DIFFERENT SHADES OF GREEN:


Barry Wilder
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American Social Histor
Ronald Schatz
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This study attempts to clarify the complex interaction between class and ethnicity in Middletown's Irish-American community over a period covering the last fifteen years of the 19th and first fifteen years of the twentieth century. These issues will be discussed within the context of the Irish-Americans' numerous fraternal, temperance and nationalist organizations. To clarify the focus of this study, let us turn to the secondary literature relevant to our subject.

No piece of secondary literature gives an adequate treatment of Irish-American fraternal organizations, temperance societies or nationalist organizations. As a consequence, a vast source of data, could be used to help understand the structural dynamics of the Irish-American population, has been left untapped. Another deficiency of the secondary literature is its scholiastic treatment of post 1900 Irish-American history: there is an inherent assumption the destiny of the Irish-American population had been sealed by the beginning of the twentieth century. A significant body of literature concerns itself with Irish-American social mobility. Perhaps inadvertently, social mobility studies impose middle class cultural values on predominantly working class Irish-American population; historians have avoided this inherent bias by concentrating on the cultural orientations of middle class Irish-Americans, with the assumption working class Irish-Americans loyally tagged behind their "prominent" fellow countrymen. On a more positive
side, recent additions to the body of secondary literature have attempted to delineate the complex interaction between ethnic bonds and class divisions within the Irish-American population.

This study begins in 1880. Stephen Thernstrom's seminal work *Poverty and Progress* concluded at about the same time. In it barest form, Thernstrom's work was a mobility study. Thernstrom's data overwhelmingly shows that there was almost no social mobility for Irish immigrants between 1850-1880. Thernstrom reports the kind of pessimism this encouraged in the Irish-American community; "Clerics would write that 'in 99 cases in a 100 we shall have reason to rejoice if the son turns out as well as the father.'" Unfortunately, Thernstrom avoids the possibility that Irish-American workers rejected the ideology of social mobility for the sake of more realistic aspirations.

In a very roundabout way, Thernstrom tries to prove that the "fatalistic peasant religion" Irish brought to America was suddenly "Americanized... as the Irish absorbed the optimistic expansionist assumptions of American social thought." If Irish-Americans could not directly experience occupational mobility, they would perpetuate their trust in it vicariously. Thernstrom interpreted Irish working class support for the Church as "Catholic workmen deriving status from their identification with the largest and most rapidly growing church in the community." If the Irish working man's identification in the Church was too impersonal to successfully insure their belief in social mobility, there was always their vicarious pleasure in
watching a slight proportion of the Irish population develop into an "elite business class;" the large Irish Roman Catholic component of the working class was securely attached to a church and a church-related associational structure dominated by a priest and a business elite firmly committed to the prevailing American ideology of enterprise and competition. So if we take Ternstrom at his word, native Protestant America did not need to fear that Irish-Americans would turn to radicalism. A well coordinated system of control, managed by middle class Irish, insured that Irish workers would embrace the world view of middle class culture. Ternstrom also presents evidence which would suggest that Irish workers did not adhere to the cultural values of middle class society.

Ternstrom is amazed at finding "A list of donors of $50 or more to a special fund drive in 1879 included some two dozen ordinary laborers." Ternstrom suggests "from the point of view of worldly success, the money might have been put to more productive uses." Ternstrom speaks as if this "point of view" was a universal principle; when more than likely it was "foreign" to many Irish-American workers. When discussing the predilection of Irish-American workers to save their money for the purchase of a home instead of investing it in an independent business enterprise, Ternstrom notes, "in their drive for property it was necessary every able bodied male be employed at the earliest possible age" as a result, "second generation" did not receive an education. This explains the "exceptionally low mobility of Irish youths." What is at issue here, is the desire
of Irish-Americans to live in a rent free home after they have stopped working. This tradition is still practiced in Ireland today. Considering these values of Irish workers, it is highly dubious to say they cherished middle class cultural values.

In this author's opinion, Thernstrom's argument rests on the assumption that the Irish community is air tight and therefore, Irish workers were culturally programmed by middle class leaders. In Middletown, this was not the case in the early 1800's. Middle class Irish had no control over a worker who wished to join the local chapter of the Knights of Labor. The best they could do to keep the Irish worker in the "fold" by offering him an alternative institution which would provide the same benefits in a depoliticized form. So the prominent middle class Irish in town started the Knights of Columbus Forest City Council in 1883. Another problem with Thernstrom's analysis is confusing the interests of the church and priest as indistinguishable from those of the Irish middle class. In an incident involving control of the local Catholic temperance movement, two prominent Middletown businessmen were rebuked by the Bishop for usurping the "right of judgement" from the local priest. The Irish middle class was not given an absolute right to rule.

Douglas V. Shaw's book, The Making of an Immigrant City enunciates, without Thernstrom's bias, the subtle interplay between class and ethnicity in a Gilded Age community. Shaw finds, the "Irish middle class frustrated in a society that offers them opportunity but not recognition." Consequently, middle class Irish
attempt to get recognition by consolidating the Irish-American working class under its control. This was true for Middletown middle class Irish-Americans who attempt to monopolize political and social control in the Irish-American community. Shaw avoids the pitfalls of incorrect generalizations attributable to excessive dependence on "Irish spokesmen." When considering the leaders of local temperance unions, he finds all but one out of eleven identified as such, were working class Irish-Americans. Shaw admonishes Irish-American historians for avoiding "detailed local research of temperance organizations. . .these studies will add to our knowledge of class interaction within the Irish community itself." Hopefully, our study of just such an Irish-American working class temperance society will address Shaw's summons.

Shaw raises another important issue when he states; "Yet another revolves about the roots that the Irish-American middle class men had in the Irish community. . .None seems to have been active in Irish nationalist circles, although most were prominent in religious activities." In other words, what shape did ethnic solidarity take when it was organized by an Irish middle class removed from many of the reinforcements of ethnicity which actively functioned in the lives of working class Irish-Americans. An analysis of the Knights of Columbus Forest City Council, an organization dominated by middle class element will give some insight into this question. To understand the importance of Irish nationalism for working Irish-Americans, and their organizations, we must consider
the work of Thomas N. Brown.

Brown is considered the foremost authority because of the popularity of his well received book, *Irish-American Nationalism*. In his survey of the subject he notes the increasing Irish-American interest in Irish affairs during the beginning of the 1880's. Brown finds "the rise of Irish-American nationalism split the Catholic community." Brown concentrates on the political divisions which occurred because of "radical" nationalists challenged the existing democratic machine. Especially pertinent for Middletown is the recognition that "Irish nationalists detested Tammany and its patronage politics as much as anyone." In Middletown the working class nationalist organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, frequently challenged the supremacy of the middle class Irish-American political leaders. It is unfortunate that in the end Brown falls back on reductionist middle class values when he retreating from a full understanding of the importance of working class radical nationalism; "In retrospect it is clear that behind Irish radical rhetoric were fundamentally conservative demands... But mostly the Irish wanted to be middle class and respectable..." nine times out of ten one could find an ambitious Horatio Alger figure." One has to search out a good radical historian to set the record straight.

Eric Foner states; "Many Irish-American workers saw no contradictions between ethnic nationalism and class consciousness." Irish-American nationalism and the working class solidarity that it inspired was not a rigid ethnic reactionary movement. The most ardent nation-
alist members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians fought to create cross-ethnic labor unions. As Foner points out, "Irish-American nationalism did Americanize its participants," in that it helped them cope with the realities of industrializing America. The divisions fostered by nationalism in the 1880's persisted until the early 20th century.

As we move into the twentieth century, secondary literature on Irish-Americans is full of gaps. Most historians assume that Irish-Americans became increasingly conservative, a hypothesis shared by this study. Some historians, like David Doyle in his book Native Rights and Native Empires, attribute this trend to the occupational diversity of the Irish-American population after 1900. In a roundabout way, Doyle sees Irish-American conservatism as a result of a new Irish middle class being integrated into mainstream America. This analysis tends to ignore the majority of Irish-Americans who were still working class at this time. This study will attempt to fill this gap by paying close attention to the circumstances which drove workers into a more conservative stance.

Middletown did have a progressive movement, which a section of the Irish-American population participated in. Historians have tended to characterize the participation of Irish-American skilled laborers and Irish-American white collar workers in the progressive movement as inconsistent, spontaneous or disorganized. Thomas M. Henderson in Tammany Hall and the New Immigrants, suggests that the "Irish-American white collar proletariat was given to suddenly rupturing their ties with the established democratic machine," if a progressive
candidate struck their fancy. During the process leading to San Francisco's ratification of a progressive reform charter, Willem Issel has noted: "Organized labor (skilled workers) plays a crucial role in the battle for the Charter, even though it displayed considerably less unanimity on the desirability of the reform than did business." In the case of Middletown, the alliance of Irish-American white collar workers and skilled union men with native American upper class businessmen, was cemented in a twentieth century fraternal organization, The Elks. Basically, Middletown's Irish-American population undergoes drastic structural changes during the final decade of the twentieth century which can be partially reconstructed with an understanding of fraternal, temperance and Nationalist organizations.
The model we shall employ to explain the interaction of class and ethnicity in Middletown's Irish-American community for the period 1880-1915 is a conglomeration of concepts apparent in secondary literature. For the period 1800-1910 we find a dichotomy in Irish-American ethnic solidarity. The first half of the dichotomy has been given much attention by conservative historians. The other half has been well documented by revisionist historians.

In 1880 Middletown had a handful of successful middle class Irish-Americans. In response to the working class militancy in organizations like the Knights of Labor, they sought to reaffirm their control over the Irish-American community. The middle class started new cross-class organizations and sought to re-establish their control in other existing ones. To be sure these middle class leaders were successful in drawing Irish-Americans into the organizations they controlled. As a result of this success, the middle class Irish-Americans received recognition from Native Americans and a right to political participation. Irish-American workers who participated in these cross-class, middle class dominated organizations accepted leader's cultural value system. An Irish-American worker who accepted such middle class cultural beliefs as "social mobility" was drawn to the ranks of these organizations. The myth of "social mobility" was perpetuated by the middle class leaders because in many cases they controlled the lever of social mobility for workers. The participation of workers that accepted the leadership of middle class Irish-Americans is not clear, but most likely it was a majority. This type of ethnic solidarity makes no notice of class divisions within the ethnic community. The interests of the workers was the same as those of the middle class.

The origins of the other half of this dichotomy are somewhat more difficult to identify. Nationalism during the 1870's many radical move-
ments, including the knights of labor and Greebache party inspired a working class consciousness among many Irish workers. A group of Irish-American workers participated in these movements. By the 1880's we find this movement along with radical nationalism, inspiring autonomous working class organization. In Middletown Irish-American workers formed alternative organizations to the middle class organization. These alternative organizations express the active working class cultural system of its participants. These individuals uncomprimisingly sought independence from middle class society. A vibrant network of working class organizations prospered in Middletown. Out of this network appeared the leaders of many unions.

Up until the beginning of the twentieth century the dichotomy of ethnic solidarity persisted. Gradually the working class brand of ethnic solidarity weakened and dissolved. One reason for the dissolution of this system was the arrival of Italian Catholics. Fear of the Italians drove many workers who had participated in an autonomous working class cultural system into cross class organizations. Many skilled workers at this time were experiencing prosperity as a result of successful unionization; these individuals also abandoned working class institutions.

Many Irish-Americans: skilled workers joined organizations consisting mostly of middle class Native Americans. Skilled workers were joined by a new group of Irish-American white collar workers in their exodus from Irish-American organizations. The full integration of these individuals into middle cultural systems came from their participation in Middletown's progressive movement allowed skilled workers to continue their political opposition to democratic middle class politics.

In 1910 we find the Irish-American divided along lines very different from what was found in the 19th century. The strain of the ethnic solidarity led by middle class Irish-Americans was still successfully
muting class divisions. Skilled workers who had formerly led working class organizations were now adjusted to middle class society and politics. There were no more defenders of working class ethnic solidarity. Irish-American ethnic solidarity was now undeniably aligned with middle class society.
For an institutional representative of Irish-American cross-class ethnic solidarity, the Knights of Columbus Forest City 3 has been chosen. The organization was started by a core of prosperous Irish-American businessmen and professionals. These middle-class Irish-Americans were already church, temperance and political leaders when they started Forest City. This organization was indicative of a general effort by middle-class Irish-Americans to reaffirm their control over the Irish-American community. Judge D.J. Donahue a "prominent" Irish-American in town clarified one primary motivating principle behind the organization; "We have felt it necessary to form an organization which could be made to take the place of the secret societies which were drawing into their ranks and away from the church many of the brightest young Catholics in the diocese." This was undoubtedly a reference to the Knights of Labor (it was a secret organization at this time), which did have a unit in Middleton. No mention of the Knights of Labor could be found located, in the newspapers or local directory, other than a reference to a Middleton chapter in the minutes for the Knights' 1884 Convention. The formation of the Knights of Columbus Forest City 3 came at a time
when many Irish-American workers were beginning to reject middle-class leadership.

Although the charter member list for Forest City contains a majority of businessmen, professionals and white collar workers, working class Irish-Americans did make up almost one-third of the total. The representation of workers gradually increased to almost one-half, but few of them ever became officers. The Irish-American workers who joined Forest City were willing to accept the social and political leadership of middle-class Irish-Americans.

There were many benefits available for the working class Irishman who belonged to Forest City. One advantage was occupational mobility. Before 1900 almost every Irish-American described as a "clerk" worked for an Irish-American businessman or professional. It was typical for a clerk to work as a laborer before gaining white collar occupation.

Of thirty Irish-American "clerks" randomly chosen from the 1895 city directory, thirteen were identified as "laborers" in the 1885 city directory. Of these thirteen who experienced social mobility, nine can positively be identified as members of Forest City during the period they made occupational changes. Granted, this is only suggestive evidence for proving that social mobility for
Irish-American laborers was dependent upon membership in Forest City. The implications of this data are pivotal if we are to understand the motivations of working class Irishmen who voluntarily accepted middle-class leadership. It is possible that laborers joined Forest City because they perceived membership as an integral element in their chances for social mobility. With information regarding institutional affiliations, it might be possible to reduce the inherent middle-class bias in social mobility studies. We shall proceed under the tentative assumption that Irish-American workers who joined the middle-class dominated Knights of Columbus Forest City, were receptive to the leadership and values of their middle-class leaders.

From another perspective on the notion of social mobility, we could interpret the Knights of Columbus Forest City as an organization responsible for doling out political patronage. It should be noted that five of the middle-class Irish-Americans who were members of the Town Democratic Committee were responsible for recruiting almost one-half of the working class members of Forest City. Workers were remunerated for their political support of middle class democratic politics with appointments to paid positions. A survey of the Irish-Americans hired from 1885 to 1900 as paid policemen, firemen, water
commission and street commission employees, indicates that two-thirds of them were members of Forest City; this explains why middle-class Irish, when given an opportunity to run for office by the native dominated Democratic Party, usually chose commissions and committees responsible for filling these jobs. This author has only tapped the surface of the body of data which would verify Forest City's role as a patronage mechanism. Detailed research needs to be done with the numerous annual town expenditures, many of which are nominal. In the work that has been done with sizable town expenditures, for construction work, road work and material supplies, it appears that Irish-Americans associated with Knights of Columbus Forest City benefitted more than any other group. A greater appreciation of this data might explain why certain skilled workers, such as carpenters and masons, joined Forest City.

For a full understanding of the structural components of Middleton's Irish-American community, we must delineate its relationship with the community as a whole. First off, one should not get the impression that Middleton ever had an Irish-American political machine. During the period we are concerned with, the Democratic Party, which Irish-Americans have consistently supported, did not have a stronghold on local politics; within this minor party, the Irish were given a subordinate role by native
American leaders. Hence, the patronage capabilities of middle-class Irish Democrats was measurable but not guaranteed. The middle-class leaders of Knights of Columbus Forest City could not supply enough patronage to satiate the needs of working class Irish-Americans. As a result, many of the cultural and political demands put to Irish-American workers by middle-class Irish-Americans fell on deaf ears. During the 1880's when middle-class Irish-Americans asserted their control over workers, with organizations like Forest City, workers immediately responded by initiating alternative institutions; up until the twentieth century these organizations would be in continual conflict. As a result, there is a crystallization of a dichotomy in ethnic solidarity; we find ethnic bonds taking shape under the tutelage of middle-class Irish-Americans, and alternatively under the guiding hand of working class leaders.

Six months after prominent Irish-Americans started the Knights of Columbus Forest, Middleton had another Irish-American fraternal organization, Knights of Columbus Diego. Right from their respective inceptions the two organizations were noticeably different; while Forest City was organized in the respectable law office of Judge Daniel J. Donahoe, the Diego council was organized in
An analysis of Diego's charter reinforces the notion that the organization was started by workers as an alternative to joining Forest City. Of Diego's twenty-two charter members, eleven are listed in the city directory as unskilled workers or laborers; five members are listed as skilled workers; four members are listed as owning small businesses, with two unidentifiable. It is assumed there was no cross-membership between Forest City and Diego, since Diego scheduled their weekly meetings on the same nights as Forest's. Diego continued to recruit a mostly working class membership up until its dissolution in 1906; unlike Forest, Diego also selected workers, in an overwhelming majority, for its leadership.

It is unfortunate that there is so little information regarding institutional goals and its activities. Part of the reason for the negligible amount of data is directly related to Diego's history. The middle-class leaders of Knights of Columbus Forest City were vehemently opposed to Diego's existence; their resistance had little to do with competition for members in economic sense, but very much to do with competition for members in the political and social sense.

Representatives of Forest City went to the Knights of Columbus state convention in 1885 and appealed to the state officers for the revocation of Diego's charter.
They obliquely reasoned that Diego's charter was "illegitimate." Even though Judge Donahoe, organizer of Forest City, was a prominent state leader in the Knights of Columbus organization, Diego held onto its charter. Nevertheless, word was out in town that Forest City was Middleton's only "legitimate" and proper Irish-American fraternal organization. That the assertions of Forest City's middle-class leaders were commonly accepted we only have to peruse the local paper. Each and every time the name of a Forest City officer was mentioned his name was always followed by "...a respected leader of the K. of C. Forest City Council;" whereas no such mention of fraternal affiliations followed the name of a Diego council officer.

Knights of Columbus Diego shall be treated here as the institutional focal point of Middleton's Irish-American working class community. This designation is due primarily to the nature of Diego's membership. Diego membership was a conglomeration of all the diverse interests which constituted Middleton's Irish-American working class community. We find leaders of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, made up mostly of skilled workers and saloon owners, taking an active part in the Diego organization. Also, the leaders of St. Aloysius Temperence Society, consisting mostly of unskilled workers and laborers, are well
represented in Diego. Middleton's working class Irish-American community was diverse, but all its participants shared a common desire to maintain their independence from middle-class leadership. Diego's working class members were more willing to challenge the rules of middle-class society than the workers who accepted middle-class leadership. The most proficient way to analyze the difference in cultural orientations that existed among Irish-American workers is to search for differences in behavior. The opportunity for such a pursuit is a Middleton strike that occurred in 1899; what started as a simple labor dispute, erupted into a "fraternal" dispute.

On August 12, 1899, ten "spare men" employed by the Middleton Railway Company because they felt they were not getting paid for only seven hours work when they were actually working fourteen. The strikers formed a union, "Conductors and Motorcar men," with two Irish-Americans as leaders. Both of the strike leaders were members, and one was an officer, of the Knights of Columbus Diego. The strikers' wage demands were accepted by officials and they went back to work the next day. Back on the job, the strikers made a new demand of management, the two individuals who did not participate in the strike had to be fired. Management, of course, refused so the union men
struck again. In response to their insubordination, management discharged all the strikers. The question that must be raised is, why would these individuals risk striking again after receiving a one-hundred percent increase in wages? We can understand the motives of the two union leaders in the context of their affiliation with Diego.

The Knights of Columbus Diego nurtured a strong commitment among Irish-American workers to "help their own." The two workers who did not join the strike violated the trust that existed among workers who belonged to Diego; punishing the traitors, and thereby preserving this trust was of more importance than an exorbitant wage increase. The workers that belonged to Diego operated with a different value system than the workers who belonged to the Knights of Columbus Forest City. The workers who joined Forest City were accepting of middle-class values; in exchange for their subordination to the political and social leadership of middle-class these Irish-American workers received what was perceived as an opportunity for social mobility. If an Irish-American unskilled worker valued "making it," it was almost a necessity that he join Forest City, because mobility was dependent upon connections with middle-class Irish-Americans.
An analysis of the 1899 strike also suggests that Irish-American workers were conscious of the theoretical distinctions this paper has drawn betwixt Diego and Forest City. It was reported in the Connecticut Catholic a week after the strike:

Two of Middleton's most distinguished Catholic fraternal orders are currently embroiled in a dispute over the circumstances of a recent labor dispute...We suggest that the fraternal brothers retreat to their lodge rooms to study the texts of their charters...of especial interest is the passage, "our cardinal principles are friendship, charity, benevolence, and brotherly love." Men, by the mixing of fraternalism with labor disputes, neither cause is done justice and both suffer.

This is an obvious reference to the Middleton Railway Strike. Also, since there were only two Catholic fraternal organizations the "dispute" must have been between Diego and Forest. Considering both strike leaders were members of Diego, most likely the two workers who did not strike were members of Forest City. It would follow that the middle-class cultural orientations of workers belonging to Forest City did not direct them towards labor activism. It would be a mistake to assert that members of Diego were radicals bent on instigating drastic social and economic change. Neither was Diego a half-baked labor union for its members. Diego was an organization which encouraged ethnic bonds within the framework of a
strictly working class culture. Irish-American working class cultural institutions in the last two decades of the 19th century, usually evolved in response to existing middle-class dominated organizations. This was the case with Diego, and it turns out to be true also for Middleton's powerful working class temperence society.

Temperence societies have been around in America since the 1820's. One of the first organizations started by Irish Catholics when they first came over to this country was the temperence society. Middleton's Irish were no exception; the first Catholic temperence society was organized by the Irish in 1854. By 1880 there were five such organizations affiliated with the Irish Catholic Church, St. John's. Up until 1885 all of these organizations had middle-class officers and working-class membership. Being known as a leader of a temperence organization was a good tactic for middle-class Irish-Americans seeking recognition from native Americans. Local newspapers reflected this phenomenon by referring to individuals as a "respected temperence leader" or "prominent advocate of the temperence movement." From a critical viewpoint we could suggest middle-class Irish-American temperence leaders used their organizations for political purposes.

As Repayment for their efforts to make Irish-American
workers responsible temperate citizens and workers, middle-class Irish-Americans were rewarded with a share of political power. This supposition is given weight by the fact that three quarters of the Irish businessmen who were included in the native dominated town Democratic Committee in 1880, were also leaders of Catholic temperence organizations. As middle-class Irish-Americans realized the political and social value associated with temperence leadership, they made a concerted effort to take full control of the movement; this meant that eventually these individuals would run into conflict with the Catholic Church which cherished its considerable influence in the Catholic temperence movement.

The first recorded dispute between middle class temperance leaders and the church hierarchy occurred in 1886. Two local Irish - American businessmen, William J. Collins and Charles Fitzgerald, were officers in a laymen's organization called "The Connecticut Catholic Temperance Societies." Apparently at their 1886 convention, the organization passed certain resolutions which would give its middle class representatives more control over the flourishing Irish catholic temperence movement. Bishop McMahon of Hartford reacted negatively to the organizations proposed resolutions. In a letter to Collins the bishop claimed the resolutions would "take away the parish priest's right of judgement on temperence activities." The
Bishop was adament that Collins and Fitzgerald resign from their official roles in the temperence movement. As a result of the scandal, the four Irish-American temperence organizations that Collins and Fitzgerald were officers of experienced drastic decreases in membership. With the Bishop accusing the middle class leaders of the temperence societies of using the issue for "political motives", it is likely that many Irish-American workers saw it in their best interest to initiate a temperence organization that would remain immune from the political aspirations of middle class political leaders.
St. Aloysius Temperence Society was started in 1886 by a group of Irish-American workers and laborers. The tarnished images of existing temperence organizations and their middle-class leaders encouraged Irish-American workers to switch their membership to St. Aloysius. The Irish-American workers who made this move were rejecting the manipulative leadership of middle-class Irish-Americans. St. Aloysius went on to grow in membership and become a stalwart institution in maintaining the autonomy of working-class Irish-Americans. While the established temperence organizations were reflective of the aspirations of its middle-class leaders, St. Aloysius' acted wholly in accord with the goals of Irish-American workers.

It is difficult to differentiate St. Aloysius from those temperence organizations controlled by middle-class Irish-Americans. None of these organizations left any records. Newspapers for the most part mentioned temperence organizations in short blurbs announcing upcoming events. From the limited data that is available it can be hypothesized that St. Aloysius concentrated less on proselytizing to its members about temperence, and more on
providing alternative forms of entertainment. The organization was well known in town for "frequently sponsoring well organized and successful festivals." Even the weekly temperence meetings were enjoyable to attend. Whole families would come for a night of singing, game playing and conversation. The temperence side of the organization was approached in an informal and often humorous manner.

A detailed account of one weekly meeting gives us a good indication of the "self-help" motive in working class temperence organizations. During the meeting different individuals who had been converted to abstinence would get up before the members and discuss the positive effects this change has had on their lives. The speakers often specifically addressed a friend in the audience as to why he/she should "wear the red band" (a sign of abstinence). Usually there would follow a humorous exchange between speaker and friend. A typical exchange went,

"Fred are you still resisting?"
"Oh, I am doing just fine Jim."
"Well, I heard you almost lost your job yesterday."
"You're mistaken Fred. That was some other Donovan."
"Well, I don't know any other Donovan who would sleep all day under his wagon instead of doing his deliveries."
"Well, maybe you're right Fred."

Members of St. Aloysius were never pressured to become temperate, but were encouraged by concerned neighbors
and friends.

Meetings reflected a common concern among members for each others' welfare. Temperence was not necessarily a moral issue, but a very practical attempt by Irish-Americans to protect their fellow workers from unemployment, family disturbances and poverty. One only has to peruse the town newspaper's daily account of arrests to understand the disruptive effect alcohol abuse had on the Irish-American working class community; Irish-Americans, during the period 1885-1900, accounted for approximately half of the arrests on charges of drunkenness, while they constituted only a third of Middleton's population. Most of the offenders were, like the majority of St. Aloysius' members, unskilled laborers. Middleton's Irish-American working class temperence society was not formed for political reasons, nor was it organized by individuals primarily interested in individual social mobility. Members of St. Aloysius sought to define their needs according to their own values. They rejected prohibition as the answer, while middle-class led organizations embraced it, because it would take away the control they had over their own lives.
The next link in what we shall label a network of work-class organizations was the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The Hibernians were mostly Irish-American skilled workers, with a minor representation of small shopkeepers and laborers. Many of the Hibernians participated in either St. Aloysius and/or the Knights of Columbus Diego; few Hibernians were members of middle class dominated temperance societies or the Knights of Columbus Forest City. The Hibernians were the individuals most likely to directly challenge the political and social leadership of middle class Irish-Americans. Nearly four-fifths of the Irish-American skilled workers named as leaders of unions can be positively identified as members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. It is difficult to identify the political challenge of the Hibernians since it was always within the democratic party. There are many instances when a Hibernian, usually connected with Diego and/or St. Aloysius, fought a party regular for a local office. Any success these attempts had was due to the ability of Hibernians to get the support of working class native Americans. This organization nurtured a strong Irish-American nationalism in its members, but also encouraged cross ethnic working class cooperation.

The 1898 democratic nomination for Mayor provides a prominent example of the attempts made by Irish-American skilled
workers, with broad based working class support, to challenge the established middle class dominated democratic party. James Donovan, a plumbers union representative and leader of both Diego and Hibernians, challenged T.W. O'keefe, a middle class democratic committee member, for the mayoral nomination. Donovan evidently won the nomination because he appealed to "his fellow union men." Without elaborating, the paper reports "while there were no signs of blood in the hall, all agreed the contention over the nomination for mayor opened many wounds." Throughout the campaign, Donovan's supporters claimed that the local democratic party "has given only half-hearted support to his campaign." The position of benign neglect taken by middle class party regulars on Donovan's campaign while not responsible for his loss, was integrally related to his disastrous showing at the polls. Donovan had the poorest showing of any democratic nominee in the overwhelmingly democratic 1st district. This election exemplifies how difficult it was to challenge the middle class control over the Irish-American faction of the democratic party.

These working class challenges rarely resulted in victory, but the mere fact they were a possibility forced the established democratic party to recognize the demands of workers not allied with middle class dominated institutions. For the skilled workers of the Hibernians, their antagonisms with the established middle class democratic party
would continue into the 20th century; partly out of past frustrations and changes in status, the political base and strategy of skilled Irish-American workers will be transformed from a working class opposition to a solidly middle class one.
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

From 1900-1910 Middleton's Irish-American community experienced drastic structural changes. One crucial element in these changes was the "Italian Menace." Between this period Italian immigrants arrived in numbers unequaled by any other period in the town's history. The mass immigration of Italians posed the greatest threat to unskilled Irish workers. In a complex process that involved both coercion and voluntarism, almost all Irish-American workers were integrated back into cross-class organizations whose leadership was dominated by middle-class Irish-Americans. After 1907 no institution existed which articulated strictly the values and goals of Middleton's Irish-American working class population. The invasion of Italians during this period was the primary cause of Irish-American workers abandoning their self-help organizations for cross-class organizations led by middle-class Irish-Americans.

In the last two decades of the 19th century, there was a measurable differentiation amongst Irish-American workers. Approximately forty percent of the Irish-American population remained laborers or unskilled factory hands. A third of the Irish-American population experienced
success as skilled workers and white collar employees. For many of the skilled Irish-American workers in Middleton this period brought prosperity. Multi-ethnic unions flourished in Middleton; by 1904 there were seventeen unions in Middleton, many of which were under Irish leadership. Some skilled Irish-Americans started successful independent businesses, while many others attained guaranteed pay scales and protection from non-union labor. As a result of their prosperity, these Irish-American labor aristocrats began a move out of the working class organizations to join or start organizations where a majority of members were native American businessmen, professionals or white collar workers. This new multi-ethnic coalition was also joined by an emerging group of younger Irish-Americans who had achieved employment in white collar and middle management positions. Politically, this coalition was to challenge what constituted the established democratic machine in Middleton; they also initiated the limited progressive movement in Middleton which reached its peak around 1910.

This period, 1900-1910, was fundamentally one of transition for Middleton's Irish-Americans; it signalled the decline of Irish-American workers' independence from middle-class culture. Unskilled Irish-American workers faced with the "Italian Menace" and the gradual desertion
of skilled workers from their institutions, accepted the leadership of middle-class Irish-Americans. Ethnicity took preeminence over class differences in the Irish-American community. For many skilled workers this period brought integration into middle-class culture and politics; in effect these individuals discarded their activist Irish nationalism for the security and status of middle-class conservatism. As we shall discuss later, this period was a transition from the dichotomy of Irish ethnic solidarity which existed in late 19th Century Middleton to its consolidation by World War I; when this process is finished Irish-American ethnicity will be distinguishable from American middle-class society only by a half-hearted claim to a sanitized version of its history in America.

St. John's parish records give us an indication of how Irish-American workers responded to the influx of Italians to Middleton. The parish priest obliquely notes in his 1904 report, "My long time parishioners are quite disturbed over the entrance of large numbers of new members." Irish-Americans' fears of "the Italians taking over the church" were not caused by some abstract prejudice. While in 1900 Irish-Americans outnumbered Italians four to one (3200 families to 800 families) by 1905 their majority had dwindled to four hundred families (2800 to 2400). Many Irish families left St. John's for Catholic parishes
in other towns. Some had simply abandoned church altogether. As a result of ethnic conflict membership in organizations affiliated with St. John's dwindled markedly. Unskilled Irish-American laborers were the most dependent on church affiliated organizations, subsequently they were more distraught over the Italian influx than other members of the Irish-American community. Skilled workers had their unions; businessmen and professionals had their own organizations independent of the church. Unskilled Irish-Americans had to battle with Italians not only for control of their church, but for housing and jobs.

Not surprisingly, Middleton did not have sufficient housing to fill the needs of incoming Italian immigrants. As a result "the incomers moved into the old Irish section--the north end, bounded by the river and the railroad tracks." In a survey of the Middleton city directory for 1900, one finds that the streets in this area were overwhelmingly populated by unskilled Irish-American workers. While it is difficult to document, it seems safe to assume that the Italian immigrants were also competing for jobs with this same group of Irish-American workers. Irish-American workers responded quickly and decisively to these problems by initiating a fund-raising drive in 1903 with the intent to build a new Catholic church in the South Farms area.
As we have already noted St. Aloysius temperance society was a pivotal organization for Irish-American workers. In 1903 its leaders and members were still almost exclusively drawn from the working class. The only change that can be noted is the significantly decreased participation of skilled workers in St. Aloysius; in 1891 skilled workers amounted to a third of its membership, whereas in 1903 their proportional participation was down to an eighth. (This trend, as we shall discuss later, was true for all the traditionally Irish-American working class organizations.) In 1903 St. Aloysius held its first festival to raise funds for a new church. Between 1903 and 1906 they held at least nine such affairs, all of them for the same purpose. St. Aloysius' dedication to its new cause apparently diverted attention from the original purpose of the organization, temperance. An anonymous letter to the Catholic newspaper questioned motives of a temperance organization which stooped to selling beer at one of their festivals. The working class members of St. Aloysius got their new church, St. Francis, in 1907, but not without paying a heavy price.

St. Francis' six thousand dollar mortgage was supplied by the Knights of Columbus Forest 3. It is at this point we attempt the hazardous exploit of judging individuals' motives. In 1906 the Knights of Columbus Diego
gave up its charter, leaving Knights of Columbus Forest 3 the only Knights of Columbus organization in Middleton. These two organizations had been in conflict since 1883. The middle-class leaders of the Knights of Columbus Forest 3 had fought hard to have the working class Knights of Columbus Diego dissolved; they were successful in taking away official recognition of Knights of Columbus Diego, but the organization was still prospering into the beginning of the 20th Century. If we were to speculate why Knights of Columbus Diego finally gave up the struggle in 1906, we might note that many of the leaders of the Knights of Columbus Diego were also the leaders of St. Aloysius temperance society, which was set on getting a new church. 56 This author does not believe that an actual deal was made which had the Knights of Columbus Diego giving up their charter in exchange for the Knights of Columbus Forest 3 supplying the mortgage money for St. Francis' Church. A more sensible approach would be to consider these circumstances as exemplifying a general trend that was altering the basic structure of Middleton's Irish-American community. The autonomy of Irish-American working class culture was rapidly declining in Middleton. With the ever increasing threat of Italian immigration, Irish-American workers retreated under the protective wings of Irish-American middle-class leadership. The bonds of ethnic solidarity were activated to such an excessive degree that class
distinctions were shaded over. From 1905 on, cross-class institutions were not just one half of the scenario in Middleton's Irish-American community, but the entire scenario.

In 1906, St. Aloysius announced the admission of sixteen new members. Of these new members, six were prominent Irish-American professionals and businessmen. Two of the individuals, both successful businessmen, were leaders of the Knights of Columbus Forest 3. Considering that up until 1903 one could find only a few businessmen in St. Aloysius (and in all cases they belonged to Knights of Columbus Diego and/or the Ancient Order of Hibernians) this inclusion of middle-class Irish-Americans marked a significant departure for this organization. For substantiation that this incident was not a fluke, one only has to lollipop to 1914, when we find the majority of St. Aloysius' officers consisting of businessmen and professionals. An institution which had embodied the self-help ethnic among Irish-American workers was well on its way to becoming just another cog in a machine whose power switch was in the hands of the Irish-American middle-class.

Not all skilled workers abandoned Irish-American working class institutions for the sake of middle-class institutions. The first group of Irish-American skilled
workers to take this path were those individuals who successfully made the transition from skilled worker to independent businessman; two of these individuals were original charter members of the organization we will now study, the Elks. The next group of skilled workers that characteristically joined this process were those individuals whose unions succeeded in getting its members guaranteed pay scales and job security; typically this group included carpenters, painters and bricklayers. Some Irish-American workers never participated in the move from working class to middle-class organization. The primary reason for the lack of status change for these workers was that their skills became outmoded as industrialization steamrolled into the 20th Century. For those individuals who did join middle-class organizations, such affiliations significantly changed their world view.

The Middleton Elks chapter was started in 1902 as a mixed ethnic cross-class organization. Two of the original founders were Irish-Americans. Both these individuals, John F. Convey and J.T. Flynn, were union man turned businessman. In the past both Flynn and Convey were active members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Convey was the first "Exalted Leader" of the Elks and therefore, had an integral part in choosing potential Elk initiates. In one aspect, Convey kept up the tradition of his union to include a multi-ethnic membership. But unlike unions, most
of the initial members of the Elks were businessmen and white collar workers. Many of these individuals were associated with the new manufacturing firms in Middleton.

The Elks became a conglomeration of individuals from very different backgrounds, but with mutual needs and goals. The Irish-American skilled worker turned businessman found himself in a precarious position. The situation of J.F. Convey is a good case in point; Convey was long associated with Ancient Order of Hibernians crowd, which had in the past, consistently challenged the social and political leadership of middle-class Irish-Americans; neither party could have expected to be receptive to the other. Part of what drew Convey to the Elks was apparently, his desire to continue his political opposition with established middle-class Irish-Americans, while at the same time recognizing his new status as a successful businessman. Those associated with new manufacturing concerns and white collar workers also found themselves closed out of the established Democratic Party in Middleton. The coalition embodied in the Elks would eventually take a significant role in the local Democratic Party; they constituted what could safely be called Middleton's progressive movement. Besides the political purposes of the Elks, it also proved to be important economically for Irish-American skilled workers. If the old saying "It's
all in who you know" is valid, then if you were an Elk, you knew the right people.

At least a dozen Irish-American skilled workers started their own businesses while they were members of the Elks. The experiences of the Kennedy brothers, Patrick and David, are indicative of the economic booty that membership in the Elks might have generated for skilled workers. The Kennedys were both employed carpenters when they joined the Elks. By 1910, these two owned a successful contracting firm which had half a dozen employees. According to a contemporary secondary source, a major factor in the Kennedy's success was their "close relationship with New England Enameling Company" which was responsible for the "extensive contracting they did for the company." It is quite possible that this "relationship" was formed in the halls of the Elk's lodge, since both the treasurer and Vice-president of the N.E. Enameling Co. were active members of the Elks. Middleton's manufacturing base expanded dramatically from 1900 to 1910, if you were a carpenter or bricklayer and an Elk, you were sure to get a good piece of the pie.

The next group of Irish-American skilled workers that joined the Elks were those whose occupations were well protected. The Bricklayers #11 Union was Middleton's first and strongest union. From 1896 to 1904 they were involved
in at least three strikes; in each of these the Bricklayers
#11 was successful. A bricklayers strike on September 17,
1904, indicates the power of their union in Middleton. A
group of ten bricklayers employed by H.R. Butler Co.
struck when they realized that non-union workers were
employed to work at the same site. It was reported in the
newspaper that the "bricklayers laid down their tools and
went home" when they discovered a group of foreign speaking
non-union workers working on a different part of the struc-
ture. 67 The non-union personnel were not bricklayers, hence
did not directly threaten the union men's security.
Apparently, it was typical for bricklayers to get an assur-
ance from contractors that no non-union personnel would be
employed when they were on the job. If an employer violated
this agreement union bricklayers would not work for him.
The amount of leverage union bricklayers had over contractors
was most likely linked to the demand for their labor. In
the case of the 1904 strike, "all of the strikers easily
found employment elsewhere." 70 There were at least seven
Irish-American bricklayers who belonged to the Elks in 1907,
including the union leader for 1907, John O'Brien, three
past leaders, and three out of four of the union's charter
members. 71 There were many Irish-American skilled who did
not enjoy success as either independent businessmen or
protected union members. This group of skilled workers is
conspicuously absent from the membership ranks of middle-
class organizations like the Elks. An example of a skilled occupation not protected by labor scarcity or from technological advancement, was the Iron molders. Middleton's Iron Molders Union No. 373 was not organized until 1901. By 1906 they only had half the iron molders unionized. A strike by iron molders at W & B Douglas Co. in 1904 gives us a good indication of the troubles they faced in the beginning of the 20th century. The strike was a protest against "labor saving molding machines." The nineteen day strike was unsuccessful, as the company had no problem finding replacements for the strikers.

To understand how the dire circumstances of Iron Molders affected their institutional affiliations, we need only look at three Irish-Americans who participated in the W.B. Douglas Co. strike. James Drennan was a leader of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, along with many masons, carpenters and painters, in the 1880's and 1890's; while these other individuals dropped out of the Hibernians to join the Elks, Drennan remained a leader of the working class Hibernians up until 1908. Daniel Christopher followed a similar pattern, only with the Knights of Columbus Diego. When Christopher first became a leader of Diego in 1896 he was one among many skilled workers who served as the organization's officers; by 1905 the only union men that remained with Christopher as leaders of Diego were bartenders.
both of whom were silk weavers facing problems similar to those of the Iron Molders, poor job security and/or the threat of technological advance.

In its first years of operation, the Elks membership reflected the gap that was developing between those workers who achieved middle-class status, and those who remained in vulnerable working-class occupations. Since Irish-American skilled workers were the backbone in working-class organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Knights of Columbus Diego, these changes were bound to have a detrimental effect on these organizations and the strain of Irish-American ethnic solidarity they nurtured.

Old time radical Irish nationalist, and lifetime member of the Hibernains, W. J. Coughlin, reflected in 1904 about the demise of the Ancient Order of Hibernians; "Unfortunately it appears that no one in Middleton is concerned any more about the home of their ancestors." Coughlin was referring not only to a decreased affection for Ireland, but also to the defection of many skilled workers from the Irish-American working class community and its organizations. With the Irish land compromise of 1902, Irish Nationalism lost its primary organizational focus. Those skilled workers who were moving away, ideologically, from the working class culture embodied in the Hibernians,
found the land compromise to be a convenient excuse for shedding their Irish Nationalism as they moved into middle-class organizations. This process of integration into middle-class organizations for old time Irish Nationalists was experienced by other non-working class individuals. As we discussed earlier, the saloon owners were integrally involved in Irish-American working class organizations. Frank M. Dugan typifies this group of individuals. As an active Hibernian, Dugan led a group of Irish-Americans in the local "Free Silver" movement; Dugan, like many participants in Middleton's independent working class cultural institutions was willing to disassociate himself from the established Democratic Party. Dugan went on to become a leader of the middle-class Elks. With the desertion of Dugan, and other small businesses like him, the Ancient Order of Hibernians ceased to become a focal point in working class ethnic solidarity. The Ancient Order of Hibernians limped along until about 1908, mostly under the leadership of unskilled Irish-American laborers until interest in its preservation was minimal. The organization had a "rebirth" in 1913 at the hands of "prominent" Irish-Americans but in substance it was an organization designed to promote the ineffectual notion of "ethnic gifts," rather than an effective base for articulating an activist Irish-American working class tradition.
Another relatively "new" group of Irish-Americans played a decisive role in the Elks' coalition. In 1907 there were at least twenty-four clerks and other white collar personnel belonging to the Elks. In an analysis of membership for the Knights of Columbus Forest City for the period 1880-1900 we find many Irish-Americans listed as "clerks." The important difference between the Forest City clerks in the 19th century and the Elk clerk of the first decade of the 20th century was place of employment. Forest City clerks and white collar personnel were overwhelmingly employed by middle class Irish-American businessmen and professionals, most of whom were members and leaders of Forest City. Over four-fifths of the Irish-American clerks who belonged to the Elks were employed in native American businesses; and a majority of these individuals were employed in the new manufacturing companies or insurance companies that came to Middletown near the beginning of the twentieth-century.

These new firms represented a new avenue to mobility for young Irish-Americans. In a majority of cases upper management personnel from companies where each clerk was employed, also belonged to the Elks. Few of the young clerks had institutional ties with the Middletown Irish-American community. For the most part, they did not live in working class neighborhoods, hence they had a minimal identification with this section of the Irish-American community. Also, unlike 19th century white collar Irish-Americans, they did not owe their jobs to middle class Irish-Americans, so had little
reason to support their social and political aspirations. The clerks identified their interests with those of their upper-middle class employers. This new class of young Irish-American white collar workers, unlike the Irish-American skilled workers who had long complex histories in the Irish-American community, were generally unattached. As a result, they carried out with a vengeance the political and social preferences they held in common with their upper middle class employers.

The political maneuverings during this period are quite exasperating if one is going to evaluate them without the aid of rigorous research. The period 1900 to 1910 was one of transition for the Irish-American population in Middletown. Hence, individuals had conflicting alliances. To illustrate the complexity of local politics during this period, we shall concentrate our efforts on the battle in 1904 over the Democratic nomination for the minor office of Registrar of Voters. The local newspaper called it the "most hotly contested battle for a democratic nomination in the town's history." 81

The Democratic nomination for Registrar of Voters had traditionally been reserved for an Irish-American who was not part of the Irish-American and native American middle class party leadership. The office usually went to an Irish-American worker who belonged to the middle class dominated Knights of Columbus Forest City. All three contestants for the position in 1904 were Irish-
American. The first contestant was E.E. Carey, an old time member of Forest City and employee of Ebony Lamp Company. Ebony Lamp was owned by Charles Fitzgerald, a prominent Democrat and Forest City officer. Carey was the choice of the middle class party hierarchy. The second candidate was Thomas O'Connell, who was described in the paper as a "prominent leader of St. Aloysius," the powerful working class temperance organization. O'Connell was the typical 19th century working class leader; he had served as an officer of Knights of Columbus Diego and was an active member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The third candidate Humphrey O'Connor, was described as an "ambitious young clerk." O'Connor, an Elk, was employed by the new manufacturing firm Omo Manufacturing Company. Each candidate had "their own respective constituencies. The paper reports most of the votes each candidate received were "rock solid." The only votes up for contention were those of the union men. They were divided almost equally in their support for O'Connor and O'Connell. A vote for O'Connell can be interpreted as an effort to remain loyal to traditional working class affiliations. A vote for O'Connor, the Elk, should be viewed as an acceptance of middle class political values. On each ballot the skilled Irish-Americans vacillated back and forth between the two candidates. As a result of the skilled workers' indecision, the party hierarchy candidate, E.E. Carey, ended up winning the nomination. This victory for the middle class Irish-American faction in the Democrats is indicative of the relative success they and their native American cohorts, achieved during this
period of political and social transition.

When we move onto the last few years of 20th century's first decade, divisions which were ambiguous earlier solidify. As the unions of Irish-American skilled workers become more successful and conservative, these workers join the Elks and identify more strongly with the organization's middle class politics. A new generation of Irish-American young men join white collar occupations which lead them to joining the middle class Elks. By 1910 the Elks contained a wide-based constituency which would effectively challenge the primacy of the established local Democratic party.

The Democratic progressives could not have gotten their candidate for mayor in William Fisher, elected without cross-over votes from local Republicans. The Progressives probably received these votes because they were simultaneously anti-Italian and vehemently opposed to the established Democratic party.
The progressive movement in Middletown can not be considered along the lines of urban populist movements, which concerned themselves with the fundamental problems of the urban masses. Although the primary organization in Middletown's progressive movement, the Social Service League, did address the horrendously overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in Italian immigrant neighborhoods, this was a secondary concern. The Social Service League spent most of its time making sure "the immigrants did not take advantage of the many state, municipal and private charities serving the community." In its 1910 report, the League states: "Italians are known as liable to avoid a hard days work if at all possible.... it is our job to make sure every capable man is placed in a respectable job." The political reform advocated by the Mayor, a former Wesleyan University professor were typical of progressive demands in localities throughout the country; "we might absorb the town in the city and then adopt something like the much discussed commission form of government." A group of Irish-Americans took an active part in this plan for prescriptive municipal government.

Of the nine Irish-Americans on the Social Service League's board, eight were members of The Elks. Included in this group were three one former cigar makers' union representative and active union representatives from the plumbers union and bricklayers union. Among this group we also find two Irish-American white collar workers. The remaining three were young professionals who had recently joined The Elks. An emerging group of young Irish-American doctors, lawyers and engineers
were joining the native dominated Elks instead of the traditional Irish-American fraternal order, the Knights of Columbus Forest City. This constituency of Irish-American skilled workers, clerks and professionals in the Elks organization provide an outline for any mass desertion of Irish-Americans from Middletown's established democratic party.

The Irish-Americans who participated in the progressive movements did receive a share of the power from their middle and upper class fraternal brothers. The list of city officers for 1910 shows almost a clean sweep for the progressive Elks. Irish-Americans and Elks occupied one Alderman's and one Councilman's position; the Alderman was a locksmith and the councilman was an agent for Standard Oil. A young Irish-American lawyer and Elk served as prosecuting attorney. The progressives would not have gained power without their support from Irish-Americans. The coalition of middle class native Americans and Irish-American skilled workers, white collar workers and young professionals that emerged in 1910 could not have materialized without the long time fraternal affiliations between the two groups.

Irish-American skilled workers, white collar workers and young professionals were either closed out of power positions in the Irish-American community by the entrenched Irish-American middle class or because of their positions in the wider community no longer identified their interests with it. Skilled workers and white collar workers made their way to middle class status through native dominated organizations like the Elks; hence there was an appreciable distancing from the Irish-American community. Many of the young Irish-American Elks came from backgrounds similar to prosecuting attorney William J. Coughlin.
Jr. The son of well known radical Irish nationalist William B. Coughlin, Coughlin Jr. was brought up to feel removed politically and socially from the leading middle class Irish-Americans. The only way Coughlin could recognize his middle class status as a professional, without allying himself with established middle class Irish-American leadership was to do so outside of the Irish-American community. An intangible in this discussion is the increasing willingness of Irish-American workers (other than labor Aristocrats) to accept in the twentieth century the leadership of middle class Irish-Americans. Quite possibly the individuals who joined the Elks perceived the working class Irish-Americans as unwilling to accept alternative forms of leadership like their own. The solidification of middle class leadership in the Irish-American neighborhoods was well established by this time. The antagonism between Irish-American workers and Italian immigrants had effectively spelled the dissolution of working class cultural institutions. Since Irish-American had either lost their institutions or had them merged into middle class dominated institutions it is difficult to document their activities during this time period. An opportunity for analyzing their increasing conservatism is available in their response to an I.W.W. led strike by Italians in 1912.
The first major labor disturbance that was attributed to Middleton Italians occurred at Russell Manufacturing, a local textile mill. The first mention of this strike appears in the June 5th edition of the Penny Press. The strike was organized by representatives of the International Workers of the World. The strikers ranks were filled almost totally by Italians and Poles. For our purposes the most important aspect of this event is the total absence of Irish-Americans at the strike meetings. The I.W.W. representative makes this fact quite clear when he asks "all the Irish to raise their hand." The paper reported "no Irish were present." The conspicuous absence of the Irish is not surprising. The Irish had made it known long ago that they harbored no special affinity for the "foreigners" who took over their church and threatened their established neighborhoods and jobs. So when 20th Century radical movements, such as the I.W.W., were brought face to face with working class Irish-Americans they rejected them; workers were introduced to radicalism not by periodicals or propaganda, but by the Italians.

On the third day of the strike the local Catholic priest spoke to the Italian strikers at their evening meeting. Father Donovan told the strikers they "must go
back to work." We would be seriously mistaken to label Donovan a puppet of the Russell Company. From the beginning of his tenure at St. John's, Donovan made it known that he was more likely to fit into the mold of the activist local priest. In 1904 Donovan made some of his beliefs known in a letter to the Connecticut Catholic. He admonished fellow Catholics for not looking out for the interests of the Catholic working man; "Every working man needs a union to protect his interests." Donovan's parish reports contain many anecdotes regarding the plight of the working man in his parish. In 1901, Donovan was instrumental in organizing the Catholic Benevolent League to care for the needs of the poor in his parish; the leadership of this organization was made up of working class Irish. Under Donovan the committee of laymen: overseers for St. John's included not only businessmen and professionals, but, for the first time, leaders of working class organizations. Donovan was also very active in the Knights of Columbus Diego and St. Aloysius. If Donovan had a constituency it was the working class parishioners of the church; it's likely that the viewpoint that he expressed to the strikers was more in line with Irish-American workers than with members of the Irish-American middle-class.

It is not surprising that Donovan was concerned about violence. The violent Lawrence strike was still
fresh in the minds of local Irish-Americans. In all the strikes that local Irish-Americans had participated in there was never any report of violence. The many Irish workers who had moved to the South Farms area (the location of Russell Manufacturing), were especially cognizant of the threat of violence. This fear is reflected by the Irish policemen who volunteered to guard the plant during the strike.

The consolidation of the Middleton Irish-American community under middle-class leadership might have also been a factor in Irish-American workers' refusal to participate in the strike. The integration of Irish-American working class organizations with middle-class organizations was nearly complete by 1912. While in the past we could find all working class organizations, there are none to be found in 1912. In regards to the strike, we find in 1912 many workers employed at Russell Manufacturing, including foremen, skilled and unskilled workers, belonging to the middle-class dominated Knights of Columbus Forest 3. This type of institutional affiliation for workers at Russell Manufacturing undoubtedly had a part in their refusal to participate in the strike. The cross-class membership of Knights of Columbus Forest 3 encouraged a conservative ethnicity for Irish-American workers. It was the type of ethnicity that identified Italians as
"foreigners," and not as fellow workers, who had to be excluded from Irish-American organizations.

The notion that cross-class institutions blunt working class activism is everyday theoretical hardware for historians. If we compare the cross-class relations of Italians and Irish in 1912, this theory is applicable. In a general way, Italians were in a situation in 1912 that was similar to the Irish's situation in the last two decades of the 19th century. The Italians had not established a tradition of cross-class institutions in 1912. The newspaper reports that the "prominent Italians in town" had to "send a representative" to talk with the strikers and convince them to end the strike. There was little or no communication between Italian strikers and the Italian middle-class. Without cross-class organizations, such as fraternal organizations, Italian workers could not be swayed from their radicalism by middle-class values.

Irish-American workers, by 1912, were meeting two, three, even five days a week in organizations with Irish-Americans of middle-class status. In the age of mass media it is easy to underrate the importance of institutional affiliations. Today the Knights of Columbus Forest 3 has approximately seven hundred members of whom about twenty are active. In 1912 members of fraternal organizations took their membership seriously. One protected oneself...
from calamity by taking out fraternal insurance. One made it through financial difficulty by getting money from the lodge loan fund. Today we get our insurance from Aetna, and loans from the local credit union. The hours of evening television viewing by average individuals today was spent at lodge meetings by individuals in the late 19th, early 20th Century; we can assume that both of these activities have, or had, a measurable effect on an individual's values.
By the end of the 20th century's first decade we have seen the Irish-American divided along two lines; the first division is composed of those skilled workers, white collar workers and young professionals who have joined ranks with middle and upper class native Americans. In organizations like the Elks, we find a cross-class membership dedicated to middle class cultural values and progressive politics. Irish-American skilled workers, many of whom were once activist nationalists, are now advocating the value system of their middle and upper class native American cohorts. The Irish-American white collar proletariats are also fully integrated into middle class culture. On the other side of the coin, we find the established Irish-American middle class in full control of the institutions workers participate. In both cases we find the fruition of cross class alliances, both of which are supportive of middle class solidarity posed no threat to middle class America.

Irish-American skilled workers and white collar workers with their middle class cultural orientation, would eventually be reunited with the established middle class Irish-American leadership. As the progressive movement loses momentum the two factions would come to realize that there were few differences between them. The symbolic reunion of these two groups came in 1913. In a front page story, it reported that the old Irish-American nationalist organization, Ancient Order of Hibernians, was experiencing a "rebirth."
Irish-American speakers spoke about "forgetting the past" and starting over again. Many Irish-American skilled workers and clerks from the Elks, joined hands with middle class Irish-American leaders to "sing Irish songs...and perform Irish dances." Ethnicity was effectively emasculated; it became the rhetoric of "ethnic gifts." In the hands of middle class Irish-Americans and workers receptive to middle class cultural values, ethnicity was only superficially different from American middle class society.
2. ibid., p. 174.
3. ibid., p. 155.
4. ibid., p. 176.
5. ibid., p. 179.
6. ibid., p. 176.
7. ibid., p. 157.
9. ibid., p. 193.
10. ibid., p. 193, 194.
11. ibid., p. 182.
13. ibid., p. 56.
14. ibid., p. 416.
15. Foner, Eric, "Class, Ethnicity, and Radicals in the Guilded Age", in Marxist Perspectives, volume one, p. 44.
16. ibid., p. 47.
21. minutes from the Knights of Labor biannual convention, on microfilm Olin library.
22. Middleton Evening Press, October 2, 1919, lists the charter members; their occupations are gathered from the 1885 Middleton City Directory.
23. A survey of 25 male "clerks" randomly chosen from the 1885, 1890, 1895, and 1900 city directory shows the overwhelming majority of them were employed in firms own by Irish-Americans, or had a one or more company officers who were Irish-American.

25. Knights of Columbus Forest City, membership lists.

26. Ibid., membership lists record who "recommenced" a new member.

27. Mayors Report, years 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900. Three-quarters of Irish-Americans employed by the city can be identified as members of Knights of Columbus Forest City.

28. Selectman's Report, years 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900. A preliminary study of town expenditures shows a clear majority of the Irish-Americans who received town contracts could be identified as members of the Knights of Columbus Forest City.


30. Ibid., the occupations of charter members were identified in the 1885 Middleton City Directory. This trend was identified over a long period of time by referring to the membership lists of Knights of Columbus Diego, which lists elected officers.

31. Minutes of Knights of Columbus State Convention, 1885; these records are stored in the state office in New Haven.


33. Ibid., p. 46, and Membership lists for Knights of Columbus Diego.

34. Ibid., p. 199; also Penny Press, August 13, 1899.

35. Connecticut Catholic, August 19th, 1899.

36. "Correspondence of Bishop McMahon", letter dated September 30, 1886. This letter is housed in the archives of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

37. Parish Records for Saint John's, 1886.

38. Ibid., for the years 1886-1906.


41. Penny Press, a random survey of the years 1885-1900 shows that out of 378 individuals arrested for drunkenness, 172 were Irish-Americans.
Footnotes

42. Membership lists for the Ancient Order of Hibernians were compiled from the following sources: Penny Press December 4, 1891; August 23, 1891, December 15, 1904; Connecticut Catholic, April 4, 1885; November 24, 1890; November 23, 1894; June 6, 1900, August 3, 1902; June 20, 1904; December 30, 1908; Middleton City Directory, for most years 1885-1915 the officers of the organization are listed.

43. Connecticut State Labor Statistics, for the years 1889-1906, the officers of individuals unions are listed.

44. Penny Press, September 23, 1897.

45 ibid.

46. ibid., January 4, 1898.

47. "Journal of Proceedings of the City Meetings of the City of Middletown, for the year 1898, January 23, 1898." The results of the elections are broken down by district.


49. Parish Records for Saint Johns, 1904.

50. ibid., 1900, 1905; the records list a breakdown by nationality.


52. Middleton City Directory, 1900.

53. Parish Records for Saint Johns, these contain partial membership lists for Saint Aloysius.

54. At least nine such affairs were recorded during this period in either the Connecticut Catholic, or Penny Press.

55. Connecticut Catholic, June 14, 1905.

56. Parish Records for Saint Francis, 1907.

57. A comparison of officers for Knights of Columbus Diego and St. Aloysius during this period shows six individuals serving in a leadership capacity for both organizations.

58. Middleton City Directory, 1906 lists officers; Membership lists for Knights of Columbus Forest City lists two individuals as officers.


63. List of Carter Members contained in "Official Program
- Footnotes -

63. (contd.) Elk's Carnival", 1907.

64. Lists of Democratic committee members for this period show very little representation of individuals representing the new manufacturing firms that came to Middleton between 1895-1905.

65. Middleton City Directory, "Business advertisements."


67. Elks Membership Lists and City Directory which lists the officers of various "stock companies" residing in Middleton.


69. ibid., 1904-5, p.408; and Penny Press September 18, 1904.

70. ibid., 1904-5, p. 409.

71. ibid., 1902-1907 officers: John O'Brien, R.J. Maher, Peter Whalen; 1902 p.424 lists the charter members, P. Dougherty, Daniel Hurley, David McKenna.

72. ibid., 1902 p.424.

73. ibid., 1907,p.361.

74. Middleton City Directory, 1908 lists Drennan as an officer.

75. List of Members and officers of Knights of Columbus Diego.

76. Penny Press June 8, 1904.


78 "Official program Elks Carnival", 1907.

79 ibid.

80. ibid.

81. Penny Press, September 24, 1903.

82 ibid.

83 ibid.

84 ibid.

85 ibid.
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86. ibid.

87. Social Service League, 1910 report.


89. "Official Program Elks Carnival."

90. ibid., and Mayor's Report 1910.

91. Penny Press, June 6, 1912.

92. ibid., June 10th, 1912.


95. Membership records for Knights of Columbus Forest City.

96. Penny Press, June 7, 1912.

97. Minutes for the Knights of Columbus Forest City, September sixteen, 1914.

98. Penny Press, October 23, 1913.
I. Secondary Sources


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Middletown City Directory, for the years 1880-1920, stored in open stacks Olin Library.

C. Organizations:
Social Service League Reports, for the years 1910-1914, stored in rare books room Olin Library.
Membership Lists and Minutes for Knights of Columbus Diego Council and Knights of Columbus Forest City Council, for years 1889-1914 (incomplete), stored at Knights of Columbus Forest City Council Lodge, Middletown Connecticut.

D. Church Records:
Correspondence of Bishop McMahon, stored in Archives room Archdiocese of Hartford, Hartford Connecticut. (catalogued.)