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Building the Brooklyn machine: Irish, Jewish and black political succession in central Brooklyn, 1919–1964

Gerson, Jeffrey Nathan, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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A

BUILDING THE BROOKLYN MACHINE: IRISH, JEWISH AND BLACK POLITICAL SUCCESSION IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN, 1919-1964

by

JEFFREY GERSON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1990

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

BUILDING THE BROOKLYN MACHINE: IRISH, JEWISH AND BLACK POLITICAL SUCCESSION IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN, 1919-1964

by

Jeffrey Gerson

Adviser: John Mollenkopf

Unlike Chicago and other well research cities of the northeast and Midwest, Brooklyn, New York was the scene of a comparatively fluid political succession for Jews and blacks in this century. Several factors differentiate Brooklyn from the others. I hypothesize that swift demographic change (and legislative reapportionment that reflects it), interparty and intraparty competition, a decentralized party structure, and astute ethnic and racial group leadership, all contribute to the machine's ability to incorporate, rather than exclude, new immigrants groups. When these conditions hold, a machine can foster ethnic and racial change in party organization.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Brooklyn Democratic machine sought to include Jews and blacks within its ranks. Few attempts were made to prevent their participation and advancement in the local political party organization. Rather, ethnic and racial competition involved a degree of conflict between the

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Irish, Jews and blacks, a situation that was contained and then resolved by party adaptation to the new demographic reality. In the end, the machine weathered several transitions of political power. Its longevity was due in no small measure to its ability to find ways of accommodating ethnic and racial change. Given the experience of the first two succession experiences for Jews and blacks, the Brooklyn Democratic machine was able to favorably incorporate them both at the local level of the party organization.

This dissertation studies the unique case of Brooklyn in the context of New York City politics. It focuses on three Central Brooklyn communities: Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Crown Heights. Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant witnessed the first shifts of political leadership from the Irish to the Jews and later from the Irish, Jews and Italians to the blacks. Crown Heights is important not only because it housed the most powerful clubhouse in Brooklyn for nearly 50 years, the Eighteenth assembly district Madison Club led by Irwin and Stanley Steingut, it also saw the blossoming of the Unity Democratic Club (UDC), the second political organization to bring blacks into district leadership positions. At UDC a progressive interracial alliance took over power from the regular, interracial clubhouse.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction: The Politics of Obstruction and Exclusion

A main current in the literature on the urban political machine and ethnic and racial succession is that the machine did little to incorporate new ethnic and racial groups into the political party system. Indeed, some argue that it actively obstructed the efforts of new groups to participate meaningfully in local politics.

The Second Wave of European Immigration, 1880-1920

Steven Erie, in his award winning Rainbows's End,[1] argues that the early twentieth century Irish machine refused to "vote" America's newest white immigrants, the Jews, Poles, Italians and Slavs. Twentieth century Irish machine leaders maintained their hegemony through a politics of ethnic exclusion. Erie argues that machine

[1]Steven Erie, Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

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leaders did not share any of the spoils of patronage because the new ethnics applied little political pressure (in part due to the fact that Irish control of the electoral mechanisms prevented most from voting immediately). The extremely limited resources of the machine as well as pressure from upper and middle class homeowners to keep property taxes low provided further disincentive.

Although this strategy for maintaining order among the party faithful was effective in the short run throughout numerous American cities (Chicago, Jersey City, Albany, Pittsburgh, and Manhattan's Tammany Hall have been studied), Erie argues that it was too narrow to permit the long term survival of the Irish machine. During the Depression years, reform mayoralties harnessed the voting clout of the newest immigrants, in effect destroying the late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban machines.

Erie's theory belongs to a literature that largely credits reformers, and not regulars, with the organization of disaffected ethnic groups during the Great Depression.[2] According to Erie, the New Deal Democratic

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[2]The literature on Mayor Fiorello La Guardia is a case in point. Some well known examples of this genre are, Arthur Mann, La Guardia Comes to Power, The Mayoral Election of 1933 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965) and Charles Garrett, The La Guardia Years, Machine and Reform Politics in New York City, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961). The latest is Thomas Kessner, Fiorello H. La Guardia and the

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coalition won the Jewish and Italian vote by default. It organized the forsaken Southern and Eastern European immigrants. In the post-New Deal period, the cities' newest inhabitants met the same resistance as the earlier second wave immigrants. This time the machines systematically mobilized and rewarded white ethnics but not blacks and Hispanics.

> Before the 1960s, minorities were deliberately kept out of the established system of "city trenches." Except for new independent politicians like New York's Adam Clayton Powell, the legacy of the machine era for blacks was "plantation politics" Chicago style. When the minority assault finally came, the old-style party organization were in the last stages of decline.[3]

The Third Wave: Internal Migration of Blacks and Latinos to America's Northern Cities

In her provocative study of succession in Chicago, Diane Pinderhughes argued in a similar vein that the political machine did little to encourage and failed to support black efforts to participate meaningfully in

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Making of Modern New York (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), Chapter 11, "He Likes the Feel of the Driver's Seat. He Wants to Stay There," 378-406.

[3]Erie, 378.

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Chicago politics after 1931.[4] In the post 1931 period, the city's political machine was characterized as having a centralized hierarchical organization and a monopoly of political power. The best blacks could do in Chicago's noncompetitive party system was to build a "subordinate black submachine under Congressman Dawson which remained compliant until the late 1970s."[5] The Chicago centralized party organization did not seek a heightened black electoral participation nor did it foster decentralized institutional decision-making. After 1955, moreover, Mayor Richard Daley would not tolerate dissent from subleaders within his organization.

The machine's tight control of political life prevented substantive issues such as discrimination in employment, housing and education from reaching the political agenda. Blacks only achieved levels of symbolic or descriptive representation; substantive participation was impossible.

While Erie and Pinderhughes correctly assert that one party hegemony leads to ethnic exclusion, and while Chicago's machine had a centralized and hierarchical

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[4]Diane Pinderhughes, Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory (University of Illinois Press, 1987).

[5]Ibid., 64.

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structure, other urban machines were better characterized as decentralized political organizations with submachines that had organizational and substantive authority. I explore a contrary case, Brooklyn, where the machine faced stiff competition.

Erie and Pinderhughes' hold that the machine did not adapt well to new ethnic and racial groups. This perspective is an overgeneralization; they are not able to explain why succession was achieved with continuity in Brooklyn.

While Steven Erie does acknowledge that the urban machine's organizational structure varies from city to city, both he and Pinderhughes agree that the third wave of ethnic and racial group immigrants (largely black and Latino) to the northern urban cities met the same kind of resistance from the urban machine as the second wave had. Erie writes:

> The machine's electoral neglect of black and Hispanics in the 1970s would be a replay of its nonfeasance toward the Southern and Eastern Europeans in the early twentieth century. Only in competitive party cities, like Chicago in the 1920's would the Irish politicos work tirelessly to help the new immigrants surmount the hurdles of naturalization, registration and voting.[6]

[6]Erie, 320. Erie found Chicago to be the only case of competitive party politics in the 1920s, of the cities he studied. In his examination of New York City he focused exclusively upon Tammany Hall in Manhattan, ignoring Brooklyn and the three other boroughs.

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Erie and Pinderhughes are not alone in this assessment. Richard W. Lotchin and a chorus of machine critics concur that the machine's record of third wave immigrant incorporation was deplorable.

> Blacks have gained some political power but nothing compared to their numbers in the city....it seems clear that the machine has been the means of keeping the newcomers down rather than raising them up....machine politics preferred one group at the expense of another.[7]

Thesis Statement and Theoretical Framework

Unlike Chicago and the other well researched cities of the northeast and Midwest (Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinatti, etc.,) Brooklyn was the scene of a comparatively fluid political succession for Jews and blacks in this century. This leads us to ask what factors differentiate Brooklyn from the others and what the implications are for building a better theory of ethnic succession under machine politics. Throughout the twentieth century, the Brooklyn Democratic machine

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[7]Lotchin adds that from 1900 until 1950, bosses, "....discriminated against the representatives of other ethnic groups, further aggravating group relations." Elite theorists find machine leaders partial to a strategy of limited ethnic mobilization; a smaller electorate was preferable since it's more manageable. Roger W. Lotchin, "Power and Policy: American City Politics Between The Two World Wars," ed. Scott Greer, Ethnics, Machines, and the American Urban Future (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1981), 6-7, 150.

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sought to include Jews and blacks within its ranks. Few attempts were made to prevent their participation and advancement in the local political party organization. Rather, ethnic and racial competition involved a degree of conflict between the Irish, Jews and blacks, a situation that was contained and then resolved by party adaptation to the new demographic reality. In the end, the machine weathered several transitions of political power. Its longevity was due in no small measure to its ability to find ways of accommodating ethnic and racial change. Given the experience of the first two succession experiences for Jews and blacks, the Brooklyn Democratic machine was able to favorably incorporate them both at the local level of the party organization.

This dissertation offers a more discriminating study of how the machine in at least one important case favorably adapted to the problem of succession. The dissertation explores both what is distinct about Brooklyn and how the Brooklyn case might cause us to qualify the generalizations that are predominant in the literature. Specifically, I hypothesize that swift demographic change (and legislative reapportionment that reflects it), interparty and intraparty competition, a decentralized party structure, and astute ethnic and racial group leadership, all contribute to the machine's ability to incorporate, rather than exclude, new immigrants groups.

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When these conditions hold, a machine can foster ethnic and racial change in party organization.

Ethnic Political Succession and Incorporation Defined

Political succession is defined as the process by which a new ethnic group displaces a previously dominant and established ethnic group as office-holders at a given level of the political system. This study focuses on the assembly district level leadership positions, which are New York's equivalent of wards, in a period when all of an assembly district's elected officials were beholden to the district leader.

A satisfactory incorporation of ethnic and racial groups implies recognition for new immigrant groups. Recognition has meant the same thing for ethnic and racial groups in urban America: an increase in the number of elected and appointed positions and an increased voice in the political party organization. Newcomers wanted recognition proportional to their population because recognition symbolized a group's progress. By electing representatives who were like themselves, racially or ethnically, members of a group gained added dignity and self-respect, not to mention access and influence. In accomplishing this feat, they felt they possessed a stake in the democratic process.

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Diane Pinderhughes distinguishes between mere symbolic or descriptive representation and substantive representation. She determines whether substantive representation exists by examining the extent to which public official create public policies that respond to the interests of their constituents. Descriptive or symbolic representation exists where ethnic and racial groups win election to office but are unable to influence the formation of public policy in the interest of their group. The appointment or election of local political submachine leaders, such as William Dawson as ward leader and Congressman from Chicago's South Side was merely symbolic because the white ethnic machine leadership largely controlled him. Examples of substantive representation included changing the economic status of the ethnic or racial community, and decision making power on the public policy issues of most concern to a particular ethnic or racial group. An example of this is in the areas of the administration of justice. The Brooklyn case suggests new groups could win substantive as well as symbolic representation.[8]

---

[8]Pinderhughes found that blacks were arrested, prosecuted and convicted out of all proportion to their presence in the population. "Whites and blacks committed crimes; blacks were punished for them." In the area of Chicago's educational policy she concluded that race was a critically important factor in educational expenditures after 1945. Pinderhughes, 180, 226.

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Key Variables That Fostered A Fruitful Succession Process

Demography

Several important factors help account for fluid successions. The first element that has to be considered is the rate of demographic change or the percentage of a neighborhood's population that is inhabited by a particular new ethnic or racial group.

If a neighborhood or the political jurisdiction that encompasses it is overrun in a decade by an incoming ethnic or racial group, it seems likely that the new group constitutes a potential political force with which the existing political organization must deal.

Boston's black population, for instance, lacked the critical mass necessary for effective political or social action until recent years.[9] On the other hand, Bedford Stuyvesant and its surrounding black districts gave blacks a sense of cohesion and continuity. While blacks faced a rockier political succession than did Jews, black succession was nevertheless accomplished with a modicum of disruption until 1964. Furthermore,

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[9]J. Anthony Lukas, Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three Families. (New York: Vintage, 1986), 58-62.

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the first two political successions for blacks and Jews at the ward level both were accomplished within a similar time span.

An important variable in the succession equation is the rate of Jewish and Italian outmigration in the 1950s and 1960s compared to Irish outmigration in the 1920s and 1930s. The Irish left the county in great numbers, leaving behind a highly mobilized Jewish population. On the other hand, while the outflow of Jews and Italians to the suburbs in the Post World II period was great, it slowed by the 1970s. As Alan Ware observed, "There was no evidence of a rapid exodus to the suburbs by whites fearful of non-white domination....Moreover, even with population drift to the suburbs, the very size of the city and the diversity of its neighborhoods meant that it did not become a city dominated by poor, non white minorities."[10] This difference in migration patterns may account for the slowing of black succession after the mid-1960s.

State Legislative Reapportionment

The four cases of ethnic and racial succession studied reveal that state legislative reapportionment

[10]Alan Ware, The Breakdown of the Democratic Party Organization: 1940-1980. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 27.

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played either a benign or a supportive role. Jewish succession benefited from the absence of reapportionment from 1918 through 1944. Had Irish leaders wished to use the gerrymander as a tool to obstruct Jewish political aspirations, it was unavailable to them.

Legislative reapportionment was more directly helpful to black political succession. In 1953, the reapportionment of assembly districts created a new one for Bertram Baker, the Sixth. At the same time, the redrawn Seventeenth assembly district was born with a 50 per cent black population, paving the way for racial succession in 1962 when the Unity Democratic Club captured local party offices.

Intraparty and Interparty Competition

Interparty and intraparty competition has always been present in Brooklyn politics, serving as a catalyst for groups' chances of party succession. The extent of interparty and intraparty competition at the time new groups make their way into the political arena strongly shapes the succession. A competitive system, where parties woo voters with promises of representation and power, gives new incoming or reawakened groups a stronger hand.

For Brooklyn's Jews, active and popular third parties gave them a political independence that

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threatened the Democratic party's hegemony. Jews had to be recruited from William Randolph Hearst's Municipal Ownership League, the Socialist Party, Communist Party, American Labor Party and Liberal Party and won over to the Democratic side.

Ronald Bayor[11] has revealed that during the early decades of this century, the Democratic party gave Jews a greater number of positions to prevent their wholesale defection to the Socialists and Republicans. They were the first group of the second wave of immigrants to be recognized by Tammany Hall. Furthermore, owing to the rise of an independent Jewish and Italian vote during La Guardia's mayoralty (1933-1945), the Irish had no choice but to share scarce political resources if they wanted to regain control of the mayor's office.[12]

Elite theorists do not give sufficient credit to regular politicians for meeting challenges from every corner of the political spectrum: the progressive era

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[11]Ronald Bayor, Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[12]Ibid. Bayor's chief source is Thomas Henderson, "Tammany Hall and the New Immigrants, 1910-1921" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1973), 24, 109, 112, 147, 230-232, 239, 247, 262-264. As it turned out, the Irish machine benefited most from the immigrants' support for the New Deal since that occurred while Irishmen were still the local Democratic party's leaders. See Kristi Andersen, The Creation of a Democratic Majority (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

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reformers, socialist party electoral successes, and the ubiquitous headache of demographic change. Steven Erie, for example, underestimates the machine's ability to battle off reformers as well as radicals in this century. He is skeptical of the importance of the machine's turn toward progressive reforms in light of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911 and the subsequent New York State Factory Investigating Commission of 1911-1915. Charles Murphy, Al Smith, Robert Wagner Sr., and others at Tammany Hall created a brand of urban liberalism that incorporated large planks of the Socialist Party and presaged the New Deal era reforms. When reform was perceived as a threat to machine rule, and when it was necessary to ensure machine survival, the machine championed social reform in New York City.[13]

Zane L. Miller has written that machine leaders recognized that, "....social, economic and political reform won votes from a broad spectrum of the urban electorate." Machine politicians were brokers, ".....offering assistance to the broadest possible con-

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[13]The two classic statements on the subject are J. Joseph Huthmacher, Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism (New York: Atheneum, 1971) and John D. Buenker, Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1973).

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stituency and garnered votes, financial support and workers for the organization in return."[14]

Party Organization

There are many kinds of party organizational structures in cities and states across the county. Each state has a different history, political culture and electoral law. In California, for instance, party organization has been weak due in part to the existence of non-partisan elections since the 1920s. In New York, on the other hand, urban machines have thrived because they were able to keep the nominating process in their hands.

Additionally, whether a party internally is organized in either a centralized or hierarchical manner, or a decentralized or stratarchical[15] fashion, has an impact on its ability to make decisions. New York City's Charter Revision of 1901, for instance, redistributed power in such a way that the Mayor lost power while the borough presidents' who were closely

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[14]Zane L. Miller, "Bosses, Machines and the Urban Political Process," ed. Scott Greer, Ethnics, Machines and the American Urban Future, 57.

[15]"Stratarchy refers to a diffusion of power among and within levels (strata) of the party organization." Alan R. Gitelson, M. Margaret Conway and Frank B. Feigert, American Political Parties: Stability and Change (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 76. See also Raymond Wolfinger, "Why Political Machines Have Not Withered Away and Other Revisionist Thoughts," Journal of Politics 34:2 (May 1972), 365-398.

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tied to the county machine, gained. The party organizations of each borough were confirmed as five county or borough systems, preventing the growth of a single integrated citywide party organization.[16]

The result was a party system characterized by struggle, bargaining and accommodation among borough power centers. The resulting borough centered politics contrasts with the ward politics of Chicago and Philadelphia and Boston. New York's county leaders had large and diverse constituencies and therefore had to respond to a wide array of forces, making parochialism less likely than in ward based systems. This system made party elites more vulnerable, visible, and responsible than were ward leaders elsewhere. The Charter Revision of 1938 confirmed the previous one by keeping parties and their leaders as chief participants in the city's political life. Sayre and Kaufman concluded that New York City's open political system encouraged "competition and bargaining from which no group is for long

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[16]"The political party," Sayre and Kaufman wrote about turn of the century New York City, was "accepted by the charter commissions as a valued, if not indispensable, institution in the governance of the city." Wallace S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), 17.

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alienated or excluded, a system inherently conservative but not incapable of innovation."[17]

The Importance of Leadership

As proponents of the elite model of machine rule, Erie and Pinderhughes minimize the importance of individual bosses' leadership qualities as a way some machines weathered hard times. A few luminaries in urban machine history are granted to be special exceptions: Richard Daley of Chicago, Carmine De Sapio of Tammany Hall and Ed Flynn of The Bronx to name three. They have been cited for their success in indefinitely postponing the transition from machine to reform rule. Daley has been credited for his astute understanding of Chicago's complex political environment, his passion for politics, and clean personal record.[18]

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[17]Ibid. The 1961 Charter Revision did severely cut the power of county party organizations by centralizing local service delivery in the Office of the Mayor. The current Charter, passed in November 1989, eviscerates the Borough President's role in governing the city, further weakening the county's power citywide.

[18]Len O'Connor, Clout: Mayor Daley and His City; Mike Royko, Boss (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

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Richard Meister[19] argues that key individual personalities of the post World War II urban machine could frequently perform miracles of organization and bring together different interest groups, including white ethnics, blacks, suburbanites, and downtown business. Their ability to contain scandal by appointing the best professionals to replace fallen ones strengthened the machine's loyalty in the eyes of the electorate. Power in the end comes to the pragmatists and realists, like Richard J. Daley and his contemporaries.

The quality of the individual leadership of the respective ethnic and racial constituencies cannot be overlooked. A party leader who was content to run the organization, with little desire for fame or fortune outside his district or county, might be better equipped to handle the role of party boss than one who has visions of grandeur in state and national politics. The strategic dimension of leadership has to be underscored. Machine leaders calculated how to maintain power in the face of demographic change and the loss of their previous ethnic base. Brooklyn county and district leader John H. McCooey offers a case in point. He nominated young Irwin Steingut to be the assemblyman from Crown Heights in 1921 with the understanding that

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[19]Richard Meister, "Ethnics, Blacks, and Machine Politics in Contemporary America," in Greer, 94.

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the Democrats could vanquish the previously dominant Republicans only with support from the recent Jewish and Italian residents of the district.

Summary

The Brooklyn experience suggests the larger literature must take into account how four factors interact: the pace of demographic change (and subsequent state legislative reapportionment), the degree of interparty and intraparty competition, the organization of local politics, and the quality of party leadership. When these conditions are analyzed it may be possible to determine whether a political succession will be promoted or resisted. I argue that just as Chicago's machine had remained intact by expanding its base of support and responding to the changing expectations of the city voter,[20] the Brooklyn machine adapted to demographic change and faced squarely intraparty and interparty competition; it managed this feat with a

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[20]Ester R. Fuchs and Robert Y. Shapiro show that the responsiveness of the Chicago machine to community service needs increased its favor with the voters. The machine was able "to define basic services as collective goods, available to all the people." As a result of the city government's good service performance record, individuals of all races and ethnic backgrounds consistently voted for machine candidates. "Government Performance as a basis for Machine Support," ed. Marilyn Gittell, State Politics and the New Federalism (New York: Longman, 1986), 78, 87.

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decentralized party structure, the assistance of responsive legislative reapportionment, and the vision of perceptive ethnic and racial group leaders. Through it all, the machine brought Jews and blacks into the party fold at similar rates of succession.

The Theoretical Framework For Effective Successions

The Brooklyn case suggests that the Democratic machine integrated the Southern and Eastern European immigrants as well as blacks into their ranks. This finding echoes such pluralist theorists as Elmer Corwell and John Allswang, who argued, "....the Irish bosses in the Northern cities were forced to politically assimilate the second-wave immigrants in order to continue to win elections," and the machine thrived and adapted to the particular compositions of their cities by responding directly to needs of the voters with jobs, public services and political representation. The key to machine success, Allswang wrote, "has been its ability to provide services that the government has been unable or unwilling to provide, and these services have been as importantly cultural as they have been economic."[21]

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[21]Elmer Cornwell, "Bosses, Machines and Ethnic Groups," Annals 353 (May 1964), 27-39; John Allswang, Bosses, Machines and Urban Voters (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1987).

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This dissertation does not address the all important question of whether the machine reduced social and economic inequalities for ethnic and racial groups. It offers no argument about whether political power at the local level was translated into economic advancement for Jews and blacks, though it appears social mobility was assisted by the prominent political position both groups achieved. While Harold X. Connelly was surely right that Brooklyn blacks faced shabbier economic conditions than Jews, it does not follow that blacks suffered an equivalent poverty in the political process. This dissertation finds that the machine was an ethnic integrator, system stabilizer and transformer rather than an obstructor and impediment to ethnic and racial aspirations.[22] This resonates with what Moynihan and Glazer wrote about ethnic succession in Manhattan:

> There is a basic reservoir of good feeling in the city that permits accommodation, change, the rise of

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[22]The seminal pluralist position on succession and ethnic and racial groups is found in Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 2-86; Fred I. Greenstein, "The Changing Pattern of Urban Party Politics," Annals 353 (May 1964), 1-13; Elmer Cornwell, "Party Absorption of Ethnic Groups: The Case of Providence, Rhode Island," Social Forces 38 (July 1961), 87-98; Edgar Litt, Beyond Pluralism: Ethnic Politics in America (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), 60-74, 155-168.

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> new groups to new positions of political power and economic well being.[23]

However, the authors of Beyond The Melting Pot did not reach the same conclusion regarding Brooklyn. There the post-World War II transition to power had still not come by 1965. Utilizing a Senior Honors Thesis by Arthur Klebanoff as their primary source, Moynihan and Glazer conclude Brooklyn's racial succession had failed:

> The remnants of the older political machinery, once broad based, continued to control Brooklyn politics as late as 1966. Jews and Italians ran the stores, owned the apartments, and filled the political clubhouses. This was to be expected. The surprise was the absence of any competing Negro or Puerto Rican organizations. Jews and Italians continued in office long after the districts they represented became predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican....The existing political organizations did not recruit in Negro and Puerto Rican areas because they had no need to. Nonvoters have never been of great interest to politicians in control of a small constituency. And no politician managed to convince Brooklyn's white party machinery that Negroes and Puerto Ricans would ever be anything but nonvoters.[24]

Contrary to their position and that of Erie and Pinderhughes that "machines did little to assimilate

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[23]Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Beyond The Melting Pot, Second Edition. (MIT Press, 1970), xxx.

[24]Ibid., xix. See the following section for a response to Klebanoff. Arthur Klebanoff, "The Demographics of Politics: Legislative Constituencies and the Borough of Brooklyn: 1950-1965." Senior Honors Thesis, (Yale University, 1969).

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blacks and Hispanics in the pre-1960 period,"[25] the Brooklyn case provides support for the pluralist view. The Brooklyn machine did "vote" Jews and blacks and did not turn its back on new immigrant arrivals.

Brooklyn As An Object Of Study

This dissertation studies the unique case of Brooklyn in the context of New York City politics. It focuses on three Central Brooklyn communities: Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Crown Heights. Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant witnessed the first shifts of political leadership from the Irish to the Jews and later from the Irish, Jews and Italians to the blacks. Crown Heights is important not only because it housed the most powerful clubhouse in Brooklyn for nearly 50 years, the Eighteenth assembly district Madison Club led by Irwin and Stanley Steingut, it also saw the blossoming of the Unity Democratic Club (UDC), the second political organization to bring blacks into district leadership positions. At UDC a progressive interracial alliance took over power from the regular, interracial clubhouse.

Jews finally gained or shared control of Brooklyn politics in 1963, which meant that it took them 43 years

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[25]Erie, 370.

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to make it to the top of the party hierarchy after Hyman Schorenstein's election as the first Brooklyn Jewish district leader in 1919. By this yardstick, Brooklyn's black politicians, having first won a district leadership in 1954 with Bertram L. Baker's triumphant machine-supported run, could not be considered behind Jewish succession until 1997. Naturally, the conditions, history, culture and immigrant experience of these two groups differed strongly. But if the Jewish experience may be used as a guide, then former Brooklyn Democratic party county leader Meade Esposito might have been right drawing a historically accurate analogy when he announced at his retirement in 1983 that "Tom Fortune's time (to be county leader) has not come yet," (Fortune was a black district leader in Brooklyn).[26]

This study will examine the dynamics of the relationships between the Irish and Jews, and then between the Irish and Jews and blacks in these neighborhoods and their political clubs. It will explore how the Irish came to transfer power to Jewish Democrats, who sought entrance into and status within the Democratic party. Demographic shifts required local Irish politicians to share or yield the fruits of power to the Jews, given the calculus of votes. In 1919, Hyman Schorenstein

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[26]"Forum of County Leaders," New York Post, 18 October 1983.

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became the first Jewish Democratic district leader. Two years later, another landmark was reached when Irwin Steingut was nominated and elected assemblyman from Crown Heights and Emmanuel Celler was elected to Congress from Hyman Schorenstein's Brownsville clubhouse. In a later turn of the demographic cycle, the same neighborhoods illustrated the relationship between the then dominant Irish and Jews and the up-and-coming blacks. As blacks became a majority of a community's population, they soon took control of the party leadership positions. In the 1950s black families branched out from Bedford Stuyvesant into Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Crown Heights and Flatbush, all of which became majority black communities by the 1960s.

Blacks are not a monolithic group. There are tensions between Afro-Caribbeans, who came to Brooklyn during and after the completion of the Panama Canal in the 1910s, and southern blacks who came to Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn in large numbers after the First and Second World Wars. To their credit, Brooklyn's black leaders kept the lid on any potential divisiveness between the two black communities.

The Brooklyn Democratic machine effectively took control through the molding of Jewish and black individuals and absorption of radical and militant political

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movements.[27] Throughout the century the Democrats were more open to appeals to race and ethnic pride than to appeals of class. In this sense, the machine was a conservative force in local political life.[28]

In his study of machine organizations, Richard Meister found that

> Ethnic politics has kept lower class ethnics from seeking radical solutions. Economic and social issues generally are subordinated to ethnic interests...these leaders called for gradual change. Ethnic politics has been a factor in keeping class politics out of America.[29]

Meister concludes:

> Through machine politics immigrants and their children were brought into mainstream America. We had integration without assimilation. The machine reached out and accepted the immigrants. It made the

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[27]See Ira Katznelson, Black Men, White Cities: Race, Politics, and Migration in the United States, 1900-1930, and Britain, 1948-1968 (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Charles Green and Basil Wilson, The Struggle For Black Empowerment In New York City: Beyond the Politics of Pigmentation, (New York: Praeger, 1989), Chapter 1, passim; Martin Shefter, "Political Incorporation and the Extrusion of the Left: The Organization of Ethnic Groups into American Politics." Studies in American Political Development, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[28]In City Trenches, (New York: Pantheon, 1981) Ira Katznelson argues that work and community were physically separated in American urban history, in effect preventing class based politics from taking root in the neighborhood setting. In the factory Americans were organized as workers by unions; at home, as ethnic and racial groups by the machine.

[29]Meister, in Greer, 111.

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> immigrant feel important; it gave those at the bottom of the ladder, jobs, and other material benefits; it coopted ethnic leaders, thereby establishing contact between the dominant society and the subgroup. As a group developed more cohesiveness, a cohesiveness partially encouraged by ethnic politics, it gained more recognition. Individuals of the group were slated for higher offices. The more power the group had, the greater the demand for a larger share of the spoils. Through this process the group as a whole and individuals in the group became part of mainstream America.[30]

Literature on Brooklyn Politics

Unfortunately, Brooklyn has been largely ignored by students of urban politics. It is especially surprising given that Brooklyn's population would make it the fourth largest city in the United States today if it were a separate jurisdiction. Many books have been written on black politics in Manhattan, but they include a page or two at best concerning Jewish and black politics in Brooklyn. Obviously, they are of limited utility.

Edwin Lewinson and Gilbert Osofsky, for example, share this bias by focusing on Harlem even though Bedford Stuyvesant eclipsed it as the largest black settlement in the city by the 1950s.[31] They recount a brief history of black politics in Brooklyn and the Bronx,

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[30]Ibid., 113.

[31]Edwin Lewinson, Black Politics in New York City (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974); Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: New York, 1890-1930, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

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merely describing the dates when blacks came to elective and appointive office. Osofsky argues, with little evidence, that black political succession was accomplished more happily in Brooklyn and the Bronx, whereas Manhattan blacks had to develop community organizations independent of the Democratic machine in order to win representation. As we will see from the case study of Bertram Baker's United Action Democratic Club, the development of a black political organization, quasi-independent of the Democratic party, was as essential to Baker's acceptance by the political machine as was his close ties to the white ethnic leadership.

Only a few scholars have studied the Brooklyn party system in any detail. For Jewish politics, Deborah Dash Moore's At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews, especially Chapter 8, "The Rise of the Jewish Democrat," is useful.[32] Moore briefly gives an account of the persistence of ethnic politics and the process of acculturation that affected the political behavior and ideology of second generation Brooklyn Jews. She describes such prominent Jewish political leaders as Hyman Schorenstein and Emmanuel Celler of Brownsville and Irwin Steingut and Nathan Sobel of Crown Heights. But

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[32]Deborah Dash Moore. At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

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she scarcely discusses the relationship that existed between the Irish machine politicians who dominated Brooklyn for nearly a century and the rising Jewish politicians who entered the party ranks in droves during the Great Depression.

Two works that do address the question of Jewish political succession are unpublished studies: Merel Pomerantz Glaubiger's "Hyman Schorenstein: A Political Biography," and Jerry Krase and Charles LaCerra's Enter The Steinguts. While they study personalities rather than process, both lay a foundation for further research.[33]

The principal work concerning Brooklyn black politics is Harold X. Connelly's A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn: Bedford Stuyvesant.[34] Overall, it shares the elite model theorists' views of the machine. Nevertheless, it remains a little recognized work of much value. Connelly's major thrust is that blacks were a powerless political force before 1940 (in fact, as powerless as

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[33]Merel J. Pomerantz Glaubiger, "Hymie Schorenstein: A Political Biography." Senior Seminar Paper, (Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1963); Jerry Krase and Charles LaCerra, Enter The Steinguts Unpublished Manuscript, 1987, Department of Sociology, (Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York), passim.

[34]Harold X. Connelly, A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn: Bedford Stuyvesant, (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

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they were in the late 1880s) and remained so after 1940; blacks were held back from achieving representation equal to their numbers by several factors, most of all, external forces, such as the Democratic party which sought to hold off black incorporation.

Connelly concludes his study with the assertion:

> ....blacks in Brooklyn or elsewhere were, relatively speaking, as deprived in 1977 as in 1900....the relative gap between black and white income, wealth, employment, educational achievement, housing, political representation, and power will persist in the foreseeable future as it has persisted historically.[35]

While Connelly makes a real contribution to the study of black politics in Brooklyn, his conclusion that blacks were politically powerless is not well supported. Connelly's research design did not consider how white regular political leaders viewed black succession and is without a comparative perspective on succession.

For instance, writing about the reapportionment of assembly districts in 1954, Connelly grudgingly gave white ethnic leaders credit for drawing a new assembly district that "demonstrated that some accommodation was inevitable; blacks could no longer be totally excluded from the political arena and its rewards."[36]

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[35]Harold X. Connelly, 227, 233.

[36]Ibid., 171.

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Yet in the same breath, partly because Connelly lacks a comparative perspective of the rate of Jewish succession, he condemned the reapportionment because it

> .....siphoned off as many of the troublesome ingredients as possible from the surrounding districts. The two districts embracing the Sixth AD contained substantial and expanding black populations, but remained sufficiently white to assure continued white leadership and assemblymen for nearly another decade.[37]

In other words, the creation of a black district, which blacks dearly wanted to assure black representation for years to come, was therefore intended to maintain white control of the surrounding districts, particularly the Seventeenth assembly district which had a majority black population in 1954. Yet by 1962, less than eight years after reapportionment, a predominately black political club led by Thomas R. Jones came into power to stay. From a comparative perspective, eight years is a short time to wait, especially given the fact that the black community first attained majority status in the district near the end of the decade.

Arthur Klebanoff shares Connelly's overall perspective and his view that gerrymandering effectively

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[37]Ibid.

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held back the growth of a more powerful black political presence in the borough.[38]

Klebanoff believed the Democratic Party in Brooklyn used reapportionment of districts as a tool for obstructing black empowerment. For instance, he agrees with Connelly that the decision in 1953 to create a new assembly district for Bertram Baker, the Sixth, was a way for the white ethnic assemblymen (Stanley Steingut, Alfred Lama, Lawrence Murphy and Max Turshen) who were fearful of the demographic shifts, "to move their districts south to whiter political territory....in the face of Negro and Puerto Rican encroachment....Demographics had certainly found its way into politics."[39]

The main criticism of Klebanoff's finding is that the supposed beneficiaries of reapportionment (the white ethnics) actually did not gain much from the gerrymander. In fact, reapportionment sacrificed some white areas to protect a few of the most powerful ethnic lead-

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[38]Klebanoff, 20. It should be said in fairness to Klebanoff and Connelly they do briefly acknowledge the problems of low black voter turnout and black leadership fragmentation when discussing the succession question. Klebanoff based his analysis of these problems on the Moynihan report and its dubious culture of poverty thesis.

[39]Ibid., 20, 45.

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ers, like Stanley Steingut and his Eighteenth assembly district Madison Club.[40]

There was ethnic as well as racial competition for positions within the party. It wasn't simply a white versus black battlefield. For instance, neighboring Brownsville, still a Jewish working class community in the late 1950s, felt the pain of abandonment as its traditional boundaries were torn apart and its political life ignored by the county leadership. The fact that it was becoming a black community certainly was a factor in its neglect but at the time these decisions were made (1953), racial transition was by no means a certainty. Brownsville was a place that many Jewish party leaders preferred to ignore. The Jewish shtetl, a community of poor folks, fundamentalist in faith, was, they hoped, a part of their past; it was better to forget it, to move up and out into the modern world of post war suburban promise.[41] There are unintended consequences and unforeseen turns in history that are not easily

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[40]Mr. Anthony Jordan, interview by author, Cassette recording, Bayville, Long Island, New York, 5 July 1989. Stanley Steingut remained in power until 1978. Sadly for students of Brooklyn history, Mr. Steingut passed away on December 15, 1989 at the age of 69.

[41]Mr. Harold Fisher, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 14 August 1985; Mr. Morty Werbel, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 2 August 1985.

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explainable or categorizeable. Demographic change and the subsequent reapportionment of districts is a far more complex process than Connelly and Klebanoff thought.

A second point of contention is the fact that the New York State Legislature drew its own new lines, with the approval of the City Council. There is evidence that their decisions were made without the consultation of local leaders. In fact, Seventeenth assembly district leader Vincent Carney states that he was left out of the process since he had just been elected leader in 1953. Moreover, Brooklyn's legislative representative to the State Legislature's Joint Committee on Reapportionment was Samuel Berman, the Seventeenth's assemblyman. It was not in his best interests nor his club's to sow the seeds of his own destruction by creating a district too weak to maintain itself (a district that would lose power to an insurgent black clubhouse a mere half dozen years later), yet that was the outcome. Berman wanted to hold on to power, not concede it for the sake of another leader, such as Stanley Steingut. In sum, the local party organizations should not reflexively be viewed as villains. In fact, local leaders who were given substantial black populations within their borders felt that they needed black votes to compensate for their shriveling white constituency.

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What options were available to a district leader in such circumstances? He could ignore the black population in the district only at the club's expense. An attempt to register and vote blacks would prove to the county and city leaders the assembly district was still a force in statewide and citywide races. If their club was viewed as a weak link in the county clubhouse chain, a large Democratic turnout might turn that perception around. Moreover, factionalization kept party leaders on their toes, since an insurgency was always a blink of an eye away.

Finally, the white ethnic leaders did not flee the county. They stayed and ran their districts as they had been run before. That meant bringing out the vote, whether the residents were black or white. And as we will see in Chapter 5, district leader Vincent Carney did bring out the black vote through his black election district captains. Voter turnout did not drop from 1956 through 1962, when whites fled a predominately black assembly district. As Steven Erie notes, nationally, black voter participation did not decrease until the 1970s.

Literature on Machine Decline in New York City

The literature on machine decline in New York City focuses almost exclusively on the demise of Tammany

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Hall. The little that has been written on Brooklyn mirrors the Tammany story. For example, Norman Adler and Blanche Blank, in their study of political clubhouses in the city wrote:

> Until 1932 Brooklyn had maintained a stable party system among its Democratic clubs. That stability had been achieved by Brooklyn Democratic leader, John H. McCooey, who single-handedly ran the entire borough. There were 60 regular clubs....Revolt was uncommon, if not rare; and whatever patronage was available was divided fairly among club and leaders.....Everything was going well for the Brooklyn Democratic clubs until (in 1932), McCooey erred seriously. Withholding his Brooklyn delegation's support for the Democratic presidential nomination of Franklin D. Roosevelt until the last minute, he found himself ignored by the party after the national elections. Despite the 320,000 vote plurality that Brooklyn gave to the Democratic national ticket, McCooey did not obtain a single federal patronage appointment during his remaining days as a county leader. At his death his once prominent organization of powerful Brooklyn clubs was besieged by insurgency and revolt.[42]

The impression one gets from such descriptions of Brooklyn politics is that the Brooklyn organization

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[42]Norman M. Adler and Blanche Davis Blank, Political Clubs in New York (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 19-20. For a refutation of this picture of political peace under McCooey's leadership see Henry Clafin Wells, "Urban Political Development and the Power of Local Groups: A Case Study of Politics in South Brooklyn, 1865-1935" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1986). The case for the machine's continued stability and power in the post-McCooey years is made by Jerry Krase and Charles LaCerra in Enter The Steinguts. Also interviews by author: Mr. Joseph Sharkey, 7, October, 1987; Mr. James Mangano, 16, September 1987; Mr. Stanley Steingut, 21, January 1986; Mr. Harold Fisher, 14, August, 1985; Mr. Abraham Beame, 27, November, 1985: all recorded on cassette tape.

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weakened in power as a result of McCooey's blunder in 1933. In reality, the New Deal reinvigorated the county organization during the Depression. Irwin Steingut worked closely with Governor Herbert H. Lehman and President Franklin D. Roosevelt to see to it that the state's New Deal legislation passed through the Legislature. Moreover, federal patronage continued to flow to the borough via its large Congressional delegation. The Brooklyn organization has always had its ups and downs. It has constantly been under attack internally from insurgents and externally from Republicans, third parties and reformers of different party affiliations. Scandals have often rocked the Brooklyn organization, but rarely disturbed its overarching power.

Reform, as Theodore Lowi has written,[43] was cyclical, unable to sustain its thrust over the long haul. Reform's limited effect did not damage the machine as much as in other metropolitan areas. If membership is an indicator, when white ethnics moved from downtown and central Brooklyn to the new suburban ring communities of Brooklyn, they built new clubhouse organizations that rivaled the earlier omnipotent Madison Club of Crown Heights and Seneca Club of Williamsburg in their heyday.

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[43]Theodore I. Lowi, At the Pleasure of the Mayor: Patronage and Power in New York City, 1896-1956. (New York: Free Press, 1964), "The Reform Cycle." passim.

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Moreover, blacks built significant organizations in the central and northern Brooklyn communities abandoned by white ethnic groups.[44]

Why Focus on Local Politics?

This study uses oral history to present what the participants in the struggle for political power had to say about their experience in the process of ethnic and racial succession at the assembly district level in the Brooklyn Democratic organization.

Alan Ware and others have argued that too little has been written on the local party organizations, especially how they have declined in the post-1964 period in cities and counties. And there have been too few research projects on the effect of organizational decline on the conduct of election politics at the local level. Behaviorism led scholars to study problems for which quantitative data could be obtained. Ware notes that,

> it cannot be denied that most of the interesting questions about the operation of party organizations

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[44]See Bertram Gross and Jeffrey Kraus, "The Party's Not Over Yet." Social Policy 12 (1982), passim. Jack Newfield, "Mayor Daley Is Alive and Well in N.Y.C." The Nation, 4 April 1987. Also Newfield and Paul Du Brul's The Permanant Government: Who Really Runs New York? (NY: Pilgrim Press, 1981) and the most recent, Wayne Barrett and Newfield, City For Sale (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

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> in America are not amenable to these techniques, as a result, little research as been undertaken on these issues....we need to learn how the competition for lesser offices has been affected by changes in electoral behavior and in modes of competition for major offices. Ticket splitting, candidate centered campaigning are features of the most visible offices, rather than less ones. How do they alter electoral competition at the lower levels?[45]

Ware urges us to examine the interaction among organizations, candidates and activists at the lower level of politics. The study of succession must begin at the local assembly district level because this is the first rung of political power for new ethnic and racial groups. Klebanoff writes:

> The smallest of the political units in New York State, the assembly district, was the first significant elective office in reach of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Its limited area enabled the development of a tightly knit political machinery to manage it, while the importance of district leaders (control of county party chairman) and elected assemblymen justified establishing such machinery.[46]

Democratic party district leaders held the chief positions of power in the borough's political hierarchy, excepting the county party leader. Control of an assembly district entitled a particular ethnic or racial group to descriptive and substantive representation.

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[45]Alan Ware, The Breakdown of the Democratic Party Organization: 1940-1980 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3, 12.

[46]Klebanoff, 24.

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How Did The Political Realm Avoid Debilitating Ethnic and Racial Strife Amidst Social Turmoil?

When the author began his research he expected to find tremendous party conflict and eventually the breakdown of the Democratic party organization during this century's first six decades. Given the social, cultural and religious animosities that existed between the Irish, Jews and blacks, it is noteworthy that political party strife instead was contained and social divisions remained outside the clubhouse door.

Ethnocentrism and racism were as pervasive in Brooklyn as in all the other great American cities. Yet they did not impede the growth of Jewish or black Democratic political power and their movement into higher level Democratic party posts. The rise of Jewish and black politicians was accomplished within a society rife with anti-semitism and racism and significant intraethnic and intraracial ideological disunity and fragmentation.

Ronald Bayor, in Neighbors in Conflict persuasively documents the friction between downwardly mobile Irish and upwardly mobile Jews in the 1940s.[47] In the previous decade Irish-Jewish tensions ran high. The

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[47](Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978).

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Catholic church was anti-communist, pro-fascist, and sought a Franco victory in Spain. It was also fearful of some New Deal policies and Jewish radicalism in the American Labor Party. The Church was worried about labor militancy, such as sit-down strikes, as well as birth control, and increasing divorce rates. The Church blamed many of these troubles on "Communism" because to the Church Communism meant change. Moreover, it meant Jewish beliefs and activity. These fears also reflected the concern among the Irish for their place in the city's power structure; they saw their power and values challenged by the ascendant Jews.

Yet, the right-wing Christian Front, led by the "radio priest" Father Coughlin, never gained great momentum in the City or Brooklyn. Economic and religious conflict did manifest itself in Christian Front activity, as Irish felt their loss of power, but the Front represented a small fraction of Irish sentiment. In fact, a popular Irish politician, District Attorney William O'Dwyer, helped put an end to the Front's harassment of synagogue goers.[48]

An explanation for relative political calm amidst social turmoil and disruption can be inferred from Amy Bridges insightful analysis of the origins of the

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[48]Paul O'Dwyer, ed., Beyond The Golden Door: William O'Dwyer. (New York: St. John's University, 1987).

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political machine.[49] Bridges has argued that party politics is distinct from other institutional behavior since it brings people together and therefore frequently mediates differences of class, race, ethnicity and culture. The political structure of liberal democracy, Bridges writes, creates places in the social structure called "voters" while in the economic sphere it creates "skill, capital, and the strike." Electoral politics is different than other forms of participation because it is about delivering majorities, an organizing task that involves incorporating new parts; it's unique because the effort to gain and maintain power is rooted in political conflict.

Likewise, in the Unity Democratic Club of Brooklyn from 1960-1964, though race pride and emergent black nationalism played an important role in the insurgent's victory over regular politicians, it quickly made peace with the reformers afterwards. And later, during the community school control controversy, the Democratic party leadership cautioned against strident militancy and favored a more calm and amicable solution. When a school busing dispute exploded into a violent situation in Canarsie in 1972, the regular Thomas Jefferson Demo-

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[49]Amy Bridges, A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

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cratic Club damped the fires of racial hatred stoked at the Italian American League and the Concerned Citizens For Canarsie. The club worked as a moderating force during an ominous situation.[50]

Why organize new ethnics, Bridges asks? The large state and city payroll was a tremendous incentive to local politicians to mobilize the electorate along nationality lines. They sorely needed reliable political majorities. However diverse the social forces were, they had to shape it into a political community. That did not come naturally, but was a product of politics. Skill at constructing a majority was the politician's role. Amy Bridges writes:

> Schematically, the appearance of machine politics in the cities of the United States may be understood as the consequence of placing social conflicts attendant on industrialization in the context of widespread suffrage....The very first generation of the industrial working class had the vote in the United States; this meant that conflicts that elsewhere were social were here political. To the strike was added the ballot; to the riot, the nominating convention; to protest, partisan insurgency; to class, party. The social transformation characteristic of early industrialization found expression not only in the factory and the neighborhood but also in electoral politics.[51]

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[50]Jonathan Rieder, Canarsie: The Italians and Jews of Brooklyn Against Liberalism (Harvard University Press, 1985).

[51]Bridges, 8.

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In summation, the machine is a special institution of community life because it avoided the pitfalls of other institutions by being able to funnel participation via universal manhood suffrage and the development of ethnic neighborhood based clubhouses which were somewhat responsive to the immigrants needs.

As Shefter, Katznelson, Naison,[52] Moore and many others have pointed out, ethnic and racial groups paid a price for joining the machine. It was a conservative institution capable at best of incremental change. The radical heritage of each group was coopted and stupefied. Yet the clash between competing ideologies infused the Democrats with social reform platforms and a tolerance for ethnic and racial difference. The party system evidently could respect notions of ethnicity and race more easily than class challenges to the market or the right to private property.[53] It expanded the definition of liberal democracy to include waves of immigrants in a constitutional system and an agreed upon set of rules for political discourse.

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[52]Mark Naison, Communists in Harlem During the Depression, (New York: Grove Press, 1983).

[53]Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), Chapter 1, "The Concept of a Liberal Society," passim. Hartz wrote, "The American Liberal creed is a submerged faith...." 305.

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A final note. Some Brooklyn institutions failed to survive century long ethnic and racial succession. The county wide newspaper, The Brooklyn Eagle, and the famous baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, both failed to survive during the years under study. Raymond Schroth, in his book, The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper, 1841-1955 argued that the Eagle was unable to adjust to the rise of Jews and Italians, as well as black and Puerto Ricans. When the paper went under in 1957, African-Americans comprised only 11.8% of the borough's population. The Eagle, whose circulation was 125,339 in 1953 appealed to Brooklyn's old central and northern neighborhoods that were losing population to outlying communities. The Eagle was at heart a WASP institution.[54]

The Brooklyn Dodgers are another case in point, moving to Los Angeles in 1957. Walter O'Malley, the Dodgers' owner, cited as one of several reasons for fleeing the upheaval of demographic change in the 1950s and 1960s, namely the exodus of whites to the suburbs (from 1950 to 1960, 476,094 whites left Brooklyn while 93,091 non-whites migrated, into the borough). "The

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[54]Raymond Schroth, The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper, 1841-1955 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974). The Brooklyn Citizen went under in 1947 (it began in 1886). The Eagle purchased the failing The Brooklyn Times Union in 1936.

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Dodgers were a commercial enterprise whose market was in the midst of upheaval," wrote Neil J. Sullivan. Rapid demographic change, and the perception among some business leaders that Brooklyn was a community in decline were enough for them to move their institutions elsewhere.[55]

How Successful Was The Post-1964 Black Succession?

This study hoped to shed some light on why the City's minority population, at or near majority proportions in the late 1980s, had few blacks in top governmental and party leadership positions. As the victory of Mayor David Dinkins in November 1989 illustrates, the author found a strong tradition of black participation in machine politics. And as Mark Naison[56] learned while telling the story of the Communist Party in Harlem during the Great Depression, Harlem's urban machine had great staying power and more appeal than the most popular political alternatives of the day: Communism and Black Nationalism. Until the mid-

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[55]Neil J. Sullivan, The Dodgers Move West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 51-53. Peter Golenbock, Bums: An Oral History of the Brooklyn Dodgers (New York: Pocket Books, 1984). For a popular history of the decline of early twentieth century Brooklyn see Elliot Willensky's, When Brooklyn Was The World, 1920-1957 (New York: Harmony Books, 1986).

[56]Ibid.

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dle 1960s, the majority of Jews and blacks participating in electoral politics opted for machine politics and strengthened, not undermined, the regular party organizations.

It is true that blacks and other minorities could not win citywide offices during the time period of this study. The building blocks for future political succession at the higher levels of the party organization were nevertheless important. The early years of ethnic and racial group participation within the Democratic party offered the hope for greater future rewards. Jewish Democrats won their first district leadership in 1919 and worked their way up the party ladder to capture borough-wide power in 1963, and city-wide power in 1973, with the elections of the Madison Club's Stanley Steingut and Abraham Beame to the county leadership and the Mayoralty, respectively. Black leadership of Brooklyn is perhaps a decade away, but blacks did win citywide leadership in 1989 when Harlem machine politician David Dinkins won election as New York City's first black Mayor.

The machine did begin to weaken in the post-1964 period, just as blacks came to control some district leaderships. Under the strain of party reform, social protest movements, fiscal crisis, public employee unionization, and the individual candidate centered

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campaigns the role of the urban party organization changed.[57] But until the scandals of 1986, it could be argued that the decade-long boom after the fiscal crisis once again strengthened machines in New York's four outer boroughs.

Methodology

> Never write down anything when you can say it; never say anything when you can nod your head.[58]

This dissertation relied on in-depth interviews with key individuals. One hundred former members of four political clubhouses that witnessed the transition from Irish to Jewish control, and later, the transition from Irish/Jewish to black control of Democratic district leaderships, were interviewed. The interviewees were mostly club members, more often than not the district leaders and the district captains or precinct workers. It was their unique, piercing and often controversial perspective that was captured. Politicians outside the Democratic machine, such as reformers, radicals, Republican party officials and community activists from

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[57]A brief discussion will follow in Chapter 7.

[58]Martin Lomasney, Boston's political leader during the early decades of the century, quoted in Zane L. Miller, "Bosses, Machines and the Urban Political Process," in Greer, 74.

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voluntary associations were also interviewed. These people were selected on a "one contact leads to another contact" basis (i.e., the snowball method). In the main, I was fortunate: most individuals were willing to articulate their experiences in Brooklyn politics. I found oral history most useful with retired political leaders. Contemporary politicians, for instance, judges still on the bench, were reluctant to speak freely, fearing possible damage to their still active careers.

Oral history methodology requires a close examination of personal documents where they exist, such as photographs, memoirs, letters, newsletters, and diaries. There are a few valuable oral history collections on Brooklyn political history. Columbia University's Oral History Research Office houses a large collection of interviews with former Brooklyn politicians. For example, Arthur Levitt, Sr, former Brooklyn politician and Comptroller for the State of New York is a subject of the Oral History Project, as are former Mayor William O'Dwyer, and his brother Paul, the former City Council President; together their collection contains at least ten volumes. Another Oral History collection of Former Members of Congress is located in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Represented there are former Brooklyn Congresspersons Abraham Multer, Emanuel Celler, and Edna Kelly. The New York State Archives in Albany

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has scrapbooks belonging to former Assembly Speaker, Majority and Minority Leader from Brooklyn, Irwin Steingut. Unfortunately, Steingut evidently left few other papers.

Additional analysis was made of secondary sources including daily newspapers, magazines, journal articles, federal and state censuses, reapportionment maps, twentieth century histories of the New York City and the Brooklyn Democratic party, biographies, and autobiographies.

The study of Brooklyn politics is limited by the lack of meaningful papers, diaries, memoirs, and letters. This was expected, as very few career politicians of this century, particularly party bosses, left such documentation. As Professor Ivan D. Steen has commented about the study of party bosses:

> Their most serious business was and is most likely conducted in person or perhaps by telephone, rather than in writing. And they were unlikely to have had the time or inclination to keep diaries. There are, to be sure many other manuscripts and print sources that are of value including newspapers, speeches, court proceedings, committee reports and the minute books of several agencies....But the most useful way to gain insight into the personalities and events of political history, especially on the local level is through oral history....oral history interviews are essential for writing recent political history.[59]

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[59]Ivan D. Steen's, review of Don't Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence Pittsburgh's Renaissance Mayor, by Michael P. Weber, in The Oral History Review vol. 17, no. 1. (Spring 1989): 183.

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Oral history is instructive for local political history because, as Herbert Gutman argued, immigrants must be understood in terms of how they dealt with large social forces, making deliberate choices among perceived options. Though the immigrant's choice might be limited, the immigrant was never reduced to being merely a passive victim.[60]

Moreover, oral history makes it possible to understand how the lives of people intersect with the history of their society. As C. Wright Mills eloquently wrote in The Sociological Imagination:

> Social science is the study of biography, history and of the problems of their intersection within the social structure. To study these problems, to realize the human variety, requires that our work be continuously and closely related to the level of historical reality--and to the meanings of this reality for individual men and women.[61]

By utilizing qualitative methods one can examine how the world is experienced by others. It reveals their internal ideas, feelings and motives, moral struggles and popular traditions, successes and failures, frustrations and hopes, love and aspirations, discontent and

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[60]Herbert Gutman, "Labor History and the Sartre Question," Humanities 1 (September/October 1980), 1982), 189.

[61]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 134.

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joy. It uncovers how people are and how they themselves define the world.

Social historians have found oral history and non-literary communication to be indispensable tools for studying middle and working class people raised in an oral, rather than a written cultural milieu.[62]

The Limits of Oral History Methodology

Behaviorism's critique of qualitative methodology suggests limitations to the oral historian's practice. In her well known essay on the subject, Louise Tilly highlights four shortcomings.[63]

By focusing on individual lives, personal documents and micro-description, both theory and analysis can be neglected. The emphasis on extreme detail often does not lend itself to representativeness, generalization and explanation. Oral history also tends to challenge the rationality of history, "which may be fragmentary, hazardous and diverse, but it exists." Third, social scientists "should focus on social relationships

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[62]Rhys Isaac "Preacher and Patriot: Popular Culture and the Revolution in Virginia", in Alfred A. Young ed., The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism (Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), passim.

[63]Louise Tilly, "People's History and Social Science History," The International Journal of Oral History vol. 6, no. 1 (February 1985), 6-16.

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rather than psychological states." Finally, questions asked by qualitative researchers too often are unfocused, allowing too many factors to enter the research scene in uncontrollable ways.

In response to Tilly and the quantitative school of inquiry, oral historians insist that analysis and explanation need not suffer from reliance on individual life accounts. Analytical categories can and do frequently grow out of people's lived experiences. Moreover, structural characteristics do appear through a series of case studies. Oral historians can start out with theoretical questions and use biographies in controlled and indirect ways to study social relationships and social structure. Interviewees do not set the terms of the problem and their words are not viewed as the embodiment of unmediated authenticity. Qualitative researchers, do however recognize individual feelings, motivation, and political consciousness in moving towards a sociological conceptualization of social relationships as reflected in behavior.

Concerning the issue of rationality, some oral history, including this work, can appear raw or rough around the edges. For example, I have choosen to keep the interviewee's exact language as much as possible, warts and all. By doing so, I've attempted to capture the subtlety, ambiguity and non-rationality of actual

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life experience. It is tempting to try to make stories more coherent or rational. I have resisted efforts to make interviewees sound more sharply motivated or precise. People act in a more complex and imperfect way than social scientists prefer, with neat boundaries and easily packaged results.

This perspective addresses Tilly's comment that social scientists should not be interested in "psychological states." Both social relationships and psychological states are intimately bound up with each other. Analysis can't be confined to measure the exterior or only quantifiable events. The interior, the psychic and the spiritual, are crucial to understanding social phenomena. Luisa Passeriri believes social science must be daring to discuss strange events: "the impalatable, ineffable and unknowable."[64] She admits, however, in oral history research:

> The procedure is lacunal, the instruments of analysis are yet tentative, the understanding is merely confused tension, a desire. We need to find newer and larger forms of expression in the symbolic sphere of symbols, which can be shared or understood by others, to trace their roots in the connection between the present and the past.[65]

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[64]Luisa Passeriri, "Response To Tilly," The International Journal of Oral History vol. 6, no. 1. (February 1985), 25.

[65]Ibid.,

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While questions asked of informants can be kept uniform to ensure the research process is controlled, oral historians themselves have genuine concerns about scholarship that relies heavily upon oral attestation. We know that oral testimony can be as misleading as written words. Human beings are not faultless recording machines. People's accounts can be several steps removed from what actually happened. Moreover, impressions have their own biases; all memory is selective and fallible. The potential for fabrication, interpretation, prejudice and exaggeration are always present.

It is the researcher's burden to make sense of oral history and not merely accept the subject's words as truth. A scholar must remember that nothing recounted can be cavalierly dismissed nor uncritically embraced. All stories have to be treated with caution because lies, unconscious distortions and honest mistakes are a part of biographical accounts.

Oral history has to be approached with open mindedness and skepticism. While the researcher is eager to learn from his informants he has to be suspicious of what seems most obvious. He must continually ask: Why is he telling me this? What special interest does he or she have in this subject? What is their bias? Are they unwittingly shading the truth to advance themselves? To protect others? The good researcher always looks for

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contradictions and inconsistencies, which once discovered is fertile ground for further inquiry. Moreover, he must consider how his questions, his body language, and his own ethnic and racial background influence responses to his questions.

Independent sources of information, such as newspapers stories, journal articles and books, and most of all accounts of other witnesses, were sought to corroborate oral evidence. As Allan Lichtman has written, "The marshalling of multiple sources is a powerful technique for reliably reconstructing the past."[66] Exploiting a variety of source materials is always the best way to support one's oral history findings. When possible, I made every attempt to do so.

It is my belief that oral history represents the best tool for capturing the human struggle of political life, intimate views of political relationships and stages and periods in the process of individual and political development. While it is true that oral history requires the scholar to empathize and identify with his subject, this should not imply that he accepts their perceptions of their world uncritically. Still the method does hold in esteem how people view their life

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[66]Allan J. Lichtman, Your Family History: How To Use Oral History, Personal Family Archives, and Public Documents To Discover Your Heritage (Vintage, 1978), 82.

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and times, and asks the researcher to inject less of his own perception of it. The people's views, critically assessed, provide the greatest understanding of history.[67]

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 examines the history of Brooklyn Jewish demography, political independence, party leadership and Irish-Jewish post succession relations. Chapter 3 presents case studies of the Irish-Jewish political succession in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brownsville and Crown Heights. Chapter 4 tells the story of the first black political succession in the Brooklyn Democratic party under Bertram L. Baker in the Bedford Stuyvesant community, while Chapter 5 analyzes the second black succession under the leadership of the Unity Democratic Club of Crown Heights. Chapter 6 looks at the dissolution of the interracial Unity Democratic Club during the

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[67]Three books on qualitative methodology have been particularly helpful to me: Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor's A Introduction to Qualitative Methods: A Phenominological Approach To The Social Sciences (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1975); Willa K. Baum's Oral History For The Local Historical Society Second Edition, Revised. (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1971); and Ronald J. Grele, ed., Envelopes of Sound: Six Practitioners Discuss the Method, Theory and Practice of Oral History and Oral Testimony (Chicago: Precedent Publishing Company, 1975).

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early 1960s. Finally, in Chapter 7 a comparison of Jewish and black party succession is made, raising some important questions for the study of the urban political machine and ethnic and racial group succession.

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CHAPTER 2

THE TRANSITION FROM IRISH TO JEWISH POLITICAL CONTROL: THE CONDITIONS FOR A PROSPEROUS SUCCESSION

Introduction

This chapter examines the importance of demographic change, the structure of the local party organization, interparty and intraparty competition, and the character of political interaction amongst the Irish and Jews during the early decades of the century. Finally, the phenomenon of ethnic political harmony amidst social conflict is explored.

Ethnic Demography

> It must be completely unlike any other American city, in a way, almost a freak.
>
> It is indeed, Skeffington said, but a grand freak. Mostly because of the way it grew. It changed overnight, you know. A hundred years ago the loyal sons and daughters of the first white inhabitants went to bed one lovely evening, and by the time they woke up and rubbed their eyes, their charming old city was swollen to three times its size. The savages had arrived. Not the Indians; far worse. It was the Irish. They arrived and they had wanted in. Even worse than that, they got in....Moreover, it's not

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> quite over yet, though we're in the last stages now. For some time something new has been on the horizon: namely the Italians.[1]

There are several reasons why the Irish and Jews enjoyed cordial political relations, in spite of occasional social conflict. The first concerns the sheer magnitude of demographic change after 1900. The geographical concentration of ethnic and racial groups, or the percentage they constitute within a neighborhood, has a significant impact on political behavior.[2]

Early Demographic History of Brooklyn

The first Jewish settlers of Brooklyn came from Western Europe, primarily Alsace and Bavaria, and organized small communities in the Borough Hall and Williamsburg areas beginning in the early 1850s. This first wave of Jewish settlers was tiny in comparison to the mass of Eastern Europeans who arrived in New York City

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[1]Edwin O'Connor, The Last Hurrah (New York: Little, Brown, 1956), 66.

[2]For an analysis of demography in the study of political succession in Chicago see Chapter 4, "Hierarchy and Political Ethnicity," Diane Pinderhughes, Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory (University of Illinois Press, 1987). Pinderhughes examines the experience of the Irish, Blacks, Poles and Italians of Chicago in the first half of the century.

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during the period of 1881-1924. There were only two hundred Jews in Brooklyn in 1856. By 1925 that figure soared to 800,000.[3]

The greatest concentration of Jews in nineteenth century New York City was found in Manhattan. However, by 1923, Brooklyn had surpassed Manhattan and had become home to the largest number of Jews in the city. The growth of Jewish Brooklyn proceeded at a steady pace in the 1900-1925 period buoyed by the completion of the Williamsburg Bridge on December 19, 1903 and the Manhattan Bridge on December 31, 1909. Public transportation improvements, such as the extension of the elevated Fulton Street line in 1889 into central Brooklyn, as well as the erection of the Brooklyn Mobile Transit's Broadway line (which traveled from the Lower East Side over the Williamsburg Bridge into the greater Williamsburg area) and the continuance of the Independent Rapid Transit through Crown Heights, Brownsville and East New York in 1920-22, all made Brooklyn's growing neighborhoods accessible to Manhattan.[4]

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[3]Samuel Abelow, History of Brooklyn Jewry (Brooklyn, New York: Scheba Publishing Company, 1936), 12-13.

[4]In 1923, the Brooklyn Jewish population of 740,000 exceeded Manhattan's by 34,000. The total Jewish population of the city was now 1,882,000 up from 598,000 in 1900. C. Morris Horowitz and Lawrence J. Kaplan, The Estimated Jewish Population of the New York Area 1900-1975 (New York: Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, 1959), 22.

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In 1900, household heads of Irish or German parentage predominated in Brooklyn, as in the city as a whole. Irish and German stock outnumbered those of third generation or later American stock. In 1890, the Irish probably accounted for one third of the population of the city. However, with the new wave of European immigration the Irish percentage of the city's population declined. By 1900 their numbers added up to only one fifth. A major shift was well underway. Jews and Italians were pouring into the city in the late 1800s and by 1910 their numbers were felt city-wide.[5]

From 7 percent of the city's total in 1900, Jews soared to 18 percent in 1920; the Italians, similarly, grew from 6 percent in 1900 to 14 percent in 1920. Within the brief span of less than a generation the ethnic composition of the city changed radically. By 1923, persons of Jewish and Italian descent had become together numerically superior to those of Irish and German background.

In Brooklyn, the demographic story was the same. Jews were only 13 percent of the borough's population in

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[5]Ira Rosenwaike, Population History of New York City (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 109-111;Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond The Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City, Second Edition, Revised., (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), 262, 317-319.

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1900; 51.9% of the borough was Protestant and 34.3% were Roman Catholic. The percentage of Jews in Brooklyn shot up to 23.8% by 1910, and 30% by 1920. At the same time, Protestants declined steeply to 35.1% while Roman Catholics stayed at the same 33.4%[6]

While Jews increased most rapidly, it is important to keep in mind that the borough's religious groups were about equally divided by 1920. The Irish foreign born population did increase slowly in Brooklyn in these early decades of the century but the huge influx of Jews and Italians simply overtook them in some assembly districts. This mass immigration caused many Irish families to emigrate to Brooklyn's newly developed ring of communities, such as Marine Park, Bay Ridge, Gerritsen Beach and South Flatbush. Jews and Italians replaced Irish, German and old stock American residents of Brownsville, Williamsburg, Crown Heights and North and East Flatbush, and also moved with these groups to the newer Brooklyn suburban-like communities.

Even in these more suburban areas, Jewish population increases kept pace with the Irish. From 1920 to 1930, the predominantly middle class Irish and Protestant area of Flatbush registered increases of

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[6]Walter Laidlaw, ed., Population of the City of New York, 1890-1930 (New York: Cities Census Committee, Inc., 1932), 275.

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nearly 250 percent in its Jewish population. Other neighborhoods shared this fast paced development: Manhattan Beach, South Flatbush, Midwood, Sheepshead Bay, Coney Island. All exploded upon the Jewish map of Brooklyn, with nearly 700 percent increases in Jewish population.[7]

By 1930 Brooklyn's central city population began to slip, as the exodus of white middle class Irish and Germans to Queens and neighboring suburbs continued. The move was made easier by the affordability of the automobile and the extensive system of parkways built by New York's master builder, Robert Moses beginning in the early 1930s.[8] The Irish and Germans were replaced by Jews and Italians in central Brooklyn. The growth of Jewish Brooklyn so overwhelmed the Irish in certain neighborhoods that Irish party leaders were left with little choice but to seek accommodation with Jewish organizational efforts within the Democratic party.

Brownsville

[7]Figures are from Deborah Dash Moore, At Home in America: Second Generation Jews in New York City (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 24; The WPA Guide To New York City: The Federal Writers' Project Guide To 1930s New York (Random House, 1928), 433.

[8]Robert Caro, The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), Chapter 17, "The Mother of Accommodation."

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Brownsville was Brooklyn's largest Jewish neighborhood during the early decades of this century. It was also the political jurisdiction where the first Jewish Democratic party district leader, Hyman Schorenstein, took power. Demography played a major role in bringing about the transference of power from the Irish to the Jews in Brownsville. At the end of the nineteenth century Brownsville was one of four wards in 1890 where over half of Brooklyn's Russian Jews were concentrated. The others were the Sixteenth and Fourteenth, (Williamsburg), and the Eighth, (Sunset Park). There were thirty two wards in all of Brooklyn until 1895 when the wards were subsumed under the new assembly district system.[9] (See Appendix A. for a map of Brooklyn Wards, a closeup of Ward Twenty Six and a map of the City of Brooklyn and neighboring jurisdictions).

Except for a small section, Brownsville was not a Jewish area in 1890. It was part of Ward Twenty Six, which embraced the villages of New Lots, East New York and Cypress Hills. Only 3,000 of its 29,505 inhabitants were natives of Russia and Poland. The Jews represented "a small deserted corner surrounded by a large Christian community."[10] While their numbers were small, Jews did

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[9]Thomas Kessner, The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York, 1880-1915 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 210.

[10]Alter F. Landesman, Brownsville: The Birth, Development and Passing of a Jewish Community in New

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not generally encounter much resentment from Christian communities in Brooklyn. However, as their numbers burgeoned troubles arose.

Between 1890 and 1900 the total population of Ward Twenty Six doubled to 66,086 while the Jews quintupled from 3000 to 15,000. At this point the increasing numbers of Jews in this predominantly Irish and German community created ethnic tension. Jacob Cohen, one of Brownsville's first settlers, observed it was "when many more Jewish families came into the community that the Christian elements resented it. The newcomers assumed the role of proprietorship by taking possession of the land, and the result, at times, was battles, and even bloodshed."[11]

Most accounts of the large Jewish migration into Brooklyn communities such as Williamsburg echo the Brownsville experience. At times problems of harassment became so serious that mass meetings were held to arouse public support and Jewish Protective Associations were formed. The cooperation of city officials was enlisted in suppressing any violence or disturbances against Jews. The Hebrew American League of Brooklyn, founded in 1899 in Upper Williamsburg, part of the Sixth assembly

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York (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 95-98.

[11]Ibid., 58.

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district, lists as one of its accomplishments the fact that it, "obtained 68 convictions for assaults on Hebrews," in 1900.[12]

Jewish Brownsville grew steadily in the 1900-1910 period, assisted by major public improvements. The construction of the Williamsburg Bridge displaced 10,000 Jewish residents living on the Lower East Side; many of whom subsequently moved to Brooklyn. Largely fueled by the influx of East European Jews Brownsville's population increased from its 66,086 in 1900, to 146,813 by 1910.

In 1915, two thirds of Brownsville's population of 177,605 were Jewish. Twenty five years after their first settlement, Jews had become the great majority in Brownsville. A Jewish Democratic district leader, however, was still several years away.

Crown Heights

When many Jewish families of Brownsville and Williamsburg became more well-off they departed and headed

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[12]American Jewish Yearbook, (Philadelphia, 1900), 56. Rudolph Glanz may help to explain why so few cases of Irish-Jewish strife has been documented. "Early anti-semitic incidents were not emphasized because of fear such matters in public could throw unfavorable light on the relations of ethnic groups to one another and make immigration more difficult." Rudolph Glanz, Jew and Irish: Historic Group Relations and Immigration (New York: Waldon Press, Inc., 1966), 47.

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for neighboring Crown Heights. Located in the heart of Brooklyn, Crown Heights, is one of the more beautiful residential areas of the borough. Eastern Parkway, Crown Heights' main thoroughfare, was considered a model of urban design, having been planned as an offshoot from Prospect Park by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the great designers of Central Park in Manhattan and Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

At the turn of the century the community was a core of imposing brownstones which extended along both sides of Eastern Parkway for five blocks on either side. Crown Heights was initially an upper crust Irish, German and Anglo community. In 1910 of the 20,287 foreign born, 4,986 (24.5%) were Irish, 4,131 (20.4% German, 2,248 (11.0%) British and 1,364 (6.7%) were Swedish. A mere 1,064 or 5.2% were Russian, while 2,290 (11.2%) were Italian born. In only twenty years, the Russian foreign born population shot up to 18,274 or 53.6% of the foreign born; with another 13% being Polish, Austrian and Hungarian Jews. The Irish born was down to 2,388 or 7.0% of the foreign born.[13]

By 1923, more than 40 percent of the community was

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[13]Jerry Krase and Charles La Cerra, Enter The Steinguts, "Chapter 2, "John H. McCooey and the Origins of the Madison Club," passim. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1987, Department of Sociology, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York).

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Jewish. And between 1923 to 1930 the Jewish population doubled, from 26,000 to 54,000. Their succession in Crown Heights was a testament to Jewish upward mobility in New York City before the Depression. A 1942 study of Brooklyn neighborhoods described Crown Heights as " a fine, middle class residential area which is predominantly Jewish."[14]One factor that made Crown Heights' growth possible was the completion of the Independent Rapid Transit (IRT) line, underneath Eastern Parkway, in 1923, providing access to and from Manhattan. During and after construction of the IRT line, large modern apartment buildings were constructed along Eastern Parkway, and on some surrounding streets and avenues. One such residence was Thirty-Five Eastern Parkway, the third largest apartment building in the nation when completed in 1930. The new apartment buildings, with the latest conveniences, contrasted sharply with the tenements of working class Brownsville, Williamsburg, and the Lower East Side.[15]

The new Jewish middle class that moved to Crown

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[14]Herbert J. Ballon Brooklyn's Neighborhoods (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Council of Social Planning, 1942), 9.

[15]The Community Council of Greater New York, Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources vol. 2. New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, September, 1959. Two Volumes (New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, September, 1959), 32.

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Heights from the Lower East Side and Brooklyn neighborhoods belonged to the second generation of New York Jews. They acquired an American consciousness through their childhood experience. Yet even as they moved to middle class communities Jews still lived in sections of the city that were segregated from the non-Jewish population. As they migrated, residential concentration increased. Deborah Dash Moore writes, "In 1920, only 54 percent of New York's Jews lived in neighborhoods at least 40 percent Jewish in population. By 1925 the percentage jumped to 64 percent, and at the end of the decade, 72 percent of Jewish New Yorkers resided in sections with a critical mass of Jews."[16]

Crown Heights evolved from a Yankee, Irish and German preserve before 1910 to a mostly Jewish and Italian community by the 1930s. One who witnessed the radical demographic change in the twenties, former Madison Club election district captain Nathan Sobel explained:

> The Irish evaporated. They just didn't move away, they just didn't exist anymore, and I don't know why. But there were just fewer and fewer or them. The only Irish we had was around St. Marks Avenue, Bergen Street, Dean Street and Brooklyn Avenue.[17]

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[16]Moore, 36-42.

[17]Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 19 August 1987.

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Anthony Jordan recalled when he grew up in the area most of the streets were empty lots. "Apartment buildings were built where those empty lots were, from Lefferts Avenue to Empire Boulevard, all over the district. And that became all Jewish."[18] Abraham Beame, then an election district captain in Crown Heights, recalls coming to Crown Heights in 1928 and finding, "an overwhelming Jewish area with small pockets of Irish and Italians."[19] Jews found little resistance from the Irish because they had moved away as the Jews moved in. They left Eighteenth assembly district and headed south and east.

Jordan adds,

> The Irish all moved out and went into Flatbush, the Marine Park (just being built then) or lower Flatbush. That was the first migration to Valley Stream and Rockville Center on Long Island by the Irish. The early breakdown in the district was 65 percent Irish-German, and 25 percent Jewish. Jews were coming out of the Brownsville ghetto to Crown Heights which was supposed to be more exclusive....The Irish then also moved south of Crown Heights to an area developed by Freddie Trump around Holy Cross Cemetery. They had two family brick houses with the garage in front. They got into the Little Flower Parish. In 1932 when Roosevelt was elected, that's when these changes had already occurred.[20]

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[18]Mr. Anthony Jordan, interview with author, Cassette recording, Bayville, Long Island, New York, 19 March 1989.

[19]Mr. Abraham Beame, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 13 May 1986.

[20]Mr. Anthony Jordan, interview by author.

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Brooklyn's Decentralized Party Structure

Political party structure can assist or obstruct the process of ethnic succession. Party organizations in the United States differ in their distribution of power, authority and importance. In the New York City Democratic party organization power is diffused, therefore it is possible for ascendant ethnic groups to achieve a modicum of success soon after they participate in clubhouse politics.

Power in the New York City party system since the consolidation of 1898 is fragmented amongst the five boroughs or counties. A powerful Board of Estimate gives each county a decisive hand in running the city.[21] New York State's party structure is sufficiently decentralized so as to grant each county a measure of control over their political affairs. The Progressive era reforms, such as at-large elections and strong-mayoral systems, intended to weaken the power of county bosses and assembly district leaders (and reduce the influence of immigrants) by centralizing power in the executive were only partly successful. They were unable to remove

[21]The Board of Estimate was stripped of its authority by the new City Charter, passed in November 1989.

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patronage from locally based partisan politicos.

In cities like New York where strong county machines were in place, reformers had only partial success in their bid to disable the machine organization. Robert Caro describes how New York's preeminent power broker, Robert Moses, while working in the New York Bureau of Municipal Research (a reform organization which sought to apply the principles of efficiency to municipal management), proposed a system where all municipal employees would be closely observed at work by efficiency experts. Each employee was to be mathematically rated for their performance. Moses's scheme was resoundingly defeated by Tammany Hall and the 50,000 city employees who refused to go along with the system. They objected to these new plans on the grounds that it tried to reduce human tasks to machinelike precision, in addition to being arbitrary.[22]

In New York City's Democratic party there are five county organizations, (the five counties of New York City are Richmond, i.e., Staten Island; New York, i.e., Manhattan; Queens; Kings, i.e., Brooklyn and The Bronx). Each borough contains a particular number of assembly districts, which are created out of State Senate districts by the State Legislature. Each assembly district

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[22]Caro, Chapter 5, "Age of Optimism," passim.

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has its own Democratic regular party organization or clubhouse. These party organizations seek to win elections, compete with one another for patronage, and try to influence the endorsement of candidates at all levels of the party.

At the lowest level of the party organization are the election districts and their leaders, the election district captain. The election district captains generally, together constitute that district's county committee, within the boundaries of one assembly district. The county committee nominates the assembly district leader, who in turn usually recruits loyal followers to serve as election district captains, making each highly dependent upon one another.

Within New York's Democratic party, especially in the early part of the century, the assembly district leader had great power. Not more than the county leader, who stood at the top of the pyramid of county power, but depending on the strength of the vote in the district, his power could be sizable. Before the 1970s the assembly district leader, not the elected officials, of a political domain were the community's power brokers. Local party leaders such as the assembly district leader made or broke the elected officials in their area. There were many devices, such as slate voting, to discipline disloyal members.

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What made the assembly district leaders so powerful was the local party organizations or clubhouses they formed and held together. These clubs constituted the party's electoral building blocks. On the lowest party level, election district leaders, called captains kept in close contact with their constituents year round and tried to assist them with whatever problems arose (if they did their job properly). In return for servicing the community, individually or collectively, residents were urged to display their gratefulness on election day by supporting the assembly district leader's candidates for office. The greater vote a captain produced, the greater the recognition he would likely receive from the assembly district leader.

High vote totals for an assembly district often meant the assembly district leader would receive the attention of city, state and national leaders.[23] Although some have argued that party leaders frequently find it better suits their interest not to bring out a large vote, only in rare cases have I found that to be the case.[24] Some captains cared little and produced the

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[23]FDR's election years visits to Hyman Schorenstein's home in Brownsville are legendary amongst old time Brownsville residents.

[24]Arthur Bramwell, Bedford Stuyvesant's long time Republican district leader, recounts how Richard Nixon's campaign strategists asked him not to seek a black vote for Nixon in 1968 and 1972. Otherwise, attempts to hold back the vote were not uncovered by this researcher. Unethical means of getting out the

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same. Many fell in the middle of the pack while a dozen or so excelled. Within clubs some captains competed with one another; sometimes for a clubhouse prize. Power (usually in the form of patronage) came to those who brought out the largest vote, although the clubhouse system favored men with a college education and especially lawyers. Nomination for judgeships was one of the top prize coveted by clubhouse lawyers. Thanks to the machine's tight control of the local judiciary, sufficient patronage was available to keep the captains happy;particularly so throughout the long night of Republican and reform administrations.

Assembly district leaders were only as strong as their clubs. A well organized and operated club would yield electoral victories. Recognition from the county leader usually came in the form of more patronage. Patronage means jobs at all levels of government for dedicated party workers from the district clubhouse. And where there were electoral offices that covered several assembly districts in range such as municipal, county and state supreme court judgeships, congressman,

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vote however were found. Hyman Schorenstein had a flair for voting the dead and double voting. Murray Feiden paid some of his block captains to get out the vote in their apartment buildings. Dummy candidates were nominated on third parties to split the votes of machine challengers. Only a rare instance required a district leader not to bring out a meaningful vote.

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state senator and alderman (i.e., city councilman, the most powerful district leader was able to parley his voting strength into choosing these more highly sought after patronage positions. In addition, quality municipal services to the community, such as police, fire, and sanitation would stand a better chance of remaining that way if the district organization continued to turn in large Democratic party pluralities.

Legislative Reapportionment

The possibility that legislative reapportionment could have been used by the Brooklyn Irish leadership as a tool for the exclusion of Jewish participation is nil. There was no reapportionment of districts from 1917 through 1944.[25]

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[25]In 1907 the Legislature passed a reapportionment act increasing the number of Senate districts to fifty one (from fifty). A re-districting act passed in 1916 was declared unconstitutional but a similar measure, which continued the membership of the Senate at fifty one, passed in 1917. All efforts to enact reapportionment legislation after that date failed until 1943 when the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a proposal that increased the number of districts and the membership of the Senate to fifty six. The first Senate under this new law was chosen at the 1944 general election. The New York Red Book, Seventy-Sixth Edition, 1967-1968 (Albany, New York: Williams Press, Inc., Publishers, 1968).

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InterParty and Intraparty Competition and Political Independence Assists Ethnic Succession

Demographic change and party structure by themselves do not account for the efficacious political incorporation of Jews into the Brooklyn Democratic Party. The independence of the Jewish vote and the high level of partisan competition for the ethnic vote also prompted party stabilization amidst the flux of a changing environment.

Jewish Support For The GOP

Long before they made their way into the Democratic party Jews identified with the Republicans: the party which held their loyalty in the nineteenth century. At the end of the Civil War there were about 200,000 Jews in the United States, mostly from Germany and Western Europe. The vast majority supported the Republican Party. In fact, outside the South, few Jews became Democrats. The Republican Presidents wooed the German Jewish vote by appointing eminent German Jews to high government offices. Yet the most important reason for Jewish support of Republicans was the party's readiness to address the problems of Jews in Eastern Europe.[26]

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[26]Life in Czarist Russia and Eastern Europe was miserable for Jews. They were confined to the Pale of Settlement since Catherine the Great. Their small towns or "shtetls" were congested, wretched slums which

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As the flow of Eastern European Jews to the United States increased between 1860 and 1890 the American Jewish population increased from somewhere between 200,000 to approximately 900,000. Slightly more than half of the newcomers came from Eastern Europe. During this time, Jewish loyalties were divided between the Democrats and Republicans. Still, the predominant affiliation remained Republican.

The same situation prevailed in Brooklyn. By the turn of the century several of the German Jewish community's leading citizens had received the nomination of the Republican party to high office. A number of them were elected or appointed to federal, state, city, and county offices; several in the judiciary. A few even served in Congress, one as Secretary of State for New York and one as District Attorney of the borough. Ernest Nathan, Israel Fisher and Meier Steinbrink, three of the borough's most prominent Jews, served as Chairmen of the Republican Executive Committee of Brooklyn suc-

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offered little chance of improved conditions. Russian laws denied Jews freedom to live and work where they wished. There were few opportunities to receive an education and own property. State and municipal services were poor, while the requirement of lengthy military service was a great burden for men and their families. Russian laws were arbitrary and capricious. Pogroms, or sporadic attacks on Jewish villages were a constant threat to life and limb. Without rule of law, there could be no sense of security or safety. See Salo Baron, The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets, 1964.

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cessively from the 1880s to the early 1900s.[27]

Judging by the number of prominent Jews within Republican ranks, the Brooklyn Democratic party was less attractive to Jewish Brooklynites. In local politics, during the early years of resettlement in America, although some Eastern European Jews did participate in the Irish Democratic machine, most cast a critical eye upon Irish Democracy, as scandal after scandal rocked Tammany Hall. Additionally, Jewish livelihoods were earned in the predominantly Jewish owned New York City clothing industry and through the self employed small business sector. To an extent these jobs insulated them from the need for work on the Irish controlled public payroll.

It has been well documented that the older and well established German Jewish community did much to assist the masses of working class Eastern European Jews through established charities such as the Baron de Hirsch Fund and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.[28] As a result, their influence on the voting habits of the newer Eastern Europeans Jews was probably substantial. There is a good chance they assisted them to become nat-

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[27]Abelow, 32.

[28]Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews 1870-1914 (New York: Corinth Books, 1964). Irving Howe with Kenneth Libo, World of Our Fathers (New York: Touchstone Books, 1976).

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uralized citizens and registered voters. Just how much direction they offered their Eastern European's brethren in the choice of party identification is not known. It is reasonable to assume that newer Jewish immigrants looked to older ones for guidance.

The Rise of Democratic Party Influence

The Republicans also led efforts to enact a number of reform planks, in addition to the national party's foreign policy stance on Jewish oppression in Eastern Europe. In New York State, Teddy Roosevelt and Charles Evans Hughes were governors who found favor amongst the Jews for their innovative proposals for electoral reform, revision of the tax structure, and rhetoric championing clean and efficient government. Richard McCormick has written, "Hughes' inquiries joined the longstanding drive for independence with the growing opposition to privileged business and inspired a series of concrete remedies for the bad behavior of the paired villains....New York's climactic "Progressive moment" of 1905 was characterized above all by intense popular anxiety about big business, its corrupt behavior and its power over people's lives." In response to this sentiment, Hughes wrote and passed legislation that tightly regulated corrupt industries.[29]

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[29]Richard L. McCormick, From Realignment to Reform: Political Change in New York State, 1893-1910

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Downstate Republicans were much more progressive than their upstate brethren, strongly supporting a reform slate: consumer legislation, settlement house aid, and support for organized labor, such as child labor laws, as well as the direct primary and other structural reforms to rectify the Democracy's record of corruption in New York City in the 1890-1910 period. In order to compete, the Democrats had to match the Republicans in reaching out to the new immigrants with, "attractive symbolic appeals, effective leadership and constructive programs."[30]

The Republicans held most of the Jewish vote until the 1920s.[31] But as early as the 1912 the Democracy began to cut into Jewish support for the Republican party in New York City, largely due to its new reform platform. John D. Buenker and Robert Huthmacker have argued that beginning around 1912, in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911, The Democratic

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(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 267.

[30]Robert Wesser, A Response to Progressivism: The Democratic Party and New York Politics, 1902-1918 (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 12.

[31]Many Jewish Democrats interviewed for this study remembered the Republican Party of the early decades as the party of prosperity. If you were a Jew and fared pretty well, or were a small businessman with visions of American dream-like success, you were likely to vote the Republican ticket in Brooklyn.

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Party began its turn toward social and public welfare legislation. Al Smith and Robert F. Wagner Sr. were two of the most outstanding Tammany legislators who pushed a progressive agenda. The Factory Investigating Commission, "was instrumental in establishing a working relationship between the Democratic party regulars and spokesmen for progressive societies and labor groups and others," writes Robert Wesser.[32]

Upstate Republicans watched with trepidation the growing immigrant population of New York City and feared an imbalance in state power would weaken their legislative strength. The Irish Democracy came to broker the interests of the second wave of immigrants despite obstructive efforts in 1894 and 1907 by upstate Republicans in the New York State Legislature. Through such measures as legislative apportionment, suffrage requirements and judicial reorganization the Irish politicians' difficulty in mobilizing the recent immigrant vote was exacerbated. In fact, the consolidation of Brooklyn into Greater New York City in 1898 was viewed by some Democrats as a Republican Party attempt to broaden its appeal and weaken Tammany in the City.[33]

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[32]Wesser, X.

[33]Upstate Republicans enacted legislation in the New York State Convention of 1894 that has allowed upstaters to maintain great control over New York City's political affairs. One important way it accomplished this was to create assembly districts in the city larger in size and population than upstate

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Historians J. Joseph Huthmacher and John D. Buenker have argued that machine politicians did achieve, "a variety of reforms and in many instances, contributed far more to the welfare of society as a whole than their much-heralded Republican middle-class and upper-class counterparts."[34] Yet Jews within the Democratic Party were not typical machine politicians in that they remained somewhat independent within the ranks. Tammany was not viewed favorably by many Democrats. Before the turn of the century, some prominent Jewish party figures called themselves Cleveland Democrats and remained independent in local politics. Nevertheless, from 1900 to 1928 more Jews chose the Republican over the Democratic party in every Presidential election except 1916.

Al Smith's election as Governor in 1919 (Smith was the first Democratic to hold that position since 1893) would go a long way to winning over Jews to the Democracy. Al Smith adjusted the party to the changes that

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assembly districts. For instance, in 1953 "in 38 upstate counties there was one Assemblyman for each 51,203 persons while in New York City there was one for every 135,551," Jerry Krase and Charles La Cerra. Their source is Arthur Klebanoff, "The Demographics of Politics: Legislative Constituencies and the Borough of Brooklyn, 1950-1965." Unpublished Senior Honors Thesis, Yale University, 1969.

[34]Wesser, X.

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urbanization, industrialization and immigration had wrought in American society and politics. Smith's common folk talk, New York background, and Progressive platform contributed to his feat. The Democracy's shift in the direction of welfare statism culminated in the Presidential elections of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, 1936 and 1940, which brought the county's newest immigrants firmly into the Democratic fold.[35] Jews gradually switched their party affiliation from the Republicans to the Democrats.[36]

Summary

In conclusion, Brooklyn's Republican Party had the edge over the Democrats in garnering the Jewish vote during the years of the great Eastern European resettlement in America. Still, Jewish loyalty was never cemented. As independent minded people they frequently split between the Republicans and Democrats in local

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[35]Kristi Andersen, The Creation of a Democratic Majority (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[36]Moynihan and Glazer write that clear signs of Jewish Democratic leanings in the twenties are the nomination and election of three Jewish Democrats to Congress: Sol Bloom and Nathaniel Dickstein of Manhattan and Emmanuel Celler of Brownsville, Brooklyn. Just two years earlier, six Jews were elected to the House, one was Socialist, the other five, Republican. Moynihan and Glazer, Beyond The Melting Pot Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), 169, are cited in Krase and La Cerra, Enter The Steinguts, 134.

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races, and by the early 1900s, the rise of radical politics in their community, and the nation, made third party efforts more attractive and viable.

Third Parties

The Municipal Ownership League

> Not only did Hearst win Brooklyn and Queens largely on the strength of his vote in the working-class districts, but he also carried eleven of thirty five assembly districts in Manhattan. Four of these were heavily Jewish assembly districts in Manhattan. Four of these were heavily Jewish areas on the Lower East Side that had already shown some vulnerability to Republican and Socialist penetration.[37]

Reflecting partly their own voting independence, and the feelings of many citizens in New York State during the realigning election of 1896, Jews seemed potentially available to either party. They were given their first chance to express their disenchantment with the major parties and willingness to abandon them in the 1905 mayoral race when William Randolph Hearst's Municipal Ownership League (MOL) nearly swept city elections. Hearst did especially well in assembly districts where Jews were concentrated. Hearst in fact cut heavily into previously Democratic and Republican Jewish working

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[37]Wesser, 12.

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class districts in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Additionally, Brooklyn and Queens gave majorities to his candidacy and many of his party's nominees. His choice for Brooklyn Borough President, Bird S. Coler, won handily. In 1906 his gubernatorial campaign had similar results, revealing the weaknesses in the Democratic and Republican parties.[38]

Hearst's appeal to Jewish voters was twofold: his party's proposals for municipal ownership and operation of the city's gas and electric companies, and his newspaper's constant support for Jews living under Czarist rule. As John Higham has written, "He became the knight-errant of the tenements, denouncing religious prejudices while arousing class and national prejudices, posing as the great American champion of the maltreated Jews in Russia."[39]

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[38]McCormick, 52-55. McCormick argues that during the party system of 1896 Democrats and Republicans suffered from working class and middle class discontent. Both parties' failure to consistently support reform legislation and their repeated betrayal of the voters' trust led many citizens of the state to adopt a more independent stance. See McCormick's concluding chapter, "From Realignment to Reform in New York," for an elaboration of this theory.

For more on Hearst's popularity and a breakdown of the 1905 Mayoral vote by assembly districts in Brooklyn see the "Appendix" to Anna Mary Lanahan, "Brooklyn's Political Life, 1896-1916." (Ph.D. diss., St. Johns University, 1977). Other relevant works on Hearst are John J. Winkler, William Randolph Hearst: A New Appraisal (New York: Hastings, 1955); W.A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1961).

[39]John Higham, Strangers In The Land: Patterns of

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Hearst's Municipal League was short-lived, as Tammany stole the municipal election from him in 1906 and bought him off in 1907. The dominant third party of the 1910s would pose a far greater threat to the Democrats and Republicans. The Socialist Party won the loyalty of many Jews in New York City. For a brief time they sat atop Brownsville's political house.

The First Generation: The Radical Heritage

Deborah Dash Moore[40] distinguishes between the experience of immigrant Jews or first generation Jews and second generation Jews, the children of the immigrants. First generation Jews who arrived in New York after 1905 were a different lot from their second generation children. They were political radicals, particularly Bundists who supported the separate Jewish Socialist worker's party in Russia (General League of Jewish Workers). As manual workers, they, like many class conscious Germans and German Jews, vociferously supported the Socialist Party.[41] Their ardor stemmed from

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American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 127.

[40]Moore, Chapter 2.

[41]For a discussion of German class consciousness and Socialist Party activity in a midwestern city see Sally M. Miller's, "Milwaukee: Of Ethnicity and Labor," in Socialism and the Cities, ed. Bruce Stave, (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975), 44. She

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their Russian revolutionary politics and their employment situation. Work was provided by other Jews from the older, established community, not by the city government or the political machine. It made them less dependent on local politics but made community concerns more important in developing their political attitudes. Their political consciousness was at odds with the Irish politicians as well as the Irish police, and they opposed their German Jewish employers. [42]

Before 1920, Moore writes, conventional ethnic politics held little attraction for New York Jews. They shunned the idea of bloc voting. Candidates did not emphasize their Jewishness, and Jews' loyalty was divided between the Socialist, nascent Communist as well as the Republican and the Democratic parties.

On the other hand, second generation Jews in the 1920s developed a Jewish liberalism that allowed them to confront the system as it existed: ethnic neighborhood politics. They adopted an ideological outlook emphasizing ethnic politics. The reality of ethnic life demonstrated that ethnic groups exerted influence

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writes, "Germans played a distinctive role in the American labor movement, bringing to it a sense of class consciousness not characteristic of native Americans."

[42]Moore, Chapter 1.

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because they shared similar antecedents, group consciousness, and cultural traditions which enabled them to view developing issues from a common point of view.[43]

Deborah Dash Moore and others who have studied Jewish Brooklyn devote little time to the Socialist Party. In so doing, they fail to see that many Jews found Socialism a real alternative during the 1910s and early 1920s. It is a history worth retelling because, as Martin Shefter has argued for a later period, the "extrusion of the Left" has a bearing on the process of ethnic succession in the city's politics. The choices that Jews made about whether to support a Socialist alternative to the politics of machine Democracy didn't simply "happen." The Democratic Party "helped" make this choice for them in the early part of this century and in later decades as well.[44]

It is remarkable that radical politics persisted in Brooklyn, despite the swift upward mobility of newly arrived ethnic groups and given the dominance of the major parties in Brooklyn. The Democrats were especially proficient in their attempts to stifle the Left by

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[43]See Chapter 3 for the second generation's coming to power in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood.

[44]Martin Shefter, "Political Incorporation and the Extrusion of the Left: The Organization of American Groups Into American Politics," Studies in American Political Development, vol. 1. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

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destroying the mechanisms that make radical electoral politics possible. In the middle nineteen forties, for example, proportional representation in New York City was terminated chiefly because it enabled radicals and independents to win elections to the New York City Council during the late 1930s.[45]

Summary

When taken together, interparty competition from the Republicans and third parties and the independence of the Jewish vote, and it easy to see how Irish party leaders were practically forced to compete with major and minor parties for Jewish loyalty as a strategy for securing Democratic pluralities. Whether they "liked" the Jews socially, economically or culturally, in politics the Irish-led Democratic machines functioned as brokers for all their vote. Irish Democrats could ignore the Jewish vote only at the risk of losing their support to competing parties.[46]

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[45]Mark Naison Communists in Harlem During The Depression (New York: Grove Press, 1983); Simon Gerson, Pete: The Story of Peter V. Cacchione, New York's First Communist Councilman (New York: International Publishers, 1976). The term "radical" is defined as persons who were found in the Socialist, Communist, and trade union ranks of the early to middle twentieth century who favored the growth of the welfare state. It also refers more generally to people who favor thorough-going reform.

[46]McCormick, 52-55. On consolidation see Raymond Schroth's "The Eagle and Brooklyn," excerpted from his book, The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper,

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Social Conflict Amidst Little Or No Political Conflict

> Kramer looked at Andriutti and Caughey, sitting there with their mighty thighs akimbo. He felt superior to them....he was Jewish. Very early in life he had picked up the knowledge that the Italians and the Irish were animals. The Italians were pigs, and the Irish were mules or goats....To his parents, New York City--New York? hell, the whole U.S., the whole world!--was a drama called The Jews Confront the Goyim, and the goyim were animals.
>
> The Mayor.....When he was growing up, the goyim were all Catholics, unless you counted the shvartzer, which nobody did. They didn't even rate being called goyim. The Catholics were two types, the Irish and the Italians. The Irish were stupid and liked to fight and inflict pain. The Italians were stupid and slob-like. Both were unpleasant....[47]

1841-1955 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974) in Brooklyn, USA, Ruth Seiden Miller, ed., (Brooklyn College Press, 1975). The decline in voter turnout has been analyzed by Walter Dean Burnham in Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970). Burnham argues that Progressive reforms successfully created a series of election laws that encouraged new kinds of voting behavior and made the machine's vote harder to come by. New voter registration requirements (in person registration and the requirement of signature identification in 1908), separation of local from state and national elections, the Australian or secret ballot, and the regulation of party nominations, all worked to depress voter turnout, and encouraged voting independent of traditional party lines, for example, ticket-splitting. The intent of Republicans was to discourage voting by immigrant Democrats, and to reduce bribery. McCormick believes that the overall consequence of these reforms was unintended as discontent with both parties was vented by working class and middle class alike.

[47]Tom Wolfe, The Bonfire of the Vanities (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 108-109, 588.

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Clashes between Irish and Jewish school children are vividly recounted by Jewish elders in Brooklyn. Stories of how Irish gangs taunted Jewish boys, made fun of their yarmulke or skull cap, and told jokes about greedy and miserly Jews abound in oral history accounts of Irish-Jewish neighborhoods in transition. The Jews privately viewed the Irish as anti-Semites, wrongly blaming Jews for the death of Jesus, and feared the Irish as anti-intellectual drunkards who would rise only as far as their brute strength would carry them, and that was to such manual labor positions as policemen, dock and construction workers. Jews were as susceptible as any ethnic group to the stereotypes of the Irish so common at that time.[48]

On the other hand, the Jew in the Irish imagination was based on the role of the Jew in the crucifixion story. It was not easy for the Irishman to rid himself of the bonds of an inherited religious concept of the Jew. Moreover, in Irish American folklore the Irish appeared as the trickster, mastering the Jew.

In nineteenth century America, and Ireland too,

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[48]Interviews by author with Brooklyn Jewish politicians. Michael Gold, Jews Without Money (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1984, c1958).

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there were serious Irish outbreaks against the Jews. Irish ignorance of Jewish customs, such as the ritual slaughter of animals, led to riots, while economic tensions aroused by Jewish businessmens' "strange and immoral practices" (closing their shops on Saturday while staying open on the Sabbath; offering a way for customers to pay bills via installment plans as well as limited job competition in factory and street) brought similar results.

Overall, there was little contact between the two groups. The German Jews of the old immigration, beginning in 1848, lived amongst the German American community and interacted primarily within it. Irish-Jewish differences of religion, country, language, customs, as well as training, occupations and even leisure activity kept them mostly apart from one another. For instance, there was little or no participation in each other's organizations.[49]

The new immigration of the 1880's brought millions of Eastern European Jews to the United States. Residentially segregated and concentrated, they created worlds of their own, separate from other urban villagers. In part, they did so to protect themselves from what they

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[49]Rudolph Glanz, Jew and Irish: Historic Group Relations and Immigration (New York: Waldon Press, Inc., 1966), passim.

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viewed as a hostile cultural environment. Kate Simon, a child of Russian Jewish immigrant parents, described how she coped with the "gentile" world outside her Bronx Jewish neighborhood,

> The Bronx County Building was stuffed with policemen, judges, immigration officials, women who looked like nurses or assistant principals. This confident, inimical enclave that spoke fast English and ate peanut butter sandwiches on white bread sat at our edge of Crotona Park, dourly in our line of vision almost everywhere we went. We children couldn't imagine them in ordinary tenement or frame houses, like ours, so we pushed them all into cold cubicles in the big-bellied building, like sides of beef in a huge butcher's icebox.[50]

The experience of neighborhood conflict that resulted from ethnic succession amongst the Irish and Jews of Brooklyn was not unusual. New immigrants often find their movement into ethnic wards resented by the established group, with periodic violence a consequence. This was evident in the late decades of the nineteenth century when Jews from Eastern Europe streamed into New York City and made a home on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. It continued as Jews made their way to Harlem and Washington Heights in upper Manhattan, to the East Bronx, and to Brooklyn. As late as the 1930s, downwardly mobile Irish vented their Depression era frustrations on Jewish individuals and institutions as the Christian

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[50]Kate Simon, Bronx Primitive (New York: Harper, Colophon Books, 1982), 9.

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Front movement of Father Coughlin reached it zenith.[51]

Given this context of social, cultural and economic tension between Irish and Jewish New Yorkers it is remarkable that amiable political relations characterized Democratic party politics in Brooklyn during the early decades of the twentieth century even though Jews were taking over the leadership of several local assembly district clubhouses from the Irish. Social conflict between these two ethnic groups rarely crossed the clubhouse door.

Theories of Irish-Jewish Friendship in Politics

A reason given by some Irish and Jewish leaders for the good relations between the two is the common struggle they faced against nativism. In a period when the Ku Klux Klan brand of Americanism was gaining new

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[51]Jews received a similar welcome in Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia, where two thirds of America's Jewish population has centered since 1890. On Boston see Robert A. Woods, ed., The City Wilderness--A Settlement Study by Residents and Association of the South End House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1899), 134-135; Lawrence H. Fuchs, The Political Behavior of American Jews (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1956);Philadelphia, Dennis Clark, "Irish-Jewish Relations in Philadelphia," in Murray Friedman ed., Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940 (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983);Chicago, Steven Erie, Rainbows End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). On the Coughlin movement see Ronald Bayor, Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

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force across the land, when Sacco and Vanzetti couldn't receive a fair trial, when Al Smith was spat upon and cursed all along his presidential campaigns in the 1920s, both Irish and Jew had much to gain from an alliance. Both, in addition, couldn't find a key to such elite institutions of higher education as Columbia University.[52]

While many of the initiatives to stifle the potential of urban immigrant power came with the Progressive reform agenda, another strong challenge to the Irish machine's control of the immigrant vote came from fervent nativist feelings which were ever present during the years of labor radicalism and militancy, and massive immigration to the United States. Urban bosses and their machines protected newcomers from nativist hostility. Nativists fought hard to enact anti-immigrant legislation, including the literacy test and restrictions on Eastern and Southern European immigration. Catholics and Jews of varied ethnic backgrounds worked side by side to defeat these bills in Congress. They had much more in common as immigrant minorities, than ethnic differences between themselves. Al Smith was able to unite them in common cause and solidify the Democratic party's hold on their vote beginning with his gubernatorial election in

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[52]Thomas Bender, New York Intellectuals (Vintage Books, 1986).

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1919 and continuing in his bids for the presidency 1924 and 1928, and again in the New York gubernatorial election of 1926. After the twenties, Brooklyn emerged a bastion of Democratic party power and remained so for next half century.[53]

John F. Hayes lends credence to the argument that nativism brought the two ethnic groups together. Hayes was at one time the right hand man of Brooklyn Borough Presidents' John Cashmore and Abe Stark, a period from 1944 until 1969. Hayes believes there was a joining of Irish and Jewish factions in the Democratic Party that was favorable for the advancement of both groups. Hayes speaks for many when he recalled:

> The key was the Great Depression and the election of Roosevelt to the presidency. FDR drew from all racial and ethnic groups in his victory. Because he took vigorous action to bring the people not only out of Depression, but in many cases abject poverty....for those first two terms of Franklin D. Roosevelt there was unified support for him. So I didn't see any divisions in the community [Crown Heights] then.
>
> The strong anti-Catholic vote against Alfred E. Smith in 1928, along with the Ku Klux Klan's vigorous activities gave Catholics reason to feel that they were a persecuted people. This feeling of persecution by both groups united them. There was a feeling that we're both persecuted so you have to be understanding of how they feel, and I'm a believer. That was one of the unifying influences. And because Jewish people undoubtedly saw that if a Catholic couldn't run for president, there was little hope for Jewish people.

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[53]Higham, Chapter Eleven, "Closing the Gates," passim.

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> Each group brought with them a feeling of rejection by the American system to some extent, but this gift of freedom surpassed everything they had ever known in Europe, whether they were Italian, Jewish, or Irish. It was literally the land of opportunity.
>
> The Democratic Party was a place of protection. The Tammany system answered the need of the immigrants for social work, social welfare and charity, even if it was based on the Robin Hood concept of stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. There was no welfare office to go to among the immigrants.[54]

Ralph Foster Weld believes both groups also had in common a concern for a national entity.

> There is an interesting parallel between Brooklyn's Jews of today and Brooklyn's Irish of yesterday. Both have been acutely conscious of wrongs suffered by their kindred overseas. Both have ardently supported the cause of a national state.[55]

Summary

The conditions for a fluid ethnic political succession during the early decades of the century were all present in Brooklyn. A combination of factors account for the phenomenon. First, a rapid, thorough- going demographic transformation (the Irish moved out and the Jews moved in by the droves). Second, the autonomy of local wards found in a decentralized party structure

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[54]Mr. John F. Hayes, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 17 February 1988.

[55]Ralph Foster Weld, Brooklyn is America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 187.

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placed Jews in a position to capture lower level party posts. Third, the leviathan struggle of competing political parties required the one intent on victory to incorporate the large Jewish vote, especially so given the Jews' history of political independence and willingness to switch party identification.

Finally, despite the social tensions that existed between the Irish and Jews, the Irish-led Democratic party, true to its nineteenth century role of broker for immigrant interests, organized the Irish and Jews into a winning electoral coalition. The Irish politician, whose gift for the three P's (priesthood, police and politics) is legendary, astutely recognized the "handwriting on the wall". Overall, congenial political relations between the two groups prevailed. In light of their common fight against nativism, it is not hard to understand why Irish and Jew made good political bedfellows.[56]

The following chapter will analyze the graceful political succession in two Brooklyn Irish-Jewish communities, Brownsville and Crown Heights. The case studies should help to explain why the Brooklyn Democratic party was able to maintain its great power throughout the century, and give a better understanding of how the process of ethnic succession might have con-

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[56]For an elaboration on the theme of the importance of Irish leadership see Chapter 3.

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tributed to its longevity.

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CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES OF JEWISH POLITICAL SUCCESSION: BROWNSVILLE AND CROWN HEIGHTS

Introduction

Chapter 2 showed that Jews became a majority of Brownsville's population in the early 1910s and nearly a majority of Crown Heights by the early 1930s. This chapter reveals how the first Jewish Democratic assembly district leaders (Hyman Schorenstein in 1919 and Irwin Steingut in 1935, respectively) came to power. The ardent party competition between the Socialists and Democrats in Brownsville, and Republicans and Democrats in Crown Heights is chronicled, in addition to the role ethnic group leadership played in the achievement of political succession.

Brownsville: The First Jewish Political Succession in Brooklyn

Hyman "Hymie" Schorenstein became the Democratic district leader of the Twenty Third assembly district in 1919, after serving the local Irish machine in a number

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of patronage positions over the previous twenty years. However, the Jews of Brownsville had already had more than a taste of local political power by the time of Schorenstein's ascent. The Republicans elected Jewish party members to local posts in the first decade of the 1900s.[1] The 1910s however saw the rise of the Socialist Party to prominence. The Socialist Party elected several respected Brownsville Jewish residents as early as 1915.

Immigrant settlements such as Brownsville were conducive to rapid assimilation for some, while others sought to maintain and strengthen Jewish identification. This tension within the Jewish community surfaced in the local political system in the battles between Democratic-Republican Fusionists and Socialists for dominance in Brownsville's Twenty-third assembly district.

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[1]The Republicans were popular in Brownsville because of their openness to Jewish participation. In Brownsville the first Republican Jewish assemblymen nominated and elected in the district was Isaac Sargent. He won elections as early as 1908 and 1909. Sargent was followed in the assembly by a fellow Jewish Republican Louis Goldstein in 1911. For the alderman post, Alexander Drescher was elected in 1910 and 1911. Alter Landesman, Brownsville: The Birth, Development and Passing of a Jewish Community in New York, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1971), 41.

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Radical Politics in Brownsville

Nationally, the Socialists were enjoying greater success than ever before. Eugene V. Debs polled 900,000 votes for President in 1912, double his 1908 figure. Trade unionization was on the rise. The International Workers of the World, the IWW, was conducting strikes from the mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts to the Colorado Coalfields. Black Americans had a new voice in the N.A.A.C.P., co-founded by a socialist, W.E.B. Dubois during this period. Socialism was in its heyday in Brooklyn, and in America, from 1912-1920.

Many of Brownsville's residents worked in the needle trades and were members of the Amalgamated Clothing Trades Workers' Union and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union of America. In the 1910s these nascent unions were aligned with the Socialist Party of America. Socialists built important communal institutions, such as the Brownsville Co-operative Bakery, the Co-operative Credit Union, The Brownsville Labor Lyceum and the Brownsville Co-operative Bank.

Residents elected Socialist Party candidate Abraham I. Shiplacoff to the assembly by a substantial margin in the November 1915 race. He was the lone Socialist New York State assemblyman that year. He easily won reelection each of the next three years.

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Another esteemed Socialist leader, Charles Solomon followed Shiplacoff into the Assembly in 1919.

Bernett Wolff was elected Socialist Alderman in 1916. He beat the combined Republican and Democratic candidates by four thousand votes out of a total of 14,700. Charles Solomon succeeded Wolff in 1917 and 1918, and Shiplacoff served following Solomon in 1919 and 1920.

The Socialists' political strength in New York was short-lived. The Democrats and Republicans joined forces to expel five Socialist members of the New York State Assembly on March 30, 1920. The anti-radical hysteria of the time, including the infamous Palmer Raids led by Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, led to the Socialists Party's demise as a force in Brownsville and other Brooklyn Jewish neighborhood politics.[2]

Certainly, other factors aside from coercion accounted for the decline of the Socialist Party, such

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[2]"On April 28, 1919 detectives from Brooklyn District Attorney Harry Lewis' office with the approval of Federal Attorney James D. Bell engineered a raid on the Brownsville Labor Lyceum, which was the headquarters of the Socialist party. District Attorney Harry Lewis was instructed by Governor Alfred E. Smith to go after the Bolsheviks." Brooklyn Eagle 28 April 1919. Of note, Harry E. Lewis was a prominent member of the Brooklyn German-Jewish community and the county Republican Party. Harry E. Lewis was appointed Republican County Judge in 1913 a year before he won the Kings County District Attorney's position on the Republican ticket. Lewis was elected a State Supreme Court Judge in 1922, and won reelection in 1935.

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as its continued internal factionalization and the end of the First World War. Nevertheless, the Democratic and Republican parties saw the Socialists as a threat to their hegemony over electoral politics. Their platform, which included a series of municipal ownership bills, in addition to labor and social legislation, was considered revolutionary at the time.

Not surprisingly, in the decades to follow, New Yorkers would hear their aspiring political leaders, including Governors Alfred E. Smith, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Herbert H. Lehman, and United States Senator Robert Wagner, adopt a large portion of the Socialist platform: raising the age limit for the employment of children, the eight hour work day, social security, old age pensions, unemployment and disability compensation, college scholarships, and other measures long a part of New York State law.

The expropriation of the Socialist party's ideas by the two major parties, while actively repressing its organizational endeavors, further led to the Party's decline. This strategy accounts in part for the longevity of the urban machine. Furthermore, the Socialists lost many of its younger adherents to the

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opportunities for power offered by the liberal wing of the Democratic party.[3]

Brownsville's Republicans and Democrats were so fearful of the Socialists' popularity and electoral grip that they used every means to regain their powers. A fusion of Democratic and Republican parties was effected to insure the Socialists' defeat. This same strategy was used throughout the century by regulars to weaken the radical impulse. For instance, in East Harlem, Republicans and Democrats joined in 1918 to defeat the Socialist Party candidate for Congress, Morris Hillquit, by supporting Republican Jewish Congressman Isaac Siegel. Fusion was necessary to insure victory since Hillquit carried a plurality of the Jewish voters in the district.[4]

Jews' substantial support for the Socialist Party had the unintended effect of moving Brownsville Jews into the ranks of the Democratic party leadership. The Irish abdicated power at the district level in order to

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[3]James Weinstein, Ambiguous Legacy, (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975); James C. Duran, Norman M. Thomas, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), 37. Norman M. Thomas, As I See It, (New York: MacMillan, 1932).

[4]Jeffrey S. Gurock, When Harlem Was Jewish: 1870-1930 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 74-83. In Brownsville, Fusion served its purpose until 1927 when Hyman Schorenstein was able to elect Walter Hart to the alderman seat without Republican party support. But to defeat the Socialists, this merger was welcomed.

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insure that regular party candidates would defeat Socialists. Their evacuation left the door wide open for Jewish Democrats to take the crown.

Merel J. Pomeranz Glaubiger had the opportunity to talk with James M. Power, the last Irish leader of the Twenty-third assembly district. Power took over the leadership upon the death of Patrick Lynch in 1911. He recalled that after the 1907 reapportionment (which dissolved the Twenty-First and created the new Twenty-third assembly district) Brownsville became predominately Jewish and Socialist. He and the other Irish club leaders saw little hope of Democratic party success with the growing immigration and the Jews' fervid Socialism. Many of the Irish leaders simply moved to other areas where there were better economic and political opportunities. In 1919, losing faith in the chance for resurrecting a Democratic district, Power resigned as leader and Hyman Schorenstein was elected by the Democratic county committee of the Twenty-third assembly district in 1919, with Power's blessing.[5]

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[5]Merel J. Pomeranz Glaubiger, "Hyman Schorenstein: A Political Biography." Senior Seminar Paper, (New York: Barnard College, 1963), passim. The ensuing section is indebted to Merel J. Pomeranz Glaubiger's paper.

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The First Jewish Democratic Leader: Hyman Schorenstein

Hyman Schorenstein's life in the Democratic party reveals that Irish political leaders with a large Jewish population in their district cultivated members of that ethnic group for entry into their ranks. The Republicans had done just that in Brownsville a few years earlier, and the Democrats were trying to keep pace. Schorenstein would prove to be a model foot soldier for the Democracy. For his battlefield loyalty and courage the party rewarded in kind. Yet for all his years in the party, following the rules of the game as set down by his Irish mentors, he was no stooge. His contemporaries said he was a very shrewd man. Some Irish leaders who may have hoped to train a puppet learned otherwise. Schorenstein, a fully developed creature of the machine, was not always a robot. In fact, his fall from the party's grace would result from an independence from the party line, in addition to his desire to succeed as others in the party had, via "honest graft." There were also forces outside his control that ended his pioneering career.

Few details of Hyman Schorenstein's life exist. He was born in Austria in 1874 and was brought to the United States by his widowed mother July 4, 1889 at the age of 14. His early life was hard. He had to work as a child to support the family and labored at various ice

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companies in Brooklyn to earn a living. Schorenstein became well known and liked by many of the local Irish politicians delivering ice to Brownsville saloons through the years. Before his twenty first birthday he became an election district captain in Brownsville's Twenty Sixth ward. As early as 1898 he had met future district leaders Patrick Lynch and James M. Power, when all were active members of John McGuire's Twenty First assembly district clubhouse.

Schorenstein explained his reasons for joining the local Democratic clubhouse to an Eagle reporter in 1938. More than anything else, he said, it was the nature of the times that led him into the Democratic party. Few economic opportunities were available for an uneducated, unskilled man to fulfill the promise of the American dream. "If we had a New Deal then, child labor laws, widow pensions, social security, and workmen's compensation when my mother came over, I might have been a college professor, maybe." Politics was a way for Schorenstein (and so many American immigrants) to make something of themselves.[6]

He worked his way up from the bottom rungs of the Democratic clubhouse ladder to achieve the status of election district captain before the turn of the

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[6]Pomerantz Glaubiger, 6. The quote is from the Brooklyn Eagle, 6 February 1938.

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century. The Irish leadership was quick to recognize his contribution to the party. James M. Power recalled, "He was very prominent and well known and a hard worker....he performed his duties as he was taught....always fighting, ever willing....he gained friends by the thousands." And when Power decided to leave Brownsville for "greener" pastures in Long Beach, Long Island, Hyman Schorenstein was his choice to succeed him. They remained friends till Schorenstein's death in 1953.

The Reward For Patience and Loyalty: The District Leadership

Hyman Schorenstein finally did receive his long sought after reward in 1919: the assembly district leadership. It had been a long haul, taking him more than twenty years. He had been supported by the Irish Democratic machine while he paid his dues. At the time of Brooklyn's Trolley Strike of 1889 Schorenstein was given his first patronage job, the post of special policeman. Afterwards he maintained that position during the daytime at the neighborhood saloons while working a second job at night. When James M. Power was appointed United States Marshall for the Eastern District of New York by President Woodrow Wilson in 1912, (a show of gratitude for Power's break with county leader McCooey,

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who supported Wilson's Democratic opponent, William Jennings Bryan), Schorenstein's allegiance was repaid with the position of Deputy United States Marshall for the Eastern District, which carried a princely salary of nine hundred dollars a year.[7]

Additionally, Jim Power evinced great wisdom and foresight in his support of Wilson and Schorenstein. Schorenstein would lead the Democrats back to office in Brownsville, while Woodrow Wilson became "the first Democratic Presidential candidate to crash the Republican hold over Jews in half a century."[8]

Power's sponsorship of Wilson and Schorenstein was a sagacious adjustment to the irresistible swell of Jewish voters in the district. Contrary to Steven Erie's theory[9] that Irish leaders obstructed Jewish efforts to participate in party politics many of the

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[7]Former Municipal and County Court Judge Harold McLaughlin had this recollection of Schorenstein, which was echoed by others who remembered him. "Hymie started out peddling ice as a young man. In those days there were no refrigerators, we had ice boxes. Hymie was the iceman visiting every house, that's how he got himself elected. He knew all the people. That's the way people got elected in those days. Sure, Hymie built himself an organization. He was a very shrewd man." Mr. Harold McLaughlin, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 21 July 1987.

[8]Fuchs, 59.

[9]Rainbows End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

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Brooklyn Irish Democrats saw the "handwriting on the wall" and responded in a pragmatic, yet enlightened, fashion to make way for a transition to Jewish rule, while also trying to preserve their last vestiges of power in the local party organization as well as in higher state, county and local governmental offices (i.e., the judiciary and borough presidency,). Confrontation was not the only course open to Irish leaders. Adaption to demographic change and out competing rival parties was the only wise course of action for the party's survival, subsistence and growth.

Post Succession Relations Amongst The Irish and Jews

A few years later, reflecting the affection and loyalty between the two ethnic groups, Schorenstein in turn took good care of the old Irish leaders and followers. Once in office, Schorenstein continued to work with the Irish leaders, even though the district was predominately Jewish. He selected Agnes Riley, wife of one of the old time contenders for the county leadership, as his co-leader[10] and for club secretary he

[10]With the struggle for women's suffrage won in 1919, New York State, in 1923, responded by requiring two district leaders, one male, one female, for each assembly district in the state.

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chose John Lynch, son of his old leader, Patrick Lynch.[11]

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[11]A fine example of the Brooklyn machine's longevity is the continuous presence of its members in high elective and appointive office, whether in "reform" or "regular" guise. The same John Lynch who worked as Hyman Schorenstein's Secretary was named to a troika by Mayor Robert Wagner in 1961 that led the Brooklyn Democratic Party for a year. Wagner's triumvirate served as his "reform" slate that year to keep his campaign promise to "Beat The Bosses." In fact what he did was to merely replace the regular Brooklyn "boss" at that time, Joseph Sharkey (who supported his challenger, Arthur Levitt) with other long time machine members and allies.

Aside from Lynch's appointment, Wagner completed the trio with Aaron Jacoby, who was close to both Hyman Schorenstein and Irwin Steingut. Jacoby had served first as Brownsville's Democratic Alderman and later as the borough's Sheriff in the 1920s and 1930s. The third member of the group was a well known and respected preacher, Reverend Gardiner Taylor of Concord Baptist Church in Bedford Stuyvesant, still Brooklyn's largest and wealthiest church. In Brooklyn politics, Taylor was raised in the arms of Bedford Stuyvesant's prototype black political machine leader, Bertram Baker, who led the devoted faithful at the Democratic United Action Clubhouse for thirty five years (1933-1968).

For information on the triumvirate see the various scrapbooks on Brooklyn politics at the Kelly Institute, St. Francis College of Brooklyn. Interview with Mr. John Lynch, William O'Dwyer Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Columbia University Oral History Project, Butler Library, 1962; Mr. Reverend Gardiner Taylor, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 27 July 1988.

John J. Lynch died, February 27, 1980 at the age of 83. His obituary records a long history of public service in Brooklyn. "In 1918 he became a deputy United States Marshall and went on to such other public posts as chief supervisor of City Markets, secretary of the State Supreme Court and Commissioner of Borough Works of Brooklyn. He held the later post until 1954 when he resigned to become vice president of the Kings County Trust Company. In 1960 he became president and four years later, its chairman....he had been associated with Catholic Charities since 1920." New York Times, 29 February 1980.

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The Irish played their ethnic cards well. Schorenstein did succeed in putting out the Socialist fire in Brownsville. Power acknowledged that this was one of the chief reasons for Schorenstein's ascendance. It was obvious that no Irishman could beat the Russian Jewish Socialists, but there was a better chance a Jewish Democrat could.

It was a task Schorenstein patriotically accepted and a political opportunity not lost on him. He understood the stakes. Victory would make him the first and only Jewish Democrat to sit atop an assembly district clubhouse in Brooklyn. During the War years Brooklyn viewed Socialist Brownsville as unpatriotic due to its anti-imperialist war stance. The Socialist Party had labeled the United States Congress' 1917 declaration of war a "crime against the people of the United States."[12] Their position was untenable to those Jews who craved an accepted place in American life. Schorenstein, and many Jewish men and women of first generation Eastern European background, considered the Socialists an embarrassment.

Alter Landesman writes, "When Hymie Schorenstein became leader of the new Assembly District in 1921 he set as his main objective to put the Twenty third

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[12]Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 355.

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assembly district in the Democratic column again."[13] To accomplish this he cleverly arranged a Fusion of the Brownsville Democratic and Republican parties in 1921. The Republicans and Democrats combined to win back the Assembly with Joseph Ricca, an Italian Republican party leader, as their candidate for the assembly. Ricca defeated the Socialist candidate Charles Brower with fifty eight percent of the vote. With an effective appeal to voters along ethnic lines, Fusion also elected former Brownsville police captain and Schorenstein loyalist, Isaac Frank, the first Jewish police captain in Brooklyn, to the Board of Aldermen the same year.[14]

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[13]Landesman, 304. The Twenty First assembly district became the Twenty Third in the reapportionment of 1907. See Appendix B. for maps of: Brooklyn Wards, 1896-1906, Brooklyn Assembly Districts, 1896-1906 and Brooklyn Assembly Districts, 1907-1917).

[14]Wallace S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), define Fusion as the united efforts of Democrats, Republicans and Independents to "throw the rascals out" of office. A Fusion candidacy aided La Guardia's entry to the mayoralty in 1933, and Lindsay's in 1969, when he was denied a place on both the Democratic and Republican party ballots. But several times in this century fusion, has worked effectively to stifle radical electoral efforts. Fusion of the Democrats and Republicans was successful in defeating American Labor Party (ALP) and Communist Party candidates in the late 1940s. On a few occasions the ALP and Republicans "Fused" their candidates in order to challenge the omnipotent Democrats. Martin Shefter's "Political Incorporation and the Extrusion of the Left: The Organization of Ethnic Groups Into American Politics." Studies in American Political Development, vol. 1. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

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The traditional orthodox religious groups in the community probably were not supporters of the anti-clerical Socialists, given their historical interaction. The Democrats may have exploited the longstanding resentment of the Socialists by mainstream members of the community, as they tried to wean socialist sympathizers away from the Socialist party. Tension between these two traditions in American Jewish thought persists.[15]

Schorenstein's gratefulness to the Irish did not preclude an independent course within Democratic Party politics. To advance the interests of his people and his organization's power, he was willing to take on the Irish controlled Brooklyn county organization when he went out on a limb to support then Lieutenant Governor Herbert Lehman for the Governorship. His vehement support for Lehman's candidacy in 1932 was too much for then county leader John J. McCooey to stomach. Schorenstein was defeated in the 1936 race for his dis-

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[15]According to Nora Levin, in the United States in the late 1800s, the arrival of Eastern European Jews did not diminish the anti-religious position of anarchists and socialists, (the only area where they could agree), which was particularly vehement. Likewise, "Orthodox religious defenders hurled invectives of their own, and from time to time the public witnessed Jewish antagonists warring against each other, even resorting to boycotts, court injunctions and arrests." Ultimately, Levin concludes, the radical assault on religion backfired and alienated most Jewish workers. Nora Levin <u>While Messiah Tarried: Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871-1917</u> (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 22-26.

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trict's leadership by a McCooey backed challenger, Dr. Maxwell Ross, a Jewish optometrist from Brownsville.

Other factors also accounted for Schorenstein's downfall, including his penchant for "honest graft." During his years as district leader Schorenstein became well off from his shared ownership (with other local politicians) in a politically favored, and exceedingly profitable commuter bus line. Eventually Mayor James "Jimmy" Walker closed the treasure chest under pressure from local critics, amongst whom were the unceasingly active, albeit fading, Socialist Party leaders, including Norman Thomas. Schorenstein's inability to read and write (his patronage positions downtown were Deputy County Registrar and County Register) became an embarrassment to the Party, and most especially the Brooklyn Jewish community. Maxwell Ross held four degrees from several prestigious universities; simply too much formal education, money and political backing for the gutter smart, "shetl" cradled Hyman Schorenstein to compete with.[16]

What Schorenstein accomplished was special. Many men and women cut their political teeth under his leadership in Brownsville. He was truly a pioneer for Jewish Democracy. The transition to Jewish rule was

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[16]Pomerantz-Glaubiger, Chapter Five, "Hymie in Perspective," passim.

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fluid. Vast demographic change, intense interparty competition and intelligent party leadership made the succession a fruitful one.

The second Brooklyn's Jewish Democratic district leader, Irwin Steingut, who came to power two years before Schorenstein's exit from the political scene, found the political terrain even easier to manage. He developed close ties with the local Irish leadership and built a local organization whose clout reached well beyond the ward to the state level in the late 1930s and 1940s.

Crown Heights: The Second Jewish Succession

Demographic patterns would assist Jewish succession in Crown Heights as it had in Brownsville. And the fact that the second generation Jews of Crown Heights chose to live together in their middle class American neighborhood compelled the Irish Democratic leadership of the Eighteenth assembly district to recognize Jewish contributions to the party; they did so almost immediately. In 1923 Irwin Steingut was elected Democratic Assemblyman for the Eighteenth assembly district; by 1934, Steingut was elected party leader of the Eighteenth assembly district. As in Brownsville, as Jews reached majority status in the assembly district they

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came to power in the local Democratic party organization.

InterParty Competition

While there was interparty competition in the Eighteenth assembly district, the battle in Crown Heights was not between a set of third parties and the major parties. Here, the district was dominated for decades by the Republican party. The struggle for power would be one of Democrats versus Republicans, with the tide turning in favor of the Democrats in the 1920s with the rise of the Jewish and Italian Democrat.

In the first decade of the century the Republicans were so strong in the Eighteenth they were resistant to the forces of Hearst's Municipal Ownership League. Its candidates in 1906 and 1907, when the MOL scored its greatest successes in Brooklyn, did not come close to toppling Crown Heights Republicans in congressional, state, county and local offices. The case was even more dramatic for the Socialists, who met with little or no success in the district in the 1910s.

Crown Heights' Democratic Political Organization and Leadership: John H. McCooey and the Madison Club

The Crown Heights area was a part of the Eighteenth assembly district, which also took in sections of

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Flatbush, and all of East Flatbush from 1918 through 1944 (see map of Eighteenth assembly district, 1918-1944, in Appendix C.). During these years the district's central Democratic clubhouse was known as the Madison Club. Its district leader from 1907 until 1934 was John H. McCooey, who was also Brooklyn Democratic County Leader from 1909 till 1934.

McCooey, born in 1864, had been active in Brooklyn machine politics since the late 1880s. He developed his own power base in Crown Heights in the early 1900s. In 1909, upon the death of Patrick McCarren he took control of the county organization.[17]

McCooey has been described in newspaper accounts and oral histories as a gregarious man, one who was sentimental, sincere and inspired one's confidence instinctively. His nicknames, such as Uncle John, and Mr. Buttercup, lend credence to those descriptions. He was considered gentle and thoughtful, generous and easy going. He believed the individual mattered; a trait he shared with some machine bosses. He added a personal touch to political life.[18]

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[17]Brooklyn was incorporated into the Greater City of New York on January 1, 1898.

[18]Some of those party bosses include Richard Croker of Tammany Hall, Boston's James Curley, Kansas City's Tom Pendergast, the O'Connells of Albany and Jersey City's Frank Hague.

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McCooey, like his Brooklyn Democratic predecessors, sought to maintain Brooklyn's independence from Manhattan's Tammany Hall. McCooey was a pragmatist, however. He was willing to go along to get along. Former Congressman Eugene Keogh recalled, McCooey "....was a strong leader because he went along with whoever was in." He found no profit in fighting if he could avoid it. He understood that survival was the key to success. He'd give in if there was something in it for his county.[19]

McCooey was canny enough to make peace with Tammany Leader Charles Murphy since it meant he would be able to maintain autonomy for Brooklyn while still receiving a generous proportion of the city and states' patronage. McCooey's power reached its apex with the election of an associate and friend from the Brooklyn organization, John F. Hylan, who served two terms as New York City's ninety sixth Mayor from 1918 through 1925. Hylan's election victories reflected the growing electoral strength of Brooklyn in city-wide elections.

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[19]Mr. Eugene James Keogh, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 29 September 1987. Sadly, Mr. Keogh died on May 26, 1989, at the age of eighty one. He had served for thirty years in Congress, winning reelection handily each time, before retiring in 1967. Obituary, New York Times 27 May 1989, p. 28.

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Nineteen hundred and twenty five marked the first time Brooklyn surpassed Manhattan in the number of Democratic registered voters, 254,723 to Manhattan's 247,008. The rise in registered voters corresponded to Brooklyn's tremendous growth rate which placed Brooklyn ahead of Manhattan in total population in 1923 for the first time.[20]

Nevertheless, the Democratic machine of Brooklyn was in and out of county and state power during the first decades of the century. The image of an omnipotent Irish machine ruling the borough may be part of the borough's folklore but it is an inaccurate portrayal. The machine was strong but not always dominant. It held numerous elective offices and appointive offices downtown, sharing key patronage jobs in the city, state and county government. To the machine's credit, even when elective positions were lost many of their appointed or non-civil service jobs were maintained.

McCooey's base, the Eighteenth assembly district's Madison Club, was no exception to the rule. Until 1920 more voters were registered with the Republicans than the Democrats in the Eighteenth. Mobilization of Crown Heights' Jewish and Italian voters would enable the Dem-

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[20]Jerry Krase and Charles LaCerra, Enter The Steinguts, Unpublished Manuscript, 1987, Department of Sociology (Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York), 57-58.

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ocratic Party to go over the top in district elections. As the Jews and Italians entered the Democratic party in droves, the party ascended to prominence in local party competition.

McCooey faced a situation similar to that of Charles Murphy's Tammany Hall; how to cope with the influx of new immigrants, principally Jews and Italians, into the borough, and in his particular district; and how to meet the desire of Jewish immigrants for a reform agenda. Murphy was generally praised for his handling of the new ethnics: Russian Jews, Italians, Poles, Czechs, Greeks and also Blacks. Rudolph Glanz comments,

> There was general agreement that the machine accepted all combinations, if they could help them stay in power: 'Tammany knows no race or creed when it is a question of acquiring or preserving political power. Some of its election captains are Jews; and although most of the assembly district leaders are Irishmen, there are almost as many Germans as Irish in the rank and file.'[21]

McCooey too deserves credit for his handling of the Brooklyn situation.

One can imagine Boss McCooey pondering what it would take to bring the Democrats control of his district, as well as the county. He appears to have recognized the folly in obstructing the participation of Jews

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[21]Henry Childs Merwin, "Tammany Hall," Atlantic Monthly, vol. LXXIII (1893), 240-251, quoted in Glanz, 89-90.

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in the local party organization and understood that his hope for winning greater power was tied to enfranchisement of the largest voting immigrant group in the borough, Eastern European Jews. McCooey may have been able to get out the Irish and German Democratic vote to maintain his position within the local party organization, but it wasn't enough to defeat the Republicans, who held all of the local offices until the early 1920s.[22]

Jewish Crown Heights

The growth of Jewish Crown Heights was exponential. Any district leader could not fail to see the new vote calculus. Nathan Sobel, who had a distinguished career as a lawyer and judge, recalled the new Jewish election districts produced 300 votes on an average in the primary, whereas the predominately Irish election districts that John H. McCooey controlled would produce 30 to 50 votes. The Jews primarily resided in apartment buildings while the Irish and old stock Yankees lived in two and three story brownstone walk-ups. Moreover, it was felt that McCooey's constituents were uninterested,

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[22]Unlike the Brownsville case, there is no history of Republican support for Jewish candidates in the district.

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and hardly ever came out in large numbers in those districts.

Murray Feiden, a captain with Sobel in the Madison Club, felt that operationally an election district with apartment houses that sheltered fifty families was preferable to a district with thirty to fifty single homes or brownstones. It was easier to control the former type of district. In those days people knew one another and stood outside of their apartment buildings when the weather was warm. Feiden had a unique method for garnering the Jewish vote. Whenever possible he found the most popular man or woman in an apartment building and paid him to get out the vote. It freed Feiden to organize other corners of the district. At registration time Feiden worked the long hours necessary to make sure that his district's voters were registered; no small feat considering that citizens had to register every year to vote in a particular election. [23]

Needless to say, the growing Jewish Democratic pluralities in the district were a source of concern to

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[23]Mr. Murray Feiden, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 12 February 1988.

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McCooey.[24] So swift and resounding was the new demographic current that Sobel believed from 1927 until McCooey's death in 1934 the Jewish captains of the district could have defeated McCooey at any time. "I could have done it all myself," he boasted. "We had enough captains down at that end of the district."[25]

Then why didn't he or a group of the Jewish captains rise up to dethrone McCooey? Simply, there was no reason to do so. There was no resentment felt towards McCooey or the Irish captains in the club. The Jews agreed that McCooey could stay on as long as he wanted to or until he died.[26]

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[24]Sobel's captain duties paid off. McCooey called him to a private meeting. After Sobel assured McCooey he could count on his loyalty he exited with a promise of an important patronage post. When Sobel graduated law school, still a teenager, he was appointed counsel to the minority members of the Seabury Investigating Committee, or the Committee to Investigate the Affairs of the City of New York. It was through his activities on the committee that he met Irwin Steingut, who served on the Committee.

[25]Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview with author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 19 August 1987.

[26]Many other neighborhoods besides Brownsville and Crown Heights (such as Williamsburg's three assembly districts, the Fourteenth --Greenpoint and North Williamsburg-- the Fourth --the Wallabout and South Williamsburg-- and the Sixth --Upper Williamsburg) experienced a similarly effortless Irish-Jewish succession in politics. There may have been occasional primary challenges to the leader, but it was based on patronage desires not ethnic differences.

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While Sobel was adept at ringing up large Jewish Democratic pluralities in his election district, another skilllful politician broadened his horizon to include district wide power. At the age of twenty eight, Irwin Steingut won the leader's praise and reward: the party's nomination for the assembly in 1923. In that year Irwin Steingut beat the Republican assemblyman by a mere 40 votes out of several thousand cast. That victory signaled the death knell for the Republicans.[27]

Irwin Steingut and Jewish Democratic Party Activism Even with the degree of party competition that was present in Crown Heights in the 1910s, there is little evidence that John McCooey recruited or mobilized the Jewish vote. However, he did not deny them a place in his local organization once they organized them-

[27]That same year the district had its first Democratic State Senator, William Lathrop Love, who served the 8th Senate District from 1923-1932. The same was true for the Congressional seat, long held by Republicans. Andrew L. Somers, Jr, son of the Board of Education President and long time political partner of McCooey, Andrew Somers, Sr., defeated both the Republican and Socialist candidates in 1925. Somers served till 1949, when Irwin Steingut's Madison Club co-leader Edna Kelly replaced him upon his death.Edna Kelly's nomination, which was assisted by the tragic death of her husband, Madison Club president William Kelly, reflected the marvel of a balanced ticket. Long after there was an important Irish constituency to mandate it, Irwin Steingut (as Hyman Schorenstein had) kept on Irish leaders in his organization well past the time when it was necessary to do so.

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selves. When their political organization was solid and voting numbers were potent, they were recognized.

McCooey's Madison Club was the Regular Democratic Club or the leading political organization in the community, yet smaller "satellite" clubs also represented a cross section of the district. For example, the southern part of the district (which ran from Empire Boulevard on the north to Kings County Hospital on the south; from Utica Avenue to East New York Avenue, from east to west) was known then as "Pigtown" because it was mainly lots and dirt roads. Some farms did have pigs on their land. It was home to immigrant Italians who made the migration from downtown Brooklyn and the industrial areas of South Brooklyn.[28] Their respective political club, The Crown Slope Club, was led by Anthony Jordan, Sr. (originally Giordano).[29]

In eastern Crown Heights, on the border of Brownsville, upwardly mobile middle class Jews settled into Crown Heights in the 1910s and 1920s. In that section of the Eighteenth assembly district a Jewish political club was built under the initiative and lead-

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[28]South Brooklyn was the catch-all name used to describe the industrial waterfront communities of Red Hook and Carroll Gardens, including Bush Terminal.

[29]Mr. Anthony Jordan, Jr., interview by author, Cassette recording, Bayville, Long Island, New York, 19 March 1989.

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ership of Irwin Steingut. It was Steingut who was recognized by McCooey for his activities garnering the Jewish vote for the Democrats.

Steingut was at one time considered an insurgent satellite club leader. The extent of his insurgency has never been determined. But even he, with his satellite Haddingway Club, eventually made peace with McCooey and developed a very close relationship.

Irwin Steingut

Irwin Steingut was for thirty years one of the most powerful politicians and legislators in Brooklyn and in the State of New York. He represented the Eighteenth Assembly District in the New York State assembly for thirty years, serving as Democratic leader (Minority and Majority leader as well as Speaker) of that chamber from 1930 till his death in 1952. He led the Eighteenth as its district leader from 1934 through 1952. He took over the Madison Club and it became the borough's most powerful, as evinced by the many high level governmental officials Irwin Steingut was able to nominate, appoint or elect.

Irwin Steingut was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan on October 17, 1893. Irwin's father, Simon Steingut, came from Germany in the late 1880s. Simon belonged to the Tammany of his day. He was known as "The

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Mayor of Second Avenue," a title earned from his successful real estate and insurance business as well as philanthropic endeavors (Second Avenue then was well known as the center of the Yiddish theater). Irwin Steingut began in politics at his father's side. He made his first speech from the tailboard of a truck on the East Side.

Steingut's reasons for making a home in the Eighteenth Assembly district are not known. He did marry a prominent Brooklyn Jewish doctor's daughter, Rae Kaufman, from Brownsville and settled into the growing Jewish environs of Crown Heights.

As a young boy, Irwin Steingut, through his father's activities, got to know, and mingled with, political people in Manhattan. In Crown Heights he came to be recognized as a tireless leader of the Jewish community within the assembly district.

Irish and Jewish Relations in the Eighteenth Assembly District

What was Irwin Steingut's relationship with John McCooey? The Brooklyn Eagle viewed Steingut as a protege of the Brooklyn Democratic Leader. The Eagle wrote at the time of Irwin Steingut's death in 1953, "When McCooey assisted Steingut to run for the Assembly and helped bring about his election in 1923, it marked the

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beginning of his unbroken string of primary and election victories." (Steingut was never successfully challenged during his thirty year reign in the Assembly). When McCooey became seriously ill in 1933, he left instructions for Irwin Steingut to succeed him upon his death. Steingut became assembly district leader in 1934. There was no struggle for power amongst the Irish leaders of the club and Steingut. In fact, the battle for power after McCooey's death came from a Jewish leader of another satellite club in the Eighteenth assembly district, Harry Wolkof. Wolkof was resoundingly defeated by Steingut.[30]

Burton Rudnick, then a young lawyer living in the Crown Heights area, worked for Wolkof when he challenged Irwin Steingut in 1935. He went with insurgent Wolkof because of limited opportunity with the regulars, not due to any ethnic antagonism between the Irish and the Jews.

> There were too many gray heads to jump over in the Madison Club. Steingut had little opposition. Harry had a lot of people running around for him, but he was simply using it as a springboard for Steingut to give himself something. Harry was a Clerk of the Third Municipal District Court. He tried to be a threat to Steingut. It didn't work. Steingut was

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[30]Wolkof held the patronage post of City Marshall from 1921-1925, an indication of McCooey's willingness to find jobs for his Jewish captains. Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac, 1895-1929, (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Eagle Publication, 1895-1929).

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> big. So big a young lawyer like myself couldn't make headway. Steingut had no opposition. I tried to beat him for Harry in Abe Beame's election district around Empire Boulevard. I got creamed.
>
> I loved Irwin Steingut. He had me as a worker after the war one time. I helped him with the Commies who were becoming big then. They invaded the American Veterans Association (AVA); trying to take over. Irwin had us try to stop them in the Eastern Parkway Chapter of the AVA. We couldn't stop them. So the Committee disbanded. Irwin was a gentleman, very smart. What may have made McCooey and Steingut's relationship different was that McCooey was the county leader. May have given him a broader view.[31]

Irwin Steingut's son, Stanley, who followed in his father's footsteps and served in the assembly for twenty four years, said his father and entire family had only fond memories of McCooey. He described John H. McCooey as affable man.

> Sweet. Kind. Considerate. He wasn't very autocratic in any manner, shape or form; a very nice, intelligent person. My father had only the greatest affection for Mr. McCooey.[32]

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[31]Mr. Burton Rudnick, interview by author, Telephone interview, Brooklyn, New York, 30 June 1989.

[32]Mr. Stanley Steingut, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 5 December 1985. Anthony Jordan, Jr., whose father was the spokesperson for the Italian section of the district, also recalled his father having a very good relationship with McCooey. His father never felt mistreated or slighted by McCooey or the Irish. On the contrary, he was grateful to them because they recruited him into the Madison Club and convinced him of the good that he could do for his community if he participated. Moreover, Jordan remembers, "My father said McCooey recognized he had to as he brought them in, that 'I'm gonna be dealing with them sooner or later, there's going to be a new influx in that area.' The Italians had no other place to go but 'Pigtown' or Flatbush; the Jews were going to get out of their ghetto like they were

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Jerry Krase and Charles LaCerra, in their forthcoming book, Enter The Steinguts, describe how easily Irwin got the assembly nomination from McCooey.

> McCooey came to look upon Irwin as a son, but it was Steingut's mother-in-law, Mrs. Kaufman, who gave this friendship a push. Irwin's son, Stanley, relates the story of how she and his mother approached McCooey and asked, 'Why not run a Jew for Assemblyman?' McCooey responded that he had nothing against Jews and that it was a good thought.
>
> McCooey realized at that time that his assembly district was changing and that many Jews had moved into the area, spreading over from Brownsville and East New York. It would be good politics to let Steingut run.[33]

That sentiment and version of events was echoed by other Madison Club members who recalled the former county leader and his relationship to Steingut. Nathan Sobel came over to the Eighteenth assembly district from Hyman Schorenstein's Twenty Third assembly district clubhouse while still a teenager because there was little opportunity for young Jewish men to rise up within that organization; "Hymie had so many brilliant minds working for him already."[34] Schorenstein had such

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going to get out of their ghetto in New York, and they were starting to come into the district from adjacent areas." Mr. Anthony Jordan, Jr., interview by author, Cassette recording, Bayville, New York, 19 March 1989.

[33]Krase and LaCerra, 107.

[34]Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview by author.

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luminaries as Emanuel Celler, who became the district's congressman in 1923 and remained for five decades; Walter Hart, who would serve as alderman, and later a State Supreme Court Justice; Albert Martin Cohen, who served in the assembly for several years; Michael Kern, who was assistant district attorney and later a State Supreme Court Judge; and Abe Brodsky, "one of the outstanding criminal trial lawyers in the country, and never wanted to become a Supreme Court Judge because he was doing too well."[35] And there was Beadie Markowitz, a legendary district captain; considered the best of Schorenstein's talented bunch. The Eighteenth assembly district was a different story when Sobel settled there in the early 1920s.[36]

At the time he joined the Madison Club Sobel remembers that there were perhaps four Jewish members and one Jewish captain out of approximately fifty five

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[35]Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview by author.

[36]Emanuel Celler was born, May 6, 1988 in a frame house on Sumner Avenue and Floyd Street in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. He died January 15, 1981 at the age of 92. He served the House of Representatives for half a century. At the age of 34 he was elected to the House in 1922. He was defeated in the 1972 Democratic primary in a stunning upset by Elizabeth Holtzman. He chaired the House Judiciary Committee for 22 years, form 1949-1972. In 1957 he sponsored the first Civil Rights Act since Reconstruction and pressed to passage the civil rights amendments of 1960, 1964, 1965, 1968 and 1970. Obituary, New York Times, New York Daily News 16 January 1981.

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to sixty five election district captains. Sobel says he received a warm welcome from the Irish leadership. He thinks it was because he and his dedicated young Jewish Democrats were top flight organizers in the district. Sobel, Murray Feiden and their brothers, became known for their ability to produce Democratic pluralities in their Jewish election districts.

As in Brownsville, the Socialist Party, though on the wane, was still a minor force to be contended in the heavily Jewish sections of Crown Heights in the early 1920s. Competition from Norman M. Thomas gave Sobel and his cohorts a reason to go all out for their party. Victory was far from assured and the Socialists were the ones to beat. Sobel and company did it handily. In 1928 Sobel surprised himself when he turned out a winning Jewish vote for Democrat Arthur Somers, Jr., (the incumbent Congressman) defeating the Socialist's candidate, Norman Thomas, "a Socialist of the highest reputation."[37]

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[37]It is remarkable the high esteem in which the Socialists were held by the Jewish Democrats who defeated them. There was a respect for their Socialist opponents (Abraham Schiplacoff, Charles Solomon, Baruch Charney Vladeck, and August Classens to name a few) that speaks well of the positive legacy the Socialist's left on their more conservative Democratic Jewish brethren. Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview by author.

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As a county and ward leader McCooey faced infrequent intraparty challenges. Yet given the party's decentralized structure (in Brooklyn, county leaders were and still are elected by all assembly district leaders, male and female) even the weaker district leaders and election district captains have a measure of influence. And since party organizations always have members who feel they are not receiving their fair share of patronage outbreaks of disloyalty do occur. Even the most powerful county leaders have to constantly watch their back.

Madison club members recall that McCooey faced at least one particular rival in a Jewish Democratic leader in the district but that insurgency was not at all based on an ethnic grievance but instead on a personal desire for greater power and recognition from the leadership.[38]

Jewish Political Organization Abets Succession

[38]Sobel remembers that Schlossberg was an ex-prize fighter, a very likable guy, who "could have beaten McCooey with the new Jewish districts" if there was resentment of McCooey by Jewish district captains. But there wasn't. Schlossberg, like Wolkof were simply looking for more attention and rewards from the leadership. Again, there was no ethnic grievance being leveled against McCooey. Mr. Nathan Sobel, interview by author.

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It is important to state that Jewish political success was not the result of Irish mobilization of their vote. Former Madison Club members remembered in unison that during McCooey's reign a Jew in politics could become successful only if he went out and built himself a power base in the Democratic Party. That's what the satellite club system permitted. No one was going to simply offer a position to a Jewish leader. He had to work hard to achieve it.

On the other hand, even with all his diligent labor he needed the nod of the Irish if he was to truly make it to the top in the district. Irwin Steingut's organization became powerful through its diligent labors; that earned it the respect and recognition of John H. McCooey.

Samuel Berman, served as district leader in Crown Heights in the 1950s. He was active in the 1930s in the assembly district to the north of the Eighteenth, wanted to emphasize that McCooey did not "make" Irwin Steingut. Irwin Steingut made himself. As Berman recalled, McCooey wasn't as lovable a man as the Steingut family paints him to be. Plainly stated, Berman felt, "He was an anti-semitic son of a bitch." It wasn't out of the kindness of McCooey's heart that he assisted Steingut to the

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Assemblyman's post. One, McCooey had no choice. The numbers were there. And second,

> It was the work of Simon and Lena Steingut, and Rae Steingut to get Irwin elected, that made him a success. All without much help from McCooey. Irwin made Irwin a power in the community, not McCooey."[39]

It is unclear whether Steingut had much organizational support of Hyman Schorenstein. Merel Pomerantz-Glaubiger suggests that Schorenstein did look favorably at Steingut electoral efforts. Though Schorenstein's power within the party was considered to be significant chiefly within his district, his positive view of Steingut's candidacy probably helped Steingut's election chances.

Charles Bernstein, who was a Madison club member for a few years in the late 1920s, saw Steingut's ties to McCooey as extremely close. "Irwin was McCooey's errand boy. Just like Hymie was Jim Power's handyman, so he advanced."[40] The implication is obvious. McCooey made Steingut. But if that is true, as the Eagle also suggests, it speaks of a close relationship between the two leaders, and reinforces the notion that the Irish

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[39]Mr. Samuel I. Berman, interview by author, Cassette recording, 12 March 1986.

[40]Mr. Charles Bernstein, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 19 August 1987.

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sought to incorporate Jewish Democrats even if they did so in a paternalistic fashion.

Another contrary view of the succession process came from a former Irish elected official from Bushwick, a community north of the Seventeenth. Former Congressman Eugene Keogh believed Steingut got the nomination to run for the Assembly because McCooey didn't think he had a chance of winning. Keogh recalls that when Steingut became assemblyman in 1923 Jews hadn't yet represented the majority of the residents of the district. "Steingut got the nomination originally because they didn't think he could win, but he did. And he stayed in there right on. McCooey thought the Republicans were going to beat him."[41]

It may be true that Steingut's victory was a surprise to McCooey (and the nominee) considering the long time strength of the Republicans in the district. It is true that McCooey had nothing to lose and everything to gain from a Steingut victory but that should not suggest McCooey did not take Steingut's candidacy seriously. If

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[41]Mr. Eugene J. Keogh.

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McCooey was as shrewd as men remember he was, he saw the handwriting on the wall by 1920.[42]

Post Succession Relations

A testament to this transition to power, characterzed by remarkable continuity, is the cordial relations that existed between Irish and Jew in politics after the succession occurred. Overall, Jews were grateful to their Irish mentors for the various social, political and economic opportunities the Democratic party offered them and became steadfastly loyal to their Irish district and county leaders long after the Irish Democratic constituency emigrated to New York City's expanding suburbs. In addition, the Irish and Jews had great rapport at the clubhouse level. Jewish newcomers rarely challenged an Irish district leader. The Irish were sensitive and responsive to Jewish needs for political recognition and representation.

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[42]Congressman Keogh's perspective does have the benefit of his experience. He served in the Assembly (from the Twentieth assembly district, Bushwick and Ocean Hill) with Irwin Steingut for one year in 1936 before winning the areas congressional seat in 1937. He served in Congress with Andrew Somers, Jr., the congressman who served Steingut's congressional district. "Reminiscences," Congresswoman Edna Kelly, Oral History Project, Association of Former Members of Congress Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 10-11, May 1976.

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Jews also favored retaining the Irish leadership of their clubs because it was useful to do so. First of all, most of the borough's district leaders were still Irish from the 1920s until the late 1950s so it was politically astute to stay on their good side. This point was made by several former Madison Club captains. For example, Murray Feiden said that Hyman Schorenstein kept on John Lynch in his club because, "having some Irish in the club was very important. They were so predominant in politics, you needed, you wanted Irish."[43] Feiden offered a broad analogy. When he first started practicing law it was wise to have Jews serve on juries because they usually favored large cash settlements in personal injury cases. Just as you would want Jews on your jury trial you wanted the Irish in the district clubhouse, to bring approving decisions from the Irish leaders downtown for the new Jewish controlled clubhouse.

Like Hyman Schorenstein, Irwin Steingut took care of the his Irish leaders in the club after he came to power. Feiden recalls at one time his name was mentioned for a possible patronage post in the club. He wasn't interested because he was busy with a successful law

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[43]Mr. Murray Feiden, interview by author.

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practice, still he was honored to be considered. Irwin Steingut apologized to him for having to give it to an Irishman to balance patronage appointments. The district also had an Irish alderman and later an Irish city councilman. Some club presidents were Irish too. "All were congenial Irishmen, likable Irishmen....We all got along very nicely. I never saw any conflict."[44]

Anthony Jordan, Jr. agreed with Feiden's assessment of Irish-Jewish relations.

> The Italian, the Jewish person and Irish that were there still got along very well. It was a close knit, tight organization. There was no ethnic diversion....Maybe the leadership, the fellows who were at the top of it were very social conscious. Maybe we were more liberal than certain other guys....We had a section that was Negro, we had a section that was Italian, we had a section that was Jewish, one that was Irish, and yet we all seemed to gel together to work as one....Maybe it was the idea that McCooey was the county leader and he had to cater and give certain things to certain ethnic groups to keep them in line while other leaders only cared about their particular club. Irwin became the assemblyman very early.

Jordan makes another point that other former activists heartily endorse; one that is contrary to the general perception of the political machine. Membership in a particular ethnic group and ties to a political

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[44] Mr. Murray Feiden, interview by author.

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club did not assure anyone of a patronage post. You had to be a highly qualified person to rise within the Madison Club.

> It was because they had ability. You worked your way up the club ladder. The club would recognize talent. You had fellas who would sit there forever....If a leader did not appoint competent people to run the political organization, you'd have a lot of trouble.[45]

A look at the Madison Club roster indicates this view has merit. Irwin Steingut, Nat Sobel, Paul Brennan (New York State Civil Service Commissioner), Saul Corwin (New York State Commissioner of Public Works) Abe Beame (New York City Budget Director, Comptroller and Mayor) Arthur Levitt, Jr., (President of the Board of Education

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[45]Mr. Anthony Jordan, Jr., interview by author. Arthur Levitt is a shining example of the fine governmental leaders the clubhouse system produced. Levitt was born June 28, 1900. He served as a private in World War I, then went to Columbia College, graduating in 1921, and the Columbia University Law School, graduating in 1924. In 1946 he took his first political assignment, campaign manager for Assemblyman Irwin Steingut in a primary election. In 1952 he was appointed to an unsalaried post on the New York City Board of Education by Mayor Vincent R. Impelliteri, and in 1954 he was elected Board President. The voters rejected him only once, in 1961, when he was picked by Democratic leaders to run for Mayor of New York City against incumbent, Robert F. Wagner, who ran and won the Democratic primary. He served as New York State Comptroller for 24 years or six terms and built the office into a power that other politicians regarded as above politics. He retired from public life in 1978. He died May 6, 1980 at the age of 79. New York Times 7 May 1980.

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and New York State Comptroller) and many others were talented men whose abilities were recognized by the party leaders.

The Irish As Arbiters

Jewish clubhouse circles also seemed to agree that a Jewish district leader's parcelling out of patronage could easily bring about infighting and quarrels within the club. Having Irish leaders in a way prevented intraethnic jealousies from getting out of hand. The Irish were seen as somewhat impartial arbitrators since their ambitions were limited by ethnic change. That important function may have enabled the Democratic machine to survive potentially troublesome times.

Jews were able to use the clubhouse system to their advantage, much as the Irish had before them. If social mobility was accelerated and policy preferences were achieved, it didn't much matter whether the leader was Irish or Jewish. As long as the leader ministered to their needs, he was welcome to stay.

Summary

Hyman Schorenstein and Irwin Steingut benefited from a similarity of circumstances: the combination of

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favorable demographic patterns (the burgeoning growth of Jewish communities at a time when the Irish moved out of central Brooklyn to Brooklyn's newer outlining communities and neighboring suburbs), interparty competition between the Democrats, Republicans, Municipal Ownership Leaguers and the Socialists, (who all vied for the Jewish vote), a decentralized party structure that granted local units or clubhouses a degree of independence and discerning Irish leaders who paved the road for the transition to Jewish power. The Jewish leadership maintained civil relations with their former Irish bosses and nominated a balanced ethnic ticket in the club even though the ward was overwhelmingly Jewish. Ethnic political succession, defined as the process by which a new ethnic group displaces a previously dominant and established ethnic group, occurred with only few disruptions for Jews in the Brooklyn Democratic party organization during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Perhaps most crucial to the success of ethnic political succession in Brownsville was the existence of extraordinary interparty competition between the Socialist Party and the Fusion of Democrats and Republicans. It was the "shotgun behind the door" that assured Jews' quick elevation to local power.

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Socialism, progressivism, and liberalism remained an important part of the American Jewish tradition. With the rise of the Communist Party's local branches in the 1930s, the American Labor Party's electoral efforts from the middle 1930s through the 1940s, the Liberal Party's birth (as a result of the split in the American Labor Party) and leading third party status in New York in the 1950s and 1960s,[46] Jewish radicalism found a political outlet, and continues to.[47]

Jewish radicalism had the unintended consequence of assisting Jewish mobility within Democratic party ranks. In the Jewish political succession experience in

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[46]The Liberal Party gave Jews clout through bargaining power with Democrats in return for not entering a separate slate or allying with the Republican party.

[47]A conference sponsored by Tikkun, a magazine founded in 1986 as a left wing Jewish alternative to Commentary, supports the contention of Jewish neoconservatives (expressed by Irving Kristol) and academics (Prof. Steven M. Cohen of Queens College, CUNY) that Jewish liberalism remains intense amongst all American Jews, even those in the upper-middle and upper class income brackets. The conference revealed that tensions between religious and secular Jews continues over numerous issues, such as whether or not to support Jesse Jackson's campaigns for the Presidency and Zionism.

Herbert Gutman argued in his pioneering essay, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America," that cultural values do not readily metamorphose or vanish. Gutman showed how the belief systems of ethnic groups linger, even through the turbulence of industrialization and urbanization, and attempts at assimilation and acculturation by the prevailing ideology.

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New York City, a radical and independent politics assisted their rise to public and party offices in numbers fully equal to their proportion in the city's population.[48]

In Crown Heights the sweeping demographic situation, coupled with the good sense of county and district leader John H. McCooey to almost immediately recognize the talented and dedicated young Jewish political leaders in the community that assured that district of a efficient transition to Jewish rule. Irwin Steingut built a first rate clubhouse operation which brought him (and after him his son Stanley) and the Crown Heights community statewide clout from the late 1930s through the late 1970s.

Their job was made easier by a party structure that gave great autonomy to assembly districts of the Democratic Party. The decentralized nature of the

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[48]This raises an important question: Did blacks benefit from a similar radical or independent politics, which required white ethnic political leaders to take their political potential seriously, or did the marriage of Afro-Americans to the Democratic party (and the Republican party's weak attempts to garner their participation) set the stage for less than a smooth transition to Democratic party power in Brooklyn? Martin Shefter, "Political Incorporation and the Extrusion of the Left: The Organization of American Groups Into American Politics." Studies in American Political Development, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

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political party organization in New York City, which grants assembly district leaders substantial power (e.g.,, to elect the county leaders) facilitated the rise of new ethnic leadership at the neighborhood and county level.

In the 1910s and 1920s resurgent nativism probably also helped the Irish and Jews to forge a common bond that went beyond the narrow confines of ethnic rivalry. Their ethnic solidarity was rewarded with the rise of urban liberalism and a sovereign Democratic party in the post World War I. decades.[49]

Moreover, Deborah Dash Moore has written, "Irish Catholics, who persisted as an ethnic group in the city, established protective precedents for Jews who wanted to preserve Jewish group life. The way that Jews recast the Democratic Party into an instrument of self perpetuation marks their important contribution to Jewish and American history."[50]

Moore added that the sheer size of the Jewish communities in New York City gave Jews tremendous psychological security. In middle class communities like Crown Heights, their rapid collective social mobility

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[49]See Chapter 2 for a discussion of nativism's unifying effect on American immigrant groups.

[50]Moore, 10.

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united their ethnic group interests with those of American urban middle classes. Movement rapidly into the middle class reduced class conflict which had strained the sense of community among first generation immigrant Jews. Furthermore, political activities gave an ideological coherence to Jewish ethnic group life. Combining a support for urban welfare measures, civil rights, and civil liberties with internationalism, second generation Jews elaborated a form of liberalism as a distinctive American faith. They equated their understanding of liberalism with the American Democratic party, and beyond the party with the American dream itself.[51]

Conclusion

In conclusion, there appears to have been no great struggle for power within the Democratic party along Irish-Jewish lines. Schorenstein and Steingut's success within the party did not represent an ethnic insurgency, except in so far as they reflected greater Jewish representation within the party. Irish accommodation to the new demographic reality permitted the machine to suc-

[51]Moore, Chapter One, "New York Jews," passim.

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cessfully weather ethnic succession in Brooklyn, at least in these once overwhelmingly Irish districts.[52]

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[52]The Italians, by their own admission, were less fortunate than the Jews in several Brooklyn assembly districts. James V. Mangano was the district leader in South Brooklyn for more than thirty years. He recalled how the Italians especially resented the Irish's insensitivity to their religious, cultural and political needs. Mr. James V. Mangano, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 September 1987.

Meade Esposito, the former district leader and Brooklyn County leader from Ocean Hill and East New York is reported to have had battles with his Irish predecessor, Harry Morr. Morr is reported to have told Meade that he'd never amount to anything because he was Italian. Meade never forgot the insult and defeated Morr in the 1960 Democratic primary for district leadership in the Fifth assembly district.

Former district leader Ross Di Lorenzo's conflicts with the longtime Irish district leader of Bay Ridge, Harry Mortimer, were also reported to be ethnically related, however, Mr. Di Lorenzo's rhetorical prowess was largely responsible for many of the "unfortunate encounters," between them. Still, it appears Italian-Americans met with greater resistance from the Irish thanthe Jews in Brooklyn.

There are several hypotheses for explaining why this problem existed. One was the economic competition for jobs between Irish and Italians in the South Brooklyn waterfront area. The Italians replaced the Irish on the docks partially because they were hired at lower wages than the current Irish employees. Religiously, ethnic succession came slowly in the Brooklyn and Queens Roman Catholic archdiocese, where Irish and Italians wrestled to control the nature of religious services. Moreover, because Southern Italians came to America with the hope of making a couple of dollars and returning home to start a business (which large numbers did) and as a consequence many traveled back and forth from Brooklyn to Italy, Italian political and neighborhood clubhouse development was delayed. For more on the economic competition between the two groups during the early decades of the century see Ronald Bayor, Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941 Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978; Jerry Krase, "The Missed Step:

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Italian-Americans and Brooklyn Politics," in The Interaction of Italians and Irish in American Politics. ed. Francis X. Femminella, With an Introduction by Monsignor Geno Baroni. Vol. 16. (Staten Island, New York: The American Italian Historical Association, 1978);Thomas Kessner, The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York, 1880-1915, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Also Mr. Sebastione Leone, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 28 October 1987; Mr. Joseph Esquirol, Cassette recording, Mattituck, Long Island, New York, 2 September 1987. Further research on this subject would be welcome.

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CHAPTER 4

BERTRAM L. BAKER AND THE RISE OF THE BLACK MACHINE IN CENTRAL BROOKLYN, 1933-1964

Introduction

It has been asserted in the recent literature on the machine and ethnic and racial succession that the conditions for succession in American cities were different for white ethnics and nonwhite minority groups, such as blacks and latinos. The Brooklyn illustration defies the prevailing view.

To understand why the process of racial succession in the political party system of Brooklyn unfolded in a relatively unruffled manner, we must take into account the conditions that make succession likely: a fast rate of demographic change, extensive interparty and intraparty competition, a decentralized political party structure, and highly capable ethnic and racial group leadership. These elements were present during the 1940s and 1950s in Brooklyn's largest black community, Bedford Stuyvesant. Black political participation in the Democratic party during those years was fundamental to the party's vigor.

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The strain in the literature on the urban political machine and racial succession that concludes the machine used every means available to block the political aspirations of the black community for a share of party and community power receives little or no support from the Brooklyn experience. It challenges this notion, particularly in the case of the first attempt by blacks to elect one of their own. The first challenge succeeded more readily than the second, yet both were more successful than what blacks experienced in other major American cities, including Chicago and Philadelphia and Boston.

A Short History of Black Political and Economic Status in Nineteenth Century Brooklyn

Unlike the Southern and Eastern European immigrants who came to the United States in large numbers during the 1880-1920 period, blacks have resided in Brooklyn (Kings County) for three hundred years. Regardless of their population size, blacks were relegated to second class citizenship in America. After the abolition of slavery, Jim Crow laws disfranchised blacks from the American political process. Until the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution on March 30, 1870, most blacks in New York were unable to vote. After 1870, they continued to play a minor role in the

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major political parties in the New York City due to the negligible size of the black population.

When the industrial revolution came to Brooklyn, in the middle nineteenth century, blacks did not benefit from the growth of semi-skilled and skilled manufacturing jobs. In New York, the newest immigrants, first Germans and Irish, later, Italians and Jews, took these highly sought after jobs. Blacks were restricted to the lower paying positions in domestic and personal service. Moreover, capitalists used blacks as strikebreakers. Blacks came to believe that they could get into a unionized industry only through strike breaking. Labor unions played a major role in excluding blacks from the organized work force. In sum, race and ethnicity determined economic entry; blacks were concentrated in lower wage, unskilled labor. While Jews and Italians found economic opportunities in an unfolding and expanding industrial economy, the impact of European immigration was deleterious to black socio-economic aspirations.[1]

During the nineteenth century, blacks learned that economic and political opportunities for whites did not necessarily mean gains for blacks. For example, in 1821,

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[1]Thomas Kessner, The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York, 1880-1915, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 23, 169.

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when an amendment to the New York State Constitution removed the two hundred and fifty dollar property qualification for white voters, it retained this limitation for black voters, disenfranchising blacks.

As a host of social historians have discovered, blacks did not accept their plight passively. They educated themselves, protested and organized to create an institutional structure that was essentially separate from white life. Nevertheless, blacks were forced to live on the margin of poverty, and received little substantive political recognition from either major political party leaders.[2]

The Development of Black Participation in Brooklyn Politics

Black participation in the borough's politics goes back one hundred and fifty years. In 1855 the Colored Political Association was formed by "local black property holders of Kings County....for the purpose of consolidating their political power as voters, and bringing that power to bear on each political contest in such a way as shall best serve their interest tending to bring

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[2]Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts, (New York: International Publishers, 1969); Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made, (New York: Pantheon, 1974). John O. Killens. ed., The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

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them just and equal rights as native born Americans...."[3]

By and large, the church was the center of the black social structure. The first black church in Brooklyn was built in the downtown area on High Street. The High Street African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church was completed February 7, 1818. "It became a station or terminal on the Underground Railroad." By 1850 a great many black churches were established in Brooklyn.[4]

The church, however, always carefully guarded its position of considerable autonomy from white society and often did not seek a marriage with political organizational efforts that could have threatened its cherished position. The establishment of separate houses of worship for blacks gave them an unusual opportunity to develop leadership, John Hope Franklin wrote:

> Cut off from participation in the political life of the community and enjoying only a very limited amount of educational opportunities, their religious institutions served as training ground for many types of activities. Although Negroes frequently took the initiative in bringing about separation, it appears that such steps were not taken until it was

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[3]Harold X. Connolly, A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn: Bedford Stuyvesant, (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 13.

[4]Society For The Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford Stuyvesant History, Weeksville, Then and Now: The Search To Discover, The Efforts to Preserve Memories of Self in Brooklyn, New York, (Brooklyn, New York, 1983), 10.

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> obvious that they were not welcome in the white churches. This keen sensitivity to mistreatment and the consequent organization of separate and independent religious organizations of their own were to be the cause for the church occupying such an important place in Negro life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[5]

Even with a solidified black communal structure, the lack of a large concentrated population permitted white party leaders for the most part to ignore their call for political participation and improved economic conditions.

Changing Demographic Patterns in Brooklyn

> There would only be isolated blocks, or two or three block areas, that were black. When I was a kid there wasn't even 1 per cent black....All of the borough's neighborhoods were white, with a sprinkling of blacks in some areas until the Second World War.[6]

Before World War I, Brooklyn's black residents were concentrated in small pockets in the downtown or Bridge Street area; in Weeksville, located within Bed-

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[5]John Hope Franklin, From Slavery To Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, Fifth Edition, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1980), 112-113.

[6]Arthur Bramwell, a life long resident of Bedford Stuyvesant, and also the area's black Republican Party leader from 1954 until 1987, grew up in Bedford Stuyvesant during the teens and twenties, and was active as a youth in the community's civic life. Mr. Arthur Bramwell, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 7 April 1989.

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ford Stuyvesant; in Fort Greene; and in Bedford Stuyvesant (primarily along lower Atlantic Avenue and Fulton Street).[7] James Shaw recalled that the Bridge Street area was:

> .....primarily the area where there were very few professionals and mostly a servant class of people. They were the servants who worked for the people like the Jeromes and Winston Churchill's relatives and the fellow that built the bridge, Roebling. They lived all along Brooklyn Heights. Those co-ops and condos were really grand mansions along the way.[8]

After the First World War, blacks

> ....sought housing near to the shipbuilding companies in the Navy Yard, and the factories along the waterfronts. The black migrants occupied the cold water flats in the tenements on Fulton and Lexington Avenue, and south of Atlantic Avenue between Fourth Avenue and Bond Street.[9]

During the early 1920s, when Congress restricted European immigration, the need for cheap labor was met by the local black population. Many blacks, though, remained employed as domestics in the homes of the old

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[7]See map of Brooklyn Wards, 1896-1906 in Appendix D. The Bridge Street area falls within the 4th and 5th Wards; Weeksville, the 25th Ward; Fort Greene, the 20th Ward; and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Wards 7, 21 and 23).

[8]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 7 June 1988.

[9]Thomas Russell Jones, "Bedford Stuyvesant In The Year 2000: A Black Community in Transition," (Unpublished Paper delivered as a lecture before the congregation of Siloam Presbyterian Church, Sunday 9 August 1987), 1-3.

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stock Yankee elite in such wealthy areas as Brooklyn Heights, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Prospect Heights\Park Slope, Kensington and Bedford Stuyvesant. By the twenties, blacks had already begun to expand their core along the Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue axis leading to Bedford Stuyvesant.[10]

Although the black population in Brooklyn surged forward during "The Great Migration" after the War, the black community did not advance significantly as a percentage of the borough's population between 1880 and 1920.[11] They had risen to a mere 4 per cent of the 1940 borough population. Not until after World War II period did blacks achieve a critical mass in Brooklyn.[12]

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[10]City-wide, the black populace was also small. Before 1910 blacks never constituted more than 3 per cent of New York City's population.

[11]See Table I. on page 10. (Note to pre-doctoral defense reader. The page number will change after the entire dissertation is printed in cumulative order.

[12]The black community in Harlem had a similar experience. Until the numbers of black families grew, and before they were concentrated in a few assembly districts, there was no base for significant political power. As Edwin Lewinson has written, between 1870 and 1900, no blacks "were elected in New York at this time because they were not concentrated in sufficiently large numbers in any one district and because the vast majority of Negroes were Republican and the city government was normally Democratic....For New York Negroes elective office had to await the migration of large numbers to Harlem during World War I." Edwin Lewinson, Black Politics in New York City, (Twayne Publishers, 1974), 17.

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The small size of the black population in Brooklyn hindered the efforts of blacks seeking political recognition from both the Republican and Democratic parties. The unintended effect of the mass immigration of Southern and Eastern Europeans to Brooklyn at the turn of the century was to water down the black community's potential voting clout.

Harold X. Connolly concludes that the prime demographic reality of Brooklyn during the years 1870-1920 was assimilation of European immigrants into political and economic life, not local blacks. Blacks did not follow in the upwardly mobile footsteps of Jews and Italians. They remained largely a scant, poor and deprived people, toiling in menial and low paying jobs. They were unable to exert much political influence in the borough.[13]

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[13]Connolly, 74-75.

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Table I.
BROOKLYN POPULATION:YEAR, TOTAL POPULATION, WHITE, BLACK PUERTO RICAN BREAKDOWN AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

Year	Total Pop.	Wht	Black	PR	% of Tot.
1870	396,099		4,931		1.2
1880	566,663		8,095		1.4
1890	797,397		10,287		1.3
1900	1,166,582		18,367		1.6
1910	1,634,351		22,869		1.4
1920	2,018,356		31,912		1.5
1930	2,560,401		68,921		2.7
1940	2,698,285		107,263		4.0
1950	2,738,000	2,485,000	210,570	40,000	7.6
1960	2,795,000	2,245,000	370,000	180,000	13.3
1960*	2,627,319	2,245,859	371,405	180,114	14.1
1965	2,395,000	1,835,000	510,000	250,000	21.3
1970*	2,602,012	1,905,788	656,194	271,769	25.0[14]

[14] U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census Reports, Censuses of 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960. Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915, (Washington, D.C., 1918), p. 101; U.S. Census Bureau, Negroes in the United States, 1920-1932, (Washington, D.C., 1935), 32,55,62;U.S. Census Bureau, Census Track Data on Population and Housing: New York City, (New York, 1942);Connolly, 75-76;New York City Planning Commission. "Population Reports." New York City, New York, 1965; The asterisk refers to: Community Council of Greater New York, Characteristics of the Population in New York City Health Areas, 1970, vols. 1-4, (Municipal Research Library, New York City, New York, 1970).

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The Heart of Black Brooklyn, Bedford Stuyvesant Remembered

> I remember these houses fifty years ago when the owner had their own carriage house and the butlers wouldn't let you in the front door unless you put your card in the silver plate.[15]

Nineteenth Century Bedford Stuyvesant

In the nineteenth century Bedford Stuyvesant was,

> The site of domestic tranquility and updated housing....Houses went up in the 1860s. Realtors waxed eloquent over its beauty, rusticity, seclusion, schools, churches and stores....Gothic styled houses with the most modern improvements such as gas, hot water, marble buffets in the dining room plus plumbing rendered Bedford, 'the garden of Brooklyn': paradise regained for the middle class. Residents opposed the introduction of streetcar lines even though it promised to measurably improve commutation to downtown work sites.[16]

By the 1880s, Bedford Stuyvesant was predominately a German and English Protestant community with a good

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[15]A Bedford Stuyvesant resident recalled the old neighborhood for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 27 July 1954, quoted in Lewinson, 83.

[16]Joe Dorinson, "The Suburbanization of Brooklyn: Persistence Without Plan," (Unpublished Paper, presented at Hofstra University, 6 March 1988).

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sized Irish population as well. In the first half of the twentieth century, Bedford, the more downtown section of this community was

> A prosperous, homeowning, middle class neighborhood, with some large houses set in gardens and many one family brownstones or whitestone houses of the three or four floor and street level basement type. The uptown or Stuyvesant section contained more modest homes. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, much of the inexpensive housing was found in the flats over the stores along the main business streets - Fulton Street, Atlantic Avenue, Gates, Sumner and Myrtle Avenues.[17]

According to Eleanora A. Schoenebaum,[18] during the 1920s the most dramatic outward movement to Brooklyn's new suburban ring communities, such as Flatlands, Sheepshead Bay and Canarsie, came from the Bedford area. Proportionally, more people were moving outward from this area than from the borough as a whole.

Bedford residents comprised only 25 per cent of the

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[17]The WPA Guide To New York City: The Federal Writers' Project Guide To 1930s New York, (New York: Random House, 1982), 461. Bedford Stuyvesant is generally considered to be the area bounded by the following streets and avenues: from Washington Avenue on the West, Ralph Avenue on the East; Lafayette Avenue on the north and Atlantic Avenue on the south. This region also fell with Health Area's 13, 20, 21, 28, 30, and 36. For maps of Brooklyn Communities by Health Areas, 1950 and Brooklyn Health Area Districts and Sub-Districts see Appendix E. "Robert Kennedy's Bedford Stuyvesant Legacy," Jack Newfield, New York Magazine, (16 December 1968), passim.

[18]Eleanora A. Schoenebaum, "Emerging Neighborhoods: The Development of Brooklyn's Fringe Areas, 1850-1930" (Ph.D. diss., (Columbia University, 1977).

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> total 1920 sample, yet they accounted for 41.5 per cent of those moving outward. Those leaving the section were replaced by the poor, mainly blacks, who settled in the Bedford area in large numbers.[19]

The construction of the Eighth Avenue Independent Subway Line (IND) at the turn of the century facilitated the growth of black Bedford Stuyvesant by making the commute to Manhattan easier. Ironically, the white community, fearful of migrating black families, had fought for and won the construction of an underground subway to replace the old above ground train in the early 1930s. They hoped modernization would provide incentive for white residents, who were now fleeing in droves, to stay. The Bedford Stuyvesant community had become a less desirable section to the white middle class now that black families were moving in.[20]

By the 1930s, The WPA Guide to New York City description of the area reflected Bedford Stuyvesant's changing demographic composition.

> [It is] a flat region of brownstone fronts and two

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[19]Ibid., 221.

[20]In the 1930s a combination of factors explain white flight. There was the real question of an inadequate mass transit situation. Additionally, the old nineteenth century housing stock was in need of repair. The brownstone houses, though still gorgeous, had an outmoded architecture. For example, they were blessed and cursed with large rooms, which in the past had required servants to care for the residence. All of these reasons notwithstanding, racial prejudice was the key to the white exodus.

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> story homes lying east of Nostrand Avenue between Fulton and Broadway, contains the city's second largest Negro population. A few imposing church structures, the homes of some old families, and St. John's University are all that remain of a once prosperous middle class neighborhood. The poorer Negroes, many of them on relief, are largely concentrated in such business and shopping centers as Gates and Sumner Avenues, Fulton and Jefferson Streets, Flushing, Lexington, and Myrtle Avenues--districts which for poverty and squalor are as bad as the worst areas of Harlem.[21]

Still even with its small, isolated sections of poverty, Bedford Stuyvesant remained a middle class neighborhood of one and two family homes. Less than half of the area's housing was made up of multi-family dwellings.[22]

Among whites, the image of Bedford Stuyvesant usually evokes thoughts of a ghetto, ravaged by slum dwellings, overwhelmed by wrenching poverty. The community has indeed had and still has deep pockets of deprivation and dilapidated housing, which ran along the commercial avenues. Nevertheless, the neighborhood's middle class character does not fit the white stereotype of the area. Richard A. Brennan, President of the Breevort Savings Bank during the 1950s and 1960s, was a close political ally of Bertram Baker. Brennan felt com-

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[21]Ibid., p. 461.

[22]Community Council of Greater New York, "Bedford Stuyvesant," Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources, vol. 2. (New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, September, 1959), 98-137.

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pelled to respond to a series of articles by the New York Mirror in August of 1965 entitled "Inside the Bedford-Stuyvesant Jungle;" the articles certified the popularly held impression of Bedford Stuyvesant. Brennan acknowledged that the community did have serious problems but argued that the

> newspaper's 'probe' related to probably not more than 5 per cent of the residents of the section. Therefore, as perhaps 95 per cent were beclouded by implication, I wonder would the Mirror consider setting forth the other side of the picture?[23]

Brennan wrote a nine page response to the articles that presented a more balanced picture of the neighborhood. He describes a community of hard working and hard saving people who were able to make their mortgage payments by subdividing and remodeling brownstones into several apartments. As a result it did become a more populous community yet it remained as stable a community as any in the city. These were and are,

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[23]Richard A. Brennan, "A Look at the Bedford Stuyvesant community by an Insider." (Published as a Community Service by the Breevort Bank, undated; received by the New York City Municipal Reference Library, June 23, 1966). It would have been fascinating to hear Mr. Brennan's response to the view that real estate developers, insurance companies and banks share much responsibility for the "problems" mentioned through the unscrupulous practices of redlining and blockbusting in Bedford Stuyvesant's recent history. Why was there a need for the black operated Paragon Credit Union (from the early thirties until the middle eighties), if banks were adequately serving the area?

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> ....serious, self respecting, socially adequate families. They were proud to be in possession of sound property in a central area accessible to cheap public transportation. It follows that they were and are zealous in taking care of their purchases. From the banking standpoint, I gladly assert that their record of living up to their contractual obligation is as good as that of any.[24]

Black Reminiscences of Bedford Stuyvesant

Gardiner Taylor has been the pastor of Concord Baptist Church, Bedford Stuyvesant's largest and wealthiest religious institution for more than forty years. He recalls,

> Bedford Stuyvesant was a new black community. Blacks were still moving into Bedford Stuyvesant....Concord Baptist's congregation had been on Adelphi Street, which would be closer to Fort Greene, and when the Black tide....moved into this area, this congregation moved here.
>
> This was a very stable black community when I came here in 1946. Many people who lived in Brooklyn had come from Harlem, because this was a community of homes, the old brownstones....a middle class community, a self consciously middle class community....And the optimism and hopefulness of this community and the congregation were both very pronounced.
>
> The previous pastor was here 26 years and died early at 52, Dr. Adams....under his leadership this church became a center, maybe the religious center of this community....Bedford Stuyvesant had been a different community from Harlem, much more....I don't want to say conservative but a much more cautious community, much less diverse than Harlem. Number one, Brooklyn

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[24]Ibid.,

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> Black people were, so many of them were homeowners.[25]

Josephine Scott, a longtime community member, remembers the area she lived in as solidly Irish with middle class white and black homeowners. When she moved in during the late thirties the area was mostly white. She didn't have more than two of three black peers in school with her.

Josephine Bravo, also a longtime resident, described Bedford Stuyvesant in 1947 as a lower middle class black area with a few white people around. Those who remained were old and in the process of moving. She didn't remember young white families there.

> Bedford Stuyvesant was very peaceful, very quiet, and a very nice family neighborhood. The brownstone houses were all well kept. They were owner occupied. Of the black homeowners some were postal employees some had steady civil service jobs. They were able to buy homes for small amounts of money. Well built homes, well equipped dwellings were sold during the depression years at depressed prices. At that time it was alot to pay $9,000-$10,000. The homes weren't run down. There were teachers and all kinds of professionals who were starting out. The older black families there could be called the backbone of the old Brooklyn black society....[26]

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[25]Mr. Gardiner Taylor, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 27 July 1988. Edwin Lewinson adds: "Many black people who had the money moved to the more roomy city of Brooklyn. Brooklyn remained the home of most upper class Negroes for half a century." Lewinson, 47.

[26]Mrs. Josephine Bravo, interview by author, Cassette recording, Baltimore, Maryland, 21 May 1988.

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The Tiny Black Population of Brooklyn Held Back Political Opportunity

Even with the phenomenal rate of black advancement in Bedford Stuyvesant in the early decades of the century, by 1940 Bedford Stuyvesant was still a polyglot neighborhood.[27] Parts were heavily Jewish (25 per cent), Italian (15 per cent), German and Irish (25 per cent), black (25 per cent) and even native white Protestant families were not uncommon (10 percent).[28] The area just south of Fulton Street, centered about Revere Place, saw a dramatic racial change in the 1940s. Charles Sherwood, a resident of Revere Place for nearly fifty years recalled that he was the second black family to settle on the block in 1941. By 1950 the entire block became black. The same was true for surrounding streets and avenues. Only in the early 1940s did blacks move south across Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue into what is called the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn.[29]

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[27]From 1910-1920 the borough increase was 66 per cent and from 1920-1930, 115 per cent. Yet in Bedford, the black population burgeoned 584.6 per cent from 1920 to 1930 (from 4,596 to 31,376). From 1930 to 1940 the black population of Bedford-Stuyvesant doubled again to 68,921.

[28]The Community Council of Greater New York, "Bedford Stuyvesant."

[29]Mr. Charles Sherwood, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 May 1988.

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Brooklyn blacks were residentially concentrated in Bedford Stuyvesant, which at the turn of the century was known as the Twenty Third Ward, and also as the Seventeenth assembly district (until the 1954 reapportionment which created the Sixth assembly district for the first black Democratic district leader, Bertram Baker). In 1900 40 per cent of Brooklyn's 18,367 blacks resided in Bedford Stuyvesant. By 1940, Bedford Stuyvesant contained 61 percent of the borough's black population. In the 1950s, however blacks overspillled its boundaries. By 1957, with the process of expansion well underway, only 54 per cent of Brooklyn's blacks resided in Bedford Stuyvesant. Crown Heights to the south, and Ocean Hill, Brownsville and East New York to the East now began to house the swelling black population of the borough.

The growth of the black population beyond Bedford Stuyvesant during the 1950s can be explained by the availability of public housing in other neighborhoods to low income families along with the desire for and ability to pay for, better housing in less crowded areas among the higher income families.

Although concentrated in one community for the first five decades of the century, blacks did not become a majority of its population until 1950, which helps to explain why black political progress was slow until the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, just before blacks

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reached majority status, Bertram Baker became the districts assemblyman. [30]

By 1957, however, the transition was truly complete, with almost two thirds of Bedford Stuyvesant claiming African-American or African-Caribbean heritage (the community population was 155,000 in 1955), rising to 85 per cent in 1960 and 90 per cent by 1968. In 1957, J. Daniel Diggs was elected the region's city councilman.

The Political Allegiance of Blacks in New York City and Brooklyn, 1900-1940

Black Republicanism

From Reconstruction until the New Deal, the party affiliation of most blacks rested squarely with the Republicans. However, blacks began to leave the Republican party in New York City as early as the late nineteenth century. Their membership in the Democratic party

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[30]Albert Murray, who sold real estate in the area in the late 1940s recounts: "After 1946, we had mostly American soldiers who were returning from the South coming here. That's who we sold to mostly. In 1946 it wasn't predominantly black, it was changing. You had pockets of blacks that developed there, right around Nostrand and Franklin Avenues and that little pocket there, but up past Sumner Avenue hadn't changed that much." Mr. Albert Murray, interview by author, Cassette recording, East Stroudsburg, PA, 9 July 1988.

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was consummated during the Great Depression with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency.

In the 1880s, after several promised appointments to high governmental posts were withdrawn by the white Republican leadership in Manhattan, some black political leaders took what was considered a radical step and joined the Democratic Party; the party that only forty years earlier battled abolitionists in the city.

A small but growing minority of blacks became Democrats. As early as the 1890, eight black Democratic clubs were formed in at least three different assembly districts in Manhattan. The Democratic party welcomed black participation and by 1898, the United Colored Democracy was organized, marking the beginning of the first permanent organization of black Democrats.[31]

Tammany's Response

In the highly competitive party system of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth in New York City, Tammany leader Richard Croker, and his successor, Charles F. Murphy, embraced votes of any color and gladly accepted blacks' support. Edwin Lewinson writes,

....at first the Tammany leader was skeptical. He

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[31]Lewinson, 42.

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> reminded them that Negro leaders had often promised votes, but few were forthcoming on Election Day. He sent them to the manager of the Van Wyck campaign, whose response was similar and who sent them to the leader of the district with the largest Negro population. The district leader said that he would gladly accept their support, since he was hoping to elect an assemblyman in a district which was normally Republican. He offered to furnish the Negroes with a clubhouse and to pay them for their services. Dr. Roberts replied that they were not primarily interested in money, but in jobs 'just like white men, and not all cuspidor-cleaners.' This request caused the leader to hesitate, but after getting the consent of Croker, he accepted the Negro support on these terms.[32]

Croker told the first meeting of the United Colored Democracy, "We treat colored people in proportion to their work, and give them patronage in accordance with their merit and representation, and that we will do for you. You understand organization as well as we do. If you don't, come to headquarters and we will be glad to give you all the information in our power....."[33]

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[32]Lewinson, 44.

[33]Lewinson, 44. For a more jaundiced view of Croker and the United Colored Democracy, see Ira Katznelson's Black Men, White Cities: Race, Politics, and Migration in the United States, 1900-1930, and Britain, 1948-1968, (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 84. Katznelson argued that from 1900 until 1930 the white party elites in Manhattan allowed blacks to receive some patronage in return for black votes. Overall, however, the terms of political participation, and the critical structural decisions that limited and shaped black behavioral possibilities, were made by the white elite. In sum, blacks did not have independently organized territorial control; their rewards came from white leaders who could withdraw prestige and patronage at a whim.

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The Democrats quickly met the black community's pressing need for what Mary White Ovington called, "steady decent work." She added, "the number of Negroes employed by the city almost equalled their percentage of the city's population," after their turn towards Tammany.[34]

The New York Age hailed Tammany Boss Charles F. Murphy upon his death in 1924 as a man for whom the black community had great respect. He "increased the places opened to the race in the city service, and it was with his approval that they grew in importance...The moral effect of this attitude on the part of the head of a great political organization governing the greatest city in the world cannot be overstated. It imbued all his followers with the same humanizing spirit of broadness and liberality." Murphy's motive may have been political, writes Lewinson, "but the overall effect was to make good will."[35]

The Brooklyn Republican Experience

In Brooklyn, Black Republicans also began to switch their allegiance to the Democrats as events similar to those taking place in Manhattan gave rise to

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[34]Lewinson, 46.

[35]Lewinson, 61.

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a black presence in the Brooklyn Democratic party. In one instance, a prominent black lawyer and insurgent Republican party leader, Franklin W. Morton, Sr., ran against the regular Republican organization for the district leadership in Brooklyn Heights in 1920. It was a particularly bold step because Morton had obtained a valuable patronage position as an Assistant United States Shipping Board Attorney in Manhattan. His son, Franklin W. Morton, Jr., who recently retired from a thirty year career on the bench in Brooklyn's State Supreme Court recounts:

> A good friend of my grand mother, (Verina Morton Jones, who graduated from the Medical College of Pennsylvania) was Mary White Ovington, a very prominent white woman. At one time her family owned the St. George Hotel and Ovington Jewelers.[36]
>
> My father ran a campaign without any photographs of himself. The white women canvassed the area so my father won by several hundred votes. Then it became known that he was black and he lost by the paper ballots. The final decision was that he lost by one vote.[37]

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[36]Mary White Ovington was a leader of that branch of the Progressive movement that "showed deep concern for the welfare of the Negro people." She became "the first prominent New Yorker to devote herself to the improvement of all aspects of Negro life in New York City, and eventually the entire nation." She was a founder of the NAACP, and worked tirelessly in the struggle for black people's rights. Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: New York, 1890-1930 (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 53-62.

[37]Mr. Franklin Morton, Jr., interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 17 February 1988.

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Morton soured on the Republicans and joined the Democrats. As in the case of Tammany, the Brooklyn organization was open to black participation. Morton joined Frank Quale's First assembly district club in downtown Brooklyn. Franklin Sr. and Franklin Jr. were the only two blacks in the club at the time. According to Frank, Jr., his father and Quale, and some of the other Irish club members had a good relationship over the years.[38]

His father quickly became a captain of an election district that was black and Italian. He had previously worked as a lawyer in the area and had many Italian clients. Frank Jr's overall assessment of Quale and the Democratic club was very positive and very impressive. Impressive because the political leaders of the day were

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[38]The relationship was so good that when Quale was the general manager of Gallaghers Steak House in Manhattan, Frank Jr., used to stop by there occasionally and have a drink with him. Later, when Frank Jr., was at Long Island University in Brooklyn and no longer a member of the club, Frank Quale, who became Fire Commissioner of New York City and Postmaster in Brooklyn, did him a favor and got him a job at the Alien Registration Department as an interviewer and a printer during the early years of the Second World War. Ibid.

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accessible at the club.[39]

Morton switched to the Democrats, and many black Republicans were not far behind. Just as Morton found the Democratic leader from the district, an Irishman, Quale, open to his participation in the clubhouse, the same was true for blacks in Bedford Stuyvesant.

The Brooklyn Democratic Party's Response

The problem with the Tammany sponsored United Colored Democracy, the first black Democratic organization in Manhattan, was that its leaders were appointed from above, not elected from the black community. Its power and influence resulted from friendships with and approval of the white dominated Republican and Democratic party structure.

The United Colored Democracy was absent from Brooklyn politics. However, its rough equivalent in both parties did exist. Both parties in Brooklyn organized separate black political organizations. The Republican party black political leader in Brooklyn from 1910-1940

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[39]A recurrent theme in interviews with all former Brooklyn political leaders was how close a citizen could get to the elected officials and party leaders of the day in the old clubhouses. Morton felt, "Today, you can't get that close contact. He'd (the leader) take notes on your problems. In those days the club could really help people with food or coal. In that sense it impressed me very much....They were closer to people in those days, did more in those days." Ibid.

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was George Wibecan, a respected member of the community. Lewinson writes,

> Wibecan held a patronage position at the Brooklyn Post Office for forty six years, retiring in 1933 as supervisor of the inquiry department. Yet his organizing ability, his militancy, and his knowledge of German at a time when Germans were a political factor not only in Brooklyn but throughout the city won him respect and influence both within and outside the black community. In 1912 he organized a borough wide Negro Republican organization with 200 members. He attended every Republican state convention and several national conventions, between 1910 and 1940.[40]

Due to the tiny size of the black community during the early decades of the century, it's unlikely that either George Wibecan or Wesley Young exercised great power. Yet given the fact that blacks were responsible for the Republican's narrowly regaining (for only that year) what had once been a traditionally Republican seat, the Seventeenth Assembly District's assemblyman post in 1930 it was in the Democrat's best interest to bring blacks into the party's fold.

One of Bedford Stuyvesant's Democratic Aldermen in the late 1920s and 1930s was John Cashmore, who later became the Brooklyn Borough President. Cashmore is reported to have encouraged black immigrants from the

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[40]Lewinson, 84-85. Wibecan's Democratic counterpart was Wesley Young, a 'turnkey' at the county jail. The extent of their power as black county leaders for their respective parties is unknown. Unfortunately, little has been recorded about their activities.

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British West Indies living in his district to become active in the Democratic party and push their demands. He felt he couldn't do very much for blacks until they got involved in local politics and pushed themselves.[41]

In the 1930s Mrs. Everett Williams, whose father knew county leader John H. McCooey and whose parents were Seventeenth assembly district club members at one time, remembered that McCooey welcomed blacks to work for the party, but McCooey also made it clear that he didn't need the black vote to win.

> Old time Irish politicians like McCooey didn't think blacks had enough power to do him good or harm....McCooey had the whole thing sewed up. Kings

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[41]John Cashmore served as Brooklyn Borough President from March 4, 1940 until his death May 7, 1961. He was 65 years old. John Cashmore was born in Brooklyn on June 7, 1895. He attended borough public schools and New York University. He enlisted in the Army for service in World War I. He had been in the furniture business before he entered public life. Cashmore served longer as Borough President than any of his predecessors. In 1922 he was elected to the State Assembly from the Fifth assembly district in the Stuyvesant Heights section of Brooklyn. In 1925 he began a twelve year stay with the old Board of Aldermen until it was abolished in 1937. After the abolition of that body he was elected to the City Council under the proportional representation form of voting. In the City Council he served as Democratic majority leader before his election as Borough President. He succeeded Raymond V. Ingersoll, a Republican-Fusion incumbent, who died on February 24, 1940. John Cashmore was for many years the Democratic leader of the Fifth assembly district in Brooklyn. In 1945, he succeeded Frank V. Kelly as Brooklyn County Democratic leader. In 1950, as a result of a political squabble with Mayor William O'Dwyer he was forced to quit.New York Times, 5 March 1940 and 8 May 1961.

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> County was in the palm of his hand; there was no need to open up....Yet Irish and Jewish leaders encouraged black participation. They saw how powerful blacks were getting. They were not fools. Can't underestimate these Irish politicians. Smart. Could see the change. Cashmore said, 'Bring your youngsters to the club, bring the children in.' Cashmore and Carney knew they needed black votes. The older Irish didn't think they needed them. The younger group knew better. Blacks were registering to vote.[42]

Summary

There was enough interparty competition in Bedford Stuyvesant for the white Democratic leadership to seek the black vote. Democrats were the supporters and beneficiaries of the New Deal reform platform which brought blacks into the party in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Democrats also recognized Bedford Stuyvesant blacks because of the growing strength of the first independent black political organization in the district, the United Action Democratic Association (UADA), put together in 1933 through the leadership of Bertram L. Baker. Baker's reception as a member of the regular Seventeenth assembly district club and leader of

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[42]Mr. and Mrs. Everett Williams, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 21 July 1988. Both were long time members of Baker's United Action Democratic Association. Mrs. Williams, whose parents were among the early blacks active in the Seventeenth assembly district club, remembered Cashmore sitting at her family dining room table encouraging her parents to keep on pushing the Democrats for their concerns.

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the autonomous United Action Democratic Association was a test of the party's willingness to achieve a racial succession free from serious disturbance.

Bertram L. Baker and The United Action Democratic Association: The First Successful Black Democratic Party Victory in Brooklyn

The Battle Hymn Of The Sixth
Words by the late Philip J. Jones

For many years we've waited for this grand and glorious day,
To elect our own to office the Democratic way
He has been in many battles teaching us the civic stand,
As he goes marching on.

CHORUS:
Forward, forward with Bert Baker-
Forward, forward with Bert Baker-
Forward, forward with Bert Baker-To the job that must be done.

We have seen him battle forces, he has always won the fight.
We have seen him conquer evil, he has always fought for right.
We will see him now the winner, he was made a gallant fight,
As he goes marching on.
TO THE TUNE -- BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC[43]

[43]The "Hymn" is found in the opening pages of the United Action Democratic Association's Annual Dinner Dance Programs from 1946 through 1968.

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Bertram L. Baker was an extraordinary figure about whom much can be written. Criticized and honored in the same breath, he was, and remains, widely respected by black political leaders as a pioneer in Brooklyn politics. It is hard to capture the admiration of and awe for Bertram Baker during his three decades of political leadership in Bedford Stuyvesant.

His loyal followers believed Baker was always a fierce advocate for his people. Dissatisfied with the lack of progress made by the Democratic party in bringing blacks into power, Baker constantly pressured party leaders for his community's fair share of patronage and services from within the organization. His challengers argued, however, that Baker was too patient with the Democratic Party. He waited for reform that could only come with a more militant stance by the black community. What is undeniable is that he built a robust and long lasting submachine that in time, Baker felt, could not be denied recognition.

Bertram Baker

Bertram L. Baker was born January 10, 1898 on the island of Nevis in the British West Indies (BWI). His father was a minister and his mother died when he was two years old. Baker attended early education classes at the Parochial School of Nevis. He received his middle

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and high school education at the Cambridge University Prep School on the island of St. Kitts (BWI). In the Caribbean he studied accounting and business administration through the LaSalle Extension University.[44]

He came to the United States in 1915 at the age of 17 and lived with his grandmother in Brooklyn. After working up from bookkeeper to head of the bookkeeping and accounting departments of a chandelier-manufacturer, Cox & Nostrand of Brooklyn, he went into private practice as a public accountant.[45] Bertram Baker worked as

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[44] New York Red Book. Seventy-Sixth Edition, 1967-1968, (Albany, New York: Williams Press, Inc. 1968). Listed under Baker's biography are the following positions he held: U.S. Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue from November 1, 1939-September 30, 1944. Member of School board Local 27, December 31, 1941-February 14, 1944. Confidential Inspector, Borough President's office, February 14, 1944 to' December 31, 1948. Elected New York State Assemblyman, 1948. Member N.A.A.C.P., Alpha Lodge No. 116, American Tennis Association, New York State Tennis Association, Board of Directors United Mutual Life Insurance Company, The Urban League of New York, Brooklyn Branch.

[45] New York Times, Obituary, 10 March 1985, 36. Edwin Lewinson adds: "Baker was also a tennis player and served as executive secretary of a national organization of Negro tennis players before the sport was integrated." This is important because club members pointed out that Baker was instrumental in the integration of the sport. Althea Gibson was his pride and joy. Her achievement meant everything to him. Lawrence Pierce remembered that Baker was, "....the Executive Secretary of the American Tennis Association. That was the second love of his life. And he was, I guess, one of the organizers of the American Tennis Association....That's his Caribbean background, you see. Caribbeans in New York played a lot of tennis. Their proudest achievement came when Althea Gibson won Wimbleton." Mr. Lawrence Pierce, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 19 May 1988; Lewinson, 50-51.

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an accountant out of his house at 523 Throop Avenue in Bedford Stuyvesant. It was through this work, especially during tax assistance time, that he met many black and white community residents.

He attended his first meeting of the Seventeenth Assembly District Regular Club in 1925, one year after he became a United States citizen. He felt welcome in the club, as had a handful of other black community residents who had joined before him. As a member of the overwhelmingly Irish and Jewish Seventeenth assembly district club in the early 1930s, Baker became a captain of one of the assembly district's black election districts.

While attending the regular club meetings, in 1933, Baker organized the UADA with the help of a dozen black community activists. Yearning for greater black political power, a loyal group of West Indian friends (some of whom had joined together to form the Banyon Investment Club in Harlem a few years earlier) and some southern and native blacks joined with Baker to form UADA. Perhaps reflecting the widespread encouragement Baker received from the West Indian community, the

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group's first meeting hall was St. Phillips Episcopal Church in Bedford Stuyvesant.[46]

Also of help to Baker's fledgling organization was Wesley McDermott "Mac" Holder, then the Brooklyn Editor of the Amsterdam News, who would be Baker's chief electoral rival in the years to come. He turned over his list of community activists from the failed "Samuel Leibowitz for District Attorney" race in 1935 (Leibowitz represented the Scottsboro Boys at their second trial. At the time he was regarded as one of the nation's finest criminal lawyers).

The core of black political activism in Bedford Stuyvesant, as in Harlem, was the small yet growing middle class and its main institutions: the church, the saloons, and the local businesses and professionals: laundrymen, hairdressers, barbershops, undertakers, real estate agents, bakers, pharmacists, ice and coal dealers, lawyers, doctors, dentists, tailors....etc. It is fair to say that UADA's community support was great.

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[46]The Episcopal Church, Moravian and Catholic Church were the religious institutions that West Indians supported. Baker always had very close ties to these churches, and was a life long member of St. Phillips Episcopal Church in Bedford Stuyvesant. Baker served as treasurer for two neighborhood churches: Rev. Augustan Miller's St. Augustine Episcopal Church, and the African Orthodox Church, led by Bishop Barrow. Mr. Everett Williams, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 21 July 1988. Mr. Williams was a close friend of Bertram Baker, and a founding member of the United Action Democratic Club.

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Every major civic organization in the community was behind Baker: The YMCA's, The N.A.A.C.P.'s Brooklyn Branch, the Urban League, the American Labor Party, the Black Elks, the New York Age newspaper as well as many others.

One of Baker's great accomplishments over the thirty seven years of his leadership in the community was to unite the various neighborhood factions that potentially could break apart the united black coalition. For instance, tension between the West Indians and native blacks ran high at times. Baker made certain to show no favor in his patronage appointments. In fact he bent over backwards to appoint native blacks so that he could not be accused of giving special consideration to his own people. The club's reason for existence was too important to allow internal tensions to fracture black unity. James Shaw concurs:

> And so far as in the club, in the membership of the club, you had people who had come out of the old Garvey movement, you had people who were active in the N.A.A.C.P., you had people who were active in the Urban League, you had people who were active in the churches, and you had a level, an intellectual level, a community commitment level where that kind of stuff [intragroup tension] was never any more than a joke.[47]

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[47]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 6 June 1988.

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Baker's ability to steward the UADA through the early, and most difficult years, produced immediate results. When UADA was born there were six black captains in the Seventeenth assembly district clubhouse. Due primarily to the influence of Baker's organization, the number of black captains increased to thirty two by 1934 and thirty nine by 1936.[48]

Baker was a loyal election district captain of the regular Democratic organization. He inherited the racial division in Brooklyn clubhouse politics, although he went beyond its confines to create a "satellite" club, UADA, even while he was a member of the Irish-Jewish clubhouse. He brought in the black vote as election district captain for the regular organization, as he developed his own clubhouse, grooming it to take over the reigns of power. Some Bedford Stuyvesant blacks were offended by the existence of separate black and white political clubs. Yet for UADA members, the club's goals to increase black representation and to find quality jobs in public service for members overrode their objections to the distinct clubhouses.

For UADA members, separateness didn't mean inferiority, especially to those people who came into the club in the 1940s. It hardly mattered that the clubs

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[48]Lewinson, 85.

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were separate since the district was well on its way to having black representation. They viewed the UADA clubhouse as a place where blacks could prepare for their political future as leaders of the assembly district. "We had no sense of second class citizenship in any distinct way," Lawrence Pierce recalled. In fact, Baker encouraged members to attend meetings at the regular club headquarters, headed by Minnie Abel and Stephen Carney.

There were early dividends to the separate club strategy. Soon after the male and female leaders of the Seventeenth assembly district, Edward Cadley and Minnie Abel, broke with one another in 1933, a primary election battle ensued for the leadership of the assembly district. The first time around Minnie Abel's candidate, Stephen Carney, was unable to defeat Cadley. The second attempt resulted in Stephen Carney's election as co-leader in 1936.[49] In that close electoral battle the vote Baker's UADA turned out made the difference in

[49]The New York Times obituary of Stephen Carney reported: "Stephen Carney was the youngest member of the Board of Alderman when he unseated the incumbent Edward F. Cadley in 1935 at the age of 27. In the next year, he defeated Mr. Cadley for leadership in the Seventeenth A.D. after a bitter primary fight. Mr. Carney was then the youngest district leader in New York. He later was appointed by Mayor O'Dwyer as Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity and served from July 9, 1948 to December 22, 1950." Stephen Carney died on August 20, 1953, 45 years young.

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Carney's victory. The weight of the election districts Baker controlled was considered the straw that broke Cadley's back. "That's when Bert gained more clout," Charles Sherwood remembered, echoing the view of many. Edwin Lewinson, who interviewed Baker about it, concluded, "In 1936 Baker was instrumental in the defeat of the incumbent district leader."[50]

Albert Murray, a long time UADA member and close aide of Bertram Baker, explains his leader's view of the benefits of a separate black clubhouse.

> Baker saw the opportunity presented in the two clubs to build a separate organization so he could have the black vote and go downtown and say, 'If you don't support me on this...'; a dual strategy: tied in with the establishment. Oh, the whites didn't want him to have that separate club. He fought like mad to do that, him and Diggs had it.
>
> Baker's strategy was that blacks have greater power together, not scattered. When you are together, even like the black churches, the spirit of unity, and you can then decide on what the white man has, so to speak; what you want, and who is the best for it. But when you're out there individually in the white man's club, its very hard to decide that. How can you? You've got committees and all of that....They only have a meeting once a week. But Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday we can meet in our house, and we can decide what we want over there ...He advocated we bring part of the club over there to serve on committees....[51]

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[50]Lewinson, 86.

[51]Mr. Albert Murray, interview by author. Mr. Murray was appointed by Mayor Robert Wagner in 1965 to New York City's Criminal Court, at the request of Bertram Baker. He served on the bench until his retirement, December 31, 1986.

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During this time, however, even with their growing clout, the more desirable appointive and elective posts such as state assemblyman, city councilman, state senator, as well as judgeships and the most coveted of them all, the district leadership, eluded the UADA.

The struggle for black recognition went on, even as the fulfillment of their goals for black political power came slowly. Even with UADA's unflagging support for Minnie Abel and Stephen Carney, support that was instrumental to Stephen Carney's election to the Board of Aldermen in 1935, the leadership selected candidates not to UADA's liking as nominees for the assembly and senate. For his patience with the regular organization, Baker was the recipient of harsh criticism from some black leaders. In their eyes he was too willing to pay the required party dues and toe the party line, especially given the meager crumbs of patronage UADA had eked out.

Aside from the nascent and therefore weak black Democratic organization, one obstacle to the advancement of greater black representation from 1937 through 1946 was the electoral system of Proportional Representation (PR). With the blessing of the regular organization, Baker ran unsuccessfully for the City Council in 1941 and 1945 under PR. An unintended consequence of PR was

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to make it extremely difficult for some black candidates to win, since they lacked the required financial resources and borough wide following. The American Labor Party and the Communist Party in Brooklyn benefited from PR but black representation suffered as a result.[52]

Nonetheless, the gradual progress UADA made during the thirties and early forties was meaningful to those who fought for every slice of the political pie. The dual political strategy of participating in two political clubhouses simultaneously earned UADA patronage jobs for Baker and a few black lawyers, such as Clarence Wilson and Philip Jones, who were appointed to county and state assistant district attorneyships, respectively. Baker served as a United States Deputy Collector for the

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[52] As Mark Naison discovered in Harlem during the 1930s and 1940s, the interests of the Communists and American Labor Party were not always the same as the black community's. He writes about Harlem in the 1930s, "....the price of that alliance, in the ALP at least, seemed to be collaboration in programs and policies which neglected important political goals of the Harlem community. To succeed in Harlem, a third party movement needed to have power and patronage downtown and an aggressive program for civil rights and black representation in government. Due to their own weakness, and the racial conservatism of their allies, Communists found they could not achieve one without sacrificing the other." Mark Naison, Communists in Harlem During The Depression, (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 248. For a better understanding of the PR system see George H. Hallet, Jr., PR, Proportional Representation: The Key to Democracy, (New York: National Municipal League, 1940); Simon W. Gerson Pete: The Story of Peter V. Cacchione, New York's First Communist Councilman, (International Publishers, New York, 1976), 61-66.

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Internal Revenue Service from November 1, 1939 until September 30, 1944. He then became Confidential Inspector to the Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore on February 14, 1944 and served until December 31, 1948 when he won election as the district's assemblyman.[53]

Lawrence Pierce, then one of many young black lawyers in Bedford Stuyvesant, began with Baker's UADA and ended up on the bench. He speaks for his fellow club members when he emphasizes the importance of those small gains made in the early forties.

> You see back in those days they were larger than life. I mean these lower court judges were considered to be big, big....Big fat totems. Judge so and so. Magistrate, okay. But if you're hungry, a small bone is a big piece of meat. So these were slim pickings of that time and they were considered big achievements.[54]

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[53]Clarence Wilson became an Assistant District Attorney in 1939. In 1951 Mayor Vincent Impelliteri appointed him a magistrate and two years later he was promoted to the Domestic Relations Court. Judge Wilson died in 1958. Connolly, 149, 170. Phillip J. Jones was born February 8, 1889. Jones was a charter member of the United Action Democratic Association. A veteran of World War I, he volunteered for service in the United States Army in June 1917. Jones was appointed Assistant Attorney General of the State of New York in 1938 by Governor Herbert Lehman. In 1945 he was appointed Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, a position he held at the time of his death, September 1, 1949. "In Memoriam," United Action Democratic Association, 1950.

[54]Lawrence W. Pierce was appointed by former President Ronald Reagan to the United States Federal Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (Foley Square) in 1981. Mr. Lawrence Pierce, interview by author.

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Baker And The White Leadership: The Struggle For Power

They Got Along, Atwixt Tension

Mrs. Irene Baker, Bertram Baker's wife, recalled that her husband's efforts to build up UADA was notably encouraged by a few of the club's white members. Two who gave Baker close counsel were Lloyd Herzka, a leading Jewish member of the club, and Sidney Squire (also Jewish), who was the Vice Chairman of the powerful Brooklyn Democratic Party Law Committee for several years. Both saw great possibilities for Baker in politics.[55]

Mrs. Baker said Lloyd Herzka was her husband's inspiration. Herzka spurred him to participate in local Democratic party politics. Several Seventeenth assembly district captains remembered Herzka as the go-between or buffer between Stephen Carney and Bertram Baker. Vincent Carney, Stephen's brother said Lloyd Herzka was,

> ....a brilliant fellow who gained a lot of people's respect, including myself. Lloyd saw his future with the changing population of Brooklyn, being more black. He figured his future was with Bert. I could see that. Lloyd Herzka was originally for Bert Baker for the district leadership before I intended to run

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[55]Mrs. Irene Baker, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 22 May 1989.

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> in 1953. When I decided to run Lloyd said, 'You have my support,' cause Bert figured he had no chance to win and told Lloyd it was OK for him to come back to me.[56]

Another account of Bertram Baker's history with the clubhouse given by former Seventeenth assembly district Leader Samuel Berman (1960-1964) argues that Baker's rise to power in the 1930s and 1940s was in part the consequence of the Party's successful recruitment of Baker by the county organization and the local district club. At the same time, "....partly it was Bert's own initiative, competence and hard work that made him a

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[56] Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 20 June 1989. Lloyd I. Herzka was elected a Justice of the Municipal Court (Second District) for a ten year term in 1949 and two years later to the City Court. He was assigned to the State Supreme Court bench in January 1957. He died suddenly at age 49, on February 21, 1958. "From the time Justice Herzka was admitted to law practice in 1930 he had been active in the Brooklyn Democratic organization. He was executive secretary and Assistant to the Borough President, John Cashmore from 1940 to 1943. He resumed the post after service as a Navy lieutenant in World War II." New York Times 21 February 1958, 24.

Herzka also served as Secretary of the Brooklyn Advisory Planning Board. Herzka was active in several Jewish organizations. He was a member of the Advisory Council Red Mogen David; the Brooklyn Lawyers Club of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies; Vice Chairman Colonel David Marcus Memorial Fund; as well as a member of the Brooklyn Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, the Knights of Pythias, the Police Athletic League and the American Legion.

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potent and respected leader in the County Democratic party."[57]

Albert Murray supports Mrs. Baker's recollection that several Jewish leaders, along with district leader Stephen Carney, assisted Baker's organizational efforts. Sidney Squire, a lawyer, and Vice Chairman of the County Law Committee, is especially remembered.

> He advised Baker all through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. He was close to Baker and always advised him. He made financial contributions to the club. He encouraged Baker with the club and helped him set it up and everything....Lloyd Herzka was definitely a friend. Squire was his adviser as to the club, any legal problems that Baker had in mind, it was Sidney Squire.[58]

An interesting sign of cooperation between Bertram Baker and the white leadership occurred shortly after UADA was formed. The United Action Democratic Association bought the building that housed the Seventeenth Assembly district regular club at 409 Hancock Street. Minnie Abel and Stephen Carney then moved their new clubhouse further south, across Fulton Street, into the section of the assembly district that was still predominately white, on the corner of St. Marks Avenue and Kingston Avenue.

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[57]Mr. Samuel I. Berman, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 12 March 1986.

[58]Mr. Albert Murray, interview by author.

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Relations between blacks and the Seventeenth assembly district leaders Minnie Abel and Stephen Carney weren't always gracious, some black leaders related.[59]

Lawrence Pierce recalled, "At Abel and Carney's club you couldn't be sure just how welcome you were." Nevertheless, "Bert worked well with Steve Carney....Carney gave Bert that area to exercise control over....Carney was viewed as a friend....Steve was an affable Irishman, he came to Baker's club to speak and we went to some of their affairs."

Baker Applies Pressure

In order for Baker and UADA to gain more power from the regular district organization, a degree of

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[59]Little is known about Minnie Abel, the female leader of the club who actually was the brains and heart of the organization. It was Minnie Abel who broke with her co-leader, Edward Cadley in 1935 and ran Stephen Carney against Cadley and won the second time around.

Samuel Berman remembered that the Cadley-Able fight had its roots in an appointment Cadley made without the approval of Abel. Also Minnie Abel backed Mayor James J. "Jimmy" Walker's reelection bid in 1929 while Cadley didn't. Walker made her a Commissioner of Aviation. Julius Barb recalled Minnie Abel was at one time the Secretary of the City's Board of Assessors. All remember Abel for her independent mind and good political connections at a time when women co-leaders were mainly window dressing in political clubhouses. Minnie is remembered fondly by black and white club members. A dissertation on the women who led district clubhouses waits to be written. Mr. Julius Barb, interview by author, Cassette recording, Amagansett, Long Island, New York, 2 August, 1989. Samuel I. Berman, interview by author.

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friction was inevitable. While playing the role of party loyalist and bringing in the black vote, Baker maintained a quasi-independent black organization that continued to push and pressure Carney and Abel for patronage.

Lawrence Pierce believes that Baker, even with Abel and Carney's overall cooperation, continually fought to achieve the UADA's goal of substantive black representation.

> Anything that had to do with recognition was a forced factor. He confronted them, Baker confronted them with the United Action Democratic Association. He confronted them with the fact that his people were working and his people came from....first of all, that area, like so much of Brooklyn was heavily populated with people of West Indian descent. They didn't turn over responsibility or power, it had to be wrested....Power is not surrendered.
>
> Bert and his allies in that organization were after representation, elected and appointed representation, and that was not forthcoming essentially, I would guess, because power is not surrendered because its the fair thing to do; its in response to pressure. And Bert's organization mounted the pressure to the point where they wound up achieving a tremendous amount of gain in terms of political representation in elected and appointed positions....I was caught up in the spirit of the whole business, which was that blacks were seeking representation.
>
> I remember it was a big thing when Bert announced that Oliver D. Williams had been elected to the Board of the Brooklyn Public Library, and Father John Coleman to the Board of Higher Education....but every one of these little tidbits....it was an important step forward and directly attributable to the pressure which was mounted by Bert and his club members.[60]

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[60]Mr. Lawrence Pierce, interview by author.

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Albert Murray was a new member of UADA in the late 1940s. He had heard from older club members that Stephen Carney had tried to hold Baker back at the same time that he encouraged Baker to get a hold of those growing black election districts. Murray also heard that Carney wanted ultimate control but Baker fought him. Their association was rocky at times. For example, Murray recalled a specific incident between the two that he witnessed. It concerned the distribution of money to poll inspectors.

> Well on Election Day there was a certain amount of money that the club gave to the captains to give to workers, to get workers in the district, on the streets, on the street corners and all that to get workers to pass out literature, but Baker got mad once and he came out and told him, 'Keep your damn money. We're going to have (black) workers covering these polls.' Because they would have had white workers in black election districts. Actually they wanted to continue to hold control. In other words, they wanted a face there at the polls. Baker set up all of his inspectors and even though the area was black Carney wanted to maintain control....I knew it was a fight, now how much of a fight I'm not sure....because Baker still contributed to the Party, to the club over there, and still supported his own club. So you had a dual thing. He had to keep leverage. He had to keep pushing on that level.[61]

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[61]Mr. Albert Murray, interview by author.

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At one time James Shaw remembers Carney played off another aspiring black leader, J. Marjorie Jackson against Baker, to keep Baker in control.

> J. Marjorie Jackson and her husband were dynamic, talented civic persons. She was a music teacher; her husband an inspector in the Post Office. Eventually Jackson and Baker worked together and Baker either selected her as one of his first co-leaders or didn't at the last minute because he felt too threatened.[62]

In the 1960s Baker was a popular target for young militant black leaders who called him an "Uncle Tom" or worse. Franklin Morton, Jr., says those black leaders were dead wrong to label Baker in that manner. Morton said he was there to see Baker and Carney almost go at it with fists. Baker had to be held back to be kept from reaching Carney, one time. Baker was no lackey or pushover. He held his ground.

> There was a feeling long before 1948 that its about time we got our share. The power structure was such you couldn't break into it. You just had to keep nibbling away. It was different in the Jewish community. Jewish politicians were more sophisticated. They were also more acceptable on the basis of skin also. I remember even in 1948 Baker storming into Steve Carney's club and raising all kinds of hell. Carney said, 'Remember Bert, there's an election.' Tried to threaten him. Didn't mean a thing to him. With Vincent Carney, Baker jumped over the desk and chased Vincent. But Baker had a time where he had one or two districts, then six, then he had white captains that he felt he should be in control. He had to fight to gain every inch of the way. When

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[62]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

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> Steve passed away he ran and would have won, other fellows would run, but they closed ranks and elected Vincent. Blacks had to struggle for every little thing they got. They fought. The power structure was always aligned against them. It was a marvel they did as much as they did. Years back they had no chance. Bert Baker used to fight.[63]

The point was made over and over by Baker's loyal followers, although he and Stephen Carney and Minnie Abel (later Carney's Co-leader was Kathryne J. Smith), got along politically, Baker wasn't the product of Democratic party recruitment. He established UADA and built up the club. After he organized the black community of Bedford Stuyvesant the white leadership saw what was happening and that brought him their respect. That is mostly what is responsible for his nomination and election to the State legislature in 1948. All evidence shows that this is true. Baker's leadership and strong clubhouse contributed mightily to his victory at the polls. However, it was also interparty competition and an very independent black voting public that expedited racial succession in Bedford Stuyvesant in 1948.

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[63]Morton qualified his comment about Jewish political sophistication by later by stating, "I don't mean the leaders, I mean the people. There were no more sophisticated people than Baker and Wesley McD. Holder, or my father. Also, you had others fighting, like Norman Johnson, Margaret Brown and Ada B. Jackson. Those people were sophisticated. Its the general populace. Jews, just my opinion, are more knowledgeable. Education." Mr. Frank Morton, interview by author.

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Bertram Baker's Nomination to the Assembly: Inter-Party Competition Facilitates Black Succession in Nineteen Forty Eight

Many Democratic party leaders, black and white, who were active in the late 1940s believe Bertram L. Baker was catapulted into the assemblyman's post in 1948 primarily because of the near victory of a black Republican woman candidate, Maude B. Richardson in 1944 and 1946. In 1946, the combined total of votes for Richardson and the American Labor Party candidate Ada B. Jackson, a black woman, were greater than the total vote for John J. Walsh, the white incumbent Democratic assemblyman. The closeness of the elections compelled the county and local organization to act decisively to nominate Baker for the assembly post in 1948. The subsequent withdrawal of the Democratic party's candidate, John Walsh, from the race, and the nomination of Bertram Baker, was the party's only choice in order to change with the new demographic and political reality. Above all, they did not want a Republican party candidate with a united black community's support to take the coveted assembly position.

William Thompson ran Maude Richardson's campaign in 1946. He credits Richardson and the exigency of interparty competition for Baker's nomination in 1948.

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> They [the Democrats] gave you nothing. Power never concedes. And why the hell should they. And I thoroughly understand it. They gave you nothing. The only reason Bert Baker....they eventually gave it....when Maude Richardson starts coming that close. It was time you were going to get beat sooner or later, so they turned around and Carney gave up the seat to Bert Baker....In politics there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies. Expediency sometimes forces you to go to a certain area that you have to go to. Its not personal, its political.[64]

While he agreed with Thompson's overall thrust, Franklin Morton Jr., believes that Baker and the UADA have to be given their proper due in pushing along the pace of succession.[65]

> ....everything everybody else got was because of Baker and men like Wesley McD. Holder. I mean nobody gave them anything. They may have been recruited when they saw they had nowhere else to turn, but they only recruited at the last moment. At the point of no return. They didn't do anybody favors. He brought himself along. I can say that. I saw it. I went in to see Carney with him. He went in and raised hell. That's what he had to do. He fought always. Nobody had to bring him along. He brought himself along. I know what he did. What he did before that, forget it! Even tougher then. They say Baker was an "Uncle Tom". I know it was a great lie. I was with the man, I seen how he acted and con-

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[64]William Thompson is now a Justice of the Appellate Division-Second Judicial Department of the State of New York in Brooklyn. He added, "The only people who became that enlightened, believe it or not, was somebody like Meade Esposito, years later." Mr. William Thompson, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 May 1988.

[65]Connolly, 162-167.

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> ducted himself. Far be it, he was an exact opposite.[66]

Harold X. Connolly's analysis of Stephen Carney's appointment of Bertram Baker to the assembly makes a crucial point that is often lost on those who choose to see the coming of black power as purely determined by mounting pressure by blacks on the white Democratic leadership. The white leadership made choices that affected the pace of racial succession. Connolly's investigation of the electoral vote in the Seventeenth's assembly races from 1944-1948 shows that contrary to the popular sentiment of black leaders interviewed, a single black candidate, either Richardson or Jackson, could not have won with united black community support in 1944 or 1946. For instance, Democratic assemblyman John Walsh evinced good voting strength in the black areas of the district, thanks in part to Bertram Baker's loyalty to the regulars. In the 1944 general election, Walsh won almost as many black votes as black Republican candidate Louis Warner, in areas where Warner had his greatest support. Walsh was able to

> ....capitalize on white voting strength without having to overcome any deficit resulting from a solid black front. To win, Walsh had but to attract one quarter of Mrs. Jackson's total vote, a not unlikely occurrence given her electoral strength in

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[66]Mr. Franklin Morton, Jr., interview by author.

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> some overwhelmingly white areas where racial bonds would not have united her supporters with Warners'....The only arrangement that might have produced a black victory required a joint Republican-ALP endorsement, an improbable alliance.[67]

And given that the 1946 race was a mirror of the 1944 contest Connolly concludes,

> Despite the closeness of the contest, the probability of a black victory without Jackson's presence remained debatable at the least. Mrs. Jackson's proportion of the total vote declined from her 1944 totals, but her proportion in the white districts actually increased....Indeed, Mrs. Jackson may actually have siphoned off more votes from Walsh then from Mrs. Richardson....An additional critical element....was the relatively lower voter turnout in the predominantly black areas. In those election districts giving Walsh a majority vote, the average number of votes cast equaled 633 compared to 521 in those districts supporting Mrs. Richardson....The black press and local politicians viewed the impending election of 1948 with resigned pessimism. Although half the population of the Seventeenth AD was black, recurrent defeat had dulled the enthusiasm and optimism expressed so easily in previous campaigns.[68]

Connolly too concurs with the interparty competition thesis but emphasizes the leadership ability of Stephen Carney. He cites as evidence Stephen Carney's shrewd nomination of John P. Walsh for the assembly position in 1948, only to ask Walsh to drop out of the race a few months later. This enabled Carney to nominate

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[67]Connolly, 166.

[68]Connolly, 166.

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Bertram Baker without creating a furor from some club members (either those who were waiting their turn and would have liked to be the assemblyman or those who were simply unable to fathom having a black assemblyman represent the district). Connolly reports that Walsh in turn was rewarded for his assent with a temporary civil court judgeship, with a promise of a permanent judgeship in the future.

Connolly views Baker's nomination, and the bumping of Walsh from the ticket in 1948 by Stephen Carney, as a clever move to "finesse whites" who would sign petitions on behalf of Walsh but perhaps not Baker. Additionally, Connolly reports that Baker himself expressed surprise at his selection. "Baker benefited from Carney's political realism and the clear threat expressed in recent elections that normally Democratic black voters would elect a black Republican."[69]

In other words, the perception by the black community may have been that they were close to toppling the white ethnic leadership but the reality was somewhat different. They were correct in thinking that Carney had to capitulate to black demands for a representative shorty but what they do not acknowledge is that he could have come to it several years later. Carney's decision

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[69]Connolly, 167.

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to grant Baker the nomination in 1948 was a choice, made not simply by the political pressure mounted by blacks who favored any black candidate, but a decision made out of Carney's understanding of what was necessary to ensure a succession marked by facility. A successful succession benefited everyone: the party, Carney and his followers, and Baker's UADA.

Summary

The independence of black voters, interparty competition and Baker's development of UADA into a successful clubhouse all accelerated the succession of blacks into party leadership positions. Moreover, the demographic tide had turned so swiftly after the Second World War, the Seventeenth assembly district's leaders sooner or later had to give way to Bertram Baker and the UADA. Baker's elevation to the assembly was the party's attempt to maintain some influence over the district and represented its desire to move blacks along in the party.

The County Organization's Viewpoint

A piece of the story that Connolly misses is that the decision to move Baker up the party ladder was made not merely at the local level, but at the county level as well.

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Sidney Squire, the Vice Chairman of the Kings County Law Committee in the 1940s and early 1950s, and later a Justice of the New York State Court of Claims (beginning April 30, 1956) had come to know Bertram Baker in 1946 when they both worked in Brooklyn Borough President and Democratic county leader, John Cashmore's office. Squire had this lengthy but fascinating recollection of the events surrounding Baker's nomination; it provides the county organization's perspective of the succession process.

> I first met Bert Baker when I was working part time in Borough President Cashmore's office as Assistant to the Borough President...I was Assistant, which meant I ran the office. Bert Baker was Confidential Inspector. As a result of our respective positions he'd come in and consult with me about things he was doing, times when he asked for guidance as to what our position should be in certain matters and I gave him answers. I had the authority of the Borough President. And that's how our friendship began and it blossomed.
>
> Bert Baker was active in the Seventeenth assembly district and had a club there. It was a club to which the Negroes of the district belonged. And Bert from time to time would see me and call me for things.
>
> If you took a look at the election district maps for that assembly district you know there were many blocks, a definite pocket, which housed people who were Negroes. And they were Democratic. And they should be voting Democratic. Not enough of them were voting and there are many reasons why they weren't. None a good reason.
>
> And Bert recognized that and he corralled them. He was an educated man. A gentle man, two words or one word, a gentleman. He really was. And he was an inspiring figure. I don't mean that he was overly

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tall in stature but when he stood up and spoke he spoke logically, grammatically, he spoke effectively. He was a leader with a small "l". That's how he attracted people to him. He was a professional man, an accountant, not certified but a very capable accountant.

Petitions were being circulated for John Walsh. In 1946 I had been asked by the county organization to do some work at the warehouse where the voting machines were and while waiting I was looking at the records I made from newspapers. In those days the Brooklyn Eagle published results of the assembly districts. I noticed how close our votes were for some of these public offices. I went to the Board of Elections, sat down with John Cashmore and showed him where we were taking a beating numerically in the vote in certain assembly districts.

I said to John Cashmore we have to do something about these places. Smolenski, for example, was under a fifty vote margin in Greenpoint. Its frightening to see an assemblyman win by twenty votes. Something has to be done. Either the Democratic party is weak there or the candidate is weak or a combination of both. And you certainly have to address yourself to that. Figures tell you about the future.

Lloyd Herzka said, 'I've known about this, Sidney. We have to do something about it. We have to put some lead in John Cashmore.' John Cashmore relied heavily upon Lloyd and rightfully so. Lloyd was capable. He wrote the speeches, and a few times when I wasn't certain what I wanted to do or what John Cashmore wanted to do I conferred with Lloyd Herzka and he was very capable. He had good insight, really. He said, 'I'm gonna talk to John about this...if he sends for you tell him we talked and say whatever you want about it.' And that's the way it happened. I told John Cashmore, showed him the figures I had. Lloyd was a gentleman. He didn't bring the figures to him he said, 'Sidney has them. Sidney did them.' Now that to me is a measure of a gentleman....so many would run to the leader to impress the leader of how great he was. Sometimes the leader caught it...leaders had to know their people.

So petitions for Walsh were already out. We did not want to print a petition with Bert Baker's name on

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it which would show that he was an adversary of John Walsh, who was the incumbent, a member of the assembly and supported by his district organization. The next step was for somebody to talk with Walsh, show him the figures and say to him, 'We don't want you to lose Johnny, we want you to win.' Who actually spoke to John Walsh I do not know. If I knew I have forgotten.

Was John Cashmore convinced something had to be done? John Cashmore knew how to count. He may not have been the best speller in the world but he certainly knew how to count. In his own way he was very capable about these things.....So Walsh was prevailed upon and I was assigned the job of convening the County Committee.....We had a County Committee meeting. We had a formal meeting, sent out notices by the mail, prepared affidavits, got receipts from the Post Office. We did everything absolutely on the level. I never did anything that wasn't on the level.

Steve Carney relied on Lloyd Herzka. I never knew of any instance when Lloyd and Steve disagreed. But I knew fellas in almost every district as a result of working on petitions in county-wide, city-wide races and I became Vice Chair of the Law Committee of the State of New York. I drew minutes at the State Conventions.

Steve Carney was a willing participant in Bert's nomination. Oh yes. Steve was bright. A gentleman. He knew how to behave. Steve called me on the phone and expressed his thanks for my participation and the time I was giving to Lloyd and Bert. He asked if there was anything I thought he should be doing or talking to anyone about, not to hesitate to let me know. Indeed he even said off the record, 'I knew you and Lloyd are close.' I did the counsel work for Lloyd. If Lloyd had a case he came to me and I took care of it. We conferred so he got part of the fee. He had no law office. Steve indicated to me if I disagreed with Lloyd I was to let him know off the record to see whether Steve agreed with me or agreed with Lloyd so that we could straighten it out so we could, the three of us could agree on everything. And he said, 'Let Bert know everything you are doing. Don't let him think he is being led around, we want to help him, he's going to be a great assemblyman, Sidney.' That's my recollection. Did every-

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> one feel it was time for Baker's nomination? No question about it. I knew what we were doing.[70]

The county organization, working with and through the local organization, understood the need for succession and moved quickly to nominate Baker when they saw the handwriting on the wall. Interparty pressure had awakened the Democratic party leadership.

Every Seventeenth assembly district captain interviewed felt Bertram Baker was well liked and respected. Baker was viewed as a man of his word, loyal as the day was long. "Steve liked him," Vincent Carney said, "he and his wife thought very highly of him." That didn't mean he didn't have disagreements with Bertram Baker. But according to white members of the regular clubhouse there was little hesitancy on the part of the club to nominate Baker for assemblyman in 1948.

Baker paid his dues. For fifteen years Baker had tirelessly served that district. He supported Stephen Carney for the leadership and the City Council in 1935 and 1936, and all of the party's candidates since, including John Walsh in 1944 and 1946. Baker took a lot of heat from the black press for doing so. He was roundly criticized for not pushing the Democrats harder

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[70]Mr. Sidney Squire, interview; by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 21 September 1989 and 4 October 1989.

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to nominate a black candidate. If there was one thing Bertram Baker had, it was faith in the political system and patience with the party. Likewise, the county and local party leadership had faith in him. There was no question whether he could handle the job. He was a proven, loyal Democratic leader.

The Party Paid A Price

It appears whomever was assigned the task of explaining why it was in assemblyman Walsh's best interest to step down did not do so all that successfully. According to Vincent Carney, John Walsh didn't simply accept a judgeship in return for stepping down from the assembly position. If a judgeship was promised, none materialized. John Walsh would later run for Municipal Court Judge in 1953, "paying back" the Democratic party for its actions. In fact, Stephen Carney and his club paid a price for asking Walsh to resign: an angry club member, one who made life harder for the district leader.

Vincent Carney remembered that Walsh's relationship with his brother Stephen deteriorated. Though not a regular member of the district organization, Vincent was often a visitor to his brother's clubhouse during the late 1940s, while employed in the New York City Department of Investigation. Vincent believes that Stephen

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caught hell from Walsh. It wasn't an easy deal for all involved. Walsh didn't resign without a fight.

> Steve went through a lot of headaches with John Walsh. In 1948 Walsh was knocked out of the race, his petitions were thrown out of court. Peter B. Smith was the judge who heard the case. I was with Lloyd Herzka and he went down to subpoena a man to testify against Walsh. And he gave the man a half dollar for the subpoena's cost. The guy threw it at Lloyd. My first real experience in politics. You could ask Sam Berman about Walsh. He was in conflict with Steve. John Walsh called me when I became the leader in 1953 and said he'd now like to become active in my club and said he was glad that my brother, 'that bum Steve' was gone. Walsh became ill shortly after that and died....I would think Steve encouraged Bert to play a major role in the club. It was also the politically wise thing to do.[71]

What is interesting about Vincent Carney's version of the story is that Stephen Carney and the county leadership might have been acting with a degree of resistance from Walsh and some followers. Walsh may not have "voluntarily" stepped down for the promise of a

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[71]A sign of the New York Democratic Party's willingness to encourage black participation came in the late 1940s when the New York State Young Democrats sought young black peoples' interest in the party. Josephine Bravo, a member of the group, and later a co-leader of Bertram Baker recalls, "I joined the New York Young Dems with the New York State Democratic Committee at the Biltmore at forty fifth street....At that time it was strictly white and they were trying to get black youth interested in it because politics was strictly divided for a long time, black and white and because you didn't have a lot of active blacks. You had a lot of young white Democrats active upstate and in different parts but not blacks. I was active in the New York State Negro Democrats before I got married." Mrs. Josephine Bravo, interview by author.

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judgeship, as Harold X. Connolly account implies. If so, it shows even more that the party was willing to take the bad, making an enemy in Walsh, in order to do the smart thing, to do the right thing, making Baker the assemblyman.

Summary

Through all their difficulties, Carney and Baker managed to get along politically. As James Shaw put it, "One hand washed the other." Carney got a stronger local Democratic organization and Baker got the recognition he and UADA desired. The relationship between Baker and Carney reveals that the slow unfolding of black representation in Brooklyn wasn't simply a case of white obstructionism of black participation. Instead, one white leader tried to protect his base of support as the new demographic reality of a black assembly district emerged. It was a tightrope walk which Stephen Carney and Minnie Abel appeared to have accomplished successfully, with Bertram Baker sometimes cooperating.

Bertram Baker had to know when it was right to push the leadership harder, and when he should follow the party line as a loyal captain. He may have wanted a more rapid change but was willing to build gradually within his party. Baker understood the system and believed in it. In order to build a local submachine,

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patronage was required to fuel membership, which was only possible, in Baker's eyes, by continuing a good relationship with the district leader and downtown leaders. He too had a difficult line to walk, with pressure from the black community mounting.

The caliber of the Democratic party leadership, black and white was excellent. Thanks in party to Baker's leadership, blacks remained unified in the face of potential conflict over ideological and ethnic differences. The Seventeenth assembly district leaders and the county leaders' response to UADA organization was one of acceptance, and for a few important Democrats, encouragement. There was cooperation and conflict. In the end, the first half of the first racial succession in Brooklyn, the nomination and election of a black assemblyman, was accomplished with little tumult. Bertram Baker's election to the district leadership however came six years later.

The Succession to District Leadership: Nineteen Fifty Four

Prelude To Nineteen Fifty Four

If racial succession was brought to completion with Baker's 1948 assembly victory then why didn't Baker take over the district leadership upon Stephen Carney's

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death in 1953? Why couldn't Baker win in a vote of the county committee, largely comprised of the districts election district captains? Vincent Carney and not Bertram Baker easily won election in the assembly district's county committee to succeed his brother. Carney recalls that many blacks were loyal to him, as a result of his brother's enlightened district leadership dating from 1935. Moreover Baker, while having great support amongst the Seventeenth's black Democratic captains, did not have total control of them. Many decided to go with Carney. The reasons are unclear but worth discussing.

For all the respect he engendered, many black political leaders also disliked Bert Baker. Many say that because he was a strong leader, he didn't run his organization as a democracy. That bitterly angered some who felt that he did not always judge a person's character fairly. Baker believed that he was the boss and the ultimate decision was his. Debate was not always encouraged. He was despised by some, mostly the younger men with ambition. Baker could make you or leave you stuck in the mud of the organization.

Criticisms of Bertram Baker: The Man and Leader

For all of the good characteristics that Bertram Baker had that allowed him to be the durable leader he was, his personality did not endear him to many loyalists. He was a moody person. He was also capable of

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changing his mind when the consequences of his stubbornness might lead to disaster. That ability helped him to survive because he could ally himself with those with whom he previously fought and vice versa. There were other marks against Baker the man that could have led several captains to abandon him for Vincent Carney.

Baker was constantly suspicious of young activists, especially lawyers, because he always believed that his young lawyers were after judgeships. Some resented the fact that he felt they were after a judgeship. Baker was at first suspicious of Gardiner Taylor, pastor of Concord Baptist Church, when he first attended a UADA meeting. J. Daniel Diggs, Baker's closest aide, brought Taylor down to the club and while Taylor's name was mentioned during a reading of the minutes Taylor recalled:

> Mr. Baker had wondered out aloud what was I doing there, who I was and why was I coming there and all that. And later we became in and out political friends. He said he did not need any pastor or preacher coming into the club to tell him what to do....something to that effect....it was a question of why I was coming there....So he was autocratic. And he did have the attitude if you don't like it you can get out, and many people did, which was what I did. You can't say that for so long.
>
> He was a dogged person in terms of his determination. I thought he was a highly skillful political person. He gave you not the warmest impression at first meeting. He tended to be with-

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drawn, some people might say aloof. As you came to know him that warmed.[72]

Josephine Bravo felt Baker was a political leader out to satisfy his own personal ego needs too. Futhermore, he was hard to get along with. He had three or four female co-leaders because of this.

> He was not an easy person to get along with, I mean unless you accepted him as he was. Baker was autocratic. If you opposed him or he felt that you were trying to outshine him, then he could be a little abusive, and that's when he might tell you....But this is one reason why he had so many co-leaders because they were ambitious. And when he asked me I didn't mind at all. First of all, I was much younger than most of his co-leaders. I had my own job. I had my home. And I really was not politically ambitious....so I stayed with him until the club finally had its demise, when Willie defeated him as leader. But that was not my life. Politics was not my life. It was Bert Baker's, it was Dolly Robinson....other people who wanted glory or fame or something for themselves....But I think Mr. Baker did things because he wanted people to know that he was the one who made the decisions....he was doing it more or less for selfish reasons. That's right. It was....what is this going to do for Bert Baker, how is it going to make Bert Baker....He did these things because it made Bert Baker look great or it gave Bert Baker...prestige. I will say that he wasn't doing all of this strictly because he was altruistic and wanted to help the whole community and things like that.
>
> Mr. Baker was not a young person when he finally became the leader...and he was from that school where men were the boss, I suppose. And his is not of this generation. And there was no way....he was not the kind who could adjust....He had to be the dominant figure and the leader and whatever else you might want to say. So there was no woman who could

[72]Mr. Gardiner Taylor, interview by author.

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> be his co-leader or work with him if they're going to try to outshine him....He had four co-leaders.[73]

James Shaw said that some black leaders resented Baker because he didn't reach out beyond his own district to help organize blacks there. Baker's rival, Wesley McD. Holder did do that.

> And this is one of the things that I really resented and some of the other younger fellows....I mean fellows who were younger at the time....to reach out and support the emergence of black leadership in adjacent and abutting districts. Baker would never have crossed his line to give active support in terms of people and finances into another district....And he wanted it [Baker's district] to be the centerpiece and all other districts and leadership satellites revolving around him. He did not attempt to work out a partnership, an accommodation by his own initiative. I mean when Tom Jones fought his way in, he just stood neutral, and I could see that there was such a personality difference as between the two of them that they could never have worked together.
>
> But still, I never heard him express any language of any community crusade for the emergence of black leadership through the entire community. And not only that, for us to....by whatever means, by either Black or Hispanic population, to have an influence in the election of white leaders in their districts like they presume to interfere in our affairs, to be able to put money, to be able to put people....He was never of that kind of mind. And one of the things that I give Mac Holder credit for, Mac Holder believed in this. That is a legitimate criticism of Baker.[74]

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[73]Mrs. Josephine Bravo, interview by author.

[74]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

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James Shaw probably reflected the unhappiness of many who found that their loyalty to Baker didn't always pay off. Shaw worked with the Baker organization for 15 years. He worked hard for other people's election before he was ever a candidate for anything, and that came because he left Baker for Thomas R. Jones' clubhouse in the early 1960s. The problem with Baker's machine, like any, is: what if the leader never recognizes you?

> Baker told me, 'You be a good boy, you keep on being a good boy and one of these days when I think its right I'll do whatever I'm going to do. 'What are you going to do Mr. Baker?', I asked. He said, 'I'll know when the time comes.' That's all the satisfaction you ever got out of him. Here I was almost 40 years old and still being treated like that.[75]

Another factor that could have played a major role in Baker's defeat for the leadership in 1953 was his support for the regular Democratic party candidate Benjamin Schor over the accomplished black lawyer Lewis Flagg, Jr., in the 1953 Municipal Court primary election. Baker went straight down the line for Schor, while it appears that some of his captains defected and voted with their consciences for Flagg. Anger at Baker's party loyalty over race loyalty may have soured some previously dependable Baker captains against him.

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[75]Ibid.

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Josephine Scott, who was in charge of the United Action Democratic Association's Girls Club that Bertram Baker formed, explained Baker's machine philosophy:

> When Bert Baker said he supports a candidate, he supported a candidate. When he talked to us as his captains he asked us to ring bells for that candidate, which we did....It would be up to the people to make a decision as to who they were going vote...This is where his loyalty comes in. Because as a leader if he pledges support to another leader or his organization, he's got to come through with that. And he did...now individual captains, I don't know what they did....But if they told you they let things ride, its not because he let them ride, he told them, 'We are supporting this slate. And I'm asking you for your support. And when I ask you to ring doorbells, I'm asking you to ask the people to support them.'[76]

William Thompson summarized the view of the disgruntled club members:

> We had gone in Baker's club at one time and it was....it became a one man gang. Bert Baker did everything. He was the leader, he was the assemblyman, he ran the dinner dance. Nobody knew how much money was taken in....he was autocratic. He wasn't heavily involved in civil rights or anything else like that. Diggs did what he was told. I told Baker he could have done a lot more for the community and Baker said, 'That's just the way it is. If you don't like it, get out.' As a matter of fact, I split with him. I split and set up my own club and I beat him in 1968.[77]

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[76]Mrs. Josephine Scott, interview by author, Cassette recording, Central Islip, Long Island, New York, 23 July 1988.

[77]Mr. William Thompson, interview by author.

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In sum, there were enough reasons for Baker's own captains to go with Carney. He was too conservative and too dictatorial for many.

Irish Arbiters?

Did black leaders prefer to have an Irishman, namely Vincent Carney, to head the local organization just as Jews had kept Irish leaders on in overwhelmingly Jewish districts? Some may have perceived Carney as unofficial, neutral arbiter. With their own constituency gone, Irish leaders may be less apt to play favorites. And given the gentle, unpolitician-like personality of Vincent Carney, many could have felt they would be able to prevail on Vincent to get what they needed from the county and local organization. Moreover, by keeping the Irish on, their ties, real and imagined, might keep the flow of patronage steady into clubhouse coffers. Vincent Carney, in this case, inherited his brother's choice post as Commissioner of Motor Vehicles for New York State and as an executive with the Broadway Maintenance Corporation, which held many franchises and contracts with the city for street light repair and parking meter maintenance.

Race loyalty was important for black machine Democrats but so was effective leadership. It could have been that Vincent Carney was recognized as someone who

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was more able than Baker to deliver the stuff of politics. Perhaps Baker felt a strain of this too, for in the end, after the county committee voted two thirds in favor of Carney, Baker asked for a unanimous vote for Carney.

There was no bad blood between Bertram Baker and Vincent Carney. On Carney's side, there is evidence of this. Vincent Carney says that one vociferous Baker loyalist, Marie Smallwood, expressed her outrage at Baker's defeat. At the time Mrs. Smallwood held a patronage post with then Congresswoman Edna Kelly. Kelly asked Vincent Carney after the meeting if he wanted her to fire Mrs. Smallwood for her outburst. Vincent said absolutely not. No hard feelings. Baker's gracious endorsement of Vincent Carney after his defeat, and his handing over his bloc's votes to Vincent Carney to make the choice unanimous was in keeping with the quality of the Baker-Carney relationship over the years.

It is not so perplexing why the white captains would have stuck with Carney. There were still many white captains in the predominantly black community. Many had waited patiently for their rewards and expected Vincent Carney to do right by them. Bertram Baker most likely would have rewarded his faithful.

The impression of Vincent Carney is that although Baker, through his black submachine had grown stronger

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each year and was a vital part of the political community, UADA still was not the overwhelming choice of the district captains, a majority of whom were by then black. He was the main black leader but he did have rivals within the regular organization. For example, Joseph Bostic, once an early and close partner in building UADA, broke with Baker in the early 1950s and ran against him in the 1956 Democratic primary for district leader. Wesley McD. Holder ran against Baker for the leadership and assembly throughout the 1950s. And a group led by William Thompson, George Fleary, Risely Dent and William Chisholm challenged Baker and the UADA more than once as insurgents.

The issue of Baker's personality had little historical significance for succession as 1954 brought with it Baker's ascendance to the district leadership via legislative reapportionment. A change in political structure from the county and state level did what the local club did not.

The Changing Political Party Structure: Legislative Reapportionment and Intraparty Competition Bring Succession to Fruition

Bertram Baker lost the county committee vote for district leadership to Vincent Carney in June of 1953. Racial succession to the district leadership would

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appear to have been dealt a blow that spring. Yet, as the county committee was making its decision to support Vincent Carney, the wheels of the State Legislature ensured that a succession to black power in Bedford Stuyvesant would take place with little difficulty. Where local clubhouse politics prevented black ascension to the district leadership in 1953, state reapportionment of assembly districts would open the door to fulfillment of that dream for blacks in Brooklyn.

In 1953 a reapportionment law was enacted that went into effect in the 1954 general election. Baker won the primary for the assembly unopposed and easily defeated token Republican opposition that fall. The New York State Legislature's reapportionment, with the approval of the New York City Council, created a new assembly district out of the Bedford Stuyvesant community: the Sixth. At the time the Sixth was approximately 75 per cent black. It was understood by the principal actors in Brooklyn politics that the Sixth assembly district was created for Bertram L. Baker.[78]

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[78]New York Red Book. Seventy-Sixth Edition, 1967-1968. Albany, New York: Williams Press, Inc. 1968. "The Joint Legislative Committee on Reapportionment was created by concurrent resolutions of the two houses of the Legislature, adopted March 29, 1949. It began to function actively about July 1, 1949. The committee, contracting with the Federal Census Bureau, obtained the 1950 census figures, in block tabulation which formed the basis of the 43 (reduced from 45) reapportioned Congressional districts in New York State effective at general election in 1952. The Committee has since concentrated on the preparation of figures which

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Bertram Baker was ecstatic with the results, his close friends and family members revealed. It was a long time in coming for Baker, who at heart cherished his role as district leader more than that of legislator.[79] Baker viewed the redistricting as another product of his patient, pragmatic philosophy.

Arthur Klebanoff has argued that the 1954 reapportionment had a more important consequence: it closed opportunities for black empowerment. For one, the new lines weakened black political power by enclosing most of Brooklyn's black families into one assembly district therefore preventing blacks from exercising power in

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served for the reapportionment of legislative districts, resulting in the passage of Chapter 893, Laws of 1953, 2nd extraordinary session; amended by Chapter 2, Laws of 1954. and Chapter 821, Laws of 1954, extraordinary session. The boundaries for the 58 senatorial districts (increased form 56) and the 150 newly apportioned Assembly districts will prevail at general election, November 1954." 950-951. Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author.

[79]Bertram Baker's achievements as a state legislator were great. In 1955 he sponsored the Baker-Metcalf Act, which made New York the first State to outlaw racial discrimination in housing. Former Assemblyman Arthur Kremer called Mr. Baker "this Chamber's spokesperson for public education." Baker was also named Assembly Majority Whip in 1966, becoming the first black to hold a leadership post in the New York State Legislature. He was partly responsible for the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. In all he served 22 years, thus far the longest standing record for any black assemblyperson.

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neighboring districts where their numbers constituted a minority of the population.[80]

This claim must be rejected for several reasons. First, black leaders have always argued for districts to be redrawn in such a fashion as to allow black communities to gain representation, particularly given the lower black turnout vis a vis the neighboring white ethnic communities. Second, if Klebanoff is correct, when blacks were divided up into several congressional districts during the 1950s and 1960s, and clamored for one congressional district composed mainly of black families, they were wrong to do so. Having one's people spread over several jurisdictions might suggest an opportunity to have clout in each but given racial polarization of voting, that has not been the case. A movement to create a congressional district for a black representative was fought for and won in the courts by a group that included members of various sectors of the black community. In 1968, Shirley Chisholm became the first black Congressional representative from Brooklyn as a result of a federal law suit that forced a change in congressional district lines.

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[80]Arthur Klebanoff, "The Demographics of Politics: Legislative Constituencies and the Borough of Brooklyn, 1950-1965," (Unpublished Senior Honors Thesis, Yale University, 1969), 17-25.

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William Thompson refutes Klebanoff's logic with his experience as a state legislator:

> Now lets face it. You go where the greater clout is. And you cater to who? You cater to the majority, not the minority. Why the hell should you? Because that's not your constituency, its not where your votes are. I took in, when I was in the State Senate...I used to go from Empire Boulevard all the way to Flushing Avenue. A pretty big territory. I had the Hasidim. I was very, very close to the Hasidim. Okay? But if the Black community said "A" and the Hasidim said "B", where the hell do you think I'm going? "A"! I was never placed in that position because as I said I had very close ties to the Hasidim....So I was sensitive to their problems. But if it came down between the Hasidim and the Black community, hey, forget it.[81]

Reapportionment could not have stopped the inexorable process of black settlement in central Brooklyn, nor could it have prevented the Jewish settlement of Brownsville, Crown Heights or Williamsburg several decades earlier. As the black population grew in outlying areas, black political organizations rose up to take local power, as a reflection of the changing demographic face of Brooklyn. But, structural change from above in the middle 1950s helped the local party organization in Bedford Stuyvesant to manage the process of succession.[82]

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[81]Mr. William Thompson, interview by author.

[82]In 1965, even before Brownsville and East New York became majority black communities, Samuel D. Wright won election as assembly district leader and state assemblyman.

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IntraParty Competition Assisted Succession Too: The Judicial Contest Between Lewis Flagg, Jr., and Benjamin Schor

The reapportionment of assembly districts in Brooklyn perhaps should not be viewed in a vacuum. A major event of profound import occurred in 1953 that influenced the decision to speed the process of racial succession. Insurgent Democrat Lewis Flagg Jr., was elected to the Municipal Court in Brooklyn shocking the Brooklyn Democratic county organization.[83] In 1953, following the death of Judge Edward A. Wynne in the Second Municipal Court District in Brooklyn, Mayor Vincent Impelliteri appointed Benjamin Schor, a Democrat, to fill the unexpired term.[84] A Democratic primary fight occurred between the regular Democratic candidate, Benjamin Schor and the insurgent Lewis Flagg, Jr,.

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[83]Municipal Court judges, who were elected, handled landlord-tenant cases and suits below $3,000.

[84] Justice Edward A. Wynne died, March 11, 1953 at age 50. The New York Times reported that he was serving his third consecutive ten year term when he died of a heart ailment that had kept him from his duties since October 1952. Mayor James "Jimmy" Walker appointed him a Municipal Court Justice October 19, 1928. Wynne was from the Andrew Jackson Democratic Club of the Eleventh assembly district, which bordered the Seventeenth. Along with the Fifteenth assembly district these districts made up the Second Municipal District. New York Times 11 March 1953, 29.

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Even with Baker's succession to the state assembly in 1948 and his election victories in 1950 and 1952, there was still mounting criticism of Baker and UADA for its lack of accomplishments, particularly at the judicial level. Baker had elevated only two judges to the bench in the twenty years UADA was active. Although blacks had only recently become a force in the county, some leaders in the community were restless with Baker's restrained and tolerant approach. An insurgent political organization in Bedford Stuyvesant led by Wesley McD. Holder called the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League backed the candidacy of Lewis Flagg, Jr. Flagg had run unsuccessfully for office a few years earlier as a Republican but Holder prevailed on him to challenge the arrogant Schor. Holder was able to tap into the grievances of many of the disaffected in the neighborhood who saw Bert as nothing less than "a White man's nigger."[85]

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[85]Vincent Carney thought well of Wesley "Mac" Holder. "Wesley Mac Holder had political savvy. I would compare him to Alex Rose. Quiet but thought matters out completely. And I give Wesley Mac Holder a lot of credit for Shirley Chisholm's success. He had a good political mind. I think very highly of him." See Chapter 5 for a more about Wesley McD. Holder. Alex Rose, with David Dubinsky (of the ILGWU) was co-founder of the Liberal Party in 1944, as differences between the left and right wings within the American Labor Party's ranks became insurmountable. Alex Rose was head of the Millinery Workers or United Hatters Union. Rose headed the Liberal Party for three decades. Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author.

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Mrs. Lawrence Pierce explained why her co-activists in the League didn't join Baker's efforts:

> ....they didn't have anything to offer me. Baker was offering me what I didn't think the community needed at that time. I thought the community needed a role model who was other than white. At that juncture the only thing that was being offered to us were white leaders. And that was the only reason we moved over to sort of change the status quo. That's what they taught me in civics....Well there was a feeling that there was no black representation. Now whether Baker was the person responsible for it or not, I'm not in a position to say. But we felt that we had a candidate that was a viable candidate, was respected throughout the community and that it was time for a change....Risely Dent was with us. Buddy Freeman, "Mac" Holder. Mrs. Flagg, and George Fleary.[86]

Lewis Flagg, Jr., was a distinguished member of the black lawyers' group, The Brooklyn and Long Island Lawyers Association. Wesley Holder was a Democrat and during his entire career never veered from that Party. He strongly believed, as did the many who joined his effort, that one of the true tests of the Democratic party's willingness to share the most lucrative spoils of office with blacks in Brooklyn was to nominate a black lawyer for a judgeship.

Baker proved his allegiance to the county organization by supporting Benjamin H. Schor, down the line, even though many in UADA knew Flagg was the outstanding

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[86]Mrs. Lawrence Pierce, interview with author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 19 May 1988.

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candidate. Club members respected Baker's leadership even though at times his candidates for appointive and elective office were sometimes poor. Nevertheless, they understood the concept of the regular organization and worked for Schor's election, even if some did so half heartedly.

Lawrence Pierce said there was never any doubt about it:

> Now there was no question that Flagg was the superior candidate. I had worked with Schor because he was appointed judge for a few weeks or a few months before the election. I think he had about 90 days of service on bench. And I had worked with him briefly. I was an assistant district attorney by that time. And Flagg was head and shoulders above Benny Schor, as a lawyer, a person, a judge. And yet our organization got out and did what Bert asked us to do, namely to support the organization candidate. And it was explained to us that if you want the regular organization support your candidates for this, that and the other office then you had to follow discipline, and you had to support the candidates of the organization. Well as you know that's been the concept of regular organization politics, Republican or Democrat, for years and years and years. I remember at Fordham Law School they had a librarian by the name of Mr. Kennedy, who used to express it in somewhat offensive terms. He used to just have a little saying that he would repeat in a humorous fashion when talking with people. He would say, 'Always support the organization candidate, even if he's a Chinaman.' Well that's not flattering to Chinese, but his point was well made. And that's how Bert played the game. I'm not telling you that he never had....he never was in opposition to some organization candidates. I dare say he probably was, but things I remember involved supporting organization candidates. And the Schor-Flagg election was one of the key such instances where happily we lost and they won.
>
> I did what I was committed to doing. As a member of

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> Bert's organization I supported the candidate that the organization supported. If I had felt that was not the thing to do at the time for whatever reasons, if I didn't buy the basic principle that we were being sold, in terms of regular organization philosophy and so forth, then I had a choice which was to leave. I cannot tell you that none left, but I don't recall people leaving.
>
> My law associate, Louis Flagg, III, was then an assistant U.S. attorney. And here the organization [UADA] that he was an active member of was supporting Benny Schor, and his father was running against Schor and he couldn't go out and support him. Now it is true that they didn't require Louis to go out and ring doorbells to get out the vote against his father, but it cast him and his wife Mary into an embarrassing middle position, difficult position. His father understood, I think....that was a life episode that was sort of difficult to say the least.[87]

According to Albert Murray, Baker privately was growing restless with the Party but was willing to wait a year or two longer if he was promised a rich return for his good faith. The county organization offered Baker the following deal: in return for UADA's support of Benjamin Schor for the Second District of the Municipal Court Judgeship, the Baker organization would receive the next two available Municipal Court judgeships.

If there indeed was such a deal, and Murray is the only former UADA captain to recall it, then Baker kept it a secret. He never let on that UADA support would be rewarded in such a fashion.

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[87]Mr. Lawrence Pierce, interview by author.

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The race also involved carpetbagging, because Schor was backed by Twenty Third assembly district leaders Albert Levitt and Beaddie Markowitz, from Brownsville. Schor didn't actually live in the Municipal Court jurisdiction but rented two furnished rooms in the home of a Brooklyn family. Whites and blacks both reacted strongly against the appointment.

Schor particularly incensed local black lawyers when he spoke before their Brooklyn and Long Island Lawyers Association annual testimonial dinner. When some black lawyers protested his receiving the nomination at the dinner, Schor is reported to have told them, "I have it. If you want it, come and get it."[88] At the prodding of Wesley McD. Holder, Flagg took up the challenge, under the condition that Holder run the campaign. Interestingly, Holder credits the American Labor Party and several trade unions for Flagg's victory. "Without them, we couldn't have won it," Holder testified. Still, it took a three way race and a divided white regular vote to bring Flagg a narrow victory. Former assemblyman John Walsh, who had been forced out by Stephen Carney in 1948, (some say Walsh's reward was a temporary Civil Court Judgeship) challenged Schor and Flagg on the Lib-

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[88]The Seventeenth's assemblyman, Samuel I. Berman, commented on Schor's reported statement: "Schor would be stupid enough to say it. He was a stupid guy."

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eral Party line. Flagg won by 128 votes but still faced another challenge in the State Supreme Court for a recount.[89]

Flagg won the Democratic primary by 123 votes and easily won the November general election by 15,000 votes. Ironically, Judge Flagg's Republican opposition in the general election was his own law partner, William Staves.

Flagg Wins; Baker Accommodates The Victors

Bertram L. Baker was a machine man but that did not mean he was inflexible to change. Just as Stephen Carney acquiesced to make way for Baker's ascendancy to

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[89]"The Reminiscences of Wesley McD. Holder," Interview conducted by Vivienne G. McGuire, 21 July 1973 at the Congressional Office of Shirley Chisholm, 1149 Eastern Parkway Brooklyn, New York, Oral History Project, Columbia University, New York, 15; Mr. Wesley McD. Holder, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 21 June 1989. Prior to the Flagg's primary victory, Baltimore Afro American reported: "The regular organization instituted a fight before the Board of Elections to have the petitions declared invalid. They even took it into court in an attempt to keep Flagg's name off the ballot but the petitions stood and the name was kept on the ballot." 19 December 1953. Flagg credited God with the course of events. "I am a Republican -- I changed and became a Democrat. A man dies who holds a judgeship, and nobody else runs for the job -- I run for it -- someone comes along and gives us our headquarters -- people come from all over the area, both white and colored to help out in the campaign. People come to the headquarters at 10 in the morning and some of them stay until 10 or 11 o'clock at night. My fates must be guided by a supreme destiny." "Brooklyn's First Municipal Judge." Baltimore Afro American, Sunday Magazine, 19 December 1953, 9.

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the assembly, Baker had to face challengers from the black community. After Flagg defeated Benjamin Schor, Baker made peace with the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League in a gesture of conciliation and political wisdom.

Baker later brought in Mrs. Marie P. Flagg, wife of Lewis Flagg, Jr. as co-leader to heal the rift created by the Flagg insurgency and unify the political community. Wesley Holder also came into the club, according to club members, though Holder denies he joined the club officially. Judge Flagg would show up too at club meetings.

Baker was smart enough to recognize that more had to be done to assuage the demands of the League's members. After the Flagg debacle Baker went out of his club to nominate Oliver D. Williams for the next seat on the Second Municipal Court. Oliver D. Williams and Lewis Flagg, Jr. were the two most prominent black lawyers in Bedford Stuyvesant during the post war period. Williams helped elect Flagg in 1953 and was a member of The Bedford Stuyvesant Political League. The Brooklyn and Long Island Lawyers' Association considered Williams to be "the Dean of Brooklyn black lawyers." Baker nominated Williams with some cost to his organization, breaking his seniority rule and bypassing Franklin Morton, Jr. Club members vividly recall that Franklin Morton was

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"not pleased" to learn that he had been bypassed.[90] Albert Murray recalled:

> He had a fit....the look on his face! Club members pleaded with him, 'Frank, look, please. Mr. Baker, you know him. You know Mr. Baker is going to take care of you.'

Albert Murray believes Bertram Baker was shrewd enough to realize that if he didn't take O.D. Williams, "he would have had a mess, because O.D. would have ran against Frank, in my opinion....Frank had never prac-

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[90]O.D. Williams died November 7, 1981. He was 83 years old. In 1955 Mayor Robert F. Wagner appointed him to an interim term on the Municipal Court for the Second District. He was elected to a full 10-year term in 1956. In 1962, when the Municipal Court and the City Court merged into the Civil Court, he was named a judge of the Civil Court. Justice Williams was the first black elected to the State Supreme Court (from the Second Judicial Conference), comprising Brooklyn and Staten Island. He was elected in November 1963 on the Democratic ticket to a full 14 year term, but had served only five years when he reached the statutory retirement age in 1968. He received three two year extensions, permitted under the law, and retired in December 1974.

A native of Brooklyn, he graduated from City College and received his law degree from Fordham University in 1924. He devoted many years to working and supporting the N.A.A.C.P. He was also active in financial campaigns of the Brooklyn and Queens Y.M.C.A. and served on the National Commission to Further Interracial Policies in the Y.M.C.A. In the 1940s, he was a consultant to Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, at the time Mr. Rickey brought Jackie Robinson into major league baseball. Williams was a member of the Kings County Criminal Bar Association, New York County Lawyers Association, the Protestant Lawyers Association and Brooklyn and Long Island Lawyers Association, of which he was a former president. New York Times and New York Daily News 9 November 1981.

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ticed you see, and we were young." Morton's patience paid off less than six months later when Baker slated him to the third judgeship in the Second Municipal Court District. Baker got these judgeships without opposition, which meant his candidates avoided wasteful and costly campaigns.

Baker got his pay back for supporting Benjamin Schor and all of the party's candidates for two decades. After Flagg defeated Schor, Baker named the next three judgeships. Albert Murray elaborated:

> Here we didn't have none, and by maneuvering we got two that the party was obligated to give. Frank walked in, never ran for election, never got a fight. He got both Republican and Democratic lines....that was part of the deal....same thing with me obviously. I was appointed by the Mayor [Mayor Robert Wagner, Jr., in 1966 to the Criminal Court]. None of us had to fight. And Baker negotiated things that way, you see.[91]

Vincent Carney, who was not yet leader of the Seventeenth assembly district in 1953 questions Murray's view that Baker was rewarded for his dedication by being given the power to name the next three black judges. Baker wasn't yet the leader of a district, so he couldn't have been promised any judgeships by the county leader, Kenneth Sutherland. "Maybe Lloyd Herzka told

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[91]Mr. Albert Murray, interview by author.

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Bert he'd probably get the next two for supporting Schor."[92]

Wesley McD. Holder also questions Murray's view. Although Holder grants Baker some credit for naming O. D. Williams and Franklin Morton, Jr., as judges, he argues it was his group, the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League, that was instrumental in the defeat of the organization candidate Benjamin Schor in the 1953 primary, thus ensuring the swift appointment of a second and third black judge.

Holder remembers that Municipal Court Judge Milton Wecht was coming up for re-election in 1955 and the new county leader, Joseph Sharkey, wanted Holder's group to support Wecht.[93] In return for the League's support, Sharkey promised the next judgeship to a black lawyer. The League then backed Wecht. Holder wanted O.D. Williams, whom Baker then had to back. Thad Owens, now a State Supreme Court Justice, did not go along with this

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[92]Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author.

[93]Justice Milton M. Wecht was appointed by Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia to the Municipal Court bench in April, 1935. He later served on the City and Civil Court before being named acting justice of the State Supreme Court in 1961. He retired from the bench at age 70 in 1965. A few months later, on April 10, 1965, he died. Between his retirement from the bench and his death he was a partner in the law firm of Wecht, Zucker and Travia. One of his law partners was Anthony J. Travia, Speaker of the New York State Assembly.

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compromise and ran against Wecht in 1955 but lost handily.

Regardless of how the decision was made to nominate two blacks to the Municipal Court, (and few would have been privy to the kind of deal Albert Murray claims Baker made), black representation in the judiciary was now a reality. The number of black judges in Brooklyn did not equal the ten percent of the county population that was black in 1957, but it was a beginning for Baker and the United Action Democratic Association.

William Thompson's perspective on the Flagg victory is that racial and ethnic succession can only happen through enlightened leadership or when so much pressure is brought upon the regular organization that it has to give way. When insurgents won the primary, the county organization decided to switch rather than fight; but only when a fight happened did the county organization realize that it was time to come to their senses and make way for black succession in the Democratic party.

> We said to him, 'Won't you give us the nomination? And I recall Gene Bannigan saying, 'We give nothing. If you want something come and take it.' We said, 'O.K., we will.' Everybody teamed up with Flagg and we won that election....Let me make it very succinct for you. With rare exception, white people will not support black candidates in a district. But turn it around, blacks will support a white in a black dis-

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trict. I'll give you a couple of examples. Peter Rodino in Newark and Joseph Addabbo in Queens.[94]

Conclusion

Comprehensive demographic change, interparty and intraparty competition, a decentralized political structure, state legislative reapportionment and astute local and county political leadership made for a racial political succession characterized by continuity in Bedford Stuyvesant. Conflict occurred but the party overcame prevailing tensions. It not only survived but prospered in the difficult years of transition to black rule.

Even when the party faced its greatest challenge, Lewis Flagg, Jr's., victory over the regular candidate, Benjamin Schor, it accepted the change and moved on to accommodate the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League. Many of the League's members came over and joined Bertram Baker's UADA. Those who later grew distraught over what they perceived to be Baker's conservatism never successfully challenged a regular candidate in the district again. Yet their presence, whether in or out of UADA served as a pressure group on the Democratic party, and UADA, to take care of the black community's needs.

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[94]Mr. William Thompson, interview by author.

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As Holder put it, he was like a man shaking a tree while Baker was the man who grabbed the birds as they flew from the tree. In effect, they worked together, although via different means. Baker, the insider; Holder, the outsider.

Reapportionment assisted succession by creating a separate district for Baker after the white leadership of the old district chose not to expedite racial change. At the same time, the decentralized system of power of the local political structure permitted the League and its black and white supporters to defeat a county imposed candidate, renewing the strength of local political decision makers. Moreover, demographic change overwhelmed the county and local leadership, with the new reapportionment of districts reflecting that movement of ethnic and racial groups.

The battle over succession is often, if not always, a trade-off, with some ethnic or racial group winning and the other losing. Benjamin Schor's loss was not only a defeat for the county establishment but was a defeat for Schor's backers, the weakening political clubhouse in the working class Jewish community of Brownsville. Feeling itself ignored and abandoned, Brownsville went further into decline. Schor's defeat surely ushered in a new age of politics in Brooklyn, one

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that was frightening to an already beleaguered neighborhood.[95]

A final point is in order. The succession of Bertram Baker, and later Lewis Flagg Jr., to high political office was made possible by interracial alliances. As Mrs. Baker stated, Lloyd Herzka was Baker's inspiration, Sidney Squire, Baker's county adviser. Stephen Carney did not obstruct Baker's efforts with UADA. He saw the handwriting on the wall and nominated Baker, at a time when Baker could not have won it by himself. In 1953, as Wesley McD. Holder stated, Flagg's election would not have been possible without support from trade unions, like the United Electrical Workers Union (UE), and the United Auto Workers (UAW),

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[95]Noteworthy is that while Brownsville suffered from an economic and political decline during the 1950s, (with former Brownsville activists citing the infusion of several low income housing projects as one major factor in its degeneration), its cry for help went largely ignored by county, city and state officials. The New York State Comptroller, Arthur Levitt, (elected November 2, 1954) who had it within his power to invest state teachers' pension funds into new middle income housing for Brownsville and other crippled neighborhoods, chose to keep pension funds in secure financial investments, such as stocks and bonds. Ironically, Levitt was a product of Crown Heights' Madison Club, whose assembly district, the Eighteenth, borders Brownsville. "The Remembrances of Louis Lefkowitz," 21 September 1984; "The Remembrances of Arthur Levitt, Jr.," 15 June 1983; "The Remembrances of William B. Volet." 2 December 1983; and "The Remembrances of Malcolm Wilson," 26 July 1983. Oral History Project, Arthur Levitt, Sr., Collection, (Columbia University. New York, 1983).

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as well as the American Labor Party, which no longer was a force in borough or city politics, but was crucial in this district race.

In the end, by the middle 1950s, the machine had survived and even grown in vigor. By choosing the path of some resistance and mostly cooperation, the machine gained new black voters and support and laid the foundation for what it hoped would be continued fluent successions to come. William Thompson summarizes this process as the triumph of pragmatic politics.

> The whites resisted to a point but when the regulars were toppled, they sided with the insurgent blacks.....When you beat him then you're in. The king is dead, long live the king....Once you become the boss, what do I do....Say go to hell? You've got all the marbles. You need me and I need you at that stage. The guy who you were supporting before, he's dead. You're the king no more.....politics has nothing to do with ideology, it has to do with clout....Simply, you had a larger population and larger voting numbers and that was all they cared about. That's it....You keep coming, you keep coming. When the numbers look like you're going to get your brains knocked in....somebody says in the power structure, 'Hey, give it to them.' Did the leadership ever say, 'Look why do we have to break out backs and go through this dance?' Nope. Because nobody's going to listen to you....And as soon as you get close, somebody says, 'Hey, you better start giving or else they're going to take it, and then they're going to be antagonistic to us. Better off making him <u>our</u> guy or <u>our</u> gal, than having him as an opponent.[96]

[96]Mr. William Thompson, interview by author.

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CHAPTER 5

THE UNITY DEMOCRATIC CLUB: THE SECOND RACIAL SUCCESSION IN BROOKLYN

Introduction

> The white power brokers were holding on to everything for themselves, throwing out just a few morsels--never even one important job to make the community feel that black people too, were competent. They weren't even putting a black man by the front door in those days....Even if there was a large number [of blacks] in a district, an overwhelming majority, there was never any effort to include them in the party structure. Oh, there was tokenism, a couple of black faces; but the black community was wise. It knew it had no part of the pie, only a few crumbs that were allowed to fall its way.[1]

Writing in her autobiography, Unbought and Unbossed, Shirley Chisholm expressed a widely held view of the urban political machine's response to black political aspirations. From this perspective, the party organization hindered every effort of blacks to participate in the political process. In this particular case, Chisholm refers to the Seventeenth assembly district clubhouse in central Brooklyn during the late 1950s and

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[1]Shirley Chisholm, Unbought and Unbossed, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), 38.

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early 1960s. At that time, reform and radical minded blacks and whites clung to this vision of the urban political machine as an organization that made little or no accommodation with blacks in city politics. Yet, as has been argued in the previous chapter detailing the history of the first black succession in Brooklyn, Chisholm's proposition is far from proven. Although there is more than a residue of truth in her story (the machine didn't bend over backwards to welcome black activism), the reports of other participants suggest it is mostly fabrication.

Although the second racial political succession in Brooklyn was more conflictual than the first, it was nonetheless successful and constructive from the purview of the Democratic party. Blacks came to power after a heated local electoral contest.[2] The racial tension that existed between the incumbent white regular clubhouse leaders and the insurgents was mediated through Democratic party electoral channels. At the end of the battle, blacks came to rule the local political party apparatus.

Generally speaking, the second racial succession was abetted by the same factors that aided the first: quick demographic change, intraparty competition at the

[2]Importantly, both factions in this struggle were interracial in composition.

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local, county and state level, the combination of centralized (reapportionment) and decentralized (party structure) power structures, interracial cooperation and leadership.

Crown Heights Demography

The population of Brooklyn's largest black community, Bedford Stuyvesant, began to decrease during the 1950s, as black families migrated into the neighboring communities of Crown Heights to the south, and Brownsville and Ocean Hill to the East. Between 1950 and 1957 Bedford Stuyvesant's population decreased by 6.1%, from 269,588 to 253,015.[3]

A number of factors help to explain this dispersal. One catalyst for the change was the increasing availability of public housing in Crown Heights and Brownsville to moderate and low income families. During the 1940s a Federally aided low rent public housing project was built in Crown Heights, the Kingsborough Houses, completed in October of 1941 (population: 3,740). The bulk of the public housing in the region was built in the 1950s, when three New York State aided pub-

[3]The Community Council of Greater New York, Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources, Two Volumes, (New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, September 1957), 150.

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lic housing projects were constructed: the Albany Houses, completed in October 1950 (3,128) and the Albany Houses II in January of 1957 (1,690). The third was the Brevoort Houses completed August, 1955 (4,070).[4]

Another explanation for the scattering of black families into bordering neighborhoods was the desire, and ability to pay for, better housing in less crowded areas among Bedford Stuyvesant's middle and upper middle income black families. In Crown Heights some black families bought or rented brownstone and whitestone buildings.

From 1940 to 1950 the overall population of Crown Heights was stable, increasing by only 625 persons. The white residents, primarily Jewish, left the area for the new suburbs of Brooklyn's outer ring, as well as Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties. The black community continued to grow during this time.[5]

In 1940, most of the 8,300 black residents of the neighborhood (amongst the population of 160,000) lived in the Health Districts that bordered Crown Heights and Bedford Stuyvesant (see Appendix D. for a map of Health Area Districts). By 1950 the black population doubled.

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[4]"Fact Sheet on Bedford Stuyvesant," The New York City Housing Authority (Prepared by Public Relations and Information Division, Received by New York City Municipal Research Library, January 21, 1965).

[5]Ibid.

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Blacks rose by 17,700 from 1940 to 1950, or 11 per cent of the community. Blacks remained congregated in the area adjacent to Bedford Stuyvesant (close to Atlantic Avenue) until the 1950s. Two thirds of the community remained white and predominantly Jewish in 1950.[6]

Between 1950 and 1957 the Special Census revealed Crown Heights' population, though it remained approximately three quarters white (72.5%), again witnessed the doubling of its black population (to 36,819, or 24.7% of the community). Blacks continued to be concentrated in the areas bordering Bedford Stuyvesant, but were expanding quickly toward Eastern Parkway, southward. In 1957, blacks who resided in Health Area Districts bordering Bedford Stuyvesant were 33,000 of the total of nearly 37,000 residents. Significantly, the non-white birth rate, far ahead of the white birth rate, suggested a majority black population for Crown Heights was only a few years away.

The Character of Crown Heights During The Years of Racial Transition

[6]There were only 500 Puerto Ricans in the community in 1950, and they settled in the new black sections of the neighborhood. By 1957 there still was an inconsequential number of Puerto Rican residents (estimated to be 4,000 or 2.7%) in the community. The Amsterdam News reported in 1954 that Brooklyn had 208,000 blacks out of a borough population in 1950 of 2,700,000 or less than ten per cent.

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Throughout the 1950s Crown Heights was a neighborhood in flux. Black migration from Bedford Stuyvesant and white flight to the suburbs, notwithstanding, Crown Heights was a racially integrated community; one that attracted many who were dedicated to maintaining its health.

Ruth Goring remembers the racial make-up of Crown Heights in the early 1950s:

> It was a mixed area. A lot of young families. And the whites in the area were primarily Jewish middle class. They had already been through their struggle with blacks moving in and had settled down and were working together. There were reform or conservative Jewish people. Many of them Jewish in name only, others who were practicing Jewish, but went to the more liberal temples in the area. There was one on Eastern Parkway, which most of them went to.[7]
>
> You made friends right away with people of interests, and we got involved in doing things like getting libraries and getting school crossing guards....Yeah, they objected to having the blacks move in, because like every community I guess when strangers move in they fear its going to decrease the property values. And yet it was evident, by the time I got there, that every black who had moved in had improved the property, as opposed to the persons whom they bought it from. And you just could see it

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[7]How liberal was Eastern Parkway's Brooklyn Jewish Center? Ruth Brooks, who attended the Center's elementary school during the 1930s recalled, "All of that stuff I learned at the Brooklyn Jewish Center stayed with me. I mean I can probably still tell you today how many schools and how many hospitals you can build for the price of a battleship. You know, that's what we learned. We learned about using tax dollars for human services, a lesson that stayed with me....[it was] a left wing elementary school." Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 2 May 1988.

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> throughout the community, between Nostrand and Utica you could just see the change. Some blacks bought small apartment houses. For instance, the block I lived on, St. Marks, had a lot of large whitestone mansions that had been converted into apartments....that was Doctor's Row. That whole block used to have doctors on it. A couple of the doctors were still there, but the blacks were moving in. I think two families kept it as a one family house. Everybody else converted it into apartments, full apartments, no rooms. For instance, I had a five room apartment and it was just gorgeous, you know, paneling, paneling on the ceiling, and the dining room was panelled from the floor up, simply lovely and people took pride. And even though they were tenants they had a very active block association. And when they decided to put the school across the street, everybody went up in smoke. I said, 'Better off a school than something else,' but they wouldn't believe me. So they tore down four of those buildings to put up P.S. 289, the school that's now there.
>
> By the time I moved in that all had simmered down. People had learned to work together. And even the big apartment buildings on St. Marks Avenue between Brooklyn and New York they were gradually getting black tenants in them. As one woman said to me, 'But the people that are moving in are our kind of people.' And I said, 'Why, they moved into your building because you're their kind of people,' you know, turn it around. Gradually they developed stronger block associations, tenants associations, black and white together. Because once they said, 'Well I guess they're here to stay,' and there were always sensible whites among them.[8]

Murray Rosenberg and his wife were one Jewish couple among many who were attracted to Crown Heights in the early 1950s because of its interracial nature. They also came to the area to enjoy reasonably priced housing which was hard to come by in the post war years.

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[8]Mrs. Ruth Goring, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 28 April 1988.

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> Oh, well let me just say that moving to the area of the Unity Democratic Club, that is really quite a story. And I don't know whom you've seen, but you may not have interviewed people who were not of interracial couples, who were white and who chose that area to move to deliberately, including my wife and myself. And there were a number of other white people who decided to do that too. Some became active in the club.
>
> And some of our friends were active in one thing or another. There was a chapter of the American Jewish Congress there. A number of people were active, including my wife, in the various Parent-Teacher Associations. They were people who took an active role in community life, all of them; most of them. The neighborhood was, in a sense, integrated, but that's because it was transitional.
>
> And in some cases the landlords were allowing some of these beautiful large buildings, for financial reasons, to suffer through a lack of maintenance, and they began to deteriorate. When that happened some of them then relented when apartments stayed vacant and they couldn't get white people to move into them. And they did wait for a long time some of them, very stubborn, before they allowed any black people to move in. That was one kind of campaign that was never really on a large scale. Events sort of took over there and the fear and panic of white people leaving created these vacancies, and for economic reasons the landlords then began to accept black tenants. But for a long time the surrounding blocks, which had many brownstones, a lot of them were largely black, although there were still plenty of white people living there.[9]

Interracial couples also sought out Crown Heights in the 1950s for its hospitable environment. Marshall and Etheline Dubin were one such interracial couple who found Crown Heights a desirable place to live. They were

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[9]Mr. Murray Rosenberg, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 11 May 1988.

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married in 1955 and had a hard time finding a place to live in Brooklyn, Marshall Dubin recounts:

> Now this is an interracial marriage, so you can just imagine how it was in those days. People used to ask me for pictures of my wife. You talk over the phone and they say, 'Are you black?' I mean they were all straight out. There's no law. You know this was before the civil rights law. So we had one devil of a time. [10]

There was a feeling in the area that as more black families moved in, neighborhood services, such as police efforts to fight crime, slackened off. Joan Maynard, long time resident of the community, had a sense that black on black crime simply was not a priority for the police or for the society at large.

> On Ralph Avenue between Halsey and Hancock Streets there was a butcher store. Next door was an Italian shoemaker. He was robbed and killed. There was a great outcry and a huge police investigation. Two years later the butcher store moved and a few years after that a black West Indian couple from Trinidad opened a hardware store in the same location. They were courteous, clean, nice. He was killed by a burglar. His assailant was out of jail in forty eight hours, bragging about it. Black on black crime is not as great a crime for the community. It was like nothing happened. Black life was very cheap, that was the signal we got. We knew this.[11]

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[10]Mr. and Mrs. Marshall and Etheline Dubin, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 1 June 1988.

[11]Ms. Joan Maynard, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 19 September 1989.

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The bulk of the racial change in Crown Heights occurred within the Seventeenth assembly district's boundaries, which comprised the northern half of Crown Heights (see Appendix D. for a map of Health Areas District 6, Sub-Divisions 27.10, 29 and 52). The way that district was carved by state and city officials paved the way for a expeditious black succession within the local Democratic party organization.

How Reapportionment of Districts Affected Succession

In 1954, the year that the State of New York's 1953 reapportionment of state senate and assembly districts took effect, a new district that contained almost all of Bedford Stuyvesant, the Sixth assembly district, was carved out of the old Seventeenth assembly district so that Bertram Baker could lead a district of his own.

The new Seventeenth assembly district had an odd shape. It was redrawn in the shape of a plumber's wrench (see Appendix E. for a map of the district and Brooklyn assembly districts).[12] The northern part of Crown

[12]The new Seventeenth's border on the south was primarily Park Place, on the northwest, Atlantic Avenue, and then as it hooks around the Sixth in Bedford Stuyvesant, between Patchen and Howard up until Myrtle and Broadway, bordering Bushwick. On the north western tip of the district lay Throop Avenue and Greene Avenue on the south.

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Heights was joined with two areas, Stuyvesant (the eastern half of Bedford Stuyvesant) and an area once called Old Williamsburg. It lay north and east of Bertram Baker's new Sixth district. Before the Second World War these communities were home to numerous tenements and a working class Jewish, Italian and Irish population. After the War, several low income housing projects were concentrated in that region.[13]

The inclusion of this predominately low income area in the Seventeenth gave the district a very different complexion. Most of the Seventeenth took in a part of Crown Heights that remained a racial mixture of working and middle class families. Population of the district was estimated in 1954 to be approximately 40 per cent black. By 1960, that figure shot up to 60 per cent.[14]

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[13]This was one of Robert Moses' dumping ground for black and Puerto Rican families who were displaced by Moses' numerous Manhattan urban renewal projects. (See Michael Musuraca's doctoral dissertation-in-progress, City University of New York, History Program, for the effect these projects had on the decline of a beautiful adjacent community, Bushwick).

[14]Blacks constituted close to 42 per cent of all residents in two Health Area Districts, and 33 percent in one Health Area, adjoining Atlantic Avenue by 1957. When combined with the exclusively black and Puerto Rican Health Area districts in the old Williamsburg section of the assembly district it made the Seventeenth a predominately black jurisdiction by 1957. Residents of the community, white and black, recall that the Seventeenth assembly district approached majority black status in 1954. By 1962 it was unquestionably one half to two thirds black. The Community Council of Greater New York, Population Charac-

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Arthur Klebanoff has argued that the 1954 gerrymandering of districts allowed for the control of opposition in and out of the Democratic party by subsuming the concentration of blacks into one district. Additionally, he concluded that the successful gerrymander meant that "By 1960, demographics had certainly not found its way into politics."

It is argued here that the reapportionment actually had an opposite effect. It sped the succession process by creating an immanent majority black district. The newly elected district leader in 1954, Vincent Carney, understood that reapportionment ensured his years as the district leadership were numbered.

Vincent Carney's View

Just before reapportionment went into effect a transition of leaders in the Seventeenth was accomplished in an orderly manner. Following the death of the Seventeenth assembly district leader, Stephen Carney, on August 20, 1953, Brooklyn Democratic party leader Kenneth Sutherland appointed club president, Albert McGrover, a law secretary in the State Supreme Court, to temporarily hold the position. Several months later a vote of the local county committee elected Vin-

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teristics, 140.

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cent Carney by a wide margin over the district's assemblyman Bertram Baker.

The Seventeenth assembly district from 1954 to 1960 was led by Vincent Carney, the younger brother of the late Seventeenth assembly district leader, Stephen Carney. Vincent Carney remained leader until he resigned from the office in the summer of 1960. The district's assemblyman from 1954 until 1962, Samuel I. Berman, took over the control of the local organization in 1960. The Irish district leader and Jewish assemblyman reflected the reality of the predominance of Irish district leaders in the county and Jewish assemblymen representing Brooklyn in the state legislature throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.[15]

Vincent Carney was a late comer to the reapportionment process. Yet once he saw how the new district's lines were drawn he objected. Carney understood the new

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[15]Arthur Klebanoff found that in the New York State Legislature, "Fifty one of the 91 state senate seats available between 1950-1968 were filled by Brooklyn Jews. Jews were not nearly as predominant in the Assembly. The 23 man delegation included eight Jews, ten Catholics (four Italian, four Irish). Catholics, however, controlled 103 of 229 available assembly seats versus the 82 seats controlled by Jews." The Jewish percentage of the borough's population in 1958 was 26.6%, according to the Protestant Council. Protestants were 22.6% and Roman Catholics, 48.6%; Other 2.2%. Klebanoff concludes that, "Brooklyn Jews were political over-achievers, and Protestants under achievers over the course of the ten elections, 1950-1960." Klebanoff, 28.

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boundaries meant his political future was limited. If he had his way he would have preferred to move his district further south to whiter political territory. The club-house to the south of his, the powerful Madison club, under the stewardship of Stanley Steingut, would not relent. It gave up only a sliver of its old Eighteenth assembly district lines to the Seventeenth. In the fierce local competitive party situation, some white district leaders lost out to others. In 1954, Carney was a loser. Steingut and several assemblymen, Alfred Lama of Ocean Hill, Lawrence Murphy of Sheepshead Bay, Max Turshen of Flatbush and Midwood, benefited from the latest gerrymander.[16]

Hardly an attempt to limit black participation, Vincent Carney believes reapportionment sacrificed his district leadership in the name of continued progress in black Democratic party succession.

> I think that's what they tried to do, and did. I objected to that too. I went over to the Biltmore Hotel. Carmine De Sapio was political boss or the brains. I went with Lloyd Herzka to see him. I went over to try to give me a regular shaped district. Why they put this over here....I have to admit they tried to keep blacks in one assembly district. They

[16]Arthur Klebanoff, "The Demographics of Politics: Legislative Constituencies and the Borough of Brooklyn, 1950-1965," Unpublished Senior Honors Thesis, (Yale University, 1969), 20, 45; "A Case For Fair Apportionment," Newsday 19 July 1962, 4M;New York Post, 8 December 1959, 20 October 1965, and 20 February 1969 discusses Stanley Steingut and reapportionment.

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> wrote me off. I felt that way and I got no satisfaction because I was a brand new leader. That was done in Manhattan but I wouldn't be surprised with Sutherland's approval. I did feel that way. I tried to get the district more even, square. Stanley Steingut had more clout than me; his family did. He didn't want me to move up that way into his district. And they wanted Bert [Baker] to get something. So my district.... nothing I could do. I didn't have it, I didn't get it....The district leader had no say in New York City Housing Projects' location. Nobody asked me. I had to get captains to work those projects once they were built, that's all.[17]

Vincent Carney had drawn cards not to his, and his clubhouses', liking but there was nothing he could do. It had been done. If he wished to remain in power he had to come to terms with a sizable black population. It was clear to everyone in the Seventeenth that they would be the site of the next black succession. The man the Brooklyn Democrats assigned greatest responsibility for seeing to it that reapportionment was beneficial to its districts was Samuel I. Berman, the Seventeenth's new assemblyman (and its future district leader). Even Samuel Berman understood the limits of gerrymandering to prevent black empowerment. Often a district leader was not able to hold onto power when his lines were changed.

> The Sixth assembly district was cut out because blacks were there. They were there. It was a matter of fact, you had to cut it out. And they fell into a district. You couldn't exclude them from an area

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[17]Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 20 June 1989.

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that was that big. The Sixth was like 99 per cent black. The party couldn't exclude them. If it tried to cut them up it would have adversely affected all the other districts. Better to give them one. In the Seventeenth we had heavily black election districts but enough whites to keep a white representative. There were Jews, Irish, a handful of Italians.

In 1955 the Seventeenth was already heavily black, but the whites controlled it. If you got a 30 per cent white vote, you're gonna elect a white representative cause the blacks don't vote the way that Jews vote.[18]
It wasn't possible for the Democratic party to obstruct black aspiration through reapportionment. Stanley Steingut was a practical guy. A smart guy. The party wasn't worried when the borough became more black as Jews and Italian moved to the suburbs. What could you do about it? What happens happens. So you lose power. It happened to me. You resist as much as you can. I didn't sit down with other leaders and say, 'Lets get guns.' I never had a discussion about it. Nothing to do. It happened to me first, and it will happen to you next. If they got the numbers, the numbers will tell the story.[19]

The Seventeenth's Record on Succession: 1954-1960

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[18]Today that theory has held true in a few predominantly black districts in Brooklyn. Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs and State Senator Marty Markowitz are Jewish legislators who represent black communities but are returned to office every two years because of their dedication to constituent needs and low voter turnout amongst the largely black West Indian community. "The Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean Dialectic: White Incumbents, Black Constituents and the 1984 Election in New York City," in Basil Wilson and Charles Green, The Struggle For Black Empowerment In New York City: Beyond the Politics of Pigmentation, (New York: Praeger, 1989).

[19]Interview with Samuel I. Berman, March 12, 1986.

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How strong an effort did the local and county Democratic party chiefs make to bring about a continuous political succession in the Seventeenth? The fact that the Seventeenth's white male district leader and assemblyman, Samuel I. Berman and the black female leader, Carrie Lark, were defeated in 1962 by black reformers suggests that the local Democratic machine did not fulfill black aspirations for greater representation and recognition. The party's performance is a mixed one, however.

The Seventeenth's Response: A Failure To Incorporate Blacks?

A Critique of the Regulars

Arthur Klebanoff has argued that Brooklyn's white ethnic leaders did embrace the notion of black participation in the Brooklyn Democratic party during the 1950s and early 1960s.

> Brooklyn's incumbent Democrats were not about to embark on organizational efforts in growing Negro and Puerto Rican areas in their districts. Their constituency viewed the influx of blacks and Puerto Ricans as a threat to most everything it valued. Whether that fear reflected narrow self interest or bigotry was not the significant issue. What mattered was that the white constituency maintained enough of its voting force to return its representatives continually independent of Negro and Puerto Rican areas of the district.....Brooklyn Democrats had few incentives to organize Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

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> The Democratic party could not have gained much more extensive control of the borough's politics regardless of the number of new registrants. Additional votes for state or national contests was never of great interest to Democratic leaders. After all, the leaders managed to beat most any statewide candidate with their present constituencies. The gamble was whether any other Brooklyn group would organize the Negroes and Puerto Ricans as a threat to Democratic incumbents. As far as the Republican party was concerned, the Brooklyn Democrats' gamble approached a sure bet. Brooklyn Republicans were hardly capable of organizing themselves let along organizing Negroes and Puerto Ricans.[20]

It is this dissertation's contention that Klebanoff's indictment is erroneous. There is oral history testimony that refutes his argument of Democratic party inactivity on the question of black participation in Brooklyn during the 1950s. Under the auspices of Vincent Carney, the Seventeenth assembly district organization did seek to include blacks in local clubhouse activity, just as Stephen Carney and Lloyd Herzka, with the cooperation of Bertram Baker and the UADA, had in the old Seventeenth. However, Carney's efforts were not sufficient to meet the rising demands of the black community. Their efforts were "too little, too late."

The Case For Incorporation

This dissertation argues that local Democrats did not view blacks as a threat to their rule. In fact, once

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[20]Klebanoff, 20, 45.

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blacks were placed within their district they dealt with them, that is, sought their vote and initiative in black election districts. Moreover, competition between districts being what it was, new voters were almost always welcome. Clubhouse members have a strong incentive to produce voters from their districts, more and better patronage posts for themselves and their followers.

Firstly, evidence of black political participation in the Seventeenth assembly district is plentiful. For example, in the clubhouse there were numerous active black election district captains, who along with the district's white captains, registered blacks and brought out their vote. Several of the white and black election district captains, in and out of the regular organization, attest to this.

It is true that the new Seventeenth assembly district clubhouse had an ethnic and racial mix of captains that was less than representative of the community. For instance, out of the 39 election districts in the Seventeenth, only a third had black captains in 1954 while the district was close to being a majority black. By 1960, when the district was 60 per cent black, still fewer than half of the captains were black.

However, the black captains who did work the district were good vote getters and solidly behind Vincent Carney. They worked hard to re-elect him, his co-leader

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Betty Kehoe and assemblyman Samuel Berman in 1956, 1958 and 1960 (when they faced a stiff interracial challenge from Thomas R. Jones and the Unity Democratic Club). Vincent Carney remembers that the black captains of the district were the most productive he had.

> The black captains brought out a vote that was right for each district. I had white captains who had three votes. The Carroll family for instance. They got ten votes at most. But you couldn't drop them. They went back to the days with my brother Steve. I'd be after them all the time, 'Geez, get the people out, get the vote out.' You'd sit at the clubhouse three nights a week, and you had no complaints in those districts. You have to surmise something is wrong. They're not getting to the people. Black district captains came up with problems and came up when you needed them. They supported us financially with card parties too.[21]

Furthermore, Vincent Carney believes he was a leader who followed in his brother Stephen's political footsteps regarding racial succession. As an observer of his brother's club and as a leader of his own, Vincent Carney said he never witnessed, nor was he party to, any obstruction of black ambitions for higher ranking positions.

> I was very happy to see blacks in the club and I encouraged them too. I could see that the population was turning. And I met some wonderful people in my time in politics. The Pankeys, Robert and Hulett; Andy [Andrew] and Tony [Antoinette] Ablack, Al Grant, these were some of the fine black captains I had. I nominated Al Grant and he was sworn in for

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[21]Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author.

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Counsel to the New York State Banking Department. Unfortunately Governor Harriman lost the election in 1958 very shortly after and he lost his job. I had some wonderful captains. In 1954 when I became the leader I had at most 12 [black captains] out of 39 election districts. By 1960 I had 20 or 22 two out of 39 districts.[22]

I knew that sooner or later we'd have to have a black assemblyman and I asked Andy Ablack. I wanted Andy to consider running for the assembly. He shied away. He said, 'I'm not qualified.' I then thought of Al Grant, and then we had to get Sammy located first.[23]

The black districts worked hard for me. The black captains I had brought out a tremendous vote. Better than many of the white captains. I did better in the black areas than the white areas of the district. Voter turnout was still important because it put one assembly district leader over another. I also got jobs for everyone, regardless of race. My greatest achievement was as Commissioner of Motor Vehicles I gave out many jobs. My mother got every friend of mine for years who needed work, alcoholics...etc. I had them sorting license plates in the basement at Schermerhorn Street. Kept them off the streets and out of trouble. I had a number of blacks at the Motor Vehicles. Several at Broadway Maintenance, too. Wesley Holder tried to help me and worked for me. I brought Wes in several times to Joe Sharkey.

Later I got jobs in the Navy Yard. Thanks to four Congressmen who touched my district. I had Manny Celler, Eugene Keogh, Edna Kelly and Vic Anfuso. So I had sources of help from those who owed me loyalty. Many district leaders only had one or two. Best Congressman? Gene Keogh. He came through for me most often, when I needed a response he and his office were there.[24]

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[22]Carney stands alone with this figure of "20 or 22" black captains in 1960. A review of the Club's Dinner Dance programs and the testimony of several Carney captains is to the contrary: less than a majority of the captains in 1960 were black.

[23]Mr.Vincent Carney, interview by author.

[24]Ibid.

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Vincent Carney additionally argues it was in both district leader's and the club's best interest to register and vote blacks. As only one district leader amongst several, Vincent Carney had to share the nomination and election decisions concerning the assembly district's state senator, city councilman, judges and congressional representatives with two, and sometimes three or four assembly district leaders. In Brooklyn's decentralized and contentious party system, generally, the leader who amassed the largest voter turnout had the greatest leverage to make their opinion heard when nomination time rolled around. For instance, the Seventeenth was in direct competition with the Sixth under Bert Baker and the Tenth under Walter E. Cooke for judgeships to the Municipal and Civil Court. And the district to the south of the Seventeenth, the Madison Club, under the regime of Stanley Steingut was considered one of the most powerful in the state. Vincent Carney recalled how hard it was for his district to compete with neighboring ones:

> Cooke, Baker and myself. That would be the competition. I had to work hard to get Lloyd Herzka moved from the Magistrate's Court to Civil Court. I got it, so Herzka got the City Court. Stanley Steingut had an "in" over there. When it came for delegate selection to the judicial convention, I'd come out second best to Steingut. But I fought all the time. Eventually you come out fairly decent. You fought

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> for yourself, as a leader. You got very little help from anyone else. You have receiverships given out by the Surrogates. Oh sure. I go in with Sharkey and ask for X and you get the $15.00 things. Yet there are big things coming out of it and I didn't get anything....The county and local party organization never interfered with black aspirations for representation. No, Not a bit. They never interfered. There was no attempt to hold back Bert Baker at the local level. I'd be more for Baker than for Cooke.[25]

A district leader had another incentive for bringing out a hefty vote: the incessant pressure applied on him by clubhouse members who were always hungry for bigger and better patronage jobs and community services. If Vincent Carney hoped to hold his club together, he had to deliver the vote, as best he could. In turn, captains understood what they had to do to uphold their end of the bargain. They had to deliver their election district members at the polls, whether they were white or black.

Louis Spinelli, a member and a hard working election district captain of the Seventeenth since 1939

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[25]Walter E. Cooke served in the New York State Senate, representing the Eleventh Senate District, from 1959 until 1964. It is reported that Cooke was prevailed upon by the County leader, Stanley Steingut and local district leaders, Bertram Baker and Thomas Jones, to step down. Baker's protege William Thompson took over the seat after the first black nominee, Risely Dent, died before he could take office. The next year Cooke was rewarded for his loyalty with the post of Commissioner of the Division of Serviceman's Voting. Klebanoff, 35.

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recalled Vincent Carney and assemblyman Samuel Berman's stewardship of the club's racial transformation.

> We did register blacks or anybody. We didn't discriminate one's race. I was one of the most conscientious captains. You had others, Jim Mooney, Burt Rudnick. You also had captains who didn't produce too but there were many who did. No one was unfriendly. Race didn't matter. I always had a proverb: 'Give me a Chinaman and I'll win.' If you know how to work a district, know how to treat people right, you can win with anybody. Black families in that area were not poor like everybody says. We ate, we shared everything. We never were enemies....Sammy was very, very active in the community. He represented everybody. He had a lot of friends and outstanding IOU's.[26]

Burton Rudnick, a captain in the old and new Seventeenth for twenty five years attested to the Democratic party's attempt to "vote" blacks.

> The Democratic Party was helpful in getting blacks to vote and register to vote. No question. We also registered more Jamaicans and people from the islands in the city, especially under Roosevelt starting around 1935. The Carneys' tried too. Relations were nice, easy. Ask Thad Owens, now a judge. He was amazed that we knew black people, spoke their language. As a captain you knew everybody. I can remember a woman who we helped get papers for her son trying to come here from Panama. We helped with a lot of immigration. I did my job whether white or blacks lived there.[27]

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[26]Mr. Louis Spinelli, interview by author, Telephone interview, Brooklyn, New York, 8 June 1989.

[27]Mr. Burton Rudnick, interview by author, Telephone interview, Brooklyn, New York, 9 June 1989.

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The Impression of the Seventeenth's Black Captains

Interestingly, many black captains in the Seventeen assembly district clubhouse were satisfied with Vincent Carney's capacity to lead. Few reported instances of racism or white hindrance of black involvement in party affairs. In fact, Vincent Carney's attempt to find a black captain who would run for the assembly was corroborated. For the most part they believed in Vincent Carney and felt he cared about the community. Samuel Berman's record was another matter.

Andrew and Antoinette Ablack were a case in point. Mrs. Ablack, wife of the former Seventeen assembly district captain Andrew "Andy" Ablack recalled her husband and herself had only the fondest of feelings for Vincent Carney. Yet they recognized Carney did have some weaknesses as a political leader. [28]

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[28]Mrs. Ablack said her husband got his start in politics when he was recruited by a captain in the neighboring Fifth assembly district, Louis Martone. Andy Ablack was brought down to the club and made a captain of the area. From 1944-1954 the Fifth assembly district was part of the community the Ablack's resided in, which was sandwiched between Bedford Stuyvesant and Bushwick. It later would be considered part and parcel of Bedford Stuyvesant. Like Bedford Stuyvesant it was an ethnically and racially mixed community. The district contained the historical African American settlement of Weeksville, named for James Weeks, a black man who purchased land there in 1838 from the Lefferts family estate. Mrs. Antoinette Ablack, interview by author, Cassette recording, Long Eddy, New York, 15 September 1989.

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The one thing they used to say about Vincent was he wasn't a politician. They didn't want him to leave. The way I understand it, he didn't want to run. I got this from people in the club. That they are the ones who went behind him and made him leader, to get him to run. They figured they could carry out his brother's principles. Vince was too nice for the job. People said he was not a fighter. Vince always called Andy after any election and thanked him. Vincent was a very thoughtful person. He was always friendly, his wife Alice too. Steve Carney's wife Ruth, too. We've been to their homes. He has kept in touch with me these eleven years.

There's always some in the club. No such thing as none. But I could never say that about Vincent or a policy of his club. If it was I would have dropped out in a minute. Yes, Vincent did ask Andy to take the assemblyman's position several times. If he called one time he called a dozen. He tried to talk me into it so I could talk my husband into it. Next night he'd call right back. Many things were offered my husband but he wasn't in it for that at all. I would be surprised that the Pankeys would turn it down if offered, though.

If there was one criticism of Vince, I do think that he really didn't understand and didn't come into contact much with the poorer community. He just didn't know. This was my impression. But he was trying. He was a very compassionate and sympathetic man. What cemented Andy and Vincent's friendship was that my husband always got out the vote, a large vote. Same with Congressman Keogh. My husband got out the votes for him, in turn, my husband got so many favors from Keogh. He helped people get jobs or if there was a problem and they couldn't get anywhere, my husband would use his influence. Keogh would. If he didn't do a good job, he wouldn't have gotten a lot of respect. A lot of people in our election district really didn't know Vince but they would take Andy's word for Vince's goodness and they accepted him and it was because Andy believed in Vincent. We worked a lot at the club. Like a family. We had a nice time there.[29]

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[29]Ibid.

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The black captains of the district were respected by many in the community. Even their rivals in 1960 and 1962 recognized that they were by and large men of stature. Etheline Dubin labeled them, "the cream of the crop." She added, "You know you really had to be somebody to even get into their club because they weren't just having that average person in the street part of that club. They were more middle class."[30] Many of Carney's black captains were professionals (mainly lawyers), though some were small businessmen and managers who were experienced (some had 25 years under their belt) in the world of local politics. A number of the black captains had cut their political teeth in the Fifth assembly district, under John Cashmore in the 1930s, Larry Acquevella in the 1940s (later a State Supreme Court Justice) and Harry P. Morr in the 1950s. In the legislative reapportionment of 1954, most were redistricted into the new Seventeenth.

Hulett Pankey, a black member of the Fifth assembly district in the 1930s, and later a captain in the Seventeenth under Vincent Carney said the black captains, himself included, tried to help people that came to him, with favors. They worked hard to organize the black community and didn't hold back the black vote.

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[30]Mr. Marshall Dubin and Mrs. Etheline Dubin, interview by author.

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The Seventeenth's assemblyman Samuel Berman had an idea why none of the black leaders in the club moved up to the district leadership or his post as well. He believed the reason why no black leader was appointed under Carney and himself was that the obvious choices for leader, such as Andy Ablack, didn't want the job and no other outstanding black came forth to demand it. Moreover, regardless of the party's effort to recruit blacks to vote, it was less the party's responsibility to groom a black captain for the top spot on the ticket than it was the job of a captain to come forth, with a personal following as Bertram Baker had, and fight for it. That was the way the ethnic clubhouse system functioned.

> I recruited blacks, way back in the 1930s; in the old Seventeenth I recruited blacks to register. To be leaders? Then you got to emerge; that you got to do on your own. Like Bert Baker, who was a loyal captain, a good worker, and an accountant. You had to have it in you too. A lot of people, white and black could make a lot of noise, but they're not leadership quality. They don't emerge. They make a lot of noises. We did reach with Bert Baker, and in my district where I made a black co-leader, Carrie Lark [in 1960]. Before the Sixth was cut out we made Baker the assemblyman in the Seventeenth. Then we made the Sixth for him. He was happy with that.
>
> The club was the hub of everything then. Blacks came to the club. They came to the church but they also came to us because the church gave them nothing. The church was a lot of talk. The black church was always a lot of talk. I produced. I buried them. Farleys on Fulton Street opposite Stuyvesant Avenue, a funeral parlor, I had an account with them. Blacks who died and couldn't afford it, I paid their bills.

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> And other things. Hospital bills. Rent. I always had cash to give them money. And jobs. I broke the barrier getting white stores to hire blacks. A white bank on Eastern Parkway, outside of my district but I went there and I spoke to the Vice President in charge, American German, big German, real Deutsch. You'd think I asked him to hire a Jew, which was worse I don't know. I knew the riots were coming, late 1950s, I knew they were coming. So I went to the corporate offices of the bank on East 42nd Street. I told them, jobs, not mopping floors, but tellers or stenographers. All the other employees were white. Because they hired blacks, they were spared violence when the riots came. They did themselves a favor to hire her.[31]

As can be inferred from Berman's statement, the former assemblyman and district leader, like many former political leaders, suffered from a case of self importance. Yet what is also clear from Berman's remarks about the black church is that he was arrogant, and on the whole insensitive to black people's feelings. He was unpopular amongst black captains in the Seventeenth and his abrasive conduct in the district became a rallying point for the rebels at the Unity Democratic Club (UDC) in 1960 and 1962. Samuel Berman would be the whipping post and chief villain of their attack on the local machine.

What Samuel Berman's view of the club's black leaders excludes is that Bertram Baker did rely heavily upon the good advice of Lloyd Herzka, Sidney Squire and Stephen Carney. In addition the state legislature's

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[31]Samuel I. Berman, interview by author.

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reapportionment of 1954 was the crowning event that put Baker on top. The black captains in the new Seventeenth lacked the advantage of long term stability and unity of organization that Baker established. His district changed little over those 20 years, which was a major factor in the strength of United Action Democratic Association. Since many of the Seventeenth's black captains were recently added to the district in 1954 from the old Fifth district they were poorly situated to develop a unified black 'satellite' organization within the regular organization.

Finally, Berman himself was a big part of the problem since he wouldn't relinquish power. In 1960 he had the opportunity to ensure that Vincent Carney's replacement would be a black captain. Instead he took the top spot for himself, and retained the assembly post too.

While many of the black captains in the Seventeenth had good things to say about Vincent Carney, they couldn't find the words for assemblyman Samuel Berman. He was the type that rubbed them the wrong way. Hulett Pankey expressed the general unhappiness with Berman amongst black captains. He only had harsh words for Berman.

He remembers that Berman became leader after Carney resigned not by a vote but by taking it.

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> Berman was never officially the leader. We were told that he took the leaders' position after Carney quit. He just took it over. Berman was always the "so called" leader.[32]

Pankey also recalls a meeting with Berman called by the black captains, at which he lambasted Berman for the way he took power. All the other black captains returned to Berman's club after the meeting but Pankey didn't. He went over to Thomas R. Jones's Unity Democratic Club (UDC) and never looked back. A big part of the problem for Pankey and others was Berman's personality.

> I didn't like Berman, and if you don't like a person, you think he is against you, you don't bother with him. I won for Carney in this district against Rowe. After I went over to Jones we swamped Berman in this district. I understand my district was the one that beat Berman. Oh yeah, I always worked that district. I went all over the district. The Projects were almost completed. Berman went in that project, spent a lot of money. Something about Berman that people didn't like. You couldn't believe a word the guy said.[33]

Berman wasn't the only high clubhouse official who lacked the expertise and the will to see the racial succession through to fruition. Vincent Carney did not have the ability of his brother Stephen to make hard choices

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[32]Mr. Hulett S. Pankey, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 4 November 1989.

[33]Ibid.

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and say no to long time members of the club. Many say he was too nice for the job.

Louis Spinelli, a long time captain in the Seventeenth, (and one of several vocal white ethnic captains who felt lawyers benefited the most from clubhouse politics while working class people like him suffered -- he ran a bar and grill with his brother--), felt as many who cared for Vincent Carney that he was never cut out for the job of a district leader.

> Vince Carney couldn't bullshit people. Wouldn't hurt anybody. He wouldn't promise you. Leaders had to be hardnosed in those days, to be able to bullshit people. He lacked that quality. His brother Steve Carney knew how to calm the Jewish people; the black people. An alright guy. Knew how to take care of his friends.[34]

Vincent Carney candidly acknowledged that perhaps his greatest regret in politics was taking the district leadership in 1953. Fittingly, a few months after his 1960 primary victory over Joseph Rowe, he resigned, tired of the grind. Vincent Carney also acknowledges he had thought about leaving politics well before the electoral challenge in 1960.[35]

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[34]Mr. Louis Spinelli, interview by author.

[35]Vincent Carney was never caught in the ego trip and trappings of the district leadership. He said: "Five minutes after you're leader you're out, you're forgotten. I have friends whom I've remained close with. Most people who would come over and tell you how great you are. Fortunately for me, I went with my brother Steve. And I'd hear that phony stuff and I'd wonder, are you believing this crap. Sometimes I think

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Nevertheless, Carney didn't plan to leave his job to a black captain. He thought so well of his challenger, Joseph Rowe, that he hoped Rowe would wait a little longer to claim it.

> I told Rowe I'm not going to stay in this thing too much longer. Sidney Lipkins, a wonderful person, one of my closest friends, then Chairman of the Board of Broadway Maintenance Corporation. He said, 'Vince, I just had a heart attack. For your own sake, get out of it. You can't do both business and politics.' So I told the fellas in the club I was gonna run only cause Rowe was running and I wouldn't quit. But I ran and defeated him. Shortly after that I resigned. I told Al McGrover after that I was leaving and asked who wanted it. McGrover was then a judge. Jim Mooney, a captain was interested. But they voted for Sammy Berman and he of course wanted it.[36]

Another problem with Vincent Carney's administration of the district was his aloofness from the growing problems there. The adversaries argued that Carney and Berman were too removed from the district's new population and their needs. Carney was frank enough to admit that maybe he was unaware of changes happening around him.

> Could be. I didn't expect they'd run against me. I don't know. Maybe that's true. I thought I was spending enough time, two or three nights a week at the club. Being Commissioner of Motor Vehicles more of the community were working than ever had before. In fact, the club had more people coming down than

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he did. He thought maybe I am as great as they say."

[36]Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author.

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> ever before, because of the conditions, coming or looking for help. Whatever help we could give we gave. We had quite a number of blacks in the club. Members, yes. Hard working members.
>
> There was an elderly black woman. Her granddaughter was on narcotics. It was my first exposure to narcotics. They said, can you help. Well, I didn't know how to help. But I said, I'd find out. I got Edna Kelly [the Congresswoman], spoke to her. She said we could send her to Kentucky. They were so gratified they asked that I bring Alice to have dinner. We went. Later, the granddaughter went back on narcotics. They said, there's nothing we could do. Drugs just started to crop up. It was a beautiful neighborhood. No crime. You could walk around. No burglaries. The greatest problem was people looking for a job. Also, to get welfare. I had a lot of welfare. I had one captain alone to work with the Department of Investigations. He was the expert on how to get welfare.

For all his personal warmth and enlightened ideas about race relations, Vincent Carney didn't have the heart to speed along racial succession by saying no to loyal Jewish, Irish and Italian club members. They had waited their turn doing the hard, thankless labor of an election captain.[37]

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[37]A number of the party faithful never got what they felt was coming to them. The next captain slated for a judgeship in the Seventeenth district was lawyer Max Washor, who never got the appointment. Maxwell B. Washor died July 6, 1964, many say of a broken heart. The judgeship he had worked so terribly hard for never materialized. In June of 1964, even with Mayor Wagner's backing he was defeated in an unsuccessful primary campaign for the Civil Court by Tom Jones, Brooklyn county leader Stanley Steingut's nominee. Washor had been an assistant city corporation counsel and at various times president, a trustee and a director of the Seventeenth assembly district clubhouse. He was 57 years old at the time of his death.

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Carney wasn't able to tell them that their dream of patronage positions would have to be cast aside for the sake of racial succession. Yet that is what his brother had to do ten years earlier with assemblyman John Walsh.

Perhaps as much because of his humanity and humble quality as his accomplishments, Vincent Carney was returned to office in June 1960. But when Carney resigned and Samuel Berman became leader, there were few reasons for the community to cling to the withering clubhouse. There were a few black captains who stayed with Berman till the end. Partly because they had a big personal stake in the outcome; partly because they saw that the problems in the district were not the fault of Berman.

Samuel D. Wright, who later was elected district leader, assemblyman and city councilman from the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community of Brooklyn, was also a captain in Stephen Carney's, and later Vincent Carney's Seventeenth assembly district club. Wright validated Antoinette Ablack's opinion of Carney but was surprisingly sympathetic to Berman's predicament. The larger social forces had so adversely affected the increasing black Crown Heights community that no local clubhouse leader could really do a better job.

Actually I was working for New York City, in the

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Corporation Counsel's office in around 1952....Steve Carney was the leader of the Seventeenth assembly district then. They felt they needed to integrate the club and share power.

I recollect that the club in 1952 was 60 per cent white and 40 per cent black. It was going through a mild change. People were moving in and out. Did I feel welcomed by the club? Very much so. Nothing in the club made me feel uncomfortable. Did I witness any obstruction? No.

I didn't become a captain at once. A captain is not so much now but then it was heavenly post. You had an election district that was yours and you tried to bring out whoever you could. Carney ran the club. Sammy Berman was the assemblyman. He told you how to pull out people and how not to pull out people you're unsure of cause they may not vote for you. Vote is the key to success. Bring more votes than the next guy and you had to be given greater consideration. Power rested in the co-leaders hands, not the captains.

They asked me to become a captain. Charlie O'Garra, a "Black Irishman" was the captain of my area. I assisted him. Very good guy. He worked in the courts. Now lives in Arizona, retired. There were captains for every election district. We were very successful.

When Tom Jones challenged Sam Berman I told people to vote as their conscience dictates. Berman felt he was a fair although white leader, and it was a matter of time for change to come. We had a group of inner captains, black captains in the club. The Democrats used an ethnic approach to that election, which is the correct approach. If I was in their camp, that's the kind of tactics I would have used. It was time of a change, as events would bear it out.

Was Berman unrepresentative of the district? No. Berman was representing the district according to the way he saw it. A white and a black district are two different animals. In my part of the district, it was difficult for people to get housing, jobs. Even though Berman was doing a good job, the Housing Authority or City government perceived the black

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> area was not worth their time. They rule it out. Cut back the service.[38]

Samuel Wright, who went on to be the third black district leader in the Brooklyn Democratic Party, had a special empathy for Sam Berman's dilemma. He too would try to help his district, only to meet unsurmountable obstacles.

> I wouldn't say that Berman couldn't do anything. He could have done some things. But in a large district you can call the Sanitation Commissioner and get a block cleaned up, but this was an area wide thing; no matter how good a politician you are and I think I was a successful one, they just overwhelmed you. The first thing was the garbage! Used to have three times a week pick-ups. It was dropped to two times a week. Left a lot of litter in the street. Same for police. Harder on our group than the other groups. Generally, that malaise that comes about slowly, but is more encompassing. You find out the solution couldn't come out of the clubhouses. It had to be done by people that had an interest in that area.[39]

Wright raises an important factor in the breakdown of the succession process: the limits of clubhouse politics as a means to solve a local district's growing

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[38]Sam Wright was a captain in the Seventeenth assembly district but resided in the neighboring Fifth assembly district. He joined Harry Morr's Fifth assembly district club as well. He stated that when he joined the Fifth in 1954 there were many black captains in the club already, and that he felt welcomed there too. "I didn't find any antagonism even though they knew the next challenge would come from the black community." Mr. Samuel D. Wright, interview by author, Cassette recording, New York City, New York 22 March 1989.

[39]Ibid.

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problems became apparent to district residents. Blame was affixed upon the shoulders of the club's leaders, especially Carney and Berman, although the machine's critics comprehended the larger causes behind their troubles. They felt the problems facing northern Crown Heights were macro in scope and that machine politic's emphasis on favoritism, cronyism, and patronage was too narrow for a solution.

The neighborhood was perceived by city and state policy makers as an area "in decline", a euphemism for "a black neighborhood." As a result of that impression Crown Heights was written off by the political party establishment as well, namely the county's Democratic overseers. Sidney Squire believed that the district was viewed by the county as a "dead" district meaning an area where little political activity took place. That didn't imply, however, that it was written off by the Democratic party entirely, but it was not viewed as having a very active and effective clubhouse. Many clubhouse members agree with this assessment to an extent, not in terms of voter turnout but regarding its financial state. This was a working class to middle class district, they said. It did not have a rich treasury to draw on. Ironically, it was viewed by their opponents as a well off organization, pocketing goods and services

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for its favored few, unconcerned about the neighborhood's plight.

In 1959 an upstart, street movement of blacks and whites, poor, working and middle class citizens joined together to attack the "powers that be," whether it was the regular political party organization for their lack of internal democracy, or the owners of neighborhood industry, such as Sealtest Milk, Bond and Ebinger bakeries and Downstate Medical Center for their discriminatory hiring practices. Only a more militant strategy of protest, sit-ins, and street corner voter registration could begin to address the threatened library closings, rising unemployment rate, and service cut-backs that were changing the face of the Seventeenth. Moreover, the need for community participation, especially a true interracial coalition as the way to solve these concerns was underscored. Finally, the tenet of black representation for black neighborhoods was the most important element of the new political agenda. An appeal to race pride was the dangerous method to achieve that result. Eventually the Unity Democratic Club was born out of the ferment.

Summary

In the 1954-1960 period demographic change was swift and reapportionment reflected that condition. Yet

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the white leaders of the Seventeenth moved too slowly to foster a fluid succession. Likewise, black leaders didn't "emerge" within the clubhouse to pressure a foot dragging provincial party organization.

Carney didn't have the backbone to disappoint the regular captains, white or black. His bringing his white contender for the leadership, Joseph Rowe, (who was once a regular member of the Seventeenth) though it shows his willingness to embrace reform is an example of his foible. His situation cannot be readily compared to his brother's since Stephen faced the genuine prospect of black flight to a united Republican candidate in 1948. Vincent Carney felt no such pressure in the years 1954-1959.

The process of racial succession within the local machine organization had already begun, with the new white ethnic leaders following the tradition of the district's previous leaders allowing for black election district captains and providing an open door to those blacks in the community who came down to the club and were willing to toil in the fields of votes. In this way, they did come to terms with the new demographic reality in their bailiwick. Yet the district leader lacked the ability to disappoint his loyal, patronage hungry followers and accommodate racial change. Vincent Carney didn't have that in him. He left the organization

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in the hands of leaders who dragged their feet over the issue of the community's demand for black representation.

Besides, larger forces were swirling around at the dawn of the 1960s, powerful forces, that would barely be contained within the parameters of electoral politics. To the expanding black community, regular machine politics bespoke a failure of stewardship (inaction, not active obstruction). In the hands of Samuel Berman, an unpopular district leader, there was less confidence the regular clubhouse could turn around their lukewarm record of black nomination and appointment to higher office.

The Insurgent's First Assault on the Regular Organization

Joseph Rowe and The Nostrand Reform Democrats

It came seemingly out of the blue, but the reformers' attack on the regular organization was predictable. Vincent Carney had five years to show the community, black and white, that his was a transitory rule on the way to greater black representation of the district. By 1959 there still was no black male or female district leader and Samuel Berman remained the assemblyman.

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Joseph Rowe was a young Jewish attorney in 1958 who lived within in the Seventeenth assembly district, on St. Marks Place. Rowe had been a member of the Seventeenth regular organization for several years. He was a likable person, one who was viewed as a potential successor to the current leaders, someday. Rowe felt that day was too far away. In 1958 he organized a separate club from the regulars, the Nostrand Democratic Club, located on Nostrand Avenue and Dean Street. It sought to do away with what a growing number of "reform" minded white ethnic residents of the district felt was, "politics, as usual, machine style," as practiced by Vincent Carney and Samuel Berman. Rowe believed that only a few members of the regular organization were being taken care of: the leaders' close friends.[40]

> The Seventeenth assembly district Regular Club was located at Nostrand and Park Place, having moved a few years earlier from St. Marks and Kingston Avenue. A lot of people were unhappy with Vincent Carney. We had a difference of opinion and a viable issue and challenged him. We felt he had lost touch with the people of the district, that he was

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[40]Little is known about Joseph Rowe and his insurgent Democratic association because Rowe himself did not wish to talk about his years with the Seventeenth regulars or his failed attempt to unseat Vincent Carney in 1960. The interview was conducted over the telephone and ended when Rowe hung up the telephone on the interviewer. (Tom Jones warned me that Rowe had a tendency to act strangely, therefore, don't expect to learn much from him. Mr. Joseph Rowe, interview by author, Telephone interview, Brooklyn, New York, 9 June 1989.

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indifferent to their needs. He was a Commissioner of Motor Vehicles as well as a corporate officer at Broadway Maintenance, run by the Lipkins family.[41]

We almost won. We gathered between 44 and 48 per cent of the vote. We won 16 of 39 election districts. The campaign was a hard fought one. You think running for President is difficult? I was twenty eight years old then and I worked like a dog. You have no idea how hard I worked. From 6am until 2am I was there at the subway stops, walked six flights of stairs on Halsey Street and Van Buren Street where there were no elevators. I covered the housing projects, Albany, Breevort, Kingsborough and won them. My shirt was dripping wet from sweat. I rang doorbells and people opened them in those days. The projects were black, and some of the brownstones were black. From Eastern Parkway up to Van Buren it went from a middle income to lower income area. There was no T.V. or media advisers in those days. You had to address block associations and civic associations. I met with the people, and they questioned you. Numerous block associations, PTA's. We lost that election fairly. There was no fraud.[42]

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[41]In 1961 the State Investigation Commission accused the company Vincent Carney worked for, Broadway Maintenance, of 'extensive irregularities' and 'excessive profits' in its contracts with the city to service traffic lights and parking meters and "....in 1976 Broadway Maintenance will once again be accused, in an audit by Comptroller Goldin of over-billing the bankrupt city by $195,000." Sidney Lipkins, was chairman of the Broadway Maintenance Corporation in 1976. The Permanent Government, Jack Newfield and Paul Dubrul (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981), 177.

It appears government contracts were a means to a good living for Vincent's brother, Stephen Carney, too. Samuel Berman remembers that Stephen Carney became very successful in business because he represented the Woodstock Typewriter Company in New York City. Through his wife's (Ruth Hagen Carney) aunt, Minnie Abel, also his district co-leader, "They got the City's school system to buy Woodstock Typewriters, which were inferior typewriters....one door leads to another and they made a fortune." This is the type of machine politics that reformers found repugnant.

[42]Mr. Joseph Rowe, interview by author.

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Joseph Rowe's running mate on the reform ticket in 1960 was Thomas "Tom" Russell Jones. Joseph Rowe ran for district leader (without a female co-leader) while Tom Jones ran for the assembly. They had been introduced to each other by mutual friends in the trade union movement and formed a marriage of convenience. While Rowe's group folded immediately after their electoral defeat, under the direction of Tom Jones the Unity Democratic Club (UDC) represented a maverick organization that went beyond the narrow features of typical "reform", which often merely represented frustrated "regulars." Under the UDC banner an interracial, class conscious membership, informed by an ideological as well as a practical vision of political life came together. The UDC's electoral challenge hastened the process of the racial succession within the Seventeenth assembly district in Brooklyn.

The guiding hand behind UDC was Tom Jones. Jones embodied many of the elements that made UDC a success. In him, and through his efforts, black nationalism and socialism was fused together into a triumphant electoral coalition.

Thomas Russell Jones: The Roots of the Unity Democratic Club

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Thomas R. Jones was born August 5, 1913 on Bergen and Nevins Streets in South Brooklyn, (the neighborhood today is known as Boerum Hill).[43] Jones' father was born and educated in Barbados, British West Indies (BWI). In 1908 Mr. Jones Sr., came to the United States, having been trained as an organist and school master in the Caribbean. In the United States Mr. Jones Sr., was an active member of the Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), as were most of his compatriots in the United States. The core of Garvey's movement was comprised of West Indians in the United States and Jamaica.[44]

Tom Jones recalled his earliest ideological education came through his father's participation in the UNIA in Brooklyn. "It was the nationalist, visceral appeal,"

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[43]The following material was garnered from two interviews with Thomas R. Jones. Mr. Thomas R. Jones, interview by author, (not recorded by request of Mr. Jones) Brooklyn, New York,; 9 June and 23 June 1987.

[44]During the 1910s Marcus Garvey competed with the N.A.A.C.P., Republican and Democratic clubs, and Socialists for the hearts and minds of urban blacks. Garvey's movement reached its apex in the early 1920s when membership reached an approximate 4,000,000, though critics of Garvey such as W.E.B. Du Bois argued that the paid up membership never exceeded 300,000. The Federal Bureau of Investigation sought to jail Garvey and succeeded when he was arrested on a trumped up charge of mail fraud. He served three years in an Atlanta penitentiary before he was deported by the F.B.I. to England in December, 1927. Ira De. A. Reid, The Negro Immigrant, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 146-158.

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he recollected. "My father took me to many Garvey rallies. I can still hear Garvey say, 'Up You, Mighty People! Up You, Mighty People!' A powerful statement." The UNIA had three branches in Brooklyn, one in East New York, one in South Brooklyn, and one in Bedford Stuyvesant. Tom Jones's father belonged to one and paid regular dues.

The second most influential factor on Tom Jones' youth came while he was a leader at the Carleton Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) in Brooklyn. It was there that he became active in the movement against Fascism, as a response to Hitler. "Anyone who was worth a damn was involved in mobilizing against Fascism." Jones joined the League Against War and Fascism. It was during these years that socialist theory had its greatest impact upon him.

During the late 1930s black nationalism and radical politics confluenced together into a "united front" around the question of protecting Ethiopian independence. Mark Naison has written that Mussolini's campaign to turn Ethiopia into an Italian colony,

> ....aroused enormous indignation particularly among the fragmented but still vital remnants of the Garvey movement....As pro-Ethiopian sentiment in the community grew, Harlem Communists moved swiftly to try to direct the emerging movement into 'anti-fascist' rather than anti-white channels....For the moment at least Communists had helped prevent the Ethiopian conflict from stirring up ethnic antago-

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nism between blacks and Italian Americans, 150,000 of whom lived in East Harlem in close proximity to black neighborhoods.[45]

Throughout the years of the Great Depression the Left was reaching out to young blacks to join the anti-fascist movement. Jones joined the American Youth Congress, a Left supported organization, which according to Jones soon after was, "captured by the C.P. and discredited. It had Communist cells within it. More influence than they were entitled to."

Jones graduated St. Johns Law School in 1936 but was so caught up in the spirit of the Left he considered going to fight in Spain in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade instead of starting a law practice. For all his Leftist political activism he was rewarded by, "The 'good friends', the black guys at the draft board who got rid of me in 1941."

Tom Jones' war experience, similar to that of many blacks from the north, reinforced his comprehension of the unjust, racist world he learned as a child. Jones spent five years in the United States Army in World War II. He entered the Army as a private and was discharged as a first lieutenant; a time when the Army gave blacks Commands with great reluctance. "The war toughened me,"

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[45]Mark Naison, Communists in Harlem During The Depression, (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 138-140, 195-196.

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he said. "If it doesn't, you don't survive otherwise. I saw the Camps." Additionally, he saw racial segregation first hand since the troops in Europe were still Jim Crow troops; there was very limited integration of soldiers.

He returned from battle in 1946 with the same commitment to democracy and justice he had always felt. Precisely because of that spirit he rejected entering clubhouse politics in the old Seventeenth assembly district then under the helmsmanship of Stephen Carney.

> I went down to the club and met Steve Carney. He told me I must go over to the black club on Jefferson Avenue, Bert Baker's club. I wanted to be a Democrat in October of 1946, I wanted to build a law practice. But I didn't want to be a part of racial separation. I wouldn't go.[46]

The American Labor Party (ALP) was still a force in borough politics in 1946. A few years later they offered Jones a spot on their ticket. Jones was first contacted by, "some girls I knew from the YWCA on Ashland Avenue before the war. They came and got me. They said their mentor was Ada B. Jackson of the ALP. We met at the YWCA and ran Ada Jackson for office in 1946 and 1948."

Although Tom Jones helped run Jackson's campaign he was one among many black activists in Bedford

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[46]Mr. Thomas R. Jones, interview by author.

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Stuyvesant who preferred to have a black candidate nominated that the community could unite around to challenge the incumbent assemblyman, Democrat John J. Walsh. He too urged Jackson in 1946 and 1948 not to run against the prominent Bedford Stuyvesant real estate broker and Republican nominee, Maude B. Richardson since that would split the black vote. Jackson was adamant. She wouldn't withdraw.

In his mind, the idea of black representation for the black community overrode any ideal of ideological purity or party label. The Communist Party and some strains of the Socialist tradition had highlighted the importance of class consciousness and class solidarity over any notion of race pride and race consciousness. This tension ran deep inside Tom Jones, and would surface in the cracks of the Unity Democratic Club 15 years later.

With all that Tom Jones owed to the Socialist movement in shaping his philosophical outlook, deep down Jones always felt outside of left wing circles, which he understood was at root Jewish and radical. The splits between the International Workers Order (IWO) and the Workmen's Circle, factions of two radical Jewish ideological visions, were essentially alien to him. He participated in debates about Marx, Trotsky, and Lenin, witnessed the bitter fights between these blocs but

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never felt them as dearly as the Jews did. In looking back, Jones had to laugh, "Its funny now. We, the few blacks in there, couldn't understand why they were so exercised."

Tom Jones left the ALP in 1950. "They weren't viable or truly interested in blacks. The ALP was now under the domination of the Communist Party." Jones's view of the ALP was shared by many black leaders who believed the ALP had little interest in furthering black representation as a goal in itself.[47] Additionally, Jones was very bitter over his treatment by some segments of the Left. Jones's particular situation, a lawyer who desperately needed to make a living at his craft, also gave rise to great resentment of the ALP lawyers he fought along side of. All of the ALP associated attorneys who represented the trade unions of the day, Harry Sacker, Victor Rabinowitz, Leonard Boudin, I. Philip Sipser, among others, never hired him; nor any blacks either, as he recalled.

> Ask them why they hired no blacks. Not one had space for a black lawyer in their career. They had their own agenda. Black people knew for years the C.P. and the Left had their own agenda. A pro-Russian tilt. They excluded blacks if the Russian party line

[47]Ibid., And yet Wesley McD. Holder gives much thanks to the ALP for their assistance in Lewis Flagg's astonishing victory over Benjamin Schor in the 1953 Municipal Court election.

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> didn't include them. If not for the doctrinaire C.P., Stalinists, had they listened to blacks....[48]

As Jones remembers it, life was terribly "cold" for him and his family during the miserable McCarthy years.

> I starved to death. Black people stayed away from me. The ALP had lost. I lost. They busted them. The Democrats red baited. I represented Feinberg, Paul Robeson, and a wonderful woman in Harlem, Alice Citron, before the Feinberg Law. My office was located at 1270 Fulton Street, near Nostrand. I had a Pot Belly Stove, and no heat. Only Mike Quill, he offered me a job cause Paul Robeson asked him. Harry Sacker, the C.P. lawyer, brilliant lawyer said, 'No I can't hire you, you don't have experience.' The C.P. were racists, American chauvinists; ideologically they were not racially motivated. And as a lawyer, I refused to talk about the Left to the F.B.I. I kept confidentiality. The F.B.I. came after everyone. Robeson. Citron. I had trouble.[49]

Tom Jones felt squeezed between the mainstream black community and the Left.

> They alienated me from black unity, calling me a red. Whites wouldn't return to me, so when blacks kept away I was in bad shape. It was a dumb thing for me to do. Rabinowitz wouldn't give me a job. Black homeowners wouldn't come to me. The red baiting was done by general feeling. I represented those who were witch hunted by the President and the United States. Conspiracies to overthrow the United States. McCarthy's clout was on the rise. Russia was no longer a popular ally. I respected Alice Citron, one of the true believers, a Stalinist in Harlem, but the best teacher. She taught blacks when no one

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

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> else would. Everyone said she was the best. I assembled twenty witnesses in her defense. They all said, 'She didn't teach ideology, just the three R's, Reading, Arithmetic and Writing.' Because she served blacks I believed in her cause. My resistance to oppression was just foolhardy. There is no purpose in fighting fights I can't finish. The media chooses certain black leaders, quotes them extensively. Trot them out to justify corruption. They dictate to a population. That's a story?
>
> I can't be red and black. More problems than I can handle. The National Lawyers Guild took me away from my roots. I came out of the John Wesley Episcopal Church, St. Augustine Afro Orthodox Church. What did I know about Lenin, or taking orders from Moscow. It wasn't part of my driving force.[50]

Over the years the strain on Tom Jones had taken its toll. He wanted desperately to be accepted by his legal peers, to have a respected place at the bar. Financial stability and publicly acknowledged political achievement would come ironically not through radical or black nationalist channels but via regular Democratic party politics.

Overall, with his background in black nationalist, socialist, and in the 1960s regular Democratic party politics, Thomas Russell Jones perhaps more than any one black leader in Brooklyn, incorporated in his life all of the currents influencing black political thought in this century. In 1953, like many black activists skeptical of Bertram Baker's contribution to his people, Tom Jones joined up with Wesley McD. Holder and his Bedford

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[50]Ibid.

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Stuyvesant Political League in their crusade to elect the first black Democratic judge in Brooklyn. His experience with the League would serve as a building block for his own Unity Democratic Club in 1960.

The Fifties: The Influence of Wesley McD. Holder and the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League

> There were only two schools in order to learn politics in our time --one was yours [Baker's] and the other was Wesley McDermott Holder.[51]

Many black activists in 1950s Brooklyn politics felt the same way as Judge James Shaw. Bertram Baker had found some success as an assemblyman and district leader, using the machine system to increase the black community's power in local, county and state politics. Perhaps Baker's only equal in stature within the black community during the 1950s was Wesley McDermott "Mac D" Holder. Tom Jones, like many young black activists of that time gravitated to Holder's ranks as disenchantment with Baker's regular clubhouse politics, and the Communist Party's uncompromising rejection of black nationalist thought, grew. Wesley Holder combined a more

[51]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 7 June 1988.

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militant approach to electoral politics with a more outspoken black nationalist oratory.

In 1953 Tom Jones, leery of and weary from his American Labor Party electoral efforts, found a new home in the camp of Wesley McD. Holder and the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League he founded. Following the victorious primary campaign to elect Lewis Flagg Jr., Democratic party nominee for the Municipal Court, many political operatives marveled at the keen political eye of this cagey political strategist, who succeeded where others had failed.

Wesley McD.Holder

Wesley McD. Holder was born in British Guyana, June 24, 1897. After teaching school for four years at Friendship Roman Catholic School in Guyana, Holder came to the United States in 1920, at age 23. Like Tom Jones's father, Holder was attracted to the Marcus Garvey movement in the United States. It was the first organization he joined here. "It was a new revolutionary idea, Negroes fighting to redeem Africa. I stayed there for five years." Upon leaving the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Holder became a newspaperman for the Amsterdam News, serving as its Brooklyn Editor. During the Second World War he was a federal employee, a statistician with the War Productions Board in Washing-

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ton, D.C. He left the federal government in 1946 and joined the District Attorney's office in Brooklyn as a statistician, and remained until 1969 when he resigned to manage Shirley Chisholm's Congressional office.

Prior to the Flagg campaign, Holder had stayed away from electoral politics. Buoyed by the stunning upset of Benjamin Schor, Holder decided to enter the party arena as an insurgent. According to Holder, Baker hadn't earned the posts he held as much as he had been granted them by the white ethnic leaders.

> He was given it [assemblyman] by the White Fathers, who were fearful at the time that if the white incumbent had run in 1948, the possibilities were that he might have been defeated, for the reason that two years prior the White incumbent assemblyman came near being defeated by one of two Negro women, Mrs. Maude B. Richardson, who ran on the Republican ticket and lost by less than 200 votes. So the rationale was that if Negroes got smart and put up only one black against the white incumbent, the black would have won. So in order that the great Democratic Party would not be defeated in a contest by the black, they withdrew the white candidate in 1948 and gave the nomination to Bertram Baker. So that's how the first black was elected to office in 1948.[52]

The nationalistic language used by Holder in a 1971 interview gives exactly the impression that Holder

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[52]"The Reminiscences of Wesley McD. Holder," Conducted by Vivienne G. McGuire at the Congressional Office of Shirley Chisholm, Brooklyn, New York, 21 July 1973. Oral History Project, Rare Book and Manuscripts Division, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

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sought to portray of himself: an ardent black nationalist, undirtied by clubhouse politics ("I never joined a political clubhouse in my life"), the outsider knocking on the crusty door of machine politics for black opportunity, as if Baker and others with him had a different goal. Holder unsuccessfully challenged Baker for the Sixth assembly district leadership every two years from 1954 through 1960. He lost every Democratic party primary to "Uncle Tom" himself.

Holder is remembered by some only for his labors on behalf of Lewis Flagg, Jr. "I heard that the only decent thing Wesley McD. Holder did was to run the Flagg campaign. That was the only decent thing that he did in his life," Andrew Cooper recalled.[53] Others remember Holder for being in the forefront of black political activism in the borough during the late 1940s and 1950s. For example, he was able to persuade The Towers Hotel, the second largest in Brooklyn in 1948, to cater a dance for the Phi Sigma Sorority group, a black sorority. Prior to that time The Towers didn't allow blacks to hold social affairs there. Holder asked a friend, Tom Cuite, Sr., then a Chief Clerk in the district attorney's office, to help persuade The Towers to hold

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[53]Mr. Andrew W. Cooper, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 13 April 1988. Andrew Cooper is Publisher of the Brooklyn black weekly, The City Sun.

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the dance. It worked. That was the first time blacks had that opportunity in Brooklyn Heights.

Franklin Morton, Jr., concurs that Holder was as much a pioneer as Baker, though more the street fighter type.

> Holder was very intelligent, very strong willed. A real fighter. Activist....He was always in some cause like that. In all his brilliance, he would organize, one of the main reasons that blacks had a role model; a role model for Shirley Chisholm....Mac Holder used to run Sunday meetings or debating societies. Invited different people in his home, other places. In 1948 Mac brought over one of his nieces and educated her. One of them is Dr. Violet Stephenson. The man should have been a big man. I remember when I was in the district attorney's office. He had more brains than the whole office. He should have been a big man. He was closed out, a man of his ability, no question about it. He could have managed the office.[54]

Tom Jones was attracted to Holder's style which was consonant with his own political persona. Jones was outside the clubhouse system, more of a "street person,"

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[54]Most people interviewed saw the difference between Baker and Holder as mainly the clash of two very strong personalities. Baker was as committed to black empowerment and worked behind the scenes, quietly to accomplish what Holder fought for visibly. Morton stated: "Baker and Holder? For a while they were together. But two powerful men can't work together. Baker and Holder were friendly adversaries. They did have a falling out at some point and then got back together again. In 1948 Holder helped Baker become the first black assemblyman. Still, everything everybody else got was because of Baker and men like Holder. I mean nobody gave them anything." Mr. Franklin Morton, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 17 February 1988.

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as Jones put it, a man of the people, whether Garveyite or leftist. For all their bluster, Holder and Jones were practical politicians. From time to time Holder left his role of dissident and rabble rouser to participate in Bertram Baker's club. He always remained faithful to the Democratic party.[55] Finally, in desperation for an electoral triumph, Holder accepted a spot on Samuel Berman's regular clubhouse ticket, as the assembly nominee in 1962. The height of irony was reached when Holder ran on Berman's slate opposite his protege, Tom Jones.[56]

Another fascinating commonality between Holder and Jones was their Caribbean heritage. Both displayed chauvinistic pride in their ethnic roots and both were class conscious, sought home ownership, higher education and the trappings of office for themselves and their family. Prestige, rank and status was important to them, as it was to many who came to the United States from the British West Indies. They remained committed to American

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[55]In former Mayor Edward I. Koch's concession speech on the night he was defeated by Mayor David Dinkins in the 1989 Democratic primary he gave special thanks to Wesley McD. Holder for his support and contributions to the party.

[56]Some observers have explained this unlikely scenario by recollecting that it was precipitated when Tom Jones and Shirley Chisholm stole the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League out from under Holder in 1958. The wily mentor was drubbed by his former pupils. Jones used the remnants of the League as a building block for the Unity Democratic Club.

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capitalism and the two party political system. In hindsight, their important political functions came as pressure group leaders. More radical and black nationalist activity would rise with the tide of the tumultuous decade of the 1960s.[57]

Interestingly, all three prominent leaders, Holder, Baker and Jones shared a vision of West Indian tenacity to succeed in the United States. Paradoxically, their belief in individual achievement was still paramount, even as they utilized group and communal means to achieve social and personal greatness. Baker, Jones and Holder were not as far from one another as they were close. Most likely, it was their kindred attributes, such as strong personalities and similar backgrounds (middle class and well educated families) that made it harder for them to get along with each other and form political alliances. Still they managed to share common political soil at times.

After 1953 the Bedford Stuyvesant League, driven by Flagg's win in 1953, lost steam with each passing year. Renegade efforts to defeat Bertram Baker failed. A challenge to Holder's dominance by Shirley Chisholm and Tom Jones was the final blow to the League.

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[57]Mr. Wesley McD. Holder, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 21 June 1989.

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Instead of battling the lone black voice for black Brooklyn, Tom Jones turned his energy to the Seventeenth assembly district where a fast growing black population was ripe for black representation. Through his contacts with Jewish radicals and black nationalists, Tom Jones constructed the Unity Democratic Club in early 1960. It was an interracial group that had many interracial couples in the vanguard of the organization. Tom Jones brought together various ideologies, peoples, and interests and kept them in unison through the force of his personal magnetism.

The Unity Democratic Club's Beginnings

> ....especially when that area was predominately white, a lot of mixed racial marriages' people settled there, held socialist teas, discussed the dialectic and the rising up of the masses and all the rest of that kind of thing....Jones, who is by far one of the most incendiary platform speakers you can ever get....He spoke the language of these people....I mean Baker as compared to the fiery Jones, to this revolutionary expression and all of that sort of thing, he probably appeared like Uncle Tom himself in accommodation. Early in those times the leadership was Baker, period. It was Baker. We didn't really start getting into an awful lot of change until the 1960s, until we started broadening the base, until we started....we got another leader. We got Tom Jones and Ruth Goring. I was supportive of them. Oh yeah. Tom Jones and Ruth Goring then spilled over and you got Sam Wright. And Sam, Tom and myself, we had a pretty good working relationship among ourselves.
>
> Tom Jones supported Bert Baker privately, and didn't attempt to challenge Baker. He thought, 'Why go

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> after that when there's this other area that's mostly black without black leadership.' Well what Jones did was broaden the base of power....it was necessary to incorporate, not that they weren't kindred spirits, but to incorporate such dissident elements that existed in those areas.[58]

The Unity Democratic Club (UDC) had a unique and diverse composition, thanks to Tom Jones' own complex background. The key early participants were Tom Jones and his wife, Bertha Jones, a Jewish woman with a radical heritage; Jones's sister Grace and her husband, novelist John O. Killens; a black nurse, Ruth Goring; Ruth Brooks and George Brooks, another interracial couple (Ruth was a social worker and former ALP activist, George was an attorney); white community activist Mary Woods and the renowned black painter Ernest Crichlow, among a few others.[59]

Joan Maynard was a young art student when she heard about UDC. She realized it was time she belonged

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[58]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

[59]John O. Killens, who died on October 27, 1987 at the age of 71, was a writer, teacher and founder of the Harlem Writers Guild. "Mr. Killens' novels belying his low key and soft spoken manner, mirrored his hard-edged activist philosophy. He once wrote, 'My fight is not to be a white man in a black skin, but to inject some black blood, some black intelligence into the pallid mainstream of American life, culturally, socially, psychologically, philosophically.'" In 1963, his novel, And Then We Heard The Thunder, (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1984), was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. It's about the experience of a black law student who is commissioned an officer during World War II. New York Times, 30 October 1987, 22.

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to something that could do some good for the community. During the 1950s she attended the Carver School in Harlem, which had a good number of progressives teaching there. After witnessing the destruction of too many young, brilliant minds, who were terrorized by the blacklists, and hounded by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, she became keenly aware of the grave injustices that were happening to people she believed in. In UDC she saw that "Those silent in the fifties lifted voices in the sixties. Its members were earnest about wanting to make a change for the entire community. It was also a mixed race club full of idealistic people. Honest, in the best sort of way."[60]

Many of UDC's leaders held unsubstantiated views of the regular clubhouse (it was wealthy, without ties to the black community, extremely powerful)[61] nevertheless, those beliefs propelled UDC on. The bottom line was they accurately perceived the Seventeenth assembly district regular clubhouse was not doing the kind of job

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[60]Ms. Joan Maynard, interview by author.

[61]"One is not necessarily logical in their approach when they're involved in politics, you block out a lot of stuff, but they might have been doing wonderful things, but all I was hearing about is what they weren't doing, and that's what fed us and charged us with that kind of energy. Jocelyn Cooper, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 17 February 1988.

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they felt it should. Given the chance, they could serve the community better.[62]

Jocelyn Cooper came to Tom Jones's campaign in 1960 energetic, albeit naive about politics. She explained that UDC's thrust was very different than the regulars:

> Well from what I experienced and from what I was told that the people who were the incumbents who had a lock on the whole system of election districts within the assembly district, who had captains in each one of the little places, and had enough financial resources to make sure that their systems would operate. The jobs were there to be given and they were always protected. We had nothing. We had no money, we had no ED captains....Plus the fact that we were progressive in terms of our caring for people and were interested in jobs....You know, the whole business of our involvement in employment, bringing resources to Bedford Stuyvesant. And we were successful. There were state offices that came in shortly after we became involved. We picketed to bring an employment office, State Employment Office. That happened.[63]

Marshal Dubin and his wife, Etheline Dubin recall how they became active in the UDC:

> We got involved with the Unity Democratic Club, this lovely interracial group, headed by Tom Jones. He had a progressive background. He was a lawyer. And we rallied around him and we decided that we were going to do civil rights work and then eventually we

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[62]Interestingly, Congresswoman Edna Kelly was largely exempt from criticism. Kelly covered parts of the Seventeenth assembly district and was respected by many for the assistance her office rendered to the West Indian immigrants.

[63]Mrs. Jocelyn Cooper, interview by author.

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> would get strong enough and we would challenge the older leader. He'd been there I think about 14 years and he thought he owned the area. Why? Because even though it became more and more black, they didn't vote. Whites voted and they voted in block and they voted for Berman and he thought he owned it. So here we were, and we're part of this aspiring club, and they were doing this civil rights work....And we began to develop a reputation in the neighborhood for militancy and for success. Now the machine was getting a little frayed around the edges, but they still had considerable power. We fought them in the campaign twice. The first time we lost, but I think only by a couple hundred votes.[64]

Walter Linder joined the Communist Party when he was at City College in 1948. Linder stayed with them until 1961 when he split to form the Progressive Labor Party. Linder and his wife Esther joined UDC during its campaign in 1960 to elect Tom Jones as the area's first black assemblyman.

> Seemed like a good cause for us. We saw the literature on electing a black representative. Jones impressed me as a progressive, forward thinking guy. Somebody who stood for the working people. As a CP member and a worker all my life I identified with the working class. Seemed like an opportunity to move workers into a position of influence. I was skeptical about what people in this government could do to really change things. But we were in on the 1960 effort.[65]

UDC Was Unique

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[64]Mr. Marshal Dubin and Mrs. Etheline Dubin, interview by author.

[65]Mr. Walter Linder, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 8 June 1988.

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At the time the way the local Democratic clubs gained new members was to wait for them to walk in the door. The machine philosophy was, come down, sit quietly and learn the business, do a good job and you'll get noticed. It was essentially the individual's responsibility to make things happen. Reformers rejected this notion of political organizing. They reached out to the as yet uninitiated, apolitical or independent voters.[66] The UDC was in-step with the movement in this respect.

> I worked the edges of the district, the housing projects. So we could go into housing projects and win them by a three to one margin. My support was grass roots, came straight off the ground. No money. These people worked for nothing. We called ourselves the Unity Democratic Club. We used the UNIA headquarters, on Bergen and Nostrand. The Garvey movement had already died out. A few diehards stayed. It was large enough space to have one hundred ten people. We helped them with the rent. The owner had a second hand furniture store.[67]

The UDC made more of an effort than the regulars to reach out to the poor, low income, and working class blacks in the district. Yet it was also closely associated with middle class block associations, tenants groups, PTAs: the grassroots of the community. Ruth

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[66]This was the way that reformers Bertram Podell, Stephen Solarz and Elizabeth Holtzman defeated their machine bred rivals in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, respectively.

[67]Mr. Tom Jones, interview by author.

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Goring remembers the ferment at UDC and whom it represented:

> Well I would say the average meetings ran between 30 and 50 people, because some people came in to get information, a meeting was in progress, they sat down and they attended the meeting. And this was a way they learned. We had women who were on welfare with families that we encouraged to go back to school I know a woman who has her Master's degree today that works for HRA [Human Resources Administration]. Her daughter went to school. I got her into another group for women that I belonged to who were working with young people and were helping them to get college scholarships....If nothing else happened that was worth it.
>
> The people that came in got vision, and saw that things could change slowly but it was possible to change things. And people who never moved out of the community would say, 'you know I joined the block association.' And then out of it we had that housing project that's there on New York Avenue, Stuy Park Houses, that was an organization that we put together, black and white, it had individual members, organization members and Stanley Layton, who was a lawyer. The UDC had the first successful rent strike that was upheld by the courts. Stanley went out, worked with the tenants, explained to them why the escrow was necessary.... [68]

The Unity Democratic Club also dealt with the seemingly intractable issues, such as black unemployment. The club accepted the call of A. Philip Randolph and the Negro American Labor Council's to end discrimination in the labor movement. Their effort was called "Operation Employment" and its goal was to pressure

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[68]Mrs. Ruth Goring, interview by author.

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> Lily-white trade union locals to open their books to Negro workers. Negro trade unionists, so long denied official positions in National, International and Local Unions, must be elected and appointed to leadership from top to bottom. Only thus will the trade union movement in our county become united and strong.[69]

Andrew Cooper, a former captain in UDC, spearheaded UDC's "Operation Unemployment" campaign.

> I was more interested in politics and in the local political movement that was also a civil rights struggle as I saw it: the need for economic justice and anti-discrimination as far as jobs were concerned because both Ebinger and Bond bakeries....Ebinger never had a black clerk, for instance. The Sheffield people never had a black driver. There were jobs that unskilled black people could qualify for or should have had since both these businesses were in the heart of the black community. No one ever looked at it. So there were a number of wider repercussions around what we did, because we began to get a great deal of attention from the Press because of our militancy and our economic actions.[70]

Their accomplishments were few but their tactics were bold and trailblazing for the time. It was the start of the up-north civil rights movements, and UDC

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[69]"UDC Salutes The N.A.L.C." The Unity Democrat, UDC's Newsletter, December 1961.

[70]Mr. Andrew Cooper, interview by author. One of these repercussions was the Minister's Movement, which led a sit-in and demonstration at Downstate Medical Center for black trade union jobs. See Clarence Taylor's Ph.D., Dissertation in Progress, "The Black Church and the Downstate Medical Center Campaign." City University of New York, Graduate Center, History Program, 1990.

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was in the forefront of that spectacle. For instance, for most of 1961 UDC fought and won jobs for black Bedford Stuyvesant residents at Sealtest's Sheffield Farm's Fulton Street milk plant. Eight black workers were hired, although ultimately Sealtest closed the plant.[71]

Ebinger and Bond bakeries were picketed for their exclusive hiring practices. Operation Unemployment's slogan was: "Buy Where You Can Work." Jocelyn Cooper, who brought her husband Andrew down to UDC in 1960 after attending a UDC workshop recalled the excitement their activities engendered:

> We picketed in seven degree weather. And we were out there for weeks and weeks and weeks. And we were successful in consciousness-raising....How should I put it? We asked for opportunities to meet corporate people to work out job placements. Sealtest never did it. They closed the plant.....rather than give black people jobs, they closed it down. And they had one [black] person who swept the floor, and I think he made something like $100 a week....And Ebinger's did not hire black people. In fact, I can remember my little daughter's voice, "Don't buy where my mother can't work!" We were chanting and struggling to bring about jobs for black people in Brooklyn.[72]

Participatory Democracy

The Unity Democratic Club also sought a different approach to politics; an approach that made the common man and woman a true participant in the political

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[71]The milk plant was transformed into The Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in 1967.

[72]Mrs. Jocelyn Cooper, interview by author.

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process. In machine style clubhouse politics, the general membership is not usually consulted when nominations are made by district leaders for elective and appointive office. There is no rank and file vote. Its the leader's decision. This way of running an organization was anathema to the UDC reformers. They wanted to open the process to all and make politics more understandable to the average citizen.

Several political workshops were conducted in 1961 and 1962, leading up to UDC's primary victory in September 1962. Ruth Brooks, a social worker by training who was experienced in political organizing chaired the Political Workshop Committee. Its goal was to demystify politics for working class people.

> Well, it was really about the fact that politics was deliberately made mystical, that it was very easy to mystify, that it was essential to vote in the primaries, that the primaries in Brooklyn were more important even than the general election; who appointed whom, how delegates were chosen, what decisions were made in the so-called backrooms, and how they could be made differently; who was beholden to whom and how that could be done differently.
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> The first year they were kind of small, and I really ran them pretty much myself with some guest speakers. And then the second year they really blew large. I had many guest speakers, union leaders, like Sam Meyers of the UAW.
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> The idea was to give people the feeling of empowerment, precisely....Many of the people who took leadership in the '62 campaign came in through the work-

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> shops....may be the high point of my life. It was very exciting. Ernie Crichlow did the artwork. We really were top drawer. We had a bunch of very gifted people. And in 1962 the primary was in September and we ran through the summer. Everybody gave up vacations. And it just was a very exciting campaign, because it was such a bunch of dedicated committees of people.[73]

The workshops were an impressive feat. They drew the most experienced and sharpest minds on city politics in the early 1960s. For instance, future City Council President Paul O'Dwyer spoke on, "How Our Government Works." He discussed,

> The structure of the Democratic party, including the importance of the primary election, the role of district leaders and of the county committee, how a bill becomes a law, patronage, where political power comes from and how political power is maintained.[74]

Also present were Tammany Hall's black leader, J. Raymond Jones, and Harlem City Councilman Herbert Evans, who analyzed the various groups in New York City contending for political power. James Booker, columnist for the Amsterdam News talked about how citizens should evaluate reports of political events in the news and electronic media; Hortense Gabel, Assistant to the Mayor for Housing discussed the factors that caused a community to become 'run down" and how this process could

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[73]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author.

[74]United Action Democratic Association, "This Is Your Life: A Political Workshop." January 1962.

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be reversed; Milton Friedman, the UDC's legal expert (former chair of the Queens Democratic Law Committee and labor arbitrator and mediator)[75] explained what were the legal requirements for petitions, committees on vacancy, declining and substitution, registering and primary voting. Other notables who held workshops were Carlos Rios, Manhattan district leader, Rev. Dr. Gardiner C. Taylor, Union leader Joseph P. Collier of the Transport Workers Union, in addition to a slew of local grass roots community leaders. The breadth of the workshops was truly remarkable.

What was most important about UDC's workshops was that it fought against alienation in the black community which was so prevalent at the time.

Ernie Crichlow remembered:

> Workshops helped stop alienation, the feeling that why should blacks care about primaries, 'That's not

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[75]Milton Friedman died 19 October 1989. Mr. Friedman became an auditor for the retirement fund of the coat-and-suit industry in New York during World War II after his return from Italy, where he was seriously wounded.

"Mr. Friedman worked for the New York State Mediation Board from 1950 to 1967 before returning to private practice. For many years he was the arbitrator for the National Railway Labor Conference and the five railroad unions. He was a special arbitrator for seven years in disputes between United States Steel and the United Steelworkers of America...He also arbitrated disputes involving newspapers, television networks, hospitals and colleges and airlines." He taught personnel and labor relations at Hofstra University. New York Newsday, New York Times, obituary, 20 October 1989.

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> important, that's a waste of time. I'll vote when I have to vote.' So it was a major education to make us understand that this is the real election for us and the community. That you could do something for your community. That was something Tom preached and hammered over and over again. White or black, you don't learn about primaries, only the hip politicians know about primaries. And he was making us hip....Unity [UDC] will always stand as a monument to what we really could do.[76]

Andrew Cooper agreed:

> The influence of Tommy Jones in those areas was basically boiled down to: This is what you can do. Forget about picking up a gun and becoming violent, anything of that kind. This is what you can do, this will make change, this you must learn in order to make changes, this his how it can be down on another level, in a peaceful way.[77]

Workshops helped to bring disenfranchised blacks into the political process. Although there are no precise figures concerning voter registration, UDC is credited with an aggressive street corner voter registration drive. The new registered voters came out in the 1962 primary and made a difference in Jones and Gorings' narrow win. It is estimated five hundred additional voters came out who hadn't in the 1960 Democratic primary.

Tom Jones and UDC gave new life to the Democratic party. An area that was once dubbed "dead" by some lead-

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[76]Mr. Ernest Crichlow, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 25 September 1989.

[77]Mr. Andrew Cooper, interview by author.

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ers in the county organization became a district to be watched and catered to by the district leaders who vied for the control of the Brooklyn Democratic party. The success of UDC was a shot in the arm to the Democratic party. Tom Jones helped to add blacks to the party just before alienation from political life boiled over (into the summer riots of 1964 in Bedford Stuyvesant) and could no longer be contained within the bounds of the electoral system. For the time being, insurgency was absorbed.

Conclusion

The Unity Democratic Club was caught in the swirl of history. Tom Jones, a golden tongued orator and political organizer, brought together a unique group of people to work for electoral change utilizing community organizing techniques. The club rode the current of the day: a new black awareness of self and community. Jones and UDC was the messenger or the medium though which the current of history was translated.

UDC's analysis of the regular clubhouse struck a chord in black people's hearts. It was time to enter the electoral arena and vote for one of their own, one who also cared about the issues of the day and not merely patronage to the faithful. Their principles were inter-racial unity (thus the club's name), black representa-

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tion for the black community, and education as a means to push for fundamental social, economic, and political change leading to a more democratic and humane society.

The Electoral Races in 1962: IntraParty Competition Leads to Black Succession

The election results of June 1960 revealed that Joseph W. Rowe and Thomas R. Jones were defeated by Vincent Carney and Samuel I. Berman. Carney polled 3,218 to Rowe's 2,018 and Berman beat Jones 3,082 to 1,997. With Carney's impending resignation, Samuel Berman became district leader. Berman understood the margin of victory might nourish the UDC. It did. The Unity Democrats saw their one thousand vote defeat as a great accomplishment. Samuel Berman took steps immediately to meet some of UDC's criticisms. He named a black captain, Carrie Lark, his co-leader.

Unquestionably, the pressure of intraparty competition is responsible for Berman's speedy appointment of a black woman to the co-leadership. Still, Carrie Lark was not simply a window dressing selection. She was a genuine hard working, long time member and captain in the Seventeenth assembly district who without a doubt earned her new position.

Where Vincent Carney was unable ask his older, loyal members to step down, Samuel Berman could. He

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asked Carney's co-leader, Elizabeth "Betty" Kehoe to resign for Carrie Lark. Several club members resented Betty Kehoe's firing. Some saw the move as an insincere attempt by Berman to gain the confidence of the black community. Black captains however were glad to see Lark receive her due.

Carrie Lark's advance in the ranks did little to quell UDC's attacks. In the fall of 1960 Berman was the man every one loved to hate. He was the perfect rogue. Arrogant. Blunt. Uncompromising at times. A man who belonged to an earlier time when machine leaders dictated and expected his followers to fall in line. Newcomers had to wait their turn, just as he had waited 30 years for his prize.

Two things limited Berman's appeal to blacks. One was his conservative ideology. The Seventeenth's regulars and reformers had genuine differences on particular issues. A good example of this was capital punishment. Samuel Berman was for it, while UDC was against it.

> Let me tell you something. When you hold public office, you have to learn how to survive too. If you have a certain area in your district that's very vocal, and voting, as against other areas and people who are not, you have to measure it against what was your district was like. Listen, I put in bills in the Legislature that if they ever passed I'd commit suicide. For instance, I believed in the death penalty. In those days we had the death penalty. The ACLU and other groups came to me to introduce a bill to repeal capital punishment so I put in a bill to repeal capital punishment. In those days, remember,

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> very few Democratic bills were reported out of Committee. Who was chairman of Codes? Malcolm Wilson, a good friend of mine. I knew way before it would never pass. Malcolm said, 'For you Sam, I'll throw it out on the floor. I'll debate against it and the Republicans will defeat it, but for you...' I said, 'No, bottle it up. If you throw it out I'll commit suicide. I don't want it coming to the floor.' Meanwhile the headlines in the paper read, 'Berman opposes capital punishment. Republican Party favor's it.' And you would have to do the same thing to survive. Privately you may be behind the scenes to scuttle bills. You have to be behind the scenes to learn that.[78]

Berman understood how difficult it was for a legislator representing a racially changing district to survive. But he couldn't survive. Crown Heights wanted change, and they wanted it right now. Secondly, Berman had a reputation for dishonesty. Finally, his credibility plunged when he nominated Wesley McD. Holder for his own assembly post in August 1962, as the primary drew near. Holder at the time was not a member of Berman's club. The nomination seemed to represent a last ditch attempt by Berman to show the community he could

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[78]Berman's practical advice to legislators on how to survive might have been appreciated in another era. After all, it was the goal of smart politicians to pull through even when he and his constituents can't see eye to eye on particular questions. However, the last thing the Seventeenth assembly district's reformers wanted in 1960 was a lesson from Berman. Mr. Samuel Berman, interview by author.

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remain their leader even as the district became solidly black. The district would have none of that.[79]

IntraParty Competition: The State and County Dimension

In 1961 New York City's big three county leaders, Brooklyn's Joe Sharkey, Manhattan's Carmine De Sapio and The Bronx' Charles Buckley broke with Mayor Robert Wagner Jr. They supported the reluctant and unprepared New York State Comptroller, Arthur Levitt for Mayor. Wagner easily defeated Levitt on the platform, "Beat The Bosses." To ensure that Joe Sharkey would no longer pose a threat to him he imposed a troika of Brooklyn "reform" leaders on the county. The underlying goal was to eventually seat Brooklyn assemblyman and Minority Leader

[79]The New York Times reported that Holder was inserted late in the campaign. "There were other changes yesterday in slates for nomination to be made in the Sept. 6 primary, which will select candidates to run in the November elections. Assemblyman Samuel I. Berman withdrew as a candidate for renomination and re-election in Brooklyn's Seventeenth District. He remained as candidate for re-election as the Democratic leader of his district. Wesley McD. Holder, A Negro, was substituted for Mr. Berman, a white, in the Assembly race. In recent years the once predominantly white population of the district has been largely replaced by Negroes. New York Times, 14 August 1962.

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of the Assembly, Anthony J. Travia[80] (and later James V. Mangano, leader of the United Mazzini Democratic Club, or Eighth Assembly district,) as county leader and hold off the candidacy of Madison club leader Stanley Steingut.[81]

The Reverend Gardiner Taylor of Concord Baptist Church in Bedford Stuyvesant was appointed to the troika along with Aaron Jacoby and John Lynch. Taylor explained how he found his way to the triumvirate, and his role in the Samuel Berman-Tom Jones contest.

> It was strange, wasn't it? I was on the Board of Education....Now I met Wagner though Adam Powell years before....he was running then I guess for Borough President of Manhattan....So Wagner and I rode over in Mr. Wagner's car, and we talked a little. Then I became a member of the Board of Education. And somehow or other he and I came together....I don't remember now how that actually happened....he and I were at a party....at Fred Richmond's house, who lived on Sutton Place....That night he said to me, 'We're going to have to do something in Brooklyn, and I want you to serve with John Lynch and Aaron Jacoby.' I said, 'All right.' So that's how that came about. Wagner used the three of us to hold off Steingut, I think.

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[80]Travia was Minority Leader from 1959-1964, and Speaker from 1965-1968. He served in the Assembly from 1944-1946 and 1949-65 from the Twenty Second district in East New York. From 1966-67 he served the Thirty Eight assembly district before accepting a Federal Court Judgeship in 1968. He retired in the 1970s and hasn't been heard from since. He lives in Dutchess County, New York.

[81]James V. Mangano replaced Anthony J. Travia, whom Mayor Wagner successfully nominated as Speaker of the State Assembly, as the Mayor's lieutenant and chief candidate to defeat Stanley Steingut for county leader. New York Times, 4 March 1965.

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> I tried to get Sam Berman and Tom Jones to coalesce, upon Wagner's urging that they ought to be brought together....I failed in this. And then Tom Jones went on and got his own ticket and they went forward....I was the man behind the scenes....that was my ticket. 'Mac' for assembly and Berman for leader.[82]

Samuel Berman was allied with Mayor Wagner and Anthony J. Travia while Tom Jones had assemblyman Stanley Steingut's support. Steingut challenged Travia for the Assembly Speakership (Travia prevailed with Republican Party support) and, at the county level, for position of Democratic county chairman. The county leader in this period was still more powerful than the district leader and their assemblyman. Still, crucial to both elections were the votes of the district co-leaders and legislators.

The votes for county leader were split evenly between Travia and Steingut. Steingut knew that if he could swing a few votes by helping to elect Tom Jones and Ruth Goring he'd come out on top in the county leader's bout. In 1962, with the 1963 county chairman's election looming large in Stanley Steingut's mind, Steingut took the practical and wise step of clandestinely assisting UDC's election campaign. Intraparty conflict at the state and county levels thus

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[82]Mr. Gardiner Taylor, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 27 July 1988.

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hastened black succession in the Seventeenth assembly district.

Ruth Brooks recalled:

> Well Steingut gave us a little surreptitious help, (which maybe should be off the record)....I remember a meeting at Toomey's Diner. Do you know Toomey's? Its still there. Rogers' Avenue and Empire Boulevard. It was an all night diner. When I was in high school we used to go there after a date on the way home for hamburgers. Fifteen years later I was meeting the district leader there, I was meeting Stanley there with Tom once....it was before Tom was elected, it was during the campaign and some arrangements were made for some help....in hoping for it [our victory]. And it was a very close victory. While all this was going on there was also a fight for county leadership, and that was why they had that silly triumvirate. And the real fight was between Travia and Stanley. So it would have been Travia sitting downtown and you can well imagine that he would not be glad to see Tom. Because he would have known that Stanley helped. I mean you know there aren't that many secrets in politics....I know he did offer a certain number of jobs. He also offered a biggie, one biggie, and my husband got it, and that was Deputy Borough President. And then when he left, Ruth Goring was Deputy for a while.
>
> Stanley is a very flexible leader. The first thing that happens after Tom and Ruth were elected was the county meeting at which the leader was elected. And Tom and Ruth choose to go with Stanley on exactly the grounds that if they had to choose between an Italian and a Jew they would go for the Jew. Plus the fact, I guess, that Stanley had been helpful. Yes, it really is a traditional historical affinity of Blacks and Jews. Yes, and there were many Jews in the club. The historical alliance amongst Jews and Blacks would prove fragile, as it always had. It was one reason why the hope and triumph of UDC would be shortlived.[83]

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[83]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author. Jonathan Kaufman has persuasively written that the alliance between blacks and Jews was not a natural one. Their relationship had been complex and extremely ambivalent. Black people's decision to cooperate with liberal Jews during the late 1950s and early 1960s was

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Ruth Goring added:

Steingut had helped us. He insured that all of our petitions were carried out...we withstood the court challenge.

Power concedes nothing. You have to reach for it and get a grasp on it, even if you don't pull it away, that shows them the time has come. And if they're smart, they say, 'Well look, we've got to do something or we're going to lose the whole ball of wax.'

Our votes were the one that won it [for Steingut] and he knew it. I was on the county executive committee, and his first being elected on that county executive committee depended on our two votes. He never forgot it. He knew it. And he was always appreciative of it. How did we get to Steingut? Through Ruth Brooks. Her father was a judge, Judge Benjamin. They all lived in that same area when they were children. They went to school together in Crown Heights. The kids played together, they dated one another and there was always holiday time and all that sort of thing. Papa became judge, papa knew Stanley, papa talked to Stanley. Stanley already knew about Tom because he'd seen him function in the courts. Everybody knew about Tom Jones. He had a big mouth and was always causing trouble. Ruth would talk to her father about it, and as a judge he couldn't be involved in politics but obviously he talked to Stanley....

Then Steingut, not Steingut himself in the beginning but there were overtures made for the club, you know there was a donation....The handwriting was on the wall. Somebody had to come into that area because the black community had moved out of that area into this area. So what are you going to do, continue to

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a practical choice. Jews were, "willing to help, had access to money, influence and intellectual circles. The ambivalent feelings could be buried. The positive could be emphasized, negative stereotypes put aside while the two groups worked together for a broader goal." Jonathan Kaufman, Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times Between Blacks and Jews in America, (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1988), 46.

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> support Berman over there or try to pick up two for the price of one? And I mean Steingut's a nice guy, I like him. I mean his sons I knew. The kids would come out once in a while and I'd fuss at them and scream at them. But he did it. So Steingut decided, 'Hey, I'm not going to drive these people out. They're solid, they're not coming off with a lot of foolish fanfare. I might just as well get them on my side.' So then he can take credit for having extended black representation. And that's why when Shirley Chisholm broke with him he never forgot her, and Travia didn't either. Jews and blacks historically have been able to work better together on issues, even though they fight like cats and dogs at times. Italians have never made overtures to blacks.
>
> Meade [Esposito] came when we were already looking like we were going to make it....years later he said, 'You know those were the good old days when Unity [UDC] stood for something. It really stood for something.' And we had our battles but we always respected one another.[84]

In sum, intraparty competition between the Seventeenth assembly district regulars and UDC insurgents, and between factions within the Democratic party at the state and county level, sped racial political succession. Burton Rudnick, a lawyer and a captain in the Seventeenth until the bitter defeat in 1962 understood the sentiment for change in the community was due. It was the black community's turn to share power.

> Things took its own course. The people felt it was time for a black leader. I had a family of seven on Dean Street. A postman. Nice, clean people. When I came by during Tom Jones' second campaign in 1962 there was a sudden coldness to me, after we had been friendly. I asked him, is it because Jones is black? And he said, 'Well, yeah, one of ours is running. If

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[84]Mrs. Ruth Goring, interview by author.

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> one of your, the Jews, were running you'd support him.' And maybe properly so. And in the campaign Jones did the same things that Jews probably did [appeals to race pride]. The Irish held off the Jews until they were stuck.[85]

Thomas Russell Jones and Ruth Goring beat Samuel Berman, Carrie Lark and Wesley Holder by approximately 500 votes. Samuel Berman went out swinging but a grand jury failed to find evidence of illegality in the election. Tom Jones easily defeated his Republican challenger Priscilla Maddox, in November 1962 by a lopsided 10,893 to 3,761; Liberal Party candidate Miriam I. Eversley garnered 999.[86]

Summary

The racial succession in Crown Heights' Seventeenth assembly district was rife with conflict. From 1954 to 1960 the political transition from Irish-Jewish to black rule was slow. The leader of the new Seventeenth, Vincent Carney was not the type to make hard choices, such as moving up a black captain to the head of the party ticket or legislative office while demoting his devoted incumbents. Nor did he make way for a black successor to the leadership upon his retirement. The

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[85]Mr. Burton Rudnick, interview by author.

[86]New York Times, 7 September 1962, 10 November 1962.

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districts new leader, assemblyman Samuel Berman was too condescending, too irritating to the growing black community. Unwilling to leave office, he failed to alter the local organization's fate. In 1960 his appointment of a black co-leader and his late 1962 selection of a black assemblyman was viewed as a weak gesture that came far too late. In this sense succession did not keep pace with demographic patterns.

Nevertheless, demographic change and legislative reapportionment had combined to set the stage for Brooklyn's second black succession in 1962. As the regulars could not match the fresh, reform minded Unity Democratic Club organized, under the aegis of Tom Jones, the political walls came tumbling down. The UDC formed a progressive, interracial alliance. It represented the reemergence of the old and new movements of social democracy and black nationalism that swept America's urban centers in the middle to late 1960s. Racial succession also got an extra push from intraparty competition at the county and state level. The chronic internal factionalism that bedeviled the Brooklyn's Democratic party became as positive factor in the succession process. Tom Jones and Stanley Steingut had much to gain in a political alliance. Both got what they bartered for.

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Throughout the decade regular clubhouses found themselves besieged as the riots of 1964, civil rights protests, student demonstrations, anti-war activities, women's rights marches, school integration and community control struggles emerged. In the fall of 1962 the urban machine newly formed black branches were barely able to contain the social turmoil that began erupting.

Before UDC could enjoy the fruits of their historic achievement, post succession bedlam broke out, tearing asunder UDC's heart and soul. By 1964 UDC was transformed. The club's liberal and radical members, black and white, were red-baited out of the club. Feeling betrayed and demoralized, they exited and entered non-electoral politics. Black nationalism had gained in popularity, pushing Jones to squeeze out many of UDC's white founders, wreaking havoc with UDC's daily operational activities. In 1964 Tom Jones stunned the flock by accepting a Civil Court judgeship offered by Stanley Steingut, leaving UDC rudderless. The addition of black captains from Samuel Berman's licked clubhouse to UDC's ranks ensured a return to regular politics and political shenanigans.

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CHAPTER 6

EPILOGUE:THE POST SUCCESSION YEARS AT THE UNITY DEMOCRATIC CLUB, 1962-1964

The Post Succession Years: Miles Apart, 1962-1964

Introduction

> Listen, you know in any revolution, you know the day before the rebel army marches in, they want everybody in the streets tearing everything down. The day after they march in they declare a curfew and shoot anybody who's on the street. Do you see what I mean?[1]

The tornado of contradictions that would rip apart the American social fabric also touched down at the UDC; its internal struggles for power ended the political dream of UDC's founders. There was an irreconcilable clash of ideologies: racial integration and unity versus separatism. In addition, the ideals of reform and pragmatism of regular politics could no longer by contained by the sheer force of Tom Jones's charisma. The militant

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[1]Interview with James Shaw, June 6, 1989.

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and radical brand of politics practiced at UDC was absorbed by the Brooklyn Democractic machine in the Seventeenth assembly district by 1964.

What brought the house down on UDC was Tom Jones' deal with Stanley Steingut for a Civil Court Judgeship in 1963. It appears Tom Jones withdrew from the original vision of UDC, mind, body and spirit. Tom Jones was afraid of two things: first, that he'd be red-baited for his close ties to leftists in the club, endangering his chance for a judgeship, and second, being seen as a puppet of the white co-founders at UDC.

Red Baiting at UDC

Before UDC's tremendous September 1962 primary victory over the regulars could be savored (Thomas R. Jones and Ruth Goring defeated Samuel I. Berman and Carrie Lark for the co-district leadership of the Seventeenth, and Jones defeated Wesley McD. Holder for the assembly), momentous changes were already afoot.

Jocelyn Cooper, one of the young progressive black women active in UDC from 1960, saw UDC change that victorious election eve. Tom Jones began to disappear before her eyes:

> And the last night....I mean the night of the election each of us was dispersed to go someplace and bring in the tally. And I went to Tom's headquarters to call back as the tally came. And it was

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> the most incredible thing that when....this can be on or off the record....the ED captains were bringing in their tallies and they were going up to the board, I saw something very strange happen with Tom Jones. He became almost incommunicado and put people off, which was not a thing that Tom had done. Tom would put his arms around people, you know, 'Can we talk about this? Can we work on it?' and so on, whatever the problem was. And I saw him....and I was very large with child so it wasn't a matter of moving around, just sitting and watching. And I saw Tom Jones not push people away, but he would say, 'Well we'll talk about that later. Maybe we can do that.' And the man walked backwards out the door and I saw him say goodbye and that was the end of it. I saw Tom Jones stop being a politician right in front of my eyes. Of course, I didn't know what was happening at the time but we never heard from him again, never, never, never.[2]

Mary Woods, the heart and soul of UDC's everyday activities, its chief administrative assistant, recalled how Jones made a clean break with one of UDC's highest ideals, racial integration and unity, less than a week after the election.

> I knew Tom pretty well. I worked with him more closely than anyone in those years...Tom spoke then for interracial unity and emphasized his socialist past as much as his black nationalist or black church history. He was strongly behind them both, the Left and black nationalism. Strongly favored an integrated outfit. He was as strong in his roots: his marriage and his family. But there was a third part of Tom that was opportunistic, scared, and shallow, personally and politically, that flooded the rest of him after he won.
>
> By his victory night, he turned on us. He had an interview with me. You could see the sign of change when his victory was near. I was close to him in

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[2]Mrs. Jocelyn Cooper, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 17 February 1988.

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> lieutenant's work, day in, day out. Every evening, kept the club open. A week after the election he said to me that he didn't want me to do that any more and he really had to change his base; that he didn't want to have either the image of a white club or a left wing club and I be kind enough to respect that and disappear. That was personally painful and crazy....A piece of me thought, 'Maybe Tom was right. Maybe the whites should check out.' But it was wrong.
>
> At first the group, Ruth Goring, Ruth Brooks, Wimberly Edwards, liberal whites and blacks, we said, 'No way'....Wimberly Edwards didn't come out of the Left. She had a middle class black family background. She was as outraged as everybody in this. In fact, she made the strongest statement against Tom. We met....became a caucus, informal, trying to figure how we can turn this around....We met, licked each others' wounds, tried to put some sense into Tom's head.
>
> The shallow, opportunistic part of Tom took over after the election.....He wanted a judgeship, he wanted the limelight. Tom made some deal with Shirley [Chisholm]. She and Pat Robinson took on this red baiting. The nasty tension wasn't there before the primary.[3]

Walter "Wally" Linder remembers the same meeting and was equally astonished by what he heard.

> We were very happy. We saw it as a big victory, which I realized it later wasn't. He called 20-25 activists together. He started off reviewing the victory. Then he said its important that male black youth see a male image, a big weakness in the black community. Fathers leave their families, so there's no male image for black youth to look to. He was giving credit, in a sense, to these hard working black women. He said if the club emerged led by only women it wouldn't sit well with this weakness in the black community.
>
> We were taken aback, shocking thing, couldn't

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[3]Ms. Mary Woods, interview by author, Cassette recording, New Rochelle, New York, 13 November 1989.

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> believe it. Contradictory to the democratic idea of participation. He was saying this had to be done. Black women objected strenuously. Mary Woods too. I did too. I was finished with the club after that.[4]

Not only had Jones asked the white leaders to leave the club, he used red-baiting as a tactic to achieve that end. Red-baiting had begun personally for Wally Linder before the primary. Tom Jones came to him months before asking him to quit while he was one of the chief editors of the UDC newsletter. With Linder's history in the Communist Party, Jones said, it wouldn't look good for UDC if Linder had a high profile position.

> The main red-baiting I recall is when I sent out our magazine to half a dozen people, and Jones told me not to send it out....it became known I was a Communist though I didn't broadcast it. During the 1962 campaign I sent out literature to people in the club. One went to Jones and he said, 'We don't want Reds here.' I guess I misestimated his reaction or receptivity. Jones came to me and said, 'Not that I want to censure you but you ought to cool it as this kind of stuff may affect the campaign, and you shouldn't do it.' I agreed not to in the summer of 1962. I had assumed that if Jones wasn't a Communist he was closely associated with the cause some prior time in his life. I never asked him. I got that feeling from the way he spoke, his openness to that.

Jones as a rule did not red-bait himself. He used Shirley Chisholm as his hatchetperson. Wally Linder was

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[4]Mr. Walter Linder, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 8 June 1988.

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one of several UDC members who remember Chisholm in this role.

> I got the feeling that Shirley Chisholm had her eye on what I wrote in the newsletter; had the feeling she was there to watch me; which I didn't do. It was reform stuff. I didn't get a great impression of her [Shirley]. It grew worse as she advanced. She wasn't the most honest person.
>
> Fighting for the unity of black and white people always was part of UDC's way of putting itself forward. To have black people in the leading role as representatives to fight for representation via black and whites joining together. Jones seemed to represent that. It was also CP politics. [The] central idea of uniting the working class. For the most part, blacks in the club were ready to unite with whites....It was called the Unity Democratic Club and I took that on face value.[5]

Tom Jones was not the lone UDC leader who red-baited. Ruth Goring clearly remembers Shirley Chisholm as a leading red-baiter.

> I know that when the red-baiting began it was Shirley [Chisholm] that started it. She accused Wally and Esther Linder of being Left and supporting Left-wing causes. Wally and his wife were members of the club. He worked for Railway Express. And they had two small children....We swore Esther was going to have that second child on a picket line because she picketed and carried on until the day she went into delivery.
>
> Well you know in the sixties the only people who were talking anything decent were 'the so-called left' because they had no avenue within the conservative Republican and Democratic parties to enunciate this kind of thing. The Railway Express, you know they ship things. It was like UPS. And their union had been in some union fights and won and had

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[5]Ibid.

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been accused of Communists having come in and dominating, and that the members were Communists and all that kind of thing. And it seems they had been red-baited as having been red. Nothing was ever proven. Wally was one of the hardest workers in Unity. He wasn't an officer but did an awful lot of writing. We were always putting out position papers. And it always came out in the name of UDC. But Shirley had been the club long enough to know that Wally did some of the writing and Mary Woods did the writing. Yeah, Mary Woods was red-baited.

We lost a journal and everybody swore because we kept a log of everything that went on, when you came in for the day if you were in charge of the desk you logged in the activities that had gone on that day....what the content of any joint meeting had been...Certain of us had keys to the office. And Shirley had had keys because she was one of the executive members. And we came in and the book was gone. And it was the log that Mary Woods used to keep, which really had the real history and the names of people who were contributing and everything, and it was gone....we always suspected that it was Shirley.'

People were sort of shaky and afraid of being red-baited, you know the Communist menace. Black people are like white people, you know they don't want Communism to come and take over and change their way of life and send them all to Siberia and all this kind of thing. It was still the Cold War. People were afraid to even be seen talking to someone that they had known for years because that person had registered Communist because they were for the workers, and nobody was doing anything for the workers. And Shirley built on this, on this fear. And even when she was still in the club and she would stand up to make her speeches, she would always warn us against associating with people that were known Communists. Everybody was saying, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah....if you want to come work for me I didn't ask you what religion you are, I didn't ask you what color you are. Will you give me an hour. That's all I want.'[6]

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[6]Mrs. Ruth Goring, interview by author, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 28 April 1988.

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Ruth Brooks expresses the depth of the pain felt by UDC's founder by Tom Jones' deception:

> It was a very emotionally upsetting period. I mean take somebody like Mary Woods who had really devoted three years of her life. Mary worked full-time, and she would come from work to the club. I would work during the day. I had babysitters all through that period. And when Mary got there at 5:30pm I would turn everything over to Mary. We were like alter egos for each other. And I would go home and she would do the evening stint. Sometimes it was the other way around. She gave up her vacation.

Jones turned away from his leftist past and his ardent belief in interracial alliances. Still what was most galling about his maneuvering, according to UDC's dedicated progenitors, black and white, was not his desire to see more black men in leadership positions (although this had the effect of pushing aside the women who did UDC's hard labor). It was Jones' choice for the top positions in the club (that is, just below his own place at the head of the ticket). Jones chose black men who were neither "UDC regulars" nor committed to its ideology. Instead he selected former black captains from Samuel Berman's regular clubhouse, such as William "Bill" Saunders.

Those interviewed felt that had Saunders and Williams been a real UDC type of leader, maybe, both black and white active members could have convinced themselves to step aside. The idea itself was respectable. For

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instance, Mary Woods among others at the time reflected, "Well he's got a point, we've got to take this turn." Yet Saunders and company were so utterly repugnant many decided it was better to exit than fight Tom Jones. Their faith in the movement was deeply shaken.

By traveling this route, Jones did bring in a couple of decent people, one of whom was Tom Fortune. Fortune was thought to be a nice man, who helped finance UDC through his ownership of several dry cleaning stores. He was likable enough but was not quite leadership material, many felt. A few members who were in a position to know say Jones chose Fortune to be president of the club because he felt he could use him as a surrogate, and easily manipulate him from behind the scenes. Nevertheless, Jones' dumping of the small but productive white members in the club, along with alienating the hard working black women leaders contributed to the death of UDC as it existed before the 1962 election.

The Rise of Black Nationalism and Black Power

Ruth Brooks, who was one of the key participants at the time, saw two pivotal events as the crucial reasons for the undoing of UDC: the rise of black nationalism and black power and Jones' personal flaws and ambitions (namely the judicial robes).

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Two other things happened. One was that Stokely Carmichael, who by the way passed through the club as did almost everybody who was interesting in that period, Stokely Carmichael raised his fist and said, "Black Power." That happened in early '62...June and July of '62. After Stokely was around that was one thing that happened. The other thing that happened was that Tom panicked when he got elected. This is my view. I think Ruth Goring would agree. I know she would. He panicked in general. He panicked at being in Albany. And he also panicked about the possibility that he would be red-baited. So he panicked about the fact that he had left-wing whites in his club....He got himself out there and finally got elected, instead of being the critic, finally got a piece of the power, and got very torn apart almost from the first day. He was chronically tense and stressed....'How are you doing in Albany, Tom?' 'I can't find the men's room,' he'd say. He was really very stressed out....I don't think he could have taken the heat really of going to Congress for instance. I think he was melting, and he was cracking up.

Well in the club he was God. Here he comes up and he's the new boy in town, the new game in town. The Press loves him. Nobody else does, I'm sure. He's very bright, but he also doesn't know anything about anything. Everything is new. And it's a whole new ball game when you're in power. Nothing is ever as simple as when you're out of power. Well there's this side and that side and the other side to this issue that I [Jones] didn't see before. And dealing with my colleagues, if I want to get this passed I can't be shooting my mouth off about that if I want him to vote for my bill.

Something else was floating around in those days. There was Moynihan's report on the black family. There was the issue about the role of the black man. And there was all this discussion about how black women really had it better than black men. This is news to you? Maybe this discussion took place largely within the black community, I don't know. Because black women could always get jobs. It would be in the white woman's kitchen but they always could get jobs, and black men couldn't. And there was a play, off-Broadway play that was kind of bitter about a black man who dresses up in his wife's clothes finally and goes out and gets a job. So in

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the club not only did we have to be careful that all the leadership be black because of black power, we also had to be careful that black men were kowtowed to and given leadership. Now Shirley fits into that kind of a setting somehow. She's nasty, but she's not strong. She doesn't have any conviction about anything, except what's the opportune thing to do. Ruth didn't fit in. And really I guess Mary and I didn't fit in...You see, all that was going on internally.

So between the Black Power and the left-wing scare....Well suddenly he didn't want to look like an Uncle Tom. Suddenly he decided his club should be all black. Suddenly he decided an integrated club was out. Because the emphasis had been on integration, which was appropriate for the neighborhood. Yeah, it was still about one-third white, I think. And suddenly his emphasis he felt had to become one of Black Power. So he had to get rid of those whites that have been looking like they're pulling the strings, making the decisions, making us look like puppets. He chose a not very nice way of doing it. Every one right after the election was very loyal to him and had he gathered all his white supporters together and said, "Look fellas, thanks a lot for your help but you've got to understand there's Black Power and there's red-baiting, goodbye now.' I think everyone simply would have left. But he didn't do that. He used Shirley, interestingly, to red-bait each of us. And he really attacked each of us in-turn....

And she would sit there and say...this was right after the McCarthy period, right. Did you ever see any tapes of McCarthy on television? 'I have in my hand a dossier.' Well that's what Shirley said. 'I have here a dossier,' she was saying, waving a manila envelope. 'I have a dossier on you!' Right at a board meeting or whatever we called, whatever was running the club then. It was quite incredible. I'll never forget that as long as I live....I remember being told I had to make some leadership use of Bill Saunders and Enoch Williams.[7] You know, 'Got to find

[7]Enoch Williams is currently a member of the New York City Council, representing Brooklyn's Twenty Sixth CD.

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an important job for them, they're Black men,' that kind of thing. Tom told me that.[8]

By the early 1960s the times had changed sufficiently to make some one like Bertram Baker the epitome of all that was wrong with the current black leadership. it seemed that interracial cooperation was achieved at

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[8]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author. Intriguingly, the Moynihan Report, [Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case For National Action, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965), 14.] was not yet published when Jones decided to bring black men to lead UDC. Yet, it is likely that preceding Moynihan's highly publicized study a whole host of sociological research in the late 1950s and early 1960s documented "the steady disintegration of the Negro family structure over the past generation in the United States." After all, the black family had just been through the drama of "uprooting, urban resettlement, and chronically high rates of urban unemployment." Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Regulating The Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare, (New York: Vintage, 1971), 193. The report, for instance, had this to say about the black male in the weak and disorganized form of black family life. "Negro women....are forced to take jobs thus undermining the man's role as breadwinner....The father stays on as an ineffectual dependent or he drifts off, perhaps to the few remaining places where a ravaged man can assert his manhood: in the bedroom or on the street. Either way the model he presents to his sons is one of futility, alienation and despair. Family discipline breaks down and so does performance." Quoted in William Ryan, Blaming The Victim, (New York: Vintage, 1972), 65. Jones would not be the first black leader to be concerned about the black family and its implications for black politics. It was a particularly important issue for black leaders who felt that it was necessary to turn inward towards the black community to solve such problems. For instance, Moynihan's report, especially its emphasis on self-help, elicited favorable comments in Black Muslim circles. Peter Steinfels, The Neo-Conservatives, (New York: Touchstone, 1979), 145.

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the expense of real social change. How long did one have to wait for the dividends of a patient machine style political strategy. Baker became a symbol of the old, stodgy, failed black leaders. All black political party leaders of the day feared the same reference.

These were the years when a resurgent black nationalist movement found a voice in Malcolm X. Waiting one's turn, working with whites for gradual, slow going reform, the epitome of machine clubhouse politics, was an intolerable political strategy. The Black Power movement argued that black people should no longer seek to share power with whites, even if they were regular Democrats or Leftist, or Jewish, Catholic or Protestant who pledged their loyalty to the cause of black representation. They felt whites could not be trusted.

As the decade unfolded, northern blacks, as well as their already awakened kin in the south, grew more "frustrated, bitter and impatient with the system," to use Roy Wilkins' words. In this context black nationalism gained a new popularity. Brooklyn's newest black political leaders, such as Tom Jones and Samuel Wright, reflected the growing luster of the black power slogans and rhetoric.[9]

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[9]UDC's campaign literature branded Vincent Carney and Samuel Berman as plantation owners and slave drivers. One picture presented Carney as a slave holder whipping a black in chains. And even when Wesley McD. Holder made an agreement between himself and Tom Jones to keep the primary fight above board (that is, free of

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> The movements that used the language of militancy, UDC, all of the jargon that could whip up a crowd....'jobs,' 'community,' 'self-determination', 'black power,'....Jones and [Samuel] Wright used this as a vehicle to capture the leadership in their areas. And of course, I'm not saying they were insincere.[10]

Black power enthusiast expressed a genuine desire for black representation without white partnership. Black leadership for its own sake was valued. Etheline Dubin said Jones's maneuvering was a heartfelt attempt to fulfill a yearning in the black community for a chance to rule, free of white participation and possible interference. Jones legitimately expressed the aspiration of blacks, especially black men, to finally have a piece of the pie. Blacks needed a black representative for their district whether or not the current white one, who was usually more experienced and had greater access to public resources.

> Because this was the sixties, the beginning of the sixties, and we were just beginning, the grassroots was just beginning to say, 'Let's stand up and let's get moving and let's do it....They [blacks] had to be the impetus, the push of getting the leaflets out. I guess that's the same thing that happened

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race as an issue) Jones claimed that Holder's mid-campaign illness (mumps) was faked, out of his race loyalty to Tom Jones. Mr. Wesley McD. Holder, interview by author; Mr. Vincent Carney, interview by author; Mr. Samuel Berman, interview by author.

[10]Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

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> with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; they did have a lot of whites in there getting out the leaflets and doing this and doing that. It wasn't until maybe a little later when they said, 'Maybe they should get out, even if the English and the literature isn't as good....at that particular time we needed all the strength that we could get. And they put it in there....a few years later, when Black Power started to come in and then there was a real grassroots group that said, 'We're going no matter what.'
>
> O.K. So we knew a lot of times the first person we put in can't get us anything, don't even know where the toilet is up in Albany. We know that. But we say, 'You've got to make a start.' You have to do without. Where if you had a white Congressman you could get things done, there's no doubt in my mind. If you go and you say you need this, he can call this other guy that he goes to the country club with and he can get this and that for you. We know that the black people when they get in initially can't go to any country clubs and can't go into certain rooms and what not....Well we know that. But, we're willing to sit back and suffer some of that so that we can begin to build a black bloc which will have some clout sooner or later.[11]

The black power movement, or the resurgence of black nationalism in local electoral politics, aided the defeat of the white ethnic leaders like Samuel Berman. Frustration by the "old boys" white network as well as elevated expectations, having been heightened by successive Presidential administrations (Truman's desegregation of the armed forces in 1949, Eisenhower's interjection of federal troops to Little Rock in 1957 and John Kennedy's support for James Meredith admission at Ole Miss in 1963) fueled the demand for immediate change.

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[11]Mrs. Etheline Dubin, interview by author.

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Integrated civil rights organizations like the Unity Democratic Club, dedicated to increasing black representation and black political power, were attacked precisely for their interracial nature.

Malcolm X captured the sentiment at the time when he declared:

> The NAACP is not a Negro organization, so Roy Wilkins is not a Negro leader. As long as Arthur Spingarn is the president, its a Jewish organization. And its the same with the Urban League, CORE, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund--all those are white organizations. When Negroes in those organizations open their mouths to speak words of praise, its always for white people--the good liberals, the good Jews, the good white folks. When they say anything good about Mr. Muhammad, its always with reservations to let people know that 'I'm not a Muslim.' These are statements by scared men.[12]

Black political leaders of every stripe were climbing the black nationalist bandwagon. Congressman Adam C. Powell, speaking before a gathering of black Muslims in Harlem said

> Unless we can seize completely the administration of our national Negro organizations, then we must say there is no hope there for us. This may sound like black nationalism. If it is then what is wrong with it....[13]

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[12]Gertrude Samuels, "Two Ways: Black Muslim and N.A.A.C.P." New York Times Magazine, 12 May 1963, reprinted in Black Protest in the Sixties, edited with an Introduction by August Meier and Elliot Rudwick (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

[13]Ibid.,

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Moreover, Malcolm X believed that blacks wouldn't have their problems solved depending "on the white man." Both Powell and Malcolm X obliquely singled out for attack those leaders with Jewish names. The Amsterdam News' executive editor in 1963, James Hicks, charged that "Jews control New York's top jobs." The enemy he said, were whites, especially liberal white Jews.[14]

Another tension that remained in the club was the bitterness blacks felt from the years of their alliance with leftist causes. Ernest Crichlow, perhaps Brooklyn's most well known black artist, also had a bitter taste in his mouth from experiences similar to Tom Jones' in leftist movements since the 1930s. He shared Jones' belief that at the core, "Black folks didn't know about Trotsky. They wanted empowerment." Their fight for racial justice was not equalled by the white leftists'.

> When blacks began to assert an independent point of view it wasn't kosher, couldn't have it, cause it upset the larger picture. Black thinkers felt it was time we forged an independent position on something. But to them [the CP] you either went down the line or support was withdrawn. That could mean the organization or whatever you were doing would slip away.
>
> They couldn't stand opposition cause they have one way, this is the way it has to go. Not much toleration for too much shifting that discussions were cut off at times.[15]

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[14]Ibid.,

[15]Mr. Ernest Crichlow, interview by author.

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The growing restlessness of blacks, young and old, in the early 1960s influenced a new, younger black leadership to take a more militant position, one that left little room for cooperation amongst whites and blacks. The Unity Democratic Club and black regular politics suffered greatly as a result of this mood. The elimination of the radical and liberal white (and black) of UDC was crucial to the future development of the black clubhouse.

The Importance of White (Jewish) Participation?

It is important to recall that Jews were assisted in their political succession by the Irish leaders they asked to remain in the club. Jewish Democrats made a conscious choice to keep on Irish leaders after they had gained power although they had no pressing need to take them on. There were benefits to this ethnic balancing strategy: influence within the county organization and acquisition of organizational skills from a generation of seasoned politicians. By cutting off its Jewish liberal and radical arm, Tom Jones severed an important part of UDC's (and his own) history.[16]

[16]After Bertram Baker came to the assembly in 1948 and became district leader of the new Sixth assembly district in 1953 he maintained close relations with white political leaders. He remained close to Judge Lloyd Herzka and Judge Sidney Squire; Majority Leader and Speaker of the Assembly, Anthony Travia and Governor Averill Harriman, who thought highly of Baker. There remained a few white members in Baker's club

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Etheline Dubin understood the importance of UDC's white left wing and the effect their absence would have. She presented an opinion shared by many.

> The club's driving force was its white members on the Left. The black community followed these people, who had an ideology and work ethic. When they were purged, they [blacks] couldn't do their job.[17]

Her husband Marshall agreed:

> The lefties were the 'spark plugs' of UDC. They were opposed to any deal with Steingut, so Steingut and Jones cut them off. If Jones had stayed with the people who put him in office he would have had a strong militant club....The purge of the left was his ticket to acceptance by the system.[18]

These members didn't feel it was their place to challenge Tom Jones. Ruth Brooks said:

> Tom had the club in the palm of his hand. It really was Tom's club. We could not fight Tom....By this time the charisma had rubbed off badly. But whether we weren't ready to challenge him or whether we really couldn't or whether it was both of those things....if really challenged he probably could have gotten an endless number of Bill Saunders to come in.

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although the district was over 90 per cent black. As evidence of his continued close ties to the Jewish community, in 1959 Bertram Baker received a humanitarian, civil rights leadership award from the Anti-Defamation League. His ties to the Jewish community and their civil rights leaders remained close.

[17]Mrs. Etheline Dubin, interview by author.

[18]Mr. Marshall Dubin, interview by author.

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Additionally, Tom Jones' push for greater black male power not only moved the club toward all black membership but had the effect of estranging the club's black women founders who shared the original goals of UDC with its white members. Black women were a potent force in the club. They did the door to door, person to person organizing, from voter registration to political education. While Jones might replace the half dozen white leaders, his black women leaders were irreplaceable. Furthermore, the black men that Tom Jones slated for leadership were not Stokely Carmichael types but regular black captains who came over to UDC hungry for patronage.

No doubt, UDC could go on without these hard working members but only at great cost. Perhaps the greatest loss was their socially progressive vision and militancy. Radical politics was once again excluded from electoral politics, while ethnic or race politics thrived at the neighborhood clubhouse.[19] Just as the destruction of the Socialist party in Brownsville fifty years earlier had ensured Jewish Democrats a place at the local political table, the squeezing out of UDC's radical branch brought Jones acceptability and a seat

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[19]See Ira Katznelson,'s City Trenches, (New York: Pantheon, 1981), for a discussion of how radical politics in America has been relegated to the workplace "trench."

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closer to the Democratic Party's front row. A negative consequence of the coup d'etat was a loss of UDC's ideological vision. Local black politicians became wrapped up solely in careerism and turned cannibalistic.

Some people have speculated that Jones permitted himself to be swayed by the nascent breeze of black power simply for opportunistic reasons. They felt his real intention was to disable the club as a militant force for social change because that was his ticket to respectability. Jones had a personal agenda: a judgeship, which meant greater income stability. Still, he hoped to keep his hand in community decision-making.[20]

Ideological Breach: The Return of Regular Politics

> Well, you know, as we got very close to the election, like August, and it began to look like he had a chance of winning, he got a big influx of a lot of opportunists. And Shirley was one....Enoch Williams was one. Bill Saunders, that was the other one...he came in with Enoch Williams.....Enoch Williams, he's a very rigid guy, today is a right-wing city councilman. Anyway they all came in at the end, and Shirley was in that wave. But she had had experience

[20]Tom Jones did keep himself at the center of community affairs. He headed the Bedford Stuyvesant Renewal and Rehabilitation Corporation which was the Bedford Stuyvesant community's precursor to the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, founded in 1967 with the full support of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Connelly, 156-157.

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> in the Bedford Stuyvesant Political League and she was something of a protege of Wesley McD. Holder's. So she cam in with some panache. And she's always had a good way of sitting around and looking important. Two years later Shirley pushed Ruth out as district leader.[21]

Part of the trouble at the UDC came as a result of its success. Black captains from regular clubs, sensing UDC's success, abandoned ship and joined up. These politicos had waited the longest time to be players at the table. The ideology of participatory democracy had so permeated UDC that all were welcome, even the influx of black regulars.

James Shaw's sojourn to the UDC is a case in point of how the club's chemistry was altered by a regular politician looking to satisfy his need for higher office. Shaw spent twenty years with Bertram Baker's United Action Democratic Association. He labored as a election district captain for nearly as many years. He waited patiently for his turn but found Baker deaf to his requests.

He came over to UDC on a promise from Tom Jones that the first judgeship available to UDC was his. Tom Jones betrayed that trust when he took the first available judgeship for himself in 1964, a seat on the Civil Court. Shaw was naturally viewed by the UDC faithful as

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[21]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author.

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a carpertbagger. He quickly sided with Shirley Chisholm and her nefarious redbaiting practices.

The UDC was organized as a reform club. Its leaders favored democratization of clubhouse politics. In its literature UDC urged doing away with the patronage system that led to a government run by political hacks and flunkies, who neglected the black community to line their own pockets.

When victory came to the UDC, many blacks who had criticized regular machine style politics began to feel that maybe there was nothing wrong in playing the patronage game, since it appeared to be the only game in town. Blacks had waited long enough for their share of the pot. They wanted a chance to play with power too.

Changing the system became less important than participating in it and sharing power. As it turned out, the attainment of power for Tom Jones and UDC was about black succession within regular party politics, and not a new militant black politics as UDC had envisioned.

Another problem arose with the decision to welcome regular party politics. The patronage the UDC received mainly benefited professionals, especially lawyers. There were few things in it for the common man to win via conventional politics. As Ernest Crichlow said, "UDC lost just as it won." No real change was produced in the end as Tom Jones welcomed these captains in exchange

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for acceptance by the county leadership and a future judgeship.

Moving Too Far Too Fast?

Some within the UDC felt the organization perhaps was moving too far to the left, too far ahead of the what the people in the community wanted. Ernest Crichlow, for instance, understood Tom Jones's dilemma. He couldn't move too far too fast after the 1962 triumph.

Moreover, politics ultimately means compromises have to be made and deals have to be done. Perhaps Jones was unfairly blamed for UDC's failure because he made those necessary compromises. He was trapped by a system that even with a primary victory kept the door closed on blacks. Crichlow stated:

> I know it was like a political joke that Jones won and had nothing to offer. It meant to blacks you can't beat the system. Beating the system means you're in the system and you have something to share with the community . What we had was a fantastic victory and a bringing together of people. But it can't go on forever with nothing, especially when you're dealing with people who had practically nothing. We had poor services. We couldn't get a damn thing done. Cause again to get something done you have to go to your enemy cause he has all the marbles and if you have any pride its a hell of a thing you have to do but eventually you have to do it. If you're not that strong you have to get out of it. For a number of years Jones was in a hellish position.
>
> One thing you know about politics and its difficult to understand if you're not in that person's shoes: It's dirty, real dirty. Especially if

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you're from a progressive background its a very tough position, how to behave because you really can't win, can't win. No matter what you give they want a little bit more.

The civil rights movement had a lot of the same kind of disillusionment and redbaiting. People can only give so much. Its one thing when there are no temptations, everyone's poor. Then people can last a long time. Everybody, especially the establishment wants you out. They'll find a way, they'll make you an offer you can't refuse and I'm certain that's partly what happened to Tom. They made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

They ought to know, you have to make daily concessions. You grow in politics or anything else. You can't operate in only what you want, you have to make deals with people who will vote with you, not by ignoring them. That's why I say it's a very dirty business and it makes us all dirty. And to expect you'll have a warrior who will do it for you, you have to dirty your hands.

The more advanced you are politically, the more advanced positions you want to take. But you got to remember everybody is not at that level of understanding in terms of the kind of activities you'd like to take. So, a lot of time you'd be out in left field and then be shocked that nobody was walking along with you. And if you're smart you'll say well I'm a little ahead, let me back up or you can turn around and say that these people are not true revolutionists.

Etheline Dubin too recalled the sharp difference in the philosophy between club reformers and regulars:

And this business of all these little jobs and whatever they [reformers] didn't want any part. And blacks were saying, 'Hey, wait till we get in, and after we get jobs, then we'll talk about reform. We needed bread and butter. And yes, reform was good, but we needed some of the pie. And we felt that many, the Irish and what-not had come up through politics and gotten jobs, the subway jobs and the sanitation jobs, and all those little jobs for the little people who didn't have any education. And

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> some of them had just gotten off the boat and they could get a job and then move up in life, educate their children, move out to the suburbs and what-not. We wanted some of that too. But they were saying, the reformers, 'Oh, none of that. We're just going to reform, and this business of patronage is dead.' And we never had any of it. We wanted to try some of the pie first.[22]word

In the end, the United Democratic Club favored regular politics over its radical parentage: jobs and services, not revolution; Tom Jones' one man show, not participatory democracy; black male rule, not interracial, intergender unity. While the celebration of black power continued, redbaiting could be overlooked as well as its harmful effect on future political clout. The legacy of the new turn for the up-north civil rights movement was a new set of leaders, namely Shirley Chisholm and Tom Fortune, but less effective political organization and a lack of substantive improvement in the problems of the day.

Jones Deserts the UDC

> We got betrayed. I mean this is not the first time that happened either. But Tom's leaving the Assembly so quickly and running for cover, for a judgeship, was definitely also seen as a betrayal. Because Tom did some great stuff up in Albany. With all his blithering and blathering around he still managed to pass the Youth Act, which was modeled on the old CCC camps of the thirties. They existed upstate....he

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[22]Mrs. Etheline Dubin, interview by author.

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was a pretty good assemblyman for two years. Great speeches.[23]

James Shaw had a unique perspective of the back-room deal Tom Jones had made to prepare the way for his Civil Court Judge nomination. His testimony is eye opening.

> Jones feared his Leftist background might hurt him in the future, someone could get a hold of that and do him ill....in that time. Jones was concerned about his advancement; how and where could he go. Forget appointments to something; iffy with his background. He had children reaching college age. He needed money. First thing available was the State Senate seat, which should have gone to Jones' club, because Baker had the City Councilman, J. Daniel Diggs. Those were the informal rules. One club had the congressman, another club the city council, another club the state senate.
>
> Jones still had to deal with Sammy Berman's club and Max B. Washor, who was still up there on Nostrand Avenue....And also there was another fellow....they were ambitious to become judges. So Jones knew that he had to have a commitment of Baker's organization to be alive to buck up against that. So what he did is the nomination that he had promised to support me on for the state senate seat, he gave to Risely Dent, who was in Baker's club. And in turn, Baker then supported Jones for the Civil Court seat.

Once on the bench, Jones hoped to keep his guiding hand over UDC. The new leaders had other ideas.

> Well, there's always two edges on anything. He had left, he thought, the club in control of his little clique. And there was Ruth Goring and Shirley at each other's throat....Shirley insisted she get the Assembly seat. She did. When Jones decided to

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[23]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author.

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> leave for a judgeship, Jones wanted Fortune to be the leader, until Pat Carter or Andy Cooper moved into the neighborhood.[24] It all worked out. Shirley in Assembly. Tom [Fortune] as leader, I as State Senator. Shirley and I then talked, and the question of how we were going to deal with the two factions....Goring, we called them Reds and what not....Andy and Pat we called the Gold Dust Twins. As I learned from Baker's club, the essence of control in a club was to control the election district structure. They [Shirley Chisholm and William Thompson] talked Tom Fortune into taking the election district structure from Andy and Pat, and restructure it and get rid of all their people....I made some of these suggestions and they bought it. They bought it. Where upon we squeezed Andy and Pat out. Anyway, it was a great deal of fun, because you know having read Kafka and all the rest of that, that history, its nice to have an opportunity to play the games.
>
> Tom Fortune then brought her [Ruth] up in a kangaroo court. Expelled her from the club....for 'disloyalty.' With her being dispossessed and Shirley not only as the assembly person, she became the co-leader. She got Ruth's co-leadership.[25]

When asked why he left the club just two years after talking office, Tom Jones said he took the judgeship because he needed money to send his kids to college. The club itself was financially broke and he was tired of taking money out of his own pocket to pay

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[24]Considered to be members of the club's small black intellegensia, both Andy Cooper and Pat Cooper could not take over the reigns because they lived just outside the district's boundaries.

[25]Out of this diabolical plan, Shaw got a one year term in the state senate. In 1965 they increased the Senate to 65 so Shaw got a spot from the extra seat. Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

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for expenses. He simply had enough. He took the judgeship and took care of his family.[26]

No one at UDC questions that this was true. In fact many members were sympathetic to Jones' desire to care for his family. He had sacrificed much for two decades. Those that were still around in 1964 resented that Tom Jones didn't tell them about the deal he made with Baker to receive the judgeship; that James Shaw was promised the state senate job if he joined UDC. He kept the club in the dark, which again was a betrayal of what UDC had stood for.

Jones didn't care to explain that the club's poverty was partly his doing. The club did not magically fold. Jones broke it up. It was no longer financially fit because he never gave it a chance to work.

Mary Woods echoed the feeling of many that the club wouldn't have minded if Tom became a judge had he turned it over to someone with UDC's vision, and then moved on.

> Sure, let him get the kids through college, but he had already hacked up the club. Tom split the club that's why it didn't work anymore. He did it....He was lucky to have people like us. Wally was an extraordinary worker. He got a typo changed on all

[26]Tom Jones felt pressure close to home. His father was so displeased with his decision to take the Civil Court judgeship he refused to speak to him for several years. He never forgave his son for accepting it.

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> literature overnight. Effective, organized mind. Bright trade unionist, left wing slant to things. Spoke of it openly....Jones gave me a list of things to do and I did them. He had able women in the club. But after he let us go, he didn't have that when he was in Albany. Bill Saunders didn't know what to do in Albany. Tom Jones broke up the club, he let it happen. None of us were looking for anything, like patronage. Fame.[27]

Many of the white and black founders of UDC didn't challenge the trend towards opportunism and a uniracial club. The white members especially felt they had no place to go since their reason for being there was the achievement of greater black recognition.

Mary Woods believes she and many of the white progressives in the club had bent backwards willingly for a few years to accommodate Tom's desire to see black men in leadership positions, even if these men were merely figure heads. They understood their place, in the background, but Jones made even this no longer possible.

> I didn't fight black nationalism even with my personal distress. That's why I didn't declare myself Editor of the Newsletter. There was no pressure on me, I would agree with it.
>
> The truth is, I was editor of the Newsletter, but we put Lem Beckford's name on as "the Editor" to be deferential to the need for black leadership. We were good friends but he was Editor more in name than anything else. I always pulled it together with Wally Linder.
>
> Part of me could understand that [black nationalism] totally. We met in the old Garveyite headquarters.

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[27]Mrs. Mary Woods, interview by author.

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> If that had been the basis for Tom Jones cutting us off, that wouldn't have been any problem and we'd have accepted that. But Bill Saunders was no Negro nationalist, he was no anything, he was obviously an opportunist. I wouldn't have minded but Bill Saunders was obviously planted there and used by Tom or planted by himself and used by Tom.
>
> A lot of men, like Joe Collier, who were transit workers, strong men, if Tom was sincere he could have taken Collier, Lem Beckford. He would have had us behind him. Who knows if Collier would have taken it. Walter Salter. A lot of men like that. It's Tom's disconnecting the fabric he had built. He always wanted whites in the background, and that was O.K.[28]

The faithful black men and women in the club exited UDC after Jones turned away from its ideals. Ruth Brooks believes they left the club because they didn't want to be at UDC with the likes of Bill Saunders.

> What Tom lost was the potential community leaders, the kind of solid people in the community who were interested in working on issues. And what they got instead were clubhouse hangers-on who wanted jobs.[29]

The great loss for UDC's dedicated members was what might have been had Jones stayed the course. The possibilities were endless. Jocelyn Cooper muzed:

> Very strange. It wasn't strange in retrospect, it was always that way....Tom Jones had stayed in his place. He would have been the most powerful black politician in the United States of America. He had the capacity to organize. My husband called him a

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[28]Mrs. Mary Woods, interview by author.

[29]Mrs. Ruth Brooks, interview by author.

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> diabolical genius, and he was. He was an incredible organizer. And we would have had the Seventeenth assembly district, we would have had the adjacent district, because we would have organized. We would have moved straight through Brooklyn. And he would have been the first black congressperson, and maybe the first black senator. He was that dynamic.[30]

Summary

Thomas R. Jones, once the UDC idealist, after assuming power, dropped his white captains, alienated his male and female black captains, and made a deal with regular machine politician Bertram Baker and Stanley Steingut for a Civil Court Judgeship. Jones lived by the adage, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." He did. Like a predecessor of his, Vincent Carney, he left with little concern for the institution that helped get him here. Those black leaders who came after Jones, namely Chisholm, Fortune and Shaw, returned UDC to the regular clubhouse of the Seventeenth, just as it was pre-1962.

The process of succession was pushed along by the militant, radical, reform minded UDC. With its historical function completed, it vanished. Racial succession was successful as radical politics was vanquished, just as the Socialist party of Brownsville, fifty years before, had boosted Jewish Democracy in Brooklyn. The

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[30]Mrs. Jocelyn Cooper, interview by author.

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left wing was sacrificed for the sake of the center. Insurgency was absorbed, again.

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CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: A COMPARISON OF JEWISH AND BLACK SUCCESSION

Introduction

This dissertation began with one major and two minor hypotheses. The dissertation's chief postulate is that Brooklyn's Democratic party witnessed an ethnic and racial succession characterized chiefly by continuity because four factors were present: rapid demograhic shifts (accompanied by state legislative reapportionment that reflects it), interparty and intraparty competition, a decentralized party structure and outstanding ethnic and racial group leadership. In each of the four case studies these conditions were evident, and therefore paved the way for fruitful successions in Brooklyn politics this century.

The first minor hypothesis is somewhat counterintuitive: ethnic and racial succession reinvigorated the machine rather than weakened it. Out of the strife that accompanied the Irish to Jewish to black competition for power, the machine was able to con-

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solidate a renewed base that enabled the Democratic party to remain in power for more than half of the twentieth century. This hypothesis was substantiated.[1]

The second minor hypothesis was that great social strife did not prevent successful ethnic and racial transitions to power at the local level. Given the unique character of party politics in the United States, the organization of electoral majorities has taken precedence over other activity. The Brooklyn case is undeniable.

We can now compare the two successions: in what ways were these experiences different and similar? Did race pose a significantly greater barrier to black progress in the Brooklyn Democratic Party? Would an analysis of the way Jews were integrated into a previously Irish dominated machine yield insights about how blacks were incorporated into an Irish-Jewish-Italian dominated Democratic party politics in pre-1964 Brooklyn? Finally, did Brooklyn's racial succession process go awry after 1964?

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[1]Alan Ware has made the strongest case to date for placing the urban political machine's decline after 1960, as opposed to the widely held belief amongst political scientists that machine decline is readily traceable to Progressive era reforms. Alan Ware, The Breakdown of the Democratic Party Organization: 1940-1980 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Chapter 1, "Introduction," 1-19.

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Demography

The Jewish and black successions are more similar than different. Both groups initially came to power as their populations overwhelmed the existing ethnic and racial groups in particular assembly districts.

The Timing of the First and Second Successions

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Jews, along with the Italians, swamped previously Irish neighborhoods. The neighborhood Irish politicians quickly lost their constituency as Irish families moved to the suburbs. The Irish leadership had little choice but to give up power to maintain a degree of Democratic party control. One means to that end was swift promotion of Jewish election district captains for the assembly and leadership, as well as significant lower level patronage jobs such as assistant district attorneys.

Blacks faced a slightly different demographic landscape in Brooklyn. Although they had lived in the borough for 300 years, their numbers became salient in the county and dominant in one assembly district only in the 1950s. Still, the first black succession was similar to that of the Jews. Both groups came to local power after their numbers had reached majority proportions in their respective assembly district (the Twenty Third in

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Jewish Brownsville and the Sixth in black Bedford Stuyvesant).

As far as other elective positions were concerned, the assembly position was usually the first office captured by new ethnic and racial groups because it is unshared with neighboring district leaders, while the alderman (i.e., city councilman), state senator and congressperson were. Again, in Brownsville, Jews and blacks were on an almost identical pace. Isaac Sargent was elected Brownsville's first Democratic assemblyman in 1908 and 1909, when Brownsville's Jews had just passed the majority population mark. Sargent's victory came ten years before Hyman Schorenstein took control of the Twenty Third assembly district.[2] Similarly, Bertram Baker became district assemblyman in 1948 (when Bedford Stuyvesant approached majority black status) and won the district leadership six years later.

For alderman, or city council, Jewish succession was somewhat quicker than it was for blacks. Isadore (Izzy) Rosenbloom was elected the first Jewish Democratic alderman in the borough in 1913, seven years before Schorenstein became the district leader. The first black Democratic councilman, J. Daniel Diggs, was

[2]In addition, Nathan B. Finkelstein was elected Democratic assemblyman from the Twenty Third assembly district in 1915.

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elected in 1957, three years after Baker's advancement to the leadership.

The pace of the first Democratic party successions were thus quite similar for both groups. When each group is compared, the pace of black succession was slightly ahead of the Jewish one.

The Second Successions

Three years after Hyman Schorenstein's ascendance to leader, Irwin Steingut became the Eighteenth district's assemblyman in 1923. Nine years after Bertram Baker rose to district chief, Thomas Russell Jones captured the assembly and district leadership of Baker's neighboring Seventeenth. While Steingut had to wait until 1935, 12 years after his election to the state legislature, to take control of the district, Jones won both offices in 1962. In this respect, the second black succession outpaced the second Jewish succession.

Overall, in the second succession Jews were a few years ahead of blacks. Irwin Steingut assumed the mantle of Democratic district leader in 1935 just as Jews became a majority of the area's population. Thomas Jones, on the other hand, came to office in 1962, when Crown Heights' Seventeenth assembly district was two thirds black.

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Borough-Wide Power

Jews finally achieved borough-wide power in the early 1960s, when a plurality of Jewish district leaders were elected (1962). Their clout in the legislature, however, exceeded their voting numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. Arthur Klebanoff's research revealed that between 1950 and 1968, "....51 of the 91 possible tenures in the Senate and 82 of 229 available assembly terms were served by Brooklyn Jews."[3] Additionally, during this time the first Jewish county leader, Stanley Steingut, was elected (1963). It is important to note that Jewish succession to this high office came 44 years after the first Jewish Democratic district leader assumed office. The Jewish road to borough-wide authority was long and winding. In the mid-1930s, when they constituted 33 per cent of the borough's population, there were only four out of 24 Jewish district leaders (17%).

Daniel P. Moynihan and Nathan Glazer found by 1970, Jews truly held the reigns of formal political power in New York City. Following the 1969 city-wide election New York City's Board of Estimate was composed of five Jewish members, one WASP, one black Protestant and one Catholic. In weighted Board of Estimate votes

[3]Arthur Klebanoff, "The Demograhics of Politics: Legislative Constituencies and the Borough of Brooklyn, 1950-1965." Unpublished Senior Honors Thesis, Yale University, 1969, 36-37.

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that came to 14 Jewish votes, six protestant votes and two Catholic votes. By comparison, in 1963 Catholics had dominated the Board: five Catholics, two Jews, and one black Protestant. When weighted, that was 14 Catholic votes, six Jewish votes and two Protestant votes. Moreover, not one of the Congressmen elected in 1962 was of Irish descent; only one fifth of the assembly's 65 members were Irish.[4]

When blacks accounted for 21 per cent of the borough's population in 1965 they held three out of 21 district leaderships (15%), roughly ahead of the rate of Jewish Democratic recognition.

A black has not yet climbed to the county leadership in Brooklyn. But given the timetable for Jewish succession, blacks are not yet behind schedule. For instance, in 1999, it will be 44 years after Bertram Baker's district leadership was attained. By then, it is conceivable that a black will have advanced to become county boss. Given the record-breaking black turnout for

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[4] In the Assembly, of 14 replacements between 1950 and 1966, ten were Jews, six were Catholics, and two were blacks. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, Beyond The Melting Pot, (MIT Press, 1970), 1ix. For a further explication on how the Italians lost and the Jews won, see Jerry Krase, "The Missed Step: Italian-Americans and Brooklyn Politics," The Interaction of Italians and Irish in American Politics, Francis X. Femminella, ed., with an Introduction by Monsignor Geno Baroni, Volume 16. (Staten Island, New York: The American Italian Historical Association, 1978).

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mayoral candidate David Dinkins in the 1989 primary and general election, that day could be sooner than we think.[5]

Interparty and IntraParty Competition

Interparty and intraparty competition and independent politics fostered Jewish and black succession. That is, a group's willingness to leave the Democratic party or challenge it was crucial to the election of one of its own. In the case of the first succession in Brownsville, radicalism played an important part in creating Jewish independence. Pressure from the Socialists and Republicans paved the way for the selection of Hyman Schorenstein as district leadership. In the second succession, the Democrats' desire to break the Republican Party's stronghold opened the door to Irwin Steingut's candidacy and election to the assembly. The existence of Irwin Steingut's Haddingway "satellite" clubhouse also placed intraparty pressure upon John H. McCooey's regular organization.

The initial black succession also benefited from interparty competition. The combined total of votes for Bedford Stuyvesant Republican and American Labor Party

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[5] There are certain factors which may stall such an outcome. A discussion follows in the final section of this chapter.

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candidates frightened local and county leaders to speed along Bertram Baker's nomination and election to the assembly in 1948. A successful insurgent black Democratic candidacy for Municipal Court judge in 1953 stunned party regulars. It was no accident that Bertram Baker was catapuled to the leadership of the new Sixth assembly district via legislative reapportionment in 1954.

The second black succession benefited from intense intraparty struggle, bouyed by the militance and radicalism of the United Democratic Club (UDC) during the early 1960s. A progressive coalition of black nationalists and white and black liberal-radicals led by Thomas Jones ousted the Democratic regulars in an atmosphere of social protest.

On the other hand, despite interparty and intraparty competition in 1948 and 1953, Bertram Baker rose to prominence within party ranks, closely resembling Irwin Steingut's mode of ascendance. Both Bertram Baker and Irwin Steingut built satellite clubhouses that worked under the regular Democratic umbrella. Each was patient with the pace of ethnic and racial change yet strong enough, individually and collectively, to reap the rewards of party loyalty. Irwin Steingut and Bertram Baker both came to the district leadership from earlier nominations to the assembly (Steingut was

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elected to the assembly in 1922 and the leadership in 1935; Baker was elected to the assembly in 1948, the leadership in 1954) and from fortuitous events outside their immediate control: Steingut, from McCooey's death, and Baker's from state legislative reapportionment.

Hyman "Hymie" Schorenstein and Thomas "Tom" Jones were lifted to the leadership by the radicalism of the day. Both achieved a higher level of respectability when they maneuvered to rid the community of its more leftist elements. Interparty and intraparty rivalry unquestionably contributed in like ways to Jewish and black progression within the Democratic party.

Legislative Reapportionment

State Legislative reapportionment was a subsidiary factor in the succession process for both groups. The reapportionment of 1917 had no harmful effect on Jewish succession in Brownsville as Hyman Schorenstein became the district leader in 1919. Since there was no state legislative reapportionment during the period of 1917 until 1944 (the reasons why remain unclear) reapportionment actually helped Jewish succession because it locked the Irish leadership into outdated boundaries that did not reflect how Brooklyn was changing from an Irish-German polity in 1910 to a Jewish-Italian one by 1930. For example, the Eighteenth assembly district was still

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an Irish-Anglo community when it was redrawn in 1917. The quick demographic shift during subsequent years paved the way for Irwin Steingut's promotion to district leadership in 1935 as the Crown Heights assembly district grew to be a majority Jewish and Italian territory.[6]

In the case of black succession, reapportionment kindly placed Bertram Baker into the leadership of the newly created Sixth assembly district. The 1954 reapportionment also gave birth to a new, albeit restructured, Seventeenth assembly district with an imminent black majority. Reapportionment paved the way for the rise of Thomas R. Jones and Unity Democratic Association (UDC)

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[6] The same case can be made for Williamsburg's Fourteenth and Sixth assembly districts where Dr. Nathan Friedman and Joe Reich, respectively, won leadership posts in 1936. The one district where Jewish succession might have been slowed by the consistent boundaries over the 30 years period without reapportionment was Williamsburg's Fourth assembly district. There an Irish leader remained in power until the 1950s even though the district had become majority Jewish during the late 1930s. However, Jewish captains interviewed from the Fourth district said that the Irish leaders were well respected and no thought was given to ousting them. They took good care of the Jewish community's needs. See interviews by author with former city councilman, and majority leader of the city council, district and county leader, Mr. Joseph Sharkey, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 7 October and 23 October 1987; also former district assemblyman Mr. Harvey Strelzin, Cassette recording, New York City, New York, 17 October 1987 and former councilman, district leader and current state supreme court justice, Mr. Leonard Scholnick, Cassette recording, Brooklyn, New York, 28 October 1987.

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by creating a second black assembly district in an area with a fairly weak and vulnerable regular clubhouse.

Party Structure

A Decentralized Party Structure

The internal organization of power within the Democratic Party in New York City facilitated political succession for Jews and blacks. The decentralized system of political party power in New York State created the opportunity for local control by existing ethnic and racial groups. The term "stratarchy" has been used to describe a diffusion of power among and within levels or strata of the party organization, and accurately reflects the Brooklyn Democratic party's framework.

> A stratarchy organization, in contrast to the pyramidal form of a bureaucratic one, may be imagined as a set of boxes, placed one above the other, but no box rests on the one below it or is directly accountable to those above or below it. Although jurisdictions and authority overlap in places most party organizations are considerably independent of each other. In effect there is no single ruing elite within the party but a number of political elites, each acting with some degree of autonomy.[7]

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[7] Alan R. Gitelson, M. Margaret Conway and Frank B. Feigert, American Political Parties: Stability and Change, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), 76.

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Additionally, power in New York City's party system was fragmented amongst the five boroughs or counties following the consolidation of 1898. A powerful Board of Estimate gave each county a decisive hand in running the city. Moreover, New York State's political party structure was sufficiently decentralized so that each county exercised a measure of control over their political affairs. The Progressive era reforms, like at-large elections and strong mayoral systems were intended to weaken the power of county bosses and assembly district leaders by centralizing power in the executive. But the reformers attempt to remove patronage from locally based partisan politics was only partly successful in New York City.

Within the state's Democratic party, especially in the early part of the century, the assembly district leader had great power, though not more authority than the county leader who stood at the apex of county power. Depending on the vote in his district, the district leader's clout could be sizable. Before the 1970s, the assembly district leader and not the elected officials of a political jurisdiction were the community's power brokers. There were many devices, such as slate voting (done away within the reform conscious early 1970s's New York State Legislature, led, curiously, by Stanley Steingut) to ensure discipline amongst elected offi-

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cials. Local party leaders such as the assembly district leader made or broke the elected officials in their area. Elected officials owed their nomination and election to their district leader.

In the case studies, Jews and blacks worked their way up the local party ladder, from election district captain to the top of the county organization, utilizing the party system to achieve recognition and goods and services. There were a few attempts at interfering in local assembly district elections that might be construed as undertakings to obstruct black succession (for example, the imposition of Benjamin Schor on the Seventeenth assembly district for Municipal Court Judge, and the Wagner-Travia stab at electing Samuel Berman district leader). Yet each attempt failed. The power of the local political organizations in both cases prevailed.

Local autonomy has always been important to Brooklyn residents. As William Plunkitt of Tammany Hall astutely observed a little over one hundred years ago: Brooklynites are "natural-born hayseeds."

> I have made a careful study of the Brooklynite, and I can tell you....a Brooklynite is a natural-born hayseed, and can never become a real New Yorker. He can't be trained into it. Consolidation didn't make him a New Yorker, and nothin' on earth can.[8]

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[8]William L. Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1963), 41.

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Translated, that means they are devoted to their beloved Brooklyn and despise those who seek to wrest from them what local independence they still have.[9]

Ethnic and Racial Group Leadership

Leadership was an important ingredient for fluid succession. Firstly, the Irish had the foresight to see their demographic predicament and so promoted loyal Jews from within the ranks. In return for this gracious transference of power, Jews lavished upon the Irish an enduring loyalty at all levels of government (Irish leaders sat in the county leader's position until 1963). Jewish clubhouses retained Irish leaders for several reasons. For one, relations between Irish and Jewish leaders were warm and friendly. Jews, also viewed the Irish as neutral arbiters who could better decide difficult internal matters, such as who was to be selected for choice patronage positions. Furthermore, it was in the self interest of Jewish leaders to retain the Irish since county politics was still dominated by Irish district leaders.

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[9] Ibid. For more on how Brooklyn struggled with Tammany to maintain its autonomy from those "across the river," see Anna Mary Lanahan's "Brooklyn's Political Life, 1898-1916." Ph.D. Diss., (St. Johns University, 1977).

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Likewise, some Irish and Jewish leaders were open to black participation in their party; several even encouraged it. Bertram Baker undertook to bring blacks into the Democratic party in the 1930s and received advice from Jewish leaders in the regular organization. Jewish and Irish leaders had a sense about the future and accordingly endorsed Baker's candidacy. In the early 1960s, Jewish district leader Stanley Steingut quietly supported Thomas R. Jones and the Unity Democratic Club's campaign for local office. The move was smart and pragmatic. He recognized the inevitability of black leadership in central Brooklyn. In addition, he needed another ally amongst Brooklyn's district leaders and assemblymen.

All of the key individuals involved, ranging from James M. Power and Hyman Schorenstein, John J. McCooey and Irwin Steingut, Stephen Carney and Stanley Steingut to Wesley McD. Holder, Bertram Baker, and Thomas Jones were special in their own right. James Power was an active district leader in Brooklyn for more than 30 years and earned a loyal Irish and Jewish following first in Brownsville and later in Sheepshead Bay and Gravesend's Thirteenth assembly district. By and large, the alert and knowledgeable were able survive that many years in local politics. Powers also served on the Board

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of Elections for two decades, which his friends say "didn't hurt his power a bit" over the years. Hyman "Hymie" Schorenstein was loved by multitudes and hailed as the pioneer of Jewish Democracy. Schorenstein is credited with bringing along many fine Jewish male and female Democratic district captains, most of whom went on to serve the borough on the bench and left an indelible mark on Jewish political life in the county. Hyman Schorenstein is still fondly remembered in Jewish neighborhoods all over the City.[10]

For thirty years Irwin Steingut was perhaps Brooklyn's most powerful leader. He served as Minority and Majority Leader, and Speaker of the Assembly during the Depression years and is credited for helping pass New York's little New Deal. Steingut built the Madison club into one of the state's most powerful political organizations, electing numerous club members to the city and state's highest offices.

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[10] Hymie Schorenstein's name is still popular in Jewish circles. In the 1989 race for Manhattan's Upper West Side City Councilperson, a candidate, Janice Wineman, used her husband Stuart's last name, Schorenstein as a selling point. It turns out that Stuart Schorenstein's great great uncle was none other than Hymie Schorenstein. One of Janice Wineman-Schorenstein's campaign workers said: "So many people stop in at the office on Seventy Second and Broadway to ask, 'Are you related to Hymie.' Every other day someone asks, usually people in their middle sixties and seventies. They loved him, those who lived in Brownsville and East New York. He was a wonderful man."

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Like Schorenstein, Bertram L. Baker was the first black Democratic district leader. He too is remembered dearly as a pioneer. By most accounts he was a respected political leader. His organization was strong and its longevity stands as a model of what a stable black electoral machine can do. Bertram Baker too helped make many young talented black men judges and high governmental officials. Furthermore, he worked well with the Irish and Jewish leaders of the county. He was respected by blacks and whites for his statesmanship.

Thomas Jones was a charismatic firebrand who used his skill to unite radicals and black nationalists. Under his guidance they forged a unique, if shortlived, local political organization. His accomplishment stands as a monument to what can be accomplished by a progressive interracial alliance.

Finally, Wesley McD. Holder deserves mention for his astute leadership of the Lewis Flagg, Jr., campaign, and his persistent intraparty struggles against Bertram Baker's United Action Democratic Association. Though they often did not get along together due to their authoritative personalities, they inadvertently worked as a team for the achievement of greater black representation.

Local Leaders Had Shortcomings Too

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These men had failings, no doubt. Schorenstein became comfortable with an "honest graft" scheme in commuter transportation. Irwin Steingut's integrity was called into question more than once. Likewise, Bertram Baker was known by his foes as an autocrat who believed in a business-like internal structure for his clubhouse. Tom Jones led his group to victory, only to betray their confidence and withdraw from the political scene to the prestige of a Civil Court judgeship. These men were not angels, but given their ability to organize men and women into electoral majorities, they enhanced the process of ethnic and racial succession.

Race and Ethnicity: Little Difference Between Them?

The apparent contradiction notwithstanding, race and ethnicity are slippery concepts for comprehending machine succession and longevity because political cleavages did not occur along simple white-black lines. Jews fought Jews for control of the electoral arena just as black succession was about black regulars and white regulars battling white and black insurgents. Often both sides of a contest were ethnically and racially integrated. The leadership of political clubhouses was also mixed.

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Black succession frequently involved alliances between blacks and whites. For instance, during the succession of the early 1960s, the regular leadership was mostly white while the leadership of the insurgents was mostly black. Yet in the regular party organization the blacks were considered the hardest working captains, though they had only lower level positions to show for it. Many blacks patiently waited their turn, as had the whites who proceeded them. While blacks led the insurgents, whites ran their day to day clubhouse operations and were the most experienced in political organizing. They too were least compensated for it. They understood this and for the most part accepted their place behind black leadership. There was little chance that black regulars and insurgents could have unified behind a black candidate because the struggle was ideological as well as racial, just as the first Jewish succession had been. Conflicting visions of political thought and action underlay interparty and intraparty squabbles; sometimes it was just a matter of strong personalities; often differences were resolved by pragmatic considerations such as the waste of time involved in battling ethnic and racial succession.

Both the second Jewish succession and the first black succession were "regular" party affairs. A key reason for Irwin Steingut's and Bertram Baker's easy

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successions was the powerful satellite clubhouses that stood behind them. And although both were fiercely loyal party lieutenants there was always the possibility they could bolt or challenge the leadership. In the end, as they hoped, there was no need for rebellion as both Irwin Steingut and Bertram Baker respectively had warm professional relationships with Irish and Jewish leaders, and moved up swiftly in the party hierarchy; however, Baker never reached the political heights that Irwin Steingut had.[11]

Politics in this era was not racially polarized. No monolithic "white" leadership or monolithic "black" leadership existed. And although there was solidarity among all types of ethnic and racial groups, each group at times fought internally over social, economic, cultural and psychological realms. Brooklyn's "white" population was diverse. It included the Irish, Jews and Italians, and to a lesser extent Germans, WASPs and others ethnics such as Poles, Norwegians, and Russians. Brooklyn's "black" population too was varied. Black West Indians immigrants, long time northern black residents

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[11] Irwin Steingut served as Minority Leader of the Assembly from 1930-1934 and 1936-1952; for one year, 1935, Speaker of the Assembly. Bertram Baker served as Minority and Majority Whip during the 1960s. New York Red Book, (Albany, New York: Williams Press, Inc. 1951).

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and recent southern black arrivals made up the community.

Literature on Machine Decline Questioned

The existence and success of Bertram Baker's United Action Democratic Association (UADA) and Thomas Jones's Unity Democratic Club (UDC) challenges the thesis of machine decline in the post World War II period. In Brooklyn's black communities, the machine and Democratic party organization was just beginning to flower after the War. The same was true in Brooklyn's newly built suburban ring communities, such as Sheepshead Bay and Canarsie, where the white ethnics who fled older central Brooklyn communities built powerful local machines. To a certain extent, the immigration of the newest ethnic groups, such as Hasidic, Sephardic and orthodox Jews, Poles, Russian Jews, Italians, and Black West Indians has replaced the voting power of the older immigrant groups in some central Brooklyn communities and boosted the party's ranks in the 1970s and 1980s.[12]

To a considerable degree, the academic literature has ignored the development of new racial and ethnic machines after World War II, like the one Bertram Baker

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[12]. Alan Ware reviews theories of machine decline in the post war decades. The Breakdown of the Democratic Party Organization: 1940-1980, 2-6.

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and UADA built in Brooklyn. In cities across the country, black machine politicians have made good. New York City's Mayor, David Dinkins learned his trade out of the Carver Club, the political house that Harlem (and later Tammany) political boss, "The Fox" J. Raymond Jones, built.[13] The success of the late Harold Washington in Chicago is another example of how a black politician could arise out of a Democratic machine organization.

Competition and conflict did not necessarily imply a decline of the Brooklyn Democratic party organization. There always was a healthy competition between and amongst district leaders (and city wide, amongst county chairmen). The decentralized nature of the party in New York State fostered competition and assisted new ethnic and racial groups to capture local organizations, as a first step toward building larger coalitions for county, city, and statewide power.

The Democratic urban machine, operating within a two and sometimes three party system, through the evolution of the American constitutional system, held firm in the face of ethnic and racial social conflicts that

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[13]John C. Walter, The Harlem Fox: J. Raymond Jones and Tammany, 1920-1970, (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1988), 225, 229. Also, Jimmy Breslin, "The Man Who Made Dinkins Possible," New York Newsday, 8 November 1989, 2.

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potentially threatened to wreak havoc in the process of political succession. The Democratic party bent and fractured, suffered defeat and celebrated victory. It co-opted and incorporated many ideologies, while it destroyed those it could not digest. In fact, ethnic and race pride were categories of life that American politics could incorporate and nurture, whereas it did not tolerate radical and militant philosophies. The Democratic party's success in incorporation has also been the story of its failure to welcome radical thought and action. Radicalism pressured incumbents to adapt to changing demographic trends, but only when each group took it upon itself to quell its radicals. Groups sacrificed this part of their heritage in order to become part of mainstream American politics.

In the end, whether intentional or not, the system adapted successfully to and even capitalized upon changing demographic circumstances. James Shaw gave credit to the Constitution as a flexible, interpretive document.

> It think [succession] has been successful. And I think it will continue to be successful. Let me just give you this. If you ride out along Coney Island Avenue, and you go to Prospect Park and beyond: wall to wall black people. Its an accommodation like that built into the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Those people that wrote those instruments originally didn't have the slightest intention of ever applying them to blacks. Just like those lords and abbotts and bishops who sat down with the Magna Carta, concerned about their rights and their

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privileges. But you see, they did a thing of genius unintentionally....[14]

Political Calm Amidst Social Strife

Originally, this dissertation hypothesized that a study of ethnic political succession in Brooklyn would reveal great strife between the incumbent Irish and the insurgent Jewish political forces, and later the incumbent Jews and insurgent blacks. And, from this struggle for power we could learn much about how the Brooklyn Democratic machine was able to sustain itself and prosper throughout the twentieth century when other urban machines appeared to have disintegrated.

Field research suggests that this hypothesis was incorrect. There was little or no political conflict between these two groups strictly along ethnic or racial lines. Nevertheless, the observation that the machine was able to sustain and replenish itself through successful ethnic and racial succession was substantiated.

One main reason for the lack of debilitating political party conflict lies in what Amy Bridges believes the machine's traditional and unique function has been. Machine politics is about delivering majorities, despite differences of race, ethnicity, class and

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[14] Mr. James Shaw, interview by author.

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culture. The effort to gain power is rooted in political conflict and the accepted rules of the electoral game. The advent of universal manhood suffrage, and subsequent opening up of the vote for women and blacks, created places in the American social structure for citizens to participate as voters. Moreover, as Katznelson and others have added, ethnic and racial politics is rooted at the neighborhood level, distinct from the economic sphere which created at the workplace other forms of participation such as the strike. As a result of this dichotomy, the machine's ideological contribution to urban politics has been conservative, often mediating differences of class, ethnicity and race. This ability to mediate in the name of electoral success is what permitted the machine to endure while other institutions faltered in the twentieth century.

The Larger Political Context

What difference did the urban machine make in the quality of life of city dwellers? What importance can be placed on local politics in the larger scheme of American political power? It is fair to say that the record of the neighborhood based political party organization's achievement and relevance is a mixed one: in some instances it has made a difference; in others it has not. I would argue that an active, neighborhood

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based political party organization, like the one found in Brooklyn until the 1960s, often made a difference in the lives of Brooklyn residents. The Brooklyn organization carried out some of the traditional functions that protected and preserved the people and communities it represented.

The provision and maintenance of municipal services was effected with the help of the local political party organizations. Moreover, ethnic and racial group upward mobility was furthered by the creation and procurement of jobs and other forms of public and private patronage. Additionally, the machine met the symbolic need of new groups for displays of ethnic and racial solidarity and pride by commemorating holidays and national leaders. Perhaps most important of all, the party organization gave voice to the people by seeking their vote and encouraging their participation in the electoral process.

Evidence of these types of contributions to community life abound in New York City. In the Brooklyn Jewish community, upward mobility was abetted by the urban machine's advocacy of the New Deal (and New York State and New York City's Little New Deal, i.e., state unemployment and disability insurance, the right of unions to collective bargaining, home relief etc.,) as well as the myriad post World War II federal social

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programs (for example, FHA backed low interest mortgages). Furthermore, in New York City, affirmation of Jewish upward mobility was particularly evident in widespread employment of Jews in the public sector of the economy. Jews as a group came to dominate several bureaucratic agencies, most prominently the public school system as teachers and administrators.

Brooklyn's largest black community, Bedford Stuyvesant, maintained a middle class, homeowning character until the 1960s. A contributing factor to this condition was the activism of Bertram Baker's United Action Democratic Association (UADA). Baker fought for the conservation of municipal services in Bedford Stuyvesant. His effectiveness was apparent to those who lived there. This role of neighborhood watchdog was possibly the local machines' greatest contribution to the area.

Nevertheless, with the rise of the twentieth century welfare state, which ironically the machine spurred on, local power, white and black, lost a good deal of its ability to control neighborhood development. Large government bureaucracies, operating semi-autonomously from public control, made important economic development decisions that affected the life of urban communities. New York's foremost power broker of the twentieth century, Robert Moses, ran roughshod over

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almost everyone: institutions, groups, and individuals, including several of New York City's Mayors. It was extremely difficult for local political party organizations to take Moses on and win. Attempts to stop his bulldozers from destroying viable neighborhoods, from The Bronx to Brooklyn, failed. However, the city's populace, the machine included, shared most of the prevailing assumptions about the brilliance of such ideas as urban renewal that made Moses a hero in his time. The appealing vision of the machine age blinded the greatest of minds to the negative consequences of urban sprawl on inner city neighborhoods such as insufficient mass transportation, traffic congestion and air pollution.

Additionally, macroeconomic shifts, such as the recurrent fiscal crises of the cities (due in part to the vagaries of the world political scene and an unpredictable capitalist market economy), were well beyond the influence of the urban party organization. The machine's response to such phenomena has been to preserve community services via infusions of governmental programs or the maintenance of those already in existence.

In sum, the machine was one among many important urban institutions that at times made a difference in the quality of life for Brooklyn residents. A study of

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those communities where political clubhouses decayed in the post 1965 period might give evidence of the impact active clubhouses truly had in the larger political arena. Still there were conspicuous limits to the effectiveness of political clubs, especially when actions of overarching governmental agencies superseded local decision-making structures; at those moments the tenuousness of urban machine clout was revealed.[15]

After 1964, Was There a Breakdown of the Succession Process?

Finally, the question of whether blacks continued to progress in the Brooklyn Democratic party after 1964 is an intriguing one. The literature on the urban machine suggests that the machine went into a steep decline in the post 1960 period. The most frequently cited reasons were the ascent of the individual centered campaign and, the growth of new styles and techniques of campaigning by individual candidates, particularly the use of television, radio, campaign consultants and

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[15]Aside from the infamous exploits of Robert Moses there are numerous examples of governmental policy-making that harmed neighborhood livelihoods. See Michael Musuraca's Ph.D. Dissertation in Progress, on Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood for a discussion of how Federal, State and City Housing Authority decisions to concentrate low income projects in one or two areas bordering Bushwick hastened the decline of that once lovely, middle class community.

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direct mail (which forced the cost of campaigns to skyrocket). The implication for black succession is that just as blacks exercised sizable control of the party system, the machine itself became a less influential figure in the urban power equation. Additionally, other theorists have hypothesized that the rise of numerous social protest movements in the 1960s and 1970s took politics out of the clubhouse and into the street, weakening the ability of the machine to recruit new party activists. Moreover, the urban fiscal crisis of the 1970s further eroded urban governmental power, leaving blacks with higher party positions and a shell of a governmental structure to command. All of the above functions might lead the student of the urban machine and ethnic and racial succession to conclude that the process broke down in the 1960s and 1970s.[16]

There is some empirical evidence in the Brooklyn case that raises questions about these findings in the mainstream political science literature. FOr instance, Brooklyn's third black Democratic party succession was in keeping with the pace of the first two. Samuel D. Wright ran and won for assembly district leader and assemblyman in 1965 from the Fifth assembly district in

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[16]This indeed was the finding of the Kerner Commission in the mid-1960s. The Report of the National Advisory Committee on National Disorder (New York: Bantam Books, 1968.)

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the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. At the time of his victory, the community had less than a majority black population. Wright benefited from the state legislative reapportionment of districts in 1965. The previous leaders of the Fifth, Meade Esposito and Shirley Weiner, engineered to move their Thomas Jefferson Democratic Clubhouse to the newly rejuvenated Italian and Jewish community of Canarsie. That created the opening for Wright's political succession.

Perhaps the most profound political event of the 1960s in Brooklyn was the decentralization and community control of schools controversy that shook Wright's Ocean Hill-Brownsville district. Just how well the local political machine was able to cope with this struggle is a question worthy of detailed study. It appears the local clubhouse attempted to play the traditional machine role of mediating conflicts of race and ethnicity. Further research would be welcome before conclusions are drawn about succession in the post-1964 period.

The results of this study of the Brooklyn case, the anomaly of a remarkably continuous succession for Jews and blacks in this century's Brooklyn Democratic party, calls for a reexamination of the machine and ethnic and racial group politics literature. Could Brooklyn be the only significant political arena to have such a

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history? A study of Brooklyn's neighboring boroughs, the Bronx and Queens, which also been neglected by political scientists, might reveal whether the findings of the Brooklyn case are generalizable.

The dissertation also suggests that oral history can be an important tool for the study of ethnic and racial succession. Steven Erie and Diane Pinderhughes, in their study of the machine and succession review the established literature, which rely heavily upon quantitative or non-qualitative methodology.

Ethnic and racial succession needs to be seen in comparative light. Harold X. Connelly's study of Bedford Stuyvesant suffers because it uses only absolute versus comparative criteria for measuring the success of racial political change. I believe that one of the reasons that tensions between racial and ethnic groups are so high is each group lacks an appreciation of what their fellow people in America had to endure.

There is no simple formula for political succession. However, this dissertation shows that when four key elements are present, the chances for a fruitful succession are greatly enhanced.

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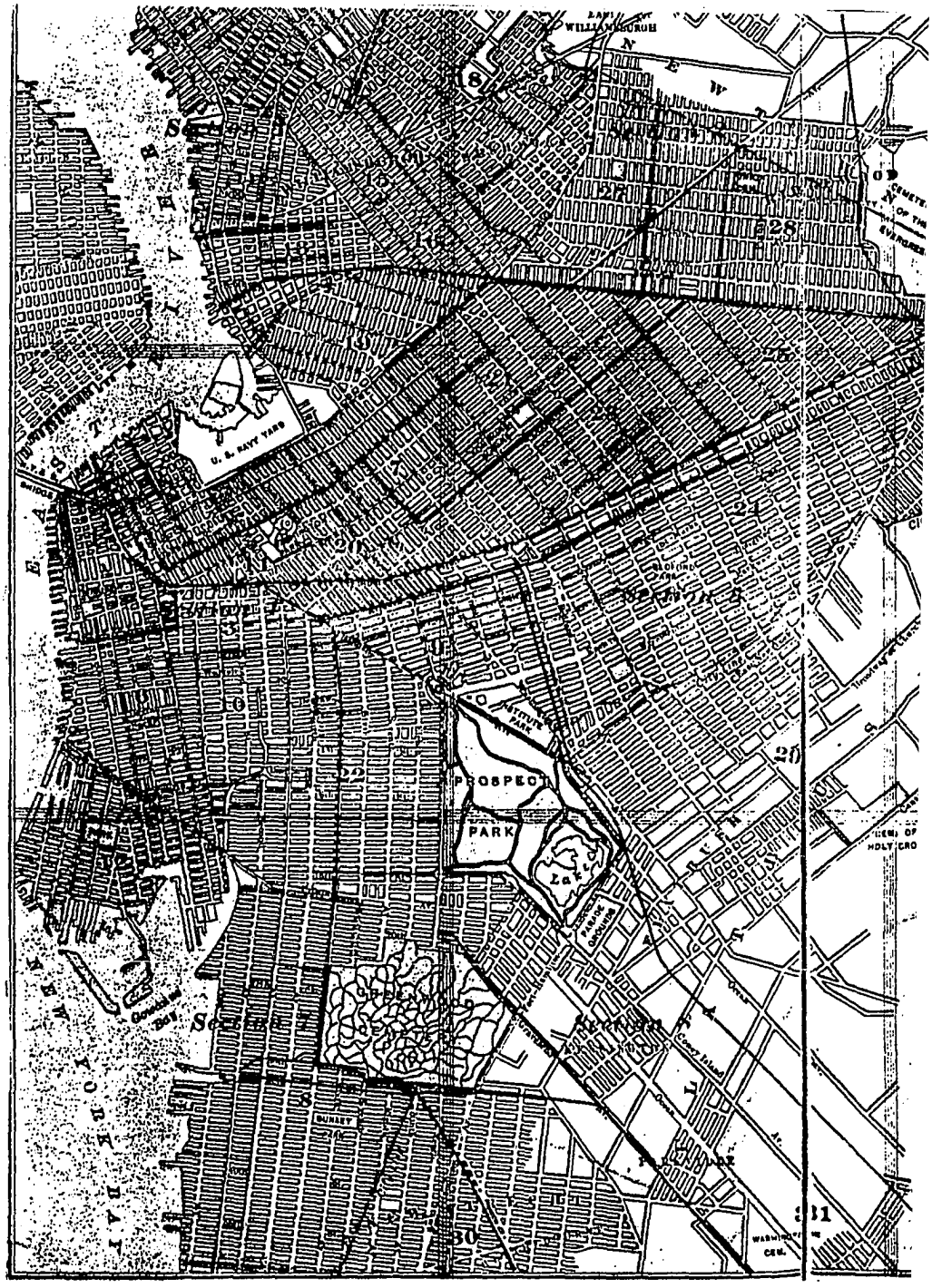
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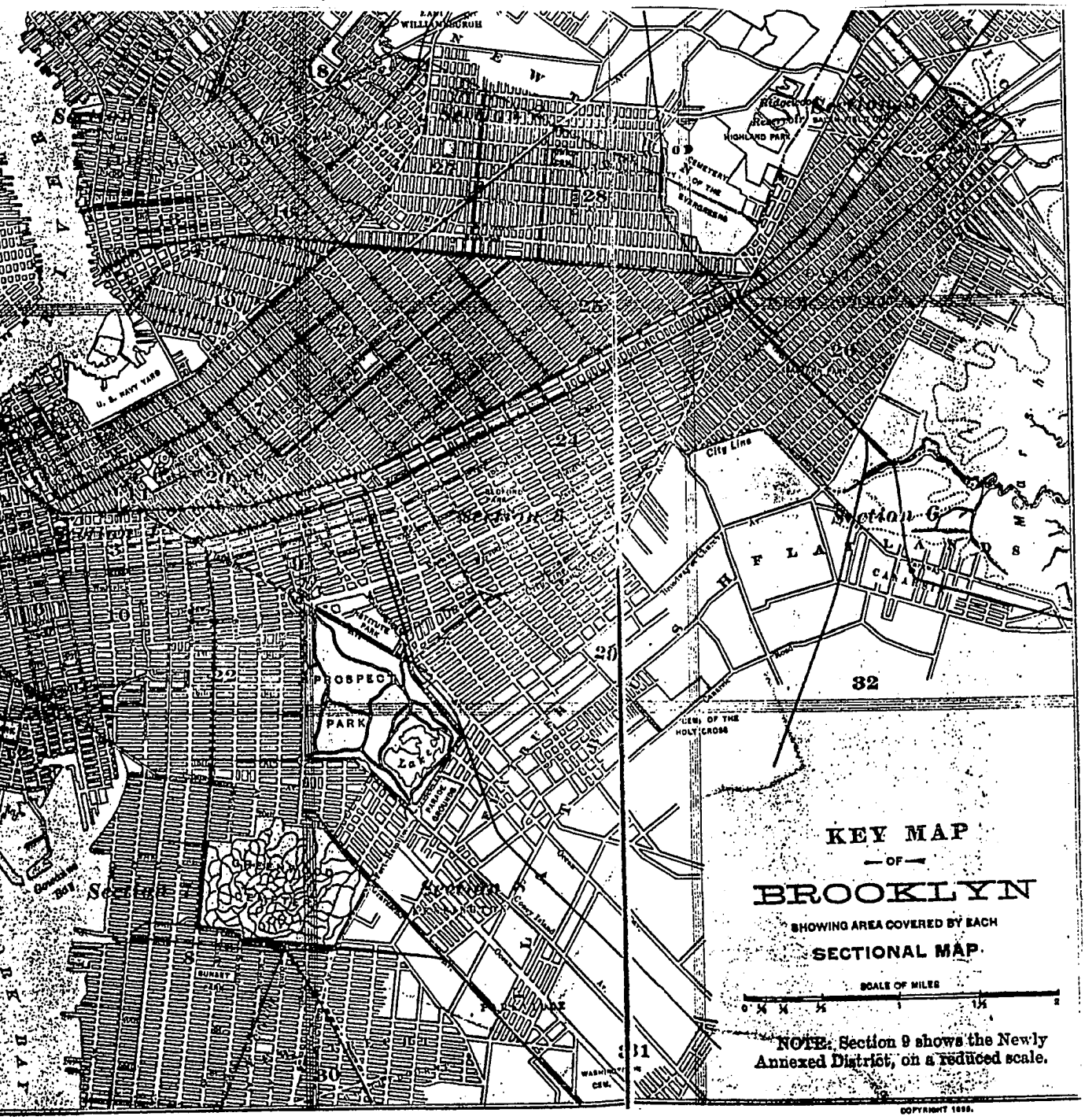
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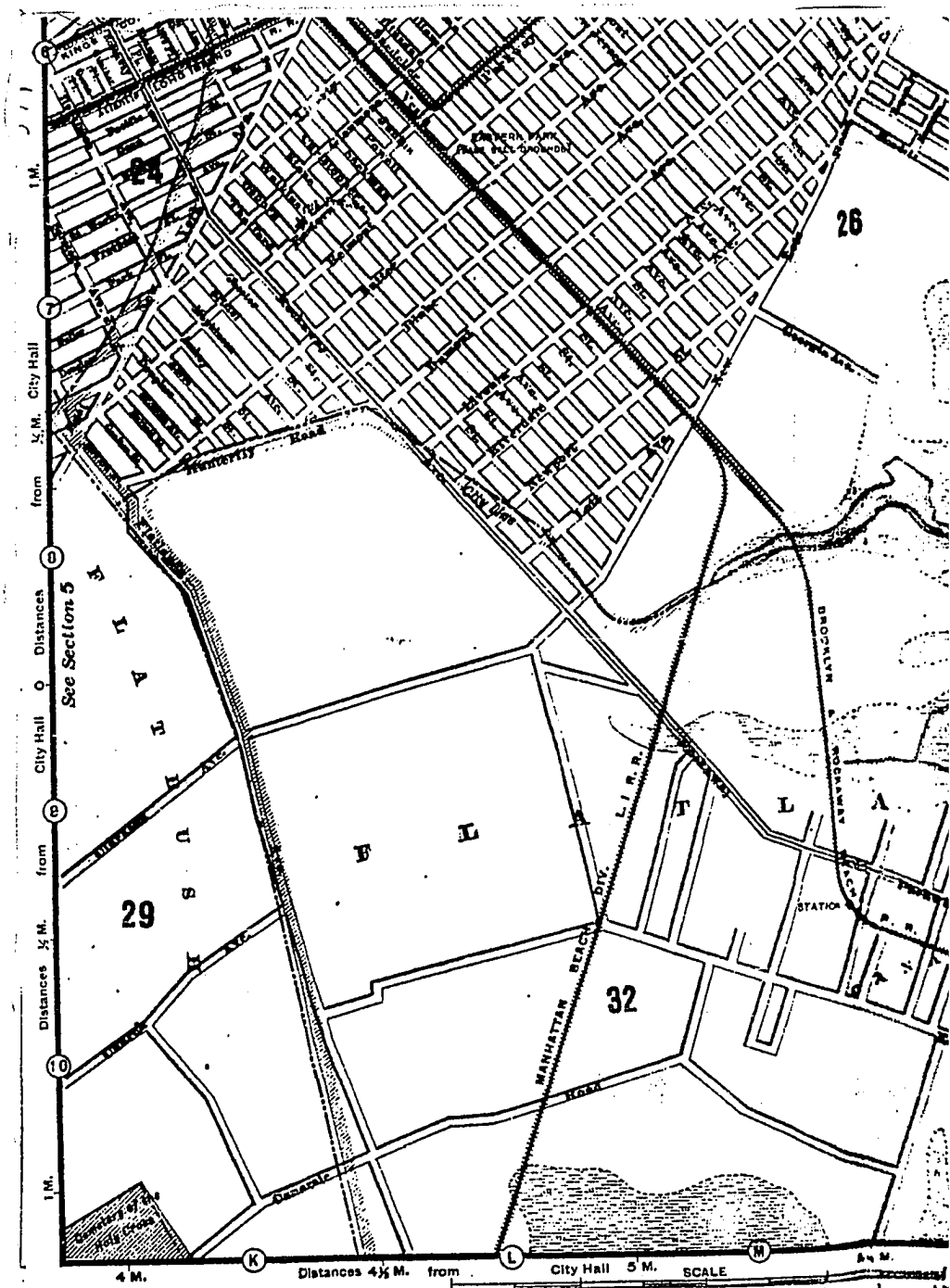
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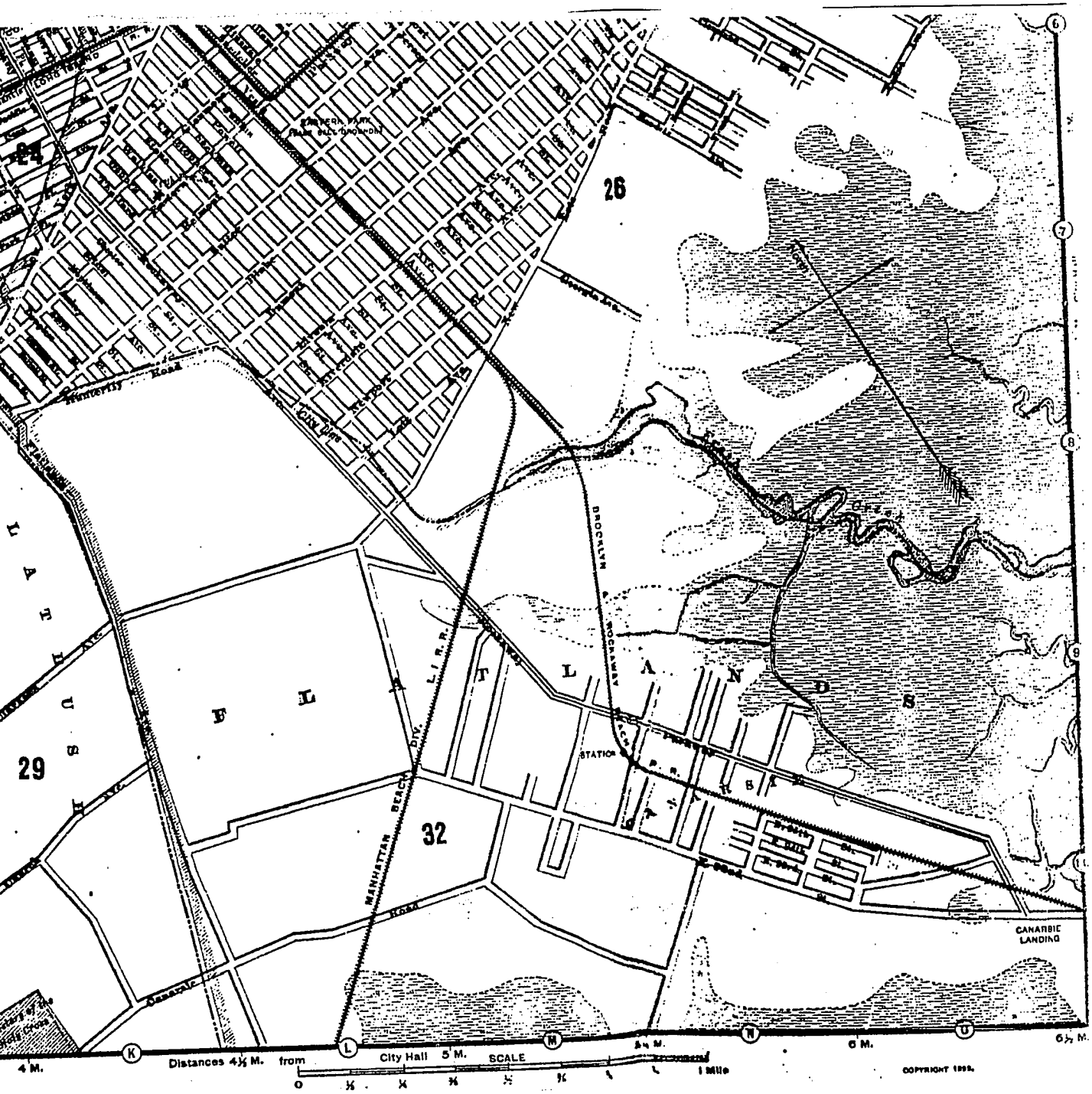
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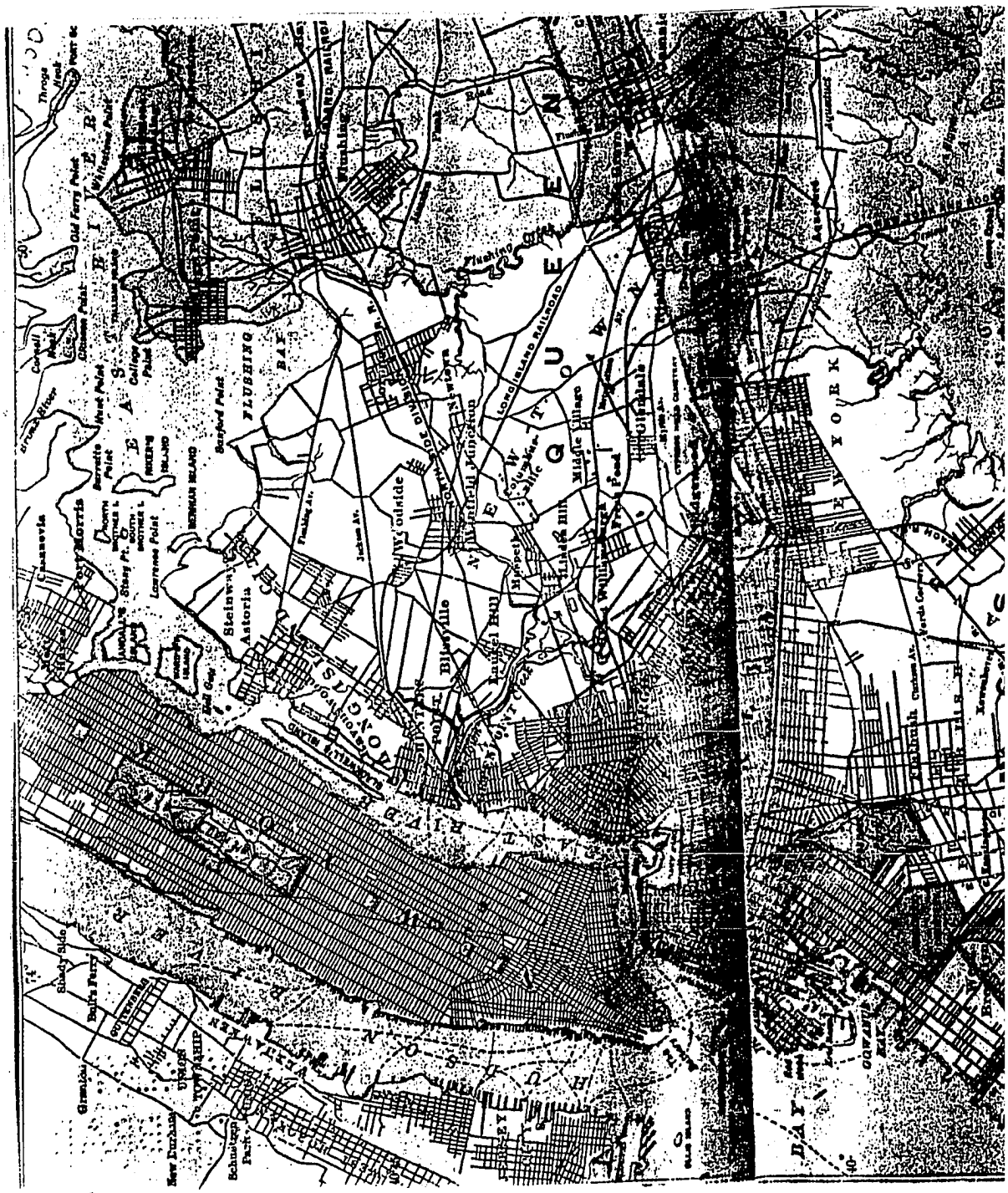
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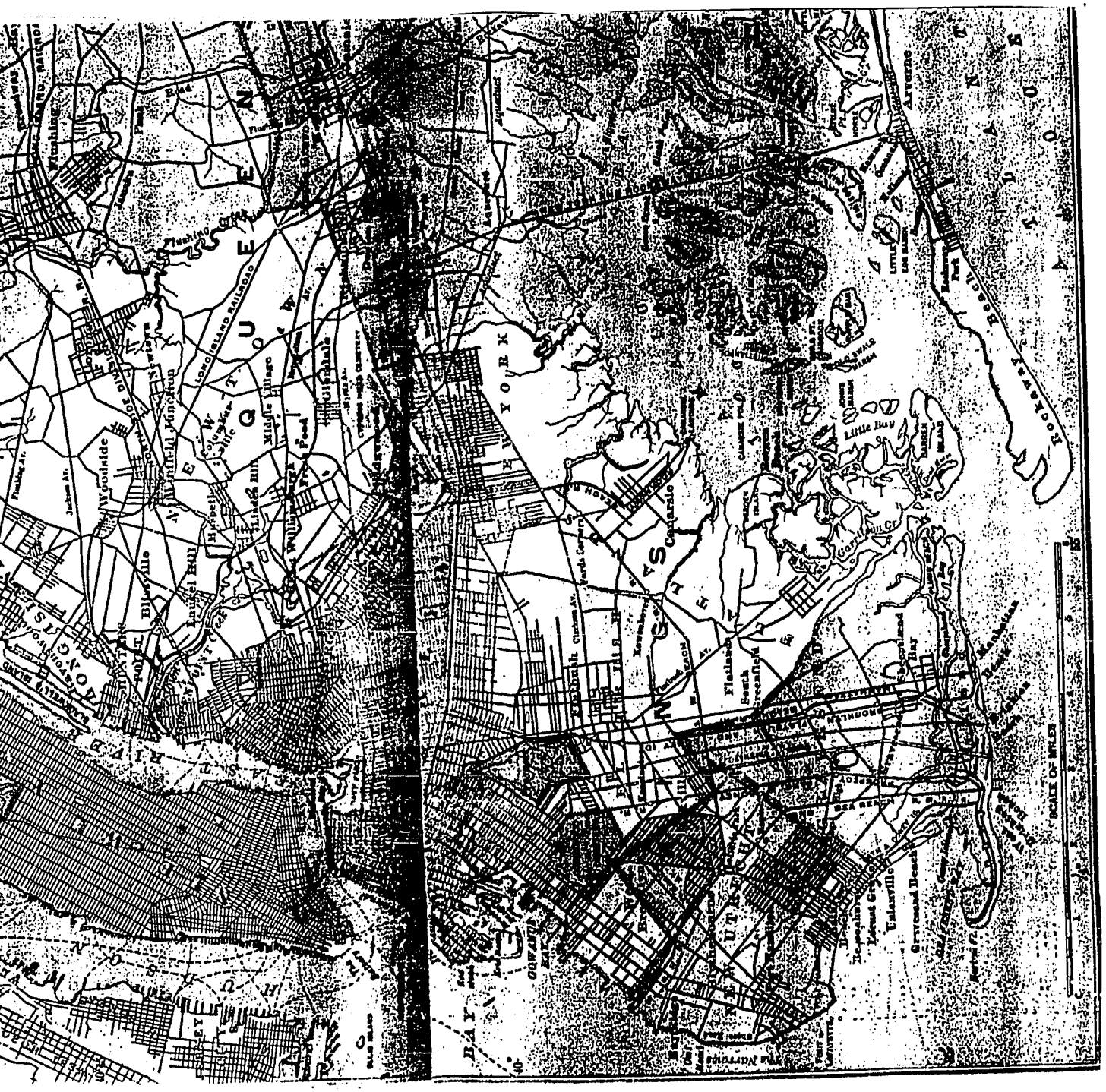


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FLUSHING BAY
Flushing
Bayside
Whitestone
Throgs Neck
Old Ferry Point
Whitestone Point
Clason Point
Cornell Creek
College Point
Bowne Park
Beaufort Point
Lawrence Point
Berrian Island
Flushing Creek
Flushing Cemetery
Long Island Railroad
Middle Village
Ridgewood
Maspeth
Blissville
Laurel Hill
Steinway
Astoria
Hallets Point
Old Gate
Sunswick Creek
Hunters Point
Long Island City
Queensboro Bridge
Blackwells Island
Roosevelt Island
Manhattan
Ward's Island
Randall's Island
Hell Gate
Bronx Kills
Pot Cove
Schuylers Point
Grassy Point
Bowery Bay
Rikers Island
Flushing Meadow
Corona
Newtown Creek
Greenpoint
Williamsburg
Brooklyn
Navy Yard
Wallabout Bay
Gowanus Bay
Gowanus Canal
Red Hook
Buttermilk Channel
Governors Island
Bedloe's Island
Ellis Island
Liberty Island
Staten Island
Upper New York Bay
Lower New York Bay
Jamaica Bay
Rockaway Inlet
Coney Island
Sandy Hook
Rockaway Beach
Rockaway Point
Barren Island
Canarsie
Flatbush
Gravesend Bay
Gravesend
Sheepshead Bay
Coney Island Creek
Coney Island Channel
Gravesend Inlet
Norton's Point
Romer Shoal
Swash Channel
Main Ship Channel
Ambrose Channel
Hudson River
East River
Harlem River
Spuyten Duyvil Creek
Kingsbridge
Fort Lee
Fort Washington
Fort George
Fort Tompkins
Fort Hamilton
Fort Lafayette
Fort Wadsworth
Fort Richmond
Fort Tilden
Fort Hancock
Fort Schuyler
Fort Totten
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Fort Diamond
Fort Delaware
Fort Mifflin
Fort Mott
Fort Du Pont

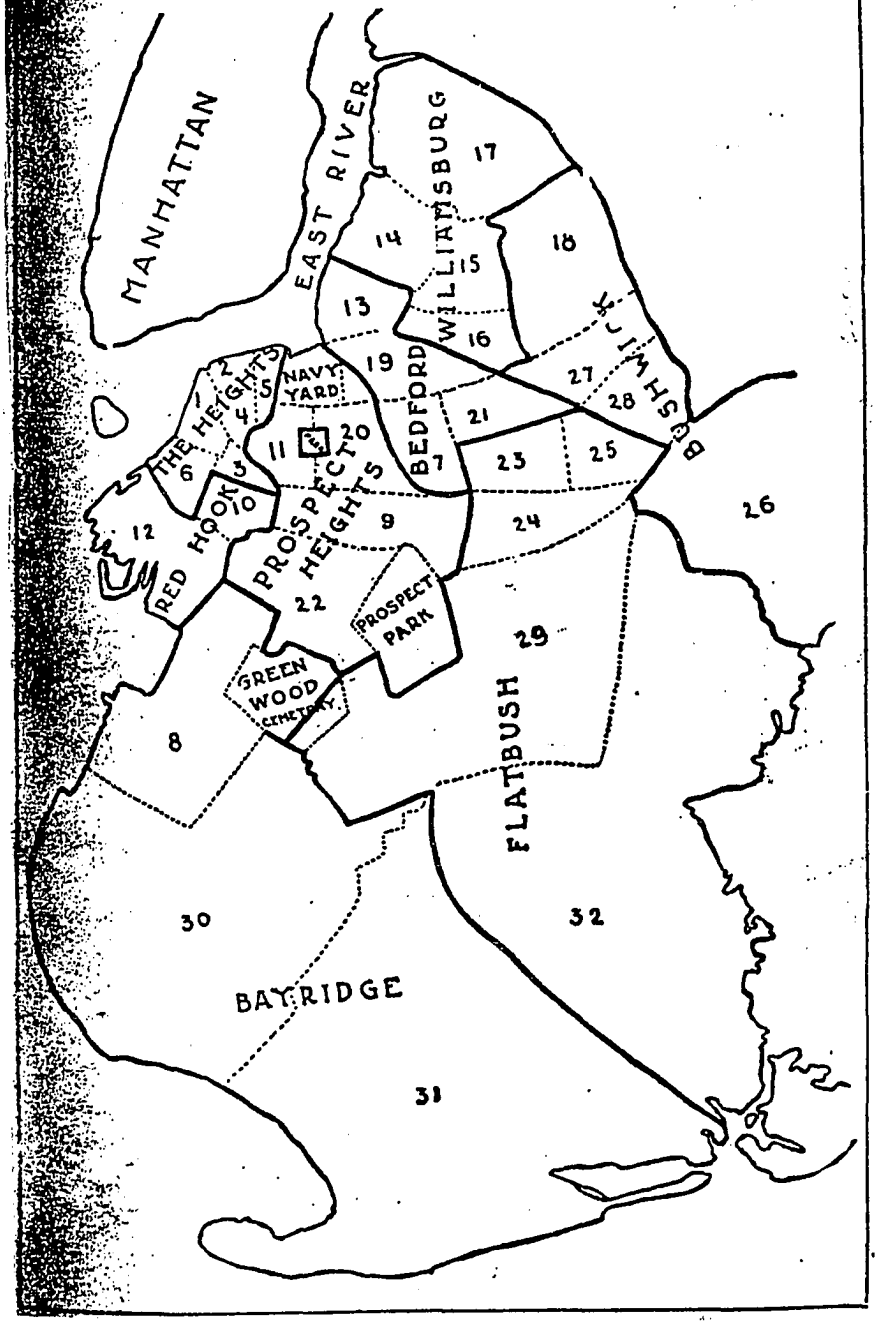
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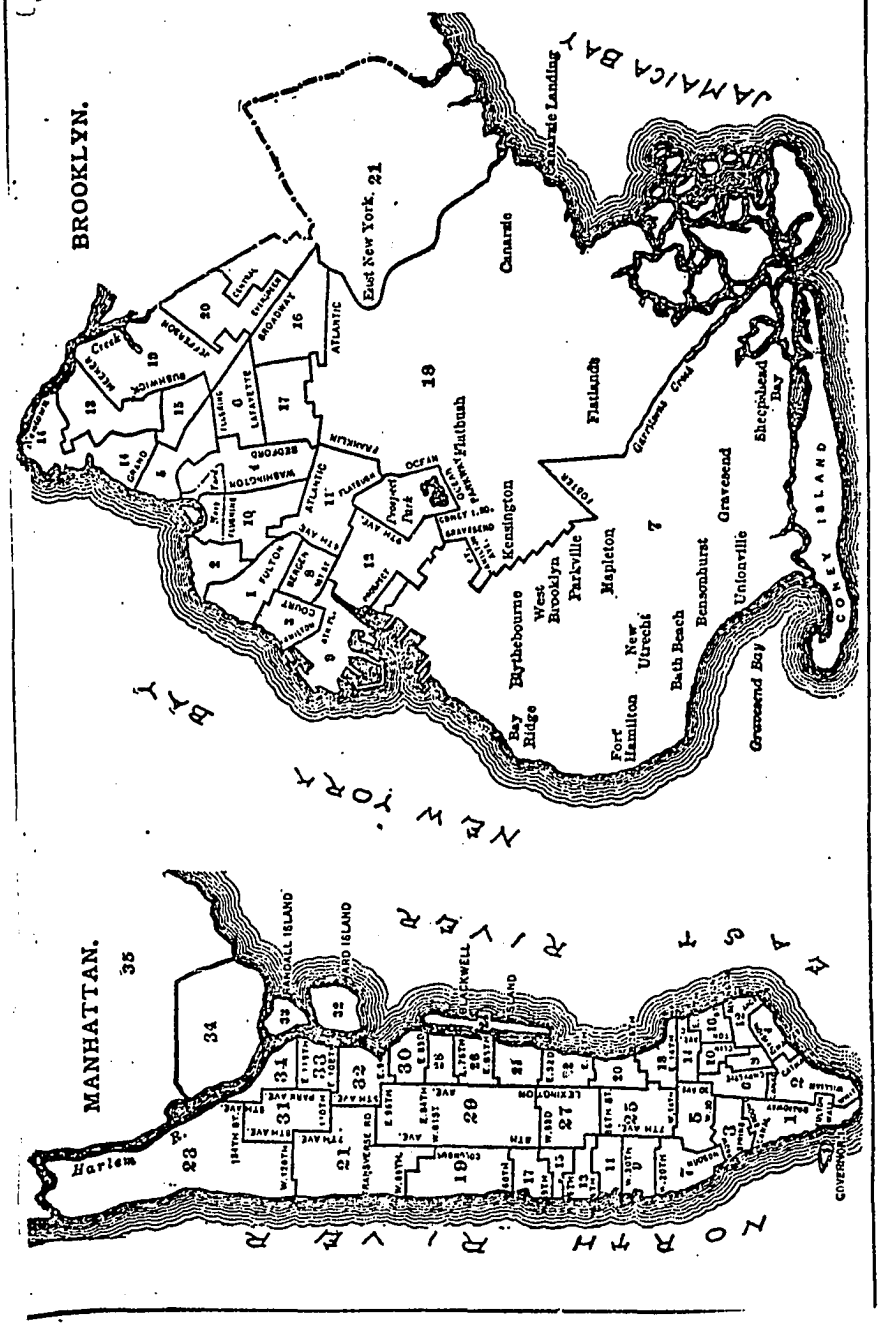
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MAP OF LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS, BROOKLYN.
Figures indicate number of the Ward.

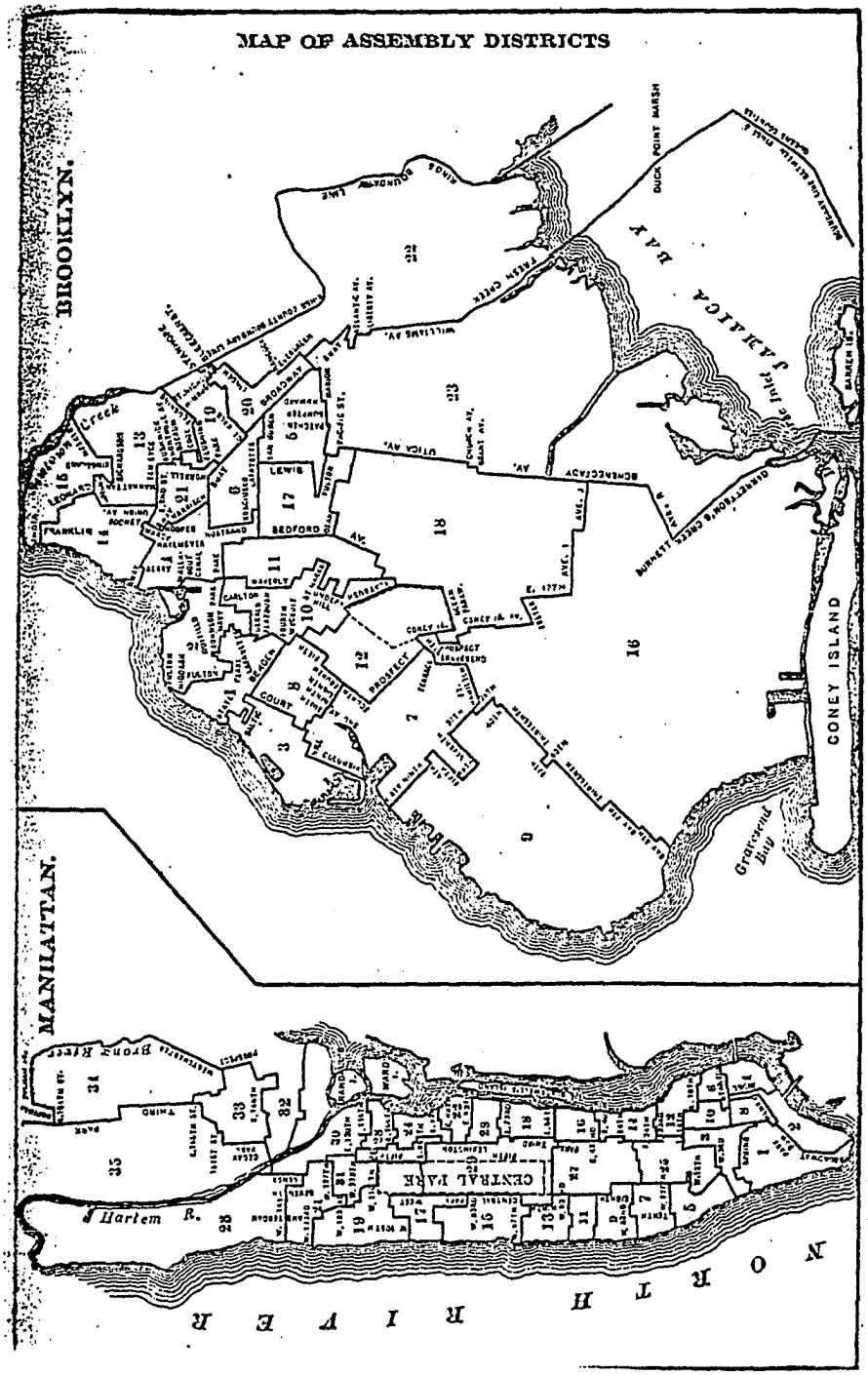


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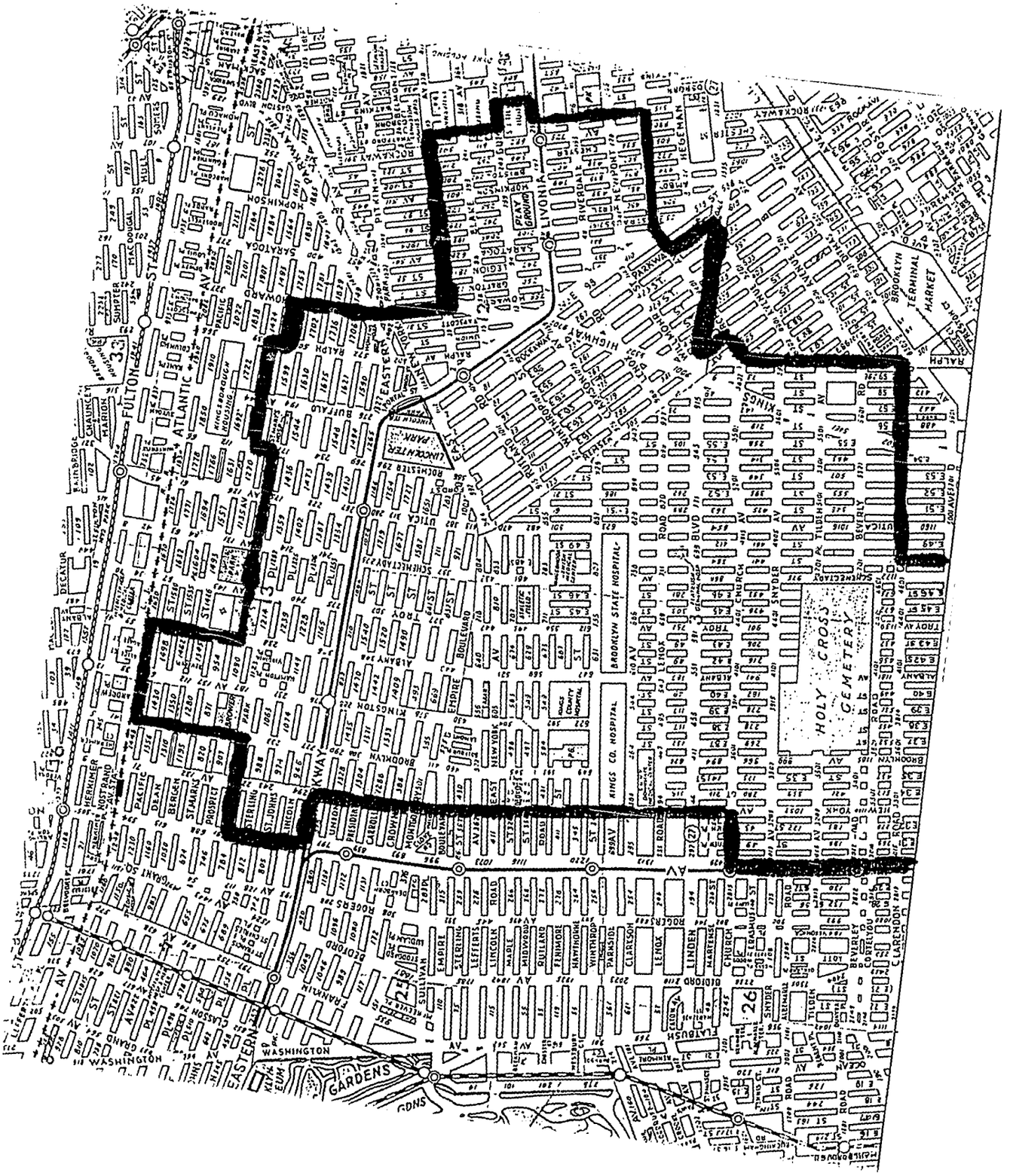
MAP OF ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS.



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1. Greenpoint
2. Williamsburg
3. Bushwick-Ridgewood

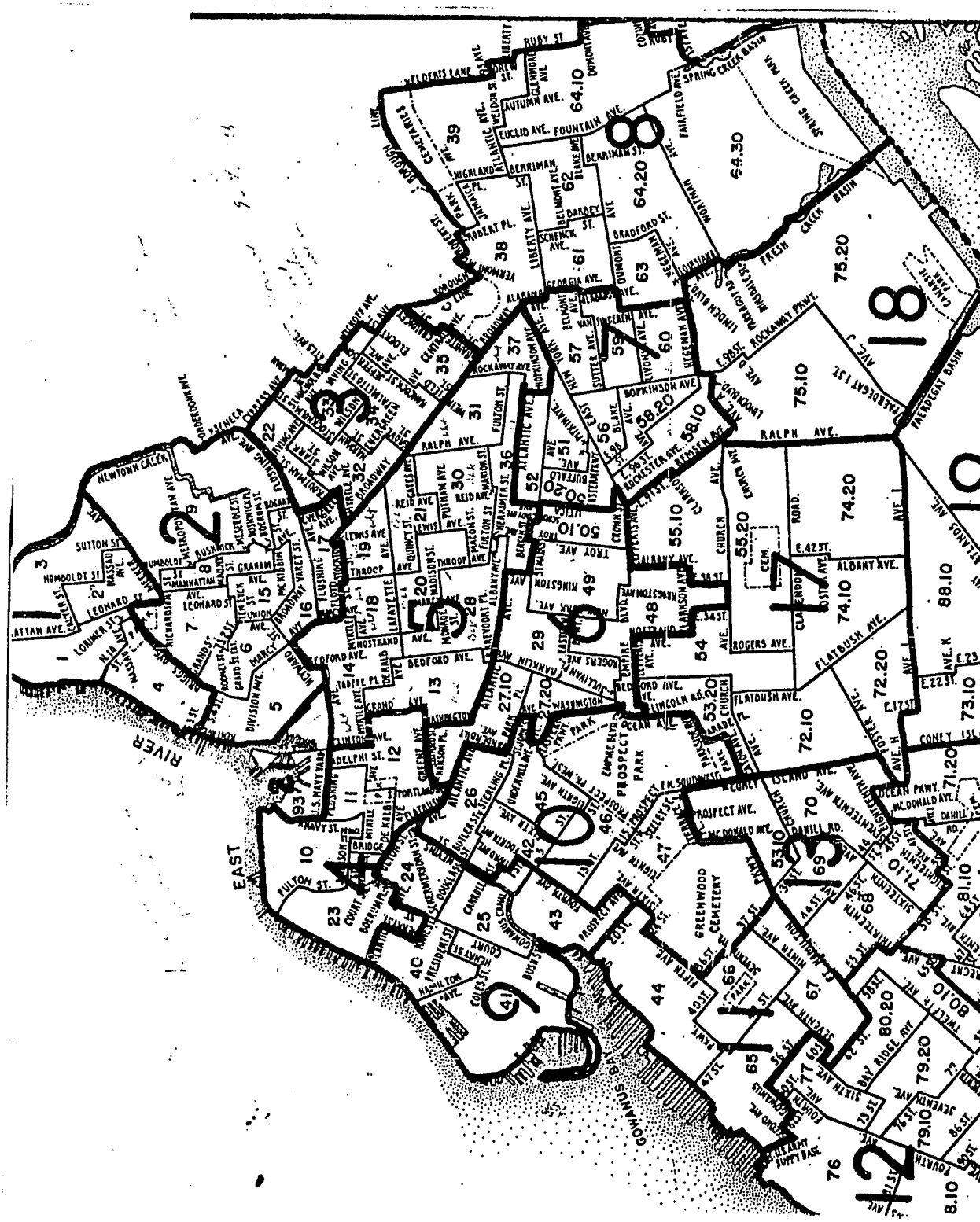
4. Brooklyn Heights-Ft. Greene
5. Bedford-Stuyvesant
6. Crown Heights
7. Brownsville
8. East New York

9. South Brooklyn-Red Hook
10. Park Slope
11. Sunset Park-Gowanus
12. Bay Ridge
13. Borough Park-Kensington
14. Bensonhurst
15. Gravesend
16. Coney Island

17. Flatbush-East Flatbush
18. Canarsie
19. Midwood-Flatlands
20. Sheepshead Bay

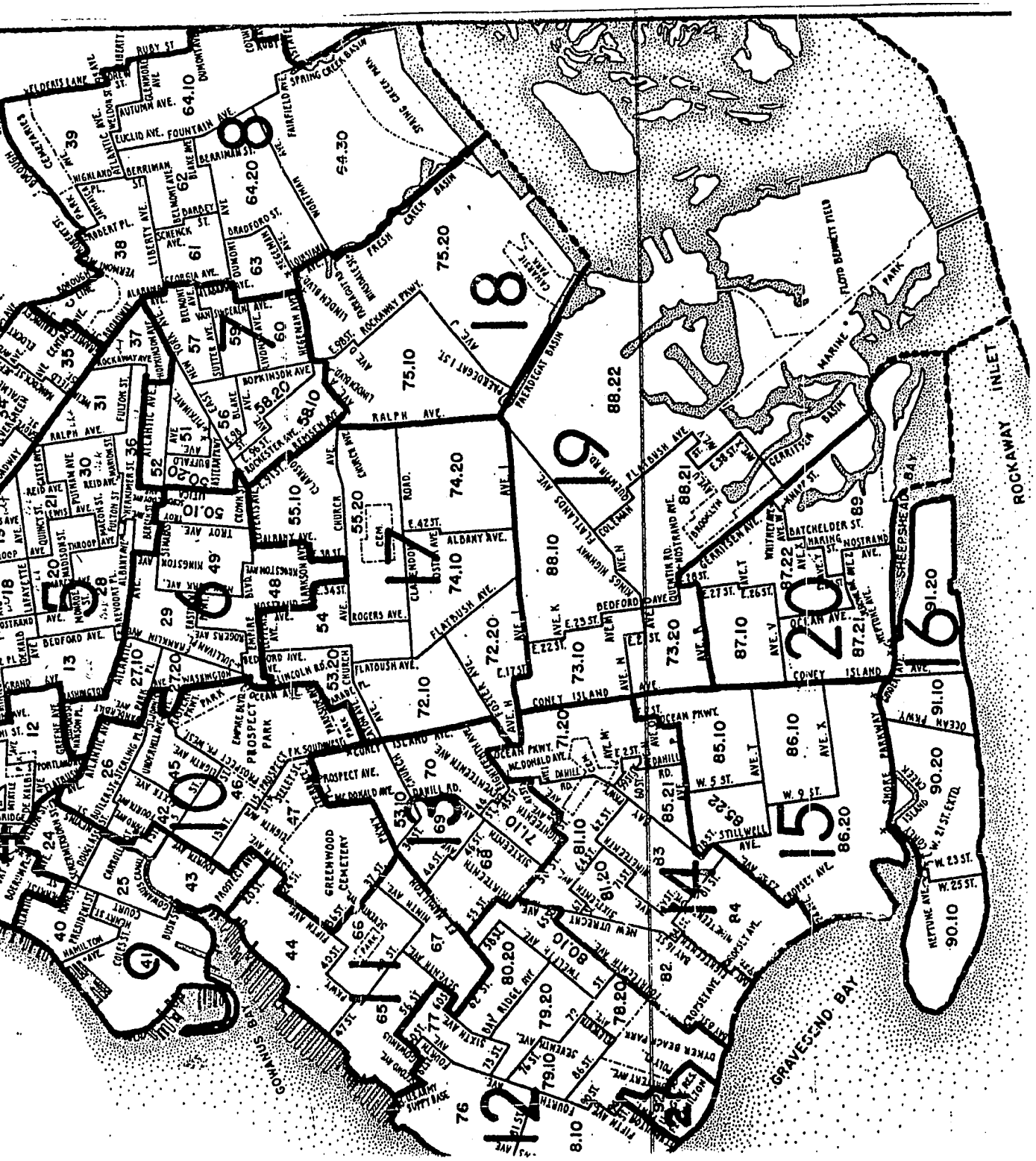
21. Ft. Hamilton and U.S. Navy Yard

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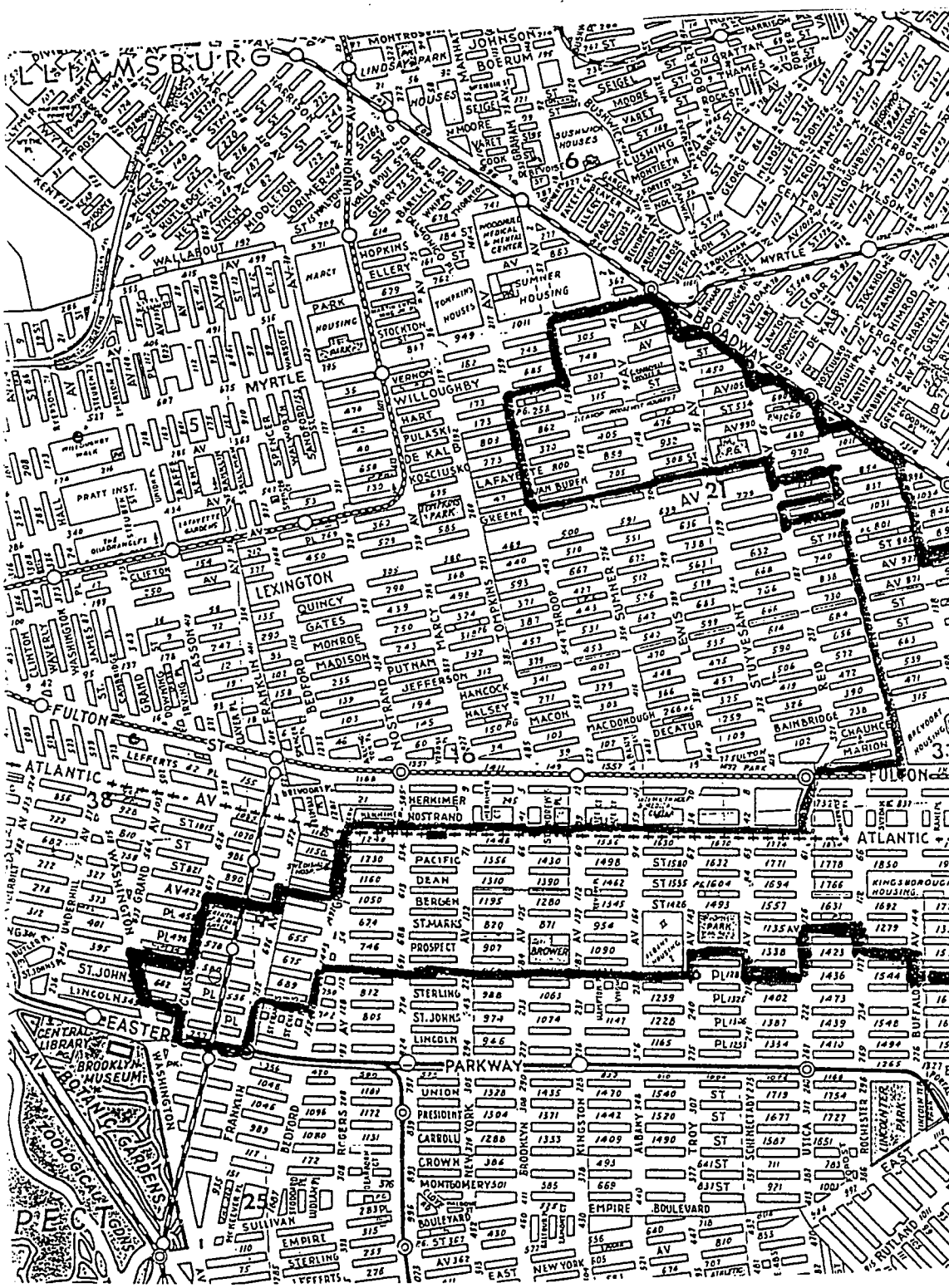
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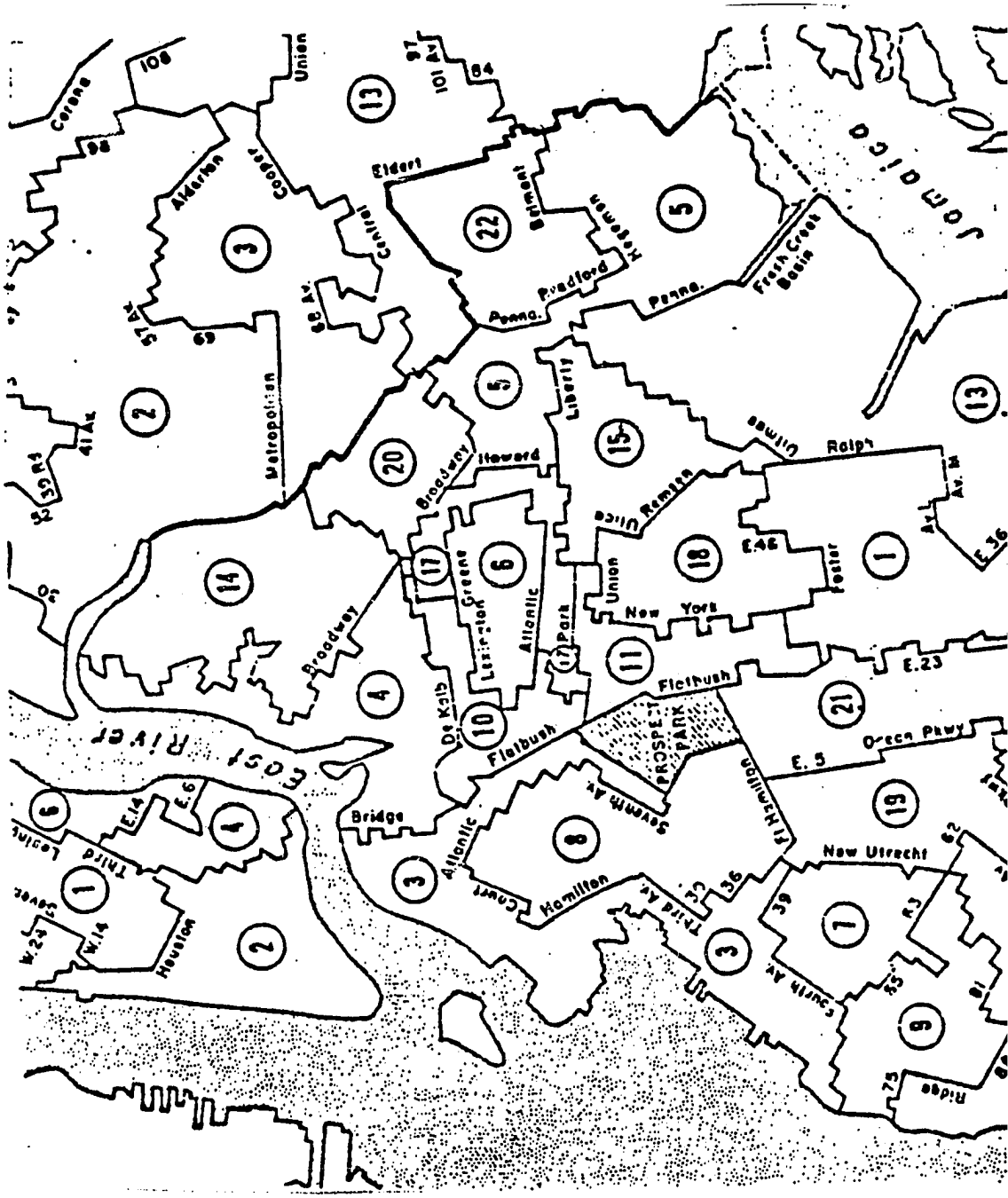

BROOKLYN
MYRTLE
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LEXINGTON
BROADWAY
EASTERN
BOTANIC GARDENS
BROOKLYN MUSEUM
PRATT INST.
PARK
HOUSES
HOUSING
SUMNER HOUSING
EMPIRE
BOULEVARD
NEW YORK
EAST
NOSTRAND
FRANKLIN
WASHINGTON
CLASSON
GRAND
HOPKINS
WILLOUGHBY
VERNON
STOCKTON
GREENE
MONROE
MADISON
PUTNAM
JEFFERSON
HANCOCK
HALSEY
MACON
DECATUR
HERKIMER
PACIFIC
DEAN
BERGEN
ST.MARKS
PROSPECT
STERLING
ST. JOHNS
LINCOLN
UNION
PRESIDENT
CARROLL
CROWN
MONTGOMERY
SULLIVAN
RUTLAND
BUFFALO
ROCHESTER
UTICA
TROY
SCHENECTADY
ALBANY
KINGSTON
BROOKLYN
NEWKIRK
BEDFORD
RODGERS
UNDERHILL
HOWARD
CLIFTON
QUINCY
GATES
MACON
DECATUR
BAINBRIDGE
CHAUNCEY
MARION
SUMNER
THROOP
TOMPKINS
MARCY
STUYVESANT
REID
BEDFORD
NOSTRAND
KOSCIUSKO
LAFAYETTE
VAN BUREN
DE KALB
PULASKI
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WALLABOUT
KENT
MIDDLETON
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HAMILTON
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WHIPPLE
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FLUSHING
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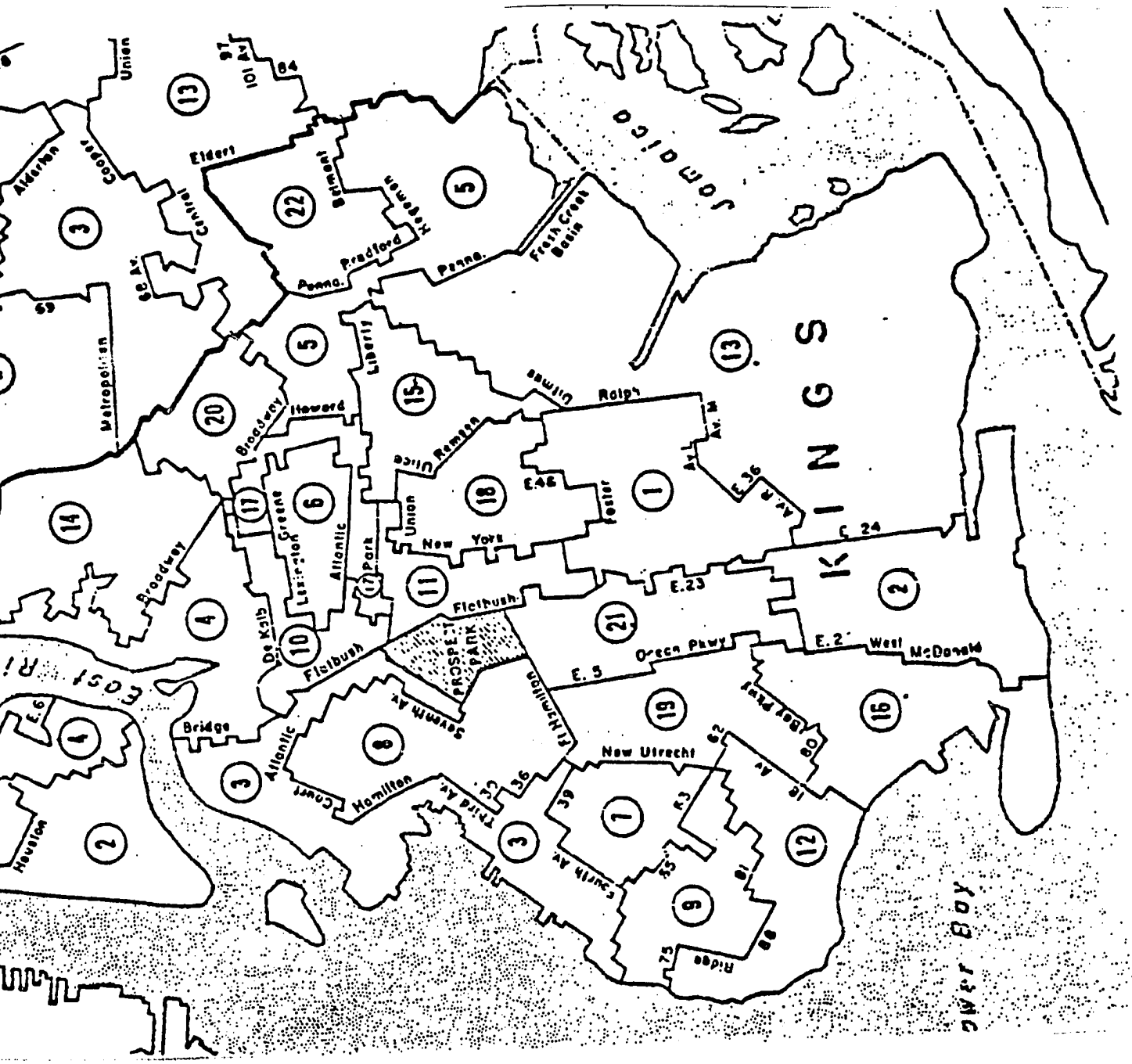
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