

Social Bases of American Voting
Behavior,
Wayne County, Michigan,
1837-1852, as a Test Case

RONALD P. FORMISANO

WAYNE STATE UNIV.
HISTORY DEPT.

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THE SOCIAL BASES OF AMERICAN VOTING BEHAVIOR;
WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN, 1837-1852,
AS A TEST CASE

by

Ronald P. Formisano

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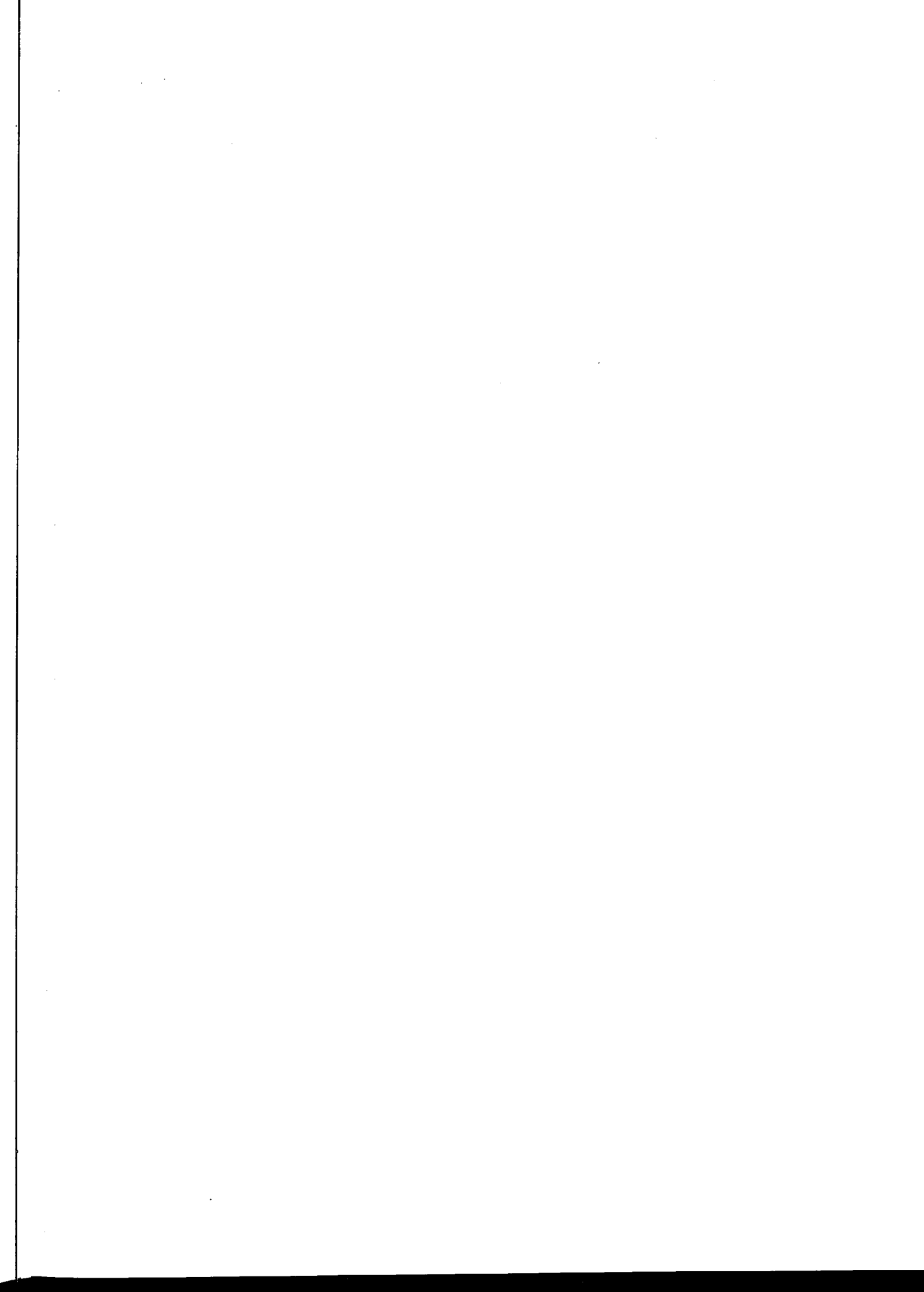
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APPROVED BY:

Adviser

Date

R. C. Mally
Wm J. Bush
Edward Lewis
Alfred H. Kelly



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1830's the Democratic and Whig parties, the first modern political parties, emerged in the United States. By 1840 each party had mobilized in almost every state the full panoply of the mass party. Virtually every four-year period from 1836 to 1852 was a cycle of accelerating enthusiasm, and the claims of each party to represent the American way became most vociferous during each Presidential campaign. The "Log Cabin Campaign" of 1840, by all accounts the most intense of the period, was marked with all the excitement of the new and innocent, while the 1852 campaign, the last Presidential campaign for the Whigs, was relatively quiet.

Around the contests of these two parties historians have organized much of our understanding of political life in that period. The great leaders--Jackson, Clay, Van Buren, Calhoun, and others--and the great issues--tariffs, banks, internal improvements--have claimed the lion's share of our attention. One "participant" that has received little attention, however, is the electorate, the great mass of nameless voters. Too often, assumptions about their behavior have rested on random impressions or on a stock set of quotations from domestic and foreign observers. The electorate, perhaps because it is a nameless, unwieldy, and apparently

less human mass, has not received the systematic study historians give to their more favored subjects.

For a long time historians were in general agreement, often implicitly, that economic issues caused party division. Through the long ascendancy of progressive history in the first half of the twentieth century,¹ an economic determinism, sometimes unconscious, decreed that economic conflicts brought parties into being and sustained their rivalry. Thus, different economic classes constituted the mass following of the parties. Historians offering an economic interpretation sometimes emphasized different classes as the most significant, but these differences were variations on a theme: Democrats came from the poor and Whigs from the rich classes. Given these class bases of party support it followed that Democratic ideology and party programs tended to be radical, democratic, and humanitarian, while Whiggery tended to be conservative, aristocratic, and property-minded.

The classes-interpretation of Democrats and Whigs has been the central element of the concept known as "Jacksonian Democracy." Class conflict between Democrats and Whigs probably reached its apogee not in 1836 or 1840 but in 1945 with the publication of Arthur Schlesinger's The Age

¹The rise and ascendancy of progressive history are discussed by John Higham in John Higham, with Leonard Krieger and Felix Gilbert, History (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 171-97.

of Jackson,² one of the most thoroughgoing economic interpretations of the Jacksonians and their opponents. The Age of Jackson appeared at the beginning of a period in which progressive orthodoxies were coming under sharp attack. According to John Higham, historians were looking at allegedly liberal movements in a critical spirit, and challenging the significance of economic conflicts.

By the mid-Fifties . . . the new research was having a cumulative impact on the whole shape of American history. One after another, the great crises, which progressive historians had depicted as turning points in the battle between democracy and privilege, came under fresh examination. In each case the scale of conflict seemed to shrink. Sharp divisions between periods, sections, groups, and ideologies disappeared.³

Nothing illustrates this better than the re-examination of Jacksonian Democrats, inspired, somewhat, by Schlesinger's provocative book. Much of the revision, while eroding the bases of the economic interpretation, seemed to be directed at establishing a point made by Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 1840's. Anticipating our contemporaries Bray Hammond and Richard Hofstadter, Emerson said, referring to parties, that

However men please to style themselves, I see no other than a conservative party. You are not only identical with us in your needs, but also in your method and aims. You quarrel with my conservatism, but it is only to build up one of your own.⁴

² Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1945).

³ Higham, History, pp. 213-14.

⁴ Quoted in Arthur I. Ladu, "Emerson: Whig or Democrat," New England Quarterly, XIII, 3 (September, 1940), 439. Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton: Princeton

The revision of the 1950's seconded Emerson in emphasizing the similarities between Democrats and Whigs. Democrats seemed to be men poorer than Whigs who wished to become rich. While the Democrats lost much of their reputation as radicals and humanitarians, historians still tended to place them below the Whigs in socio-economic status, even as, in some studies, class lines between parties began to blur.⁵

Around 1960 revision entered a new phase as historians began to question directly the axiom of class divisions between parties.⁶ Lee Benson, in The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy; New York As a Test Case (1961), systematically analyzed the electorate of a major state and showed that in New York in the 1840's the Democrats and Whigs had drawn their leaders and mass support from roughly the same socio-economic groups, both high and low status. Benson found that ethnocultural and religious differences seemed far more important than economic differences in determining the party loyalty of social groups. New York Whigs and Democrats, also, did not differ significantly in the styles of persuasive rhetoric with

University Press, 1957). Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947).

⁵ For a review of changing interpretations see Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Andrew Jackson Versus the Historians," Mississippi Valley Historical Review (MVHR), XLIV, 4 (March, 1958), 615-34; Higham, History, pp. 216-18, discusses Schlesinger's book and reactions to it.

⁶ Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review (AHR), LXV (January, 1960), 288-301.

which they appealed to the electorate. "Agrarian" rhetoric, for example, could not be considered distinctively Democratic. New York provided no evidence, either, for the traditional linkage between the "democratic, egalitarian, humanitarian movements" of the 1830's and 1840's and the Democratic Party. Further, the Democracy's "ideology and program derived from the old doctrines of states rights, strong executive, freedom of conscience, and the new doctrines of negative government. "But," asked Benson, "why equate those doctrines with democracy? Why make the party that advocated them either the champion or the instrument" of the reform movements?⁷

Benson concluded that

- 1) The concept of Jacksonian Democracy has obscured rather than illuminated the course of New York history after 1815. . . . and
- 2) Since events in New York are invariably cited by historians who accept some version of the concept, systematic research may find that in other states the concept also does not conform to reality.⁸

In this context, then, I have turned to the Northwest, to the new State of Michigan which entered the Union in 1837, and to Wayne County in particular, to test certain aspects of the "Jacksonian Democracy" concept under conditions somewhat different from those studied by Benson. The electorate, particularly at the town level, and party politics in general,

⁷ Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 331-32.

⁸ Benson, p. 333.

1837-1852, have been studied systematically to determine, firstly, the social bases of voting behavior. Besides Wayne, intensive study has been made of towns in three other eastern Michigan counties, Washtenaw, Oakland, and Hillsdale.

To some extent data pertaining to all the counties in the state was relied upon, but voting and demographic data from the four-county group constituted the hard core of evidence. For 32 towns an occupational and national origins profile of potential voters in each town was tabulated by hand from the 1850 federal census manuscripts. This involved a head-count and cross-tabulation of over 4900 individuals for Wayne County alone in 1850. Thus, the relative proportions in the towns of certain socio-economic groups (e.g., farm-owners, tenants, laborers, skilled workers, etc.) and ethnocultural groups (native born, New England born, German born, etc.) could be determined with some accuracy. The 1850 manuscript of Social Statistics also provided a fairly reliable measure of the relative proportion of religious denominations in townships, with the number of church seats as the basic unit of measurement. This socio-economic, ethnocultural, and religious data, when compared to the voting habits of the towns, was the basic data for determining which groups supported the parties. Two recent studies of Wayne County were invaluable in providing systematic data on party leadership and the economic elite in Wayne County in 1844: Lawrence H. Sabbath, "Analysis of the Political Leadership in Wayne County,

Michigan, 1844,"⁹ and Alexandra McCoy, "Political Affiliations of American Economic Elites: Wayne County, Michigan, 1844, 1860, As A Test Case."¹⁰

McCoy's study in particular, with its skillful use of multivariate analysis, provided strong corroboration for conclusions which I reached independently regarding the significant determinants of political choice in Wayne County.

The Classes-interpretation of Democrats and Whigs failed to pass muster in Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland, and Hillsdale counties, and, as far as could be determined, in all of Michigan as well. Similar socio-economic groups supported both parties. Although Wayne County's economic elite had a strong Whig preference, McCoy's analysis showed that religious beliefs and ethnocultural conditioning probably had far greater influence in determining party choice among the elite than "economic interest." This appeared to be overwhelmingly so among the parties' mass followings.

In determining who voted for whom, one inevitably becomes involved in the question of why. Explaining why certain social groups voted as they did is a complex and challenging task, and the explanations to be offered make no pretense of being complete or fixed. Social cleavages rather than group adjustment and accord have claimed most attention because the conflicts among ethnocultural and religious groups, or subcultures, and even clashes of temperament and person-

⁹Lawrence Howard Sabbath, "Analysis of the Political Leadership in Wayne County, Michigan, 1844" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1965).

¹⁰Alexandra McCoy, "Political Affiliations of American Economic Elites: Wayne County, Michigan, 1844, 1860, As A Test Case" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1965).

ality within such groups, have been uncovered as sources of party conflict. Political conflicts in Michigan, 1837-1852, were to a significant degree the formal expression of conflicts between subcultures.

Particularly intensive study has been made of the process of party formation in the period from roughly, 1829 to 1840, because this seems a most appropriate time for identifying the salient issues causing party divisions. Just as parties were forming in Michigan, a convention was held to write the state's first constitution. The Constitutional Convention of 1835 was thus worthy of careful study to get at divisive political issues. The debates of the Constitutional Conventions of 1835 and 1850, the addresses and resolutions of state, county, Detroit, ward, and township party conventions, speeches of leaders and their private letters, newspapers, and other sources have been examined for clues and evidence.

The study of party organization yielded an unexpected result: the discovery that the reactions of different groups to the very idea of party organization significantly affected the organization of parties, and particularly the Whig Party. A very general hostility to "party" pervaded the population and was shared by many potential or incipient Democrats and Whigs. A largely religiously-based antiparty sentiment existed mostly among Whigs. The Antimasonic and Whig parties were both, to a significant extent, antipolitical and antiparty parties. In contrast, the Democratic Party had a penchant for organization and for "politics" that

was related to its pervasive secularism.

The chapter on "Antiparty" and other sections explore the connections between a party's character, i.e., its rhetoric, style, ideology, symbols, values, and image, and the character of subcultures supporting it., i.e., their value systems, beliefs, and traditions.

In determining who among the masses voted Whig and who Democrat, it has not been necessary to treat politics so much as a matter of "Who gets what, when, how?"¹¹ or as a matter of the allocation of "tangible resources,"¹² but rather the primary concern has been with "the emotional and symbolic side of politics." The focus has been, in Richard Hofstadter's words,

Who perceives what public issues, in what way, and why? To the present generation of historical and political writers it has become increasingly clear that people not only seek their interests but also express and even in a measure define themselves in politics; that political life acts as a sounding board for identities, values, fears, and aspirations. In a study of the political milieu these things are brought to the surface.¹³

Two chapters analyze the relationship between religion and politics. Both chapters try to show that religion was a cause and not a correlate of party preference. One chapter explores the relationships between parties

¹¹Harold Lasswell, Politics: Who Gets What, When, How? (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1958; first published 1936).

¹²Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), pp. 22-23.

¹³Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1965), p. ix.

and broad religious groups, particularly the impact of the "evangelicals" on politics, and tries to establish the saliency of religious issues for party conflict and politics generally. The other, through a comparison of voting and religious data, tries to determine which religious types voted for which parties. The two chapters should leave little doubt that 1) one cannot understand the formation, character, and style of parties in the 1830's without understanding the impact of religion on politics and particularly on the Whigs, and 2) one cannot understand the vital and salient issues dividing Democrats and Whigs in Michigan unless one understands cleavages between religious groups, such as that between Protestants and Catholics, the secular and the pious, and evangelicals and anti-evangelicals.

Two chapters now intervene before substantial demonstration of the foregoing begins. Chapter II reviews the uses historians have made of quantitative materials in attempts to be systematic about showing who voted for whom in the Jackson period. It is a comment on "how it should not be done." Chapter III is a plan for how it should be done which also begins to show how.

CHAPTER II

"EXPLICIT DATA AND IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS:" A CASE STUDY;
HISTORIANS AND VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THE JACKSON PERIOD.

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"EXPLICIT DATA AND IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS:" A CASE STUDY; HISTORIANS AND VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THE JACKSON PERIOD.

Looking back from the late nineteenth century at the party battles of Whigs and Democrats, James Schouler knew who the Whigs were: they were the "choice spirits" and the "flower of our society." In the fourth volume of his History of the United States of America Under the Constitution,¹ Schouler spoke of Whiggery as the party of "higher classes," of property, education, and intelligence. Using curious phrases such as "masses of well-bred men" he emphasized the party's respectability and status. It was the "favorite of northern polite circles, of scholars, professional men, the rich and prosperous tradesmen, of such as led good society or hung to its skirts, of capitalists, and those who bask in the sunshine of capital; but most of all of manufacturers and merchants, classes intelligent, yet timid lest they should lose something." Although

¹James Schouler, History of the United States of America Under the Constitution, Vol. IV, 1831-1847: Democrats and Whigs (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1889). Schouler was one of the first to give such a full description of the class composition of the parties. Cf. Horace Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I (Hartford: O. D. Case; Chicago: George and C. W. Sherwood; 1864), p. 168; Henry Wilson, Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America, Vol. I (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1872); and Herman von Holst, Constitutional History of the United States, Vol. II, 1828-1846, Jackson's Administration-Annexation of Texas (Chicago: Callaghan and Co., 1879), pp. 330-405, 696, 697.

"thrifty farmers" might join the Whigs temporarily, mechanics, laborers, or the "jealous poor" rarely did so. Those classes constituted the Democratic Party, the party of persons and principles, but also of "unfortunate discipline," illiteracy, and spoils. After reading Schouler one suspects Democrats tended not to wash.²

Schouler's father had been one of the "choice spirits," which perhaps helps explain his son's enthusiasm for Whiggery. William Schouler was an editor, politician, historian, textile manufacturer, anti-slavery Whig, and later a Republican.³ His son was one of those historians that Charles Sellers has characterized as the "Whig" school, whose writing was a facet of "patrician liberalism." James Schouler abhorred the spoils system and blamed Jackson's party for starting it.⁴

Since Schouler, interpretations of "Jacksonian Democracy" have changed often, but the assumption that class divided the parties lasted a long time. In 1945 Schlesinger's Age of Jackson offered an interpretation much different from Schouler's, but still assumed the same class differences between the parties. Schlesinger wrote from the liberal

² Schouler, History of the United States, IV, 196, 286-87, 288-89.

³ Dumas Malone (ed.), Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), XVI, 459-61. Alfred Alexander Cave, "The Jackson Movement in American Historiography" (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida, 1961), pp. 127-31.

⁴ Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Andrew Jackson Versus the Historians," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIV, 4 (March, 1958), pp. 616-18.

perspective of New Deal Democracy, praising Jackson and comparing him to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Yet even here the lower classes still voted Democrat and the upper classes voted Whig.⁵

In the years separating Schouler and Schlesinger many historians presented class interpretations of the parties, and some supported their theses with voting and economic data showing how rich and poor counties and wards voted. These attempts to use quantitative data to offer systematic evidence of who voted for whom are of particular concern here. (Usually in such works, the pages devoted to quantitative inquiry were few and not representative of the entire work, which was usually narrative.) From roughly 1910 to 1960 most attempts to demonstrate divisions between Democrats and Whigs were dominated by implicit assumptions about the economic basis of politics and voting.⁶ Thus, historians drawing upon quantitative data used only economic data to analyze voting, and the implied assumptions of this method were not challenged until the 1950's. Yet the materials with which to issue such a challenge had been around for some time.

Frederick Jackson Turner probably never used the term "multivariate analysis," yet he sought to apply its elementary logic to

⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1945).

⁶ See Higham, History, pp. 171-97.

analyzing voting. Turner knew it was necessary to examine many variables in the social condition of men to determine the influences on their voting, and economic factors were only part of what Turner would have studied:

I should make in selected areas detailed study of the correlations between party votes, by precincts, wards, etc., soils, nationalities and state origins of the voter, assessment rolls, denominational groups, illiteracy, etc. What kind of people tend to be Whigs, what Democrats or abolitionists, or Prohibitionist.⁷

This is, after all, the logic of what is called multivariate analysis.

In his The United States 1830-1850, published posthumously,⁸ Turner used maps to show the social, economic, cultural, and political characteristics of sections and states, but he emphasized the socio-economic differences between Whigs and Democrats:

while regional antagonisms determined the geography of party distribution, the quality of the region did not consistently determine the party complexion. Not all regions of property and prosperity voted Whig, and not all poor regions of rough country were predominantly Democratic. There were exceptions that prevent the historian from formulating a law of political distribution on physical or economic grounds. It can be said, however, that different physical regions usually voted opposite to each other and that there

⁷ Quoted in Joseph Schafer, "The Microscopic Method Applied to History," Minnesota History Bulletin, IV (1921-22), p. 17. I am indebted to an unpublished paper by Richard Jensen, "The Development of Historical Psephology in America" (Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, 1965), and to Lee Benson for calling my attention to this aspect of Turner's thought.

⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, The United States, 1830-1850, ed. Avery Craven (New York: Henry Holt, 1935).

was a tendency, falling short of the inevitable, for the Democrats to control the less prosperous areas and for the Whigs to rule in the regions of greater wealth and vested interests.⁹

Turner did not systematically consider the "exceptions," and did not follow through on the logic of multivariate analysis, although at many points he recognized the significance of non-economic factors (e.g., ethnocultural and religious) in giving a region its political character.¹⁰ Like many historians after him, Turner was harnessed to an assumption that most voting behavior was determined by economic factors. This was unfortunate, and more unfortunate was the tendency of historians after Turner to disregard variables other than economic altogether, and to concentrate on only two: 1) voting and 2) economic class or wealth.

Dixon Ryan Fox, who had been influenced by Turner, published The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York in 1919. From that point on economic determinism dominated inquiries into voting in the Jackson period. Fox's Decline set a pattern of analysis which many historians followed.

Fox portrayed the Whig Party as the direct descendant of the Federalist Party, relying on impressionistic evidence to show that the wealth, business interests, breeding, and conservative ideology of New

⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 261-62, 287, 322, 324-25, 414, 435-86, 579.

York Federalists had passed to the Whigs.¹¹ He tested the suggestion of Charles A. Beard that Whigs represented personal property interests and Democrats real property interests by comparing the assessments of 24 Whig counties with 33 Democratic counties, "with due reference to population." Fox concluded that the hypothesis that real and personal property interests separated Whigs and Democrats "was not supported by the statistics."¹² The method itself, he suggested, might be wrong in using counties because they were large enough to conceal "how property was distributed" within their boundaries. So Fox turned to "An examination of the cities, ward by ward, through several years . . . for here we may safely infer a general economic character to each small locality."¹³

He presented maps showing how each ward in New York city had voted in elections from 1810 to 1840 but which did not give election returns or percentages. Tables showed the total assessment of property

¹¹Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of the Aristocracy in the Politics of New York 1801-1840 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1919), pp. 116-17, 420-22, 438-39.

¹²Ibid., p. 424. Fox did not mention Beard by name. Beard taught for a time at Columbia and his hypothesis had been presented in two well-known books: Charles A. Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1913), and Charles A. Beard, Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York: Macmillan, 1915).

¹³Fox, Decline of Aristocracy, p. 430. To show the relationship between wealth and Federalism, Fox had used the ratio of inhabitants to electors in each ward. Under a suffrage qualified by property this served as "an index on the intensity of wealth." pp. 22-25 and n.1, p. 25.

in each ward in 1840, the population, and the per capita wealth of each. Fox derived the per capita wealth by dividing the total assessment by population, and used per capita wealth as a measure of relative wealth. Fox then went to the 1845 New York State census for the general occupational groups in each ward: 1) farmers, 2) mechanics, 3) merchants and manufacturers, and 4) learned professions. He used the percentage of merchants, manufacturers, and professionals in each ward as another measure of relative wealth.¹⁴ In no ward was the percentage of these upper classes large enough to provide a basis for generalizing about voting, but these percentages did indicate something about distribution of property within each ward.

The "aristocratic" wards, said Fox, (wards 1, 2, 3, and 15) were inhabited, in general, by the richest men and the most stalwart Whigs. The "reliable" Whig wards contained the largest proportion of merchants, manufacturers and professionals. However, two wards, 5 and 8, with large numbers of mechanics, had also sometimes voted Whig. Fox explained that the voters there were probably better off because they had a high Negro population and Negroes needed property worth \$250 to vote. This explanation would have been more credible if Fox had shown that Negroes in large numbers voted in those wards. As it was, his assumptions that many Negroes voted and that areas of high Negro population

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 430-45.

were "better off" run counter to what is generally assumed regarding areas of Negro concentration in Northern cities.

In other large New York State cities Fox found similar conditions:

Where the property per capita was relatively large, the ward was Whig. Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, and Troy all contribute figures to establish that wherever thirty percent of the population were merchants, manufacturers and professional men, the vote showed more Whigs than were found in other wards. Conversely, where mechanics made their homes, Democratic candidates generally were certain of election. Rochester alone, refuses to yield support to these conclusions; but the traditions of that city were so strongly Whig that it scarcely furnishes the evidence for our inquiry.¹⁵

Thus, with originality and ingenuity Fox offered his "statistical evidence" for a class interpretation of parties. Similar "evidence" appeared in many later studies, although not all subsequent users of quantitative data were as careful as Fox in checking it with supplementary and impressionistic data. Many historians, when confronted with voting behavior not readily attributable to economic class (i.e., deviant cases), would offer explanations that were not explanations. Like Fox, later historians made many references to non-economic causes of political behavior, but failed to give them proper consideration.

In 1922 Henry R. Mueller published The Whig Party in Pennsylvania which presented county data and conclusions agreeing with Fox's. Mueller had "naturally expected to find the wealthy merchants and manufacturers

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 436-37; Appendix, pp. 440-49.

rallying to the Whig standard" and he did not disappoint himself. He pointed to several rich men who were Whigs and closed the case by quoting from Democratic newspapers making the same claim. He then compared county voting with population and property evaluations for taxation. Although property evaluations of Philadelphia city and Philadelphia county were not available separately, Mueller said that most of the wealth in that county was concentrated in the city, which voted Whig regularly, while the poorer county voted Democratic. He ranked the state's counties according to valuation and found that 13 of the "first 33" were Whig and "nearer the head of the list." The table itself was not presented. There were 17 Whig counties altogether, said Mueller, and they contained 35 percent of the population and just under 45 percent of the state's wealth. If Philadelphia were included, the Whig areas contained 58 percent of population and 81 percent of the wealth.¹⁶ Acknowledging that some Democratic counties were wealthy, Mueller concluded that:

In the more prosperous of the normal Democratic counties, with the exception of Berks, the Whigs possessed a strong following, at times well over forty percent of the voters. Fertile Berks, settled by Germans, was the fourth county of the state in population and in wealth. The voters had been won over early by the Democratic-Republican party . . . and the imperturbably "Pennsylvania Dutch" farmers never failed to roll up large Democratic majorities. The voters, due to an absence of sectarian appeal, had been untouched

¹⁶Henry R. Mueller, The Whig Party in Pennsylvania (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), pp. 244-45.

by the Anti-Masonic movement. . . . The conclusion is almost inevitable that although the Whig party did not include all the people of wealth in the state, yet the vast majority of those possessing vested interests felt that the Whig party offered them more protection than did the opposition party.¹⁷

This explanation did not account for 1) why Berks County's Germans were "won over" to the Democrats in the beginning and 2) why four counties which were Whig did not fall among the "first 33" in wealth. (Mueller, it will be remembered, said that 13 Whig counties did and there were 17 Whig counties in all). Throughout his narrative Mueller had made references to ethnocultural and religious groups playing an important role in Pennsylvania politics in the 1830's and 1840's, but even the very suggestive example of Berks County did not induce him to give such influences greater weight.

I am going to consider next a series of studies of Southern states which used voting and demographic data for counties to support their claims regarding the composition of the Democratic and Whig parties. It will be convenient to discuss them chronologically, and then return to studies of Northern states and cities which continued more directly in the tradition of Fox.

Although he himself used no quantitative data, the spiritual father of the Southern state studies was Ulrich B. Phillips. He presented his

¹⁷Ibid., p. 245.

view of the parties in an essay which was written for a Festschrift dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner and published in 1910. The "well-to-do and aristocratically inclined," said Phillips, had been Whigs; the "illiterates and unprosperous" had been Democrats.

The lines were not at all sharply drawn in this connection either in society or in politics; but a tendency nevertheless prevailed. The lower classes were of course in most communities the first to welcome Jackson and Jacksonian Democracy. The backbone of the Whigs were the cotton producers, the "first state-rights men pure and simple."¹⁸

In 1929 Henry H. Simms proposed "to prove statistically" the Phillips view that Whigs were rich, aristocratic planters, in Virginia and especially in Richmond. Although economic, occupational, and voting data were unavailable for Richmond's wards, Simms was undaunted. He could still show that Richmond was

overwhelmingly Whig in sentiment. The personal property lists show that a very large majority of such taxpayers (sic?) owned some slaves, while the numerous Whig leaders are shown by real property lists to be, almost without exception, possessed of considerable property. Banking interests were also strong in Richmond. These facts may help to explain the impressive Whig victories there.¹⁹

Simms also reported that he had found a "correlation" between areas where major stockholders of Virginia banks lived and Whig

¹⁸ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, "The Southern Whigs, 1834-1854," ed. Guy Stanton Ford, Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner (New York: Henry Holt, 1910; reprinted, New York: Peter Smith, 1951), pp. 208, 209.

¹⁹ Henry H. Simms, The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840 (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1929), pp. 163-64.

majorities.²⁰ Since Simms presented none of his data, these statements stand alone in their rather considerable ambiguity. Simms appeared to be saying that, judging from his inspection of personal tax lists, Whigs tended to own slaves and "considerable property," and that areas where banking interests were located also voted Whig. Simms "statistical proof" amounted to a series of impressionistic observations about a small percentage of the population.

Twenty years after Simms, yet still in the tradition of U.B. Phillips, Paul Murray published The Whig Party in Georgia, 1825-1853.²¹ The Whig Party in Georgia, said Murray, in its various forms over the years, was strongest in "communities in which property and property ownership were important factors in the political life of the people." Whiggery won its greatest success in the 1840's as the party representing the interests of cotton growers, shippers, and dealers. In the 1850's, however, the Democratic Party replaced the Whig as the representative of the planting interests.²² Murray described the physical

²⁰ Ibid., p. 165. The "constant Democratic sections" were areas of "non-slaveholding German farmers" and "small independent farmers." Cave said that "In the analysis offered by Fox and Simms, class cleavages appeared far more clear cut than they had in the interpretation offered by the Marxist scholar, Algie B. Simons," p. 187.

²¹ Paul Murray, The Whig Party in Georgia, 1825-1853 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948).

²² Ibid., pp. 179, 187, 188.

features of Whig and Democratic counties in some detail and compared them as to the number and value of manufacturing establishments, the percentage of slaves, the number of bales of cotton produced, and other economic indices.²³

Murray, while agreeing with Simms and Phillips, advanced considerably beyond them in defending inconsistencies in his data. Murray was aware that the "traditional interpretation" of the Whigs as the party of the slaveholders had been invalidated by studies in economic history which showed "that there was no strict line of cleavage between farmers and planters in Georgia" in political affiliation, and that planters constituted only a small minority of the voting population. This meant that the Whig Party had to draw support from sources other than planters to carry any county and the state. Murray insisted, however, that the key element of Whig politics was the powerful social influence enjoyed by planters. Murray pointed out that the older "political interpretation" had confused party leaders with personnel. Whig leaders of statewide importance were "either large slaveholders or tied to the slave-holding class by residence, cultural affinities, or the practice of law." (Thus, he implied, Whig leadership was dominated by the slaveholding class.) The older "economic interpretation" also, said Murray, had failed to note the "plain indications that farmers, preachers, overseers, 'patty-

²³ Ibid., pp. 177-88.

rollers, and other hangers-on to the slave system were all slaveholders in politics, people who, while not slaveholders, placed their hope for prosperity in the slave system and its politics."²⁴

Murray's interpretation is significant because he found it necessary to argue that a rather loosely defined slaveholding class dominated Whig party leadership and not its personnel, *i.e.*, its rank and file voters. He also invoked, faintly, concepts other than narrow economic interests to explain voting (or party loyalty) in referring to "cultural affinities" and to persons who were "hangers-on," not slaveholders, but "slaveholders in politics." These explanations suggested complex processes of socio-cultural conditioning and psychological identification.²⁵

An explicit challenge to the Phillips tradition came in 1957 from Grady McWhiney, who denied that the Whigs were a class party.²⁶ The stereotype of the Whig Party, said McWhiney, as "a broad-cloth and silk stocking party embracing a large part of the wealth, intelligence, and blue-blood of the South" did not hold for Alabama. His analysis of county voting, yielded "only slight correlation between slave-holding and the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 177.

²⁵ On the psychological identification of lower class whites with the planters in the ante-bellum South see Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941).

²⁶ Grady McWhiney, "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama?" Journal of Southern History, XXIII, 4 (November, 1957), 510-22.

Whig vote." Whig strength did not lie only in the Black Belt and Democratic support was not confined to areas of small farms. "For twenty years the Whig party was a major political organization in Alabama with supporters in every county." Although the Whigs never carried the state they received 42 percent of the vote from 1836-1856.²⁷

McWhiney then examined the backgrounds and personalities of Alabama Congressmen and legislators from 1836 to 1856 as a way of uncovering differences between Whigs and Democrats. He found that significant differences in their family status, education, occupations, and religion did not exist.²⁸ McWhiney unfortunately did not distinguish between party leadership and mass following, and fell into the logical fallacy of assuming that elected officials represented the electorate in microcosm. Lee Benson observed, regarding Charles A. Beard's similar procedure with the Constitutional and Ratifying Conventions of the 1780's, that convention delegates were elected to represent counties, "not economic classes or interest groups."²⁹ Similarly, Alabama legislators and congressmen were elected to represent counties and districts, not economic classes, interests groups, or religious groups.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 510-14.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 521-22.

²⁹ Lee Benson, Turner and Beard; American Historical Writing Reconsidered (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960), pp. 164-65.

Two years after McWhiney's article appeared, Herbert J. Doherty contended in The Whigs of Florida, 1845-1854, (1959),³⁰ that a "definite correlation" existed in Florida between property ownership and Whiggery. Following a line of reasoning similar to Murray's in Georgia, Doherty recognized that the planters were a minority in the electorate and that for the Whigs to carry elections the "big" men had to exert "important political influence upon the small farmers, professional men, overseers, merchants, shippers, and craftsmen."³¹ Whig counties, said Doherty, held larger slave and white populations, richer farm land, and produced more cotton. "While the plantation Whig counties of Middle Florida were generally the backbone of Whig strength, there were also Whig strongholds that were commercial centers rather than rich agricultural areas." Democratic strongholds "were for the most part the thinly populated poorer counties which usually had more whites than slaves."³² Yet from Doherty too came the familiar complaint: there were "counties which defy the generalizations which have been laid down." And like scholars before him, Doherty introduced "explanatory factors" that failed to convince. Three staunchly Whig counties for example, were

³⁰ Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., The Whigs of Florida, 1845-1854 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1959).

³¹ Ibid., p. 63. Doherty and Murray were both vaguely invoking a concept which Walter Baghot called "the habit of deference." For a discussion of the concept see Benjamin W. Larabee, "Microanalysis," ed. Edward A. Saveth, American History and the Social Sciences (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 377.

³² Doherty, pp. 63-65.

"poor, thinly populated counties, producing practically no cotton or tobacco and having few slaves. They voted Whig, said Doherty, because all bordered on "heavy" Whig areas in Alabama; one had been formed from Florida's banner Whig county, and two were astride commercial water routes. Similarly, a "commercial" Democratic county which "should have been Whig" was Democratic because its cross-river rival happened to be Whig.³³ Why did bordering on heavy Whig areas in Alabama have such influence on certain Florida counties when other counties, which were Democratic and poor, bordered on Whig areas in Florida but were unaffected? Why should a "commercial" county, assuming that that is an adequate characterization of it, seek to compete with a commercial rival through a party which represented poor, non-commercial interests? Other obvious questions occur, but the inadequacy of Doherty's explanation of deviant cases should be clear.

Like historians before him, Doherty uncovered evidence suggesting the influence of ethnocultural background, but did not explore or consider its relevance. Rich, cotton-producing Jefferson County had "never returned a Whig majority in any statewide race and never elected a Whig to the state legislature." Doherty saw "no clearly apparent explanation" for Jefferson's behavior. He observed 1) that most of Jefferson's planters and population (about 40 percent) had come from Georgia

³³Ibid., pp. 66 67.

and South Carolina and that 2) "Georgians and South Carolinians were more often than not Democrats," because Doherty had found that a high proportion of Democratic party leaders came from these states. At this point the explanation came to a dead stop.³⁴

Doherty assembled a collective biography of Whig and Democratic legislators which showed little difference in the occupations of the two groups, although he did find a marked difference as to place of birth. He reasoned, quite properly, that "the breakdown in the occupational category for members of the legislature may not reflect the breakdown among Democratic and Whig voters."³⁵ This consideration had not prevented him, however, from assuming that differences in place of birth among party leaders extended to the electorate.

Doherty concluded by laying heavy emphasis on the differences he found at the highest levels of party leadership, among 19 men who had most influence in shaping party policies, programs, and, he implied, images. The Whigs at this level owned more slaves and property than the Democrats. However, in the electorate at large, neither party relied solely on "support of, or an appeal to, the interests of an 'upper' or a 'lower' class." "Whigs and Democrats in Florida both appealed to and drew their strength from all the pervading middle class." Taken at face

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 66-69.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

value Doherty's conclusions seemed inconsistent, but he had significantly modified the "traditional" interpretation of Southern Whigs and Democrats.

Meanwhile, the traditional view of Northern Whigs and Democrats was being sharply challenged and reasserted. Schlesinger's Age of Jackson (1945) provoked historians to re-examine the Jackson period and its political parties in a variety of ways. One of the many areas of re-examination grew out of Schlesinger's proposition that the "radicalism" of the Jacksonian movement, came from eastern workingmen and the intellectuals who were their spokesmen. This central theme of Schlesinger's stirred investigation of how workingmen actually voted. Schlesinger himself had been satisfied by Dixon Ryan Fox's demonstration of how workingmen voted. However, other scholars came forth to challenge Schlesinger's thesis, armed with Fox's method, but with conclusions very different from those of the early master. The most significant aspect of the ensuing debate for the next decade and longer, was the extent to which it was dominated by the spirit and technique of Fox.

The first to enter the post-Schlesinger fray a la Fox was William A. Sullivan who asked "Did Labor Support Jackson?"³⁷ and answered with a "No" based on study of Philadelphia wards. Acknowledging indebtedness to Fox for his method, Sullivan presented a table showing the total

³⁷William A. Sullivan, "Did Labor Support Andrew Jackson?" Political Science Quarterly, LXII, 4 (December, 1947), 569-580.

assessment of property in each Philadelphia ward in 1829, their population in 1830, and the average assessment per person. Other tables showed the number of votes the wards gave to major parties in the Presidential and Gubernatorial elections, 1828-1836. Percentages were not given. Ten of the fifteen wards voted for Jackson in 1828. All but one voted against him in 1832, and all voted Whig in 1835 and 1836. Sullivan concluded that "the workingmen gave their votes far more consistently to the Whigs than to the Jacksonian Democrats. Moreover, it was prior to the Bank War and not during it that the working class districts revealed any inclination to follow Jackson's party." ³⁸

There were, however, the inevitable exceptions. In the early years, "labor" tended to support Jackson, but that "pattern was shattered" by two deviant wards. Chestnut, "one of the wealthiest" (\$670 average assessment), voted steadily Democratic. "Poor" Lower Delaware (\$212) "voted monotonously for the Anti-Jackson party." ³⁹

Unlike Fox, Sullivan used no other measure of wealth than average assessment and no impressionistic evidence. Not only did he offer no explanation for the behavior of deviant wards, but he had no explanation of why Philadelphia "labor" generally voted against Jackson. ⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 569-70, 578.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 578-79.

⁴⁰ Sullivan also investigated the attitudes of the Workingmen's Party as an indication of how labor reacted to Jackson. His conclusions

The next challenge to "the accepted gospel that eastern workingmen supported Jackson" and to high-priest Schlesinger came from an investigator in Schlesinger's own backyard of Boston. In 1949 Edward Pessen offered "Did Labor Support Jackson?: The Boston Story."⁴¹ Pessen said he would study the "attitudes of Boston workers toward the party of Jackson" by studying their voting, using the method of Fox and Sullivan. Their technique had, he said, "a common sense validity and, in practice, has been effectively employed." Pessen computed the average assessment for each ward and, anticipating later critics, noted that "While this method is open to question in a city where a few great holdings might give a particular ward a false aura of general well-being, in this case that is hardly a consideration."⁴² Pessen nowhere showed why this was so, unless he meant that his introduction of other quantitative measures provided sufficient checks on the per capita assessment. His other measures were somewhat ingenious. He counted the number of persons in each ward in 1834 assessed over \$2,600, an arbitrary figure. Unfortunately, Pessen presented the whole number of such persons in each ward and not the percentage

seemed contradictory. He said that "as a political force representing the interests of the laboring classes" the party "had no particular predilection" for Jacksonians. (p. 577) On the other hand, Sullivan found that most of the Workingmen's leaders were business, professional, and wealthy men and concluded that the party could not have been "really devoted to solving working-class problems in the interests of the workers." (pp. 575-76).

⁴¹ Edward Pessen, "Did Labor Support Jackson?: The Boston Story," Political Science Quarterly, LXIV, 2 (June, 1949), pp. 262-74.

⁴² Ibid., p. 262-63.

which would have been a better basis of comparison, since the wards varied in population. Pessen also considered the total expenditures for poor relief in each ward in 1835, and found, presumably, general agreement among his measures of wealth. Pessen observed the voting of Boston's wards in elections each year from 1828 to 1836. The poor wards never gave majorities or even significant support to Jackson or the Democrats until 1836, when Jackson won majorities in three of the "working class" wards.⁴³ Pessen's attitude toward explaining Boston labor's non-support of Jackson was almost nonchalant, as if he assumed that no explanation could be satisfactory: "A number of factors can be cited as 'explanatory factors:' the power of Whig merchants in local politics; the voting system (open ballot) with the fear on the part of the voter, perhaps, of voting 'wrong;' internal dissension within the ranks of the Democratic party"⁴⁴

Pessen's "factors" rested partly on impressions and partly on speculation. It was not clear which of them was to be given greatest weight or whether all had equal weight.

In 1950 Pessen's method and conclusions came under critical review by Robert T. Bower in "Note on 'Did Labor Support Jackson?: The

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 265-74.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 274.

Boston Story."⁴⁵ Bower praised Pessen's industry in digging up election returns and demographic data for wards in the 1830's, but criticized him for not using proper statistical methods to interpret his data. Pessen's ignorance of such statistical methods was, of course, typical of his profession, and it was to this professional weakness that Bower directed his article. Bower had been inspired, significantly, by Paul F. Lazarsfeld of the Bureau of Applied Social Research, one of the pioneers of modern voting research.⁴⁶

Bower pointed out that Boston "as a whole was pro-Whig and anti-Jacksonian" during a period in which the country at large was voting Jacksonian. Thus, compensation needed to be made for Boston's being atypical. What was needed, said Bower, was "some tool of analysis that will neutralize the effect of the general level of voting in the area and allow us to see to what degree voting Whig or Democratic is related to the socio-economic nature of the wards, regardless of how the city as a whole voted." Pessen made the very basic error of using only the whole number of votes given in wards. In a situation such as that of Boston the relative size of the vote, i.e., simple percentages, was essential. Bower rearranged the wards in a rank order of poorness

⁴⁵ Robert T. Bower, "Note on 'Did Labor Support Jackson?: The Boston Story,'" Political Science Quarterly, LXV (September, 1950), pp. 441-44.

⁴⁶ See Bernard Berelson, H. Gaudet, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, The People's Choice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).

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and then observed the variation of Democratic percentages in that more meaningful ordering. The table showed "Many areas . . . out of line, but the general tendency for the working-class wards to give more support to the Democratic party is unmistakable."⁴⁷ Bower then computed the statistical expression of the variation in wealth and in Democratic strength--the coefficient of correlation--from 1829-1835 and the correlation coefficients showed that the tendency for working-class wards to support the Democrats had steadily increased. Bower said that he had disregarded the level of significance of the correlation and that his "main purpose [was] to demonstrate the application of a technique rather than settle the matter of labor's support for Jackson." Nevertheless, insofar as these data go, he did assert that Boston's working class had supported "Jackson and his political allies."⁴⁸

Bower's assertion regarding labor and Jackson showed that while Pessen's reliance upon proper statistical methods had been insufficient, (or non-existent), Bower had leaned too heavily on a method which identifies relationships which are not necessarily causal. The correlation coefficient only shows how one variable (Democratic strength) varies with another variable (wealth). The cause of that variance is not self evident, and to be determined credibly, other variables must be tested. Bower seemed unaware that, in the words of V. O. Key, Jr., "statistical

⁴⁷ Bower, p. 442.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 443, 444.

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procedures only identify relationships: it is necessary to understand precisely the statistical nature of the relation so identified and then to apply ingenuity and perhaps other inquiry to the explanation of the established relation."⁴⁹ The relationship between Democratic strength and wealth in Boston's wards 1829-1835 could very well have been a spurious relationship, due to some other factor or factors to which wealth was accidentally related. These are far from "hypothetical" considerations. In addition, Bower left the validity of the Fox-Sullivan-Pessen measure of relative wealth unchallenged and unsupplemented by impressionistic evidence. He offered no explanation of why Boston labor tended to support Jackson. He ignored, as Pessen had, the increase in Boston's electorate between 1828 and 1836. In 1828 the Democrats had received 828 votes in the entire city, the Whigs 3,112. In 1836 the totals had climbed to 2,894 and 4,772. What effect did this tremendous increase in the number voting have on parties? Who were the new voters? Bower had offered no general explanation and the "many areas out of line," naturally, also went unexplained. The Pessen and Bower articles illustrated the need for historians to equip themselves with elementary knowledge of statistical procedure,⁵⁰ and for historians to recognize the limits of statistical "magic" and to combine new techniques with some of the best traditions of their discipline, namely curiosity and searching inquiry.

⁴⁹V.O.Key, Jr., A Primer of Statistics for Political Scientists (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Co., 1954), p. 123.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 124.

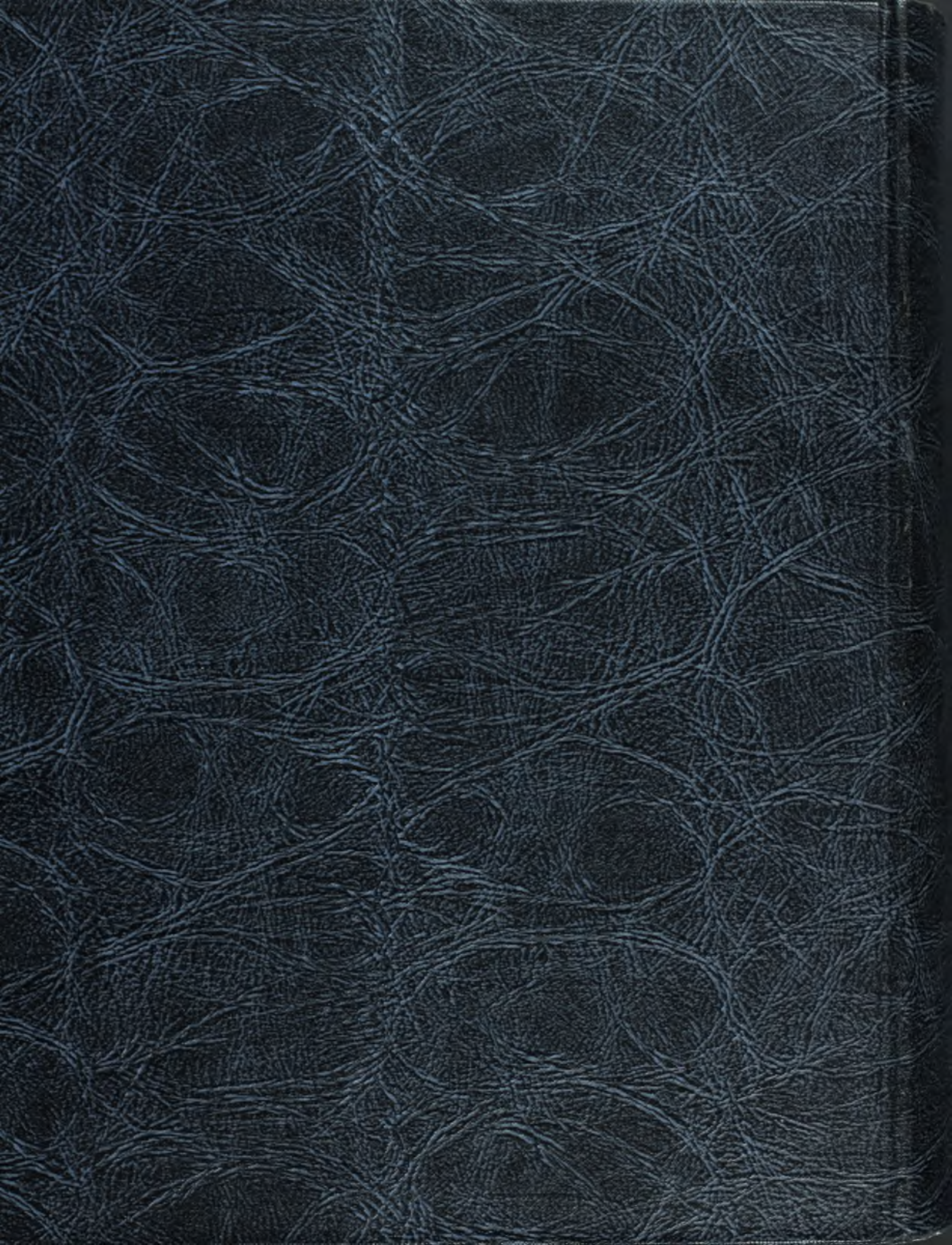
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Ronald P. Formisano was born in Providence, Rhode Island, March 31, 1939. He grew up in Bristol and attended public schools there. He is a 1960 graduate of Brown University with a B.A. degree, and attended the University of Wisconsin in 1960-61, where he received the M.A. degree in 1962. Since that time he has worked upon a Ph.D. degree in American History at Wayne State University, where he has been a full-time instructor for the last two years.

**WAYNE STATE UNIV.
HISTORY DEPT.**



MAY 1967



In his 1952 doctoral dissertation, "Labor in the Economy and Politics of New York City, 1859-1860; A Study of the Impact of Early Industrialism," Carl N. Degler rejected Fox's measure of per capita wealth for indicating rich and poor wards in the 1850's. Degler approved of using the measure before 1840, but found that by 1850 it no longer provided a reliable measure of wealth. Many wards had changed in character. Some wards such as the First, which had been the home of the wealthy, had become part slum and part business centers. Yet because their population was small and their total assessment high, the per capita wealth was high. "But the people who lived in the First Ward did not possess the great wealth that was located there." Degler found it "impossible to use the method which served Professor Fox and others so well for a period earlier than the decade of the fifties." Fox had, said Degler, "demonstrated that, up until the Forties at least, the allegiance of the working class was safely held by the Democrats." Part of Degler's own thesis was to show that working men in the 1850's gave "remarkably consistent support to the Democratic Party," so his approval of Fox's method and findings for the early period were hardly surprising.⁵¹ Yet if average assessment could not be relied upon in New York in 1850, was the measure so free from distortion in 1840 as everyone concerned seemed to assume?

⁵¹ Carl Neumann Degler, "Labor in the Economy and Politics of New York City, 1850-1860; A Study of the Impact of Early Industrialism," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1952), pp. 333, 296, 330, 331.

In 1955 William A. Sullivan published The Industrial Worker in Pennsylvania, 1800-1840.⁵² He offered nothing new or different from what he had earlier said in his article, except that he had incorporated the lessons of Bower's critique of Pessen, and had armed himself with party percentages, coefficients of correlation, and even the coefficient of determination. Sullivan did not elaborate on what his statistical devices had shown him, but it was clear that the new tests did not change his original thesis. Except for some support in 1828, Philadelphia workers (and those of Pittsburgh) had voted overwhelmingly against Jackson. The "stubbornly" deviant wards, however, remained unrepentant and unexplained. Sullivan's explanation generally added little to what he had said earlier and an air of mystery still surrounded the voting habits of Pennsylvania workers.⁵³

Joseph G. Rayback reviewed Sullivan's book in 1956. Rayback held strong convictions about labor's support of Jackson and they were not easily surrendered. He questioned Sullivan's method which rested, he said, on

the assumption that those Philadelphia wards in which per capita property assessments were lowest were those in which the working class lived. . . . The assumption . . . is open to serious question: value of real estate is often very high in workingmen's wards

⁵²William A. Sullivan, The Industrial Worker in Pennsylvania, 1800-1840 (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1955).

⁵³Ibid., pp. 199-200, 200-01, 205-07.

by reason of the existence of industrial and commercial property in them. The decline of the Jackson vote in the major industrial centers, moreover, may have been caused by population shifts--extensive in the 1830's--and by the drift of non-labor elements toward Whiggers.⁵⁴

Thus, Rayback objected to Sullivan's method for the very reason that Degler had not used Fox's method in New York City in the 1850's. But Degler had approved of the method for the 1830's. And Pessen had been aware of Rayback's objections in his study of Boston in the 1830's, but had not considered them an obstacle to using per capita wealth as a measure of relative wealth.

One could easily agree with Rayback's conclusion that "Dr. Sullivan has not written the last word on the subject of labor's support for the Jacksonians."

All the historians discussed above, whatever their differences, assumed that however different classes may have voted, different classes supported different parties. They all assumed, at least implicitly, that voting was determined by economic class or interest. In 1959 Richard P. McCormick attacked this assumption by questioning "whether the electorate tended to divide between the major parties along lines of economic cleavage." McCormick offered evidence that this was not the case in

⁵⁴ Joseph G. Rayback, Review of The Industrial Worker in Pennsylvania, 1800-1840, William A. Sullivan, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 1800-1840, XLIII, 2 (September, 1955), pp. 311-12. Rayback criticized Pessen for ignoring large numbers of workingmen who lived in Philadelphia County, the city's "suburbs and liberites," who voted staunchly Democratic throughout the period (immune, no doubt, to the "population shifts--extensive in the 1830's").

North Carolina from 1835 to 1856 nor in New York State in the 1820's. At those times both states had dual property qualifications for voting that permitted one to identify and compare the voting of broad groups which represented different economic classes. Thus, in North Carolina, 1835-1856, the office of Governor was elective by a vote of general taxpayers, but only fifty-acre freeholders could vote for Senator. The taxpaying requirement was not a serious limitation on voting because 83 percent of the adult males voted for governor in 1840. McCormick compared the votes for Senator and Governor in 1840, 1844, and 1856 to determine "whether the fifty-acre freeholders, as an upper level economic group, differed markedly in their party affiliations from the remainder of the electorate."

In each of the three elections the fifty-acre freehold voters were divided between Whigs and Democrats in almost exactly the same proportion as those who met only the taxpaying qualifications. In 1840, for example, 53.7 percent of the freehold electors were Whigs, as were 52.7 percent of the less qualified electors. In none of the elections was there as much as a two percent difference in the party distribution of the two classes of voters. Indeed, the similarity of party affiliations of the two groups was so nearly identical as to be astonishing. . . . Thus, whether or not a man owned fifty acres or more of land seemingly had little or no influence on his party affiliation.⁵⁵

McCormick's data for New York bore on the years 1816 and 1820-1826. There, a dual suffrage based on property also showed very little

⁵⁵ Richard P. McCormick, "Suffrage Classes and Party Alignments: A Study in Voter Behavior," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVI, 3 (December, 1959), pp. 397, 398-400, 401, 402. "The similarity of party distribution within the two classes of electors existed in almost every county; it is not the fabrication of an averaging process." p. 403.

difference between the political alignments of upper and lower economic groups. The common man's entrance into politics in 1821 did not at all upset the existing balance between the major parties. "Either he did not vote, or he showed as much preference for one party as for the other."

While McCormick drew a number of interesting conclusions regarding the influence of property restrictions on electorates, his most interesting conclusion (for me) struck directly at the assumption of earlier historians that voting was economically determined.

Although North Carolina and New York are not cited as "typical," they were two important--and even representative--states. Consequently, the conclusion that the upper economic-electoral class in each state divided between the major parties in almost the same proportion as the lower economic-electoral class raises significant questions about the general validity of economic-class interpretations of political behavior. . . . Here . . . is a field for further study.⁵⁶

McCormick was challenging an assumption that had exercised a formidable tyranny over historians' efforts to understand voting since the time of Turner and Fox. The major virtue and the major vice of the historians discussed above were, to paraphrase David Potter, that their data was explicit--more so than other historians--but their assumptions were often implicit, often unexamined and even unacknowledged. Most of the scholars discussed above made a direct, empirical approach to supporting their claims about classes and parties. But their controlling assumptions about human behavior and voting behavior were implicit and unexamined and handicapped their method. They labored in a discipline in

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 409.

which, as Potter said, "the development of theory has been inhibited . . . as much as in any branch of learning" with debilitating effects on method.

This neglect of theory did not mean, of course, that the historian really confined himself, as he often professed to do, to the mere compilation of data. In practice, he was constantly attempting to work out answers to the questions of causation, motivation, etc., but the assumptions of scientific history [in the late 19th and early 20th century] told him that he found these answers in the data and therefore he did not need analytical tools--other than those for validating data--to assist him in working them out. After the decline of scientific history, he usually went right on, just as before, trying in practice to work out the answers to interpretive questions. But his belief that it was impossible to work them out in the absolute sense stifled his impulses to formulate any systematic theory. Consequently, for the better half of a century now, the historian's assumptions concerning the nature of his own work have prevented him from attempting a systematic consideration of the concepts which he uses constantly in the course of his work.⁵⁷

The case of historians' treatment of voting in the Jackson period perfectly illustrates how limiting and unsatisfactory the neglect of a direct approach to problems of interpretation can prove. One of the most obvious failings of the works discussed earlier was their inability to cope with "exceptions," i.e., with behavior not apparently motivated by economic considerations. Cushing Strout has said that "the historian has always been embarrassed by the effort to discover conditions which invariably produce certain results not otherwise accounted for." Strout would attribute this embarrassment to the historian's inability to re-run events. But the embarrassment of Fox, Mueller, Sullivan and others resulted from their not

⁵⁷ David Potter, "Explicit Data and Implicit Assumptions in Historical Study," ed. Louis Gottschalk, Generalization in the Writing of History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 180.

possessing even the simplest working theory of voting behavior that would have required them to use a method designed to test a variety of possible determinants of voting behavior, and not just the economic determinant. Tyrannized by the assumption of economic determination of voting, Fox and the others lacked an adequate "design of proof." They examined only two variables: wealth and voting. When they encountered behavior for which economic motivation offered no answer, their explanations usually ground to a halt. The apogee of economic determinism's tyranny and the clearest expression of the scholar's bondage to one-factor economic analysis came, ironically, in a work which sought to show that the Boston working class did not vote for Jackson, contrary, as most economic interpretations would be expected to allege, to its class interest. Edward Pessen revealed the thoroughgoing assumption of economic determinism which underpinned his method when he stated his desiderata of "ideal data" which could show labor's attitudes to Jackson. "The ideal data for this study would consist of lists of all the voters, precise descriptions of their occupations and social positions--that is, whether they were wealthy or poor, journeymen or masters, small retail dealers or large merchants--and, finally, a tabulation of their votes." This would constitute "definitive material."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Pessen, Political Science Quarterly, LXIV, 2, p. 263.

Turner, it will be remembered, desired not just "physical" and "economic" data about voters, but also information about "nationalities and state origins of the voter, assessment rolls, denominational groups, illiteracy, etc."

In 1960 a direct challenge to one-factor analysis came in Lee Benson's critique of the method used by Charles A. Beard in The Economic Interpretation of the Constitution. Benson showed a "logical fallacy" in Beard's method that was the same logical fallacy inherent in Pessen's formulation of what constituted "ideal data" and the same logical fallacy running through historians' attempts to study voting in the Jackson period. Beard had presented a thesis regarding the creation of the United States Constitution based primarily on a collective economic biography of delegates to the Constitutional Convention--and to some of the ratifying conventions in the states. Beard explained the delegate's political attitudes, i.e., their voting in the Convention, according to their economic interest. Benson said that Beard's assumption that perceived self interest was the only aspect of class position influencing political behavior was logically fallacious because "it assumed what Beard proposed to demonstrate." Beard could not test his hypothesis by restricting his attention to the delegates' class position and not testing the relevance, say, of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Beard himself had made scattered references to the effect of such non-economic factors on men's opinions. In formal terms, said Benson,

Beard's design of proof is logically fallacious because it assumes that the relationship between two variables can be discovered without considering the possible influence of other variables. Or, in positive terms, to discover the relationships between opinion on the Constitution and economic class, it is necessary to consider the effect of other variables (factors) that might also have influenced opinion (e.g., membership in ethnic groups, membership--or lack of it--in religious groups, previous partisan affiliations, level of education). In short, spurious relationships may result if attention is restricted to two variables.⁵⁹

Benson then offered a substantive example from his then forthcoming study of New York State voting in the 1840's. His examination of other variables (ethnic and religious) indicated that alleged economic differences underlying party divisions were non-existent or spurious.

Benson urged historians to look to the "logic of multivariate analysis" to help resolve methodological problems and to arrive at more credible explanations of political behavior.

When we try to discover the relationships between two variables, our design of proof must permit us to consider the possible influence of at least one other variable. And the more variables we consider, the greater the likelihood of our verifying, or discrediting, a hypothesis.⁶⁰

Multivariate analysis is a convenient description of "the study and interpretation of complex inter-relations among a multiplicity of characteristics." Benson emphasized that "it is the logic of multivariate analysis, not its specific applications in other disciplines, that seems to me to have potential value for historiography."⁶¹

⁵⁹Benson, Turner and Beard, pp. 153, 154.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 158-59.

⁶¹Ibid., n.4, p. 159.

In 1961 Benson published The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy; New York as a Test Case, in which he sought to practice multivariate analysis. Concept showed in many ways the increasing impact of interdisciplinary trends on historical methodology. Benson relied heavily on methods drawn from political science to identify group voting patterns and used concepts drawn from sociology and social psychology to help account for voting behavior.

Benson made his book testimony to the greater credibility and precision of multivariate over one-variable analysis, and of systematic over impressionistic procedure. He considered six variables in determining the group bases of voting behavior: "1) previous voting behavior; 2) economic group; 3) ethnocultural group; 4) religious group; 5) residential group (i.e., large city, small city--large town, small town, large village, other rural); 6) regional group (i.e., residence in geographical area of New York State)." With variables for which no quantitative measure was available (e.g., percent of ethnocultural groups in a town) Benson estimated the variable's content on the basis of painstakingly assembled impressionistic evidence. If a quantitative measure was available--e.g., one for measuring the relative wealth of rural towns--he supplemented the measure with evidence from a variety of sources, particularly township and county histories.

Proposing that "at least since the 1820's when manhood suffrage became widespread, ethnic and religious differences have tended to be relatively the most important sources of political differences," he showed that this held for New York in the 1840's. Benson did not ignore the operation of economic differences, but assigned them lesser influence. Economic or other influences (e.g., sectional) could become relatively more important under different conditions.⁶²

While Benson's most immediate substantive concern was to undermine traditional assumptions regarding the class bases of parties in the Jackson era, or, as he renamed it, "The Age of Egalitarianism," the thrust of his two books was directed at a central problem in the craft of American history writing, namely "the gap between theory and practice." He was challenging not just the theory of economic determinism but also the historian's habit of working with such "implicit assumptions" and unconsciously applying "unreasoned and unrecognized assumptions."⁶³

The earlier studies of Democratic and Whig voting were logically fallacious because they tested only two variables in demonstrating the class bases of voting. Behind that reliance on one test was an unacknowledged theory of economic determinism which stultified their method and doomed it to inadequacy. Earlier historians wrote as if they were

⁶² Benson, Concept, pp. ix, 165, and 123-207.

⁶³ Potter, "Explicit Data," pp. 180, 183, passim.

deriving ideas from the data rather than selecting the data in the light of their ideas (which would be 'unhistorical'). But in actual practice, does not the historian often derive his view of history from his personal philosophy rather than from his analysis of the evidence? If he and another historian disagree, is their disagreement always inherent in the evidence or is it often a disagreement about the generalization which is to be applied to the evidence? Every historian will recognize, no doubt, that subjective factors are certain to influence his colleagues, and conceivably even himself. But what we do not always recognize perhaps is that what appears to be argumentation about a specific historical problem may really be controversy about the nature of the forces that operate in human society. Insofar as it is the latter, it could not possibly be solved in the terms in which it is being discussed--which is one reason why historical controversies are so seldom resolved.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 196.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN FOR A CASE STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN
WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN, 1837-1852.

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Introduction

I. Aims.

This study intends to identify the social groups--economic, ethnocultural, religious, or other--which supported the Whig and Democratic parties in Wayne County, Michigan, 1837-1852. It intends to explain as far as possible why certain kinds of persons and groups voted as they did and to identify which issues were most significant in causing parties to divide and in causing voters to form and hold party loyalties.

Systematic knowledge about the mass support of parties in a Northwestern county and state in the 1840's should supplement Benson's analysis of New York, and test both the "Concept of Jacksonian Democracy" as well as some of Benson's propositions and findings. This should be another brick in the foundation for broader generalizations about ante-bellum Northern politics. In addition to increasing our understanding of political history, this study has tried to highlight basic features of American politics and culture, particularly the relationship of the individual to the subculture, the interactions between subcultures, and the functions of the political party in American society.

2. Theoretical Assumptions.

(a.) Most voting behavior is socially determined. A number of variables in their social development and environment cause most men to choose a certain party.

(b.) Intensive study of a representative locality can yield generalizations reaching far beyond it. The political dynamics of a county, for example, can be a way of understanding the typical dynamics of a section or nation.

Focus on a microcosm does not mean that one simply describes and classifies that locality. Rather, as David Potter said, bringing to mind the famous mite of Pascal within which were an "infinity of universes,"

generalization in history is inescapable and . . . the historian cannot avoid it by making limited statements about limited data. For a microcosm is just as cosmic as a macrocosm. Moreover, relationships between the factors in a microcosm are just as subtle and the generalizations involved in stating these relationships are just as broad as the generalizations concerning the relation between factors in a situation of larger scale.¹

(c.) There is a rapport or correspondence between a party's character and the character of social groups supporting it. Party character consists of the attitudes, values, and ideology or belief system²

¹Potter, "Explicit Data," p. 191.

²This concept is borrowed from Phillip E. Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics;" (ed.) David E. Apter, Ideology and Discontent (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 206-61.

that are expressed in a party's image, style, rhetoric, and aura. For some social groups a party is a positive reference group, for others it is a negative reference group. If a party serves opposing functions for two groups, chances are that the two groups are antagonistic to one another. These relationships are usually discoverable and provide clues and inferences as to how various social groups voted. The social groups being referred to here can be particular social groups, e.g., laborers, Irish Catholics, or Germans, and they can also be more amorphous groupings which Daniel Bell has called "broad symbolic groups,"³ and which may also be termed "political subcultures."⁴ A broad symbolic group is inclusive and classifies men according to their "social and cultural characteristics (defined by such criteria as class, ethnic group, religious group, residences, education), their formal and informal organizations . . . their values, their beliefs, their symbols, their sense of identity."⁵

3. Method.

The major source of information about Michigan politics in the pre-Civil War period is Floyd B. Streeter's Political Parties in Michigan,

³Benson, Turner and Beard, p. 170.

⁴Frank J. Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System, ed. Sheldon S. Wolin, Basic Studies in Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), p. 149. On positive and negative reference groups see Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (revised edition; Free Press of Glencoe, 1957).

⁵Benson, Turner and Beard, pp. 169-70.

1837-1860 (1918). The following pages shall re-examine much Michigan political history, but no attempt has been made to write a formal narrative of political events⁶ although it should become clear that a revision of Streeter's narrative is long overdue. Streeter's method of describing political parties and in accounting for voting behavior--typical of the methods discussed in the last chapter--will be criticized, and multivariate analysis used in place of one-factor analysis. Voting has been examined systematically rather than impressionistically. Some parts of this study are, however, impressionistic, because it was unnecessary or too diverting or impossible for them to be otherwise. Some parts serve a negative function, that is, showing what did not happen. Other parts simply raise questions, pose hypotheses, or suggest lines of study.

Since data pertaining to individual voters is not available in the ante-bellum period, the researcher must turn to a study of aggregate political units. Wayne County's towns and Detroit's wards, e.g., provide the data for making inferences about how individuals in Wayne County most probably voted.

⁶Thus I have written mostly, although not only, what J. H. Hexter calls "rank" history as opposed to "file" history. "If we deal vigorously with a chain of events in time [file] we lose track of the connectedness of each part of the chain with the other happenings contemporary with it. If we deal with the interrelations of events in a particular time [rank] we lose track of the connections of each particular event with its antecedents and consequences." Reappraisals in History (Northwestern University Press, 1961), p. 22.

I examined the demographic characteristics of towns, wards, and counties, and their voting behavior over time. From election returns it was possible to construct a time series or voting profile of each unit in Wayne County from 1837 to 1852, showing the number and percent of the total given to each party in every major election.⁷ Six major variables could be compared: party loyalty; major economic group (farm, urban); economic class; religious group; ethnocultural group; and residence (urban, moderate rural, very rural). The "extreme cases," that is, the political units which had the most homogeneous populations or which most disproportionately supported one party provided the best evidence for generalizations about voting.

Wherever possible an effort has been made to develop quantitative measures for economic, religious, and other variables, as precisely as the available data permitted. For example, Benson classified rural New York towns in five economic categories, ranging from "unusually prosperous" to "poor," by using a quantitative measure constructed from the average value of family dwellings, checking its reliability against impressionistic evidence.⁸ I constructed an "Occupational Status" scale with which to compare units on the basis of the

⁷On the necessity of studying electorates or political units over time, see Lee Benson, "Research Problems in American Historiography," ed. Mirra Komarovsky, Common Frontiers of the Social Sciences (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 113-83. The wards were created in 1839 and the only major elections for which I was unable to obtain returns were the Presidential elections of 1840 and 1844.

⁸Lee Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 147-48.

percent of different economic classes among the potential voters in each unit in 1850. From the 1850 manuscript of the federal census a hand tabulation was made of the occupation of every potential voter (white, male, over 21) in every Wayne township (18) and in 14 selected townships in Washtenaw, Oakland, and Hillsdale counties. This involved over 4900 persons for Wayne County alone. The description of the individual's occupation and property provided the criteria by which he was ranked in one of 18 occupational groups reflecting relative socio-economic status (the Occupational-Status scale, devised after a study of the character and relative earnings of occupations in the 1840's and 1850's).⁹ The scale consists of two major groups, Farm and Urban, and six sub-groups: Farm Owners; Farm Laborers; Tenants, Unskilled Workers; Skilled and Service Workers; and White Collar Workers. The percentages of these classes and their subdivisions in various combinations provided a way of comparing units. Towns, for example, could be ranked according to the percent of Farm Laborers and Tenants in each, or according to the aggregate percent of some grouping of "upper" classes.

Since sociologists today, with great amounts of "objective" and "subjective" data about individuals, disagree about the best measurement

⁹James C. Bonner constructed a similar scale or table from the 1850 and 1860 census schedules for Hancock County, Georgia. His table, which he called "Economic Status of Occupational Groups," consists of 10 classes arranged "to approximate ascending order of economic well-being." "Profile of a Late Ante-Bellum Community," AHR, XLIX, 4 (July, 1944), 671.

of socio-economic status,¹⁰ I am well aware of the limitations of the scale used here. I checked the scale's rankings against impressionistic evidence and other economic data, such as the average value of farms and the average value of farm machinery in towns.¹¹ The scale is described in detail in Appendix A, and other quantitative measures used for other variables are discussed in the text.

4. Study of Eastern Michigan and Michigan.

Washtenaw County, immediately west of Wayne, and Oakland, just north of Wayne and Washtenaw, formed together with Wayne a rough triangle in eastern Michigan. Hillsdale county was southeast of these three and not contiguous with them. Study of these counties brought more social groups under observation and hypotheses generated from Wayne data could be checked. Washtenaw and Oakland were both populous counties and logical choices for further study. Hillsdale was simply one other eastern Michigan county for which some township election returns were available, this being no mean consideration. Detailed

¹⁰For a discussion of the history of the development of status measurement see Theodore Caplow, The Sociology of Work (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp. 30-57. "Objective" refers to measurable data, e.g., income, wealth, residence. "Subjective" refers to what individuals think about their class or status.

¹¹These additional measures were computed from the whole number of occupied farms and other data for farms given for townships in Statistics of the State of Michigan From the Census of 1850 (Lansing, 1851), and from Census of the State of Michigan (Lansing, 1854).

socio-economic, ethnic, and religious data from the census manuscript was gathered only for the "banner" towns in the counties outside Wayne, that is, the towns which gave the largest vote most consistently to the same party.

The voting of all of Michigan's counties in 1844, 1848, and 1852 was compared with demographic data for counties from the census of 1850. Some of the patterns found at the township and ward level were strikingly corroborated by the statewide county data. This broadening of scope resulted less from a desire to expand the geographical breadth and more from a desire to test hypotheses and particularly to bring more social groups under observation. In some cases, that alone has been done arbitrarily, e.g., Mormons in northern Michigan and Germans in western Michigan have been brought into the picture.

5. The Case Study

In 1940 James Malin said that "American History needs to be written from the bottom up" and recommended the local community approach as making possible "the analysis of units small enough so that they can be dealt with in the entirety of their behavior. As people do not live their lives in separate compartments--economic, social, cultural, or religious --the study of history . . . must be envisioned as a whole." A single community would not allow generalization but a number of "sample communities" studied separately could "afford a reasonable basis for

generalization."¹² Thus, the case study can be a vital part of the historian's method. It has always been recognized, as the authors of the Harvard Guide to American History said, that "A single community can serve as a case study which throws light on general problems," but they seem to regard local studies more as a subdivision of state and local history.¹³

The case study has had less significance in American historical scholarship than in European. Joseph Schafer observed over forty years ago:

We know . . . what light has been shed on general history by studies of a single monastery or of a given manor whose records happened to be preserved or the gild of a single town. Such studies have remade history in the older world, because they revealed the typical life forces and their modes of operation.¹⁴

Georges Lefebvre, who Robert R. Palmer described as "the most distinguished living authority on the period of the French Revolution," began studying that period with a four-volume analysis of "the rural sociology of a single department, that of Nord, before and during the Revolution," which took him twenty years. "To read in these volumes," said Palmer, "is like entering into the Revolution itself, so close are they to

¹² James C. Malin, "Local Historical Studies and Population Problems," ed. Caroline Ware, The Cultural Approach to History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 300.

¹³ Oscar Handlin et al., Harvard Guide to American History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 217-18.

¹⁴ Schafer, Minnesota Historical Bulletin, IV (1921),

the daily lives of the actual people."¹⁵

Limited but intense studies convey a sense of things elusive because they were so obvious, which everyone took for granted and no one bothered to record, as well as the pace and style of life.

Yet perhaps case studies are becoming obsolete, victims of progress as manifested in

the development of computer technologies for the rapid handling of large masses of information, usually quantitative. . . . These capacities have enormously expanded the horizons of the scholar who has analytic problems involving concrete bodies of data, for he is no longer bound to the small amounts of information that he can realistically expect to hand-copy or analyze from tabulations of social statistics. Thus, for example, the investigator interested in some rather general question . . . of American historical voting behavior need no longer limit the empirical portions of his inquiry to a "case study" of a particular state in a short time period out of respect for the sheer bulk of clerical labor involved in a broader definition of the problem: he can check out his theoretical surmises over much more extended areas and time periods.¹⁶

As one who spent a summer before microfilms of census manuscripts making hand tabulations I see no inherent virtue in laborious, clerical labor. What can be learned from personal examination of the manuscripts rapidly reaches the point of diminishing if not vanishing returns. But intensive case studies, with or without such labor, enable the researcher to become familiar with the "universe" which he is studying, and to see it as far as possible in "the entirety of its be-

¹⁵ Georges Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, 1789, trans. Robert R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. vi, xi-xii.

¹⁶ Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Annual Report, 1964-1965 (Ann Arbor, 1965), pp. 10-11.

havior." He can saturate himself in its history, and can explore individual, family, and group relationships at many levels, all of which can inform his interpretation of political behavior. While the limitations of the case study are obvious, its overwhelming and compensating advantage, as Robert A. Dahl has said, "is that the enterprise is reduced to manageable proportions." Dahl observed that "It is not, perhaps, wholly accidental that the two political theorists who did most to develop a description of political science were Aristotle and Machiavelli who, though separated by eighteen centuries, both witnessed politics on the smaller, more human scale of the city-state."¹⁷

Finally, political researchers are not agreed as to what constitutes the most effective unit of analysis in studying past voting behavior. Presently, individual data is most relied upon, but it is not available for most of American history. The local study brings the historian closest to individuals.¹⁸ This is not to reject the utility of the extended study. The broad canvass and case study can be brought together successfully, and computer technologies can aid in this process.

¹⁷ Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs?; Democracy and Power in an American City (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. v-vi.

¹⁸ On the relationship between the community context and the voter's frame of reference see Philip A. Ennis, "The Contextual Dimension in Voting," eds. William McPhee and William A. Glaser, Public Opinion and Congressional Elections (Glencoe: Free Press, 1962), pp. 180-211.

6. Wayne County, Representative of What?¹⁹

Wayne County, Michigan, is a good place to make a case study to follow up Benson's study of New York. Michigan was settled largely by New Yorkers. In 1850, 33.6 percent of its population had been born in New York. Only 7.8 percent had been born in New England, but most of the ex-New Yorkers were of New England descent, so that "Yankees" were the predominant group in the population, and southeastern Michigan was for a time dubbed "Greater New England."²⁰

In the 1840's and 1850's Wayne County recapitulated in its social structure many aspects of Michigan and the Northwest. Within its bounds lay Detroit, one of the oldest settlements of the region, Michigan's largest town in 1837 and largest city in 1860. Linked to Lake Erie by the Detroit River on its eastern boundary, Detroit was the landing place for most of the emigrants coming west over the Erie Canal. In the 1830's Detroit housed some small factories, chiefly metal and woodworking concerns. Two railroads were under construction in 1837, but Detroit's most important connections to the rest of the world were the 47 lake vessels owned by Detroiters, testifying to the leading part played by commercial interests in Detroit's economy in the 1830's and 1840's. Detroit's economic

¹⁹ For an excellent discussion of the "Question of representativeness" with respect to a nineteenth-century city see Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 192-206.

²⁰ Seventh Census, 1850--Statistical View, Compendium (Washington, 1854), pp. 116-18. J. Harold Stevens, "The Influence of New

importance in 1840 was as a jobbing center, with 11 commission houses engaged in foreign trade with an aggregate capital of \$123,000. For the next decade or so Detroit continued to be the jobbing center for a large part of Michigan, supplying merchants in the interior. Detroit's exports were agricultural products from the hinterland and its factories produced for state markets. Before the rise of Chicago, Detroit was a key point astride the general eastward flow of grains and wool and the westward flow of manufactured goods. By 1860, however, the "leading economic activities at Detroit . . . shifted from commerce to manufactures." Several industries had been steadily growing and employing large numbers of men by 1860: lumber (466 men), machinery and steam engines (505), iron (300), leather (108), pig iron (120), and malt liquors (78) were the largest.²¹

Although Detroit's presence made Wayne Michigan's most populous county, it should not be assumed that all the county's towns were the first settled in eastern Michigan. Some were not settled until the 1830's because sandy loam soil, heavy clay, thick timber, and generally flat lands (depriving Wayne of good water power), diverted, initially, emigrants from much of the Detroit hinterland. Thus, some Wayne townships in the 1840's were as frontier-like as any in the Northwest.

England in Michigan," Michigan History, XIX (Autumn, 1938), 321-54. Almon Ernest Parkins, The Historical Geography of Detroit (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1918).

²¹Parkins, pp. 131-32, 184, 316-17, 291, 292-93. Parkins' figures were from the Eighth Census of the United States, 1860.

As Detroit developed as a port city and center of trade and manufacturing, and as rail and toll roads pushed from it into the interior, the hinterland became peopled and prosperous, even while retaining, outside of Detroit, a predominantly rural character. Most of the county's inhabitants outside of Detroit earned their living by tilling the soil. Wheat and, to a lesser extent, potatoes became the cash crops, other farm products being grains, corn, livestock, and dairy products. The range of social structures encompassed in Wayne went from Detroit wards, whose socioeconomic organization in 1860 was as complex as any western city's, to townships completely devoted to agriculture.

Steady streams of emigrants and immigrants, the latter ever increasing, flowed into Wayne from 1840 to 1860. The foreigners clustered in Detroit and a few townships, while most of the towns remained predominantly native born. The immigrants were mostly Irish Catholics and Germans, Protestant and Catholic. English, Scots and Welsh from the British Isles and Canada, French-Canadians, and others came in much smaller numbers. In 1834 the foreign born amounted to about 20 percent of Detroit's population, in 1860 they constituted about 47 percent.²² The foreign born population of Wayne County in 1837 was probably well under 20 percent, closer to ten; in 1850 the foreign born amounted to about one-third of the county's

²² See the letter of Reverend Robert Turnbull, November 8, 1834, quoted in M. E. D. Trowbridge, History of the Baptist Church in Michigan (Michigan State Baptist Association), 1909, p. 45. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Vol. 1, Population (Washington, 1864), p. xxxi.

inhabitants.²³ The native born were mostly New Yorkers and New Englanders. There was another group that was not quite native and not quite foreign: the Michigan-born descendants of the early French habitants, who had lived in ribbon farms along the Detroit River and its tributaries. During early Territorial days the French had been the largest group in the population, but in 1837 they probably amounted to less than 10 percent of the population, although in Detroit and Wayne County the proportion remained fairly high in 1837 and for a short time thereafter, since the southeastern shore had been the most concentrated area of French settlement.²⁴

Without pretending to have described Wayne County in all its social dimensions, I hope to have conveyed an impression of its heterogeneity, as well as the uniformity, in certain characteristics, of some

²³ John T. Blois, *Gazeteer of the State of Michigan, 1838* (Detroit: Sidney L. Reed and Co., 1838), pp. 155-58. Seventh Census, 1850--Statistical View, Compendium, pp. 116-18. There is an 1834 census showing the number of "aliens" in each county in Clarence Edwin Carter, (ed.), The Territorial Papers of the United States, XII, The Territory of Michigan, 1829-1837 (Washington: United State Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 1018-21.

²⁴ Some of the sources of this description, in addition to those already mentioned, are: George N. Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, 1807-1837 (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1916); Clarence M. Burton et al., History of Wayne County and the City of Detroit, Michigan, I (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1930); George B. Catlin, "Early Settlement in Eastern Michigan," Michigan History, XXVI (Summer, 1942), pp. 319-45. For a brief summary see Constance McLaughlin Green, American Cities in the Growth of the Nation (Tuckahoe, New York: John De Graff, Inc., 1957), 193-99.

of its political units. There was a great diversity of social, economic, ethnocultural, and religious groups in Wayne County in the 1840's and 1850's. Detroit was the state capital until 1847, and in many ways remained the unofficial political, social, economic, and cultural capital long after 1847.

Defining the Problem

In the voting studies conducted during the past three decades, political scientists have developed certain basic insights, concepts, and ideas about voting behavior in America that can help define the problems of this historical inquiry. They have shown, for example, the extent to which party loyalty overwhelmingly shapes voting behavior. Donald E. Stokes has said that the "role of basic partisan dispositions" is perhaps the "most impressive element" in American political life. "Any national election can be thought of as an interplay of basic dispositions and short run influences." While short run influences are not trivial "each election is not a fresh toss of the coin; like all good prejudices, the electorate's basic dispositions have a tremendous capacity to keep people behaving in accustomed ways."²⁵

The authors of The American Voter observed that survey data on individual persons showed that basic party loyalties "have persisted

²⁵ Donald E. Stokes, "Party Loyalty and the Likelihood of Deviating Elections," Journal of Politics, XXIV, 4 (November, 1962), pp. 689-690.

through a number of elections. . . . These loyalties establish a basic division of electoral strength within which the competition of electoral campaigns takes place." The sense of individual attachment to a party is usually, they said, "a psychological identification. . . . Most Americans have this sense of attachment with one party or the other."²⁶

Phillip E. Converse, however, has maintained that party loyalty should not be treated as a "given" but rather as a variable. Converse has differentiated between two kinds of variations in party loyalty:

1) defections and 2) conversions. Defecting voters temporarily leave their traditional party to vote for another party and return when the specific causes behind their departure are relaxed. Conversion involves permanent change from one's traditional allegiance; it is a change of vote and party.²⁷

My central concern is with identifying the party loyalty of social groups in Wayne County, 1837-1852. A comprehensive account of short

²⁶ Angus Campbell, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 121, and see pp. 121-67, passim. Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, William N. McPhee, Voting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954, 1962), pp. 15-16, 19-22. Angus Campbell, Gerald Curin, Warren E. Miller, The Voter Decides (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Co., 1954), pp. 88-111. Angus Campbell and Donald E. Stokes, "Partisan Attitudes and the Presidential Vote," eds. Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck, American Voting Behavior (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 355-58, 368.

²⁷ Phillip E. Converse, unpublished lecture given at Inter-University Consortium for Political Research Seminar, August, 1965.

run influences from election to election will not be given, but certain elections will be discussed as a means of identifying persistence or change in group loyalties. The general definition of the problem involved is itself a hypothesis which shall be demonstrated here.

The Whig and Democratic parties emerged as major parties in 1837. The loyalties of social groups to these parties were formed by 1837 or not long after. Although the new Liberty Party appeared in 1840, followed by the Free Soil Party in 1848, the period had a basic stability and the Democrats dominated Wayne County and the state. The Liberty and Free Soil parties helped maintain Democratic domination by drawing their votes overwhelmingly from the Whig Party (75-95 percent, varying by community and by election).

The above poses these questions: Who voted for the Democratic, Whig, Liberty, and Free Soil parties? What accounts for Democratic domination of the period and its underlying stability?

1. Party Loyalty.

Party loyalties formed by 1837-1840 remained relatively stable from 1837 to 1852. This claim rests on several considerations: the net change in party votes at the state, county, and township level, and in the party loyalty displayed by almost all towns during the period. (Net shift is not a measure of gross shift, and small changes in net shift may appear while unseen gross shifts may be occurring. This does not appear

to have happened.)

The state popular vote and party percentages in the gubernatorial election of 1837, and in presidential elections from 1840 to 1852, show that the electorate divided fairly evenly between the Democrats and their opponents. The Democratic percentage in these elections was never lower than 47.2 (1848) and never higher than 51 (1837). Similarly, in Wayne County the Democratic percentage changed little: it was lowest in 1837 (49.1) and highest in 1852 (55.3).

TABLE 1

MICHIGAN VOTE FOR GOVERNOR, 1837, AND PRESIDENT,
1840-1852, NUMBER AND PER CENT TO EACH PARTY

Year	Democrat		Whig		Liberty-Free Soil	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1837	15,269	<u>51.0</u>	14,665	49.	--	--
1840	21,096	<u>47.6</u>	22,933	<u>51.7</u>	321	<u>.7</u>
1844	27,737	<u>49.7</u>	24,375	<u>43.8</u>	3,639	<u>6.5</u>
1848	30,677	<u>47.2</u>	23,930	<u>36.8</u>	10,393	<u>16.</u>
1852	41,842	<u>50.5</u>	33,860	<u>40.8</u>	7,237	<u>8.7</u>

TABLE 2

WAYNE COUNTY VOTE FOR GOVERNOR, 1837, AND PRESIDENT,
1840-1852, NUMBER AND PER CENT

Year	Democrat		Whit		Liberty-Free Soil	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1837	1,998	<u>49.1</u>	2,066	<u>50.9</u>	---	---
1840	2,237	<u>49.6</u>	2,248	<u>49.8</u>	23	<u>.5</u>
1844	2,737	<u>51.8</u>	2,345	<u>44.4</u>	192	<u>3.6</u>
1848	3,308	<u>52.7</u>	2,544	<u>40.5</u>	420	<u>6.6</u>
1852	4,680	<u>55.3</u>	3,407	<u>40.2</u>	368	<u>4.3</u>

The evidence for the persistence of party loyalty is most striking and convincing in township voting. Most of Wayne's towns voted every year for the same party, 1837-1852. Their populations, especially when compared to Detroit's wards, were relatively stable. The census manuscript for 1850 showed that many of the individuals and families which local histories named as the first settlers were still there in 1850. Most of the towns displayed a fairly consistent character and any significant demographic changes have been looked for and taken into account as far as possible. It was generally safe to assume that the census manuscript did not give a picture of the towns drastically different from what they had been in 1840.

Table 3 shows the percentages cast for the Democratic Party in ten of Wayne County's towns in elections from 1837 to 1852. In some cases town boundaries changed between 1837 and 1840; Grosse Pointe was organized out of Hamtramck in 1847. The table suggests the strong and consistent adherence, with minor fluctuations, of those towns to the Democracy.

TABLE 3

DEMOCRATIC PARTY PERCENTAGES IN TEN WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS
ELECTIONS, 1837-1852

Year	Office	Canton	Dearborn	Greenfield	Grosse Pointe	Hamtramck	Monguagon	Nankin	Redford	Romulus	Van Buren
1837	Govenor	67.9	63.	40.4		68.7	37.7	53.1	48.1		48.5
1840	President	61.7	61.3	57.6		69.5	30.2	58.6	55.5	54.2	57.7
1842	State Senator	78.6	74.2	62.8		96.4	54.5	69.1	59.6	70.1	63.6
1844	President	60.3	63.8	54.4		67.6	61.7	60.1	59.	56.7	59.3
1846	Congress	73.5	67.5	60.1		72.3	65.5	52.1	57.	57.8	57.2
1848	President	63.8	62.5	54.9	75.	66.4	59.4	58.7	67.7	55.2	59.2
1850	Congress	56.3	53.4	54.7	76.3	68.2	62.2	41.5	59.7	59.8	56.5
1852	President	66.7	55.6	61.8	85.7	71.3	55.8	56.7	64.3	57.	59.1

Five other towns were as consistent in giving the Democrats a low percentage of their total vote, although they were not as strongly anti-Democratic as the above nine were Democratic. (Taylor was created from Ecorse in 1847.)

TABLE 4
DEMOCRATIC PER CENT IN FIVE WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS,
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 1840-1856

Towns	1840	1844	1848	1852	1856
Brownstown	34.	41.4	39.2	48.	49.3
Livonia	41.3	41.5	38.7	43.4	35.2
Plymouth	38.	40.1	33.9	38.3	32.4
Sumpter	46.	33.8	43.2	43.7	46.5
Taylor	--	--	32.6	43.4	37.2

Only two towns in Wayne showed significant fluctuations in their voting. Although Ecorse swung from one party to another, the margin of its changes was not very large. Its electorate was closely divided. Springwells over-all voting pattern showed a steady change from strong Whig loyalty to strong Democratic loyalty. Springwells conversion corresponded to extensive changes in both the size and composition of its electorate.

TABLE 5
 DEMOCRATIC PER CENT IN ECORSE AND
 SPRINGWELLS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS,
 1840-1856

	1840	1844	1848	1852	1856
Ecorse	47.5	44.1	54.7	47.7	53.2
Springwells	33.4	49.5	53.3	51.	56.4

One of the best indications of the strength of party loyalty is found in comparison of the votes townships and wards gave to all the avrious offices involved in any one election. In most years one finds a remarkable consistency in the distribution of the vote from top to bottom of the ticket. The number of votes given to Democratic Presidential electors, say, in Greenfield township was usually equal to or very close to the number of votes given to the Democratic candidate for state representative, or county clerk. In other words, one finds very little indication of ticket splitting, which is an excellent index of party loyalty.²⁸

This was particularly true of towns no matter what the election, whereas

²⁸ See Campbell et al., The Voter Decides, pp. 22-25, 103; Campbell et al., The American Voter, p. 83; E. E. Schattschneider and Victor Jones, Local Political Surveys (New York: 1962).

Detroit's wards, with more mobile, changing, and heterogenous electorates, showed more of a tendency to split tickets. The wards did usually show, however, very consistent divisions for most high state and federal offices.

Finally, Sandra McCoy found strong party loyalty among Wayne County's economic elite in the 1840's. Of the 97 men that McCoy identified as constituting Wayne County's economic elite in 1844, she found only two cases of a party switch in the period 1837-1854.²⁹

2. Impact of the Liberty and Free Soil Parties, 1840-1852.

The entrance of the Liberty Party into the political lists in 1840 did not disturb the unity of the 1837-1852 period because the new party drew its votes overwhelmingly from Whiggery. Thus, Democratic and anti-Democratic divisions remained about the same, but much to the advantage of the Democrats. The Whigs did not view the matter calmly since it came to mean the difference between victory and defeat.³⁰ In

²⁹ McCoy, p. 96.

³⁰ In 1843 Whig leader William Woodbridge feared that the "political abolitionists" endangered Henry Clay's prospects in 1844: "Of them, consisting of men of both parties, the majority in our state, heretofore has been (sic) of the opponents of the Locos." William Woodbridge, Springwells, August 25, 1843, to Hon. Willie P. Mangum, Woodbridge MSS, Burton Historical Collection (BHC), Detroit Public Library.

most political units the Whig and Liberty votes can be regarded as the approximate sum of anti-Democratic strength, particularly in towns where, were it not for the anti-slavery party, the Whigs would have enjoyed a clear majority.

The anti-slavery parties did not poll votes in every political unit and in only two towns in Wayne did they attract a significant minority. In most of the towns in which they polled over 5 percent of the total vote, the Democratic percentage was usually low. For example, one of the consistently low Democratic towns in Wayne was Plymouth. In 1839 the town voted 60.5 percent Whig, in 1840, 59.6. In 1844, however, the Whig percent had fallen to 49.1, the Democratic vote was a characteristically low 40.1, while the Liberty Party polled 10.4 percent, or almost precisely the measure of the Whig drop between 1840 and 1844. This was the most common pattern: the Liberty Party taking votes from the Whigs in towns which were otherwise Whig and giving the Democrats a plurality. Not all Whig towns, however, succumbed to Liberty attractions. Taylor in Wayne, for example, was unique among the Whigs towns of Wayne in that, after being organized in 1847, it gave no votes to any anti-slavery party until 1852, and then only two (2.8%). Most rare was a town that could be called Democratic-Liberty or Democratic-Free Soil. None such specimen existed in Wayne County. In one town, Nankin, where the anti-slavery parties did draw from the Democratic Party, they still drew more votes from the Whigs.

In Wayne County the Liberty Party drew its votes overwhelmingly from the Whig Party: in several towns the emergence of the Liberty Party affected the distribution of the vote as it had in Plymouth.

TABLE 6

WHIG PER CENT IN FOUR WAYNE TOWNS IN 1839 AND 1840,
COMPARED WITH WHIG AND LIBERTY PER CENT IN 1844

Towns	1839	1840	1844		Votes
			Whig	Liberty	
Livonia	61.9	56.1	40.4	17.9	48
Plymouth	60.5	59.6	49.4	10.4	58
Sumpter	----	54.	59.3	6.7	4
Brownstown	61.	66.	54.6	3.9	6

TABLE 7

DEMOCRATIC PER CENT IN THREE WAYNE TOWNS, 1839 AND 1840,
COMPARED WITH DEMOCRATIC AND LIBERTY
PER CENT IN 1844

Towns	1839	1840	1844		Votes
			Dem.	Liberty	
Redford	54.6	55.5	59.	5.2	14
Nankin	58.	58.	60.1	4.7	13
Canton	65.1	61.7	60.3	3.3	7

Towns in which the Whig Party had a clear majority in 1839 and 1840 had sharply reduced Whig percentages in 1844. This was not true of Sumpter, where very few votes made large differences in percentage. It was spectacularly the case with Plymouth and Livonia. Two Democratic towns slightly increased their Democratic percentage between 1840 and 1844.

Another insight into the impact of the Liberty Party in Wayne is gained from observing the party vote of those towns in which not one vote was cast for the Liberty presidential candidate in 1844.

TABLE 8
MAJORITY PARTY PER CENT OF VOTE IN WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS
GIVING NO VOTE TO THE LIBERTY PARTY
IN 1844 (PRESIDENTIAL)

Town	Party	%
Hamtramck	Democratic	67.6
Dearborn	Democratic	63.8
Monguagon	Democratic	61.7
Van Buren	Democratic	59.3
Romulus	Democratic	36.7
Greenfield	Democratic	54.4
Springwells	Whig	50.5
Ecorse	Whig	55.9

Table 8 suggests a strong relationship between Democratic strength and absence of support for the Liberty Party. Six of the eight towns giving no votes to Birney in 1844 were strong Democratic towns. Only Springwells had once been a Whig stronghold.

Changes in the voting behavior of Michigan's counties between 1839 and 1841 suggest that the Whig Party throughout the state lost votes to the Liberty Party. In the 1840 vote for Congress, 17 counties out of a total of 31 gave 1 or more votes to the Liberty Party. Of these 17 counties, 13 had voted Whig in the 1839 gubernatorial election. By 1841 only 2 of these 13 remained Whig. In the others the Liberty vote had increased and the Democrats now enjoyed a majority or plurality as a result. This is, of course, a very crude measure of Liberty encroachment on the Whigs, but it supports the claim that the Liberty Party took most votes from the Whigs.

The aggregate state vote from 1836 to 1841 also supports the claim. In every major election from 1836 to 1840 the Whigs kept pace with and then surpassed the Democrats, but then fell drastically behind in 1841. This drop cannot be attributed solely to defections or conversions to the Liberty Party. Non-voting was obviously more responsible for Whig losses in 1841 than defections to the Liberty Party. The Libertyites polled only 1,223 votes and the Whig vote fell from 22,933 to 15,449.

TABLE 9

MICHIGAN VOTE IN MAJOR ELECTIONS, 1836-1841

Year	Office	Democrat	Whig	Liberty
1836	President	7,332	5,545	
1837	Govenor	15,269	14,665	
1838	Congress	16,255	16,051	
1839	Govenor	17,760	19,069	
1840	President	21,096	22,933	268
1841	Govenor	20,993	15,449	1,223

Non-voting usually results from apathy or confusion, and there was plenty of both among Whigs in Michigan in 1841. Before the election one Democratic leader observed that the Whig party "manifests a most astonishing apathy and I do not believe they can drag their force to the polls."³¹ The Whig President-elect of 1840, William H. Harrison, had taken office only to die in April 1841. His successor John Tyler dismayed Whigs everywhere by turning out to be more of a states' rights Southern Democrat than a Whig. By September of 1841 Tyler had twice vetoed a bank bill, was warring openly with Whig Congressional leaders, and all of his Cabinet except Daniel Webster had resigned. These

³¹Robert M. McClland, Monroe, October 7, 1841, to John S. Bagg, Detroit, Microfilm of selected letters from the John Sherman Bagg MXX in the Huntington Library, property of Russell E. Bidlack. (Hereafter: Bagg MSS, Film)

events induced rage, frustration, and disgust among Michigan Whig
 32
 leaders.

Michigan Whiggery itself had been racked by internal feuding and had been deprived of its most prominent state leader. The party controlled the legislature in 1841 but could not agree on a choice for United States Senator. After a fight, the legislature chose William Woodbridge, the Whig governor elected in 1839. Woodbridge was elected because the Democratic minority threw its support to the faction supporting him. He had been a popular governor and his departure could not have done much for Whig esprit de corps. The failure of the Bank of Michigan, which the Whigs had made fiscal agent for the state, also hurt the party. Many Whigs said privately that "the monster's" mishaps would cost the party votes. Although this is far from a full account of short-run influences on the election of 1841, it should

³²The reactions of many Whig leaders to these events are expressed in many letters in the William Woodbridge MSS. See, e.g., George Goodman, Niles, September 8, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington, D.C. (Tyler's veto "hastened very much to cool the ardor of the Whigs.") See also Austin Blair, Jackson, December 15, 1841, to A.T. McCall, Bath, New York, Austin Blair MSS, BHC, (hereafter Blair MSS); and Detroit Daily Advertiser, November 3, 1841, p. 2.

³³Streeter, Political Parties, pp. 39-40. Early in 1840 a Whig leader wrote to Woodbridge urging him to remain governor and to become Senator as such a move would damage the party by creating a feeling of abandonment among his supporters, Franklin Sawyer; Ann Arbor, January 16, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS. Many letters in the Woodbridge MSS refer to the intra-party fight over the Senatorship. See especially: Thomas Rowland, Detroit, January 28, 1841, to

be clear that many apathy producing factors were working to cause a drop in Whig voting.

The Liberty Party probably helped increase non-voting among Whigs. Since Whigs were most likely to be attracted to political anti-slavery, it follows that more Whigs than Democrats would be caught undecided between their party loyalty and the new party, and would resolve their indecision by simply not voting.³⁴

3. 1848 and Defection Among Democrats and Whigs.

In 1848 the Free Soil Party nominated Martin Van Buren, former Democratic President, to head its ticket. This gave Democrats with political anti-slavery tendencies strong incentive and justification for setting aside party loyalty and voting Free Soil. At first, politicians in Michigan expected that Van Buren's candidacy would help the Whig nominee, General Taylor, and Whig leaders at first may even have secretly encouraged the free soil movement. But gradually during the

William Woodbridge, Springwells; Richard Butler, Mt. Clemens, February 9, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Detroit; and Same to same, December 26, 1840. Detroit Free Press, February 4, 1841, p. 2.

³⁴ On cross-pressure situations and withdrawal see Robert E. Lane, Political Life (New York: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 199-201.

1848 campaign it became apparent that "multitudes of Whigs also were joining" the free soilers.³⁵

More Democrats do appear to have defected to Free Soil in 1848 than had ever defected earlier to the Liberty Party. Yet the surprising thing is how few Democrats did defect. Native son Lewis Cass's nomination by the Democrats for president must have helped offset the pull of the Van Buren candidacy in Michigan, particularly in Cass's home town, Detroit. The Whig and Free Soil parties also worked closely together in some Congressional Districts (although not in the First, which included Wayne), and this may have helped repel Democrats from Free Soil.

Voting in Wayne County in 1848 followed patterns already established with these differences: slightly increased Democratic defections took place in towns already disposed to give votes to the Liberty Party; Whig defection to Free Soil was not only greater than Democratic defection, but greater than earlier Whig defections to the Liberty Party.

In 9 towns where the Free Soilers got over two percent, Democratic strength in 7 of the 9 was less than it had been in 1844. Six of the 9 bounced back in 1852 and gained over 1848. Yet when Democratic losses,

³⁵William Woodbridge, Springwells, October 2, 1848, to N.W. Coffin, Boston, Mass., Woodbridge, MSS. Democratic editor Wilbur F. Storey had earlier expressed his fears that the free soil promoters in Michigan "desire above all to carry the state for General Taylor." W.F.S., Jackson, July 31, 1848, to John S. Bagg (Confidential), Bagg MSS, Film.

1844-1848, and Democratic gains, 1848-1852, are compared to Whig losses and gains in the same intervals, one sees that the Free Soilers drew far more heavily from the Whigs. In the county at large Whigs had given Henry Clay 44.5 percent of the vote in 1844, but Zachary Taylor polled only 40.5 percent in 1848. (See Table 2.) Whig rebounds in the 9 towns, 1848-1852, were far more extensive than comparable Democratic gains.

The Democratic percentage of the state vote fell by 2.5 between 1844 and 1848, and the Whig percentage fell by 7. The whole number of Democratic votes rose by over 3,000, while the whole number of Whig votes fell by 400, in an election in which greater numbers turned out than ever before (although not the greatest percentage of eligible voters). Correspondingly, the Whigs increased their percentage between 1848 and 1852 far more than the Democrats, as the Free Soil vote fell from 16 to 8.7 percent. (See Table 1.)

The theses that most of the electorate identified with one party in the period 1837-1852 and that the anti-slavery parties drew votes largely from the Whigs have been established here to simplify the identification of Democrats and Whigs. The anti-Democratic vote, whether Whig, Whig-Liberty, or Whig-Free Soil (to a lesser extent), may usually be taken as representative of potential Whig strength. The convenience of this procedure will become apparent in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV
ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR,
1837-1852.

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1837-1852

Economic Interest and Parties, 1835-1841

1. Introduction.

Did conflicts between economic groups cause party division in Michigan in the 1830's? Did different economic classes support the Democratic and Whig parties?

The first section of this chapter will examine Floyd B. Streeter's answers to these questions and the assumptions, method, and kinds of evidence he used to support his claims that party divisions reflected economic divisions. Some tentative hypotheses shall be offered regarding the relationship between business enterprise and politics in the 1830's and 1840's. Although economic interest influenced political behavior it did not divide parties in the mechanistic way described by Streeter. Economic motives undoubtedly spurred many men to political activity, men who were political actives or members of elite interest groups often competing for government favoritism. But economic interest does not seem to have caused party division, among elites or the mass public.

The second section shall examine impressionistic and systematic evidence bearing on the voting behavior of the mass public and economic

groups in four counties. The data offers no support for the thesis that different economic classes supported different parties. The bulk of voters were overwhelmingly middle and lower class and this electorate remained fairly evenly divided. The rural lower classes showed no consistent tendency to vote for one party. Towns where the eligible voters were almost wholly small farmers had strong attachments to both the Whig and Democratic parties, and some of these towns had no strong attachments. Towns with large proportions of prosperous, middle-class farmers were both Whig and Democratic.

2. Streeter's Economic Determinism.

In his preface to Political Parties in Michigan Streeter thanked Ulrich B. Phillips for aiding and encouraging his work. It is not surprising that a historian with Streeter's associations, working in the intellectual milieu of the 1910's, produced a classes and masses interpretation of the Whig and Democratic parties. Phillips' essay on the Southern Whigs, the fountainhead of the "blue-blood" interpretation of Southern Whigs, had appeared in 1910. Charles A. Beard's pyrotechnic Economic Interpretation of the Constitution appeared in 1913 and Fox published Decline in 1919.

Unlike Fox, Streeter used no quantitative measures of economic class. But he did consider the relevance of factors other than

economic on political behavior and wrote chapters on "The Churches in Michigan Politics" and the "Foreign Element in Michigan Politics." Unfortunately, he did not consider religious and ethnic variables systematically, and usually reduced them to a function of economic class. For example, he described Baptists and Episcopalians as holding different political attitudes, but nothing in their religio-cultural background seemed related to their political preferences. Baptists were, however, mostly "rural" and in "moderate financial circumstances" while Episcopalians "represented the wealthy and conservative class." Thus, according to Streeter, Baptists were mostly Democrats and Episcopalians voted mostly Whig.¹ He described Catholic and Lutheran voting as follows:

Most of the Catholics were poor and illiterate aliens who resided in the cities. The nativistic tendencies of the Whigs alienated the Catholics and the German Lutherans, while the Democrats befriended them; consequently, this element consistently voted the Democratic ticket throughout ante-bellum times.²

Whig nativism and Democratic friendship were here as important as the Catholics' and Lutherans' class. In the chapter on the "Foreign Element" Streeter gave more weight to class position as a determinant of the "party preferences" of Catholics and Lutherans. He said that bribery and whiskey might have helped induce aliens to vote Democratic, "But it seems more

¹Floyd B. Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, 1837-1860 (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1918), pp. 211-16. This refers to the 1830's and 1840's. Anti-slavery and the Republican Party caused alignments to change.

²Ibid., p. 212.

probable that the nativistic tendencies of the Whigs and the fact that the Democrats were socially of the same class with the naturalized citizens and stood for principles which fitted the ideas of the latter, played a far more important role in determining the party predilections of the foreigners."³ That Streeter regarded economic class as the primary determinant seems beyond doubt in view of his comment that Whig nativism was the attitude of the conservative faction in the Whig party who "represented the wealthiest class in the state," men who "regarded the citizens of foreign birth as a reckless and ignorant element whose votes were controlled by Democratic politicians."⁴ Nativism in this sense is almost a product of the upper-class stake-in-society view of government and a function of economic class position.

Streeter assumed that "conscious self-interest is the only aspect of class position that influences political behavior," and he confused the concepts of "interest group" and "social class."⁵ This confusion will be apparent in the following summary of his general "reasons for division of voters into political parties."

³Ibid., p. 165.

⁴Ibid., pp. 38-39. Compare this with Fox's comment that most Whigs in New York "were of a station in society" where nativism and anti-Catholicism would prevail." Decline of Aristocracy, p. 375.

⁵For a similar confusion on the part of Charles A. Beard, see Benson, Turner and Beard, p. 153.

1. "Origin." Voters from western New York tended to be radicals and eastern New Yorkers and New Englanders tended to embrace conservative parties. 2. "Amount of wealth and social position." While this came second, the first actually depended on it because "most of the voters who had emigrated from western New York were poor and inclined to be radical," while those "reared in New England and eastern New York . . . had enjoyed the advantages of wealth and education." 3. "Sectional interests." Streeter said that "the economic interest of the people in the northern and southern counties conflicted sharply with the interests of the residents of the central counties. Thus the voters tended to divide into parties according to sectional lines." Yet further examination of this "reason" shows that, as with origin, it also operated to divide voters along class lines. The central tier of counties was "the stronghold of the well-to-do element and the commercial interests," while most voters in the northern and southern counties worked at agriculture and "many" were poor.⁶

Class lines separated the parties. The Democratic Party "was composed of the poor and uneducated people in the cities and the rural districts, though a number of well-to-do had also been attracted to it." The Whig Party had a "much different constituency;" the "vast majority . . . were the well-to-do and conservative men, or those who, for some

⁶Streeter, pp. 4-6.

reason, upheld the interest of this class. Among them were many bankers, merchants, and financiers in the cities, and large landowners in the country."⁷

It is interesting that Streeter recognized that some voters did not vote as class lines indicated. When confronted with behavior that class interest could not explain, Streeter left it unexplained--as, for example, "for some reason," --or found another economic reason of greater weight. For example, well-to-do farmers on the southern border did not ally themselves with the conservatives in the 1830's because they thought that the central counties were getting the "lion's share" of internal improvement appropriations, so they united "with that political party which would protect their interests."⁸

Given the support of the Democratic Party by the poor and radical it followed, for Streeter, that the party's legislative program would be designed to benefit the lower classes and that rich and conservative men, in the Whig Party after 1834, would oppose their schemes. The poor-radicals dominated the Democracy in the 1830's, said Streeter, and with the party in power they "had an opportunity to make practical use of their theories." Thus the party enacted legislation on internal improvements and on banks designed to meet the interests of the lower classes.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

These impressions, assumptions, and deductions find little support in the complexities of Michigan political and economic life in the 1830's and early 1840's. Democratic legislation on internal improvements and banks cannot be construed to be radical or lower class legislation. There is little reason to think that Democratic policy in general was created by the demands of the poor of that it directly benefited them, with one exception in 1842.⁹ As it was, Democratic and Whig policy differed little on economic matters.

3. Economic Interests and the Convention of 1835.

A constitutional convention is an excellent place to look for fundamental differences between political parties.¹⁰ As Michigan passed from territory to state, it held a constitutional convention in

⁹This was a debt exemption law of 1842 which allowed workers, artisans, and others in debt to keep that part of their personal property necessary to continued earning of their income; the law set up criteria of what was "necessary." The Democrats promised such a law in their 1841 gubernatorial platform, but were apparently not unanimous in supporting it. The Whig Advertiser recognized the need for the law but thought the Democratic version went "too far" and that it would "work mischief." Paul A. Randall, "Gubernatorial Platforms for the Political Parties of Michigan, 1834-1864" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1937), p. 37. Advertiser, February 15, 1842, p. 2. The Democrats appear to have been split on the issue, Free Press, February 21, 1842, p. 2.

¹⁰Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), uses this technique in dealing with parties in New York in 1821 and 1846. Meyers assumes, however, that the Whig and Democratic parties were direct descendants of the Federalist and Republican parties. For a corrective see Shaw Livermore, The Twilight of Federalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

1835. If the basic differences between parties resulted from conflicting class and economic group interests, one might expect that these interests would have emerged in the convention. Marvin Meyers has said that among the "most incendiary issues" of the two Jacksonian decades in New York were "banking and corporations, public debt and public works."¹¹ Yet in 1835 a constitutional convention met in Michigan and economic issues barely threw off a spark of conflict. The Whig contingent was small, only about 10 percent. It protested loudly over other issues, but in reading the debates it is difficult to determine even what Whigs thought about economic issues.¹²

The convention's decision to have the constitution enjoin the legislature to encourage internal improvements seems to have been reached without disagreement. Similarly, the convention dealt with corporations by requiring that the legislature could pass no act of incorporation unless by a two-thirds majority in each house. There was no strong sentiment for or against this measure.¹³

Nine delegates voted for a sweeping ban on corporations "with special privileges," but 56 voted against it. Nineteen delegates

¹¹Ibid., p. 236.

¹²Harold M. Dorr (ed.), The Michigan Constitutional Conventions of 1835-36: Debates and Proceedings (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940), pp. 55-420, 462, 539. (Hereafter, Debates)

¹³Ibid., p. 606, passim.

favored authorizing some kind of a state bank: they included prominent Democrats and leading Whigs such as Hezekiah G. Wells and Woodbridge.¹⁴

Significantly, an attempt to make the private property of corporation stockholders liable for the debts of the corporation, a measure not encouraging to corporate growth, failed without a roll call vote.¹⁵

4. Internal Improvements.

"The legislature of 1837," said Streeter, "in which a majority of the members were Democrats representing poor and radical constituents, launched upon an elaborate plan of internal improvements" while the Whigs, "whose opinions were reflected in the Detroit Advertiser, believed that only the central railroad should be completed at this time." Their attitudes resulted from "the conservative influence of a large class of monied men."¹⁶

¹⁴The vote was 19-57, Debates, p. 391. The 19 were: Beaufait, Biddle, Clark, J., Collins, Comstock, Ellis, Jenkins, Loomis, McDonnel, Raynale, Rexford, Stevens, Sutphen, Van Every, Wells, White, A., Williams, J. R., Woodbridge. Beaufait, Biddle, and Ellis voted for banning corporations with special privileges. Biddle became a Whig in 1839 and Ellis supported the Whigs in 1839. Debates, Appendix A, roll call 87.

¹⁵Debates, p. 393. A measure requiring payments in specie on notes and bills secured by land failed, 27-48.

¹⁶Streeter, p. 9.

Historians have often assumed that in state politics Democrats usually opposed internal improvements while Whigs promoted them. Professor Carter Goodrich warned that this suggestion "should be viewed with caution," and pointed to Michigan as one of three cases contradicting it. Michigan's parties took positions, initially, opposite to that formula, with Democrats for and Whigs against. Yet it was not that simple. Even Streeter's account shows that the parties never differed in principle on internal improvements and both generally favored them. The Democracy, a majority party responsive to the demands of all of its geographic sections, tried to build railroads and canals in the north, south, and center all at once. The Whigs, or at least the Advertiser, argued that improvements should be built where people were. The paper, certainly, did not speak for all Michigan Whigs.

The Democratic program was designed to insure harmony among Democrats from all sections. It may have been that northern and southern legislators would not have supported an improvements bill unless their sections received some attention.¹⁷

¹⁷Carter Goodrich, Government Promotion of Canals and Railroads, 1800-1890 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 266. Streeter, pp. 10-13. Harold B. Hoffenbacher, "Michigan Internal Improvements, 1836-1846," (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1937), pp. 10-12, 25-26.

Harry N. Scheiber, in a preliminary report on his study of Internal Improvements in the Old Northwest has pointed to the need to focus on the "interplay of regional and local rivalries" in understanding early internal improvements programs. Partisan politics disappeared, said Scheiber, as members of state legislatures would vote "for nothing which does not pass through their own country."

In Michigan all the lake shore towns demanded connections with the interior, yet no policy could command adequate support until one embracing the objectives of every competing town had been formulated. And so Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan all adopted comprehensive state programs that overextended their resources.¹⁸

Whigs began to criticize the program after the boom expectations of 1835-1836 burst in the Depression of 1837 and complications developed in negotiation of the state's notorious Five Million Dollar Loan, which was supposed to have financed improvements. When the Whigs took power in 1840 they cut back the program and concentrated on certain projects.¹⁹

When the Democrats returned to office in 1842 they continued the limited Whig policy. The Democratic Governor, John Barry, began

¹⁸ Harry N. Scheiber, "Urban Rivalry and Internal Improvements in the Old Northwest," Ohio History, LXXI, 3 (October, 1962), p. 223, 234-35.

¹⁹ One Whig legislator told Woodbridge that he thought the cut back on railroads would have no effect on the election of 1840. Henry B. Lathrop, Jackson, July 2, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS. Also, Lucius Lyon, January 24, 1840, to Gen. John McNeil, Detroit. "Letters of Lucius Lyon," MPHIC, XXVII, 531. (Hereafter, Lyon Letters.)

negotiations to sell the state railroads to private investors. During the 1845 gubernatorial campaign both parties promised to sell the roads, and after Democrat Alpheus Felch's election, the state began selling them.

The Michigan Central went first, sold at what has been described as "a bargain price." In the legislature Democrats incanted ritual formulas about "monsters and monopolies," and some Whigs regarded the sale as a "great panacea." A recent study concluded that the legislature's debates

give the impression that the legislators feared a railroad monopoly, but feared the failure to sell even more. Most opposition rested almost entirely on local interest rather than any principle. The newspapers offered no opposition.²⁰

Thus, party positions on internal improvements varied little and changed as circumstances changed. I suspect that a systematic

²⁰ Goodrich, pp. 144-46, 326. William L. Jenks, "Michigan's Five Million Dollar Loan," Michigan History, XV (Autumn, 1931), 619, 622-23. Austin Blair, Detroit, January 8, 1846, to A. T. McCall, Bath, Steuben Co., N.Y., Austin Blair MSS. I have seen a draft of Father Peter Beckman's dissertation "James J. Joy and the Joy Railroads" (St. Louis University) and am indebted to it for an account of the lobbying efforts of Joy and his associates on behalf of private buyers and for describing the role of Democratic legislators. Letters advocating the sale, probably written by Joy (according to Beckman), appeared in the Free Press.

Henry T. Backus, an astute Whig politician, thought that the "wire workers" were actually reluctant to sell, "as they deem it the railroad as the nursery of their power." H.T.B., Detroit, February 21, 1846, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

study of opinion on the issue would find that support for improvements knew no class or party lines. Virtually all sections associated better transportation facilities with prosperity. Many farmers viewed railroads as their economic salvation. It might be instructive to study who benefited immediately from public works contracts, for example, builders and contractors and their suppliers, and to study the political relationships of these persons and groups in shifting power situations.²¹ Any such study would probably find that the poor and radical had little to do with legislation.

5. Banking.

The "radical" Democrats, according to Streeter, democratized banking in Michigan.

At the beginning of the year 1837 there were sixteen chartered banks in the state. The poor people cried out against them. They said that these institutions were monopolies which the aristocracy used in order to control elections The masses demanded that banking should be free so that poor men as well as the rich might have an opportunity.²²

The Democratic legislature responded with a General Banking Act permitting "freeholders who had a limited amount of capital to start

²¹See the Memorial, December 28, 1839, Woodbridge MSS, of 15 Contractors engaged in building the Clinton and Kalamazoo Canal, asking the Governor-elect not to stop or cut back work.

²²Streeter, pp. 32-33.

a bank." But this "killer of monopolies" spawned an illegitimate brood of wild cat banks, mainly because of an untimely suspension of specie payments which applied to the new banks as well as the old. Forty-nine new banks existed by April 1838, with a nominal capital of \$3,915,000. "Most of them flooded their communities with worthless notes and then failed." Yet in 1838, when "conservative Democrats and Whigs tried to suspend the act, "radical" Democrats opposed them.

Aside from internal contradictions, this interpretation suffers grave difficulties. Streeter's conception of the Democracy as an anti-monopoly party rested partly on Governor Stevens T. Mason's 1836 veto messages on steamboat and other corporations. But of the sixteen chartered banks of 1837, nine had been chartered in 1836 by the Democratic "'anti-monopoly' legislature" and none had been vetoed by Mason.²³

"Freeholders" with "a limited amount of capital" were neither "poor people" nor necessarily representatives of the "masses." No one, to my knowledge, has shown that poor people in Michigan demanded free banking or the General Banking Act. Streeter's citation to that assertion led one to the reminiscences of H.M. Utley and Alpheus Felch in the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections.²⁴ Utley said merely that

²³William G. Shade, draft of a dissertation in progress, Wayne State University. Hereafter referred to as Shade.

²⁴Streeter, p. 33.

the bill resulted from popular clamor. He may very well have refreshed his memory with Felch's reminiscences, published a few years earlier. Felch was a former Democratic governor and a banking commissioner during the 1830's. His paper, "Early Banks and Banking in Michigan," described mainly the wild cat banking episode. Regarding the passage of the General Banking Act, it noted the state's economic difficulties in 1837 and said:

Applications for bank charters almost without number were presented to the legislature. They came from all portions of the state, and from citizens of nearly every condition and occupation. The tables of the committee on banks and incorporations in both houses . . . were loaded with petitions, and the outside pressure for the grant of bank charters, which it was fondly hoped would afford relief from all embarrassments, was irresistible.²⁵

This sounds very much like an apologia for Democratic responsibility for the General Banking Act, which is quite ironical since Felch, a legislator in 1837, was one of the few Democrats to vote against the Act.²⁶ One can readily believe that some men, insistently, wanted such an act, but were they the "poor" and "radical" or their representatives? Governor Mason and his Banking Commissioner advised against creating more banks, but not very strenuously. Democratic newspapers, such as the Detroit Free Press and the Monroe Times advocated passage

²⁵Alpheus Felch, "Early Banks and Banking in Michigan," MPHC, II, 114. H.M. Utley, "The Wildcat Banking System in Michigan," MPHC, V, 211.

²⁶Herbert Randall, "Alpheus Felch: An Appreciation," Michigan History, X, 2 (April, 1926), p. 166. Shade.

of the law as an "anti-monopoly" measure, but why should one assume that they spoke for poor people? The law itself provided that no more than twelve freeholders in any county could organize a bank, with a minimum of \$50,000 capital, 36 percent of which had to be paid in in specie. Persons possessing the average amount of capital required for such a venture in Michigan in 1837 were not poor.²⁷

Things did not work out, of course, according to the letter or spirit of the law. Most of the new banks' capital was grossly over-valued land, some of it encumbered. The new banks misrepresented their capital, wildly overextended themselves, and brazenly defrauded the populace. Who were the wild cat bankers? Poor people? Merchants? Whigs? Democrats? I have seen no identification of wild catters in the secondary literature, let alone systematic identification. Such a study would be extremely fruitful. It would probably turn up men of easy politics as well as morality--fast-buck opportunists to whom party politics meant nothing. The model for this type appeared in a fictional character created in 1837 by a social commentator, Mrs. Kirkland, in her A New Home: Who'll Follow?, an account of manners and life in Michigan in the 1830's. She satirized the typical wild cat banker in her picture of Harley Rivers of a mythical Tinkerville, Michigan.

²⁷ Joseph Gantz, "A History of Banking Legislation and Currency in Michigan, 1835-1865," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Wayne State University, 1936), pp. 7-8. Streeter, p. 33.

Rivers was poor, but not "of the poor classes." He fancied himself a gentleman, never worked for a living, and had squandered two fortunes. Rivers redeemed himself from poverty by setting up the Bank of Tinkerville, making "money of rags," and moving east to "live like a gentleman on the spoils of the Tinkerville Wild Cat."²⁸

A systematic study might unearth characters like Rivers; it might connect "respectable" Whigs and Democrats with the "cats." The legendary Bank of Brest probably qualifies as the most notorious of the cats, located, according to its sponsors, in the "thriving metropolis" of Brest--which was then and is now a thick forest. At least one of the major stockholders was a Democratic politician, and Origen D. Richardson, elected Lieutenant Governor by the Democrats in 1841, held stock in the wild cat Bank of Oakland.²⁹

It is difficult to believe that Democratic newspapers were speaking for or concerned about the interests of the poor when they welcomed the new banks. The Democratic Monroe Times congratulated the townspeople of Brest on the opening of their bank and noted that the town had risen "to wealth and importance in a surprisingly short time." One has

²⁸C.M.S. Kirkland, A New Home--Who'll Follow? or, Glimpses of Western Life (New York, 1837), pp. 191-200. I have used the 1850 edition, BHC.

²⁹Calvin Britain, a Democrat, held stock in Brest's wild cat. The Advertiser made the charge against Richardson in the 1841 campaign and the Free Press did not answer. Advertiser, September 30, 1841, p.2.

to choose between awarding the Times' editors with vast naïveté or a ready sense of humor. The Free Press welcomed a flock of wild cats: the Farmers' Bank of Homer was run, it said, "principally by the farmers of that town." Naturally. The Democratic Pontiac Balance greeted the Bank of Oakland as an "anti-monopoly" triumph. The Balance admitted, however, that it was the second bank in a "village of roughly 1000 souls. . . . But few Eastern villages can boast of like means of enterprise."³⁰

The Free Press's editor wrote a letter to a friend in 1836 which throws revealing light on the relationships between editors, legislators, land speculation, new towns, and new banks. Editor John S. Bagg wanted to borrow money to take advantage of unrivaled investment opportunities opening up in all parts of the state. "You must be aware," wrote Bagg,

that from my situation with this press, I am easily enabled to form acquaintances with members of the Legislature. They are men of good judgment and most of them have laid the foundations for fine fortunes in real estate. They are very friendly to me--more perhaps on account of my situation than anything else--and would very willingly do me a favor in affording me facilities for investing money in lands in different parts of the state. Many of them are anxious to have me invest something in their embryo cities--so as to get an occasional puff from the state paper, and it provokes me much to see the fine opportunities I enjoy for making money--if I had the capital to avail myself of them.³¹

³⁰Times quoted in Free Press, August 28, 1837, p. 2; others from Free Press, September 27, 1837, p. 2, September 13, p. 2, August 17, p. 2.

³¹ John S. Bagg, Detroit, February 21, 1836, to J. H. Bronson, Microfilm of selected letters from the Bagg MSS, Huntington Library, property of Russel E. Bidlack, Michigan Historical Collections. Hereafter cited as Bagg MSS film.

By the time the wild cats failed and their frauds were exposed the populace was already embittered by economic depression. Rich, poor, merchants, farmers, laborers, artisans, all suffered from the wild cats. In 1841 Austin Blair said the speculators were so despised in Michigan that "the people would hang them if they could."³² The public did not seem to associate wild cats with any one party. Everyone knew that a Democratic legislature had passed the banking law and the untimely suspension law. Both parties accused each other of harboring all the wild catters in their folds.

In the 1837 gubernatorial campaign both parties charged the other with being the party of bankers and speculators. The Whigs published a list of bank officers which said, in effect, that 69 percent of them were Democrats. The Democrats brought out their list claiming that 55 percent of the bank officers were Whigs. These claims, as William Shade has observed, tended "to confirm only that party had little to do with whether a man was a banker or not."³³

In the 1841 campaign the Whig State Convention proclaimed that the Democratic Party had created "every Bank in the State . . . except

³² Austin Blair, Jackson, July 21, 1841, to A. T. McCall, Bath, Steuben Co., N. Y., Blair MSS. Mrs. Kirkland, *loc.cit.* See also Lawton T. Hemans, *Life and Times of Stevens Thomson Mason* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1920), pp. 377-78. In the Spring of 1838 just before the city election, three Democratic merchants agreed "to receive at their store for goods and in exchange for current money, the notes of" 18 wild cat banks. *Free Press*, March 29, 1838, p. 2.

³³Shade, p. 33.

the Bank of Michigan." After studying the political affiliations of the Presidents, cashiers, stockholders, and debtors of Michigan banks, Shade found no consistent party alignment by banks, but found men of different parties in these positions in all the banks. He agreed with Harry N. Scheiber that "personal inter-relations of entrepreneurs and politicians in the 'Age of Jackson' complicated what are too often described as strictly political divisions" and concluded that

In Michigan there was an entrepreneurial group that invested in and borrowed heavily from banks. Many of these men, perhaps a simple majority, were affiliated with the Democratic party.³⁴

6. Whigs and Banks.

The Whigs had raised no clamor against the banking law. The Advertiser had raised some minor objections and had said that Michigan had enough banks. As the financial debacle descended, Whigs began to denounce the law. Whig legislators introduced a resolution declaring it unconstitutional, and called for an investigation, hoping to reap political advantage.³⁵

Whigs consorted rather openly with banks, particularly with the Bank of Michigan. The party's 1837 gubernatorial candidate, Charles C.

³⁴Advertiser, September 13, 1841, p. 2. Free Press and Advertiser, August-November 1841, passim. Shade, pp. 34-35.

³⁵Gantz, p. 18. Advertiser, July 14, 1836. Elsa Holderreid, "Public Life of Jacob Merritt Howard" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1950), pp. 32-33.

Trowbridge, was the Bank's cashier, later its President. The Free Press's reaction to this candidacy is instructive for those who like to think of the Democracy as a militant, anti-business party. The Free Press treated Trowbridge initially with unusual cordiality: he was a nice man, a good banker, but unqualified for office. The editors insisted, however, as did local Democratic conventions, that they were "not hostile to banks per se," nor did a "moderate connection" with banks disqualify a man for office, although an "exclusive bank man" was as bad as an "actual locofoco." Michigan Democrats wanted to disassociate themselves, no doubt, from an anti-bank splinter group of New York's Democratic Party whose nickname, "locofoco," became associated with their ideas. Although Whigs called them locofoco for years, Michigan Democrats, as they insisted, did not deserve the label.³⁶

Governor Woodbridge's Whig administration relied heavily on Bank of Michigan personnel and facilities. In January 1840 the Free Press wondered why the Whigs did not simply turn over the state wholly to the Bank. Bank officials or stockholders now served, it said, as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, United States Senator, Auditor General, and State Treasurer; bills were pending that would appoint its cashier state fiscal agent and make it the state

³⁶Free Press, September 18, 1837, p. 2; September 20, p. 2.

treasury. The Bank also took over handling the Five Million Dollar Loan.³⁷

The liaison with the Bank hurt the Whigs. In 1840 it and the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank provided the state with reliable currency, though both had suspended specie payments, but by 1841 this situation had changed drastically. In a crisis the Bank protected the investments of its absentee controllers, the Dwights of Massachusetts and New York, at the expense of local investors and the state. The Bank, wrote Juliana Woodbridge, was "completely down, they refuse taking their bills and have assigned everything to the Dwights and left everybody in the lurch." She thought that the Bank had acted "very dishonorably." A Macomb County farmer told of being "poor indeed, without a currency and without our money our last hope has failed us (to wit) the Bank of Michigan, we all supposed it good until forced to part with it [its notes] for a song or lose the whole (sic)." George Dawson's Advertiser turned on the Bank like a locofoco and assailed it with "unmeasured fierceness." One Whig leader thought that Dawson's course was folly and would wreck the party, but the party followed Dawson. In 1841 the Whig State Convention virtually admitted that the party had erred in relying on the Bank, adding that Democratic

³⁷ Free Press, January 24, 1840, p. 2; January 25, p. 2. See Woodbridge MSS 1840-1841, especially the correspondence between Woodbridge and Robert Stuart.

mistakes earlier were the root of the trouble, and passed a resolution against allowing legal bank suspensions.³⁸

State Treasurer Robert Stuart, although a defender of the Bank, realized that the Whigs needed a more "comely monster" or they must "give up the ship." During the summer Whigs in various parts of the state predicted that "the swindling policy of the bank of Michigan" would damage the party in the fall election. Its "broken promises like an incubus" had crushed "at once all promises of better things for the multitude" and had given substance to "locofoco declamation of a rotten and corrupt institution." The Bank's failure probably did help beat the Whigs in 1841, although it was only one of many factors working against them. The Bank angered poor persons and "monied" persons, and many Whigs. It should be evident that the Bank cannot be seen as the instrument of a monolithic or even highly cohesive "wealthy and

³⁸"In the case of the Bank of Michigan there was the question of whether the Eastern sharks had got Michigan assets at a bargain price paid in dubious coin." Beckman, Chapter I, pp. 21-22. Juliana Woodbridge, Springwells, January 26, 27, to William Woodbridge, Washington and Gideon Gates, Romeo [Macomb County], June 29, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS. The latter is a good description of the depression.

Thomas Rowland, Detroit, January 25, 1841, to W. W., Washington, and Robert Stuart, Detroit, January 29, 1841, to W. W., Washington, Woodbridge MSS, discuss Dawson. Stuart said that Dawson was "worse than mad" and feared he would "destroy us root and branch--he is worse than any locofoco, for he is all brimstone." Randall, "Gubernatorial Platforms, Michigan, 1834-1864," pp. 20-37.

commercial" class which allegedly ran the Whig Party. How can such an interpretation cope with the fact that Lewis Cass, Michigan's foremost Democrat, was one of the largest stockholders in the Bank of Michigan?³⁹

If the Whigs had a "monster," so did the Democrats; indeed, at least two. A group of Democrats led by John R. Williams had incorporated the Michigan State Bank in March 1835. This bank did not become a federal deposit bank, but Democratic state officials used it for deposit of state funds. Shortly after the 1837 depression began, the bank failed, much to the Democrats' embarrassment. The scene enacted between the Whigs and the Bank of Michigan, 1839-1841, was virtually a repeat performance of a scene enacted earlier by the Democrats and the Michigan State Bank.⁴⁰

³⁹Robert Stuart, Detroit, July 16, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington; Henry T. Backus, Detroit, July 6, to William Woodbridge, Washington; Richard Butler, Mt. Clemens, Macomb County, July 9, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington; E. A. Trumbull, Centerville, Mich., July 5, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS. Shade, *passim*.

⁴⁰Clarence M. Burton, Gordon K. Miller, and William Stocking (eds.), The City of Detroit, Michigan, 1701-1922 (Detroit: S. J. Clarke, 1922), I, 640, gave a list of incorporators of the bank, including such Democrats as Abraham S. Schoolcraft, John Truax, and Barnabas Campau. Kinsley S. Bingham thought that the Michigan State Bank failure had hurt the Democrats more than the wildcat episode. Kinsley S. Bingham, March 30, 1839, to Alpheus Felch, Alpheus Felch MSS, BHC.

Beckman said regarding the failure: "It was a question of whether state funds were to be lost, presumably for the benefit of the bank's stockholders, many of whom were local. Porter [a Whig lawyer] thought that neither the bank nor the state would have been in trouble if certain early officials of the bank and of the state had repaid their loans." William G. Shade told me that the non-local stockholders were Albany Regency bankers.

A more successful Democratic bank was the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank. John R. Williams had led in founding this bank too. Williams was one of Detroit's wealthiest men who enjoyed a long career in the Democratic Party, holding numerous party, city, and state offices. Once Williams had been president of the Bank of Michigan, but resigned in 1824 as control of the Bank shifted eastward to the Dwight family, New York and Massachusetts capitalists. That transaction touched off a feud between the Dwights and Williams, marked by suits, counter-suits, and Williams being jailed three times during 1829. Williams was a man of great egotism and pride, and one can sense the understatement of the local historian who said that the formation of a bank to rival the Bank of Michigan was for Williams "a consummation devoutly to be wished."⁴¹

The Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank became a "pet" bank, i. e., a federal deposit bank of the Jackson administration, after John Norvell, one of its directors, "assured the treasury department of its solvency and of the high percentage of its stockholders (90 percent) who had Democratic views."⁴²

⁴¹Burton, et al., (eds.), City of Detroit, I, 634, 635. Silas Farmer described the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank and the Bank of Michigan as the two most important banks west of Buffalo in 1837, History of Detroit and Michigan, I, General (Detroit: Silas Farmer and Co., 1884), 860-61.

⁴²Harry N. Scheiber, "George Bancroft and the Bank of Michigan, 1837-1841," Michigan History, XLIV, 1 (March, 1960), p. 83.

Democrats not only nursed "monsters," but certain Democrats had, from time to time, given important aid to the Whig "monster." In 1831 the Bank of Michigan sought and obtained a government deposit three years before the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank became a "pet." Lewis Cass helped the bank in this instance and again in 1839 when it was seeking relief from the Treasury. Earlier, in 1837, the Bank had relied upon "the assistance of George Bancroft [Massachusetts Democrat], a relative of the Dwights [who] also held stock in several of their enterprises [including the Bank] and whose children would inherit part of the Dwight fortune."⁴³ Not all Democrats were so well-disposed toward the Bank. John Norvell urged Treasury Secretary Levi Woodbury in 1837 to initiate a suit against the Bank if it did not meet its drafts. Against this pressure came the intervention of Bancroft and Cass.⁴⁴

7. Party Leadership and Classes.

After studying the careers of "about seven hundred" noted party leaders, Streeter found convincing (to him) evidence of the class divisions between parties. The seven hundred men were, of course, a minute part of the electorate. They were an elite of "influentials" and their leadership was not only or always political. Streeter assumed that

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 89-90.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 83-88. See Mason MSS, 1833 fragment of letter of John Norvell to Stevens T. Mason, n.d.

this group represented the electorate in microcosm because he transferred the same class divisions that he saw in it to the rest of the electorate. He nowhere made it clear that he made a distinction between a party's leadership and its mass following. Treating the two as separate problems one may ask: was Streeter right about the different class bases of party leadership?

Laurence A. Sabbath recently made a systematic study of the social characteristics of prominent Whig and Democratic Party leaders in Wayne County in 1844. He examined the occupation, wealth and economic status, birthplace, religion, age, and other characteristics of 100 party leaders. Sabbath found that Democratic leaders included some of the wealthiest men in the county, particularly large landowners. The party leaderships were roughly similar in their occupation, breaking down this way:

	Democrats	Whigs
Lawyers	25	21
Businessmen	34	38
Doctors	0	2
Farmers	14	4
Craftsmen-Artisans	3	4
Others	6	7

After exploring the relationships between a number of the leaders' characteristics, Sabbath concluded that it was difficult to distinguish between Whigs and Democrats on the basis of their socio-economic background and that similar socio-economic groups provided leadership

in both parties.⁴⁵

8. The Economic Elite and Political Parties.

Alexandra McCoy, in a carefully controlled investigation, determined Wayne County's economic elite in 1844 by using wealth and economic role as indicators of economic status. The elite group of 97 had a Whig majority: 60 Whigs (62%), 5 Libertyites (5%), 28 Democrats (29%), and 4 Unknown. Although Whigs dominated the elite, McCoy said that Streeter's interpretation of the Whigs as the party of the well-to-do could not be regarded as definitive since it left 40 percent of the group as an exception.

What is essential, then, is to examine other factors which might reasonably influence men's political affiliations. Streeter . . . [himself] suggests ethnocultural as well as economic factors as possible influences on Whig membership. . . . By the use of multivariate analysis we hope to be able to relate ethnocultural and economic characteristics to party membership with greater precision.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Lawrence Howard Sabbath, "Analysis of the Political Leadership in Wayne County, Michigan, 1844," pp. 75, 128, 135. While there are defects in Sabbath's procedure, and his criteria for selection of party leaders were not as systematic as the McCoy study, it is the only such study to be made that is at all systematic. For the time being its findings will have to be regarded as having greater weight, for Wayne County at least, than Streeter's impressions.

On the lack of significant class differences between Whig and Democratic party leaders in Newbury Port, Massachusetts, in 1850, see Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, p. 53.

⁴⁶McCoy, pp. 97-98. She discusses her method pp. 51-52 and the criteria of selection, pp. 55-67.

McCoy tested several factors, such as economic role, ethnic origin, religion, and others, in simple cross-tabulations with political affiliations, and also tested significant subgroups (e.g., Democratic landowners) with the other variables.

Economic role had some relationship to party preference. Merchants and non-specialized entrepreneurs tended to be predominantly Whig (87%) as did manufacturers (68%), while landowners were the only economic group showing a marked Democratic preference (66%). Yet economic interest, rationally calculated, did not seem to have determined men's choice of a party. Party programs offered no clues. Men with the same interests preferred different parties. The non-specialized nature of business enterprise, moreover, made the formulation of a fixed and defineable "interest" unrealistic for many men.⁴⁷

Ethnocultural and religious group correlations with party preference yielded more significant correlations than those for economic role and party. Yankees were the largest single ethnocultural group among the elite, 47 percent, and 84 percent of the elite Yankees were Whigs. But it did not follow that Yankees were hardly ever Democrats because Yankees (both New England English and New York English) made up the largest ethnocultural group in the Democratic Party--32 percent. "All we can say . . . is that elite Yankees tended to be Whigs . . . to

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 101-20.

a much greater extent than they were Democrats." However, the decisive factor separating Yankees was Presbyterianism. With one exception, "Yankees who were not Democrats were not Presbyterians," while 76 percent of the Elite Presbyterians were Whigs, and 61 percent of the Whigs were Yankee Presbyterians.

Religion in the case of Presbyterianism, the predominant faith among the elite, showed a more constant correlation with political affiliation than did any economic role. What makes this relationship impressive is that religion presents a much more clear-cut designation than economic role. Many who were merchants or capitalists were also landowners, but no one was a Presbyterian and an Episcopalian simultaneously.⁴⁸

The character and interests of Wayne County's Presbyterians suggested an explanation of the Yankee-Presbyterian Whig preference. Presbyterians promoted moral uplift and social causes, such as temperance, to which Whiggery was far more in sympathy than the Democracy. McCoy proposed that Presbyterians promoted a kind of "Yankee reformism" in alliance with the Whig Party, and that Democrats seemed unsympathetic or openly hostile to Whig-Presbyterian "reformist zeal."⁴⁹

Concluding that "opposing party types were characterized by different religious affiliations and economic roles" and that men's political choices depended on complex social conditioning rather than on

⁴⁸ McCoy, pp. 160-61, 175.

⁴⁹ McCoy, pp. 173-183.

narrow economic interests,⁵⁰ McCoy went on to examine the effect of personal influences on political affiliation and found that "class interest among the elite operated in the same way as party loyalties in the community as a whole; class solidarity tended to lessen party cleavage in the same way that party loyalties among all economic strata blurred class antagonisms."⁵¹

9. Summary.

Limited investigation of the relationship between business and politics has shown Democratic involvement in those economic affairs which have been considered typically Whig and that joint action in economic enterprise by men of different parties was routine. Some economic rivalries roughly paralleled political rivalries, as with the Bank of Michigan and the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank. But far more impressive was the tendency for political differences to dissolve before the prospect of profit. The Cass Farm Company, organized in 1835, was "one of the largest real estate enterprises" of early Detroit, formed by Whig and Democratic businessmen who bought a chunk of Lewis Cass's farm.⁵² Some businessmen were non-partisan, and some bi-partisan,

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 183.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 199.

⁵² Burton, et al., (eds.), City of Detroit, I, 341. George E. Catlin, "Oliver Newberry," Michigan History, Vol. 18 (Winter, 1934), pp. 13-14.

like the roulette player betting both sides of the board.

McCoy's study of the economic elite led her to contemplation of "the paradoxical nature of political loyalties during the mid-nineteenth century." She said that "close business relationships existed across party lines" and even included partnerships in which partners belonged to opposite parties. "Business promotion was also carried on by economic leaders acting jointly without regard to party." Elite members of different parties also did one another personal political favors, and there existed, naturally, a "wide range of social intercourse among the elite without regard to party."⁵³

Party leaders and elite groups must be studied separately. Generalizations about such groups do not necessarily extend to parties' mass followings. Determining the political preferences of groups among the mass electorate in Wayne County will require examination of data that has not yet been considered.

Classes and Voting

1. The Uses of Impressionistic Evidence.

After the election for governor in 1837 the Free Press explained the failure of the Democrats to carry Wayne County while winning in the state. Wayne County was "the seat of the aristocracy" and the

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 199, 193-95, 197.

Democracy had enlisted the "active opposition of the whole mercantile interest of the city, forwarders and all, with a very few exceptions." The staffs of two deposit banks, customs house officers, and building contractors were "exclusively Whig," and, the Free Press charged, employers in general had threatened their workers with dismissal if they did not vote Whig.⁵⁴

The 1840 federal census takers counted 1009 persons in Detroit engaged in commerce, trades, manufacturing, and the learned professions, categories which covered the occupations mentioned by the Free Press. In 1840 these persons accounted for roughly 5 percent of Wayne County's population and 11 percent of Detroit's.⁵⁵ It is unlikely that in 1837 this group accounted for more than 15 percent of Wayne County's electorate. Therefore, to swing the election for "the aristocracy," the mercantile and business interest must have had to exercise considerable influence outside of its own class. Yet later students of Michigan politics have often accepted the Free Press's claim at face value. If one considers the close balance of the Democratic and Whig vote in Wayne County and in the state from 1837-1840 and the necessarily small size

⁵⁴ The Free Press, November 14, 1837, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Detroit occupations for 1840 are not in the federal census but were printed in the Free Press December 1, 1840, p. 2. See also Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, p. 182, and Michigan Manual, 1838.

of any "upper class," such reasoning is a necessity in justifying an economic interpretation of voting. But in looking at the state vote from 1837-1852, one wonders how and why the "aristocracy" could have influenced so many voters outside of Wayne and why it was unsuccessful after 1840, the year of its greatest triumph. In a new state, with an overwhelmingly poor, agricultural population, the Whigs carried the elections of 1839 and 1840. Those were the years, moreover, of the "mighty democratic uprising;" more voters turned out in the nation and in Michigan in 1840 than in any other election from 1824 to 1852. In 1840 the percentage of the national electorate voting was 79, and the percentage of Michigan's electorate voting was 84.9.⁵⁶

The Whigs carried Wayne County in 1837, 1839, and 1840. Outside of Detroit the parties were about evenly balanced, with the Whigs running much better in the townships in these years than they did after 1840. In the county outside of Detroit it is no exaggeration to estimate that farmers constituted easily over 95 percent of the electorate and the bulk of these were self-employed and poor, although many, probably most, were upwardly mobile. One prospering farmer wrote in 1837, "My greatest difficulty is to find men to work for they are nearly all farmers them selves(sic)."⁵⁷ Who threatened

⁵⁶As estimated by McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," AHR, LXV, 292.

⁵⁷Louis Leonard Tucker (ed.), "The Correspondence of John Fisher,"

these men with dismissal or how were they otherwise threatened by the aristocracy?"

Streeter used the Free Press's claim within a larger framework of impressionistic evidence and balanced it with testimony from a Whig newspaper corroborating his thesis: "On June 21, 1837, the Detroit Advertiser [said] 'the great difficulty with us heretofore has been, not a paucity of numbers, but indifference at the polls. The Whig party is made up of businessmen. They have no time to spend in the electioneering tactics of their opponents.'"⁵⁸ On more than one occasion the Advertiser lent support to Streeter's thesis. In 1838 it continued to chide Whig merchants with indifference and with losing by default. Before the spring city election a meeting of Detroit Whigs recommended that Whig businessmen close their stores and shops on election day and work for the party. Yet the implication of these incidents, and of several Advertiser editorials, is that the party was managing without support from its expected partisans among businessmen: "businessmen and merchants [had been] notably lax" when "compared to mechanics and others."⁵⁹

Michigan History, XLV, 3 (September, 1961), 231.
The letters were not written from Wayne County.

⁵⁸ Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, p. 16. Advertiser, November 16, p. 2; June 29, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Advertiser, March 19, 24, and 28, 1838.

If one is to accept the Advertiser's occasional remarks about businessmen being Whigs, what is one to do with other, occasional comments regarding the adherence of non-business groups to Whiggery. On November 6, 1838, the Advertiser called upon merchants to go to the polls on the second day of election and pointed to the example of "mechanics and workingmen" who had turned out for the Whigs on the first day. In 1837 the Advertiser had said that Whigs were strongest among farmers. Whig farmers were men "hitherto too busy to engage actively in politics" and men who lived in an "insulated position in reference to the mails." After the August 1837 Congressional election the paper attributed the narrow Whig defeat partly to the election occurring during harvest time when farmers were "busily engaged. . . . It is to the farmers we look for our strength."⁶⁰

The major element of consistency in the Advertiser's remarks lies in its characterization of Whig merchants and farmers as "too busy" for politics, which may have been a euphemistic way of handling the anti-party sentiment prevalent among potential Whigs of whatever class or occupation.⁶¹

Testimony regarding the presence of rich men among Democrats came from as unlikely a source as a Democratic newspaper. The Detroit

⁶⁰Advertiser, June 28, 1838, p. 2. September 1, 1837, p. 2.

⁶¹See p. 160-163.

Morning Post in its maiden issue proclaimed its solidarity with "working men," its opposition to monopolies and to a caste system creating "artificial" classes of rich and poor. The Post, however, was no rabble-rouser, and insisted that the rights of all be protected:

Because an individual is wealthy, or elevated in office, it does not necessarily follow that he is to be denounced or humbled. . . . Some of the most true, self-sacrificing friends of the Democratic cause are to be found among them.⁶²

In September 1839 a group of journeymen printers, formerly employees of the Post, became sufficiently disenchanted with the goodwill of the Post's owners that they set up a small sheet called the Rat Gazette, whose raison d'etre was to report on the unfairness of certain employers, namely the owners and editors of the Post. The printers claimed that the Post's owners had not paid them for honest work and that they were rich and pretentious dandies who made their money by cheating working men.⁶³

Whatever the merits of the case, it is difficult to believe that the printers would have agreed with Streeter's interpretation of the political parties. Neither, probably, would a friend of William Woodbridge's who, while the latter was running for governor in 1839, told him that his chances of carrying Monroe County were good because, among other reasons, "many of our substantial residents who have acted with our opponents (italics mine) will be active in your behalf."⁶⁴

⁶²Detroit Morning Post, July 3, 1837, p. 2.

⁶³Rat Gazette, September 1839, Burton Historical Collection. This seems to be the only issue ever printed.

⁶⁴Daniel S. Bacon, Monroe, September 1, 1839, to W.W., Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

These scattered pieces of impressionistic evidence indicate very little except that it was likely, given the contradictory testimony, that support for the Democratic and Whig parties cut across class lines and economic groups. The Advertiser's apparently conflicting claims suggest that Whig support came from various classes and occupational groups.

2. Wayne County and Detroit Voting, 1837-1852.

Historians have noted the closeness of the Whig and Democratic parties in numerical strength on the national and state levels. Marvin Meyers said that "given the relatively loose class structure, the heavy concentration in the middle social ranks as then identified (farmers, mechanics, shopkeepers), the flexibility of careers and the mixture of interest--it seems clear that both parties must have reached broadly similar class constituencies to gain, as they did, only a little more or less than half the popular vote."⁶⁵

Lee Benson described the close balance which existed between Whigs and Democrats in New York state in the 1840's and asked:

If the Democrats had had significantly disproportionate support among the lower classes, how could the two parties have been evenly balanced? . . . the 'lower classes' must have greatly outnumbered the 'upper classes' in the cities, yet the Whigs had a majority in all but two cities [of nine in 1844]. . . .⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Meyers, Jacksonian Persuasion, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, p. 142.

In major elections between 1837 and 1852 the Whigs carried Detroit only three times. But the parties were fairly evenly balanced before the advent of the Liberty Party and in the years of largest turnout.

TABLE 10
PER CENT OF VOTE TO PARTIES AND TOTAL VOTE,
DETROIT, 1837-1852

Year	Office	Dem. %	Whig %	Lib. %	Total Number Votes Cast
1837	Govenor	51	48.7	.3	1645
1838	Congress	49.7	50.2		1497
1839	Governor	48.7	51.3		1588
1840	President	46.9	52.3	.8	1484
1841	Govenor	59.2	37.4	3.4	1169
1842	State Senator	56.1	40.9	3.	1206
1843	Govenor	51.4	47.2	1.4	1340
1844	President	50.3	47.8	1.9	<u>1932</u>
1845	Govenor	51.2	45.	3.8	1411
1846	Congress	56.7	42.7	.6	1716
1847	Govenor	56.6	41.2	2.2	1542
1848	President	51.5	45.4	3.1	<u>2663</u>
1849	Govenor	60.2	39.8		1792
1850	Congress	55.6	44.4		2614
1851	Govenor	68.9	31.1		2228
1852	President	54.8	41.1	4.1	<u>4428</u>

The Whigs carried the city in 1838, 1839, and 1840. Although the Democratic majority climbed fairly high in non-presidential years after 1840, their majority was cut back sharply in every Presidential year of high turnout: to 50.3 percent in 1844, 51.5 percent in 1848, and 54.8 percent in 1852.

Unfortunately, no reliable data exists by which to rank Detroit's wards by wealth or occupations. The 1850 federal census for Detroit was taken in the aggregate, and the manuscript listing each individual gives no indication of wards. All the impressionistic evidence I have seen also discourages me from making generalizations about the economic character of the wards, except to say that they were heterogenous in economic classes and occupations and provide little basis for making more precise inferences about classes or occupations.

3. Rural Voting, 1837-1852.

The balance in the county as a whole between 1837 and 1852 was similar to the balance in Detroit. From 1837 to 1840 the parties were evenly balanced. After 1840 the Democrats rolled up large majorities in non-Presidential years which were much reduced in years of large turnout.

TABLE 11

WAYNE COUNTY PARTY PERCENTAGES AND TURNOUT,
ELECTIONS 1837-1852

Year	Office	Dem.	Whig	Lib.	Turnout
1837	Govenor	49.1	50.9		4,064
1838	Congress	50.1	49.9		3,831
1839	Govenor	50.2	40.8		4,019
1840	President	49.6	48.8	.5	<u>4,506</u>
1841	Govenor	60.3	36.6	3.4	3,718
1842	State Senator	58.7	37.6	3.6	3,480
1843	Govenor	55.5	41.	3.4	3,818
1844	President	<u>51.8</u>	44.4	3.6	<u>5,274</u>
1845	Govenor	50.5	43.5	5.8	3,523
1846	Congress	53.8	42.6	3.5	4,200
1847	Govenor	56.4	40.4	3.	3,617
1848	President	52.7	40.5	6.6	<u>6,272</u>
1849	Govenor	58.1	41.9		4,056
1850	Congress	50.7	49.3		5,853
1851	Govenor	65.5	34.5		4,121
1852	President	55.3	40.2	4.3	<u>8,455</u>

The towns of Wayne County in the late 1830's and early 1840's were rural, agricultural, and predominantly made up of middle and lower class farmers. In 1840 the Democrats carried 9 towns, the Whigs 7: the aggregate Wayne vote exclusive of Detroit was Democratic 1,540 and Whig 1,469 (51%-49%). In 1844 the Democrats and Whigs again carried 9 and 7 towns, 8 and 6 of them being towns they had carried in 1840. The Democratic aggregate was 1,765 compared to the Whig and Liberty aggregate of 1,577.

The middle and lower classes, urban and rural, must have been so closely divided that a class interpretation of party divisions collapses when confronted by very simple considerations regarding the structure of society and the election returns.

4. Urbanness and ruralness: 1840.

To determine the relative "urbanness" or "ruralness" of a town in the period around 1840 I consulted John T. Blois's Michigan Gazeteer (1837), which noted the commercial and industrial development (i.e., the number of general stores and saw mills) in every village in the state, and the 1840 United States Census, which gave incomplete data on the number of persons engaged in six occupational groupings (by towns). The number of persons engaged, for example, in 1) manufacturing and trade and 2) learned professions and engineering provided measures for comparing towns (See Table 12) which I supplemented with the information

TABLE 12

NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN MANUFACTURING, TRADE
LEARNED PROFESSIONS AND ENGINEERING,
WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS, 1840

Manufacturing, Trade		Learned Professions, Engineers	
Plymouth	160	Plymouth	15
Livonia	46	Springwells	14
Dearborn	40	Hamtramck	9
Nankin	34	Brownstown	7
Hamtramck	19	Livonia	7
Canton	16	Dearborn	5
Springwells	14	Nankin	3
Ecorse	9	Canton	2
Van Buren	7	Ecorse	2
Huron	2	Huron	--
Romulus	1	Romulus	--
Sumpter	--	Sumpter	--

No information given for Greenfield, Monguagon, and Redford. Blois and other sources indicate that these towns did have some manufacturing and trade, as did Brownstown.

from Blois and other impressionistic sources. After assembling all the data I decided that Plymouth was by far the least rural of the towns, and that Dearborn, Springwells, Livonia, Hamtramck, and Nankin were also "least rural" to about the same degree. Plymouth and Livonia were Whig, then Whig-Liberty towns; Springwells was Whig, and the other three were Democratic (all to the extent of about 60% in party strength). The "most rural" were Sumpter, Romulus, Huron, Van Buren, and Ecorse. Sumpter was slightly Whig, Ecorse unclassifiable, and the other three Democratic from about 55-60 percent. Although the bases for any conclusions are crude, there was no relationship that I could see between degrees of "ruralness" or "urbanness" and party strength. The Wayne data, limited as it is, presents a number of towns strikingly similar in urbanness, ruralness, and socio-economic structure, yet of different political loyalties.

5. Urbanness and ruralness: 1850.

What was true around 1840 was more clearly demonstrated by the data for 1850. My tabulation of the occupations of potential voters in each town in 1850 provided percentages of two major occupational groups: Farm and Urban. I assume that the proportion of potential voters engaged in Farm occupations (e.g., farmers and farm laborers, drovers) provides a relative measure of ruralness and the percent of a town's potential voters engaged in non-farm or "Urban" occupations provides a relative

measure of urbanness (e.g., skilled workers, inn keepers, merchants, brick yard laborers). Thus, Sumpter was the "most rural" town with 68 percent of its potential voters engaged in urban occupations. When the most urban and most rural towns are ranked and their majority party's average strength compared (Table 13), there appears to be no relationship between urbanness and ruralness and party strength.

TABLE 13

PERCENT OF FARM OCCUPATIONS AND PARTY STRENGTH,
1848-1852, AND PER CENT OF URBAN OCCUPATIONS
AND PARTY STRENGTH, 1848-1852

Most Rural Towns	% Engaged in Rural Occpts.	Party %	Most Urban Towns	% Engaged in Urban Occpts.	Party %
Sumpter	91	Whig 53	Springwells	68	Dem. 53
Taylor	88	Whig 64	Monguagon	51	Dem. 60
Romulus	85	Dem. 66	Plymouth	48	W-FS 62
Greenfield	84	Dem. 66	Hamtramck	44	Dem. 70
Huron	84	Dem. 54	Brownstown	29	Whig 59

The four "most urban" towns, Springwells, Monguagon, Plymouth, and Hamtramck, on closer inspection I found to differ in one important respect. All had, according to the federal census of 1850 and the state census of 1854,⁶⁷ relatively large numbers of "hands" or persons employed in manufactories or industry, especially Springwells, Hamtramck, and Plymouth. Plymouth, however, differed significantly in the kinds of industry giving employment. Plymouth's "hands" worked mostly in manufacturing industries: in small factories making furniture, sashes, blinds, tools, shoes, and other finished products, while the "hands" of Hamtramck and Springwells worked mainly in brickyards and sawmills, industries requiring little skilled labor. In Plymouth a nascent factory system existed in its small manufacturing villages of Plymouth and Northville, but the same could not be said of the other towns. The others were Democratic or Democratic-tending towns while Plymouth was a Whig-Free Soil stronghold. In 1850, also, 190 skilled workers were among Plymouth's potential voters, amounting to 30.7 percent of that group. The greatest number of skilled workers in any other town in Wayne was 69 in Hamtramck (17.7%), and the greatest percentage of skilled workers among

⁶⁷ Census of the State of Michigan, 1854 (Lansing, 1854). United States Census of State of Michigan. Schedule of Social Statistics, 1850, Michigan Historical Commission Archives, Lansing.

the potential voters in any other town was 22.9 in Monguagon. (See Appendix B, Table 3).

6. "Banner" Towns of Washtenaw, Oakland, and Hillsdale Counties: Urbanness and Ruralness.

Examination of the strongest Democratic and strongest Whig or Whig-Free Soil and strongest Free Soil towns (where present) in Washtenaw, Oakland, and Hillsdale counties, all in eastern Michigan, corroborated the Wayne findings as to the lack of relationship between "ruralness" and party strength (1848-1852).⁶⁸ All of the "banner" towns in the three counties, with one exception, were overwhelmingly rural and diverged tremendously in their party loyalties (Table 14).

Overwhelmingly Whig Wheatland township in Hillsdale and Springfield township in Oakland were as rural as any of the Democratic banner

⁶⁸The party strength of the banner towns was computed on the basis of available returns from 1844 to 1852: Oakland: 1844 President, 1845 Governor, 1847 Governor, 1850 Congress, and 1852 President; Washtenaw: 1848 President, 1849 Governor, 1850 Congress, and 1852 President; Hillsdale: 1848 President, 1851 Governor, and 1852 President.

Sources: Oakland: Oakland Gazette, November 27, 1844, p. 3; November 19, 1845, p. 2; December 25, 1847, p. 1; December 7, 1850, p. 2; December 4, 1852, p. 2; majorities for 1848 in Free Press, November 9, 1848, p. 2. Washtenaw: Ann Arbor Michigan Argus, November 20, 1844, p. 2; Ann Arbor True Democrat, November 23, 1848, p. 3; Michigan Argus, November 21, 1849, p. 2; December 3, 1851, p. 2; November 17, 1852, p. 2. Hillsdale: Hillsdale Gazette, November 23, 1848, p. 3; Hillsdale Standard, November 18, 1851, p. 2; November 16, 1852, p. 2.

TABLE 14

RURALNESS AND PARTY IN BANNER TOWNS OF OAKLAND,
WASHTENAW, AND HILLSDALE COUNTIES.¹

Democratic Towns		% Engaged Rural Occupations
(Washtenaw)		
Freedom	(67%)	96.3
Northfield	(67%)	91.7
(Oakland)		
Addison	(77%)	83.9
Holly	(69%)	82.9
(Hillsdale)		
Wright	(68%)	96.9
Camden	(63%)	87.8
Whig Towns		
(Washtenaw)		
Pittsfield	(68%)	81.5
Lima	(63%)	87.8
(Oakland)		
Springfield	(68%)	90.4
Milford	(62%)	56.6
(Hillsdale)		
Wheatland	(73%)	88.4
Scipio	(66%)	81

¹Ruralness is based on the per cent of rural occupations among potential voters in 1850. For elections used to determine party strength see note 14.

towns, as was Free Soil Salem township in Washtenaw. The exception was Whig Milford in Oakland County, and Milford presents a striking parallel to Plymouth in Wayne County. It was the least rural of any of the banner towns in the three counties (56.6%) and had a relatively large number of skilled workers, 78, or 24.6 percent of its total potential voters. Holly, the least rural of the Democratic towns, had 26 skilled workers, 11 percent of the potential voters. Although Milford was most agricultural, its villages had "important" manufacturing interests in 1850, including grist and woolens mills.⁶⁹ Milford led all other banner towns in the three counties and all towns in Oakland County in 1850 in value of non-agricultural products.⁷⁰

The cases of Plymouth and Milford are significant in that they are in agreement with Benson's findings for "manufacturing towns" in New York state in the 1840's. Benson found that "although a 'manufacturing town' was not the top Democratic town in any county, such towns registered the lowest Democratic percentages in Columbia, Essex, Fulton, Montgomery and Orange." He reasoned that these towns supported the Whigs because the Whigs favored a tariff and voters "associated with the textile, iron, and other industries affected by

⁶⁹ Samuel W. Durant, History of Oakland County, Michigan (Philadelphia: H. H. Everts and Co., 1877), pp. 221-28. After 1856 manufacturing declined.

⁷⁰ Statistics of Michigan from the Census of 1850 (Lansing, 1851).

foreign competition" were able to perceive a relationship between government action on the tariff, party policy, and their material interests.⁷¹ Benson's examination of "deviant" manufacturing towns, i. e., those which unlike most of their kind voted Democratic, led him to consider other variables as having more weight in those cases. For example, manufacturing Phillipstown in Putnam County voted Democratic in 1844 (73.9%), but differed from Whig manufacturing towns in ethnocultural and religious group composition. Its inhabitants were mainly "Yorkers" and Irish Catholics, groups which "Irrespective of class . . . tended to vote Democratic (although not to the same degree)." Benson thus concluded that "particularly in the absence of severe economic depression, party loyalty and ethnic or religious pressures influence voters more powerfully than membership in tariff-oriented occupational groups or in any other kind of politically-sensitive occupational group."⁷²

As I shall show later, the presence in Plymouth and Milford of religious and ethnocultural groups which tended to vote Whig and Free Soil probably had more to do with the towns' Whig disposition than the tariff-consciousness of skilled workers.

⁷¹Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 161-62. "The estimate cannot be verified at present, but the assumption seems reasonable that in manufacturing towns the Whig vote among men actually engaged in tariff-oriented industries was much higher than among the remainder of the electorate."

⁷²Ibid., p. 163.

7. Class and Party: The Occupation-Status Rankings and Party.

The 18 basic occupational groups provide a rough measure of class or socio-economic status when combined in various groupings. It will be convenient to list and number the occupations here to provide a ready key to the groupings to be used.

A. Farm

1. Farm laborers
 2. Tenants, renters
- (Farm owners)
3. of Farms worth up to \$500
 4. of Farms \$501-1000
 5. of Farms \$1001-3000
 6. of Farms \$30001-5000
 7. of Farms \$5001-9999
 8. of Farms \$10,000 and up

B. Urban

(Blue Collar and Service)

1. Unskilled
2. Semi-skilled
3. Skilled
4. Service

(White Collar)

5. Sales
6. Clerical, Agents
7. Managers, Officials
8. Proprietors I
9. Proprietors II
10. Professionals

Farm Laborers and Tenants.

In no town did farm laborers or tenants together amount to 50 percent or more of the potential voters, so that inferences may not be

made on the basis of clusterings of these groups in individual towns. However, the towns of Wayne may be ranked according to the percent of these groups, separately and together, and the corresponding variation in Democratic strength can then be observed to see if there was a possible correlation between these groups and Democratic strength, as so many writers have suggested. Democratic strength is compared with the percent of tenants among the potential voters in Table 15, with percent of farm laborers in Table 16, and with tenants and farm laborers in Table 17. Without expressing the statistical relationship between the variables involved in each case, simple observation shows that there is no constant relationship between the percent of these classes and Democratic strength. (Simple histograms on graph paper also suggest a lack of correlation, showing a scattered pattern.) Table 17 does show a group of Democratic towns clustered near the top, but Ecorse, with the greatest percent of farm laborers and tenants (33), was low in Democratic strength (49).

8. Rural Lower Classes.

It seems reasonable to assume that farm laborers and tenants, and unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the towns (Farm 1-2, Urban 1-2) represented the rural lower classes. Certainly their relative wealth, or lack of wealth, was roughly the same, although farm laborers who were

TABLE 15

TENANCY (% OF POTENTIAL VOTERS) 1850 AND DEMOCRATIC
STRENGTH IN WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS

	Tenancy	Democratic %
Redford	21	66
Ecorse	21	49
Grosse Pointe	19	80
Greenfield	19	62
Monguagon	18	60
Dearborn	15	60
Huron	15	54
Plymouth	11	38
Hamtramck	10	70
Brownstown	9	41
Canton	9	64
Livonia	9	39
Springwells	8	53
Van Buren	7	60
Nankin	6	56
Taylow	3	37
Sumpter	2	47
Romulus	--	60

TABLE 16

FARM LABORERS, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH, WAYNE COUNTY

	% Potential Vtrs. Fm-Labs	Dem. Avg.
Hamtramck	16	70
Grosse Pointe	14	80
Browstown	13	41
Ecorse	12	49
Greenfield	12	62
Van Buren	11	60
Monguagon	10	60
Springwells	10	53
Huron	9	54
Nankin	7	56
Redford	7	60
Dearborn	6	60
Romulus	5	60
Canton	5	64
Sumpter	4	47
Livonia	4	39
Plymouth	2	38
Taylor	2	37

TABLE 17

FARM LABORERS AND TENANTS, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC
STRENGTH, WAYNE COUNTY

	%	
	Farm 1-2	Dem. Avg.
Ecorse	33	49
Grosse Pointe	29	80
Greenfield	29	62
Monguagon	29	60
Redford.	28	66
Hamtrack	26	70
Huron	24	54
Dearborn	22	60
Brownstown	21	41
Springwells	18	53
Van Buren	18	60
Canton	14	64
Nankin	13	56
Plymouth	13	38
Livonia	12	39
Sumpter	6	47
Romulus	5	60
Taylor	5	37

relatives (sons, for example, of a prosperous farmer) probably enjoyed a different status.

Table 18 ranks the towns according to the percent of Farm 1-2 and Urban 1-2: there appears to be no strong correlation with Democratic strength. One town, Springwells, actually had almost 60 percent of its potential voters in these classes, yet its Democratic strength was only 53 percent (although it was growing).

When the next lowest farm classes are added to Farm 1-2 and Urban 1-2, some significant bases for making inferences begin to appear.

Table 19 ranks the towns according to the percent of Farm 1-3 and Urban 1-2. Nine towns with from about 50 to 64 percent of these classes among their potential voters were sharply divided in their party loyalties. The four towns with from 55-64 percent of the rural lower classes among their potential voters were none of them strong Democratic towns and one was a weak Whig-Free Soil town. The two "most upper" class towns on Table 19 were both Whig-Free Soil strongholds, Plymouth and Livonia, but Canton was just about as "upper" class as Livonia, and its Democratic strength was a smacking 64 percent. Indeed, 73 percent of Canton's potential voters were in classes above Farm 1-3 and Urban 1-2.

The coefficient of correlation for percent Farm 1-3, Urban 1-2 and Democratic strength, computed with a formula using Spearman's r_s , was .02. Thus, there was no correlation in Wayne County between the percent

TABLE 18

PER CENT FARM 1-2 AND URBAN 1-2 OF POTENTIAL VOTERS AND
DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH, 1848-1850, WAYNE COUNTY

	%	
	Fm. 1-2	
	Ur. 1-2	Dem. Avg.
Springwells	57	53
Monguagon	47	60
Hamtramck	44	70
Ecorse	36	49
Grosse Pointe	34	80
Greenfield	33	62
Brownstown	29	41
Dearborn	28	60
Redford	28	66
Huron	25	54
Van Buren	19	60
Phymouth	17	38
Nankin	15	56
Canton	15	64
Livonia	15	39
Taylor	7	37
Sumpter	6	47
Romulus	6	60

TABLE 19

PER CENT FARM 1-3 AND URBAN 1-2, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC
STRENGTH, 1848-1852, WAYNE COUNTY

	%	
	Fm 1-3 Ur 1-2	Dem. Avg.
1. Springwells	64	53
2. Ecorse	60	49
3. Huron	56	54
4. Sumpter	55	47
5. Hamtramck	54	70
6. Greenfield	53	62
7. Monguagon	52	60
8. Romulus	50	60
9. Brownstown	49	41
10. Taylor	48	37
11. Grosse Pointe	47	80
12. Dearbron	41	60
13. Redford	39	66
14. Van Buren	36	60
15. Nankin	33	56
16. Canton	27	64
17. Plymouth	26	39
18. Livonia	20	38

of rural lower classes in a town in 1850 and the town's tendency to vote, or not to vote, Democratic. (See Appendix C for how the correlation coefficient was computed.)

When Farmers 4, owning farms worth from \$501-1000 were added to Farm 1-3 and Urban 1-2, it became apparent that the overwhelming majority of the potential voters in all the towns were included in these rural lower classes. Fifteen towns had 50 percent or more of their potential voters in these classes (Table 20), 13 over 60 percent, 5 over 70 percent, and 1 over 80 percent. The weakest Democratic towns in the county were both at the top and bottom of the table, i. e., had both the greatest percent of rural lower classes and the least percent (Plymouth 24) among their potential voters.

The coefficient of correlation for percent Farm 1-4, Urban 1-2 and Democratic strength was negative, and very low, $-.17$, indicating no relationship between these rural classes' presence and Democratic or anti-Democratic strength. (See Appendix C for computation of the correlation coefficient.)

If the towns are ranked according to Farm 1-4 and Urban 1-4, (including skilled and service workers), there still is no apparent correlation between the lower classes and Democratic strength. (Table 20). No matter how the various occupational groups are combined or rearranged, it is difficult to discover any relationship between occupation, class, and party loyalty.

TABLE 20

PER CENT FARM 1-4 AND URBAN 1-2, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC
STRENGTH, 1848-1852, WAYNE COUNTY

		%	
		Fm 1-4	Ur 1-2
		Dem. Avg.	
1.	Sumpter	82	47
2.	Taylor	78	37
3.	Ecorse	77	49
4.	Romulus	73	60
5.	Huron	71	54
6.	Greenfield	69	62
7.	Springwells	67	53
8.	Grosse Pointe	65	80
9.	Brownstown	64	41
10.	Hamtramck	60	70
11.	Dearborn	59	60
12.	Van Buren	57	60
13.	Monguagon	56	60
14.	Nankin	53	56
15.	Redford	51	66
16.	Livonia	40	39
17.	Canton	40	64
18.	Plymouth	24	38

Since the towns were voting in 1850-1852 very much as they had voted before 1848, and since their economic growth had been fairly even and no great differences existed between their socio-economic character in 1840 and 1850, I assume that there was no relationship between economic class and party loyalty from 1837-1848 in the towns of Wayne County. This assumption is supported by earlier examination of the aggregate vote in Wayne County and Detroit from 1837-1852.

9. Small Farmers.

One of the Ten Commandments of American history has been (and was until recently, unchallenged) that small, independent farmers were the backbone of the Democratic Party, virtually anytime, anywhere. Does any even passing student of American history need to be referred to the countless textbooks and secondary works which make such an assertion for the ante-bellum period? In Wayne County, Michigan, 1837-1852, the small, independent farmer was equally or more devoted to the Whig Party as he was to the Democratic Party.

In three towns farm owners with farms worth \$1000 or under constituted the overwhelming majority of the potential voters. They were 76 percent of the potential electorate in Sumpter, 71 percent in Taylor, and 67 percent in Romulus. Sumpter, Taylor, and Romulus were remarkably alike in their socio-economic structure. None had very many farm laborers or tenants; Romulus had no tenants at all. Since there were no

large farms in these towns, men who owned farms worth under, say, \$500, were far less likely to be tenants, as was the case with men in other towns who probably owned land but worked it on the side while their main employment was on some large farm as laborer or tenant. No one in the three towns owned a farm worth more than \$3000. All three of the towns were in southwestern Wayne on the flat lands astride the sluggish Huron River.

Sumpter had a five year (1848-1852) Whig-Free Soil average of 53 percent. Taylor was the strongest Whig town in the county with a 63 percent average. And Romulus was a Democratic town with a 60 percent Democratic average. The small, independent farmer in those three towns, then, was sharply divided in his political loyalties and if he tended toward any party it was the Whig.

Three towns had significant but not majority percentages of small farmers in their potential electorates: Huron, 47 percent; Ecorse, 41 percent; and Van Buren, 39 percent. Ecorse, Huron, and Van Buren were also in the same part of the county; their percentages of Farm 1-4 were very high. Ecorse was divided in party loyalty; Huron was Democratic by only 54 percent; and Van Buren was strongly Democratic (60%).

10. Middle and Upper Middle Class Farmers.

Democratic Canton and Whig-Free Soil Plymouth and Livonia consistently ranked, in the foregoing tables, as the most upper towns. They

had comparatively large proportions of prosperous middle class farmers among their potential electorates, and Plymouth had a large group of middle class skilled laborers. Canton is the best example in Wayne County of a town that was very prosperous; predominantly middle-class and Democratic. Farmers owning farms worth \$1001-3000 constituted 36 percent of its potential electorate, compared to 31 percent in Livonia, and 17 percent in Plymouth. In Canton about 9 percent of the potential voters owned farms worth over \$3,000, compared to 8 percent in Livonia, and 17 percent in Plymouth. Could it have been possible that Canton's prosperous farmers were solidly Whig, or to put it another way, that the lower classes were solidly Democratic and only about a third of the upper classes were Democratic while about two-thirds of the upper classes were Whig-Free Soil. Given the data presented so far this was possible although not likely. But it was not the case. I checked on the property ownership in 1850 of individual Democrats in Canton: men who were party leaders around 1840 (delegates to county conventions) and men who were elected to township offices year after year. All of them owned farms worth \$1000 or--usually--more. Archibald Y. Murray, a Democratic county leader and Supervisor of Canton in 1836, 1837, 1841, 1844, and 1852, owned more real estate than any other man in town in 1850: \$18,750 worth. David D. Cady, Democrat and Supervisor in 1846, 1853, 1854, and 1855, owned real estate in 1850 valued at \$4800. These men were among the original settlers of the town, like the Kinyon, Stevens, and Andrews families, who were also

Democratic. They prospered quickly, stayed in Canton, and were good Democrats. They were mostly from New York state.⁷³

11. Oakland County Banner-Towns: Classes and Parties.

I tabulated occupational-status classes for only the banner towns of the three counties other than Wayne. (See p. 131). The top Democratic towns in Oakland were Addison (77%) and Holly (69%); the lowest Democratic towns were Whig Springfield (68%) and Whig-Free Soil Milford (62%). These towns of very different political loyalties had very similar socio-economic structures. Three (Addison, Holly, and Springfield) were in the northern, less densely populated half of the county. All lay on generally open, rolling land, heavily sprinkled with lakes. Milford, in southwestern Oakland, was somewhat more settled, more cultivated, and more productive in 1850, in agriculture as well as in manufacturing. Milford's greater prosperity in 1850 was partly due to its having been settled earlier than the more northerly towns.⁷⁴

When the towns are compared by percent of: tenants; Farm 1-3, Urban 1-2; and Farm 1-4, Urban 1-2, (or other combinations) as in Table

⁷³ United States Census of State of Michigan, Population Schedule, Microfilm. Party delegates listed in Free Press, November 1, 1836, p. 2; October 14, 1837, p. 2; June 16, 1840, p. 2. Town officials in Silas Farmer, History of Detroit, II, 1255-57.

⁷⁴ Michigan Statistics, 1850, pp. 116-17, 120-21. Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, pp. 210-14, 218-19.

21 suggests that there was no relationship in Oakland County between the proportion of rural lower classes and Democratic or anti-Democratic strength.

TABLE 21

PER CENT FARM 1-4 AND URBAN 1-4, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH, 1848-1852, WAYNE COUNTY

		%	
		Fm 1-4	
		Ur 1-4	Dem. Avg.
1.	Sumpter	91	47
2.	Taylor	86	37
3.	Springwells	86	53
4.	Ecorse	85	49
5.	Romulus	85	60
6.	Huron	82	54
7.	Brownstown	81	41
8.	Monguagon	80	60
9.	Hamtramck	78	70
10.	Greenfield	78	62
11.	Dearborn	74	60
12.	Grosse Pointe	72	80
13.	Van Buren	70	60
14.	Redford	65	66
15.	Nankin	63	56
16.	Plymouth	55	38
17.	Livonia	55	39
18.	Canton	51	64

12. Washtenaw Banner Towns: Classes and Parties.

The Democratic Banner towns of Washtenaw were Freedom and Northfield, both with Democratic averages of 67 percent (see p. 131). The Whig banner towns were Pittsfield (68%) and Lima (63%). I also tabulated the occupations of Salem as a Free Soil town, because it gave 40.1 percent of its total vote to the Free Soil Party in 1848 and 31.3 percent to Hale in 1852, leading the many Free Soil-tending towns of Washtenaw in Free Soil percentage both years.

All of the towns had about the same proportion of tenants and farm laborers among their potential voters (Table 22). The Washtenaw banner towns, especially Whig Lima and Free Soil Salem compare very favorably with "upper class" Wayne County towns in the small proportion of rural lower classes among their potential voters. Freedom was the one markedly lower class town with a significant proportion of small farmers among its potential electorate, although not at all to the same degree as the Wayne towns of Sumpter, Taylor, and Romulus. Nevertheless, it was a comparatively poor town of small farmers and a strongly Democratic town. Freedom was mostly inhabited by German Lutheran farmers who had settled there not too long before 1850 and they were not destined to remain relatively unprosperous. They were hard working and upwardly mobile. German Lutherans, as will be shown, in the city or on the farm, were a strongly Democratic group.

TABLE 22

WASHTENAW BANNER TOWNS, 1848-1852, AND
RURAL LOWER CLASSES, 1850

	Dem. Towns		Whig Towns		F S
	Freedom	Northfield	Pittsfield	Lima	Salem
Tenants, Farm Labs.	28.3	25.4	32.6	23.9	21.5
Fm 1-3, Ur 1-2	41.2	42.2	38.9	29.3	27.1
Fm 1-4, Ur 1-2	74.7	57.8	48.9	<u>41.4</u>	<u>37.2</u>
Fm 1-3, Ur 1-4	44.5	39.5	47.6	35.5	38.2
Farm Owners under \$1,000	<u>46.6</u>	30.1	13.3	16.7	14.4
Farm Owners over \$1,000	21.3	31.5	35.2	<u>46.7</u>	48.5

13. Hillsdale Banner Towns: Classes and Parties.

On the basis of rather limited election returns I selected five banner towns in Hillsdale County for the 1848-1852 period (see note 14), and used the towns' party votes in 1852 for purposes of comparison. The Democratic strongholds were Camden (68.2%) and Wright (62.6%), and the Whig-Free Soil strongholds were Wheatland (73%) and Scipio (65.7%). Both Wheatland and Scipio cast solid Whig majorities in the two-party year of 1851. Litchfield, while consistently anti-Democratic, I classed as the Free Soil banner town because it led

Hillsdale's towns in 1852 in Free Soil percentage with 34.5 and led in 1848 with a Free Soil plurality of 46.5 percent.

TABLE 23

HILLSDALE BANNER TOWNS, 1848-1852,
AND RURAL LOWER CLASSES, 1850

	<u>Dem.</u>		<u>Whig</u>		<u>F S</u>
	Camden	Wright	Wheatland	Scipio	Litchfield
Tenents	5.6	11.4	11.2	14.2	14.5
Fm 1-2, Ur 1-2	10.4	12.8	13.3	20.3	16.4
Fm 1-3, Ur 1-2	48.6	55.5	43.4	34	30
Fm 1-4, Ur 1-2	74.6	79.1	70.5	51	50
Fm 1-3, Ur 1-4	56.7	56.9	49.8	47.7	43.3
Fm 1-4, Ur 1-4	82.7	80.5	76.9	64.7	64.3
Farm Owners under \$1,000	64.2	66.3	47.2	30.7	33.6

Table 23 shows that Hillsdale's Whig and Free Soil towns tended to be less lower class than the Democratic towns. Camden and Wright added too preponderantly small farmer towns to the Democratic ranks. Yet overwhelmingly Whig Wheatland was about as lower class as Camden and Wright, and it contained a heavier concentration of small farmers (47.2) than did the Democratic towns of Wastenaw, Freedom (46.4) and Northfield (30.1).

If all the banner towns of the three counties are ranked according to percent, Farm 1-3 and Urban 1-2 and compared with Democratic strength (Table 24), an over-all view of the lack of relationship between party strength and the rural lower classes emerges.

TABLE 24

PER CENT FARM 1-3 AND URBAN 1-2, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH IN BANNER TOWNS OF OAKLAND, WASHTENAW, AND HILLSDALE, 1848-1852

	%	
	Fm 1-3 Ur 1-2	Dem. Avg.
Wright	56	63
Camden	49	68
Wheatland	43	27
Northfield	42	67
Freedom	41	67
Pittsfield	39	32
Scipio	34	34
Springfield	31	32
Litchfield	30	35
Lima	29	37
Addison	27	77
Salem	27	46
Milford	26	38
Holly	25	69

14. Summary.

In New York state Benson found that:

With few exceptions anywhere in the state . . . in the same county, numerous towns with roughly the same degree of prosperity varied widely in their voting patterns, and that towns with the same voting patterns varied widely in their degree of prosperity. In some counties a tendency existed for economically low ranking units to be the low ranking Democratic units, but in others, economically low ranking units tended to be the high ranking units.⁷⁵

In Wayne County and the banner towns of Oakland, Washtenaw, and Hillsdale in eastern Michigan, towns with roughly the same proportion of the rural lower and upper classes among their potential electorates varied widely in their voting patterns, and towns with the same voting patterns varied widely in the proportion of rural lower and upper classes among their potential electorates.

In Wayne County the correlation coefficients for rural lower classes in the towns and Democratic strength were very low: for Farm 1-3, Urban 1-2 and Democratic strength .02; for Farm 1-4, Urban 1-2 and Democratic strength, -.17.

⁷⁵Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, p. 148.

CHAPTER V

ANTIPARTY, ORGANIZATION, AND SOCIAL GROUPS,

1829-1840

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ANTIPARTY, ORGANIZATION, AND SOCIAL GROUPS

1829-1840

Introduction

1. Party Organization and Voter Participation.

Party organization and voter participation on a large scale arrived together in Wayne County in 1837. Organization preceded extensive participation of voters. This does not necessarily mean that turnout was largely caused by organization. Historians have tended to exaggerate the role of party organization in causing turnout because the two usually do appear simultaneously. Richard P. McCormick, in an excellent article, showed that the "mighty democratic uprising" traditionally associated with Jackson occurred not in 1828 or 1832 but in the Whig victory of 1840, when more voters turned out than ever before. McCormick attributed this to the existence of "fairly well-balanced parties" in virtually every state by 1840:

A two-party system scarcely could be said to exist in more than half the states until after 1832. . . .

As balanced organized parties subsequently made their appearance, . . . and voters were stimulated by the prospect of a genuine contest, a marked rise in voter participation occurred. Such conditions did not prevail until 1840.¹

¹Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," AHR, LXV, 300, 301.

However, while party organization may have helped increase turnout, it is only one of many causes of voting, and the general causes of voting also help cause organization. While parties are usually organized by elite groups, their mere organization is not enough to cause or sustain high levels of turnout. After 1840 in Michigan, voter participation took a nose dive, yet parties were probably better organized in 1841 than they were in 1837. At present, there are many areas where parties have been organized for decades, yet many persons in these areas, usually poor, uneducated and unsocialized persons, never vote. To understand voter participation and particularly unusual "surges" of voter turnout, one must explore the nature of the electorate and study factors operating within it which stimulate political interest and involvement. In the 1830's parties were just coming into being and one must study the processes by which parties became "emotionally significant reference groups" for various social groups. One must study the processes by which "broad symbolic groups" or "political subcultures" came into being and into conflict, and how they transferred their conflicts into political party conflicts.

Harry R. Stevens attributed both voter turnout and the relative strength of rival Presidential candidates in Ohio in 1828 largely to party organizations. Once activated, voters chose men who had personalities like their own: "The more energetic and overtly aggressive [voter] might prefer Jackson; the more judicious and reflective, Adams; the more skilled in 'wire-working,' Clay. Such a conclusion cannot, of course, be proved, but it may be amply documented from biographical studies of approximately six thousand individuals in Ohio politics during the decade." (italics mine) The Early Jackson Party in Ohio (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1957), pp. 138-42, 151.

2. Parties As Reference Groups.

The way in which parties function as reference groups today is described by Robert Lane:

. . . the two major political parties are emotionally significant reference groups for almost 95 percent of the population (even though this is barely acknowledged by about 20 percent of the people) in the sense that people have a 'pro' or 'anti' feeling about the two parties. At election time about a third of the population feels a 'strong' identification with their party. It is, perhaps, of this group that Merriam speaks when he says 'at times the party spirit seems almost a form of general intoxication.'²

Parties become "stable" when they possess an "inclusive organization" and "persist beyond the single cause or single election," when they acquire "traditions, clienteles, and ideologies," and when they become "a symbol, a focus of loyalty, or point of orientation i.e., a reference group⁷ for the public,"³ and for political subcultures within the "public."

During and after the time in which they become reference groups, the political actions and goals of parties are both "instrumental and expressive." For students of voting behavior it is the expressive or symbolic meanings of party activity, goals, and language which is of importance.⁴ According to Edelman,

²Robert E. Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), p. 299-300.

³Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System, p. 14. I have borrowed Sorauf's phrases but changed his meaning.

⁴Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 12.

For the spectators of the political scene every act contributes to a pattern of ongoing events that spells threat or reassurance. This is the basic dichotomy for the mass public. The very fact that the same act which one grouping favors looms ominously for another reinforces each side in its perceptions for it seems to make it all the more clear that the enemy is really there, fighting against the good life or against life itself. One student of symbolism has written: "Every act is at once an acceptance and (not or) a rejection. . . . Identification is compensatory to division; for, if men were not separate from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to stress their unity."⁵

During the later 1830's in Wayne County and Michigan parties became reference groups for different political subcultures. Large numbers of voters did not become involved until political actions, goals, and language became invested with symbolic meanings threatening or reassuring different groups. This was a gradual process, as was party organization. Parties organized effectively in Wayne and party lines crystallized in 1837. Yet Wayne had been a center of party activity for several years. In Battle Creek partisanship did not govern the course of elections until the spring of 1838, and in northern Mackinac County party lines were not "drawn tight" until the fall of 1839.⁶

⁵Ibid., p. 13. Edelman said that language is "the key to the universe of speaker and audience. Many students of cultural anthropology, logic, and social psychology have demonstrated that this function of language is no ephemeral influence, but the central factor in social relations and action. It is all the more potent because it operates unconsciously for the most part, permeating perceptions, conception, and experience." Ibid., p. 131.

⁶A.D.P. Van Buren, MPHC, XVII, 240-41. Daniel Munger, Constantine, to Sheldon McKnight, Detroit, August 28, 1837, Bagg MSS Film.

Party organization was a slow, gradual process largely because a general antiparty prejudice existed among the electorate, and particularly among potential Whigs. This had much to do with the Whigs organizing considerably later than the Democrats and with potential or active Whigs being prone to non-voting and to political schism. Their differing attitudes to parties is one of the key differences between early Whigs and Democrats and is a key to their differing party characters and to identifying the different social groups supporting each. Exploring the attitudes toward parties of incipient Whigs and Democrats is a way of getting at how parties became "emotionally significant reference groups" in the 1830's. To many persons the very idea of "party" already had an intense negative emotional significance.

3. Antiparty Sentiment, Organizers, and Parties.

Hostility to political parties existed in the early days of the Republic. It is well known that George Washington in his Farewell Address warned against the "baneful effects of party spirit." In his study of the early national period William Nisbet Chambers said that "the very idea of parties was long suspect. In the retrospect of peaceful American party development it is easy to argue that fear of party rivalry was exaggerated in the years of party formation, but it was widespread at the time."⁷

⁷William Nisbet Chambers, Political Parties in a New Nation: The American Experience, 1776-1809 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963),

Historians have long been familiar with generalized manifestations of antiparty attitudes, but have not appreciated how a rather pervasive prejudice persisted and, in the 1830's, obstructed party organization, particularly the organization of the Whig Party. Understanding this will give insight into the nature of the Whig and Democratic parties and into the character of certain of their supporters.

Jacksonian Democrats have been renowned for their political and organizational skills. Moisei Ostrogorski, in his classic Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, described the rise of a class of "politicians" in the 1820's who engineered Andrew Jackson's election in 1828 and who led in building the party system. Historians recently have called the Jackson Democrats "technicians of mass leadership" and the "shrewdest politicians,"⁸ suggesting, as have many historians, that Democrats were by inclination or disposition capable organizers of political machinery. Scholars usually imply that their opponents were less capable, and perhaps, less willing organizers. The Democrats in

p. 7. For Washington's Farewell Address see John R. Owens and P. J. Staudenraus, The American Party System; A Book of Readings (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 22-24.

⁸M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, II (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), 39-79. Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 49. Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1963), p. 52. The Democrats were originally the Jackson faction in the Republican Party, called Democratic Republicans.

Michigan in the 1830's have usually been credited with being first to organize and one historian has said that they owned by 1840 perhaps "the best party organization in the Northwest."⁹

I intend to show that Democrats were the most capable and willing party organizers, with proclivities for organization not shared by their opponents. Yet Democratic organizers, like Whig organizers, had to contend with antiparty sentiment, which existed in generalized form among supporters of all parties. A more intense and moralist antipartyism, however, tended to affect Democratic opponents such as the Antimasons, a short-lived party which despised politics and parties. In Michigan, after 1833, Antimasons went mostly into the new Whig Party and carried their antipolitical and antiparty sentiment with them.

The kinds of persons most prone to antipartyism were evangelized, "burned-over," Yankee Protestants, pietists filled with reformist, benevolent zeal. These persons tended to oppose the Jackson party and filled the ranks of the Antimasonic Party. Antimasonry was in part a religious movement in politics, and Antimasonry's antipartyism was closely

⁹The quotation is from Homer J. Webster, "History of the Democratic Party Organization in the Northwest, 1815-1840," The Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XXIV (1915), 117. See also: R. C. Buley, The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1850, II (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1950), pp. 168, 206, 221; Floyd Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, 1837-1860, p. 7; Ben S. Chinitz, "Political Techniques in Michigan, 1824-1844," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Wayne State University, 1938), pp. 23-55.

related to its Protestant evangelicalism. Antimasonry was born, after all, in western New York's "infected" or "Burned-over District," the most preached to, proselytized, and reformed area in all of Yankee Christendom. Michigan Whiggery absorbed Antimasonry and its anti-party, evangelist strain.¹⁰

Evangelized Protestants, with an active heritage of anti-Catholicism, tended to see in Masonry, in the Democratic Party, and in the political party as such many of the evils they associated with Popery. They used very similar language and symbols to denounce all three. This demonology seems to have been worked out first in campaigns against Popery and then applied to Masons, parties, and the Democratic Party, in that order. Anti-Catholicism was a prominent feature of Antimasonry and remained characteristic of the evangelical or nativist wing of the Whig Party. Although they seldom said so directly, evangelicals saw not just similarity among the enemies described above, but actual liaison. They thought that Masonry and Democracy were in secret alliance, and they saw Catholicism, in the form of Catholic Irish and German immigrants, coming to the aid of Democracy with votes, legal and otherwise.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the connection between anti-organization feeling and the "Yankee Protestant ethos" during the Progressive period, see Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), Chapter VI, pp. 215-71.

Antimasonry

Antimasonry erupted in western New York after it became public knowledge that a William Morgan, who intended to expose the Masonic Order's secrets, disappeared in 1826. Many non-Masons became outraged, charged that Morgan had been murdered, and that his murderers went unpunished because they were Masons. Their Masonic brethren, occupying high public offices, used their influence and privilege to protect them. Protest meetings swept the countryside and by a process described as "spontaneous combustion" a political party came into being. In 1827 Antimasonic nominating conventions bypassed existing political factions and nominated their own candidates. Antimasonry found most of its strength among former opponents of Jackson and Van Buren. In New York and other states Antis tended to unite with National Republicans and, in the "midst of the excitement," President Jackson openly praised the Masonic order.¹¹

Ever since Charles McCarthy's pioneer study of the Antimasonic Party (1903), historians have recognized the complexity of the movement, and have emphasized its moralism. McCarthy analyzed its "moral and religious basis" (among other bases), and saw it in the context of a deeply rooted Christian reaction against liberal and secular trends:

¹¹ Charles McCarthy, "The Anti-Masonic Party," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1902, Vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 383. Fox, Decline of Aristocracy, pp. 337-51, deals with the origins of the party, 1826-1828. Lee Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 14-27.

In New England this was especially true as the party there was composed of the ultra religious country people already in opposition to the liberal spirit of the cities. . . . The party soon received the stigma of the 'Christian party in politics.'¹²

Whitney R. Cross saw class resentments, status anxiety, country-city antagonism, and denominational rivalries feeding Anti-masonry, but implied that the Order's alleged offense to public and private morality was central in Anti eyes:

In its original form, and persistently in rural areas, Anti-masonry was a crusade. . . . the major issue seemed to be one of morality. Masonry was believed to have committed a crime. Its members had put their fraternal obligations ahead of their duty to state and society. . . .¹³

Lee Benson analyzed Antimasonry as a blend of the moral and mundane, and emphasized its practical aspirations and goals. Anti-masonic leaders, he said, led in reform movements as well as in promoting business enterprise, banks, and internal improvements. Masonry's special offense was that it created secret power and privilege in all spheres of life. This offense became public at a time when, stimulated by the Transportation Revolution, men's aspirations for "improvement" (moral and material) were rising to "unprecedented heights." "Appeals

¹² McCarthy, pp. 540-41. "The Anti-Masonic papers of the day," he said, "all have a religious tone." ibid., p. 541. For the religious roots of Anti-Masonry in Vermont see David M. Ludlum, Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791-1850 ("Columbia Studies in American Culture," No. 5; New York: Morningside Heights: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp.102-07.

¹³ Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District: The Social and Economic History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850

designed to satisfy the increasingly widespread and deeply felt demand for equal opportunity in all phases of American life were . . . the most powerful weapons in the Antimasonic arsenal of argument."¹⁴

In Michigan too the "blessed spirit" seems to have blended the moral and mundane. Antimasonic leaders in Detroit and Wayne County headed benevolent and reform societies and promoted enterprises such as railroads and banks. Leading Antimasons in Washtenaw County were town and business promoters and land speculators.¹⁵

Michigan Antimasonry impresses one most, however, with its evangelism and crusading style. It had all the enthusiasm of any "ism" in western New York. In New York and other states the connection between Antimasonry and evangelical Protestantism had been clear. The Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches had all denounced Masonry (though not with equal accord), and Antimasonry

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 113-25, quotation from p. 117. Richard Hofstadter has emphasized the "apocalyptic and absolutist framework in which . . . hostility to Masonry was usually expressed." The Paranoid Style in American Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 17.

¹⁴Benson, p. 18. See Hofstadter, Paranoid Style, p. 17.

¹⁵Detroit Courier, November 13, 1833, p. 2; November 27, p. 2. Russel E. Bidlack, John Allen and the Founding of Ann Arbor (Michigan Historical Collections Bulletin No. 12, December 1962; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1962), for the story of the leading promoter of Ann Arbor, an Antimason.

was often in alliance with such evangelical causes as temperance, antislavery and anti-Catholicism.¹⁶

The Antimasonic newspapers in Wayne and Washtenaw Counties were basically "religious" newspapers filled with news relating to evangelical causes, particularly temperance, as well as Masonry. Many Antimasonic leaders tended to be engaged in Christian benevolence and moral reform. Consequently, the mark of the revivalism of the 1820's and 1830's was plainly stamped on Michigan Antimasonry. Henry R. Schoolcraft, the well-known Indian agent and a Democrat, caught the quasi-messianic cast of Antimasonry when he wrote that it was a "kind of 'shibboleth' for those who are to cross the political 'fords' of the new Jordan."¹⁷

In New York the Morgan affair had offended republican prejudices, but the leading cause of the "excitement" had been, as Cross observed, that Masonry threatened Protestant Christianity.

¹⁶McCarthy, "Anti-Masonic Party," pp. 542-44.

¹⁷Courier, 1833-1834, passim. I have seen two copies of the Michigan Temperance Recorder which are privately owned, and was told by the owner that his grandfather, the publisher of the Recorder, was a lifelong Antimason. Henry R. Schoolcraft, Personal Memoirs (Philadelphia: Lippencott, Grambo and Co., 1851), p. 324. The entry referred to was written about 1830.

Masonry had come to serve many persons in place of a church, to the exclusion of Christianity. Its oaths took the Lord's name in vain. At the very least, it interposed a prior association among certain church members, who were held to be bound equally with all regenerate humans in the exclusive fellowship of the Communion. The rumour that alcoholic beverages were used with abandon in its ceremonies irritated a growing sensitivity on the subject of temperance. Its titles and rituals smacked of monarchy as well as infidelity.¹⁸

For Michigan Antimasons, Masonry sinned most in presuming to be a substitute religion. Masonry's religious heresy overshadowed its political crimes. Antis saw the Order as a competing, anti-Christian sect. They described it as a delusion which gripped man's minds and especially their hearts. For the evangelist, the heart was where religion, conscience, and God's good grace should be. Masonry ensnared heart and mind in secrecy, oaths, ritual, magical devices, and dogma.¹⁹ Long after the excitement died down, in 1848, a Baptist engaged in exposing the evils of secret societies wrote an article on "The pretended origin and religious character of Free Masonry." He explicitly developed the point being made here:

The claims of religion are prior and paramount, and Christians are required to give their first and special attention to the 'household

¹⁸Cross, Burned-Over District, p. 117. Cross underestimated the extent to which Masonry offended Protestants as an ersatz religion. See also, Ludlum, Social Ferment, p. 92.

¹⁹The major sources for these generalizations are the Detroit Courier, 1833-1835, and the William Woodbridge MSS and John Allen MSS, Burton Historical Collection.

of faith.' Masonry reverses this order and requires that its members shall pay their first attention, and be first to relieve [] a 'worthy brother' of the order. The brother that takes this oath of allegiance, virtually renounces his allegiance to Christ. (Italics mine.)²⁰

Antimasons hated parties for much the same reasons that they hated Masonry. At least they transferred much of the rhetoric they used to damn one in condemning the other. Parties, like Masonry, bored "secretly and silently" from within. They set up centralized organs of authority which presumed to think and judge for the individual. They demanded allegiance necessitating the harnessing of free judgment, and, if need be, the violation of conscience.²¹

By 1833 Antimasonic antiparty rhetoric howled about the heads of the Democratic Republicans, whose faction ran Michigan's territorial government. The Democrats had adopted the convention system, established a central committee, and announced that appointments would be based on party loyalty. All this was anathema to Antimasons who decried Democrats for their "magic" and "military discipline of party." In Anti rhetoric it appeared that Democrats had an organization remarkably like the Masonic and one that perpetuated many of its evils.

²⁰ Michigan Christian Herald, April 14, 1848, p. 1. This was the fifth in the series. Earlier he had said that Masonry was based on consummate selfishness, being a system of "favoritism and perfectly exclusive," March 10, p. 1. It had a vindictive "inquisitorial spirit." March 31, p. 1

²¹ On the anxiety produced by secret organizations and its social psychology in a different age, see Edward A. Shils, The Torment of Secrecy (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), especially pp. 27-33.

The Courier's denunciation of the Territorial Legislative Council early in 1834 illustrated vividly how they associated Democrats with a host of traditional villains. The Council was compared to the "infidels of France," "Jacobin revolutionaries," and "Jesuitical inquisitors." It was "masonic" and a "political inquisition." The Democratic Central Committee was a "contemptible cabal," which congregated "weekly to inquisitorialize (the word is new but suggestive) delinquents to the holy cause." The Committee, a "hydra Headed faction," insinuated "political dogmas" to establish the "omnipotency of party." The Courier warned that a "secret machinating, irresponsible espionage is going on, backed by a cabal of aspiring demagogues, whose exclusive and darling object aims at total subversion of . . . genuine republicanism."²² The Courier's outburst illustrated its anti-conspiratorial and counter-subversive frame of mind.

It is clear that the Courier transferred the attributes of Masonry to the party as such, and these attributes also belonged to Popery, the original evangelical model of evil doing.

McCarthy observed that the support of Irish Catholics for the Jackson party encouraged anti-Catholicism among Antimasons who saw "Popery

²²Courier, July 31, 1833, p. 2; October 2, p. 2; January 29, 1834, p. 2. For a brilliant analysis of related themes, see David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," MVHR, XLVII (September, 1960), pp. 205-24.

and Freemasonry" as "schemes equally inconsistent with republicanism."²³ The Courier believed in that inconsistency. After the burning of a Catholic convent in Massachusetts (1834) by nativists, the Courier criticized mob violence but ended by blaming the violence on Catholicism. The Church of Rome, it said, harbored a "bigoted, malignant, and intolerant spirit." Catholics in American society were inherently a disruptive element. "The very tenants of Catholicism are calculated to foster a spirit of intolerance and violence." An "inevitable hostility" existed between priestly dogmatism and Protestant freedom of conscience.²⁴ Many evangelicals who were Antimasons and later Whigs were leaders or members of benevolent proselytizing societies which mobilized support by playing upon anti-Catholic prejudice and fear. Like Antimasons in New York, Michigan Antis recognized, at least in 1833, that Catholics (French) voted against them and supported their enemies.²⁵ In 1835, to evangelical Whigs, the tie between Catholic immigrants and Democratic votes would become all too clear.

²³ McCarthy, "Anti-Masonic Party," p. 544. "Such a spirit led naturally to the Native American doctrines of the future; indeed, many of the prominent Antimasons became leaders of that excitement."

²⁴ Courier, September 3, 1834, p. 2.

²⁵ Courier, July 10, 1833, p. 2.

Party Organization

The antiparty Antimasons ironically acted as unintentional catalysts in establishing parties in the 1830's. They called the first Territorial Convention in 1829 "to concert measures for suppression of Masonry." Their example (as at the national level) was soon followed by the Democratic Republicans and National Republicans. The convention system, once established, as Ostrogorski has pointed out, promoted the establishment of other parts of party apparatus.²⁶

Despising the "spoils system" and "party usages," Antimasons may have encouraged them by insisting on clarifying party lines. They brought an absolutist, moralistic spirit into politics. McCarthy described how in New York "From the petty politics of the towns to the higher politics of the state government the Antimasonic prescriptions spread. . . ." and how the Antis' demand for unequivocal allegiance forced men to political positions they would not otherwise have taken. This, perhaps, was why one irate National Republican charged that the Antis were the "political prescriptive ones (sic)."²⁷

²⁶ Ostrogorski, II, 59-66.

²⁷ McCarthy, p. 373. Lewis B. Sturges, Norwalk, Ohio, November 7, 1833, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS. McCarthy said that Antimasonic actions "tended to drive the bitter . . . nonmasonic opponents of Jackson into the only strong . . . party opposed to him, while the anti-Jackson Masons chose rather to support him than to go over to the hated opponents of masonry." See also Ludlum, Social Ferment, p. 116.

In 1828 a New York critic of the Antimasons said that "their motto is down with every man that is a Mason and they who will not cry out against them." (Italics mine.)²⁸

In the fashion of the evangelical revivalists Antimasons insisted on a narrow choice between Right and Wrong and on the necessity of "coming out" for the Right. The unintended consequence of their adopting the "all who are not with me are against me" attitude was that it encouraged politics to be conducted along party lines. They set precedents for what became known as "party regularity" and infused the idea of regularity with moral sanctions. Thus, the Antimasons helped sanction the first commandment of party discipline and helped it become, as Ostrogorski called it, a "moral constraint."²⁹

Michigan Antimasons added to the pressures accumulating within Democratic Republican ranks to establish party discipline with its attendant rewards and punishments. As early as 1829 an incipient Democrat urged that party lines be "drawn taut, and no man put in nomination who is not a thorough whole hog party man." Ebenezer Reed advised that a compromise was a device of the devil and aristocrats, that a party press

²⁸J. B. Bryan, Pampila, New York, November 3, 1828, to John Bryan, Woodruff's Grove, Washtenaw County, Michigan, John Bryan MSS, Michigan Historical Collections, Ann Arbor.

²⁹Ostrogorski, II, 67-69.

was needed, and that Michigan Democrats would have no influence in Washington until they had a strong local party.³⁰

The Jacksonians soon acted as if they were following Reed's program. Already in control of territorial affairs, Jacksonian leaders launched a strong party press in 1831. Their Detroit Free Press advocated states rights and limited government. In 1832 it began to agitate for Michigan statehood, and that cry became its shibboleth.³¹

The national administration boosted party development by conducting something of a purge in 1830-1831, egged on, apparently, by Reed in Washington and, in Detroit, by John P. and Thomas Sheldon, Sheldon McKnight, and other members of the Free Press group. Among the notables purged were Judges William Woodbridge, Henry Chipman, and James B. Witherell, all of whom later became Whigs. They were replaced, as Woodbridge complained, by a "batch of new party men."³²

³⁰ Letter of Ebenezer Reed, December 27, 1829, printed in Friend Palmer, Early Days in Detroit (Detroit: Hunt and June, 1906), pp. 325-27.

³¹ Woodbridge wrote of Cass in 1823: "He has organized a system of political machinery which few perhaps could have devised or could have maintained. A more consummate politician will rarely be found." Printed in Charles Lanman, The Life of William Woodbridge (Washington, 1867), pp. 45-46.

Harold M. Dorr, "Origin and Development of the Michigan Constitution of 1835: A Study of Constitution Making," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1933), p. 168. I am indebted to this fine dissertation. In some cases it suggested ideas which I have further explored. Some points at which I disagree with it will be discussed below.

³² Letters of E. Reed, January 24 and 26, 1830, printed in Palmer, Early Days, pp. 327-28. There are many references to the Witherell

The 1833 delegate election pushed ahead the trend to party politics. The election was the last fling of the Antimasons and National Republicans. The Antimasons nominated a National Republican, hoping to draw together a majority, but lost anyway. Both parties dropped out of political sight. The Democrats nominated Lucius Lyon and made support of him "the test of every man's faith and principles." They explicitly welcomed to their party only those who accepted all their principles. Their opponents, on various issues, had been trying to sound like Democrats, supporting Jackson's Nullification Proclamation, or opposing re-charter of the National Bank, but the Democrats wanted party lines to be drawn unmistakably.³³

removal in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, especially pp. 127-32, 138, 144-47. Quotation from William Woodbridge, Springwells, January 13, 1834, to Lewis Cass, Washington, D. C., Woodbridge MSS.

Among the batch of new party men came John Norvell to be post-master of Detroit. Many earlier scholars have believed that he was sent to organize the Democrats and that from the moment of his arrival he was the "leading architect" of the party. A letter from Andrew Mack, an original organizer, to Stevens T. Mason, then Territorial Secretary, December 18, 1833, shows that Norvell's role has been exaggerated. He was not even a member of the Central Committee, set up early in 1833, until December, and had not been trusted by all its members. See also Lucius Lyon's hostile description of him: Lucius Lyon, March 23, 1836, to E. D. Ellis, Monroe, Lyon Letters, MPHC, XXVII, 488.

For the "Norvell myth" see Streeter, p. 24; Dorr, "Origin Michigan Constitution," p. 233; and Buley, Old Northwest, II, 203-04.

³³Proceedings of the Convention are in the Lyon Letters, p. 448. For the Address, Courier, May 8, 1833, pp. 1-2.

The Convention established a Central Committee which was to seek support for their candidate and to make it clear that office-holding depended upon party loyalty. One critic said that the Committee intended to regulate "all appointments whether coming from the Executive of the United States or of the Territory, and have proclaimed to the world that no man can receive an office . . . without first receiving the sanction of the committee, and procuring from them an endorsement that he is a 'true Democrat dyed in the wool.'"³⁴

Lucius Lyon won the election and partisans such as Ebenezer Reed attributed the victory to organization on Jacksonian principles: "the cry was Jackson and Democracy--and I have no doubt our majority is much larger in consequence of our 'hanging out the Banner on the outer wall.'"³⁵

The Democrats apparently followed up their promise to base appointments on party loyalty and the Central Committee continued to extend its influence during the winter of 1833-1834, seeking to enlist "all true friends of the Cause of Democracy." Andrew Mack assured

³⁴Stevens T. Mason, Detroit, March 1, 1833, to John T. Mason, Mason MSS, BHC.

³⁵Reed extravagantly claimed: "There is no nook or corner of the Union where the Democratic Party is organized more generally or on a more permanent footing than it is now in Michigan." E. Reed, July 25, 1833, to Elijah Hayward, St. Joseph, in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 603-04.

Stevens T. Mason that the Committee's intent was "not mere party control, or the obtaining of office," but the realization of party principles. "Our objects are the extension and application of the principles of our party to our institutions, and to make them the basis of our contemplated state constitution."³⁶

There are many indications, despite the apparent and relative ease of Democratic organization, that antiparty feelings and resistance to party regularity obstructed Democratic organizers. Potential or active Democrats tended to have more general or secular antiparty attitudes which lacked the religious base of Antimasonic antipartyism. It seems to have been secular in tone and to have objected only to certain aspects of the party system (such as regular nominations), implying a de facto acceptance of the system.

The 1833 Democratic Convention itself implicitly testified to the presence of antiparty sentiment by sounding highly defensive about its actions. The first five resolutions which it passed and presented to the electorate were all designed to justify and rationalize party organization. "The character of our democratic republic, fellow citizens," it said, "for consistency, demands, and the best interests of Michigan, requires, the immediate, general and permanent organization of the democratic party

³⁶For a complaint about removal see Richard Butler, Mt. Clemens, Monroe, March 16, 1834, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS. Andrew Mack, Detroit, December 18, 1833, to Stevens T. Mason, Mason MSS.

(sic)." The 1837 State Democratic Convention, similarly, passed three resolutions out of a total of eight which emphasized the "necessity" and "resolve" of the Convention and all Democrats to maintain "an unyielding adherence to the support of regular nominations." The established "usages" of the party demanded, it said, that "every sectional, local, or personal prejudice or partiality" be submerged.³⁷

The sister of Michigan's first Democratic governor (Stevens T. Mason) complained in 1836 that candidates for office were no longer elected on the basis of merit, but needed only to belong to the "strongest party." The degree to which party feeling was being carried was a great evil, she said, and "It has already in a measure usurped the place of patriotism." The Democratic Young Men of Wayne County shared, to a point, Catherine Mason's misgivings. In July 1837 they agreed to support the Democracy's regular nominations, but with evident reluctance. They resolved to acquiesce in the "system" of regular nominations, "but at the same time do insist that competence, integrity of purpose, and purity of character are important considerations in choosing candidates."³⁸

A Democratic judge in 1839 blamed the "bitterness of party strife" for the

³⁷Randall, "Gubernatorial Platforms, Michigan, 1834-1864," pp. 12-13.

³⁸Catherine Mason, Troy, N. Y., November 27, 1836, S.T.M., Detroit, Mason MSS. Young Men's resolutions in Detroit Free Press, July 25, 1837, p. 2.

"melancholy spectacle . . . of counsel calculating upon the result of a trial, from knowledge of the political character of the litigants and jury."³⁹ All of these incidents suggest that while Democratic organizers were capable and eager politicoes, many of their potential supporters did not see the party as an unmixed blessing and it had to work to establish unswerving loyalty among its followers.

Democratic leaders, aware of resentment against unwarranted party intrusions, knew when to subordinate party to other considerations--at least in the area of lip-service. Thus, in the 1835 Constitutional Convention the unofficial leader of the Democratic majority, John Norvell, insisted that he had set aside all "mere party views" to consider only Michigan's interest. In the angriest exchange of the Convention he and the unofficial leader of the Whig minority, William Woodbridge, accused one another of bringing party spirit into the Convention.

A young Democratic friend of Woodbridge's, could concede the existence of evils such as election corruption and the evil "of party," but regarded them as "necessarily concomittant evils accompanying the thousand benefits we enjoy." Party organization, particularly, he said, could only be harmful if the people were not happy and contented.⁴⁰

³⁹ Charles W. Whipple, Pontiac, December 2, 1839, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

⁴⁰ Vincent L. Bradford, Niles, Michigan., October 23, 1838 to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

In 1833 young Stevens Mason, a Democrat and first governor of Michigan--elected by party vote in 1835 and 1837--criticized parties with gusto. In March he described the Ann Arbor Convention and its Central Committee:

The presumption of that little faction would almost provoke one if it were not that their assumption has made them ridiculous. The unfortunate people of Michigah have set over them a Regency more formidable than the famous Albany Regency itself, and have only to bow their heads to be trampled on by Andrew Mack, David C. McKinstry, John P. Sheldon, and Elliott Gray.

The . . . Convention has instituted these gentlemen . . . to regulate all appointments . . . [in accordance with party loyalty.]

'Tis said that governments are republican only in proportion as they embody the will of the people, and execute it; but if these gentlemen are to be our dictators, and their decisions in all cases (as they contend) should be the will of the people, deliver me from New York politics. I shall not say aught against them, for I firmly believe that the intelligence of the people, will always in time be found a panacea for every evil affecting their rights.⁴¹

Personal considerations probably influenced Mason's attitude.

He resented the Committee's intention to regulate him--he was Acting Governor--and the Convention had bypassed his friend Austin E. Wing, a National Republican incumbent whom Mason hoped would be reelected. By April, Mason still hoped for Wing's election, but his opinions regarding parties had undergone at least a revolution. William Woodbridge had accepted the Antimasonic nomination but not their platform. Mason thought that this candidacy would hurt Wing's chances and criticized Woodbridge's claim "to represent the people and not a party."

⁴¹Stevens T. Mason, Detroit, March 1, 1833, to John T. Mason, Mason MSS.

Mason called that "the language of an individual who means to represent anyone rather than those who elect him."

I am satisfied that parties must exist under our government; I would be the last to discourage party spirit when properly controlled. It is the surest plan of keeping people awake to their rights, and whenever I see a man declaiming against party spirit, and professing to be for the people alone, I always think that he is for slipping quietly along, serving his own interests, and flattering himself that no one can see it.⁴²

Mason now held attitudes more characteristic of Democratic organizers who, in their more sublime moments, no doubt engaged in similar rationalizations which transformed necessity into preference and power into principle.⁴³

Antimasons and Whigs, on the other hand, indulged in few comforting thoughts about parties. Woodbridge assumed a non-partisan role in 1833 partly because it was expedient and because he recognized the requirements of his political role. He was, unofficially, a National Republican who hoped to unite National Republican and Antimasonic votes. His non-partisan posture served more than his maneuvering. It was addressed particularly to Antimasons and to many Republicans who would be reassured by his claims, in accepting the nomination, that he had never been "the slave of any party," and that he would dislike being

⁴²Same to same, April 16, 1833, Mason MSS.

⁴³See Ostrogorski, who attributed the rise of parties to an "unhealthy politico-social condition," II, 66-67.

forced into office "by the mere operation of party."⁴⁴ Lucius Lyon could never have used such words in accepting the Democratic nomination.

In the major political events of the mid-1830's--the Constitutional Convention of 1835, the Conventions of Assent and Dissent in 1836, the Presidential election of 1836--the Democrats acted far more as a party than their opponents. This resulted partly from the Democrats holding power and being in a position to reward loyalty and punish disloyalty.

A good example of their ability to maneuver as a party came in 1836. In the early phases of a boundary dispute with Ohio the Democrats insisted that Michigan would not come into the Union without "the Toledo strip," which Ohio also claimed. The "Toledo War" of 1835-1836, although almost bloodless and largely farcial, engaged feelings of state honor and pride. By early 1836, however, many Michigan Democrats rightly believed that the national administration was going to support Ohio, which was a state in Congress with political influence Michigan did not have. During 1836 most Michigan Democrats changed from a states rights-no submission stand to a "submissionist" stand. The Whigs, who had been criticizing Democratic intransigence and bellicose posturing, mostly reversed themselves and took up the cry of states rights and no submission.

⁴⁴William Woodbridge, March 9, 1833, to John W. Davis, Woodbridge MSS.

By August the reversal of the Free Press and most local Democratic committees, amid defections, was complete. They charged Congress with outrageous violation of Michigan's rights, but said it was now irrational to insist on "recovery of Michigan's lost territory." Not all Democrats would swing into line, and so when a convention met in September, supposedly elected to agree to Congress' terms for admission, non-submitting Democrats combined with non-submitting Whigs to reject Congress' terms, 28-21, and earned the name of the "Convention of Dissent."

Although apparently defeated, the party bounced back and organized a second convention to get Michigan into the Union as quickly as possible. Wayne County's delegation to the September convention had cast eight unanimous votes on the submissionist side. In November the Wayne Democrats issued a call for the election of delegates to a new convention. Through other county committees and conventions election machinery was established, an election held, and the "Convention of Assent" met in December. This convention was virtually a creation of the Democratic Party. The opposition had collapsed, probably because most realized that submission was inevitable. The Convention of Dissent was a last act of defiance and probably provided a face-saving mechanism for any who still needed one. After that the party organization went to work.⁴⁵

⁴⁵This account is a summary of my reading of secondary and

And during the boundary dispute the Democrats had gained a potent vote-getter. Because he refused to obey Washington, Acting Governor Stevens Mason had been dismissed by Jackson. But Mason gathered a minature army, mounted his horse, and marched on the Ohio Boundary on an expedition that was mostly a picnic. The voters overwhelmingly elected him governor in 1835 (although Michigan was not a state), and legally reelected him in 1837.

The effectiveness of the party organization in the statehood m  l  e testifies to its strength and to the intensity of Democratic party loyalty, even though many other factors worked to Democratic advantage. It became characteristic of Democrats to regard loyalty to party as a virtue of great value, although party regularity was not established overnight. As late as 1837 and after, some Democrats rejected party nominations and supported irregulars. There are very few cases of this resulting in a loss for the Democratic candidate, because splitting Democratic ranks, as a Macomb County Whig observed in 1839, was "in opposition to all good rules in that party." In 1840 a meeting of Dearborn (Wayne County) Democrats showed just how much Democrats could value regularity by

primary sources, including Clark F. Norton, "Michigan Statehood: 1835, 1836, or 1837?" Michigan History, XXXVI, 4. (December, 1952), 321-50; Lyon Letters, pp. 482, 487, 486, 488; Free Press, 1835-1836, passim, particularly August 27 and 31, 1836, September 14, 17, and November 1, 15, and 17; and the Advertiser, July 12, 1836, July 15, August 1, 13, and October 1. Relevant letters in the Bagg MSS Film include Lucius Lyon, Washington, March 23, 1836, to John S. Bagg.

equating it with religious fidelity. Abandoning a party, it said, because of "alleged mistakes, misconduct or corruption," by those who professed its principles "is conduct unworthy of anyone who pretends to be a man and totally inconsistent with the dignity and responsibility of a freeman. Such a course can only find its parallel in the folly and wickedness of the person who would change his religion, in consequence of the delinquencies of the minister appointed to enforce its obligations."⁴⁶

Antimasons, Antiparty, and Whig Organization

Most Michigan Antimasons became Whigs after 1834. This hypothesis is based on my observation of the tendency of Antimasonic leaders to become Whigs and the tendency of strong Antimasonic towns in Wayne County to support the Whigs.

The editors of the Detroit Courier became Whigs, as did the editors of Washtenaw County's Antimasonic paper, the Ann Arbor

⁴⁶In a Justice election in Detroit, August 1837, the Democrat was beaten because two "irregulars" drew votes away. Free Press, August 4, 1837, p. 2. William Dusell, Macomb Co., July 8, 1839, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS. Dearborn meeting: Free Press, February 29, 1840, p. 2.

Ostrogorski, disliking parties, later used metaphors similar to that of the Dearborn Democrats: "The party became a sort of a church, which admitted no dissent and pitilessly excommunicated anyone who deviated a hair's breath from the established ritual and dogma." II, 75-79.

Western Emigrant.⁴⁷ I found a list of 28 Wayne County Antimasonic leaders from different towns who were appointed to committees of correspondence in 1833. Checking on their later party affiliations by using lists of Whig and Democratic "actives" published in the newspapers, 1835-1837, I was able to identify 18 of the 28: 17 had become Whigs; 1 a Democrat.⁴⁸ Another Antimason who became a Whig, according to the Free Press, was Philo C. Fuller, the Whig candidate for governor in 1841. The Democratic paper said that Fuller had been an Antimason from the "infected districts" of New York and had been elected by the Antis to Congress.⁴⁹

A comparison of the voting of Wayne County towns in 1833 and in 1837-1839 suggests that most Antimasonic voters there later voted for the Whigs. Those towns which gave most votes to the Antimasons

⁴⁷John Allen, Samuel Dexter, and George Corselius were the Ann Arbor editors. See MPHC, I, 388; and Lawton T. Hemans, Life and Times of Stevens Thomson Mason; the Boy Governor of Michigan (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1920), p. 65.

⁴⁸Antimasonic List: Courier, April 10, 1833, p. 2. Whig lists: Journal and Courier, January 21, 1835, p. 2, March 5, p. 1, February 18, p. 1; Advertiser, October 25, 1836, p. 2. Democratic lists: Free Press, August 21, 1836, October 19, p. 2, November 1, p. 2, November 6, 1837, p. 2, October 14, p. 2, July 25, p. 2, October 11, p. 2, August 14, p. 2, September 20, October 12, p. 2.

⁴⁹Free Press, October 1, 1841, p. 1. The Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949 (United State Government Printing Office, 1950), said that Fuller was elected to Congress in 1833 as a "Whig," p. 1187.

in 1833 were Whig strongholds in the late 1830's. Plymouth and Springwells both received a comparatively large number of Antimasonic votes which amounted to a large percentage of their totals.

TABLE 25

WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS WITH SIGNIFICANT ANTIMASONIC VOTE,
1833, AND WHIG VOTE, 1837-1838

	<u>Antimasonic Vote 1833</u>		<u>Whig %</u>	
	No.	%	1837	1838
Detroit	116	34		
Plymouth	89	61.8	58.5	59.6
Springwells	26	56.5	71.3	79.7
Hamtramck	23	21.4		

In Detroit and Hamtramck the Antimasonic percentage was low. Detroit was fairly evenly divided between the parties in 1837 and 1837, and Hamtramck was heavily Democratic. Plymouth never gave the Democrats a high percent of its vote and Springwells was strongly Whig until the mid 40's.

One reason Antimasons were less likely to become Democrats was that, as elsewhere (see above), Michigan Masons and Democrats seemed to be closely associated. Lewis Cass, Michigan's foremost

Democrat, had been a Mason since 1816 and was first Grand Master of the Michigan Lodge formed in 1827. Lucius Lyon, support of whom in 1833 the Democrats made a test of party loyalty, was also a Mason. During the campaign he refused to repudiate the Order and the Antis took his silence as proof of Masonic sympathies. It was Cass who, as a result of the "excitement," recommended the indefinite suspension of Masonry in Michigan.⁵⁰

The National Republican and Antimasonic parties did not formally disband after 1833, as far as I can tell, but that campaign was apparently the last significant political activity for either party in Michigan. Both were dormant or dead when news of the new Whig Party's surprising victory in the spring elections of 1834 in New York city came to Michigan. National Republican leaders seem to have become both Whigs and Democrats as did National Republican voters, but it is very difficult to say in what proportions.

Tentative Whig organization did not begin in Wayne County or Michigan until late in 1834, and effective, permanent organization did not begin until 1837. The Democrats' firm grasp of power in the state would have put the organization of any opposition under a handicap. Whig organization was particularly difficult because many potential Whig leaders and followers, especially evangelized Protestants, resisted the idea

⁵⁰ Lou B. Winsor, "Masonry in Michigan," Michigan History, XX (Autumn, 1936), pp. 287-89. Courier, 1833, passim. MPHC, XXVII, 410, on Lyon.

of party and the need to organize. Most of the members of the evangelical wing of the Whig party were, at best, reluctant members of a political party. The many manifestations of antipartyism by the Whig Party in Wayne County and in the state in the late 1830's testified to the prominent influence of evangelicalism in the origin and shaping of the party.

The course of the Detroit Courier between 1833 and 1835 illustrated how evangelicals both resisted and accommodated themselves to party organization. In 1833 the Courier propagated Protestantism and the puritanical code. It advised its readers, for example, to shun intemperance, keep the Sabbath, and avoid the theater, that "sink of vice (sic)." (Significantly, a prominent Democrat, David C. McKinstry, opened the first theater in Detroit in 1833.) The Courier had warred upon Masons, occasionally baited Catholics, and had abhorred parties and Democrats. Gradually, however, it sacrificed its hatred of parties to its hatred of Democrats. Gradually its evangelicalism and anti-Catholicism became sublimated or muted. The Courier's secularization paralleled its preparation to embrace the Whig Party.

Early in 1834 it still clung to its motto that "principles not party or persons" were its "guiding star." Religious and reform news still dominated the paper. Gradually such items decreased. By July a correspondent complained that the Courier was giving too much attention

to politics and too little to religion. Finally, on September 24 editor Franklin Sawyer, Jr., announced that "whigism" was a "venerable cause bounding onwards in its career with a rapidity that thrills its advocates to the very heart's core," and the marriage was complete. Sawyer called for "efficient organization" and in October he branded "political indifference" as the "crying sin of the day."

Yet Sawyer had not yet shaken off his own distaste for organization:

Opposed as we are to the drilling tactics of Toryism, the truth is no longer to be disguised that without a systematic effort on the part of its foes, the cause of republicanism (sic) must soon yield to . . . arbitrary power. . . . Organization cannot begin too soon.⁵¹

At best then, Sawyer thought parties a necessary evil.

In January 1835 Courier editor Charles Cleland warned, after organization had begun in earnest, of the dangers attending parties. Their main danger, he wrote, was that they soon considered "the success of the party as more important than the causes or issues over which they first arose."⁵²

By January of 1835 the Courier's editors had reluctantly accepted party organization--but not George Corselius, editor of the

⁵¹Courier, February 19, 1834, p. 2; September 24, October 8, p. 2, and November 19, p. 2.

⁵²Courier, January 7, 1835, p. 2.

Ann Arbor Michigan Whig, formerly an editor of the Antimasonic Western Emigrant. In January Corselius still thundered against "Party Discipline" and "counter organization" as unnecessary evils. He argued that one party organization could not exist unless another was arraigned against it. Organization had been the greatest error of the New York Whigs. If they had discarded the "contemptible trickery of party management" and trusted in the people, the Democrats would have collapsed of their own weight. Corselius advocated the mechanism of "people met in primary assemblies" rather than "men working in the collars." All parties smacked of "Van Buren politics . . . a gigantic system of slavery and corruption." They suppressed dissent as heresy and demanded unthinking submission by individuals.⁵³

Antiparty sentiment in Washtenaw County was not confined to Corselius. In January 1835 Washtenaw Whigs called for a meeting to oppose the "arbitrary, intolerant and uncompromising course of those with whom party is all, the Common Weal nothing," and to oppose "the disposition to impose the odious collars of an odious political discipline on Freemen." In 1837 the Washtenaw County Whig Address attacked the principle of party organization and said that the alternative for the electorate was Whig "liberty of Freemen" versus Democratic "slavery of party."⁵⁴

⁵³ Ann Arbor Michigan Whig, January 15, 1835, p. 2, Michigan Historical Collections.

⁵⁴ W. T. Groves (ed.), "The Whigs of Washtenaw, 1835," MS,

During 1835 in Detroit the Advertiser became the successor to the Courier (Antimasonic-Whig) and the Journal and Courier (National Republican-Whig) as the major journalistic opponent of the Democrats. Although committed early to Wiggery, the Advertiser occasionally revealed that hostility to parties and "party usages" so characteristic of Michigan Whigs. In October 1836 an anonymous contributor suggested that all good men band together to keep parties honest and argued that party division was an irrational method of coping with public issues. He attacked the Democrats for placing party loyalty above other loyalties and for blindly adhering to party dogma. This antiparty essay contained tinges of anti-Catholicism, Antimasonry, and nativism. The author implied that the Democratic abdication of private judgment was foreign and un-American and closed by observing that if the Democrats put "Old Nick" on their party ticket, their followers would support him.⁵⁵

The 1837 Whig State Address devoted more than half of its attention to an attack on Jacksonian party organization as such. While criticizing specific Democratic usages such as the spoils system, it attacked also such general attributes of parties as "compactness" and centralized authority.⁵⁶

BHC. Ann Arbor State Journal, October 26, 1837, pp. 2-3, Michigan Historical Collection. It was, of course, very likely that Corselius wrote both of these documents. It seems reasonable to assume that most of his Whig friends shared his sentiments and approved of his manner of expressing them.

⁵⁵Advertiser, September 12, 1836, October 21, p. 2, and 22, p.2.

⁵⁶Advertiser, August 17, 1837. I have been impressed by an anti-political strain that seems to have been characteristic of Whig leaders. James F.

Antiparty and antipolitical feeling, with the assistance of the Ohio boundary dispute and Whig lack of power, helped prevent effective Whig organization before 1837. In April 1835 Whigs created a rudimentary organization in contesting the election of delegates to the Constitutional Convention. It disappeared after the election. In the fall 1835 election of state officials the opposition to the Democrats made their nominations on a non-partisan basis. They did not involve "the spirit of party," they said, but had tried to select men "without regard to party, men who had not made a business of politics, and who, if left to their own choice, would prefer remaining in the walks of private life."⁵⁷

The Whigs seemed moribund during 1836. Charles Cleland asked William Woodbridge

Where are the Whigs! We sicken o'er the question can be answered. If indeed there still exists two parties among us, I can only say, I am ashamed of the one, and disgusted with the other.⁵⁸

Joy said that his father had warned him to avoid two things in life: debt and politics. In 1838, Joy, a Whig organizer, said privately that he detested "Politicians' Politics." Beckman, "James F. Joy and the Joy Roads," Chapter 1. Another Whig leader, Jacob Howard, as he became involved in politics in the 1830's called it "most detestable garbage." Holderreid, "Jacob Merritt Howard," p. 26.

⁵⁷ Detroit Journal and Advertiser, September 29, 1835, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Charles Cleland, Detroit, July 26, 1836, to William Woodbridge, Springwells, Woodbridge MSS.

In the 1836 Presidential election the opposition billed itself as a States Rights Party, hoping to capitalize on the Democratic about face on the Ohio boundary. After the Democratic victory one Whig paper claimed that no electors had voted "as Whigs" but that the issue had been between the Democrats and a "genuine states rights party."⁵⁹

As late as April 26, 1837, Whig partisans lamented that "no regular Whig organization" existed and called again for a party.

Shortly thereafter Whigs organized, all the while criticizing parties and denouncing Democrats for having such a things as a party. Whigs claimed to be a people's movement and not a party. In time such claims disappeared. Yet even after the party had been in existence a decade, and had acquired traditions, loyalties, "moral constraints," and all the practices and hunger for success of its opponents, anti-partyism survived.

Even after the pitched party battles of 1840 and 1844 one Whig could still write that he believed party distinctions "in great measure but a name." And William Woodbridge continued to give speeches in which he asked voters to support the Whig Party while decrying the very idea of party. In 1844 he observed that angry parties cut up and distracted the country, presenting different measures and policies to the voters who must choose between them.

⁵⁹ Journal and Courier, November 12, 1836, p. 2, December 6, p. 1.

I do not attempt to screen the fact from anyone; that my Party associations are and have been principally with that Party called Whigs: but yet, I have always deemed it to be my duty, to strive at least to rescue myself from the enslaving prejudices of Party as to leave my mind free to act for the best interest of the Country. . . . A philosopher . . . long ago said that 'Party is the madness of the many, for the gain of the Few!'⁶⁰

Whigs could still feel themselves involved temporarily in a necessary evil and could still feel morally superior to their opponents. In 1849 a Whig editor, Rufus Hosmer, showed the moral detachment with which Whigs could still view their party in a self-flattering post-mortem on the disastrous Whig showing in the state election. Hosmer attributed the Whig defeat to many Whigs balking at the party's gubernatorial candidate

. . . the body of the Whig party he said can never be driven into the support of an unpalatable nomination by the mere force of party discipline. The character of the party is such that no organization however perfect can serve to keep it in the traces, unless the nominations are acceptable.

Our opponents are differently constituted, or to say the least, they possess in their ranks fewer of that class of independent men who vote, or refuse to, less upon the dictation of party leaders, than upon the convictions of their reason and the dictates of their own judgment.⁶¹

⁶⁰John J. Abbott, Detroit, December 25, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS. MS dated 1844 in Woodbridge MSS. Woodbridge's image of being above considerations "of a mere party character" appear to have been a key element of his popularity among Whigs. J. M. Edmunds, Ypsilanti, October 3, 1844, to W. W., Woodbridge MSS.

⁶¹Advertiser, November 9, 1849, p. 2. On Whig organization, see "Circular," June 28, 1837, MS, BHC.

In the late thirties the paradox of continuing Whig antagonism to party in the midst of party-making was due to a complex of motives and conditions. Some Whig leaders and editors probably felt a personal need for self-justification, to quiet their own doubts and guilt. They wanted, too, no doubt, to reassure their evangelistic followers that they could use and vote for a political party and remain uncontaminated by its "baneful effects." Some wanted, certainly, to exploit the general antiparty feeling, both secular and pious, to Whig advantage, relying, perhaps, on the electorate's recognition of the Democrats as the party of the politicians par excellence.

The Nature of Antiparty Sentiment

Considerable hostility to party organization existed in the 1830's and to the very idea of a "party." It seemed to suggest to many a failure of society and government, a lack of harmony and social accord. Its foes thought a party to be an unnatural and unnecessary growth on the socio-political order. Many persons, like the framers of the American constitution, did not foresee the rise of the party or considered it "an extra constitutional excrescence. . . . In either case the political party appeared as an unplanned adjunct to the formal political institutions and processes."⁶²

⁶² Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System, p. 135.

In the 1830's citizens saw less separation between government and society than is seen today. They thought, ideally, that government and society should possess an organic unity. That government was a necessary evil was an assumption shared by men of very different political persuasions. Party organization seemed a deliberate contradiction and mockery of the idea that government existed to promote the common weal and by suffrage of the commonality. Party suggested the promotion of the particular, of the artificial and selfish, which was unnatural and unconsitutional in a broad non-legal sense as well as in a legal sense.

Secular antiparty attitudes such as the above were shared by many different kinds of persons. The most significant antipartyism, however, existed among evangelized Protestants, persons concerned with leading a pious life, with spreading moral reform and the gospel, and who were prone to revivals. Their hostility to parties was influenced primarily by their heritage of "left-wing Protestantism," i.e., Puritanism, piety, and revivalism. To evangelicals the word "party," in a religious context, had long had a pejorative meaning similar to that attached to "sect." In the 17th and 18th centuries revivalists used the word to refer to artificial, unnatural distinctions that existed within the universal Christian Church. One minister, for example, warned against "this wretched, mischievous spirit of party" and

exhorted his listeners to labor to be Christians above all else.⁶³

A student of Northern Evangelicals in the ante-bellum period has seen a "profound distrust for the major political parties among the ministry and their devoted followers." Francis Wayland of Brown University, for example, decried the "utter worthlessness of party distinctions."⁶⁴

To many evangelicals, "party" in politics came to mean the equivalent of Romanism in religion, *i.e.*, submission of individual reason and conscience to a central interpreter of dogma. Just before the American Revolution Edmund Burke had attributed the American colonists' "fierce spirit of liberty" to their English heritage and to their being "Protestants . . . of that kind which is the most averse to all implicit subjection of mind and opinion."⁶⁵ Evangelicals saw parties demanding that "implicit subjection of mind and opinion" in politics. They opposed Masonry partly because they saw it demanding the same kind of subjection. Horace Bushnell, the famous Protestant clergyman, expressed succinctly the evangelical attitude to party discipline and regularity.

I do not complain that we have parties. . . . But in the name of God and all that is sacred, I protest against the doctrine that every

⁶³Winthrop S. Hudson, American Protestantism, (ed.), Daniel J. Boorstin, The Chicago History of American Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 45-47.

⁶⁴Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p. 153.

⁶⁵Quoted in Hudson, American Protestantism, p. 3.

man shall do what his party appoints and justify what his party does.⁶⁶

According to Charles C. Cole, Jr., Bushnell gave to parties his "choicest condemnation" when he said: "It is the worst form of Papacy ever invented."

It is not accidental that at least since the 1830's it has been common to hear religious metaphors in reference to party politics. Phrases such as "political church," "party dogma," political or party "faith," have long been almost household words. They suggest partly that men hold political beliefs about as intensely as they hold religious beliefs. Today such words usually lack a pejorative meaning. Not so with the evangelicals in the 1830's and 1840's. The religious metaphors meant to them what they meant when they applied them to Catholicism or Masonry. Masonry, for example, in presuming to be a substitute religion, imposed duties on the individual superseding all other duties. Likewise, to evangelicals, the "political church" imposed loyalties superseding those of conscience and religion. A political party presumed to mediate between the individual and his conscience, and thus interfered between the individual and God.

Evangelicals placed great value on open persuasion as a means of gaining adherents to the evangelical churches. Because denominations competed with one another after the Revolution in a context of

⁶⁶Cole, p.153.

religious freedom, the evangelical churches bent their most strenuous efforts to gain, according to Dr. Sidney Mead, "the free uncoerced consent of the individual." Revivals came to be the chief means of open persuasion used by the evangelical churches.⁶⁷ In evangelical eyes parties took on a sinister aspect because they, like Catholicism and Masonry, did not seem to rely upon open persuasion but rather entrapped and deluded their followers with secrecy, ritual, magical and other devices. Insidiously they gained not the individual's "free uncoerced consent" but his submission.⁶⁸

Party regularity is based in part on compromise. Individuals within the party displeased with a position or candidate favored by the party's majority will usually support that position or candidate in the hope that their preferences will eventually come to the fore, and the majority often makes concessions to minority positions or candidates to insure party unity. Evangelicals in rejecting parties as such or accepting them as a necessary evil naturally tended to reject the strategies and rationales of compromise in politics. They tended to regard a choice between two evils as no choice. Largely for this reason revivalist Charles G. Finney said that "No man can be an honest man, that is committed to a political party." Finney urged his followers,

⁶⁷Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," Church History, XXIII, 4 (December, 1954), 299.

⁶⁸Davis's "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion" has been suggestive.

should they be confronted with a choice between two evils, to make no choice. Perhaps it was because he was confronted with a choice between two evils that a pious Detroit carpenter refused to vote in the city election of 1832 and recorded in his diary: "I'll none of sin." ⁶⁹

Effects of Antiparty Sentiment

Antiparty sentiment obstructed party organization in Michigan and particularly Whig organization. Michigan Whiggery, absorbing the Antimasonic Party, inherited its tradition (less intensely) of being an antiparty party. There is evidence suggesting that antipartyism was not unique with Michigan Whiggery. A study of the emergence of the Whigs in four Northern states--New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Massachusetts--concluded, as have most historians, that the Antimasons went mostly into the Whig Party.⁷⁰ The study also showed that Whig organization in the four states emerged as hesitantly and

⁶⁹ Cole, p. 152. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism; Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), p. 117. Fred Landon (ed.), "Extracts from the Diary of William C. King, A Detroit Carpenter, in 1832," Michigan History, XIX (Winter, 1935), 67.

⁷⁰ John Julius Reed, "The Emergence of the Whig Party in the North: Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1953). Reed said that while Antimasonry was a "minor element" in Ohio, it was of "fundamental importance" in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, where it produced "outstanding leaders" who became Whigs "as well as a wing of that party [Whig] which constituted its 'radical' wing

as falteringly as Whig organization in Michigan, if not more so in some cases. The New York Whigs, for example, were an "amorphous" group, and the Pennsylvania Whigs chronically "lacked effective organization." In his conclusions the author, John Julius Reed, chided the Whigs for failing to appreciate the value of "Organization, leadership, and political know-how."⁷¹ But there was much in Reed's dissertation to suggest that Whigs in the four states, like Michigan Whigs, may have devalued organization and political know-how and also resisted the political party as a necessary evil. There was also much evidence showing that they lacked the capacity to compromise.

In Michigan, antipartyism helps explain why more Whigs were disposed to non-voting than Democrats. We saw earlier the tremendous drop-off in Whig voting that occurred between 1840 and 1841 and attributed this partly to the impact of the Liberty Party and partly to conditions inducing cross-pressures or apathy among Whigs. The record of election returns, year by year, from 1840 to 1852, shows a chronic Whig disposition to fall far behind the Democrats in turnout in non-presidential years, and particularly in the odd-year gubernatorial elections which were held

as long as the Whigs endured." p. 33. Ludlum estimated that two-thirds of the Antimasons in Vermont became Whigs. Whiggery was strong in counties prone to revivalism and abolition. Social Ferment, pp. 118, 126, 130-32.

⁷¹Ibid., (N.Y.), p. 142' (Pa.), p. 348; (conclusion), pp. 486-87; (Mass.), p. 190; (Ohio), pp. 247-48, 376; and pp. 126-376, passim.

in 1841, 1843, 1845, 1847, 1849, and 1851. Surveying Whig defeats in Wayne County in 1841 and 1842 the Detroit Advertiser said it was impossible to secure a rally of the Whigs unless in a national contest. It attributed Whig apathy mainly to Tyler's treachery: "So strong is their sense of treachery, and so deep their resentment, that many of them utterly refuse to take any further part in political action." Again looking at election returns in Wayne County in 1843 the Advertiser said "the Whigs have staid (sic) at home." And in 1845 anticipating a low turnout in the fall election the Whig paper noted that "the Whigs are usually the largest losers at such times."⁷²

⁷²Advertiser, November 14, 1842, p. 2; November 16, 1843, p. 2; November 5, 1845, p. 2.

TABLE 26

VOTES CAST FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND TOTAL VOTE,
WAYNE COUNTY, 1840-1852

Year	Office	Democrat	Whig	Liberal	Total ⁺
1840	President	2,237	2,246	23	4,506
1841	Govenor	2,242	1,346	130	3,718
1842	State Senator	2,044	1,309	127	3,480
1843	Govenor	2,114	1,560	130	3,818
1844	President	2,737	2,345	192	5,274
1845	Govenor	1,761	1,519	205	3,523
1846	Congress	2,201	1,744	146	4,200
1857	Govenor	2,043	1,464	110	3,614
1848	President	3,308	2,544	420	6,272
1849	Govenor	2,349	1,694		4,056
1850	Congress	2,963	2,876		5,853
1851	Govenor	2,693	1,418		4,121
1852	President	4,680	3,407	368	8,455

⁺Discrepancies exist because the small number of scattered votes are not given.

The performance of Whigs and Democrats in Wayne County in non-presidential years shows unmistakably that Democratic party loyalty was far stronger than Whig party loyalty. The evangelical origins of the Whig Party and the persistence of antiparty feeling help us to understand why Whigs, who tended to place much less value on political parties than Democrats, "staid at home" more often than Democrats.

CHAPTER VI

THE PARTIES AND ALIEN VOTING IN THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS OF 1835 AND 1850

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The Convention of 1835

In the winter of 1834-1835 Whigs organized hastily to contest the election of delegates to a Constitutional Convention. Then they fell back into disarray and virtually disappeared until 1837. What called forth the effort of 1834-1835 in which Whigs roused themselves to such unusual effort? Why did Whigs then act as if a crisis were at hand?

Michigan Whigs tried in their initial burst of party activity to gain influence in making the new constitution. Above all, they hoped to prevent Democrats from giving aliens or non-citizens the right to vote, which the Democrats seemed to be preparing to do. The Legislative Council had enfranchised all inhabitants, including aliens, for the election of delegates. If the Democrats elected a majority of the delegates it seemed certain that they would write alien voting into the new constitution. With foreign born Catholics steadily coming into Michigan, the Whigs--especially the evangelistic and nativistic Whigs--saw alien voting as a threat to social stability and governmental integrity.

The skeleton Whig Party of 1835 was formed by persons who feared for the cultural homogeneity which they thought should underlie society and government. Early Whig leaders tended to regard New England Protestant culture as the model on which all non-Yankee Protestants should shape themselves. To Whigs, assimilation usually meant conformity to Yankee Protestant ethics. Unassimilated elements were in their eyes unfit to discharge the duties of a responsible citizen. All of the early Whigs did not share these attitudes and the party in later years did not voice them as openly as it did in 1834-1836, but they remained the attitudes of a sizeable faction and exerted great influence on the party's character and style.

In the 1835 Constitutional Convention the delegates divided most sharply and debated longest over the issue of alien voting. More than any other this issue split Whigs and Democrats and, significantly, Democrats themselves. No other issue engaged the delegates' time or emotions on the same scale. The Whigs had elected only a small minority of the delegates, but that minority hurled itself against alien voting as if it had battalions behind it.

1. Historial Background.

The Democratic Party organized after 1832 around the objective of statehood. The desire to form the new state government on Democratic principles and the desire to enjoy power in the new government

had a stimulating effect on Democratic organization.¹

The Legislative Council had called a special election in 1832 on the statehood question and drastically changed the suffrage qualification by framing "the most liberal suffrage clause yet known in the states," enfranchising every "inhabitant." Since 1819 voters had been "citizens of Michigan Territory" who were "free, white, male citizens" above 21 years of age, one year's residents preceding the election, and payers of a county or territorial tax. "Inhabitants" included all non-citizens and non-tax payers--even non-residents. Only 3007 men voted, however, casting a 627 majority for statehood. Governor George F. Porter, who thought statehood premature, pointed out that in the 1831 election "although none but qualified electors" had been eligible, 4,435 votes were cast. He recommended that the question be resubmitted, thus splitting with the Democrats advocating immediate statehood. Porter died in 1834 and a statehood-inclined Stevens T. Mason became Acting Governor. In the summer of 1834 Congress failed to pass an enabling act for Michigan, and Mason and most Democrats impatiently began to insist on Michigan's right to become a state. They prepared to make a constitution without Congressional authorization.²

¹Dorr, "Origin of 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 224-29.

²Act of February 16, 1819, Laws of the Territory of Michigan, 1833 (Detroit: Sheldon M'Knight, 1833), pp. 35-36. Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 182-184-87, 201.

Up to this point the opposition, even the Detroit Courier, had approved of the push for statehood, but it soon began to suspect, and rightly, that the Democrats intended to have delegates elected to a convention with all "inhabitants" voting. The enabling act which had failed in Congress would have provided that the electorate be restricted to citizens and that the constitution be submitted to the people for ratification. The Democrats initially intended doing neither of these things. The Whigs charged that they welcomed, and probably connived at, the defeat of the enabling act so that they could write their own rules for making Michigan a state. The Democratic plan to enfranchise non-citizens "had upon the Whigs the same stimulating effects as the statehood issue had had earlier upon the Democrats,"³ and provoked the Whigs into organizing a party late in 1834.

Earlier in 1834 incipient Whigs had made tentative moves toward organizing. In March "A Republican" called upon all "genuine republicans" to counter organize against the Democrats. A meeting in Detroit on April 4, claiming to speak for "the merchant, mechanic, farmer, and common laborer," protested Jackson's removal of the public deposits

³Dorr, pp. 205-12; 234. I disagree with the Democratic plot thesis because Democratic actions were not as well calculated or uniform as Dorr assumes, and there was internal division in the party, best documented in the Lyon Letters.

The suffrage scheme, said Dorr, was the key to Democratic actions, because it would enfranchise "later settlers, the unpropertied classes, and the foreign element," who would vote Democratic, p. 211. Dorr nowhere shows that these groups voted Democratic.

from the Bank of the United States.⁴ However, when the Whig banner first flew in its own right in Detroit, on December 18, the Bank War was not mentioned, except by implication. The Whigs condemned President Jackson's "arbitrary policies" and Michigan's "Tories" for introducing party spirit and machinery into Michigan life. The Resolutions and Address were full of antiparty spirit. The Address called the Democratic spoils system "this stupendous system of corruption" which had been "transplanted from the state of New York where it had long flourished under . . . the Albany Regency." Michigan's Legislative Council was merely a creature of the Regency and "this odious party machinery" was now preparing to make a constitution for the people of Michigan.⁵

The Address welcomed "newcomers" who came seeking a new home and "honest pursuit of useful industry," then added: "but we have no use for Tory principles nor political managers and no use for the tactics of the 'spoils' party." The linking of "newcomers" with "Tory tactics" meant that the Whigs had no use for the enfranchisement of newly arrived immigrants. References to corruption in New York held

⁴Courier, March 5, 1834, p. 2; April 2, p. 2. Journal and Michigan Advertiser, April 9, 1834. Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, p. 6.

⁵Broadside, "Resolutions of Whig Meeting, 1834, December 18, an Address of the Detroit General Whig Committee," MS, BHC; also printed in Journal and Michigan Advertiser, December 24, 1834.

special meaning since most of Michigan's native population had come from New York. Many Whigs believed that New York political life had been ruined by immigrants. Philip Hone, a New York Whig, noted in his diary in 1834: "These Irishmen, strangers among us, without a feeling of patriotism, or affection in common with American citizens, decide the elections in the city of New York."⁶

Hone's thoughts were echoed by another New York city Whig in a letter to William Woodbridge, as the latter was emerging as one of Michigan's leading Whigs. Elihu White told Woodbridge that the New York Whigs were all in low spirits because the Tories had thrashed them in the last election, with the result that

we in this city have got to submit to be ruled by the dregs and outcasts of Ireland. Men who know not a letter of the alphabet, who have been in the country 1 mo. or 6 days . . . decide who shall represent us in Congress. The name of illegible or any other preacher of infidelity . . . is given to them, and for this they will vote and no other, and if the poor devil cannot vote honestly, he will for a dollar perjure himself to oblige the party, and then make confession to his priest and get absolution. . . . These men are increasing in us at the rate of 3 to 400 per year.⁷

Considerations such as these may have led a Michigan Whig to tell Woodbridge that he thought constitution making "not very important"

⁶Quoted in Dixon Ryan Fox, Decline of Aristocracy, p. 375 n.

⁷Elihu White, New York, November 8, 1834, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

except that "the qualification of the electors is I think of vast moment, a pivot on which the whole turns."⁸

Concern for institutional purity and cultural homogeneity mingled with dislike and fear of Catholics in Whig feelings. The Democrats charged that at their December 18 meeting Whigs insulted Catholics and a formal protest was made to Detroit's Catholic Bishop Res . The Whigs denied the charge, but it is very likely that some of them were given to Catholic baiting. The ornamental chairman of the meeting was James B. Witherell, who, as Territorial Judge, had caused the jailing of the well-known French priest Father Gabriel Richard in 1824. Up to 1824 judges friendly to Richard and the French habitants had prevented a lawsuit brought against Richard by an excommunicated parishioner from doing Richard any damage. Changes on the court, however, allowed Witherell, who "had always been ready to convict," to find against the priest. The plaintiff in the case assigned the money awarded him to his debtors, and they hounded Richard until his death in 1832.⁹

An incident in the 1835 Convention showed that anti-Catholicism and resistance to it had become a strong current in Michigan politics. Some delegates favored adding a clause to the section in the bill of rights

⁸Simon Perkins, November 26, 1834, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

⁹There is an account of the case in an excellent book, George Par , The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888 (Detroit, 1951), pp. 347-51. (On Witherell removal, see Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 127-32, 138, 141-55, 159-69, 171-72.)

on liberty of conscience providing that it "not be construed to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state." Delegate Alpheus White, a Democrat and a Catholic from Wayne, charged that the amendment was anti-Catholic. He said that the newspapers bulged with accusations against the Catholics similar to the terms of the amendment and that a group of Protestant clergymen had just met and proclaimed that Catholicism was a danger to public safety. The amendment's supporters denied that it was anti-Catholic, but withdrew it.

Whatever the delegates' intent, the Whig Journal and Courier left no doubt as to why it wanted the law. Without such protection, it said, all sorts of religious exotica could be free to come to Michigan: Hindus, Mormons, "Bacanalians revels [sic]" and, --getting to the point,-- "Convents with all their impurities, priests with all their power to do evil may exert an influence destructive to the public virtue." The Journal would have been hard put to show that hordes of Hindus and Mormons were poised on Michigan's borders awaiting the failure of the "peace and safety" clause to plunge forward. Catholics, however, were already numerous and increasing every day.¹⁰

¹⁰Harold M. Dorr (ed.), The Michigan Constitutional Conventions of 1835-36: Debates and Proceedings (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940), p. 278 (hereafter as Debates). Journal and Courier, July 29, 1835. Dorr, "Origin of 1835 Michigan Constitution," p. 291.

After the December 1834 meeting Whig organization spread through Wayne and Washtenaw Counties and the outstate area. Woodbridge thought that "appearances are exciting and encouraging" but recognized that Whigs needed to draw strength "from among Jackson men."¹¹

While Whigs did not succeed in luring many Jacksonians, resistance to alien voting developed within the Democratic ranks. During the January 1835 meeting of the Legislative Council the Democrats divided over election and convention procedure. Some Democrats held out for greater restrictions on the suffrage and gained some concessions: inhabitants had to be 3 month residents, only citizens could be delegates, and the delegates were directed not to adopt the constitution but were to decide whether to submit it for ratification or not. Democratic Judge Doty had been one of the creators of the compromise bill which passed on January 26, 1835, and it became known as the "Doty Bill."¹²

The bill disgusted Whigs as did its passage as a party measure. One Whig said that "the scenes which I daily witness of devotion to party at the expense of truth, honor and honesty induces me to believe

¹¹William Woodbridge, January 5, 1835, to Henry T. Backus, Woodbridge MSS. Lewis Allen, Sharon, Michigan, January 9, to John Allen, and H. Wright, Saline, Michigan, January 29, 1835 to John Allen, John Allen MSS, BHC.

¹²Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 216, 234-35. Other supporters of the bill were McDonnell, Martin, Stockton, Farnsworth, Britain, Durocher, and Hascall.

that we cannot long continue to enjoy the privileges of a free government." The Democratic Party was destitute of talent and "the weight of argument is against them."

Their only hope is founded upon the provision of the /Doty/ bill. . . giving to foreigners . . . the privileges of voting away the rights of American citizens trusting that in this manner they will be enabled to bring into the field their usual and to (sic) commonly successful arguments viz Bribery and Corruption. They have been busily engaged in this City previous to the passage of the Bill and up to the present time in feeding the hungry and giving bread to the thirsty (I mean strong drink) not by any means cold water indeed their conduct has been so marked in that particular that a Irishman was heard to exclaim he could not understand what he had done to make him so great a man. . . .¹³

Whigs throughout the territory criticized the Doty Bill because, as the Niles Weekly Register put it, "foreigners, whether they have renounced allegiance to foreign powers or not, are thus placed on a par with native Americans."¹⁴ That ominous reference to "allegiance to foreign powers" undoubtedly included allegiance to the Roman Pope as well as any foreign state.

The prospect of alien voting was the major consideration prompting Whigs to organize in the towns of Wayne County. In Springwells, Whigs drew up a set of resolutions devoted almost entirely to setting

¹³G. Kinwiocck, Detroit, February 5, 1835, to John Allen, John Allen MSS.

¹⁴Quoted in Dorr, "Origin," p. 212. For the opinion of the Ann Arbor Michigan Whig, ibid., p. 217, n.1. The Democratic Ann Arbor Argus, MHC, is filled with material on Whig nativism.

forth the injuries done to American freemen by alien voting. Those who were "strangers to . . . Nation and People" and to American principles possessed not right in justice or nature to meddle in making fundamental law. It was "the Citizens only, either by birth or by naturalization," who had such a right. William Woodbridge, who lived in Springwells, probably wrote the resolutions.

The Whigs of Plymouth, Greenfield, Nankin, Dearbornville, Brownstown, and Hamtramck met to organize and protested against the Doty Bill. They said that the territory was not yet prepared for "the collar" of party control (Greenfield), that alien voting was "calculated to advance the power of an irresponsible cabal" (Brownstown), and an "Assemblée Française a Hamtramck" said the bill was "contraire a la constitution des Etats-Unis."¹⁵

The Wayne County Whig Convention's Address criticized the Doty Bill, accusing the Tories of wanting only to use foreigners. If foreigners could vote why could they not serve as delegates? The Address indirectly answered charges of anti-Catholicism by announcing that Whigs discarded all "sectarianism" and embraced "all the various religious denominations."¹⁶

¹⁵The Springwells resolutions are in a manuscript dated December, 1834, in Woodbridge's MSS, in his handwriting. Plymouth: Journal and Courier, January 21, 1835, p. 2; Greenfield: Ibid., February 4, p. 1; Nankin, Dearbornville: ibid., February 11, p. 1; Brownstown: ibid., February 18, p. 3; Hamtramck: ibid., March 5, p. 1.

¹⁶Journal and Courier, March 4, 1835, p. 2.

This convention was unusual in that it supported a tax-paying qualification on suffrage. I found no other instance of Whigs in Michigan publically advocating a property qualification or even a tax-paying qualification. I did find two instances of Whigs advocating property qualifications in private, and who clearly would have preferred government to be based on the "stake in society" concept, but it is significant that the two Whigs advocating such measures were both ardent nativists. Class, cultural, and religious attitudes seemed to blend together in their thinking on suffrage qualifications, and it is very likely that such a blend of attitudes influenced the Wayne County Whigs who proposed the tax-paying qualification. Detroit city elections still operated on such a basis, and the 1835 proposal went beyond both the city and old territorial qualification in that it required only one year's residence in the state. It would have excluded only the transient, the very poor, and the very recently arrived. At any rate the Whig Territorial Convention which met in March, 1835, declared its "unqualified opposition" to property qualifications of any kind.¹⁷

Meeting in Ann Arbor on March 4 and 5 the Whig Territorial Convention issued an Address describing in detail the Democratic plot to

¹⁷William Woodbridge, n.d., 1832, to Governor George B. Porter, Woodbridge MSS. Henry P. Powers, Monguagon, October 5, 1835, to William Woodbridge, Springwells, Woodbridge MSS. Journal and Courier, March 4, 1835, p. 2, February 4, p. 8.

write alien voting into Michigan's constitution. The Tories "anticipated" Congress's failure to admit Michigan and desired that failure.

They wished for the support of their party, to have a different qualification for voters from what Congress prescribed. For this they were willing to sacrifice the substantial interests of Michigan. . . .¹⁸

Alien voting was beneath discussion. The Whigs wanted voting limited to naturalized citizens and insisted that the constitution be submitted to the people for ratification. The Whig Address was notable for its focus on alien voting, for its vigorous anti-partyism, and because it discussed only one economic issue, the Bank of the United States. That amounted to hoping that the Bank would be allowed to die and be forgotten.

During the campaign for the election of delegates Whigs did not openly criticize foreigners and Catholics. They even held meetings for "Foreign Emigrants."¹⁹ (These may have been Protestant "Emigrants" but I have not been able to test that hunch.) After the April 4 election, in which the Whigs were trounced, the Journal and Courier revealed the depth of hostility which Whigs could feel against foreigners and Catholics. The paper bristled with xenophobia and anti-Catholicism. The

¹⁸Journal and Courier, March 25, 1835, p. 2.

¹⁹Ibid., February 25, 1835, p. 1; April 1, 1835. Journal and Courier.

election had been decided, it said, by aliens. Tory demagogues had sold American "birthrights to renegades and fugitives from justice and from the despotisms of Europe," and to "beings sunk in ignorance and besotted with vice." Some foreigners were virtuous, but most were not. "Party demagogues, especially in the state of New York, are holding out every encouragement to the vilest of the outcasts of Europe, to swarm upon our shores, take possession of our polls and control our elections. The paper charged that Catholic priests had exerted pernicious influence. The original Catholics [French-Canadians] had been quiet and good citizens, but "new men" [Irish] led by a "whole host of church functionaries" had been sent among us, "are opposed to our social system," and were striving to convert all Catholics to their "anti-republican doctrines." Priests had appealed for Van Burenism from their pulpits and had sent young seminarians around to instruct Catholics on how to vote.

The Journal pointed out that 1433 votes were polled in the city of Detroit which contained, according to the Journal, only 450 "legal" voters: "Foreign Paupers" and "Catholic Mobs" had made the difference. Henceforth, concluded the Journal, political parties should not be distinguished "by any other names than 'Americans' and 'Foreigners.'"²⁰

²⁰Journal and Courier, April 8, p. 2. See Woodbridge's letter in the same issue under the pseudonym of "Algernon Sidney." A copy of it in his handwriting is in his papers, dated March, 1835. The Michigan Whig

Americanism, the Journal and Courier later elaborated, was synonymous with Protestantism. "All that we prize in the blessings of equal rights and the inalienable privileges of freedom of opinion in politics or religion is the result of Protestantism." Protestantism and Americanism inevitably conflicted with Romanism because it was incompatible with free inquiry and liberty of conscience. So was the party discipline of the Democrats. Now Catholicism and Van Burenism had joined in unholy alliance and the two despotisms worked hand in hand to convert American freemen into slaves.²¹

Not many persons voted for the Whigs in 1835 and not all of those who did can be assumed to have shared the feelings of the editors of the Journal. But those Whigs who organized in 1834-1835 did so primarily because they feared that the alien bill portended the corruption of Michigan politics by foreign Catholics.

2. In Convention.

The delegateselection of April did not measure party strength because there were not yet two parties to be measured. The Democrats showed a clear superiority as the Whigs elected some 4-10 delegates

said that about 400 "British and German subjects" voted in Washtenaw County, Journal and Courier, April 15, 1835, p. 2.

²¹April 15, 1835, p. 2, and April 22. A similar analysis appeared in the Michigan Whig.

out of 89, but not all of the others claimed the Democratic label or behaved as Democrats. Although one observer thought that "party feeling has governed exclusively" in the election, some candidates made a show of non-partisanship. In the Convention delegates were quick to deny any imputation that they acted from partisan motives. The roll call votes show great variety of alignment, and the Democratic majority, on key votes, usually polled about 20 less than would have been expected.²²

That was the pattern of voting during the elective franchise fight. Delegates debated suffrage requirements for 5 days, 2 more than consumed by any other issue. All historians of the Convention have agreed that it was the most divisive and most intensely fought issue.²³

Wayne County strongly supported broad suffrage. John Norvell, chairman of the committee on the franchise, Alpheus White, and John R. Williams, three leading advocates of broad suffrage, were Democrats from Wayne. Detroit's Whig newspapers, in 1835 and later years, frequently accused Norvell and Williams of pandering to Irish Catholics.

²²Schoolcraft, Personal Memoirs, p. 511. Debates, pp. 257-58; "Appendix, Roll Call of Votes."

²³Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 271, 277. Hemans, Life of Stevens Thomson Mason, pp. 152-77. Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, pp. 27-28. Lanman, William Woodbridge, p. 51.

Williams, a native Catholic, was related by marriage to the old French population. White, an Irish Catholic, was a prominent Catholic layman and a friend of Bishop Resé. This is not to say that these men "represented" a Catholic or foreign-born "interest." Undoubtedly the relationships between them and their varied groups of constituents were subtle and complex. But given their associations Norvell's, Williams', and White's support of alien voting and their desire to enfranchise the multiplying foreign population is not surprising. That the foreign born Catholics would support the Democrats is hardly surprising in view of the open Whig hostility to them. An 1834 census, incidentally, showed that Wayne County contained five times as many "aliens" as any other county--1997 to 421 for Washtenaw County. Alien suffrage's most vocal opponent, William Woodbridge, was also from Wayne and he was its lone Whig delegate. It is difficult to determine the attitude of the French natives, Catholic or non-Catholic, to alien voting. Lewis Beaufait, a French Democratic politician from mostly French Hamtramck in Wayne County, supported broad suffrage, but this does not necessarily reflect the attitudes of all the French.²⁴

²⁴The census is in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 1018-21. On Alpheus White see Richard R. Elliott, MPHC, XXVI, 268. William's speech: Debates, pp. 222-24. Williams' father married a Campau, a leading French Catholic family, Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Wayne County, II (Detroit: Silas Farmer and Co., 1890; third edition), 1031. Democrat Michael Stubbs, an Irish Catholic from Washtenaw County, supported broad suffrage, History of Washtenaw County, Michigan (Charles C. Chapman and Co., 1881), II, 644-45.

The original franchise article presented by Norvell enbaled every white, male inhabitant, over 21, and a 6 month's resident, to vote. Norvell's group was willing, eventually, to extend the residence requirement to 2 years, while their opponents held out for citizens, which involved the 5 year naturalization period. The delegates debated generally the question of whether voting would be limited to United States citizens or whether a state could enfranchise anyone she chose.

The opposition first tried to amend Norvell's aritcle by broadening it to include Negroes and Indians. Democrat Ross Wilkins of Lenawee, a Methodist lay-preacher and later a judge, wanted to strike the word "white" from the article: "Paper is white and snow is white, yet how many men are white as paper or as snow?" He said that Negroes are men and that "all men are created free and equal." Wilkins' generosity, however, did not extend to aliens. He and most of the delegates who supported non-white suffrage opposed non-citizen voting. This conjunction of attitudes appeared throughout the country, as Chilton Williamson has observed. Persons who favored Negro suffrage tended to oppose foreigners voting and usually were Whigs. Similarly, Norvell's Democrats fell into a larger pattern. Foremost in urging broad suffrage they led in opposing Negro suffrage and in expressing racial prejudice. When the Wilkins' amendment lost (63-17), the anti-broad suffrage Democrats tended to support it. The few identifiable

Whigs, however, contrary to the pattern described, joined the Democrats in opposition.²⁵

As the opposition to alien voting developed, the Whig enclave contributed its share and more of outrage, but the defection of some 20 Democrats was more important. The defection persisted despite considerable speech-making and suasion from broad suffrage men. The latter took orthodox Democratic states rights ground that states had full power to determine suffrage requirements and that United States citizenship had no bearing on a voter's status within a state. A person was first a citizen of a state and secondly a United States citizen. Norvell claimed the measure would promote prosperity by encouraging industrious emigrants to come and that it embodied the "highest liberality of American institutions." Exclusion of foreigners would mean incorporating "prejudices and aristocratical distinctions into the constitution."²⁶

Woodbridge and the opposition argued that the article conflicted with the federal Constitution and usurped Congress's power of defining citizenship. In Woodbridge's mind the community which made law for itself could only be an ethnic or cultural community. A representative

²⁵Other delegates supporting non-white suffrage: Darius Comstock, William H. Welch, Edward D. Ellis. They opposed non-citizen voting. Debates, pp. 155-56 and Appendix A, roll call 17. For Democratic Anti-Negro sentiments, Debates, pp. 157-59, 161-62, 163. Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 261-67.

²⁶Debates, pp. 193-218.

democracy, he said, should represent only "the members of the community . . . its elemental parts . . . these only, who are of this Anglo-American family; in a word, its citizens." Congress required 5 years for naturalization, during which the newcomer could learn about "our complicated system of government." To qualify as a citizen and voter a man must have more than "general intelligence" and an "abstract devotion to liberty. . . . His habits must likewise have been formed upon our model."²⁷

Opposition Democrats expressed less ethnocentrism than Woodbridge and emphasized their concern for the abuse of the ballot and the devaluation of citizenship resulting from alien voting. Few delegates spoke as bluntly as David White (Monroe): foreigners came to Michigan "as paupers . . . absolutely destitute, and entirely ignorant," and "were led like cattle to the polls."²⁸

The anti-broad suffrage Democrats offered a compromise on May 27 in an amendment presented by Manning of Oakland. It failed, 31-53,²⁹ and the same day a slightly modified article passed, with the residence requirement extended to 2 years in the United States and 6 months in the state. It required that any unnaturalized inhabitant wanting to vote must

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 226, 228.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 184-92, 173-80; White's remarks, p. 220.

²⁹ The Manning amendment would have enfranchised citizens who had been residents for six months, and every other "inhabitant" residing in the state at the time of the adoption of the constitution. Debates, pp. 249, 253-54.

take an oath "renouncing all allegiance to any foreign prince, potentate or state," and must declare his intention of becoming a citizen. This part passed 51-33. A second part, enfranchising all "inhabitants" resident on April 4, 1835, passed 68-14.³⁰

On June 4 Woodbridge and three other Whigs formally protested, calling alien voting unconstitutional, unrepublican, and unjust. Their "Protest" expressed anxiety over the undermining of cultural homogeneity and the loss of ancestral virtues. The coming of so many European foreigners, with different social and political habits, "seems to have given a different character to our economical and social intercourse. The sober frugality and republican simplicity, which marked the manner of our ancestors, seems fast fading away before a . . . too suddenly enfranchised foreign population."³¹

The Journal and Courier, predictably, choked with rage over the "disgrace." The franchise was passed by the "slaves of a HIRELING DEMAGOGUE" who "spends his time in bar-rooms and grog-shops, at the corners of our streets, haranguing and cajoling the tenants of those wicked abodes and ruining the moral and political character of everyone he can make his victim." (Norvell, I presume?)

³⁰Ibid., pp. 265-66. The vote on both parts was 55-27. The concessions seem to have been worked out in meetings at Norvell's home, attended by Crary, Wilkins, McDonell and Adam, and the formula proposed by Mason. Note in Mason MSS dated May 26, 1835.

³¹Debates, pp. 510-15. Compare these Whig anxieties with what Marvin Meyers said were characteristic Democratic anxieties in his The Jacksonian Persuasion (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), pp. 3-15.

One Monroe County Whig told William Woodbridge that in regard to the franchise there was "already such a feeling abroad . . . as cannot fail to assure its reconsideration."³²

Whatever effect the Whigs had, the Democratic minority remained irreconcilable. Perhaps fearing that this group might vote against the entire constitution,³³ the Democratic majority brought forth, on June 17, a compromise that was written into the Constitution limiting voting to citizens who had resided 6 months in the state and enfranchising all inhabitants resident at the time of the signing of the constitution. This article was substantially the same as the compromise offered earlier by Manning. A last-minute attempt to gain additional non-citizen voting came from Alpheus White and failed. White proposed to enfranchise any one year residents who were compelled to labor on the roads of their respective towns or counties in payment of taxes. These laborers in Wayne County were, for the most part, recently arrived Irish Catholics.³⁴

There is little doubt that the franchise fight had badly split the Democrats and that the compromise was made between Democrats.

³²Journal and Courier, June 3, 1835, p. 1. James Quincy Adams, Monroe, June 17, 1835, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

³³Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," p. 317. On his copy of the June 4 "Protest" Woodbridge wrote that the Jackson leaders changed their position because they feared that otherwise Congress "would totally reject their Constitution." Woodbridge MSS.

³⁴Debates, p. 394. George Catlin, "Wayne County" MS in the George B. Catlin MSS. BHC.

Edward D. Ellis reported to his readers in the Monroe Michigan Sentinel that the compromise resulted from "the mutual interchange of sentiment among brethren of the same principle--and by means of a creditable and honorable concession, to some extent, of the majority to the views of the minority for which the latter have every reason to be thankful." ³⁵

Lucius Lyon and John Barry, conservative Democrats, campaigned against alien voting before and after the convention. Early in April 1835 Lyon wrote to John Forsyth, Jackson's Secretary of State, asking him to send to Detroit and to John Barry of White Pigeon "laws now in force for the naturalization of Foreigners." Lyon explained that "there are many foreigners in that territory, and as the people are about forming a State government these laws are very much needed."³⁶ In December 1835 Lyon wrote to a friend in New Orleans of the attempt to enfranchise non-citizens. "This I, with my friends, opposed most strenuously, and finally

³⁵Ellis complimented the Monroe delegation, Lyon, Welch, Wilkins, Briggs, Moore, Mundy, McDonnell, TenEyck, Cook, and "several others." "Norvell's course, in this instance, is certainly creditable to him as a man and a politician." Debates, pp. 393-94.

³⁶Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 213-15. Floyd B. Streeter, "The Factional Character of Early Michigan Politics," Michigan History, II, 1 (January, 1918), pp. 165-91. Lucius Lyon, New York, April 3, 1835, to John Forsyth, in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 891. Barry's association with Lyon: E. Byron Thomas, "Political Ideas and Activity of John Stewart Barry, 1831-1851," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Northwestern University, 1935), pp. 21-22. Forsyth seems to have been nativist and anti-Catholic: see John Tracy Ellis, American Catholicism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 75-76.

succeeded in requiring citizenship, which I think will be a sufficient protection for us situated in the interior as we are." He noted that Louisiana did not enjoy a favorable location since it was on the seaboard and in the path of foreign arrivals. Lyon recommended that Louisiana could change its constitution to enfranchise whomever it chose and, ironically, echoed Norvell's states' rights position by insisting that Congress could not interfere with such action. Louisiana could require 15 years residence for voting or could prohibit foreigners from voting altogether, "as boys and women are." Lyon said that the franchise fight in Michigan had "occasioned a split in the Jackson party which in all probability cannot be healed."³⁷

3. Summary.

Alien voting failed because a minority of Democrats refused to accept it. They threatened, perhaps, to vote against the entire constitution if it were retained, thereby embarrassing and splitting the party. Fear of offending Congress may also have caused the Democratic majority to moderate its position.³⁸ As it was, the issue opened

³⁷ Lucius Lyon, December 25, 1835, to Col. George W. Boyd, New Orleans, Lyon Letters, pp. 468-69.

³⁸ This is suggested by the defensiveness of a letter describing who voted and who could vote in Michigan, Lucius Lyon, John Novell, and Issac Crary, Washington, D. C., December 31, 1836, to Hon. F. Thomas, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 1218-22.

a fissure which Lucius Lyon said could not be healed and, at the very least, forecast possible trouble over a similar conflict in the future. The question dividing Democrats seemed to be, not whether or not to be friendly to immigrants, but how friendly to be. At stake was political power and status within the party and society. Those Democrats whose political power rested on or would be increased by foreigners voting, naturally sought to increase the foreign-born electorate. They were opposed by Democrats whose power did not derive to any significant extent from foreign born voters, who feared that alien voting endangered the status quo, who genuinely doubted its wisdom and constitutionality, and who may have feared loss of power and status within the party to rivals fattened by alien votes. A few Democrats felt as many Whigs felt about foreign born Catholics. The public Democratic opposition to broad suffrage, however, lacked the nativism, xenophobia, and anti-Catholicism expressed openly by some Whig critics of alien voting.

Whatever the internal strains within the parties in 1835, the general postures which they presented to the public were quite different regarding foreigners and Catholics. Whig newspapers continued to rage against foreigners and Catholics all through the summer of 1835 and 1836. The Democrats held a convention in August to nominate candidates for state offices and distinctly reaffirmed their friendship for foreigners and Catholics and declared their opposition to mixing religion

and politics. The Convention disapproved of "the course taken by the Whig papers, to create a spirit of Jealousy and distrust between native born citizens and foreigners." It promised to resist any effort to throw odium "upon a portion of our population, who commend themselves to our sympathy and hospitality." It was even more emphatic on the religious-political issue, viewing "the systematic efforts . . . to connect religion and politics, as subversive of a fundamental principle in Republican institutions, as conflicting directly with the Constitution of the United States, and tending to engender a spirit dangerous to society, and to liberty." The Democrats resolved "that the attacks recently made upon our Catholic brethern, are illiberal, unjust, and meet with our decided misapprobation."³⁹

Because parties were just coming into being the alien suffrage fight and its aftermath were of great importance in forming voter loyalties and the parties acquired not only part of their clientele but an important part of their traditions. Henceforth, words spoken and actions taken by their leaders would be seen by many in the context of their traditions, and that context would lend to the words and actions symbolic meaning often running far deeper than their face-value. Both parties and leaders began to "stand for" certain things--not that what they stood for was always unambiguous, not at all. The ambiguity of

³⁹Randall, "Gubernatorial Platforms, Michigan, 1834-1864," p.7.

political language allows leaders and parties to stand for several things at once, and their ability to sound meaningful while being ambiguous is usually an element in their political success.

William Woodbridge's actions in the 1835 Convention probably came to have great symbolic importance for many Whig voters. Eight years later, after Woodbridge had served a year as governor and three years as United States Senator, a voter wrote to him that "Your public life as far as I am acquainted has been pleasing to the people in particular and the course which you pursued at the forming of our state constitution was worthy of your head and heart."⁴⁰ (Italics mine.) In 1847 Detroit and Michigan's Native American newspaper, American Vineyard, came out in support of Taylor for President and Woodbridge for Vice President in 1848. It printed the 1835 "Protest" against alien voting to show why it supported Woodbridge's nomination.⁴¹

The Convention of 1850: Democrats, Whigs, and Foreigners

In 1850 Michigan again held a Constitutional Convention. The public style, image, and rhetoric of both the Whig and Democratic

⁴⁰ John B. Hough, Bristol, Lapeer County, November 28, 1843, to William Woodbridge, Washington, D. C., Woodbridge MSS. Hough wanted Woodbridge to send him an opinion on a problem causing contention at elections every year in his township. He asked "Can a citizen of the United States move into the dominion of Great Britain and take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown [/, / stay several years in her Majesty Dominions then (sic) move thence into this state and exercise the right of suffrage."

⁴¹ American Vineyard, April 23, 1847, December 14, pp. 1-2. BHC.

parties had changed significantly in 15 years, yet the debates and voting in the Constitutional Convention of 1850 reveal that their parties' attitudes to the foreign-born still constituted a salient issue dividing them.

Nominations of candidates for convention delegates and the short campaign before the May 6, 1850 election of delegates took place in a politically more sophisticated environment than had existed in 1835. There was no "Doty Bill" to throw the Whigs into alarm as in 1835 and their county nominating conventions appear to have been routine affairs.⁴²

Although both parties hoped to elect their nominees, party loyalty was not intensely engaged. The Democratic Grand Rapids Enquirer did not expect party lines to be drawn in the convention, and the Advertiser "urged Whigs to nominate "good men, and, where it can be done, without distinction of party, as no party issues are necessarily involved in the canvass."⁴³

Turnout was low, indicating lack of interest, and there was according to the Free Press, "more ticket splitting than we have ever known." Nevertheless, the Democrats, as in 1835, swept the

⁴² Wayne County: Advertiser, April 19, 1850, p. 2. Kalamazoo County: Ibid., April 26, p. 2.

⁴³ Free Press, May 8, p. 2. Advertiser, April 12, p. 2. According to the Advertiser the greatest political evil to be remedied by the Convention was "too much private legislation;" it made government venal and mercenary and surrounded it with lobbyists. April 23, p. 2.

election.⁴⁴ Some 80-81 Democrats were elected, 16-17 Whigs, and 3 Free Soilers. These numbers are the minimum and maximum each party could have elected, according to the available sources.⁴⁵

After the election the Advertiser admitted that the Whigs, realizing that they were in a minority and expecting and wanting no help from Free Soilers, had entered the canvass "with little hope of general success." The Advertiser's consolation lay in knowing that any successful Whigs had been elected on their own merits. Less logically and contrary to the evidence of the election, but in a typical display of antipartyism, the editors concluded that

The days of caucus and party drill in Michigan are numbered. The bonds of discipline, which have so long been drawn across the consciences and the minds of men, have at length become loosened. The time has arrived when men will vote for the best candidates. . . .⁴⁶

In the convention the Democrats initially reported a franchise article that gave the suffrage to every white male citizen of 21 years of age who had resided in the state 6 months, and to "every white male inhabitant who was permitted to vote under the previous constitution of

⁴⁴Free Press, May 7, 1850, p. 2. Wayne County returns are in the Advertiser, May 17, p. 2.

⁴⁵Free Press, May 13, p. 2, said 18 Whigs were elected but named only 10. Advertiser, May 10, p. 2, said 16 Whigs were elected, but named only 13. I compared the two lists and checked them in Michigan Biographies (Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey, 1888). Frederick W. Stevens, Michigan Constitutional Convention of 1850 (n.p., n.d.), p. 12, gave the number of Whigs as no more than 10.

⁴⁶Advertiser, May 9, 1850, p. 2.

this state, and their male descendants." Some Democratic delegates then offered amendments, most of which extended the suffrage further. One proposed that every inhabitant of 2 years residency should vote. Democratic editor and delegate John S. Bagg and others were willing to enfranchise every inhabitant (otherwise qualified) with only a minimal residence requirement.⁴⁷

As in 1835 a small minority (Free Soilers) demanded Negro suffrage. Again the Democrats heard that they were being inconsistent in professing liberality and restricting it to whites. Mr. Williams, who gave a long, impassioned speech, giped at the Democrats: "Let the naturalization laws of the United States be the test; or let gentlemen go for universal suffrage, and admit all men to the rights of electors." But the opposition to only-white voting was again only a brief interlude and apparently not of concern to most Whigs and Democrats.⁴⁸

There was no full-scale debate in 1850 as there had been in 1835, nothing comparable to the set speeches and dramatic exchanges of William Woodbridge and John Norvell. The "conservatives who spoke on the issue were both Whigs and Democrats. They said that Michigan

⁴⁷State of Michigan, Report of the Proceedings and Debates in the Convention to Revise the Constitution of the State of Michigan, 1850 (Lansing: R. W. Ingals, 1850). (Hereafter cited as Report.), pp. 278-79.

⁴⁸Report, pp. 485-86. See also pp. 284-96, 490-91, for discussion of Negro suffrage.

should not violate United States naturalization laws, that newcomers needed 5 years to learn how to read and write English, that special enfranchisements (e.g., of inhabitants residing in Michigan on January 1, 1850) discriminated against later arrivals, that our own citizens needed to be protected against invasions of foreigners who could take control of their counties, and one Whig asked why "our young men" should not vote at 16 years of age.⁴⁹

In 1835 opponents of non-citizen voting had argued that it took time for the foreign-born to assimilate themselves to American ways. The fear of the influence of non-assimilated foreigners was greater in 1850 because of the impact of large German and Dutch immigrations in the late 1840's. The immigrants had come to the Saginaw Valley and its environs in western Michigan and had set up colonies that were virtually "little Germanies" and "little Hollands." "It is well known," said one Democrat, "that there has been a large emigration from Germany and Holland to our State for the last three or four years, and that these emigrants have clustered together, and are not dispersed among our citizens."⁵⁰

One prominent Democrat said, in opposition to the 2 year suffrage, that when foreigners mixed they rapidly became assimilated, "But

⁴⁹ Remarks of Mr. Sutherland (Dem.), Report, p. 279; Mr. Hascall (Dem.) p. 279; Mr. Gale (W.), p. 280; Mr. N. Pierce (W.), p. 282; Mr. Beeson (Dem.), p. 283; Mr. White (W.?), p. 490; Mr. Hanscom (Dem.), p. 493.

⁵⁰ Report, p. 496.

do gentlemen know that to be the case where large colonies are formed without any mixing of American population; colonies of thousands; and when they come in and settle the way they do, giving the American citizens no access to them, and under the control of their religious protectors to so great a degree that you can have no influence with them. . . . /?" Under these circumstances, easy suffrage would not quicken Americanization.⁵¹

In general the "conservatives" showed a sensitivity for the feelings of foreigners that was a tribute to the voting strength the foreign-born had acquired by 1850. A Democrat from Wayne County, however, vigorously opposed alien voting and did not hesitate to use words that since 1835 had been symbolic of nativistic attitudes and much resented by the foreign-born. Henry Fralick said he feared that aliens would vote away our rights if suffrage were made too cheap. Even "the best class of foreigners" did not want the suffrage cheapened.

It is too much like driving cattle to market. They are imposed upon by designing demagogues.⁵²

Fralick was not a typical Democrat. His town, Plymouth, was a strong Whig-Liberty town and one of the most "Yankee" towns in

⁵¹Ibid., p. 489. Mr. Moore (Dem.) pointed to thousands of foreigners who could not speak English, knew nothing of the laws, and who were under leaders "who can control their votes by thousands." He added, "I do not think the democratic party will lose one vote" if the original article were retained. p. 493.

⁵²Report, p. 281.

Wayne County. It had been an Antimasonic center and was a stronghold of antislavery and particularly of temperance sentiment. In 1853 Fralick, as a state representative, associated himself with the demand for an anti-liquor Maine Law. Fralick held many local offices in Plymouth, was a respected businessman, and a Congregationalist.⁵³

Fralick voted against non-citizen voting but very few Democrats joined him. Some of those who had objected to the enfranchisement of inhabitants of 2 years voted for enfranchising inhabitants of 2 1/2 years who had declared their intention of becoming citizens. John S. Bagg explicitly identified the most liberal suffrage obtainable (for aliens) with Democratic principles. He said that the Democratic Party had led the way nationally and state by state in the liberalization of suffrage and naturalization laws. During the period of "liberal progression" Bagg had never heard complaints "except from the opposition, and that the aliens nine times in ten were democrats. Thus the democratic party, in opposition to the federalists and whigs, have chased them from point to point, and whittled down the time already to that amount (sic)." The responsibility for a liberal suffrage article rested on the Democracy:

Has the small remnant of whigs and free soilers on this floor any responsibility in this matter? Not the least, except to artfully and deceptively defeat the measure.⁵⁴

⁵³Rev. R. C. Crawford, "Memoir of Hon. Henry Fralick," MPHC, XVIII, 318-20.

⁵⁴Report, p. 487.

One Whig, at least, was trying artfully to defeat the measure. In 1835 William Woodbridge had openly taken a stand against alien voting without regard for consequences. In 1850 his son-in-law, Henry T. Backus, led the opposition to alien voting but played a subtle game. His major tactic was to try to attach an amendment to the franchise article providing that every elector would be eligible to all state offices under the constitution. As it was, only citizens were eligible for office and this amendment pointed up the inconsistency. At the very least Backus sought to embarrass the Democrats. He said that in offering the amendment he was promoting the "greatest good to the greatest number, without any reference to political party." He had no wish to organize "a party feeling."

When several Democrats rose to point out that Backus had earlier voted against all liberal suffrage measures and that his object now must be to defeat the article, Backus--with tongue no doubt well in cheek--protested that he really wanted every newcomer to vote immediately and asked "Do not these amendments speak in trumpet tones of my liberality?"⁵⁵ Mr. Chapel answered that he did not think so.

The gentleman's motives may be pure, but when a native Americanism endeavored to form a party, in Detroit as elsewhere, what

⁵⁵Report, pp. 499, 501. Backus presented a petition from H. Eismack and 20 others, "naturalized citizens," asking that the vote not be extended to foreigners until they were "regularly naturalized." p. 381.

was sought sir? It was to proscribe the adopted citizen who had taken out his papers according to United States law; and if that gentleman [Backus] was opposed to it, I can only say that he is an exception to his party, for that standard of discrimination was raised and openly avowed by them.⁵⁶

Backus's amendment failed by a vote of 52-34. In its final form the franchise article gave the vote to all white male citizens of 21, to every inhabitant permitted to vote in 1835, to every inhabitant resident on January 1, 1850, and to all inhabitants resident for 2 1/2 years in the state who had declared their intention of becoming citizens--as well as to every "civilized" Indian not a member of a tribe. The key vote was 59-31 (with 10 abstentions, mostly Democrats). The Free Press correspondent in Lansing said the Whigs voted against the article 2-14. The available sources indicate that at least one Whig definitely voted for the measure and no more than two. There were definitely 13 Whigs opposing and probably 14. At a minimum, then, 76 percent of the Whigs opposed the article and 71 percent of the Democrats supported it.⁵⁷

The Free Press reporter described the debate and maneuvering on the article and said that some "sickening demagogical speeches were made . . . and numerous demagogical amendments proposed."

Mr. Backus . . . was the chief demagogue of the day, but Williams [Free Soiler], of St. Clair, and N. Pierce [Whig], of Calhoun, were

⁵⁶Report, p. 505.

⁵⁷Report, 505; Free Press, August 7, 1850, p. 2.

not far behind him. Several amendments proposed by the Whigs were right in principle, but they were not sincere in making them, and would have voted against them had there been a possibility of their adoption.

The democrats well understood the object of the minority, and exposed their inconsistency.⁵⁸

In reply to this version of the proceedings, a correspondent to the Advertiser defended Whig actions, charging there was not a "word of truth" in the above report. The original article did not suit "certain of the ultra progressive" Democrats. The amendment enfranchising resident aliens "was a direct bid for foreign votes, by the Locos, in direct contravention to the policy and spirit of the law of the United States, making an uniform rate of naturalization. Mr. Backus and other delegates placed the matter in its true light before the convention" with their amendments.⁵⁹

As the convention came to an end, the Free Press reporter reviewed Whig activities in the convention and said that on three major issues the Whigs had voted along partisan lines. Firstly, they had voted for a new districting system for the state legislature, allegedly because they expected to gain seats thereby. Secondly, they voted against admitting newly organized counties, allegedly because they feared these counties would elect Democrats. Finally, the "last general vote of a partisan character given by the Whigs" was on the franchise

⁵⁸ Free Press, July 24, 1850, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Advertiser, July 30, 1852, p. 2.

article, where they voted 2-14 against the measure. The vote showed the "deep seated hatred of the whig party" for the foreign-born. "In fact, every action of the whig delegates touching the qualifications of voters, indicated the strongest desire to disfranchise and alienate from our institutions and common country all foreigners."⁶⁰

If the foregoing is accepted at face value, then the issue of alien voting could be considered the most salient issue dividing the parties in the Constitutional Convention of 1850. Before that claim could be made, however, a systematic analysis of votes on other questions would have to be made. Votes on such issues as debt exemption, for example, would have to be analyzed and compared to the divisions, by party, on other issues.⁶¹

If the suffrage issue--as a reflection of the parties' attitudes to foreigners--was not the most salient issue dividing parties in the 1850 convention, it was at least one vital point of divergence between them, one that opened a window into their deeper character, and one that had lost little of its emotional intensity or symbolic importance since 1835.

⁶⁰One insult to the foreigners came in June. "When the question of what classes should be enumerated in making up the basis of representation was under discussion, a very influential member of this conservative whig or, anti-democratic party moved to strike out the word 'alien.'" Free Press, August 7, 1850, p. 2.

⁶¹The debt exemption article exempted \$500 worth of personal property and the individual property of married women from execution. It passed by a vote of 52-21: 5 or 6 Whigs opposed it and 15 or 16 Democrats. Advertiser, August 2, 1850, p. 3. See also Lena London, "Homestead Exemption in the Michigan Constitution of 1850," Michigan History, XXXVII, 4 (December, 1953), 385-406.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTIES AND RELIGION :
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In the 1830"s religious movements and attitudes had an influence on politics which we have not fully appreciated. Understanding this influence is vital to understanding the bases of party division. Historians have long been aware of the more spectacular intrusions of religion into politics. Antislavery societies, for example, came out of revivals and led to political antislavery.¹ Although the revivalists have received much scholarly attention,² the political significance of their activities has been seen only in relation to specific issues such as antislavery or temperance, but the broad impact of their activities as a whole has not been explored.

It was not coincidental that just after the most intense revivals of the "second great awakening" (1795-1835) that political parties emerged. From about 1800 on certain religious leaders campaigned to "Christianize"³

¹Gilbert H. Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (New York: 1933). Anne C. Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation' in American Antislavery Thought," Journal of Southern History, XXXII, 2 (May, 1966), 172-88.

²John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954); Cole, The Northern Evangelists; Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957).

³Franklin Hamlin Littell, From State Church to Pluralism (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 30.

America. The revivals, as part of an evangelical campaign, helped launch successive waves of moral reform which sharpened ethnoreligious antagonisms. These cleavages were significant determinants of party division. An evangelical and anti-evangelical conflict was at the heart of party alignments in Michigan. The evangelical campaign may be considered as one long-run cause of the very emergence of parties.

The Whig Party succeeded Antimasonry as the Christian Party in Politics. It became the evangelicals' leading political agent in the drive to Christianize America. The major channels of evangelical effort were the interdenominational benevolent societies which interlocked with one another and with the Whig Party.

In Michigan, Presbyterians occupied positions of leadership in benevolence, moral reform, and the Whig Party. Many were engaged in promoting the evangelical causes which their Synod actively championed.

In the late 1830's Presbyterianism was virtually in open alliance with Whiggery. Whig policy reflected Presbyterian and evangelical influence. The Democrats usually opposed evangelical goals or offended evangelical sensibilities through both their public and private behavior.

The early Whig Party's style and image bore the marks of evangelical influence. It broadened its appeal and image from 1836 to 1840 and tempered and modified its evangelicalism, and thus was able to enlist broad support. Still, the Whig campaign of 1839-1840 is best

characterized as a form of political revivalism.

Historical Background

The second great awakening is sometimes described as part of a "counter-attack" against the irreligious mood of the country during the early national period. The irreligion of that period could be seen in the vast number of unchurched persons and in widespread hedonism, especially on the frontier, in disestablishmentarianism, and in the deistic, secular tone given the new American government by many Founding Fathers, particularly by Jefferson's Republicans.⁴

Clergymen looked at the new national arena and saw "a heathen nation--one of the most needy mission fields in the world."⁵ They looked at the new national government, especially after 1800, and saw it exuding an un-Christian aura. Those Protestant leaders who reacted to the challenge of a heathen nation and an infidel government were the "evangelicals."⁶

Most students of evangelicals have agreed on their chief attributes: a proselytizing, missionary impulse; a desire to regulate morality; a Calvinistic heritage tempered by acceptance of "new measures,"

⁴Bernard Weisburger, They Gathered at the River (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1958), pp. 3-19.

⁵Littell, From State Church, p. 29.

⁶See Ludlum's suggestive description of the "Puritan Counter-Reformation" in Social Ferment, pp. 6, 30-52.

notably revivals; an emphasis on religious experience and personal relations with God; a dislike for ritual; and participation in interdenominational societies.

John R. Bodo has studied a rather select group of Northern "theocrats"⁷ whose cast of mind was typically evangelical. Charles C. Cole studied a larger group than Bodo's which he called "Evangelists," and which overlapped with Bodo's group, including many of the same men.⁸

Charles I. Foster has seen great cohesion in the movement to Christianize America.

Although the United States began its national career in the anti-Christian atmosphere of the Enlightenment, it received during its most formative years an intensive, systematic indoctrination in the ideology of Evangelical Protestantism. The indoctrination was not the work of Protestant sects but of an Evangelical united front.⁹

The front's purpose, according to Foster, was social control. Conservatives sought to bring harmony to a society being rent by social conflicts between rich and poor, east and west, debtor and creditor. Conformity to Christian ethics would create social pressures to stifle such conflicts.¹⁰

⁷Bodo, Protestant Clergy, pp. viii-ix, 9.

⁸Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 5.

⁹Charles I. Foster, An Errand of Mercy; the Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), pp. vii-viii.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 7, 8, 132-33, 134. A similar thesis appears in Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United

Foster's emphasis on the cohesion and self-consciousness of the evangelicals seems excessive. Cole, Bodo, and others have shown their diversity and their frequent disagreements. Although they promoted conformity, their activities also increased social conflicts: they intensified, for example, Protestant-Catholic antagonism. Many economic "conservatives," too, including rich men, merchants, lawyers, even clergymen, could be found on the side of anti-evangelicalism.

Like Bodo and Cole, however, Foster saw the evangelicals' pietism and messianism as their distinctive characteristics. Foster's evangelicals were "a clearly defined religious party exhibiting at times the potential of becoming a political party as well."¹¹

Thus, evangelicals were lay and clerical leaders, usually Congregational or Presbyterian, who had theocratic tendencies and a desire to establish conformity to puritan ethics. They usually engaged in benevolent and missionary enterprises and shared the pietist mood of what William G. McLoughlin has called evangelical or "Arminianized Calvinism."¹² The term will also be used here to designate an amorphous

States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960).

¹¹Foster, United Front, p. viii.

¹²William G. McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), pp. 8-13. See the use of "evangelical" by John L. Thomas, The Liberator; William Lloyd Garrison (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963), pp. 57-69.

political pressure group, and reference will also be made to the evangelical wing of the Whig Party.

The evangelical crusade brought great gains in church membership, especially in the 1820's. In 1800, 6.9 percent of the population was churched: in 1850, 15.5 percent.¹³

Perhaps the most significant success of the "front" lay in the way it helped religion to permeate public life and put God in the pantheon of democratic politicians. Foster said that the front "raised the prestige of Christianity to the point where belief or at least the pretense of belief was the norm of American behavior" and Bernard Weisburger observed that "Few public policies by 1838 were launched except in His name, and few politicians were willing to risk the condemnation of his spokesmen the ministers."¹⁴

The national interdenominational societies intermeshed with revivalism and propagandized and proselytized in the wake of revivals. The earliest societies were organized around 1815, for example, the American Bible Society. The 1820's were the heyday of the "mania for joining organized movements,"¹⁵ such as the American Tract Society (1824), American Sunday School Union (1824), American Temperance Society, American Peace

¹³Littell, p. 32. Cole, p. 75.

¹⁴Foster, p. 130; Weisburger, p. 3.

¹⁵Cole, p. 11. See also Ludlum, Social Ferment, pp. 51-52.

Society and the influential American Home Missionary Society (all 1826). Although interdenominational, Congregationalists and Presbyterians dominated the societies. Many of the same men directed various societies, giving the "benevolent empire" a kind of interlocking directorate.¹⁶ By 1830, said Weisburger, "a great network of Christian enterprise was one of the things holding American society together."¹⁷

The revivals of the 1820's took a social and political turn that previous revivals had not taken. Leaders such as Charles G. Finney and Lyman Beecher deliberately focused on one socio-political cause after another, especially temperance and slavery.¹⁸

In 1827 the Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely of the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia called for the formation of a "Christian Party in Politics." Ely said that the major Protestant sects ought to unite in voting only for Christian rulers who "know and believe the doctrines of our holy religion, and act in conformity with its precepts." Ely advised against organization and recommended only "unofficial union."¹⁹

¹⁶Smith, Revivalism, p. 30. Bodo, pp. 13-22. See also, McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 53.

¹⁷Weisburger, p. 3; also, Smith, p. 61.

¹⁸Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 77, 102-03. Early in his career Finney avoided politics, while Beecher was organizing local societies into pressure groups. Finney eventually concluded that "politics," but not party politics, was an "indispensable part of religion." Cole, p. 133. On Beecher's activities, Thomas, The Liberator, p. 58.

¹⁹Joseph L. Blau, "The Christian Party in Politics," Review of Religion, XI, 1 (November, 1946), 23.

Ely's wish was partly realized in the Anti-Masonic Party. Friends and foes recognized Anti-Masonry as the approximation of Ely's "Christian Party."²⁰ The rise of Anti-Masonry paralleled the evangelicals' "Great Offensive of 1828-1829, as many benevolent societies began cooperating in 1828 in a great effort to win the Mississippi Valley for Christianity."²¹

After Anti-Masonry subsided in Michigan its spirit, as shown earlier, went marching on in the evangelical wing of the Whig Party. It also marched on in the benevolent and reform societies whose members tended to be Whigs. In politics or benevolence these men created pressure for, in John Thomas's words, "the engineering of mass American consent to Christian leadership."²²

1. The Parties and the Evangelicals: General View.

There is considerable impressionistic evidence suggesting that Northern evangelicals overwhelmingly were aligned with Whiggery. Bodo

²⁰McCarthy, "Anti-Masonic Party," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1902, I, 541. Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 193-94.

²¹Foster, United Front, pp. 185-92.

²²Thomas, p. 57. Ely thought in 1827 that "In ten years, or certainly in twenty, the political power of our country would be in the hands of men whose characters have been formed under the influence of Sabbath schools." Blau, Review of Religion, XI, 25.

and others have attributed the alignment to class and to alleged evangelical conservatism on economic issues. The theocrats, said Bodo, had been in "virtually open alliance with the Federalist party" and "naturally the theocrats transferred their sympathies to the Whigs."²³

For the Whigs represented, by and large, the same classes and the same interests which had been embodied in the Federalist party. Actually the theocrats identified themselves with the Whigs even more closely than they had with the Federalists. Theocratic support of the Federalists was confined to the Congregational clergy fighting for the survival of their Establishment. Support of the Whigs was not confined to any one denomination.²⁴

This explanation rests on assumptions regarding the class character of the Whig Party that are unfounded. The assumption that evangelicals were economic conservatives is questionable: Timothy L. Smith has challenged that notion and argued that the social gospel movement of the late nineteenth century had ante-bellum evangelical origins. Smith said that "liberalism on social issues, not reaction, was the dominant note which evangelical preachers sounded before 1860."²⁵

The economic explanation of evangelical alignment, if not invalid, is yet to be demonstrated. Bodo suggested a more relevant consideration: "Both times [with Federalists and Whigs] the theocrats sided with the party which seemed ready to acknowledge orthodox Protestantism as the

²³Bodo, Protestant Clergy, pp. 49-50.

²⁴Bodo, p. 52.

²⁵Smith, Revivalism, pp. 151, 148-77; cf., Weisburger, They Gathered, pp. 155-57, and Thomas, pp. 63-64.

titular national religion, while accusing the other party not only of social radicalism but of infidelity."²⁶ He also observed that aside from religious liberals and latitudinarians the chief opponents of the theocrats were "the politicians of the old Republican and Democratic parties. . . . Their interpretation of America's destiny was radically opposed to theocratic doctrine, and they resisted all attempts of the theocrats to enlist the government."²⁷

Cole said that the evangelists had "varied" political affiliations, but observed that they had become "particularly vocal" during the Jackson era and that they opposed Jackson on "moral grounds." They condemned the spoils system and identified it with the Democracy.²⁸ Smith did not consider the political affiliations of revivalists, but noted that the clergy had lost influence "in the generations of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson."²⁹ Albert F. Post wrote that the Whigs accused the followers of Jackson of infidelity and compared the Democratic Party to Masonry in its harboring of "deists and infidels."³⁰

American parties, at whatever level, seem never to achieve a thorough homogeneity of opinion or ideology. We refer today, for example, to "liberal" and "conservative" Republicans or Democrats and realize that

²⁶Bodo, p. 52.

²⁷Bodo, p. 25.

²⁸Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 151, 139-40.

²⁹Smith, pp. 38-39, passim.

³⁰Albert F. Post, Popular Freethought in America, 1825-1850 (New

"liberal" Republicans behave more like "liberal" Democrats than like "conservative" Republicans. Liberal and conservative are the operative words. The situation is further complicated in that some men are liberal on some issues and conservative on others. Similar ambiguities and factions and wings existed in parties in the 1830's. Not all Whigs were evangelicals or in favor of evangelical goals, nor were all Democrats anti-evangelical. Focusing on the evangelical and anti-evangelical conflict may exaggerate the comprehensiveness of these distinctions. Many men, leaders and followers, were Whigs and Democrats for reasons that had nothing to do with evangelicalism. But this was the most significant dividing line between parties in Michigan.

Democratic Secularism and Laissez-Faire Ethics

1. Democratic Secularism in the 1835 Convention.

The 1835 Constitutional Convention debated several issues involving religion and government. Dorr observed that with the exception of the suffrage no questions so stirred the convention as those bearing on religious freedom.³¹ On questions of religion and ethics Whigs, as represented by William Woodbridge, expressed substantially evangelical attitudes. Democratic attitudes tended to be secular, latitudinarian, and anti-evangelical. The parties' attitudes to Catholics, discussed earlier, were symptomatic of their general postures.

York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 197.

³¹Dorr, "Origin of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," pp. 271-72.

There were pious, even evangelical Democrats, but they were few. Democrats, as will be shown, tended to belong to non-evangelical denominations and to have a compartmentalized view of religious and secular affairs. In general, they simply cared less about religion. This helped make them tolerant and pragmatic. As Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich, a seventeenth-century Puritan said, "A person who is willing to tolerate any religion . . . either doubts of his own or is not sincere in it."³² The Democrats remind one of a group of men who emerged during the Wars of Religion in sixteenth-century France known as the politiques or "politicals," men who opposed the continuation of the wars and who "believed that men lived primarily in the state, not in the church. They were willing to overlook a man's ideas if only he would obey the king and go peaceably about his business."³³

Yet Democrats felt strongly about being told what to do in religious matters. They knew very well what they did not want. The 1835 convention adopted a bill of rights that was aggressively secular. Three sections of Article I (4, 5, 6) guaranteed freedom of conscience, separated church and state, and guaranteed equal political and civil rights for individuals of "any opinions or belief concerning matters of religion." The first clause was submitted originally as "Every man has a right to worship Almighty God

³²Quoted in Hudson, American Protestantism, p. 13.

³³Robert R. Palmer, A History of the Modern World (2nd edition, revised; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 117.

according to the dictates of his own conscience, provided such worship does not lead to acts of licentiousness, or a breach of the peace."

Democratic leader John Norvell moved successfully to strike out the words after "provided," saying he wanted to take no chances on putting a loophole in the constitution through which sectarian animosities might operate.³⁴

When a delegate proposed that clergymen be invited to give a daily invocation, a surprising number of delegates rose to debate the matter, and a clear contrast appeared in the attitudes of Whig and Democratic leaders. Norvell said he opposed "the adoption of any measure by which religion might mingle itself with politics" and which might be the first step toward union of church and state--creeping theocracy, as it were, by way of a daily prayer. Whig leader William Woodbridge, on the contrary, welcomed a prayer "to inaugurate proper solemnity" and to foster among the delegates "direct perception of the power of God . . . [by] a direct appeal to His overruling Providence." A daily prayer would show respect for patriotic customs and, he claimed, for "the public sentiments of the American people."³⁵

The practice of dueling was an established target of the evangelical crusade for moral reform, and evangelists were outraged above all by

³⁴ Debates, pp. 598, 289-90.

³⁵ Debates, pp. 119-20, 130-32.

the election of duelists to public office--for example, Andrew Jackson. Evangelicals contended that putting a duelist in a place of honor was tantamount to giving public sanction to the evil.³⁶ In the convention a Quaker delegate proposed that any person fighting or seconding a duel be excluded from voting or being elected to office. Norvell quickly warned that such a measure gave the legislature too much power. The convention might as well go further, he said, "and exclude all who may utter such language calculated to provoke a challenge. If they undertake to deprive a man of his rights for resenting injury . . . they may go to the end of the chapter of discretion, and make every little irregularity such an offence. . . ." (Italics mine.) He did not approve of dueling and thought that if death resulted from it that it should be treated "as a crime."³⁷ His rather ambivalent disapproval notwithstanding, Norvell was defining dueling as a matter of personal judgment in which the law should not interfere. He probably thought personal codes of honor took precedence over the law in this case.

William Woodbridge expressed a characteristic Whig desire to regulate such "personal" matters. He thought dueling

a relic of the feudal system; a means of gratifying the angry and malevolent passions, which had nothing but custom to sanction it.

³⁶ Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 104.

³⁷ Debates, pp. 267-68.

. . . the convention should cut off the germs of so barbarous a practice. In his native state of Connecticut, a duel had never taken place; yet it had never been imputed to its inhabitants . . . that they were deficient in sentiments of honor.³⁸

In a discussion of freedom of the press Woodbridge and Norvell again offered characteristically conflicting opinions. The question was whether in libel cases, if it appeared to a jury that the matter charged as libellous was true, and "published with good motives and for justifiable ends, the party should be acquitted." Norvell moved to strike out the "good motives" and "justifiable ends" clause. He wanted no jury "to determine the intentions of any man, when liberty of the press was concerned." He then implied that he was willing, as a public man, to bear abuse from the press as part of the political game.

William Woodbridge again objected to unrestrained personal freedom. He pointed out that slander cases involved not only candidates for office but that slander reached everywhere, holding nothing sacred. Norvell's amendment left "open the door for the gratification of the most malignant and vindictive feeling, and gives the malicious libeller the assurance that he shall go free." Woodbridge wanted the character of public men to be "freely canvassed," but he wanted restraints on the "outpourings of slanders through the public papers, of such things as were fit only for the bar room."³⁹

³⁸Debates, p. 269.

³⁹Debates, pp. 292, 295.

Woodbridge's evangelical orientation and Norvell's anti-evangelical attitudes on matters of religion, ethics, and personal freedom are clear. It is assumed here that their attitudes were more or less characteristic of their parties.

2. Democratic Secularism and Higher Education.

The article on education adopted by the 1835 convention touched on a point of controversy between church leaders and Democratic politicians. The article and the early educational policy of the state regarding higher education led in a secular direction and thwarted early evangelical pressures to establish denominational alternatives. The educational system fashioned in the convention was largely the work of Democrats Issac E. Crary and John D. Pierce. Church leaders did not object to the establishment of a state university, but they did not want this to be the only form of higher education available. Pierce, who became the state's first Superintendent of Public Instruction, maintained that the state system should be the only system at least until it was well established. Since 1827 Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians had been asking the Legislative Council to allow them to incorporate colleges. The Council had permitted the incorporation of schools but had withheld from them the degree-granting power and had required that they be open to the members of any denomination and subject to state inspec-

tion.⁴⁰ After 1835 Pierce urged the continuation of this policy by the state on the grounds that church colleges would compete with the new university and draw off students and private support. Pierce believed that the university should be secular and opposed a separate department of theology, but offered a concession to churchmen in a professor of theology who would teach the evidences of divine existence and the bases of the Christian religion. In seeking neutral ground to accommodate all varieties of religious opinion in the state system, Pierce held that

There is a medium between bigotry on the one hand and atheism on the other. And the success of the University, its life, energy, and character and usefulness, will essentially depend on the adoption of that medium course.⁴¹

In 1836 the Baptists renewed their agitation for a college and their state convention appointed a committee to lobby and to raise funds for it. They eventually lost hope in the face of what one minister called a "prevalent antipathy among politicians against denominational movements, in supposed efforts to secure a sectarian control of the educational interests

⁴⁰Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), p. 55. Willis F. Dunbar, "Public Versus Private Control of Higher Education in Michigan, 1817-1855," MVHR, XXII, 3 (December, 1935), 390-91.

⁴¹Quoted in Dunbar, Michigan Record, pp. 57-58. Pierce had been a Presbyterian minister and was still an active layman. He had been greatly influenced by Prussian educational ideas. Arthur B. Moehlman, Public Education in Detroit (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1925), p. 55.

of the county."⁴² In 1838 the Presbyterians launched the most serious effort of any group to gain a college charter. They went before the legislature showing that investments had been made, land bought, and a President appointed to a projected manual labor school to be located in Marshall. Whig leader Jacob M. Howard presented a bill for the incorporation of the college to the legislature. The bill was referred to a committee, a minority of which, Democrats, followed Superintendent Pierce in arguing that the results of freely granting college charters would be a proliferation of weak and ineffective colleges. A majority of the committee, mostly Whigs according to Dunbar, argued that volunteers in the cause of education should be encouraged, that competition in education as in commerce was healthy, that a state college monopoly ran against religious and political opinion, and maintained that the people desired the "New England system."⁴³ In 1839 the legislature finally agreed to incorporate "Marshall College," although it hedged the charter with conditions and provided that the legislature could repeal the charter by a two-thirds vote. On the day that the Presbyterian school was incorporated the legislature also granted a charter to St. Philip's College near

⁴²Dunbar, Michigan Record, pp. 36-38. Quotation in M.E.D. Trowbridge, History of Baptists in Michigan (Michigan State Baptist Association, 1909), p. 49.

⁴³Dunbar, Michigan Record, p. 112. Holderreid, "Public Life of Jacob Merritt Howard," p. 38.

Detroit. "This was a Catholic institution, and the simultaneous grant of the two charters suggests some log-rolling and bargaining among Presbyterian and Catholic members."⁴⁴

Although neither Marshall College or St. Philip's ever managed to get going, Democrats had led in establishing and preserving a secular public system of higher education while church leaders, especially Presbyterian and Baptist, aided mostly by Whigs, had fought for recognition of their sectarian interests in higher education.

3. Laissez-Faire Ethics.

Although traditional and recent interpretations of Democratic ideology have stressed its commitment to laissez-faire economic theory, in state affairs in Michigan neither party's actions or attitudes on economic questions could be regarded as laissez-faire. However, Democratic attitudes to matters of ethics, religion, and personal freedom could be characterized as laissez-faire, while Whig attitudes could be characterized as regulatory and authoritarian.

Lee Benson said that the platforms of the New York and national Democratic parties in the 1840's rested on a conception of a "negative liberal state." Democrats wanted the government to pass no laws attempting any social or economic engineering. Whig "positive liberalism,"

⁴⁴Dunbar, Michigan Record, pp. 36-39, 111-113; Dunbar, MVHR, XXII, 397-98.

on the other hand favored using government power to affect social and economic conditions.⁴⁵

The gubernatorial platforms of Michigan's Whig and Democratic Parties from 1837 to 1845 show that the state parties followed their national party's line on national economic issues. During that period Michigan Whigs favored: a national bank, a distribution bill, a general banking act, a tariff, a uniform national currency, and lake harbors appropriations. They opposed a sub-treasury and annexation of Texas. Michigan Democrats favored a sub-treasury and Texas annexation, as did the national party, and of the measures approved by the Whigs supported only lake harbors appropriations.⁴⁶

On state questions it is difficult to find differences between the parties. In 1837, 1839, and 1841, the parties made few if any concrete proposals. The Democrats did propose and pass, in 1841, one piece of social legislation: a debt exemption law permitting workers and others in debt to keep a specified part of their personal property deemed necessary to their continued earning of income. In 1845 both parties favored a long list of reforms in the state's political and judicial system, but

⁴⁵Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 104-09. Foster observed that for the evangelicals "Political prosperity depended upon moral prosperity. The weaker the government, the less power it had to control the passions and interests of its subjects, the more it was endangered by evil customs." United Front, pp. 179-80.

⁴⁶Randall, "Gubernatorial Platforms, Michigan, 1834-1854," p. 1-70.

the platforms were almost identical. Both parties always claimed to be the most capable administrators of a limited and "economical" government.

In Michigan Democratic laissez-faire conflicted with Whig activism over issues involving religion and morals. Democratic secularism was evident in the 1835 constitution and in Democratic leader John Norvell's views on religion, morals, and government. Democratic preference for laissez-faire ethics will be illustrated further below as the sources and shape of Whig activism are uncovered. Evangelical Whigs would have involved the state in regulating morals and promoting Christianity. Michigan Democrats insisted such matters were personal. In 1839 a Democratic newspaper characteristically reprimanded an editor for appointing himself judge "over other men's conscience (sic)" and equated such a posture with bigotry and intolerance.⁴⁷ In 1843 the Ann Arbor Michigan Argus clearly stated the Democratic case in declaring its intention to abstain from discussion of any "particular religious tenents (sic)."

We regard a man's religious belief as concerning only himself and his Maker. We, therefore, shall never sully our columns with theological disputations or blacken them with sectarian controversies.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Detroit Morning Post and Craftsman, March 16, 1839, p. 2.

⁴⁸Ann Arbor Michigan Argus, February 1, 1843, p. 2.

Whig Benevolence and Evangelicalism

1. Piety and Power.

In 1831 Charles C. Trowbridge described the new Governor of Michigan Territory to a friend. Governor and Mr. Porter, he said, impressed him as agreeable, informed, and proper persons, yet Trowbridge was disturbed.

Neither of them are pious, however. How few there are in the seat of power who are--and how earnestly we ought to pray that the influence of station and character might be brought to bear in the great work of the gospel.⁴⁹

Six years later Trowbridge became the Whig Party's first candidate for governor of the state. Trowbridge helped manage the Bank of Michigan, and his financial ability, it may be assumed, was partly responsible for his nomination in a time of economic crisis. More important, however, was Trowbridge's identification with benevolence. Trowbridge had served as Detroit alderman and mayor, was a director of the Detroit and St. Joseph Railroad Company, a founder of the Historical and Algic Societies, a member of various Bible and Missionary Societies, and had a lively interest in everything "calculated to promote intellectual, moral, and religious culture." A fellow church member said that Trowbridge's "interest in religious matters was great and devoted, and while his modesty was remarkable he was . . . a conspicuous

⁴⁹Charles C. Trowbridge, Hamtramck, October 23, 1831, to Henry R. Schoolcraft, in Carter (ed.), Territorial Papers, XII, 360.

and influential leader in the Protestant Episcopal Church."⁵⁰

He belonged, also, to an elite group of solid citizens who ran Michigan's benevolent system. That system, like the national benevolent network, was "controlled through a series of interlocking directorates by a small number of Presbyterian and Congregational ministers and laymen."⁵¹

The benevolent system interlocked with Whiggery. Three representative benevolent societies in 1833 were the Detroit Temperance Society, the Wayne County Bible Society, and the Michigan Sunday School Union. Together they had 47 offices which were filled by only 31 different men. There was most overlap at top levels. Thus Eurotas P. Hastings, a prominent Presbyterian layman and Whig, was President of both the Temperance and Bible Societies and a director of the Sunday School Union. Lists of officers of other societies in the 1830's revealed a similar pattern.⁵²

⁵⁰James V. Campbell, "Biographical Sketch of Charles C. Trowbridge," MPHC, IV, 478-91.

⁵¹Arthur R. Kooker, "The Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan, 1796-1840: A Study in Humanitarianism on the American Frontier," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1941), p. 87.

⁵²Detroit Courier, March 6, 1833, p. 3; February 26, 1834, p. 2; April 3, 1833, p. 3. Pauline Joan Ullrich, "The Impact of New England Influences Upon the Formative Stages of the Non-Political Institutional Developments in Michigan During the Late Territorial Period," (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1942), pp. 47, 48, 52, 55-56, 59, 84. Kooker, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 84, 85.

The Michigan Education Society, a branch of the American Education Society, was a typical evangelical organization whose main aim was to raise funds to train Protestant missionaries. John Allen, the enterprising founder of Ann Arbor, was President of the Society in 1834. Allen had been an Antimason and became a leading Whig. He was not a communicant in the Presbyterian church, but his immediate family had founded the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor.⁵³ Of the 31 officers of the three societies discussed above, I was able to identify the later party affiliations of 22: 4 were Democrats and 18 were Whigs.

Anti-Catholicism seems to have been, as elsewhere, a stock-in-trade of Michigan benevolence. The Education Society's 1834 Report, for example, rang out dire warnings about the spread of Popish influence in the West.⁵⁴ Playing upon fears of Popery was a chief means of raising support for benevolence. The spectre of a common enemy also reduced internal strife among Protestants.⁵⁵ Lyman Beecher, an evangelical with a consuming interest in Protestant unity, appreciated very well the uses of anti-Popery. In the midst of the "Valley Project" in 1830 he observed:

⁵³Bidlack, John Allen and the Founding of Ann Arbor, pp. 23-24. Allen founded Ann Arbor to make money. He invested in sawmills, railroads, and land companies. Later he became a Democrat. His ardent Whiggery of the 1830's is evident in the John Allen MSS, BHC, and Woodbridge MSS.

⁵⁴Courier, October 15, 1834, p. 1

⁵⁵Ray Allen Billington, "Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860," MVHR, XXII, 3 (December, 1935), pp. 361-84. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 38.

The right spirit is awake, and strong to preoccupy the Valley before his Holiness. So much good is meant to come out of Popery, though it meant not so.⁵⁶

What Beecher meant by the "right spirit" was partly expressed in a letter from Michigan to the evangelical journal Home Missionary.

The letter was typical of evangelical views of the Catholics:

In Detroit the Catholics are building a most spacious and splendid cathedral. At Bertrand in Berrien County or nearby, they have a college, and all southwestern Michigan and northern Indiana are being scoured to obtain Protestant children to educate. The villages on the whole line of our railroads are beginning to be filled by Papists; and wherever they pitch their tents and gain an influence, immorality, intemperance, and crime stalk abroad unblushingly.⁵⁷

2. The Whigs and the Presbyterians.

Professor Dixon Ryan Fox observed that New England influence on politics in western New York was exercised primarily through the Presbyterian Church.⁵⁸ The same might be said of Michigan, where Presbyterians

⁵⁶Quoted in Foster, United Front, p. 207. Foster commented: "The united front drive for the Valley needed a competitor to excite energies and bring in more funds; that competitor had to be a dreadful foe, precise in form and substance, mysterious in power. Ignorance and sin were too vague and general . . . to provide a satisfactory stimulus. So the Pope, the 'Man of Sin,' the great "Whore of Babylon," opened his sinister intrigues to move his empire to the Valley of the Mississippi. p. 205. Yet Foster underestimated the extent to which evangelicals used anti-Catholic propaganda, p. 207. Compare with Sister M. Evangeline Thomas, Nativism in the Old Northwest, 1850-1860 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1936), p. 51.

⁵⁷Quoted in Thomas, Nativism, p. 41.

⁵⁸Dixon Ryan Fox, Yankees and Yorkers (New York: New York University, 1940; reprinted by Ira J. Freedman, Inc., 1963), p. 210.

had political influence far out of proportion to their numbers, both as a pressure group and through individual Presbyterians who had power in the Whig Party and, for a time, in the state government. Perhaps the Presbyterians tended to become so intensely involved in politics because they inherited the puritan tradition of "the necessary interrelationship of civil and religious life."⁵⁹ The Presbyterians and Congregationalists were the most active carriers of that New England culture in which religion pervaded all spheres of life.

The Presbyterian-Whig association was manifested in many ways. Local and state Whig meetings, such as the Whig Young Men's State Convention of 1837, were often held in Presbyterian Churches.⁶⁰ Meeting in church buildings for public purposes was not unusual in a newly settled area where few spacious buildings existed. Yet, that Whigs met often in Presbyterian churches was due less to a proliferation of those churches than to that denomination providing Whigs with a familiar and congenial setting. Detroit Whigs had other buildings available, yet frequently found the Presbyterian Session Room convenient, as did the benevolent societies.

The Presbyterian Michigan Observer was published in Detroit at the office of the Whig Advertiser. During the 1838 campaign the Observer printed a sermon which asked church members to vote against the incumbent Democratic administration of "profane men" who "condemned" God

⁵⁹Blau, Review of Religion, XI, 25.

⁶⁰Advertiser, October, 1837, August 2, 1843, p. 2, for First District Convention in Clinton Presbyterian Church.

and trampled on His laws. Presbyterian ministers in various parts of the state, according to the Free Press, exhorted their churches to vote Whig.⁶¹ During the 1840 campaign the Free Press said that the sound of Tippecanoe (Harrison) songs emanating from the Presbyterian Session Room indicated the "union of a religious sect with a political party." The union of "Church and Whiggery," it said gave urgency to the Democratic slogan of "Political, civil, and Religious Liberty."⁶² Long after the campaign, an old Detroit resident reminisced about the part played in it by Reverend George Duffield of Detroit's First Presbyterian Church.

in whig politics the doctor could not get all to follow him. In the log cabin, hard cider campaign some of his democratic members . . . threatened to nail up their pew doors--Major Kearsley, Jonas Titus [Democratic politicians] and others--if he did not stop preaching politics, because for six Sundays [he had not prayed for President Van Buren]. The Dr. said if that was so he did not know it. He meant as in duty bound, to pray for all who needed prayer, and he knew of no one who needed it more than Martin Van Buren.⁶³

In the midst of the campaign Democrat Lucius Lyon described to his brother Whig policy since 1839: "Jacob M. Howard was nominated for congress by the Whigs . . . in pursuance, I suppose, of the central policy which has concentrated all offices, all appointments, all patronage and all power here in the city of Detroit in the Presbyterian church and in the Bank of Michigan ever since that party got the ascendancy."⁶⁴

⁶¹Free Press, December 3, 1838.

⁶²Free Press, October 1, 1840, p. 2.

⁶³Reverend W. Fitch, "Reminiscences of Detroit," MPHC, V, 538.

⁶⁴Lucius Lyon, Detroit, September 13, 1840, to T.H. Lyon, Lyon Letters, p. 537.

(Lyon was an Episcopalian and interested in advancing the interests of that church in Michigan.)

In 1840 the Democrats concentrated their political fire on the alleged alliance of Whiggery and the banks, but in the 1841 gubernatorial campaign the Free Press shifted its main assault against the Presbyterian-Whig entente cordiale. Religion was a salient issue in 1841 because the Whigs were making dark hints about the "peculiar religious opinions" of John Barry, the Democratic candidate. Barry was known to be a religious skeptic, although during the campaign the Democrats claimed that he was a Unitarian. The Advertiser reported that as a state representative Barry habitually cursed and made "coarse jokes" about the birth of the Savior in the legislative halls. The Free Press counter-attacked by charging that there was a "church party linked in with our state politics." Since taking power in 1839 the Whigs had appointed a striking number of the "most influential members" of the Presbyterian Church to high office. If Barry were elected, said the Free Press, he would not "aggrandize one particular sect as has been the case for the past two years." The Presbyterian denomination in Detroit "during the two years of Whig rule, has had a Governor, an Auditor General, a State Treasurer, a Secretary of State, an Attorney General, two United States Senators, one Representative in Congress, the Commissioner of Internal Improvements, the Collector of Customs for the Port of Detroit, several Regents of the University, selected from it." The Advertiser apparently made no reply to the charges,

which the Free Press continued to make in detail.⁶⁵

The Free Press was appealing to a popular sentiment regarding Whigs and Presbyterians that seems to have been present from the time the Whigs took power back in the winter of 1839-1840. In February, 1840, Eurotas P. Hastings wrote to Governor William Woodbridge recommending the Reverend Ira M. Mead for the office of University Regent. Hastings thought Mead "well qualified" but had doubts about the political wisdom of the appointment. "As he is a Presbyterian minister it may seem under the present state of the public mind an unfit selection."⁶⁶

It seems reasonable to conclude that the influence of Presbyterians within the Whig Party had developed in Michigan by 1841 to an extent which even the anxious Reverend Ely might have found reassuring.

3. Michigan Synod and Party Policy.

In the 1830's no Michigan denomination was more interested in promoting social and moral reform than the Presbyterian.⁶⁷ Presbyterians

⁶⁵ Free Press, September 12, 1841, p. 2. Advertiser and Free Press, August-November, 1841, passim.

⁶⁶ Eurotas P. Hastings, Detroit, February 13, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

⁶⁷ Under the Plan of Union, Presbyterianism included many former Congregationalists.

who staffed benevolent societies and who brought Christian influence to bear in politics were following their church's urgings and ideals. It will be useful first to identify reform measures promoted by the Presbyterians and then to compare Whig and Democratic attitudes toward those measures.

The ministers of Detroit's First Presbyterian Church during the 1830's and 1840's were forceful men who dominated the Michigan Synod and who involved it with social causes with political implications. Reverend John. P. Cleaveland in the mid 1830's plunged unblushingly into socio-political issues. One church-goer described an 1836 sermon of his as "an exceedingly well written political discourse" proper for an election day which "touched upon everything but religion."⁶⁸ Produced by Cleaveland, the Synod in 1835 declared slavery "a sin before God and man [which] ought to end immediately." The Presbyterians also branded the "use, manufacture and sale of ardent spirits" as morally wrong, and the use of tobacco as "offensive to personal and domestic requirements." Sabbath desecration, said the Synod, was a "principle cause of darkness and declension." In the mid 1830's the Synod even condemned war and declared conscientious objection to be a Christian duty.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Quoted in Kooker, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 120-21.

⁶⁹John Comin and Harold P. Fredsell, History of the Presbyterian Church in Michigan (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Press, 1950), pp. 62, 69, 74-76.

The Synod took a conservative turn after 1837, partly because of the effects of the Old-School--New-School schism of 1837. Although most Michigan Presbyterian churches went New School, they became, according to Lewis G. Vander Velde, more conservative in trying to show their orthodoxy. Perhaps more significant was the departure of Cleaveland and his replacement by George Duffield who brought a moderate evangelical influence to the First Presbyterian Church and to the Synod. Duffield had been, ironically, a New School "rebel" of the 1830's and a former assistant of Charles G. Finney. Duffield regarded causes such as abolition as "ultra reforms" and refused to support movements with "one-idea" fixations. The Synod changed its emphasis after 1838, paying less attention to slavery, temperance or war, and more to Sabbath-keeping and education.⁷⁰

Yet these shifts of emphasis and of official policy can be misleading. Neither the Synod nor many individual Presbyterians lost the evangelical drive they already had. Individual Presbyterians and Congregationalists continued to lead in "ultra" reforms such as abolition and peace. Duffield himself, as a community leader, gave ardent support to temperance, which he thought had a sound scriptural basis. He

⁷⁰ Lewis G. Vander Velde, "The Synod of Michigan and Movements for Social Reform, 1834-1869," (n.d., typewritten MS, BHC), pp. 6, 9-12. Lewis G. Vander Velde, "The Diary of George Duffield," MVHR, XXIV, 1 (June, 1937), 22. Smith, Revivalism, pp. 26, 53, 108-09. Lewis G. Vander Velde (ed.), "Notes on the Diary of George Duffield," MVHR, XXIV, 1 (June, 1937), 31.

engaged himself also in advancing education, in denouncing Popery, and in a controversy over capital punishment, upholding the evangelical point of view in all these matters. Although Duffield thought abolitionists to be misguided Congregationalists, he reacted to Southern offenses to the North, such as the Fugitive Slave Law, with indignation and resentment. Whatever his reservations regarding certain causes, Duffield was easily the leading evangelist of Detroit and Michigan.⁷¹

The Parties and Morality

1. Temperance.

Evangelicals played a leading part in the temperance crusade everywhere. Indeed, "the drive against intemperance was an integral part of the expanded revivalism of the 1830's."⁷² In Michigan, Duffield, the Presbyterians, and other evangelicals, such as the editors of the Baptist Michigan Christian Herald, led in temperance agitation. Whig Presbyterians were conspicuously active in temperance societies organized in the 1830's. The Detroit Young Men's Temperance Society

⁷¹Vander Velde (ed.), "Notes on the Diary of George Duffield," p. 62. On the involvement of Presbyterians in Anti-slavery and temperance see Kooker, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 148-49, 84-85.

One of Duffield's young parishioners said that whenever she talked to Duffield "I feel . . . as if I were talking to someone in the clouds." Lucy W. Woodbridge, Springwells, February 27, 1845, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

⁷²Cole, Northern Evangelists, p. 116.

appropriately met to organize in 1835 in the session room of the Presbyterian Church.⁷³ The evangelicals did not hesitate to try to advance temperance through politics. In 1839 the Presbyterian Michigan Observer urged the friends of temperance to unite in voting in local elections for only those candidates who would refuse licenses to liquor retailers, on the assumption--mistaken, as it proved--that unlicensed liquor retailing would be illegal and not practiced.⁷⁴

Although there was no absolute division between the parties on temperance, the Whig Party showed itself far more sympathetic to the cause than did the Democracy. This was not surprising in a party which had absorbed Antimasonry, since Antimasons universally seem to have promoted temperance.⁷⁵

The Whig Advertiser had agitated for temperance in 1836, deploring public apathy and advocating a stiffer licensing law for Detroit. It suggested making the cost of a license about \$100 to cut down the number

⁷³McCoy, "Political Affiliations of American Economic Elites," pp. 133-34. Constitution and By-Laws of the Detroit Young Men's Temperance Society (Detroit: S. M' Knight, 1835), pp. 3-4. Farmer, History of Detroit, I, 838-39. The Michigan State Temperance Society in 1841 also met in the Presbyterian Session Room. Free Press, November 23, 1841, p. 2.

⁷⁴Michigan Observer, March 19, 1839. This is the only copy I have seen, in BHC.

⁷⁵E.g., Detroit Courier, Ann Arbor Western Emigrant, Michigan Temperance Herald. Every Masonic publication in Michigan which I have seen or read about promoted temperance.

of retailers. Where temperance was concerned, it said, "Almost anything was permissible to save a man from becoming a drunkard."⁷⁶

Whigs showed themselves sympathetic to temperance indirectly by suggesting continuously in campaigns from 1837 to 1840 that the Democrats were intemperate and unfit for office. In 1837 the Whigs emphasized a number of issues: depression, rag money and wildcat banks, party despotism, the Toledo strip, and others. Most of all they tried to identify the Democrats with intemperance. More than any other issue they played upon the Democratic legislature's alleged appropriation of money for "stationery" which the Whigs claimed was actually for "ardent spirits." In evangelical eyes, this was no doubt the nadir of corruption: public money had illegally gone to pay the Democrats' immoral "grog bill."⁷⁷

Meetings of Whigs in the towns of Wayne County, such as one in Dearbornville, denounced the legislature for violating the Michigan constitution "in having voted a large sum of money for the purchase of ardent spirits for the use of the members . . . under a fraudulent subterfuge." This action was "not only unworthy of a moral and religious people, but unworthy of any man having the slightest pretension to decency."⁷⁸

The Wayne County Whig Convention said that the Democratic Party placed in important stations men "wholly irresponsible and incompetent

⁷⁶ Advertiser, June 16, p. 2; June 29, 30; August 1, p. 2; November 15, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid., September 15, 18, 26.

⁷⁸ Ibid., September 18.

(even in the qualification of common sobriety)." That phrase, judging by Democratic reactions to it, seemed to have hit home.⁷⁹

Long after the 1830's an old resident of Dearborn recalled what the Wayne County Democratic Convention had been like when it used to meet in Dearborn. The hurly-burly of a town meeting, he said, was "a puritan Sunday" in comparison.

Dray load of refreshments in kegs and bottles came from Detroit. . . . possibly the visitors could enjoy greater individual freedom than if it had been held in Detroit. There were no policemen nor jail in Dearborn in those good times.⁸⁰

During 1837 Democratic Governor Mason and a large group of state and party dignitaries gathered at Mt. Clemens to celebrate the opening of the Clinton and Kalamazoo canal. A Baptist minister in 1873 recalled the scene. After a groundbreaking ceremony in which Mason raised the first spadeful of soil to loud huzzas,

Whiskey flowed profusely. Tables were spread in the adjacent grove, and a sumptuous dinner was provided. . . . Then came the toasts, with speeches and responses. It was a day of democratic glory. All were hilarious with joy and whiskey. Distinctions were abolished. All were on a level.⁸¹

Another early settler remembered the same celebration many years later and it made a very similar impression on him. He recalled that there

⁷⁹Ibid., July 12, 1837, p. 2; Free Press, July 21, 1837, p. 2, and July, passim.

⁸⁰F. A. Gulley, "Old Dearborn Families," Historical and Genealogical Sketches, Typewritten MSS, BHC.

⁸¹Rev. Supply Chase, "A Pioneer Minister," MPHC, V, 59-60.

had been an "abundant supply of champagne" and much "toasting and drinking."

I suppose they had what, in those days, was called a good time. I know I thought they did not act as though the champagne had added to their brains or sense. I am proud to say that a governor would not do such things now.⁸²

In these rather puritannical observations (with envy just below their surfaces), not just temperance sentiment was being offended, but also that sense of moralistic propriety so characteristic of small-town, Protestant New England and its colonies in the Middle West. Intemperance did violence to social distinctions, and lack of regard for rank was to the New Englander, even on the frontier, immoral.

In 1838 temperance societies, especially in Lenawee County, petitioned the Michigan legislature to prohibit the licensing of the traffic in ardent spirits.⁸³ The Report of the House Committee on Ardent Spirits could not have endeared the Democratic legislators to temperance forces. About three-fifths of the report reminded the petitioners of the beneficial uses of alcohol. The committee eventually arrived at the "dreadful evils of intemperance," but, it went on, any food or drink used immoderately could become "fatal poisons." "Let man use all things without abuse, and deadly poisons will be harmless, like the dews of heaven." A prohibitory

⁸² MPHC, XIV, 553-54.

⁸³ Michigan House Journal, 1838 (Detroit, 1838), pp. 212, 232, 307, 387.

law, the Committee believed, "could not be well enforced, and would be perhaps entirely nugatory."⁸⁴

How different was the report submitted in 1840, when the Whigs controlled the legislature. They passed no temperance law, but the report of Munnus Kenny must have comforted the evangelicals. Kenny was an anti-slavery Whig from Washtenaw County, a farmer, lawyer, and founder of the Washtenaw Mutual Insurance Company.⁸⁵ His report read like a teetotaler's tract. It listed not the beneficial uses of alcohol, but rather the evils resulting from intemperance: misery, poverty, wasted time. Kenny could find no "benefit resulting from the traffic, to offset against the evils it inflicts upon the community. . . . no bright spot to relieve the dark shade of the picture." All use of intoxicating liquors was an abuse.

Some men argued, said Kenny, against legislating morality, that "compelling men to be moral . . . is always odious, and savors of church and state." He answered that every law on the books, such as those punishing theft and murder, compelled men to be moral. In answer to the argument that the "law would conflict with the private rights of individuals, to buy and sell as they please," Kenny pointed to the rights of the

⁸⁴Michigan House, Documents Accompanying the Journal, 1838 (Detroit, 1838), pp. 460-61. March 6, 1838, A. W. Buel, Chairman of Committee.

⁸⁵Michigan Biographies, I, 464.

community: "this giving up of private rights so far as they come in conflict with the general good, is the very principle which holds society together." The report proposed no legislation but was meant to show where the sympathies of the House lay. Kenny implied that public opinion would not yet compel temperance legislation nor effectively support any law once enacted.⁸⁶

The Democrats appear to have become more discreet after 1837. At least there is no record of any more "stationery" incidents or Mt. Clemens parties, although party conventions probably continued to be "good times." Local Democratic candidates in Detroit in 1838 and 1839 went on record as supporting, with qualifications, temperance laws.⁸⁷ Yet the basic pattern of Whig friendliness and Democratic unfriendliness to temperance continued. When a Whig City Council in 1840 established a high liquor license in Detroit, Democrats held a public meeting on February 24 to disapprove the "excessive rates of license . . . respecting taverns, victualling houses, groceries, and places of public amusement."⁸⁸ Unfortunately, there is no way of identifying who the Democrats at the meeting were, or of determining whether they represented a cross-section or particular faction of the party.

⁸⁶State of Michigan, Documents Accompanying the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1840, (Detroit: George Dawson, 1840), II, No. 61, 552-54.

⁸⁷Advertiser, March 26, 1838, p. 2. Free Press, April 13, 1839, p. 2.

⁸⁸Free Press, February 27, 1840, p. 2.

In 1850 the state Constitutional Convention passed an amendment permitting the state legislature to pass a temperance or prohibition law. In 1853 the Legislature passed such a law but chose to submit it as a referendum to the electorate in a special election. Although the vote did not strictly follow party lines, there was, in the rural towns of Wayne County and in Detroit's wards, a strong tendency for areas of Democratic strength to vote against the prohibition law, and for areas of Whig-Free Soil strength to support the prohibition law. The top four Whig-Free Soil towns all favored the law by a majority of over 70%. One of the three Democratic towns in the county to favor the law was Nankin, the only Democratic town with marked Free Soil tendencies.

Symbolic of the general pattern was the strongest Democratic town in the county casting the greatest percentage against prohibition.

Detroit's wards behaved much the same as the towns. Only three wards voted against prohibition, and of the three, two were the strongest Democratic wards.

The five wards which favored prohibition were about the same in Democratic strength, but varied widely in the extent to which they supported prohibition, from 59 to 75 percent. Obviously, many Democrats also supported prohibition.

TABLE 27

OPPOSITION TO PROHIBITION, 1853, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH,
1848-1852, IN WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS

	% Against Prohib.	Democrats
Grosse Pointe	81	80
Greenfield	72	62
Ecorse	71	51
Huron	66	54
Sumpter	65	47
Romulus	60	60
Hamtramck	60	70
Van Buren	59	60
Canton	53	64
Reford	52	66
Springwells	51	53
(WAYNE COUNTY)	44)	
Dearborn	31	59
Livonia	28	39
Brownstown	20	41
Nankin	18	56
Plymouth	16	38
Monguagon	14	60
Taylor	12	37

TABLE 28

OPPOSITION TO PROHIBITION, 1853, AND DEMOCRATIC AVERAGE,
1848-1852, AND 1848, 1850, 1852, IN DETROIT'S WARDS^a

Ward	% Against Prohib.	Democratic Average	
		1848-1852	1848, 1850, 1852
4	71	61	61
7	64	58	56
8	54	75	68
3	41	54	50
1	37	59	52
6	35	52	49
2	34	55	51
5	25	53	50

^aBetween 1848 and 1852 no wards changed their boundaries.

In 1852 a Temperance Party put together a slate of nominations for state and Wayne County officers composed of candidates drawn from both the Whig and Democratic tickets. Its purpose was to endorse those regularly nominated candidates who, regardless of party, were most favorable to temperance. The slate was dominated by Whigs: the Temperance men endorsed Whig nominees Zachariah Chandler for governor and William A. Howard for Congress.⁸⁹

2. Antislavery.

Evangelicals organized antislavery societies in the 1830's and many of them helped form the Liberty Party in 1840. Evangelical antislavery was moderate compared to Garrisonian abolition which rejected political action and demanded immediate abolition. Since their opponents lumped together all critics of slavery as "abolitionists" it will be convenient here to use "abolitionist" and "antislavery" interchangeably, remembering that Michigan abolitionists were not Garrisonian and were politically oriented.

The attitudes of the Whig and Democratic parties to antislavery provide another index of how parties stood toward evangelicalism. Whigs initially tried hard not to offend abolitionists because so many of their party sympathized with the cause. Presbyterian Whigs led in the

⁸⁹Detroit Post and Tribune, Zachariah Chandler: His Life and Public Services (Detroit: Post and Tribune Co., 1880), pp. 85-86.

organization of the State Antislavery Society and they dominated the Detroit Society.⁹⁰

In 1836 the Advertiser attacked Southerners and Northern dough-faces for suppressing abolitionist literature ("incendiary publications") and defended the abolitionists' right to freedom of speech. It sympathized with the fugitive slave and for a time constituted itself a forum for the airing of opinions on abolitionism, pro and con, but by the end of 1836, avoided the issue.⁹¹

The Democratic Free Press ignored the abolitionists at first, but when it did eventually mention them showed that it regarded them as misguided zealots.⁹² The Democratic legislature was even less well disposed, and in 1836 considered censuring abolitionists in a resolution saying that "the formation of abolition societies and the acts of certain individuals calling themselves abolitionists . . . are in direct violation of the obligation of the compact of the Union, and destructive to the tranquility and welfare of the country." The final version, passed March 2, and 4, omitted the words "abolition" and "calling themselves abolitionists," but the latter could hardly have missed the point.⁹³

⁹⁰Kooker, "Anti Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 149, 148, 182, 183.

⁹¹Advertiser, June 22, 30, July 2, 16, 19, 25, August 6, 25, November 18.

⁹²Kooker, pp. 135-36, 170, 177; Free Press, passim.

⁹³Kooker, pp. 125-26.

During 1838 the Michigan Antislavery Society sent letters to the Democratic and Whig Congressional candidates asking their views on issues related to slavery. The replies, while ambiguous, showed the Whig candidate to be far more hostile to slavery and the South than the Democrat. Whig Hezekiah G. Wells said he favored abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia but that its inhabitants should be consulted first. He believed Congress had power to regulate the internal trade of the states, approved of recognizing the slave republic of "Hayti," and opposed Texas annexation. Wells also supported the right of petition, which meant that he opposed, by implication, the "Gag Rule" passed by Congress in 1836 by which it would not receive, read, or refer any petitions dealing with slavery in any way but would automatically table such petitions.

Democrat Issac Crary said he opposed slavery in principle, but opposed abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia and opposed regulation of interstate commerce as unconstitutional. He hedged on recognition of Haiti, and gave himself a loophole on Texas by opposing it "at the present time, especially when that territory is to be under the influence of the evils of slavery." Crary defended the "Gag Rule" at some length as did, on occasion, the Free Press. The "Gag Rule" was an anti-abolitionist measure but many non-antislavery Northerners found it obnoxious.⁹⁴

⁹⁴Advertiser, October 8, p. 2; October 20, p. 2. Free Press, September 27, 1838, p. 2, October 8, p. 2, October 9, p. 2, October 11,

In 1838 the legislature refused to table petitions dealing with slavery and by large majorities, 5-42 and 44-2, voted to refer them to committees. The minority supporting the equivalent of a "Gag" were Democrats. The legislators who had introduced the petitions were Whigs.⁹⁵ (Sympathy for or against a state "Gag Rule" does not necessarily imply anything about antislavery feeling. It involved primarily feelings of sectional resentment and pride.)

The Free Press became increasingly vituperative as the 1830's ended and usually managed to couple references to abolitionists with Negrophobic comments. In 1840 Dearbornville Democrats typically grouped together "modern whiggery, abolitionism, anti-masonry and the thousand other etceteras" which were merely "disguises for ancient federalism"⁹⁶

In 1844 a Democrat legislature again went on record to express its lack of sympathy for antislavery. A committee report on petitions asking the state to protect fugitive slaves conveyed through its tone its contempt for the petitioners. The committee pointed out that 525 persons "purport" to have signed the petitions, and that the same six counties kept sending similar petitions. It bluntly advised the petitioners

p. 2. Also, William Woodbridge, Springwells, October 14, 1839, to Arthur L. Porter, Michigan Anti-Slavery Society, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

⁹⁵ Michigan House Journal, 1838, pp. 46-47.

⁹⁶ Free Press, February 29, 1840, and November 20, 1840, p. 2.

to read federal laws and the constitution: if they had, they would not have invited the legislature of Michigan to disregard an act of Congress.⁹⁷

This discussion has been fragmentary and is meant only to show dominant attitudes in the parties. There were antislavery Democrats and some took positions, unofficially, far more antislavery or anti-Southern than their party's. Also, most of the evidence above relates to Wayne County and the Democrats of Detroit seem to have been particularly anti-abolitionist.

3. The Sabbath.

While temperance and antislavery were among the best-known of evangelical causes, the evangelical campaign to preserve the Sabbath probably more than any other issue marked Michigan Whiggery as the party of evangelicalism and the Democracy as anti-evangelical. No other issue placed the Whigs so clearly on the side of piety and religion.

The controversy in the United States over Sabbath-keeping went back most immediately to an 1810 act by Congress permitting post offices to remain open and mails to be carried on Sunday. Philadelphia and central New York Presbyterians led opposition to the law. Another

⁹⁷State of Michigan, Documents of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, 1844 (Detroit: Bagg and Harmon, 1844), House Doc. No. 13.

Congressional law in 1825 requiring post offices where mail was delivered on Sunday to stay open rekindled the controversy. In 1828 evangelicals formed the General Union for Promoting Observance of the Christian Sabbath and in 1829 they sent petitions to Congress remonstrating against the Sunday mail laws. Richard M. Johnson, Jackson's Attorney General, replied to the petitions in his famous report to the Senate in 1830 which defended Sunday mails and was a "classical defense of the American system of separation of church and state."⁹⁸

Sympathetic historians of Michigan Presbyterianism have remarked that the Synod in the 1830's seemed to think that "the continued existence of Christian civilization itself depended on keeping the Sabbath after the Puritan fashion." The Michigan Synod advised the churches to exercise "immediate, steady, uncompromising discipline" over violations of the holy day. Violations were: "to journey or transact any secular business, or give or receive social visits, . . . or to own stock in establishments, such as Stage Companies, Railroads, Steamboats, etc., which are employed in violation of that holy day."⁹⁹ In

⁹⁸Bodo, Protestant Clergy, pp. 39-43; Cole, Northern Evangelists, pp. 107-08.

⁹⁹Comin and Fredsell, History of Presbyterian Church, pp. 67, 69, 74-76. Vander Velde, "Synod of Michigan and Social Reform," pp. 16-19. In 1832 a farmer wrote to his native England that "The laws of this territory strongly prohibit working on the Sunday and are well enforced." He added, "But if there were no laws or conscience . . . believe me the Yankees do not like work well enough to work on the Sunday." Tucker (ed.), "Correspondence of John Fisher," Michigan History, XLV, 224.

1836 the Synod said that it was wrong to elect rulers who violated the Sabbath by example or by legislation.

The outstanding example of rulers violating the Sabbath was the Democratic state government's permitting railroad mail cars to run on Sunday. Presbyterians and other evangelicals, particularly Baptists, petitioned the legislature to stop the "running of the cars," but the Democrats appeared little interested in the matter.¹⁰⁰ William Woodbridge, as Whig candidate for governor in 1839, took a personal interest in Sabbath violation by the state,¹⁰¹ and the Whig legislature elected in 1839 acted to rescue the state from sin. One March 13, 1840, the House passed, 26-16, a resolution prohibiting any locomotive, passenger, or freight car to be run on any state railroad on "the first day of the week," except to fulfill the terms of any existing contract for transporting government mail.¹⁰² Three days later the House reconsidered the

¹⁰⁰Michigan House Journal, 1838, p. 309. Michigan Christian Herald, 1839, *passim*.

¹⁰¹See letter from Robert Abbott, Detroit, informing Woodbridge that "labor has been performed at the depot in the city, and on the road on Sundays," March 25, 1839, Woodbridge MSS. Abbott was a Democrat who was Auditor General from 1836 to 1839, a former fur trader and Territorial Treasurer. He was interested in "benevolent and church enterprises" and "especially in advancing the interests of the Methodist Church." Michigan Biographies (Lansing, 1888), pp. 5-6. The historian of Michigan Methodism praised him highly. Reverend Elijah H. Pilcher, Protestantism in Michigan (Detroit: R.D.S. Tyler and Co., 1878), p. 40.

¹⁰²Michigan House Journal, 1840 (Detroit, 1840), pp. 356-57, 442.

resolution as Sabbatarians apparently hoped to pass a stiffer law. True M. Tucker, a Whig from St. Clair County, added an amendment which fined any person "traveling on any public or private road . . . on the Sabbath day" fifty dollars, with any money from fines to go for the benefit of Sabbath schools. Tucker's proposal failed, but so irritated one Democratic legislator (Charles P. Bush, representing Livingston and Ingham) that he proposed an amendment which would have had the state, in effect, pay the cost of any person's business suffering because the cars were not to run on Sundays. After other attempts to strengthen and to weaken the measure, the original repassed the House, 25-19.¹⁰³

The House's action had been preceded by a committee report in which Munnius Kenny again put the Whigs squarely on the side of the angels and in which he recommended, unlike his temperance report, "some prompt and efficient legislation" to prohibit the running of cars on the Sabbath. "That christianity is the common law of this country, is a fact not to be questioned." Sabbath observance was one of the great Christian duties:

No christian nation has guarded effectually against the prevalence of vice and immorality, who have not required the sanctification of the Sabbath, and prohibited, by law, those things which are inconsistent with its sacred character and holy uses and designs.

Industry, health, frugality, temperance and order prevailed in those districts where it is observed, and just in proportion as it is

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 478-81.

revered and honored; while idleness, dissipation, intemperance and vices, injurious to the public weal, have abounded, wherever, and just as the first day of the week has been robbed of its sacredness and prostituted to secular uses.¹⁰⁴

Kenny conceded that the state had an obligation to meet federal mail contracts, but said it was not necessary to forward passenger and freight cars with the mail.¹⁰⁵

In the original vote passing the Sabbath bill (26-19), 19 Whigs and 7 Democrats voted for it, 10 Whigs and 6 Democrats voted no, and 2 Whigs and 4 Democrats abstained.¹⁰⁶ Thus, House Democrats split on the bill while about two-thirds of the Whigs supported it. A systematic study of legislative behavior could identify the evangelical and anti-evangelical blocs in both parties. It is enough here to identify the central tendencies of the parties. A Whig legislature stopped the cars from running in 1840 and a Democratic legislature, on February 15, 1842, instructed the commissioners of internal improvements to have one passenger train run over the Central Railroad every Sunday. No freight cars would run and no work except mail carrying would be done, but the Democrats set the cars and passengers rolling again. A motion to postpone the measure failed 17-31, and the House passed the resolution

¹⁰⁴State of Michigan, Documents Accompanying the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1840, II, Doc. No. 49, 467.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 467-68.

¹⁰⁶Roll call vote in Michigan House Journal, 1840, p. 442. Party identification, Advertiser, December 28, 1839, p. 2.

27-24. On February 17 the Democratic-run Senate adopted the measure as a joint resolution without a roll call vote.¹⁰⁷

The Advertiser observed that "the first step taken by the new Democratic legislature was to pass a resolution directing cars to run on the Sabbath. Any exhibition of regard for that day, would have been set down as heresy by the locofoco ultraists." The Presbyterian Pastoral letter of 1842 described the "visible and growing profanation" of the Sabbath. It attributed the growth in individual violation of Sunday partly to the "evil example" set by the legislature.¹⁰⁸

4. Adultery and Fornication.

In January 1843 a Democratic dominated legislature passed a bill to amend the laws relating to adultery and fornication which had made those sins criminal offenses in Michigan.¹⁰⁹ The Whig First

¹⁰⁷ Michigan House Journal, 1842 (Detroit, 1842), pp. 331-32. The vote indicated some Democratic opposition. That hardy anti-evangelical John Norvell was among those voting for the cars to run. Michigan Senate Journal, 1842 (Detroit, 1842), p. 278.

¹⁰⁸ Advertiser, February 17, 1842, p. 2. Vander Velde, "Synod of Michigan and Social Reform," pp. 16-19, and Michigan Christian Herald.

¹⁰⁹ The record is confusing, but see Michigan House Journal, 1843 (Detroit, 1843), pp. 163-64, 177, 178. The repeal seems to have passed January 24, 1843, by a vote of 29-16. On February 5, 1844, the legislature approved an act "to punish persons criminally who are guilty of seduction or adultery." It punished the begetting of children and "carnal knowledge" not sanctified by marriage. Advertiser, February 26, 1844, p. 2.

District Convention (including Wayne County) meeting for the fall campaign, said that it opposed the repeal of the "adultery laws" by last legislature which had thereby committed an "outrage upon the moral sense of the community, and proved themselves to be as destitute of moral, as they are of political virtue." The Whig State Convention condemned the repeal as an "outrage" which struck "at the foundations of our social system and can only be sanctioned by those who are interested in having it passed as a relief measure."¹¹⁰

The Democrats, of course, did not come out in favor of sin, but this was another example of their tendency to prefer laissez-faire in matters of morality, and of the Whig tendency to desire the government to regulate morality.

5. Capital Punishment.

In the 1835 constitutional convention a few delegates proposed, unsuccessfully, that capital punishment be abolished. For the next ten years, and particularly from 1843 to 1846, this issue stirred up debate and dissension within the parties. Party lines were even less clearly drawn on this issue than on those discussed above, but it is significant

¹¹⁰The First District and State Conventions are in Advertiser, August 2, 1843, p. 2 and September 4, 1843, p. 2. The Wayne County Convention attacked "licentiousness and crime," Advertiser, October 4, 1843, p. 2.

that evangelicals and some Whigs placed themselves in the forefront of the opposition to abolition, and that anti-evangelical Democrats led the fight for it.

Agitation for removal of the death penalty gathered steam in the 1843 legislature. The House passed an abolition bill, but not the Senate. The Advertiser meanwhile had been opposing abolition and applauding those Whig legislators who stood against it. Michigan's leading evangelical, Reverend Duffield, also opposed abolition. When Democratic legislators criticized Duffield's interference, the Advertiser came to his defense.¹¹¹

In 1844 the House would not pass abolition,¹¹² but in 1846 "a determined group of reformers" carried abolition. The Democratic legislator who drafted the repeal law was Charles P. Bush of Livingston, the same legislator who would have had the state pay compensation to any person whose business was hurt by the railroad not running on Sunday.¹¹³

¹¹¹Michigan House Journal, 1843, pp. 158, 177, 178, 194, 198, 210. Advertiser, February 1, 1843, p. 2, February 6, p. 2. Albert Post, "Michigan History", XXIX (January-March, 1945), 44-46.

¹¹²The committee on capital punishment in the 1844 House submitted a majority report favoring abolition and a minority report opposing it, both signed by Democrats. State of Michigan, Documents of the Senate and House of Representatives, 1844 (Detroit: Bagg and Harmon, 1844), House Doc. No. 22, and House Doc. No. 23.

¹¹³Post, Michigan History, XXIX, 47-49. Michigan Biographies, p. 142. Bush was a "successful business man, and his farm of 1,700 acres in Livingston County was one of the best in the state."

The Advertiser and the Presbyterians, led by Duffield, protested the repeal. The Synod officially condemned it in 1846 and was still condemning it and petitioning for reinstatement of the death penalty until after 1860. Duffield continued to deliver sermons arguing that God "has ordained there shall be such a thing for the welfare of society" and the Advertiser continued to print them. The Michigan Christian Herald, the evangelical Baptist paper, supported restoration of the death penalty, claiming that crime had increased since its abolition.¹¹⁴

The capital punishment controversy illustrates the frequently symbolic nature of the evangelical and anti-evangelical conflict. For all practical purposes, capital punishment did not exist in Michigan, because there had been only one execution under territorial government in 1830 and none since. De facto abolition already existed in the 1840's.¹¹⁵ Charles Bush and George Duffield were nonetheless disagreeing about matters vital to them: whose values would be acknowledged as legitimate by the state; whose values should predominate in society?

So it was with other matters. Duffield and the evangelicals may not have really believed that a train running on Sunday was rending the social fabric, although it undoubtedly set a bad example. It did, however,

¹¹⁴Vander Velde, "Synod of Michigan and Social Reform," pp. 25-26. Advertiser, January -March, 1848, passim, and especially February 19, 1848, p. 2. Michigan Christian Herald, January 29, 1849, p. 2.

¹¹⁵Post, Michigan History, XXIX, 49.

represent the attitude of the state to their God and their values, which they believed were the American heritage. Elected officials were men designated by the community to represent it before man and God. That "representation" should not be sinful. With symbolic issues it does not matter if the law is violated by parts of the community, particularly by the subterranean and unseen, or the un-lived-with. Form counts more than substance for those who are looking for recognition, either for themselves or for their values. It matters that the letter and spirit of the law exist and bestow sanction and indicate the approved direction of society.

Twenty-five years after the Michigan Synod first denounced intemperance George Duffield gave a 25th Anniversary Address to the Synod in which he expressed almost precisely this compulsion of the evangelicals for actual and symbolic recognition of their norms. In the midst of a long discourse on the history and progress of temperance in Michigan, Duffield said,

The day is advancing, notwithstanding the revulsions, convulsions, and opposition the temperance reform has experienced, when the example and position of the Synod of Michigan, a quarter century ago, will be vindicated and honoured by the applause of a temperate community; (italics mine) when intemperance and the use of intoxicating drinks shall be confined to the secret dens of an illegal and disgraceful traffic, and when the enemies of temperance reform . . . shall find no sympathy or countenance or apologists any longer in the church.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶Address delivered on October 13, 1860. Free Press, October 14, 1860, p. 1

The Whigs and the Moralization of Politics

The Whig Party constituted the evangelicals' best hope to promote the Christianization of America through politics. Even if the party passed only few pieces of "Christian" legislation, its sympathy for evangelical causes made its being in power reassuring to evangelicals, who were also comforted by the piety of Whig leaders. William Woodbridge, for example, while not a pious man, always took positions which conveyed his rapport with evangelical attitudes.¹¹⁷

According to Edelman,

through taking the roles of publics whose support they need, public officials achieve and maintain their positions of leadership. The official who correctly gauges the response of publics to his acts, speeches, and postures makes those behaviors significant symbols evoking common meanings for his audience and for himself and so shaping his further actions as to reassure his public and in this sense 'represent' them.¹¹⁸

Thus did the Whigs "represent" evangelicals. Many Whigs shared with evangelicals the tendency to view political activity in a providential framework, recognizing the intervention of God in secular affairs. This, like the desire to Christianize society, was a continuation of the Puritan tradition in somewhat modified form.

1. "Woodbridge and Reform"

The central Whig slogan in the 1839 campaign was "Woodbridge

¹¹⁷This generalization is based on a reading of the Woodbridge MSS from 1830 to 1848.

¹¹⁸Edelman, Symbolic Uses of Politics, p. 188.

and Reform." The slogan must have appealed strongly to the revivalist mentality. "Reform" had a meaning in 1839 which we cannot appreciate today because in its political sense the word has a secular meaning for us. But in 1839 the word used even in a political context had inevitable religious connotations, especially to a rural public familiar with revivals.

Sidney Mead has made some observations regarding nineteenth-century revivals which help clarify this point. The revival he said, encouraged a cycle of sin and salvation, or a habit of declining and re-forming. "The revivalist emphasis that Christ came to save sinners had the effect of encouraging the Church to nurture flagrant sinners in its bosom in order that they might be 'gloriously saved.'"¹¹⁹ The individual welcomed revivals as a means to personal salvation or reform--that was the word often used--and as a means of casting out sin. Mead suggested an obvious political parallel to this on the community level: "The stock answer to decline and apathy in a local church was to import a forceful revivalist to 'revive us again!' just as the stock answer to troubles in the country was the importation or election of a morally impeccable plumed knight in shining armor to lead a great crusade for spiritual renovation and to throw the rascals out."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," Church History, XXIII, 4(December, 1954), 309-10.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 310.

Surely "Woodbridge and Reform" suggested these things to portions of the electorate in 1839, particularly to the evangelical part. Many private statements of Whigs support that conclusion. Stephen V. R. Trowbridge, prominent Oakland County Whig and a Presbyterian elder, in urging Woodbridge to become a candidate in 1839, said "It is high time the reckless irreligious and awful men in power here should be put down." He prayed to Providence to spare Woodbridge's life so that he would be a candidate and was sure that God would join the battle to put down "irreligion."¹²¹

A Presbyterian minister who openly supported the Whigs in 1839 and 1840 told Woodbridge in 1841 that he had viewed the period in state government just before 1840 [under Democratic control] as a time of the encroachment of ambition and "corruption."¹²² One Whig surveyed the blasted fortunes of the party in 1842 (following Harrison's death, Tyler's defection, and state defeat) and revealed the intense religious meaning that "Woodbridge and Reform" and "Harrison and Reform" had held for him. He was desolate because his long cherished hope of "practical reform in the Gov't--of the glorious triumph of right over might--the establishment of honest [y] and merit and the overthrow of corruption and

¹²¹Stephen V. R. Trowbridge, Birmingham, June 25, 1839, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

¹²²Marcus Harrison, Jackson, January 12, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

crime (sic)--of a bright political millenium has died within me. It went to the grave of Harrison and I despair of reformation." (italics mine)¹²³

One evangelical Whig described the state of affairs that had existed under Democratic rule in the state and nation as "Barefaced and Unblushing Infidelity . . . and instead of Rulers being a Terror to Evil doers they have become Encouragers." Phineas Fullerton, self-styled evangelical of Redford, Wayne County, said that he had seen the "public trust betrayed, our Treasuries Robed (sic) and our government well night subverted." But by the "Interposition of that God who holds the destinies of all men in his hands" the reigns of the state had been placed in Woodbridge's hands bringing salvation.¹²⁴

2. Active Providence.

For evangelical Whigs "reform" was virtually the political equivalent of a revival. With God's aid sinful men would be cast out of government. The notion of an active God who intervened in men's secular affairs is a crucial aspect of evangelical Whig thinking which has escaped us in a secular age. When a community was visited by a revival,

¹²³H. Mower (?), Kalamazoo, May 3, 1842, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

¹²⁴Phineas Fullerton, Redford, January 30, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit. Fullerton also sent Woodbridge a copy of his The Christian Luminary, an anti-Catholic tract.

Woodbridge's Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1840 faintly echoed this theme and, more importantly, reassured the religious that a man of piety properly expressed their gratitude to God as their representative. Woodbridge thanked the Almighty for "the countless mercies and benefits he has been pleased to extend to us," particularly, he noted, for the possession of "political institutions insuring that defects may be remedied without convulsing society and that public abuses may be corrected without violence or bloodshed."¹²⁷

Woodbridge seems to have been successful in bestowing his rule with an aura of piety. One Jackson County Whig wrote him that "there is a God whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in behalf of the upright; and I doubt not that you function under full conviction of such a belief." He was sure that Woodbridge rested with confidence "in Him whose divinity guides the end of all human action."¹²⁸

Heaven could "own" the Whig cause, but an angry God could chastise the Whigs for pride and worldliness. Detroit Postmaster Thomas Rowland, a Whig, interpreted William Henry Harrison's death as such a punishment. An "all wise and benevolent God," he said, ordered all things.

¹²⁷Free Press, October 26, 1840.

¹²⁸Benjamin J. Mather, Jackson, February 24, 1841 to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS.

If we have offended God by vainly claiming to ourselves the glory of our late astonishing and unparalleled triumph as a political party hailing it as the result of our skill and sagacity, and cast off for the time our dependence on him (sic) and put our trust in an arm of flesh, it is in accordance with his ordinary dealing that we should receive our punishment in the very thing wherein we have offended, so that 'our pleasant vices are made whips to scourge us.' Hence in the loss of our Idolized President and the humiliation and destruction of our great Whig party were we punished.
 . . . ¹²⁹

In Rowland's piety we can see at first hand the sources of the anti-political and anti-party sentiment discussed earlier. That piety encouraged the devaluation of personal loyalty to a political leader or party. The latter were secular and by nature profane, and the pious readily saw the danger of placing too much reliance upon men or of becoming too infatuated with party spirit. They already possessed an alternate set of values which took precedence over such obvious things of the world.

The party itself could be seen by evangelical Whigs as counting for very little as a secular institution. It was but one agent which God might choose to use to fulfill His plan for America. After the bitter Whig defeat of 1844, one Monroe Whig leader wrote to Woodbridge:

For myself, I mourn the late Contest, because it seems to be pregnant with great Moral, as well as political Evil to our beloved Country. Our Fathers thought, and we have thought that America was destined by Divine Providence to act an efficient and most conspicuous part in the regeneration of true Liberty and Religion in the

¹²⁹ Thomas Rowland, Detroit, January 25, 1842, to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS.

World. Can it be that all our Hopes are so soon to be blasted? Will not God in a Way that we cannot now comprehend, yet cause America to become the Joy and the Praise of the whole Earth?¹³⁰

3. Political Revivalism.

Although the Whigs organized their party late, once they were underway, in 1837, they waged a virtually continuous campaign until 1840 that seems to have been a kind of political revivalism. Whig political picnics resembled camp meetings, Whig evangelicals spoke a political idiom resembling that of the revivalist, and the party caught an enthusiasm in those years which can be compared only to the enthusiasm of the extended revival.

In the dark days of 1836 Charles Cleland, Whig editor and former Antimason, prayed: "God grant that there may yet be a redeeming spirit in the people and that it may break forth . . . ere it is too late to save the Republic."¹³¹ Cleland must have thought that the "redeeming spirit" was breaking forth by 1837, and if not then, certainly by 1839, as Whigs went to the polls in unprecedented numbers, and as a pitch of enthusiasm swept the electorate which, by all accounts, has seldom been matched in American politics.

¹³⁰Oliver Johnson, Monroe, November 20, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Washington, D. C., Woodbridge MSS.

¹³¹Charles Cleland, Detroit, July 26, 1836, to William Woodbridge, Springwells, Woodbridge MSS.

Whig "camp meetings" were thoroughly "Arminian" in political theology. They gathered together all those without distinction of party who opposed Democratic misrule and wanted to cast out the rascals. Entire families loaded themselves on wagons, joined together with other wagons or persons on foot or on horseback, and trooped in cavalcades to political rallies, prepared to spend the day. The ladies packed food and the men packed hard cider. The meeting was a rally, a picnic, a revival, and a chance to socialize all rolled into one. The First District Whigs held such a rally in 1840. The District committee recommended that all who could should "bring with them, a trencher of Pork and Beans, Johnny Cake, and other Log Cabin fixings." Ladies were invited and "their fixens, the Committee leave to themselves, as they are always in good taste."¹³²

A Democratic observer of a Whig meeting in Kalamazoo County criticized the rally for its "mock religious ceremony" and, with hostile exaggeration, unwittingly suggested how successful the Whigs were in blending religion and politics. He had observed "the infuriated excitement of inebriated revelings" and wondered how the Whigs expected to elect Harrison "by the senseless display of pictured banners and the exhibition of cider barrels, mammoth balls of johnny cakes, and by their blasphemous imitation of the Holy Supper of our blessed Savior in giving

¹³² Circular, July 1, 1840, Woodbridge MSS.

parched corn and hard cider to their devotees saying, 'drink ye all of it.'"¹³³

The Whigs were playing upon the appeal of the folkways of New England as well as upon religious symbolism and succeeded in incorporating both into their campaign. Hard cider had its place in the cultural symbolism and helped energize Whig gatherings. Years later a Whig recalled that in 1840 "Log cabins and coonskins were familiar things, but the hard cider was merely a reminiscence of by-gone days in New England."¹³⁴ Whigs indignantly rejected the Democratic charge that alcohol caused Whig fervor. William Woodbridge gave a more sublime interpretation:

It is worse than purile vanity to pretend that Whig enthusiasm of the day has its origins in the Grog-shop! . . . We see a moral power at work which must and will hurl from their seats the bad men who now occupy the high places of our national government.¹³⁵

A Methodist minister described to Woodbridge the fervor prevailing at a Whig convention in Columbus, Ohio:

Never since the days of '76 was there so much rejoicing--Every heart beats with high anticipation of . . . success. . . . And a feeling of enthusiasm and zeal will be carried from this convention which will produce a revolution in the minds of the despairing and despondent.¹³⁶

¹³³Free Press, June 19, 1840, p. 2.

¹³⁴Edward W. Barber, "The Vermontville Colony," MPHC, XXVIII, 238.

¹³⁵William Woodbridge, Detroit, August 22, 1840, to Issac Van Olinda, New York, Woodbridge MSS.

¹³⁶John M. Woodbridge, Columbus, Ohio, February 21, 1840 to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

Religious enthusiasm in politics made for an intensity of partisan politics that stirred the electorate as it never had been stirred before. Silas Beebe watched the Detroit city election in 1838 and then wrote in his diary that

such a fuss, rumpus, and a rioting I never witnessed in a state election. The hand-bills, flags, procession, and a band of music with a marshall mounted on a richly caparisoned horse with gilt trappings. . . .

I left before the election waxed hottest, but learned that there was fighting, broken heads and bloody noses and that the Whigs were the successful party.¹³⁷

The "mighty democratic uprising" of 1840 was caused in great measure by political revivalism--and the reaction to it--which had been carried on since 1837 and which helped to moralize politics. One Michigan Whig said that "the politics of our time can be compared to nothing so fitly as the great Norwegian Maelstrom which carries into its vortex everything that comes within its influence, so that a man can scarcely think or speak of anything else."¹³⁸ Decades later a politician told about the heat of 1840 and "the topic of the day--whig politics:"

whatever else a man might have, in that wonderful year of 1840, he was sure to have an extra supply of politics. And it was politics of a kind which, like Josh Billings hornet, always meant

¹³⁷Quoted in Hemans, Stevens Thomson Mason, pp. 446-47.

¹³⁸Thomas Rowland, Uniontown, Pa., July 19, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

business. If two strangers met each other in the woods, they could not be together five minutes before they would be discussing this all absorbing theme. ¹³⁹ The campaign had so much of the stirring and dramatic in it.

Shortly after the campaign a young man wrote in his diary:

Never was a political campaign carried on with such zeal. Mass meetings, speeches, songs, were the order of the day, til the entire Union was agitated. Every nerve was strained and every means tried which a fruitful imagination could choose (sic) to ensure success. ¹⁴⁰

Political life of such intensity, conviction, and moral drama, where the participants see in party conflict the symbolic conflict of great moral principles, results from the moralization of politics.

Robert Lane has described a situation of low political tension as one in which "politics has not been moralized" and a low level of participation exists. According to Lane, low levels of political tension have existed in the United States when

the parties have not been invested with strong moral feeling; the issues are not seen as moral issues; the political leaders have not been made moral heroes and villains. This has the effect of reducing the stakes in elections and making commitment to one political group a rather loose affair that can be dissolved as the situation may require. It permits ticket splitting, switching, and a rapid adjustment when the opposition party wins. ¹⁴¹

Obviously, the reverse of all these things held in Michigan in the period 1837-1840. Historians have often said that by 1840 Whigs

¹³⁹A.D.P. Van Buren, "The Log Schoolhouse Era," MPHC, XIV, 322.

¹⁴⁰Henry Chase, Journal, 1826-48, Supply Chase MSS, BHC.

¹⁴¹Robert E. Lane, Political Ideology (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 344.

and Democrats seemed most alike, yet it was in 1840 that Whigs and Democrats themselves were thinking that there were great differences between them and that they thought of themselves as "us" and thought of their opponents as "they." Broad symbolic groups had been created and the parties had become emotionally significant reference groups.

For these and other reasons the election of 1840 needs to be re-examined. Historians have said that in 1840 the Whigs copied their campaign methods from the Democrats and learned to "go Democratic" in their appeal to the masses. The implication has been that the Whigs, being the party of the classes, had to disguise themselves to win the the masses. The Whigs could win only by "stooping to conquer." Aside from the unwarranted assumption regarding the class composition of parties, this interpretation ignores totally the previous development of Whig Party character and campaign style. In Michigan the Whig posture of 1840 was rooted as much in Whig precedents as in Democratic precedents! Its style was heavily influenced by Yankee culture and evangelical religion. The Whigs had politicized and secularized both, and had not done this overnight. As early as 1836 Michigan Whigs had consciously set about broadening and secularizing their image and appeal. In the process their militant evangelism was tempered and diffused into a form in which it could win broad support. The Whig Detroit Journal and Courier had admitted in 1836 that "our party prints are too much addressed to the ultras of [our] own party, with whom no further argument is necessary;

and not at all fitted to win the assent of moderate men, much less to make converts from the opposition." The first object of a minority newspaper [and party], therefore, was to win the uncommitted. Arguments "which weigh most with the confirmed advocates of the party" were "least fitted for that purpose."¹⁴²

Already in 1835 the Advertiser had tentatively begun to practice this preaching and became increasingly moderate and secularized in 1836, dropping, for example, nativist, anti-Catholic, temperance, and religious articles and editorials, and paying more attention to occupational groups such as farmers, businessmen, mechanics, and laborers. Indeed, after 1836 the Advertiser, like Whig county and state conventions, protested its friendship for foreigners and its opposition to mixing religion and politics.

Whig success in 1839 and 1840 lay in the creation of an image which was diffuse enough to include non-evangelicals yet which would still retain reassurance for the evangelicals.

¹⁴²Advertiser, November 15, 1836, p. 2.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

1837-1852

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I have tested most of the propositions relating to how religious groups voted against the available religious and voting data. The latter strikingly suggests that the Whigs were the party of religion: native, Protestant religion. And in towns and counties where evangelical churches were strong, the Whig-Free Soil vote almost without exception tended to be large.

The major evangelical churches in Michigan were the New and Old School Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. The major non-evangelical churches were the Methodists, Episcopalians, Dutch Reformed Christians, and Lutherans. The Catholics, of course, were non-evangelical.

The Catholics and evangelicals were the politically most polarized groups, with the evangelicals overwhelmingly supporting the anti-Democratic parties, and the Catholics overwhelmingly for the Democrats. The Methodists and Episcopalians were more closely divided, with the Methodists favoring the Democrats and the Episcopalians the Whigs. The Lutherans and Dutch were, like the Catholics, heavily influenced by their ethnocultural background (of which their religion was a part),

and voted strongly Democratic. Different voting patterns of religious groups within ethnocultural groups will be discussed in the chapter on ethnocultural groups.

Religion As A Cause of Political Alignment

Religion was a significant cause and not a correlate of party preference. The evangelical-Whig alignment, for example, was not the accidental by-product of some other cause of political choice, say economic interest. Religion itself, of course, is intermeshed with social and economic conditions and is usually part of any individual's cultural background.¹ The claim that "religion" was a cause of party affiliation means something broader than any doctrinal system or its institutional expression. Rather it means, more awkwardly, something that is religious-cultural or ethno-religious.

Gerhard Lenski has demonstrated, in The Religious Factor (1961), that religion in Detroit in the 1950's and 1960's is a cause and not a correlate of party preferences and political attitudes. Lenski collected detailed information on a representative sample of individuals in four major religious groups (Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Negro Protestants), and used multivariate analysis to make his case. While the kinds of data and techniques available to Lenski are not available for this study,

¹See, e.g., H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Co., Inc., 1929).

the logic of his approach is, and so are his provocative hypotheses.

It was not religion in terms of "doctrinal orthodoxy" that Lenski found to have an influence on party affiliation and on secular life in general, but rather a "religious orientation" which he called "devotionalism."

Whereas the latter is linked with many distinctive attitudes toward political and economic issues, the former generally plays a neutral role. One cannot help but conclude that unless our data are seriously misleading . . . doctrinal orthodoxy fosters a more compartmentalized type of religious belief and experience. In other words, devotionalism seems to encourage its adherents to think in terms of 'the oneness of life' and to disregard the popular distinctions between that which is religious and that which is secular; but orthodoxy appears to have the opposite effect.²

Lenski's concept of devotionalism helps characterize the attitudes and mood of the evangelicals. It is relevant, also, to a group such as the Quakers, who were not Revival Calvinists and not evangelical, but pietist or devotionalist. The Quakers had an un compartmentalized view of religion and life, and a concern for the moral-social welfare of the community and voted strongly Whig and Free Soil.

The evangelical and non-evangelical alignment that I have found in Wayne County and eastern Michigan is very similar to the "puritan" and "non-puritan" alignment that Lee Benson found in New York State in the 1840's. Benson's "puritans" were pietist and concerned for the moral welfare of the community, and "other factors held constant, puritans would

²Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1961), p. 186; see pp. 182-87.

be more likely to vote Whig, non-puritans to vote Democratic." He warned that "No implication is intended . . . that all or an overwhelming majority of Whigs and Democrats were puritans and non-puritans respectively. The inference refers to central tendencies and not to perfect or near perfect relationships."³ The same warning holds for evangelicals and non-evangelicals and Whigs and Democrats in eastern Michigan.

Method: Religious Preference and Religiosity

The main source of religious data is the 1850 census manuscript of social statistics which lists each church by denomination in every town, and gives the number of "accommodations" or seats in each building. The number of seats was used as a relative measure of denominational strength by computing the percentage each denomination had of the total seats. These percentages became the "religious preferences" of each town.⁴ Thus, Redford township had three Methodist churches with 450 seats, one Baptist church with 250, and one Dutch Reformed with 150; its Methodist preference was 53 percent, its Baptist preference

³Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, p. 207. "The Whigs were the 'religious party' and the Democrats the 'free thought' party. p. 193.

⁴I am indebted to Philip A. Nordquist, "The Ecology of Organized Religion in the United States: 1850" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1964), for developing this technique with county data, and to Professor Thomas Pressly for suggesting the method relating to "religiosity."

was 29 percent, and its Dutch Reformed preference was 18 percent. Ecorse, with only one Catholic church of 200 seats had a Catholic preference of 100 percent. Since the preference alone could be misleading I considered also the whole number of seats as well as the "religiosity" of each town, i.e., the ratio of all church seats to population represented by the total number of church seats in any town. Redford's total of 850 church seats represented 52 percent of its population of 1642, while Ecorse's 200 seats were only 32 percent of its population of 631.

The number of seats, of course, is not necessarily a measure or indication of membership. As it was, many if not most communicating members of Protestant churches were women and children. I have assumed, however, that the number of church seats of different denominations in the townships represented a relative measure of different religious affiliations. In one sense the religiosity of a township is a good measure of religious intensity, because the very fact that churches were built or not built in these largely rural townships usually indicated the concerns of the community. When J. D. Johnston took a census of the religious and national groups in Detroit in 1853, he counted only about two dozen athiests out of a population of some 40,000 persons: Everyone else professed to be affiliated with some church. Yet, all of those persons were not members--only a small minority was--and many were marginal types and non-church goers. There was no way to

determine the number intensely involved in the various denominations from Johnston's data. Yet men and women in a rural township who sacrificed to build a church gave a fairly sure sign of the intensity of their religious interest while those in towns which built no churches can be assumed, usually, to have given a sign of their relative disinterest.

Protestants and Whiggery

The available data indicates that the Whigs were the party of churched Protestants in Michigan. Whig-Free Soil areas, compared to Democratic areas, had far more church seats, supporting the thesis that Whiggery was the party of "religion." In Wayne County in 1850, for example, there were five Protestant denominations (Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Dutch Reformed) in the four highest Democratic towns (1848-1852) with a total of 2050 seats. In the four lowest Democratic towns there were three denominations (Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist), with seats totalling 3610. Although the Whig-Free Soil towns had about 1500 more Protestant church seats, they had a smaller aggregate population (5128) than the Democratic towns (5964), indicating that Whig-Free Soil preponderance was not due to relative size of population.

This same pattern held in Oakland and Wastenaw Counties.

TABLE 29

PROTESTANT SEATS, 1850, IN TOP DEMOCRATIC AND
WHIG-FREE SOIL TOWNS, 1848-1852,
OAKLAND AND WASHTENAW

	Democratic	Whig-Free Soil
Washtenaw		
top 4 towns	775	2,375
Oakland		
top 4 towns	---	1,750
top 7 towns	410	2,050

Similarly, in the five counties which cast the highest Democratic vote in the state in 1852, there were 6250 Protestant seats; in the five counties returning the lowest Democratic vote in 1852 there were 9390 Protestant seats.

The association of Protestant strength and Whig-Free Soil strength was both rural and urban, as data for Detroit's wards indicates. The census of 1850 provided no useful data for Detroit wards, but the publisher of the Detroit City Directory in 1853 undertook to gather a census "Showing . . . the several National and Religious divisions" in each ward.⁵ Table 30 shows the percentage of Protestants in each ward compared with Democratic strength in 1852. It

⁵ Johnston's Detroit Directory and Business Advertiser, 1853-4 (Detroit: Geo. E. Pomeroy and Co., 1853), p. xiv.

TABLE 30

PER CENT PROTESTANTS IN DETROIT'S WARDS, 1853, COMPARED
WITH DEMOCRATIC AVERAGE 1848, 1850, AND 1852,
AND 1848-1852

Ward	% Protestant	Dem. Avg. 1848, 1850, 1852	Dem. Avg. 1848-1852
5	76	50	53
1	72	52	59
6	70	49	52
3	66	50	54
2	65	51	55
7	54	56	58
8	53	68	75
4	43	61	65

is evident that Protestants were divided in their political loyalties, but it is also clear that the five weakest Democratic wards were those with the most Protestants; the three wards with the least Protestants were the strongest Democratic.

The percentages in Table 30 are based on figures for the total population, not the electorate. The percent of Catholic voters probably exceeded the percent of Catholics in the population, since Catholics were mostly foreign born. George A. Boeck has shown that there tended to be a disproportionate number of adult males among the foreign born and therefore estimates of foreign born voting potential based on population figures usually need to be revised upward.⁶

⁶George A. Boeck, "A Historical Note on the Uses of Census Returns," Mid-America (January, 1962), pp. 46-50.

Evangelicals: Presbyterians, Congregationalists,
and Baptists

Evangelicalism, or Arminianized Calvinism, or Revival Calvinism, cut across the nineteenth century Protestant churches. Timothy L. Smith identified "Four significant strains of thought and feeling which flowed freely across denominational lines:" 1) Traditionalism, 2) Orthodox Calvinism, 3) Evangelical Arminianism, and 4) Revival Calvinism.

Traditionalism is the term which best describes the mood common to High Church Episcopalian and Old Lutheran leaders. Orthodox Calvinism, the bogeyman of social historians was a dying dogma. Old School Presbyterians, Antimission Baptists, a small minority of the most conservative Congregationalists, and two or three minor Protestant sects were its sole champions. . . . Revival Calvinism was, paradoxically enough, almost Arminian on the matters of election and free will and leaned toward 'new measures' and interfaith fellowship. This point of view characterized New School Presbyterians, most Congregationalists, Low Church Episcopalians, Regular Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and those of the New Lutherans who were not thoroughly Arminianized. Evangelical Arminians claimed the allegiance of a vast army of Methodists of all sorts, the German Wesleyan sects, the Friends, many New Lutherans, the Cumberland Presbyterians, and the Free Will Baptists.⁷

Smith's use of "evangelical" obviously differs from mine. He used it in its primary sense of gospel-bearing. The Methodists, in this sense, were perhaps the most evangelical of all nineteenth century churches because of their hordes of circuit riders who brought the gospel to thousands on the American frontiers. I prefer to regard the Revival Calvinists as distinctively evangelical because they were 1) pietist

⁷Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 32-33. See also Foster, United Front, pp. 251-52.

emphasizing religious experience over ritual, 2) revival-prone, and partly Arminianized in the fashion of Finney, 3) theocratic, 4) gospel bearing, through the missionary work of the interdenominational agencies, and, most importantly, 5) concerned for the moral and social welfare of the community.⁸

The evangelical credentials of the Presbyterians have been sufficiently established. Michigan's leading evangelical, for example, was the Presbyterian leader George Duffield. Presbyterian piety does not seem to have stopped at the leadership level. The "Records of the Presbyterian Church in Dearbornville," show the orientation of a congregation in Wayne County from 1834 to 1860.⁹ From what is mostly a prosaic record of church business emerges the strong pietism of the church, the emphasis members placed on religious experience and on puritannical behavior. Members were dismissed or threatened with excommunication for such offenses as the "frequent habit of using profane language," such as "By God," and for being intemperate.¹⁰

⁸For a different interpretation see Seymour Martin Lipset, "Religion and Politics in American History," ed. Earl Raab, Religious Conflict in America (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1964), pp. 64-65. T. Scott Miyakawa, Protestants and Pioneers (Chicago: London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), offers a traditional interpretation, pp. 198-209.

⁹"Records of the Presbyterian Church in Dearbornville," type-written bound MS, BHC. Pp. 1-78 cover the years 1834-1860.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 10-12, 38-40.

Such occurrences were not frequent, apparently because the members were not given to immoral behavior. The rare cases would seem to prove the rule.

The Congregationalists before 1842 were indistinguishable from the Presbyterians because the Congregational churches, under the Plan of Union, were part of Michigan Synod. In 1842 some broke away and formed a separate association. In 1850 there was one Congregational church in Detroit and one small congregation (without a building) in Nankin township. The Congregationalists shared all the evangelism of the Presbyterians, and then some, much to the distress of Reverend Duffield. His diary is laden with complaints against the excessive zeal of the Congregationalists, their disdain for church order, and their susceptibility to one-idea zealotry. Duffield said that the "miserable spirit" of Congregationalism "disdained all watch and care of an eldership ordained to take the spiritual oversight, knows no obligation of governmental relations, and inflates each individual with the notion that they (sic) are judges and have as much right as anyone else to move in matters affecting the public social /? / interests." (italics mine)¹¹ This remark, whatever its fairness, points precisely to one of the most important qualities of evangelicalism, namely the concern for the moral

¹¹Vander Velde (ed.), "Notes on the Diary of George Duffield," *MVHR*, XXIV, 56. The question mark is Vander Velde's; entry for February 28, 1847.

and social welfare of the community--or the "holy enterprise of mind-ing everyone else's business." The difference between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, while important, seems to have been largely one of degree.¹²

Next to the Presbyterians and Congregationalists the most evangelical of Michigan Protestants were the Baptists. All three shared an "essentially common confession of faith" and since colonial times had been becoming more alike. The Baptists gave strong support to the benevolent societies. In the period 1837-1852 the evangelical Baptist organ, the Michigan Christian Herald, steadily concerned itself with issues such as education, missions, Sabbath-keeping, intemperance, slavery, capital punishment, general immorality, and Popery.¹³ On several issues in the 1840's Baptists easily outran the Presbyterians in the vigor of their insistence that society conform to a puritannical way of life.

The Baptists were stridently anti-Catholic. Ray Allen Billington described Baptists as "the most active independent church group in the

¹²MPHC, XII. 352.

¹³These generalizations are based on a reading of the Michigan Christian Herald, 1841-1852, the Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1836, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850, and George H. Waid, Centennial History of the Michigan Baptist Convention, 1836-1936 (Lansing: Hallenbeck Printing Co., 1936). Compare the space Waid allotted to discussions of missions, pp. 8-19, ministerial education, pp. 19-26, the book fund, pp. 29-33, and "other causes," including slavery, temperance, and Sabbath-keeping, pp. 33-34.

crusade against popery in the Mississippi valley."¹⁴ In 1850 the Michigan Baptist Convention declared that "Our country is the arena which God has chosen for the genius and prowess of the Anglo-Saxon to develop." America was threatened, however, by "the tide of immigration which is setting from Europe and beating incessantly upon our shores," endangering "the character of our religious institutions" and therefore threatening "the religious institutions of mankind."

Catholicism is here with abundant materials upon which to work, and with super abundant means to prosecute its work. It is grafting its ugly scions upon every branch, and growing with . . . the Tree of Liberty.¹⁵

The Michigan Christian Herald from 1842 to 1852 frequently did battle with Popery, about as frequently as it did with intemperance, and far more frequently than it deplored slavery. The Herald's anti-Romanism waxed most intensely around 1844 to 1846, years during which nativism and anti-Catholicism intensified in many parts of the country. In 1844 churches were burned in Philadelphia and the Catholic bishop was forced to that city. The Native American Party mushroomed in many areas in the mid-forties. The Herald's anti-Popery slackened off under new editors in 1847 and 1848, and revived in 1849 after another change of editors. Throughout its attacks on Catholicism ran the theme sounded by the Convention in 1850, that Catholic immigration endangered

¹⁴Ray Allen Billington, "Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860," MVHR, XXII, 3 (December, 1935), 361-84.

¹⁵Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1850, pp. 19-21.

American freedom because through the immigrants Rome would seek to establish its despotism over the West. The Herald also associated Catholic immigrants with poverty, crime, and intemperance, and blamed the Catholic religion itself for fostering these evils.¹⁶

Temperance was constantly promoted by the Baptist leadership. In 1836 the State Convention resolved to discontinue fellowship with members who used intoxicating liquors as a common drink and in 1840 included under the ban any who "in any way encourage the same in the community." In the late forties the convention lent its weight to the growing agitation for some kind of prohibition law.¹⁷

The Baptists in Michigan were not slow in speaking out for Sabbath preservation. In 1836 the Michigan Convention said that it regretted Sabbath desecration by any travelling "or other unnecessary worldly employment by professors of religion." After a Democratic legislature in 1842 reinstated the running of railroad trains on the Sabbath, Baptists joined other evangelicals in denouncing the "evil example" set by the legislature. In 1846 the Herald asked: "does not the State by allowing the cars to run on the Sabbath, lend the high

¹⁶ Herald, *passim*, 1842-1852; see e.g., December 18, 1843, p. 1, September 23, 1844, p. 1. January 6, 1845, p. 2, December 4, 1851, p. 3.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1848, p. 7; Ibid., 1850, p. 9. Michigan Christian Herald, October 30, 1851, p.3.

sanction of its example and influence to a practice which is in gross violation of the laws of God and man?" State governments, it said, have no consciences, "But there is an order of statesmen (some of them are beginning to be found in State legislatures) a grade above the bar-room politician, who think the violation of a moral law, by a community or State, as deserving of moral reprobation as violation by a single individual."

Unlike the Presbyterians after 1838, the Baptists pursued no moderate policy regarding slavery. In 1840 they declared their wish to "clear their skirts of this most accursed evil of the land." The Convention delivered anti-slavery resolutions throughout the 1840's, while the Herald took an anti-Southern and anti-slavery position on sectional issues. The editors opposed Texas Annexation because it would "perpetuate the foul curse of Slavery, by giving the South the ascendancy in the National Councils." Annexation was a "plot against Northern rights and Northern interests. . . . The whole thing has been done at the behest of the slaveholding power of the South, which rules this nation with a despotism that is absolutely insufferable." The Herald supported the anti-slavery extension position of the Wilmot Proviso and opposed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The State Convention of

¹⁸ Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1836, p. 11.
Michigan Christian Herald, December, 1842, pp. 2-3; February 9, 1846.

1850 called the law a violation of conscience and civil and moral law and called for urgent efforts "by all lawful measures to obtain its speedy repeal."¹⁹

I. Evangelical Voting.

A comparison of church seats in towns and counties of different political loyalties indicates that evangelicals voted strongly Whig-Free Soil. In Wayne County in 1850 there were 350 Presbyterian and Congregationalist seats in the top four Democratic towns and 1300 in the lowest four Democratic towns. In Washtenaw County there were no Presbyterian or Congregationalist seats in the top four Democratic towns and 600 in the lowest four Democratic towns. In Oakland County there were 260 Presbyterian and Congregational seats in the top seven Democratic towns and 1350 in the lowest seven. The five highest Democratic counties in 1852 (excluding Wayne, which was tied with another county for fifth) had 1000 Presbyterian and Congregational seats in 1850; in the four lowest Democratic counties there were 3750.

Baptist seats also were heavily concentrated in the lowest Democratic counties and towns:

¹⁹ Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1840, p. 4; Ibid., 1841, p. 9. Herald, November 6, 1843, p. 1; May 6, 1844, p. 2; March 17, 1845, p. 2; August 4, 1848, p. 2; February 28, 1850, p. 2; October 16, 1851, p. 2. Minutes of the Michigan Baptist Association, 1850, p. 7.

Baptist Seats	Democratic	Whig-Free Soil
Five Highest Counties	650	2,310
Wayne top 4 towns	250	1,110
Washtenaw top 4 towns	---	200
Oakland top 4 towns	---	400
top 7 towns	---	800

The most convenient method of approaching individual townships will be to combine the religious preferences of any evangelical churches present to produce an "evangelical preference." If my hypothesis is correct, towns with a high evangelical preference and a high religiosity should be in the Whig-Free Soil camp. Only two towns in Wayne County had high evangelical preferences and high religiosities:

Plymouth:

Presbyterian (O.S.) preference	38%	
Baptist preference	<u>31%</u>	
Evangelical preference	69%	Religiosity: 107%

Livonia:

Baptist preference	40%	
Presbyterian preference	<u>30%</u>	
Evangelical preference	70%	Religiosity: 73%

Both Plymouth and Livonia were leading Whig-Free Soil strongholds, the second and third lowest Democratic towns in Wayne County (1848-1852). The two towns were, with Canton, the most consistently "upper class" of Wayne County's towns (see Chapter IV). Canton and Livonia, particularly, were remarkably alike in economic structure and prosperity, with middle class farmers a substantial element among the

potential voters of both. The potential electorate in both towns, too, was predominantly native born. Yet Canton had a Democratic average of 64 percent. Its religious preference, however, was different from Livonia's: although it had a Presbyterian church and preference of 37 percent, its Methodist preference was 63 percent (religiosity 71%), so that Canton, unlike Plymouth and Livonia, was non-evangelical. It may have been, although I cannot show it, that Canton's New York born potential voters (55%) were predominantly of Yorker descent--an ethno-cultural group which tended to vote Democratic in New York. The absence of evidence on this point may be significant. Although Canton bordered Plymouth and Livonia, and those two towns showed many signs of "Yankeeeness," the same is not true of Canton.²⁰ The significant points of comparison and contrast were these: Plymouth and Livonia were mainly Yankee, Protestant, evangelical, prosperous, and Whig-Free Soil. Canton was predominantly Protestant, non-evangelical, possibly Yorker, prosperous, and Democratic.

In Oakland County two towns had a high evangelical preference and high religiosity in 1850. Milford township was the second

²⁰ Daniel B. Riebel, "Founding a Pioneer Home in Plymouth, Michigan, 1825 to 1840" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1961). Nettie L. Dibble (ed.), "Historical Data of Plymouth Township, Wayne County, Michigan," typewritten MS in BHC, 1930-31. Nettie L. Dibble (ed.), "The Presbyterian Church in Plymouth, Michigan," typewritten MS in BHC, 1960. Plymouth Historical Society, "Papers Read, 1949-50," MS in BHC. Domenic P. Paris, The Heritage of Livonia (privately printed, 1962).

highest Whig-Free Soil unit in the county (62%), and Farmington had a solid anti-Democratic average of 59 percent. Both were moderately prosperous, not very different from such Democratic towns as Waterford (Average Value of Tools, \$127) and Orion (\$147).

	Religiosity	Evangelical Preference	Average Value Tools
Milford	88%	69%	\$115
Farmington	68	60	117

Eight other Oakland towns had evangelical preferences but not high religiosities. One cannot generalize about these towns regarding their religion and politics, but it is worth noting that three of the four with the highest religiosities were Whig-Free Soil towns. Avon had a 50 percent Democratic average, but its Democratic vote in 1850 and 1852 was large. Except for Lyon, the towns were moderately prosperous.

In Washtenaw County three towns had both high evangelical preferences and high religiosity:

	Religiosity	Evangelical Preference	Avg.Val. Tools	Party	Avg. ^x
Augusta	65%	48 [†]	\$ 80	WFS	61%
Saline	60%	69	85	WFS	58%
York	59%	100	102	D	52%

[†]Plus a Quaker preference of 19%

^xElections 1848, 1849, 1851, 1852 averaged.

TABLE 31

EIGHT OAKLAND COUNTY TOWNS WITH LOW RELIGIOSITY AND
HIGH EVANGELICAL PREFERENCE, COMPARED BY WEALTH
(AVERAGE VALUE OF TOOLS) AND PARTY STRENGTH^a

Towns	Religiosity	Evang. Pref.	Avg. Val.Tools	Party Avg.
Lyon	35%	100%	\$ 70	WFS 58%
Troy	32%	56%	101	WFS 60%
Avon	31%	100%	___ ^b	D 50%
Southfield	30%	60%	135	WFS 55%
Novi	28%	100%	124	WFS 61%
Bloomfield	19%	52%	___ ^b	D 63%
Highland	18%	100%	128	D 55%
Oakland	10%	100%	160	D 64%

^aElections 1845, 1847, 1850, 1852, averaged.

^bNot available.

D = Democratic

WFS = Whig-Free Soil

None were prosperous. Two were leading Whig-Free Soil towns, but York had a Democratic average of 52 percent, a Baptist preference of 100 percent, and a high religiosity. It was the only town in Wayne, Washtenaw, and Oakland (and Hillsdale) Counties which had a high evangelical preference and high religiosity and was not a Whig-Free Soil town. It could not, at least, be described as a Democratic town. York's Baptists (or other of its voters) may have been, as the name of the town suggests, of Yorker background. Intensive study of the origins of York's voters might determine that.

Four other Washtenaw towns had high evangelical preferences and moderate religiosities, or moderate evangelical preferences and high religiosities. None were Democratic towns, and two (Lima and Salem) were Whig-Free Soil strongholds.

	Religiosity	Evangelical Preference	Avg. Val. Tools	Party	Avg.
Sharon	69%	50%	\$ 92	WFS	53% ^a
Lima	66%	50%	94	WFS	63%
Salem	52%	100%	126	WFS	54% ^b
Lodi	41	100%	103	WFS	54% ^a

^aWhigs never made a strong showing in these towns; both were slightly Democratic in 1851, a two party year.

^bThis average is low due to a disastrous Whig showing in 1849, but the Whig-Free Soil percentage was very high in other years: 59% in 1852, and 67% in 1848.

One other town in Washtenaw County had an evangelical preference but a low religiosity (22%). Webster, named after the great Daniel, had a Presbyterian preference of 100 percent and a Whig-Free Soil average of 58 percent.

2. Evangelical Tendencies of Whig Leaders and Whig Economic Elite Members, Wayne County, 1844.

My conclusions as to the evangelicals' Whig preference rest primarily on township data, but McCoy's study of Wayne's economic elite in 1844, and Sabbath's study of Whig and Democratic party leadership in Wayne in 1844 offer some corroboration of my findings.

Sabbath identified the religious affiliation of 42 Democratic leaders and 46 Whig leaders. The evangelical denominations showed up among the Whigs by slightly more than two to one over the Democrats.²¹

	Democrats	Whigs
Presbyterians	12	21
Baptists	0	1
Congregationalists	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
	12	25

Members or affiliates of evangelical denominations in Wayne County's 1844 economic elite were even more strongly Whig. Only two

In 1850, 162 ladies of Plymouth petitioned the constitutional convention to pass a temperance law. Report of the Proceedings and Debates, 1850, p. 522.

²¹Sabbath, "Political Leadership in Wayne County, Michigan, 1844," p. 112. Sabbath did not provide data distinguishing ethnocultural groups by religion.

of the elite were Congregationalists: one was a Whig, the other Liberty Party. One of the two Baptist elite members had no identifiable political affiliation, the other was Whig.

McCoy's findings for elite Presbyterians showed a striking correspondence to my findings for rural middle and lower class Presbyterians. Presbyterians were the largest single religious group among the elite in 1844, 37 men out of 97, or 38 percent. Only 16 percent of the Presbyterians were Democrats, 76 percent were Whig, and 5 percent Liberty, an anti-Democratic percent of 81. McCoy also found that Presbyterianism was the most significant difference between Yankee Democrats and Yankee Whigs, i. e., the latter tended to be Presbyterian, the former did not. Yankees were the largest single group among the elite, as they were among the population at large.²² Religion was the decisive factor dividing Yankees among the economic elite, and it seems also to have been the deciding factor among the rest of the Yankee electorate.

Presbyterians, whether of Detroit and Wayne County's economic elite, or of the rural middle classes in Plymouth (farmers and skilled laborers), or of the rural lower middle classes in Lyon, Oakland County (Tools \$70, Farms \$1360), seem to have voted Whig by about 65-75 percent or more. It might be noted that Sabbath's data for Wayne's political leaders in 1844 provide a kind of sample of the urban middle and upper

²² McCoy, "Political Affiliations of Economic Elites," pp. 126, 153.

middle classes, or at least of the politically active urban middle class, since most of the party leadership seems to have come from that class.

Obviously, not all Presbyterians voted Whig or Free Soil, and some of them took leadership roles in the Democratic Party. It is most significant that these men seem to have been regarded as renegades by most of the Presbyterians: at least this was the reaction of the congregation of Detroit's First Presbyterian Church (Duffield's) to their fellow Presbyterian, David Stuart. In 1850 Stuart's mother described his campaign for city Prosecuting Attorney on the Democratic ticket:

Dave is very busy in insuring his own election, you would be astonished to see the success he has in anything in a political way, and the astonishing influence he has in the party. Bethune Duffield /Rev. Duffield's son⁷ is the Whig candidate for his berth. Dave told him a day or two since that those of the Pres. Church (sic) who do not vote out of love for him, would do it out of hate for Dave.²³

Quakers

Quakers, as much or more than evangelicals, did not compartmentalize their lives into secular and religious sectors. They were not Calvinists, nor revivalists, nor particularly gospel-bearing, but their temperament was what Lenski has characterized as devotional. Their intense pietism was a cause of their voting overwhelmingly for the Whig and Free Soil parties.

²³ Sarah B. Stuart, Detroit, September 29, 1850, to Kate, in Helen S.M. Marlatt (ed.), Stuart Letters of Robert and Elizabeth Stuart, I (privately printed, 1961), 131.

Streeter recognized that "a large number" of Quakers were "political abolitionists and Free Soilers" after 1840, but asserted that "in the early statehood period" most were Democrats and that "the Democratic vote was very large in the Quaker settlements in Lenawee County in the election of State officials in 1837 and 1839."²⁴

The Quaker association with antislavery is incontestable. Quakers joined Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the 1830's in promoting anti-slavery societies and were influential far out of proportion to their numbers in the anti-slavery movement and Liberty Party.²⁵

From what has been shown regarding the tendency of Liberty voters to come from Whig ranks, Streeter's claim that Quakers voted Democratic in the 1830's seems unlikely. Close inspection of "Quaker settlements" in Lenawee and other counties provides no empirical basis for his claim.

²⁴Streeter, Political Parties in Michigan, 1837-1860, pp. 207, 213-14.

²⁵Kooker, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 22, 108-09, 110, 113. John Cox, Jr., "The Quakers in Michigan," Michigan History, XXIX, 4 (October-December, 1945), 512-21. Gerald Sorin, "The Historical Theory of Political Radicalism: Michigan Abolitionist Leaders as a Test Case" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1964). Of the ten most important Liberty Party leaders in Michigan, 1840-1844, two were Quakers, pp. 54-72. Merton L. Dillon, "Elizabeth Chandler and the Spread of Anti-Slavery Sentiment to Michigan," Michigan History, XXXIX, 4 (December, 1965), 494. Van Buren, MPHC, XVII, 255.

Streeter may have been referring to the towns of Tecumseh and Adrian when he mentioned the "Quaker settlements" in Lenawee, which gave "very large" Democratic votes in 1837 and 1839. However, the Whig vote, numerically, was also "very large" in those towns in 1837 and 1839. Tecumseh and Adrian were the two most populous towns in Lenawee, and although Quakers had set their distinctive marks on the early history of the towns, by 1837 they were a small part of their populations. Both towns voted Democratic in 1837 and 1839, but Adrian was only 53 percent Democratic, and Quakers probably did not amount to more than one-tenth of the electorate in either.²⁶

	Democratic	Whig
Tecumseh - 1837	294 (57%)	221 (43%)
- 1839	304 (57%)	230 (43%)
Adrian - 1837	229 (53%)	210 (47%)
- 1839	313 (53%)	280 (47%)

Streeter may also have been referring to two smaller towns in Lenawee where Quakers constituted a larger part of the population, but were still a minority. In Rollin township, the Quakers amounted to at best about one-third of the population. Baptists and Methodists had religious organizations in Rollin as early as the Quakers. Rollin, from

²⁶ Election returns: Advertiser, December 5, 1837, p. 2; Free Press, November 16, 1839, p. 2. Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, p. 236. W. A. Whitney and R. A. Bonner, History of Lenawee County, Michigan, I (Adrian: W. Stearns and Co., 1879), 40, 56, 57-58.

1835 on, was a staunch Whig town that gave thumping majorities to the Whigs in 1837 and 1839.²⁷

	Democratic	Whig
Rollin - 1837	16 (14%)	78 (86%)
- 1839	22 (19%)	93 (81%)

Raisin township's Quaker settlement was small but intensely anti-slavery. A disciple of Benjamin Lundy organized the first anti-slavery society in Michigan in Raisin. The Quaker settlement was described as being in "the southwestern part of the township" and as consisting of "a few families." Congregationalists may have been about as numerous as the Quakers. Raisin delivered a Whig majority of 54 percent (77 votes) in 1837, and in 1839, the year of "Woodbridge and Reform," cast 65 percent (93 votes) of its votes for Whiggery.²⁸

Another place of Quaker settlement in eastern Michigan had been Farmington in Oakland County. Farmington was known as "Quakertown" in its earliest days, but in 1850 its Quaker preference was only 8 percent. Its evangelical preference, including the Quakers, was 60 percent, its religiosity 68 percent. The town cast 58 percent of its vote for the Whigs in 1840 (207 votes), and 5 votes for the Liberty Party. In 1844 the town voted 50.1 percent Whig (178 votes), and 8.7 percent Liberty (31 votes). The number of Democratic votes increased by 3 between 1840 and 1844. In other elections, 1848-1852, the town gave a similar Whig-Free Soil majority.

²⁷ Whitney and Bonner, History of Lenawee County, I, 44-46.

²⁸ Whitney and Bonner, pp. 51-52. Dillon, Michigan History, XXXIX, 481-94.

Augusta township in Washtenaw had a Quaker church in 1850 and a Quaker preference of 19 percent. It had a Presbyterian preference of 48 percent, and a religiosity of 65 percent. Its Whig-Free Soil average, 1848-1852, was 61 percent, although it gave the Whigs alone only 51 percent in 1851, a two party year of very low turnout. Augusta's Free Soil vote in 1848 was 27 percent, and in 1852 31 percent.

In no town in eastern Michigan where, to my knowledge, Quakers lived, did the Liberty or Free Soil parties not get votes. If any inference can be made about how Quakers in Rollin, Raisin, Farmington, and Augusta voted when they did not vote Liberty or Free Soil, it is very difficult to see how that inference can be that they voted Democratic.

This hypothesis receives considerable support from a letter written from Henry Willis to William Woodbridge in 1840. Willis was a builder, a former Superintendent on the Michigan Central Railroad, a former National Republican, a Whig and a Quaker. Just after Woodbridge's election to governor, Willis asked him for an appointment to the Board of Internal Improvements and said: "It may not be amiss to state to thee for thy information that we know of but two individuals in all our Society in this State which is now becoming numerous--but what are Whigs and did exert themselves to the utmost to Secure thy Election and I am the only man out of they (sic) whole who will apply

to the (sic) for an office."²⁹

Wesleyan Methodists

The Wesleyan Methodists were a splinter group of Methodists, located mainly in Michigan and western New York, who seceded from the Methodist Episcopal church in 1841 because it avoided taking a stand on slavery and would not allow them to express their anti-slavery feelings in the church. The Wesleyans amounted to only about 1000 persons in Michigan, many of them in Wayne and Washtenaw Counties. Their Discipline tended to be more pietist than the regular Methodists, and they condemned the use of ardent spirits as well as slavery, but they were not evangelicals.³⁰

It has been asserted that "most of the voters in this church [Wesleyan] were political abolitionists and Free Soilers,"³¹ but the data for Wayne and Washtenaw counties suggest that the striking aspect of the Wesleyan secession was not how many but how few anti-slavery voters it produced.

²⁹H. Willis, Detroit, February 9, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS. Willis was described as an "ultra abolitionist," Representative Men of Michigan, or, American Biographical History: Michigan, I (Cincinnati: Western Biographical Publishing Co., 1878), District 3, 103-04.

³⁰William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1933), p. 242.

³¹Streeter, Political Parties, p. 214.

Nankin township in Wayne was the home of the Reverend Marcus Swift, who began his antislavery agitation in the Methodist church in eastern Michigan around 1834. Stifled by the church, Swift was one of the leaders of the Michigan Wesleyan secession. In Nankin, most of the Methodists and most of the town's first families followed Swift. A pioneer remembered that the "anti-slavery members . . . constituted the great majority" of Nankin's Methodists. Thus, in 1850 there were two Wesleyan Methodist Churches in Nankin, 53 percent Wesleyan preference (500 seats), and one Methodist church, 26 percent preference (250 seats). Nankin also had a Presbyterian preference of 21 percent and a religiosity of 59 percent. Nankin gave, from 1840 to 1852, more votes to the antislavery parties than any other town in Wayne which was otherwise a Democratic town, but it did not give as many antislavery votes as might have been expected. Marcus Swift was a dynamic and commanding personality. He had "adhered, on general principles, to the whig party, til 1840, when he turned his back upon it and gave his influence to the liberty party, and his vote to its candidate."³² Yet in 1840 that was the only vote given to the Liberty Party in Nankin. In 1842, the year after the Wesleyan secession,

³² Melvin D. Osband, "History of the Pioneer Church of Nankin, Wayne County, Michigan," MPHC, XXVIII, 150-60. Melvin D. Osband, "My Recollections of Pioneers and Pioneer Life in Nankin," MPHC, XIV, 431-83. Reverend O. C. Thompson, "Observations and Experiences in Michigan Forty Years Ago," MPHC, I, 401. Bela Hubbard, "Memoir of Luther Harvey," MPHC, I, 407.

the Liberty Party polled only 17 votes, about 10 percent of Nankin's vote. In 1844 it polled 13 votes, about 5 percent. Its greatest percent of the vote was 18 in 1845 (30 votes) and the largest number of votes given to it was 50 (17%) in 1848. In 1852 the Free Soil vote fell to 39, about 13 percent. It is by no means certain, of course, that all or most of the antislavery votes came from Wesleyans, but even if they did it does not appear (with the possible exception of 1848) that most of the voters in that church were political abolitionists.

The voting of Pittsfield township in Washtenaw County also fails to support the thesis that most Wesleyans voted antislavery. The town's only church in 1850 was Wesleyan, with 200 seats. In 1848 Martin Van Buren and the Free Soil Party managed to attract 63 votes in Pittsfield, 30 percent of the total cast, but in 1844 James Birney polled only 24 votes, 10 percent, and 1852 Hale received only 25, or 12 percent. The conclusion seems inescapable that more persons in Nankin and Pittsfield seemed willing to secede from the Methodist Church over anti-slavery than to secede from the Whig or Democratic parties or to vote antislavery.

The Non-Evangelicals: Methodists and Episcopalians

The Methodists were the major non-evangelical Protestant group in eastern Michigan. Other non-evangelical Protestant groups were the

Episcopalians, Universalists, Dutch Reformed Christians, and German Lutherans. Ethnocultural considerations make it convenient to postpone discussion of the Dutch Reformed and Lutheran churches. The Universalists were few in number (one church in Washtenaw County) and, if they were like most of their brethren elsewhere, were anti-evangelical. The anti-evangelicals tended to resist actively evangelical measures such as Sabbath-keeping laws or other mixtures of religion and state. Non-evangelical denominations such as the Methodist and Episcopalian tended to avoid evangelical causes and issues.

This is not to say that there were no evangelicals or pietists in their ranks. There were laymen, ministers, and perhaps whole congregations in the Methodist and Episcopalian churches which were evangelical. Indeed, the split personality of these denominations may help account for their apparent political divisions and for their not being as consistently attached to either party as were the evangelicals. The data indicate that Methodists in Wayne, Washtenaw, and Oakland Counties voted about 55-60 percent Democratic, and Episcopalians probably voted about 55-60 percent Whig.

1. Methodists.

The Methodists have usually been described as the most "evangelical" of American denominations because they led the way on the

frontier in bringing the gospel directly, simply, and emotionally to many persons spread over vast territories. They were thoroughly Arminian in their open attitude to converts: whomever would come could be saved; Methodists needed simply "to desire to flee from the wrath of God and to be saved from their sins."³³

Michigan Methodists, according to one Methodist in 1838, were "very zealous in the cause of religion and seem to live in the enjoyment of religion."³⁴ During camp meetings "Excitement rose to fever heat and the shouts of the converted and those convicted of sin could be heard ringing through the woods."³⁵ Although Methodism did have a strong streak of pietism, it seems also to have appealed strongly to sinners--persons who went through cycles of backsliding and getting religion. The saints of the evangelical denominations, especially Presbyterian and Congregational, seem to have been more uniformly God-fearing and given to "good" behavior.

But, Methodists in Michigan took no significant part in the benevolent societies or in movements for moral and social reform. Particularly before 1850 they lacked any social focus. They took no official

³³ Abel Stevens, The Centenary of American Methodism (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1866), pp. 270-71, 110.

³⁴ Letter of John Fisher, March 1838, in Tucker (ed.), "Correspondence of John Fisher," Michigan History, XLV, 234.

³⁵ William Ray Prescott, The Fathers Still Speak: A History of Michigan Methodism (Lansing: Michigan Printing Service, 1941), p. 76.

stand criticizing slavery until 1854, and none on temperance until 1853. Their attitudes on other evangelical issues are difficult to determine because there is simply a lack of evidence--which suggests lack of interest on their part.³⁶

A small minority took the uncompromising antislavery position of the Wesleyans. When Marcus Swift denounced the church for temporizing in 1835, "Not one of his fellow ministers stood by him."³⁷ In 1837 the General Conference succeeded in "pretty thoroughly muzzling the abolitionist radicals," according to William W. Sweet. It declared slavery not a moral wrong and in 1840 adopted its version of a "gag rule" in hopes of immunizing the church from controversy.³⁸ In 1838 the Conference censured the radicals and said that any "excitement" on the subject of abolitionism was "prejudicial to the interests of the Church" and resolved that it was the duty of members to "refrain from agitating the Church by forming abolition societies . . . or by attending Methodist abolition conventions."³⁹

³⁶Ibid., p. 91. Pilcher, Protestantism in Michigan, p. 420. Margaret Burnham Macmillan, The Methodist Episcopal Church in Michigan During the Civil War, ed. Lewis Beeson (Lansing: Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission, 1965), pp. 1-17.

³⁷ Macmillan, Methodist Church, pp. 3-4.

³⁸ Sweet, Methodism, pp. 237-42. Kooker, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Michigan," pp. 153-55, 280. Macmillan, Methodist Church, pp. 4-5. "Far from opposing slavery, official Methodism was actually discouraging abolitionism," Miyakawa, Protestants and Pioneers, p. 187.

³⁹ Quoted in Wesley Norton, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in Michigan and the Politics of Slavery: 1850-1860," Michigan History, XLVIII, 3 (September, 1964), 195-96.

The Wesleyans departed in 1841 and soon after the General Conference itself split, ostensibly over slavery, in 1844 into Northern and Southern wings. But this did not mean that Northern Methodists had become antislavery. As one Ohio minister, an abolitionist, said of the Northerners: "They had no pity for black men enslaved but when the Slave Lord sought to gag and manacle the Yankees that altered the case." Further, the Northerners did not change any of the existing provisions on slavery in their Discipline. They were the same in 1860 as they had been in 1824.⁴⁰

Temperance sentiment, like antislavery, seems to have been confined to a minority. Individual Methodists in Detroit seem to have given the cause solid backing, but my impression is that Methodists generally lagged far behind the evangelicals in pressing the cause. Not until 1856 did the Michigan Conference decide that the cause was inseparably connected with the Gospel.⁴¹

2. Methodist Voting.

The number of Methodists McCoy found among the economic elite was too few to be of significance, but Sabbath identified 6 Methodists among the Democratic and Whig party leaderships in Wayne in 1844: four

⁴⁰ Quoted in Macmillan, Methodist Church, p. 3.

⁴¹ Pilcher, Protestantism in Michigan, pp. 129-30. Advertiser, September 15, 1840, p. 2. Prescott, Fathers Still Speak, p. 91.

were Democrats and two Whigs.⁴² A comparison of the total Methodist seats in Democratic and Whig-Free Soil towns and counties suggests that the Methodists were split between the parties.

	Democratic	Whig-FS
Wayne: top 4 towns	1050	1100
Washtenaw: top 4 towns	500	1400
Oakland: top 7 towns	150	900
Michigan: top 5 counties	1400	1950

Although there were slightly more Methodist seats on the Whig-Free Soil side, examination of townships with high Methodist preferences and high religiosity shows the Democratic tendency found by Sabbath. Four towns in Wayne County had high Methodist preferences and fairly high religiosity. All were strong Democratic towns. Canton and Nankin were both mainly middle class, prosperous towns, with relatively few of the rural lower classes among their potential voters. But Monguagon had almost twice as many as Canton.

	Relig.	Meth. Pref.	Dem. Avg.	Fm. 1-3, Ur. 1-2
Monguagon	107	57	60	52
Canton	71	63	64	27
Nankin*	59	79	56	33
Redford	52	53	66	39

*Includes 53% Wesleyan Methodist preference.

One town in Wayne County had a Methodist preference of 100 per cent in 1850, and was a Whig-Free Soil town (59%), but Brownstown's

⁴²Sabbath, "Political Leadership in Wayne County, Michigan, 1844," p. 112.

religiosity was low (20%) and its Methodist congregation composed in part from neighboring Huron township.⁴³

Although the manuscript census of social statistics listed no Methodist church for Van Buren township in 1850, it did have in that year three different Methodist congregations and one Baptist congregation. The town's historian said that "A complete account of the activities of this Methodist society would make a creditable history of the township. . . . The Methodist Episcopal Church has led the way and been a dominant figure in all religious matters."⁴⁴ Van Buren's Democratic strength was 60 percent, its percent of Farm 1-3 and Urban 1-2 a low 36.

One town in Oakland County, Royal Oak, and one in Washtenaw, Sylvan, had a high Methodist preference and high religiosity. Both towns, however, were Whig-Free Soil towns, even though one of them, Sylvan, had a Catholic preference of 38 percent. Since, as will be shown, Catholics were the most consistently Democratic of any religious group, it seems likely that Sylvan's Methodists voted largely anti-Democratic, but this hypothesis is based on deductive reasoning rather than evidence.

⁴³ Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Wayne County, II: Township and Biographical Edition (Detroit: Silas Farmer and Co., 1890), 1314. Brownstown had a Presbyterian church in 1839, which was defunct by 1850.

⁴⁴ Farmer, History of Detroit, II: Township Edition, 1382-83. Samuel H. Robbe, History of Van Buren Township, Wayne County, Michigan (Van Buren, 1930), pp. 36-40.

	<u>Relig.</u>	<u>Meth. Pref.</u>	<u>Tools</u>	<u>Party Avg.</u>
Royal Oak	46%	60%	\$130	WFS 54%
Sylvan	70%	62%	\$ 96	WFS 59%

The data suggest that Methodists in eastern Michigan divided between the parties. In Wayne County, possibly for ethnic reasons, they favored the Democrats. Although it has not been possible to demonstrate, the influence of ethnocultural background on Methodists may have been crucial. There may also have been a difference between intensely religious Methodists and those only marginally religious or between the doctrinally orthodox and the devotionalist. Economic class, at any rate, was not a significant consideration.

3. Episcopalians.

Although individual Episcopalians such as Whig Charles C. Trowbridge were men of piety and benevolent works, the ecclesiastical leadership of the denomination seems to have been strongly non-evangelical. In eastern Michigan Episcopalianism existed mainly in population centers, so it is difficult to make inferences about the voting of its affiliates on the basis of township data. The McCoy and Sabbath studies suggest that Episcopalians favored the Whigs by about 60 percent. Yet their data, as well as impressionistic evidence, suggest that Episcopalians were an important group within the Democratic Party.

One measure of Episcopalianism's non-evangelicalism is that during the entire ante-bellum period the church ignored the slavery

issue.⁴⁵ In 1850 Detroit's Episcopal Bishop McCroskey, in his address to the Diocese of Michigan, gave his rationale for the church's non-involvement in social and moral issues with a political bearing. In her pursuit of "peace and harmony," said McCroskey, the church stood between her old enemy, "that corrupt branch of the Church of Christ--the Romish communion" and "the various sects who entertain no kind feeling for her." The Church could best defend herself by holding to her "conservative principles." Her duty was to God and to brethern "scattered abroad separated by political and social interests." The Church's main line of action should be to extend its "great doctrines" and to follow the "middle path marked out by our fathers." "We can thus avoid all those irritating questions that so often separate brethern, and weaken the power and influence of the Church of Christ." (italics mine)⁴⁶

The resolutions of the Convention in 1850 characteristically touched upon no social or political issues. The "Parish Reports" contained few if any signs of benevolent activity by the local churches.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Streeter, Political Parties, p. 216.

⁴⁶ Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopalian Church, Diocese of Michigan, 1850 (Detroit: Jabez Fox, 1850), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 23-28, 29-51. Nationally the Episcopalians took relatively little part in benevolence, Hudson, American Protestantism, pp. 60, 85, 86. At the fourth annual meeting of the Detroit City Tract Association, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist ministers gathered, but not Episcopalian, Michigan Christian Herald, January 24, 1850, p. 2.

Streeter asserted that because Michigan Episcopalianism "represented the wealthy and conservative class, many of the voters" in that church were Whigs in the 1830's and 1840's. This claim has some validity in that, according to McCoy's study, Wayne County Episcopalians were relatively more wealthy than other groups. In 1838 Blois said that the Episcopalians had 448 "communicants" in the state, compared to 3,230 Baptists and about 10,000 Methodists. In 1850 there were four Episcopalian churches in Wayne compared, for example, to six Baptist and fifteen Methodist churches. Given their modest numbers in the population, Episcopalians accounted for a substantial number of Wayne County's economic elite in 1844: 29 percent were Episcopalians. Of the 28 elite Episcopalians McCoy found that 18, or 64 percent, were Whigs, and 10, or 36 percent, were Democratic. McCoy, however, rejected Streeter's thesis that because these men were "wealthy" they were therefore "conservative" and "Whig." She proposed, rather, that the political preferences of the elite generally seemed to be not a product of self-conscious class interest (for one thing there was no solidarity of class), but that ethnocultural background and religious outlook and, to a lesser extent, economic role, were far more significant determinants of party affiliation.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Streeter, Political Parties, p. 212. Blois, Gazeteer of Michigan, 1838, pp. 148-49. McCoy, "Political Affiliations of Economic Elites," pp. 131, 134, 173-83.

Sabbath also found more Episcopalians, 15 or 58 percent, among Whig Party leaders in Wayne in 1844 than among Democratic leaders (11, 42%). Thus urban upper and middle class Episcopalians in 1844 in Wayne County definitely seem to have had a Whig tendency. Yet Episcopalians even among those classes were not always Whig, and they constituted a significant group in the Democracy. For example, because of the small numbers of Democrats among the economic elite, Episcopalians actually were the largest of any religious group among elite Democrats, 36 percent, while the 18 Whig Episcopalians constituted 31 percent of the Whig elite. (The second largest Democratic group was the "No Religion" contingent: 9 men, 32 percent.)⁴⁹

Episcopalianism in eastern Michigan was predominantly "urban." In 1850 in Wayne County out of 40 Protestant churches 4 were Episcopalian and 3 were located in Detroit. In Oakland County of 33 Protestant churches in 1850, 2 were Episcopalian, and one was in the nascent city of Pontiac with 6 other churches. There were 3 Episcopal churches in Washtenaw County (of 40 Protestant churches) in 1850: one, with 8 other churches, was in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw's most populous town; another stood in Ypsilanti, second most populous in the county; and the third was in the "Village of Dexter, Town of Scio," with 3 other churches.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Sabbath, "Political Leadership in Wayne County, Michigan, 1844," p. 112. McCoy, pp. 129, 131.

⁵⁰ Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 (Washington, 1853), pp. 908-12. United States Census of State of Michigan's Social Statistics,

The large-town and urban character of Episcopalianism makes it impossible to generalize about Episcopalian voting on the basis of the available township data. The one rural church in Wayne County was in Monguagon township which had an Episcopalian preference of 43 percent and a Methodist preference of 57 percent (religiosity 107%). This strong non-evangelical preference probably was related to the town's Democratic strength of 60 percent; but Episcopalians could easily have been split between the parties and, possibly, in the Whig's favor. At least one Episcopalian in Monguagon, however, was Democratic in 1844, and he was the richest man in town. Abraham Caleb Truax, a good friend of Lewis Cass, was an enterprising businessman who had plotted Monguagon's village of Trenton in 1834, first called Truaxton. He had been a director of the Huron Canal and Manufacturing Company, one of the brief speculative enterprises of the 1830's. Truax donated to the Episcopalian church of Trenton both its lot and its building. Before he died in a steamboat explosion in 1844, he was easily the most influential man in Monguagon. Is it unreasonable to assume that other Episcopalians or influential men in Monguagon were also Democratic?⁵¹

1850, MS. The other church in Oakland, at Troy Corners, became defunct in the fifties after the railroad bypassed it and businessmen moved away, Durant, History of Oakland County, pp. 285-95.

⁵¹ Farmer, History of Detroit, II: Township Edition, 1321. Wayne County Historical and Pioneer Society, Chronography of Notable Events in the Northwest Territory and Wayne County, Fred Carlisle (comp.) (Detroit: O. S. Gulley, Bcrnman and Co., 1890), pp. 151-52.

Impressionistic evidence suggests that "fashionable" Episcopalians (a favorite word of their evangelical critics) tended to be Democrats. Stevens T. Mason was Democratic governor from 1835 to 1839, and before that Territorial Secretary and Acting Governor. He and his family were Episcopalians and among the leaders of high social life. When Harriet Martineau came to Detroit in 1836 the high point of her visit was "a charming evening party at General Mason's. . . . It was wholly unexpected to find ourselves in accomplished society on the far side of Lake Erie."⁵² According to Lucius Lyon, himself an Episcopalian and Democrat, the Episcopalians shone brightest among Detroit's "accomplished society." In 1838 he wrote to his sister that Detroit had "a society which for intelligence, cultivation and refinement is equal to that of any town of similar size in the United States; and of the different religious societies there, the Episcopalian is decidedly the most respectable."⁵³

4. Evangelicals and Episcopalians.

Evangelicals disliked Episcopalianism because they associated it with worldliness, formalism, and Popery. However many pious or

⁵² Harriet Martineau, "Harriet Martineau's Travel's in and Around Michigan," Michigan History, VII, 1-2 (January-April, 1923), 51.

⁵³ Lucius Lyon, Washington, May 5, 1838, to Lucretia Lyon, Lyon Letters, p. 454.

evangelical Episcopalians there may have been in Wayne County, there was considerable hostility between evangelicals and Episcopalians, particularly between Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

Their disagreements were no secret. In 1842 Reverend Duffield and Episcopal Bishop McCroskey feuded publically over who represented the true church and traded personal insults.⁵⁴ Evangelicals often baited Episcopalians by lumping them together with Catholics, or implying that Episcopalianism was only one step removed from Romanism. Long ago Congregational Independents had decided that "Association leads to Consociation; Consociation leads to Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism leads to Episcopacy; Episcopacy leads to Roman Catholicism."⁵⁵ The Baptist Herald habitually equated Rome and Episcopacy in such a way as to suggest that such an equation was a cliché among evangelicals. In 1844 Duffield virtually did the same thing in a public letter, and one Episcopalian layman asked him to retract his "allegation" as to the "identity of Episcopacy and Catholicity."⁵⁶

In 1843 the Presbyterian Synod felt compelled to speak in a pastoral letter of the "false theology, and exclusive sectarianism, and jusitical proselytism, together with opposition to temperance and

⁵⁴ Advertiser, November 9, 1842, p. 2; November 11, p. 2; November 12, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Hudson, American Protestantism, p. 53.

⁵⁶ Advertiser, February 5, 1844, p. 2; February 9, p. 2.

revivals of religion, in the Episcopalian denomination." The Synod judged all of this to be "highly injurious to the cause of human salvation" and warned its members against it.⁵⁷

The Whig Advertiser and the Presbyterian Evangelical Observer apparently harassed Episcopacy by giving full coverage to disputes in that church. The leading "story" in this regard was the trial of Bishop Onderdonk in New York for "unchastity." The Evangelical Observer, surveying the affair, spoke with contempt of the "uncertain and ridiculous dogmas" promulgated by the same Episcopalians.

A similar spirit seems to have guided the Advertiser. One reader of that paper complained in 1843 that it printed too many "'squibbs' [excerpts from other papers] . . . designed to excite prejudice against the Episcopalians." The Advertiser denied such an intention, but its actions testified otherwise. One of its reporters said that the Episcopalian churches of New York were the "fashionable churches" of New York's aristocracy. "The Episcopalians alone seem to be bent upon building their churches in the most gaudy styles, without regard to sight or hearing, as if the . . . building were the object of worship."⁵⁸ The implication was that Episcopalians were idolators, and that they valued formalities and comfort more than religious experience. A pious member

⁵⁷ Free Press, October 14, 1860, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Evangelical Observer, October 21, 1845, p. 174. Smith, Revivalism, p. 29. Advertiser, October 3, 1843, p. 2; October 20, 1847, p. 2.

of Duffield's church, who described herself as a "strong" Presbyterian, raised objection to Episcopalianism in a letter to a son who had just decided to join that church. She was not, she said, opposed to the doctrines of Episcopacy: "their Doctrines are literally ours--that Chh. has turned out some of the brightest stars in the history of the Chh. (sic)" But she said, "unless they have a godly Minister--Their beautiful form, their Elegantly written prayers, their perfect specimens of composition in their Liturgy, all tend to making one 'at ease in Zion.'"⁵⁹

Reverend Duffield criticized the Episcopalians most for encouraging intemperance. At a dinner party in 1849 he watched Bishop McCroskey--and everyone else at the party--partake of intoxicating drink:

The Bishop drank freely and I could not help but thinking that it was no wonder the Episcopal church here stood in the way of temperance when the Bishop would sanction in this way the drinking of intoxicating liquor among his own folks as nearly all of them were. Oh what an obstacle in the way of true spiritual religion is that Episcopal church! I . . . mourn over its benumbing influence upon many members of my own church.⁶⁰

The antagonism between Episcopalians and evangelicals, and the apparent worldliness of many Episcopalians, were intimately related to Episcopalians being a significant group in the Democratic Party.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Sullivan Stuart, Detroit, April 4, 1853, Stuart Letters, I, 505.

⁶⁰ Vander Velde (ed.), MVHR, XXIV, 60, 61.

Catholics

There were three major ethnocultural groups in eastern Michigan in the folds of the Roman Catholic Church: Irish and German, both overwhelmingly foreign-born and recently arrived, and the French-Canadians, mostly native-born but largely unassimilated with the American-born. These groups all voted Democratic, but not to the same degree. The next chapter will explore differences among them. This section will show only that Catholics generally were the strongest and most consistent Democratic religious group.

The press of both parties was full of impressionistic evidence suggesting that Catholics voted Democratic. In 1835 and 1836, given the open Whig anti-Catholicism described earlier, one would hardly expect anything different. In 1837 a Catholic briefly published a newspaper, the Democrat, specifically to defend Catholics against Whig newspaper attacks, and it aligned itself with the Democratic Party.⁶¹ After 1836, however, Whiggery became more discreet. Men other than uncompromising evangelicals seem to have taken over leadership of the party, men interested less in ideology and more in getting elected. But the evangelicals remained with the party and it remained their party to a significant extent. Democratic newspapers and politicians tried hard, from 1837 to 1852, to insure that Catholics (and foreigners) did not forget

⁶¹ Detroit Morning Post, December 27, 1837, p. 2.

the Whig insults of 1835-36. On election eves particularly, they recalled those outbursts and made sensational efforts to connect every flurry of nativism and anti-Catholicism anywhere with the Whigs. The connection, of course, was often there. Yet the Whig Party eventually made serious efforts to woo Catholic voters, particularly in the early forties and through the 1844 election.⁶² After the 1844 election, however, the Advertiser joined other Whig papers in complaining that the Catholics had voted almost unanimously against the Whigs. In 1852 the Whigs were still confessing failure to win the "Catholic vote." The Advertiser attributed Winfield Scott's defeat to Whig disunity and inability to attract Catholic votes. Catholics were put off, it said, by "sectarian tendencies" in the Whig Party.⁶³

1. Rural Catholics.

Religious and voting data for counties suggests a relationship between Democratic strength and Catholics. The five Michigan counties

⁶² "It having been asserted and industriously circulated that Mr. Clay was hostile to emigrants and particularly Irish emigrants and Catholics, a small pamphlet has been prepared completely refuting the calumny and many copies are being sent by the Whig committee here to all parts of the country, particularly where there are Catholics." W. Hickey, Office of the Secretary of the Senate, August 13, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

⁶³ Advertiser, November 12, 1844, p. 2; November 5, 1852, p. 2. I have studied every spring and fall campaign in Detroit and Wayne County in the period 1837-1852.

with the highest Democratic vote in 1852 had (in 1850) a total of 15 Catholic churches with 5,240 seats, compared to 2 Catholic churches with 800 seats in the 5 lowest Democratic counties. This imbalance was not due to population differences: the low Democratic counties had a larger aggregate population (35,614) than the high Democratic counties (29,199).

There were no Catholic churches in Oakland, but five of six towns in Wayne and Washtenaw with Catholic preferences were strong Democratic towns. Grosse Pointe and Hamtramck were the banner Democratic units in the county. Preference computed on the basis of church seats may be a less adequate measure of Catholic congregations than of Protestant, because Catholics often had several masses on Sundays whereas Protestant congregations usually met all at once.

It is worth noting that the most "lower class" of the Catholic towns, the town with the lowest average value of tools in Wayne County, was Ecorse, and that this was the least Democratic town of all. This is interesting in view of the oft-repeated argument that Catholics voted Democratic because they usually were poor.

Despite Ecorse's deviancy, rural Catholics in eastern Michigan seem to have voted--from farm laborers to prosperous farmers--overwhelmingly Democratic.

TABLE 32

TOWNS WITH CATHOLIC PREFERENCES IN WAYNE AND WASHTENAW
 COUNTIES, 1850, SHOWING 1) PERCENT FARM 1-3,
 URBAN 1-2, OR VALUE OF TOOLS, 2) PARTY
 STRENGTH, 1848-1852, AND 3) PER CENT
 FOREIGN BORN

	Cath. Pref.	Relig.	Farm 1-3 Urban 1-2	Pty Avg.	% Foreign Born
Wayne:					
Grosse Pointe	78%	83%	47%	Dem 80%	56%
Hamtramck	100%	25%	54%	Dem 70%	72%
Greenfield	100%	8%	53%	Dem 60%	67%
Ecorse	100%	32%	60%	W 51%	33%
(Tools \$60)					
Oakland:					
Northfield	67%	134%	43%	Dem 67%	41%
Dexter	100%	21%	(Tools \$84)	Dem 58%	---

2. Urban Catholics.

The 1853 Detroit Directory's census of "National and Religious Denominational divisions" in Detroit's wards probably underestimated the number of Catholics. The returns lumped together 4,600 persons constituting a "Scattered population" living in hotels and boarding houses in different wards, and there were typographical errors, or errors of addition. Nevertheless, the census was remarkably complete and provides at least a relative measure of Catholic and Protestant presence. It is the only source of such information on the religious composition of Detroit wards in the mid-nineteenth century.

Only one ward in the city had a Catholic population of over 50 percent in 1853: the fourth with 57 percent. It was the second strongest Democratic ward in the city, averaging 61 percent 1848-1852. If the wards are ranked according to the percent of Catholics in their population and compared with Democratic averages in years of large turnout (1848, 1850, 1852) and with Democratic averages for every election, 1848-1852, there is a rough correspondence between Democratic strength and Catholic presence.

The significant point is that the three wards with the largest Catholic populations were all strong Democratic wards. Unfortunately, there is no reliable way of comparing the wealth or occupations of the wards. The fourth and seventh wards were the two easternmost wards, bordering Hamtramck, and the eighth was the most westernmost of

Detroit's wards. The seventh and eighth were the most recently created wards, symbolic of their containing many recently arrived immigrant Catholics.

TABLE 33
PER CENT CATHOLICS IN DETROIT WARDS, 1853,
COMPARED WITH DEMOCRATIC AVERAGE

Ward	Cath. %	Dem. Avg. 1848, 1850, 1852	Dem. Avg. 1848-1852
4	57	61	61
8	47	68	75
7	46	56	58
2	35	51	55
3	33	50	54
6	30	49	52
1	28	52	59
5	24	50	53

Mormons

Perhaps the clearest case of a religious group reacting to evangelical hostility and voting Democratic even more solidly than Catholics was a small colony of Mormons, who were living on Big Beaver Island,

which was part of Mackinac County, lying off the northernmost part of Michigan's lower peninsula. There were no Mormons in eastern Michigan, but the case of the Big Beaver colony is an excellent illustration of the way an alternate and deviant set of religious values, held by a sectarian in-group living in a hostile environment caused the group to choose one party rather than another.⁶⁴

The "Latter Day Saints" of Big Beaver were led by James Jesse Strang, who was crowned King, Prophet, and Priest in 1852. That same year he was also unanimously elected to the state legislature, as a Democrat. Internal dissension led to his murder in 1856, and the enlightened Christian neighbors of the Mormons thereupon invaded, sacked and burned the colony.

In 1852 the Mormons voted for Democrat Franklin Pierce, 164-1. Streeter said that the "party predilections of the Mormons were doubtless due to the influence of their leader," but offered no explanation of Strang's predilections. A recent article by David Byron Davis is more suggestive. In "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," Davis explored the "nativist" frame of mind which regarded Masons, Catholics, and Mormons as conspirators against democratic government and society.

⁶⁴ James S. Coleman, "Social Cleavage and Religious Conflict," ed. Earl Raab, Religious Conflict in America, pp. 96-98.

"If Masons, Catholics, and Mormons bore little resemblance to one another in actuality, as imagined enemies they merged into a nearly common stereotype." All three were secret organizations to which members must be unconditionally loyal. Nativists engaged in "countless fantasies of treason and mysterious criminality," in which they saw the subversives indulging in sexual immorality and perversion, and in this Mormons were held to be preeminent because they practiced polygamy. Nativists attributed this to Mormons being deluded by a "false ideology" which had "deadened the moral sense and liberated man's wild sexual impulse from the normal restraints of civilization."⁶⁵

Davis's nativists have much in common with the evangelicals. Both hated Mormonism for similar reasons. Nativism and evangelicalism was concentrated in the Whig Party in Michigan to a much greater degree than in the Democratic Party. It is reasonable to infer that Mormons perceived this and voted accordingly. In 1852 the Advertiser noting the Democratic vote of the Mormons, said that this was appropriate and that Whigs did not want the votes of "Murderers, Polygamists, and Freebooters."⁶⁶ In 1854 it warned of the growing and "fearful influence of Mormonism." It was becoming entrenched in Michigan,

⁶⁵Streeter, Political Parties, pp. 226-27. Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion," MVHR, XLVII, 208, 216, passim.

⁶⁶Advertiser, November 15, 1852, p. 2.

and the narrow stretch of water separating Beaver Island from the mainland was not enough to "keep their evil influence from contaminating the thoughtless impulses of youth. Let it have a speedy end in all conscience." When Strang was murdered the Michigan Christian Herald called him a "tyrant, a knave, and a hypocrite," and rejoiced that his death would "disorganize that band of robbers and pirates who have . . . for years infested the northern parts of the state, committing all sorts of violence and depredations."⁶⁷

The Democrats did not exactly rush to embrace the Mormons, and their newspapers referred to them in similarly unpleasant terms. However, the Democrats had identified themselves over the years with laissez-faire ethics, and the Mormons probably believed that Democrats were less disposed to demand conformity to "Christian" ways. It is symbolic that the year of the sack of Big Beaver, was the year in which the national Republican Party condemned polygamy. The Republicans in Michigan were very much a continuation of the Whig Party.

Negative Reference to Evangelicals: General

In his study of New York Benson suggested that the concept of negative reference groups could be of great value to historians in helping them to understand, in Robert Merton's words, "patterns . . . of

⁶⁷ Advertiser, August 15, 1854, p. 2. Herald, July 17, 1856, p. 2.

hostile relations between groups or collectivities in which the actions, attitudes and values of one are dependent upon the actions, attitudes and values of the other to which it stands in opposition."⁶⁸

Benson showed that patterns of hostile relations between ethno-cultural, religious, occupational, and broad symbolic groups (puritans and non-puritans) helped explain voting behavior in New York in the 1840's. In eastern Michigan evangelicals tried to realize a set of goals which became more or less identified with the Whig Party. Segments of the population, subcultures with different values from evangelicals, saw those goals as threats. Their reaction helped lead them into political opposition to the Whigs.

Most of the evangelicals were New England Protestants. They were, as Dixon Ryan Fox put it, "positive men," and as such begot a strong reaction. Richard L. Power once suggested that historians study the "earthy character of the opposition encountered in the West by the Yankee colonists, ministers, editors, teachers, tradesmen, and enterprisers, and their ideas and ways (italics mine)."⁶⁹

The reaction to Yankee "cultural imperialism" was, in large part, an anti-evangelical reaction against what Fox called "the holy enterprise

⁶⁸ Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 27, 284-86. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (revised; Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), pp. 300-01.

⁶⁹ Richard L. Power, "A Crusade to Extend Yankee Culture, 1820-1865," New England Quarterly, XIII, 4 (December, 1940), 648, 649-51.

of minding everybody else's business." It was probably the inspiration of Herman Melville's desire to form a "Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling with Other People's Business." The philanthropy of the evangelical Yankees was derived from the philanthropy of puritanism generally, which Ralph Barton Perry has described as philanthropy of the "paternal sort."

It was a stern kindness, designed to repay the hurts of denial with the greater benefits which will accrue at some remoter time, in this world or the next. It was an inquisitive, because distrustful, kindness, which sought to regulate another's life, rather than to leave that life to the promptings of its own inward impulsions and self-government. It was an arrogant kindness, expressing a conviction so free from doubt as to be untroubled by the protests of the beneficiary.⁷⁰

For very different reasons Catholics, religious liberals such as Unitarians, Universalists, Campbellites, and others, and free-thinkers, deists, atheists, and Mormons, were natural enemies of the evangelicals. When Reverend Ely issued his 1829 call for a "Christian Party," the strongest reaction came, according to Blau, from free-thinkers, Universalists, and "ardent secularists," some of the latter being Jacksonian Republicans, i. e., incipient Jacksonian Democrats.⁷¹

Commenting on the reaction to Ely's speech a Presbyterian minister said

⁷⁰Ralph Barton Perry, Puritanism and Democracy (New York: Vanguard Press, 1944), p. 326.

⁷¹Blau, "Christian Party in Politics," Review of Religion, XI, 24-26. Bodo, Protestant Clergy, pp. 23-25.

Although our strength is over rated, we are strong enough to excite fear. . . . The mobocracy of the age hates us, because we are not liberal enough to suit their taste ⁷² . and from every quarter there is a hideous outcry against us.

Religious liberals feared evangelical efforts to connect religion and state and many non-evangelicals, not necessarily liberal or conservative, simply resented the evangelicals for trying to mind their business. Perhaps the classic expression of irritation with evangelical meddling came from a rural New Yorker who wrote to the Temperance Recorder in 1835:

By what authority you continue to send me the Temperance Recorder, I know not. One thing I do know, which is, that if you do not like to have them returned with double postage, you had better wait till I subscribe before you send me another. We have Anti-Masonry, Anti-Rum, Anti-Gin, Anti-Brandy, and Anti-mind-their-own business people enough in this small town.⁷³

In Michigan, Presbyterians appear to have been the focus of anti-evangelical reactions, probably because they were most heavily engaged in and identified with benevolence and reform causes such as temperance. Catherine Mason, an Episcopalian turned Campbellite and an ardent Democrat, gave her view of Presbyterians in 1836. In describing an acquaintance with whom she disagreed frequently she attributed their differences to the other's

⁷²Quoted in Bodo, pp. 47-48.

⁷³Quoted in John Allen Krout, The Origins of Prohibition (New York: Knopf, 1925), p. 259, n.

being a thoroughgoing Presbyterian--I a disciple of Alexander Campbell. . . . However she is not as bigoted and illiberal as the generality of her brethern. They have a preacher here Troy, New York. . . far worse than Mr. Cleaveland Detroit's Presbyterian minister. . . . on Thanksgiving day . . . he gave them a ranting, 'hellfire' sermon upon temperance and slavery saying the latter was instituted by the devil, who also introduced the use of ardent spirits--thus desecrating a day appointed to return thanks to our Creator for the blessings we enjoy as a nation.⁷⁴

A Congregational minister doing evangelical missionary work in Macomb County in 1835 wrote that

The current of Infidelity is strong in the Territory. Unwearied pains are taken to disseminate error. Infidel Publications are extensively circulated. . . . Universalism and Deism are the most common popular errors. The majority of the community, however, do not care what they believe provided it is in opposition to the 'Orthodox' as they term the Presbyterians. (italics mine)⁷⁵

The temperance crusade appears to have been particularly aggravating to many non-evangelicals. The reaction against it by those who preferred to drink and regulate themselves probably worked to Democratic advantage and helped reinforce anti-evangelical sentiment. In 1836 Henry Schoolcraft, a Democrat, described how temperance ultras had alienated moderate men like himself. The temperance movement, he wrote,

⁷⁴ Catherine Mason, Troy, New York, December 18, 1839, to Stevens T. Mason, Mason MSS.

⁷⁵ Luther Shaw, Romeo, Macomb County, August 22, 1835, to Reverend Levi Platt, Secretary, Home Missionary Society, in William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1850, III, The Congregationalists: A Volume of Source Materials (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 315.

excited the community of Detroit this season, as a subject essential to the cause of sound morals. Its importance is undeniable on all hands, but there is always a tendency in new measures of reform to make the method insisted on a sort of moral panacea, capable of doing all things, to the no little danger of setting up a standard higher than the Decalogue itself. In the midst of this tendency to ultraism, the least particle of conservative opinion would be seized upon by its leaders as the want of a thorough acquaintance and heartiness in the cause.⁷⁶

In an election of town officers in Farmington, Oakland County, in 1840, temperance advocates aroused such resentment that a Justice of the Peace was elected "rather in opposition to temperance principles" by Democrats and a group of "disappointed" Whigs. The man elected turned out to be such an enthusiastic drinker than even his anti-temperance supporters joined some Whigs in petitioning for his removal.⁷⁷

The case of Charles M. Bull, a Detroit merchant in the 1830's illustrates how resentment of the Presbyterians and their causes probably influenced politics. Bull, a Democrat, held opinions on certain important issues which were characteristic of Whigs. He thought that President Jackson's removal of deposits from the Bank of the United States "not right." Although not wishing to be thought a Bank man, he said "give the d---I his due." After all, the Bank had allowed Congress

⁷⁶ Schoolcraft, Personal Memoirs, pp. 550-51.

⁷⁷ Seth A. L. Warner and Amos Mead, Farmington, December 7, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit; and see the related petitions in the file of Political Petitions, 1839-1841, Woodbridge MSS.

to look at its books.⁷⁸ When Michigan was admitted to the Union, after the Democrats had switched to a "submissionist" position on the Ohio boundary, Bull helped celebrate statehood, but opposed--as the Whigs still did --"submitting to the insult we have received from Congress without saying a word."⁷⁹ Bull's younger brother Hampton thought that "the Irish and French are the meanest set of people I ever saw."⁸⁰ If Bull shared this nativism there was additional reason for expecting him to be a Whig.

Yet one incident in 1834 may go far in explaining Bull's Democratic loyalty. The Territorial Legislature and Governor Mason, in a temperance move, had just raised the price of liquor retail licenses to \$100. This incensed tavern keepers as well as many store keepers such as Bull who kept bar at one end of their counters. Bull said that the merchants had submitted a petition to the city council with the names of "30 of the richest and most influential men in the place" on it. A temperance minded council had treated the petition lightly, but Bull said "we are safe now and have all on our side except the d--d presbyterians and them we do not care anything about we shall (sic) get

⁷⁸ Charles M. Bull, Detroit, February 24, 1834, to John Bull; C.M.B., Detroit, June 4, 1834, to J.B.; see also his desire not to have "much to do with the Local Banks," C.M.B., January 12, 1834, to J.B., Bull MSS, BHC.

⁷⁹ Charles M. Bull, February 13, 1837, to John Bull, Bull MSS.

⁸⁰ Charles M. Bull and Hampton Bull, Detroit, January 12, 1834, to John Bull, Bull MSS.

bout the best way we can until we get a new board." The latter amounted to disregarding the \$100 fee and selling booze anyway.⁸¹

The evangelical demand that all keep a quiet Sabbath irritated the unorthodox who wished to keep it as they pleased. The Congregational missionary in Macomb wrote of his encounter with "Universalists or Deists who wish to sell and go farther into the woods--as one of them said a few days since--that he might be where he could hunt on the Sabbath and not disturb his neighbors."⁸²

Lenski: The Principles of the Demanding Norm and Social Hedonism

In his study of Detroit in the 1950's and 1960's Lenski advanced concepts which help explain how men reacted to the evangelicals and to the Whig Party in the 1840's. They help explain why Reverend Duffield complained of the "benumbing" influence of Episcopalianism on his congregation, and why evangelical denominations did not wholly support evangelical goals or the Whig Party. They suggest, too, why the uncommitted would be more likely to be attracted to the anti-evangelicals and the Democratic Party.

⁸¹ Charles M. Bull, Detroit, August 31, 1834, to John Bull, Bull MSS. John Fitzgibbon, "King Alcohol: His Rise, Reign and Fall in Michigan," Michigan History, II, 4 (October, 1918), 740-47.

⁸² Letter of Luther Shaw in Sweet, The Congregationalists, p. 315.

Lenski found, as he expected, that "the degree to which individuals are involved in the churches greatly affects their attitudes on moral issues which the churches have especially chosen to champion. When the issue involved is one on which the churches disagree, . . . we typically find a neat progression in attitudes from the most involved members of one group to the most involved members of the other." For example, the Protestant churches condemn gambling and drinking, but sanction birth control; the Catholic church condones gambling and drinking, but condemns birth control. Thus,

The most active white Protestants are the most confirmed critics of gambling and drinking, while the most active Catholics are close to the opposite extreme. On the issue of birth control, however, the positions are virtually reversed.⁸³

However, it was Lenski's observations of the marginal members of both groups, that is, those members not intensely involved, which was of particular relevance. Lenski found that both marginal Catholics and Protestants

were closer to the activists supporting the less demanding moral standard. In other words, on the issues of gambling and drinking, the marginal members of the two groups were closer to the positions of the Catholic activists, the less demanding position. However, on the issue of birth control the marginal members of the two groups were closer to the Protestant activists. . . . In each case the group with the less demanding norm seems to exert greater influence over the members of the other groups. These are examples of what might be called the principle of social hedonism: when two established and institutionalized religious groups support opposing moral norms,

⁸³ Lenski, The Religious Factor, p. 174.

the less demanding norm tends to win the less committed members of both groups.⁸⁴

Might there not have been something of this in men's reactions to political parties in the 1840's? It has been seen that commitment to evangelical denominations very probably went along with opposition to the Democratic Party and support of the Whig and antislavery parties. Was it not likely that marginal Presbyterians, say, would be unconcerned about temperance or Sabbath-keeping and less likely than committed Presbyterians to vote Whig? Unfortunately the kind of data needed to test such a hypothesis is not available. Yet, clearly, the Whig Party in Michigan from 1837 to 1852 supported more demanding moral standards than the Democratic Party. The "principle of social hedonism" would seem to have worked to help create the far more frequent Democratic majorities in Wayne County and the State.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 174-75.

CHAPTER IX

ETHNOCULTURAL GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

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In New York in the 1840's, according to Lee Benson, "ethnic and religious differences . . . tended to be relatively the most important sources of political differences." This holds for Western Michigan, 1837-1852. Benson also proposed that the traditional identification of Democrats with immigrants and Catholics, and of Whigs with native stock Protestants, particularly New Englanders, "is almost as inaccurate and misleading as it is unoriginal. Collection and analysis of the relevant data reveal that the sharpest political cleavages occurred, not between immigrants and Yankees, but between different groups of immigrants."¹

Benson developed a classification system for ethnocultural groups which will be of some use here. His two main categories were "Natives," or "Groups in United States by 1790," and "Immigrants," or "Groups arriving in significant numbers after 1790." He divided the immigrants into two groups: "New non-British" and New British." Immigrants voted, according to Benson's estimates, as follows:²

	Whig %	Dem. %
New non-British		
Catholic Irish	5	95
French Canadian	5	95

¹Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, p. 165.

²Ibid., p. 185.

	Whig %	Dem. %
French	10	90
New German	20	80
New British		
English	75	25
Scots	90	10
Welsh	90	10
Prot. Irish	90	10

The natives were subdivided into Negroes, Yankees, Penn-Jerseyites, and four "Yorker" groups: Huguenots (French Protestants), Dutch, Old British, and Old German. Except for Negroes and Huguenots, Benson estimated that the native groups split far less sharply between the parties:³

	Whig %	Dem. %
Native Voting		
Negroes	95	5
Huguenots	75	25
Yankees	55	45
Penn Jerseyites	45	55
Old British	40	60
Dutch	40	60
Old German	40	60

Wayne County and eastern Michigan were not as heterogenous in 1850 as New York was in 1844. Probably members of all the groups mentioned above were present in Wayne County alone, but they did not

³Ibid., pp. 177-85. "It is worth noting that the 'deviant' behavior of Negroes and Huguenots strengthens rather than weakens the conclusion that native groups had not developed polarized voting patterns. Like the immigrants, members of the two groups were influenced by certain ethnic and religious factors that differentiated them from the great bulk of the native electorate." pp. 184-85.

cluster in townships in such a way so that, lacking data for individuals, inferences can be made from aggregate data. It has not been possible to test adequately whether "the sharpest political cleavages occurred . . . between different groups of immigrants," although the available data suggests that this was so. There was no simple alignment of natives on one side and immigrants on the other.

Immigrants

In 1836 Harriet Martineau wrote that "thousands of foreigners are pouring in every year; and of these, many are Irish, Germans, or Dutch, working their way into the backcountry, and glad to be employed for a while at Detroit, to earn money to carry them further."⁴ By 1850 the foreign born of Wayne numbered about 14,507, or 35 percent. In Michigan the foreigners made up 13.8 percent of the population, and the largest single group were English, (6.8%), but in Wayne County Irish and Germans were heavily concentrated.⁵

Did the foreign-born vote Democratic? From the Constitutional Convention of 1835 to the post-mortems on the 1852 election, politicians and editors testified that they did. In 1844 they voted for Polk, said the

⁴ Harriet Martineau, Michigan History, VII, 50.

⁵ The Wayne estimate is based on my count of the birthplaces of the potential voters in the towns in 1850, and on the 1853 Directory census, which counted over 7,700 Germans in Detroit alone in 1853, compared to 6,100 Irish Catholics, and 3,200 English Protestants and about 2,100 other New British.

Advertiser, "Almost in a solid phalanx." The election was determined, said William Woodbridge, by the "'Foreign Vote'--the Irish and the Catholic Germans are very numerous in this State and no doubt is entertained that they almost universally voted the Loco Foco ticket." Woodbridge added that the Democratic cause was also helped by importations, no doubt French, from Canada. In 1852 the Free Press claimed the loyalty of "adopted citizens" for Democracy despite "all the appliances of Whiggery" to lure them away.⁶

The observers were mostly correct. There was a strong tendency for areas where immigrants were concentrated to be strongly Democratic, but the most correct observers were those like Woodbridge who singled out immigrant Catholics as the Democrats' strongest supporters.

The percent foreign born in 1850 in Michigan counties giving the highest Democratic vote in 1852 was generally greater than the percent in the lowest Democratic counties. (See Table 34.)

The percent of foreign born in Wayne's towns tended to increase as Democratic strength increased; the coefficient of correlation for the two variables, as noted earlier, is plus .57. (See Table 35.)

⁶Dorr (ed.), Debates and Proceedings, 1835 (Debates), pp. 184, 219-20. Advertiser, November 15, 1844; November 16, p. 2; November 18, p. 2. Free Press, November 6, 1852, p. 2. William Woodbridge, Springwells, November 11, 1844, draft of a letter, Woodbridge MSS.

TABLE 34

PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN-BORN, 1850, IN HIGHEST DEMOCRATIC
COUNTIES, 1852, AND LOWEST DEMOCRATIC COUNTIES, 1852

County	Dem. %	F-B %
<u>High Democratic</u>		
Mackinac	89	34
Ottawa	64	48
Saginaw	61	16
Livingston	57	10
Wayne	55.4	35
Monroe	55.3	17
Montcalm	55.3	6
St. Clair	55.1	31
<u>Low Democratic</u>		
Tuscola	35	10
Kalamazoo	41	8
Clinton	42	7
Genesee	43	8
Jackson	45	6
Hillsdale	47	8

TABLE 35

PER CENT FOREIGN BORN, 1850, WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS,
 COMPARED TO DEMOCRATIC AVERAGE, 1848-1852

Towns	% FB	Dem. Avg.
Hamtramck	72	70
Greenfield	67	62
Springwells	64	53
Grosse Pointe	56	80
Monguagon	48	60
Dearborn	38	60
Ecorse	33	49
Brownstown	32	41
Redford	32	66
Romulus	22	60
Nonkin	20	56
Taylor	17	37
Van Buren	14	60
Canton	14	64
Sumpter	13	47
Huron	10	54
Livonia	8	39
Plymouth	7	38

Only one of the banner towns of Oakland, Washtenaw, and Hillsdale had a significant number of foreign born. Although it was Democratic, the coefficient of correlation for percent foreign born and Democratic strength fro all was an insignificant .02. (See Appendix E, Table 1).

In Detroit's wards some correspondence is seen between percent foreign and Democratic strength. The three wards--fourth, seventh, and eighth--with the largest percent foreign were also the strongest Democratic wards. Yet two wards with high foreign percentages were not strong Democratic wards--the sixth and third. Religion appears to have been decisive. Wards four, seven and eight had the largest percentages of Catholics: 57, 46, and 47; compared to 30 and 34 for wards six and three.

TABLE 36

DETROIT'S WARDS, PER CENT FOREIGN-BORN, 1853, AND
DEMOCRATIC AVERAGE, AND PER CENT CATHOLIC

Ward	FB %	Dem. Avg. 1848-1852	Dem. Avg. 1848, 1850, 1852	Cath. %
4	82	65	61	57
7	80	58	56	46
8	75	75	68	47
6	67	52	49	30
3	60	54	50	34
1	50	60	52	28
5	48	53	50	24
2	46	55	51	35

Among Wayne towns Springwells had a large foreign born population (64%) but low Democratic strength. This may have been due to Springwells' immigrants having recently arrived. Significantly, of the four towns with the most foreigners (by percent), Hamtramck, Greenfield, Grosse Pointe, and Springwells, the only one not heavily Democratic in 1850 was Springwells, the only one without a Catholic church in 1850.

Thus, the foreign born voted heavily for the Democracy, but foreign born Catholics made up the bulk of the immigrant population and it was they who were most consistently Democratic.

Natives: Yankees and Yorkers

With the exception of those of foreign birth--our population is principally from New England and western New York: like that from which it has been separated, it is industrious, intelligent and enterprising. Its interests--are with the Whigs: and we hope this truth will be acknowledged. Its intercourse, political as well as social and commercial, ought to be--and is getting to be--with New England.⁷

It is clear from these comments of William Woodbridge in 1844 as well as from the tables above that natives were divided in their political loyalties. Since most of the natives, whether born in New York or New England, were of Yankee stock, it seems reasonable to infer that Yankees were also divided.

⁷William Woodbridge, Springwells, September 14, 1844, to Jonathan Chapman, Boston, Woodbridge MSS.

Next to Yankees the largest native group was the Yorkers (Dutch, Old British, Old Germans, Hugenots). In New York most Yorkers had disliked Yankees since the seventeenth century, and vice versa.⁸ Benson has shown that the Yankee-Yorker hostility affected Whig and Democratic political alignments, with Yankees slightly favoring the Whigs and Yorkers (except Hugenots) favoring the Democrats by a somewhat larger margin (see pp. 377-78.) In Michigan Yankees and Yorkers were blended together in the native population far more than in New York. The New York born were the largest single element in Michigan and Wayne County, but it was very difficult to determine which were Yankees and which were Yorkers (or other). There is some evidence for the persistence of Yankee-Yorker antagonism in Michigan, but the greater mingling of the two groups may have made it less intense than in New York. At any rate, the evidence for the Democratic tendency of Yorkers in Michigan is far from as persuasive as that in New York. The evidence for the Whig tendency of Yankees is somewhat stronger.

Towns could be ranked according to the percent of New England born in each. In Wayne Democratic strength showed a slight tendency to rise as the percent of New England born fell. The coefficient of correlation was $-.28$ (See Appendix E, Table 2). The banner towns of

⁸Dixon Ryan Fox, Yankees and Yorkers (New York: New York University, 1940) pp. 1-26, 206-07, passim.

Hillsdale, Oakland, and Washtenaw showed no consistent relationship between New England born and Democratic strength (See Appendix E, Table 3).

This data proves or disproves little. However, the Sabbath and McCoy studies both show Yankees as important in both parties but decisively favoring the Whigs. Sabbath found 24 New England born among Wayne's Whig leadership in 1844 and only 15 Democratic leaders of New England birth (69%-31%).⁹

McCoy's Yankee elite members were more preponderantly Whig and anti-Democratic than Sabbath's aggregate Yankee group. The 45 Yankee elite members in 1844 were the largest ethnocultural group among the elite, and 33 (71%) were Whig, 3 were Liberty (9%), and 9 Democratic (20%), for an anti-Democratic percent of 80. The New York English and the New England English broke down as follows between parties:

	New-England English		New York English	
	No.	%	No.	%
Whigs	22	84	11	58
Democrats	4	16	5	26
Liberty	--	--	3	16
	<hr/> 26	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 19	<hr/> 100

(The New England English were Whig by 84% and the New York English were anti-Democratic by 74%.)

⁹ Sabbath, "Political Leadership in Wayne County, 1844," p. 131.

Although elite Yankees were preponderantly anti-Democratic, Yankees were still the largest single ethnocultural group among elite Democrats. Yankee Democrats constituted 32 percent of the Democratic total, compared to Yankee Whigs amounting to 54 percent of the Whigs. The decisive factor separating Yankee Whigs and Yankee Democrats, it will be recalled, was Presbyterianism.¹⁰

In a general way McCoy's findings agree with the data here: Yankees in eastern Michigan were divided between the parties, favored the Whigs, and religious differences among Yankees had a highly significant influence on their party preference. McCoy's elite Yankees were far more anti-Democratic than Yankees in the population at large appear to have been. Partly accounting for this imbalance was that Presbyterians were so numerous among McCoy's elite: this was a group which even among the population at large was strongly anti-Democratic. Significantly McCoy explained the Whiggism of elite Presbyterians by referring to their "reformist zeal" and "puritanical" impulses.¹¹

Yorkers

Impressionistic evidence suggests that Yorkers played a significant role in the Democratic Party in eastern Michigan. John Norvell,

¹⁰ McCoy, "Political Affiliations of Economic Elites," pp. 160, 161. Among non-Yankee Presbyterians there was no sharp cleavage.

¹¹ McCoy, pp. 166, 167, 175.

one of Michigan's first Senators, and a Democratic Party leader for many years, was described by an admiring Charles M. Bull in 1831 as "a real Yorker." Bull himself may have been a Yorker (born in Columbia County, New York), but Norvell was the son of a Virginian and born in Kentucky. I interpret this to mean that Bull associated Jacksonian leaders with Yorker characteristics.¹²

Conrad "Coon" Ten Eyck, a Democratic leader of Dearborn, was a genuine Yorker, born in New York of Dutch ancestry. Ten Eyck was a pioneer and leading citizen of Democratic Dearborn. In the 1830's pioneers traveling through eastern Michigan stopped at Ten Eyck's inn for refreshment and a dose of Democratic politics. Wayne County Democratic Conventions for years were held at "Ten Eyck's Tavern," and Conrad's neighbors frequently elected him to the state legislature and other local offices.¹³

Two Wayne County towns had Yorker characteristics and both were Democratic towns. Redford (66% Democratic strength) had a Dutch Reformed church (18% preference), and 48 percent of its potential voters were born in New York. But this proves almost nothing.

¹² Charles M. Bull, Detroit, July 1831, to John Bull, Columbia County, New York, in Sidney Glaser (ed.), "In Old Detroit (1831-1836)," Michigan History, XXVI (Spring, 1942), 204.

¹³ Henry A. Haigh, "The Old Ten Eyck Tavern," Michigan History, XV (Summer, 1931), 441-45. Henry A. Haigh, "Early Days in Dearborn," Michigan History, V, 2-3 (July-October, 1921), 536-60.

Democratic Van Buren (60%) was settled in the 1820's and 1830's by New Yorkers, particularly from Seneca County, New York. Seneca was a Penn-Jerseyite County sharply divided in its political loyalties.¹⁴ Yet the founders of Van Buren indicated where their loyalties lay by naming their town after New York's best known Yorker Democrat.¹⁵

In 1850 in Addison, Oakland County's banner Democratic town (77%), 50 percent of the potential voters had been born in New York and 28 percent had been born in the Middle Atlantic states, mostly New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Most of the prominent men in this predominantly small farmer but prospering town were of Dutch and German ancestry. All the available evidence regarding Addison's ethnocultural composition points strongly in a Yorker direction.¹⁶

The above evidence is impressionistic and far from conclusive. Yet it seems plausible that Yankees and Yorkers carried from New York to Michigan both their cultural antagonism and political preferences.

The French

In 1837 the population of Michigan was about 175,000 and an estimated 10,000-12,000 were descendants of the French-Canadians

¹⁴Benson, Concept, p. 184. He estimated that Penn-Jerseyites voted about 55 percent Democrat. They were not properly a Yorker group, but I am considering them as such.

¹⁵Robbe, History of Van Buren Township, pp. 32-40, 58-59.

¹⁶Durant, History of Oakland County, pp. 123-29.

who had been the first white settlers in the region. Many French were concentrated on Michigan's southeastern shoreline in Wayne and neighboring counties. While the French could not have amounted to more than 7 percent of Michigan's population in 1837, they constituted about 15 percent of Detroit's population in 1834.¹⁷

From at least the mid-1830's on, most of the French formed and held a Democratic loyalty. In New York state, according to Benson's estimate, the "Old French" voted about 90 percent Democratic, and French-Canadians, the most recently arrived of any immigrant group there, voted about 95 percent Democratic.¹⁸ Although both the old and new French in Michigan were a strongly Democratic group, neither seem to have been as solidly Democratic as the New York French.

One old pioneer, however, remembered that

In politics all Canada Frenchmen . . . were democrats . . . and never failed to be present on election day to 'cast a vote for Gen. Jackson.' No insult was more keenly felt than to be charged with lack of fealty to the 'old party,' although it was well understood that the last man to give him (sic) a ballot and the longest plug of tobacco secured his vote.¹⁹

¹⁷ Blois, Gazeteer of Michigan, 1838, pp. 156-67. Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings, p. 502. Trowbridge, History of Michigan Baptists, p. 45.

¹⁸ Benson, Concept, pp. 175-76, 185.

¹⁹ E. S. Smith, "Pioneer Days in Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties," MPHC, XIV, 279.

As early as 1833 opponents of the Democrats noted that the Catholic French were voting Democratic and in 1838 the Detroit Free Press claimed that the French population voted Democratic "almost en masse." The paper predicted that in the coming fall election the French "will be more unanimous . . . in support of the Democratic ticket, than they have ever been before."²⁰

Often the French gave Whig leaders hope that they could be wooed away from Democracy, but usually ended up disappointing them. A Monroe Whig leader in 1844 became convinced that the French would go for Clay, but after the election lamented:

It is said, and I am convinced of the truth of it, that the Sabbath previous to the Election, their Clergy here and at the Bay urged on them the duty of voting the Polk ticket as the Clay Party, should they succeed, would burn their Churches, and otherwise act hostilely to all Catholic Interests. . . . that kind of influence that is always brought to bear on such Minds, succeeded in effacing any favorable impressions made by Whigs and caused them to fall in with the prevailing Delusion of this unhappy Period.²¹

I. Detroit French, 1839-1844.

In 1853 the number of "French Catholics" in each of Detroit's wards was given as follows in Johnston's census (I have computed the

²⁰ Detroit Courier, July 10, 1833, p. 2. Caleb N. Ormsby, March 11, 1833, Detroit, to John Allen, Ann Arbor, Allen MSS. BHC. Free Press, October 23, 1838, p. 2; October 25, p. 2.

²¹ Oliver Johnson, Monroe, November 20, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Washington, Woodbridge MSS.

percentages):

Ward	French Catholics	
	No.	%
1	55	1.6
2	34	2.4
3	303	8.8
4	533	12.5
5	58	1.8
6	424	8.9
7	606	12.4
8	43	1.0

In the period 1839-1844 there were only 6 wards, and the 7th was then part of the 4th. The then 3rd, 4th, and 6th wards (those with the largest numbers and percentages of French Catholics in 1853) were all on the east side of town, as were the French Catholic churches. Those wards bordered on Hamtramck township, an early French settlement. In 1839, given its location and the size of the French Catholic populations in the 4th and 7th wards in 1853, the 4th probably was the most French of the wards. It voted 59 percent Democratic in 1839 and gave even larger majorities to the Democrats in 1841, 1842, and 1843.²² Although the foregoing data do not provide a sound basis for generalization, it does not contradict all the impressionistic evidence regarding French Democratic loyalty.

²²The 1840 and 1844 Presidential election returns for Detroit wards are unavailable. In city elections, 1839 through 1844, the 4th ward went Democrat.

2. Rural French, 1837-1852.

Hamtramck's Democratic majority from 1837 to 1847 ranged from 68 percent to 96 percent, the latter majority cast in 1842, a low turnout year when 160 Democrats and only 6 Whigs went to the polls. In 1847 Grosse Pointe was organized out of Hamtramck and it took over as the banner Democratic unit, averaging 80 percent during 1848-1852 to Hamtramck's 70 percent. By 1850 both towns had been flooded with foreign-born Catholics, German Lutherans, and other immigrants. Their early French populations were in a minority. In 1840 Hamtramck had still been mostly French. A poll list of the persons who voted in Hamtramck on November 2 and 3, 1840, contained 336 names of which about 185, or 55 percent, appeared to be French. Hamtramck voted 70 percent Democratic in 1840, and it is unlikely that all or most of the 104 Whig voters were French. Lewis Beaufait of Hamtramck was a member of a well known French family and a Democratic leader for many years. He served as delegate to the 1835 Constitutional Convention and Hamtramck frequently elected him to the state legislature. While a candidate for the latter in 1837 the Free Press described him as "an estimable member of the old and independent class of French population. . . . He is an intelligent and influential farmer, who will get almost the entire vote of his township. . . ." In 1844 a group of about 75 Hamtramck Democrats met to announce their support of Lewis Cass for the Presidency

and about 80-90 percent of them were French.²³

Just south of Wayne County, in Monroe County, was the settlement of Frenchtown. In 1840 it was probably more homogenously French than Hamtramck. It stood just across the Raisin River from Monroe, the county seat. American developers had originally chosen it to be the county seat but the French natives were unwilling to sell their land for public and other purposes. Election returns are available for only 1837 and 1841, but these indicate a normal Democratic majority more overwhelming than Hamtramck's; the town voted 79 percent Democratic in 1837 and 83 percent in 1841.²⁴

The data for Hamtramck and Frenchtown suggest that the old French voted, as in New York, about 90 percent Democratic. But this was not true of the French of Ecorse, Wayne County.

3. Ecorse.

The French of Ecorse were both old and new and were divided in political loyalty. Ecorse, in southern Wayne County, was an early French

²³ Free Press, October 19, 1837, p. 2; February 23, 1844, p. 2; May 26, 1840, p. 2. The Hamtramck poll list is in the John R. Williams MSS, BHC. An 1840 or 1839 census of Hamtramck is in the Woodbridge MSS. It lists 133 names of male household heads, including 35 resident farm owners, 16 tenant farmers, 3 unidentifiable, and 9 non-residents. Of the residents 40-45 percent of the names appear to be French.

²⁴ Fuller, pp. 153, 175. Election returns: Free Press, November 17, 1837, p. 2; August 28, 1837, p. 2; November 1841.

river bank town, with its ribbon farms clustered about the confluence of the Ecorse and Detroit rivers. In the 1830's the western half of the town had been settled mainly by Yankees--but in the early forties the town's electorate must have been at least 50 percent French. The town voted slightly Whig in 1838, 1839, 1840, 1842, 1843, and 1844, and Democratic in 1837 and 1845. In 1846 the western half of Ecorse organized itself as the separate town of Taylor, which thereafter became the strongest Whig town in the county, averaging about 63 percent in elections 1848-1852. If the Taylorites had voted as strongly Whig while part of Ecorse, then the eastern French half had probably voted strongly Democratic. One could then expect that after 1846, the smaller and more predominantly French Ecorse would have voted Democratic. But this was not the case. The town remained divided. The turnout was very low in 1847 and 52 percent Whig. Although the town went 55 percent Democratic in 1848, it then vacillated between the parties and compiled a 51 percent Whig average in the years 1848-1852.

In 1850, 54 percent of Ecorse's potential voters were Michigan born French-Canadians and about 25 percent were new French-Canadian. Thus, about 80 percent of the potential voters were French. In the 1850 Congressional election about 56 percent of the potential turned out and voted 55 percent Democratic. In 1852, 91 percent turned out (according to the 1850 base figure) and voted 54 percent Whig.

Ecorse's French behaved like the French in Hamtramck and Grosse Pointe by never casting a vote for Liberty or Free Soil. In 1850 in the vote on equal suffrage, 60 voted against non-white suffrage and none for it. This was typical of strong Democratic towns and of the French, and makes Ecorse's lack of strong Democratic loyalty more remarkable.

It is no easy matter to account for Ecorse's deviancy. Its behavior offers no support to the traditional class interpretation of parties, according to which it should have been strongly Democratic. Over 60 percent of its potential voters were in the rural lower classes (Farm 1-3, Urban 1-2). The average value of farms (\$1,121) and tools (\$60) were the lowest in the county in 1850. Only 12 farmers owned farms worth \$1,001 to \$3,000, and none owned farms worth over \$3,000. Except its relatively large numbers of tenants (12%) and farm laborers (21%), Ecorse resembled the other poor, small farmer towns in Wayne's southern tier. Lack of wealth and geography may have combined with other factors to create political isolation. Ecorse farmers were mostly poor, uneducated, probably illiterate, and French-speaking. In a rural town all these things could contribute to political apathy. Personal loyalties could easily have counted for more than party loyalty. Phil Ennis has said that "personalization of politics occurs more often in smaller communities" and "as the size of the community declines,

so too, does voters' involvement with issues."²⁵

It may be significant that the town did not build a Catholic church until 1847. Lack of religious involvement may have been related to lack of political and Democratic loyalty.

Ecorse received very few immigrants other than French Canadians, unlike Hamtramck, Grosse Pointe, and Greenfield. Those towns bordered one another in Wayne's northeast corner. They represented a belt of Democratic strength resting on French, German, and Irish Catholics, and German Lutherans. Non-French immigrants may not have been welcome in Ecorse, although the economic condition of the town was not such as to hold promise of opportunity for newcomers.

Hamtramck, Grosse Pointe, and Greenfield contained many poor, uneducated persons, including farm laborers, tenants, and common laborers. Yet in the three towns lived many early leaders of the Democratic Party. The towns were predominantly lower and middle class, yet housed some of the flower of the Democratic county and state elite. My impression is that these towns had a party esprit and élan that was lacking in Ecorse. This quality, however, as emphasized in the second chapter, is as much an effect as a cause of party loyalty and political interest.

²⁵ Phillip H. Ennis, "The Contextual Dimension in Voting," William McPhee and William A. Glaser (eds.), Public Opinion and Congressional Elections (Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 189.

In sum, the French of Ecorse seem to have been a relatively self-sufficient, self-contained enclave, little dependent emotionally or otherwise on ties to the outside world. The isolation imposed by geography, illiteracy, lack of communication, and the language barrier, probably were the controlling factors in Ecorse's failure to develop strong political loyalties in the 1840's.

4. French Economic Elite.

McCoy's study showed that the French among Wayne County's economic elite in 1844 preferred the Democrats, but not to the same extent as the French group generally. Of 11 native French economic elite members, McCoy found that 5 of them, or 45 percent, were Democrats, 3 were Whigs, or 27 percent (1 other possibly was a Whig, 4 or 36 percent), and 2 were of no identifiable party. McCoy assumed (rightly) that most Wayne County French voted Democratic and concluded that the "large Whig minority among the elite" in 1844 suggests that ethnocultural solidarity cannot automatically be assumed on all socio-economic levels. The small French elite defection to the Whigs suggests that class identification for some was stronger than religious-cultural antipathy or ethnic solidarity." Yet, as McCoy recognized, "class identification" alone was not the only possible or even most likely explanation for party deviance among the French economic elite. At one point she suggested that the "most 'puritan'" of the French may have been those which

were attracted to the Whig (and Republican) Party.²⁶ The case of Ecorse suggests that other factors, too, were capable of causing deviancy among French at very low socio-economic levels.

McCoy also found that the Catholics among the French elite numbered seven, and that three were the three positive Whigs and four were Democrats (43% Whig, 57% Democrat).²⁷ It is interesting that seven of the eight men with strong party identifications also had identifiable religious involvement, and that three men with no or uncertain party identification had no identifiable religious involvement. This provides one small piece of support for the hypothesis that strong political loyalty tended to accompany religious involvement.

5. The French Democratic Association.

In 1851 some Old French Democrats in Detroit organized the French Democratic Association and their action may provide some insight into the position of the French in the Democratic Party in the latter part of the 1837-1852 period. The purpose of the Association was frankly political: it intended to undertake the political education of about half of the French-Canadian population which, "not understanding the English" needed "some means by which they could

²⁶ McCoy, pp. 169-70, 180.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 170.

learn what is done around them and for their benefit." The Association said it did not intend to be a pressure group within the party, but would "remain auxilliary" to the party. Its function would be to increase Democratic majorities in city and county. Despite its disclaimer, it is very possible that the Association sought, as a by-product at least, increased influence within the party. The influence of French leaders was shrinking as the relative number of votes they represented shrank: while the French-Canadians had been increasing by Canadian immigration, their numbers could not compare with the masses of Irish and Germans. French influence in the city, if not in the party, had been steadily diminishing. From 1824-1836, of 51 Common Council members, according to one student, at least 11 and probably 14 were French; from 1836 to 1856, of 99 Council members, only 7 names of certain French origin were counted, and only one of these appeared after 1846.²⁸

That the Association thought it could increase Democratic majorities indicated that a significant number of the non-English speaking French were either voting Whig or, more likely, not voting at all. From what is known of the tendency of the poor, uneducated, and thus uninvolved, not to vote, that was probably the case.

²⁸ Free Press, October 31, 1851, p. 3. Leigh G. Cooper, "Influence of the French Inhabitants of Detroit Upon Its Early Political Life," Michigan History, IV, 1 (January, 1920), 301-02.

The Democratic press welcomed the Association. The Whig Advertiser greeted it with remarks which Detroit's French Canadians could hardly have cherished. The Advertiser said that the "Canadian Democrats" usually came to Detroit only annually, on election day, "when they have generally been on hand to help us try the experiment in self government, by putting from fifty to two hundred illegal votes according to the exigencies of the situation. We heartily rejoice that if like the whitefish, they come but once a year, that they . . . concluded to make their 'run' earlier in the season."²⁹

Yankees and Frenchmen

The Yankee-Protestant and French Catholic social and political division in Michigan was similar in many ways to the Yankee-Yorker cleavage in New York state. The Catholic French Canadians were the anciens habitans of Michigan, and they regarded the Yankees as interlopers, much as the Yorkers had looked upon the Yankees who had been pushing in upon them for over a century and more. The Yankees, even when they were still freshly arrived in Michigan, regarded the French as "foreigners." There had been, however, comparatively little social and religious tension in Michigan's Territorial days, while the French still constituted the majority of a rather isolated frontier community.

²⁹Advertiser, October 29, 1851, p. 2.

As Detroit and Michigan grew and as native Americans began to shape communities such as Detroit to their models of the good society, conflict ensued. The conflict between Yankee and Frenchman was cultural and religious: the French culture was traditional, Catholic, and strongly hedonist; the Yankee Protestant culture was puritanical and rationalist.

In 1856 Walter March published a romantic novel, Shoepac Recollections, whose setting was early nineteenth century Detroit. "Walter March" was a pseudonym for Orlando B. Willcox, an otherwise obscure native Detroiter and army officer. The novel's turgid prose, rambling construction, cardboard characters, and stale melodrama have consigned it to literary oblivion, but it is of interest here because the author tried to make Detroit's Yankee-French conflict the backdrop of his story. The narrator, March, was not French but an Episcopalian of English descent whose sympathies were with the French. Significantly, the novel had strong streaks of anti-evangelism.

"Shoepacs" were "old fashioned Canadian shoes," and the word clearly symbolizes the early French culture of Detroit before the Yankees. March told in his preface of a contemporary Detroit Frenchman laughing at the outmoded "Shoepacs," but in earlier days it was not so. March described the "sensation" created by the first Frenchman to wear shoes. On a Sunday morning he walked through a churchyard full of habitans waiting for mass to begin. They spotted his shoes and

pointed /to/ them . . . exclaiming, au large! au large! room! room! and made way right and left, with mock bows and pretended ceremony, for the enviable possessor of such a treasure.

Ah, 'room! room!' is the word that expresses the history of the Northwest. The moccasin must make room for the Shoepac, and the Shoepac, in its turn, for the iron heel of the British, and all together exclaim--

'Room! Room! for the American!' ³⁰

The opening chapter described Detroit "at the period when Indian, French, Briton and American commingled harmoniously. . . . and there was room enough for all to spare." March's early Detroit was no melting pot: all cultures were harmonious but each was distinct. The easy-going French set the pace and style of life. Immigrants had not begun to pour into the small town. The "spirit of speculation" was confined to the fur-traders, who were of many nations. "There was no touchiness about position in the social scale and consequently neither stiffness nor affectation."

A typical scene was the "mercurial" Frenchman riding "in his two-wheeled cart to market with white fish and onions, . . . screaming a rascally patois," or driving his bride "at full speed to church, two and two, in little antique catechés; the bride of course, dressed in white, but wearing a veil that sweeps the ground (sic)," or the correurs

³⁰Walter March /Orlando Bolivia Willcox/, Shoepac Recollections: A Way-side Glimpse of American Life (New York: Bunce and Brother, 1856), pp. v-vi. Summary of History and Services of Orlando B. Willcox, Colonel 12th U.S. Infantry, Brevet Major General, U.S.A. (n.d., n.p.), BHC. For information on the relationship of Willcox's family to Woodbridge and insight into Willcox's character see Orlando

du bois coming down by pirogue from Mackinaw, pulling red oars and keeping "joyous quick time."³¹

The invasion of the busy and puritannical Yankee, however, dispelled the ease, insouciance, and sociability of this idyllic society. Before the Yankees

Our community was not yet divided on the question of Bibles in the schools, or wine on the side-boards. Slavery was little talked of, and as far as disunion--the mere word was considered by the veriest Kenuck as a profanation of the human language.

But as settlers from New England began to thicken among us --Bostonians they were indiscriminately denominated--it gradually came to light that our lively little community were scarce a grain better than the wicked, nay than the very heathen; witness the fiddling and dancing on Sunday evenings. . . . There were the prettiest and most mischievous-eyed French girls dancing away for dear life with the good-looking, frank-mannered voyageurs . . . in their red, yellow, or green sashes, long black hair, and blue calico shirts. Such abominations attracted the 'growing attention' of the strict sober sides from the land of Jonathan Edwards, as he passed these dens of Apollyon, on his way to the place where prayer was wont to be made. Then was there not racing to church the year round, and racing home again? And were there not regular trotting matches on the afternoons of the great days of the church. . . ? Especially, was there ever anything like it in the winter season, when the wicked river would even wink at these atrocities by freezing over, so that nothing was seen on Sunday afternoon but carioles . . . flying (,) over the ice. . . .

Then on Easter morning, was not the church-yard of St. Ann's fairly riotous with boys cracking painted eggs? Nay . . . were not idolatries frequently committed? Was not the Host brought in procession by chanting Jesuits and nuns, to a high mound called

B. Willcox, Detroit, December 24, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington, and O.B.W., West Point, January 16, 1846, to W. W., Washington, Woodbridge MSS.

³¹ March, Shoepac, pp. 11, 15.

Calvary, where there was a huge cross. . . ? Doubt not that these abominations smelt in the nostrils of the sons of the Puritans.³²

In the days before religious strife Catholic and Protestant boys went to school and played together. The Catholic priest, "Father Robert," --a thinly disguised Father Gabriel Richard--was loved by many, even the "unco good Protestants." The priest died before "evil times" came and before "men came who would have known him not."³³

There was yet wanting in our cup another element of happy discord considered now indispensable in every well organized city--the foreigner question. We scarcely knew what foreigners were, except as brethren in pursuit of fortune and happiness. The Frenchman . . . would have been astonished to have been branded as a foreigner. . . . English or Scotch. . . . we all dwelt together harmoniously . . . and knew no more distinction of blood or nationality than they are supposed to know in heaven.³⁴

The plot of Shoepac Recollections, unfortunately, sheds no light on the process of social change which the author so much laments. The villain of the piece is Magroy, a Scotchman with Yankee ways and a Yankee wife. On the death of March's father, Magroy, his former friend and business associate, persecutes the March family. He opposes the marriage of his son (an un-Magroy like person) to the March girl. Monsieur Latrobe, a noble Frenchman, comes to the aid of widow March,

³² March, pp. 17-19.

³³ March, p. 22.

³⁴ March, pp. 22-23.

her daughter and sons, and is their unselfish protector. In the novel's dénouement, Magroy is thwarted by the March boys and repents as he dies. It is revealed that the source of his antagonism for the March family was his frustrated love for Mrs. March. If Magroy was meant to represent the Yankee, March's ending did not serve his purpose. Perhaps this made necessary one of the last and awkwardly spliced on last chapters in which March described contemporary Frenchmen. They had become old, sad, and ludicrous. March finished by musing over the times "when the simple French people held undisputed and gentle sway along this whole frontier. Standing between the redman and white-man, mingling with both, disturbing neither, with little to defend, and no desire to aggrandize."³⁵

March touched upon some central points of the Yankee-French conflict. Firstly, Catholicism was anathema to Yankee Protestants, especially to evangelicals. When the evangelicals were not denouncing Catholicism, they were likely to be trying to make converts. By 1850 the Baptists had a French mission in Detroit with a small membership. An article written by "an intelligent French gentleman . . . once a Catholic," and designed to show the "absurdities and dangers of Popery," appeared in the Michigan Christian Herald in 1851; it bore the imprimatur of George Duffield. This effort probably offended more French Catholics than it liberated from Popery. The anonymous author

³⁵March, p. 359. Pp. 302-315 summarize most of the plot.

called upon all Frenchmen to throw off their "pious oppressors," the "observers of your poverty," and declared that "we seek to substitute a man where they have placed an automaton."

Under the golden croziers of your mitred pastors, you have lost liberty and reason. You have lost your nationality, you have become Parias in the midst of a people free and independent.³⁶

Catholic the French mostly were; "religious" and "pious" they mostly were not, contrary to the impression given by some writers.³⁷

Paradoxical as it may seem, the French were more hedonist than Catholic, and this constituted as much if not more of a source of irritation to "the strict sobersides," as is evident from March's account above. All early descriptions of the French emphasize their pleasure loving ways. It is usually added that although fond of merry-making, "yet" the French were "pious." I think this a misuse of the word "pious." French piety was probably most intense among women, and it certainly did not dominate the lives of the well-to-do. Even religion for the pious was largely ritual and custom. Although it could be treated as a deadly serious matter, it did not promote an uncompartmentalized view of life, as evangelical or Quaker piety did. The French, one observer said,

³⁶ Michigan Christian Herald, October 3, 1851, p. 2. This states, by implication, the familiar evangelical equation of Protestantism and Americanism.

³⁷ See. e.g., Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings, p. 112.

were "not bigoted. Their religion was simple as their tastes."³⁸ No one ever accused the French of having religious zeal, and their hostility toward what they regarded as zealotry is reflected in their lack of sympathy for anti-slavery and temperance.

Monsieur Latrobe of Shoepac was, significantly neither Protestant nor Catholic. At one point he decided to have his own daughter raised as a Protestant to prevent her becoming a Catholic nun. March said "I fear he was a poor sort of religionist . . . to lose sight thus far of his daughter's eternal interests, but he had a strange opinion that there was but one God and one Savior for both churches."³⁹

At any time of year the Frenchman's greatest concern was enjoying life, and he needed neighbors to do that. Desire for sociable living as much as for protection dictated the arrangement of the early French settlements in long narrow ribbon farms with the farm houses more or less in a row at one end, usually near the river banks. "The social virtues," said Bela Hubbard, "never shone more brightly among any people." All nationalities enjoyed their hospitality. They warmed the cold winters with continuous "parties, balls, and merry making." Around 1800 in Detroit, wrote a recent student, "there developed between the better

³⁸ Bela Hubbard, Memorials of a Half-Century (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1887), p. 146. "I speak in the past tense because within the last quarter of a century many changes have taken place, mainly through the disturbing elements that have poured in around them."

³⁹ March, Shoepac, p. 65.

families a friendly social life which was half French, half English-- picnics up and down the river in canoes and bateaux, and gay parties at the Saint-Martin house assembled by carriages on sledges."⁴⁰

As March made clear, the French regarded Sundays as holidays and festive occasions. The puritan condemned even unnecessary visits and "social intercourse" on Sundays; for the Frenchman the day meant time for intensification of festivity. Hubbard observed that "noise and hilarity prevailed" among the French on Sundays. The Reverend Elijah Pilcher, in his history of Methodism, described the French as having "little or no regard for the Sabbath." He told of an incident in which an American Protestant justice of the peace fined some French Catholics for working on the Sabbath. Pilcher praised the justice and noted that "He met with much opposition in this, and threats of violence to his property."⁴¹

Bishop Lefevre, Catholic prelate of Detroit from 1841 to 1860, seems to have promoted temperance among the French. In his first sermon to the largely French congregation of St. Anne's he stressed the "great necessity of total abstinence." After one campaign for

⁴⁰ Fuller, p. 103. Hubbard, Memorials, pp. 139-40. Richard Clyde Ford, "The French Canadians in Michigan," Michigan History, XXVII (Spring, 1943), 49-50.

⁴¹ Hubbard, p. 141. Pilcher, Protestantism in Michigan, p. 43.

temperance in 1843-1844 the Bishop succeeded in getting some 3450 persons to take a temperance pledge.⁴² Yet the French do not seem to have otherwise favored the temperance cause. In the 1853 referendum on a prohibition law, no area where the French were concentrated gave strong support to the law. Ecorse voted 71 percent (27 votes) against it, and Grosse Pointe's vote of 81 percent against (117 votes) was the largest negative in the county. (In Grosse Pointe in 1850, 35 percent of the potential voters were of French descent.)

French opposition to temperance and evangelism emerged in the city election of 1839. The Democrats nominated Jonathan Kearsley for mayor. Kearsley was not only a rarity in being a Democrat and a Presbyterian; he was also prominent in benevolence, and in the last two years had identified himself, with qualifications, as an "uncompromising foe of intemperance."⁴³

Kearsley made one of the poorest showings ever made by a Democratic candidate for mayor, losing to Whig DeGarmo Jones 886 to 373. The previous fall the Democrats had polled 744 votes in Detroit and the next spring the Democratic candidate for mayor, while losing

⁴²Paré, Catholic Church in Detroit, p. 440. Free Press, February 17, 1844, p. 2.

⁴³Free Press, April 13, 1839, p. 2.

by 10 votes, polled 644 votes. A comparison of the returns for mayor and alderman in 1839 suggest that Kearsley's loss was due to the French and immigrant German voters withholding votes from him. Kearsley made his poorest showing in the fourth ward, which had the greatest proportion of French voters and a growing number of German voters. The fourth gave 82 percent of its vote to the Whig mayoral candidate in 1839, but simultaneously elected two Democratic candidates for aldermen by votes of 104-83 and 94-80. Both of the Democratic aldermen were prominent French Democratic politicians. In every mayoral election after 1839 the fourth voted strongly Democratic. It seems clear that the French, and probably the Germans, decisively rejected Kearsley in 1839.⁴⁴

The French were hedonist, which grated on Yankee Protestant sensibilities. Inevitably, American observers (usually Yankee) commented on French merry-making as an exotic phenomenon and in such a way as to imply a moral judgment of it. The French way of life ran directly counter to the values of pious and secular Yankees. The Detroit French, to put it mildly, were not diligent, thrifty, hard-working, and productive. In 1834 it was observed that

Hunting, fishing, skating, fêting each other are for them more pleasant occupations than hard work. Their principal activity is

⁴⁴Free Press, April 14, 1839, p. 2, April 18, p. 2. Advertiser April 24, 1839, p. 2.

the raising of small Canadian horses. The best racers . . . are used for sleighing. . . ⁴⁵

The French offended doubly, in Yankee eyes, by being non-productive and sinful. William Woodbridge, not a pious man by evangelical standards, sent his wife these first impressions of the French in 1815:

But of society--what shall I tell you? One would think the lives of this people consist in one constant succession of amusements--dances, rides, dinners, and parties, and all the et cetera of dissipation, follow in one long train, treading each upon the heels of the other. ⁴⁶

The Yankees regarded the French as poor farmers, and attributed this to French laziness and ineptitude; the French were ignorant of "modern" farming methods and not interested in learning. ⁴⁷ The Yankees failed to see that for the Frenchman to change his farming methods meant changing his way of life. Yankees judged the French according to the values of an entirely different culture. French farming was not organized around a productive ethic; the farm was part of his way of life. He tilled the land, usually, for sustenance and comfort, but not as a business. He left most of his acreage unimproved--scandalously neglectful in

⁴⁵ Rev. W. Fitch, MPHC, V, 539. Hubbard contrasted the "practical, hard-working, money-getting Yankee" with the "careless, laughter-loving Frenchman," Memorials, p. 154.

⁴⁶ William Woodbridge, Detroit, March 5, 1815, to Juliana Woodbridge, quoted in Lanman, Life of William Woodbridge, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Fuller, pp. 104-13. Hubbard, pp. 118-20.

Yankee eyes--because he used the timber of the unimproved land as a permanent source of wood for fuel and other domestic uses. The Frenchman intended to stay where he was. The Yankee, on the other hand, viewed the farm as an investment. All through the Midwest the Yankee saw the farm not as a "folk heritage of land and lore . . . but a speculative commodity in the wagon of a roving entrepreneur--a rational symbol to be manipulated by other rational symbols like maps and mortgages."⁴⁸

These differing attitudes led to some painful disagreements between Yankee and Frenchman in Detroit. One of the most notorious of these was the refusal of the French in the 1830's to allow the city to extend its streets across their farms. In 1837 "After years of palaver-
ing with the French habitants, consent was obtained to open Jefferson Avenue." Since the French did not work their farms for profit, and did not improve them, and were offered good prices for their land, Yankees interpreted the French refusal as being due to stubbornness and ignorance.⁴⁹ The French for their part appear to have been insulted by Yankee lack of tact, and distrusted Yankee bargains. Charles M. Bull said in 1831 that the French "are very ignorant and the Yankees take them in very often."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Frank N. Kramer, Voices in the Valley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), pp. 63-64.

⁴⁹ Rev. W. Fitch, MPHC, V, 537.

⁵⁰ Fuller, pp. 131-32. John Bell Moran, The Moran Family (Detroit: Alved of Detroit, 1949), pp. 54-55.

The streets affair was characteristic of another general conflict between Yankee and Frenchman. The Frenchmen generally opposed public improvements because he wanted no taxes. Solomon Sibley, an early trader and pioneer, wrote in 1802:

Nothing frightens the Canadians like taxes. They would prefer to be treated like dogs and kenneled under the whip of a tyrant than contribute to the support of a free government.⁵¹

Given this attitude among the French it is easy to understand why Democratic speakers campaigning in Hamtramck stressed the Democratic Party's support of "simplicity and economy" in government.⁵²

The opposition to a school-tax movement in Detroit in 1841-1842 was reported to have come from the "large landowners." Since many of the large landowners were French, and since the French were so notoriously opposed to taxes, it seems reasonable to infer that some stood in the way of establishment of an effective common school system. French names were conspicuously absent from the bipartisan movement which supported the common school tax.⁵³

⁵¹ Quoted in Dorr, "Origins of the 1835 Michigan Constitution," p. 125. In 1823 some French petitioned Congress in opposition to any taxes, *ibid.*, p. 126. "The tendency of French-Canadians to regard all 'Yankee innovations' with suspicion stood not a little in the way of Detroit's material progress," Fuller, p. 131.

⁵² E.g., Free Press, June 11, 1840, p. 2.

⁵³ Arthur B. Moehlman, Public Education in Detroit (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1925), p. 77.

Irish Catholics

Benson estimated that Irish Catholics in New York voted about 95 percent Democratic in 1844; the Catholic Irish tended to vote Democratic "whether they were day laborers or freehold farmers--in short, their voting pattern represented an ethnocultural or religious group, not a place or class phenomenon."⁵⁴ Irish Catholics seem to have been the most overwhelmingly Democratic group in Wayne County and eastern Michigan in the period 1837-1852. Whether farm or urban laborers, poor or prosperous farmers, Irish Catholics were the most loyal Democrats.

1. Urban Irish.

Irish Catholics first arrived in Wayne County in large numbers around 1833-1835. Many came to work on railroads and canals during the boom days, lived in camps out in the country, and then returned to Detroit and other towns to find work. One Whig recalled the efforts of three Whig campaigners in 1837 who spent hours haranguing laborers at a camp in Wayne County, all to no avail.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Benson, Concept, p.172, and see pp. 171-73.

⁵⁵ George C. Bates, "By Gones of Detroit," MPHC, XXII, 349-50. Catlin, Michigan History, XXVI, 340. Advertiser, August 22, 1837, p. 2; August 23, p. 2; September 15, p. 2; September 18, p. 2; November 20, p. 2.

In Detroit during the early 1840's the Irish were moving from the waterfront to the western side of the city. In 1848 a new ward was created whose boundaries followed the boundaries of what became known as "Corktown: " "the new and concentrated Irish Catholic community . . . on the western edge of Detroit." There the Irish built Holy Trinity Church. "This church became their center, their source of spiritual comfort; their place for daily and Sunday devotions; the scene of their weddings and christenings; the staging for the last solemn partings with the dead, and with it all, the headquarters of Irishmen in Detroit."⁵⁶ According to Johnston's 1853 census, 44 percent of the population of the new 8th ward was Irish Catholic. This was probably too low a figure and there must have been a greater proportion of Irish Catholic voters among the electorate. In 1849 the 8th ward, in its maiden vote, cast a 74 percent majority for the Democracy, and from 1849 to 1852 was Detroit's banner ward with an average Democratic strength of 73 percent.

2. Rural Irish.

The only Irish Catholic church in Wayne County outside of Detroit was in Dearborn. In 1850 Dearborn's Catholic preference was 31 percent and about 17 percent of its potential voters had been born

⁵⁶ John A. Russell, The Early Irish of Detroit (1930), pp. 1-5.

in Ireland. Contemporary witnesses remembered that the Dearborn Irish voted Democratic. One of Dearborn's prominent men was Democrat William Daly, a leading Catholic layman, who had been born in Ireland. Daly, a prosperous farmer, frequently served as town supervisor.⁵⁷

A "New Ireland" had been planted in Washtenaw County's Northfield township as early as 1831 and a church had been built soon after. In 1840 there were about 90 Catholic families in St. Patrick's parish.⁵⁸ In 1850 Northfield's Catholic preference was 67 percent and 35 percent of its potential voters were born in Ireland. In the late 1830's the Northfield Irish were voting strongly Democratic. In 1840 Franklin Sawyer, then Whig editor in Ann Arbor, told William Woodbridge that "Most of the Catholics in this place and vicinity, particularly in Northfield, have hitherto been our warmest opponents."⁵⁹ Although Sawyer had hopes of changing the Northfield Irish's habits, he had no lasting success, if any. Northfield election returns for 1840 are not available, but in 1844 the town

⁵⁷ Col. Joshua Howard Chapter, *Daughters of the American Revolution* (ed.), "History of the Churches in West Dearborn, Michigan" (bound typewritten MS, BHC; Dearborn, 1938), p. 20. F. A. Gulley, "Old Dearborn Families; Historical and Genealogical Sketches" (MS, BHC). Farmer, History of Detroit, II, Township Edition, 1828, on Daly.

⁵⁸ Chapman, History of Washtenaw County, II, 636, 37.

⁵⁹ Franklin Sawyer, Ann Arbor, September 19, 1840, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

cast 69 percent of its vote for Polk and Dallas. Its Democratic average from 1848 to 1852 was 67 percent.

3. Irish Catholics and Evangelicals.

The Irish Catholics were the *bête noire* of nativists and evangelicals. The Irish embodied, in evangelical eyes, all the evils of Popery. Probably no other two groups in American society regarded one another with more hatred. The evangelicals regarded the Irish as obstructive to temperance, Sabbath-keeping, anti-slavery, and moral and political reform generally. They linked Irish intemperance with poverty, and both of those social ills with crime. The Irish came to represent social and political impurity. On election days, by drinking, fighting, and rowdyism, they disrupted the electoral process and intimidated native citizens. By voting en masse for the Democrats, the Irish gave massive support to the evangelicals' enemies and made a mockery of the classical liberal model of the independent, reasoning voter. The Irish seemed to obey party dogma as blindly as they obeyed Papal dogma.⁶⁰

The Irish brought from Ireland a "hatred for all things English" and especially for Protestants. In the evangelicals they recognized their natural enemies: Protestants, generally of English descent, who

⁶⁰These generalizations are based on evidence in sources already mentioned, notably the Courier, Advertiser, Herald, and Vineyard.

villified their religion and insulted their manhood. From their experience as an oppressed people they brought clannishness, an ability for sub-rosa political organization, and a tradition of personal loyalty to leaders, all of which stood them well in American party politics.⁶¹

Irish dislike for things Protestant included the Protestant Scots Irish of Ulster. The few Orangemen in Detroit's Corktown, or on its borders, were "looked upon with a bad eye" by the Irish, who gave "bad scran to them."⁶²

When an Irish Catholic newspaper came into being in 1853, it was able to return the knocks Catholics and especially Irish Catholics had taken from evangelical, temperance, and Whig journals for years. Significantly, the Protestants to whom the paper gave the most "bad scran" were the Presbyterians and "Doct. Duffield."⁶³

Germans

In New York, according to Benson, immigrants of German birth voted about 80 percent Democratic in the 1840's. Benson identified

⁶¹Robert Ernst, Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863 (New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia, 1949), p. 105, 106, 165.

⁶²Russell, Early Detroit Irish, p. 4. For the hostility of an Irish Catholic Democratic leader to "brutal Orangemen," British, and Negroes, see Edward A. Theller, Canada in 1837-38, I (Philadelphia, Henry F. Annors, 1841), 105-06, and passim.

⁶³See e.g., Detroit Catholic Vindicator, June 4, 1853, p. 4; August 13, p. 4; August 20, p. 4. On microfilm, University of Detroit Library.

three different German groups, all of which tended to favor the Democrats: Catholics, free thinkers or "rationalists," and Protestants.

The latter were the least strongly committed to the Democrats.⁶⁴

That appears to have been the pattern in Wayne County and eastern Michigan: an over-all Democratic tendency among Germans, with the German Protestants less Democrat than Catholics and rationalists.

As early as 1835 Whigs complained that "British and German subjects" were deciding elections by voting Democratic. In Wayne County the Germans very early formed an attachment for the Democracy. John Reno, a Catholic German, was a Democratic activist through the 1830's and 1840's, and meetings of German Democrats and others were held frequently at his tavern. In the 1840's a German language newspaper published in Detroit supported the Democrats.⁶⁵

1. Urban Germans.

In the 1840's the 4th ward, originally a French center, filled rapidly with Germans. In 1847 a new ward, the 7th, was created out of the eastern half of the 4th. Both wards were strongly Democratic from 1848 to 1852. In 1847 the 4th cast 72 percent of its vote for the

⁶⁴Benson, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 173-74.

⁶⁵Detroit Journal and Courier, April 15, 1835, p. 2; Advertiser, September 10, 1836, p. 2, September 15, p. 2; Free Press, October 21, 1837, p. 2, October 25, p. 2, November 2, p. 2; Advertiser, November 2, 1846, p. 2.

Democratic candidate for governor. The Free Press congratulated the 4th as the Democratic "banner ward" for that year and said "most nobly did the Germans discharge their duty." It cited the work of John A. Damm and others for furnishing teams to bring out voters; the paper praised the playing of the German band, "nearly all, if not all," of whose members were Democrats.⁶⁶

A comparison of the characteristics and voting patterns of the 4th and 7th wards yields some interesting results. Both wards probably had roughly the same socio-economic composition; neither contained commercial or manufacturing establishments to any great extent, both bordered the Detroit river and there seems to have been no striking physical or economic differences between the two. They had roughly the same number of foreigners and Germans in their population in 1853, the 7th having slightly more in both cases:

Wards	Foreign	German
4th	55%	49%
7th	57%	52%

Yet the over-all Democratic average of the 7th ward in elections from 1848 to 1852 was 7 percentage points below that of the 4th--58 percent compared to 65 percent. The two wards had about the same number of French Catholics, 13 and 12 percent, and in both the British

⁶⁶Free Press, November 4, 1847, p. 2.

Protestants amounted to about 7 percent. The difference in the voting pattern of the two wards could very well be attributed to the 4th's Germans being mostly Catholic, and the 7th's being evenly divided between Catholics and Protestants:

Wards	German Catholics	German Protestants	Total Germans
4th	31	18	49
7th	26	27	53

The 4th also had twice as many Irish Catholics (12%) as the 7th (5%). This data, as well as much impressionistic evidence, points to the Irish and German Catholics as the strongest Democratic groups in Detroit.

2. Rural Germans.

In Wayne County, towns with the largest proportion of German-born among their potential voters were, with one exception, strong Democratic towns: Hamtramck, 27 percent; Grosse Pointe, 26 percent; Springwells, 19 percent; and Greenfield, 11 percent. This does not show that rural Germans voted Democratic, but it creates a presumption in favor of that hypothesis. Dearborn had even fewer Germans; an old pioneer remembered that the German Catholics and Protestants of Dearborn had voted Democratic in the 1840's.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Gulley, "Old Dearborn Families."

In 1839 the Ann Arbor State Journal (Whig) claimed that the Germans of Washtenaw County had rallied to "Woodbridge and Reform." The Journal said that the Germans were no longer deceived by the "jesuitical scoundrelism of the Detroit junto." Detroit Whigs, in their 1839 victory celebration, included toasts to the Washtenaw Germans.⁶⁸

If the Whigs did make gains among the Washtenaw Germans in 1839, they could not have been very large or very lasting. The German Protestant farmers of Washtenaw in the late 1840's and early 1850's were strongly Democratic. Most of Washtenaw's Germans were concentrated in prosperous Freedom township, which they had settled in the 1830's. In 1850, 64 percent (174) of Freedom's potential voters had been born in Germany; its Lutheran preference was 73 percent. It also had a Catholic preference of 27 percent (the Catholics were probably Irish as 6% or 16 of the town's potential voters in 1850 had been born in Ireland.) Freedom's Democratic average for 1848, 1849, 1851, and 1852 was 67 percent, and it tied Northfield as Washtenaw's banner Democratic unit in those years. Some of the Germans probably voted Whig; most, it seems, were Democrats.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ann Arbor State Journal, November 6, 1839, p. 2. Advertiser, November 27, 1839, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Chapman, History of Washtenaw County, II, 1291-95.

German Lutherans in western Michigan also tended to vote Democratic. In 1848 and 1849 the Democratic state legislature and Democratic Governor Epaphroditas Ransom officially promoted the immigration of German Lutherans to Michigan. In an 1848 message Governor Ransom praised the character and industry of the German immigrants who were settling the Saginaw valley and applauded their coming to America in search of "liberty of conscience" as had "the pilgrims of 1620."⁷⁰

The population of Saginaw County, as a result of the German Lutheran influx, increased rapidly between 1844 and 1852, as did the number of persons voting. Simultaneously, the Democratic percentage of Saginaw's vote increased. In 1844, 213 men had voted for President, 49 percent for Polk. In 1848, 348 voted 53 percent for Cass. In 1852, the effects of the German Lutheran migration became fully apparent as 1134 voted and 61 percent voted for the Democrat Pierce.⁷¹ Although the Democratic loyalty of the Saginaw settlements was not unshakeable, they voted more or less "solidly Democratic" from the 1850's to World War I.⁷²

⁷⁰William L. Jenks, "Michigan Immigration," Michigan History, XXVIII, 1 (January-March, 1944), 73-74.

⁷¹Jenks, ibid. The Free Press, August 20, 1847, p. 2, reported that some 500 Germans had settled during that year in Saginaw and 900 more were soon expected. The 1850 Constitutional Convention was well aware of the Saginaw settlements, Report, p. 279.

⁷²History of Saginaw County, Michigan (Chicago: Charles C. Chapman and Co., 1881), p. 226. Robert Arthur Dengler, "The German

3. Rationalists.

Impressionistic evidence suggests that free thinking Germans in Detroit tended to be Democrats. In 1851 the "German Workingman's Association" came under attack by a formidable array: Pastor Haslinger of St. Mary's German Catholic Church and a group of St. Mary's Laymen; the Advertiser; and, later, the Michigan Christian Herald. Pastor Haslinger's laymen in a public letter in the Advertiser denounced the Association for having violent revolutionary goals. Its bible, they said, was the New York Workingmen's Republic, a fomentor of class warfare and godless red terror. The Advertiser limited itself to an endorsement of the "character" of Pastor Haslinger's men and said it did not find proofs of "correctness and patriotism" in the Association.⁷³

A "Committee of German Mechanics" replied to Haslinger's group --his "faithful Laecedaemonians," according to the Mechanics--and charged that Haslinger himself had written their letter. They claimed that they had never attacked the Catholic religion as Haslinger had charged, although they obviously had no reverence for it, and particularly not for Haslinger and his Jesuit order. They dismissed the charges regarding the Workingman's Republic by saying that they found some of

Settlement at Frankenmuth, Michigan, In Its First Century," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Michigan State College, 1953), p. 26.

⁷³ Advertiser, February 14, 1851, p. 2.

the New York editor's suggestions practical, and some nonsense. "Mr. Haslinger," they said, prevented his congregation from reading everything "not quite in accordance with the rules of the church; but we pretend to be free citizens in this free Republic, who can and will read all they may find." Rationalism joined ethnocultural pride in their final blast against Haslinger:

The time is over when you once said (sic) . . . 'the Germans must be led by the nose like a beast, else there is nothing to do with them.' But the time is arriving when the sole word of a Jesuit is no more an order for a hundred; people emancipate themselves from your reign.⁷⁴

The Mechanics did not overlook the Advertiser. They made the revealing comment that they were unacquainted with the editor's abilities because "we do not read it often," and suggested that the editor had been duped by Jesuits. At least one of the officers of the Detroit Association, Caspar Butz, was an active Democratic leader.⁷⁵

Later on in 1851 the Michigan Christian Herald printed articles dealing with the "infidelity and blasphemy" of German newspapers in America. A leading example was the Workingman's Republic. It was observed that such papers appeared usually on Sundays in deliberate defiance of Sabbath-keeping, and that they helped preserve German

⁷⁴ Advertiser, February 19, 1851, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Butz's politics: Free Press, March 1, 1852. Names of other Mechanics: Hohl, D. Huth, John Bloynk, B. Waldeck, R. Kellermann, W. Boenninghaussem.

identity and worked against assimilation. Nothing was said about the Detroit Workingmen, but it was clear that the Herald must not have sympathized with them.⁷⁶ And if the Workingmen did not "often" read the Advertiser, how much less, if ever, did they read the Herald?

4. German Lutherans.

The bulk of the churched German population in eastern Michigan was Lutheran, and Michigan Lutheranism was non-evangelical and generally conservative in its attitude to revivalist tendencies. Smith has pointed out that religious conservatism among Lutherans went along with resistance to Americanization. "After 1840 the new immigration combined with a dawning desire for symbols of German theology to support a resurgence of conservative strength."⁷⁷

Ethnocultural feelings seem to have been most important in shaping German political behavior in the period 1837-1852. German Protestants and Catholics seem to have felt that they had more in common than they had separating them. Their "sense of peoplehood" should not be exaggerated: these "Germans" came from a "Germany" that was, as Metternich

⁷⁶ Michigan Christian Herald, October 16, 1851, p. 1; November 27, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, p. 57. Eugene Poppen, A Century of Lutheranism in Michigan (Toledo: Toledo Lutheran Co., 1934), pp. 5-28, and Robert E. Erickson, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wayne, Plymouth, Livonia, Pontiac, Farmington, Northville, Rochester, and Redford (Detroit, 1922), passim., and Erickson, A Short

said of Italy, a "geographic expression." They came from many little states and sub-cultures in central Europe and brought many parochialisms with them. But the kind of antagonism that existed, say, between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants (who were also ethnically different) does not seem to have been a part of their cultural baggage. In the 1830's an early Catholic missionary described the two German congregations then in Detroit, "the stronger being Catholic."

The members of the two congregations live in harmony with one another, and never allow their religious differences to interfere with their social intercourse. At marriages and baptisms they are never concerned about which preacher they should choose, but that they should have a good time in German fashion.⁷⁸

My impression is that in the 1840's in Detroit, as the number and variety of Germans grew, their relations were less harmonious. But it seems clear that their sense of ethnocultural solidarity was strong, as was their desire that Gemütlichite should prevail.

5. Lebensgemuss and Politics.

The German word Lebensgemuss means the pleasures of life. German desire to enjoy them had much to do with their heavy Democratic

Historical Sketch of the Activity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Michigan from 1833 to 1863 (Detroit, n.d.), passim., contain no evidence of evangelicalism as I have defined it.

⁷⁸Quoted in John A. Russell, The Germanic Influence in the Making of Michigan (Detroit: University of Detroit, 1927), p. 54.

preference. The German Catholic and Lutheran churches tended to tolerate pleasures such as drinking intoxicating beverages and merry-making on the Sabbath. The native evangelical churches tended to condemn practices which Germans did not regard as immoral but rather as "normal." It was on moral issues that nativism often focused and thus blended subtly with evangelicalism. Whig nativism and evangelicalism determined German political preferences to a significant degree, as did Democracy's laissez-faire ethics and willingness to tolerate, indeed enjoy, "the pleasures of life."⁷⁹

New British

In New York state the New British were, with the exception of Negroes, "by far the strongest Whigs of any group in New York."⁸⁰ Although it is a reasonable hypothesis that the New British in eastern Michigan were strong Whigs, evidence to support it is far from being as substantial as that for the New non-British. It has not been possible to identify group voting patterns on the basis of township data because nowhere in the counties studied here did the New British cluster in towns in substantial numbers. Rather, they scattered themselves

⁷⁹Thomas, Nativism, pp. 211-12. Mark O. Kistler, "The German Language Press in Michigan; A Survey and Bibliography," Michigan History, XLIV (September, 1960), 304.

⁸⁰Benson, Concept, p. 166.

throughout the area. English, Welsh, Irish Protestants, and Scots, as well as persons born in Canada of British descent, all lived in Wayne County, but not in such a way that group voting patterns could be determined.

The Whig-Free Soil towns of Wayne County had one suggestive characteristic involving the New British. All of them had relatively few foreign born among their potential voters in 1850, but in every case the great majority of their foreign born were New British (including Canadian born with British names).

	% Foreign born	% New British
Taylor	17	13
Plymouth	7	5
Livonia	8	5
Brownstown	32	21
Sumpter	13	11

This is not to suggest that the New British were to be found only in Whig-Free Soil towns, but it does suggest that, in Wayne County at least, these were the kinds of immigrants most welcome (or least unwelcome) in Whig-Free Soil towns. In Wayne County, as in New York, the friendlier disposition of Whig-tending natives to New British may have influenced the voting of the latter.

Impressionistic evidence regarding the voting behavior of the New British is thin. There was a small "Scotch Settlement" in Dearborn, and F. A. Gulley remembered that the Scots had voted anti-Demo-

cratic. The Scots of Bruce township in Macomb County were alleged to have voted mostly Whig and Free Soil.⁸¹

British immigrants were the largest foreign born group among McCoy's economic elite in Wayne County in 1844, and they had a decided, although not an overwhelming, anti-Democratic percent of 64. McCoy noted that the group was too few to be of significance, but her data also increases the presumption in favor of the claim that the New British were strong Whigs.⁸²

Except for the Scots, who apparently did group together, the New British were highly dispersed throughout the population. This dispersion is a measure of their quicker acceptance by the native population and their tendency to assimilate much faster than the New non-British. The remark of an English immigrant in 1832, that he was "proud to be received as a citizen (sic)," was much less likely to be made by a New non-British immigrant.⁸³

⁸¹ Gulley, "Old Dearborn Families." Streeter, Political Parties, p. 174.

⁸² McCoy, p. 171. McCoy observed that the New British elite "did not show the overwhelming Whig preponderance Benson found for the group in the general population in New York."

⁸³ Tucker (ed.), "Correspondence of John Fisher," Michigan History, XLV, 224-25.

CHAPTER X

CULTURAL POLITICS

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Richard Hofstadter has defined "cultural politics" as embracing "certain types of cultural issues, questions of faith and morals, tone and style, freedom and coercion, which become fighting issues."¹

Earlier chapters showed how such cultural issues as temperance and Sabbath-keeping helped cause social cleavage and party division in Michigan in the 1830's. "Cultural politics" is a concept covering a broad range of group relationships and their political consequences in a heterogeneous society. Two kinds of cultural politics that were particularly important in Michigan in the period 1837-1852 were "ethnic politics"² and "denominational politics."

1. Ethnic Politics.

Local Whig and Democratic leaders played ethnic politics much as political leaders do today. They catered to the pride and self-esteem of ethnocultural and religious groups by attending St. Patrick's Day

¹Richard Hofstadter, "Pseudo-Conservatism Revisited: A Post-script (1962)," ed. Daniel Bell, The Radical Right (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1964), p. 99.

²The term ethnic politics will be used as a more convenient phrase for what should more properly be called ethnocultural politics or subcultural politics.

celebrations or meetings of the New England Society and delivered unctuous speeches about the contributions to America of the Irish, Yankees, Germans, Scots, etc.

The "balanced ticket" was just as important then as today: political leaders recognized that a slate of nominations for, say, county and city offices, stood a better chance of success if the major "minority" groups were represented. In Wayne County, for example, most of the candidates for office offered by both parties were native born, but both parties tried to appeal to ethnic groups by having at least one or more names on their tickets that were conspicuously French, German, or Irish.

The Democrats played ethnic politics better than the Whigs. Given the attitudes most prevalent in the parties this was hardly surprising. Perhaps the ultimate in Whig nativism was expressed in 1837 by a Whig of Monguagon, Wayne County. Henry P. Powers condemned the new state constitution for opening "the doors of the Sanctum Sanctorum to the aliens" and asked

Am I so much mistaken to have groundlessly believed all my life long, that our grand source of danger was from the sea of aliens constantly flooding upon us? Mistaken have I indeed been, if the profligate Irish, the mercenary border Dutch and German, the mindless Canadians, the hired Britains, and ~~/?~~ foreigners, may all be put in the hands of hartless (sic) politicians . . . to be used at will, and yet without danger to the property of the individual or the quietude of the state.³

³Henry P. Powers, Monguagon, October 5, 1835, to William Woodbridge, Springwells, Woodbridge MSS.

Powers could not imagine any magic in the atmosphere which would heal "the moral turpitude of the refuse foreigners the moment they inhaled it."

Almost by way of answering Powers, a meeting of Democrats in Detroit's Third Ward in 1840 resolved that "the moment a foreigner presses the soil of freedom and inhales the first breath of liberty" he was as well qualified as any to discharge the duties of a citizen (i.e., to vote) as after five years. Therefore, Congress should "ameliorate" the naturalization laws, presumably by abolishing the five year waiting period for citizenship and voting.⁴

Powers' xenophobia and the Third Ward's metaphysics represented extremes of nativism and hospitality. They did not represent the attitudes of all Democrats or all Whigs. The Whigs, particularly, after 1835, tried hard to erase the taint of nativism and anti-Catholicism from their public image. Yet overt Whig efforts to court foreigners and Catholics risked alienating the party's nativists and evangelicals. In 1838 Detroit Whigs, on the eve of the city election, distributed bread and pork to the city poor. A visitor described the affair as

a farce . . . evidently for political effect and electioneering purposes. . . . Fish, pork, and bread were the only articles handed out by the committee to the 'hungry' applicants as they presented themselves. . . . Many of them were Canadian women and children . . . and some were well fed farmers who lived out of the

⁴Free Press, October 17, 1840, p. 2.

city; but they were chiefly French and Irish who would crowd up again and again, get their baskets filled, go and empty them and hurry back for more. Most of the Whigs were sufficiently disgusted before the farce was ended.⁵

While Whig playing at ethnic politics risked a reaction within the party it was safer for Whig newspapers to charge the Democrats with hypocrisy in their dealings with the foreign-born and to play upon potential sources of discord in the heterogeneous Democratic coalition. In 1838, for example, the Advertiser charged that Democratic railroad contractors had paid the "working Irish" in depreciated currency, that Democratic officials had insulted Irishmen, and that although Frenchmen had received prominent places on the Democratic state and county ticket, no Irishmen had an important place.⁶

Whenever an Irishman on the Democratic ticket ran behind the rest of the ticket the Advertiser was quick to attribute it to anti-Irish sentiment in the Democracy.⁷ On one occasion a Democratic newspaper replied candidly to charges that foreign-born Democratic nominees were not fully supported by all the party by saying that the Whigs

⁵Quoted in Hemans, Life of Stevens Thomson Mason, pp. 446-47. For the Advertiser's appeals to foreigners in the spring see the issues of March 17, 19, 23, and 31, 1838. Later in the year a meeting of Irish Democrats said they were not about to give up their Democratic loyalty by being bought with foetid fish and tainted pork. Free Press, October 25, 1838, p. 2.

⁶Advertiser, October 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, November 2, 3.

⁷Advertiser, November 11, 1842.

had no such "problem" (thus implying the Democrats had such a problem) because they never placed such persons on their tickets, but tried to get foreign votes through bribery.⁸

Both the number and kind of nominations that went to various groups in the Democratic Party (and the Whig) must have been a continual source of rivalry and a frequent source of resentment and factional fighting. In the early forties a factional fight developed in the Democracy between old leaders, notably John Norvell and Isaac Crary, and a new group which included John S. Barry and Robert McClelland and had the backing of the Free Press.⁹ Barry and McClelland had opposed Norvell in the constitutional convention of 1835 by supporting citizen voting, and the status of the foreign-born in the party may have been an issue in 1841-1842. The Advertiser's interpretation of the strife, at any rate, was that the anti-Norvell group harbored the nativist sentiment in the party and that a Democratic victory in the 1842

⁸ Detroit Constitutional Democrat, March 30, 1844, p. 3.

⁹ In denouncing Norvell and Crary the Free Press said that the people had had enough of politicians who lived "by gambling in either public or private life." February 28, 1842, p. 2, March 18, p. 2.

Several years later Robert McClelland said that by throwing off their leaders in 1841 the Democrats "have progressed gloriously ever since. Who does not remember the iron rule of John Norvell and Co. You may remember how loath many of our old democrats were to give him up, but now none of them would touch him without fear of being contaminated with some fell political disease." Robert McClelland, Monroe, September 1, 1849 to John S. Bagg, Bagg MSS, Film.

state elections meant a victory for the Free Press clique.

The German voters--the French voters--all those who felt slighted by the nominations, are ranged under the name 'Norvellites,' and told--we have got you down and now we mean to keep you down. Henceforth, all who do not bow the knee to B.F.H. Witherell, Anthony Ten Eyck, and the Free Press must stand back.¹⁰

One of the ways in which politicians have courted the votes of ethnocultural groups is to associate themselves with organizations with which particular groups identify. Such an organization in the 1840's was the Irish Repeal Association whose ostensible purpose was to do what could be done on this side of the Atlantic for Home Rule in Ireland. It also served as an outlet for Anglophobia and was a favorite stumping ground for politicians.¹¹ In 1843 the Repeal Association became the means by which a Whig was elected mayor of Detroit with the help of Irish Catholic votes. The man with whom the Whigs accomplished this phenomenon was Zina Pitcher, a physician and scholar, some-time Democrat, and President of the Association. Pitcher won the mayoralty in an election which was otherwise Democratic, the Whigs electing only one out of six aldermen. The Free Press said that the Irish had voted "almost in a body" for Pitcher because he was the Repeal President and

¹⁰Advertiser, November 12, 1842, p. 2.

¹¹When the Repeal Association was organized its officers included such prominent Democrats as George A. O'Keefe, Charles Moran, James A. Van Dyke, and others, and some prominent Whigs, including DeGarmo Jones and H.H.Emmons. Advertiser, September 13, 1841, p. 2.

"because they thought they had been wronged by the Democratic nominating convention." The Advertiser congratulated "our warm-hearted Irish friends, who have contributed their full share to this glorious result."¹²

Political wonders were not to cease in the summer of 1843. The Whigs, as the Free Press noted, began finding nominees for office among Repeal Associations and nominated Pitcher for governor. The Free Press complained that it had been "openly" argued at the Whig convention that Pitcher would draw "two thousand Irish democrats" to the Whig ticket.¹³ The Advertiser started to insist that "adopted citizens" be regarded as "American citizens" (now that they were becoming "undeceived" of the Locos), announced that among candidate Pitcher's qualifications for office was a full blooded Irish maternal grandfather, apologized for printing an anti-Catholic squib by mistake, reminded the Germans and the Irish of the injuries done them by the Democrats, and denounced American Republicanism or "any crusade against Catholics or any other denomination" as "anti-Republican and anti-Christian." Meanwhile the Repealers and the Free Press feuded.¹⁴

¹² Free Press, March 7, 1843, p. 2; Advertiser, March 7, 1843, p. 2.

¹³ Free Press, August 26, 1843, p. 2.

¹⁴ Advertiser, July 22, 1843, p. 2, October 4, 5, 19, November 2, 7; Free Press, August 29, p. 2, September 16, p. 2.

Although Pitcher was badly defeated, he ran better in Detroit than the Whig gubernatorial candidates of 1841 and 1845, and ran particularly well on the west side of town where most of the Irish were. If the Irish did cast a sizeable vote for the Whigs in 1843 (it is not at all certain that they did), it was a phenomenon not often repeated.

Although it is impossible to measure it, there very likely was a reaction among nativist Whigs against the Irish courtship. William Woodbridge referred contemptuously in 1843 to the Whig "Irish Repealers" as a "new sect among us" and his son William described Repeal politics with deep revulsion:

The politicians of the day are making a great handle of this 'Irish Repeal' concern. There are many about Detroit who expect to get boosted up over the shoulders of others, to attain party ends and get hold of the reins of power, men who are themselves the dung of the earth, who do not know who their grandfathers were, the very impersonations of putridity who rise into high places by the very men whom they would not extend the hand of charity to, after they had got into power.¹⁵

The Whig reaction to ethnic politics in this case may have been particularly intense because the group involved was the Irish Catholics, and it was the Irish who were the foreigners most despised by the nativists. Nativist feeling against Germans seems to have been neither as widespread nor as intense as that against the Irish. The Whigs were

¹⁵William Woodbridge, Springwells, August 25, 1843, to Hon. Willie P. Mangum; William L. Woodbridge, July 8, 1843, to Dudley Woodbridge, Woodbridge MSS.

able to play ethnic politics with the Germans, if not with too much success, at least with greater ease. The Germans were not as strongly Democratic as the Irish and the Whigs were usually more hopeful about detaching the Germans from the Democrats. One Washtenaw County Whig leader wrote in 1844 that "Our German population in this county is large and still increasing, and as they are a truth-loving and reliable people they should be brought onto the right political path." The Washtenaw Germans were largely Lutherans and it was among Protestant Germans that Whigs seemed to have entertained their most sanguine hopes of success.¹⁶

Wayne County Whigs frequently ran candidates of German descent for city offices and state representative. In 1846 the Advertiser charged that the Democrats had circulated tickets substituting the name of a German Whig nominee for state representative, Nicholas Greusel, Jr., for a Democratic nominee, "for the purpose of getting the German vote for the balance of their ticket."¹⁷

In 1848 Detroit Whigs nominated Frederick Buhl, a "merchant manufacturer" for mayor. The Advertiser announced that "It is the first

¹⁶ M. Howard, Ann Arbor, July 8, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Detroit. Howard said that the circulation of Whig campaign tracts written in German had been "deemed by our German whig friends here most excellent and . . . effective." See also P.B. Thurston, Mt. Clemens, August 27, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, asking for "Whig news printed in German." Woodbridge MSS.

¹⁷ Advertiser, November 2, 1846, p. 2.

time . . . that a descendent of Germans has been designated to so important a post; and it is to be hoped that the adopted citizens of his own land will not forget the compliment thus paid them." In neither of the most German wards (4th and 7th) did the vote show a surge for the Whigs. The 4th in 1847 (then including the 7th) gave 53 percent of its vote to the Democratic candidate for mayor. But in 1848 neither the 4th nor the 7th were strongly Whig: the 4th voted 52 percent Democratic, and the 7th favored Buhl by 115 votes to 110. In the next city election the Whigs ran better in both wards. Although strong shifts among the electorate may have been concealed in the available data, Buhl's candidacy seems to have had little or no impact on the "German vote." Perhaps there was little reason for expecting Germans to vote for him. Buhl was of German descent, but not of German birth. He was born in Pennsylvania, was a wealthy man and a Presbyterian. He qualified as a member of McCoy's economic elite of Wayne County in 1844. German voters would seem to have had less reason for identifying him with the "Fatherland" and more for identifying him with the Yankee Presbyterian elite group so prominent in the Whig Party. He probably lacked appeal for the recently arrived German Catholics and Protestants whose folkways were different from, if not antipathetic to, those of Buhl.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid., March 6, 1848, p. 2. McCoy, "Political Affiliations of American Economic Elites," p. 40.

The French were not as strongly Democratic as the Irish but probably more Democratic than the Germans. From the beginning the French seem to have had a proprietary interest in the Democracy and were especially prevalent in the leadership of the party in the 1830's. Even in 1844, 11 men of French descent were part of Wayne County's Democratic leadership, compared to 2 among the Whigs.¹⁹

The significance of the French Whig minority should not be underestimated. As with the Germans, the Whigs tried constantly to swing the French to them. They frequently ran French candidates for office, especially in Detroit, and seem to have had a beach-head of support in French ranks which could, occasionally, be turned into a majority. In 1844, in a special election for alderman in Detroit's 3rd ward, both the Whig and Democratic candidates were old French. Both were well known businessmen and party leaders. The Whigs carried the ward, 186-139, even though the Democrats had carried the ward in the fall of 1843 by 58 percent and had also carried it in the previous city election. The French were only a minority of the electorate in the ward, so this does not show that they voted for the Whig, but it was likely that most did.²⁰

¹⁹ Sabbath, pp. 128-29.

²⁰ Free Press, March 25, 1844, p. 2.

In the 1839 state election the Whigs made special appeals to the French, trying to capitalize on William Woodbridge's ability to speak French, his long residence in Michigan, and his alleged friendship for the French Citoyens.²¹ The French of Hamtramck do not seem to have been lured to Woodbridge, although Whig leaders in Monroe and Macomb counties claimed, before the election, that the French were going for Woodbridge.²² Woodbridge's ability to speak French did place him on demand all through the early forties with Whig leaders in counties with large French populations. In wooing the French the Whigs sometimes worked with local spokesmen for the French and sometimes bypassed them and talked directly to the group or dissident minorities.²³

The importance of French names on the party ticket was well recognized by Whig leaders such as Richard Butler of Macomb. In 1840

²¹ Circular, "Attention! Aux Citoyens Français, et Anciens Habitans du Michigan," Woodbridge MSS.

²² "The French are not pleased with the prospect of more taxes for internal improvements," William Dusell, Macomb Co., July 8, 1839, to William Woodbridge, Detroit; "From my acquaintance with the old residents here, I am led to believe that the French population will be unanimous for you (save only such as have or expect office at the hands of the present party)," Daniel S. Bacon, Monroe, September 1, 1839, to William Woodbridge, Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

²³ Henry D. Terry, Mt. Clemens, September 27, 1844, to William Woodbridge, Detroit; Oliver Johnson, Monroe, October 22, 1844, to W.W., Detroit; William W. Studdiford, Monroe, September 16, 1848, to W.W.; George Laurian, et al., Monroe, October 12, 1848, to W.W., Woodbridge MSS.

Butler explained why the Democrats had carried Macomb by 150 votes in 1840, whereas Woodbridge had carried it by 21 votes the year before. Butler gave several reasons and emphasized that "there was not one man on the Whig ticket, calculated to call out any portion of the French population to our support, who (sic) number about one hundred and fifty votes in the lower part of the county."²⁴

2. Manipulative Politics.

The relative willingness to play ethnic politics among leaders of each party in the 1837-1852 period affected considerably the relative strength of the parties. Many Democratic and Whig leaders seldom let slip any opportunity for building political goodwill by catering to ethnocultural prejudices. When a public meeting in Detroit in 1847 decided to raise funds to send a shipload of flour "to the suffering poor in Ireland," both Whigs and Democrats joined in, no doubt from a variety of motives. Yet the Whigs seem to have reluctantly courted the minorities, and more Whig than Democratic leaders seem to have shared the sentiments of Thomas Rowland. In 1842 Rowland, Detroit Postmaster, declined an invitation to be Vice President of the St. Patrick's Temperance celebration dinner because he "could not make up my mind to it." He confided to his friend Woodbridge that he disliked "the idea even

²⁴ Richard Butler, Mt. Clemens, Macomb, November 6, 1840, to W.W., Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

indirectly of countenancing the absurd custom of keeping saint days" and moreover did not see

the fitness of keeping up a practise that fosters a foreign feeling of separate nationality amongst those who profess to be American citizens. . . . The mawkish efforts which are so much in use by demagogues through repeal societies and other means to flatter that class of citizens is exciting pretensions and claims on their part entirely inimical to the public good.²⁵

Rowland well realized that his was "an act of temerity which would doubtless be pronounced unwise by any modern politician of the school democratic."

The inflexibility of men like Rowland lessened the Whigs political effectiveness and worked to the Democrats' advantage. Some Democrats may have shared Rowland's sentiments, but practical considerations seem to have won out among most of them. Robert McClelland of Monroe, a conservative Democrat on alien suffrage in 1835, illustrated this pragmatism as he worried about how the Irish would vote in 1843:

Will the Irish vote be cast for Barry and if not, will this affect me /??/ Here all will pull true. You must not rely on your county and Washtenaw on mere reports. They ought to be seen and by those who have influence with them. And seeing them often will do no harm. McReynolds, O'Beirne, Gallagher, and Nesbit can do much. . . . Let us not act on the principle that one can do without the aid of such men. This is the course of the Whig party and it has occasioned them many a disaster. Let us be firm to our principles, but conciliatory in our conduct towards men.²⁶

²⁵Thomas Rowland, Detroit, March 17, 1842, to W.W., Washington, D.C., Woodbridge MSS.

²⁶Robert McClelland, September 5, 1843, Bagg MSS Film. In

3. Native Americanism.

In the campaign of 1844 the Whigs made special efforts to break the Democratic domination of the Irish, French, and Germans, particularly the last two. Just after the Detroit city election in March the Advertiser attacked the "humbug" that Whigs "as a party" were hostile to foreigners. Strong prejudice existed in both parties, it said, but twice as much in the Democracy. In the recent election only two of the many nominees of foreign birth on the Democratic ticket were elected and those two (Irish) ran behind the rest of their ticket.²⁷

The election returns show that the Advertiser had a point, but the Democrats succeeded far more in 1844 in associating nativism and anti-Catholicism with the Whigs. Church burnings in Philadelphia, agitation to change the naturalization laws, the Whig "Protest" against alien voting in 1835, and the like, all provided ammunition for the Democrats, and the election in November testified to the impact of history and Democratic propaganda on the Catholics and German Lutherans.²⁸

After the victory of James K. Polk over Henry Clay, Whig newspapers and leaders universally counted the foreign vote as a major factor

May McClelland wrote that "Ten Eyck speaks of my going to Detroit soon and endeavoring to soothe the Irish." R. M., Monroe, May 30, 1843, Bagg MSS Film.

²⁷ Advertiser, March 12, 1844, p. 2.

²⁸ Free Press, June-November, 1844, passim, esp. June 7, 10, July 27, August 3, 14, September 17, October 1, 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28; November 2 and 5.

in the election, if not the major factor. Although the Whigs were conscious of the damage done to their cause by the Liberty Party in 1844, many were disposed to vent their frustration and anger on foreign Catholics and began to look to Native Americanism. The Oakland Gazette said that American citizens had been brow-beaten by the "filth of Europe" and "clubbed from polls by gangs of drunken Irishmen." Native Americanism would be resorted to if this continued.²⁹

From Mackinac County in the far north a Whig "Protest" signer of 1835 wrote

I am sorry to have heard by our Papers Respecting the Presidential Election there can be no . . . Doubt but the foreners have elected Polk. I do hope this will Rouse Our American Citisens to a Sense of there Duty (sic).³⁰

George W. Wisner, a leading Pontiac Whig, demanded of William Woodbridge:

Can we ever hope to establish sound doctrines in this country? Look at the course the foreigners have pursued among us. Will they not always oppose Whig principles? Is it not better for us to make a bold appeal to native Americanism, get up a storm of passion and sweep the country? Will they not overwhelm our country in a few years? And ought we not to meet the danger now while we can master it? The contest will be a bitter one I know, but what will it be in 20 years or so when our children will be called upon to fight the battle. I firmly believe the catholic religion, united with lawless democracy, will seise (sic) this country

²⁹ Gazette quoted in Free Press, November 12, 1844, p. 2. Advertiser, November 16, 1844, p. 2.

³⁰ Michael Dousman, Mackinac, January 7, 1845, to W.W., Woodbridge MSS.

in less than 20 years, unless it is put down immediately. . . . All the whigs of the north and part of the democrats are squinting towards native Americanism. What shall we do?³¹

A Monroe Whig leader also reported that many Whigs were talking of adopting American Republicanism, but he feared that such action would only alienate all foreigners from the Whigs and perhaps come to violence. In Washtenaw County Whigs debated adopting open anti-foreign policies but concluded that "Native Americanism must not be agitated in the country to the extent it is carried in the cities."³²

The nativist pulsation running through the Whig party in the winter of 1844-1845 was no secret. Democratic newspapers began predicting that the Whig party was destroyed and would be succeeded by a Native American Party. The Free Press said that

The Advertiser calls upon the Whigs to stand by their flag! Whig papers elsewhere advise the Whigs to strike their flag, and fall into the ranks of the nativists.³³

The Advertiser's reaction to the gathering Whig bolt to Americanism was revealing in its implications. It suggested that Whigs stand firm, that Americanism would be impractical, and implied that this was so because the Whig Party was already the most effective

³¹ George W. Wisner, Pontiac, November 14, 1844, to W. W., Detroit, Woodbridge MSS.

³² Oliver Johnson, Monroe, November 20, 1844, to W.W., Washington, D.C.; H.G. Crittenden, Saline, December 26, 1844, to W.W., Washington, Woodbridge MSS.

³³ Free Press, November 14, 1844, p. 2.

agent of nativist principles and could be known by its enemies:

"Abolitionists, foreign influence, foreign money and foreign votes."
The Whig party offered "American Whigs" a broad and practical program. Whig adoption of nativist principles could only injure the party, but "If every Native American can be made to think, feel and act as a Native American should . . . everything that a native American can desire will be accomplished."³⁴

Sometime around early 1845 a Native American newspaper began appearing in Detroit.³⁵ In the city election of 1845 a Native American ticket entered the field. The Free Press said that the Natives had nominated several regular Democrats as a trick, while the Advertiser claimed that the Native ticket was a trick to split the Whigs organized by a "clique of the most intolerant Locofocos" and urged Whigs to stand by their party.³⁶

Out of 1644 votes the Native got only 32, the Liberty Party received 50, Whigs 750, and Democrats 810. The Advertiser said the outcome was a Whig success, since the Whig vote was larger and the

³⁴ Advertiser, November 15, 1844, p. 2, November 18, 20.

³⁵ Three issues of the American Vineyard (Detroit) are in the BHC: October 23, 1846, April 23, 1847, December 17, 1847. On papers in Michigan see Detroit Daily News, July 8, 1845, p. 2.

³⁶ Free Press, March 3, 1845, p. 2. Advertiser, February 27, 1845, p. 2.

Democratic smaller than the previous year. This proved, it said, the wisdom of avoiding "entangling alliances." This seems to mean that a Whig-Native coalition had been considered and rejected.

Since the Whig Party in Detroit had such a strong nativist tradition, the 32 votes given to the Natives in 1845 probably do not give any adequate measure of nativist strength. The Natives also may very well have drawn as heavily upon the Democrats as upon the Whigs for the 32 votes. The Native mayoral candidate, Orus Field, a merchant, had been a regular Democrat.³⁷

In preparation for the Presidential election of 1852 the Whigs began, around 1850, a new and vigorous effort to win the foreign vote. Early in 1850 a promising Whig leader emerged as Zachariah Chandler won an upset victory to become mayor of Detroit in 1851. As mayor, Chandler plunged into ethnic politics as few Whigs ever had. At the St. Patrick's Day celebration of the Detroit Irish Emigrant Society, Chandler joked about politicians who claimed to be of every nationality before elections, but seldom after, and then went on to say that he was Yankee by birth, English by name, and one-half Irish by blood. Chandler endorsed the Emigrant Society and St. Patrick's Day celebrations because they promoted assimilation and Americanism. They

³⁷ Advertiser, March 8, 1845, p. 2. The Free Press, May 29, 1843, listed Field as a delegate to the Democratic County Convention.

broke the ice of "national" and "sectional" feelings and prompted neighbors to forget whether they were native or foreign. Whigs and Democrats, Protestants and Catholics forgot "factions and feuds" and learned to respect the opinions, even the prejudices, of others. "To Ireland," he said, "the world owes a debt of gratitude" because her sons were always found in the first ranks of freedom fighters. "In our struggles for independence, Irish blood flowed like water."³⁸ Perhaps he paid similar compliments to the Germans when he agreed to help a fund raising drive for German liberty.³⁹

Chandler's apparent enthusiasm for ethnic politics probably had something to do with his being nominated for governor by the Whigs in 1852. By all accounts the Whigs tried harder than ever before to woo the Irish and German voters. The campaign for Winfield Scott all through the Northwest sought to counter Democratic charges that Scott was hostile to foreigners and Catholics. These efforts mostly failed in Michigan and the foreign born Catholics and most Irish, German, and French voters remained solidly in the Democratic camp.⁴⁰

³⁸ Advertiser, March 19, 1851, p. 2.

³⁹ Warren W. Florer, "The Liberty Meeting in Detroit, December 1851," Michigan History, XVI (Autumn, 1932), 400.

⁴⁰ Advertiser, October-November, passim; Free Press, October-November, passim; Thomas, Nativism in the Old Northwest, pp. 63-78; the Vindicator, November 15, 1856, p. 2., referred to the "most extraordinary efforts" made by the Whigs in 1852 to get the Irish and German votes.

As in 1844-1845 Whig frustration in 1852 was to fan the fires of nativism and to feed a far stronger nativist impulse that was already gathering force, but this is part of another story.

4. Denominational Politics.

Rivalry among Protestant denominations for converts and general public recognition was extremely intense during the nineteenth century. This competition between "free, absolutistic groups in the vast free market of souls"⁴¹ had its counterpart in political life where the denominations competed not so much for recognition in the nomination of candidates as for "representation" and recognition, or, simply their share of patronage.

The case of the Board of University Regents in Michigan illustrates this very well. When the constitutional convention of 1835 provided for a state-supported, centralized system of higher education, it made the University's ruling body a board of twelve regents who would be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. Until the office of Regent became elective by popular vote in 1851 the appointment of Regents became an arena for the play of denominational politics. Scattered evidence reveals a keen competition among denominations for representation on the Board, apparently less from a desire

⁴¹ Mead, Church History, XXIII, 4, 316.

to control the Board and more from fear that rivals would control it.

In 1840 the Michigan Methodist Conference passed a resolution recommending that appointees to the University be chosen from the various denominations in proportion to the relative numbers of each denomination among the general population. The Conference claimed that this would check "political" and "sectarian" influence, but perhaps the Methodists being the most numerous denomination in Michigan had something to do with the proposal.⁴²

In 1841 a Whig legislative leader wrote to Governor Woodbridge that the Senate had confirmed all but three of his appointments to the Board of Regents. If the three had been confirmed "the whole board would consist of members of either the Presbyterian or Episcopalian Churches, and a majority of the Senate seemed to think, that a more equal distribution among the different denominations would be right and proper and give a more general satisfaction."⁴³

During the 1841 state campaign the Democrats played upon the lack of "general satisfaction" with appointments to the Regency, and particularly upon Presbyterian domination of it and other patronage. The Democrats claimed that it was due to the efforts of their candidate

⁴² Advertiser, November 18, 1840, p. 2.

⁴³ James M. Edmunds, Detroit, February 27, 1841, to William Woodbridge, Washington, D. C., Woodbridge MSS. Woodbridge had by now resigned as governor.

for governor, John Barry, that "Methodists, Baptists and some other denominations have now (though not to the fullest extent which their relative numbers would seem to deserve) a representation in the Regency of the University."⁴⁴

The Free Press described the incident "last winter" when the three Woodbridge appointments had been rejected to prevent monopoly of the board by "one or two sects" and went on to lecture the Whigs on patronage distribution.

In the University, as in the Government, all interests should be equally represented. . . . in a multitude of different interests there is no danger of one interest trampling all others under foot. . . . This representation of different interests is what is meant by checks and balances in government, and the politician who disregards them is either ignorant of the nature of our free institutions . . . or wants . . . character to overcome his personal prejudices.⁴⁵

A more systematic survey of patronage distribution would be necessary before the Democratic claims to a more catholic patronage policy could be accepted. The very nature and composition of the Democracy in Michigan argues in favor of its being more attuned to the heterogeneity of American society. Practical political considerations, and perhaps some "melting pot" idealism, made the Democrats more responsive to the aspirations of groups which felt excluded and frustrated. A number of the "out"

⁴⁴ Free Press, October 20, 1841.

⁴⁵ Free Press, September 12, 1841, p. 2. The Regents themselves in appointing a university faculty were "careful to choose ministers of the four leading denominations in the state (Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian) for professional positions." Dunbar, Michigan Record, p.69.

groups in American society seem to have been persuaded, at least, that the promotion of their "welfare and fame,"⁴⁶ that is, their interests and status, was more likely to be done under Democratic auspices.

⁴⁶ Advertiser, October 23, 1848, p. 2, used this phrase in an article arguing the opposite point of view.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Classification of Farm Occupations

The manuscript population schedules of the 1850 federal census provided information on the occupation of males over 18 years, usually a one-word description, and the value of any real estate owned by individuals. I tabulated the number of potential voters in eight farm occupations, regarding a potential voter as any white male 21 years or older. This included all the foreign born who were not necessarily eligible voters, but there was no way of knowing how recently they had arrived in the United States. There was evidence that some of the foreign-born often voted before the five-year naturalization period expired, and after 1850 this was legally possible.

Farm Owners:

These included any individual described as a "farmer" who owned real estate. The value of the real estate determined in which class of Farm Owner he was placed. (See Chapter IV)

Elder Sons:

Potential voters who were farmers without real estate, but who were obviously members of the family, received special treatment, of which I kept a record for each town. The first immediate relative with

no real property (usually the elder son, but possibly a brother or other relative) I placed in the same class as the head of the family. Any relatives after the first immediate relative was counted as a farm laborer, and a record was kept of how many such individuals there were in each town. This was the "Younger Son-Farm Laborer" group. If the real estate owner and head of the household was female, but the next male member was over 21 and described as a "farmer" or a "laborer" then that person was counted a Farm Owner according to the value of real estate. There were very few of these.

Tenants or Renters:

Men described as "farmers" but owning no real estate, usually heads of households, and not elder or younger sons, were counted as tenants or renters. Whatever their status may have been whatever arrangements they made to farm, they were farmers who owned no land.

Farm Laborers:

In 1860 the census takers usually made a distinction between "farm laborers" and other kinds of "laborers," day or general. In 1850 census takers in some townships made this distinction; in others they did not, so that a "laborer" could have worked on a farm or in a sawmill. I decided whether a "laborer" was a farm laborer or an Urban unskilled

according to the household and on the basis of his apparent environment as indicated by surrounding households, farms, or places of business on the same census page.

APPENDIX B

TABLE 1

WAYNE TOWNS RANKED BY NUMBER OF HANDS
EMPLOYED IN INDUSTRIES, 1850

	Number Hands
Springwells	120
Hantramck	116
Plymouth	111
Dearborn	34
Monguagon	32
Redford	28
Nankin	27
Greenfield	25
Grosse Pointe	21
Ecorse	20
Romulus	16
Canton	15
Brownstown	14
Livonia	10
Van Buren	
Taylor	
Sumpter	
Huron	

Source: Schedule of Social Statistics, 1850. Bound MSS in Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

APPENDIX B--Cont.

TABLE 2

WAYNE TOWNS RANKED BY NUMBER OF MALES EMPLOYED IN FLOUR
AND SAW MILLS AND ALL OTHER MANUFACTORIES, 1854

(State Census, 1854)

Hamtramck	186
Plymouth	131
Monguagon	39
Greenfield	34
Springwells	30
Redford	25-35 (estimated)
Romulus	25
Nankin	19
Canton	18
Van Buren	14
Brownstown	12
Livonia	12
Dearborn	11
Sumpter	6
Huron	4
Taylor	3
Ecorse	
Grosse Pointe	

APPENDIX B--Cont.

TABLE 3

WAYNE TOWNS RANKED BY PER CENT OF SKILLED WORKERS
AMONG POTENTIAL VOTERS, 1850

	%	No.
Plymouth	31	190
Monguagon	23	51
Hamtramck	18	39
Brownstown	17	41
Springwells	16	54
Dearborn	14	40
Livonia	14	44
Redford	14	49
Van Buren	13	44
Canton	11	32
Huron	11	13
Romulus	11	15
Nankin	10	36
Taylor	9	5
Ecorse	9	11
Sumpter	8	8
Greenfield	8	28
Grosse Pointe	7	22

APPENDIX C

TABLE 1

		Democratic Strength	Di	Di ²
Springwells	1	12	11	121
Ecorse	2	13	11	121
Huron	3	11	8	64
Sumpter	4	14	10	100
Hamtramck	5	2	- 3	9
Greenfield	6	5	- 1	1
Monguagon	7	7.5	.5	.25
Romulus	8	7.5	- .5	.25
Brownstown	9	15	6	36
Taylor	10	18	8	64
Grosse Pointe	11	1	-10	100
Dearborn	12	7.5	- 4.5	20.25
Redford	13	3	-10	100
Van Buren	14	7.5	- 6.5	42.25
Nankin	15	10	- 5	25
Canton	16	4	-12	144
Livonia	17	16	- 1	1
Plymouth	18	17	- 1	1
	<u>18</u>			
	N=18			

Spearman's r_s

$$\underline{D_1^2 = 950.00}$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D_i^2}{N(N^2-1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{6(950)}{18(323)} = 1 - \frac{5700}{5814} = 1 - .98 = .02$$

APPENDIX C--Cont.

TABLE 2

		Democratic Strength	D _i	D _i ²
Sumpter	1	14	13	169
Taylor	2	18	16	256
Ecorse	3	13	10	100
Romulus	4	7.5	3.5	12.25
Huron	5	11	6	36
Greenfield	6	5	- 1	1
Springwells	7	12	5	25
Grosse Pointe	8	1	- 7	49
Brownstown	9	15	6	36
Hamtramck	10	2	- 8	64
Dearborn	11	7.5	- 3.5	12.25
Van Buren	12	7.5	- 4.5	20.25
Monguagon	13	7.5	- 5.5	30.25
Nankin	14	10	- 4	16
Redford	15	3	-12	144
Livonia	16	16	0	0
Canton	17	4	-13	169
Plymouth	18	17	- 1	1
				<hr/>
				D _i ² = 1141

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D_i^2}{N(N^2-1)} = 1 - \frac{6846}{5814} = 1.0 - 1.17 = -.17$$

APPENDIX D

A NOTE ON OTHER MEASUREMENTS OF WEALTH

The Statistics of Michigan, 1850, a compilation of federal census data printed by the state, gave the number of occupied farms in each town, the aggregate cash value of farms, and the value of all farm machinery and implements ("tools") in each town. I divided the value of farms by the number of farms and the value of tools by the number of farms to find 1) the average value of farms and 2) the average value of tools. The data was lumped together for four towns in Wayne and was unavailable for some towns in Oakland, Washtenaw, and Hillsdale.

The average value of farms and tools, while useful as a check on other measures, could be misleading. For example, Monguagon had the highest average value of farms in Wayne. But this did not mean that the average farmer or voter in Monguagon was fairly prosperous. The number of occupied farms given for Monguagon was only 36, while I counted 108 potential voters engaged in farm occupations and almost 60 percent of these were farm laborers and tenants. Thus, the average voter in Monguagon was not a fairly prosperous farmer and its high average value of farms was due to the presence of a relatively few very prosperous farmers. Similarly, the average value of farms was misleading for Hamtramck and Springwells.

When I ranked Wayne's towns according to their average value of tools, and then compared each of these rankings with that based on Farm 1-4 and Urban 1-2, the towns fell into roughly similar orders with the tendency for lower class towns to be misrepresented as prosperous in the average value rankings. The average values of farms and tools thus seemed most reliable as indicators of poor towns. I have used the average value of tools as a measure for towns in Oakland, Washtenaw, and Hillsdale for which I did not tabulate occupational-status.

APPENDIX D

TABLE I

WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS RANKED ACCORDING TO AVERAGE VALUE OF FARMS, AVERAGE VALUE OF TOOLS, AND LEAST % OF FARM 1-4 AND URBAN 1-2, 1850

	Avg.Val. Farms		Avg.Val. Tools		Least % Fm 1-4, Ur 1-2
Monguagon	\$3,447	Plymouth	120	Plymouth	24
Plymouth	2,865	Monguagon	119	Canton	40
Hamtramck	2,700	Canton	110	Livonia	40
Springwells	2,413	Livonia	109	Redford	51
Livonia	2,215	Springwells	104	Nankin	53
Greenfield	2,070	Hamtramck	101	Mongaugon	56
Canton	1,930	Grosse Pointe	99	Van Buren	57
Redford	1,739	Redford	90	Dearborn	59
Dearborn	1,720	Greenfield	90	Hamtramck	60
Grosse Pointe	1,661	Dearborn	89	Brownstown	64
Brownstown	1,548	Brownstown	89	Grosse Pointe	65
Huron		Huron		Springwells	67
Nankin	1,512	Nankin	86	Greenfield	69
Sumpter		Sumpter		Huron	71
Romulus	1,358	Taylor	82	Romulus	73
Taylor		Romulus		Ecorse	77
Van Buren		Van Buren		Taylor	78
Ecorse	1,121	Ecorse	60	Sumpter	82

APPENDIX D---Cont.

TABLE 2

WASHTENAW, OAKLAND, AND HILLSDALE BANNER TOWNS RANKED ACCORDING
TO PER CENT FARM 1-4 AND URBAN 1-2, COMPARED WITH
AVERAGE VALUE OF FARMS AND AVERAGE VALUE
OF TOOLS, 1850

	%Fm 1-4, Ur 1-2	Avg.Val. Farms	Avg.Val. Tools
Washtenaw:			
Salem	37	\$1,798	126
Lima	41	2,067	94
Pittsfield	46	3,037	132
Northfield	59	1,807	80
Freedom	75	1,233	56
Oakland:			
Milford	44	\$1,735	
Addison	52		
Springfield	59		
Holly	61		
Hillsdale:			
Litchfield	50	1,564	93
Scipio	51	1,775	90
Wheatland	71	1,431	78
Camden	75	1,137	59
Wright	79	1,110	69

APPENDIX E

TABLE 1

BANNER TOWNS, OAKLAND, HILLSDALE, AND WASHTENAW,
PER CENT FOREIGN-BORN, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH

	%FB	Dem.St.	D_i	D_i^2
Freedom	70(1)	67 (4.5)	3.5	12.25
Northfield	41(2)	67 (4.5)	2.5	6.25
Lima	26(3)	37 (9)	6	36
Milford	22(4)	38 (8)	4	16
Pittsfield	17(5)	32 (11.5)	5.5	30.25
Springfield	15(6)	32 (11.5)	4.5	20.25
Scipio	10(7)	34 (10)	3	9
Holly	8(8)	69 (2)	-6	36
Salem	8(9)	46 (7)	-2	4
Addison	6(10)	77 (1)	-0	81
Wright	6(11)	63 (6)	-5	25
Camden	6(12)	68 (3)	-9	81
Wheatland	4(13)	27 (13)	0	0

$$D_i^2 = 357.0$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6(357.0)}{2184} = 1 - \frac{2142}{2184} = 1 - .98 = .02$$

APPENDIX E--Cont.

TABLE 2

PER CENT NEW ENGLAND BORN, 1850, AND DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH,
1848-1852, WAYNE COUNTY TOWNS

	New Eng. % (and rank)	Dem. (and rank)	D_i	D_i
Livonia	24 (1)	39(16)	15	225
Plymouth	21 (2)	38(17)	15	225
Nankin	19(3.5)	56(10)	6.5	42.25
Canton	19(3.5)	64(4)	.5	.25
Van Buren	15(5.5)	60(7.5)	2.	4
Huron	15(5.5)	54(11)	5.5	30.25
Dearborn	14(7.5)	60(7.5)	0	0
Sumpter	14(7.5)	47(14)	6.5	42.25
Romulus	11(9.5)	60(7.5)	- 2	4
Redford	11(9.5)	66(3)	- 6.5	42.25
Brownsown	10(11)	41(15)	4	13
Greenfield	9(13)	62(5)	- 8	64
Taylor	9(13)	37(18)	5	25
Monguagon	9(13)	60(7.5)	- 5.5	30.25
Springwells	7(15)	53(12)	- 3	9
Hamtramck	3(16)	70(2)	-14	196
Grosse Pointe	2(17)	80(1)	-16	256
Ecorse	1(18)	49(13)	- 5	25

$$D_i^2 = 12365.00$$

$$r_s = \frac{6(1236.5)}{5814} + 1 - \frac{7419.0}{5814} = 1 - 1.28 = -.28$$

APPENDIX E--Cont.

TABLE 3

NEW ENGLAND BORN, 1850, BANNER TOWNS OF WASHTENAW,
HILLSDALE, AND OAKLAND COUNTIES

	% N.E. Born	Dem. St.
Litchfield	25	35
Lima	20	37
Camden	19	68
Wheatland	18	27
Springfield	17	32
Pittsfield	17	32
Scipio	16	34
Holly	14	69
Addison	13	77
Milford	12	38
Wright	11	63
Salem	10	46
Northfield	9	67
Freedom	6	67

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