Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

III

LET US SHARPLY SHIFT the time perspective from the years before 1843 and those between 1893 and 1919 to the decades between 1843 and 1893 and also shift our attention to the artisans and skilled workers who differed so greatly in the culture and work-styles they brought to the factory from men and women bred in rural and village cultures. The focus, however, remains the same—the relationship between settled work habits and culture. This half-century saw the United States (not small pockets within it) industrialize as steam and machinery radically transformed the premodern American economic structure. That so much attention has been given to the Civil War as a crucial divide in the nation's history (and it was, of course, for certain purposes) too frequently has meant neglect by historians of common patterns of behavior that give coherence to this period. Few contemporaries described these large structural changes more effectively if indirectly than the Boston labor reformer Jennie Collins in 1871:

> If you should enter a factory and find the water-wheels in the garret, the heaviest machinery in the seventh story, and the dressing and weaving in the basement, you would find the machinery and system less out of joint than at present it seems to be in this strange country of ours. The structure of our society is like a building for which the stones were carefully designed and carved, but in the construction of which the masons seized upon whatever block came handiest, without regard to design or fitness, using window-sills for partition walls, capstones for the foundation, and chink-pieces for the corner-stone.

24. Brody, *Steelworkers in America, op. cit., passim;* Brody, *Labor in Crisis, op. cit.,* 15–45.

The magnitude of the changes noticed by Collins cannot be understated. In 1869 half of the country's manufacturing enterprises still managed on water power. The nation in 1860 counted more slaves than factory workers. In his unpublished study of six upstate New York counties Richard L. Ehrlich has found that in five counties during that same year employment in manufacturing plants having at least fifty workers accounted for 37 percent or less of their respective labor forces. In the six counties (Albany, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, Onondaga, and Rensselaer) the average number of persons employed by firms engaging fewer than fifty employees was less than nine. In the year of Abraham Lincoln's election as president, the United States ranked behind England, France, and Germany in the value of its manufactured product. In 1894 the United States led the field: its manufactured product nearly equalled in value that of Great Britain, France, and Germany together. But such profound economic changes did not entirely shatter the older American social structure and the settled cultures of premodern native and immigrant American artisans. "There is no such thing as economic growth which is not, at the same time, growth or change of a culture," E. P. Thompson has written. Yet he also warns that "we should not assume any automatic, or over-direct, correspondence between the dynamic of economic growth and the dynamic of social or cultural life." That significant stricture applies as much to the United States as to England during its industrial revolution and especially to its native and immigrant artisans between 1843 and 1893.[25]

It is not surprising to find tenacious artisan work habits before the Civil War, what Thompson calls "alternate bouts of intense labour and of idleness wherever men were in control of their

25. Jennie Collins, *Nature's Aristocracy* (Boston, 1871), 4; Richard L. Ehrlich, "The Development of Manufacturing in Selected Counties in the Erie Canal Corridor, 1815–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo, 1972); Stuart Bruchey, *Roots of American Economic Growth* (New York, 1965), 139; George Rogers Taylor, *Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860* (New York, 1951), 249; Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class, op. cit.,* 97, 192.

working lives." An English cabinetmaker shared a New York City workplace with seven others (two native Americans, two Germans, and one man each from Ireland, England, and France), and the readers of *Knight's Penny Magazine* learned from him that "frequently . . . after several weeks of real hard work . . . a simultaneous cessation from work took place." "As if . . . by tacit agreement, every hand" contributed "loose change," and an apprentice left the place and "speedily returned laden with wine, brandy, biscuits, and cheese." Songs came forth "from those who felt musical," and the same near-ritual repeated itself two more times that day. Similar relaxations, apparently self-imposed, also broke up the artisans' work day in the New York City shipyards, and a ship carpenter described them as "an indulgence that custom had made as much of a necessity in a New York shipyard as a grind-stone":

> In our yard, at half-past eight a.m., Aunt Arlie McVane, a clever kind-hearted but awfully uncouth, rough sample of the "Ould Sod," would make her welcome appearance in the yard with her two great baskets, stowed and checked off with crullers, doughnuts, ginger-bread, turnovers, pieces, and a variety of sweet cookies and cakes; and from the time Aunt Arlie's baskets came in sight until every man and boy, bosses and all, in the yard, had been supplied, always at one cent a piece for any article on the cargo, the pie, cake and cookie trade was a brisk one. Aunt Arlie would usually make the rounds of the yard and supply all hands in about an hour, bringing the forenoon up to half-past nine, and giving us from ten to fifteen minutes "breathing spell" during lunch; no one ever hurried during "cake-time."

Nor was this all:

> After this was over we would fall to again, until interrupted by Johnnie Gogean, the English candyman, who came in always at half-past ten, with his great board, the size of a medium extension dining table, slung before him, covered with all sorts of "stick," and several of sticky candy, in one-cent lots. Bosses, boys and men—all hands, everybody —invested one to three cents in Johnnie's sweet wares, and another ten to fifteen minutes is spent in consuming it. Johnnie usually sailed out with a bare board until 11 o'clock at which time there was a general sailing out of the yard and into convenient grog-shops after whiskey; only we had four or five men among us, and one apprentice—not quite a year my senior—who used to sail out pretty regularly ten times a day on the average; two that went for whiskey only when some one invited them to drink, being too mean to treat themselves; and two more who never went at all.
>
> In the afternoon, about half-past three, we had a cake-lunch, supplied by Uncle Jack Gridder, an old, crippled, superannuated ship carpenter. No one else was ever allowed to come in competition with our caterers. Let a foreign candyboard or cake basket make their appearance inside the gates of the yard, and they would get shipped out of that directly.
>
> At about five o'clock p.m., always, Johnnie used to put in his second appearance; and then, having expended money in another stick or two of candy, and ten minutes in its consumption, we were ready to drive away again until sundown; then home to supper.

Less well-ordered in their daily pleasures, the shoemakers in Lynn, Massachusetts, nevertheless surrounded their way of work with a way of life. The former cobbler David Johnson recorded in minute detail in *Sketches of Old Lynn* how fishermen and farmers retained settled ways first as part-time shoemakers in small shops behind their homes. The language of the sea was adapted to the new craft:

> There were a good many sea phrases, or "salt notes" as they were called, used in the shops. In the morning one would hear, "Come Jake, hoist the sails," which simply was a call to roll up the curtains. . . . If debate ran high upon some

exciting topic, some veteran would quietly remark, "Squally, squally, today. Come better *luff* and bear away."

At times a shoemaker read from a newspaper to other men at work. Festivals, fairs, games ("trolling the tog"), and excursions were common rituals among the Lynn cobblers. So was heavy drinking with the bill often incurred by "the one who made the most or the fewest shoes, the best or the poorest." The man "paid 'the scot.'" "These were the days," Johnson reminded later and more repressed New England readers, "when temperance organizations were hardly known." [26]

Despite the profound economic changes that followed the American Civil War, Gilded Age artisans did not easily shed stubborn and time-honored work habits. Such work habits and the life-styles and subcultures related to them retained a vitality long into these industrializing decades. Not all artisans worked in factories, but some that did retained traditional craft skills. Mechanization came in different ways and at different times to diverse industries. Samuel Gompers recollected that New York City cigarmakers paid a fellow craftsman to read a newspaper to them while they worked, and Milwaukee cigarmakers struck in 1882 to retain such privileges as keeping (and then selling) damaged cigars and leaving the shop without a foreman's permission. "The difficulty with many cigarmakers," complained a New York City manufacturer in 1877, "is this. They come down to the shop in the morning; roll a few cigars and then go

26. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *op. cit.*, 73; "A Workingman's Recollections of America," *Knight's Penny Magazine*, 1 (1846), 97–112; Richard D. Trevellick, in *Fincher's Trades Review*, n.d., reprinted in George E. McNeill, ed., *The Labor Movement: the Problem of To-day* (New York, 1887), 341–42; David Johnson, *Sketches of Old Lynn* (Lynn, 1880), 30–31, 36–49. The relationship between drink, work, and other artisanal communal activities was described inadvertently in unusual detail for dozens of British crafts and trades on nearly every page of John Dunlop's *The Philosophy of Artificial and Compulsory Drinking Usage in Great Britain and Ireland* (6th ed.; London, 1839), a 331-page temperance tract. There is good reason to believe that the craft customs described in this volume were known to American artisans and workers, too.

to a beer saloon and play pinnocio or some other game, . . . working probably only two or three hours a day." Coopers felt new machinery "hard and insensate," not a blessing but an evil that "took a great deal of joy out of life" because machine-made barrels undercut a subculture of work and leisure. Skilled coopers "lounged about" on Saturday (the regular payday), a "lost day" to their employers. A historian of American cooperage explained:

> Early on Saturday morning, the big brewery wagon would drive up to the shop. Several of the coopers would club together, each paying his proper share, and one of them would call out the window to the driver, "Bring me a Goose Egg," meaning a half-barrel of beer. Then others would buy "Goose Eggs," and there would be a merry time all around. . . . Little groups of jolly fellows would often sit around upturned barrels playing poker, using rivets for chips, until they had received their pay and the "Goose Egg" was dry.
>
> Saturday night was a big night for the old-time cooper. It meant going out, strolling around the town, meeting friends, usually at a favorite saloon, and having a good time generally, after a week of hard work. Usually the good time continued over into Sunday, so that on the following day he usually was not in the best of condition to settle down to the regular day's work.
>
> Many coopers used to spend this day [Monday] sharpening up their tools, carrying in stock, discussing current events, and in getting things in shape for the big day of work on the morrow. Thus, "Blue Monday" was something of a tradition with the coopers, and the day was also more or less lost as far as production was concerned.
>
> "Can't do much today, but I'll give her hell tomorrow," seemed to be the Monday slogan. But bright and early Tuesday morning, "Give her hell" they would, banging away lustily for the rest of the week until Saturday which was pay day again, and its thoughts of the "Goose Eggs."

Such traditions of work and leisure—in this case, a four-day work week and a three-day weekend—angered manufacturers anxious to ship goods as much as it worried Sabbatarians and temperance reformers. Conflicts over life- and work-styles occurred frequently and often involved control over the work process and over time. The immigrant Staffordshire potters in Trenton, New Jersey, worked in "bursts of great activity" and then quit for "several days at a time." "Monday," said a manufacturer, "was given up to debauchery." After the potters lost a bitter lockout in 1877 that included torchlight parades and effigy burnings, the *Crockery and Glass Journal* mockingly advised:

> Run your factories to please the crowd. . . . Don't expect work to begin before 9 a.m. or to continue after 3 p.m. Every employee should be served hot coffee and a bouquet at 7 a.m. and allowed the two hours to take a free perfumed bath. . . . During the summer, ice cream and fruit should be served at 12 p.m. to the accompaniment of witching music.

Hand coopers (and potters and cigarmakers, among others) worked hard but in distinctly preindustrial styles. Machine-made barrels pitted modernizing technology and modern habits against traditional ways. To the owners of competitive firms struggling to improve efficiency and cut labor costs, the Goose Egg and Blue Monday proved the laziness and obstinacy of craftsmen as well as the tyranny of craft unions that upheld venerable traditions. To the skilled cooper, the long weekend symbolized a way of work and life filled with almost ritualistic meanings. Between 1843 and 1893, compromise between such conflicting interests was hardly possible.[27]

27. Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York, 1925), 1: 42–53, 63–82; Thomas Gavett, *Development of the Labor Movement in Milwaukee* (Madison, 1965), 43 ff.: New York *Herald*, November 17, 1877; Franklin E. Coyne, *The Development of the Cooperage Industry in the United States* (Chicago, 1940), 7–26 but especially 21–22; *Crockery and Glass Journal*, n.d., reprinted in *Labor Standard* (N.Y.), September 9, 1877; Frank Thistlethwaite, "Atlantic Migration of the Pottery Industry," *Economic History Review*, 10 (1957–1958), 264–73.

Settled premodern work habits existed among others than those employed in nonfactory crafts. Owners of already partially mechanized industries complained of them, too. "Saturday night debauches and Sunday carousels though they be few and far between," lamented the *Age of Steel* in 1882, "are destructive of modest hoardings, and he who indulges in them will in time become a striker for higher wages." In 1880 a British steelworker boasted that native Americans never would match immigrants in their skills: "'adn't the 'ops, you know." Manufacturers, when able, did not hesitate to act decisively to end such troubles. In Fall River new technology allowed a print cloth manufacturer to settle a long-standing grievance against his stubborn mule spinners. "On Saturday afternoon after they had gone home," a boastful mill superintendent later recollected, "we started right in and smashed a room full of mules with sledge hammers. . . . On Monday morning, they were astonished to find that there was not work for them. That room is now full of ring frames run by girls." Woolen manufacturers also displaced handjack spinners with improved machinery and did so because of "the disorderly habits of English workmen. Often on a Monday morning, half of them would be absent from the mill in consequence of the Sunday's dissipation." Blue Monday, however, did not entirely disappear. Paterson artisans and factory hands held a May festival on a Monday each year ("Labor Monday") and that popular holiday soon became state law, the American Labor Day. It had its roots in earlier premodern work habits.[28]

The persistence of such traditional artisan work habits well into the nineteenth century deserves notice from others besides labor historians, because those work habits did not exist in a cultural or social vacuum. If modernizing technology threatened and even displaced such work patterns, diverse nineteenth-

28. *Age of Steel*, August 5, 1882 (courtesy of Lynn Mapes); Berthoff, *op. cit.*, 54–55, 146; announcement of "Great Festival" on "Labor Monday," Paterson *Labor Standard*, May 29, 1880.

century subcultures sustained and nourished them. "The old nations of the earth creep on at a snail's pace," boasted Andrew Carnegie in *Triumphant Democracy* (1886), "the Republic thunders past with the rush of an express." The articulate steelmaster, however, had missed the point. The very rapidity of the economic changes occurring in Carnegie's lifetime meant that many, unlike him, lacked the time, historically, culturally, and psychologically, to be separated or alienated from settled ways of work and life and from relatively fixed beliefs. Continuity not consensus counted for much in explaining working-class and especially artisan behavior in those decades that witnessed the coming of the factory and the radical transformation of American society. Persistent work habits were one example of that significant continuity. But these elements of continuity were often revealed among nineteenth-century American workers cut off by birth from direct contact with the preindustrial American past, a fact that has been ignored or blurred by the artificial separation between labor history and immigration history. In Gilded Age America (and afterward in the Progressive Era despite the radical change in patterns of immigration), working-class and immigration history regularly intersected, and that intermingling made for powerful continuities. In 1880, for example, 63 of every 100 Londoners were native to that city, 94 coming from England and Wales, and 98 from Great Britain and Ireland. Foreign countries together contributed only 1.6 percent to London's massive population. At that same moment, more than 70 of every 100 persons in San Francisco (78), St. Louis (78), Cleveland (80), New York (80), Detroit (84), Milwaukee (84), and Chicago (87) were immigrants or the children of immigrants, and the percentage was just as high in many smaller American industrial towns and cities. "Not every foreigner is a workingman," noticed the clergyman Samuel Lane Loomis in 1887, "but in the cities, at least, it may almost be said that every workingman is a foreigner." And until the 1890s most immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe, French- and English-speaking Canada, and China. In 1890, only 3 percent of the nation's foreign-born residents—

290,000 of 9,200,000 immigrants—had been born in Eastern or Southern Europe. (It is a little recognized fact that most North and West European immigrants migrated to the United States after, not before, the American Civil War.) When so much else changed in the industrializing decades, tenacious traditions flourished among immigrants in ethnic subcultures that varied greatly among particular groups and according to the size, age, and location of different cities and industries. ("The Irish," Henry George insisted, "burn like chips, the English like logs.") Class and occupational distinctions within a particular ethnic group also made for different patterns of cultural adaptation, but powerful subcultures thrived among them all.[29]

Suffering and plain poverty cut deeply into these ethnic working-class worlds. In reconstructing their everyday texture there is no reason to neglect or idealize such suffering, but it is time to discard the notion that the large-scale uprooting and exploitative processes that accompanied industrialization caused little more than cultural breakdown and social anomie. Family, class, and ethnic ties did not dissolve easily. "Almost as a matter of definition," the sociologist Neil Smelzer has written, "we associate the factory system with the decline of the family and the onset of anonymity." Smelzer criticized such a view of early industrializing England, and it has just as little validity for nineteenth-century industrializing America. Family roles changed in important ways, and strain was widespread, but the immigrant working-class family held together. Examination of household composition in sixteen census enumeration districts in Paterson in 1880 makes that clear for this predominantly working-class immigrant city, and while research on other ethnic working-class communities will reveal significant variations, the overall patterns should not differ greatly. The Paterson immi-

29. Andrew Carnegie quoted in Henry Pelling, *America and the British Left* (New York, 1957), 52; Samuel Lane Loomis, *Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems* (New York, 1887), 68–73; Henry George quoted in Carl Wittke, *Irish in America* (Baton Rouge, 1956), 193.

TABLE 1. MALE OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION BY ETHNIC GROUP, PATERSON, NEW JERSEY, 1880, ENUMERATION DISTRICTS 150–53, 161–72[a]

	British	*German*	*Irish*	*Native White*
Total Males 20 and Older	2090	927	2841	1461
Total Females 20 and Older	1941	804	3466	1689
Male Occupational Structure				
Unskilled Laborer	8.2%	9.8%	43.6%	20.8%
Skilled Worker	75.5%	64.3%	44.8%	62.5%
Nonlaborer	16.3%	25.9%	11.6%	16.7%
Household Composition				
Number of Kin-related Households	1402	686	2142	905
Number of Subfamilies[b]	117	41	158	125
Nuclear Households	73.9%	78.1%	73.1%	65.7%
Extended Households	13.5%	10.3%	13.6%	18.7%
Augmented Households[c]	14.6%	13.1%	15.3%	19.0%
Percent of Households and Subfamilies with a Husband and/or Father Present	87.2%	91.6%	81.1%	78.9%

[a] I am indebted to Carol Waserloos for gathering the raw Paterson data from the 1880 federal manuscript census schedules.

[b] A subfamily is defined as a complete or incomplete nuclear family residing with another nuclear family.

[c] Augmented households include lodgers. The sum of nuclear, augmented, and extended households is greater than 100 percent because some households included both relatives and lodgers and have been counted twice.

grant (and native white) communities were predominantly working class, and most families among them were intact in their composition. For this population, at least (and without accounting for age and sex ratio differences between the ethnic groups), a greater percentage of immigrant than native white households included two parents. Ethnic and predominantly working-class communities in industrial towns like Paterson and in larger cities, too, built on these strained but hardly broken familial and kin ties. Migration to another country, life in the city, and labor in cost-conscious and ill-equipped factories and workshops tested but did not shatter what the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has described as primordial (as contrasted to civic) attachments, "the 'assumed' givens . . . of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connections mainly, but beyond them, the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, and following particular social patterns." Tough familial and kin ties made possible the transmission and adaptation of European working-class cultural patterns and beliefs to industrializing America. As late as 1888, residents in some Rhode Island mill villages figured their wages in British currency. Common rituals and festivals bound together such communities. Paterson silk weavers had their Macclesfield wakes, and Fall River cotton mill workers their Ashton wakes. British immigrants "banded together to uphold the popular culture of the homeland" and celebrated saints' days: St. George's Day, St. Andrew's Day, and St. David's Day. Even funerals retained an archaic flavor. Samuel Sigley, a Chartist house painter, had fled Ashton-under-Lyne in 1848, and built American trade unions. When his wife died in the late 1890s a significant ritual occurred during the funeral: some friends placed a chaff of wheat on her grave. Mythic beliefs also cemented ethnic and class solidarities. The Irish-American press, for example, gave Martin O'Brennan much space to argue that Celtic had been spoken in the Garden of Eden, and in Paterson Irish-born silk, cotton, and iron workers believed in the magical powers of that town's "Dublin Spring." An old resident remembered:

> There is a legend that an Irish fairy brought over the water in her apron from the Lakes of Killarney and planted it in the humble part of that town. . . . There were dozens of legends connected with the Dublin Spring and if a man drank from its precious depository . . . he could never leave Paterson [but] only under the fairy influence, and the wand of the nymph would be sure to bring him back again some time or other.

When a "fairy" appeared in Paterson in human form, some believed she walked the streets "as a tottering old woman begging with a cane." Here was a way to assure concern for the elderly and the disabled.[30]

Much remains to be studied about these cross-class but predominantly working-class ethnic subcultures common to industrializing America. Relations within them between skilled and unskilled workers, for example, remain unclear. But the larger shape of these diverse immigrant communities can be sketched. More than mythic beliefs and common work habits sustained them. Such worlds had in them what Thompson has called "working-class intellectual traditions, working-class community patterns, and a working-class structure of feeling," and men with artisan skills powerfully affected the everyday texture of such communities. A model subculture included friendly and benevolent societies as well as friendly local politicians, community-wide holiday celebrations, an occasional library (the Baltimore Journeymen Bricklayer's Union taxed members one dollar a year in the 1880s to sustain a library that included the collected works of William Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels), participant sports, churches sometimes headed by a sympathetic clergy, saloons, beer gardens, and concert halls or music halls and, depending upon circumstances, trade unionists, labor reformers, and radicals. The Massachusetts cleric Jonathan Baxter Harrison published in 1880 an unusually detailed description of one such ethnic, working-class institution, a Fall River music hall and saloon. About fifty persons were there when he visited it, nearly one-fourth of them young women. "Most of those present," he noticed, were "persons whom I had met before, in the mills and on the streets. They were nearly all operatives, or had at some time belonged to that class." An Englishman sang first, and then a black whose songs "were of many kinds, comic, sentimental, pathetic, and silly. . . . When he sang 'I got a mammy in the promised land,' with a strange, wailing refrain, the English waiter-girl, who was sitting at my table, wiped her eyes with her apron, and everybody was very quiet." Harrison said of such places in Fall River:

> All the attendants . . . had worked in the mills. The young man who plays the piano is usually paid four or five dollars per week, besides his board. The young men who sing receive one dollar per night, but most of them board themselves. . . . The most usual course for a man who for any reason falls out of the ranks of mill workers (if he loses his place by sickness or is discharged) is the opening of a liquor saloon or drinking place.

Ethnic ties with particular class dimensions sometimes stretched far beyond local boundaries and even revealed themselves in the behavior of the most successful practitioners of Gilded Age popular culture. In 1884, for example, the pugilist John L. Sullivan and the music-hall entertainers Harrigan and Hart promised support to striking Irish coal miners in the Ohio

30. Neil Smelzer, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago, 1959), 193; Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States* (Glencoe, 1963), 109–10; Lillie B. Chace Wyman, "Studies in Factory Life," *Atlantic Monthly*, 62 (1888), 17–29, 215–21, 605–21, and 63 (1889), 68–79; Berthoff, *op. cit.*, 147–81, *passim;* Paterson *Labor Standard*, October 2, 1897; Thomas N. Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 1966), 32; Paterson *Evening News*, October 27, 1900. Except for the fact that nuclear households declined greatly at the expense of households containing lodgers (augmented households), examination of the household composition among immigrant Jews and Italians in Lower Manhattan in 1905 shows that powerful familial and kin ties bound together later immigrant communities, too. The data are summarized briefly in Table 3 (see appendix to this essay, page 77).

Hocking Valley. Local ties, however, counted for much more and had their roots inside and outside of the factory and workshop. Soon after Cyrus H. McCormick, then twenty-one, took over the management of his father's great Chicago iron machinery factory (which in the early 1880s employed twelve hundred men and boys), a petition signed by "Many Employees" reached his hands:

> It only pains us to relate to you . . . that a good many of our old hands is not here this season and if Mr. Evarts is kept another season a good many more will leave. . . . We pray for you . . . to remove this man. . . . We are treated as though we were dogs. . . . He has cut wages down so low they are living on nothing but bread. . . . We can't talk to him about wages if we do he will tell us to go out side the gate. . . . He discharged old John the other day he has been here seventeen years. . . . There is Mr. Church who left us last Saturday he went about and shook hands with every old hand in the shop . . . this brought tears to many mens eyes. He has been here nineteen years and has got along well with them all until he came to Mr. Evarts the present superintendent.

Artisans, themselves among those later displaced by new technology, signed this petition, and self-educated artisans (or professionals and petty enterprisers who had themselves usually risen from the artisan class) often emerged as civic and community leaders. "Intellectually," Jennie Collins noticed in Boston in the early 1870s, "the journeymen tailors . . . are ever discussing among themselves questions of local and national politics, points of law, philosophy, physics, and religion." [31]

31. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, *op. cit.*, 194; Richard T. Ely, *Labor Movement in America* (New York, 1886), 125; Jonathan Baxter Harrison, *Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life and Other Essays* (Boston, 1880), 178–88; *National Labor Tribune* (Pittsburgh), December 13, 1884; Robert Ozanne, *Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester* (Madison, 1967), 10–28; Collins, *op. cit.*, 94.

Such life-styles and subcultures adapted and changed over time. In the Gilded Age piece-rates in nearly all manufacturing industries helped reshape traditional work habits. "Two generations ago," said the Connecticut Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1885, "time-work was the universal rule." "Piece-work" had all but replaced it, and the Connecticut Bureau called it "a moral force which corresponds to machinery as a physical force." Additional pressures came in traditional industries such as shoe, cigar, furniture, barrel, and clothing manufacture, which significantly mechanized in these years. Strain also resulted where factories employed large numbers of children and young women (in the 1880 manuscript census 49.3 percent of all Paterson boys and 52.1 percent of all girls aged eleven to fourteen had occupations listed by their names) and was especially common among the as yet little-studied pools of casual male laborers found everywhere. More than this, mobility patterns significantly affected the structure and the behavior of these predominantly working-class communities. A good deal of geographic mobility, property mobility (home ownership), and occupational mobility (skilled status in new industries or in the expanding building trades, petty retail enterprise, the professions, and public employment counted as the most important ways to advance occupationally) reshaped these ethnic communities as Stephan Thernstrom and others have shown. But so little is yet known about the society in which such men and women lived and about the cultures which had produced them that it is entirely premature to infer "consciousness" (beliefs and values) only from mobility rates. Such patterns and rates of mobility, for example, did not entirely shatter working-class capacities for self-protection. The fifty-year period between 1843 and 1893 was not conducive to permanent, stable trade unions, but these decades were a time of frequent strikes and lockouts and other forms of sustained conflict.[32]

32. *Connecticut Bureau of Labor Statistics, First Annual Report, 1885* (Hartford, 1885), 70–73; Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress, Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, 1964), *passim*; and Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., *Nineteenth Century Cities* (New Haven, 1969), *passim*.

Not all strikes and lockouts resulted in the defeat of poorly organized workers. For the years 1881 to 1887, for example, the New Jersey Bureau of Labor Statistics collected information on 890 New Jersey industrial disputes involving mostly workers in the textile, glass, metal, transportation, and building trades: 6 percent ended in compromise settlements; employers gained the advantage in 40 percent; strikers won the rest (54 percent). In four of five disputes concerning higher wages and shorter hours, New Jersey workers, not their employers, were victorious. Large numbers of such workers there and elsewhere were foreign-born or the children of immigrants. More than this, immigrant workers in the mid-1880s joined trade unions in numbers far out of proportion to their place in the labor force. Statistical inquiries by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Illinois in 1886 and in New Jersey in 1887 make this clear. Even these data may not have fully reflected the proclivity of immigrants to seek self-protection. (Such a distortion would occur if, for example, the children of immigrants apparently counted by the bureaus as native-born had remained a part of the ethnic subcultures into which they had been born and joined trade unions as regularly as the foreign-born.) Such information from Illinois and New Jersey suggests the need to treat the meaning of social mobility

TABLE 2. ORGANIZED WORKERS, MALE WHITES IN NONAGRICULTURAL PURSUITS, ILLINOIS (1886) AND NEW JERSEY (1887)

	Illinois 1886		*New Jersey 1887*	
Nativity	*Bread-winners*	*Organ-ized*	*Bread-winners*	*Organ-ized*
Number				
Native-born	423,290	25,985	243,093	24,463
Foreign-born	308,595	57,163	137,385	26,704
Percent				
Native-born	57.8%	31.3%	63.9%	47.8%
Foreign-born	42.2%	68.7%	36.1%	52.2%

with some care. So does the sketchy outline of Hugh O'Donnell's career. By 1892, when he was twenty-nine years old, he had already improved his social status a great deal. Before the dispute with Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick culminated in the bitter Homestead lockout that year, O'Donnell had voted Republican, owned a home, and had in it a Brussels carpet and even a piano. Nevertheless this Irish-American skilled worker led the Homestead workers and was even indicted under a Civil War treason statute never before used. The material improvements O'Donnell had experienced mattered greatly to him and suggested significant mobility, but culture and tradition together with the way in which men like O'Donnell interpreted the transformation of Old America defined the value of those material improvements and their meaning to him.[33]

Other continuities between 1843 and 1893 besides those rooted in artisan work habits and diverse ethnic working-class subcultures deserve brief attention as important considerations in understanding the behavior of artisans and other workers in these decades. I have suggested in other writings that significant patterns of opposition to the ways in which industrial capitalism developed will remain baffling until historians re-examine the relationship between the premodern American political system and the coming of the factory along with the strains in premodern popular American ideology shared by workers and large numbers of successful self-made Americans (policemen, clergymen, politicians, small businessmen, and even some "traditional" manufacturers) that rejected the legitimacy of the modern factory system and its owners.[34] One strain of thought

33. Table on New Jersey and Illinois trade-union membership in Isaac Hourwich, *Immigration and Labor: The Economic Aspects of European Immigration to the United States* (New York, 1912), 524; Leon Woolf, *Lockout: The Story of the Homestead Strike of 1892* (New York, 1965), 187–88.

34. See, for examples, H. G. Gutman, "The Worker's Search for Power: Labor in the Gilded Age," in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal* (Syracuse, 1963), 38–68; Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement: The Christian Spirit in the Gilded Age," *American Historical Review*, 72 (1966–1967), 74–101; Gutman, "Class, Status, and Community Power in Nineteenth Century American Industrial Cities: Paterson, New Jersey, a Case

common to the rhetoric of nineteenth-century immigrant and native-born artisans is considered here. It helps explain their recurrent enthusiasm for land and currency reform, cooperatives, and trade unions. It was the fear of dependence, "proletarianization," and centralization, and the worry that industrial capitalism threatened to transform "the Great Republic of the West" into a "European" country. In 1869, the same year that saw the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the chartering of the Standard Oil Company, the founding of the Knights of Labor, and the dedication of a New York City statue to Cornelius Vanderbilt, some London workers from Westbourne Park and Notting Hill petitioned the American ambassador for help to emigrate. "Dependence," they said of Great Britain, "not independence, is inculcated. Hon. Sir, this state of things we wish to fly from . . . to become citizens of that great Republican country, which has no parallels in the world's history." Such men had a vision of Old America, but it was not a new vision. Industrial transformation between 1840 and 1890 tested and redefined that vision. Seven years after their visit, the New York *Labor Standard*, then edited by an Irish socialist, bemoaned what had come over the country: "There was a time when the United States was the workingman's country, . . . the land of promise for the workingman. . . . We are now in an *old country*." This theme recurred frequently as disaffected workers, usually self-educated artisans, described the transformation of premodern America. "America," said the Detroit *Labor Leaf*, "used to be the land of promise to the poor. . . . The Golden Age is indeed over—the Age of Iron has taken its place. The iron law of necessity has taken the place of the golden rule." We need not join in mythicizing preindustrial American society in order to suggest that this tension between the old and the new helps give a coherence to the decades between 1843 and 1893 that even the trauma of the Civil War does not disturb.[35]

Study," in Frederic C. Jaher, ed., *The Age of Industrialism: Essays in Social Structure and Cultural Values* (New York, 1968), 263–87.

35. *Reynold's Newspaper* (London), March 28, 1869; *Labor Standard* (N.Y.), May 6, 1876; Detroit *Labor Leaf*, September 30, 1885.

As early as the 1830s, the theme that industrialism promised to make over the United States into a "European" country had its artisan and working-class advocates. Seth Luther then made this clear in his complaint about "gentlemen" who "exultingly call LOWELL the Manchester of America" and in his plea that the Bunker Hill monument "stand *unfinished,* until the time passes away when aristocrats talk about mercy to mechanics and laborers, . . . until our rights are acknowledged." The tensions revealed in labor rhetoric between the promises of the Republic and the practices of those who combined capital and technology to build factories continued into the 1890s. In 1844 New England shoemakers rewrote the Declaration of Independence to protest that the employers "have robbed us of certain rights," and two years later New England textile workers planned without success a general strike to start on July 4, 1846, calling it "a second Independence Day." The great 1860 shoemakers' strike in Lynn started on George Washington's birthday, a celebration strikers called "sacred to the memory of one of the greatest men the world has ever produced." Fear for the Republic did not end with the Civil War. The use of state militia to help put down a strike of Northeastern Pennsylvania workers in 1874 caused *Equity*, a Boston labor weekly, to condemn the Erie Railroad as "the George III of the workingman's movement" and "the Government of Pennsylvania" as "but its parliament." ("Regiments," it added, "to protect dead things.")[36]

Such beliefs, not the status anxieties of Progressive muckrakers and New Deal historians, gave rise to the pejorative phrase "robber baron." Discontented Gilded Age workers found in that phrase a way to summarize their worries about dependence and centralization. "In America," exploded the *National Labor Tribune* in 1874, "we have realized the ideal of republican government at least in form." "America," it went on, "was the

36. Luther, *Address to the Workingmen of New England, passim;* Ware, *op. cit.*, 38–48; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York, 1947), 1: 202–09, 241–45, 292; *Equity* (Boston), 1 (1874), quoted in James Dombrowski, *Early Days of Christian Socialism* (New York, 1936), 81.

star of the political Bethlehem which shone radiantly out in the dark night of political misrule in Europe. The masses of the old world gazed upon her as their escape." Men in America could be "their own rulers"; "no one could or should become their masters." But industrialization had created instead a nightmare: "These dreams have not been realized. . . . The working people of this country . . . suddenly find capital as rigid as an absolute monarchy." Two years later, the same Pittsburgh labor weekly asked, "Shall we let the gold barons of the nineteenth century put iron collars of ownership around our necks as did the feudal barons with their serfs in the fourteenth century?" The rhetoric surrounding the little-understood 1877 railroad strikes and riots summed up these fears. Critics of the strikers urged repressive measures such as the building of armories in large cities and the restriction of the ballot, and a few, including Elihu Burritt, even favored importing "British" institutions to the New World. But the disorders also had their defenders, and a strain in their rhetoric deserves notice. A radical Massachusetts clergyman called the strikers "the lineal descendants of Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and the Massachusetts yeomen who began so great a disturbance a hundred years ago . . . only now the kings are money kings and then they were political kings." George McNeill, a major figure in the nineteenth-century labor movement and later a founder of the American Federation of Labor, denied that the Paris Commune had come to America: "The system which the pilgrims planted here has yet a residue of followers. No cry of 'commune' can frighten the descendants of the New England commune. This is the COMMONWEALTH, not the *Class* wealth, of Massachusetts." A discharged Pittsburgh brakeman put it differently in blaming the violence on a general manager who treated the railroad workers "no better than the serfs of Great Britain, sir, . . . introduced into this country a lot of English ideas and customs, [and] made our men wear uniforms and traveling bags." "A uniform," he worried, "constantly reminds them of their serfdom, and I for one would rather remain out of work than wear one." An amazed reporter wondered how this man could "assert his rights as a free born

American, even if in so doing himself and family starved." [37]

This Pittsburgh brakeman revealed values that persisted throughout the decades of industrialization, that expressed themselves most commonly in the rhetoric and behavior of artisans and skilled workers, and that worried other influential Americans besides railroad magnates and industrial manufacturers. In 1896 an army officer won a prize for writing the best essay submitted to the *Journal of the Military Service Institutions of the United States.* Theodore Roosevelt helped to judge the contest. The officer insisted that "discipline" needed to be more rigorous in an American as opposed to a European army. Even though he knew little about European societies, his insistence that "means of discipline are entirely artificial productions of law" in the United States counted as a profound insight into a social condition that plagued industrialists and sparked frequent discontent among skilled and other workers in industrializing America:

> Discipline should be as a rod of iron. It may seem hopelessly illogical to claim that the army of a free people needs to be kept in stricter discipline than any other army, with wider space between the officers and the enlisted men, yet there are natural reasons why it should be so. The armies of Europe are drawn from people who for countless generations have lived under monarchical institutions and class government, where every man is born and bred to pay homage to some other man, and the habit of subordination to the will of another is a matter of heredity. It is natural that when such a man finds himself in the army he is not only amenable to discipline, but any relaxation on the part of the officer would be accepted as a matter of grace.
>
> With us these conditions are reversed. Every man is born and bred in the idea of equality, and means of discipline are

37. *National Labor Tribune* (Pittsburgh), December 12, 1874, and October 14, 1876; Jesse Jones, "Railroad Strike of 1877," and George McNeill, "An Address," *Labor Standard* (N.Y.), August 26, and September 30, 1877; Robert, Pittsburgh dispatch, Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, September 11, 1877.

entirely artificial productions of law, not only without support from traditional habit, but they have that habit to overcome, and familiarity on the part of the officer would breed contempt of authority.

Two decades earlier, the London editor of the *Industrial Review* and increasingly conservative British trade-union leader, George Potter, posed the same problem somewhat differently. The disorders incident to the 1877 railroad strikes convinced him that Americans then lived through an earlier stage of English history, before "habit" had "begotten" men to "use their combinations peaceably and wisely." "The state of things that existed then in England," Potter insisted, "exists now in the United States. It was at one time believed that this was impossible within the borders of the great Republic, but it has proved itself wrong." Potter believed that the widespread violence in 1877 had been caused by men "suddenly or newly brought together to defend an interest" and therefore lacking "that wisdom of method that time and experience develop." But Potter was wrong. The men who quit work in 1877 (and before and after that) included many deeply rooted in traditional crafts and worried that the transformation of the American social and economic structure threatened settled ways of work and life and particular visions of a just society. Their behavior—in particular the little-understood violence that accompanied the strikes (including the burning and destruction of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Pittsburgh yards and equipment)—makes this clear. It had specific purposes and was the product of long-standing grievances that accompanied the transformation of Old America into New America.[38]

38. Major George Wilson, "The Army: Its Employment During Times of Peace and the Necessity for Its Increase," *Journal of the Military Service Institutions of the United States*, 18 (1896), 8–9; George Potter, "The American Labour Riots," *Industrial Review* (London), August 4, 1877, p. 9.

IV

QUITE DIVERSE PATTERNS of collective lower-class behavior (some of them disorderly and even violent) accompanied the industrialization of the United States, and certain of them (especially those related to artisan culture and to peasant and village cultures still fresh to factory labor and to the machine) deserve brief attention. Characteristic European forms of "premodern" artisan and lower-class protest in the United States occurred before (prior to 1843), during (1843–1893), and after (1893–1919) the years when the country "modernized." The continuing existence of such behavior followed from the changing composition of the working-class population. Asa Briggs's insistence that "to understand how people respond to industrial change it is important to examine what kind of people they were at the beginning of the process" and "to take account of continuities as well as new ways of thinking," poses in different words the subtle interplay between culture and society that is an essential factor in explaining lower-class behavior. Although their frequency remains the subject for much further detailed study, examples of premodern lower-class behavior abound for the entire period from 1815 to 1919, and their presence suggests how much damage has been done to the past American working-class experiences by historians busy, as R. H. Tawney complained more than half a century ago, "dragging into prominence forces which have triumphed and thrusting into the background those which have been swallowed up." Attention is briefly given to three types of American artisan and lower-class behavior explored in depth and with much illumination by European social historians ("church-and-king" crowds, machine-breaking, and food riots) and to the presence in quite different working-class protests of powerful secular and religious rituals. These occurred over the entire period under examination, not just in the early phases of industrial development.[39]

39. Asa Briggs, review of Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, in *Labor History*, 6 (1965), 84–91; R. H. Tawney, *Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1912), 177.

Not much is yet known about premodern American artisan and urban lower-class cultures, but scattered evidence suggests a possible American variant of the European church-and-king phenomenon. Although artisan and lower-class urban cultures before 1843 await their historians, popular street disorders (sometimes sanctioned by the established authorities) happened frequently and increasingly caused concern to the premodern elite classes. Street gangs, about which little is yet known except the suggestion that some had as members artisans (not just casual or day laborers) and were often organized along ethnic lines, grew more important in the coastal and river towns after 1830. New York City, among other towns, had its Fly Boys, Chichesters, Plug Uglies, Buckaroos, and Slaughterhouse Gangs, and their violence against recent immigrants provoked disorderly counterthrusts. Political disorders on election days, moreover, were apparently well-organized and may have involved such gangs. The recurrence of such disorders through the pre-Civil War decades (including the nativist outbursts in nearly all major Northern and Southern cities in the 1850s) may have meant that local political parties, in their infancy, served as the American substitute for the king and the church, a third party "protecting" artisans and even day laborers from real and imagined adversaries and winning clanlike loyalty. Although the testimony of Mike Walsh, a Tammany leader and later the publisher of the *Police Gazette*, must be read with care, he suggested an interesting relationship between the decline of premodern lower-class entertainments and the rise of modern political "machines." Election politics, Walsh noted in the *Subterranean*, saw "the Goth-and-Vandal-like eruption of the shirtless and unwashed democracy" which Walsh connected to the disappearance of popular lower-class entertainments. A "gloomy, churlish, money-worshipping . . . spirit" had "swept nearly all the poetry out of the poor man's sphere," said the editor-politician. "Ballad-singing, street dancing, tumbling, public games, all are either prohibited or discountenanced, so that Fourth of July and election sports alone remain." Workers flocked to political clubs and labored hard for a party to "get a

taste of the equality which they hear so much preached, but never, save there, see even partially practiced." If Walsh's insight has merit, political parties quite possibly competed with early craft unions in adapting older forms of popular entertainment and ritual to changing needs. That process, once started, had a life beyond the early years of the premodern political party and continued as the composition of the working class changed. The ethnic political "boss" created a new dependence that exploited well-understood class feelings and resentments but blunted class consciousness. The relationship, however, was not simple, and in the 1880s the socialist Joseph P. McDonnell exploited that same relationship to convince local New Jersey politicians to respond to pressures from predominantly immigrant workers and thereby to pioneer in the passage of humane social legislation, a process that began well before the stirring of the middle- and upper-class conscience in Progressive America.[40]

Available evidence does not yet indicate that machine-breaking of the "Luddite" variety was widespread in the United States. There are suggestive hints in reports that Ohio farm laborers burnt and destroyed farm machinery in 1878 and that twenty years later in Buffalo a crowd of Polish common day laborers and their wives rioted to break a street-paving machine, but the only clear evidence found of classic machine-breaking occurred early in the Civil War among rural blacks in the South Carolina Sea Islands, who resisted Yankee missionary and military efforts to make them plant cotton instead of corn and therefore broke up cotton gins and hid the iron work. "They do not see the use of cotton," said a Northern woman school-

40. Mike Walsh, *Subterranean* (New York, n.d.), quoted in M. R. Werner, *Tammany Hall* (New York, 1932), 49–51 (courtesy of Paul Weinbaum). On gangs, nativism, politics, and antebellum street violence, see A. F. Harlow, *Old Bowery Days* (New York, 1931), *passim;* Ray Billington, *Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860* (New York, 1938), *passim;* and McNeill, *Labor Movement*, 344. The ways in which McDonnell used machine politics and politicians to push social reform in the 1880s are described in Gutman, "Class, Status, and the Gilded Age Radical: The Case of a New Jersey Socialist," Gutman and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., *Many Pasts: Readings in American Social History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1973), 2: 125–51.

teacher, and a Yankee entrepreneur among them added that "nothing was more remote from their shallow pates than the idea of planting cotton for 'white-folks' again." (Some time later, this same man ordered a steam-run cotton gin. "This engine," he confided, "serves as a moral stimulus to keep the people at work at their hand-gins, for they want to gin all the cotton by hand, and I tell them if they don't by the middle of January I shall get it by steam.") If white workers rarely broke machines to protest their introduction, they sometimes destroyed the product of new technology. In the early 1830s Brooklyn ropemakers paraded a "hated machine" through town and then "committed to the flames" its product. Theirs was not an irrational act. They paid for the destroyed hemp, spun "a like quantity" to allow the machine's owner to "fulfill his engagement for its delivery," and advertised their product in a newspaper, boasting that its quality far surpassed machine-made rope "as is well known to any practical ropemaker and seaman." Silk weavers in the Hudson River towns of New Jersey broke looms in 1877 but only to prevent production during a strike. A more common practice saw the destruction of the product of labor or damage to factory and mining properties to punish employers and owners. Paterson silk weavers regularly left unfinished warps to spoil in looms. Crowds often stoned factories, burned mine tipples, and did other damage to industrial properties (as in the bitter Western Pennsylvania coke strikes between 1884 and 1894) but mostly to protest the hiring of new hands or violence against themselves by "police." Construction gangs especially in railroad work also frequently destroyed property. In 1831, between two and three hundred construction workers, mostly Irish, punished an absconding contractor by "wantonly" tearing up track they built. Similar penalties were meted out by Italian construction gangs between 1880 and 1910 and by unorganized railroad workers, mostly native-born repairmen and trainmen, between 1850 and 1880, who tore up track, spiked switches, stole coupling links and pins, and did other damage to protest changing work rules or to collect back wages.[41]

41. *Labor Standard* (N.Y.), September 28, 1878; Edward S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States from April 1833 to October 1834* (London, 1838), 1: 77–79; Gutman, "Class, Status, and Community Power"; Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fifteenth Annual Report, 1887* (Harrisburg, 1888), F1–F18, and *Nineteenth Annual Report, 1891* (Harrisburg, 1892), D1–D18; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 40 (1831), 338–39; New York *Tribune*, May 2, 1857; *John Swinton's Paper* (N.Y.), February 24, 1884; New York *Tribune*, October 21, 1893; *New York State Board of Mediation and Arbitration, Eleventh Annual Report, 1898* (New York, 1899), 139–42; Gutman, "Trouble on the Railroads in 1873–1874," *Labor History*, 2 (1961), 215–35. The materials on the Sea Island blacks are found in Laura Towne, *Letters and Diaries of Laura S. Towne 1862–1884, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, ed. Rupert S. Holland (Cambridge, Mass., 1910), 16–17, 20–21; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, ed., *Letters from Port Royal, 1862–1868* (Boston, 1906), 221–22, 236–37, 250; Willie Lee Rose, *Port Royal Experiment: Rehearsal for Reconstruction* (Indianapolis, 1964), 141; Jane and William Pease, *Black Utopias* (Madison, 1963), 134, 143, 149–50. Although American blacks are not included in these pages, the behavior and thought of rural and urban blacks fits the larger patterns suggested here in a special way. Their experiences first as slaves and then as dependent laborers in the rural South as well as in the industrial North (where most manufacturing industries remained closed to them until the First World War) distinguished most lower-class blacks from all immigrant and native white workers. In still little-understood but profoundly important ways enslavement followed by racial exclusion sustained among blacks a culture that despite change remained preindustrial for more than merely two or three generations. Despite this significant difference, similarities in behavior between blacks and native and immigrant white workers can be noticed. Visitors to the Richmond tobacco factories in the 1850s found industrial slaves there who practiced "Blue Monday." Joseph C. Roberts, *The Story of Tobacco in America* (New York, 1949), 86–91. Blacks themselves made comparisons to whites who shared difficult premodern rural experiences: "I have never heard any songs like those [slave songs] anywhere since I left slavery, except when in Ireland. . . . It was during the famine of 1845–1846." Frederick Douglass said that. Quoted in Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Men of Our Times* (Hartford, 1868), 395. Contemporary observers who noticed black work habits after emancipation rarely told of "laziness" but nearly always noticed irregularity, and in 1909 W. E. B. Du Bois quoted approvingly a writer who suggested that "what is termed Negro 'laziness' may be a means of making modern workingmen demand more rational rest and enjoyment rather than permitting themselves to be made machines." W. E. B. Du Bois, *Negro-American Family* (Atlanta, 1909), 42. See also Du Bois's discussion of the same matter in *World's Week*, 103 (1926), quoted in Asa H. Gordon, *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina* (Industrial College, Ga., 1929), 10–11.

"Luddism" may have been rare, but classic "European" food riots occurred in the United States, and two in New York City—the first in 1837 and the second in 1902—that involved quite different groups of workers are briefly examined to

illustrate the ways in which traditional cultural forms and expectations helped shape lower-class behavior. (Other evidence of similar disorders, including the Confederate food riots led by white women in Mobile, Savannah, and Richmond, await careful study.) In February 1837, thousands gathered in City Hall Park to protest against "monopolies" and rising food prices. Some months before, that park had witnessed yet another demonstration against the conspiracy trial of twenty-five striking journeymen tailors. In their rhetoric the protesters identified the trial with the betrayal of the premodern "Republic." "Aristocrats" had robbed the people of "that liberty bequeathed to them, as a sacred inheritance by their revolutionary sires" and "so mystified" the laws that "men of common understanding cannot unravel them." "What the people thought was liberty, bore not a semblance to its name." Resolutions compared the tailors to that "holy combination of that immortal band of Mechanics who . . . did throw into Boston Harbor the Tea." In 1837 a crowd dumped flour, not tea, and in its behavior revealed a commonplace form of premodern protest, a complaint against what Thompson calls "the extortionate mechanisms of an unregulated market economy." The crowd in City Hall Park heard protests about the high price of rent, food, and especially flour and denunciations of "engrossers," and the New York *Herald* called the gathering "a flour meeting—a fuel meeting—a rent meeting—a food meeting—a bread meeting—every kind of a meeting except a political meeting." But a New York newspaper had printed advice from Portland, Maine, that "speculating" flour dealers be punished with "some mark of public infamy," and after the meeting adjourned a crowd (estimates range from two hundred to several thousand) paraded to Eli Hart's wholesale flour depot. A speaker advised it to "go to the flour stores and offer a fair price, and if refused take the flour." Crowd members dumped two hundred barrels of flour and one thousand bushels of wheat in the streets, broke windows, did other minor damage, and chased the city's mayor with stones and "balls of flour." At first, little looting occurred, and when wagons finally appeared to carry home sacks of flour

"a tall athletic fellow in a carman's frock" shouted: "No plunder, no plunder; destroy as much as you please. Teach these monopolists that we know our rights and will have them, but d--n it don't rob them." The crowd moved on to other flour wholesalers and continued its work. It smashed the windows of B. S. Herrick and Son, dumped more flour, and finally stopped when "a person of respectable appearance" came from inside the building to promise that what remained untouched would be distributed gratis the next day to the "poor." The crowd cheered and melted away. More than twenty-eight persons were arrested (among them "mere boys," a few "black and ignorant laborers," a woman, and as yet unidentified white men), but the *Herald* found "mere humbug . . . the unholy cry of 'It's the foreigners who have done all this mischief.' " The daily press, including the *Herald*, denounced the crowd as "the very canaille of the city," but the *Herald* also pleaded for the reimposition of the assize of bread. "Let the Mayor have the regulation of it," said the *Herald*. "Let the public authorities regulate the price of such an essential of life." (In 1857, incidentally, New Yorkers again filled the City Hall Park to again demand the restoration of the assize of bread and to ask for public works.)[42]

More than half a century later different New York City workers re-enacted the 1837 food "riot." Unlike the rioters of 1837 in origins and rhetoric, the later rioters nevertheless displayed strikingly similar behavior. In 1902, and a few years

42. John R. Commons and others, eds., *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* (Cleveland, 1910), 5: 314–22; New York *Herald*, February 13–16, 1837; New York *Evening Post*, February 14, 16, 1837; New York *Sun*, n.d., quoted in Thomas Brothers, *United States of America as They Are* (London, 1840), 374–76; E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), 76–136 but especially 134. On the Confederate bread riots, see Paul Angle and Earl S. Miers, eds., *Tragic Years, 1860–1865* (New York, 1960), 1: 526–28; William J. Kimball, "The Bread Riot in Richmond," *Civil War History*, 7 (1961), 149–54. Early American patterns of price regulation involving foodstuffs and the disputes over them are detailed splendidly in Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York, 1946), *passim*, and Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City* (Philadelphia, 1968), ch. 1.

before Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, orthodox New York City Jews, mostly women and led by a woman butcher, protested the rising price of kosher meat and the betrayal of a promised boycott of the Meat Trust by retail butchers. The complaint started on the Lower East Side and then spontaneously spread among Jews further uptown and even among Jews in Brooklyn, Newark, and Boston. The Lower East Side Jews demanded lower prices. Some called for a rabbi to fix for the entire New York Jewish community the price of meat, as in the East European *shtetl*. Others formed a cooperative retail outlet. But it is their behavior that reveals the most. The nation's financial metropolis saw angry immigrant women engage in seemingly archaic traditional protest. Outsiders could not understand its internal logic and order. These women did not loot. Like the 1837 demonstrators, they punished. Custom and tradition that reached far back in historical time gave a coherence to their rage. The disorders started on a Wednesday, stopped on Friday at sundown, and resumed the following evening. The women battered butcher shops but did not steal meat. Some carried pieces of meat "aloft on pointed sticks . . . like flags." Most poured kerosene on it in the streets or in other ways spoiled it. "Eat no meat while the Trust is taking meat from the bones of your women and children," said a Yiddish circular apparently decorated with a skull and crossbones. The New York police and *The New York Times* came down quite hard on these Jewish women. A "dangerous class . . . very ignorant," said *The Times*, explaining:

> They mostly speak a foreign language. They do not understand the duties or the rights of Americans. They have no inbred or acquired respect for law and order as the basis of the life of the society into which they have come. . . . The instant they take the law into their own hands . . . they should be handled in a way that they can understand and cannot forget. . . . Let the blows fall instantly and effectively.
>
> . . .

Two days later, *The Times* reflected on a British Royal Commission then examining the effects of Jewish immigration on British society. "Stepney," *The Times* of New York noted, also was "becoming a foreign town. . . . Perhaps when the Royal Commission reports on what England should do about its un-English Londoners we shall learn what to do about these not yet Americanized New Yorkers whose meat riots were stranger than any nightmare." *The Times* found comfort in what it felt to be a "fact." Immigrant Jews had sparked the 1902 troubles. "The attempted incendiarism," it believed, "could not happen in an American crowd at all." *The New York Times* had done more than idealize a world that had never been lost in suggesting that premodern Americans had been little more than ordered and expectant entrepreneurs. In comparing its response in 1902 to that of the New York *Herald* in 1837, we measure some of the distance that proper Americans had traveled from their own, premodern American roots.[43]

Even though American society itself underwent radical structural changes between 1815 and the First World War, the shifting composition of its wage-earning population meant that traditional customs, rituals, and beliefs repeatedly helped shape the behavior of its diverse working-class groups. The street battle in 1843 that followed Irish efforts to prevent New York City authorities from stopping pigs from running loose in the streets is but one example of the force of old styles of behavior. Both the form and the content of much expressive working-class behavior, including labor disputes, often revealed the powerful role of secular and religious rituals. In 1857 the New York City unemployed kidnapped a musical band to give legitimacy to its parade for public works. After the Civil War, a Fall River cotton manufacturer boasted that the arrival of fresh Lancashire

43. New York *Herald*, April 21, 23, May 15–30, 1902; New York *Tribune*, April 19, 21, May 11, 16–27, June 15, 1902; New York *World*, May 16–19, 1902; New York *Commerical Advertiser*, May 15, 17, 24, 26, 1902; *New York Times*, May 23–26, June 7, 1902; New York *Journal*, May 15, 1902; *People* (N.Y.), May 14, 15, 20, 23, 26, 1902. Food riots occurred again among immigrant New York City Jews in the spring of 1917.

operatives meant the coming of "a lot of greenhorns here," but an overseer advised him, "Yes, but you'll find they have brought their horns with them." A few years later, the Pittsburgh courts prevented three women married to coal miners from "tin-horning" nonstrikers. The women, however, purchased mouth organs. ("Tinhorning," of course, was not merely an imported institution. In Franklin, Virginia, in 1867, for example, a Northern white clergyman who started a school for former slave children had two nighttime "tin horn serenade[s]" from hostile whites.) Recurrent street demonstrations in Paterson accompanying frequent strikes and lockouts nearly always involved horns, whistles, and even Irish "banshee" calls. These had a deep symbolic meaning, and, rooted in a shared culture, they sustained disputes. A Paterson manufacturer said of nonstrikers: "They cannot go anywhere without being molested or insulted, and no matter what they do they are met and blackguarded and taunted in a way that no one can stand . . . which is a great deal worse than actual assaults." Another manufacturer agreed:

> All the police in the world could not reach the annoyances that the weavers have at home and on the street that are not offenses—taunts and flings, insults and remarks. A weaver would rather have his head punched in than be called a "knobstick," and this is the class of injury they hate worst, and that keeps them out more than direct assault.

But the manufacturers could not convince the town's mayor (himself a British immigrant and an artisan who had become a small manufacturer) to ban street demonstrations. The manufacturers even financed their own private militia to manage further disorders, but the street demonstrations continued with varying effectiveness until 1901 when a court injunction essentially defined the streets as private space by banning talking and singing banshee (or death) wails in them during industrial disputes. In part, the frequent recourse to the courts and to the state militia after the Civil War during industrial disputes was

the consequence of working-class rituals that helped sustain long and protracted conflicts.[44]

Symbolic secular and, especially, religious rituals and beliefs differed among Catholic and Jewish workers fresh to industrial America between 1894 and the First World War, but their function remained the same. Striking Jewish vestmakers finished a formal complaint by quoting the Law of Moses to prove that "our bosses who rob us and don't pay us regularly commit a sin and that the cause of our union is a just one." ("What do we come to America for?" these same men asked. "To bathe in tears and to see our wives and children rot in poverty?") An old Jewish ritual oath helped spark the shirtwaist strike of women workers in 1909 that laid the basis for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. A strike vote resulted in the plea, "Do you mean faith? Will you take the old Jewish oath?" The audience responded in Yiddish: "If I turn traitor to the cause, I now pledge, may this hand wither and drop off at the wrist from the arm I now raise." (Incidentally, during this same strike a magistrate who advised troublesome Jewish women that "you are on strike against God" provoked Bernard Shaw's classic quip, "Delightful, medieval America always in the most intimate personal confidence of the Almighty.") Immigrant Catholic workers shared similar experiences with these immigrant Jews. A reporter noticed in 1910 at a meeting of striking Slavic steelworkers in Hammond, Indiana: "The lights of the hall were extinguished. A candle stuck into a bottle was placed on a platform. One by one the men came and kissed the ivory image on the cross, kneeling before it. They swore not to scab." Not all rituals were that pacific. That same year, Slavic miners in Avelia, Pennsylvania, a tiny patch on the West Virginia border,

44. Billington, *op. cit.*, 196; New York *Herald*, November 12, 1857; Fall River *Weekly News*, January 21, 1875; L. H., Pittsburgh, to the editor, *John Swinton's Paper* (N.Y.), September 28, 1884; A. B. Corliss, Franklin, Va., to the editor, *American Missionary*, 11 (1867), 27–28; Paterson *Press*, August 2, 1877; Paterson *Guardian*, August 2, 1877; Gutman, "Class, Status, and Community Power," *op. cit.*, 283–87; Gutman, "Social Structure and Working-Class Life and Behavior in an Industrial City, Paterson, New Jersey, 1830–1905," unpublished manuscript.

crucified George Rabish, a mine boss and an alleged labor spy. An amazed journalist felt their behavior "in the twentieth century . . . almost beyond belief":

> Rabish was dragged from his bed and driven out into the street amid the jeers of the merciless throng. . . . Several men set about fashioning a huge cross out of mine timbers. They even pressed a crown of thorns upon his temples. After they had nailed him to the cross, the final blasphemy was to dance and sing about the still living man.

That event was certainly unusual, but it was commonplace for time-honored religious symbols as well as American flags to be carried in the frequent parades of American workers. Western Pennsylvania Slavic and Italian coal miners in a bitter strike just east of Pittsburgh (eighteen of twenty thousand miners quit work for seventeen months when denied the right to join the United Mine Workers of America) in 1910 and 1911 carried such symbols. "These rural marches," said Paul Kellogg, "were in a way reminiscent of the old time agrarian uprisings which have marked English history." But theirs was the behavior of peasant and village Slavs and Italians fresh to modern industrial America, and it was just such tenacious peasant-worker protests that caused the head of the Pennsylvania State Police to say that he modeled his force on the Royal Irish Constabulary, not, he insisted, "as an anti-labor measure" but because "conditions in Pennsylvania resembled those in strife-torn Ireland." Peasant parades and rituals, religious oaths and food riots, and much else in the culture and behavior of early twentieth-century immigrant American factory workers were cultural anachronisms to this man and to others, including Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Elbert Gary, and even Samuel Gompers, but participants found them natural and effective forms of self-assertion and self-protection.[45]

45. Rischin, *op. cit.*, 144–94; Levine, *op cit.*, 154; Graham Adams, *Age of Industrial Violence, 1910–1915* (New York, 1966), 105–16, 188–94; Chicago *Socialist*, January 31, 1910, quoted in Brody, *Steelworkers in America, op. cit.*, 125–46; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, April 24, 1910 (courtesy of Robert D. Greenberg); Paul Kellogg and Shelby M. Harrison, "The Westmoreland Strike," *Survey*, 25 (1910), 345–66; *Report on the Miners' Strike in the Bituminous Coal Fields in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in 1910–1911* (Washington, 1912), *passim*. A recent work which convincingly disputes earlier views that Slavic coal miners were difficult to organize into trade unions is Victor H. Greene, *Slavic Community on Strike* (Notre Dame, 1968).

V

THE PERSPECTIVE EMPHASIZED in these pages tells about more than the behavior of diverse groups of American working men and women. It also suggests how larger, well-studied aspects of American society have been affected by a historical process that has "industrialized" different peoples over protracted periods of time. Fernand Braudel reminds us that "victorious events come about as the result of many possibilities," and that "for one possibility which actually is realized, innumerable others have drowned." Usually these others leave "little trace for the historian." "And yet," Braudel adds, "it is necessary to give them their place because the losing movements are forces which have at every moment affected the final outcome." Contact and conflict between diverse preindustrial cultures and a changing and increasingly bureaucratized industrial society also affected the larger society in ways that await systematic examination. Contemporaries realized this fact. Concerned in 1886 about the South's "dead"—that is, unproductive—population, the Richmond *Whig* felt the "true remedy" to be "educating the industrial morale of the people." The *Whig* emphasized socializing institutions primarily outside of the working class itself. "In the work of inculcating industrial ideas and impulses," said the *Whig*, "all proper agencies should be enlisted—family discipline, public school education, pulpit instruction, business standards and requirements, and the power and influence of the workingmen's associations." What the *Whig* worried over in 1886 concerned other Americans before and after that time. And the resultant tension shaped society in important ways. Some are

briefly suggested here. In a *New York Times* symposium ("Is America by Nature a Violent Society?") soon after the murder of Martin Luther King, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz warned: "Vague references to the frontier tradition, to the unsettledness of American life, to our exploitative attitude toward nature or to our 'youthfulness' as a nation, provide us with prefabricated 'explanations' for events we, in fact, not only do not understand, but do not want to understand." More needs to be said than that Americans are "the spiritual descendants of Billy the Kid, John Brown, and Bonnie and Clyde." It has been suggested here that certain recurrent disorders and conflicts relate directly to the process that has continually "adjusted" men and women to regular work habits and to the discipline of factory labor. Sidney Pollard reminds us that this "task, different in kind" is "at once more subtle and more violent from that of maintaining discipline among a proletarian population of long standing." [46]

The same process has even greater implications for the larger national American culture. Hannah Arendt has brilliantly suggested that the continual absorption of distinctive native and foreign "alien" peoples has meant that "each time the law had to be confirmed anew against the lawlessness inherent in all uprooted people," and that the severity of that process helps explain to her why the United States has "never been a nation-state." [47] The same process also affected the shaping and reshaping of American police and domestic military institutions. We need only realize that the burning of a Boston convent in 1834 by a crowd of Charlestown truckmen and New Hampshire Scotch-Irish brickmakers caused the first revision of the Massachusetts Riot Act since Shays' Rebellion, and that three years later interference by native firemen in a Sunday Irish funeral

46. Richmond *Whig*, June 15, 1886 (courtesy of Leon Fink); Clifford Geertz, "We Can Claim No Special Gift for Violence," *New York Times Magazine*, April 28, 1968, pp. 24–25; Pollard, "Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution," *op. cit.*, 254–71.

47. Hannah Arendt, "Lawlessness Is Inherent in the Uprooted," *New York Times Magazine*, April 28, 1968, pp. 24–25.

procession led to a two-hour riot involving upward of fifteen thousand persons (more than a sixth of Boston's population), brought militia to that city for the first time, and caused the first of many reorganizations of the Boston police force.[48] The regular contact between alien work cultures and a larger industrializing or industrial society had other consequences. It often worried industrialists, causing C. E. Perkins, the president of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad to confide in a friend in the late nineteenth century, "If I were able, I would found a school for the study of political economy in order to harden men's hearts." It affected the popular culture. A guidebook for immigrant Jews in the 1890s advised how to make it in the New World: "Hold fast, this is most necessary in America. Forget your past, your customs, and your ideals. . . . A bit of advice to you: do not take a moment's rest. Run, do, work, and keep your own good in mind." [49] Cultures and customs, however, are not that easily discarded. So it may be that America's extraordinary technological supremacy—its talent before the Second World War for developing labor-saving machinery and simplifying complex mechanical processes—depended less on "Yankee know-how" than on the continued infusion of prefactory peoples into an increasingly industrialized society.[50] The same process, moreover, may also explain why movements to legislate morality and to alter habits have lasted much longer in the United States than in most other industrial countries, extending from the temperance crusades of the 1820s and the 1830s to the violent opposition among Germans to such rules in the 1850s and the 1860s and finally to formal prohibition earlier in this century.[51] Important relationships also exist

48. Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants* (New York, 1968), 186–91; Roger Lane, *Policing the City: Boston* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), chs. 1–2.

49. Sidney Fine, *Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State* (Ann Arbor, 1956), 54, 56, 103; Rischin, *op. cit.*, 75.

50. John Higham, in C. Vann Woodward, ed., *Comparative Approaches to American History* (New York, 1968), 101; H. J. Habakkuk, *American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1967), *passim.*

51. Although the literature on American temperance and prohibition movements is vast, nothing yet written about them approaches in clarity of analysis

between this process and the elite and popular nativist and racist social movements that have ebbed and flowed regularly from the 1840s until our own time, as well as between this process and elite political "reform" movements between 1850 and the First World War.[52]

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and use of evidence Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872* (Pittsburgh, 1971). Much information on the relationship between temperance and late nineteenth-century American factory labor is found in the little-used *U.S. Commissioner of Labor, Twelfth Annual Report, 1897* (Washington, 1897), a detailed analysis of the replies about working-class drinking habits from the owners of more than seven thousand establishments which together employed about 1,750,000 workers. For the later period see (but with great care) Herman Feldman, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York, 1927), especially pages 200–12. Feldman, who surveyed representative manufacturing firms about the impact of Prohibition on work patterns, learned that "many plants in pre-Prohibition days had the five-day week long before Henry Ford ever thought of it, because so many workers were absent after pay-day." Employers used "considerable ingenuity" to cut down Monday absenteeism. Some had shifted pay-day from Saturday to a midweek work day, and others paid wages less frequently. Feldman received replies from 287 firms. Two-thirds said improved attendance at work followed Prohibition. A New Hampshire shoe manufacturer no longer had to "reckon with the after-effects of celebrations, holidays, and weekends" as he did "years ago." And a St. Louis metal manufacturer told that the Saturday paycheck no longer meant "the usual 'Blue Monday.'" "Now," he explained, "we have changed to Friday, and as we are paying by the check system this enables the men to deposit their checks in one of the local banks that stay open on Friday evenings. We have no Saturday absences." Not all sounded so optimistic. "The stuff available to labor," said an employer of Delaware River tugboat and barge workers, "and there is plenty of it, is so rotten that it takes the drinking man two to three days to get over his spree." And a Connecticut manufacturer feared that new technology threatened regular attendance at work more than traditional or spurious spirits. "Cheap automobiles," he said, "make more employees tardy than does liquor."

52. Detailed local studies are badly needed here, and these should focus on the clear continuities between antebellum municipal "reform" movements and the issues that dominated much of local politics in the Gilded Age. Such studies will reveal neglected elements of continuity in political issues, patterns of elite reform, and patterns of political centralization that started before the Civil War and continued into the Progressive Era. Few saw this more clearly than President Andrew D. White of Cornell University who reminded delegates to the First Lake Mohonk Conference on the Negro Question in 1890 that "in 1847" New York had "sank back toward mobocracy." "We elected judges on small

The sweeping social process had yet another important consequence: it reinforced the biases that otherwise distort the ways in which elite observers perceive the world below them. When in 1902 *The New York Times* cast scorn upon and urged that force be used against the Jewish women food rioters, it conformed to a fairly settled elite tradition. Immigrant groups and the working population had changed in composition over time, but the rhetoric of influential nineteenth- and early twentieth-century elite observers remained constant. Disorders among the Jersey City Irish seeking wages due them from the Erie Railroad in 1859 led the Jersey City *American Standard* to call them "imported *beggars*" and "*animals,*" "a mongrel mass of ignorance and crime and superstition, as utterly unfit for its duties, as they are for the common courtesies and decencies of civilized life." (According to their historian Earl Niehaus, the antebellum New Orleans Irish fared so badly in the "public" view that many non-Irish criminals, Germans and even blacks among them, assumed Irish names.) Although the Civil War ended slavery, it did not abolish these distorted perceptions and fears of new American workers. In 1869 *Scientific American* welcomed the "ruder" laborers of Europe but urged them to

salaries for short terms," said White; "we did the same thing with the governors. We have swung backward or forward . . . out of that. We now elect men for longer terms. In many ways, we have returned to more conservative principles." Isabel Barrows, ed., *First Lake Mohonk Conference on the Negro Question* (Boston, 1890), 120. See also Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 55 (1964), 157–69. The pattern Hays uncovered for Progressive Pittsburgh was not new because its roots rested in elite fears of immigrant and working-class domination of municipal governments (and especially the influence of those groups on local fiscal and educational policies), fears that revealed themselves powerfully before the Civil War and retained much importance during the Gilded Age. The focus on municipal corruption has hidden such important social and political processes from historians. See the original and convincing study by Douglas V. Shaw, "The Making of an Immigrant City: Ethnic and Cultural Conflict in Jersey City, New Jersey, 1850–1877" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1972), that demonstrates conclusively (for that city at least) that antebellum elite nativism did not end with the Civil War but continued into the postwar decades.

"assimilate" quickly or face "a quiet but sure extermination." Those who retained their alien ways, it insisted, "will share the fate of the native Indian." Elite nativism neither died out during the Civil War nor awaited a rebirth under the auspices of the American Protective Association and the Immigration Restriction League. In the mid-1870s, for example, the Chicago *Tribune* called striking immigrant brickmakers men but "not reasoning creatures," and the Chicago *Post-Mail* described that city's Bohemian residents as "depraved beasts, harpies, decayed physically and spiritually, mentally and morally, thievish and licentious." The Democratic Chicago *Times* cast an even wider net in complaining that the country had become "the cess-pool of Europe under the pretense that it is the asylum of the poor." Most Chicago inhabitants in the Gilded Age were foreign-born or the children of the foreign-born, and most English-language Chicago newspapers scorned them. The Chicago *Times* told readers that Slavic Chicagoans were descended from "the Scythians," "eaters of raw animal food, fond of drinking the blood of their enemies whom they slew in battle, and [men] who preserved as trophies the scalps and skins of enemies whom they overthrew." "The old taste for the blood of an enemy has never been obliterated," said this proper Chicago newspaper. And the Slavs had now "invaded the peaceful republic." In words echoed differently in *The New York Times* fifteen years later, the Chicago *Times* advised: "Let us whip these slavic wolves back to the European dens from which they issue, or in some way exterminate them." Here, as in the Jersey City *American Standard* (1859) and *The New York Times* (1902), much more was involved than mere ethnic distaste or "nativism." In quite a different connection and in a relatively homogeneous country, the Italian Antonio Gramsci concluded of such evidence that "for a social elite the features of subordinate groups always display something barbaric and pathological." The changing composition of the American working class may make so severe a dictum more pertinent to the United States than to Italy. Class and ethnic fears and biases combined together to worry elite observers about the diverse worlds below them and to distort

gravely their perceptions of these worlds. Few revealed these perceptual difficulties and genuine fears more clearly than John L. Hart in 1879:

> About one half of our poor can neither read nor write, have never been in any school, and know little, positively nothing, of the doctrines of the Christian religion, or of moral duties, or of any higher pleasures than beer-drinking and spirit-drinking, and the grossest sensual indulgence. . . . They have unclear, indefinable ideas of all around them; they eat, drink, breed, work, and die; and while they pass through their brute-like existence here, the rich and more intelligent classes are obliged to guard them with police and standing armies, and to cover the land with prisons, cages, and all kinds of receptacles for the perpetrators of crime.

Hart was not an uneducated "nativist." He had been professor of rhetoric, the English language, and literature at the College of New Jersey and also the principal of the New Jersey State Normal School. These words appeared in his book entitled *In The School-Room* (1879) where he argued that "schoolhouses are cheaper than jails" and that "teachers and books are better security than handcuffs and policemen." We have returned to Lesson One.[53]

53. Jersey City *American Standard*, September 20, 1859 (courtesy of Douglas V. Shaw); Earl Niehaus, *Irish in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 186; *Scientific American*, June 19, 1869, pp. 393–94; Chicago *Tribune*, May 11, 1876; Chicago *Post and Mail*, n.d., reprinted in Chicago *Tribune*, July 25, 1876; Chicago *Times*, April 25, 1874; Chicago *Times*, May 6, 1886 (courtesy of Steven Hahn); Antonio Gramsci, quoted in Charles Tilly, "Collective Violence in European Perspective," in Hugh D. Graham and Ted R. Gurr, eds., *Violence in America* (New York, 1969), 12; John L. Hart, *In The School-Room* (Philadelphia, 1879), 252–57 (courtesy of Barbara Berman). See also John Kober, *Capone, The Life and World of Al Capone* (New York, 1972), 344, for an extraordinary description of Alcatraz prison routine in the 1930s: "Midmorning. Bell. Recess. Bell. Work. 11:30. Bell. Prisoners Counted. Bell. Noon. Bell. Lunch. 1 P.M. Bell. Work. Midafternoon. Bell. Recess. Work. 4:30. Bell. Prisoners Counted. Bell. 6:30. Bell. Lockup. 9:30. Bell. Lights Out."

its tragic but rich and deeply human interior textures far more incisively than temporary visitors such as Alexander Hamilton and William D. Haywood and illustrious native sons such as William Graham Sumner and Nicholas Murray Butler. The poet celebrated what gave life to a city in which men, women, and children made iron bars and locomotives and cotton and silk cloth:

It's the anarchy of poverty
delights me, the old
yellow wooden house indented
among the new brick tenements

Or a cast iron balcony
with panels showing oak branches
in full leaf. It fits
the dress of the children

reflecting every stage and
custom of necessity—
chimneys, roofs, fences of
wood and metal in an unfenced
age and enclosing next to
nothing at all: the old man
in a sweater and soft black
hat who sweeps the sidewalk—

his own ten feet of it—
in a wind that fitfully
turning his corner had
overwhelmed the entire city.

Karabin and Carlos Williams interpreted life and labor differently from the Chicago *Times* editor who in the centennial year (1876) boasted that Americans did not enquire "when looking at a piece of lace whether the woman who wove it is a saint or a courtesan." [55]

55. Gabro Karabin, quoted in George J. Prpic, *Croatian Immigrants in America* (New York, 1971), 331–32; William Carlos Williams, "The Poor," in Louis Untermeyer, ed., *Modern American and Modern British Poetry* (rev. ed.; New York, 1955), 132; Chicago *Times*, May 22, August 26, 1876.

APPENDIX

TABLE 3. MALE OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, SELECTED JEWS AND ITALIANS, NEW YORK CITY, 1905

	Jews	*Italians*
Total Males 20 and Older	6250	4518
Total Females 20 and Older	4875	3433
Male Occupational Structure		
Unskilled Laborer	7.7%	39.1%
Clothing Worker	44.7%	18.0%
Skilled Worker (Nonclothing)	21.5%	29.2%
Nonlaborer	26.1%	13.7%
Household Composition		
Percentage of All Households with a Nuclear Kin-related Core	96.6%	94.5%
Number of Kin-related Households	3584	2945
Number of Subfamilies	159	262
Nuclear Households	48.6%	59.9%
Extended Households	11.8%	23.2%
Augmented Households	43.1%	21.1%
Percentage of Households and Subfamilies with a Husband and/or Father Present	93.2%	92.9%

Note: As in 1880 the percentages again total more than 100 percent because a small number of households that included both lodgers and relatives are counted twice.

The data are drawn from the New York State 1905 manuscript census schedules, and I am indebted to Mark Sosower, Leslie Neustadt, and Richard Mendales for gathering this material. As with the 1880 Paterson data, they cast grave doubts on the

VI

THESE PAGES HAVE FRACTURED HISTORICAL time, ranging forward and backward, to make comparisons for several reasons. One has been to suggest how much remains to be learned about the transition of native and foreign-born American men and women to industrial society, and how that transition affected such persons and the society into which they entered. "Much of what gets into American literature," Ralph Ellison has shrewdly observed, "gets there because so much is left out." That has also been the case in the writing of American working-class history, and the framework and methods suggested here merely hint at what will be known about American workers and American society when the many transitions are studied in detail. Such studies, however, need to focus on the particularities of both the groups involved and the society into which they enter. Transitions differ and depend upon the interaction between the two at specific historical moments. But at all times there is a resultant tension. Thompson writes:

> There has never been any single type of "the transition." The stress of the transition falls upon the whole culture: resistance to change and assent to change arise from the whole culture. And this culture includes the systems of power, property-relations, religious institutions, etc., inattention to which merely flattens phenomena and trivializes analysis.

Enough has been savored in these pages to suggest the particular importance of these transitions in American social history. And their recurrence in different periods of time indicates why there has been so much discontinuity in American labor and social history. The changing composition of the working population, the continued entry into the United States of nonindustrial people with distinctive cultures, and the changing structure of American society have combined together to produce common

modes of thought and patterns of behavior. But these have been experiences disconnected in time and shared by quite distinctive first-generation native and immigrant industrial Americans. It was not possible for the grandchildren of the Lowell mill girls to understand that their Massachusetts literary ancestors shared a great deal with their contemporaries, the peasant Slavs in the Pennsylvania steel mills and coal fields. And the grandchildren of New York City Jewish garment workers see little connection between black ghetto unrest in the 1960s and the kosher meat riots seventy years ago. A half-century has passed since Robert Park and Herbert Miller published W. I. Thomas's *Old World Traits Transplanted*, a study which worried that the function of Americanization was the "destruction of memories." [54]

Not all fled such a past. Born of Croatian parents in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, in 1912 (his father and brother later killed in industrial accidents), Gabro Karabin published a prize-winning short story in *Scribner's Magazine* (1947) that reflected on the experiences replayed in different ways by diverse Americans and near-Americans:

> Around Pittsburgh, a Croat is commonplace and at no time distinctive. As people think of us, we are cultureless, creedless, and colorless in life, though in reality we possess a positive and almost excessive amount of those qualities. Among ourselves, it is known that we keep our culture to ourselves because of the heterogeneous and unwholesome grain of that about us. . . . We are, in the light of general impression, just another type of laboring foreigner . . . fit only as industrial fuel.

The native-born American poet William Carlos Williams made a similar point. He lived near the city of Paterson and grasped

54. Ralph Ellison and James Alan McPherson, "Indivisible Man," *Atlantic*, 226 (1970), 57; Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *op. cit.*, 80; Park and Miller, *op. cit.*, 281. I am indebted to Leon Stein, the editor of *Justice*, for calling to my attention the fact that W. I. Thomas, whose great study of the Polish immigrant leaves us all in his debt, was the author of *Old World Traits Transplanted*.

widely held belief that working-class family disruption commonly occurred as the byproduct of immigration, urbanization, and factory work. The 1905 Jews studied lived on the Lower East Side (Rutgers, Cherry, Pelham, Monroe, Water, Pike, Jefferson, Clinton, Madison, Livingston, Henry, Division, Montgomery, Delancey, Rivington, Norfolk, Suffolk, and East Third Streets, East Broadway, and Avenue B). The Italians resided on Hancock, Thompson, Mulberry, Bayard, Mott, Canal, Baxter, Elizabeth, Spring, Prince, Grand, Hester, MacDougal, Sullivan, West Houston, Bleecker, Bedford, Downing, and Carmine Streets, and the Bowery. The table above deserves another brief comment. Clothing workers are listed as a separate occupational category because census job descriptions make it impossible to determine their skill levels. A large percentage of those listed as nonlaborers engaged in petty enterprise (including peddling): 10.9 percent of all the Jewish males and 8.3 percent of all the Italian males. On early twentieth-century immigrant households and family behavior, see Virginia Yans McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization Among Buffalo's Italians," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (1971), 299–314, and McLaughlin, "Like the Fingers of the Hand: The Family and Community Life of First-Generation Italian-Americans in Buffalo, New York" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo, 1970).