When the widow of a black soldier was ejected from an Eighth Avenue street car reserved for whites, the Union League rallied to her support and prepared to take her case to court. The company, however, capitulated, and consequently such discrimination on public cars in the city ended.[121] Finally, in 1873 the state legislature enacted a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination because of race or color on public conveyances, in theaters, inns, and other public amusements. The law was not rigorously enforced, however, and African-American New Yorkers continued to face a depressing racism in the late nineteenth century.[122]

The degraded condition of African-American New Yorkers prompted some observers to equate their plight with those of the incoming Irish. Both groups occupied miserable tenement housing, lived lives of wretched poverty, and faced virulent prejudice. But no white group, not even the Irish, suffered so much for so long as did the blacks. Nonetheless, among European immigrants entering the city during the nineteenth century, the Irish did encounter the most difficulties and were subject to the most hostility by native-born citizens. Their experiences and those of the German immigrants will be discussed in some detail in the chapter that follows.

Diversity in Action: Irish and German Immigrants in a Growing City, 1789–1880

3

i

It is a truism to assert that the Irish, the largest of the era's immigrant populations, were probably the least suited by experience, training, and culture for city life. As a consequence, they provide the story of America's first highly visible urban, poor-white minority group. While not all the immigrant Irish were impoverished and unskilled, so many of them were that as a group they received less of the good and more of the bad that life in New York City offered. As early as the 1790s observers noted the poverty of the city's Irish Catholics. A majority of the victims of the yellow fever epidemic in 1795 were Irish, and so many poor Irish appeared in the 1790s that the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick could scarce-

ly find funds to assist them.[1] Years later, in describing his flock, New York's Bishop John Hughes wrote that they were "the poorest and most wretched population that can be found in the world—the scattered debris of the Irish nation."[2]

Carole Pernicone's study of the heavily Irish Sixth Ward found that, according to the 1855 census report, 51.2 percent of the ward's 1,116 families arrived in the city as family units. She also revealed that, in addition to family unit migration, often a single family member would emigrate and ultimately raise enough money to send for the remainder.[3] In contrast to the Germans, the number of Irish women emigrating exceeded the number of men. Some were widowed heads of families who lacked skills to obtain an adequate income, or else faced discrimination in finding decent paying jobs.[4] Once here, the leading contribution to female-led families was probably the high rate of industrial accidents. Irish men dominated the ranks of unskilled laborers employed in dangerous work on the docks and in the construction trades, and many died on the job.[5] For the widows and children of these victims, starvation and homelessness could be avoided only through income-producing work.

Even in male-headed households, laborers' salaries were so low that extra income was essential for survival. Whether we speak of the low salaries, industrial accidents, and seasonal unemployment common among the unskilled male workers or the few extra pennies earned by women who took in one or two boarders or did needlework in the home for twelve cents for each day's labor, we are speaking about extreme poverty. The majority of Irish immigrants experienced its reality for at least a portion of their years in New York.[6]

Irish immigrants were most apt to live in the crowded tenement districts where they encountered poor sanitation and epidemics. More comfortably placed Irish, especially a number of young and single women, managed to escape the worst aspects of immigrant slum living. Some of these became Catholic nuns and served in the diocese's expanding network of charitable agencies, schools, and hospitals. Most others, after the 1820s, dominated domestic service in New York City; by 1855, 74 percent of domestics were Irish, and in 1880 44 percent of Manhattan's and Brooklyn's servants were still Irish.[7] So common a stereotype was "Bridget," the serving woman, that one guide book, *Advice to Irish Girls in America* by the Nun of Kenmare, simply assumed

that all Irish women who worked would enter domestic service.[8]

While life was not all roses for the city's "Bridgets"—They worked long hours, and a few suffered abuse by their employers—most lived in middle-class homes, where they benefitted from a healthy diet; and, because room and board were free, they were able to save part of their wages for their dowries. Historian Christine Stansell tells us that between 1819 and 1847 these young women accounted for between one half and two thirds of the savings accounts opened by unskilled workers at the New York Bank for Savings.[9]

Not all single Irish women entered domestic service. The needle trade drew some, and for a few others a way "of getting by, of making the best of bad luck" was through prostitution. One study of the city's prostitutes in 1855 revealed that 35 percent were Irish and 12 percent German.[10]

As the Irish often were blamed for their poverty, so too were they castigated for the means by which they sought a measure of relief from its effects. There seemed to be no end of drinking establishments in the immigrant districts. For the first generation of Irish in particular the saloon was the center of a relatively inexpensive social life, just as the pub had been back home. In 1864 the Sixth Ward alone had one drinking establishment for every six people. At Peter Sweeney's saloon, for example, one could gain entry for ten cents and quaff whiskey at three cents a glass. The saloon keeper was a respected figure in his community and by the Civil War had become a key figure in local politics. Yet to many a well meaning reformer the saloon represented both a den of immorality and a prime cause of poverty among the Irish.[11]

The Irish immigrant life style did indeed differ in many respects from that of the native, white Protestant American. Politically, economically, and culturally oppressed in their native land, competing for the most menial jobs, and experiencing prejudice on all fronts in their new setting, what William Shannon terms the "two-fisted aggressiveness of the Irish" is not difficult to understand.[12] During the mid-nineteenth century New York City was an arena of rivalry, competition, and violence between ethnic and racial groups. Often unemployed and seeking excitement, young Irish men organized into street gangs, whose names reflected a variety of old and new country loyalties. The Bowery B'hoys, Dead Rabbits, Kerryonians, True Blue Americans, Plug Uglies, and O'Connell Guards, among others, provided their members

opportunities for raucous sociability and plenty of two-fisted action. So too did the city's many volunteer fire companies, more adept at fighting each other than at effectively extinguishing fires.[13]

After 1830 the city witnessed an unusually large number of street riots and brawls, even by modern urban standards. Irishmen were prominently involved in many of them, a circumstance which appeared to confirm that they were indeed a belligerent people. A closer examination of some of those outbreaks reveals more about the Irish condition in New York than merely the propensity of bully boys to do their thing. In 1837, for example, it was actual hunger that drove Irish workers to break into and loot grain warehouses in what became known as the Flour Riot.[14] The Irish often vented their rage and violence against New York's blacks, fellow victims of prejudice, yet often competitors for low level unskilled jobs as waiters, coachmen, and dockworkers. In their hostility to blacks the Irish adopted racial attitudes expressed by New York working people as early as the colonial period and reflected as recently as July 1834 in an eight-day, anti-abolitionist riot which ravaged black homes and churches.[15]

Anti-black sentiments were not part of the baggage brought from Ireland, but anti-English sentiments certainly were. They account to a considerable degree for the Irish gangs' participation in the famous Astor Place Riot of May 1849, which stemmed from the rivalry between British actor William Macready and the darling of the American stage, Edwin Forest. Both men were appearing at the same time in rival productions, and ethnic pride and anger were deeply involved. The riot involved more than 10,000 workingmen, native and immigrant alike, and led to thirty-one deaths.[16]

Finally there were instances of street brawls that pitted Irishmen against Irishmen in seemingly senseless fits of violence. The biggest such battle occurred on July 4th and 5th, 1857, between the Dead Rabbits and the Bowery B'hoys. Nearly 1,000 gang members were involved, and before two regiments of state militia finally quelled the melee, ten men lay dead and at least 80 suffered wounds. However, even this riotous affair was related to broader events. New York's condition of inadequate police protection had reached a point of near lunacy that summer with two competing forces in the city, the reputedly corrupt Municipal Police under the control of Mayor Fernando Wood's Democratic administration and its supposed replacement the Metropolitan

Police, created by the Republican-controlled state legislature. Mayor Wood's refusal to disband the Municipals led to open combat between the two forces on June 16th and contributed to a climate of lawlessness that continued into July. Such was the resentment against the state-appointed police force that two weeks later a crowd largely made up of Germans—not generally known for violent behavior—battled Metropolitans in the Seventeenth Ward.[17]

The allegiance of the Bowery B'hoys to Mayor Wood and the Municipal Police reveals a good deal about ethnicity and politics as well as street violence in New York City during the antebellum years. The Bowery B'hoys were Irish and in the First, Fourth, Sixth, and Fourteenth wards so too were the majority of Municipal policemen.[18] A Democratic mayor claimed the loyalty of the Municipals, and the Irish citizens of the city were overwhelmingly and fiercely loyal Democrats.[19] Wood's election in 1854 was secured largely by the Irish of the Sixth Ward, who conjured up 400 more votes for him than there were registered voters in the district. Continued Irish support for Wood in the 1856 election was strengthened by such factors as the mayor's opposition to prohibition, his granting of city lands to facilitate the construction of a new St. Patrick's Cathedral, and most certainly for his appointments of Irishmen to city jobs, particularly on the police force. While the Irish adherence to the Democratic Party was indeed secure, no individual politician—not even Fernando Wood—could count on that support continuing indefinitely. In the mayoral elections held in December 1857, Tammany Hall, under the leadership of its new head, the notorious William Marcy "Boss" Tweed, decided to run Daniel Tieman against Wood, the "regular" Democratic candidate, who had committed the unpardonable sin of ignoring Tammany when he appointed heads of executive agencies. In a campaign marked by violence, Tweed's successful wooing of the Bowery B'hoys and other Irish gangs was crucial in Tieman's victory over Wood by 2,300 votes.[20]

The loyalty of the Irish to Tammany Hall and the Democratic party, which seemed almost ordained by nature in later years, had in fact evolved over time. In its early days as it was transformed from a fraternal lodge to a political machine, Tammany Hall claimed to represent the interests of the city's workingmen against both aristocratic privilege and foreign competition. Such competition included immigrant labor-

ers as well as imported goods. By the 1820s politics was changing in a more democratic direction, and when New York's constitutional convention of 1821 did away with the property requirement for white, male voters, it enabled increasing numbers of poor Irishmen to become potential voters capable of swinging municipal elections. The Jacksonian democratization of politics, notably illustrated by the selection of a mayor by popular election beginning in 1834, along with the rising tide of immigration led Tammany to shift away from its nativist stance. Irish immigrants were not simply to be accepted by the Democratic party; they were actually to be wooed.[21] As shop gave way to factory and as unskilled and semiskilled labor replaced the craftsmen as the numerically dominant representatives of the working class, urban politics also changed. Richard Stott has described how:

> A new and distinctively working-class style of politics began to emerge in the 1840s and 1850s. Related to change taking place in working-class life, it paid attention less to ideology than to the personal qualities of political leaders. At the same time pugilists came to dominate working-class politics in the city, and elections themselves became stormy, brawling affairs. At the same time, also, the saloon emerged as central to the city's political life.[22]

The Irish immigrants were hardly passive pawns to be manipulated by political leaders. Unlike the Germans who, at least until the arrival of political refugees in the late 1840s, appeared rather indifferent to politics, the Irish came to America with a tradition of political involvement. Popular demonstrations, mass meetings, and other forms of political action on behalf of Irish Catholic causes provided experiences readily applicable to New York City politics.[23] The Irish in New York knew well how to use their saloons and their street gangs for Tammany's causes. In return, Tammany delivered assistance in expediting naturalization; protected saloon keepers from overzealous enforcers of closing laws; expressed strong anti-nativist and anti-prohibition positions; hosted picnics, balls, river excursions, and other social events; and, most important of all, provided jobs for "lamplighters, fire wardens, meat inspectors, and policemen."[24]

In time politically activist-minded Irish found such rewards to be not enough. They demanded more substantial pieces of the action—

political office and/or a place among the Democratic leadership. The most successful of these early zealots was Mike Walsh, an Ireland-born journalist who in 1840 formed his partisans into "the Spartan Band," and three years later established a weekly newspaper, *The Subterranean*. Having considerable talents as a public speaker, Walsh called for more attention to workers' rights and wider participation for workingmen within the Democratic party. He acted the gadfly at political meetings, virtually forcing himself on Tammany's leaders, who, in 1846, finally nominated and helped elect him to the state assembly. In 1850 Walsh won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he remained until his death in 1859.[25]

As Irish and other ethnic populations of the city grew, so too did their role in the Democratic party. In 1856 two Irishmen and a German won election to the City Council, and an Englishman served as alderman from the First Ward. With the ascendancy of Tweed as head of Tammany, the Irish came extremely close to the apex of power. Though of Scotch-Irish, Protestant origins, Tweed had strong ties to the city's Irish Catholic community in most everything but religion, in which he professed no affiliation. He had been a member of an Irish street gang and an Irish volunteer fire company. His closest political associates were Irishmen Peter Sweeney and Richard "Slippery Dick" Connolly.[26]

When the corruption of the Tweed Ring was finally exposed in 1871, journalists and cartoonists were quick to point to the close ties between the Boss and his Irish followers. Certainly Tweed's active support of Irish Catholic efforts to prevent the Orange parade celebrating the Battle of the Boyne contributed to his downfall. The order of Tweed's police commissioner forbidding the Protestant Ulstermen from marching was rescinded by Governor Hoffmann. For Tweed, the subsequent riot, erupting just days after public disclosure of Ring corruption, was another nail in his coffin.[27]

Ironically, Tweed's downfall permitted Irish Catholics to finally attain the highest seats of political power in the city. In 1871 John Kelly assumed the leadership of Tammany Hall, and in 1880 shipping magnate William R. Grace was elected mayor. Neither was really a man of the masses of the city's Irish. Kelly, basically conservative, was more interested in attracting wealthy businessmen and professionals to Tammany than in serving the city's hard pressed, working-class communities. As for Grace, he proved an able mayor but hardly qualified as a true

New York Irishman. He made his fortune in the shipping business while a resident of Peru and continued to be interested in that country's affairs when he moved to New York after the Civil War.[28]

Writing of the urban Irish in America of 1870, Lawrence H. Fuchs states that the "most important communal organization . . . , next to the church itself, was the Democratic Party, and for Irish men, the party probably was more important than the church. In and through the party they found sociability, jobs, and a way to claim American identity." [29] What they had failed to claim in New York City by that year, however, was control of the top positions in Tammany and the Democratic Party. Even while William R. Grace was serving his second term as mayor in 1884, one estimate found 58 percent of the positions of power within the Democratic Party still held by "old stock" Americans against only 29 percent by Irish and 10 percent by Germans. "Yet the Irish and Germans made up over three quarters of the city's population in 1880."[30]

If the Irish failed to fully control the Democratic party by 1880, there is no doubt of their influence over what Fuchs saw as their most important communal organization; Irish men and women totally dominated the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York. The growth of the church in New York City had been phenomenal since 1820, when there were but two churches to serve the city's Catholic population of approximately 30,000. By 1840 the church had established eight new parishes as the Catholic population reached close to 90,000, and in 1865 somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 Catholics attended thirty-two churches. In the United States the Catholic parishes were generally organized along ethnic-language lines. Thus, of the thirty-two New York churches, eight were German-speaking, one was French-speaking, and twenty-three were English-speaking, which in effect meant their parishioners were overwhelmingly Irish.[31]

The figures above reflect the course of immigration into the city. The Irish arriving after 1820 were, with few exceptions, Catholic, while the Germans were a religiously heterogeneous lot. By 1860, as Jay Dolan informs us, "for every German Catholic there were six to seven Irishmen." Naturally enough, "the principal authority in the city, the bishop, was an Irishman."[32] The "Irishman" Dolan referred to was John Hughes, who succeeded the Frenchman John Dubois as bishop of New York in 1838. Hughes became archbishop in 1850, when Pope Pius IX raised the diocese of New York to the position of archdiocese,

and continued in office until 1864. His successor, the Irish-American John McCloskey, in 1875 became America's first cardinal.[33]

Under Hughes's dynamic leadership the Roman Catholic Church in New York moved from weakness to vast power. In 1841 the diocese had but ten churches, one priest for every 8,000 people, and $300,000 in debts. "Within fifteen years, however, [Hughes] succeeded in establishing doctrinal unity, in paying off the debts, in tripling the number of churches, and in creating a variety of charitable, social, and educational organizations that became a strong basis for Irish Catholic community life in New York."[34] Perhaps most symbolic of the changed status of the church was its formal administrative center. When Hughes assumed the bishop's chair, old St. Patrick's Cathedral was located on Mulberry Street on the Lower East Side. At the time of his retirement and as a result of his efforts a new, grand and Gothic St. Patrick's was under construction on prestigious Fifth Avenue between 50th and 51st streets, where it is still to be found.[35]

The cathedral would have many residents, but no Catholic prelate in New York, before or after, ever exerted the influence that Bishop Hughes did among the city's Irish. No Irishman in politics or business during the antebellum period achieved power comparable to that which Hughes held within the church. Furthermore, whether Irish Catholics attended church regularly or not—and many did not—in terms of self-identity, birth, and heritage they remained Irish and Catholic. This melding of nationality and faith had been forged in Ireland in the face of English-Protestant attempts to subvert both. In America nativist hostility and evangelical Protestant assertiveness only served to strengthen that alloy. Hughes's responses to these challenges had much to do with his popularity within the Irish community and with the respect he earned among those without.[36]

Bishop Hughes's refusal to advocate a passive, defensive position for American Catholics made him, in his own way, as confrontational as any Bowery B'hoy or Dead Rabbit. As spokesman for the city's growing Irish Catholic population whose votes no political leader could ignore, he might not be loved by Protestant America, but he also could not be taken lightly. He demonstrated his potential political power and influence in a battle that erupted almost immediately after he took office as archbishop. In 1840 New York City lacked a public school system. The bulk of the state's school funds earmarked for the city went to

the Public School Society, a chartered philanthropic organization founded by Protestant laymen to provide elementary schooling for poor children and governed by a self-perpetuating board of trustees. Though nondenominational, the climate and orientation of its schools were such that most Catholics could not in good conscience enroll their children. Their objections included the recital of Protestant prayers and hymns, exclusive use of the King James Bible, and the employment of religious, literary, and historical texts displaying anti-Catholic biases, including the frequent use of the derogatory term "popery." With many Catholic parents boycotting the society's schools and with a paucity of Catholic schools, large numbers of New York City's children were totally without the benefits of education.[37]

The election of William Henry Seward to the governorship in 1838 on the Whig ticket had drastic consequences on the school situation in the city. Sympathetic to the Irish condition here and abroad and hopeful of breaking the Democrats' hold on New York City's Irish vote, Seward openly proposed that public money be used to support Catholic schools. Bishop Hughes responded enthusiastically to these sentiments and, working closely with the governor and his aides, petitioned the city's Common Council for a share of the state school funds for Catholic schools. In the face of opposition from the Public School Society, anti-Catholic nativists, and citizens sincerely concerned about a perceived threat to church-state separation, the council on two occasions rejected Hughes's request. Political action then moved to Albany, where the state legislature, in receipt of anti-Catholic petitions, editorials, and tracts, hesitated to support the Hughes-Seward cause. Determined to get favorable action, Bishop Hughes decided to impress legislators with the potential power of the city's Irish voters. Under his leadership, for the first and only time in the city's history, a Catholic political party was established to contest the 1842 state legislative race. Ten assemblymen who supported the Hughes school aid position ran on both the Catholic and the Democratic slates, and they won election. Three nonsupportive Democrats were opposed by Catholic party candidates and were defeated. Although no separate Catholic slate candidates succeeded, Bishop Hughes had made his point: New York's Irish Catholics had enough power to tip the balance of power in city-wide elections. Bowing to that political reality, the Democratic-controlled legislature prepared to enact a school law for New York City.[38]

The measure that was finally passed did not by any means provide everything Hughes desired. It established in the city a district public school system in which "no religious sectarian doctrine or tenet should be taught, inculcated, or practiced."[39] Public funds would not be forthcoming to support Catholic schools or religious teachings, but Catholic children attending public schools in their neighborhoods would no longer be subjected to teachings explicitly critical of their faith. The failure to gain governmental funding for the kind of schools he wished moved Hughes in a new direction. He began to build a separate, privately financed parochial school system. During the remainder of his tenure and afterward the number of parochial schools and the number of children attending them grew considerably. In 1840, almost 5,000 children attended Catholic schools. By 1870 the parochial school population reached 22,215. Yet, whereas the 1840 figure represented 20 percent of the city's total school population, the 1870 figure represented but 19 percent. Ethnic population growth simply outpaced the church's ability to pay for school expansion.[40] Furthermore, an improved religious climate in the public schools made them inexpensive alternatives to parochial schools for most Irish parents. In heavily Catholic districts Irish Catholics won strong representation on the school boards and among the faculty. Jay Dolan notes that as early as 1843 the elected school board in the Sixth Ward "read like a roll call for the Hibernian society and included two trustees of the parish."[41]

Bishop Hughes's decision to promote the growth of a separate parochial school system not surprisingly fed nativist, anti-Catholic propaganda mills. It also was criticized by some who had traditionally been among his friends and supporters, including Horace Greeley and the old-stock American convert to Catholicism, Orestes A. Brownson. They objected to what they believed were anti-assimilationist tendencies inherent in the move and undoubtedly were correct in their perception.[42] But if Bishop Hughes displayed a siege mentality and a desire to keep the Irish strong and separate behind the protective barrier of the church, it is perhaps understandable, given Irish history and the intense American nativism during the antebellum years. Foreigners of every nationality felt the sting of nativist barbs, particularly during election campaigns or periods of economic downturn. For example, during the municipal election campaign of 1844 the *Daily Plebian* in a single paragraph spoke of German and Irish "thieves and vagabonds," Eng-

lish and Scotch "pickpockets and burglars," "wandering Jews" using "their shops as receptacles for stolen goods, encouraging thievery among our citizens. Look at the Irish and Dutch [German] grocers and rum-sellers monopolizing the business which properly belongs to our native and true-born citizens."[43] But if the net was widely tossed, the Irish by far bore the brunt of these attacks. They arrived in the greatest numbers, were the poorest, and were willing to work for the lowest wages. Wages for all laborers dropped during decades of high immigration, among unskilled labor from a dollar a day in the early 1830s to seventy-five cents a day in the 1840s. The huge Irish influx of the 1840s helped make "possible the full introduction of factory production" and the consequent lowering of status among workingmen.[44] The causes of decline in the living standards of the working class were more complex than merely the result of mass immigration, but as Douglas T. Miller points out, "the immigrant often served as a convenient scapegoat for a variety of frustrations."[45]

That the Irish became the primary target of religious bigots was a consequence of their near universal allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church and the growing Irish domination of the priesthood and clerical offices of the church in the United States. The historical enmity toward Catholics was directed more at the church politic and "popery" than to purely religious teachings and practices. Nativists charged that the church politic was the enemy of democracy, of social reform, and of the nonsectarian, Protestant values traditionally promoted in the public schools.[46] In 1850, in response to oft repeated charges that his church threatened to displace the dominant place of Protestantism in American society, Archbishop Hughes declared in a speech entitled, "The Decline of Protestantism and Its Causes," that Protestantism was a sterile religion in contrast to dynamic Catholicism. As for Catholic intentions:

> Everybody should know that we have for our mission to convert the world, including the inhabitants of the United States, the people of the country, the officers of the Navy and Marines, commanders of the Army, the legislatures, the Senate, the Cabinet, the President, and all.[47]

As one historian put it, "Rather than pour oil on troubled waters, Hughes preferred to ignite the oil."[48] Even native-American Catholics

felt uncomfortable with and voiced objections to Irish dominance of the church. Orestes Brownson, who had strong disagreements with Hughes's anti-assimilationist policies, wrote in 1856, apparently referring to Catholicism in New York City, "In the parts of the country where the prejudices against Catholicity are the strongest, it seems to be *Celtic rather than Catholic*; and Americans have felt, that to become Catholics, *they must become Celts*, and make common cause with every class of Irish agitators, who treat Catholic America *as if it were a province of Ireland*."[49]

The success of the Democratic party in winning the allegiance of the Irish Catholics led to success of the Irish in gaining municipal jobs in return for their loyalty. But Irish association with Tammany Hall's corrupt politics provided further grist for nativist mills. While the Democrats found their Irish supporters a highly valuable political asset, their opponents in the city used anti-foreign, anti-Catholic sentiment to attract the votes of native Americans. During the school controversy the city's Whig politicians resorted to appeals to nativist sentiments, but separate nativist parties had emerged even earlier. In 1835, for example, a short-lived Native American Democratic Association appeared in close alliance with the Whigs, who had seen their attempts to win the Irish vote in 1834 come to naught. Later, in 1844, the nativist American Republican Party elected its candidate, James Harper, mayor of New York City, while in 1855 the Know Nothing movement candidate for mayor, James Barker, came in second in a four-man race, losing by a mere 1,500 votes.[50] Nativist campaigns traditionally played upon the fears and prejudices of the electorate and urged restriction of office holding to native-born citizens, a twenty or twenty-one year naturalization law, deportation of foreign-born criminals, the exclusion of Catholic influence in public life, and reading of the Protestant King James Bible in the public schools.[51]

Some political leaders used an anti-Irish, anti-foreign stance in order to achieve other, unrelated ends. There was a strong reform, anti-corruption factor in the American Republican movement of the 1840s, while the New York Know Nothing Party of the 1850s preserved the pro-slavery, pro-Millard Fillmore, anti-Seward wing of a disintegrating Whig Party. But if nativist sentiment was strong enough to periodically attract politicians, its staying power wasn't very great. Nervous reaction to the Philadelphia nativist riots of 1844 dampened nativist poli-

tics in New York for several years, and the Know Nothing Party was ultimately drowned out by the growing sectional slavery crisis. Yet, so long as they were associated with Tammany Hall and until a new wave of immigrants began pouring into the city in the 1880s, the Irish remained the main targets of nativists. The post–Civil War anti-Tweed crusade of *Harper's Weekly* and its cartoonist Thomas Nast focused on the strong Irish support for Tammany, but it failed to point to the presence of Irish Americans among those who exposed the ring's crimes, including the chief prosecutor in the Tweed trials, Charles O'Connor.[52]

Generations of oppression in Ireland and decades of intolerance and poverty in the United States were part of the legacy of New York City's Irish in the years following the Civil War. The war itself proved to be a mixed bag of hope, opportunity, and frustration for the Irish. At the very least it deflated the nativist movement, since the incessant demand for troops provided opportunity for the city's ethnic groups to demonstrate their loyalty to the Union and their personal worth. No regiment was more renown for bravery and sacrifice than the predominantly Irish 69th.[53]

But if the Irish who volunteered were motivated by patriotism or by a desire to prove their loyalty to America, they had not enlisted in a struggle to free the slaves. Antebellum New York's shipping, banking, and manufacturing economy was strongly tied to the slave South, and prior to the outbreak of war sentiment in the city had been strong for compromise. Its citizens rejected Lincoln by 30,000 votes and overwhelmingly defeated a measure that would have granted equal suffrage for blacks.[54] Irish laborers in particular feared the possibility of freed slaves flocking northward to threaten their livelihoods. During the war Archbishop Hughes warned Secretary of War Cameron that Catholics would fight for the nation and the Constitution but not to free the slaves: "indeed they will turn away in disgust from the discharge of what would otherwise be a patriotic duty."[55] As one New York City black put it, it is "well known by both white and black that the Most Rev. Archbishop do hate the black race so much that he cannot bear them to come near him."[56]

By the summer of 1863 the patriotic fervor that had motivated Irish enlistees in the early days of the war had lost a good deal of its intensity, while Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation enraged many Irish New Yorkers. Tension gave way to violence during the week

after Saturday, July 11th, the day New York drew names under the Conscription Act of 1863. That first draft list contained 1,236 names, the majority of whom were poor Irishmen unable to afford the $300 required to purchase an exemption. To Irish workingmen it seemed that the war to preserve the union had become a crusade to uplift African Americans at the expense of their blood. Antiwar politicians and newspapers fed this resentment. For example, Benjamin Wood of the *Daily News* argued that the draft "would compel the white laborer to leave his family destitute and unprotected while he goes forth to free the negro, who, being free, will compete with him in labor."[57]

On Sunday a mob attacked the registry office. On Monday, as drawing was scheduled to resume, full-scale rioting broke out. For four days a predominantly Irish mob virtually controlled the streets of Manhattan. It "assaulted and killed Negroes, burned the Colored Orphan Asylum . . . , sacked the homes of antislavery advocates, intimidated peaceful workers and forced them to leave their jobs, and plunged into an orgy of robbery and pillage" before police, soldiers, and armed civilians finally restored order.[58] Estimates of the death toll in the rioting run as high as 1,200, including at least eighteen blacks who were lynched. Illustrations of the rioting published in *Harpers Weekly* on August 1, 1863, leave no doubt in the viewer's mind that the mob was Irish.[59]

Yet another side of Irish involvement was revealed in an editorial appearing in the August 1 edition of *Harper's*:

> It must be remembered . . . , that in many wards of the city, the Irish were during the late riot staunch friends of law and order; that Irishmen helped to rescue the colored orphans in the asylum from the hands of the rioters; that a large proportion of the police, who behaved throughout the riot with the most exemplary gallantry, are Irishmen; that the Roman Catholic priesthood to a man used their influence on the side of the law; and that perhaps the most scathing rebuke administered the riot was written by an Irishman—James T. Brady. It is important that this riot should teach us something more useful than a Revival of Know-Nothing prejudices.[60]

That such sentiments should have been expressed in a publication traditionally hostile to Tammany Hall and its Irish followers is noteworthy. *Harper's* editors wrote in awareness that not only had Irishmen acted on the side of law and order during the riots but also that, one

week before the riots began, Irish soldiers of New York's 69th Regiment had suffered grievous losses at Gettysburg. Eight years later, in its attack on the Tweed Ring, *Harper's* would revert to the stereotypical depictions of the Irish so common on the vaudeville stage. But in fact by the 1870s the Irish of New York City could not be fit into a single mold. Continued immigration of poor Irishmen, spurred on by a famine in 1879, contributed to maintaining the image of "shanty" or "tenement" Irish as the poorest of the city's white ethnics, but there were already among earlier Irish immigrants and their children those who had prospered mightily. That generational reality will be discussed in later chapters.

ii

When the German episode in New York is examined, one immediately sees how the skills, experiences, and culture amassed in the mother country determined what life would be like in the new land. Because the contrasts between the Irish and the Germans in these matters were considerable, there were great contrasts in how the two groups were perceived by native New Yorkers and how they adapted to life in New York City. Language was a great divider, and not since early colonial days, when Dutch vied with English in the streets and marketplaces of New York, had the sounds of a minority tongue been heard with such frequency. As much as the Irish detested their English oppressors, their years under British domination made Anglo-Saxon dominated New York far less strange to them than it was to the Germans. Yet, in fact, it was the Germans who more rapidly and in greater numbers seem to have adapted to and prospered in New York City, even while standing apart socially and culturally from the English-speaking residents. They had arrived in America with more money, more skills, and a higher rate of literacy than had the Irish.[61]

This is not to say that Germans did not know poverty. Many did. There were those, for example, who earned their living as rag pickers and bone gatherers and who lived in the Eleventh Ward's "Rag Pickers' Paradise," a miserable slum despite its name.[62] But to balance the ledger, after 1845 Germans were increasingly prominent among the city's artisans and skilled tradesmen. "By 1855, Germans were already a majority of tailors, shoemakers, cabinetmakers, and upholsterers, bakers, brewers, cigarmakers, locksmiths, paperbox makers, potters, textile workers,

gilders, turners, and carvers. Over the next two decades they came to dominate most other skilled trades as well."[63]

German men largely monopolized the skilled trades. German women were expected to stay at home and care for the family. Of course, circumstances forced them to search for employment outside their homes, but apparently not in such numbers as Irish women. In the heavily female occupation of domestic service, in 1880 there were only 5,800 Germans employed compared with 24,000 Irish. Yet as was the case in so many immigrant families, the women brought in badly needed funds by working at home. Historian Dorothee Schneider tells us, "German women tried to avoid wage labor outside home. Taking in boarders, sewing, taking in wash, or making cigars were the ways of earning additional dollars while officially retaining the status of housewife."[64]

Germans also experienced the stings of nativism. Many New Yorkers accused German workers of driving down the wages of American craftsmen and of contributing to the increase in cheaply made and priced goods, particularly furniture. During the 1850s their fellow immigrants, the Irish, accused Germans of acting as strikebreakers who threatened their dominant position on the city's docks. Native Americans castigated them for not speaking English, for being clannish, for loving beer, and for treating the Sabbath as a day of relaxation and recreation. Bigots hated German Catholics for being Catholic, and others depicted the small group of intellectual refugees from the revolutions of 1848 as "red republicans," "agnostics," and "freethinkers." Newspapers that were quick to see an immigrant-criminal identity found German names prominent among the safecrackers, counterfeiters, and fences of New York.[65]

Certainly nativism along with cultural differences encouraged German separateness and retarded their assimilation. Yet, even as victims of nativism the Germans suffered less intense hostility directed at them than did the Irish. Because Germans rarely formed street gangs or participated widely in the raucous activities of the city's fire companies, they were not associated with street and gang violence. Unlike the Irish, only a portion of the Germans were Catholics, and few of them held power in a church politically dominated by Irish clerics. And statistically German names were considerably less prominent than those Irish ones on the city's charity roles and on its police blotters.

If Germans faced criticism for their cultural clannishness, their limited participation in the city's seamier political life served to protect them from nativist criticism directed at Tammany Hall. Most Germans did vote Democratic, but a number of them, active in abolitionist circles, felt more comfortable in the Republican party. Germans were not connected in the public mind with corrupt city politics, though they were perceived as being associated with radical political movements, which were at times considered dangerous. And overcoming all the negative stereotypes directed at them, the Germans received plaudits for being hard workers, skilled in crafts and shrewd in businesses.[66] No equivalent of the commonly displayed "No Irish Need Apply" notices greeted them.

Heavy German concentrations in the city's Tenth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, and Seventeenth wards earned the area a number of appellations. Non-Germans most often referred to it as Dutch Town, but to its German residents it was *Kleindeutschland* (Little Germany). By 1875 the four wards were more than 64 percent German American, representing approximately half of the city's German population.[67] At the outset of the 1870s *Kleindeutschland* consisted of some 400 city blocks:

> Tompkins Square formed pretty much the center. Avenue B, occasionally called the German Broadway, was the commercial artery. Each basement was a workshop, every first floor was a store, and the partially roofed sidewalks were markets for goods of all sorts. Avenue A was the street for beer halls, oyster saloons and groceries. The Bowery was the western border (any thing further west was totally foreign), but it was also the amusement and loafing district. There all the artistic treats, from classical drama to puppet comedies, were for sale.[68]

Far more isolated from the general population by virtue of language and culture than were the Irish, the Germans also displayed a greater desire to remain apart. For them separateness or self-segregation not only protected them from nativist hostility and the difficulties of coping with a foreign language but also maintained their positive identification with things German. And when allegiance appeared to waiver, there were those in the community who warned of the dangers. For example, German Catholic priests insisted that maintenance of the German language was essential lest communicants abandon their reli-

gion. "Language saves faith," was an oft-heard slogan in the parish churches of *Kleindeutschland*.[69]

German separateness was not exclusively a matter of Germans vs. non-Germans, since prior to the establishment of a unified German nation in 1871, German immigrants rarely identified themselves chiefly as Germans. They were Bavarians or Brandenbergers or Hessians or Swabians or Prussians. Particularism among *Kleindeutschland*'s population was reflected in speech dialects, loyalties, institutional structures, and residential patterns. In his detailed study of the area, Stanley Nadel found that regional origin played a key role in determining in what neighborhood one lived, and that, along with religion, it was an important factor in the selection of marriage partners. Thus, in 1860 72 percent of Bavarians were married to other Bavarians, and another 18 percent chose spouses from adjoining regions of southwest Germany.[70]

In matters of religion also the pattern of German separateness from the English-speaking community and divisions within the German community persisted. Among Catholics and Protestants alike language and religious traditions of their homeland fostered a desire for national churches. For Catholics, who constituted the largest group of religiously affiliated Germans, this required the sympathy and cooperation of the Irish-dominated hierarchy, something not always forthcoming. Not without cause, German Catholics resented Irish dominance and believed that Archbishop Hughes was far more concerned with the spiritual needs of his own fellow Irishmen than those of other ethnics. As one Irish priest put it in 1865, referring to the German Catholics, "our ordinary authorities almost ignore their existence."[71]

The incentive to establish German national parishes initially came from laymen, who usually led the fundraising, supervised the construction of the church, and, only upon completion of the structure, applied to the bishop for a German-speaking priest.[72] While Hughes had little recourse but to comply with such requests, since the parish had in effect already been established, he was not always willing to endorse other nationalist ventures. In 1850, for example, he adamantly opposed the efforts of the German parishioners of Most Holy Redeemer Church to found a cemetery in land they owned in Williamsburg. The parishioners claimed that German burial parties at the official Catholic cemetery had persistently met with insults from Irish onlookers. When the Germans continued to use the Williamsburg cemetery after Hughes's

insistence that there be only "one cemetery for Catholics of all nations," the bishop threatened to close down Most Holy Redeemer. Needless to say, Hughes won that battle.[73]

Despite limited support from the city's Irish-led church authorities, German Catholic parishes prospered. The first, St. Nicholas, had been established in 1833 on Second Street between Avenue A and First Avenue and reluctantly accepted by the diocese nine years later. By the Civil War there were seven German parishes, and the number continued to increase during the following decades.[74] The founder of St. Nicholas and the leading figure in the movement for German national parishes was the Austrian-born Rev. Johann Stephen Raffeiner. Father Raffeiner employed his considerable personal wealth and his skills in fundraising to serve the German Catholic communities of Manhattan and Brooklyn; his own money helped found Holy Trinity Church in Williamsburg and St. Francis of the Fields Church in Brooklyn. He succeeded in bringing over from Bavaria the Sisters of St. Dominic to serve Holy Trinity, encouraged German priests to emigrate to New York, and inspired young German Americans to enter the priesthood. Even Archbishop Hughes was impressed, and in 1853 he named Father Raffeiner vicar-general for Germans of the archdiocese. Upon Raffeiner's death in 1861 the position of vicar, much to the displeasure of German Catholics, remained unoccupied until 1875, when the Bavarian-born priest Michael May was named to the post.[75]

Father Raffeiner's later activities had centered in Brooklyn, so spiritual leadership of Manhattan's German Catholics fell increasingly into the hands of German priests of the Redemptionist order, led by Rev. Gabriel Rampler. Feuds with parishioners of St. Nicholas Church led Rampler, with Bishop Hughes's permission, to establish in 1844 Most Holy Redeemer parish on Third Street. The parish's prosperity was marked seven years later by the erection of an impressive new stone church structure. The popularity of Most Holy Redeemer was in no small part due to the intensive missionary activities of the Redemptionists, well beyond that typical of Irish Catholic churches in New York. They held "fire and brimstone" revival meetings, of the type associated with evangelical Protestantism, and the parishioners warmly received their particular emphasis upon Marian devotion. Furthermore, the parish set a pattern for other German Catholic churches by sponsoring a wide variety of social, cultural, and charitable societies

(*vereine*) to meet competition offered by Protestant churches and secular bodies within the German community. Beginning with St. Joseph *Verein*, a relief society established by Father Rampler in 1843, Most Holy Redeemer went on to sponsor mutual aid societies, youth groups, and singing societies. Physical protection of church property from Know-Nothing attacks was provided by a militia company, the *Jager-compagnie*, and a second company, the Henry Henning Guards, was later established. Both military groups were splendidly uniformed, took part in parades, sponsored picnic outings and shooting contests, and generally fostered a strong sense of religious and ethnic pride. The units, incidentally, helped counter the influence of regionalism.[76]

Beyond parish activities, the interests of German Catholics were served by Catholic newspapers like the *Katholische Kirchenzeitung, Die Aurora*, and the *Katholische Volksblatt*. Following the Civil War the New York Central *Verein* provided a city-wide Catholic organization devoted to assisting German Catholic immigrants when they landed at the Port of New York.[77] German Protestants were no less inclined than their Catholic countrymen to establish ethnic churches, but there the similarity ended. As Protestants in a Protestant nation they felt far more welcome and had no Irish hierarchy to contend with. Most churchgoing German Protestants affiliated with one form or other of Lutheranism, but several other Protestant denominations also supported German congregations. As early as 1839 the city had six Protestant German congregations: two Lutheran, one Dutch Reformed, one Evangelical Reformed, one Episcopalian, and one Christian (*Algemeine Christliche*). As more Germans arrived in New York, the variety of denominations came to include Baptist, Presbyterian, and even Mormon. Lutheran growth was most impressive. By 1865 all but two of New York's twenty-four Lutheran congregations were German, and the heavily Prussian and north German immigration of the following two decades added substantially to the numbers. Immigrants from German-speaking Swiss areas, from Baden, Wurttemburg, Darmstadt, and from the Dutch border regions helped establish the German Dutch Reformed Church as the second largest denomination among New York's German-American Protestants.[78]

Individual Germans chose among Protestant denominations or among churches within the same denomination often on the basis of the dynamism of the minister. Church membership thus tended to be

rather fluid. Whatever their denominational affiliation, German Protestant churches showed a desire to foster Germanism and discourage assimilation by providing ethnic schools, clubs, and cultural and social activities. Unhampered by a non-German hierarchy, the Lutherans in particular achieved great success in assisting newly arrived immigrants.[79]

The general tone of German Protestantism in metropolitan New York was conservative. During the 1840s German pastors railed against the liberal republican movements in their homeland; during the post Civil War years most of them enthusiastically supported the Bismarkian drive for German unification. Anti-assimilationist laymen and clerics saw the religiously and ethnically diverse population of Manhattan as a constant threat to German separatism. Beginning in the 1850s, therefore, and continuing for the next two decades, many of them helped establish German communities in Brooklyn and neighboring Long Island districts.[80]

German Americans of nominally Protestant background, constituting the majority of German immigrants during the final three decades of the century, were far less likely to formally join a church then were their Catholic brethren. Estimated figures of church membership for 1860 report 8,000 Protestants, 28,000 Catholics, and 7,000 Jews out of a population of 85,000 Germans in New York City. Twenty-one years later, when the German-American population of the city exceeded 280,000, Protestant church membership stood at somewhere between sixteen and twenty-one thousand.[81]

Since the 1840s an alternative to church affiliation, particularly among the city's German intellectuals and social reformers, were the *Frei Gemeinden*, the Freethinkers. Anti-clerical, often openly hostile to religion, such groups devoted themselves to promoting ethical principles derived from rational rather than spiritual sources. Despite their nonreligious stance, Freethinkers organized themselves along lines similar to mainline religion, holding "meetings" on Sunday mornings and conducting Sunday and day schools. Their membership never exceeded a few thousand, but the numbers of distinguished German Americans among them heightened their influence, particularly during the 1840s and 1850s. The *Frei Gemeinden* approach to ethical behavior continues to be espoused today by the Ethical Culture Society, founded in 1876 by Felix Adler, a member of New York City's German-Jewish community.[82]

The waves of immigrants that made Christian New York very much a multiethnic affair had a similar impact on the city's Jewish community. The descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of colonial days were joined by coreligionists from throughout northern and western Europe. To an overwhelming degree, however, the largest sending nation during this period was Germany, which in 1820 was home to about 10 percent of the world's Jewry.[83] Most emigrating German Jews came from the rural areas of Bavaria, Wurttemburg, and the Palatinate, where their occupations as merchants, peddlers, artisans, grain and hop dealers, and money-lenders tied them closely to the regions' peasant economies and made them sufferers of the decline in those economies. But for Jews economics never provides the entire explanation for emigration. For centuries the Jews of Europe had been victims of prejudice, living under conditions that ranged from bare toleration to brutal persecution. German Jews in particular had benefitted from liberal ideals of the Enlightenment. Napoleon's troops tore down ghetto walls, and many of the inhabitants rushed out to participate in the larger German community. But the defeat of Napoleon brought with it reaction and the return of political and economic repression. The failed revolutions of 1848 similarly caused upheaval in the German states and subsequent intolerance toward Jews.[84]

Between 1846 and 1886 it is estimated that the German-Jewish population of New York City grew from 7,000 to 85,000. The impact on the city's Jewish religious life of this influx along with those from other lands was considerable. Until 1825 New York City had only a single synagogue, Shearith Israel, where the Sephardic ritual continued to be followed even though Ashkenazic Jews had long been in the majority. That year English, Dutch, German, and Polish Jews founded the first Ashkenazic synagogue, B'nai Jeshurin. In 1828 a group broke off from B'nai Jeshurin to establish Anshe Chesed, which by the early 1840s had become a purely German synagogue. Nationality-based synagogues were by no means a monopoly of the Germans. Among the twenty-six synagogues founded between 1825 and 1860 were English, Bohemian, Dutch, French, and Russian-Polish congregations.[85]

Not only was the Jewish religious community divided along lines of national origin, but also the founding of Temple Emanu-El in 1845 signalled the beginnings of a religious division between Orthodox and Reform Jewry. Throughout the nineteenth century, Reform Judaism

was almost exclusively a German affair, representing an effort to adapt ancient Jewish practices to modern times, to make them more compatible with Enlightenment ideals and American religious practices. Influential in the founding of Temple Emanu-El was Leo Merzbacher, the first ordained rabbi to serve New York City's Jewish community. Prior to his move to Emanuel, Merzbacher held a joint appointment as rabbi of Orthodox congregations Anshe Chesed and Rodeph Shalom. Among the more dramatic changes instituted at Emanu-El were the use of German (later English) along with the traditional Hebrew in its abbreviated worship service, the introduction of sermons, organ music, and the seating of men and women together. Most profound was its emphasis on the ethical teachings of the prophets and the diminished adherence to Jewish law and traditional ritual. In truth, more than matters of religious practice separated the members of Emanu-El from their Orthodox fellow Jews. By 1860 the Reform synagogue was identified with the social cultural, and economic elite among New York's German Jews.[86]

Like their fellow immigrants of Christian origins, the majority of New York's German Jews were not affiliated with a religious body. Yet, for Jews religion was but one aspect of being Jewish. For centuries, resulting from a mixture of choice and proscription, the Jews of Europe had existed as communities within the larger Gentile communities. A sense of peoplehood existed among most Jews that neither the Enlightenment nor the apparent absence of overt anti-Semitism among New York's German Americans of the period could extinguish. Thus, there existed a distinct German-Jewish community within *Kleindeutschland*. There were Jewish fraternal organizations, most notably B'nai B'rith, founded in 1843, and the Free Sons of Israel, founded in 1849, both of which ultimately became national in scope. In addition, as did other German groups, Jews formed mutual aid societies, burial societies, literary societies, and a variety of other forms of *Vereine*. There were some Jews who cut themselves off completely from Jewish communal life, but this was not common. Rather, as Nadel explains, "Many of *Kleindeutschland*'s Jews participated in the broader-based German political and cultural organizations, but may have turned to the Jewish *Vereine* for more social activities."[87]

German was the language spoken by the German Jews of New York, and with their compatriots they promoted its inclusion in the city's pub-

lic schools. They gloried in German culture and admired German education. The wealthy among them often sent their sons to Germany for university training and to obtain wives. But even for the most affluent of the German-Jewish community, "a need was still felt for the ministrations of religion and the organization of specifically Jewish institutions."[88]

The regional and religious varieties among New York's German Americans were but two manifestations of the numerous divisions that marked this ethnic group during the nineteenth century. Perhaps this heterogeneity is most dramatically illustrated by the flourishing of so many newspapers and magazines within the German-American community. The most influential German-language paper was the secular, pro-Democrat *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, established in 1834, and followed the next year by the Whig-leaning *Allgemeine Zeitung*. The emerging Republican party of the 1850s had the support of the *Demokrat* and the *Abendzeitung*, while during the post-Civil War decades the socialist *Volks-Zeitung* challenged the *Staats-Zeitung*'s position as leader in total readership.[89] It seems as if there was a German-language paper for just about every taste and interest: literary newspapers; humor and sports papers; journals of commerce; newspapers promoting the causes of reform, socialism, abolitionism, and freethought. The *Neue Zeit*, a women's weekly, fostered feminism while more traditional views on family values and sex roles appeared in the *Illustrierte Welt*, *Familienblatter*, and the *Illustrierte Zeitung*. In one two-year period, 1850–1852, 28 German-language papers could be found in New York City. Many of these lasted only a short time, succumbing to competition, fluctuating political fortunes, and changing tastes. Yet, even as late as 1890 there were twelve flourishing German-language dailies competing for readership.[90]

Whatever their slant or persuasion, the German-American editors, led by the *Staats-Zeitung*'s Oswald Ottendorfer, generally stood in support of the maintenance of a distinct German society and culture, and that certainly is what existed in New York City. The Germans were by no means unique among ethnic groups in establishing lodges, benevolent and mutual aid societies, militia companies, and nationality-based drinking establishments. But the number of Germans, their language, and most of all the scope and variety of their community-based activities made them appear the most ethnic of the ethnics, even including the Irish. Certainly the Irish had their grog shops aplenty, but what

could compare in color or conviviality to the German beer gardens and the beer served in them? In 1848 Ferdinand Maximilian Schaefer introduced lager beer in the city, and its popularity soon spread beyond German neighborhoods. The beer gardens were establishments in which whole families gathered. Some held as many as three thousand people drinking, eating, listening to and singing German music, and gazing nostalgically at large wall murals depicting romantic scenes of the Fatherland. Here the spirit of *Gemutlichkeit* reigned. Of course there were other, smaller drinking establishments in *Kleindeutschland*, among them the traditional, male-dominated "standing only" saloons, and the *Lokale* that catered to families and provided tables and chairs.[91]

Professional theatrical entertainment became available to the residents of *Kleindeutschland* on a permanent basis with the opening of the Stadttheater on the Bowery in 1854. Particularly in the decades following the Civil War, German high culture became increasingly a part of the city scene. During the 1878–1879 season alone the drama *Faust* received 223 German-language performances in the metropolitan area. For Germans and non-Germans alike symphonic and operatic music in the city was dominated by German musicians, vocalists, and conductors performing works of German composers.[92]

At the very heart of German social life in New York City were the vast numbers of fraternal lodges and *Vereine* sponsored by occupational groups, by German regional organizations (*Landsmannschaften*), or, as noted earlier, by churches. The variety of *Vereine* was staggering. Most common were the sickness and benefit societies, but there were also singing associations and literary associations, *Vereine* to sponsor amateur dramatics, and *Vereine* to promote shooting contests (*Schutzenvereine*). Political refugees of the 1848 revolutions sponsored gymnastic societies, *Turnvereine*, which combined physical fitness with active support of the free soil and abolitionist movements. Socialists among the Forty-Eighters established the *New Yorker Socialistischer Turnverein*, which added the promotion of Marxism and trade unionism to the agenda.[93]

The activities of the various societies were not limited to their members. The Sunday performances of singing and dramatic groups attracted hundreds, while the *Volksfests* (folk festivals) held at Jones' Wood on the East River above 60th Street or across the Hudson in New Jersey drew tens of thousands. These *Volksfests* featured orchestral and choral performances, parades and dances, athletic and shooting contests,

speeches, dramatic readings, poetry recitals, and, of course, abundant food and drink. The Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish also had their field days, but these German *Volksfests* were truly special. What could match the *Plattdeutscher Volksfest* of 1875 which began in Tompkins Square Park, moved across the Hudson by ferry boats, and involved 150,000 participants?[94]

The distinctive German-American culture of New York City was by no means restricted to evenings and weekends, to religion and relaxation. In the world of work the strong German presence in the skilled trades has previously been noted. But, even here regional origin and occupation were closely related. For example, Nadel points out that in 1860, 75 percent of *Kleindeutschland's* grocers were born in Hannover, while in 1870, one third of all German-born shoemakers were from Baden, though Badenites constituted but 15 percent of the German-American labor force. Tailoring had by the late 1870s "developed into a Prussian preserve."[95] Yet Nadel also reveals that in many instances regional dominance of a particular field was short lived; by 1870 the Hanover-born grocers had virtually disappeared, as many became wine and liquor dealers or saloon keepers.[96]

Opportunities provided by an expanding economy enabled a number of German Americans from rather humble artisan or merchant backgrounds to make spectacular advances. "Brewer princes" like Jacob Ruppert and Max Schaefer, piano manufacturers Henry Steinway and his sons, and rubber magnate Conrad Poppenhusen became prominent before 1860. Many German-Jewish financiers, including names like Straus, Guggenheim, Kuhn, Loeb, and Lehman, arrived in America with limited financial resources and started out as peddlers and merchants. Some enterprising dry goods peddlers invested their earning in retail clothing stores and later turned to manufacturing inexpensive, ready-to-wear clothing. Substantial profits from uniform manufacturing during the Civil War added capital for the further expansion of this industry.[97]

Paralleling the success stories of some was a growing awareness, not at all limited to German Americans, of a widening social and economic gap along class lines in the city. Perhaps the most dramatic example of a totally German class conflict was the Steinway piano strike of 1870, brought on by Henry Englehard Steinway's attempt to cut the wages of workers by almost a third. In this instance the strikers, assisted

financially by German trade unionists from throughout the city, gained a victory. "There was no evidence of non-German union help to the strikers."[98]

Separate German trade unions had their origins in the 1850s, resulting from language difficulties and the hostility of native-born and Irish workers toward Germans. Early in that decade, while the economy was booming, there had been considerable cooperation among the various ethnic workers as they struck for higher wages and shorter hours. During the massive tailors' strike of 1850, for example, there was class unity between German and Irish workers. However, a downturn in the economy beginning in 1854 and culminating in the Panic of 1857 proved disastrous to organized labor and exacerbated ethnic and racial tensions.[99]

Conflicts between labor and capital within the German community during the antebellum period attracted the attention of promoters of a variety of radical, utopian philosophies. Among the more prominent was Wilhelm Weitling, who arrived in New York in 1847. Two years later his *Arbeitbund* (Workers' League) was organized to promote a brand of communism strongly influenced by Charles Fourier, the French utopian socialist. Weitling's utopianism envisioned a rather complex system of producer and consumer cooperative schemes, advocacy of public schooling, religious and moral preaching, and anti-nationalism. By 1852 New York's German artisans had grown weary of Weitling's notions, which seemed far removed from addressing their immediate interests in higher wages and improved working conditions. The idea of producer cooperatives, however, did have considerable appeal in *Kleindeutschland*, and some were actually launched. It was the less than enthusiastic support of such projects by non-German trade unionists combined with a lack of capital and managerial skills that doomed the movement.[100]

More lasting in its impact on New York's German workers was the Marxian socialism introduced into the city by Forty-Eighter refugees, most notably Joseph Weydemeyer. After arriving from Germany in 1851, Weydemeyer worked closely with German trade union leaders to establish the *Allgemeiner Arbeitbund* (later *Amerikanisher Arbeitbund*), a party whose platform combined the goals of socialism with those of trade unionism. Wisely, he added objectives particularly dear to German sensibilities, such as resistance to "Sunday" laws and temperance legislation. When Weydemeyer left the city to settle in the Midwest in 1856,

the movement was salvaged by Frederick Sorge, a refugee who had fought in the 1849 uprising in Baden. Sorge formed a Communist Club in Manhattan and shortly thereafter brought the organization into Marx's International Workingmen's Association. In 1868 he led a Social Party of German workers into the city's municipal elections, but it was unsuccessful at the polls. Yet socialism's influence was maintained by a continuing stream of class conscious German immigrants and by socialist-leaning German-language newspapers like the *Arbeiter Union*. As the German-American trade union movement expanded with American industrialization, socialist leaders and Marxian ideals remained prominent. The New York Cigarmakers Union and the United Cabinetmakers were perhaps most fervent in their attachment to socialism, and both organizations experimented with cooperatives. But, like their English-speaking counterparts, German-American workers depended upon traditional union tactics like the strike to attain their immediate goals. German Americans did introduce socialism to America, but they gained far more respect from fellow workers for their skill in union organizing. In time this respect helped erode old prejudices, and after the 1860s greater worker cooperation was achieved.[101]

German businessmen no less than German workers displayed a strong tendency toward ethnic solidarity. Among the products of their cooperative ventures were the German Savings Bank (1859), the German-American Fire Insurance Company (1857), and a German hospital formed in 1866.[102] When faced with growing union strength during the last years of the Civil War, German employers responded by forming trade associations. The first of these, the Boss Cabinetmakers in 1863 and the Merchant Tailors' Association in 1864, initially hoped to break the unions; but, failing to accomplish this, their purpose became to present a united, industry-wide front against union demands.[103]

Perhaps the most creative attempts by German businessmen to ensure labor peace and at the same time to maintain strong ties to German culture in the New World were the separate German towns they founded in Queens County beginning in the late 1860s. By 1880 College Point had become a German-American industrial town dominated by the Conrad Poppenhusen Enterprise Works, the Hugo Funk Silk Mill, the Samuel Kunz Mill, the I. B. Kleinert Rubber Company, and the Germania Ultra Marine Works. The largest employer (11,000 workers) and leading personality in College Point was the rubber mag-

nate Conrad Poppenhusen, who presided over factory and town like a benevolent despot. Poppenhusen's benevolence made him a founder of the Germania Life Insurance Company; his Poppenhusen Institute provided College Point residents with a kindergarten and free classes in the arts and crafts; he paid to build a causeway between College Point and Flushing, and his private funds employed a teacher to ensure the continuity of the German language in his town. Poppenhasen's efforts kept German language and culture dominant in College Point for more than thirty years.[104]

Piano manufacturer William Steinway developed the second of Queens's German industrial towns. Steinway left Manhattan in the late 1860s because he needed more space for his expanding business, but there was another motivating factor:

> we wished to escape the anarchists and socialists who even at the same time were constantly breeding discontent among our workmen and inciting them to strike. They seemed to make us a target of their attacks and we felt that if we could withdraw our workingmen from contact with these people, and with other temptations of city life in the tenement districts, they would be more content.[105]

In Astoria it was the piano magnate who, like Poppenhasen in College Point, dominated the community. Steinway erected a huge industrial complex with housing for his workers and contributed public parks and baths to the town. Also following Poppenhasen, he paid the salary of the public school German teacher, who it was hoped would provide a solid grounding in the native language to the children of the 81 percent of his workers who were German.[106]

Thus, metropolitan New York saw two very different but very German responses to industrialism. In College Point and Astoria, in the spirit of Prussia, authority was obvious. In very much the same mold as Alfred Krupp's factory towns in Germany, workers lived, labored, played, and prayed in a German atmosphere created and guided by industrialist patrons. Back in Manhattan, however, the German radical strain was most in evidence as workers sought a better life through socialist/union activism.

New York City's German Americans simply did not fit into a single mold. Not all German unionists were socialists by any means; not

all German nonsocialist workers were Democrats any more than all German financial and industrial leaders were Republicans. Wide religious, regional, and class differences among the Germans made their politics very hard to predict during the antebellum years. The party support Tammany could count on among the Irish was impossible for Germans. As a consequence German-American New Yorkers never received the political rewards that strict party loyalty earned for the Irish. However, the tendency of Germans to act as an ethnic bloc within varied political organizations provided them with no small amount of clout in different venues. At election time Germans had to be wooed.

During the 1850s strong free soil and anti-slavery sentiment among German Forty-Eighters gave Republicans hope of making significant inroads in New York's German community. Well-attended rallies in support of Republican presidential candidate John C. Frémont held in *Kleindeutschland* during 1856 were addressed by leaders of the *Turnverein* movement. Some of the most notable members of the city's Forty-Eighter refugee population became Republicans, but in the end the majority of German Americans voted for the eventual winner, James Buchanan. The Democratic party's traditional pro-immigrant, anti-nativist stance on the one hand and on the other the association of some city Republicans with temperance, Sunday observance, and nativism dictated the outcome.[107] Germans active in Democratic politics—saloon keepers, professionals, and journalists, most notably Oswald Ottendorfer of the *Staats-Zeitung*—were adept at forging alliances within the party that gained them the greatest possible influence. For example, when in 1857 Mayor Fernando Wood broke with Tammany and established his Mozart Hall organization, most German party activists went with him. And, while most of Wood's Irish supporters returned to Tammany in 1858, the Germans remained loyal and reaped the patronage benefits of Wood's 1859 electoral victory. With the onset of the Civil War Wood's pro-Southern sentiments cost him heavily in the German community, and the Republicans once again had cause for optimism. The German-Americans leaders did leave Mozart Hall in 1861, but not to support the Republican mayoral candidate. Tammany had nominated Godfrey Gunther, the son of German immigrants, for mayor, and a German Democratic Union Party was hastily established to endorse him. Republican George Opdyke won a

narrow victory, but Gunther outpolled Wood, thanks to massive support in the German wards. In 1863 the German Democrat Union again nominated Gunther and, with the support of a splinter group of Irish Tammanys led by "Honest John" Kelly, won the mayoral prize.[108]

Ottendorfer and his fellow German-American Democratic leaders used their organizational skills and the power of the press brilliantly. In alliance with native American reformers and with the power of the *Staats-Zeitung* and the *New York Times* behind them, they played a major role in breaking the stranglehold the Tweed Ring held over Tammany Hall. In 1872 a German Reform Party, led by Ottendorfer and his colleagues August Belmont and William Steinway, nominated William Havemeyer for mayor. With broad support from reform elements throughout the city, Havemeyer achieved victory.[109]

The 1872 election was the highwater mark in the political careers of Ottendorfer and his circle. Despite his own German antecedents, Mayor Havemeyer proved insensitive to the political aspirations of his German supporters and avoided the immigrant community generally when filling patronage jobs. The sugar magnate even filled traditionally ethnic-held positions with old-stock Americans. Frustrated in their attempts to deal with Havemeyer, the German Reform Party named Ottendorfer its mayoral candidate in 1874. However, by this time a clean government element led by "Honest John" Kelly had gained control of Tammany and subsequently won back the city's reform-minded citizens. A revived Tammany, promising patronage jobs to ethnic supporters, overwhelmed Ottendorfer, who lost all but one of the city's heavily German wards.[110]

The era of separate German parties ended for the most part in 1874. Despite the theoretical attachment of many workers to socialism, the majority of the city's German Americans were, like the Irish, increasingly aligned with the Democratic party and remained so as Tammany enacted tenement legislation and served other immigrant causes. Furthermore, the growing German-American population—from 15 percent to 28 percent of the city's total between 1860 and 1890—assured greater political influence and patronage for the community. The number of custom house jobs held by German Americans, for example, rose from 23 in 1861 to 54 in 1884.[111] For Ottendorfer and a number of his political colleagues defeat in 1874 left a bitter taste for democratic politics. "By 1877 they had reached the conclusion that the only way to

end municipal corruption and high taxes was essentially to disenfranchise anyone who didn't pay taxes on property worth over $500 or a rent of $250 a year."[112]

Lawrence H. Fuchs tells us that, after a short time in the United States, German Americans in the nineteenth century "went through a process of reconfiguration of their ancestral identity. Immigrants of different backgrounds found it was to their advantage to establish a new identity as ethnic-Americans, although the term obviously had not been invented."[113] As years passed there was increased participation in religious, political, economic, and charitable life as German Americans rather than as Bavarians, Prussians, Hessians, etc. Bismarck's successful campaign between 1864 and 1871 to forge a unified German Empire fostered so great a sense of nationalism among the residents of New York City's German neighborhoods that even a great many Forty-Eighter republicans overcame their hostility to the Prussian monarchy. The Franco-Prussian War, which broke out on July 19, 1870, found the vast majority of New York German Americans enthusiastically supporting the Fatherland.[114]

Yet, the "reconfiguration" from German particularism to ethnic unity as German Americans was far from complete. In 1880 a resident of *Kleindeutschland* might well belong to a "German" union, church, or political club along with those from a wide variety of German regions; nonetheless, localism remained a potent force as memberships in regional associations, choices of marriage partners, and the persistence of regionally-based German neighborhoods testify. Continuing German immigration, which reached its peak in 1882, served to strengthen localism. These newcomers were themselves evidence that, despite unification, the German Empire was still very loosely held together, particularly in the realms of culture, religion, and dialect. But localism was by no means limited to newcomers. Regional loyalties were effectively passed on to American-born children who continued to join and participate in the activities of *Landsmannschaft* associations and to subscribe to German dialect newspapers like the *Plattdeutsche Post* and the *Schwabbisches Wochenblatt*.[115]

Separated from one another by differences in religion, class, and regional loyalties and separated from the larger American society by a strong adherence to cultural continuity, the German-American community of nineteenth-century New York was, nonetheless, immensely

dynamic and flourishing. This community was also on the move, as during the post–Civil War years affluent Germans were leaving the older neighborhoods of *Kleindeutschland* for homes in uptown Manhattan. By 1880 Yorkville was emerging as the new center of German-American culture in New York.

The movement of Germans, and to a lesser extent the Irish, from lower Manhattan marked a stage in the history of New York City's immigrant groups. As they prospered, they sought better housing away from their first areas of settlement. This was a process repeated again and again by others. The living quarters they left behind were not left empty, for after 1880 New York continued to grow economically and geographically and to attract new waves of immigrants, this time from other regions in Europe.

4

Old and

New

Immigrants

in Greater

New York

City,

1880 to

World

War I

As the twentieth century approached, New York maintained its position as the nation's largest city. For a brief period Chicago, rapidly recovering from its famous fire, appeared to be a viable challenger. But with the merger of Manhattan with its four outlying boroughs to form Greater New York City in 1898, the city easily outdistanced its midwest rival. Consolidated New York contained more than three million inhabitants, and on the eve of World War I housed a population twice as large as Chicago's.[1]

New York also remained America's leading port. While the city slipped from its commercial high point of 1850, when 70 percent of America's exports and imports went through its harbor, nearly half of