 1830-32 |
| | | (2) 1838-40 | (7) 1825-30 |
| | | (3) 1836-38 | (8) 1820-25 |
| | | (4) 1834-36 | (9) Before 1820 |
| | | (5) 1832-34 | (0) No Information/ Conflicting |
| 19 | ARRIVE ON or BEFORE: | (1) 1840 | (6) 1829 |
| | | (2) 1836 | (7) 1825 |
| | | (3) 1834 | (8) 1819 |
| | | (4) 1831 | (9) |
| | | (5) 1829 | (0) No Information/ Conflicting |
| 20. | RELIGION: | (1) Unitarian | (6) Methodist |
| | | (2) Episcopalian | (7) Baptist |
| | | (3) New School Presbyterian | (8) Catholic |
| | | (4) Old School Presbyterian | (9) Other |
| | | (5) New Jerusalem | (0) No Information |
| 21-22 | OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY: | (11) Attorney | (16) Artist |
| | | (12) Physician | |
| | | (13) Clergyman | |
| | | (14) Editor | |
| | | (15) Teacher | |

| COLUMN | CATEGORIES | |
|---|---|---|
| | (21) Banker | |
| | (22) Commission | |
| | (23) Produce | |
| | (24) Dry Goods | |
| | (25) Hardware | |
| | (31) Heavy Manuf. | |
| | (32) Light Manuf. | |
| | (33) Pork Packer | |
| | (34) Brewer | |
| | (35) Refined | |
| | (41) Grocer-Food | (46) Hotel |
| | (42) Druggist-Fancy | (47) Stable |
| | (43) Book-Tobacco | (48) Auctioneer-Agent |
| | (44) Clothing | (49) Undertaker |
| | (45) Coffee House-Tavern | |
| | (51) Councilman | (56) Cashier-Secretary |
| | (52) Judge-Magistrate | (57) |
| | (53) City Officer | (58) Captain of Riverboat |
| | (54) County Officer | |
| | (55) State-Federal | |
| | (61) Carpenter | (66) Blacksmith-Machinist |
| | (62) Brick-Stone | (67) Moulder-Wright-Turner |
| | (63) Paint-Plaster | (68) Tanner-Currier-Saddler |
| | (64) Tailor-Shoe-Hat | (69) Food Products Worker |
| | (65) Printer-Instrument | (60) |
| | (71) Clerk-Bookkeeper | |
| | (72) Student | |
| | (81) Laborer | (86) Drayman-Teamster-Carman |
| | | (87) Riverman |

| COLUMN | | CATEGORIES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | WARD: | (1) Ward I<br>(2) Ward II<br>(3) Ward III<br>(4) Ward IV<br>(5) Ward V | (6) Ward VI<br>(7) Ward VII<br>(8) Boards<br>(9) Outside<br>(0) None Listed |
| 24 | RESIDENCE: | (Leave Blank) | |
| 25 | WEALTH: | (1) Over $10,000.<br>(2) $5,000-10,000.<br>(3) $2,000-5,000.<br>(4) $1,000-2,000.<br>(5) " " | (6) $500-999.<br>(7) $100-499.<br>(8)<br>(9) Company/Combined<br>(0) None |
| 26 | GREVE/ FORD: | (1) Many Listings (over 10)<br>(2) Several (3-10)<br>(3) Few | (5)<br>(9) Questionable<br>(0) None |
| 27 | VITAL STAT.: | (1) Birth-Death<br>(2) Marriage<br>(3) Property | (5) Several<br>(9) Questionable<br>(0) None |
| 28 | PUBLICA-TIONS: | (1) Books about<br>(2) Books by<br>(3) Articles about<br>(4) Articles by | (0) None |
| 29 | MANU-SCRIPTS: | (1) Several-Many<br>(2) Single | (0) None |
| 30 | OBITUARY-BIOGRAPHY: | (1) Book<br>(2) Article<br>(3) Capsule<br>(4) Wright Obit.<br>(5) In Memoriam | (5) Newspaper Obit.<br>(6) Other<br>(0) None |
| 31 | PARTICIPATION INDEX: | | |
| 32 | POWER INDEX: | | |
| 33 | INDEX OF ACTIVITY: | | |

# PARTICIPATION: KEY ACCORDING TO HIGHEST-CATEGORY

| COLUMN | | CATEGORY | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | WHIG: | (1) City-Wide Officer | |
| | | (2) Ward Officer-Delegate | |
| | | (3) General Meeting | |
| | | (4) Ward Supporter | |
| | | (5) Supporter County Convention | (9) Some Listing |
| | | | (0) None |
| 37 | DEMOCRAT: | (1) City-Wide Officer | |
| | | (2) Ward Officer-Delegate | |
| | | (3) Cosmopolitan | |
| | | (4) Other | (9) Some Listing |
| | | (5) Germans | |
| 38 | BENEVOLENT: | | |
| | | (1) 3 or more meetings | (6) Poor Meeting |
| | | (2) 2 meetings | (7) Nathez |
| | | (3) Temperance | |
| | | (4) Benevolent Ball | (9) Some Listing |
| | | (5) Penitentiary Reform | |
| 39 | MUTUAL AID: | (1) Officer | |
| | | (2) Meeting | |
| 40 | SLAVERY: | (1) Colonizationist | |
| | | (2) Abolitionist | |
| | | (3) Anti-Abolitionist | |
| 41 | PATRON: | (1) Patron | |
| 42 | SOUTH: | (1) South | |

| COLUMN | | CATEGORY | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 43 | PROFES-SIONAL: | (1) Merchant's Meeting | (6) Workingmen |
| | | (2) OMI | (7) 2 Meetings |
| | | (3) Mechanics and Citizens | (8) 3 or more |
| | | (4) YMML | (9) Some Listing |
| | | (5) MD-Teachers | (0) None |
| 44 | BANKING: | (1) 3 or more meetings | (6) State Banking |
| | | (2) 2 meetings | |
| | | (3) Free Banking | |
| | | (4) Bankruptcy | |
| | | (5) Tariff | |

POWER

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 45 | BANK-INSUR-ANCE: | (1) Bank President | |
| | | (2) Insurance President | |
| | | (3) Bank Officer | |
| | | (4) Insurance Officer | |
| | | (5) Both | |
| 46 | EDUCATIONAL-PHILANTHROPIC: | | |
| | | (1) Several | (6) Lane |
| | | (2) OMI | (7) Other |
| | | (3) Useful Know. | |
| | | (4) Woodward | |
| | | (5) YMML | |
| 47 | CIVIC OFFICER: | (1) City Council | |
| | | (2) School Trustee | |
| | | (3) State-Federal official | |
| | | (4) City-County official | |
| | | (5) Master Commissioner in | |

| COLUMN | | CATEGORY |
|---|---|---|
| 48 | FRATERNAL: | (1) Mason: several<br>(2) Mason once<br>(3) Odd-Fellow: several<br>(4) Odd-Fellow once |
| 49 | FIRE COMPANY: | (1) Officer by Company |

Cist 1841: 143-4

MEMBERSHIP

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 51 | CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: | (1) |
| 52 | USEFUL KNOWLEDGE: | (1) |
| 53 | O.M.I. | (1) |
| 54 | CINCINNATI ASTRONOM. | (1) |
| 55 | FIRE COMPANY: | (1) |

# APPENDIX 6

## SHAFFER SAMPLE

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# APPENDIX 7

## ACTIVIST FILE

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WRIGHT NATHL | 25 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 15 | | 24 | | | | | | 3 | 2 | | 1 |
| WRIGHT WM | | | 6 | 6 | 8 | 7 | | 1 | 1 | 4 | | | | | | | |
| YARDLEY KIRKBRI | 4 | | | 71 | | 3 | | 12 | | | | | | 4 | | 1 | |
| YEATMAN GRIFFIN | 5 | 8 | | 54 | | 21 | | 2 | 1 | 4 | | | 1 | 3 | 4 | | 11 |
| YEATMAN THOS H | 1 | | | 121 | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| YORKE J | 4 | 3 | | 22 | | 13 | | 3 | 1 | 5 | | | 1 | 33 | 4 | | |
| YOST J W | 3 | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | 4 | | 1 | | 3 | | 1 | |
| YOUNG ISAAC | 1 | | | 68 | | 65 | | 2 | 1 | 4 | | | | 3 | 3 | | |
| YOUNG ISAAC | 3 | | | 43 | | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | | | | 8 | | | |
| YOUNG JOHN | 2 | | | | | 2 | | 2 | 4 | | | | | | 2 | 21 | 1 |
| YOUNG JOSEPH G | | | | | | 52 | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 3 | | |
| YOUNG WM | 7 | | | 81 | | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | | | | 1 | |
| ZEUMER HENRY | 5 | | | 69 | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | 1 |

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

This bibliographical essay will describe the sources which were particularly important for this study, and which require special identification or explanation. No attempt will be made to include every work used in the study; rather, the major sources upon which the analysis is based will be discussed with special attention to their character and accuracy, and the problems of using them for historical analysis. Also, some of the relevant literature in the social science, from which some of the theory and techniques were derived, will be discussed.

For an adequate introduction to the basic literature on Cincinnati history, see Alvin F. Harlow, The Serene Cincinnatians (New York, 1950). For a more accurate and comprehensive listing, see the card catalog of the Cincinnati Historical Society, which has the best collection on Cincinnati history in any single place. For a good, extensive, and fairly recent bibliography of the literature on urban history, sociology, political science, and geography, see the chapters by Charles N. Glaab, Harold M. Mayer, Wallace S. Sayre and Nelson W. Polsby, and Gideon Sjoberg in Phillip M. Hauser and

Leo F. Schnore, The Study of Urbanization (New York, 1965).

## PART I: CINCINNATI

### General History

The best short introduction to the history of Cincinnati, which has the merit of being both readable and accurate, is Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors, compiled by the workers of the Writers Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Ohio (Cincinnati, 1943). Henry A. and Kate B. Ford, History of Cincinnati (Cleveland, 1881) and Charles Theodore Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati (Chicago, 1904) are both good compilations of material from newspapers and other primary sources, arranged both topically and chronologically. These two histories are a good place to start any serious research on Cincinnati history, providing the necessary general background and introducing some of the important primary material. There is a good deal of duplication in the two works, but also some important differences so both should be consulted. It is best to start with Ford and then to check the relevant sections in Greve. The Cincinnati Historical Society has a complete index to the Greve on file cards. Alvin F. Harlow, The Serene Cincinnatians (New York, 1950), Clara Longworth deChambrum, Cincinnati: The Story

of the Queen City (New York, 1939), and Dick Perry, Vas You Ever in Zinzinnati? (New York, 1966) are popular accounts, fraught with inaccuracies and distortions, which should be avoided.

For the early period of Cincinnati history, Richard C. Wade, The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830 (Cambridge, 1959) is good but limited by its ambitious attempt to fit the separate histories of five cities into a common framework. Daniel Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942) covers the same general period of Cincinnati history, but is more detailed and comprehensive. It is an outstanding history which discusses economic, social, political, and intellectual conditions within the framework of the Turner Thesis and Tocqueville's analysis of American society, Democracy in America. Among many other things, Aaron made a detailed analysis of the associational activities of the leading Cincinnatians during this period, presented in a chart in the Appendix, which was quite suggestive and useful for the present work. Unfortunately, the thesis has never been published (perhaps because it did not meet Aaron's initial hopes of doing for early Cincinnati what the Lynds did for Muncie in Middletown) but it is available from Harvard Library and, in a Xerox copy, at the Cincinnati Historical Society.

## Travel Accounts

There are over thirty travel accounts written by visitors to Cincinnati between 1830 and 1850, which all include some useful description of the community. The striking thing about this literature is the similarity of the accounts--what is noted, admired, and condemned--despite the wide variety of interests and attitudes of the authors. None, however, are particularly detailed or perceptive, and the value of the literature is in general impression of the total group of accounts rather than in quality or insight of any single description.

The best introduction to travel accounts is Robert R. Hubach, Early Midwestern Travel Narratives: An Annotated Bibliography: 1634-1850 (Detroit, 1966). Max Berger, The British Traveller in America: 1836-1860 (New York, 1943) is a good analysis of the travel literature and contains an exhaustive bibliography with detailed annotations. The card catalog of the Cincinnati Historical Society is the most convenient place to check the relevant travel literature, since it lists the pages where Cincinnati is mentioned.

## Newspapers

There were a great number of newspapers published in Cincinnati during the pre-Civil War period, most of which were undistinguished and had a short existence.

Most of the extant papers are available at the Cincinnati Historical Society in bound volumes. The best newspaper during this period was the Cincinnati Gazette (1827-83), but the Advertiser and Journal (1818-41) which became the Enquirer (1841-present) and the Commercial (1843-1930) were also good. The strategy of newspaper research, inevitably, is dictated by the material desired, but for urban social history during this period it is possible to concentrate on the second and third pages of these newspapers. The first and fourth pages generally carry advertisements and, sometimes, serialized novels. The second page is generally editorials and reprints from other newspapers, the third page is usually devoted to local news. After having read through all of the available newspapers, it seems evident that one should concentrate on the best paper, and then fill in with the others where appropriate. But it is also important to check the character of each newspaper periodically, since editors and policies changed quite often, and newspapers sometimes carried special types of information or had unusually good local correspondents, which makes them particularly valuable to the historian.

## Guidebooks

Guidebooks were basically promotional literature, describing the assets and advantages of the city for the outsider and potential immigrant. They contained quite

detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the city--its topography, climate, geology, history, institutions, economy, and amusements--but they were hardly balanced evaluations. The great value of these books is that they convey the public image and attitudes of the community. The three volumes by Charles Cist, Cincinnati in 1841 (Cincinnati, 1841), Cincinnati in 1851 (Cincinnati, 1851), and Cincinnati in 1859 (Cincinnati, 1859), the only Cincinnati guidebooks published between 1830 and 1860, are good examples of this genre of literature, noteworthy particularly because of the author's special experience and knowledge of the city.

Biographies, Autobiographies, and Memoirs

Perhaps the best description of Cincinnati society during the pre-Civil War period by a contemporary participant is Edward Mansfield, Personal Memories: Social, Political, and Literary (Cincinnati, 1879). It contains acute descriptions of many of the leading Cincinnatians of this period but, unfortunately, describes events only through the 1840 election. Clara Longworth de Chambrun, The Making of Nicholas Longworth (New York, 1933) devotes the first four chapters to this period, focusing on the first Nicholas Longworth and Timothy Walker. Alfred G. W. Carter, The Old Court House (Cincinnatti, 1880) contains interesting vignettes of the prominent

lawyers of this period, as well as a general discussion of the development of the profession in Cincinnati. A comparable volume on physicians is Otto Juettner, Daniel Drake and His Followers (Cincinnati, 1909). James Handasyd Perkins, The Memoirs and Writings of James Handasyd Perkins, edited by William Henry Channing (Cincinnati, 1851) is a valuable collection of this important Cincinnatian's writings. A Choice Nook of Memory: The Diary of a Cincinnati Clerk, 1842-1844, edited by James Taylor Dunn (Columbus, 1950) is a good description of the city by an outsider.

Manuscripts

The Cincinnati Historical Society has a large and valuable collection of manuscripts, many of which cover the period of this study. These proved, however, to be of relatively little value for the present study, since they either dealt with personal matters or general political or business affairs, rather than the character and conditions of the local society. The Papers of Timothy Walker, the Diaries of William S. Merrill, the William Greene Collection, the Peter Zinn Diary, and the Elam Langdon Collection were the only manuscript collections which had any valuable material; the other fifteen collections consulted proved useless. Fortunately, many of these collections have detailed calendars, which makes it quite easy to use them.

City Directories

In recent years there has been considerable interest among historians in the use of city directories, particularly in tracing mobility. Unfortunately, there has been little attention paid to the reliability of their information, the completeness and/or biases of the listings, or even of the way in which they were surveyed and put together. The present study, and the work of several other historians doing similar studies, suggests that there is a significant discrepancy between the names included in a city directory and the census, or some other similar listing, covering the same general population within the same period of time.

The Shaffer Directory of Cincinnati in 1840 included only two-thirds of the total adult white male population; a study of Allegeny, Pennsylvania in 1850 found a similar discrepancy; a study of Hazelwood, Pennsylvania in 1880 found approximately 80% of the names in the census included in the city directory; and Sidney Goldstein found that in Norristown there was 93% correspondence in 1910 and that there was "virtually 100% coverage" in 1930. This suggests that the accuracy and completeness of the directories improved over time. The reasons for the discrepancies during the earlier period are unclear; undoubtedly, they were the result of crude techniques of surveying, possible prejudices of

the enumerators, and the high mobility of the population. For a discussion of city directories in the study of mobility, see Sidney Goldstein, Patterns of Mobility, 1910-1950: The Norristown Study (Philadelphia, 1958), Chapters 5 and 6.

There were ten Cincinnati city directories published before 1850, and one published every year thereafter. Before 1850 they were put out by a series of publishers, Oliver Farnsworth, Harvey Hall, Robinson and Farnsworth, J. H. Woodruff, David Shaffer, Charles Cist, and Robinson and Jones; after 1850 they were all published by Williams and Company. The directories all followed a basic format--names, with occupation and residence, listed in alphabetical order, followed by an advertising section and, sometimes, a short history and description of the advantages of the city. The 1825 and 1840 directories were noteworthy because they included the nativities of the people listed. The nature of their information--specific occupational and residential identification--and their alphabetical order makes the directories more useful for social research than the Census. The Cincinnati Historical Society has a complete collection of the directories, which are also available on microfiche from Research Publications, Inc., 254 College Street, New Haven, Conn. 06510.

Tax Lists

The Ohio Historical Society (Columbus) has all of the manuscript tax lists through 1838. These are available in large bound volumes, which report the name of the taxpayer, the location of each piece of property, and the tax on it. Names for each township are arranged in alphabetical order; unfortunately, they do not include any additional information on the taxpayer, such as age or occupation, which limits their value and makes it more difficult to match names with those drawn from other sources. The 1817 Tax List is available in manuscript form at the Cincinnati Historical Society; a printed list of the taxpayers' names, without the amount they were taxed, is available in the pamphlet edited by Marie Dickore, Census for Cincinnati, Ohio, 1817 and Hamilton County, Ohio, Voters' Lists, 1798 and 1799 (Cincinnati, 1960). The 1798 Tax List was found in the Cincinnati Commercial, July 15, 1859. The list of Taxpayers who paid over $500.00 in taxes in 1850 was found in the Cincinnati Enquirer, January 8, 1851; it is reprinted in the Bulletin of the Cincinnati Historical Society, XXV, 2 (April, 1967), 156-60.

Church Records

The religious affiliation of Cincinnatians was one of the most difficult facts to establish in this study. For some of the people, particularly early

residents or prominent individuals, this information was available in the "Vital Statistics" card file at the Cincinnati Historical Society. Here the information is drawn from marriage records, birth certificates, burial notices, as well as the cemetery records of Spring Grove Cemetery. For most of the 237 individuals whose religion was identified, however, the information came from the church records of Christ Church, St. Paul's Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Wesley Methodist Church, and Ninth Street Baptist Church. Here the names listed in the registers of communicants, members, baptisms, marriages, and deaths for the years 1830-1860 were checked. Information on Catholics may appear in the Catholic Telegraph or the Volksblatt, which were not available at the time research for this study was being conducted.

Maps and Pictures

The Cincinnati Historical Society has a large collection of maps and pictures which are a valuable source for the reconstruction of the physical appearance and development of the city. Particularly valuable was the Joseph Gest "Map of the City of Cincinnati, 1838" which was done by the city surveyor in that year, recording in great detail the block-by-block development of the city. This map is in the Library of Congress; it is

also available at the Cincinnati Historical Society, both in its original size (30" x 18") and in the reduced size, duplicated on page 133. The Doolittle and Munson "Topographical Map of the City of Cincinnati, 1841" is really a doctored version of the Doolittle and Munson "Topographical Map of the City of Cincinnati, 1831" surveyed by Joseph Gest in that year. Another valuable source is the Survey Books of Joseph Gest, which are in the manuscript collection of the Cincinnati Historical Society.

The Cincinnati Historical Society has a number of artistic renditions of the physical appearance of Cincinnati done during the 1830's and 1840's. The Wild Paintings, done in 1837, are the best, but the print by Klauprecht and Menzel in the Shaffer, Cincinnati Directory for 1840 is also suggestive. The first daguerreotype, done by Fontayne and Porter in 1848, is really the best representation of the city during this period. It is printed in the Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio VI (April, 1948), 28-40.

## PART II:: RELATED WORKS IN HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Social Structure

The best general discussion of a nineteenth century American community, using a good deal of quantitative analysis, is Merle Curti, The Making of An American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County (Stanford, 1959). For the earlier period, Charles S. Grant, Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent (New York, 1961) and Sumner Powell, Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town (Wesleyan, 1963) are quite good. Jackson Turner Main, The Social Structure of Revolutionary America (Princeton, 1965) is a good survey of American society, using quantitative as well as impressionistic evidence. Douglas T. Miller, Jacksonian Aristocracy: Class and Democracy New Hork, 1830-1860 (New York, 1967) is a rather superficial analysis based on secondary sources. James A. Henretta, "Economic Development and Social Structure in Colonial Boston," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d series XXII (1965), 83-96 is a good pioneering analysis of wealth distribution. Sam B. Warner, Jr. Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge, 1962) is a good example of detailed analysis of the physical development of a city.

There are a number of sociological community studies which discuss social structure. Robert and Helen Lynd, Middletown (New York, 1929) and Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society (Princeton, 1958) proved particularly helpful. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, Class, Status, and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective (New York, 1966) is a good collection of some comparative studies.

Associational Activity

There has been very little work done on associational activity in America during the nineteenth century. Wade and Curti discuss it in some detail, and Oscar Handlin has a chapter on "Voluntary Associations" in Dimensions of Liberty (Cambridge, 1961). Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1961) and Frank O. Gatell, "Money and Party in Jacksonian America: A Quantitative Look at New York City's Men of Quality," Political Science Quarterly LXXXII, 2 (June, 1967) are social analyses of Whigs and Democrats.

The most influential works on my analysis of associational activity in Cincinnati in 1840 were Robert Presthus, Men at the Top: A Study in Community Power (New York, 1964), Charles R. Wright and Herbert H.

Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Surveys," American Sociological Review, XXIII, 3 (June, 1958), 286-94, and Charles M. Bonjean and David M. Olson, "Community Leadership: Directions of Research" Administrative Science Quarterly IX, 3 (December, 1964), 278-95. Two recent volumes, Linton C. Freeman, Patterns of Local Community Leadership (Indianapolis, 1968) and Terry N. Clark, Community Structure and Decision Making: Comparative Analyses (San Francisco, 1968) are good recent surveys of the literature.

Mobility

The pioneering work on social mobility by a historian is Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge, 1964). Robert Ernst, Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863 (New York, 1949) includes an appendix which traces the occupational mobility of individuals from father to son. The best work on mobility, which develops techniques of directory analysis and studies a large population over an extended period of time, is Sidney Goldstein, Patterns of Mobility, 1910-1950: The Norristown Study (Philadelphia, 1958). Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, Social Mobility in Industrial Society (Berkeley, 1959), is a good survey of the literature on social mobility in modern industrial society.