

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Antimasonry in Western New York:

A Social and Political Analysis

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

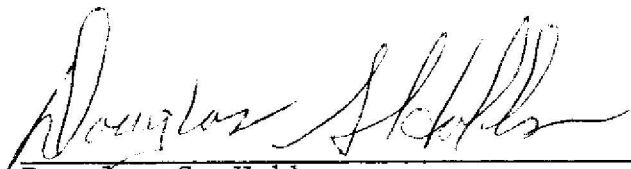
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Charles Robert Hixson, III

1983

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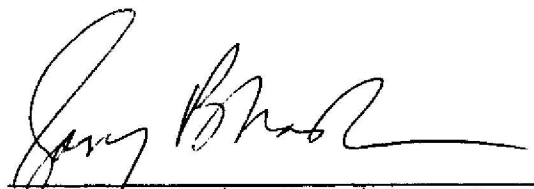
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1983

To my mother and grandmother
and
to the memory of my father and grandfather

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Antimasonry in Western New York:
A Social and Political Analysis

by

Charles Robert Hixson, III

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Professors Frank Otto Gatell and Gary B. Nash, Co-chairmen

The subject of Antimasonry, both as an antebellum reform movement and as a political party, has attracted historical attention, but yielded little serious investigation. Few scholars have attempted to trace the social bases of the crusade that developed into the nation's first significant third party. This study examines the specific historical and geographic context in which the movement began in western New York, the characteristics of Antimasonic Party supporters, their ideological formulation of American republicanism, and the course of the political party based on such interests and ideas. In order to illuminate these themes I have concentrated much of my attention on Chautauqua and Wayne counties in western New York.

Rather than an egalitarian rural movement aimed

against a Masonic or village aristocracy, Antimasonry often proved strong in the more urban areas where the commercial transformation facilitated by the opening of the Erie Canal proved most intense. Instead of a party composed predominantly of backwoods farmers, nascent manufacturers and artisans concerned both with economic advancement and the preservation of order and morality represented a significant percentage of Antimasonic activists, more so than in their Regency opposition. More often churchmembers, Antimasons also represented a majority in county temperance, Sabbath school and Bible societies.

The Antimasonic attack on Freemasonry reflected a coherent philosophy that emphasized the virtues of law, order, religion and morality. Antimasons accused lodges of practicing sacrilege, acting as a separate government, and favoring their own members in political contests and economic transactions during a period of widening suffrage and economic opportunity. As such Masonry presented a threat to Christianity and republican government that justified united action to abolish it.

Founded to destroy Masonry the Antimasonic Party widened its platform to champion Henry Clay's American System. Although this practice, as well as brazen attempts by the party's leadership to secure Masonic votes, alienated many enthusiastic crusaders, it also reflected the interests of men involved in production and

the management of a labor force. The majority of New York's Antimasons became Whigs, while their concern with conspiracy led some to champion nativism and condemn the slave power.

INTRODUCTION

Antimasonry's dual quality as a social reform movement and a political party make it an intriguing subject for investigation. Historians have examined the political leaders, the rhetoric, the socioeconomic factors, the religious aspects, and the appeal of the movement to a mass following, yet basic questions remain unanswered. Who were the Antimasons? Why did the reform arise with such great intensity? What were their motivations, their ideology? What, if any, is the political and social legacy they have left to American society?

The colorful rhetoric of the crusade has proved too great a temptation for most historians, with the result that few have sought to investigate the social basis of the movement. What kinds of men congregated in the Antimasonic camp? In the light of the opening of the Erie Canal in western New York, how did members of the new party respond to the growing commercialization of society? What were their occupations? Did they belong to other reform organizations of the day, such as temperance, Sabbath school and Bible societies? How were their political and economic interests represented at Antimasonic meetings and conventions?

The kidnapping of William Morgan and subsequent investigations in western New York gradually developed into a political party that won the electoral support of counties in that part of the state. I chose to examine two counties, Chautauqua and Wayne, in order to answer the question of Antimasonic identity. Rhetoric alone cannot satisfactorily solve the mystery. Nearly all speeches and writings of the Jacksonian period tended to include the fashionable egalitarian phrases of the day, and are therefore not especially amenable to socioeconomic analysis. More important than what people said were their actions, which reflected the changes from a frontier to a commercial society and the interests of particular groups reacting and adopting to those changes.

Certainly those men who gave their support to the Antimasonic Party had world views beyond their common desire to proscribe and eliminate the Masonic institution. Many studies of the movement have emphasized the manipulation of the mass of the party's supporters by Thurlow Weed and other New York Antimasonic leaders in order to fight the policies of Martin Van Buren and the Albany Regency, his effective Republican machine. Most historians have observed the vital importance of evangelical religion in the Antimasonic crusade, especially among the grassroots following. But to assume that religious opponents of the fraternity were completely betrayed by the Machiavellian

Weed and others when the party expanded its platform is a naive reading of the Jackson Age. Despite defections from some "pure" Antimasons who refused any possible diversion in their single-minded efforts and those who felt that all political parties, Antimasonic included, were innately corrupt, the enlarged credo of the party reflected the political and economic interests of much of its constituency. Religious opposition to Masonry and strong political and economic beliefs frequently went hand in hand. Historians have generally agreed that Antimasons left a lasting influence on the Whig Party, but what sort of influence was it?

I have tried throughout to integrate political history with social history. Neither alone can explain the phenomenon of Antimasonry. Chapter I serves as a historiographic essay, examining past trends and revealing the present problems in coming to grips with the crusade. Chapter II presents the historical setting within which the phenomenon arose. It examines the economic, political and social background of western New York, and Chautauqua and Wayne counties in particular, within the context of the commercial transformation brought by the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. Chapter III investigates the nature of Freemasonry in western New York and discusses the characteristics of its membership. It also recounts the kidnapping and murder of William Morgan, the frustration of

committees investigating his disappearance, and the evolution of the committees into the Antimasonic Party.

Chapters IV and V examine the Antimasons themselves--their backgrounds and ideology. Chapter IV provides an analysis of politically active Antimasons and their Bucktail opposition. Their occupations, religious affiliations, society memberships, and other characteristics are listed and contrasted. Chapter V discusses Antimasonic ideology and illustrates that those opponents of Masonry shared common viewpoints on a wide variety of issues, which together composed a surprisingly coherent political and social philosophy. Here, as in most other places, I have faithfully reproduced quotations, leaving the spelling in the original without the use of "sic."

Chapters VI and VII discuss the political history of Antimasonry and the legacy of the movement as a whole. Chapter VI follows the machinations and electoral strategies and goals of the party's leadership. Chapter VII looks at the legacy of the movement, its drift into Whiggery, and the political and reformist future of some of its participants. A brief conclusion follows.

CHAPTER I

THE MYSTERY OF ANTIMASONRY

The greatest murder mystery of the young republic unfolded in the autumn of 1826 in western New York. Several Freemasons arrested William Morgan at his Batavia home on a pretended charge of petty theft, took him to Canandaigua, and imprisoned him for debt. The next night another Mason appeared, paid Morgan's debt and gained the prisoner's release. But Morgan walked into the arms of other men who seized him and forced him into a waiting carriage. The abductors held him at abandoned Fort Niagara for a week. On or about September 19, Morgan was rowed out to Lake Ontario and dumped overboard, tied and weighted. He presumably drowned. Some people claimed Morgan had fled to Canada, South America, India, and even Asia Minor. Years of trials and all manner of investigations, however, failed to uncover the perpetrators of the crime or to discover his body.

Although writers then and since have laboriously and unsuccessfully reviewed the Morgan incident and searched for new leads and clues, modern historians have increasingly sought to unravel a less murderous but equally baffling mystery--the meaning of Antimasonry and the

political party that it spawned. Why did so many eagerly embrace the crusade against Masonry? What underlying forces helped create that enthusiasm? Which ideas became incorporated into the Antimasonic creed? What were their political aims and hopes for the future? Scholars have sought to answer these questions for over a century, and today they appear as divided in their explanations as the agitated Batavians of 1827.

Despite their general disagreement as to the character of the movement, most historians of Antimasonry concur in observing the unusually severe and open antagonism between the single-minded opponents of the secret fraternity and those who sought to lead them into the wider give-and-take coalitions of party politics. Alice Felt Tyler wrote of the "two incompatible groups" who "quarreled bitterly."¹ Charles McCarthy found that "[t]rue Antimasonry had become subverted to anti-Jacksonism."² More recently Kathleen Kutolowski has emphasized the great disparity in social types between Antimasonic voters and party officials.³ For the most part, however, the recognition of this dualism of Antimasonry--reform movement and political party, idealism and pragmatism, spontaneous grassroots uprising and a carefully orchestrated political organization--has not brought us greater understanding.

For the tendency of historians has been either to focus on the "fanaticism" and rhetoric of the western

excitement or to stress the growing manipulation of the party's state political leadership. These approaches have prevented a clear analysis of the social basis of the movement which united these groups in the same camp. Both the leaders and the led within the movement have been labeled democratic, progressive, fanatical, reactionary, and neurotic by historians friendly and disapproving, yet we still have no adequate composite of the Antimasonic supporter. Certainly one reason for this state of affairs is the division between social and political history which only serves to obscure, rather than illuminate, historical causation.

Historiographical trends are distinguished both by their focus of attention and their sympathy toward Anti-masonry. The earliest accounts of the movement came from former Antimasons and friends of Antimasons loyal to the old cause. Beginning at the turn of the century another group of historians influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner and the Progressive Era stressed the democratic nature of the movement. Another school, beginning with the New Deal and continuing into the Cold War era, focussed more on the masses of Antimasons, whom they claimed were victims of demagoguery and exhibited attitudes smacking more of nativism and a "paranoid" fear of conspiracy than of a wish to broaden democracy. Social historians of the 1950's, however, also studied the mass of Antimasons, emphasizing

instead a relationship between religious evangelicalism and millennialism and political and economic democracy. Both neo-progressive and consensus historians of the 1960's observed these relationships in explaining the origins of the political party. Recently, a new group of scholars have undertaken community studies in which Antimasonry serves as a means of studying an antebellum process that concludes with the legitimation of free labor and the creation of a bourgeois middle class.⁴

The first historical accounts of Antimasonry came from the pens of the party's former leaders or friends of these leaders seeking to justify their actions in the days of "the excitement." Writing in 1852, Frederick Whittlesey, ex-member of the party's central committee for New York, denied that politicians had opportunistically seized upon and manipulated the Antimasonic excitement in order to strengthen their opposition to Martin Van Buren and the Albany Regency, an efficient Republican machine. The spontaneous origins of the excitement and the destabilizing effect of local Antimasonic victories on the Bucktail (Van Buren) and Adams parties in 1827 village elections illustrated the independence of the crusade. Whittlesey attributed the increasing anti-Regency position of Antimasonry to the fact that most Antimasons had been Adams supporters, as well as to the common knowledge that Jackson was a Royal Arch Mason while Adams had condemned the Order.

Governor Van Buren's 1829 message condemning the use of the excitement for personal and partisan purposes, Governor Throop's 1830 message further deprecating this tendency, and finally the failure of the Bucktail-dominated legislature to fund adequately the Morgan investigations of special prosecutor John C. Spencer drove Antimasons into direct political opposition to the Regency.⁵ The expiration of the statute of limitation for punishing Morgan's kidnappers, he argued, also forced the party into adopting other causes in championing their western New York constituency.

Such a view, however, belied the charges of political partisanship made by the Bucktails and ignored the massive discontent expressed by Antimasons against the machinations of Thurlow Weed and others. Solomon Southwick, religious zealot and seceding Mason, was dismissed as an eccentric opportunist, ignoring his support among the rank and file.⁶ As the only former Bucktail on the state Central Committee, Frederick Whittlesey may have obeyed his moral conscience, but he most certainly fought for his political future.

A more intimate though not always candid version of the Antimasonic episode came in the autobiography of Thurlow Weed, whose eye constantly surveyed the political future. Described by William Seward as "the magician whose wand controls and directs the operations of the Antimasonic

party,"⁷ Weed claimed only to be responding to an excitement which proved strongest outside of Rochester and other towns: "While the Antimasonic sentiment was strong among the farmers, it was weak in the villages, especially among the wealthy and influential classes."⁸ He observed the religious schisms occurring when laymen attacked clergy and members of their own church who refused to resign from the order. He also described himself as the helpless victim of Masonic machination, relating how his simple paragraph on Morgan's kidnapping by members of the fraternity had led to discontinued subscriptions and his resignation from a newspaper partnership.

Despite his portrayal of the "spontaneity" of the grassroots excitement, Weed's account of Antimasonry's political history leaves little doubt where the true power lay. Weed's attempt in 1828 to persuade Antimasons to nominate the same gubernatorial candidate endorsed by the Adams men created enormous dissension within the new party and resulted in the nomination of the fanatic and evangelical Solomon Southwick. Concerned with "other principles involving the welfare of the country,"⁹ he insisted the Antimasons especially sympathized with Henry Clay's determination to protect American industry. Here one wonders how enthusiastic Antimasonic farmers could have been in championing the cause of manufacturers. In the 1832 attempt at coalescing Antimasonic and National

Republican forces, Weed observed several instances of "mutual repugnance," yet insisted that there was general success in amalgamation, "[h]owever discordant the materials."¹⁰ In concluding that later elections illustrated the failure of political Antimasonry to retain its hold on the public mind, Weed could have pointed the finger at himself for deliberately playing down Masonic proscription in order to unite the opponents of the Regency.

Unlike the accounts by Whittlesey and Weed, Myron Holley's nineteenth-century biographer neither directly praised nor condemned his subject's role in the Antimasonic leadership, yet defended Holley's innocence in a scandal resulting from his position as Erie Canal Commissioner and championed the strength of his moral character. Holley's religious liberalism, ardor for horticulture, advocacy of education for women, and later uncompromising abolitionist sympathies all received gushing treatment by Elizur Wright. Interestingly, the author concluded that Holley's love for the family and respect for the rights of women led him to oppose Masonry on the grounds that it segregated men and women while requiring its members to keep secrets from their wives, thus threatening domestic harmony and, therefore, basic moral principles.¹¹ Indeed Whig historians followed this concept of Antimasonry as purely a social movement, in the words of one, a "moral idea or one-idea"

party "such as leaves the business of government alone."¹²

The more democratic orientation of historians at the turn of the century, under the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner's ideas on the American frontier and the anti-aristocratic and moralizing rhetoric of the Progressive Era, had the effect of legitimizing the Antimasons as a serious political party born of a meaningful reform movement. By 1900 John Bach McMaster emphasized the political importance of Antimasonry. He described the party as "the most remarkable" in American history, and portrayed its principles as the preservation of free democratic institutions. He viewed the party as a logical extension of the Morgan kidnapping and frustrated trials that had led to the excitement.¹³ De Alva Alexander acknowledged the control that Weed and others exerted over the direction of the movement, yet found the nature of the movement progressive. The crusade appealed to the religious-minded and resembled for a time the later development of abolitionism.¹⁴ He drew heavily, however, from a work published four years earlier by Charles McCarthy, a student of Frederick Jackson Turner.

The outstanding work of the era, and still the indispensable starting point for students of Antimasonry, appeared in 1902, some four score years ago. Critical of nineteenth-century historians who concentrated almost

entirely on the social aspects of the movement, Charles McCarthy's history of political Antimasonry argued that underlying economic conditions in western New York created the proper conditions for turmoil in which the Morgan episode was "merely incidental." Most men who became Antimasons already opposed Van Buren and the Albany Regency for their early hostility toward the Erie Canal project and had given their votes to its champion, De Witt Clinton. With the increasing political vacuum caused by Governor Clinton's sudden death in 1828 and John Quincy Adams' sound defeat in the same year, these men could be expected to rally around any banner against the Canal opponents. The new party endorsed the old Clintonian demands for an extension of the canal system and fought against any attempt by the Regency-controlled canal board to raise the tolls.¹⁵

Yet if democracy had asserted itself on the New York frontier, McCarthy argued, elite politicians with eastern ties quickly stepped in to exploit and manage it. He put heavy reliance on the Albany Argus, the state's official Regency paper, in chronicling Antimasonic shortcomings and dissension. McCarthy stressed the decisive control exercised by Weed and other members of the Antimasonic state central committee over state conventions beginning in 1829. Also Antimasonic lawmakers in the New York legislature appeared lax in combatting Masonry. While trying to expand their political base, Weed and company

often allowed radical resolutions denouncing the perverse and aristocratic nature of Masonry, but his simultaneous actions of recruiting Masonic support against the Regency proved too obvious to escape notice.¹⁶ McCarthy viewed these machinations as inconsistent with the goals of the excitement, concluding that only the radical faction characterized by the zealous Solomon Southwick composed "the only true, consistent, and uncompromising Anti-masons."¹⁷ He recognized the underlying Clintonian strength in the western counties, but saw the evolution from the excitement and Morgan committees of 1827 to anti-Regency feeling and the Antimasonic state central committee as far from inevitable. The explanation for this progression lay not with any logical political evolution, such as that described by Whittlesey, but rather in the deliberate, neo-conspiratorial actions of an experienced elite.

Although the political narrative that characterized his study was in some sense a reaction against the impressionistic social accounts of "naive" earlier writers, McCarthy by no means dismissed social factors from his inquiry. Considerations left to a separate concluding section have received the attentions of historians later in this century, though one might have wished that the author had seen fit to incorporate and develop them within the body of his work. Masonic intransigence, he reasoned, had made the Antimasonic movement possible. Essentially a

crusade by New England natives, the religious and moral base of Antimasonry produced the closest organization to the Christian party in politics envisioned by the Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely in 1827. McCarthy found Antimasons at the forefront of campaigns to ban Sunday mails and promote the practice of temperance. In his reading of Weed and the Antimasonic press, he likewise found that Antimasonry received its "chief support in the country and not the city."¹⁸ The excitement and involvement of common people reflected the democratic era. With his undue emphasis on political manipulation, McCarthy may not have tackled all the complexities of the movement's social bases, yet he provided a firm foundation from which future scholars could launch their inquiries. Most later Progressive attitudes toward Antimasonry rested on whether scholars turned their attention toward the party's leadership or looked to the mass of the crusade's support.

Frontier democracy continued as a characteristic theme of the excitement. John D. Hicks, another Turner student, explained the impact of the excitement on the rustic western mind: "These were the days in which frontier democracy was on the rampage, and western New York was still frontier. It was easy for the primitive rural population to see hidden dangers for the Republic in the meaningless mummeries of a secret order"¹⁹ Hicks observed that hostility toward Freemasons stemmed not only

from the fact that they tended to be wealthy and politically dominant but also because the seemingly sacrilegious oaths enlisted the godly against the ungodly. The frontier experience of Antimasonry exerted a strong influence on the Whigs and made possible the party's victory in the Log Cabin campaign of 1840.

Turner himself emphasized the influence of the frontier on the New England conscience. The "come outers" created such "isms" as Mormonism, Shakerism, spiritualism and feminism: "In the wilderness of western New York these tendencies had been accentuated and had gained an open field. The absence of the balance wheel of a ministerial ruling class, dominated by tradition, in this region, freed the individualistic New England spirit from restraint."²⁰ The demand for lateral canals, banking reform, a home market, and the abolition of imprisonment for debt also prompted Antimasonic attacks upon the Regency. The friends of Adams had quickly turned the moral crusade into a political program.

Even with the characterization of Jackson and the Democrats as the harbingers of political egalitarianism, most Progressive historians found that Antimasons responded to the spirit of the age. Dixon Ryan Fox viewed Weed and other leaders as agents, busily transforming the old aristocracy into a business party which conceded the newly-won political equality. On the other hand, he recognized

Antimasonry as an idealistic movement of the New England conscience that used the democratic methods of lecturing and preaching to spread its gospel.²¹ In an omnibus study of antebellum reform, Alice Felt Tyler noted in 1944 that the politicians and "Antimasonic fanatics" constituted "two incompatible groups" who fought bitterly throughout the history of the party. She viewed the excitement as "an extraordinary manifestation of the combination of principle, prejudice, and hysteria that has confounded students of American democracy." Anxious citizens charged Masonic lodges with perverting the responsibility of democratic citizenship, and Masonic clergy and church members were called upon to resign. Tyler became the first historian to recognize the female role in the movement, noting that women met to insure their daughters would not marry Masons and put pressure on their husbands to secede from the fraternity.²²

Other historians of the period, persuaded by McCarthy's account of the party leadership, disregarded the rank-and-file entirely and centered their attention on the development of the anti-Jackson coalition. In chronicling the politics of the 1832 elections, Claude Bowers and E. Malcolm Carroll examined the issues between Antimasonic and National Republican leaders but ignored internal Antimasonic dissent.²³ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. paid little attention to Antimasonry in The Age of Jackson

(1945) and repeated Fox's argument that the party represented the attempt by conservatives to shed the discredited style and rhetoric of Old Federalism. Such leaders as Weed and Seward directed their new following into the camp of businessmen: "The Anti-Masonic movement, that invaluable school for demagoguery, had instilled in both a contempt for the tactics of silk-stocking Federalism. If conservatism were to be profitable in the thirties, they saw that it must capitalize on the prevailing liberalism, not resist it."²⁴

Schlesinger's unfavorable portrayal of the party's leadership and his charge of demagoguery had already been sounded against the rank-and-file of the movement during the years of Father Coughlin and Huey Long. In a 1935 article on Antimasonry in western Pennsylvania, J. Cutler Andrews argued that a psychologist would be better qualified than a historian to explain the spreading excitement of "the Blessed Spirit." Comparing the movement to the Salem witchcraft hysteria, Andrews details incidents of Antimasonic feeling as much as eight years before Morgan's disappearance. Apparently much of the great objection centered, as it did in the case of Myron Holley, on the practice of husbands in keeping secret communications from their wives. The crusade appealed to Scotch-Irish settlers as well as members of German sects who opposed oath-taking,

a fact which casts doubt on the concept of Antimasonry as exclusively New England in nature.²⁵ Politicians made political capital from the movement, but the excitement itself outlived the party. Another crusade against Masonry won 83 votes in a western Pennsylvania county as late as 1876.

Also convinced that the irrational actions of Antimasons did not stand as an isolated phenomenon in American history, David Brion Davis in 1960 compared the movement with the attacks on Catholics and Mormons. All three movements, he argued, molded European images of subversion into an inverted image of Jacksonian America with which they charged their opponents. Writing in the aftermath of McCarthyism, Davis found a uniform image of an un-American conspiracy taking root in the nativist press.²⁶ As society grew increasingly mobile and individualistic, and as laissez-faire ideals garnered increased approval, a need developed to guarantee individual feelings of united loyalty by defining a common enemy. In addition, their rhetoric assigning sadistic practices to the "subversive group" provided an outlet to project personal fears and fantasies. The emulation of the enemy's secrecy and organization further demonstrated this tendency. Antimasons and others hoped to revive and preserve the values they believed were slipping away, while accepting an inevitable march of progress.²⁷

Davis' concept of Antimasonry within the context of a fear of conspiracy received further support from his student, Lorman Ratner. Citing earlier American concern with the Bavarian Illuminati and the Society of Cincinnati, Ratner classified Antimasonry with Know-Nothingism, the Red Scare, and McCarthyism.²⁸ He criticized the Turnerian influence of frontier democracy in McCarthy's work and warned historians of equating the struggle for economic opportunity or a moral society with an effort to promote democracy. He also disputed the claim that Antimasonry drew strongest support in rural areas. All classes of people, including town merchants, took part in the crusade. Democratic rhetoric, Ratner claimed, did not necessarily reflect practice in an age filled with egalitarian expression.²⁹

This sense of political irrationalism had already received its clearest expression in the work of Richard Hofstadter in 1967. Although Masonic favoritism justified to an extent charges of political monopoly and inequality of economic opportunity, the character of the Antimasonic response denoted an example of "the paranoid style" of American politics. Like Ratner, Hofstadter traced the previous excitements over the Illuminati and the supposed Jacobin plot in America during the French Revolution. Later Antimasonry may have contained elements of rural egalitarianism, but it found expression within an

apocalyptic and absolutist framework. Antimasons obsessively condemned what they saw as immoral Masonic sexual freedom as well as the "blasphemous" nature of oath-taking that swore an initiate to a secret pattern of loyalty from that of civil government. Examining Antimasonic rhetoric, Hofstadter quoted David Bernard's view of the order in his Light on Masonry, the Bible of the zealous Antimason. Freemasonry was the world's most dangerous institution, "an engine of Satan . . . dark, unfruitful, selfish, demoralizing, blasphemous, murderous, anti-republican and anti-Christian."³⁰ For Hofstadter and others the "paranoid" response of Antimasons suggested the inadequacy of traditional historical analyses in explaining the enthusiasm and nature of the movement.

If historians began to put greater emphasis on rank-and-file Antimasons and their motivations, not all scholars viewed the excitement as demagogic, bigoted, and irrational. In a 1948 history of antebellum Vermont, David Ludlum examined both social and political trends in explaining the basis of the movement in the Green Mountain state. Rather than viewing the crusade as an irrational agent of provincialism and reactionism, Ludlum agreed with many of the Progressives that the movement's religious roots injected a democratic influence into local politics. The popular belief in the imminence of the millennium, and

the notion that good Christians should be "up and doing," helped form the Antimasonic cry for "Equal Rights" by way of destroying the fraternity. Baptists especially raised this demand, partly because of their democratic organization which contained no episcopal hierarchy. But in all denominations, those attracted to the movement represented "the democratic striving of a Christian people . . .": "Almost without exception the adherents of those sects which had arisen as a protest against hyper-Calvinism embraced anti-masonry and incorporated it into their creeds."³¹ Not surprisingly, the reaction against the movement took on an anti-clerical tone.

Vermont Antimasonry also reflected a desire for political democratization. A "back-country aristocracy" had gradually monopolized all government offices before news of Morgan's demise reached Vermont. Voters overwhelmingly supported John Quincy Adams, yet the presence of a National Republican clique of officeholders engendered increasing hostility. Jackson men drew little support from a wool-growing constituency favoring a high protective tariff and sound currency, while the Adams party received strongest endorsement from older, more established sections of the southern counties. Ludlum claimed Antimasonry won support from men of all political affiliations and social classes but fared strongest in counties which "exhibited a strong attachment to revivalism in the early years of the

century and were to prove receptive to abolition agitation in the middle years."³² Unlike their counterparts in New York, Vermont Antimasons succeeded in electing their gubernatorial candidate. His policies differed little from his predecessors. The excitement itself, however, had overcome a coalition of National Republicans and Jacksonians and all but eliminated Freemasonry from the state. Only with the 1836 presidential campaign looming ahead did most Antimasons merge with the Whig Party. Even then temperance advocates continued their hostility to Masonic imbibing.

In 1950 a pioneering study of religion and reform movements in western New York examined as never before the social context of Antimasonic origins in the state. In The Burned-over District Whitney Cross described the religious factors, economic changes, and land problems that gave birth to social reform movements, or "isms." He linked the existence of "isms" with the presence of a New England migrant community and Yankee moral intensity. He claimed that 1825, the year in which the Erie Canal opened, represented a turning point in the area's history and called 1826, the year of Morgan's abduction, the peak of religious fervor. Charles Finney's great revivalist campaigns in that year had convinced many that the millennium loomed near. As had Tyler, Cross noted that women used their growing moral influence in churches to proselytize

both privately and publicly. Like Ludlum, he drew a connection between patterns of millennial revivalism and Antimasonic strongholds. The lay revolt against clerical domination helped explain why laymen played such leading roles in the Antimasonic movement, alienating the wealthy and helping to split churches along class lines.³³ The conception of Masonry as a blasphemous substitute church, where sacrilegious oaths and intemperance occurred, served as the indispensable religious and moral basis of Antimasonry.

If religious underpinnings helped shape the character of the Antimasonic excitement, economic development molded the geographic and social basis of its converts. Cross noted a tendency for enthusiasm to grow during the rising curve of business cycles. Areas in the state's western counties, he found, became enthusiastic over religion and most susceptible to "isms" when they had reached a particular age and development: "Thus the phenomena of Burned-over District history belonged to a stage of economy either of full or of closely approaching agrarian maturity."³⁴ Rapidly expanding commercial towns such as Buffalo proved too active for the distractions of religious and reform movements, while manufacturing towns like Rochester that served a large farming region were more stable communities concerned with their religious and moral welfare. The transition from subsistence to commercial

agriculture spurred by the Erie Canal led to the decline of household manufactures, giving women more time for involvement in enthusiastic movements.

Cross found that the rural nature of the Anti-masonic response stemmed from land problems. Economic recessions and the policies of the Holland Land Company, which led to anti-rent riots in the mid-1830's, also rendered Company land suitable to the rise of "isms." Whatever political tendencies New England migrants brought to western New York, Cross argued, the affiliation of aristocrats and landlords' agents with the Albany Regency "aligned leaseholders and renters against the resident agents of absentee landlords."³⁵ This, as well as the existence of Masonic lodges only in the larger towns and the greater sensitivities of rural folk to excitements and egalitarian democracy, also explained why Antimasonry took its great support from the countryside. Although he recognized the clever management by Weed and others, Cross insisted that this peculiar socioeconomic mixture helped shift the essentially egalitarian Antimasonic crusade into an updated Federalist businessmen's party: "Thus a set of non-political considerations served for many years to keep in the anti-Democratic column votes which on grounds of interest alone might well have joined the Jacksonians

against the merchants and millers of the canal towns."³⁶

With the characterization of Antimasons as at least socially egalitarian, it was only a matter of time before historians would champion their political opposition to the Albany Regency. In The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy (1961), Lee Benson relied heavily on the Antimasonic movement in arguing that the Jacksonians were not really the party of democracy. De Witt Clinton and the People's Party of the 1820's, not Martin Van Buren's party, took the lead in extending the suffrage and securing the election of justices of the peace. The transportation revolution brought "a rising level of aspiration" to western New York that fueled egalitarian sentiments. Antimasons viewed the secret workings of Masonic influence as a threat to equal rights.³⁷

Here Benson left the path of earlier historians. Rather than recognizing a conflict between pure Antimasonry and the expanding interests of the Weed politicians, Benson interpreted later party demands as a natural outgrowth of the equal rights theme: "Closely examined, the demand for the 'Abolition of All Licensed Monopolies' represented a logical extension of the egalitarian impulse which originally moved the Antimasons to action."³⁸ Rather than a result of leadership machinations, the 1830 coalition with the state's Workingmen's Party resulted from the "logic of

history," since both sought justice by democratic legislation. Antimasons, spurred by the convention system that incorporated grassroots support and lent efficient organization to their cause, won battles for militia reform and the abolition of imprisonment for debt. Like Cross, Benson found a rural discontent toward landlords and concluded that the movement "represented an impassioned, leveling attack by members of the 'lower classes' against the village and urban 'aristocracy.'"39

Taking his cue from Cross' "nonpolitical considerations," and writing near the time of the 1960 presidential election, Benson insisted that historians needed to place greater weight on religion and ethnicity in evaluating party distinctions. Besides suffering from harsh economic conditions, farmers attracted to Antimasonry often belonged to evangelical sects. Wealth and occupational indicators, claimed Benson, frequently provided very inexact measurements of social status or party affiliation. (He did find, however, that Whig support proved strong in "manufacturing towns," a conclusion he never reconciles with his characterization of the anti-Regency coalition). The Antimasons and later the Whigs represented "the religious party," while the Democrats reflected the "free thought party." Such identifications figured critically in determining party affiliation. For Benson both the movement and the party undertook democratic struggles against an entrenched elite,

illustrating "that religious enthusiasm has frequently accompanied social radicalism"40 This characterization of Antimasonry proved highly controversial in the following decades and provided a focus for further investigation.

Benson's portrayal of a democratic Antimasonic Party structure came under attack in a study of the origins of political conventions. James S. Chase recognized that the Morgan investigations had paved the way for grassroots enthusiasm and participation in Antimasonry but viewed the convention system chiefly as a means whereby political leaders could manipulate their mass following. These local investigative committees that evolved into the Antimasonic Party soon became subjugated to a party central committee under the control of Weed and others. Despite the unwillingness of many to become involved in regular party politics, local Antimasons found themselves bound to support candidates chosen with an eye toward an anti-Regency coalition. For Chase, the mere structure of a convention system did not insure the joys of democratic participation or greatly diffuse the privileges of political decision making: "On the other hand it apparently never crossed the minds of the Antimasonic leaders, except when writing for public consumption, that the rank and file of the party or their delegates might actually designate the party's candidate."41

Other scholars continued to question Antimasonry's democratic credentials by bringing a far different interpretation to rhetorical and literary evidence. Sociologists Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab devoted a section to the crusade in their analysis of right-wing movements in America. Agreeing with Davis and Hofstadter that the crusade encompassed an irrational fear of conspiracy, the authors analyzed Antimasonry within a theoretical structure of extreme reactionism. In defending orthodox religion against the secularization of society, in denouncing Catholics, Jews, and Unitarians, and in voicing their hostility to the new French ideas, Antimasons represented an early preservationist anti-elite that anticipated such movements as McCarthyism and the Ku Klux Klan. The party embodied "the first mariage de convenance between a displaced elite and an unstable mass."⁴² The "mass" consisted of a poor isolated rural population drawn from New England, bypassed by the advantages of the Erie Canal. Less educated, more bigoted, and hostile to urban life, they supported political conservatives when their economic position should have dictated support for Andrew Jackson.

Unlike Lipset and Raab and Benson, Anthony F. C. Wallace found good reasons for Antimasonic conservatism. In a recent study of the Pennsylvania community of Rockdale, Wallace views Antimasonry as a Christian capitalist response to Deism and the challenge of working men:

It is clear enough, then, that Anti-Masonry attacked precisely the views of the liberal-to-radical range being so energetically promulgated in the 1820's by the Marquis de Lafayette, Robert Owen, Fanny Wright, and the Workingmen's Party of Philadelphia. These views, based in considerable part on the philosophy of the Enlightenment (illuminism), proposed, in effect, to take control of the Industrial Revolution away from capital and put it in the hands of the workers.⁴³

A tradition of European witch fear and Christian terrorism against followers of the Enlightenment characterized Anti-masonry as mainly an aspect of the evangelical Protestant crusade against infidelity. The party, however, attracted many respectable men dedicated to policies of "capitalist industrialization, free soil, universal free education, and the complementary rather than competing interests of the social classes."⁴⁴ William Appleman Williams likewise viewed the movement as one uniting manufacturers and religious forces, arguing that the secular principles of laissez faire found expression in religious and millennial beliefs.⁴⁵ It is difficult to believe Wallace and Williams and Benson are talking about the same people. Did Anti-masonic manufacturers, like Luddites, destroy their own machinery to take up debtor farming on the frontier?

Other historians bypassed such questions, while emphasizing the anti-party aspect of the movement. In discussing the origin of political parties in Michigan, Ronald Formisano found Antimasonic aversion to Democratic Party organization almost as great as its hostility toward

the fraternity. All evangelicals of New England origin with a belief in a moral commonwealth could also attack Popery on the same grounds that it too represented centralized authority and dogmatic acceptance. Yet ironically, in politicizing Christianity it created a division among the electorate which its own moral sense of party regularity sharpened, and thus helped to usher in the second party system.⁴⁶ This initial ambivalence in the Antimasonic fold contradicts Benson's account of a mutuality of interest between the leadership and its base. And unlike Williams, Formisano saw a strong conflict between Whig religious and moral concerns and the laissez faire attitudes of Democrats.

According to this view Antimasons looked upon party politics as an immoral influence in American life. Ronald Walters asserted that reformers viewed political machines as appealing to the lowest mentality to win votes. Politicos duped a "sinful majority" into partisan politics, while the religious minority stood by in helpless shock. Convinced that the older values were disappearing, reformers found themselves trying to create a public opinion that would produce a morally responsible electorate. The numbers of political hacks who opportunistically entered the fray greatly compromised the credibility of Antimasonic reform, a development which Walters blames for its demise.⁴⁷ Daniel Howe saw the Antimasons as contributing a sizeable

anti-party feeling within the Whig party. Antimasonry's evangelical, anti-Calvinist roots provided most of its popular support. The democratic nature of its organization owed much to its adoption of the convention system held by benevolent societies, a fact that immediately placed the new party on higher moral ground from the caucus methods of machine politics.⁴⁸ Whether politicians "duped" an apolitical frontier citizenry or whether they won their votes from a feeling of moral obligation, Formisano, Walters, and Howe agreed that Antimasons responded in the nature of a rational interest group.

In "Antimasonry, Religious Radicalism, and the Paranoid Style of the 1820's" (1974), William Gribben directly confronted historians who had earlier questioned the rationality of the Antimasonic response. The opponents of Masonry had no monopoly on wild, unfounded rhetoric; the inherited political culture of the times emphasized the conspiratorial. Gribben found that members of dissenting religions, such as the Unitarians, combined with a national religious establishment: "Their perception of community dynamics was remarkably similar to the views of the Antimasons. Though hostile to one another, both groups preponderated a pejorative interpretation of American society; both were convinced that plots and cabals threatened their freedom and the Revolutionary heritage which sustained it."⁴⁹ In an age of economic expansion and the rise of

diverse interests, what has been called "the paranoid style" may simply have been a reasonable expression of its time.

Other historians of the 1970's generally agreed with Benson over the legitimacy of Antimasonic grievances. Michael Holt found that Masons did hold a high proportion of all political offices, and that by refusing to cooperate with investigations and prosecutions Masons helped to fire a crusade against the entire fraternity. Although politicians rapidly gained control, the religious crusade that underscored the movement left the Whigs a legacy of evangelism. Holt concluded with Benson that poorer farmers lashed out against both landlords and the aristocrats of village Masonic lodges. The additional measures added by Weed and the politicians succeeded in drawing large segments of the middle class under the party's banner.⁵⁰

Another defense of Antimasonry against charges of irrationality soon appeared in an article on the origins of the movement. Writing in the years following Watergate, Ronald Formisano and Kathleen Kutolowski described the "stone-walling" by Freemasons and the cover-up which transformed public attitudes.⁵¹ Neglect of its origins, they argued, had led to misunderstandings of a crusade both egalitarian and restorationist. Masonic response to the kidnapping resembled a defensive paranoia, and the fraternity fought against Antimasons with equally partisan

zealousness. Their actions frustrated state-appointed special counsels and led to the postponement of trials when both witnesses and those under indictment failed to appear. During the Genesee County trials of 1826-27 five of six foremen and five of seven judges were Masons.⁵²

The authors emphasize the moderate character of the protests through 1826 and argue that the search to find Morgan's murderers did not by any means lead inexorably to a denunciation of Masonry. Local citizenry voiced concern for the legal structure, but by early 1827 the failure of this system to mete out justice combined with the arrogance and recalcitrance of Masons brought a strong reaction that led to politicized Antimasonry. Excited citizens discovered that Masonic members of the Morgan Committee had been relaying confidential discussions to Rochester lodges. Moderate Masons failed to restrain a zealous majority who refused to admit any wrongdoing. When an aroused populace failed to discern the "authorities" from Masonry, the struggle became a contest for control of the local justice system. From this controversy the movement grew into a general republican demand for equality before the law.⁵³

By 1979 even David Brion Davis gave serious consideration to Antimasonry as an important political and social movement. Combining the ideology of the American Revolution with religious revivalism, it became "the first widespread popular movement to attack special privilege and

insist on an unequivocal commitment to equal access to power."⁵⁴ Davis also viewed the rapid growth of Masonry as a result of the increasing business travel and changes of residence that characterized the age. Wherever the Mason traveled he knew the "substitute church" function of the lodge would bid him welcome. In providing this service for the privileged, Masonry aroused the wrath of citizens who perfected the use of anti-elitist rhetoric in American political culture.⁵⁵ This characterization of Antimasonry stood as strong and forceful a praise of the movement as Lipset and Raab's earlier denunciation. Benson's work on New York politics had raised a response but had inspired few sober second thoughts.

Recent analyses, however, have provided some of the local research on Antimasonry necessary for a fresh reinterpretation of the subject. The first important monograph appeared in 1973 in Kathleen Smith Kutolowski's "The Social Composition of Political Leadership: Genesee County, New York, 1821-1860." Examining such county officers as assemblymen, clerk, and sheriff, she found little difference between party low-level elites, whose characteristics stood in contrast to the mass of the electorate: "Highly homogeneous in social characteristics, Genesee leaders crossed party lines frequently to associate in a variety of economic, social, and cultural organizations."⁵⁶ Before

Morgan's disappearance Masonic affiliation only figured as one of several characteristics of the political elite.⁵⁷

Little or no hostility toward Freemasonry existed, and Masons received much publicity and praise.

Nor did Kutolowski find two hostile forces reduced to hysterical bantering after the kidnapping. In villages and townships Antimasons and Bucktails gathered to form Bible and temperance societies, to petition for internal improvements, and to condemn any ban on Sunday mails as contrary to the interests of business and the freedom of capital.⁵⁸ Indeed, Kutolowski claimed that the increased commercial climate in the period gave an impetus for Antimasonic professionals, village merchants, and farmers to exploit new business opportunities and also gain increased local influence: "For them, social equality implied equal power and status in the community with established political leaders. They not only achieved this goal but far surpassed both the older elite and their political opponents in local power and material wealth."⁵⁹

Few of her conclusions squared with traditional views of Antimasonry. Contrary to the findings of McCarthy, Cross and Benson, she failed to uncover any struggle between the rural yeoman and the village and urban aristocrat. Although she did not attempt a social analysis of Antimasonic voting, Kutolowski discovered that the movement's strongest support came from the most urban centers

while more rural towns first reflected the party's decline. In addition Masonic lodges were located in many small settlements as well as in the larger villages.⁶⁰ These and other conclusions make one wish Kutolowski had written a monograph on Antimasonry rather than examining a small number of the party leadership. Without a study that also encompassed the mass of the party following, she could only provide partial conclusions.

Further insight into the Antimasonic attraction came with the appearance of a study on Masonry. Although published in 1977 as Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut, Dorothy Lipson's study of Masonry and Antimasonry recounted the activities of Putnam Lodge in the Northeastern section of the state from 1801 to 1835. The disestablishment of Congregationalism in 1818 gave rise to a struggle between orthodoxy and latitudinarianism. This controversy exacerbated the existing tensions between Masonic lodges and the traditional church-community relationships within towns. The sometime reluctance of lodges to hold Masonic funerals illustrated the existing hostility to the fraternity long before the Morgan episode. Many saw a danger to the churches in Masonic moral instruction, but men affiliated with lodges as an alternative to the orthodox communitarianism of the towns. Both Masonry and the orthodox beliefs of Antimasons provided means of coping with an increasingly individualistic society in a rapidly changing era.⁶¹

Antimasonry proved a political flop but a social success in Connecticut. The primary motive of the movement rested on the religious conviction of the fraternity's evils. It sought immediate political power only as a means of arousing public opinion on this one issue. With the emergence of the nuclear family and the correspondent ideological creation of the cult of true womanhood, male Freemasonry increasingly came under attack for impinging on women's sphere as the source of morality. Women increasingly provided private support to the movement. The effect of such pressure may have been considerable. Although the conditions in Connecticut differed greatly from those in western New York, Lipson's ideas on Masonry in an increasingly secular society, and the unexplored role of women in the Antimasonic movement offer guides to future Antimasonic scholarship. In Cradle of the Middle Class, a study of Oneida County, New York, Mary Ryan argued that questions of gender and family persistently shaped the social structure and religious issues of the period.⁶²

Another investigation of Antimasonry in western New York claimed that the Yankee background of settlers rendered the movement fundamentally a religious crusade. Making extensive use of denominational and convention proceedings, William Brackney found that the New England origins of migrants and the extensive revivalism of Charles Finney and others gave birth to a crusade against Masonry

that closely resembled the evangelical warfare against other sins. He found Baptists most receptive to the movement, partly because of their strong revivalist tendencies and generally zealous feelings, and also because of the democratic organization of the church in requiring the consent of its membership. The schism over Antimasonry proved violent and threats of dissociation were common. Since none of the evangelical churches gave full and uncritical endorsement to Antimasonic ideas, the focus of the movement increasingly revolved around individual evangelists.⁶³

Antimasonic evangelists formed an Ultraistic phenomenon as a separate religion of its own with a distinct ideology and method. These preachers were well-known religious figures who shared common evangelical characteristics. Most had participated in a conservative Christianity, were born in New England, had undergone "conversion" experiences, and had enormous personal drive. At the base of their preaching lay the belief that Masonry had committed sin. Its ceremonies contained blasphemy, its illegal oaths forced members to commit crimes against Christian morality if necessary, and its secrecy smacked of immorality, treason, and the darkness of Satan.⁶⁴ By 1830, however, the use of conventions by political leaders had turned the crusade away from its religious emphasis. Although the shortcomings of viewing the complexities of

Antimasonry solely through theological rhetoric and denominational development are obvious, Brackney's brief but excellent accounts of religious Antimasonry in the counties of the Genesee country should serve as a boon to historians seeking to study the movement on the town and county level.

In contrast to Brackney's view Elizabeth Haigh found New York Antimasonry "primarily a civic rather than a religious movement, concerned with public responsibility and the discussion of values in a changing republican society."⁶⁵ Studying the careers of leading New York Antimasons, she characterized the movement as a reaffirmation of such republican values as the supremacy of the laws and freedom of the press through the medium of the nominating conventions and the ballot box. Many of the new party's leaders were lawyers and journalists sensitive to charges of silence and tampering with the law. Talented men, they felt no personal restriction on their opportunities. As had Davis, Haigh observed that Antimasons created their own community and mutual aid society, mirroring the organization of their opponents.⁶⁶

Perhaps the most important recent contribution to Antimasonic scholarship came in a work placing the movement in a much wider perspective. Although he claimed that Antimasonic strength came overwhelmingly from rural areas, Paul Johnson's analysis of Rochester revivals in A Shopkeeper's Millennium (1978) assigned the movement a vital

role in a process that he claimed legitimated free labor and created a bourgeois middle class. Antimasonry played the largest part in crippling the old elite just at the time the village experienced rapid growth and dislocation. Journeymen workers left their masters' homes to move into new working-class neighborhoods. They seemed to have acquired increasing independence, and the use of alcohol became a symbol of their greater freedom and class solidarity. Various temperance efforts failed. Even Anti-masonic politicians hesitated to enforce the unpopular observance of the Sabbath or limit the granting of liquor licenses. But Antimasons showed no reluctance in attacking the political power of the Rochester family and their followers, who derived much of their power from Regency connections and who often were Masons. When general elections took the place of town meetings and the town was divided into wards in 1827, it became increasingly difficult for one or two factions to control town politics. In the midst of the social crisis suffrage had expanded, and new kinds of men gained political power. When Antimasonry created hostile divisions within the churches of the political elite, the social crisis came to a head.⁶⁷

Antimasons helped to restore a political order that they had left in chaos by emphasizing the need for a moral order. Whereas Bucktails were often Masons and Anti-Sabbatarians, Antimasons championed both Sabbatarianism and

temperance. After Finney's return to Rochester in 1830, an enormous revival converted a sizeable number of master craftsmen, especially those journeymen who had recently moved into the new neighborhoods. The entrepreneur had found a new method to insure social control: "The religion that it preached was order-inducing, repressive and quintessentially bourgeois."⁶⁸ The Antimasonic role in the creation of this new order is evident in the fact that during the years 1834-37, fully 64 percent of Democrats had joined the movement. As did Williams, Johnson argued that this development epitomized the religious expression of laissez faire:

Thus a nascent industrial capitalism became attached to visions of a perfect moral order based on individual freedom and self-government, and old relations of dependence, servility, and mutuality were defined as sinful and left behind. The revival was not a capitalist plot. But it certainly was a crucial step in the legitimation of free labor.⁶⁹

In the broadest sense, Antimasonry reflected the fears and aspirations of a generation of Americans and encompassed within its creed nearly every major antebellum reform. At a time when economic change engendered new modes of production and transformed traditional social relations, Antimasons reinterpreted the meaning of republicanism as they sought to reconcile older values with a nascent capitalist society. Historians have too often attempted to interpret that response without firm evidence to identify their subjects. Without such a determination

it is all too easy to select any trait of Jacksonian Americans and explain Antimasonry by such reference. Unfortunately the more ludicrous rhetoric of the crusade has all too often influenced such selection.

That Antimasonry developed into a political party is in itself significant and it is also a boon to the historian. That many Americans viewed the ballot box as a medium to enforce social behavior reflected a propensity inherited from Puritanism still prevalent in contemporary politics. When Antimasonry became a political party, it bequeathed to the scholar a wealth of names: candidates, committee members, and newspaper editorialists. The thoughts of men in a specific historical context become illuminated through their actions on the political stage. As in any mystery, we cannot discuss motivation before the introduction of our players.

Notes to Chapter I

¹Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), p. 356.

²Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1902)1:388.

³Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "The Social Composition of Political Leadership: Genesee County, New York, 1821-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1973), p. 187.

⁴Paul Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), pp. 139, 141.

⁵Jabez D. Hammond, The History of Political Parties in the State of New-York (Syracuse: Hall, Mills & Co., 1852), 2:378-95.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁷Quoted in McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," p. 374.

⁸Harriet A. Weed, ed., Autobiography of Thurlow Weed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1883), 1:301. See also Thurlow Weed Barnes, Memoir of Thurlow Weed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1884). Later biographers of leading Antimasons have noted the hesitance with which their subjects approached the crusade. Weed's initial reluctance to exploit the kidnapping is described in Glyndon Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1947), p. 62. In another work he portrayed William Seward's early career as a young man in search of the direction of each political wind, while Robert Rayback described Millard Fillmore's agonizing choice between Antimasons and National Republicans; Glyndon Van Deusen, William Henry Seward (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 11-13, and Robert J. Rayback, Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1959), pp. 23-35. For Antimasonic overtures to Henry Clay, see Glyndon Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1937).

⁹Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 414. The biographer of Antimasonic presidential candidate William Wirt likewise defended his subject as a conciliator who reluctantly accepted the nomination in hope of uniting both National Republicans and Antimasons against Jackson (Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea, 1854), 2:332.

¹¹Elizur Wright, Myron Holley; and What He Did For Liberty and True Religion (Boston, 1882), p. 157. See also John White Chadwick, A Life for Liberty: Anti-Slavery and Other Lectures of Sallie Holley (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899).

¹²James Schouler, History of the United States of America Under the Constitution (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1894), 4:81.

¹³John Bach McMaster, A History of the People of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1900), 5:119.

¹⁴De Alva Stanwood Alexander, A Political History of the State of New York (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1906), p. 399.

¹⁵McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," pp. 367, 370-71, 376, 390.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 377-78, 384, 387, 392.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 377.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 546.

¹⁹John D. Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 20 (June 1933):6.

²⁰Frederick Jackson Turner, The United States, 1830-1850 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), pp. 118-19.

²¹Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York, 1801-1840 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1919), pp. 340-51.

²²Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, pp. 351-56.

²³Claude G. Bowers, The Party Battles of the Jacksonian Period (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), p. 326, and E. Malcolm Carroll, Origins of the Whig Party (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1925), p. 49. One political historian did recognize the Antimasonic schism, designating the two factions as "the extremists and the politicians." Samuel Rhea Gammon, Jr., The Presidential Campaign of 1832 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1922), p. 33.

²⁴Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1945), pp. 283-84.

²⁵J. Cutler Andrews, "The Antimasonic Movement in Western Pennsylvania," The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine 18 (December 1935):255-60.

²⁶David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Mason, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 48 (September 1960):205-06.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 217-23.

²⁸Lorman Ratner, Antimasonry: The Crusade and the Party (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 1. See also Lorman Alfred Ratner, "Antimasonry in New York State: A Study in Pre-Civil War Reform" (M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1958).

²⁹Ratner, Antimasonry, pp. 11, 100.

³⁰Quoted in Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 17.

³¹David M. Ludlum, Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791-1850 (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), p. 108.

³²Ibid., p. 26.

³³Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 75, 124.

³⁴Ibid., p. 75.

³⁵Ibid., p. 117.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 13-17.

³⁸Ibid., p. 37.

³⁹Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 193.

⁴¹James S. Chase, Emergence of the Presidential Nominating Convention, 1789-1832 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 158.

⁴²Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, The Politics of Unreason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 43.

⁴³Anthony F. C. Wallace, Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 345.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 346.

⁴⁵William Appleman Williams, The Contours of American History (New York: Franklin Watts, 1973), p. 253.

⁴⁶Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 60.

⁴⁷Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers 1815-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 8-10.

⁴⁸Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 54-57. Edward Pessen also placed strong emphasis on the Whig Party's inheritance of the moral strain in Antimasonry; Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 266.

⁴⁹William Gribben, "Antimasonry, Religious Radicalism, and the Paranoid Style of the 1820's," The History Teacher 7 (February 1974):253.

⁵⁰Michael F. Holt, "The Antimasonic and Know Nothing Parties," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, History of U.S. Political Parties (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), 1:576-78.

⁵¹Ronald P. Formisano and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry: The Genesis of Protest, 1826-1827," American Quarterly 29 (Summer 1977):140, 150.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 142, 145-47, 154.

⁵³*Ibid.*, pp. 162-64.

⁵⁴David Brion Davis, Antebellum American Culture: An Interpretive Anthology (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath & Co., 1979), p. 183.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 8.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 100, 159.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 194, 211.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁶¹Dorothy Ann Lipson, Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 10.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 329. Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1740-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁶³William Henry Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry: The Genesis of a Political Party" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1976), pp. 3, 143-44, 179.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁶⁵Elizabeth Bruchholz Haigh, "New York Antimasons: 1826-1833" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1980), p. v.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 41-48.

⁶⁷Johnson, Shopkeeper's Millennium, p. 90.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 141.

CHAPTER II

COMMERCIAL TRANSFORMATION

A century and a half after the arrival of the first English settlers to the Massachusetts coast, western New York remained an uncharted frontier. In the summer and autumn of 1779 some of the region's first settlers marched through the wilderness with General James Sullivan in response to Iroquois attacks on Cherry Valley settlers. This highly successful campaign broke the military power of the Six Nations and made possible the oncoming tide of white settlement. In return for their services during the Revolution, many soldiers received a pension of a few hundred acres of land in the military tract, a narrow strip of land that bordered on the east the vast lands of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase.¹ Thus began the colonization of the Burned-Over District, known later for its zealous revivalism, myriad reform movements, and antislavery activism.

During that latter period, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, western New York underwent a fundamental transformation. It affected the lives of pioneers on farms and in villages, and it brought thousands of new settlers to the country west of Cayuga Lake. The construc-

tion of the Erie Canal (1816-1826) spurred investment as well as settlement, drew countless farmers into the marketplace, and created boom towns along its proposed route. Greater economic involvement and diversification led to increased political participation. Meetings for "internal improvements" were matched by gatherings to promote individual betterment in religion, education, and temperance. Rapid changes engendered divisions and transformed the character of society. One of its byproducts, Antimasonry, struck the people of Chautauqua and Wayne counties with particular force.

Frontier Society

Most migrants to western New York came from New England. Land shortages and soil exhaustion plagued the hill counties of Vermont and Massachusetts, and Jefferson's embargo and the War of 1812 nearly eliminated the alternative of Montreal as a market. Wheat prices plummeted during the war.² There existed, however, pull factors as well: stories of returning soldiers and the efforts of such agents as James Wadsworth, who conducted "missionary meetings" to attract settlers, and especially fired the imaginations of younger Yankees.³ Independent of spirit and desiring to own their own land, they rejected eastern New York, with its huge manorial estates and system of quit-rent payments. For years the majority of mobile Vermonsters and many Massachusetts families headed for the

lands of the Holland Company in the western part of New York state.⁴

The terms offered by the Holland Land Company, a creation of Dutch merchants and bankers, were no bargain.⁵ Hard times in 1809 led the company to sell smaller plots on credit, a practice that in time created hardship on small buyers, who lacked specie and adequate transportation to markets. Later, when the Panic of 1819 caused a drastic fall in the price of wheat, most settlers found it difficult to meet interest payments. They complained that the company made no recompense for farmer improvement on land, while settlers had to pay increased road, military, and school taxes. The company would not encourage the internal improvements necessary to widen the access to market, which might have provided settlers with the needed cash to pay off their debt, interest, and taxes. The Holland lands encompassed Chautauqua County, created in 1811 and situated in the far southwestern corner of the state between Lake Erie and the Pennsylvania border.

Wayne County, created from Ontario and Seneca counties in west central New York in 1823, experienced similar agrarian discontent. Here residents directed their complaints toward the agents of other large landowners, particularly the English-owned Pulteney and Hornby estates. High land prices and compound interest thwarted many dreams of land ownership, and farmers reviled the policies that

allowed no remuneration for clearing and improving land and denied the right of transfer to a third party. Actions by the British government helped increase local hostility in the area to the policy of Sir William Pulteney's agents. The retention of military posts and influence of British agents on Indians helped to retard initial immigration, while lack of markets and resources later led to emigration further west.⁶

While land problems continued to plague many settlers, they did not seriously slow the stream of migrants to western New York. The state census of 1814 for Chautauqua County records a sparse population, with males clearly outnumbering female residents. Of the 4,122 citizens, 2,449 (59.4%) lived in the western towns bordering Lake Erie that possessed the finest soil. Males in the county outnumbered females by 55 to 45 percent. Six years later the population tripled to 12,447. Females now composed 46.2 percent of the county's inhabitants, but it would take another generation to reach parity between the sexes.⁷

Yet frontier society did not reproduce the life or culture of Yankee villages. Despite the early population growth, settlements remained scattered and governmental authority seemingly absent. These conditions may account for the high number of women charged by their husbands with "eloping from my bed" in the early 1820's.⁸ In an

1817 letter to a Vermont friend, future Antimasonic assemblyman Abner Hazeltine bemoaned the cultural shortcomings of the New York frontier:

I cannot say that Newengland manners, especially the good ones of that country, prevail here. We have many settlers that may be considered respectable, though but few that are religious.⁹

Any re-creation of Vermont or Massachusetts society, if any, still lay in the future.

Economic development too remained in its rudimentary stages, with production centered around individual households. Here men, as heads of households, exerted the strongest authority in frontier society, supervising the work of wives and children within a nearly self-sufficient family unit. The 1821 state census reveals that in 1820 Chautauqua County residents produced 83,550 yards of fulled cloth, flannels, linen, and cotton, while only one cotton and woolen factory existed in the county.¹⁰ In a primitive economy characterized by barter and self-sufficiency, few grocery stores and inns existed, and everything from the raising of livestock to religious worship took place within the household.¹¹

This is not to suggest, however, that such farm families enjoyed complete independence. Few good farmers arrived in the period of early settlement, and frontiersmen who could handle an axe often exhibited ignorance in using a plough. New Englanders knew little of crop rotation and

manuring, nor did they wish to learn.¹² Settlers raised Indian corn to feed themselves, but such a product could never be transported with profit. They grew almost no wheat at all, for freight charges from Buffalo to New York in 1807 totalled almost three times the value of wheat at the port. Those who did grow wheat often distilled the best part of their crop into the more transportable product of whiskey. In order to pay the balance of the purchase price of his land, a farmer might produce pot or pearl ashes, whiskey or hemp--anything that consisted of little bulk and could fetch a good price.

In most places as late as 1820 men carried on their business transactions by barter, often using grain, cattle or potash as a medium of exchange.¹³ They may have made few if any cash purchases, but farmers relied on each other for assistance from season to season. Both men and women sought and received the labor of neighbors and relatives. Farmers traded equipment on a temporary or permanent basis, while barter stores allowed families to exchange produce for household goods, without the existence of the commodity relations brought by a cash economy.¹⁴

The first portents of widespread change on the frontier came not in the west, but from the eastern part of the state. Dewitt Clinton's early and continued support for the Erie Canal project helped earn him lasting political favor in western New York. As a shareholder in the

western canal company, he had attacked its Federalist members for using that organization to further their own political interests. Later, however, it had become advantageous for Federalists to win support of their project by appointing Clinton and other Republicans as members of a board of commissioners to survey the route for the proposed waterway. Clinton's unsuccessful bid as "peace candidate" for the presidency in 1812, and the ravages of war on the western New York frontier, led Tammany Hall to condemn Clinton's alliance with the Federalists and threatened destruction of the Erie project. Clinton's 1816 "memorial" containing signatures of thousands of petitioners, led to large bipartisan meetings throughout the state, and the creation of a law in 1817 providing for a canal fund and a canal board, insured that the Erie Canal would become reality despite political rivalries. Anti-Clintonians led by Martin Van Buren had expressed reservations and had favored more surveys and estimates before making canal appropriations, but they now had to support the venture.¹⁵ However, westerners still touted Clinton as the "Champion of the Canal."

For many, western prosperity became linked to Clinton's political success. Clinton's personal popularity, an increasingly well-organized Republican party throughout the state, and, most important, a broadening of the suffrage, gave rise to the mass politics characteristic

of the state later in the decade. In 1821 Clintonians and many old Federalists pushed for universal male suffrage to enfranchise the many farmers not included under the old constitution of 1777. Under this document only some 60 percent of residents met the property qualifications to vote. Wary of the ballots of western farmers, the Buck-tails succeeded in postponing any grant of universal suffrage, pushing through a more liberal taxpaying qualification instead. Voters overwhelmingly approved the state charter, yet the spirit of reform persisted.¹⁶

Economic and Political Awakening

As anticipation built up on various localities at the beginning of Erie Canal construction in 1817, and as sections reached completion, the agrarian economy grew and became more specialized. In addition to the one cotton and woolen factory in Chautauqua County in 1821, six fulling mills had been built and seven carding machines set into operation. Tanneries, asheries, and distilleries served the needs of settlers, while grist mills processed local grains. The county could boast of 71 saw mills and a burgeoning lumber industry.¹⁷ Writing from the village of Jamestown in the town of Ellicott in 1816, Abner Hazeltine waxed optimistically over economic prospects on the frontier:

The principal business of the inhabitants is
lumbering--there are about 20 sawmills in town,

some of which run the whole year, night and day. The inhabitants are rapidly accumulating wealth, and everything promises, that at some future day, this will be a rich and flourishing county.¹⁸

The population of western New York rapidly expanded with the economy. In the five years after 1820, Chautauqua County's population increased from 12,535 to 20,639. The four towns bordering Lake Erie--Hanover, Pomfret, Portland and Ripley--became the four most populous in the fifteen-town county. In Wayne County, where settlement began in the 1790's, a decade before that of Chautauqua, the population reached 26,761 by 1825. Some 53.4 percent of the inhabitants lived in the towns along the new Erie Canal. Women composed 47.8 percent of the county's population, and made up 48.3 percent of citizens in the canal towns, a sign of the increasingly settled nature of society. Along the Lake Erie towns of Chautauqua County, women accounted for 48.4 percent of inhabitants. The growing numbers of western New Yorkers, many of whom had brought their skills to the frontier villages, reflected the increasing diversification of the economy.

Yet despite the growth of the agrarian economy by 1825, the essential nature of individual productive households linked together by barter underwent only slight alteration. Chautauqua County could boast of small increases in the number of grist and saw mills, as well as the construction of the first two iron works. In the

TABLE 1
GROWTH OF FEMALE POPULATION IN CHAUTAUQUA AND WAYNE COUNTIES
1814-1835

Chautauqua				Wayne			
	Men	Women	Percentage of Women		Men	Women	Percentage of Women
1814	2,284	1,838	44.6	1814	---*	---*	---*
1820	6,497	5,950	46.2	1820	---*	---*	---*
1825	10,837	9,802	47.5	1825	13,959	12,802	47.8
1830	18,095	16,473	47.7	1830	17,060	16,654	49.4
1835	22,955	21,914	48.8	1835	19,294	18,4 94	48.9

SOURCE: Census of the State of New York for 1814, 1825, 1835. U.S. Census, 1820, 1830.

*Not a separate county until 1823.

short four years, the number of fulling mills doubled, while carding machines tripled. Yet production of cloth continued to take place in the home, and the number of yards "manufactured in the domestic way" swelled to two and a half times the total of four years before.¹⁹ The economy continued to expand, but the mode of production remained in the household unit, and under the supervision of the patriarch.

Much the same patterns held sway in Wayne County, yet evidences of the commercial transformation had already appeared by 1825. Grist mills and saw mills commensurate in number with Chautauqua County had been erected, while eight iron works were set in operation. Still, domestic manufactures of cloth continued to rise after the creation of the new county in 1823. Construction of the western section of the Erie Canal through Wayne County the year before made an immediate impact, however. In the towns of Palmyra and Lyons, where the county's canal tolls were collected, domestic manufactures declined between 1821 and 1825.²⁰

With the growth of western towns in the years preceding the opening of the canal, newspapers sprung up to politicize the occupationally diverse electorate. If politicians eagerly looked to establish party presses, merchants and tradesmen besieged newspapers with advertising orders, thus increasing the viability of the new publica-

tions. With the completion of the waterway, upstate towns not only received quicker shipments of commodities, but also more recent news items from New York City and abroad.²¹ In this way, state political leaders helped incorporate distant localities into statewide factional and party disputes. The anti-Clintonian Fredonia Censor became the first Chautauqua County newspaper in 1821. In Wayne County the first issue of the Lyons Advertiser resolved "to speak and act with honest independence," yet constantly advocated Clintonian politics. Its rival, the Palmyra Register began publication in 1817, but by 1823 began advocating the Bucktail cause under the name Wayne Sentinel.²² Within such a context the proliferation of Antimasonic presses following the opening of the canal and the Morgan kidnapping, remarkable though the numbers were, followed an established trend.

Blunders in 1824 by the Bucktails, or Albany Regency as their enemies labeled them, greatly enlivened this party spirit and the movement for political reform. With the approach of the presidential election, movements in New York and elsewhere sought to replace the caucus system of selecting presidential electors with one chosen directly by the voters. The Regency controlled the legislature and thus supported William Crawford of Georgia, the caucus candidate. Those favoring Jackson, Adams, or Clay formed a Clinton-led coalition in 1823 called the People's Party.

Most western New Yorkers, however, responded angrily toward the foot-dragging on political reform, regardless of party preference. The Lyons Advertiser indignantly reported "The farce of nominating a President and Vice President" had occurred at "THE DOUGH-FACE CAUCUS AT WASHINGTON."²³ When the state senate defeated the Electoral Bill that would have changed the process, western villages reacted furiously to the "infamous seventeen senators" who were responsible. At a Chautauqua County meeting both Bucktails and Clintonians expressed regret and astonishment.²⁴ A gathering of Wayne County politicians viewed the defeat as a conspiracy and found that Byram Green, their state senator, had "abused the confidence reposed in him by his constituents, and should be held in future, utterly unworthy of public confidence and trust."²⁵

Apprehension led to a major Regency mistake on the final day of the 1824 legislative session. Concerned with the rising fortunes of the People's Party, Regency forces engineered the removal of DeWitt Clinton as canal commissioner. Intended to divide those who had sought electoral reform, the move only unified their enemies around the man who had served without pay on the Canal board for fourteen years.

Newspapers in Chautauqua and Wayne counties condemned the act as malignant and persecuting. Although he spoke against the nomination of Clinton for governor, a

Chautauqua Bucktail editor declared that the action of the senate represented "a palpable disregard of the will of the people and their rights."²⁶ The Regency abandoned the incumbent Governor Yates in favor of Samuel Young, another canal commissioner. However, he had only recently accepted the idea of the Electoral Law, and Clinton won with 54 percent of the vote.²⁷ In Chautauqua and Wayne counties the canal champion triumphed by a 3-2 margin.²⁸ "[T]he whole disgrace of this defeat," charged a disgruntled Bucktail, "may be thrown upon our last legislature, or those who managed them. Had the electoral law been passed it would have been impossible for the Clintonians to succeed in this county."²⁹

Citizens of both counties, happy to take advantage of the project Clinton had long championed, held huge celebrations at the completion of the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany and New York in October 1825. Although located south of the canal in the far southwestern corner of the state, Chautauqua County lay on the shore of Lake Erie and could hope to benefit greatly. On the day of celebration, a national salute was fired under the direction of a major of the artillery, and "the utmost harmony and hilarity prevailed." The toasts on the occasion reveal that the Erie Canal had merely whetted the appetites of many for further internal improvements: "The Grand Canal-- May it not stop at Buffalo, or Ohio; but may it continue

until it reaches the shores of the Pacific Ocean"--"The waters of Chautauqua Lake--Impatiently waiting to be united with those of the grand canal"--"The State Road--may its completion afford the advantages to the south, that the canal now ensures to the north."³⁰

The celebration at Lyons, the Wayne County seat, and now a "canal town" proved even more jubilant. After a salute of eight guns fired at sunrise, light infantry, Freemasons, and the clergy marched to the new brick meeting house where Graham H. Chapin, attorney and "leading citizen," delivered an address at once pompous but insightful:

Agriculture, before, depressed and borne down by insuperable difficulties, now rears her head; her face smiling with the oil of gladness. Commerce is increased with the Facilities which gave her new activity and life, and her borders are greatly enlarged. Manufactures have been multiplied and invigorated.³¹

Chapin also perceived the relationship between the transportation revolution and the rising consciousness of people drawn into the commercial market:

A renovating principle has pervaded the whole community, and society had received a fine impulse. . . . Arouse the public mind to the improvement of their social condition, and you enlighten their understanding: they obtain more correct and defined notions of their own individual rights; their relations to the government are more clearly perceived and better understood, and their collected will becomes, at once, the arbiter of whatever of good or evil, the laws and institutions of society may dispense.³²

This wholesale invasion of the commercial market transformed the nature of society in western New York dur-

ing the ensuing decade. By 1830 Chautauqua County's population reached 34,568, an increase of 68 percent since 1825. Five years later the population stood at 44,869 residents, more than double that of a decade before, with women comprising 48.8 percent of the inhabitants. Wayne County grew to 33,714 residents by 1830, a somewhat less spectacular increase. Settled slightly earlier than Chautauqua County, Wayne's female residents had nearly reached parity (48.9%) with their male counterparts. By 1835, 37,788 people lived in the county.³³

The opening of the Erie Canal brought markets as well as laborers to western New York, stimulating large increases in the number and volume of manufactures. New grist and saw mills entered production in both Wayne and Chautauqua counties, with the number of Chautauqua saw mills increasing from 83 in 1825 to 206 in 1835. New industries, such as rope factories, sprang up in the county, while a Wayne County glass factory manufactured \$72,000 worth of products each year. The number of carding machines grew, while the number of fulling mills more than doubled in Chautauqua County. These two enterprises had also grown in size, creating \$145,141 in products in Chautauqua County and \$93,081 in Wayne County. The factory system, though in its infancy, had arrived in western New York.

The household economy, with its self-sufficiency

and patriarchal "government," continued in some areas for years, but the new commodity relations of the market economy rapidly undermined much of the old mode of production. Domestic manufactures declined 54.2 percent per capita in Chautauqua County between 1825 and 1835. In Wayne County, where the Erie Canal wound its way through the valleys and marshes, household production fell in every town, and declined more than 45 percent per capita in the county during the decade.³⁴ The rise of production outside individual households helped to usurp many of their basic functions.

Although the canal and other transportation improvements had made the marketing of surplus produce a viable and economic alternative to local barter, many farmers continued to avoid the commercial market. Many simply preferred to grow a wide variety of crops for their own use and continued to manufacture items needed for their household. The ideology of individual settlers or the persistence of traditional practices in local communities, rather than the absence of opportunity, often explained the economic choices of farmers. The oncoming system of credit created an immediate tension with long-held notions of self-sufficiency, as well as with the Jacksonian fear of debt. The transition to a market economy represented nothing less than a prolonged ideological battle of competing ways of life.³⁵

Opportunities to make such a choice came first to those with immediate access to the canal. When men in the canal towns began to specialize in buying and shipping produce of the countryside, many farmers sold their crops in exchange for cash, with which they could buy products from the shops of a growing number of merchants. Most farmers, increasingly concerned with producing a marketable crop, shifted their resources from home manufacturing in an attempt to increase output.³⁶ Such transformation and growth was an uneven process that led to prosperity in some towns and relative stagnation in others. By 1833 the six towns along Lake Erie in Chautauqua County boasted the six highest valuations per acre. Towns inland with poorer soil and little access to markets were valued one-third as high.³⁷ The five largest manufacturing towns in Wayne County by 1835 all lay along the route of the canal, while those with the least production often lay inland, away from both the waterway and Lake Ontario.³⁸

No settlement in either county, however, remained unaffected by the general alteration. As land prices rose, the market for real estate encouraged a growing number of lawyers to handle the inevitable litigation.³⁹ Physicians formed themselves into county medical societies.⁴⁰ Canal laborers lingered in the villages along the waterway. The formation of storage and forwarding firms helped transform larger settlements into commercial towns. In Palmyra

village, J. D. Everingham and Philip Grandin offered cash for wheat and other crops. J. S. Colt offered ready money for farmers bringing cattle and pigs to their slaughter and packing house.⁴¹ In 1826 the Wayne Sentinel boasted that "By the inexhaustible influences of the Grand Canal, and other tributary advantages, including the wealth and dense population of the region of country adjacent, the village of Palmyra has assumed an important station among the commercial villages of the west."⁴² The next year the legislature approved a petition incorporating the community.

With a growing population, the expansion of a cash economy, and a transportation network capable of delivering needed tools and equipment, manufacturers began to rival the forwarding merchants in local importance. By early 1827 Pomfret township could boast concerns as diverse as a paper mill, a percussion rifle factory, and, in Fredonia village, the first natural gas street lights. Few towns in the state, declared the local press, possessed "a greater number of the difficult kinds of machinery and factories, that are calculated to render their population flourishing and independent, than the town of Pomfret."⁴³

No wonder, then, that farmers, forwarding agents, and manufacturers all demanded more improvements in transportation. Jamestown residents of Chautauqua County met to urge that local citizens subscribe funds to improve the roads linking them with nearby towns, and they

petitioned the legislature to survey and fund a route for a new canal connecting the upper branch of the Allegheny River with Buffalo.⁴⁴ Palmyra men formed the Montezuma Turnpike Company to improve roads leading to their village, while other Wayne County citizens worked intensively for incorporation of a company linking the canal town of Clyde with Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario.⁴⁵ "The Good people of the western part of this state are bustling about with unexampled activity," beamed one editor in 1826. "Meetings are called in every quarter and on every subject."⁴⁶ Improvement projects soon became political issues, just as the building and administration of the Erie Canal had long agitated the politics of New York state.

Religion, Domesticity and Reform

As the commercial revolution created economic opportunity and fostered a more intense and competitive brand of politics, so too it brought a more egalitarian religion. The faithful, that is most of the population, tended to take a more active role in church affairs and in their own salvation. The Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century softened the deterministic tenets of orthodox Calvinism by emphasizing the importance of human efforts in spiritual conversion and encouraged faith in individual salvation. The Reverend Charles Finney found upstate New York fertile ground for the new ideas, and the

great revivals of 1826 and 1831 coincided with his evangelical efforts. Faith played a vital role in the Finney philosophy, but he did not neglect the importance of good works to personal salvation. Moral and social reform were the weapons necessary to conquer the original sin of self-interest. Once individuals abandoned preoccupation with worldly affairs, they could begin the Christian life of charity and temperance. In what came to be known as the Burned-Over District (the western New York area with Rochester as its hub) Finney's efforts "released and coordinated the moral energies of a community already throbbing with optimistic individualism."⁴⁷

Religious enthusiasm produced general excitement and revival meetings and promoted evangelistic influence within churches. In 1815 and again in 1819 and 1821 Utica Presbyterians converted a large number of the town's residents to their cause. Freewill Baptist revivals occurred near Buffalo and along the shores of Lake Ontario in the early 1820s. Much of western New York soon caught the fire, and by 1825-1826 many began to believe in the imminence of the millennium.⁴⁸ Although camp meetings and other informal revivals did not ordinarily increase church membership permanently, the evangelistic spirit entered denominations such as the Baptists and Presbyterians as a lay revolt against clerical control.⁴⁹

Churches and religious organizations took root and

spread throughout Chautauqua and Wayne counties in the 1820s. By the end of 1823, four houses for public worship had been built in Fredonia village, and early the following year the Pomfret Bible Society voted to become an auxiliary to the American Bible Society.⁵⁰ In Wayne County, a convention of delegates from every town met in 1826 at the Lyons Presbyterian Meeting House to organize a County Bible Society that promised to distribute some 1,200 Bibles. In 1824 the Reverend Benjamin Stockton of the Palmyra Presbyterian Church took up a collection for the formation of a Juvenile Library for a Sunday School, and in 1826 he became the president of the newly-formed Wayne County Sabbath School Union.⁵¹ An address before the Lyons Branch Missionary Society by Graham H. Chapin in 1825 praised the proliferation of benevolent societies as congruent with the new secular ideology:

There seems indeed to have risen thro-out Christendom a kind of crusade to extend and diffuse the light of revealed truth and the blessings of Christianity And it is an axiom in the science of government: that the general interest is nothing less than the aggregate interests of each individual in the community, so that whatever may be affirmed of an individual, as such, may be predicted of a State, or nation, considered as a body politic.⁵²

Meetings for the support of the Greek war of independence and county Fourth of July celebrations tied Christianity with political liberty in much the same way that Antimasonry did later. Pro-Greek meetings exhorted the clergy to take up donations for the rebels and lend

their presence to future meetings. Spokesmen condemned the Turks not only as political and economic despots, but also as heathens who had ruined Greece, a once-powerful and admirable nation:

A deep interest in behalf of that suffering people, who are now probably making their last struggle to regain those liberties which were once the pride and glory of their country, seems to be rapidly pervading the whole Christian and civilized world.⁵³

Christianity and local clergy played prominent roles in the celebration of American independence. Ministers took part in opening processions, along with the marshals of the day and patriotic orators. Devotional services usually followed, emphasizing God's concern for the American cause and the young republic. After the delivery of patriotic orations, another minister offered a closing prayer. Only then would citizens leave church grounds for the town square or hotel, where some would then sit down to eat and toast the occasion.⁵⁴

The role of religion in the land of liberty, however, became a subject of debate. Argument in the political presses soon helped transform these feelings into tests of party identification. The editor of the Clintonian Jamestown Journal triumphantly declared, "Man is a religious being, and the present is an age of religious enterprise and exertion. No history of the times therefore can be complete that does not notice an interest so important."⁵⁵ The Bucktail editor of the Fredonia Censor

expressed skepticism and hostility toward the intentions of religious organizations and evangelist preachers. He printed articles condemning foreign missions as a fraud upon the poor which produced religious intolerance, made artful men wealthy, and created "a moral force unknown to our constitution."⁵⁶ He likewise opposed the creation of the National Tract Society as the first step toward a national religion that would unify church and state, and by the methods of the Inquisition oppress those who expressed independent viewpoints. He defended the character of a Universalist preacher against attack from the large denominations and frequently included news of ministers involved in moral turpitude.⁵⁷ He even expressed doubt concerning the likelihood of a second coming: "The mill-ennium, as Mr. Irving says, is evidently at hand. A Miss Lyon was married to Mr. Lambe. The 'lion and the lamb will now, of course, lie down together.'"⁵⁸

Women played a significant role in the rise of enthusiastic religion in upstate New York in the 1820s. With the decline of household production, women found their economic obligations steadily reduced. With increased economic diversification and the development of villages, men increasingly found work outside the home as mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, and journeymen laborers. As the home grew into an entity separate from the market economy, it became defined as "women's sphere." The idea of

domesticity and the concept of "public and private" spheres stood in sharp contrast to the increasing competition and dislocations of nascent capitalism. Since women became identified with the home they were seen as removed from the worldliness of brutal economic rivalry. Women alone could regulate the unbounded passions of commercial-minded men by instilling moral notions of self-control.⁵⁹ Such a philosophy of domesticity reflected the emergence of a middle-class ideal that condemned both the vanity of the wealthy and the promiscuity of the poor.⁶⁰

Women's new role as moral custodian received added encouragement from early nineteenth-century Protestant ministers. With the increasing secularization of society and with women composing a majority in the congregations, ministers realized that their own interests lay in an appeal to their female membership. They stressed the duty of women's domestic moral instruction in the preservation of an orderly society.

Yet the emphasis on active reform as a means of achieving salvation, stressed by Finney and others, led many women to band together to help one another and fight sin.⁶¹ They dominated revivals, prayer meetings, and evening services, and put enormous pressure on their husbands and other male members of the household to convert, to be born again. Women members of the Presbyterian Church of Palmyra donated \$20 to buy a life membership in the

American Tract Society for Reverend Stockton. Such activities allowed women prominent and often independent social roles outside of the household. They also led to the feminization of evangelical Protestantism.⁶²

One organization, the Female Missionary Society at Utica, proved especially influential in building this new moral order. Assisting in the formation of such groups as the First Presbyterian Society in Pomfret, the Utica women drew upon the advantageous connections of their social standing. Many of them were married to merchant and lawyer husbands who now maintained a separate business address apart from their residence. Freed from assisting in any household production, these women took advantage of existing economic and political ties in creating a network of societies that underlay and funded evangelical churches. Even the founding of the Sunday school movement owed much to the initiative of the daughters of this elite.⁶³ A Fredonia man had no trouble rationalizing the extension of women's moral sphere beyond the fireside:

Next to mothers, the young ladies have the greatest agency in forming the character of the other sex. Young men, although their characters are in a great measure formed, require some powerful restraint. The young females with whom they then associate, are the guardians of their virtue, and accountable for most of the evil practices into which they fall.⁶⁴

With the growing emphasis on moral instruction and motherhood, women increasingly came to be viewed as educators. Females had many qualifications for instructing

infants that men lacked, declared the Ladies Magazine in 1830. With the decline of the Calvinist doctrine of grace many women now saw a duty actively to assist in their children's salvation. If the individual could help determine his own salvation, early moral instruction of children would further God's work while contributing toward an orderly society.⁶⁵ A Jamestown resident arguing for the creation of a grammar school in the village, stressed the importance of providing a restraint on a child's will in order to enforce morality.⁶⁶ In announcing the founding of a female boarding school on the shore of Lake Erie in Pomfret, the Reverend David Brown promised instruction consistent with the philosophy of middle-class parents, "without any of the rusticity and vulgarity of the country--with all the refinements, without any of the vices and foppery, of the city."⁶⁷ Miss Clark of the Buffalo Female Academy pledged to continue her concern for the morals and habits of her charges while announcing that her sister would teach the higher branches of science.⁶⁸ Inevitably, female education began to widen the interests of women while at the same time uniting them and thus threatened the restrictions of domesticity.⁶⁹

In view of these factors, women understandably flocked to join the crusade against intemperance. Teachers, ministers, farmers and men of every profession regularly consumed a sizeable amount of liquor, especially whiskey.⁷⁰

Drunken men regularly were found drowned along the Erie Canal in Wayne County. One Temperance address emphasized the disastrous effects of drunkenness on domestic life. The inebriated husband could not appreciate the peaceful feelings brought by his wife, while the intoxicated mother abandoned the entire household to moral chaos.⁷¹ With this threat against the social order, men formed temperance societies to combat the problem, while both men and women carried on the fight in "private" and "public" spheres. As with attitudes toward the role of religion, the advocacy of temperance eventually developed into a political issue.

Political Rivalry

Spurred on by economic developments which transformed the nature of their societies, as well as by correspondent shifts in the beliefs of many citizens, western New York towns and villages experienced internal political strife which left devoid any lingering illusions of homogeneity. With responses to the commercial transformation as diverse as the new economy itself, westerners increasingly turned toward the electoral process as a means of asserting their material and ideological interests. The founding of partisan party newspapers insured that these disagreements would eventually be encompassed within statewide political contests. Such incorporation as occurred, however, proved far from uniform. Local struggles often

took overwhelming preeminence, while general agreement over the dominant issue of internal improvement somewhat mitigated antagonism. While the underlying tendencies composing modern political parties undeniably took their roots in this period, Antimasonry later became the crucial agent in both separating these tendencies and molding the character of the second American party system in New York.

Although both Wayne and Chautauqua counties underwent much the same process of economic and social change, and stood subject to similar statewide political stimuli, such party rivalry remained largely undeveloped in the canal county of Wayne, in contrast to Chautauqua County. In one of the more outrageous incidences of land speculation, canal commissioner Myron Holley bought lands in the village of Lyons and then tried to convert the place into a new county seat. When an assembly committee accepted the Lyons petition for division, the village became the administrative center for the new county of Wayne, created in April 1823 from two towns in Seneca County on the east and six towns from Ontario County in the west and center.⁷² The arrangement generated sharp competition between the western and east-central sections of the county, particularly between Palmyra and Lyons. These local rivalries determined the nature of county politics--until the kidnapping of William Morgan in 1826.

Believing that the Lyons petition had succeeded

because of conspiratorial maneuvering, men in Palmyra and in the western towns frequently petitioned for halfshiring the county. The editor of the Palmyra Herald railed:

And we do not, we cannot believe that the members of our Legislature are so corrupt as to sacrifice the rights of 16,000 of their constituents, merely to aggrandize the single village of Lyons, and to gratify the sinister views of certain individuals in Canandaigua, who appear willing to go all lengths to injure that hated rival, PALMYRA.⁷³

When Lyons' Myron Holley failed to account for \$30,000 in public funds during the period he had speculated on lands, Palmyra politicians attacked him unmercifully.⁷⁴

Citizens of the western towns of Macedon and Ontario met to complain of the distance of the Lyons courthouse and other public buildings from their homes, while Lyons residents presented a petition against the halfshire. Advocates for building a courthouse in Palmyra insisted that while village commerce had long been connected with that of Canandaigua, little if any ties existed with Lyons, since the marshes of the eastern towns would never attract enough settlers to match the population of the west. At still another meeting, delegates from four western towns insisted that "the erection of the county of Wayne in its present shape and establishing the Court House at Lyons Village, was an act of injustice and oppression to the people of the four western towns, unparalleled in the history of a free government."⁷⁵

The conflict intensified in July 1825 when county

clerk Israel J. Richardson gathered up the books and papers of his Lyons office and loaded them onto a canal boat bound for Newark, a few miles west, where he deposited them in several locations. The Lyons Advertiser claimed Palmyra halfshiring interests promised to remove the clerk's office to Newark in exchange for votes and signatures on their petition. He further accused the Palmyra activists of forging names on the petitions, threatening to take up arms, defrauding the townspeople by using their taxes to fund their lobbying efforts at Albany, and keeping "a score of idle and vulgar fellows whose business has been to haunt taverns and packet boats, for the purpose of telling malicious and foolish lies against a neighboring village, to the great annoyance of strangers and travellers"⁷⁶ Halfshire advocates insisted that the money for the new courthouse would be raised by voluntary subscriptions and not, as Lyons claimed, by a tax on the citizens of the western towns. The bill passed in the assembly but failed to get senate approval, which the halfshire men of Palmyra ascribed to "the unexampled subtlety of the numerous speculating, ambitious young men of the village of Lyons."⁷⁷ By the end of the year advocates again sought to renew the question.

Meanwhile, the voters of Wayne County faced a choice between sectional candidates. In 1824 two separate delegations from Wayne County arrived at the Bucktail

seventh district senate convention. The Clinton convention in October included delegates from only three towns, yet claimed in its address to represent political principles rather than localism. The Lyons paper interpreted the victory of the county ticket nominated months earlier in the village as a defeat for the halfshire advocates, but Palmyra's press insisted that one elected assemblyman had pledged not to oppose the measure. The following year the nominating convention referred to itself as the ticket against the halfshire, while those supporting the "western ticket" resolved "to use all honorable exertions to overthrow the contemptible aristocracy at Lyons." The success of the latter ticket in 1825 was heralded as a triumph of principle in Palmyra, while the Lyons Advertiser accused the Palmyra party of promising offices to residents of other western towns in return for electoral support.⁷⁸

Although by 1826 the statewide struggles of Buck-tails and Clintonians began to make an impression upon the course of Wayne County politics, little excitement existed there over party preferences. A letter to the Palmyra paper declared that the Republican party must suffer a permanent split to isolate the anti-democratic element,⁷⁹ while the year previous the editor of the paper condemned the nomination of attorneys for the assembly by the Lyons party as against the interests of the people: "The Lawyers build themselves up upon the ruins and misfortunes of the

Farmers and Mechanics, and it is natural for them to make such laws as will best promote their own interests, and which of course must be injurious to the rest of the community."⁸⁰ In rivalries, the editor of the Lyons Advertiser expressed his opposition to the candidacy of Andrew Jackson.

The relative political apathy continued into 1826. No eastern delegates attended the Clintonian meeting at Palmyra in 1826,⁸¹ while a western voter declared in December, "I therefore see nothing in the result of the election to convince us of any change in the disposition of our neighbors at Lyons, or the subsistence of former sectional partialities."⁸² In 1823 only one-third of the Wayne County electorate had bothered to cast ballots, and in September 1826 leaders of a county nominating convention postponed the meeting for days because of poor attendance.⁸³ One observer remarked just days before news of Morgan's kidnapping reached the county, "Indeed our politics partake of the general stagnation, and are quite barren of interest just now, as any other topic of news."⁸⁴

Organized as a separate county in 1811, Chautauqua experienced less controversy over the manner of its creation, and political competition between Bucktails and Clintonians developed relatively unencumbered by sectional disputes. In 1826 the Fredonia Censor charged that the village of Jamestown had supported a split ticket for the

assembly nominations.⁸⁵ Not denying the allegations, the Jamestown Journal warned,

We do not wish to see prevailing here, the state of things that has occasionally existed in some sections of our country, where every little neighborhood in a district has a candidate of its own. Such a state of things savours too much of a narrow, selfish spirit to suite our tastes⁸⁶

Instead, parties in each town actively recruited adherents to their cause.

Between 1824 and 1826 Clintonians received their strongest support from the larger villages and most populous towns of Chautauqua County, while Bucktails fared better in rural areas. Clintonian candidates carried three of the four towns along Lake Erie in 1824 and 1825 and won their largest majority from Pomfret, where household manufactures had declined most steeply and shop manufactures risen swiftly. They also gained victories in the town of Chautauqua, with its village of Mayville as the county seat, and Ellicott, with the growing village of Jamestown, at the opposite end of Chautauqua Lake. Bucktail candidates won small inland towns that contained no large settlements and little industry; in 1814 Samuel Young received 70 percent of the votes of Mina and Villenova on the Pennsylvania line.⁸⁷

Individual support of men for the two parties reflects the voting patterns of the towns.⁸⁸ Delegates to both county conventions in 1825 had resided in the county

for an average of ten years, nearly all were born or had fathers who had been born in New England, and half in each party had strong ties with diverse religious denominations. Farmers were represented much more strongly in the Bucktail delegation than in the Clintonian camp. Men like George W. Fenton, who had taught school over the line in Warren, Pennsylvania, and had traveled down the Ohio River as a young man, had the ready cash to invest and the desire to expand landholdings for speculation as well as production for the commercial market.⁸⁹ Others such as Josiah H. Wheeler and Samuel Shepard combined farming with investment in grist mills and saw mills.⁹⁰ A few men could be described as merchants; Elijah Risley, Jr., opened the first grocery in Fredonia, and William H. Fenton worked for a time as a merchant in Jamestown.⁹¹ Bucktails had their share of attorneys and physicians. Commercial agriculture, though, stood as the dominant influence on the party.

A substantially greater proportion of Clintonian delegates were shop owners and manufacturers. Horace Brockway had just opened the first store at Findley's Lake in Mina in 1824, Jonathan Cass ran the first tavern in Westfield, James Haywood kept the first store in Delanti in Stockton, and Titus Kellogg became a partner in an Ashville store in Harmony.⁹² Men owning substantial manufacturing concerns gave strong support to the Clintonian cause. General Leverett Barker of Fredonia established the first

tannery in the county in 1809, which he soon conducted "on an extensive scale." When he bought an interest in a Jamestown establishment, he took on fellow Clintonian Samuel Barrett as a partner. Royal Keyes, the first cabinet maker in Jamestown, owned a joiner shop where he worked in the winter, while building the Dolloff mills on Conewango Creek in the summer season. Daniel Hazeltine, heeding his brother's advice, arrived in Jamestown in 1816 and became much more than a tailor. Through his brother's connections, he immediately erected a cloth-dressing shop, while putting his fulling mill in front of Judge Prendergast's saw mill. By 1823 he had acquired two carding machines, producing 2,500 yards of woolen cloth during the first year.

Perhaps Colonel Henry Baker, another Clintonian, represented the ultimate entrepreneur in the early years. He opened a shoe shop a few miles from Jamestown which provided him with capital to purchase logs for the lumbering industry. He continued to buy timber when he moved his shoemaking business to Jamestown in 1820, employing journey-men shoemakers to carry on the business. In 1823 he rented and ran a tavern, while in 1825 he purchased land and built a sawmill. He also purchased stock in the project that built the steamer Chautauque in 1817.⁹³

Although both Bucktails and Clintonians called themselves the party of the people, their political rhetoric reflected philosophical disagreements arising in

part from their differing occupational pursuits. Clintonians feared the divisiveness of fierce political competition:

We do not pretend to issue our address commanding obedience in your part as the peril of denunciation, and dismemberment from the republican family.--Let not party feelings, party prejudices and party partialities mislead you. Look not alone at the "good of the party," but let a higher and holier sentiment, a pure patriotism, and an ardent attachment to our state and country, prevail over the groveling zeal for party men and party measures.⁹⁴

Party spirit had only led to the selection of men unfit to serve:

So far is the fondness for political polemics carried in many instances, that a talent for controversy is considered the only test of Knowledge and fitness for public employments. We have, however, long considered political zeal as a very unsafe standard of merit. . . . And in weighing a man's ability, we should pay particular attention to his education and habits of life. A man may possess great powers of mind, and yet in consequence of deficient education, be totally unfit for public employment.⁹⁵

Declining Jefferson's invitation to portray the independent farmer as the backbone of the republic, men of the Clintonian coalition rarely paid tribute to the "yeoman." In a letter to an editor of a Clinton (later Antimasonic) newspaper, "Leisure" castigated farmers for complaining of their inadequate political influence. Non-agricultural men simply have more leisure time to educate themselves, he argued, and knowledge is power:

But instead of attributing their deficiency in this respect to its true cause, their own indolence and want of mental exertion, they exclaim against the intrigues and ambitious designs of their neighbors,

who, by greater assiduity and enterprise have fitted themselves for public employment.

An aristocracy of talents, he concluded, was less to be dreaded than one of rank or wealth.⁹⁶ In its second issue, a Clintonian paper in Lyons, Wayne County, gave farmers no more credit for either virtue or intelligence: "To a commercial and manufacturing, more than an agricultural community, is a newspaper most valuable. Their wealth and success in business, depend in a great measure upon information"97

Bucktails, who justified party conflict as a healthy development in a free republic, held little fear of the consequences of political rivalry or the nomination of capable party men.⁹⁸ The editor of the Bucktail Fredonia Censor spoke out against the Clintonian practice of reporting nominations that had been decided by one or two votes in county conventions as "unanimous," claiming "a strange perversion of this word."⁹⁹ Nor would it surprise him, stated the editor, to find truth in the rumors of DeWitt Clinton's intentions to turn Bucktail, since there was much flexibility in his political principles.¹⁰⁰ Little indecision existed in the editor's philosophy, however, and he proved consistently receptive to the concerns of the agricultural sector:

The farmers of this county have for sometime been calling for a member of the Legislature, who would be likely to devote himself to their interests. They are tired of sending lawyers to represent them,

who show more inclination to be engaged in intrigues with the great men of Albany, than in attending to their honest duties.¹⁰¹

If subsistence and commercial farming had represented two competing ways of life, the rhetoric of Bucktails and Clintonians, at least in Chautauqua County, offered western New Yorkers different visions of the emerging commercial society.

This commercial transformation, in stirring the hopes and imaginations of thousands, had contributed to the optimism of citizens in the young republic. With war and depression now behind them, western New Yorkers proudly hailed the new freedom of their country's self-sufficiency, while celebrating individual initiative. Rising opportunity with freedom from economic restraint encouraged aspirations for successful competition in the marketplace, tempered of course by the morality of domesticity. Thus, economic liberty and Christianity came to be viewed as twin tenets of American civilization. Within this context an 1826 kidnapping perpetrated by members of a fraternity formerly thought harmless took on a symbolic importance of demonic proportion.

Notes to Chapter II

¹Neil Adams McNall, An Agricultural History of the Genesee Valley, 1790-1860 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), p. 17.

²Ibid.; Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 6; Lawrence D. Stillwell, Migration from Vermont (Montpelier, Vt: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), pp. 65, 125-26, 128, 164; Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York, 1801-1840, ed. Robert V. Remini (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 211.

³Lois Kimball Mathews, The Expansion of New England (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), p. 154; McNall, Agricultural History, p. 16-24.

⁴Stillwell, Migration from Vermont, p. 139, 139n.

⁵Paul D. Evans, The Holland Land Company (Buffalo, N.Y.: Buffalo Historical Society, 1924).

⁶Lyons Countryman, 31 August 1830.

⁷New York Census, 1814; United States Census, 1820.

⁸Fredonia Censor, 13 August 1823; 20 August 1823; 1 December 1824. This connection has been suggested in Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1860 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 21.

⁹Abner Hazeltine to Jesse Smith, Mayville, New York, 4 December 1817, Manuscript Collections, Fenton Library, Jamestown, New York.

¹⁰New York Census, 1821.

¹¹Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 24-25, 35.

¹²Obed Edson, "Farming in Chautauqua," manuscript in George W. Patterson Library, Westfield, New York; McNall, Agricultural History, p. 79.

¹³McNall, Agricultural History, pp. 89, 92, 101; James S. Tolles Papers, No. 520, Olin Library, Cornell University.

¹⁴Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States," Radical History Review, Vol. 3, No. 4 (September 1976); Clarence H. Danhof, Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); Christopher Clark, "The Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," Journal of Social History, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Winter 1979); George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1895), p. 54.

¹⁵Ronald E. Shaw, Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal 1792-1854 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), pp. 39, 51-75.

¹⁶Fox, Decline of Aristocracy, pp. 251-58; Jackson Turner Main, Political Parties before the Constitution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 123.

¹⁷New York Census, 1821.

¹⁸Abner Hazeltine to Jesse Smith, Jamestown, New York, 24 May 1816, Manuscript Collections, Fenton Library, Jamestown, New York.

¹⁹United States Census, 1825; New York Census, 1821, 1825.

²⁰New York Census, 1821, 1825; Shaw, Erie Water West, pp. 123-25.

²¹Allan R. Pred, Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities, 1790-1840 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 23, 43, 73, 142.

²²Cowles, Wayne County, p. 132; Lyons Advertiser, 31 May 1822.

²³Lyons Advertiser, 27 February 1824.

²⁴Fredonia Censor, 12 May 1824; Shaw, Erie Water West, p. 175.

²⁵Wayne Sentinel, 1 September 1824.

- ²⁶Fredonia Censor, 18 August 1824.
- ²⁷Shaw, Erie Water West, p. 177.
- ²⁸Fredonia Censor, 10 November 1824; Wayne Sentinel, 17 November 1824.
- ²⁹Fredonia Censor, 10 November 1824.
- ³⁰Ibid., 3 November 1825.
- ³¹Lyons Advertiser, 19 October 1825.
- ³²Ibid., 2 November 1825.
- ³³New York Census, 1825, 1835; United States Census, 1830.
- ³⁴New York Census, 1825, 1835.
- ³⁵Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat"; Danhof, Change in Agriculture.
- ³⁶Danhof, Change in Agriculture; Cross, Burned-Over District.
- ³⁷Elial T. Foote, Supervisors Proceedings and Civil History (Fredonia, N.Y.: W. McKinstry and Son, 1868), p. 256, contains yearly average valuations in each town.
- ³⁸New York Census, 1835. This determination was reached by adding the value of manufactured articles in the recorded industries for each town.
- ³⁹Dixon Ryan Fox, Yankees and Yorkers (New York: New York University Press, 1840), p. 19.
- ⁴⁰Lyons Advertiser, 6 June 1823.
- ⁴¹Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, New York), 28 July 1824.
- ⁴²Ibid., 22 September 1826.
- ⁴³Fredonia Censor, 13 February 1827.
- ⁴⁴Jamestown Journal, 26 July 1826; 6 December 1826.
- ⁴⁵Lyons Advertiser, 6 September 1822; 20 September 1826.

- ⁴⁶Ibid., 30 August 1826.
- ⁴⁷Blake McKelvey, Rochester: The Water-Power City, 1812-1854 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 196.
- ⁴⁸Cross, Burned-Over District, pp. 11, 13, 199.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 45.
- ⁵⁰Fredonia Censor, 10 December 1823; 4 February 1824.
- ⁵¹Lyons Advertiser, 4 July 1826; 24 July 1826; Wayne Sentinel, 15 December 1824.
- ⁵²Lyons Advertiser, 28 May 1825
- ⁵³Wayne Sentinel, 7 January 1824; William Appleman Williams, The Contours of American History (New York: Franklin Watts, 1973), p. 232.
- ⁵⁴Lyons Advertiser, 12 July 1822; Wayne Sentinel, 14 July 1824; Fredonia Censor, 6 July 1825.
- ⁵⁵Jamestown Journal, 21 June 1826.
- ⁵⁶Fredonia Censor, 18 June 1825.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., 3 August 1825.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., 9 August 1826.
- ⁵⁹Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 50, 59, 62, 69; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 85.
- ⁶⁰Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, p. 92.
- ⁶¹Ibid., pp. 126, 133, 142, 144.
- ⁶²Cross, Burned-Over District, p. 177; Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837, pp. 97-100; Wayne Sentinel, 16 December 1826; Ryan Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 54, 98.
- ⁶³Uriah Wentworth et al. to the United Domestic Missionary Society, Fredonia, New York, 5 September 1825,

Manuscript Collection, Fenton Library, Jamestown, New York; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 60, 84, 85.

⁶⁴Fredonia Censor, 20 October 1824.

⁶⁵Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, pp. 68-69; Dean May and Maris A. Vinovskis, "A Ray of Millennial Light: Early Education and Social Reform in the Infant School Movement in Massachusetts, 1826-1840," in Tamara K. Hareven, Family and Kin in Urban Communities, 1700-1930, pp. 62-69.

⁶⁶Jamestown Journal, 28 June 1826.

⁶⁷Fredonia Censor, 14 June 1826.

⁶⁸Ibid., 18 August 1824.

⁶⁹Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, p. 125.

⁷⁰From Newark Courier Gazette, 1 July 1876, in files of Wayne County Historical Society, Lyons, New York; W. J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 61.

⁷¹Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 12. Wayne Sentinel, 4 May 1825, 15 June 1825, 23 June 1825; Jamestown Journal, 6 February 1828.

⁷²Shaw, Erie Water West, pp. 121, 169-70; Cowles, Wayne County, p. 1.

⁷³Quoted in Lyons Advertiser, 28 February 1823.

⁷⁴Wayne Sentinel, 26 February 1824.

⁷⁵Ibid., 31 March 1824, 15 September 1824, 19 January 1825.

⁷⁶Lyons Advertiser, 20 July 1825, 3 August 1825, 17 August 1825.

⁷⁷Ibid., 22 February 1826; Wayne Sentinel, 7 February 1826, 31 January 1826, 10 March 1826.

⁷⁸Lyons Advertiser, 24 September 1824, 5 November 1824, 22 October 1824, 26 October 1825, 16 November 1825, Wayne Sentinel, 10 November 1824, 18 October 1825, 15 November 1825.

⁷⁹Wayne Sentinel, 24 March 1826.

- ⁸⁰Ibid., 18 October 1825.
- ⁸¹Lyons Advertiser, 9 August 1826; Wayne Sentinel, 3 November 1826.
- ⁸²Wayne Sentinel, 1 December 1826.
- ⁸³Lyons Advertiser, 21 November 1823; Wayne Sentinel, 15 September 1826.
- ⁸⁴Lyons Advertiser, 4 October 1826.
- ⁸⁵Fredonia Censor, 22 November 1826.
- ⁸⁶Jamestown Journal, 20 September 1826.
- ⁸⁷Fredonia Censor, 17 November 1824, 23 November 1825, 22 November 1826.
- ⁸⁸Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County (Buffalo, N.Y.: Matthews and Warren, 1875); John P. Downs, ed., History of Chautauqua County and Its People (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1921).
- ⁸⁹Young, Chautauqua County, p. 248.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 250, 562.
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- ⁹³Ibid., pp. 353, 479, 444, 345, 346, 659; Downs, Chautauqua County, p. 206.
- ⁹⁴Jamestown Journal, 25 October 1826.
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- ⁹⁶Ibid., 11 October 1826.
- ⁹⁷Lyons Advertiser, 7 June 1822.
- ⁹⁸Richard Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).
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CHAPTER III

MASONRY, MORGANISM, AND THE POLITICS OF PROSCRIPTION

Freemasonry has been defined as "a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated with symbols."¹ Since guild origins in early seventeenth-century London, the fraternity provided a refuge from rapid political and socioeconomic change by offering an alternative society of its own, based upon a quasi-religious natural morality imposed upon and practiced by its members, whose standing rose according to a hierarchical meritocracy. It drew men from a rising middle class. But because of its Enlightenment belief in the universality of man, the conflict of its own moral universe with civil and religious institutions, and its secret and aristocratic demeanor, many western New Yorkers attacked Masonry as a separate "shadow 'state'"² that threatened the emerging American social structure.

Much of the prevailing Masonic ideology stemmed from its English origins about 1720. At the time of the death of Queen Anne in 1714 powerful forces continued to transform London society. A growing tolerance toward dissenters within the established church, and the decline

of parental control within the family, lessened the effectiveness of religion and family in forming and enforcing social morality. The rise of free labor in the marketplace and the waning of the guild system brought a further sense of disinheritance to an important middle stratum of the populace. Masons working on a particular building site came from a wide region and required different rules to govern their labor from those of settled guilds. Masons and builders formed a club to preserve guild rituals and history, while out of their rules grew a concept of morality that would last for centuries. Since skill determined a mason's role on the worksite, the new fraternity sought to preserve and extend this same concept of meritocracy in its own organization. A rising faction of men interested in philosophy and science helped put an indelible stamp of rationalist universalism on the rising fraternity that would limit moral instruction to the interpersonal conduct of daily life. Both builder and philosopher factions united on the ideas of charity and benevolence resting on mutual aid and individual need.³

Although Freemasonry achieved a quick popularity on the Atlantic seaboard, certain sectors of American society cast a wary eye toward the lodges. By 1730 a Masonic chapter operated in Philadelphia, and in 1733 a Boston lodge was opened. New Yorkers established their first city lodge in 1737. In that year the New York

Gazette accused Masonic lodges of immoral practices and condemned oath taking and the "brutal death" that awaited those who betrayed its secrets.⁴ In Connecticut the Masonic pattern of values clashed strongly with the Calvinist philosophy of the state-established Congregational Church. The latter orthodox view saw a universe created by God for His glory and unknowable to man except through God. Inherently sinful, man stood totally dependent upon divine will. Masonic doctrine held to the Enlightenment vision of the Heavenly Father as the Great Clockmaker whose well-ordered universe operated in favor of the good of mankind. From this premise and their guild background came strong beliefs in education and individual betterment, personal freedom, and a liberal attitude toward recreation and self-enjoyment.⁵

By the dawning of the Age of Revolution, American ambiguity toward Masonry developed into open hostility in some quarters. During the American struggle for independence, Masonic chapters spread through the Continental army and state militias. Most American lodges proved strongly sympathetic to the revolutionary cause, although those formed by the "Antients," composed almost wholly of British soldiers and officials, remained Loyalist.⁶ The French Revolution, much more than the American rebellion, laid the groundwork for attacks on Freemasonry, foreign and domestic. European lodges, many necessarily highly

secret, championed Enlightenment ideals and exerted a progressive influence as part of the rising bourgeoisie.⁷ As the fighting reached its thermidor, many churches began to associate growing American deism, other religious dissenters, the Genet-inspired pro-French clubs, and the Republican-Democratic societies with "French infidelity."⁸ Christian piety had become a test of American patriotism.

The secrecy and unorthodox religious beliefs of Freemasonry provided a natural target for religious conservatives and reactionaries. Shortly after his appointment as Yale's new president in 1795, Timothy Dwight warned of the political and religious dangers of Masonry. He had recently come by a copy of Proofs of a Conspiracy Against all Religions and Governments by the famous Scottish scientist, John Robison. Robison had focused his attentions on the Illuminated Masons, or Illuminati, a secret Bavarian society designed to overthrow church and state. By the means of international Masonic connections, he argued, this group had spread their theories through French Masonic lodges and helped ignite the French Revolution.

On the day of fasting and prayer recommended by President Adams in 1798, the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, Jr., of Charlestown, Massachusetts, delivered a sermon indicting the Illuminati of America as the cause of all the nation's strife and licentiousness. Although he attempted to distinguish between loyal New England Masons and the

Illuminati, whom he thought might have infiltrated certain lodges and Genet clubs, his sermons and later pamphlets put a strong stigma on Masonic membership. The publication of Morse's first pamphlet coincided with the startling news of the XYZ Affair, and newspapers throughout New England trumpeted stories of the Illuminati threat to overthrow the young American government.⁹

Two events contributed to stemming the tide of this first wave of Antimasonry. First, the death of George Washington in 1799 had provided enormous legitimation to American Freemasonry. The great man had appeared in Masonic apron and sash in 1793 as the Grand Master of a Virginia lodge that laid the cornerstone of a new capitol building. Much of the American public watched large formal Masonic funeral dirges and gatherings in which members eulogized the General as their own fallen brother. Second, in much of New England where the strongest sentiments prevailed, the concern of conservatives shifted from foreign intrigues toward the domestic political reality of Republican rule and the newly elected President, Thomas Jefferson. Notions of conspiracy and infidelity, for the time being, were set aside.

An Association of Like-Minded Men¹⁰

Although the Grand Lodge of England granted a charter to the first Grand Lodge of New York in 1737, the

western part of the state had no lodge until Buffalo received its charter in 1816 after the close of the war of 1812. During the next decade, however, Masonic lodges spread rapidly in the Genesee Valley and the western frontier. Within a month after the Treaty of Ghent in 1815 a dozen Fredonia Masons applied to the Grand Lodge for authority to institute the first lodge in Chautauqua County. Forest Lodge of Fredonia received its charter in June, 1816. A year later men in the eastern section of the county established Mount Moriah Lodge in Jamestown. Mayville Masons met informally for years before successfully establishing the Summit Lodge in October, 1818. In the two years preceding the kidnapping of William Morgan five new lodges opened: Hanover Lodge, Forestville, in February 1824; Sylvan Lodge, Sinclairville, in June 1824; United Brethren Lodge, Busti, on July 4, 1826; Albion Lodge, Westfield, and Harmony Lodge, Ashville, in August 1826. Even a Royal Arch Chapter, that admitted Masons into a variety of higher degrees, commenced meeting in Jamestown.¹¹ Growing rapidly, Freemasonry had firmly entrenched itself in New York's western frontier.

Even before the establishment of the Buffalo Lodge in 1816, seven men in Pultneyville in the west-central county of Wayne (then part of Ontario) petitioned and won the right to establish a lodge near the shore of Lake Ontario. The next year what would become the largest lodge

in the county, Humanity Lodge in Lyons, received its charter from the state organization. Other branches of Freemasonry established themselves at the Mount Moriah Lodge, Palmyra, in 1816; Galen Lodge, Clyde, in 1823; Newark Lodge No. 83, Newark, in 1824; and Newark Chapter No. 117, Newark, in 1826. The Palmyra Eagle Chapter of Royal Arch Masons opened in 1823.¹² In both Chautauqua and Wayne counties the establishment and growth of lodges constituted a rapid and conspicuous development.

Masons in these counties came from the largest villages to the rural wilderness. In addition to the establishment of lodges in larger communities such as Lyons, Palmyra, Fredonia and Jamestown, chapters arose from the petitions of handfuls of settlers in the smaller settlements of Pultneyville, Busti, and Ashville. In many towns on the western New York frontier, men gathered to form lodges before any other organizations, so strong were their affiliations with the fraternity to the east.¹³ With only rudimentary transportation and the full moon to guide them, members traveled miles from one town to the next on meeting days. Calvin Lake, a farmer from Vermont, had to leave his fields in Charlotte to travel to the lodge meeting at Sinclairville,¹⁴ while Stockton farmer Peter Barnhart journeyed to Mayville to attend assemblages.¹⁵

Freemasonry in no way represented strictly a village elite, although it included a higher proportion of

influential and wealthy members than society at large.¹⁶ Wayne County Masons included attorneys William Clark, Graham H. Chapin, and Ziba Lane; merchants John Adams and Oliver Allen; and physicians Alexander McIntyre and Richard P. Williams. Yet men from other backgrounds became accepted Masons in good standing. Hiram Soverhill taught school and served as a constable in Newark, while Alexander Beard worked as a village blacksmith in Lyons. William Popple owned a coffee house in Newark where the first town meetings took place, and Caleb P. Tibbets ran a tavern just north of the canal. Ziba Lane, a member of Harmony Lodge, traveled from Maine by cattle and wagon to Lyons after the war. He purchased land from the Holland Land Company, built a log cabin with timber and mud, and left his land in the care of his son in old age. Peter Eisenlord settled on a Lyons farm in 1806, but eventually sold it and moved on to Michigan.¹⁷

Physicians, attorneys, millowners, and merchants belonged to Masonic lodges in Chautauqua, but so did farmers, ministers and tavernkeepers. Samuel T. Booth farmed land in Charlotte after his arrival in the county in 1814, farmer Frederick Love bought out his father's land in Ellery in 1825, and Ezra Convis helped manage a farmers' store in 1826 at Silver Creek, Harmony, that ended a few years later in collapse, "many of the farmers having become deeply involved by its failure."¹⁸ Paul Davis, the

first pastor of the Baptist Church of Busti in 1819, and Joy Handy, a missionary who arrived from Madison county, settled on the Canadaway Creek, and served as a minister at the Fredonia Baptist Church, both found their applications accepted at the local lodges. Their Masonic brothers included John Love, Jr., who kept a tavern near Sinclairville, and Nathaniel Wattles, who built a distillery in Hanover in 1823.¹⁹

Although it included many politically prominent men, Freemasonry did not constitute a political force in itself. Masons respected the rules against political discussion at formal lodge meetings, for the broader social functions of lodges remained the most important concern.²⁰ Nor did Masons in Chautauqua and Wayne especially associate with any particular political party. Of fifty-three Chautauqua County Masons whose political affiliations could be identified, twenty-seven supported the Bucktail cause, while twenty-six were Clintonians. The fraternity remained as nonpartisan as possible, but the fifty-three of 187 masons who participated in party town nominations, or who served on town delegation or vigilance committees for Clintonians and Bucktails, illustrate the political activism of Chautauqua Masons.²¹ Of the seven county assemblymen elected through 1826, five were Masons. As with their occupations, the political standing of Masons tended to be greater than their numbers, but whether both resulted from

Masonic influence or represented the attraction of an elite institution to men having already reached success remains unclear. In any case, Masonic membership did not guarantee community leadership or account for political affiliation.

For many new members the fraternity provided a sense of identity and security in frontier areas beset by the increasing mobility and individualism brought by the commercial revolution.²² Asa Pierce, who served as the postmaster of Forestville in 1822 and worked as an innkeeper in different parts of the county, could find a brother Mason wherever he located. Colonel Nathaniel Bird, a Revolutionary War veteran, arrived in Westfield in 1815 and contracted to carry weekly mail on horseback from Buffalo to Erie, Pennsylvania. Soon after he began running stage-wagons along the route, which by 1826 ran daily near the shore of Lake Erie. Gilbert Ballard started a stage service from Jamestown around the east side of Chautauqua Lake to Mayville, that by 1824 traveled tri-weekly carrying the mail. In 1826 Obed Edson established a semi-weekly stage line between Fredonia and Jamestown.²³ All three of these men could rely on assistance from Masonic brothers should a horse collapse or a wheel turn astray or if the often inclement weather required shelter and a hot meal.

Local lodges also promised to furnish economic security and camaraderie that rivaled the functions of family and church. Masonic charity resembled family

assistance, if not a group insurance program, guarding against economic disaster during a period of rapid change. Its very secrecy helped provide friendships based on the confidence of Masonic morality--relations perhaps not as easily corroded by the forces of expanding capitalist development. As with the cult of domesticity, Freemasonry, despite its strongly entrepreneurial composition, also served as an impediment against the developing ideology of individualism. It may also have offered a haven to political and religious dissenters, much as it had in the early eighteenth century. The quasireligious origins and practices of Freemasonry probably attracted the Reverend Joseph Bailey of the Christian Church at Delanti and Reverend Lewis C. Todd of the First Universalist Church of Ellery, who may have found the tolerant atmosphere and firm friendships a welcome relief from the controversies of daily life.²⁴

Yet more practical considerations often drew members of the fraternity toward one another; Masons were often business partners. In Wayne County Joseph M. Demmon, who brought the first stock of goods to the village in 1813, joined in the mercantile business with brother Jacob Leach in 1824. When Demmon later decided to open a livery stable, he took on Humanity Lodge member Nehemia Sprague as an associate. A Galen Mason built the first canal boat in the county, and soon constructed others with a fraternity

brother. In Chautauqua County, merchants Augustin U. Baldwin and Daniel Rockwell jointly opened a store and two other lodge members combined to purchase a large plot of land. Mason James Mullett, Jr., arrived from Vermont in 1810 and worked in a Fredonia store, but by 1813 studied law with Mason and prominent attorney Jacob Houghton. Whether business associations helped foster Masonic memberships or vice versa, many in western New York may have noticed the connections.²⁵

More so than business connections, widespread marriage and kinship relations between members of the lodges existed. Samuel Sinclear and his stepsons John and Obed Edson all belonged to the Sinclairville Lodge. Darius Dexter, who first came to Chautauqua in 1808, became a Mason, and so did his three sons who accompanied him. Samuel Berry's wife was the sister of Mason Richard Williams. Jonathan Cass married Asa Hall's daughter, and Eliphalet Dewey's daughter married Jonathan Sprague. Abraham Winsor, a brother-in-law of Samuel Sinclear, gave his daughter in marriage to fellow lodge member Heman Bush. John Mack also had two Masonic kinship relations; his daughters married Asa Hall and Richard Smith.

Perhaps the most outstanding circumstance of Masonic connections was that of William Colvill, Jr., who came to Forestville from Scotland in 1820. Soon after his arrival he entered into the mercantile business with Albert

H. Camp, whom his sister later married. Colvill himself married a daughter of George Love, while his other sister wed Ernest Mullett.²⁶ One can visualize the evenings after lodge meetings: the boisterous ribaldry, the tilting of glasses, and the betrothals suggested with a wry smile. These kinds of connections must have drawn the envy and hostility of other ambitious men.

Freemasonry exercised all the functions of a secret fraternity, yet its presence on the western frontier was anything but inconspicuous. Members of the fraternity invited the general public to attend ceremonies installing new lodges. Processions took place, Masonic ministers preached sermons, and orators extolled the benefits of Masonry. Newspapers advertised and sold subscriptions to Masonic magazines and reported on installation of new officers and the public processions and ceremonies of the Grand Lodge at Albany.²⁷ The largest public displays of the fraternity usually took place in June as a part of their festival celebrating the anniversary of St. John the Baptist. In 1824 a procession of 120 Masons in Lyons gathered in Humanity Lodge and marched to the court house, where prayers, band music, and an oration on the prophet were presented. The 1826 Jamestown celebration began at the lodge room at 11:30 and assembled in the town square where listeners heard similar sermons and orations.²⁸

Masonic participation in public ceremonies served

to reinforce their own identity and morality as well as fostering good public relations. The cornerstone of the new Lyons courthouse was laid in Masonic form in 1823, and a public procession and celebration organized by three Masons drew people from all parts of the county.²⁹ Masons, who like to regard their institution as "the Handmaid of religion," laid the cornerstone of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mayville on August 1, 1826, a little over a month before William Morgan's abduction. The Fredonia Censor described the ancient ceremonies employed as "novel and interesting":

But few in this vicinity had ever enjoyed the pleasure of witnessing and participating in a similar scene. Members of the different lodges in the county attended. . . . The fraternity formed in procession at the masonic hall, (each brother appropriately decorated with the insignia of the order,) and proceeded by martial music, repaired to Mr. Tracy's where they were joined by the ladies and citizens there assembled.

After an Ode to Masonry was sung, a sermon reminded Masons that they must

regulate their lives and conduct by the strictest principles of morality and virtue, square their actions by honesty and justice, and keep within the compass of moderation and self denial, that they might ever receive in needed supply, the Corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment, and the Oil of joy, and become duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified to join hereafter, that better Lodge above, where the grand Master, the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.³⁰

Lafayette's western New York tour in 1825 brought out Masonic demonstrations of affection that further publicized the fraternity. A welcoming committee, all

Masonic brothers of the Frenchman, met Lafayette in the Fredonia public square as cannons roared their salute and militiamen stood at attention. He responded warmly to the members of the committee and Revolutionary veterans. Not until 10:00 p.m. did the hero leave and then only after repeated toasts, a sumptuous meal, and a 24-gun salute at his departure.³¹ Lafayette's journey impressed a young William Seward, later an Antimason and prominent politician, who viewed the festivities in Auburn. "I had not even then a high appreciation of Freemasonry," he recalled, "nor did I understand what claim that order had to the prominent position which was conceded to it in this and in like political and social demonstrations." The following day he overheard a tinsmith and master of the lodge still wearing his apron say, "You are a Royal Arch-Mason, Lafayette, and so am I. You are our brother, and all Masons are glad to see you, Lafayette."³²

Certain Masonic public displays did not meet with as much approval. Masonic funerals, such as the one held by the Lyons Lodge in 1825 for John S. Tallmadge,³³ accentuated the differences between Masonic principles and the ascendant belief structure brought about by the commercial revolution. The master of the lodge to which the deceased belonged directed the quasireligious service, usually supplemented by a minister or church of any denomination to placate family members and the religious community.

Masons mourned for their departed without regard or concern for any sinfulness in his nature, believing that men should lead the good life, and with expectation of a general resurrection. The more religious elements of society, however, still insisted that such an interpretation of saving grace for salvation be made by a minister. As the values of domesticity took hold, death increasingly became a family matter, and community and family decided whether or not the lodge should participate in a funeral.³⁴ In announcing the death of former editor Hiram T. Day, the Lyons Advertiser reported, "He requested to be buried by his Masonic Brethren, but not if his mother objected to it."³⁵ As Masons attempted to justify the continued exclusion of women from their paternalistic benevolent activities, they increasingly ran against the grain of social change.

Indeed, Masons illustrated a hypersensitivity toward criticism. In a St. John celebration toast one rose to condemn "the enemies of Masonry--These speak evil of things which they understand not." Editor Day reported that a group of Irish Masons in Londonderry had been tried for a misdemeanor under a British statute outlawing the public parading or exhibition of Masonic banners.³⁶ He denounced as intolerant the decision by the ruling elders of a Lamot, Illinois, church to dismiss the pastor for his refusal to relinquish his Masonic ties. Only a total

ignorance of Masonic principles, he insisted, could have caused such a reaction.³⁷ Lodges might unwillingly admit a person whose character might someday render him subject to dismissal. Masons themselves could protect the general public from these men. Just such a warning came in the August 1826 Ontario Messenger when "the Masonic fraternity and others" received warning against a man called "Captain William Morgan, as he is a swindler and a dangerous man."³⁸

A Breach of Personal Liberty

Little is known about Morgan's life before his fateful decision to publish the secrets of Masonry. Originally from Virginia, he had worked as a stonemason and had earlier joined the fraternity. He had attended meetings at the Batavia Lodge, but for some reason had been denied entry early in 1826. The disagreement probably prompted Morgan to write his exposé. David C. Miller, publisher of the struggling Batavia Republican Advocate, who had himself entered into minor scuffles with members of the fraternity, announced plans to publish Morgan's work in early summer 1826.³⁹ Revenge, as much as profit, drove them on.

They did not, however, surpass the Batavia lodge in zealously. Once news of their intentions circulated, Batavia Masons determined to punish Morgan and Miller by frightening them into abandoning the project. Both underwent harassment and prosecutions for petty debt. With the cooperation of the Genesee County sheriff (a Mason), Morgan

was temporarily jailed and many of his papers confiscated under pretended legal sanction. Men thought to be Masons from other areas of the state and even Canada passed through the villages of western New York. Local Masons organized a mob to destroy Miller's printing offices on September 8, but the men turned away when they heard that Miller and his supporters were armed. Two nights later Miller's men foiled a midnight attempt to set his offices on fire.⁴⁰

Local Masons, even angrier over their frustration, decided on more drastic action against their two enemies. At dawn on September 11, 1826, several Masons, including Sheriff William Thompson, arrested Morgan at his home, this time on charges of petty larceny. They spirited him away forty-eight miles east to Canandaigua, where they imprisoned him for debt. The following night some Rochester Masons paid his fine and he was released, but men immediately seized him on the street and forced him into a carriage. After a long westward journey with many stops on the way, the abductors arrived with their victim at old Fort Niagara, where Morgan was briefly incarcerated. It is believed that on or about September 19, he was weighted and dropped in the middle of the Niagara River.⁴¹ At the same time a LeRoy constable and his posse arrested David Miller on obscure charges and confined him in a lodge room in a nearby community. As they took him to LeRoy,

Miller's friends followed and finally convinced the constable to release him.⁴²

The large numbers of conspirators involved in the abduction and the wide geographic area encompassed by the travels of the captive Morgan contributed to the widespread excitement brought by the news of the kidnapping. Upon hearing that her husband had been taken to Canandaigua, Mrs. Morgan journeyed to that place, only to learn that he had again disappeared. Back in Batavia she told her story to neighbor Timothy Fitch, later a member of the Anti-masonic state central committee, who undertook to gather testimony from those who had recently seen Morgan.⁴³

The evidence associated his vanishing with Masonry. Public meetings were held in Batavia on September 26 and October 4, the second of which appointed a committee to gather depositions from witnesses. Committee members sent copies to Governor Clinton with the demand that he take action in bringing the guilty parties to justice, and published an appeal for public cooperation to determine whether the unfortunate Morgan had been murdered.⁴⁴ The public appeal emphasized the crime as a violation of domesticity and called for assistance to lessen the suffering of Mrs. Morgan: "His distressed wife and two infant children, are left dependent on Charity for their sustenance."⁴⁵ Men in other towns along Morgan's route excitedly called public meetings, which created new investigating committees.

Excitement gripped Batavia with a special intensity. After the first public meeting the Masonic editors of the Batavia Times described efforts to publish secrets of the fraternity as a "great moral turpitude" and "depravity." It had not yet been ascertained whether the criminal charges against Morgan were justifiable, and if so, they argued, why should people proclaim his innocence? No grounds existed for a general condemnation of the Masonic fraternity, despite David Miller's claims that his person and property were in danger. "We cannot, therefore, discover any reason for all this mighty uproar, as though heaven and earth and hell, were soon to be mingled in one common ruin."⁴⁶ The Batavia Advocate likewise bemoaned the growing hostility to Freemasonry in general while addressing their readership in apocalyptic tones: "The world is aroused to the impending danger, which threatened destruction to our civil and religious institutions." Encouraged by the indictments of the mostly Masonic Genessee County Grand Jury, the newspaper hoped that social conflict could be avoided:

Composed, as said that jury was, of a majority of Masons, if their honorable acts cannot wipe out entirely the deep stain impressed upon the order of which they are members, they go to prove the never to be forgotten fact that it contains within its bosom men whose principles cannot be contaminated. It is with the most heart felt sorrow that we hear some men assert that they never will yield their confidence to any of the Masonic Order. This is unjust and ungenerous. It is visiting upon the innocent, the crimes of the guilty. Do, depend

upon it, as they will hereafter do, separate the worthy from the unworthy. This justice--humanity, and every enobling virtue of the heart demands.⁴⁷

Newspapers in Wayne and Chautauqua counties initially treated the Morgan story as something approaching farce. Morgan's Illustrations of Masonry was dismissed as "a harmless little matter," hardly warranting the violent outrage against its author. From its contents Masonic ceremonies appeared moral and generally admirable;⁴⁸ perhaps the entire kidnapping had been part of a scheme to promote the book that David Miller now hawked for one dollar per copy: "But we believe the Book to be as great a hoax as was ever attempted, and our opinion is, that after Miller shall have accumulated a snug fortune from his sales, say \$20,000, Morgan will return, unharmed, and leisurely participate in the enjoyment of the same."⁴⁹ As late as May 30, 1827, one editor speculated that Morgan continued in good health and that his disappearance constituted "but the effects of the operation of a gigantic machine, whose impulse his finger has created."⁵⁰

Meanwhile the slow progress and inconclusive results of the Morgan investigations and trials in the western counties provided an argument for Masonic manipulation. The Genesee County bills of indictment in the October sessions accused four men of falsely imprisoning David Miller, three of whom were convicted six months later. All were sentenced to terms of six months or less, while

James Ganson, the wealthiest and most conspicuous defendant, gained acquittal. Part of the jury and two of the four county judges belonged to the lodge, one of whose members served as a defense witness. Of twenty-six men indicted by Genesee grand juries between 1826 and 1830, only six ever came to trial. In the controversial grand jury sessions of 1826-1827, five of six foremen were Masons.⁵¹

The criminal justice system appeared "fixed" in other counties as well. The Masonic sheriff of Monroe County appointed a Mason as foreman of a grand jury in December 1826. Masonic witnesses refused to testify, and no indictments came forth. Sheriff Eli Bruce, a Niagara County Mason, had helped in the kidnapping of Morgan, and was eventually convicted and jailed. Yet for many months, he protected himself and others by packing grand juries with fellow Masons. When three defendants pled guilty to conspiracy to kidnap Morgan at the January sessions of Ontario County, a belief quickly arose that the men had "taken the rap" to avoid providing new information that might incriminate others. More than 200 witnesses who had arrived in Canandaigua, some from 100 miles away, now made their way home through severe winter weather.⁵²

The state government proved little better than the counties in pushing forward the investigations. After citizens protested the light sentences received by the

conspirators, Governor Clinton approved legislation in April 1827 taking away the power of sheriffs to form grand juries and investing that duty in town supervisors. He also consulted with Canadian officials and offered large rewards for information concerning Morgan. But when a special legislative committee headed by Francis Granger, later an Antimasonic candidate for governor, recommended that the state appoint a joint legislative committee to investigate the situation in the western counties, the proposal was vilified by a strongly Masonic lawmaker and soundly defeated.⁵³

Many men still continued to express confidence that justice would eventually expose any guilty party. The Monroe County Grand Jury promised that if Morgan had met a foul end, he would be avenged: "The spirit of enquiry is abroad, and publick justice cannot rest until her offended laws are vindicated by the full exposure and ample punishment of all persons concerned in the outrage committed upon William Morgan."⁵⁴ After the results of the trials, the Lyons Advertiser sought to temper inflamed passions by citing the necessity of following the rules of the criminal justice system: "We cannot wish that the forms of law had been disregarded, and the safe barriers which are formed by the rules of evidence, overleaped, for the purpose of giving the full length of the reins to public indignation."⁵⁵ The Morgan abduction had been an outrage, argued

another, but the existing laws were adequate to punish the guilty and no need existed to take extraordinary measures. The excitement produced by the trials not only stood completely unjustified, but actually disturbed the judicial process by preventing the discovery of guilty parties and destroying all prospect of a fair trial.⁵⁶

Masons in the two counties met to condemn the kidnapping and to disclaim any culpability. Fredonia's Forest Lodge found the Morgan affair "just cause for public indignation," and denied that any Masonic code authorized the power of taking the "life, liberty or property of another." The rules of Masonry stood in consonance with the laws of civil society, and the kidnapping of Morgan violated both.⁵⁷ A resolution of the Lyons Royal Arch Chapter defended their creed in much the same way:

That we hereby declare unto the world that Masons acknowledge no laws which contravene the constitution and laws of their country, and that the Masonic Institution claims no right to inflict corporal or other punishment upon its members, except suspension and expulsion.⁵⁸

A month later the Sylvan Lodge in Gerry promised to guard against the "contaminating influence" from guilty members of other lodges. As they criticized the "time serving" and "recreant" members who had seceded from the institution, they also held them up before the public as evidence of the "little influence" Freemasonry had held over them. A final resolution thanked the citizens of Gerry for their

tolerance during "the present excitement."⁵⁹

While excitement continued to rise, many dreaded the effects of heightened controversy on community and commerce. Some newspapers attempted to conciliate growing factionalism by declarations of neutrality: "As there is a great diversity of tastes among our readers," wrote the Wayne Sentinel, "especially in reference to the dishes which are weekly served up by some editors, of this 'unfortunate individual,' we have endeavored to pursue a kind of neutral course in relation to the business. . . ."⁶⁰ The Jamestown Journal declared that although Morgan had probably been murdered, the entire fraternity could not be held responsible. Those devoted to one side of the issue could read The Masonic Intelligencer or The Morgan Investigator.⁶¹ Either the intense feeling would abate, declared the Lyons Advertiser, or violence and civil disorder would result:

But it is of immeasurable importance that the peace of this community should not be hastily disturbed, and that the generosity of public feeling should not be abused and hurried into acts of injustice and violence, by partial statements or inflammatory denunciation. And while we would urge the strictest vigilance in discovering the real violators of the law, we appeal to the good sense of the community to prevent the commission of greater outrages. . . .⁶²

Another view also received an airing. Shortly after the 1826 election a Chautauqua newspaper reprinted an article on the Morgan affair by Solomon Southwick, soon to be an Antimasonic leader. Not only was Morgan denied his right of free speech, he claimed, but had also been

denied liberty and property without due process of law. The crime had also been committed against the feelings of his wife, apparently all the more hideous because of her "unspotted character." Meanwhile the sheriff had admitted that he presumed Morgan had been arrested under a false pretense, but still served in his capacity as the chief law enforcement agent of the county. Although he revered the principles of Freemasonry, Southwick issued a prophetic warning: "Masonry is unknown to the constitution; and however meritorious in itself, or benign in its consequences, it exists by tolerance, and not by prescription of law."⁶³

Mounting frustration over the course of the trials and the constant state of animation existing in western New York communities led only to more heated discussion and a call for meetings to address the situation. A meeting called in the Wayne County town of Macedon sought to pass resolutions on the institution of Masonry itself, and a gathering of Harmony citizens in Chautauqua County met at Clark's Inn in March 1827 to consider the Morgan outrages. The resolutions at Harmony condemned the inaction of Governor Clinton, who had served as Grand Master of the New York Masons from 1806-1820. They also condemned the light punishments given to those found guilty at the Canandaigua sessions but "treated more as martyrs to a glorious cause, than as the perpetrators of a horrid

crime." The men pledged to support the laws of the government and constitution, and then came perilously close to passing a resolution not to support Masons for office:

That we will use our best exertions at all popular elections, to exclude from office all men, whether Masons or otherwise, who do not publicly and sincerely declare a decided abhorrence and disapprobation to a transaction fraught with iniquity, both in degree and extent, which is unparalleled in the annals of our country.

The next resolution quickly added that they equally disapproved of those who condemned innocent Masons who expressed abhorrence of the crime.⁶⁴ On that point, they would soon change their minds.

Hearing first, second, or even third-hand reports of the trials and surprised by Masonic defensiveness and intransigence, much of the public turned with hostility against the fraternity. A Chautauqua paper observed, "If a certain portion of our population had not treated this matter with unreasonable coldness and indifference, we believe the undue excitement and intemperate zeal of which they complain, in another portion, would never have existed."⁶⁵ A Macedon meeting in March 1827 was the first in Wayne County to condemn Masonry. There they expressed shock at the "cold way" Masons treated the abduction, and claimed that the institution corrupted young men by providing them with a baseless false pride that distracted them from becoming "valuable members of the community." Its first resolution would in some form be repeated in hundreds

of meetings throughout the state:

That we view the Institution of Freemasonry as of dangerous tendency inasmuch as it is a secret society, and we believe has assumed powers which are not recognized by the constitution of our country. Therefore we think it not proper to give our suffrages to any person who continues to support the Institution.⁶⁶

Although Bucktails claimed Antimasonic leaders were nothing more than office-seeking opportunists,⁶⁷ they recognized that the new party had unwittingly performed a beneficial service: "The present instance is the first which has occurred since the erection of our county, of a Convention having met to nominate candidates for office, without suffering the clashing and discordant claims of local or sectional interests. . . ."⁶⁸

Chautauquans also gathered at town meetings to denounce Masonry in 1827. Several assemblages along the shore of Lake Erie pledged never to give their vote to Masonic candidates, and some of them also resolved that they would never again listen to the preaching of a Masonic clergyman.⁶⁹ As in Wayne County, preparations were made for a county convention to nominate non-Masonic candidates. County Bucktails refused to take the new party seriously: "It is office and honour alone they court and which they expect to win by means like these.--The contest is not, will not be a political one."⁷⁰ As the Regency men underestimated the support for an Antimasonic Party within the county, they had also not yet arrived at the realization

that a strong basis for statewide organization existed among the investigating committees of western New York. While the feelings of county voters proved broader than their desire to vote for any particular candidate, opportunist or not, the range of concerns shared by many in the investigating committees eventually went beyond the bounds of proscribing the institution of Freemasonry.

Taking Up the Ballot Box

As early as January 1827 men from different counties had met to compare notes and to unearth the facts of the Morgan conspiracy. Members of seven investigating committees sent delegates to Lewiston, the village where Morgan's death had supposedly been arranged. For four days they compiled a narrative of the outrages which, along with the bloody obligations of the higher Masonic degrees compiled in Morgan's book, shocked and enraged public feeling.⁷¹ Known as "the Lewiston Convention," the gathering constituted more an informal affair, with private consultations and without a set organization. The result of the meeting, however, provided a skeletal framework which later developed into the leadership apparatus of the Antimasonic Party. Delegates selected a central corresponding committee of three Rochester men and appointed local committees headed by one member.⁷²

Antimasonic sentiment first permeated the political

arena in the town election of 1827. Although various committees continuing to work announced no further disclosures, feeling "grew more and more bitter and vindictive."⁷³ Beginning in January western town meetings passed resolutions against voting for Masons. They also appointed correspondence committees that communicated with the Lewiston central committee and other town organizations.

Another result of these spring elections provided an inadvertent stimulus to political antimasonry. Frederick Backus, for years treasurer of Rochester, had been a member of the Lewiston convention. Running for reelection unopposed, he suddenly found himself defeated. Excited villagers condemned this as yet another Masonic conspiracy and became convinced that Masonry's power could only be neutralized through vigilance at the ballot box. Thurlow Weed later observed,

The coup d'etat, so secretly and successfully accomplished, awakened immediate and wild excitement throughout the village. It was like a spark of fire dropped upon combustible materials. "The blow was struck but the hand concealed," according, as it was alleged, to the obligations of the Order.⁷⁴

Weed, as with most Antimasonic leaders, was a young but experienced politician. A printer and junior editor of the Rochester Telegraph, he became a local leader of the anti-Regency People's Party in the fall of 1823. His editorial support of the town's efforts to gain a charter for a village bank impressed local leaders, and they sent

him to Albany and gave him a free hand in lobbying for legislative approval, a method that rendered positive results.⁷⁵ He had been instrumental in securing the nomination of Samuel Tallmadge as De Witt Clinton's running mate in the successful 1824 election. His party efforts, in addition to a "natural conservatism bolstered by his concern for internal improvements,"⁷⁶ won him a seat in the state assembly in the fall.

By the end of the session Weed had made useful political connections. He borrowed \$2,500 to purchase the Rochester Telegraph himself, but his efforts in 1826 to support both John Quincy Adams and De Witt Clinton, who was rumored as leaning toward the Jackson camp, brought controversy and disappointment.⁷⁷ "I have never before experienced such a sickening defeat, or even been abandoned to such an utter political hopelessness and despondency," he told the unsuccessful Clintonian senate candidate Albert H. Tracy. Tracy advised Weed to continue the Telegraph and patiently ride out the political turbulence of the times. "The purposes and combinations of political men," he observed, "are not only undeveloped but probably in a great measure unformed." When Tracy asked for Weed's views on Antimasonry a year later, the young editor had already become part of the movement.⁷⁸

Weed showed initial reluctance to involve himself in the Morgan controversy, but his political acumen soon

made him aware that the situation provided a unique opportunity if it could be turned against Van Buren and the Bucktails. In the summer of 1826 he turned down an offer to print Morgan's revelations of the first three degrees of Masonry, largely because his partner belonged to the lodge. When shortly after the kidnapping he printed "Excitement at Batavia," surmising that the men responsible "must have been over-zealous members of the fraternity," Masonic patrons descended on the office demanding that their papers and advertisements be cancelled immediately.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Weed pursued a moderate stand on the issue, asking Masons to surrender the guilty individuals and making light of Solomon Southwick and others for their radical stands against the fraternity. But by spring, which brought the mysterious defeat of his good friend Backus, Weed joined the Rochester Morgan Committee.⁸⁰

By September the committee had assumed the leadership of Monroe County "Republican Anti-Masonick Ticket" for the state legislature. While the investigating committee practiced their political invective, their own efforts to locate Morgan became part of the political campaign. When a decomposed body was discovered floating on Lake Ontario, the committee at once sought to determine its identity. Although they claimed they had found Morgan's body, stories of Weed bending over trying to

pull out the whiskers of the dead man began to circulate. "It's a good enough Morgan until after the election," Weed reportedly remarked.⁸¹ One Antimason pleaded with Weed that he should speak out if he had second thoughts on the victim's identity.⁸²

Weed's conscience did not seem to interfere with electoral politics. On October 17, 1827, the committee issued a supplementary report confirming that they had found Morgan, "beyond the shadow of a doubt."⁸³ Whether or not Weed's strategy had a beneficial effect in stimulating the emotions of voters, Antimasons carried the five counties the captive Morgan had traveled through. Party leader Frederick Whittlesey later recalled, "The result astonished all--even the anti-masons themselves--and opened the eyes of politicians to the growing power of this new party."⁸⁴

Two conventions in LeRoy, Genesee County, early in 1828 broadened further the scope of the fledgling organization. On February 19 and 20 a large group of disenchanted Masons who had seceded from the fraternity met to discuss their next step. One Rochester leader wrote Millard Fillmore, urging him to send as many honest Masons as he could, as the meeting constituted "the most important step that has yet been taken to overthrow the institution of Masonry."⁸⁵ Rather than a strictly political gathering, the former lodge members recounted the rites of the

fraternity, proceedings which covered over 100 pages and which were ordered ready for publication at a later meeting of July 4. The disclosure of some of the higher degrees of Masonry and the public renunciation of the institution by several respectable and prominent men stimulated further hostile feeling toward the lodges. Antimasons quickly accepted these men into their ranks where their political status found shelter. Calling for the destruction of Masonry, this seceding group proved a catalyst to the politicization of the movement. As Weed described it in his autobiography,

The pressure for political action was most earnest from seceding Masons, a large class of influential men, who insisted that the ballot was the only weapon that could be successfully wielded against the fraternity, and who insisted that by no other means, and in no other way, could they be protected from the "vengeance" of the institution which they had renounced.⁸⁶

Of even greater import was a convention called by the Rochester committee of seventy-seven delegates from twelve western counties, who assembled in LeRoy on March 6, 1828. Although no specifically political resolutions passed, leaders hoped the gathering would further politicize towns across western New York. The delegates, chosen at county meetings, resolved to meet at Utica on August 4, instructed towns to elect committees of correspondence, and agreed on a "General Central Committee of Correspondence and Publication" that included Weed and four others from

Rochester. Neither in March at LeRoy nor in the June agenda did Antimasons mention a gubernatorial nomination, but it was "very generally understood" that one would occur and that the candidate would likely be Francis Granger, a prominent National Republican and Adams man. That Weed's entire ambition lay in uniting Antimasons with the older anti-Regency groups in a coalition against Van Burenites, while favoring the cause of National Republicans on the presidential question, is spelled out in a letter to Daniel Webster immediately after the close of the LeRoy convention: "The Convention embraced the talents, character, and influence of the 'Lion of the West.'"87

Cementing such a coalition proved more difficult than the ambitious Weed imagined. In not advertising their intentions to nominate a candidate for governor, Weed and other Antimasonic leaders had hoped to surprise the Adams men and pressure them to support the same candidate so as to avoid a split in the anti-Regency ranks. However, National Republican leaders quickly rescheduled their convention to meet a few days ahead of the Antimasons, and despite the machinations of Weed, narrowly nominated Judge Smith Thompson over Francis Granger, who was selected for lieutenant governor.

Antimasonic delegates from twenty-three counties, meeting at the Utica Baptist Church, could not swallow Thompson⁸⁸ and vowed "wholly to disregard the two political

parties, that at this time distract this state and the union, in the choice of candidates for office; and to nominate anti-masonic candidates for governor and lieutenant governor."⁸⁹ They then proceeded to nominate Francis Granger and John Crary. Placed in an awkward situation, Granger accepted the first nomination for lieutenant governor, leaving the new Antimasonic Party without a candidate. Determined to field their own candidate, delegates later met to nominate Solomon Southwick, a man popular with many of the people, but dismissed by others as an eccentric.⁹⁰ Some Antimasonic leaders even believed that the nomination of Southwick had been "a project of the Jackson folks."⁹¹ Angry and humiliated, the Machiavellian Weed nonetheless placed Southwick's name at the head of the party's ticket of his Anti-Masonic Enquirer. Weed had lost this particular skirmish, but his eventual ambition to become the party's undisputed leader would not be denied.

Yet party leadership implied only limited control over its development. Antimasonry, as with Masonry, attracted like-minded supporters, and their attitudes to some extent had been shaped by past political affiliations and their responses and relations to rapid commercial development. As Antimasons increasingly took over the role of anti-Regency party from the faltering National Republicans, they impressed these attitudes upon the party they

had created. The condemnation of a violent kidnapping gave rise to a political philosophy that would attempt to reconcile the necessity of a growing commercial market with an overwhelming desire to build a united and moral community. Inevitably, in a society of such diverse conditions, others would strongly disagree with these ideas.

Notes to Chapter III

¹Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, Masonic History Old and New (n.p.: n.p., 1942), p. 10, quoted in Dorothy Ann Lipson, Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 6.

²Lipson, Freemasonry, p. 226.

³Ibid., pp. 16-43; Mervyn Jones, "Freemasonry," in Norman MacKenzie, ed., Secret Societies (London: Aldus Books Ltd., 1967), pp. 152, 158-59, 161.

⁴Lorman Ratner, Antimasonry: The Crusade and the Party (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 3-4; Ossian Lang, History of Freemasonry in the State of New York (New York: Grand Lodge of New York, 1922), pp. 7, 10.

⁵Lipson, Freemasonry, p. 63; Michael F. Holt, "The Antimasonic and Know Nothing Parties," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., History of United States Political Parties, Vol. I (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973).

⁶Lang, History of Freemasonry, p. 57. On the appeal of Freemasonry to military men, see E. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848 (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1978), p. 146.

⁷Hobsbawm, Age of Revolution, p. 267; E. J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1959), pp. 127, 157.

⁸Lipson, Freemasonry, pp. 82-83.

⁹Ibid., pp. 84, 99-100; Ratner, Antimasonry, p. 6; Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, p. 164.

¹⁰I am indebted to Dorothy Ann Lipson for the phrase used above as a chapter subheading. Lipson, Freemasonry, p. 328.

¹¹Obed Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua: A Story of Masonic Work from the Year 1815 (Sinclairville, N.Y.: H.C. Drake, 1897), pp. 8-9.

¹²George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason & Co., 1895), pp. 146-52.

¹³Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "The Social Composition of Political Leadership: Genesee County, New York, 1821-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1973, p. 42.

¹⁴Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County (Buffalo, N.Y.: Matthews and Warren, 1875), pp. 252, 254; Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua, p. 28.

¹⁵Elmer Brinkman, "The History of Summit Lodge," Masonic News, File 366.1b, George W. Patterson Library, Westfield, New York; Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 267, 560.

¹⁶Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 183.

¹⁷Cowles, Wayne County, pp. 112, 121, 229, 240, 358, 364, 368, II 74.

¹⁸Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 257, 317, 408, 410.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 107, 241, 317, 410, 494.

²⁰Lipson, Freemasonry, pp. 4-5.

²¹This was determined from county conventions and other proceedings printed in the county newspapers, and by lists of Masonic membership for the two counties found in Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua, and Cowles, Wayne County.

²²Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 183; Lipson, Freemasonry, p. 78.

²³Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 123, 125, 582, 594.

²⁴Lipson, Freemasonry, pp. 92, 239, 243; Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 326, 573.

²⁵Cowles, Wayne County, pp. 227, 230, 240, 257; Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 264, 489, 609.

²⁶Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 254, 268, 469, 600, 491, 254, 261, 634, 418, 422.

²⁷Jamestown Journal, 23 August 1826; Fredonia Censor, 23 November 1825; 5 October 1825.

- 28 June 1826. ²⁸Lyons Advertiser, 2 July 1824; Jamestown Journal, 2 July 1824.
- ²⁹Lyons Advertiser, 30 July 1823.
- ³⁰Fredonia Censor, 9 August 1826.
- ³¹Ibid., 1 June 1825.
- ³²Frederick W. Seward, Autobiography of William H. Seward from 1801 to 1834 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1877), p. 65.
- ³³Lyons Advertiser, 19 October 1825.
- ³⁴Lipson, Freemasonry, pp. 163-67.
- ³⁵Lyons Advertiser, 23 August 1826.
- ³⁶Ibid., 7 June 1826.
- ³⁷Ibid., 6 July 1825.
- ³⁸Quoted in Wayne Sentinel, 18 August 1826.
- ³⁹Ronald P. Formisano and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry: The Genesis of Protest, 1826-1827," American Quarterly 29 (Summer 1977):146-47; Lang, History of Freemasonry, p. 109.
- ⁴⁰Formisano and Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry," p. 147.
- ⁴¹James S. Chase, Emergence of the Presidential Nominating Convention, 1784-1832 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 123.
- ⁴²Formisano and Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry," p. 148.
- ⁴³Chase, Nominating Convention, pp. 123-24.
- ⁴⁴Ibid.
- ⁴⁵Republican Advocate (Batavia, N.Y.), rpt. in Jamestown Journal, 18 October 1826.
- ⁴⁶Batavia Times, rpt. in Fredonia Censor, 4 October 1826.
- ⁴⁷Rpt. in Jamestown Journal, 1 November 1826.

- ⁴⁸Lyons Advertiser, 15 November 1826.
- ⁴⁹Wayne Sentinel, rpt. in Fredonia Censor,
6 December 1826.
- ⁵⁰Lyons Advertiser, 30 May 1827.
- ⁵¹Formisano and Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and
Masonry," pp. 153-54.
- ⁵²Ibid., pp. 155-56; Fredonia Censor, 24 January
1827.
- ⁵³Formisano and Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and
Masonry," pp. 156-57.
- ⁵⁴Fredonia Censor, 20 December 1826.
- ⁵⁵Lyons Advertiser, 31 January 1827.
- ⁵⁶Wayne Sentinel, 4 May 1827.
- ⁵⁷Fredonia Censor, 14 March 1827.
- ⁵⁸Lyons Advertiser, 21 March 1827.
- ⁵⁹Fredonia Censor, 11 April 1827.
- ⁶⁰Wayne Sentinel, 9 February 1827.
- ⁶¹Jamestown Journal, 11 April 1827.
- ⁶²Lyons Advertiser, 7 March 1827.
- ⁶³Albany Observer, rpt. in Jamestown Journal,
22 November 1826.
- ⁶⁴Wayne Sentinel, 16 March 1827; Jamestown Journal,
4 April 1827.
- ⁶⁵Jamestown Journal, 21 February 1827.
- ⁶⁶Wayne Sentinel, 16 March 1827.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., 21 September 1827.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., 5 October 1827.
- ⁶⁹Fredonia Censor, 4 April 1827.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., 10 October 1827.

⁷¹Jabez D. Hammond, The History of Political Parties in the State of New York (Albany, N.Y.: C. Van Benthuysen, 1842), pp. 376-77.

⁷²Chase, Nominating Convention, pp. 125-26.

⁷³Harriet A. Weed, ed., Autobiography of Thurlow Weed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883), p. 249.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁷⁵Glyndon Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1947), pp. 20, 25; Matthew Brown to Weed, 1 January 1824; E. B. Strong to Weed, 19 January 1824, Weed MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

⁷⁶Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed, pp. 23, 28.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 29-36.

⁷⁸Thurlow Weed to Tracy, 2 December 1826, Tracy MSS, New York State Library, Albany; Albert H. Tracy to Weed, 6 December 1826; Albert H. Tracy to Weed, 17 December 1827, Weed MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

⁷⁹Weed, Autobiography, pp. 212-14.

⁸⁰Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed, p. 40.

⁸¹*Ibid.*; Lang, History of Freemasonry, p. 121.

⁸²Bates Cook to Weed, 24 October 1827, Weed MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

⁸³A Supplementary Report, of the Committee Appointed to Ascertain the Fate of Captain WILLIAM MORGAN, October 17, 1827, New York State Library, Albany.

⁸⁴Hammond, Political History, I, 382-83.

⁸⁵Timothy Fitch to Millard Fillmore, 3 February 1828, Fillmore MSS (microfilm), Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.

⁸⁶Weed, Autobiography, p. 30.

⁸⁷Hammond, Political History, I, 385-86; Chase, Nominating Convention, pp. 129-20; Proceedings of a Convention of Delegates Opposed to Free Masonry which met at Le Roy, Genesee County, New York, New York State Library,

Albany; Thurlow Weed to Webster, 7 March 1828, Webster MSS, Library of Congress.

⁸⁸Chase, Nominating Convention, p. 132.

⁸⁹Hammond, Political History, I, 387.

⁹⁰Chase, Nominating Convention, p. 87.

⁹¹Philo Case Fuller to Weed, 8 September 1828;
Nathan Sargent to Weed, 26 October 1828, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

CHAPTER IV

WHO WERE THE ANTIMASONS?

THE SOCIAL BASES OF PARTY SUPPORT

In his much-quoted Autobiography of 1883, Thurlow Weed asserted, "While the Anti-Masonic sentiment was strong among the farmers, it was weak in the villages, especially among the wealthy and influential classes."¹ Weed may have been a political genius, but he did not reach this conclusion by utilizing modern social science techniques. Yet nearly all historians have accepted the statement as accurate and pursued their research from the point of this assumption. They have repeated the contention that Antimasonry received its "chief support in the countryside and not the city," that the movement illustrated a "rural jealousy toward urban superiority," and even that it "represented an impassioned, leveling attack by members of the 'lower classes' against the village and urban 'aristocracy.'"² Town voting tabulations and evaluations of politically active Antimasons and Bucktails demonstrate that this was not the case in Wayne and Chautauqua counties. In fact, some of the social basis of Antimasonry lay in urban manufacturing communities.

The Rural Myth and Town Voting Returns

By using the 1830 United States Census, the 1835 New York State Census, the 1832 county tax figures paid by each town, the value of articles manufactured within each town recorded in the 1832 state census, and the 1832 official voting returns by town for the two counties, it is possible to gain some insight into the social basis of political Antimasonry. Even these records cannot completely illuminate the intense community divisions and religious fervor which so especially characterize the movement. Yet in an age when every political group claimed to champion the rights of the honest yeoman farmer, these data provide insights into the nature of the controversy impossible to glean from a quick perusal of the party presses and help to put rhetorical differences in a wider, more meaningful perspective.

An analysis of town voting in Wayne County illustrates that one source of Antimasonic support came from the larger manufacturing towns (see Table 2). Lyons, Galen, and Macedon, the leading manufacturing towns, together produced nearly half (49.3%) of the value of manufactured products in the entire county. All three returned sizeable majorities for Francis Granger, the 1832 Antimasonic gubernatorial candidate. Of the fifteen towns in the county, Macedon ranked first, Galen second, and Lyons sixth in percentage of Antimasonic vote. Lyons' grist mills produced

TABLE 2

WAYNE COUNTY TOWN WEALTH AND ANTIMASONIC VOTING PERCENTAGES, 1832

Town	1835 Pop.	1835 Per Capita Value of Manufactures (in dollars)	Rank	Est. 1832 Pop.	1832 Per Capita Tax Assessment (in dollars)	Rank	Antimasonic Vote (in percen- tages)	Rank
Macedon	2190	33.15	3	2062	.666	1	68.6	1
Galen	3775	50.06	2	3665	.371	4	62.3	2
Ontario	1626	7.74	11	1614	.282	12	62.0	3
Marion	2043	5.58	12	2124	.286	11	60.9	4
Rose	1715	20.52	5	1662	.241	14	59.6	5
Lyons	4013	64.23	1	3788	.348	6	58.8	6
Williamson	2017	17.25	7	1880	.370	5	52.9	7
Walworth	1798	2.76	13	1814	.424	3	52.8	8
Savannah	1324	00.15	15	1067	.306	8	51.6	9
Wolcott	1792	32.28	4	1392	.263	13	44.1	10
Huron	1831	10.12	10	1379	.291	10	42.0	11

TABLE 2--Continued

Town	1835 Pop.	1835 Per Capita Value of Manufactures (in dollars)	Rank	Est. 1832 Pop.	1832 Per Capita Tax Assessment (in dollars)	Rank	Antimasonic Vote (in percen- tages)	Rank
Palmyra	3326	18.00	6	3373	.633	2	38.5	12
Sodus	4079	13.26	9	3708	.317	7	38.4	13
Butler	2160	1.86	14	1909	.238	15	34.9	14
Arcadia	4102	15.52	8	3908	.293	9	27.2	15

SOURCE: United States Census, 1830 provides information on population; New York Census, 1835 provides information on manufacturing as well as population. The tax assessments are taken from the abstract of town accounts in Elial T. Foote, Super-
visors Proceedings and Civil History (Fredonia, New York: W. McKinstry and Son, 1868), p. 256. The official returns for the 1832 election are from Lyons Countryman, November 14, 1832, for Wayne County, and from Fredonia Censor, November 14, 1832, for Chautauqua County.

\$211,432 worth of flour and grain, almost half the value for the entire county. Its iron works and saw mills ranked second among the towns. Lyons' importance soon equalled that of Canandaigua as the most important town in northwestern New York between the Oswego and the Niagara rivers.³ A glass factory in Galen, the only one in the county, accounted for \$72,000 of the town's production. The town ranked second in the output of its fulling mills and third in carding machines. Macedon stood third and second in the same categories, respectively. The Erie Canal greatly aided the development of these towns, yet they might be described as manufacturing rather than commercial towns.

Other manufacturing towns, such as Palmyra and Arcadia, sided as strongly with the Bucktail cause as Macedon, Lyons and Galen leaned toward Antimasonry, however their economic prosperity centered much more on the Erie Canal. While the construction of Clinton's Ditch stimulated the growth of other county villages, Newark in the town of Arcadia owed its entire existence to the new waterway. From hastily constructed warehouses and docks built along its banks, the new settlement grew into the largest village in the county and soon provided the town of Arcadia, ranked fourth in total value of manufactures, with the county's largest population. On some occasions before the building of railroads, fifty or more teams waited to unload produce at Newark.⁴ In Palmyra, ranked

fifth in total manufacturing, the large number of merchants, some with their own freight boats, became the leading men of the community. Probably the most telling figures are the canal tolls reported by collectors. Philip Grandin, the Bucktail collector of Palmyra, found that \$76,944 had been collected in the village in 1826--some \$20,000 less than Rochester. In Lyons only \$26,393 was collected.⁵ Indeed, the political divisions in Wayne County seemed to verify Judge Van Ness' prediction at the 1821 New York Constitutional Convention that commerce and agriculture must entrench themselves against the manufacturers.⁶

The poorer, more agricultural towns themselves could hardly be described as teeming with angry Antimasonic debtors. Butler, with the second lowest value of manufactures, gave the Bucktails their second highest majority in 1832. Neighboring Savannah manufactured the least number of articles in the county, yet its support for Antimasonry in 1832 ranked only ninth. Walworth, in the far western end of the county, produced the third lowest value of manufactures, yet its citizens' vote for the Antimasonic Party only stood eighth out of the fifteen towns.⁷ According to the traditional arguments, such towns should have served as hotbeds of Antimasonry.

Neither does the old contention of a rural rebellion against a village elite find any substantiation from Chautauqua County figures. Although Ellicott, the largest

manufacturing town with the highest assessed tax, provided Antimasonry with one of its weaker majorities, the dominance of the lumber industry renders it worthy of special consideration. Saw mills multiplied rapidly in the 1820's, and many Ellicott men became rich sending vast quantities of lumber, boards and shingles down the Conewango Creek to the Allegheny River. By way of the Ohio and Mississippi, Chautauqua County timber reached Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and New Orleans. Saw mill production, then, accounted for over 40% of the value of Ellicott's manufactured goods. Regular trade with Pittsburgh and other places gave Ellicott and its village of Jamestown a commercial character unique in the county. Jamestown hardly typified a burgeoning community of small manufacturers; its central business section stood in a swamp. Bucktail support came from other manufacturing towns. Third-ranked Hanover gave the Bucktails their sixth largest percentage. Fourth and sixth in production, Charlotte and Carroll gave the party its fourth and second strongest totals.⁸

Several of the other manufacturing towns, however, gave much greater support to Antimasons. Mina, the second greatest per capita producer, ranked ninth of twenty-two towns in percentage of Antimasonic vote. The seventh, eighth and ninth manufacturers, Harmony, Ellington and Pomfret, ranked third, eighth, and fourth respectively

TABLE 3

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY TOWN WEALTH AND ANTIMASONIC VOTING PERCENTAGES, 1832

Town	1835 Pop.	1835 Per Capita Value of Manufactures (in dollars)	Rank	Est. 1832 Pop.	1832 Per Capita Tax Assessment (in dollars)	Rank	Antimasonic Vote (in percen- tages)	Rank
Ellery	2395	8.51	14	2159	.201	21	93.9	1
French Creek	353	3.00	20	393	.451	2	84.3	2
Harmony	2915	15.42	7	2359	.246	15	78.3	3
Pomfret	3981	13.39	9	3624	.2956	8	77.2	4
Arkwright	1293	1.31	21	1073	.242	16	75.8	5
Sheridan	1909	4.70	16	1763	.2958	7	72.9	6
Portland	2178	3.65	17	1934	.286	11	72.5	7
Ellington	1773	13.82	8	1477	.170	22	72.1	8
Mina	798	38.69	2	1152	.363	3	72.0	9
Busti	2079	3.12	18	1840	.221	17	70.9	10
Cherry Creek	923	3.03	19	714	.278	12	66.0	11
Westfield	3036	22.47	5	2700	.292	9	63.8	12
Gerry	1340	9.10	13	1202	.217	19	63.7	13
Clymer	843	9.43	12	677	.299	6	62.1	14
Stockton	1943	00.93	22	1740	.2212	18	60.5	15

TABLE 3--Continued

Town	1835 Pop.	1835 Per Capita Value of Manufactures (in dollars)	Rank	Est. 1832 Pop.	1832 Per Capita Tax Assessment (in dollars)	Rank	Antimasonic Vote (in percen- tages)	Rank
Ellicott	2355	42.48	1	2203	.528	1	59.0	16
Hanover	3520	25.88	3	2976	.257	14	55.8	17
Chautauqua	3119	12.08	10	2713	.289	10	54.5	18
Charlotte	1208	24.95	4	1015	.272	13	53.4	19
Villanova	1453	11.14	11	1257	.205	20	52.1	20
Carroll	1414	18.36	6	1175	.321	5	47.5	21
Ripley	2003	6.10	15	1789	.339	4	42.4	22

SOURCE: United States Census, 1830 provides information on population; New York Census, 1835 provides information on manufacturing as well as population. The tax assessments are taken from the abstract of town accounts in Elial T. Foote, Supervisors Proceedings and Civil History (Fredonia, New York: W. McKinstry and Son, 1868), p. 256. The official returns for the 1832 election are from Lyons Countryman, November 14, 1832, for Wayne County, and from Fredonia Censor, November 14, 1832, for Chautauqua County.

in their backing of the new party. Fifth in manufactures, Westfield voted 64 percent Antimasonic, a figure that ranks only twelfth in a county nearly totally dominated by the crusade against Masonry.⁹ The social basis of Antimasonry, at least in Wayne and Chautauqua counties, cannot be described as "rural."

County taxes paid by each town in 1832 illustrate as weak a correlation with voting behavior as manufactures. In Wayne County the two leading Antimasonic towns, Macedon and Galen, ranked first and fourth in per capita tax, yet the next three party strongholds placed among the five weakest manufacturers. The two firmest Bucktail towns, Arcadia and Butler, the latter burdened with swamps and poor soil, ranked ninth and last in taxation. Yet the next two party majorities came in towns with the seventh and second highest assessments. In Chautauqua County the two strongest Antimasonic towns, Ellery and French Creek, included the second lowest and second highest county tax. The two leading Bucktail towns ranked fourth and fifth in per capita taxes, but the next two ranked twentieth and thirteenth. It appears highly unlikely from such figures that the mass of poor and debtor farmers rallied to Antimasonry.¹⁰ If socioeconomic factors separated Antimasons and Bucktails, the division lay within towns rather than among them.

Likewise geographical background cannot explain

party strife. Not all Yankees rallied to the Antimasonic camp. New Englanders may have held great desires for improvement both economic and moral, but Antimasonic strength differed widely among towns that experienced the heaviest direct New England settlement. Among these towns were the Bucktail strongholds of Palmyra and Wolcott as well as the Antimasonic towns of Macedon and Ontario. In mostly Yankee Chautauqua County Bucktail towns Ripley and Carroll had equally overwhelming immigration from New England as the Antimasonic areas of Ellery and Harmony. Concerned with social progress though they might have been, New Englanders in western New York nonetheless disagreed upon which direction such progress lay.¹¹

Antimasonry, then, was much more complicated than a simple egalitarian crusade against a village elite. Existing political influences, ties, and preferences, religious and social values, and a general "huzzah spirit" that pertained at least as strongly to Antimasonic crusaders as to Jackson partisans also helped swing men to one camp or the other. The issue of Antimasonry forced people within each town to make a political decision involving the often painful judgment of friends and neighbors. In such an intensified environment the number of Masons within a town and the ability of each to conciliate his fellow townsmen may have had an important influence on the final votes cast by a given town. But in making such a decision

townsmen consulted their conception of the good society, a vision based upon their past experiences and their present role in the community.

Production and Piety

A survey of the backgrounds of individual Antimasonic activists demonstrates that those whose lives had undergone the greatest change as a result of the commercial transformation were most likely to side with the crusade against the fraternity. Information on Antimasons and Bucktails who attended town meetings or who served on county convention delegations and vigilance committees in both Chautauqua and Wayne counties clearly refutes the view of Antimasons as egalitarian-minded agrarians.¹² Antimasons tended to be younger than their political opponents but had resided longer in their counties than Bucktails. A greater number of former Federalists embraced Antimasonry than the Regency. Ethnicity and geographic origin had little effect on party preference. Politically active church members and officers more often supported Antimasons over Bucktails. And probably most importantly, occupational profiles illustrate an unmistakable preference of artisans and nascent manufacturers for the Antimasonic cause.

The growing specialization within the commercial economy had begun to divide politically men of varying

economic interests. Table 4 lists the occupations of 172 Antimasons and 146 Bucktails.¹³ The most striking trends are evident within the artisanal category: building and clothing trades, smithing, shoemaking/leatherworking and haberdashery. Some 23.3 percent of Antimasonic activists were composed of men of these classes, while they represented only 11.6 percent of the Bucktail stronghold. Their interests in a protective tariff and a stronger moral order reflected their concern for profit and a dependable labor force. Recent studies have demonstrated that this rising group of artisans figured prominently in the religious revivalism and changes in the internal family order that helped create and define the bourgeois ideology of the northern antebellum middle class.¹⁴

By the opening of the Canal such men enjoyed prosperity and respect. Daniel Hazeltine, an earlier Ellicott supporter of Clinton, owned a custom wool-carding and cloth dressing factory in Jamestown which dressed from 16,000 to 20,000 yards a year between 1829 and 1833. Asa Hall, a carpenter and joiner in Westfield, served as town clerk in 1814 and had even belonged to a Masonic Lodge before his resignation after the Morgan abduction. In Wayne County Thomas P. Lusk ran a furnace with his father and brothers near the Newark Hotel in Arcadia. He figured as a leading Antimason in a town that provided the largest Bucktail majorities in the county. In Marion, Antimason

TABLE 4
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ANTIMASONS AND BUCKTAILS

Occupation*	Antimasons			Bucktails		
	Chautauqua	Wayne	Total	Chautauqua	Wayne	Total
Artisans	13 (11.1)	16 (15.2)	29 (13.1)	11 (8.7)	6 (9.8)	17 (9.1)
Bankers	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)	4 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.1)
Farmers	46 (39.3)	41 (39.0)	87 (39.2)	53 (42.1)	12 (19.7)	65 (34.8)
Manufacturers	8 (6.8)	8 (7.7)	16 (7.2)	4 (3.2)	2 (3.3)	6 (3.2)
Merchants	23 (19.7)	22 (21.0)	45 (20.3)	29 (23.0)	31 (50.8)	60 (32.1)
Officeholders	4 (3.4)	2 (1.9)	6 (2.7)	11 (8.7)	2 (3.3)	13 (6.9)
Professionals	<u>22</u> (18.8)	<u>16</u> (15.2)	<u>38</u> (17.1)	<u>14</u> (11.1)	<u>8</u> (13.1)	<u>22</u> (11.8)
Totals	117	105	222	126	61	187

SOURCE: George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County, and Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County.

*The categories above include the following occupations: Artisans (blacksmiths, building trades, leatherworks, and tailors); Bankers; Farmers; Manufacturers (glass-makers, ironmakers, shoemakers, and textile producers); Merchants (grocers, innkeepers, livery/saddlers, and shopkeepers); Officeholders; Professionals (attorneys, clergymen, physicians, teachers, and veterinarians).

Elias Durfee constructed and operated a furnace, while serving as town supervisor from 1829 to 1833. Israel J. Clapp of Butler worked as a carpenter and stood "prominent in town affairs." Lyons cabinet maker William Voorhees served as town Justice of the Peace in 1833, while Marvin Rich of Marion owned a cabinet shop in the village where he was "a very prominent citizen."¹⁵

The Bucktail prominent were more often merchants than artisans. Small merchants, including grocers, shopkeepers and innkeepers composed 32.1 percent of Bucktail activists and 20.3 percent of Antimasonic leaders. A stronghold of the Bucktail coalition, most of these men eschewed the protective tariffs championed by manufacturers and artisans and held general old Republican notions concerning free trade. Among these merchants, nearly twice as many innkeepers favored the Bucktail cause over Antimasonry. Perhaps this lopsided division can be accounted for by the propensity of anti-Regency men to support the temperance crusade in the late 1820's. Owners of taverns and hotels certainly had the greatest contact with "outsiders" and have often been viewed with suspicion by conservative members of society concerned with order and community.

Western New Yorkers, however, held equal concern for their own salvation, and religious convictions played a vital role in the Antimasonic controversy. Some 14,358

Baptists in 144 churches, 13,075 Presbyterians in 203 parishes, and 9,003 Methodists in 83 circuit stations existed in the region by 1830.¹⁶ In Wayne County by 1830 thirteen Presbyterian ministers served 1,000 church members. By the time of the formation of the Wayne Baptist Association in 1835, 1,046 faithful worshipped in fourteen churches. Methodists did not secure large followings in Wayne County until later.¹⁷ Evangelical religious groups also established themselves in Chautauqua County. Presbyterian churches of the Buffalo Presbytery were built in most towns, and served some 700 citizens. Methodists boasted of an equal following. The Chautauqua Baptist Association, formed in 1823, exhibited the greatest growth. Thirteen years later 1,430 members attended thirty-five churches. Most of these structures were built in the 1820's, during a decade noted for numerous conversions.¹⁸ Much of the battle over Freemasonry took place not at the polls but in the pews.

Relatively few activists of either party could be identified as churchmembers. Of those located, Antimasons held a small majority over Bucktails (see Table 4). Of those Antimasons on whom information was available, 30.7 percent belonged to various churches. Churchgoers represented 24.5 percent of Bucktail leaders. In addition slightly more Antimasonic members than Bucktails held offices in the varying denominations (clerk, trustee,

elder, vestryman, etc.).¹⁹ Antimasonry's religious component, as with other antebellum reform movements yet to come, politicized the new mass electorate.

While Antimasons exhibited a somewhat greater religious bent than Bucktails, church members of both parties came evenly from among a variety of denominations. In both political camps, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists were represented commensurate with their strength in the two counties. However, the greatest difference in the divisions reflects the tendency of religious minorities to support Antimasonry (4.5%) rather than the Regency (.9%). Five Antimasons attended the Christian Church, while two more associated with the Protestant Church of New York. Others included Cyrus Smith, a member of the Hicksite branch of Quakers, Martin Harris, an early and prominent Mormon, and carpenter Israel J. Clapp of the Disciples Church, a Campbellite who denied scriptural authority for the ordaining of ministers.²⁰ The religious attack against the Masonic fraternity, it seemed, came from people who held varied, if devout beliefs. Interestingly, three of the five renouncing Masons who became active political Antimasons belonged to a church. Of those Masons who became Bucktail leaders, only four of twenty-four affiliated with a particular denomination.²¹ The nearly uniform representation of sects among Anti-masonic and Bucktail activists helps explain the severity

TABLE 5
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ANTIMASONS AND BUCKTAILS

Denomination	Antimasons		Bucktails	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Baptist	25	(9.5)	16	(7.5)
Presbyterian	18	(6.8)	15	(7.1)
Methodist	12	(4.9)	11	(5.2)
Episcopal	6	(2.3)	6	(2.8)
Congregational	6	(2.3)	1	(0.5)
Christian Church	5	(1.8)	--	
Trinity Church	3	(1.1)	1	(0.5)
Universalist	1	(0.4)	--	
Mormon	1	(0.4)	--	
Hicksite Quaker	1	(0.4)	--	
Campbellite	1	(0.4)	--	
Unidentified Church	1	(0.4)	--	
Unknown	183	(69.3)	162	(76.4)
Total	264		212	

SOURCE: George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County, and Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County.

of intradenominational disputes over Masonic members and the fraternity in general. As the controversy spread to every church in the counties it carried the issue into the most remote rural towns.

In addition to religious and occupational differences, age and length of time in the county separated the activists of the two parties. As befitted a movement that included a new, rising artisanal and manufacturing class, Antimasons were on the average two years younger (average date of birth in 1793) than their Bucktail counterparts (average date of birth in 1791).²² Despite their relative youth, however, they had spent an average two years longer in the two counties (average year of arrival in 1814) than Bucktail leaders (average year of arrival in 1816).²³ This trend may help explain the greater Antimasonic concern for what they viewed as a decline in morality and orderly society, changes engendered by the same social processes leading to their own upward mobility.

Geographical origin and ethnic background seemed to have had little influence in determining political affiliation (see Table 6). Despite the emphasis placed on the ideological baggage of the Yankee migration by some historians in explaining the fervor of the crusade against Masonry, an equal percentage of New England migrants composed the leadership of Antimasons and Bucktails.²⁴ About 70 percent of activists in both parties began life in New

England, while those born in eastern New York made up about 19 percent. Interestingly, a higher percentage of Antimasons (8%) than Bucktails (4.2%) came from other states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. As both a social movement and a political party, Antimasonry represented much more than a product of the Yankee disposition.

TABLE 6
BIRTHPLACES OF ANTIMASONS AND BUCKTAILS

Birthplace	Antimasons		Bucktails	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
New England	70	(70.0)	49	(69.0)
New York	21	(21.0)	17	(23.9)
Foreign	1	(1.0)	2	(2.8)
Other States	8	(8.0)	3	(4.2)

SOURCE: George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County, and Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County.

Salvation and Social Control

The leading role played by Antimasons in religious and reform associations reflects their strong belief in creating a Christian commonwealth that would encompass and regulate the competition of the marketplace. Of those party activists serving as officers and on committees of Bible Societies, Antimasons outnumbered Bucktails by two to one. Of the nine officers elected at the first meeting in

Wayne County to form a local chapter of the American Bible Society, members chose four Antimasons and no Bucktails.²⁵ Chautauqua County residents had formed a society as early as 1820, but by 1829 Antimasonic County Corresponding Committeemen Chauncey Tucker and Anselm Potter served as President and Secretary, respectively. In the nine years of its existence, the organization had distributed some 800 Bibles and 1,600 testaments.²⁶ A study of Oneida County found that the wives of the merchants, artisans, and attorneys who composed most of the society's leadership, paid visits to the "deprived" families and helped fund the society as well.²⁷ This same network probably operated in Chautauqua and Wayne counties.

Women also participated widely in the Sunday School movement, where Antimasons held a slight edge over Bucktail members.²⁸ Sunday School organizations were founded in 1826 in Wayne County and 1828 in Chautauqua County, with ministers holding many of the offices. With condescending attitudes similar to those of the Bible Societies, the Chautauqua County Sunday School Union resolved to appoint committees "in the principal villages and towns in this county, whose duty it shall be to visit destitute neighborhoods and aid in the establishment of Sabbath Schools, and encourage suitable persons to take charge of them as superintendents and teachers."²⁹ Anselm Potter served as treasurer for a time, while Antimasonic assemblymen Abner

Hazeltine and Nathan Mixer also charted the course of godliness in the county.

Despite a tendency toward Sabbatarianism displayed within much of their following, Antimasonic leaders showed no more inclination to curtail transportation of the mail and the opening of post offices on Sunday than Regency men. At two Chautauqua County meetings in January, 1830, concerned citizens, including ten Antimasons and ten Bucktails met to condemn any ban on Sunday mails.³⁰ At an Ellicott meeting in which Antimasons Phineas Palmiter, Jr. served as secretary and George W. Tew helped draft resolutions, the assemblage agreed "[t]hat any attempt whatsoever, by congress to interpose, legislate or control, in matters of conscience, would be in direct opposition to the best interest of civil and religious liberty" ³¹ Eight more Antimasons attending a county meeting later that month found that such proposals "would ultimately lead to a union of church and state."³² Piety, apparently, was one issue; disruption of business quite another.³³

By far the worst threat to the hopes of economic advancement lay in intemperance. Concerned with the formation of an orderly and sober society, Antimasons (56%) outnumbered Bucktails (44%) in the leadership ranks of the Wayne and Chautauqua county temperance societies.³⁴ The membership chose three Antimasons as president, vice president, and secretary at the first temperance meeting

in Lyons, Wayne County in 1828. Antimason Abraham Spear became the first president of the temperance society in Palmyra in 1830, when the town voted overwhelmingly for Bucktail candidates. By 1832, William H. Adams, another Antimason, won election as president of the county society.³⁵

The first attempt to create a county temperance society in Chautauqua County came in 1826, but not until 1828 did the organization take hold. From that time on, Antimasons increasingly dominated the society. John Birdsall, a judge and 1831 delegate to the Antimasonic national convention, and Abner Hazeltine, for years an Antimasonic state assemblyman, both served as president of the organization. Three Antimasons, including Anselm Potter of the county corresponding committee, served as vice presidents. Two other members of the party's corresponding committee became temperance leaders, one serving as secretary. At the 1831 meeting, Antimasons won election to president, vice president, secretary, and to two of the four positions as "managers."³⁶

The response of men to Antimasonry and Masonry was strongly shaped by the new relations to production and by changing religious and social ideas brought by the commercial transformation. Rather than an egalitarian battle against any Masonic privilege or elitism, the Antimasonic crusade reflected the changing modes and relations of

production and the ideological responses of men and women faced with the task of reconciling their beliefs with the new society. As the political struggle ensued, party presses and citizens' meetings entered into a prolonged debate, not confined to the existence of American Freemasonry alone, but concerned with the power of the community to circumscribe the actions of dissenters, while encouraging what it considered proper standards of behavior and belief. Antimasons struggled to find the means to maintain order and enforce morality in a new era of economic freedom and opportunity coupled with political democracy.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹Harriet A. Weed, ed., Autobiography of Thurlow Weed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1883), I, 301.

²Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," Annual Report of the American Historical Association 1 (1902):546; Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 117; Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 24.

³George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County (Syracuse, N.Y.: Mason and Co., 1895), p. 9.

⁴Ibid., p. 70.

⁵Wayne Sentinel, 29 December 1826.

⁶Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York, 1801-1840, ed. Robert V. Remini (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 277.

⁷New York Census, 1835; Lyons Countryman, 14 November 1832.

⁸New York Census, 1835; Gilbert W. Hazeltine, The Early History of the Town of Ellicott (Jamestown, N.Y.: Journal Printing Co., 1887), pp. 37, 56.

⁹New York Census, 1835.

¹⁰United States Census, 1830; New York Census, 1835; Elial T. Foote, Supervisors Proceedings and Civil History (Fredonia, N.Y.: W. McKinstry and Son, 1868); Lyons Countryman, 14 November 1832; Fredonia Censor, 14 November 1832; Cowles, Wayne County, p. 7. The 1832 estimated population was derived by computing 40 percent of the population change from 1830 to 1835.

¹¹William Henry Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry: The Genesis of a Political Party" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1976), pp. 49, 93.

¹²Antimasonic and Bucktail delegates and committee-men were drawn from numerous newspaper reports of Chautauqua and Wayne County political meetings from 1827-1833. Sources used were Wayne Sentinel, Lyons Countryman, and Lyons Advertiser (Wayne County), and Fredonia Censor and Jamestown Journal (Chautauqua County). Information on occupations, religious activity, year of arrival in the two counties, geographical origin, ethnic background, date of birth and other characteristics of these party activists were drawn from Cowles, Wayne County, and Andrew W. Young, History of Chautauqua County (Buffalo: Matthews and Warren, 1875).

¹³Many party leaders had several occupations in the 1820's; care was taken to decide which was their chief activity during the years immediately preceding and following the Morgan affair.

¹⁴Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 95-115; Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 89-103.

¹⁵Cowles, Wayne County, pp. 240-41, 187, 346, 369, 386, 391, 436, 499, 600.

¹⁶Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry," p. 96.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

¹⁹The percentage figures are based upon the total number of names of party activists--264 Antimasons and 212 Bucktails.

²⁰Cowles, Wayne County, pp. 171, 259, 436.

²¹Young, Chautauqua County, pp. 509, 600, 495-96; Johnson, Shopkeeper's Millennium, pp. 76, 90, also found relatively few churchmembers among party activists. He uncovered at least strong temporary connections between Antimasonry and Presbyterianism, but any such alliance seems unlikely in Chautauqua and Wayne counties.

²²This average was derived from the birthdates of 50 Antimasons and 42 Bucktails from information from Young, Chautauqua County, and Cowles, Wayne County.

²³Dates of arrival in the counties was determined by an average of 126 Antimasons and 99 Bucktails.

²⁴Cross, Burned-over District, p. 115. Lee Benson has also emphasized the Yankee spirit as a component of Antimasonry, Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, pp. 304-09.

²⁵Lyons Advertiser, 20 June 1827.

²⁶Jamestown Journal, 4 February 1829.

²⁷Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 110.

²⁸Lyons Advertiser, 25 July 1826; Fredonia Censor, 19 May 1830; 29 February 1832.

²⁹Fredonia Censor, 29 February 1832; for a similar development in Oneida County, see Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 110.

³⁰Jamestown Journal, 13 January 1830; Fredonia Censor, 27 January 1830.

³¹Jamestown Journal, 13 January 1830.

³²Fredonia Censor, 27 January 1830.

³³Paul Johnson has found that politicians embracing Sabbatarianism consistently met defeat in Rochester elections. Johnson, Shopkeeper's Millennium, p. 88.

³⁴Of 50 party activists involved in county temperance societies, 28 were Antimasons.

³⁵Wayne Sentinel, 30 May 1828; 30 April 1830; Lyons Countryman, 2 May 1832.

³⁶Fredonia Censor, 19 January 1831; 8 August 1832; Jamestown Journal, 26 January 1831; 18 January 1832; 11 January 1837

CHAPTER 5

"LAW, ORDER, RELIGION AND MORALITY":

THE ANTIMASONIC ASCENDANCY

While Abner Hazeltine asserted that Antimasons "have a higher object in view" than simply bringing the Morgan kidnappers to justice,¹ Bucktails attacked the leaders of the new party as unprincipled opportunists. The movement certainly had its share of demagogues, yet the background of the investigations and trials, and the almost revolutionary transformation of western New York society in the 1820's had given rise to a distinct political and social philosophy. Both restorative and reform-minded, a "strange mixture of idealism and conservatism,"² Anti-masonic rhetoric sought a return to a united patriotism of the Revolutionary Age while endeavoring to reconcile increased economic and political divisions under an all-encompassing message of community and morality. The kidnapping and murder of Morgan did not merely illustrate the evils of Freemasonry; it exemplified the degradation of the modern age.

Secret, Separate and Subversive

The different economic and political interests created by economic expansion and diversification of the canal era unnerved western New Yorkers. They saw the rapid change as a prelude to chaos. Antimasonic leader and former Federalist Myron Holley pleaded for "the just restoration of harmony to social intercourse and the preservation of the character and rights of the nation."³ With the passing of the Founding Fathers, especially after the deaths of Jefferson, Adams and Madison, the separation of the new generation from the Revolutionary fervor and patriotism which allegedly flourished in the first days of the Republic seemed all the more complete.

At the first presidential nominating convention in American history, in Baltimore in 1831, party delegates named statesman William Wirt, a selection "intended to make the strongest possible demonstration of an honest wish for the restoration of harmony"⁴ Writing to Richard Rush shortly after the convention, Wirt described the country as corrupted and dishonored.

I long, [he said,] for an old-times administration like Mr. Madison's--straightforward work--with no other object in view than the happiness, the honor, the dignity of our country. Will that golden age of virtue and patriotism ever return? ⁵Alas! I fear not. But it is worth a struggle

The rise of special interests implied selfishness and machination, characteristics that Antimasons immedi-

ately identified with Freemasonry. Secrecy of lodge meetings and rituals meant, ipso facto, conspiracy and indecency counter to the public interest. A Fourth of July orator at Weedsport declared, "Standing secrecy always implies shame and guilt."⁶ Since public discussion and debate furnished one of the bulwarks of republicanism, private associations must exist only for the articulation and dissemination of ideas subversive to the good of society. Without the suppression of Freemasonry "what happened in France is likely to occur in this country," warned Adolphus Fletcher of the Jamestown Journal.⁷ A Wayne County resolutions committee in 1831 found,

That in our estimation the masonic society can furnish no reasons for secrecy, but its crimes and its indecencies, and that a genuine attachment to liberty and the rights of man, as it is honorable to the character of all who cherish it, naturally courts publicity, and the open co-operation of all reputable citizens.⁸

Antimasons enthusiastically greeted the news that the Harvard University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa had agreed to relinquish its secrets.⁹

Antimasons declared themselves the friends of "LIBERTY and LAW" against the "BLOOD-STAINED" murderers of Morgan¹⁰ and the enemies of civil liberties. By obstructing the judicial process, they argued, Masonry had sought to control the civil power,¹¹ one seceding Mason claiming that the fraternity "had well nigh overthrown civil liberty itself."¹² A Chautauqua County paper believed the 1828

election would decide "whether our free constitutions, or the constitutions of the 'ancient' order of freemasonry, shall be the supreme law of the land"13 Antimasons repeatedly had to defend their possibly contradictory assertion that secret societies were incompatible with civil liberty.¹⁴ They claimed to oppose any measure that might interfere with liberty and the private rights of citizens. Public opinion alone would call for the overthrow of Masonry in a constitutional way.¹⁵ Private rights, apparently, did not encompass the freedom to form or to participate in a secret society.

Men who had undertaken the oaths and obligations of Freemasonry or other secret societies could not consistently swear to fulfill the requirements of civil duty: "The distinct and specific charge against the masonic institution," according to the Journal, "is that it assumes an authority over the conduct of its members, in their civil relations, superior to the . . . laws of the country."¹⁶ Pointing to the Morgan trials, Antimasons argued that lodge members should be forbidden to sit as judges or jury members. And because of their oaths of secrecy, Masons should be barred from all office holding. One writer justified the exclusion on the grounds that by joining the international order Masons had "sworn allegiance to an alien power."¹⁷ More commonly they described individual Masons as the tools of a mysterious "Executive"

or "unknown superiors" knowing all the mysteries and wielding power in pursuit of a grand Masonic design.¹⁸

Regardless of any other tendencies toward corruption, the very structure of Freemasonry provided the institution with excessive influence, especially political power, in the eyes of its opponents. A letter to the editor of the Western Advertiser feared the extent of Masonic organization:

The masonic constitution, and the singular structure of masonic obligations, give the institution a peculiar and alarming power over the character and standing and the property of all its opposers.-- This order of men, too, from the nature of the institution, act promptly, connectedly and privately, in every cause.¹⁹

A Chautauqua County Antimasonic Young Men's convention in 1830 claimed that the state government had been "sold" to the Freemasons, who constituted "a lump of lazy leeches."²⁰ A church elder and former Mason in Livingston County insisted that he had been reprimanded at the lodge for supporting the opponent of a fellow Mason standing for Justice of the Peace.²¹ The Lyons Countryman claimed that the Masonic "usurpation of political power" had "cheated" county citizens "of our inheritance."²² After Antimasonic victories in the Wayne town elections in 1830, the paper rejoiced that the Masonic sign would no longer prove a passport to office.²³

Masonic power, Antimasons argued, pervaded every aspect of the community. Its vaunted secrets consisted

merely of "ingenious contrivances to obtain unjust advantages over all, who are not members of the fraternity

. . . ."24 The Jamestown Journal extended this power to include a control over business success and a restraint on social mobility:

[M]any honest and industrious tradesmen and mechanics have lost one customer after another, without any probable cause, on the appearance of a mystic brother of the same calling. An invisible agent has been behind the scenes cutting off the sources of his support, poisoning the ears of his customers, giving the secret signal, and throwing obstacles in the way of his honest industry, in order to "cast a penny" in the way of some rival, who, relying more on his masonry than his merits, has planted himself by his side.²⁵

Antimasons gained enormous success in describing Masons as aristocrats. A senatorial convention accused lodge members of preferring knightly and aristocratic titles to republican equality.²⁶ The brave Antimasonic yeomanry, according to this legend, labored to support "the strippling aristocrats who live in palaces, erected with money paid out of the public coffers."²⁷ Attempts were made to convince citizens that George Washington had really resigned from his lodge.²⁸ Even the party's legislative report to its constituents emphasized the regal and pretentious nature of the threat to the American system:

Freemasonry contravenes the spirit of Democracy. It is monarchical in all its structure, anti-republican in its government, purposes and all its exhibitions. If Republicans wish to prepare for the overthrow of their government, no more measure could be more

effectual than the toleration of the institution of Freemasonry.²⁹

Short of revolution, but nearly as serious to Antimasonic writers, the existence of the lodges and other secret societies threatened to disrupt further communities already under the strain of commercial and industrial dislocation.³⁰ Such separate organization presented a danger, men argued, "because they divert us from serious civil occupations and lead to idleness and useless activity; because they soon become a place of rendezvous for all adventurers and idlers, and favor all sorts of political, religious and philosophical fanaticism"³¹ Masonry inflated young men with a false pride, drawing them away from worthwhile activities that would otherwise have made them valuable members of the community.³²

Antimasonic philosophy condemned everything that failed to fit their mold of community. When one of their own party put his name forward as a candidate for county clerk, seeking to avoid the machinations of political intrigue, the party press condemned his individual action "as having a direct tendency to corruption; and that every advocate of public morals is called upon to discountenance them."³³ The party blamed its overwhelming defeat in Palmyra in 1830 on the traveling boatmen and canal drivers prevalent in the village whom Masonic forces "procured to vote."³⁴ In the same year, when the party sought a coali-

tion of sorts with the newly-formed Workingmen's Party, the Jamestown Journal praised the New York City mechanics for rejecting the ideas of Robert Dale Owen, Thomas Skidmore, and Fanny Wright. The editor then proceeded to attack Bucktails, not for the alliance with aristocratic Freemasonry, but for taking sides with the radical workingmen's faction, "who contend for the wild notions and disorganizing projects of the fanatics we have mentioned.-- Their love of religion and social order is a little singularly manifested by their course in this respect and many others."³⁵

Antimasons repeatedly distinguished between their attacks on Freemasonry and a rote condemnation of all its members. At the same time references to Masonic individuals grew increasingly conciliatory. The Wayne County convention of 1827 resolved that resigning lodge members who had openly denounced Masonry "are entitled to our warmest gratitude,"³⁶ while the state convention of the following year congratulated seceders on their individual courage.³⁷ The Jamestown Journal continued to condemn the institution, but promised to champion those who had resigned from lodges.³⁸ By the time of the party's state gathering in 1829, delegates had resolved that the convention "cherish every feeling of good will and personal respect for those of its unoffending members, who have been incautiously drawn into the society or yielded their

assent to its principles without fully investigating their character and tendency."³⁹ By 1830 party leader William H. Maynard was suggesting that convention resolutions should be mild and conciliatory, allowing members simply to withdraw from Masonry without going through the "dread ordeal" of a full-scale renunciation as proof of their conversion to the Antimasonic cause.⁴⁰

Party leaders were also at pains to justify the politicization of the social movement. Denying charges that their own party organization existed mainly to obtain offices for its leaders, party members insisted that the public good required the use of the ballot box as a last resort to insure the safety of the republic.⁴¹ In order to keep Masons out of office, Antimasons required united action on the same scale of the complex network of Freemasons. Even Antimasons had to compromise their ideals to meet the dictates of party politics:

Hence we see the propriety of state, district, and county conventions, and the necessity of acquiescing heartily in their results, although they may not be just such as we had anticipated, or the best calculated to advance local objects. The lesser good must give place to the greater; and the paramount object being secured, we should not be overzealous for securing others.⁴²

Strict party organization and discipline proved a constant source of tension within Antimasonry, for many of its adherents held feelings as hostile to centralized party authority as toward the "unknown superiors" who manipulated

individual Masons to serve their own ends. Evangelical rhetoric attacking political parties strikingly resembled denunciations of Masonry.⁴³

"A Christian Party in Politics"

If asked to summarize his philosophy, no Antimason would have separated political and religious beliefs. Republicanism and Christianity joined to form a millennial belief in the divine mission of the United States to regenerate a sinful world. By its moral influences, they contended, religion would uphold a free government; no free government could exist in its absence.⁴⁴ "Our republican institutions could not survive the loss of those religious and moral sentiments"⁴⁵ The Jamestown Journal reprinted an article claiming, "Without the Bible, constitutions and bills of rights were but waste paper."⁴⁶

Although most Antimasonic party leaders opposed the suppression of Sunday mails as inconsistent with the rights of private property,⁴⁷ much of the mass of the movement's supporters favored a strict observation of the Sabbath. The editor of the Journal favored restrictions, disagreed with the actions taken by prominent party leaders, and only reluctantly agreed to print the proceedings of county anti-sabbatarian conventions.⁴⁸ Sunday stage arrivals interrupted public worship and encouraged travel on the Lord's day.⁴⁹ The action of Congress in 1825

extending postal services to include the Christian Sabbath, evangelicals argued, only encouraged the decay of morality manifested in the murder of Morgan. Interestingly, Anti-masonic Sabbatarians frequently turned their wrath against canal forwarders, who composed an important part of the Regency stronghold in Wayne and Chautauqua counties.⁵⁰

Antimasons firmly agreed with the Reverend Charles Finney and others who preached the need for social reform as a Christian duty. They responded positively to Philadelphia's Reverend Ezra Stiles Ely when he suggested the notion of "a Christian party in politics," which would foster cooperation between religious men of all denominations in choosing government officials.⁵¹ Republican virtue required "the indispensable condition of improvement and happiness, ordained by the Most High."⁵² Indeed many believed that Antimasonry and the party that it spawned had fulfilled this role:

The principles of free government are founded in the essential nature of men. But they are more indebted to the New Testament for their just comprehension, and practical establishment than to any other source It never should be forgotten, that political duty constitutes one of the most essential branches of moral duty, and that the performance of all duty is the requirement of religion, or the command of God. How then can men professing to be religious, excuse themselves in the neglect of their political duties? . . . Professors of the religion of universal love, of equal rights, and of individual responsibility, we respectfully ask you, can you forbear the use of political means to suppress freemasonry?⁵³

Although Freemasons had claimed for years that

their institution served as the "Handmaid" of religion, Antimasons condemned the society as blasphemous and unchristian. The Le Roy Convention of Seceding Masons concluded that the ceremonies were degrading and blasphemous and that the principles of the order constituted a system of religion opposed to Christianity.⁵⁴ The editor of the Lyons Countryman asserted that the lodges impaired the moral sense of every member,⁵⁵ while Elder Powell argued that masonry was founded on infidelity.⁵⁶ Neither could masonic society be religious in any case since they did not worship God publicly.⁵⁷ Beriah B. Hotchkin summed up the Antimasonic religious argument against Freemasonry: (1) it prostituted Holy Scriptures to unholy purposes; (2) the required oaths were unchristian; (3) masonic ceremonies were sacrilegious; (4) it assumed religious titles to which it had no claim; and (5) it made a religion of the performance of outward duties.⁵⁸

Antimasonry's religious rhetoric contained an immediatism, single-mindedness, and apocalyptic quality later characteristic of slavery agitation in the burned-over district.⁵⁹ Myron Holley, later an antislavery advocate and one of the founders of the Liberty Party, cried that the battle against Masonry should be waged "with a purity and singleness of purpose becoming our cause"⁶⁰ The struggle against the institution was nothing less than "the cause of MORALITY against vice,

and the cause of Christianity against Deistical philosophy and infidelity."⁶¹ The resultant victory would bring conditions necessary for millennial expectation: "Then, shall we walk together, in gladness, upon all the high places of our freedom; and partake with restored harmony, and Christian reverence, of the solemn feasts of religion."⁶² After the election of 1828, Solomon Southwick estimated the number of Christians in New York at 33,335, just the number of votes he received as Antimasonic candidate for governor.⁶³ The Antimasons, he claimed, were fighting "under the banner of Jesus CHRIST, and the TESTAMENT of the ETERNAL GOD!"⁶⁴

Seceders most often stressed the unchristian nature of Masonry. Phineas Crouch of the Newark chapter claimed that a Royal Arch Mason had disclosed the plans of the Morgan abduction to him shortly after taking the second and third degrees and had claimed they were doing "God's services." Crouch called the ceremonies sacrilegious, the oaths blasphemous, and the fraternity itself anti-Christian.⁶⁵ In a letter "to the Christian public," Samuel Alvard of Clymer, Chautauqua County confessed his earlier sinful connection with the Fraternity, and urged those "who are adherents to the order to investigate its principles and unite in purging the church of God and the world from the errors of Freemasonry."⁶⁶ When announcing his withdrawal from a lodge in Washington County shortly

before the Le Roy Convention, Robert Harper found that he "could not pursue the labors of the craft and at the same time enjoy the rich blessings of the religion of the Saviour" His concern centered not merely on his own association "with the Deist and Infidel, the Intemperate and Profane," but included "a duty which I conscientiously feel to owe to the Christian community and the cause of vital religion"67

Antimasonic members of evangelical Protestant churches initiated struggles to expel Masons from their congregations. The 1829 Sparta circuit conference in Livingston County expressed satisfaction that the state conference had found "that Freemasonry is a moral evil," but insisted on action that would remove the fraternity's influence on the church: "That we will not recommend to the District conference for license to preach the gospel, nor give license to exhort, nor elect to any office in our church, any person who advocates for, or adheres to, the institution of freemasonry"68 The Presbyterian Church of Plattsburg resolved to require its Masonic members to withdraw from lodges, asserted that it would hereafter receive no Mason into its body, and threatened to dismiss any one who united with a local chapter.

As with many of the Protestant churches, hostility toward Masonry partly stemmed from the perception of its competitiveness as a quasi-religious institution. The

Presbyterian Church at Plattsburgh, New York, resolved that "the institution, of freemasonry, by claiming to be divinely instituted does place itself in direct hostility to the church of Christ." Unlike the community spirit which they claimed churches fostered, "the boasted benevolence of free-masonry is nothing more than supreme selfishness, and love of party."⁶⁹ A Presbyterian Synod in 1830 recommended that its ministers and members publicly resign from Masonry's "religious pretensions," ironically suggesting that prospective church members swear to a "formula" stating that they had no connections with freemasonry. It was careful to distance itself, however, from "the political forms of this question."⁷⁰

Perhaps no one so effectively brought the issues of religiosity and community to the fore as the Reverend David Bernard; his efforts to exclude Masons from Chautauqua churches help to explain the early emotional intensity in the country. Born in Utica, New York, Bernard became an itinerant Baptist minister and Freemason. Shocked at the intrigue leading up to the Morgan kidnapping, he claimed to be the first Mason to renounce the order after Morgan's disappearance. He served as convention secretary of the "Declaration of Independence Convention" of Le Roy on July 4, 1828, and received encouragement to publish an expose of Masonry at the Antimasonic state convention in August. The result, Light on Masonry, bettered Morgan's

earlier attempt by compiling oaths, penalties, and other Masonic secrets and providing a directorate of all lodges across New York in the 1820's. Describing the order as subversive and anti-Christian, he characterized his actions as "calculated to promote God's glory and the best good of community."⁷¹ Responding to criticism, he could reach levels that even the Jamestown Journal found "a little too severe":

O wicked man though shalt surely die. . . .
Though you may expect to mount up as an eagle on
your boasted God, you will find that the Almighty
will dash you to pieces like a potter's vessel!!
Be warned then, be wise and flee from masonry--
flee from the wrath to come--flee at the gushing
side of that Jesus whose blood you are ever tramp-
ling under your feet. He can save you, for he is
merciful.⁷²

Of all the denominations in which Antimasonry created discontent and controversy, Baptist churches underwent the greatest upheavals. This turmoil has been attributed to traditional zealousness and revivalistic tendencies. The Baptist belief in the church as a democracy and the absence of a central control may also have allowed for the growth of Antimasonic strength within its churches.⁷³ However, other considerations may have been vital in the divisions that occurred in Chautauqua County. In an 1825 letter to the United Domestic Missionary Society, the First Presbyterian Society in Pomfret bemoaned their financial status and complained that the Baptists encompassed many of the oldest settlers and enjoyed "the

influence and pecuniary aid of our most wealthy citizens"74 In addition, many of the active members of the Chautauqua Baptist Association were Masons.75

Struggles over social status in an organization with an inordinate number of Masonic members may have been more important in creating such a severe division than any innate tendencies toward democracy and revivalism.

Clashes within twelve congregations created an open schism within the Chautauqua Baptist Association in 1829. Masonic delegates at the 1828 meeting combined to defeat any motion that would exclude them from church fellowship and helped pass a resolution denying the right of the association to pass any judgment upon Freemasonry. Anti-masonic delegates decided to boycott the 1829 gathering and formed a separate body known as the "Chautauqua Baptist Conference" which excluded lodge members. In the new body's first meeting in 1829, David Bernard provided the keynote address and helped draw plans to create separate benevolent societies. However, in a second meeting called to organize the seceding members of Baptist churches in Chautauqua, many delegates balked at formal creation of a new organization. Alarmed at the situation in the west, state church officials sought a compromise to restore harmony at a convention in Whitesboro. Resolutions stated that although Freemasons belonging to the church should withdraw from the lodge, local churches could not require

them to condemn openly the institution or disclose Masonic secrets.⁷⁶

The Whitesboro decision had little effect on the Baptist brethren in Chautauqua, and the conflict intensified after pastor Elder Tucker of the Pomfret church conducted a funeral service with full Masonic ceremony. That public appearance in Masonic dress convinced Antimasons that his renunciation of the institution appeared rather unlikely, and Masonic members suggested that the dissenters withdraw from the church. By September, 1830, the Chautauqua Baptist Conference claimed that the secessionists represented the true county Baptist Association. Meetings throughout the country in 1831 denounced Masonry as anti-Christian, while religious revivals augmented the membership of the Harmony Baptist Church and David Bernard's First Baptist Church in Pomfret. Antimasonic Baptists now simply met as the Chautauqua Baptist Association, and in 1832 state authorities finally recognized the group as the legitimate Association.⁷⁷ In the Antimasonic efforts to impose their concept of community upon county residents the Baptist Church, one historian has written, "had been transformed from a democratic body to an extremely judicatory and self-righteously probing organization which, in its search for Ultraistic purity, seriously violated individual membership privileges."⁷⁸

Safeguarding Morality

Antimasons also employed the temperance cause as part of their quest for a more stable and moral community and took the Masons to task in this area. In 1830 the Jamestown Journal charged that "Masonic Lodges have been astonishingly fundamental in spreading the vice of Intemperance."⁷⁹ The many exposés and public renunciations had acquainted western New Yorkers with charges of the use of wine (sometimes quaffed from human skulls) in Masonic ceremonies, and they had viewed the lengthy toasting of fraternity members on the festival of St. John the Baptist as well as on patriotic occasions. Yet many refused to believe that those who struggled against the fraternity held a monopoly on community virtue. "If the Antimasons are such great sticklers for temperance as they would induce others to believe," suggested a Bucktail paper, "why do not they resolve that they will not support any one for office who is in the habit of getting intoxicated?"⁸⁰

The following year Henry Dana Ward had a suggestion for William Seward: "We are all temperate men, as well as a temperate party. I should be exceeding happy to have one celebration of our Independence without ardent spirits Antimasonry will do its work, Antimasonry will regenerate the nation."⁸¹ Party leaders never seriously studied this suggestion, but its members figured prominently in the movement against "Prince Alcohol."

As they had stressed the need for religion to protect American democracy from Masonic blasphemy, the party faithful now embraced temperance reform to guard against the mysterious and silent enemy, drunkenness. Abner Hazeltine warned the Jamestown temperance society that drinking would undermine American patriotism: "The firm foundations of our freedom would be subverted; and the noble temple of liberty, erected by the sacrifices and virtues of our fathers, would be prostrate in the dust."⁸² Everyone who treasured the nation's free institutions as well as its natural wealth and prosperity must surely support the cause.⁸³ Antimason Anselm Potter claimed that drunkenness would subvert the religious and moral sentiments on which the republican institutions of the nation were based.⁸⁴ A New York City temperance paper echoed these sentiments, declaring in its prospects: "It will therefore seek to build, on the basis of MORAL REFORM, the edifice of general philanthropy and the citadel of the PEOPLE'S RIGHTS."⁸⁵

Temperance had other uses, as well. It would help in shaping a more reliable labor force for the new economic era. Abner Hazeltine claimed that intemperance "affords ailment for the growth of every crime,"⁸⁶ while Anselm Potter pinpointed drunkenness as the cause of increasing crime and public taxes: "Exclude intemperance from our land, and one half of the public tax that is now paid for the support of the poor, for criminal prosecutions, and for

prisons, might be appropriated for other purposes."⁸⁷ In addressing themselves to heads of households and to men with capital burdened by taxation, society spokesmen viewed themselves as self-appointed upper class regulators of working-class drinking.⁸⁸

Temperance leaders believed that their Christian and civic duty required that they restrain working men whose drunkenness threatened the nascent capitalist society. In Rochester alcohol became a symbolic force of cultural independence when dramshops sprang up in autonomous working-class neighborhoods and threatened the ability of city authorities to impose social control.⁸⁹ At the same time workers experienced anxiety with the loss of traditional relations among craftsmen and the growth of the factory system.⁹⁰ In addition a new class of rootless, mobile workers, such as canal laborers in Wayne County and lumberjacks in Chautauqua County, turned ever more to alcohol in frustrations which often led to violence.⁹¹

Temperance propaganda promised to reassert the diminishing power of employers over their labor force: "Masters of apprentices, employers of laborers and clerks, we call upon you as men of influence, to combine with us in a cause of the deepest importance to those who are under your charge."⁹² In 1832 an advertisement announcing work for laborers on the improvement of Dunkirk harbor warned, "None need apply but sober, healthy and industrious persons,

and agree to a total abstinence from all kinds of SPIRITOUS LIQUORS, as it will not be furnished nor allowed about the works on any pretense."⁹³ At the Baptist Meeting House in Williamson, Wayne County, temperance advocates agreed not to supply liquor "for the entertainment of our friends or for persons in our employment."⁹⁴ In 1831 the Palmyra Temperance Society appointed a committee to help enforce the law against unlicensed sellers of alcohol.⁹⁵

Advocates of sobriety openly courted female cooperation and support. Chautauqua County reformers urged young women of the "rising generation" never to permit their children to imbibe.⁹⁶ Another plea similarly urged woman to use her domestic influence within the family: "Mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, we entreat you to throw your gentle influence around society, to hold it back from the enchanted cup of death."⁹⁷ Wayne County reformers openly requested both women and children to become members of the county society⁹⁸ in order to further their own domestic interests: "Resolved, That we deem the influence of females important in this cause, and hereby earnestly recommend to every female in the county of Wayne to unite with a Temperance Society, and thus aid in removing an evil which has been eminently productive of domestic misery."⁹⁹ Woman's new role of maternal socialization led temperance advocates to urge male self-control, emphasizing their position as family breadwinners.¹⁰⁰ Myron Holley went so

far as to commend the gatherings of both men and women that the temperance society brought together.¹⁰¹ The ironic extension of women's sphere by the cult of domesticity is nowhere better illustrated than in the following notice in the Fredonia Censor in 1831: "The women will soon be obliged in self defense, to do what they can for the promotion of temperance. We have within a week seen 3 new cases of women being killed by drunken husbands."¹⁰²

The growing role of women as the moral force in society and the vision of woman as the regulator of men's passions contrasted sharply with Masonry's secretive sessions and claims to moral influence. One Massachusetts Mason complained that his wife

could not be reconciled to the idea, that I should know something that she could not.--But when the sound of Morgan's book came floating on the aerial current down the canal and Hudson, and then in extensive undulations spread far and wide, all the fair daughters of Eve simultaneously exclaimed, that is the grand desideratum! We shall now know as much as our husbands!¹⁰³

If Masonry was beneficial, argued Antimasonic assemblyman George Washington Patterson, "Why deprive the fair sex from a participation in its benefits--Have they no souls?"¹⁰⁴ A letter to the Lyons Countryman condemned both the secrecy and immoral behavior that husbands kept from their wives:

But if evils were confined to families alone, I think they would far outweigh all its boasted or rather, all its real benefits. Woman you know is designated as an "help meet for men," and those who answer the design are fit to be entrusted, with all his virtuous and proper secrets. If therefore,

the institution be a good one, good wives should know its contents: but this would soon have upset their applecart, long before the birth of William Morgan: for sure had some kind elf but whispered only in one fair ear, and obligingly have shown her sturdy partner, in all the awkward, silly forms, and obscene attitudes--with all the childish manoeuvres he performed--O! yes, it would have been too good to keep! So here I find an incongruity, as well as grounds of just complaint on the part of females.¹⁰⁵

The double-edged sword of domesticity led women to support actively the crusade against the lodges. When the widow Ely of Penfield, New York, became proprietor of the Anti-Masonic Star, the Bucktail press of Wayne County reacted sarcastically: "Her Ladyship will find able and useful auxiliaries in 'Prince Alcohol' and 'Elder Powell,' who have hitherto done much towards keeping up the literary character, and sustaining the political reputation and popularity of that orb of anti-masonry."¹⁰⁶ A meeting of women in Wheaton, Monroe County, shortly after the Morgan abduction resulted in a series of resolutions against the institution, one of which resolved "That every mother should duly consider the degrading disadvantages, and unmerited contempt, to which they consign their daughters by their union with Free Masons,--men arrogating to themselves light and knowledge, with which our sex may not be entrusted."¹⁰⁷ An Antimasonic address "by a single Lady" went even further in questioning the practices of the male organization:

Women, Sisters, Mothers: If we derive our existence from a common origin of the human species, may we not without offense against the modesty of our

sex, fairly claim an intellectual equality with those of the other, one brethren by commutal affection of the same parentage and fashioned by the same Almighty Artist who made man? Whence then arises the ungenerous wish to exclude us from a participation in all that can improve the understanding, exalt the thought, or expand the soul?--In short, what reason can masonry render that the casualty of sex alone should exclude at least one-half of all the human family from a knowledge which, they say is calculated above all other systems of science, morality, or religion, to produce happiness?¹⁰⁸

Perhaps no one better related the Antimasonic belief in female domestic morality with political conservatism than Myron Holley. As part of the resolutions committee at the 1830 Wayne County convention, he claimed "the 'sign of the times' are portentous of good to the friends of law, order, religion, and morality."¹⁰⁹ A native of Salisbury, Connecticut, he removed to Canandaigua where he served as Ontario County Clerk from 1810 to 1814. Elected to the assembly as a Federalist, he soon championed the cause of a canal. He served as an Erie Canal commissioner, counselling the construction of the middle section running from Utica to Syracuse. Writing to his brother in 1820 Holley expressed the wish for a "third party, which should occupy the ground of the old, respectable and ever venerable federalism"¹¹⁰ Although the scandal over his public default of the canal funds tarnished his future as a political candidate, Holley became an early and leading Antimason. His admiring nineteenth-century biographer attributed his immediate attraction to the movement as much to his domestic ideas as his conservative political

principles:

For a man to whom the family was the focus of human happiness, and justice the vital principle of human society, an institution which segregated a body of men from the rest of the world, including the wives and daughters of their own families, under oaths of secrecy, backed by horrible penalties, could have no attractions.--But when it became plain that such an institution could be used and had been used, not only against the family, but against free government, he became its uncompromising enemy.¹¹¹

Holley became Antimasonry's leading spokesman and orator, writing the party's national and New York state addresses. His address at the 1829 state convention stressed the protection of property against Masonic criminal behavior:

A great crisis has occurred in our social condition. The peace of this community has been extensively disturbed, the domestic security of its citizens openly violated, their property unlawfully invaded, and the life of one of them, without doubt, feloniously destroyed. And these calamitous events have proceeded from a source which threatens our most valuable institutions, and all those possessions which make life desirable.¹¹²

Holley replaced the editor of the Antimasonic Lyons Countryman after the latter stepped down. A featured speaker on all political occasions, he also conducted Sunday scriptural readings and discussions at the county court house in Lyons.¹¹³ His conception of an Antimasonic Fourth of July celebration, although it never occurred, perfectly captured the sentiments of those loyal to the cause:

Next week our readers may expect a detailed statement of the arrangements adopted for the glorious festival of freedom, which we trust will be attended by most of the patriotic fathers, mothers,

sons and daughters of the county. Suitable provision will be made for the accomodation of women and children, as well as men. Neither danger, nor rudeness, nor noise, nor intemperance will mar the scene. It is intended that the celebration shall embrace the same pious gratitude, patriotic ardour, and becoming order, which in times of old, were associated with the Jewish feast of tabernacles. And it is hoped that the friends of civil and religious liberty, of temperance and their country, will concur, on this occasion, in introducing a new and better fashion of celebrating our national freedom: --a fashion which both sexes and all ages,--the decently gay, and the soberly pious, may equally participate in and approve. It is humbly believed, that this is the way to sanctify the celebration, and make it a savour of truth and virtue to the just restoration of harmony to social intercourse, and the preservation of the character and rights of the nation.¹¹⁴

Antimasons, Anti-Bucktails

As described earlier, most politically active Antimasons did not become involved simply to eliminate Masonry; their various interests led them to oppose the policies of New York's Albany Regency while favoring those measures collectively known as the American System. Nevertheless the rhetorical salvos toward the political enemy came from high moral ground. Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky made an easy target: "[W]e cannot for our lives see, how a man who cohabits with a woman of color, not his wife, can possess a morality and deportment of the highest order, or 'behave well in his domestic relations.'"¹¹⁵

Rather than attempting to ferret out the political alignments and implications, and passing by an opportunity to condemn President Jackson as a military man incapable of

leading the nation, the Chautauqua Association press took the Peggy Eaton Affair at face value and launched into a moral tirade:

It is also placed beyond a doubt, that the commanded resignation of a part of the cabinet was owing to the fact that these members of it and their families refused to acknowledge a degraded woman as a fit associate.--If these things fail to convince our people, that righteousness exalteth a nation, that virtue in morality at least are becoming in rulers, we shall expect, that the debauchery, the violence and bloodshed that disgraced arbitrary governments are likewise to tarnish ours¹¹⁶

Antimasonic leaders expressed equally righteous indignation over the Van Buren controlled banking system. Identifying the Masons with the Albany Regency, the 1829 Antimasonic state convention drew up a farcical circular announcing the application for "THE MASONIC BANK OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK."¹¹⁷ The Buffalo Patriot complained, "Thus, in one bank after another, falling in the hands of a set of political brokers, and speculators at Albany.--The people cannot be permitted to hold bank stock and manage their pecuniary affairs in their own way."¹¹⁸ Thurlow Weed charged "these wretches design to enslave us through the corrupted influence."¹¹⁹ Conspiratorial rhetoric against Freemasonry was now employed in the battle against the banks:

This monied monster evidently aims at the destruction of all that offers the slightest resistance to its lawless graspings for PECUNIARY and POLITICAL SUPREMACY.--Links are forged daily, in the chain with which the Regency and Bank demagogues design to enslave the people.¹²⁰

Western New Yorkers who had rallied before to the standard of canal champion De Witt Clinton now turned to the Antimasonic Party as the defender of their interest in improving the canal system. The party's official paper in Albany grumbled,

The Regency adhere to their determination of resisting all projects of improvement, excepting only the project to improve their salaries. They mean to divide the "spoils," enjoy them in idleness, and leave the people to take care of themselves.¹²¹

A Palmyra man charged that by raising the tolls the Albany Regency had set upon a policy deliberately to destroy the canals. He urged those whose interests had been adversely affected to work for the Bucktail governor's removal.¹²²

The first resolution at the Chautauqua County convention in 1830 assailed the Regency for "the squandering of the canal funds and upholding a system of despotism in the canal commissioners"¹²³ The address of the Antimasonic legislators in 1831 gloomily portrayed the fate of the canals under the Regency-controlled Canal Board: "The whole system of internal improvements is decried and discountenanced; the old spirit of hostility to the canals, which so much obstructed their commencement and completion, is revived under the auspices of the same sectional influence which then prevailed."¹²⁴

As early as 1830 the fate of Morgan and support for his widow had taken a decided back seat to attacks on the Regency's economic policy and praise for the American

System. Southern men, Antimasons observed, had earlier helped to establish a national bank and protective tariffs; Northerners would now fight to maintain them:

In vain will southern statesmen of southern feelings, or southern men with southern sympathies demand of us, for their gratification on the relinquishment of the boon which their policy conferred. The abandonment of the American system, would now produce extended desolation and ruin.¹²⁵

Claiming that farmers and mechanics principally composed their party, Antimasonic leaders at the 1830 state convention declared "That the prosperity of the state of New-York is identified with the policy of the protecting system, and works of internal improvement."¹²⁶ The Seneca Farmer declared simply, "Antimasons are almost universally the friends of the tariff, and of American manufacturers."¹²⁷

Reflecting the manufacturing interest within their constituency, Antimasonic party leaders encouraged plans to support growing domestic industries. They praised the state's Tariff Convention as "dear to every patriotic American who can look upon the prosperity of the whole nation with pleasure"¹²⁸ Responding to the millers in Lyons and other important Antimasonic strongholds, party legislators introduced a bill to reduce fees for inspecting flour which would have "relieved to a large extent" manufacturers of flour.¹²⁹ Wayne and Seneca counties nominated Joseph S. Colt, a Palmyra merchant, for Congress in 1832. Bearing a classical and legal education and mindful of the

interests of "all the relations of society," he too advocated the American System: "Mr. Colt believes in the protection of American industry and in the adaption of measures that will produce and secure a steady market for the productions of the artisan, the mechanic and the farmer of this country."¹³⁰

Men who had long championed the intervention of government in actively promoting business and industry eagerly seized upon the excitement of the Morgan turmoil as a rallying point against the Regency. As early as 1821 future Antimason John C. Spencer bemoaned the "image problem" of the anti-Regency forces:

But above all, the bucktail leaders have neither property, talents, character or any other thing to set them up as objects of suspicion. They are therefore identified with the people. On the contrary our side presents best too many objects for popular jealousy; we have lately been driven into opposition to the convention, and we are identified with the federalists and their old principles. The causes then on bucktail success and of our failure, both unite to point out the remedy. We must be democratic, we must be on the side of the people; if our adversaries are republicans, we must be democratic; if they are democratic, we must be jacobinal.¹³¹

Leading Antimasons expressed pleasure and relief in finding that President John Quincy Adams had never become a Mason, but the events of 1828 had convinced Weed that constructing a united opposition against the Regency would take time: "The game is played out, and as an administra-

tion party we are beat. Now what is to be done? I shall reply, as I have long done, upon the power of Anti-Masonry. This can yet save the State" Weed expressed regret that men in the eastern part of the state had not fully appreciated the potential political power of the western movement, and resolved to go it alone until practical political necessity led them to accept Antimasonic leadership.¹³²

But the rapid development of Antimasonry into an anti-Bucktail party had the effect of driving Masonic Clintonians toward the Regency camp. Masons and uncompromising National Republicans united in Chautauqua County and elsewhere "against intolerant and all-proscribing political antimasonry."¹³³ While Millard Fillmore believed early in 1829 that the new party would win a majority in the next assembly,¹³⁴ by September Thurlow Weed admitted, "I have not expected a majority in the next house, since the coalition between the Regency and the Fraternity."¹³⁵ Nevertheless Antimasons successfully elected Albert H. Tracy as their first state senator, while gaining substantially more votes east of Cayuga Lake.¹³⁶

The strategy of identifying Masonry with Regency won converts, for if Masons had not before united politically, the whole institution now stood conspicuously partisan. Antimasons in the senate and assembly recommended measures for an investigation of the Morgan

kidnapping and its aftermath. In January, 1830, Livingston County assemblyman Philo C. Fuller confided that Anti-masonic legislators would move for the appointment of a committee to consider repealing the charter of the Masonic Grand Chapter of New York on grounds that it had abused its power. The new party, he believed, would "feed and grow fat from opposition."¹³⁷ The Regency-controlled legislature impeded progress on this memorial, limited the investigative power, and cut the salary of special prosecutor John C. Spencer.

The association of the fraternity with the state's majority party became even more pronounced, and Antimasonic presses wasted little time in employing the new political capital. The Regency, they cried, "have taken Freemasonry under their special attention."¹³⁸ The official party paper asserted,

This shows a more intimate connexion between free masonry and the government than many have been willing to believe, or even suspect, but the candid will not shut their eyes to the testimony It is worth while for all thinking men to pause, and reflect upon the dangerous character of an institution which thus obtains control over every department of government, influencing them even to the protection of the violators of our laws and the offenders against public justice.¹³⁹

Long before the expanded inroads against the Regency occasioned by the Spencer affair, Weed and company had paved the way for another extension of Antimasonry's influence. Against the objections of those who sought only

to eradicate the lodges, party leaders at the 1829 state convention resolved to hold a national Antimasonic convention at Philadelphia on September 11, 1830, the fourth anniversary of Morgan's abduction. A delegation of 96 men with an "array of learning and talents" composed the first national party convention.¹⁴⁰ Under the firm control of the New York leadership, the resolutions committee carefully inserted praises of the American System and statements on national issues between denunciations of Masonic character and activity. Taking another step toward national power, the delegates resolved to nominate a presidential candidate at a convention in Baltimore in September, 1831.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile Regency policy and Antimasonic praise for the American System provided party leadership with realistic hopes to capture the governorship in 1830. Another member of the state central committee enthusiastically wrote Weed,

The Canal Tolls have made Enemies to the Regency who will fall into our ranks next fall--indeed since the Election some of the Masons have come to me and said they begin to think Anti-Masonry is bearable if it will have the Effect to bring down the Regency and begin to Entertain the idea of voting with antimasons at the general Election.¹⁴²

Having decided to nominate Francis Granger for governor, the leadership next struggled with the problem of a running mate. James K. Livingston suggested "a respectable and substantial man who will take and unite the vote of the old Federal counties of New York."¹⁴³ In the end they chose

Samuel Stevens, a popular New York City alderman active in the struggle against Tammany Hall and prominent in the new anti-Regency Workingmen's Party. The problems of reconciling the old Federalist counties in the Hudson-Mohawk Valley continued, and eastern Clay men complained when Antimasonic intrusion split the anti-Regency vote.¹⁴⁴

When Granger lost by only 8,000 votes to Bucktail Enos T. Throop, Antimasons had no difficulty in explaining the outcome. "The high and strictly adhering Clay masons, are our most deadly enemies. They are the men that have defeated Mr. Granger, not so much from love to Mr. Clay, as from malice towards Anti-masonry."¹⁴⁵ The party even gathered together a committee to investigate the election, and in March following they expressed shock at "the extent to which the votaries of masonry sacrificed their political principles and attachment to the controlling and paramount requisitions of their masonic obligations."¹⁴⁶ One Anti-masonic leader wrote Henry Clay (a Royal Arch Mason) expressing his frustration at the eastern betrayal of the anti-Regency coalition:

They could not but know--they did know, that we here, were almost to a man American system men-- That we were not Antimasons of the proscribing order--that we, by mixing freely with them not only gave tone to their politics but served to restrain their virulence.¹⁴⁷

Meanwhile, local public pressures had forced lodges throughout the state to surrender their charters, while

many individual Masons seceded or ceased to attend meetings. In September, 1829, the Jamestown Journal reported that some 1000 Masons (including eighty ministers) had openly renounced the fraternity.¹⁴⁸ By March, 1829, eight lodges in Ontario and Monroe counties had dissolved,¹⁴⁹ while nearly every chapter in Chautauqua and Wayne counties had disbanded by the end of 1831.¹⁵⁰ Most Antimasonic presses insisted that Masonry had not been uprooted, that lodge members continued to meet secretly. Yet it grew increasingly apparent that the movement's original goal would eventually succeed.

By mid-1831 the Antimasonic Party had reached the apex of its influence. It had nearly won the gubernatorial election, clearly outstripping the remnants of the National Republicans as the leading anti-Bucktail force in the state. Its constituents had succeeded in closing down lodge after lodge, while convincing others that Masonry held sway over the Regency government. Antimasons gained a majority for the first time in Wayne County in the 1830 election, and Antimasonic candidates ran unopposed in the 1831 Chautauqua fall election. Millard Fillmore received widespread congratulation when he introduced his bill to abolish imprisonment for debt in 1831, while Bucktails felt "somewhat piqued that it should measureably owe its success to the Antimasons"¹⁵¹

The party, armed with a highly talented central

organization and a grass-roots following of active zealots, looked toward nominating a presidential candidate at Baltimore in September, 1831, and presenting its formula of conservatism and idealism to a national electorate.

Notes to Chapter V

- ¹Fredonia Censor, 1 July 1829.
- ²Glyndon Van Deusen, "Thurlow Weed and the Seventh Ward Bank," New York History 26 (January 1945):6.
- ³Lyons Countryman, 13 June 1832.
- ⁴Ibid., 11 October 1831.
- ⁵William Wirt to Richard Rush, 3 October 1831, Wirt Papers, Library of Congress.
- ⁶Jamestown Journal, 31 August 1831.
- ⁷Ibid., 12 May 1830.
- ⁸Lyons Countryman, 1 February 1831.
- ⁹Jamestown Journal, 24 August 1831.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 4 November 1829.
- ¹¹Ibid., 23 February 1831.
- ¹²Ibid., 4 February 1829.
- ¹³Ibid., 22 October 1828.
- ¹⁴Fredonia Censor, 10 October 1827.
- ¹⁵Jamestown Journal, 10 June 1829.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 23 March 1831.
- ¹⁷Ibid., 8 September 1830.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 11 June 1828; 10 December 1828.
- ¹⁹Quoted in Jamestown Journal, 6 February 1828.
- ²⁰Jamestown Journal, 25 August 1830.
- ²¹From the Livingston Register, quoted in Jamestown Journal, 1 July 1829.

- ²²Lyons Countryman, 23 March 1830.
- ²³Ibid., 14 April 1830.
- ²⁴Ibid., 7 June 1831.
- ²⁵Jamestown Journal, 1 July 1829.
- ²⁶Ibid., 40 September 1829.
- ²⁷Ibid., 10 June 1829.
- ²⁸Ibid., 18 August 1830.
- ²⁹Ibid., 10 June 1829.
- ³⁰A recent doctoral thesis characterized Antimasonry as primarily a civic movement. See Elizabeth Brucholz Haigh, "New York Antimasons: 1826-1833," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1980.
- ³¹Jamestown Journal, 18 February 1829.
- ³²Wayne Sentinel, 16 March 1827.
- ³³Jamestown Journal, 21 September 1831.
- ³⁴Lyons Countryman, 14 April 1830.
- ³⁵Jamestown Journal, 16 June 1830.
- ³⁶Wayne Sentinel, 5 October 1827.
- ³⁷Proceedings of the New York Antimasonic Convention, 1828, Utica, New York, New York State Library.
- ³⁸Jamestown Journal, 18 February 1829.
- ³⁹Proceedings of the New York Antimasonic Convention, 1829, Albany, New York, New York State Library.
- ⁴⁰William H. Maynard to Albert H. Tracy, 12 July 1830, Tracy Papers, New York State Library.
- ⁴¹Jamestown Journal, 14 April 1830; Lyons Countryman, 19 January 1830.
- ⁴²Ibid., 22 October 1828.
- ⁴³Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political

Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 60.

⁴⁴Jamestown Journal, 19 May 1830.

⁴⁵Fredonia Censor, 20 January 1830.

⁴⁶Jamestown Journal, 9 March 1831.

⁴⁷Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 111.

⁴⁸Jamestown Journal, 13 January 1830.

⁴⁹Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Prelude to Abolitionism: Sabbatarian Politics and the Rise of the Second Party System," Journal of American History 58 (September 1971): 328.

⁵⁰Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1821-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), p. 105.

⁵¹Jamestown Journal, 16 November 1831.

⁵²Lyons Countryman, 26 July 1831.

⁵³Ibid., 21 March 1832.

⁵⁴Jamestown Journal, 5 March 1828.

⁵⁵Lyons Countryman, 19 January 1830.

⁵⁶From the Anti-Masonic Star (Palmyra), quoted in Wayne Sentinel, 27 May 1831.

⁵⁷Lyons Countryman, 20 September 1831.

⁵⁸Jamestown Journal, 6 February 1828.

⁵⁹Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 17.

⁶⁰Jamestown Journal, 23 March 1831.

⁶¹From the Chautauqua Phenix, quoted in Jamestown Journal, 4 November 1829.

- ⁶²Jamestown Journal, 11 October 1829.
- ⁶³Fredonia Censor, 10 December 1828.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., 4 February 1829.
- ⁶⁵Lyons Countryman, 4 October 1831.
- ⁶⁶Jamestown Journal, 19 January 1831.
- ⁶⁷From the Seneca Farmer, quoted in Fredonia Gazette, 16 February 1828, Barker Library, Fredonia, New York.
- ⁶⁸Jamestown Journal, 30 September 1829.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., 3 September 1828.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., 13 October 1830.
- ⁷¹William Henry Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry: The Genesis of a Political Party," Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1976, pp. 255-61, 296, 298-99.
- ⁷²Jamestown Journal, 16 January 1828.
- ⁷³Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry," p. 143.
- ⁷⁴Letter from the First Presbyterian Society in Pomfret (Fredonia, New York) to the United Domestic Missionary Society, September 5, 1825, Fenton Library, Jamestown, New York.
- ⁷⁵Jamestown Journal, 15 September 1830.
- ⁷⁶Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry," pp. 163-71; Fredonia Censor, 2 December 1829.
- ⁷⁷Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry," pp. 171-75; Jamestown Journal, 15 September 1830; 13 April 1831; Fredonia Censor, 29 July 1829.
- ⁷⁸Brackney, "Religious Antimasonry," pp. 173-74.
- ⁷⁹Jamestown Journal, 19 May 1830.
- ⁸⁰Fredonia Censor, 26 August 1829.
- ⁸¹Henry Dana Ward to William Henry Seward, 21 June 1830, Seward MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

- ⁸²Jamestown Journal, 4 August 1830.
- ⁸³Ibid., 22 April 1829.
- ⁸⁴Fredonia Censor, 20 January 1830.
- ⁸⁵Jamestown Journal, 18 August 1830.
- ⁸⁶Ibid., 4 August 1830.
- ⁸⁷Fredonia Censor, 20 January 1830.
- ⁸⁸Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 111; W. J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 204.
- ⁸⁹Johnson, Shopkeeper's Millennium, p. 58.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., p. 59; Rorabaugh, Alcoholic Republic, p. 131.
- ⁹¹Rorabaugh, Alcoholic Republic, pp. 140-44.
- ⁹²Jamestown Journal, 26 November 1831.
- ⁹³Fredonia Censor, 1 August 1832.
- ⁹⁴Wayne Sentinel, 30 July 1830.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., 18 February 1831.
- ⁹⁶Jamestown Journal, 12 May 1830.
- ⁹⁷Ibid., 26 November 1831.
- ⁹⁸Wayne Sentinel, 18 February 1831.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., 14 February 1834.
- ¹⁰⁰Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 139.
- ¹⁰¹Lyons Countryman, 18 April 1832.
- ¹⁰²Fredonia Censor, 7 December 1831.
- ¹⁰³Ibid., 28 March 1827.
- ¹⁰⁴George Washington Patterson to James V. Dickey, 27 February 1832, Patterson Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

- ¹⁰⁵Lyons Countryman, 26 January 1830.
- ¹⁰⁶Wayne Sentinel, 22 July 1831.
- ¹⁰⁷Lyons Advertiser, 6 December 1826.
- ¹⁰⁸Lyons Countryman, 18 May 1830.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., 2 February 1830.
- ¹¹⁰Myron Holley to Orville L. Holley, 28 December 1830, Holley MSS, New York State Library.
- ¹¹¹Elizur Wright, Myron Holley; and What He Did For Liberty and True Religion (Boston, 1882), p. 157.
- ¹¹²Ibid., p. 166.
- ¹¹³Wayne Sentinel, 10 January 1832.
- ¹¹⁴Lyons Countryman, 13 June 1832.
- ¹¹⁵Jamestown Journal, 26 October 1831.
- ¹¹⁶Ibid., 5 July 1831.
- ¹¹⁷Proceedings of the New York Antimasonic Convention, 1829, Albany, New York, New York State Library.
- ¹¹⁸From the Buffalo Patriot, quoted in the Lyons Countryman, 5 July 1831.
- ¹¹⁹Thurlow Weed to William Seward, 18 June 1831, Seward MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.
- ¹²⁰Jamestown Journal, 6 July 1831.
- ¹²¹Albany Evening Journal, 15 March 1831.
- ¹²²Lyons Countryman, 27 April 1830.
- ¹²³Jamestown Journal, 20 October 1830.
- ¹²⁴Ibid., 11 May 1831.
- ¹²⁵Ibid., 8 September 1830.
- ¹²⁶Ibid., 1 September 1830.
- ¹²⁷Ibid., 3 August 1831.

- ¹²⁸Ibid., 9 November 1831.
- ¹²⁹Ibid., 11 May 1831.
- ¹³⁰Lyons Countryman, 17 October 1832.
- ¹³¹John C. Spencer to Albert H. Tracy, 28 May 1821, Tracy MSS, New York State Library.
- ¹³²Thurlow Weed to Tracy, 15 June 1828, Tracy MSS, New York State Library.
- ¹³³Fredonia Censor, 12 October 1829.
- ¹³⁴Millard Fillmore to Delos Warren, 22 February 1829, Fillmore MSS (microfilm), Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.
- ¹³⁵Thurlow Weed to Philo C. Fuller, 9 September 1829, Fuller MSS, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.
- ¹³⁶Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1 (1902):388.
- ¹³⁷Philo C. Fuller to James S. Wadsworth, 19 January 1830, Wadsworth Family Papers (microfilm), Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.
- ¹³⁸Jamestown Journal, 19 May 1830.
- ¹³⁹Anti-Masonic Enquirer (Rochester), 11 May 1830.
- ¹⁴⁰Jamestown Journal, 29 September 1830.
- ¹⁴¹McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," p. 398.
- ¹⁴²Frederick Whittlesey to Thurlow Weed, 9 April 1830, Weed MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.
- ¹⁴³James K. Livingston to Thurlow Weed, 12 July 1830, Weed MSS.
- ¹⁴⁴Jacob Haight to Thurlow Weed, 15 October 1830, Weed MSS.
- ¹⁴⁵Jamestown Journal, 1 December 1830.
- ¹⁴⁶Anti-Masonic Enquirer, 29 March 1831.

¹⁴⁷B. W. Stoddard to Henry Clay, 8 November 1830, Clay Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁴⁸Jamestown Journal, 30 September 1829.

¹⁴⁹Wayne Sentinel, 27 March 1829.

¹⁵⁰Obed Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua: A Story of Masonic Work From the Year 1815 (Sinclairville, N.Y.: H. C. Drake, 1897), pp. 11-34; George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1895), pp. 148-52.

¹⁵¹George Washington Johnson to Millard Fillmore, 28 March 1831, Fillmore MSS (microfilm), Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS, PRINCIPLES AND PRAGMATISM

From its investigative origins, political Anti-masonry had derived both its major strength and its chief weakness. The initial excitement had attracted men from varied backgrounds, inflamed by the Masonic "stonewalling" tactics in the Morgan affair that non-Masons viewed as an obstruction of justice.¹ The efforts of Thurlow Weed and other political professionals to direct and shape the movement into the leading anti-Regency party in New York, despite their acknowledged skills at forming coalitions and forging compromises, ended in frustration and failure. Internal bickering, already a central feature of the Anti-masonic Party in 1828, reached fatal proportions as party leaders increasingly sought to merge the war against the lodges with approval of measures championed by National Republicans and friends of Henry Clay. Bucktails and Jacksonians attacked the tenets of Antimasonry while denouncing the coalition as indicative of the power-mongering intentions of its leadership and the party's lack of principle.

Still, Weed's success in outpolling the National

Republicans in New York state gave his party a decided edge in the coalition against the Van Buren men in 1832; and Antimasons would play a decisive role in formally launching the Whig Party early in 1834.

The Leadership Gains Control

Outraged citizens and seceding Masons had dealt Weed and other anti-Regency men a severe blow in 1828 when they disregarded the advice of the party leadership and nominated Solomon Southwick for governor at the Baptist Church of Utica. Yet as Weed and others placed Southwick's name at the head of the ticket in the Antimasonic press, they stressed the necessity of party discipline, confident that they would soon gain a controlling power. Comments in the Jamestown Journal followed the political axiom of "obeying in order to command."² The paper lamented that Granger had not been replaced through the regular channels, but insisted it would follow the apparent direction of public opinion.³

The Antimasonic leadership, however, sat back in disgust during the months of the campaign. After the election Weed accused the National Republicans of damaging the Antimasonic cause,⁴ yet party leaders knew well where the greatest problem lay. "What is to be done with Southwick?" asked Thomas C. Love rhetorically. "In the first place Southwick must be seen and told the truth, that he is too

much of an old political hack for the cause to prosper under his particular auspices"5 No anti-Regency coalition could be created without political control over Antimasonry, and party leaders acutely understood the need to tread lightly.

The first campaign of future President Millard Fillmore was greatly tempered by the advice of anti-Regency politicians in Buffalo and Erie counties. In October, 1828, one correspondent advised the young lawyer to refuse an Antimasonic nomination because some of "the anti Masonic men (I am told) in this place have heard that you are rather waving in your faith, and therefore do not place so much confidence in you as formerly."6 Another feared that Fillmore was "acting dishonestly relative to the Anti Masonick question," making "the people think you are at one time Anti Masonick and at another time Masonick." He advised Fillmore to give a strong public declaration of his stand.7 A third correspondent counseled prudence, and urged Fillmore to pursue a middle course in order to thwart Regency efforts to divide his support.8

Though most party leaders provided Fillmore with a wide variety of advice, most important Antimasons pleaded with Weed, as editor of the Rochester Anti-Masonic Enquirer and later of the Albany Evening Journal, not to alienate sections of the movement's mass following. As early as April, 1828, a New York City Antimason complained to Weed,

"I have frequently to fight for you here . . . by swearing you are truly honest in all your antimasonic notions."⁹

In June, Albert H. Tracy advised Weed "to keep cool" for a while on state politics: "Perhaps it may be well from time to time to indicate that the paramount interests of anti-masonry cannot be sacrificed to any political considerations" ¹⁰ Some feared that Weed's more grandiose national ambitions, as well as his removal to Albany in 1830 to edit the party's new state press, had hindered his powers to direct supporters in the west. Frederick Whittlesey, a central committeeman from Rochester, warned, "I fear you look at things through a doubtful and cloudy atmosphere at Albany, distorting all correct views of our situation and darkening all the bright hopes which such situation holds out."¹¹

Although Weed shrewdly returned to the good graces of the party faithful, his outspokenness and enthusiasm often created problems for the leadership. At the Albany state convention in February, 1829, the resolution calling for the national convention at Philadelphia was surrounded by "an outward show of Antimasonry with all its verbiage and proscriptive declarations."¹² Solomon Southwick opened the meeting with a long speech, and resolutions inquiring into the financial status of Morgan's widow won approval. A further resolution designed to reconcile radicals disavowed connection of the movement with other political

parties. Yet days later, Weed's visit to Utica undermined most of what the resolutions may have gained, to the bitter chagrin of local leaders:

A report is in circulation here that you declared publicly a few days ago in this place that the principle object of Anti-Masonry was to prostrate Van Buren. I repelled it as a slander on the motives of Antis and was offered a list that numerous affidavits of the fact could be procured

I have no idea that you have made such a remark seriously but if you have said any thing while here bordering upon it I beg you will inform me under what circumstances it was made.¹³

Weed nevertheless continued toward his goal with an undaunted optimism: "Anti-Masonry grows like a young turkey. It is heartsease to see things go so swimmingly. We cut loose from the National Republicans at the witching moment."¹⁴

Coalition and Dissent

With the rise of the Workingmen's Party, a rival anti-Regency force stemming from opposition to Tammany Hall in New York City, Weed and the Antimasonic leadership moved quickly to bring the group under their control. First they hoped to nominate Samuel Stevens, a "Workey" and popular New York City alderman as Antimasonic candidate for Lieutenant Governor. At the same time they took steps to support legislation favorable to Workingmen's Party interests. The Albany Evening Journal condemned convict labor, complained that the higher canal tolls would hurt New York City, and endorsed the American System that favored "the

interests of our own mechanics and workingmen to the interests of British subjects."¹⁵ Early in 1830 a Rochester Antimason complimented Weed, now a member of the state assembly, "We are pleased with your bill exempting Mechanics tools from tax, and I hope as you intimate that you will say something on the Tax Subject as I anticipated it is a very Popular Measure" ¹⁶ The correspondent also mentioned party involvement in local meetings to abolish imprisonment for debt, an issue pressed by the party that culminated in Millard Fillmore's successful bill. National Republican politicians also looked with favor upon the Workingmen, most of whom could be found in the Adams camp two years before. Peter B. Porter wrote Henry Clay that the "'Working Men's Party' . . . is already spreading itself throughout the state. It will contain most of the friends of the late administration and particularly your friends, and will form a rendezvous for all those, who detest and despise Jacksonism or Antimasonry. It promises well."¹⁷

With the Antimasonic organization encompassing the weak National Republicans, Clay's friends now angled for Antimasonic support. In May, 1830, Peter Porter informed Clay that the only political contest in western New York pitted the Antimasons against the Jacksonians, and that Clay could not hope to carry the state in 1832 without seceding from Masonry or strongly condemning the Morgan

kidnapping.¹⁸ Many Antimasons would rush to support Clay, but the fanatical element required accommodation. "The more discreet and decent of them wish to support you," reported Porter, but the violent ones objected. "I say you are a Mason, but like most other of the old and most intelligent members not too serious about the institution."¹⁹ Although Porter entreated him to send a letter of his views that might be circulated among anti-Regency leaders, Clay balked at the suggestion, claiming to have lost interest in the "harmless institution" and having "long since ceased to attend." Yet he insisted upon taking the high ground:

After saying this much, I must add that I would not renounce or denounce Masonry to be made President of the United States not for any Force or any obligation which I stand under to it, but from the force of a much higher obligation that of honor. Still, I do not think, my dear Sir, that such an explanation of my feelings in this would do any good, and I therefore request that you will not use it.²⁰

For those Antimasonic leaders who had believed that coalition with the National Republicans and Workingmen's Party would lead to victory, the campaign of 1830 ended in bitter disappointment. At the party's convention in February, Samuel Stevens of New York City received his nomination in a speech that called for obtaining all possible votes, "whether Antimasons or not." With an eye to winning the old Federalist counties of the Hudson Valley, Antimasonic state senator William H. Maynard advised a colleague that future convention resolutions should be

"mild, conciliatory, and inviting to individual members" of the Masonic fraternity.²¹ Delegates passed resolutions championing the American System of the National Republican platform. The Southwick faction of "pure Antimasons" angrily denounced this loss of principle, and unsuccessfully sought to hold separate nominations.²² As early as May, Weed reported, "The Workies are flagging, and will, I think, die out," and gubernatorial nominee Francis Granger found New York Workingmen to be in a complete chaos.²³ After the defection of Masonic Clay men in the east in 1830, the Antimasonic executive committee secretly met to decide that, although they could not support Clay directly, Antimasonic papers should abstain from attacking him and attempt to conciliate his friends. Furthermore the Antimasonic fold must extend to include those ex-Masons who had not formally renounced their membership.²⁴

Clay himself continued to hope that he might receive Antimasonic support in the presidential campaign of 1832, if National Republicans gave full backing to Antimasonic candidates in the state election.²⁵ Yet Clay supporter and future historian of New York state politics Jabez Hammond observed that National Republican infidelity to the Antimasonic organization seemed "perfectly designed to commit Antimasons against Clay."²⁶ Despite his refusal to issue a statement regarding the fraternity, Clay completely understood the situation in New York:

The leaders of that party are undoubtedly aiming at political power, whilst the great mass of it is actuated honestly by the solid motive of pulling down Masonry, which they believe to be a great evil. It would be perfectly consistent with the object of the leaders to support any candidate for the Presidency, Mason or Anti-Mason whose election they could secure. But the difficulty with those leaders, in supporting a candidate who was a Mason, would be that they could not carry with them the body of their party.²⁷

Thus, despite its political talents and fierce determination, the executive committee could not move to widen its constituency without alienating the large segment of western men who had shown reluctance to support any political party. Even the Lyons Countryman affirmed: "The anti-masons will not 'swallow' Mr. Clay; but whether his friends will 'swallow' them, time alone can only determine! As a party, the anti-masons will never be guilty of as great a political sin, as it would be to support Mr. Clay for the Presidency."²⁸ Solomon Southwick, the greatest critic of leadership maneuvers, did not accept his demotions from party power lightly. Leaders had not only "talked to" Southwick concerning his future in Anti-masonry, they had used their patronage power to replace his National Observer with Weed's Albany Evening Journal. By the end of 1830 Southwick referred to the man he had once employed as a printer's apprentice as "the rank, foul and profligate Weed of intrigue and corruption." Antimasonry had come under the control of the unprincipled heathen:

[T]owards the close of the year, the cloven foot began to show itself, on the part of some of the

leaders of the party, and the banner of private, secret, and malignant hostility towards us, was unfurled. The canting cry of carping hypocrites, was raised, and individuals, who are as destitute of private worth, private honesty, and political independence, patriotism and sincerity, as they are of moral and intellectual qualifications, meanly spread, in secret, their dastardly and cowardly insinuations.²⁹

Angry early adherents succeeded in passing a resolution at the 1831 state convention warning the leadership that they had not succumbed to party discipline: "That inasmuch as very erroneous sentiments respecting the views of the Antimasonic party have been industriously circulated by its enemies, we do hereby declare that we will not support any man for office under the state or General Government who at the time of his nomination is an adhering Mason."³⁰ That party leaders never accepted such a resolution as binding is evidenced by their search for the most nationally prominent man to head the presidential ticket in Baltimore.

A National Party

A few party leaders spent much of 1831 deciding whom the delegates would "choose" at the national convention in September. The Antimasonic junta sounded out John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster, both of whom would likely have accepted a nomination had the party seriously considered them. By August leading Antimasons had narrowed the field to John McLean, Supreme Court Justice; Richard

Rush, Adams' running mate in 1828 and his Secretary of the Treasury as well; and John C. Calhoun, now totally at odds with President Jackson, but not yet the infamous nullifier. Francis Granger appealed to Weed in desperation:

Who are we to nominate? is a question put by all and as far as I can learn, answered by none. Tracy has returned from Ohio and, it is said, brings word that McLean has not the moral Courage to take a nomination in such manner as to do himself or us any good. Tis just as I feared, he is anxious for our nomination as a mere political Canal upon which to cruise around and see what other Cargo he can take on board. It seems to be between Rush and Calhoun. My feelings are with the former, but could the latter be placed upon the ground he occupied in 1822 he is the strongest man for any party.³¹

A Boston Antimason wrote Seward that a Rush nomination would draw much National Republican strength away from Clay: "Should he be nominated at Baltimore, thousands of Tariff men will cordially support him in preference to Clay whom they have heretofore considered as the only man able to defeat Old Hickory."³²

This strategy went no further, for Seward soon received word from Pennsylvania that Rush had withdrawn his name for consideration, further limiting Antimasonic prospects.³³ Calhoun, although he opposed Masonry, refused to endorse Antimasonry openly. With the growing importance of the tariff issue, Weed and company slowly turned away from the idea of a Calhoun candidacy. Despite McLean's ambiguous remarks concerning his intentions, Antimasonic

leaders finally agreed upon him as the party's presidential nominee. New York City's leading Antimason, Henry Dana Ward, enthusiastically informed Thurlow Weed:

I wish you to know that on a careful perusal of the correspondence, Mr. Rush thinks Judge McLean has already said enough to bind him in honor, to accept our nomination; and he thinks with the judge at our lead we can beat the Nabobs of Masonry on the first trial.--I wish to keep Rush's name before the public, and McLean's not out of sight; then when the nomination comes, shift the scenes, and astonish the masons.³⁴

Most Antimasonic delegates journeying to Baltimore in September were determined to vote for McLean.³⁵

They never had the chance. Before the convention assembled on September 26, 1831, word came that Clay had decided to accept the National Republican nomination in December. Wasting little time, McLean wrote to Albert H. Tracy, by now in Baltimore, withdrawing his name.³⁶ Seward confessed that the declination "fell like a wet blanket upon our warm expectations."³⁷ Weed arrived "much embarrassed" by the letter³⁸ but still very much in control of the New York delegation, whose members commanded most of the important offices and committees at the gathering. Weed and the party leaders convinced Chief Justice John Marshall, then in the city, to sit as a spectator at the convention, but failed to lure him into a nomination. With the selection already delayed one day, the leadership agreed that William Wirt should serve as the party's standard bearer.³⁹

The nomination of Wirt, an able lawyer who had served as attorney general under James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, constituted a last-minute effort by leaders to unite anti-Jackson forces. Not only was Wirt a Mason; he also had been selected as a delegate to the National Republican convention. Antimasonic leaders informed Wirt that they did not expect him to make statements condemning Freemasonry, and in a confidential letter Wirt assented to the nomination "upon the terms he had avowed."⁴⁰ He characterized the institution as "harmless" and the issue of Masonry and Antimasonry "as a fitter subject for farce than tragedy" The power of the presidency ought not "to be prostituted to the purpose of a blind and unjust proscription, involving innocence and honour with guilt and treason"⁴¹ The Antimasonic leadership read this strange acceptance with the hope that National Republicans would see the logic of unity against Jackson and nominate fellow delegate Wirt rather than Clay. By January, after the nomination of Clay, and ill in his bed, Wirt longed to withdraw, insisting that "I consented to be nominated for the single purpose of union." Yet Clay, Weed, and Wirt himself knew that such a move would only cause a separate nomination by Antimasonic dissenters. "[T]here is no more chance for Clay with the Anti-Masons," observed Wirt, "'than for the Pope of Rome.'"⁴²

The selection of Wirt seemed to please both the

Antimasons and the Jacksonian opposition. Philo C. Fuller expressed his satisfaction and relief to Millard Fillmore:

I believe for myself the nomination is as strong as any one which could have been made under any circumstances--At all events under those which did exist, we were most fortunate. . . .

Thank God it is done--and I believe well done: but I tell you, the fewer National Conventions we have to nominate Presidents and Vice Presidents the better.⁴³

If Fuller exhibited weariness, Amos Kendall seemed jubilant over his employer's prospects for re-election. Writing to a New England Jacksonian, Kendall urged the party presses to do all they could to widen the Antimasonic schism:

In relation to the nomination of Baltimore, I think the Jackson papers in your quarter should boldly take the ground that the honest antis have been betrayed by a few political managers who got into the Baltimore convention and are attempting by nominating a mason without renunciation to sell and transfer the party for the benefit of a few political aspirants. The facts of the case thrust home upon them in every shape would make a strong impression on the undesigning rank and file of their party. Indeed, if this event be well handled, it will go far to destroy that party.⁴⁴

Even without the Baltimore convention, the course of state politics in 1831 further weakened the hold of Antimasonic leaders over many New Yorkers, especially in the western strongholds. The state convention at Albany provided an account of the recent trials at Lockport, while delegates complained that the expiration of the statute of limitations had frustrated their attempts to punish those guilty of the Morgan murder:

The probabilities are now strong, that the catastrophes of this wide spread conspiracy will never be judicially established, which leads us to the alarming conclusion, that freemasonry has been bold enough in this land of laws, to perpetrate a deed of blood; and powerful enough in the strength of her appalling oaths, to successfully set at defiance the requirements of justice.⁴⁵

The sense of betrayal was not an invention of Amos Kendall. One Antimasonic leader from Lockport bitterly attacked Weed for refusing to publish the convention resolutions, including the one prohibiting the party from nominating an unrenounced Mason: "I see you do not like the Resolutions of the State Convention They bring in five fast friends where they drive one from us. It began to be a matter of general inquiry here, why you did not publish the Resolutions. Milk is good for babies; but men require something more substantial."⁴⁶ Solomon Southwick, meanwhile, spent the 1831 campaign lecturing in Albany, on "proving Christianity to be a Divine Revelation."⁴⁷

With his eyes on the presidential election of 1832, Weed's interests in the 1831 state election centered around retaining the Antimasonic organization while holding the National Republicans to a secondary anti-Regency force. "Nothing can be done this year, in New York," he wrote William Seward. "I advised strongly against any nomination of our friends, but they seem anxious to try their strength, of which they will expose their weakness."⁴⁸ To

Granger he confided, "The prospect now is that our Ticket will beat the 'Nationals.' This is all we want to begin with."⁴⁹ To the Antimasonic faithful Weed insisted, "All mere personal considerations should be merged in the question of duty."⁵⁰

In the shorter term, however, leadership policy managed to alienate both Clay Masons and "pure" Antimasons. "What are the causes of this unexpected check in the advance of the 'blessed spirit?'" asked Seward following the November election. "Clay masons voted the Jackson ticket--those Clay men who weren't Masons did not vote--the motive . . . to break down Antimasonry and thereby compel the withdrawal of Mr. Wirt in favor of Mr. Clay and compel also Mr. Calhoun's friends to come to the standard of the Kentucky Chief."⁵¹ Frederick Whittlesey reported the loss of Wayne and Seneca counties "over which we ought to have had undisputed dominion," and attributed the decline of party fortunes to voter apathy.⁵² Weed bemoaned the losses in the party strongholds: "In some of the western counties, where Antimasonry is as firmly established as the rocks and the mountains, we have been beaten--not because our opponents have increased, or our friends diminished in numbers; but solely because antimasons did not go to the polls."⁵³

From the packet boat Paragon plying the tranquil waters of the Erie Canal, Albert H. Tracy reflected upon

the effect of party politics upon the movement arising from the Morgan excitement:

I never believed it possible to succeed by the influences of political action alone. Nothing short of an ardent enthusiasm, producing a fanatic spirit of proselytising could supply the requisite energy to make head against an organized and efficient party always in possession of place and powers. . . . Political organization has been necessarily resorted to as its substitute and it was inevitable that as the question assumed more and more the character of a political struggle individual zeal and excitement would diminish.⁵⁴

Men who had risen against the hierarchy and power of Masonic lodges had now begun to condemn and secede from what they viewed as a corrupt, manipulative organization that their support had helped foster.

The Siamese Twin Party

Despite the many problems, by 1832 Weed and other party leaders had formed an electoral alliance with the state's National Republicans, creating what Regency presses labeled a "Siamese-twin Party." In February a prominent National Republican excitedly reported to Clay a project in which the fortunes of the organizations would unite, with the Antimasons selecting presidential electors pledged to Clay in return for National Republican support for the Antimasonic gubernatorial ticket. "Only the old Federalists could effect this bond," he observed, and asked Clay to correspond with such old patroons as Chancellor Kent, General Van Rennselaer and Abraham Van Vechten.⁵⁵ Anti-

masons expressed approval of their plan shortly before the state convention in June. Orville L. Holley voiced his confidence to Seward:

The decided expediency of putting in nomination an unpledged electoral ticket seems to be assented to, and I think will prevail The nomination will be ours, an Antimasonic nomination; and no pledges will be asked, because it would give needless offense and produce needless difficulty and embarrassment, and being satisfied with the names ourselves, we hope our friends in the interior will receive them cordially, the certain result being favorable, eminently favorable, to the general and permanent interests of the Antimasonic cause as well as the cause of the country.⁵⁶

Samuel Stevens insisted that Antimasonic delegates conciliate the Clay men,⁵⁷ while Albert H. Tracy thought, "Very much depends on the character of our state convention to keep the nationals quiet."⁵⁸

After the delegates had met, organizational problems arose. Many counties neglected to send delegates, while resolutions avoided the topic of Masonry to placate Masonic National Republicans.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, quarrels threatened to break out between the two organizations in local elections. Weed recalled the great "difficulty experienced in aranging local nominations--a difficulty which rendered it necessary that an influential Clay man as well as a Wirt man should attend district and county conventions."⁶⁰ Meanwhile, former Federalist theoretician Chancellor Kent headed the coalition electoral ticket. Peter Porter told Clay that the great dilemma lay in

securing Masonic support.⁶¹ Even important Antimasons began to question the coalition strategy, with Seward refusing to "agree to the scuttling of Wirt"⁶² and Tracy fearing "that the antimasonick enthusiasm which has given us such overwhelming majorities in some of the western counties will flag"⁶³

Men who had utilized every vile epithet printable in party presses spent the next few months commending each other. Antimasonic zealot Myron Holley calmly observed, "To sacrifice unessential differences of opinion for the public good, every liberal mind will acknowledge to be commendable and patriotic."⁶⁴ Fredonia Censor editor Henry C. Frisbee, formerly an anti-Clintonian but now a Clay man and an unrenounced Mason, observed that National Republicans and Antimasons held many views in common.⁶⁵ When no opposition had been mounted against Chautauqua Antimasons in 1831, he had cried, "Give them rope";⁶⁶ but as the 1832 elections neared he asked, "where will you find a more genteel or better 'proportioned' gentleman than Frank Granger?"⁶⁷ The Jamestown Journal perceived the logic of a National Republican alliance: "Coinciding with us in most public measures, they can have no objections to our candidates, except on the ground of their being anti-masons"⁶⁸ The Antimasonic New York Whig, in an apparent appeal to eastern and Clay Masons, temporarily laid aside the usual rhetorical rubbish regarding "honest

yeomanry":

Our friends, however, in other states, will not despair of New York, although antimasonry has here taken strong hold of the upper classes. Our ticket in this state is composed of characters so high, as to command the unqualified support of the honest men of a party opposed to antimasonry.--Having a ready interest with the lower classes, and a mighty grip upon the most eminent men in our country, anti-masonry advances towards the goal of victory, with accelerated velocity.⁶⁹

The rhetoric of the two parties regarding Andrew Jackson and the Albany Regency proved nearly identical. Both parties in Chautauqua County condemned Jackson's defiance of the Supreme Court in the Cherokee case and his Bank veto, while approving of the Senate's rejection of Martin Van Buren as Minister to Britain.⁷⁰ Antimasonic presses continued to turn the religious tendencies of their readers to political advantage: "At one place, peaceful and pious missionaries, faithfully discharging their Christian duties, doing good and removing evil, are seized and thrown into Prison with Felons and murderers, though themselves blameless of all offense, except that of obeying the instructions of their Divine Master!"⁷¹ Antimasons attacked the Regency for retarding internal improvements and maintaining a high schedule of tolls on the canals.⁷²

Perhaps the predominant issue of the campaign centered on the Regency banking system, an entity apparently so evil that it replaced the monster of Masonry. In the party's legislative address, Seward condemned the

politicization of state finances:

The bank commissioners are active and zealous partizans, and the facilities for exercising political influence afforded, by the nature of their duties, render them eminently useful. The increase of their salaries was therefore sustained by their partizans in the senate.⁷³

Antimasons condemned the Regency "money changers," while lauding the United States Bank as "one of the most important institutions of the country."⁷⁴ Whereas widows and orphans owned a large part of the foreign holdings of the Bank of the United States, Jacksonian office holders had employed violent foreign mercenaries to terrorize innocent voters at the polls:

Axes, knives, paving stones and bricks, were the arguments used by the FOREIGN mercenaries who were under pay by Albany Regency. American citizens, in the peaceful discharge of their electoral duties, were attacked with knives, and assaulted with paving stones.

Our rights and our liberties are not only gone, but our LIVES are at the mercy of abandoned foreigners, instigated by the still more abandoned office holders.⁷⁵

The use of the foreign issue for the benefit of economic interests not only drew the appeal of the conservative and religious adherents of Antimasonry; it foreshadowed the later attraction of western New Yorkers to Anti-Catholic and nativist movements.

For "pure" Antimasons the true mercenaries were those who had betrayed the crusade against the fraternity to the interests of party politics. In announcing the publication of an Antimasonic paper at Lockport in May,

1832, the new editor promised never to deviate from the cause:

That all doubt as to the objects of the proposed print may be obviated, the Editor pledges himself that not the most remote allusion shall be made in its columns to any one of the many other distracting topics which now engage the attention of politicians. Pure and unadulterated Republican Anti-Masonry he repeats, shall alone be the theme of his labours.⁷⁶

One party adherent inquired of Granger:

Was it right for such men as did bargain with the Clay leaders, that if they would support Granger and Stevens, they would bring the Antimasons to support Clay electors. Are you friendly to these proceedings? Will it not be the ruin of our party if acquiesced in by the people.⁷⁷

Other expressions of discontent, such as John Crary's broadside, wreaked greater damage to the party's electoral performance than on the collected conscience of its leaders. The running mate of Southwick in 1828, "Honest John," had also repudiated the later path taken by the Weed faction and described himself as one of the "martyrs in the cause of antimasonry." He condemned "the necromancy of modern parties" in shunning ideals for selfish ambition:

The policy at present pursued, and which is most likely to be continued, must forever prevent the triumph of antimasonry; for it can only succeed, not only by making it political, but by considering it politically paramount to every other subject. . . .

In 1828, the object was the destruction of freemasonry--now it is the protection of it, for the benefit of all those who will connive at the hypocrisy of the party. In 1828, antimasons abandoned their political parties for the cause of antimasonry--now they abandon the cause of antimasonry for the

sake of resuscitating the old Adams party for the benefit of Mr. Clay, and unite with the masons who are in favor of him.⁷⁸

Even established party leaders began to question the course laid out by Weed. George Boughton had feared that a coalition might disillusion western voters and swing counties into the Jackson camp.⁷⁹ Weed, he said, could not afford to ignore the issue of Masonry:⁸⁰

It is a truth that the people do fear there is something more than the spontaneous and unpledged support of the Clay men of our ticket, and they are "ill at ease" on account of it. And I am sorry to say that your paper is not calculated to allay those fears in the infected district. You have of late so little antimasonry and so much Jackson and Van Buren and occasional plaudits of National Republicans that fears will crop into good men's hearts, tho they let them not.⁸¹

John C. Spencer, who had presided at the Baltimore convention, insisted that continued success depended upon "genuine principles," and urged Weed to print excerpts from local Antimasonic papers to give them "heart and hope."⁸² He emphasized that Weed's course lacked pragmatism as well as principle: "I know the delicacy of your situation, but I am persuaded you can lose nothing and may gain much, by avowing firmly our anti-masonic principles."⁸³

The Antimasonic elite nervously suspected that the contagion of "ultraism" had invaded their circle, fearing the course they might pursue at the party's convention. Seward, who had expressed reservations on the coalition himself, suspected Spencer's fidelity: "He will go to the

Convention I fear ultra in his course as to Anti Masonry. Discretion is a virtue very important to be exercised just now. Weed writes in rhapsodies about our prospects at the East."⁸⁴ William Maynard feared that Antimasonic stalwarts would ruin chances of coalition at the state gathering:

But if they misbehave and do foolish things, they will ensure our defeat and stop the progress of our cause. I hope they will do nothing except simply perform the acts for which they are appointed. There is always more danger in doing too much rather than not enough.⁸⁵

In October, 1832, the Chautauqua County Antimasonic corresponding committee issued a broadside defending the coalition from external and internal attack. Granger and Seward had carried the county in 1830 despite "the misrepresentations of a licentious and corrupt press, the falsehoods of bold and unprincipled electioneers mingling among us, and the free circulation of perjured affidavits and forged reports of trials." National Republicans, who had once united with the Regency against the Antimasonic majority in the county, had now repudiated their former ties in light of the abominable practices of the Regency:

Divide and conquer, is the watch word of our adversaries. Our strength has been too well ascertained in the repeated defeats they have suffered, to allow them to hope for success while we remain united. Various expedients have been resorted to, and none will be left untried, to induce a portion of you, either to desert your candidates and remain at home during the election, or drive from the support of your class of politicians, of whose services, in this state, they have heretofore, most gladly availed themselves in their time of need, but who have since been severed from their association

by the abuses and corruptions they have witnessed,
and who now come forward with a generous devotion to
the public welfare⁸⁶

The Regency strategy may have helped in defeating the coalition, yet Weed's attempt to walk the political tightrope had been doomed at the start, alienating both loyal Masons and Antimasons. Granger wrote: "I mourn in bitterness that the nincompoopery of the order should have thrown this proud state from us."⁸⁷ Disappointed by the National Republican showing in the east, Granger now expressed concern for the Antimasonic counties in the west:

We have suffered a perfect Waterloo defeat
Clay Masons who have cost us two votes for one,
have played false We now have no way to
show our people that they were not betrayed by us--
we must devise some means to show it was a Wirt
ticket.⁸⁸

Western Antimasons, however, had already defected in droves. A Rochester party man deplored the loss of a "great many of the honest thinking farmers in the county who have heretofore been the backbone of our party."⁸⁹ Granger likewise lamented that the defectors came "from the pure 'best cut' Antimasons," and observed in a confidential letter to Weed, "We shall lose more in the west by the Clay men than all we shall gain by them."⁹⁰ Tracy decried the permanent damage that the temporary coalition had brought upon the party:

Paltering with the Nationals for their cooperation was a false step. We should have been as much and more beaten if we had not--but afterwards there would have been "some ground of principle to rally

on" Besides it was our business to have known we could not succeed anyhow and to have kept in reserve for the future instead of sacrificing all for the impracticable present.⁹¹

The Counterattack against Antimasonry

The exterior assault against the doctrine of Antimasonry, though dictated in part by practical political necessity, arose from the same changes and conflicts that had produced the struggle against Masonry. The first thrust concerned the new party's activists: the charge that they were broken-down politicians and opportunists unfit for office. Their only motivations, declared the delegates at the Wayne County Regency meeting in 1831, stemmed from "a common desire to win the honors and emoluments of office"⁹² and their lust "for the golden streams which issue from the fountain of the Treasury."⁹³ Henry C. Frisbee of the Fredonia Censor charged his Antimasonic counterpart with blatant opportunism:

Is there any man who, in his sober senses, does not believe Mr. Newcomb would without the least compunctions of conscience, murder William Morgan in cold blood, if he had the opportunity, rather than have him return to destroy the excitement which he is endeavoring to promote, to his own advantage? We venture to predict there is not one.⁹⁴

Opponents of political Antimasonry, especially Regency men, realized just as quickly that politicians were busily molding the excitement into an organization that could present a challenge for state power. In August, 1828, the Albany Argus called attention to the motivations

of Weed in promoting Antimasonry:

He is the stipendiary tool of Mr. Clay, a mason of the highest rank, and the go-between of the Cabinet, nearly all of whom are high masons. . . . [H]e visited Washington, and after a closer and more fraternal understanding with his employers, obtained means for the establishment of pretended anti-masonic presses.⁹⁵

Antimasons formed a "[c]oalition party waiting for opportunity,"⁹⁶ and the alliance with the Workingmen in 1830 constituted "a miserable bribe, an odious coalition of parties that have intrinsically no fellowship with each other."⁹⁷ The Baltimore nomination of a mason, William Wirt, presented "a precious farce,"⁹⁸ eagerly taken up by Antimasonic opponents.

In 1832 a Wayne County convention of Regency supporters again cited Antimasonic support of Masons and appealed to the party following to take heed:

The avowed enemies of masonry are in fraternal embraces with the supporters of a Royal Arch Mason. It is a barefaced union of physical numbers, for the sole and flagrant purpose of obtaining Office and Power--Can honest men who vote for it know whether they are giving their suffrage for Mr. Clay or Mr. Wirt--for a friend or a foe?⁹⁹

The Wayne County Regency convention of 1829 issued a typical appeal to those "honest Antimasons":

We entertain charitable and respectable feelings toward very many members of the antimasonic party--we believe them to be actuated by pure motives;--but when we call to mind who their principal leaders and agitators are, we, as friends of good order and government, are alarmed and astounded of the remotest possibility of their being successful in their sinister designs.¹⁰⁰

Yet when an election was not imminent, attacks on so-called "honest Antimasons" illustrated deep-seated differences and hostility. Those opposing Antimasonry frequently referred to themselves as "the friends of toleration and equal rights" and they labeled Antimasons "intolerant and proscriptive" and a threat to the civil liberties of republicanism. The Oneida Observer reasoned, "Antimasonry cannot be republicanism, because it denies the enjoyment of equal rights to all. It cannot be republicanism, because it assumes to take cognizance of men's consciences, and seeks, by inflicting punishments of political disabilities, to prevent the free enjoyment of opinion."¹⁰¹ If Antimasons believed that republicanism could not exist without Christianity, their opponents insisted that only sentiments of toleration would guarantee the survival of the republic: "Oppose masonry, if you will, but in doing so we beseech you not to violate all the CHARITIES of life--poison not the streams of SOCIAL INTERCOURSE--invade not the liberties of speech and the freedom of opinion."¹⁰² Opponents foresaw the effects of the proscriptive tendencies which later gave rise to anti-Catholic and nativist feeling in western New York:

If it is possible for a party based upon such shallow foundations, to succeed in its unhallowed and greedy aspirations after power, we have cause to tremble for our liberties,--there can be no security for any class or sect, civil or religious. What shall prevent other excitements against any

society of men? All political, all religious rights may be thus invaded and destroyed.¹⁰³

Antimasons, it was heatedly argued, threatened religious rights because they constituted a Christian party in politics. As such they threatened to establish a union of church and state which might then lead to an inquisition in America:

For it is as plain as noon day, that the same proscription and persecution--the same clamors and denunciations, with no shadow of difference in principle, may be encouraged and directed against any class of men, any sect of RELIGION, or any profession whatever. In vain have our statesmen, our philanthropists and patriots, endeavored to fence round by constitutional safe-guards the freedom of religious opinion.¹⁰⁴

Those who did not fear the immediate establishment of an ecclesiastical order, nevertheless condemned the pious preaching of the Antimasonic moral minority, admitting that they felt "nauseated with such continual doses of self conceit and self-righteousness."¹⁰⁵ A Palmyra Regency man, defending his efforts for the party against the coalition ticket of 1832, spoke in harsh terms against the influence of organized religion on the campaign:

It is enough to say that we had to combat the forces of political antimasonry, political masonry, old fashioned federalism, and the "religious party in politics"--with a deacon of the latter stamp on this assembly ticket. The entire Presbyterian society of this town, (with barely three or four truly honorable exceptions,) were rallied on the side of the "coalition." Numbers of them old federal fathers of the church, who had for many years abstained from voting at elections, from "conscientious scruples," went forth and gave their votes for the "Lord's side," as they expressed it.

Members of the church were dragged from their sick beds and carried to the polls. The deacons, headmen and clergy of the society, including no less than four of the latter class, descended to the electioneering arena--some of them occupying their stands at the polls during the whole three days of the election--pretending that their religious duty called upon them to "put down the infidel Jackson," on account of his "barbarous persecutions of the poor Missionaries," &c &c.¹⁰⁶

Opponents of Antimasonry occasionally accused the movement of many of the same evils that had been brought to bear against Masonry. Antimasons, they claimed, acted in an un-Christian manner by persecuting those with whom they disagreed. In proscribing one portion of society by advocating their exclusion from political and religious participation, they had effected a rift in the community.¹⁰⁷ Antimasonry, not Masonry, proved "factionous, turbulent, and peace-destroying," and stood "hostile to the best interests and domestic tranquility of the country."¹⁰⁸

The Demise of Antimasonry

"Pure" or "ultra" Antimasons in the west, unaffected by such ideological onslaughts, continued to believe in the cause, though they could no longer follow the leadership of Weed and the New York elite. Massachusetts Antimason Benjamin F. Hallett, who edited the only Antimasonic daily apart from Weed's paper, revealed his exasperation in 1833:

It is with extreme regret that I perceive your paper has apparently abandoned the cause of Antimasonry. I see no allusion to that subject in the columns of the Journal, and I am obliged to infer that you have become tired of the subject

I feel anxious to know whether I can still rely on your cooperation This is the 4th letter I have written to you. I have received no answer.109

An Auburn Antimason refused Seward's request to write circulars for the party's upcoming town elections:

I am convinced that every and all efforts to root out the institution are justifiable--but I am seriously inclined to believe that little very little has been done by political Anti Masonry to effect this object. And the evidences are very strong which go to confirm the supposition that the extinction of Free Masonry is but a secondary object with those who assume to control the Anti Masonic party.110

When the Jamestown Journal condemned the Regency's tariff stand in February, 1833, it could very well have been applied to Antimasonry: "Party discipline, when enforced with such severity as to suppress the free and spontaneous voice of the free people, becomes indeed a fearful despotism; a despotism more to be dreaded than the enactment of arbitrary laws, or the march of armies."111

Western Antimasons, disgusted over the machinations of the state's party leaders, kept their own organizations strong and "principled" in the 1833 campaigns. At the county convention in October, Chautauqua Antimasons insisted they had not abandoned the one true course:

Resolved, That the institution of freemasonry stands first on the catalogue of evils which disturbs the prosperity and endangers the free institutions of this our highly favored land. That it is a secret and deadly foe to the principles of our government. . . .

Resolved, That we, having inscribed upon our banner "Opposition to Freemasonry," should be justly chargeable with inconsistency and dereliction from

the principles which characterise us as a party, were we to withdraw that opposition, or cease to exert all our energies, until we have effected a total surrender of its unholy principles and practices.¹¹²

When the campaign ended in defeat, the Journal condemned the orgiastic Masonic celebration: "They went 'from labor to refreshment.' Guns were fired--shouts and hurras resounded in the streets--drunken men were made drunker--wine was urged on such as called themselves 'cold water men' and antimasons freely abused by their boon companions."¹¹³ Wayne County Antimasons won a majority on the board of supervisors in February, but by October the party central committee eschewed the title "Antimasonic," calling instead for a meeting concerning "Opposition to the Albany Regency and the Grand Lodge."¹¹⁴

By the election of 1832 party leaders had concluded that the Antimasonic title had outlived its usefulness. Months after he headed the coalition electoral ticket, Chancellor Kent gleefully inquired of Seward, "Where is the Antimasonic Party? Gentle Shepherd! tell me where. I hope with the receptacle of things lost on earth. Lets brush away this ugly cob-web, and stand up for a fair, honest, gentlemanly cause."¹¹⁵ In November, 1833, Weed proclaimed in the Journal,

We are glad that the election has disinfected the 8th district of anti-masonry; not that anti-masonry is the worst thing we have to deal with, but it has too narrow a base for a general party, and is, with

all, too peculiar in its doctrine, for political operations.¹¹⁶

Timothy Childs had written Weed from Rochester before the campaign had ended, urging the calling of a convention to dissolve formally the Antimasonic Party and reunite anti-Regency elements for 1836: "We want all our forces for the coming fight for president--it is the thing and the more you think of it the more you will be in favor of it."¹¹⁷

The official dismemberment of the party occurred late in March, 1834, in Washington. Philo C. Fuller reported, "I should think poor antimasonry was pretty effectually deposited in the Tomb of General Politics."¹¹⁸ Yet in that eighth senatorial district, which included Chautauqua County, Antimasons carried town elections "wherever the question was brought to bear."¹¹⁹ James B. Lowry of the Chautauqua central committee, representing one of the most intensely Antimasonic areas of the county, argued in vain against the dissolution of the party:

I am convinced that a want of confidence exists among anti-masons at present in this state, partly owing to a lack of success heretofore, and partly for want of confidence in many of the leading men in the Eastern Section of the State--both of which ought to be remedied if possible. Will it, or can it be done by the disorganizing measure of becoming Whigs--by a tangling alliance with those men who of all others ought not to expect much support from anti-masons.

All the leading antimasons that I have conversed with of late are decided that they will not support a ticket which is not antimasonic, or friendly to antimasons. If we are to be trodden down by masonry it matters not whether it be by Jackson or Clay masonry.¹²⁰

Lowry need not have protested so vehemently over this last move of the leadership; the prime movers had deserted his cause years before.

That attacks on "pure" Antimasonry from within or without would later resemble criticisms of the Whig Party was inevitable. Weed and other state party leaders had succeeded in carrying most Antimasonic adherents into the Whig Party, but the prevailing and developing ideas of this constituency continued to shape their political crusade against what came to be called the Democratic Party. And though many people became disillusioned with their political participation, still they drifted toward the ballot box to battle new evils inconsistent with their definition of republicanism.

Notes to Chapter VI

¹Ronald P. Formisano and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry: The Genesis of Protest, 1826-1827," American Quarterly 29 (Summer 1977):150.

²James S. Chase, Emergence of the Presidential Nominating Convention, 1789-1832 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 134.

³Jamestown Journal, 22 October 1828.

⁴Anti-Masonic Enquirer (Rochester), 18 November 1828.

⁵Thomas C. Love to George H. Boughton and Millard Fillmore, 29 March 1829, Fillmore Papers, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (hereafter BECHS).

⁶Joseph Clary to Millard Fillmore, 13 October 1828, Fillmore Papers, BECHS.

⁷Delos Warren to Fillmore, 18 October 1828, Fillmore Papers, BECHS.

⁸William A. Carpenter to Fillmore, 19 October 1828, Fillmore Papers, BECHS.

⁹F. W. Taylor to Thurlow Weed, 8 April 1828, Weed Misc. MSS, New-York Historical Society.

¹⁰Albert H. Tracy to Weed, 19 June 1828, Weed MSS, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

¹¹Frederick Whittlesey to Weed, 11 January 1830, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

¹²Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," Annual Report of the American Historical Association 1 (1902):385; Proceedings of the New York Antimasonic Convention, 1829, New York State Library, Albany, New York.

¹³Richard Ray Lansing to Weed, 27 February 1829, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

¹⁴Thurlow Weed to Francis Granger, 31 December, no year, NYSL.

¹⁵Albany Evening Journal, 22 July 1830; 12 April 1830; 25 September 1830.

¹⁶Samuel George Andrews to Weed, 23 January 1830, Weed, MSS, University of Rochester.

¹⁷Peter B. Porter to Henry Clay, 23 May 1830, Clay Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁸Porter to Clay (draft), 8 May 1830, Porter Papers, BECHS.

¹⁹Porter to Clay, 23 May 1830, Clay Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁰Clay to Porter, 13 June 1830, Porter Papers, BECHS.

²¹William H. Maynard to Albert H. Tracy, 12 July 1830, Tracy Papers, NYSL.

²²Proceedings of the New York Antimasonic Convention, 1830, Utica, New York, NYSL; McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," pp. 396-77; Chase, Nominating Convention, p. 147.

²³Weed to Albert H. Tracy, 1 May 1830, Tracy MSS, NYSL; Francis Granger to Weed, 17 October 1830, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

²⁴W. B. Lawrence to Clay, 9 November 1830, Clay Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁵Clay to Porter, 21 November 1830, Porter Papers, BECHS.

²⁶Jabez D. Hammond to John W. Taylor, 22 December 1830, Taylor Papers, New-York Historical Society.

²⁷Clay to Porter, 21 November 1830, Porter Papers, BECHS.

²⁸Lyons Countryman, 4 January 1831.

²⁹From the Batavia Times, reprinted in Fredonia Censor, 15 December 1830.

³⁰Quoted in McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," p. 409.

³¹Granger to Weed, 1 August 1831, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

³²Seth Hunt to Seward, 6 August 1831, Seward MSS, University of Rochester.

³³Amos Ellmaker to Seward, 1 August 1831, Seward MSS, University of Rochester.

³⁴Henry Dana Ward to Weed, 8 August 1831, Weed Misc. MSS, NYHS.

³⁵Chase, Nominating Convention, p. 169.

³⁶John McLean to Tracy, 7 September 1831, Tracy MSS, NYSL.

³⁷Samuel Rhea Gammon, Jr., The Presidential Campaign of 1832 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1922), p. 48.

³⁸Harriet A. Weed, ed., Autobiography of Thurlow Weed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1883), I, 389.

³⁹Gammon, Election of 1832, pp. 46-49; Chase, Nominating Convention, p. 175.

⁴⁰Gammon, Election of 1832, p. 49.

⁴¹John P. Kennedy, Memoirs of the Life of William Wirt (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1854), II, 306-08.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 317, 319.

⁴³Philo C. Fuller to Fillmore, 7 October 1831, Fillmore MSS, BECHS.

⁴⁴Amos Kendall to Gideon Welles, 30 September 1831, Welles Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁵Jamestown Journal, 2 March 1831.

⁴⁶George H. Boughton to Weed, 15 March 1831, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

⁴⁷Fredonia Censor, 14 September 1831.

⁴⁸Weed to Seward, 26 October 1831, Seward MSS, University of Rochester.

⁴⁹Weed to Granger, 13 October 1831, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.

- ⁵⁰Albany Evening Journal, 7 November 1831.
- ⁵¹Seward to Weed, 14 November 1831, Weed MSS, University of Rochester.
- ⁵²Frederick Whittlesey to Seward, 12 November 1831, Seward MSS, University of Rochester.
- ⁵³Albany Evening Journal, 14 November 1831.
- ⁵⁴Tracy to Seward, 19 November 1831, Seward MSS, University of Rochester.
- ⁵⁵Hiram Ketchum to Clay, 12 February 1832, Clay Papers, Library of Congress.
- ⁵⁶Orville L. Holley to Seward, 8 May 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.
- ⁵⁷Samuel Stevens to Tracy, 7 June 1832, Tracy MSS, NYSL.
- ⁵⁸Albert H. Tracy to Philo C. Fuller, 30 May 1832, Fuller MSS, BECHS.
- ⁵⁹Francis Granger to Weed, 5 June 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester; McCarthy, "Antimasonic Party," p. 416.
- ⁶⁰Weed, Autobiography, I, 415.
- ⁶¹Porter to Clay (draft), 25 February 1832, Porter Papers, BECHS.
- ⁶²Seward to Tracy, 17 June 1832, Tracy Papers, NYSL.
- ⁶³Tracy to Seward, 24 August 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.
- ⁶⁴Lyons Countryman, 19 September 1832.
- ⁶⁵Fredonia Censor, 29 August 1832.
- ⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 26 October 1831.
- ⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 26 September 1832.
- ⁶⁸Jamestown Journal, 1 August 1832.

⁶⁹From the New York Whig, quoted in Jamestown Journal, 22 August 1832.

⁷⁰Fredonia Censor, 18 July 1832; Jamestown Journal, 25 July 1832; 10 October 1832.

⁷¹Albany Evening Journal, 29 October 1832.

⁷²Jamestown Journal, 13 June 1832; Tracy to Seward, 30 May 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷³Jamestown Journal, 9 May 1832.

⁷⁴Ibid., 2 September 1832; 17 October 1832.

⁷⁵Albany Evening Journal, 12 November 1832.

⁷⁶Broadside received May 7, 1832, Fillmore MSS, BECHS.

⁷⁷Dr. E. Sedgwick, Jr., to Granger (copy), 21 August 1832, Granger Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷⁸"Letter of John Crary, to the Anti-Masons of 1828," 1 August 1832, Political Broadside Collection, Olin Library, Cornell University.

⁷⁹Tracy to Seward, 12 June 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁰George H. Boughton to Seward, 4 May 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸¹Boughton to Weed, 7 September 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸²John C. Spencer to Weed, 22 March 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸³Spencer to Weed, 18 September 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁴Seward to Tracy, 4 June 1832, Tracy MSS, NYSL.

⁸⁵William H. Maynard to Seward, 8 June 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁶"To the Electors of the County of Chatauqua," 24 October 1832, Elial T. Foote Papers, Chautauqua County Historical Society.

⁸⁷Granger to Weed, 7 November 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁸Granger to Weed, 13 November 1832, Granger Papers, Library of Congress.

⁸⁹Timothy Childs to Weed, 27 November 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁹⁰Granger to Weed, 8 November 1832, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁹¹Tracy to Seward, 11 November 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁹²Wayne Sentinel, 24 June 1831.

⁹³Ibid., 20 September 1831.

⁹⁴Fredonia Censor, 11 June 1828.

⁹⁵From the Albany Argus, quoted in Wayne Sentinel, 8 August 1828.

⁹⁶Wayne Sentinel, 25 September 1829.

⁹⁷Ibid., 20 August 1830.

⁹⁸Fredonia Censor, 28 September 1831.

⁹⁹Wayne Sentinel, 29 August 1832.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 16 October 1829.

¹⁰¹From the Oneida Observer, quoted in Fredonia Censor, 21 October 1829.

¹⁰²Wayne Sentinel, 11 June 1830.

¹⁰³Ibid., 25 October 1830.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 20 August 1830.

¹⁰⁵Fredonia Censor, 7 May 1828.

¹⁰⁶Pomeroy Tucker to Lyman Sherwood, 30 September 1833, Wayne County Historical Society.

¹⁰⁷Fredonia Censor, 11 November 1829.

¹⁰⁸Wayne Sentinel, 20 March 1829; 6 August 1830.

- ¹⁰⁹ Benjamin F. Hallett to Weed, 12 January 1833, Weed Papers, University of Rochester. Along with most Massachusetts Antimasons, Hallett later drifted into the Democratic rather than the Whig Party.
- ¹¹⁰ Alvah Worden to Seward, 16 March 1833, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.
- ¹¹¹ Jamestown Journal, 6 February 1833.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 23 October 1833.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 13 November 1833.
- ¹¹⁴ Wayne Sentinel, 11 April 1833; 25 October 1833.
- ¹¹⁵ William Kent to Seward, 20 February 1833, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.
- ¹¹⁶ Albany Evening Journal, 16 November 1832.
- ¹¹⁷ Timothy Childs to Weed, 9 October 1833, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.
- ¹¹⁸ Philo C. Fuller to Tracy, 29 March 1834, Tracy MSS, NYSL.
- ¹¹⁹ Jamestown Journal, 12 March 1834.
- ¹²⁰ James B. Lowry to Tracy, 3 June 1834, Tracy MSS, NYSL.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEGACY OF ANTIMASONRY

Despite the failure of Antimasonry as a political party capable of rallying the opponents of the Albany Regency around its banner, the movement succeeded on almost all accounts. It temporarily eradicated Freemasonry in New York, leaving a strong hostility toward the institution apparent years after the reestablishment of lodges in the late 1840's. The nature of its attack on the lodges strongly contributed to molding a new ethos in communities throughout the state. It schooled adherents for roles they would later play in abolitionist and nativist movements, and as members of the evangelical or "conscience" wing of the Whig Party. Most importantly, it left a social and political legacy that associated republicanism with certain standards of moral conduct and belief.

Under the Whig Standard

As Antimasonry collapsed under the strain of coalition, and with the National Republicans firmly entrenched as fellow Whigs, Weed and the machine politicians belatedly sought to keep the allegiance of the disenchanted among the Antimasonic brethren. They generally

succeeded in retaining their adherents, for most New York Antimasons followed their leaders into the Whig Party in 1834. In so doing they did incur some losses, including the support of Albert Tracy. In 1834 Tracy had warned of Regency men "directing unwonted efforts toward the infected district," and argued that the original Anti-masonic county leaders should continue to direct anti-Regency politics in the west:

The great danger arises from the rampant desire of the nationals to make everything Whig and the jealousy of rigid antimasons that this is some scheme of selling them out to Clay whom many of them dislike more even than they do Jackson--But I trust with prudence and vigilance we shall get along without much loss--it is to be done however only by preserving our antimasonic organization in every thing but the state ticket which I believe there is a willingness should be called Whig provided it has no mason on it.¹

Tracy had heard Lowry's report on Chautauqua County Anti-masonry, and concluded that the party had no effective central organization. "Still I don't wonder," he admitted, "that their stomachs revolt at swallowing national republicanism though it may be sugared over by Whiggism."² Within a year Tracy's own disaffection led him to forsake his Antimasonic colleagues for the Regency camp.

In 1834 Tracy and the party leadership agreed upon Jesse Buel, a former Regency man who might arrest the defections to the Democrats, as the Whig candidate for governor. A Utica leader argued, "In my judgment it will be madness to think of nominating either an ultra national

or an ultra anti. Take an old democrat and then you secure the bolters here and elsewhere."³ Buel, however, opposed the Second Bank of the United States. Seward, himself at best ambivalent on the issue, insisted that Buel stood the best chance of election, and he should continue expressing his opinions unrestrained: "I have no philosophy which will induce me to consent to our being beaten if we can prevent it."⁴ Conflict between Buel and Whig leaders on the Bank of the United States soon rendered his candidacy untenable, and the now pragmatic Seward received his party's nomination. Yet the loosely organized Whigs could only offer him fragmentary support. An old National Republican wrote Peter Porter in October bemoaning the absence of activity in the Eighth Senate District bordering Lake Erie, and warned that without action to counteract heavy Regency campaigning in the western counties, Seward's cause appeared hopeless. Regency attacks on the Bank and the entire question of banking had confused many, he claimed, and these arguments would tell at the polls.⁵ With the Whig party soundly defeated, Weed despaired at the unpopularity of the new anti-Regency organization:

The longer we fight Jacksonism, with our present weapons, the more it won't die! [W]e are in the condition of the old federalist party. The people are against us, and they won't change in our favor as long as the existing party lines are drawn.⁶

Weed proposed to initiate a war upon the Regency banking

system in an attempt to weaken that party's democratic image as well as its economic power.

Governor Marcy's Regency plan to lend funds to state banks during the deflationary crisis of the Bank War had helped stimulate the formation of the Whig Party in 1834, but Regency banking policy had helped scuttle Anti-masonic political hopes for several years. In 1832 a letter to Fillmore warned of the dangers of passing a bill establishing a bank in Steuben County, which had given an Antimasonic majority in 1830.⁷ Frederick Whittlesey remarked that the prospective "commissioners are of a strong Regency cut . . . who if their names are retained in the Bill will so distribute the Stock and Exercise their influence as to aid the Regency in the greatest possible amount." He accurately predicted that passage would keep Antimasons from carrying the county.⁸ The following year a Cortland County Antimason warned Seward to vote against rather than for a measure establishing a bank since a few Antimasons had deserted the standard for the Regency in hopes of carrying the bill.⁹ Three weeks later Seward received a request to vote against the creation of an Oneida County bank because the commissioners had changed.¹⁰ For a political party which encompassed rising men of manufacturing and mercantile wealth, such an "artificial," political exclusion represented a direct affront to their self-interests and laissez-faire individualist outlook.

Hostility toward the Regency's "little monsters," as well as a propensity to support the BUS as a part of the American System, motivated Chautauqua County Antimasonic leaders. An 1834 county convention in favor of maintaining the national bank, composed not only of Antimasons but important former National Republican businessmen as well, met to condemn what it intimated was Jackson's governmental interference in the natural economy:

That the great pressure that exists and has existed for some time in the money market of our country, the inevitable tendency of which is to cripple and destroy our mercantile, manufacturing and agricultural business, arises from the ill advised and illegal interference of the Chief Magistrate with the currency of the country.¹¹

These new Whig leaders fumed at the profits raked in by their Regency counterparts: "The Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank is the pet of the Albany Regency--of the men who profess 'uncompromising opposition' to Monopolies and Monsters, while they foster and protect an institution which gives them FIFTY PERCENT upon their investments."¹² When the state legislature established the Chautauqua County Bank at Jamestown in 1831, Regency men dominated its directorship.¹³ The Jamestown Journal in 1836 described the county Regency meeting as a "convention composed in part of Bank Directors, and which had just nominated for the Assembly another bank director"¹⁴ On the issue of banking, many local Antimasonic and Whig leaders identified with their state party chieftains.

Yet the issues which motivated much of the leadership did not always ignite the passions of the rank and file. The battle over the politicization of the Fredonia Post Office caused great local Whig excitement in 1835. The 1834 county Whig convention decried the bankruptcy of the Post Office Department under the Jackson Administration,¹⁵ and early in 1835 the Journal condemned a senate bill reorganizing the department as containing highly partisan provisions:

These extend not only to the payment of money to partizans and favorites, unauthorized by law, and without precedent, but in the business of letting contracts, and in fact in every branch of the multifarious transactions connected with the department.¹⁶

Shortly thereafter the General Postmaster sought to remove the Fredonia office from the center to the west side of town, replacing the current local postmaster with a long-time Regency leader and Jackson man. A large meeting of the village and its vicinity agreed that the Post Office was "not intended to be political in its character, nor to subserve exclusively either civil, political or religious interests" A petition signed by the majority of inhabitants called upon the newly appointed postmaster to reject his new position. When he refused, a committee of three circulated a petition protesting the appointment to the Postmaster General.¹⁷ The issue proved fortuitous to the prospects of the local Whigs, for it had

the effect of fusing the hatred of party chiefs for the patronage powers of the successful Jacksonians with the continued strong anti-party sentiment that characterized so many of their constituents.¹⁸ The delegates of the 1835 county convention exploited this sentiment by calling for citizens to march duly forth and vote against party tyranny:

Resolved, That in the course pursued by Mr. Van Buren and his followers in seizing upon every local and temporary excitement for party purposes, and endeavoring to connect every question that agitates the community with political strife, is deserving of severe reprehension and rebuke.¹⁹

Yet the evangelic intensity of Antimasonry overcame underlying anti-partyism, polarizing attitudes and encouraging voter loyalty.²⁰ The editor of the Jamestown Journal saw no inconsistency in changing the name of the party standard:

Freemasonry in this state, is in the hands of the Albany Regency; and Whigs from principle, notwithstanding they may have been once initiated in the mysteries of the Masonic institution, who are determined to support the Constitution and the supremacy of the laws, will not wear a Regency Collar.²¹

Both Antimasons and Whigs, he claimed, could support Seward without betraying principle.²² Antimasons, however, continued to control the anti-Regency forces. The five members of the September, 1835, Chautauqua County Whig Correspondence Committee had served together in the Antimasonic committee, and at least three of the five had been

active as Clintonians.²³ The next month the committee included its first non-Antimason, and another joined the five-man board in the fall of 1836.²⁴

Whigs continued the winning ways of Antimasons in the west, with the campaigns reflecting much the same rhetoric. Chautauqua County Whigs succeeded in the elections of 1834, with the Antimasonic town of Pomfret delivering the largest majority for Seward. Four of the five towns won by the Regency contained a rural, geographically isolated electorate.²⁵ Whigs continued to attack the local justice system in much the same tone employed by Antimasons who had linked them to the dictates of Masonic lodges. Judges of the county court, claimed the Whigs, constituted "an organized and trained band of dependants, subservient to the power which created them and always obedient to the bidding of ambitious leaders, connected with the administration."²⁶

Meanwhile Wayne County Regency men attacked the economic activities of their opposition. They condemned the employers who criticized Jackson's removal of the Bank deposits while they lowered the wages of Lowell and Dover mill girls: "The proof is now complete, that the whole was a fraud upon the working people, and that manufacturing was scarcely ever more profitable than it has been during the last 6 months of panic making."²⁷ In the campaign of 1836 the paper aimed its barbs at its more religious

opponents, charging that the Whigs "are playing at their old game again" in "working hard to unite church and state."²⁸ The old party names had disappeared but the debate over the nature of American republicanism continued much as before.

Yet the dual phenomena of overspeculation and increasing hard times helped divert attention from this debate. The Journal expressed its confusion in the spring of 1835:

We can hardly conceive why it is, that so great a scarcity of all kinds of provisions prevails. There is no apparent cause for the cry of distress and famine which every day sounds in our ears. We are inclined to the belief that most of the excitement on that subject has grown out of a disposition to speculate and make money, which is so prevalent in every department of trade and business.²⁹

In early 1836 land sales at the newly established Van Buren Harbor on Lake Erie "have surpassed in price any thing we expected to see for years to come." Farms now sold at double the price for which they were purchased the year previous.³⁰ In neighboring Erie County, Tracy complained that the myriad land ventures had distracted the attentions of Whigs:

It is a difficult task to do anything here for all our people are dead drunk with land speculating so that scarcely the trump of the archangel could arouse them to any other topic. It would be a pity and a burning shame to lose the infected district and especially when we have for our candidate an original and pure antimason, and besides a worthy and competent man.³¹

Statewide leaders, however, never neglected their pocketbooks to ponder over the proper character of republi-

can society. As early as 1827, a Genesee County political opponent charged that Antimasonic congressional nominee Phineas L. Tracy had "erected a palace, and accumulated an immense fortune in bills of costs drawn from the pockets of unfortunate debtors." Tracy defended his wealth and "expensive and elegant house" as the products of hard work that would serve to "encourage worthy and industrious mechanics."³² In May, 1833, Weed wrote to Antimasons Seward, Tracy and George W. Patterson, encouraging them to join him in investing in the new Utica and Schenectady Railroad:

It is expected that the stock will be valuable. A great rush will be made for it. A large number of members will subscribe. Seward gave me his power to subscribe for him, today. . . . Let us give a long and strong pull for Anti-Masonry, this fall.³³

In July Weed complained to Patterson, "We only got ten shares, and the rascals cut off Clark entirely. Seward and Birdsall got 20 shares each."³⁴ He later apologized to Patterson for holding the stock too long, but promised to "transmit half of the 'spoils' as soon as received."³⁵ By the mania of 1836, former Antimasonic state central committee member Frederick Whittlesey was "overwhelmed in land speculation,"³⁶ and Weed had borrowed \$8500 to speculate in lands at Lockport.³⁷ If Antimasonic rhetoric had stressed an equal opportunity to become rich, the party's leaders showed no qualms in putting those words to practice.

The Legacy of the "Blessed Spirit"

Although Antimasonry as a political movement was shortlived, Antimasonic definitions of republican society proved to have lasting power and persisted in influencing the course of religious and political trends throughout the antebellum period. Inherent in the evangelistic crusade against the fraternity was the concept of the "un-Protestant idolatry" of Masonic ceremonies that promoted infidelity and an authoritarianism, interfering with the liberty of personal belief.³⁸ Antimasons compared fraternity practices with those of the Jesuits of Popery.³⁹ Many viewed Masonry and Catholicism as equal threats to morality and republicanism, some longing for the days of Puritan exclusion.⁴⁰ In 1834 the Jamestown Journal printed an advertisement for The Anti Romanist,⁴¹ and the next year viciously attacked Catholicism itself, linking Catholic immigrants with foreign conspiracy:

It is even demonstrated that crowned heads, and men wielding power and influence in the councils of foreign governments, are combining to undermine the deepplaid foundations of our freedom, by sending swarms of the bigoted followers of the Roman Catholic Religion among us, with the avowed object at supplanting our favorite and long cherished predilections for American customs, in matters of religion as well as politics.

Thousands of the mercenaries of popery are annually settling in this country, and propagating with a frenzied zeal, the absurd dogmas of that faith.--This subject so far as regards our safety and success as a nation, is probably second to none now in agitation.--It is too momentous and important to be supported by any party, less than the whole American people.⁴²

This fear of an international plot to subvert American institutions persisted, resulting in diatribes against the Democratic Party's active recruitment of immigrant voters and sharp nativist reactions culminating in the Know-Nothings of the 1850's. Many Antimasons later espoused the Native American doctrines,⁴³ while implicating the dominant political parties in conspiracies to overturn American values and institutions. A Buffalo newspaper editor's charges in the election year of 1836 typified the connection between the conspiracy idea and anti-Catholic hysteria:

In 1830, Mr. Van Buren while Secretary of State, without any assignable reason, wrote to the Pope through our Consul at Rome, informing his holiness of the high respect he entertained for him and the Catholics. Since then the influx of Catholics and Roman priests has notoriously increased in this country; and wherever there has been a Catholic population, it has in every election gone with the party. Such a fact deserves notice and should be remembered.⁴⁴

This paranoid political style evident in the excitement over Illuminism in the 1790's became incorporated into the view of Masonic lodges as a standing conspiracy designed to subvert the American social order,⁴⁵ and left a permanent stamp that clouds political thought and discussion to the present day. As Anthony Wallace has written, the Antimasons

contributed to the branding of an indelible impression in one part of the American political consciousness that somewhere, somehow, beyond America's shores

there exists a Satanic empire whose minions are ever at work to destroy the republic and take over the world.⁴⁶

At the same time, Antimasonic visions of a laissez-faire economy regulated by Protestant Christianity clashed with the institution of slavery. No better illustration of the connection between antimasonry and antislavery exists than the career of William Lloyd Garrison, who first wielded his pen as an antimasonic journalist in 1829,⁴⁷ and whose paper The Liberator printed renunciations of Masonry.⁴⁸ Another abolitionist leader, Lewis Tappan, renounced his Masonic membership, declaring the institution "PROFANE AND BLASPHEMOUS." His brother Charles served as a Boston delegate to a Massachusetts Antimasonic convention.⁴⁹ Antimasons at the Chautauqua County anti-Regency convention in 1834 claimed

that at the approaching elections of the several states of the union, the alternatives of Liberty or Slavery is more distinctly presented to the American people, than on any previous occasion since the Declaration of Independence.⁵⁰

Though many former Antimasons championed the anti-slavery cause, some showed little sympathy for abolitionism or the plight of black people. At an Anti-Slavery Society meeting in Pomfret in 1836, every resolution introduced by abolitionist members met defeat, while a majority vote demanded that the chair reprimand one of the speakers.⁵¹ The Jamestown Journal attacked New York City abolitionists for causing the 1835 riots there by endeavoring "to amal-

gamate the blood of the blacks with our citizens--and to destroy all distinction between them, by permitting and inviting the blacks of the city to participate in public meetings, by occupying promiscuously the seats and pews in the churches and the pulpit"52 Nevertheless, the Antimasonic membership within the new Whig Party eventually became the "Conscience" section, frustrating Henry Clay's hopes for the 1840 presidential nomination in utilizing the considerable political skills that they had brought into the party.⁵³

Other former Antimasons, most maintaining a persistent aversion to the workings of political party machinery, became active in Antislavery third parties. Myron Holley left the Whig Party after Clay's anti-abolitionist attack in February, 1839, to urge antislavery men to form an independent party. Already independent in religion, Holley had preached his own humanistic faith in public buildings in Lyons, while labeling orthodox Calvinist beliefs as "unscriptural, irrational and demoralizing." After moving to Rochester in 1839 he began publishing the Rochester Freeman which, as did his earlier Antimasonic paper, stressed the necessity of political action as a religious duty to improve humanity. The conspiratorial vision of Freemasonry now shifted to the southern slave power. The following year Holley became one of the founders of the Liberty Party, the first independent political party dedi-

cated to the overthrow of slavery.⁵⁴

The debate surrounding formation of the Liberty Party illustrates a remarkable parallel to the thoughts of early Antimasons, many of whom were now involved in these discussions. At a Rochester convention to nominate anti-slavery candidates to the assembly in 1839, Holley defended voting as "the last resort, the only conservative power of the republic," and called for the formation of a new party dedicated to "equal rights." The corrupt expediency of the existing parties stood beyond purification; only an independent organization could stand up to the slave power. At an Arcade, New York, abolitionist convention, former Utica Antimason Alvan Stewart argued, "We cannot vote for either of the parties without voting for a slave-holder." Anti-party feeling delayed the formation of the Liberty Party, yet the experience of Antimasonry illustrated to many that this new organization could serve as a temporary mechanism that would educate and proselytize, and then dissolve when its mission had been fulfilled.⁵⁵ A Liberty Friends List in Chautauqua contained at least three former Antimasons.⁵⁶

The Antimasonic mission had proved temporarily successful, but American Masonry revived while American reformers gave most of their attention to slavery and the Free Soil movement. Though the Fredonia Lodge had formally disbanded, a former Antimason reported that ex-Masons often could be seen "sitting in a peculiar arrangement and talk-

ing together" in the Village Park.⁵⁷ No technical dissolution could suddenly break the bonds of friendship, business connections and camaraderie which had drawn these men together for years. By 1849 the Mt. Moriah Lodge and the Forestville Lodge formally reopened in Chautauqua County, while the Palmyra Eagle Chapter of Wayne County reorganized in 1853.⁵⁸ When the Summit Lodge convened in Westfield in 1852, the chapter had many of the same members.⁵⁹

Yet hostility toward Masonry continued. During the last few years before the Civil War, another evangelistic crusade attacked the newly revived fraternity.⁶⁰ At an 1855 Masonic funeral and burial of a brother of the Cherry Creek Lodge in Chautauqua County, an older neighbor grabbed one Mason, screaming, "A Morgan killer burying a Morgan killer! What a sight to behold! You can never be anything morally, religiously or politically in this town. Renounce Masonry and be a man again."⁶¹

Conclusion

Enduring as Antimasonic sentiment and philosophy proved, they emerged from specific material and ideological bases long forgotten by the time these ideas found their way into an American creed. The sudden floodwaters of commercial capitalism brought by the Erie Canal to western New York swept over the small villages and settlements of the frontier, remolding communities and awakening the con-

sciousness of settlers to the larger world without while bestirring them to reexamine their own relationships with neighbors. The transportation revolution encouraged the growth of villages, manufacturing and mercantile concerns, as well as a rising level of aspiration with greater economic opportunity. Individual opportunity under a laissez-faire economy also implied individual responsibility.

The Second Great Awakening, punctuated by the revivals inspired by the preaching of Charles Finney, encouraged settlers to accept their own salvation as well as the saving of others as a God-given responsibility. These ideas promoted lay revolts against the conservative clergy in evangelical sects and stimulated widespread millennial enthusiasm. This religious activity combined with suffrage expansion to enhance the confident sense of individual control of destiny. Rumors of DeWitt Clinton's flirtation with Andrew Jackson and his sudden death in January, 1827, left many frontier New Yorkers who favored an active government without a leader or a party. The resultant political vacuum encouraged the formation of a new organization.⁶²

Given the high level of excitement and the strong belief in self-determination, the immediate and widespread response toward the unsolved mystery of Morgan's disappearance does not seem surprising. Yet the unexpected

intransigence and haughty demeanor displayed by Masons who deliberately subverted the course of justice appeared designed to bring down the wrath of an outraged community. Perhaps the strong group identity reinforced by business and kinship connections, combined with the often isolated and alienating conditions of the frontier led them to flaunt their association and boast of their power. To evangelicals and others, the actions of this outside force in disrupting the progressive course they saw themselves pursuing smacked of conspiracy. The grassroots participation in local investigating committees that sent delegates to meetings reflected the organization of benevolent societies and led to the mass participation, conventions and democratic rhetoric characteristic of the Second Party System. As the Antimasonic Party became the leading anti-Regency organization, most Clintonian Masons necessarily found themselves drifting into the Regency camp, although a minority renounced their fraternal obligations.⁶³

With the predilections toward an active government characteristic of most western New Yorkers and this increasing identification of Masonry with Regency, Clintonians and Adams men seized the opportunity brought by the Morgan kidnapping and directed the movement toward their own ends. Certainly Weed, Seward and other state Anti-masonic leaders did not share the evangelical fervor or moral concerns of much of their constituency.⁶⁴ Their own

frequent financial transactions illustrated that they did comprehend the business interests of manufacturers. Nevertheless, Antimasons demanded that their leaders at least pay lip service to the concerns of their supporters coping with rapid change. The alliance with the Workingmen's Party of 1830 excited relatively few activists, and Weed's own feelings suggest little attraction between the short-lived political bedfellows. As the leadership moved further toward building a national party, cementing a political coalition and broadening the scope of their platform, the loyalty of the state's western voters waned and the party suffered an irredeemable loss of credibility. Although the experience appeared to reaffirm anti-party feeling, the evangelistic sense of duty continued to push believers into electoral politics. The resultant dialogue between Antimasons and their opponents almost immediately escalated into a debate concerning the nature of republican society that reflected their very different bases of support.

Contrary to previous notions, Regency advocates proved generally strongest in towns less affected by the commercial revolution and were often gentleman farmers, canal forwarders, and merchants. Many men accustomed to a placid agrarian existence or engaged in commerce that tied them with larger cities failed to respond to calls for a tightly knit moral community. They resented the attempted

imposition of a code of behavior as a response to rapid change. Championing individual freedom over both their religious and economic lives, Regency supporters opposed religious issues in politics with as much fervor as they did governmental aid for manufacturers in the form of protective tariffs. From the 1820's to the formal creation of the Democratic Party and beyond, neither manufacturing nor a concern over the moral groundings of an urban labor force drew much concern with the party's constituency.

Antimasonic strength also illustrates a political continuity, including the backing of former Clintonians and winning support in the largest villages and towns. Almost every politically active manufacturer associated with the Antimasons. In towns where family life predominated, where women no longer delayed marriage and where household production had declined--in short, where women had the ability to exert an important influence upon community affairs--Antimasons received large majorities.⁶⁵ The Antimasonic outlook, then, sprung from the experience of these constituencies most transformed by commercial expansion and development.

Calling for equality of opportunity and a moral, homogeneous commonwealth, Antimasons "shared a belief in America as a Christian capitalist nation" which contained "complementary rather than competing interests of the social classes."⁶⁶ In attacking Deists, Enlightenment

philosophy and such radicals as Robert Dale Owen and Fanny Wright, Antimasons offered a new concept of community that provided a sense of identity and unity against a foreign Masonic monster while commercial capitalism fostered a diversity of interests and an increasing mobility. Manufacturers and shop owners, concerned with maintaining a dependable labor supply, and evangelicals interested in promoting a higher moral order joined forces in an Antimasonic movement that combined a religious and a civic crusade. As William Appleman Williams has put it, "Seen through the prisms of religious forms and language, the secular principles of laissez faire appeared as a utopian revelation."⁶⁷ An assessment of the Rochester revivals as "a crucial step in the legitimation of free labor" appears equally applicable to the influence of Antimasonry: "Thus, a nascent industrial capitalism became attached to visions of a perfect moral order based on individual freedom and self-government, and old relations of dependence, servility, and mutuality were defined as sinful and left behind."⁶⁸

The Antimasonic movement, as the first major political and social response to the effects of the boom of commercial capitalism and manufacturing which followed the War of 1812 and the Panic of 1819, created a philosophy that eventually swept the antebellum North. In defining the evils of Masonry, it also presented a view of a stable, law-abiding society that joined a free labor ideology with

evangelical Protestantism. Economic and political freedom, they argued, could only operate within the context of a moral community designed to check any excesses. More than a list of guaranteed freedoms, republicanism came to signify a certain set of moral beliefs that served to bind society together while allowing for the individual pursuits and interests of capitalism.

The political rhetoric of Antimasonry as well as that of its opponents represents much more than meaningless campaign drivel. If the leadership of the parties did not always seriously subscribe to the viewpoints expressed on the platforms and in print, the contending arguments spoke to the concerns of an interested and politicized electorate. Real differences divided Regency men from Antimasons and the Whigs who succeeded them. Men who shared a common New England cultural background vehemently disagreed with each other on every conceivable issue. The inability of scholars to evaluate adequately the relationships of social movements and the political process demonstrates the poverty of classification and the uselessness of the pretended division between social and political history. It is impossible to divide the social movement of Antimasonry from the political party it spawned and understand its significance to Jacksonian America or to our own time.

The legacy of Antimasonic thought proved ironic. The marriage of the moral-minded and the capitalist entre-

preneur grew into a crusade that helped undermine and uproot human slavery. Yet no amount of denials could transform the internal contradictions of growing class strife into a homogeneous community. Christian capitalists continued to place the blame on external "conspiracies" to which they assigned the very antithesis of their own beliefs. In defining "Americanism" in terms of a structure of beliefs rather than as a system in which freedom to disagree stood paramount, they helped set the stage for the repression of radical and laborer alike and threatened the personal liberty of men who spoke out in dissent. By that time nonconformist William Morgan had been long forgotten.

Notes to Chapter VII

¹Albert H. Tracy to Philo C. Fuller, 18 July 1834, Fuller Papers, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (BECHS).

²Tracy to Fuller, 8 June 1834, Fuller Papers, BECHS.

³Samuel P. Lyman to Tracy, 9 July 1834, Tracy Papers, New York State Library (NYSL).

⁴William H. Seward to Tracy, 19 July 1834, Tracy Papers, NYSL.

⁵H. C. Van Schaack to Porter, 4 October 1834, Porter Papers, BECHS.

⁶Thurlow Weed to Francis Granger, 23 November 1834, Granger Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷Horace Clark to Fillmore, 22 February 1832, Fillmore Papers, BECHS.

⁸Frederick Whittlesey to Seward, 29 February 1832, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁹Augustus Donnelly to Seward, 21 March 1833, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

¹⁰Abraham Bruyn Hasbrouck to Seward, 10 April 1833, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

¹¹Jamestown Journal, 2 July 1834.

¹²Ibid., 31 December 1834.

¹³Elial T. Foote Collection, Vol. 18, No. 122, Chautauqua County Historical Society, Westfield, New York.

¹⁴Jamestown Journal, 26 October 1836.

¹⁵Ibid., 20 August 1834.

¹⁶Ibid., 18 February 1835.

- ¹⁷Fredonia Censor, 25 March 1835.
- ¹⁸See Ronald P. Formisano, "Political Character, Antipartyism, and the Second Party System," American Quarterly 21 (Winter 1969):683-709.
- ¹⁹Jamestown Journal, 21 October 1835.
- ²⁰Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "The Social Composition of Political Leadership: Genesee County, New York, 1821-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1973, p. 174.
- ²¹Jamestown Journal, 9 July 1834.
- ²²Ibid., 17 September 1834.
- ²³Fredonia Censor, 30 September 1835.
- ²⁴Ibid., 28 October 1835; 14 September 1836.
- ²⁵Jamestown Journal, 12 November 1834.
- ²⁶Ibid., 19 November 1834.
- ²⁷Wayne Sentinel, 20 June 1834.
- ²⁸Ibid., 8 July 1836.
- ²⁹Jamestown Journal, 27 May 1835.
- ³⁰Fredonia Censor, 20 January 1836.
- ³¹Albert H. Tracy to Philo C. Fuller, 21 October 1835, Fuller Papers, BECHS.
- ³²Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 213.
- ³³Weed to George Washington Patterson, 21 May 1833, Patterson Papers, University of Rochester.
- ³⁴Weed to Patterson, 12 July 1833, Patterson Papers, University of Rochester.
- ³⁵Weed to Patterson, 11 December 1833, Patterson Papers, University of Rochester.
- ³⁶Weed to Seward, 20 February 1836, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

³⁷Weed to Seward, 30 April 1836, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

³⁸Ronald P. Formisano and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry: The Genesis of Protest, 1826-1827," American Quarterly 29 (Summer 1977):143.

³⁹Formisano, "Political Character, Antipartyism, and the Second Party System," p. 66; David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Mason, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 48 (September 1960):205-24; and Richard Hofstadter, The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1967) best draw the connection between Antimasonry and Anti-Catholicism.

⁴⁰Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1969), pp. 47, 62-63.

⁴¹Jamestown Journal, 13 August 1834.

⁴²Ibid., 15 July 1835.

⁴³Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," Annual Report of the American Historical Association 1 (1902):544.

⁴⁴From Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, quoted in Fredonia Censor, 21 September 1836.

⁴⁵Hofstadter, Paranoid Style, p. 14; Davis, "Some Themes of Counter Subversion," p. 208.

⁴⁶Anthony F. C. Wallace, Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 346.

⁴⁷Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 265.

⁴⁸From The Liberator, printed in Jamestown Journal, 3 December 1834.

⁴⁹Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan, p. 47.

⁵⁰Jamestown Journal, 22 October 1834.

- ⁵¹Fredonia Censor, 10 February 1836.
- ⁵²Jamestown Journal, 23 July 1834.
- ⁵³Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 57.
- ⁵⁴Richard H. Sewell, Ballots For Freedom: Anti-slavery Politics in the United States 1837-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 54-55.
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 56-71, 83-84.
- ⁵⁶"Liberty Friends List," Elial T. Foote Collection, N.D., Vol. 9, No. 45, Chautauqua County Historical Society.
- ⁵⁷"History of Forest Lodge" (History Committee), p. 50, in Barker Library, Fredonia, New York.
- ⁵⁸Obed Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua: A Story of Masonic Work From the Year 1815 (Sinclairville, N.Y.: H. C. Drake, 1897), p. 12; "Forestville Masonry," File 366, George Washington Patterson Library, Westfield, New York; George W. Cowles, ed., Landmarks of Wayne County (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1895), p. 152.
- ⁵⁹Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua, p. 23.
- ⁶⁰Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 354.
- ⁶¹Edson, Masonry in Chautauqua, p. 41.
- ⁶²Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 13; Cross, Burned-over District, pp. 45, 80, 200.
- ⁶³Formisano and Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry," pp. 145-51; Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 213.
- ⁶⁴Kathleen Kutolowski's study of Genesee County politics illustrates that Antimasonic county leaders did not embrace evangelical doctrines either. Kutolowski, "Social Composition of Political Leadership," p. 218.
- ⁶⁵Cross, Burned-over District, pp. 84, 87.

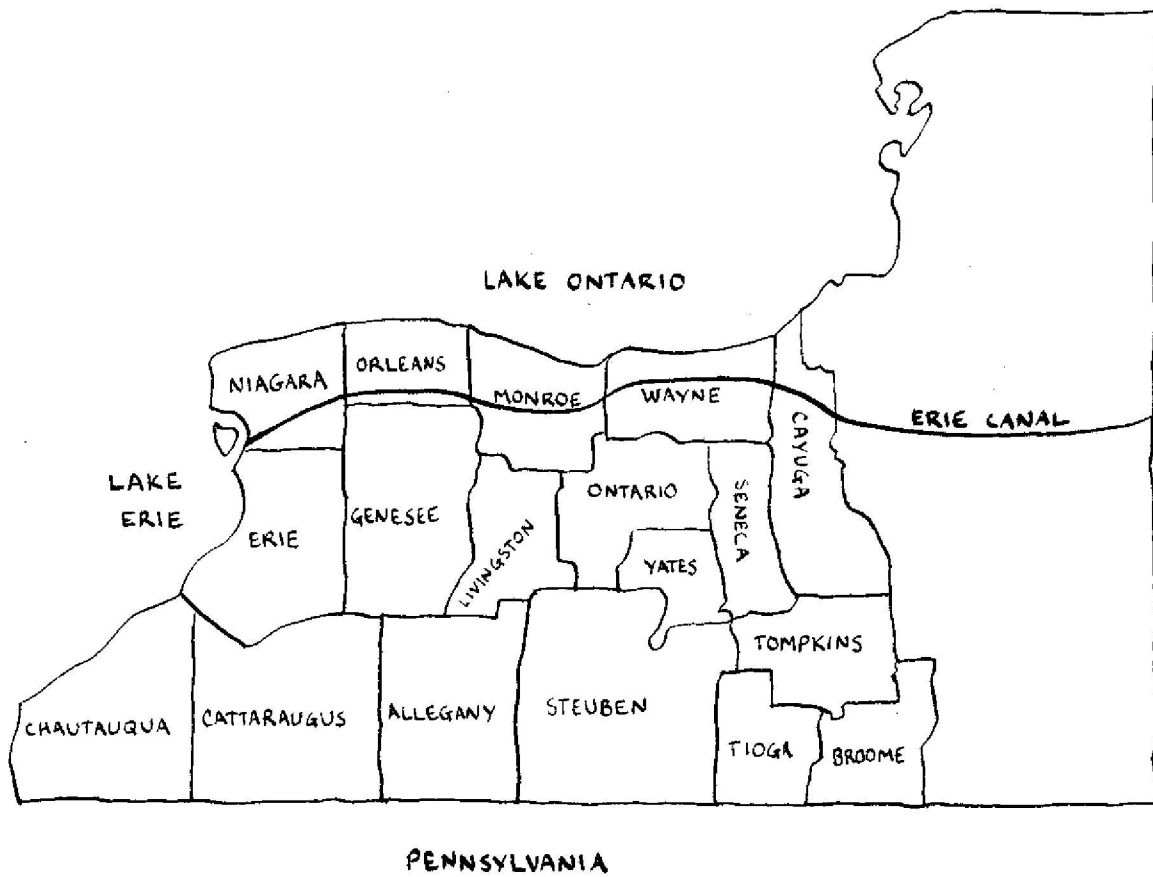
⁶⁶Wallace, Rockdale, pp. 342, 346.

⁶⁷William Appleman Williams, The Contours of American History (New York: Franklin Watts, 1973), p. 253.

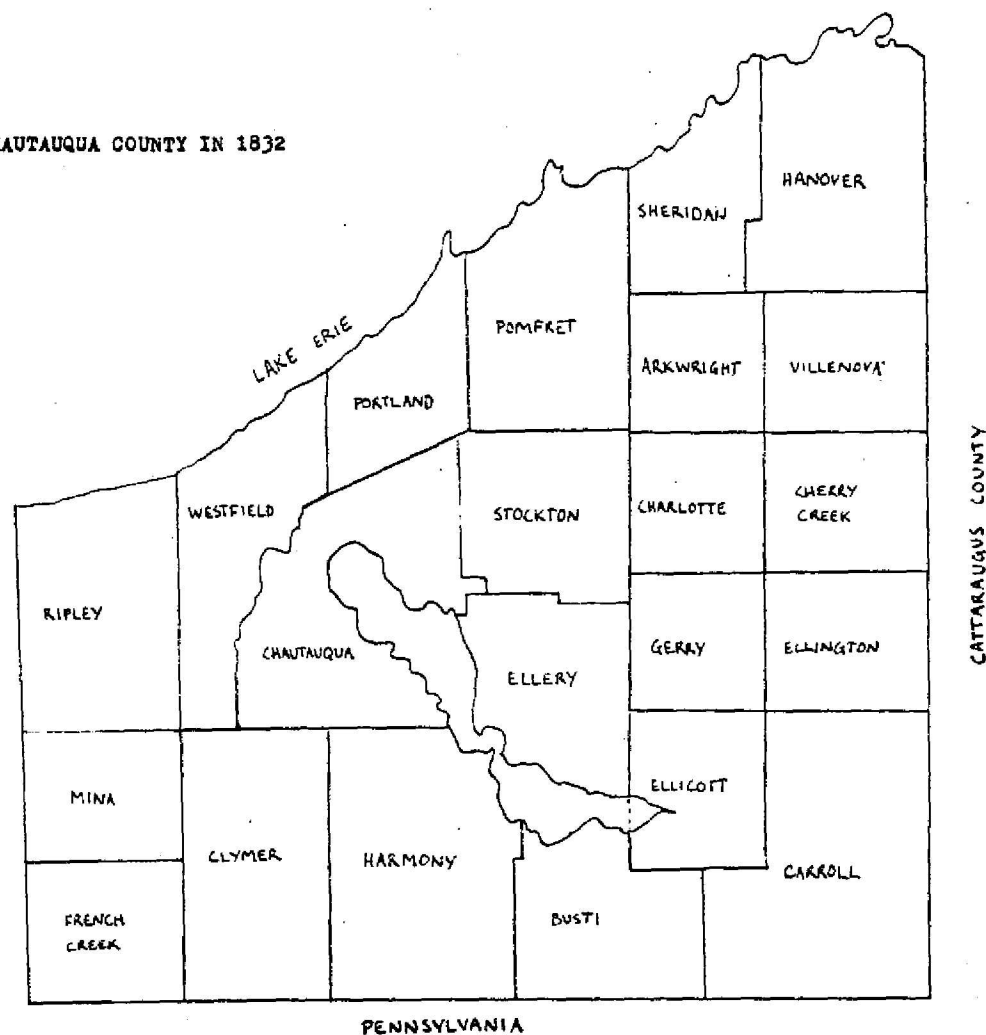
⁶⁸Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), p. 141.

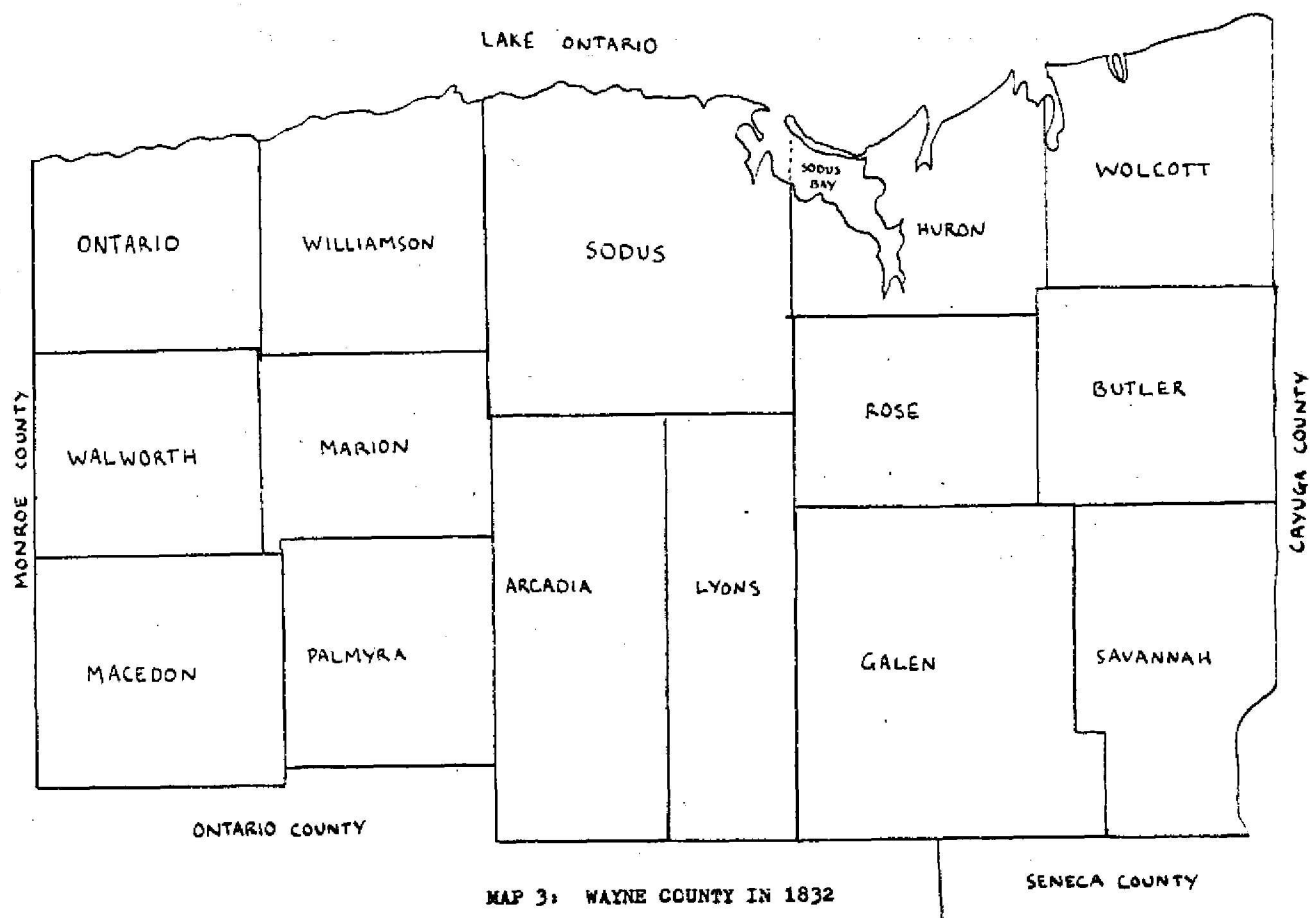
APPENDIX

MAP 1: WESTERN NEW YORK IN 1832



MAP 2: CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY IN 1832





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