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THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDEOLOGY IN THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL  
REVOLUTION: PATERSON, NEW JERSEY: 1820 - 1840

*City University of New York*

Ph.D. 1985

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**THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDEOLOGY IN THE EARLY  
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:  
1820 - 1840**

by

**HOWARD HARRIS**

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

**1985**



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

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## PREFACE

American society underwent rapid and wholesale change during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. Locomotives steamed through forests recently vacated by Indian tribes. Cotton mills and shoe factories began to crowd out small artisan shops in scores of towns and villages. Tens of thousands of immigrants from Europe and the British Isles poured off ships in eastern ports in search of political freedom and economic opportunity. Political organizations formed in the early years of the Republic disappeared, to be replaced by the Democratic and Whig parties. Established religious institutions were swept by waves of evangelical enthusiasm while demands for a wholesale, moral reformation of society echoed throughout the land.

This study explores the impact of these and other changes on the ideas and behavior of working people in one community, Paterson, New Jersey. During the 1820's and 1830's, it became one of the country's primary industrial towns, rivalling Lowell as a center of textile and machinery manufacturing. Opportunities for employment attracted people from throughout the eastern United States and Great Britain. Machinists from New England, handloom weavers from Ireland, factory operatives from New York, and skilled journeymen from England, all settled in Paterson,

joining the indigenous Dutch-American inhabitants of the area.

Wage earners, whether immigrant or native born, believed that they were free and equal citizens of a democratic republic. Easy access to the political system, for white males at least, reinforced this notion. Early nineteenth century workers equated the existence of democracy in society at large with the relatively high degree of freedom they experienced in the workplace. This situation began to change as the dramatic expansion of the economy in the 1820's put pressure on both small and large manufacturers to increase output while keeping their costs in check. They attempted to achieve these goals by establishing more structured work routines, by the increased use of female and child labor, and by utilizing more efficient power-driven machinery.

While many parts of the country and many communities did not feel the full impact of these changes until later in the century, Paterson, which owed its very existence to manufacturing, had to face the accompanying problems at a very early date. The rapid expansion of its cotton mills and machine shops, the growing dominance of one or two master artisans or merchants in other types of manufacturing, and the stagnation of small shop production

all affected the ways in which working men and women viewed themselves and the world in which they lived. They had always operated on the assumption that their interests and those of their employers were one and the same. As the years went by, increasing numbers of workingmen began to question whether this sense of shared purpose still existed.

Their concern over changing social relationships had a strong basis in fact. Large and small manufacturers, shopkeepers, and professionals all began to identify specific areas of interest and concern which often differed from those of wage laborers. The need for protection for domestic manufactures and for a strong central banking system, for example, contributed to a growing political coalescence of the town's mill and shop owners. By the mid 1830's, only one major manufacturer consistently identified with the Democratic Party, which drew increasing support from mill operatives and journeymen. Professional men and merchants, disenchanted with the turbulence of everyday life in a developing industrial community, openly condemned mill employees and, to a lesser extent, millowners, for their continued consumption of alcoholic beverages. In addition to taking the lead in the temperance movement, many of these same individuals fought for restrictions on

various forms of popular entertainment and actively participated in a multitude of reform and benevolent organizations. As the nature of life in Paterson became more complex, the community of interest common in earlier periods of time began to deteriorate.

While manufacturers heavily relied on the political system to achieve their goals and reformers turned to moral suasion to achieve theirs, Paterson workers drew upon traditions of craft organization and popular protest to express their differences with the evolving economic and political order. Trade associations, originally comprised of both journeymen and master craftsmen, rapidly evolved into journeymen's organizations, which fought against wage cuts or for reductions in working hours. These groups banded together to set up the first citywide and nationwide trades unions. As more sophisticated forms of organization flourished, the use of pre-industrial, agrarian tactics such as arson and sabotage by individuals and small groups declined. These tactics were replaced by strikes called against single shopowners, against specific industries or against a majority of employers in the community. Workers engaged in such activities justified their actions by comparing their behavior to that of the American colonists who had taken up

arms to resist the despotic encroachments of a corrupt, English monarchy. Immigrants from England and Ireland related their historical experiences to those of the workers in their new homeland, often assuming prominent positions in the various labor movements of the period.

Paterson wage earners did not depend solely on direct action at the workplace to obtain redress of their grievances. They quickly realized that many of their concerns could only be resolved through remedial legislation. An end to imprisonment for debt or the attainment of an education for their children could only be obtained through the political process. Politicians actively sought the votes of workingmen, hoping to gain a clear advantage over their partisan rivals. Although Paterson wage earners could be found in the ranks of both the Democratic and National Republican/Whig parties, they increasingly gravitated to the former as economic and social conditions worsened in the early 1830's. Even as millhands, journeymen, and laborers, in general, more firmly aligned themselves with the Jackson Party, some of them moved to establish an independent workingman's party which they believed would more adequately represent their interests. Even after the demise of the independent party, the individuals leading the movement continued to play an



active part in local politics.

Although wage earners in Paterson and other towns had serious reservations about the industrial society that was emerging, they never questioned the validity of the nation's economic and political institutions. All around them they saw men of humble origins rise to positions of wealth and prominence. The dynamic quality of the local economy provided many opportunities for skilled craftsmen to move up into the ranks of the town's manufacturers. The ability of wage earners to affect the decision making process through their use of the ballot box strengthened their belief that they were living in the best society possible at that time. Strong religious and ethnic ties also helped to soften many of the more negative aspects of growing economic inequality. The protests of the ante-bellum workingmen were directed towards one goal: the maintaining and strengthening of the basic rights they had enjoyed since the early days of the Republic. In their view, failure to achieve that goal threatened not only their welfare and that of future generations but the very survival of the republic as well.

As is the case with most dissertations, this one took many years to complete. Considerable numbers of people contributed in both major and minor ways to its final form

and content. The members of my committee, Professors Herbert Gutman, Irwin Yellowitz and Eric Foner invested time and effort in guaranteeing that the finished product reflected the highest scholarly standards and that it retained its relevance over the years. My "unofficial" committee of Prudence Pace, Alan Singer and Eric Weitz provided constant encouragement, helping me to overcome major conceptual and philosophical roadblocks. In addition to supplying me with a constant stream of books directly related to my research Sidney Millman's continuing interest in the study represented another important source of support. The staff of the Paterson Free Public Library promptly and courteously answered my requests for important microfilm material. Linda Ciminello put in many long and tedious hours in the preparation of the final manuscript.

Other people contributed to this work in less apparent but equally significant ways. The members and staff of the United Community Centers remain the single most important force in the shaping of the ideas and values which lay at the root of this dissertation. They have taught many of us that it is not enough to have the "right" ideas; one must constantly test these beliefs in the arena of everyday life before they can be accepted as valid. We learned, often reluctantly, that there can be no progress for man

without conflict and struggle. This reality reflects the historical experiences of working people in the United States and provides the touchstone for this exploration of the early development of Paterson, New Jersey.

My friends and co-workers in the Department of Labor Studies at the Pennsylvania State University provided me with an important boost at a difficult period of time by recommending my appointment to the staff of that department. The trade unionists of western Pennsylvania and West Virginia that I have met while working in the field of labor education have helped me to better understand the pulls and contradictions experienced by American workers each day of their lives. Over and over again they have proven that education is indeed a two-way street.

Family members always play a crucial role in the completion of such an effort. All of mine took great pride in the fact that I was one of the first people in our family to earn an advanced degree. My parents, Doris and Jerry Harris, and my grandmother, Ida B. Cohn always encouraged me to press on with the study although they often doubted that they would live to see it finished.

Finally, three people deserve special mention. My wife, Paula, was the one who actually made this dissertation possible; she was my critic, my typist, my companion and my

friend. My son Joshua was born at just the right time, providing a valuable and delightful counterpoint to the drudgery of research and writing. Morris L. Eisenstein died before the completion of this study. Had he lived he probably would have been very critical of it, not because it isn't good, but because it could have been better. It is to his memory that it is dedicated.

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## CHAPTER I

Sometime in the year 1778, a soldier of Washington's Continental Army passed through the town of Acquackanonk located near the Great Falls of the Passaic River in northern New Jersey. He observed that:

These towns are chief inhabited by Dutch people; their churches and dwelling houses are built of rough stone, one story high. . . . The land is remarkable level and the soil fertile; and being generally advantageously cultivated, the people appear to enjoy ease and happy competency. . . . They despise the superfluities of life and are ambitious to appear always neat and cleanly and never to complain of an empty purse.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately thirty years later another observer described the same site. While the topography remained largely unchanged, the town of Paterson had grown up below the Falls. "A Major Godwin kept a tolerably good tavern there and I walked from his house about a mile to the cascade, the ground all being delightfully wooded. . . . From the bottom there is a very fine view of these falls but the upper scenery pleased me more. There were several manufactories lower down the river as well as saw mills."<sup>2</sup>

Dutch farmers migrating from New York in the 1670's established the first permanent settlement in the area around the falls of the Passaic. The agricultural community they created there remained largely unchanged for nearly a century. The advent of war in the 1770's and attempts to establish a national manufactory near the falls in the 1790's permanently altered the village, transforming



it into an industrial city. Men and women from New Jersey, New York, England, and Ireland moved to the area, supplanting the Dutch. Within a few decades the original inhabitants of Paterson became a distinct minority, stubbornly adhering to customs and traditions of work rejected, for the most part, by the region's newer inhabitants.

Dutch families began migrating into the Acquackanonk area from New York in 1674. They moved there because most of the land in New York suited for the production of fruits and cereals, their primary crops, had already been bought up. In 1684, fourteen families formally applied to Jersey governor Sir George Carteret for a patent to the lands around the falls.<sup>3</sup> Each patentee received a lot for home use plus 150 acres of farmland. They held all other lands in common. The patentees divided these remaining common lands in 1695, 1701, and 1714.

The marshy, sandy soil of Acquackanonk proved no obstacle to the hardworking Dutch. Largely self-sufficient, with the exception of such staples as sugar, tea, and fine molasses, they raised a variety of crops and livestock. Most of their production went for their own use rather than for commercial markets. Washington Irving described in great detail a typical New Jersey Dutch farm.

There was a large cider house. . .for home use and for the convenience of the neighbors. There were shops with

their workbenches, in which. . .they would be employed in making many things necessary in working the farm. . . . The harness for plowing and common work was made of flax or tow, pulled out and spun in the winter evenings by the boys. . .The girls performed their part by plying the flaxen and woolen wheels and by their industrial and economical efforts materials were prepared and woven by which the family was clothed at all seasons. . . . The family had its tan vat and tanned its own leather. Having manufactured the materials, the tailor and the shoemaker would come to the house and make them up into garments.<sup>4</sup>

The itinerant artisan represented one of the few outside intrusions into this family based system of production. The travelling shoemaker passed through the area once or twice a year, carrying his tools with him. He would spend several days at each house, crafting or repairing shoes with home tanned leather. If enough business developed, he would settle down in the community, plying his trade in a small shed attached to his home. Occasionally, Irish handloom weavers passed through the district offering their services to the farmers. The weaver would use the ever present family loom to turn raw flax or wool into cloth. The demand for itinerant craftsmen was limited, however, by the presence in most families of a large number of older children. The Dutch tended to have large families with offspring remaining at home until they were well into their twenties. According to historians William Nelson and Charles Shriner, Dutch males, prior to 1800, married at an average age of 24-1/2 years, while women married at twenty-one years of age.<sup>5</sup>

Limited access to land, a problem in many of the

American colonies, may have been the single most important factor in preventing children from leaving their parents' homes.<sup>6</sup> By 1714, all the common lands in Acquackanonk had been distributed. The manuscript will of one John Ryerson illustrates the problem of passing land from one generation to the next. In order for Ryerson, age seventy-eight, to distribute land to his two sons, he had to divide up the family farm.<sup>7</sup> His eldest, Ryer, received the family homestead and windmill minus a section passed on to his second son, Martin. Part of the total of sixty-one acres given to Martin was purchased from other landholders. Both sons had formerly lived on the land they received, having raised their own families while waiting for their father to grant them legal title to their sections. Neither Martin nor Ryer had been able to accumulate any property on their own.

This situation forced many young men into becoming skilled artisans. By the mid-eighteenth century, according to Nelson and Shriner, those who had a "special knack" for weaving often set up small weave shops adjacent to the family homes.<sup>8</sup> Others became carpenters, millers, stone masons or shoemakers. As the population of the region increased, other individuals took advantage of the Passaic's water power to set up fulling mills, saw mills, and grist mills. Hotels sprung up as did distilleries and country stores. Men such as Albert Van Saun and Cornelius

Van Winkle continued to run their farms while engaging in commercial ventures. Others, such as carpenter David Benson and storekeeper Ralph Doremus, directed all their time to non-agricultural pursuits.<sup>9</sup> This developing village economy continued to rest almost exclusively on agriculture. Whatever manufacturing took place in the area went almost exclusively for immediate use rather than for sale.

The Acquackanonk Dutch remained fairly isolated from broader political and economic events for a good part of the eighteenth century. Suspicious of outsiders, they retained the use of their native language in everyday life and generally discouraged non-Dutch from settling in the region. Their separation from many aspects of the English speaking world ended as a result of the developing confrontation between the colonies and the mother country. This conflict spilled over into a bitter struggle within the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1760's and 1770's. The synod of North Holland, in The Netherlands, had been given authority over the Reformed Church in America. As life became more stable in Acquackanonk and surrounding communities, questions arose as to the utility of having their church under the control of a central body three thousand miles away. Intense conflict developed between two factions: the Coetus, which favored an autonomous church, and the Conferentie, which wanted to maintain ties

with the Synod in The Netherlands. Churches divided, physical assaults became commonplace, and congregations expelled their ministers. The struggle ended with the establishment of an American church in 1772.

The divisions generated by the conflict carried over into the revolutionary struggle. The Coetus faction, fearful that English authorities might try to establish controls over all non-Anglican denominations, whole-heartedly supported the steps toward independence taken by the Continental Congresses. Not one Coetus minister sided with the Loyalists during the war while a number of the Conferentie faction did.<sup>10</sup> Most of the Acquackanonk Dutch, aligning themselves with the Coetus, joined the movement against England. They suffered greatly during the war. A number of area inhabitants became Tories, spending much of the war looting and destroying the property of their former neighbors. English armies passed through Acquackanonk a number of times, killing livestock and burning crops and homes. The English went out of their way to use churches and barracks as stables. Historian Gerald F. DeJong believes that the New Jersey Dutch may have suffered more in the Revolutionary War than any other ethnic group in the colonies.<sup>11</sup>

The devastation caused by the war compounded the economic problems that already existed in the area. The decline of local markets for agricultural products made it

increasingly difficult for farmers, especially young ones, to make ends meet. Early in 1791, rumors began to circulate of plans to build a national manufactory somewhere in New Jersey. The inhabitants of Acquackanonk appointed a committee to meet with representatives of the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures, SUM, the moving force behind the effort.<sup>12</sup> The Acquackanonk delegation offered the Society alternate three acre lots below the Passaic falls at ten pounds an acre, "York money," plus additional parcels of land gratis. They assured the SUM representatives that area farmers could provide all necessary building materials, fuel, and foodstuffs, and that there existed an adequate supply of labor within a radius of thirty miles.<sup>13</sup>

The New Jersey State Legislature supported the citizens of Acquackanonk by offering the SUM a number of special privileges. Chartered as a legal corporation, the Society would have the right to manufacture almost any item it wanted. In addition, the legislators offered to exempt SUM employees from poll taxes, general assessments, and routine military duty. Property and buildings of the Society were to be immune from all taxes for ten years and the SUM would have the authority to run a lottery to recoup projected financial losses. The Council and Assembly were prepared to give the manufacturers broad powers of eminent domain over the building of raceways and other canals. The

only legal limitation placed on the Society was that it was not to engage in general trading or banking operations.<sup>14</sup>

The Society accepted the offer in the spring of 1792. It purchased seven hundred acres in the general vicinity of the falls. Four hundred of these acres came from the descendents of the original Dutch settlers. By the terms of the agreement, the total size of the manufactory could not exceed six square miles.<sup>15</sup> The legislature rejected a proposal to establish a thirty-six square mile corporate borough centered on the site due to the pressure of people living in the area. As a result, Paterson remained part of Acquackanonk Township for nearly forty years.

Fewer than ten or twelve buildings stood on the ground of the proposed manufactory. Before any mills or houses could be built, a series of dams and canals had to be constructed. The SUM hired local artisans and laborers to build the needed facilities while purchasing provisions and building materials from area farmers. Acquackanonk inhabitants with specialized skills quickly found positions with the Society. The SUM hired Abraham Doremus in 1792 to run their survey lines, keeping him on the Society's payroll until his death. A member of one of the largest landowning families in Acquackanonk, Abraham Van Houten, became a managing agent for the Society. David Godwin, brother of Abraham Godwin, who served on the committee that

met with the SUM, worked on the erection of the dam and cotton mill in 1792.<sup>16</sup>

The SUM planned to use a workforce comprised primarily of women and children in its spinning operations, a practice common in most early cotton mills.<sup>17</sup> The water frames and/or spinning jennies used in the production of yarn required little skill to operate. According to Peter Colt, second superintendent of the SUM, there already existed a ready supply of this kind of labor. ". . .in all the northern and middle states we have an abundance of unemployed people or rather people who are not fully employed-and an abundance of women and children, who are without any regular and useful employment-all those may become manufacturers.<sup>18</sup>" SUM officials recruited potential factory operatives from among the poor Irish in New York City and craftsmen from among English immigrants. Local Dutch families, while welcoming the SUM to the area, refused to have their wives or their children work in the mills, even though a number of males found employment in the factories as supervisors or machinists. They shared the antipathy towards manufacturing commonly found among many people in the United States in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Lurid tales of the horrors found in England's "dark, satanic" mills convinced many people that factory production was inherently evil and a contradiction of basic American values. The Acquackanonk



Dutch, while willing to turn a profit from the establishment of manufactories in their township, did not want their spouses and offspring exposed to the indignities of working in the cotton mills. This attitude forced the SUM to recruit its workforce from elsewhere.

The Society depended heavily upon supposedly experienced English craftsmen to set up the production facilities and the necessary machinery. Almost all of the early cotton manufacturing facilities in the United States relied on the skills of such individuals. America's backwardness in the establishment of manufacturing created the conditions for this dependence on foreign workmen. It took nearly thirty years for native-born mechanics and millrights to develop the necessary skills and training. Alexander Hamilton, the main driving force behind the SUM, played an active role in the recruitment of the English supervisors and craftsmen.

The Englishmen proved to be far less skilled and knowledgeable than they had led Hamilton to believe. As Peter Colt put it in a letter to one of the SUM board members, "Tho they appear to be good workmen they are bad managers. They were not sufficiently acquainted either with the climate or modes of transacting business in this country to be at the head of any extensive business."<sup>19</sup> He went on to point out how their engineering calculations had been "erroneous," and how they had been unable to get

either the canals or the buildings finished. Many of the skilled English workmen left Paterson, lured by tales of higher wages in other sections of the country. In one case they destroyed the cards used in the preparation of cotton, removed the machinery, and filled the spaces with quick lime, ruining all the metal work.<sup>20</sup>

Poor planning and dubious financial practices on the part of the Society greatly contributed to the situation. Chronically short of funds, the SUM did not obtain necessary machinery and raw materials on time. Workers did not know from one week to the next if they would be receiving their pay. Delays in the completion of the spinning mill left workers in the print shop with nothing to do while they continued to collect full wages. Originally, the Society had planned to build small, individual homes for their employees. Financial difficulties forced it to abandon the plan and to adopt a policy of selling or leasing quarter acre plots of land. When that approach failed to generate much interest, the Society offered free stone and brick in order to induce the construction of multi-family dwellings near the mill. This effort also failed, forcing the SUM to build at least one boarding house.<sup>21</sup>

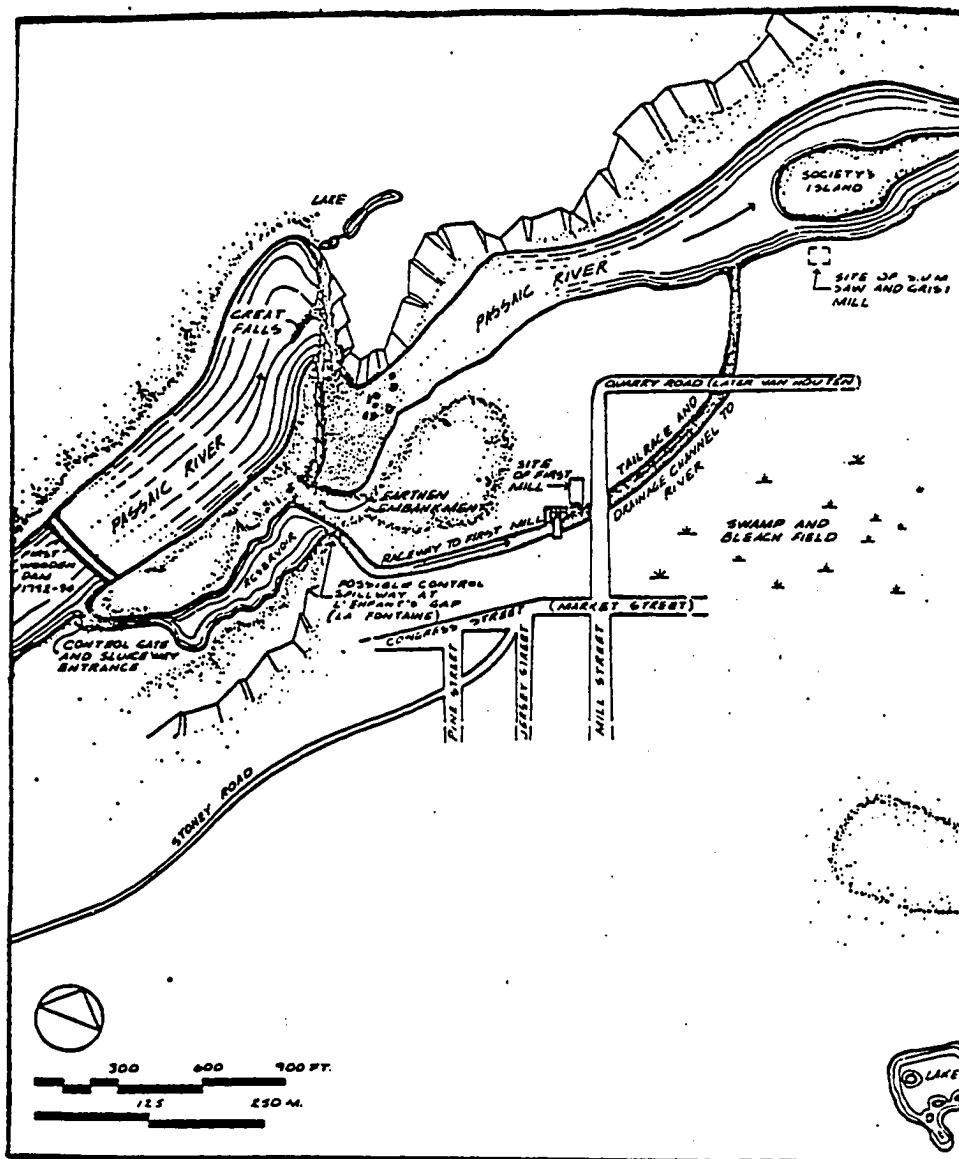
The very nature of the workforce recruited for the manufactory and the low level of their wages precluded their building or purchasing their own homes. Outside of

the skilled English artisans and mechanics, most Paterson operatives lived on the edge of poverty. Peter Colt referred to their condition while discussing the operation of the Sunday school established by the Society for the benefit of the working children. "The superintendent representing to the Board that a number of children were employed in the factory, whose parents were so poor and the wages of the children so low, that they cannot go to school, and that if something is not done a number of children will be withdrawn."<sup>22</sup> Such families could hardly be expected to buy their own homes. In general, the Society adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards its workforce, in contrast to the paternalism that developed in many of the later New England mill villages. Beyond providing a Sunday school for the children, manufactory officials took little, if any, responsibility for the conditions under which their employees lived. While circuit riding clergymen visited the site from time to time, the only church in the area was the Dutch Reformed Church in nearby Totowa. Irish Catholic millhands travelled to New York to attend mass or give confession. Fever, ague, and other diseases swept through the town in August and September of 1794, putting at least half of the total workforce out of commission.<sup>23</sup>

By January, 1796, the Society decided to terminate the project. Neither the cotton mill nor the print shop

had ever returned a profit and costs continued to mount daily. The Board of Directors paid off the workmen and sold much of the machinery and whatever goods remained. Although it ceased to be involved in manufacturing, the Society retained the legal rights to the land and the water power. It adopted a policy of leasing mill sites on a twenty-one year basis, including the use of the water in its canals and raceways. In order to raise cash the SUM periodically sold off small parcels of land. During its active phase, the Society had managed to complete only two major facilities, a four story stone mill and a three story frame building used for printing and bleaching. After the cessation of its own manufacturing efforts it rented sections of the two buildings to private individuals for their own use. The termination of manufacturing resulted in the rapid departure of many of the people living in Paterson. Approximately 500 people had lived there in 1794. This dropped to less than 300 two years later.<sup>24</sup> George Wurts, in an 1867 article in Northern Monthly, observed that this pattern repeated itself over and over again. "When mechanical industries were active, life throbbed in all its arteries, and prosperity hung out its banners in its midst, when manufacturing was prostrate, and the 'mills' closed, silence as of death brooded in the deserted streets."<sup>25</sup> The out migration of working men and women became an all too frequent response to economic

# PATERSON RACEWAYS, [1792-99]



THIS SHEET DEPICTS THE FIRST RACEWAY PLAN ORIGINALLY DESIGNED BY PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT AND MODIFIED BY PETER COLT. WATER FROM THE PASSAIC WAS DIVERTED INTO THE RACEWAY SYSTEM BY A WOODEN DAM. WATER FELL INTO A RESERVOIR AND THEN PASSED THROUGH THE RACEWAY TO THE FIRST S.U.M. MILL. AFTER LEAVING THE MILL, WATER FLOWED BACK INTO THE PASSAIC THROUGH A DRAINAGE CHANNEL. SOURCE: CONCEPTUAL MAP BASED ON HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND 1"=100' MAP. MAP PREPARED BY THE HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD, NAEH.

hard times. Limited financial resources and minimal public relief forced people to search for work when existing jobs dried up. As there were few if any alternative forms of work available in Paterson for most of the millhands, they packed up and left the area.

Despite the considerable loss of population, Paterson survived as an industrial site. The existence of the canals and raceways, as well as the mill and the print shop, offered a ready-made opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a manufacturer. The Society appointed a resident agent to keep its property in good repair and to facilitate the leasing of its water power and buildings. A considerable number of dwellings and a handful of stores had been constructed by local Dutch farmers. Craftsmen, such as bobbin turner Peter Van Riper, had established their own production facilities as adjuncts to the mill, continuing in operation after the withdrawal of the SUM.

Two individuals, John Clarke and John Parke, took advantage of the collapse of the SUM to establish themselves as independent manufacturers. They represented a thread of continuity between the early SUM period and Paterson's later development. Parke arrived in Paterson sometime in the mid 1790's. After the demise of the SUM, he began to spin candlewick and coarse yarn in a section of the stone mill. After the mill burnt down, around 1808, he put up his own factory on the site of the later Phoenix

Mill. In addition to his spinning establishment, he ran a "country store" nearby where one could purchase dry goods, shoes, hardware, and crockery, as well as cotton yarn. The hands employed in his mill received their wages in store orders, a common practice at the time.<sup>26</sup> The use of such orders made it easier for minor producers, such as Parke, to survive economically. A chronic shortage of cash often made it difficult for small manufacturers to meet wages and other payments. Store orders made it possible to pay employees without having to come up with large amounts of cash. Parke also reduced his costs by boarding some of his workers. During the 1800-1815 period it was common for millowners to live close to their facilities so as to better oversee their operation. It proved to be a simple matter to have a certain number of young single hands dine and board at his home. Parke deducted the costs involved from their wages. The need to limit cash outlays, rather than a sense of benevolence or paternalism, may have been at the root of many of these employer-employee relations so common in early industrial towns.<sup>27</sup>

Parke remained in the cotton spinning business until the Depression of 1816 when his mill was repossessed by the Paterson Bank.<sup>28</sup> He continued to operate his store throughout the period. With the recovery of the economy in the mid 1820's Parke briefly returned to the ranks of the town's manufacturers, operating the Fayette

Cotton Mill. The Fayette mill was a modest venture employing anywhere from forty to fifty hands between 1825 and 1827.<sup>29</sup> By 1832 he permanently withdrew from manufacturing, serving as a town magistrate. An article about Paterson published in Scientific American in 1859 summed up the experiences of early factory operators such as Parke.

In the eastern states flourishing cities have been built up by corporations of wealthy capitalists, under whose fostering care not only productive industry grew up, but science, art, education and religious institutions received abundant encouragement. In Paterson it was different. With very few exceptions, almost every manufacturer started, financially, at zero, enlarging his establishment as the quicksilver expanded in his purse. In prosperous times they prospered, but with the recurrence of disaster, were too likely to go under.<sup>30</sup>

Lacking adequate financial resources, most Paterson mill and shop owners had to cut costs wherever possible. This put considerable pressure on wage rates and made it necessary to try and maximize production efficiency, two factors which continually put millowners and their employees at loggerheads.

Just as Parke in many ways typified Paterson's cotton mill owners, John Clarke represented the town's machine shop operators. The thirty-one year old native of Paisley, Scotland arrived in Paterson in 1794. Already trained as machinists, he and a partner approached Peter Colt about establishing a machine shop on the SUM premises. Sensing that it was important to have "two such valuable mechanics on the premises," Colt contracted with them to



produce carding engines, as well as spinning and drawing equipment. In 1795, the Board of Directors agreed to erect a house and a machine shop for their use on a five year lease at not over 10% of the cost of the buildings and the land.<sup>31</sup>

After the collapse of the SUM, Clarke and his partner separated. Clarke rented a section of the stone mill for a machine shop. In addition to providing John Parke with cotton spinning machinery, Clarke turned out equipment for manufacturers in other towns. In 1804, a legislative petition called for "An act vesting in John Clarke, of the town of Paterson, - in this state, and others, an exclusive right of constructing and using machines for carding sheep's wool in this state for a limited time."<sup>32</sup> As in the case of Parke, Clarke built his own building, the Old Beaver Mill, after the destruction of the SUM mill. He soon took in a partner, Thomas Rogers, a Connecticut carpenter. Clarke continued in the machine making business until he retired, around 1816.

His family continued to play a prominent role in the town's manufacturing life even after he retired. John Clarke, Jr., continued the machine shop with Rogers, recruiting a third partner, Abraham Godwin, Jr., around 1822. By 1829 the firm employed over two hundred people in machine making and cotton manufacturing. Another son,

William L. Clarke, worked as a financial agent for a number of local manufacturers while Elisha B. Clarke, a third son, began operating a cotton mill in 1825 at the age of twenty-four. John Clarke's daughter, Jane, married Robert Cunningham, a Paterson machinist.<sup>33</sup>

Men such as John Clarke and John Parke relied on practical skills to establish themselves as manufacturers. Their ability to succeed depended on the quality of the product rather than on extensive financial resources. The members of the Colt family, another link between the SUM and the post-SUM periods, relied on shrewd financial investments to establish themselves as a major force in Paterson's manufacturing economy. Although Peter Colt left for New York in 1796, his two sons, John and Roswell, apparently remained in Paterson. The latter began buying up outstanding shares of SUM stock at reduced rates in 1808. His father decided to return to Paterson in 1810, exchanging 550 acres of New York land for 144 shares of SUM stock. By 1814, the two sons and their father had accumulated 1,990 of a total of 2,356 shares of SUM stock. The Colts pushed the New Jersey legislature to amend the Society's original charter in order to give them more authority than the Board of Directors. Roswell Colt became the official agent of the SUM in Paterson.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Colt-controlled SUM no longer involved itself directly in manufacturing, the value of its

assets continued to grow. Their control over the water power and most of the land in Paterson made it the direct beneficiary of any economic expansion in the town. An 1816 report to the New Jersey government placed the overall worth of the Society's total assets at nearly \$120,000.<sup>35</sup> These assets included rents on eight houses it owned, the value of unleased plots of land, and investments in two local manufacturing concerns. While Roswell continued to run the SUM, John Colt decided to go into cotton manufacturing. He opened the Passaic Mill #1 on Van Houton sometime around 1814. Rather than get involved in the spinning of cotton yarn, Colt chose to specialize in the finishing of linen duck. At first, he obtained supplies of unfinished duck from outside sources, but this proved to be too costly. He soon purchased some flax spinning machinery and a number of heavy duty looms built specifically for him by Irishmen for the weaving of linen thread into cloth. By 1816, he had between fifty and sixty such looms in operation.<sup>36</sup>

Another member of the Colt family, Samuel, established a rolling mill and nail factory in 1811. The factory produced hoop and sheet iron, boiler plate, and copper sheathing. The hands in the shop utilized machines to cut the nails from sheets of iron but then headed the nails by hand. Samuel left Paterson and John took over the running of the rolling mill. By 1832, John Colt employed

211 hands in his various manufacturing establishments.<sup>37</sup> Although the SUM had no direct control over John's mills and shops, close ties bound the two together. In 1832, the SUM built the Passaic Mill #2 with its own funds. John Colt subsequently leased and then bought the building from the Society. Few people doubted that Colt's pre-eminence as a manufacturer was directly linked to his family's control over the SUM.

In contrast to the relatively successful Clarkes, Colts, and Parkes, a second group of manufacturers played an important role in Paterson's development. These men came to the town, operated a mill or shop for a few years, and then moved on or went into another line of work. As the overall national economy slowly expanded after 1800, increasing numbers of such individuals arrived in Paterson. Charles Kinsey, along with two partners, leased a mill seat in 1802 in order to construct a paper mill. Kinsey commenced producing paper in continuous sheets, a process that he reportedly patented.<sup>38</sup> During the boom years from 1812-1815 his two partners, "The capitalists of the firm," convinced him to switch to cotton manufacturing. The collapse of the cotton textile market in 1816 ruined Kinsey's operation. Although he remained in the Paterson vicinity he never returned to manufacturing.

Prior to 1807, there were few other attempts to establish new manufacturing enterprises. Michael

Vreeland, a local landowner, established a tannery around 1800 which he turned over to his son Cornelius in 1804. A number of fulling mills also went into operation prior to 1807. The Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812 dramatically changed the situation. Between 1807 and 1815 the nation experienced an incredible increase in manufacturing facilities. According to economist Douglas C. North, the number of new cotton mills went from fifteen during the period from 1791 to 1808 to 102 between 1807 and 1809. The spinning capacity of these mills jumped from eight thousand spindles in 1808 to some eighty thousand five years later. Other branches of manufacturing experienced similar growth.<sup>39</sup>

By the beginning of 1815, a New Jersey census of manufacturing reported that Paterson had eleven cotton mills in operation as well as a card and wire mill, a rolling mill, and a saw mill. Nearly fifteen hundred people reportedly lived there, crowded into seventy-four dwelling units. In November of that year the Centinel of Freedom indicated that further growth had taken place. The correspondent for the paper reported that two more spinning mills had been added to the previous eleven and that over seven hundred people worked in the spinning departments alone. Of these seven hundred, approximately sixty-five were men, fifty-five were women, and the remainder were children. They turned out over five tons of yarn per week.

Close to two thousand people worked in the mills and other manufacturing establishments.<sup>40</sup>

While women and children worked in the cotton manufactories, men labored in the rolling mill or in the duck mill. The manufacture of duck, a heavier cloth than regular cotton, required considerable skill and strength making the employment of a large number of adult men a necessity. The construction of new homes and mills required the talents of both Dutch and non-Dutch carpenters, masons, and millwrights. Home hand loom weaving also developed as a trade at this time, turning the yarn and linen duck produced in the spinning mills into cloth. Hand loom weaving, an important part of Paterson's economy, required the labor of both adults and children.

Children could also be found working for O'Shea Wilder in his card and wire operation. After bending the wire to the proper shape in his shop, Wilder distributed it to young boys and girls in their homes who placed the pieces of wire into leather cards. He collected the cards and sold them to cotton manufacturers who installed them in their carding engines. Wilder also produced knitting pins, wire sieves, and rat traps, as well as "iron and steel suitable for flyers and spindles for machine makers."<sup>41</sup> The homework system he developed could not keep pace with the demand and he eventually bought cardmaking machinery to replace the children.

Wilder's shop represented one example of the impact of expanded cotton manufacturing on the community. A whole series of ancillary industries sprang up to meet the needs of the spinning mills. Van Riper's bobbin shop and Clarke's machine shop directly depended on mill orders for their continued success as did two local bleaching and dyeing establishments. John Flood started his bleachworks along the Passaic River in 1809. Rather than use chemicals or machinery, he utilized sunlight as a bleaching agent. James Shepherd began bleaching and dyeing cloth in 1813. Instead of relying on sunlight, as did Flood, he used a system of chemical vats and drums. Both men processed untreated cloth turned out by the town's handloom weavers. Shepherd later expanded into the beetling of cloth while Flood branched off into wool carding in 1812. Although the operation of both men survived the economic depression of 1816, they were forced out of business in the 1820's with the advent of mechanized bleaching and dyeing.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the development of ancillary crafts and trades, the expansion of the manufacturing village attracted various artisans and shopkeepers. Cabinetmaker William Ferguson and painter and glazier John Seager, an Englishman, moved to Paterson sometime during the period. Dr. J. D. Martin and surveyor Abraham Willis found a demand for their services. John Sherburne opened up a grocery store, supplementing his income by conducting classes for

some of the town's children. Benjamin Weller and Abraham Godwin operated taverns while a number of the local Dutch opened grocery and general stores.

Many of Paterson's major manufacturers of the 1820's and 1830's got their start during the pre-1816 period. Daniel Holsman began operating a spinning mill in 1813 while John Berry started his operation in 1814. Two brothers from New York, Robert and Aaron King, began spinning cotton in 1811 while Mark Collet also opened his mill during this period. Most of these enterprises were either individually owned or partnerships. Only three firms, Colt's Passaic Manufacturing Company, the Beaver Woolen Company, and the Essex County Manufacturing Company appear to have been incorporated firms with stockholders.<sup>43</sup> This also became a pattern in the New Jersey manufacturing town. Up until the late 1830's, a majority of Paterson's cotton and duck mills remained unincorporated. This, in part, explains the high turnover rate among manufacturers. Primarily relying on personal resources, the unincorporated firms remained highly vulnerable to sudden shifts in the economy. Failure to meet the demands of creditors often resulted in both commercial and personal bankruptcy.

There is little concrete information on life in the town during the Embargo and wartime periods. The majority of mills and houses were jammed into a small area no larger



than a fifth of a square mile below the Falls. The limited number of available housing units must have led to severe residential overcrowding. Few social institutions had been established up to that point. Even the Dutch Reformed Church at Totowa did not have a permanent clergyman. A visiting dominie came every third week to deliver sermons and perform other pastoral duties. A fledgling Presbyterian congregation began meeting on a regular basis in 1813, but as late as 1817 it only had twenty-four members. The fact that it included millowners such as John Colt, John Clarke, John W. Berry, and the King brothers made it possible for them to hire Paterson's first resident clergyman, the Reverend Samuel Fisher, in 1813. Bernard McNamee, a long-time resident of Paterson, claimed that a Father Langton held the first Catholic mass in the town in his father's house sometime between 1805 and 1807. Many Catholics, however, continued to travel to New York City for religious matters. Richard Bulgar, an Irishman and assistant pastor in New York, began to make regular trips to Paterson during this period. Under the leadership of manufacturer Mark W. Collet, Episcopalians began to organize a church of their own in 1817.<sup>44</sup>

The lack of established religious institutions contributed to a minimum amount of sectarianism in the town. Presbyterians offered to share the services of Doctor Fisher with the Dutch Reformed congregation if they

would pay one-third of his salary. A number of Presbyterians and Episcopalians owned pews in the Totowa church until they constructed their own churches. The Presbyterians allowed people of all faiths to be buried in their cemetery. Overt anti-Catholicism appears to have been minimal; the only known incident occurred when some Dutch farmers threw a stone through Father Bulgar's window.<sup>45</sup>

The lack of educational institutions easily rivalled the paucity of religious ones. Paterson citizens did not establish any sort of public educational system until well into the 1820's. Until then, itinerant and part-time teachers educated the children of the manufacturers, shopkeepers, and some millworkers. Teachers worked as surveyors, storekeepers, tavern keepers, or preachers, conducting classes for pay during their free time. Parents had to pay between six and twelve shillings a quarter for their children's education.<sup>46</sup> Few, if any, mill children attended these schools. Sunday schools operated by millowners such as John Colt and Aaron King represented their only contact with formal education.

Throughout the 1807-1815 period, the town's manufacturers represented the driving force behind the development of all social institutions from churches to schools. In February, 1815, they spearheaded a drive in the state legislature to obtain a charter for Paterson's

first bank. Millowners Daniel Holsman, John Parke, Henry Godwin, Richard Ward, and Charles Kinsey were all elected to the bank's Board of Directors in April of that year. Holsman became the bank's first president, hiring Andrew Parsons, an Irish Episcopalian, as it's first cashier.<sup>47</sup> Efforts by the mill and shop owners to establish a regular newspaper proved far less successful. All attempts at publishing a newspaper on a regular basis failed. For all its shortcomings and lack of social amenities, Paterson appeared to be an expanding, dynamic industrial village with unlimited potential for growth.

The collapse of the American cotton industry, in the latter part of 1815, abruptly terminated that trend. With the cessation of hostilities in 1815 came a flood of imported English cotton goods. British exporters deliberately undersold American manufacturers in order to re-establish their presence in U.S. markets. The decline of the American cotton industry contributed to a general economic downturn in the 1816 to 1818 period which, in turn, led to the depression of 1818-1819. The northeast and mid-Atlantic regions suffered the most.<sup>48</sup> George S. White, writing in 1836, described the state of manufacturers in Paterson after 1815.

Paterson, in New Jersey, at the close of the war exhibited an appearance of prosperity and happiness scarcely exceeded in the world. But in 1822, it was said, there was not a single cotton establishment in the place, then in the possession of the original proprietors, as they had been almost universally ruined! This is a fact, the force of which fifty columns of

newspaper essays and paragraphs, and fifty speeches of ten hours each, could not obviate. One manufactory in that town which cost \$100,000 has been sold for \$19,000.<sup>49</sup>

A writer for Scientific American, in 1859, described the town's misfortune in more graphic and picturesque terms.

"A second time was the place almost emptied of its population who were obliged to take themselves to other pursuits. The streets were again deserted; mills were locked up and stood in gloomy solitude; the spindle rusted in the socket; the wheel rotted in its pit; and the spider wove his cobwebs upon looms whose clatter drowned the workmen's song."<sup>50</sup> Although only two mills consistently continued in operation throughout the period, the impressions given by White and the writer for Scientific American obscured actual conditions in the town. Many mills operated sporadically, returning to production when a demand for a specific type of goods picked up. Individuals with the monetary resources took advantage of the depressed state of manufacturing to pick up mill buildings at bargain prices. Parke's cotton mill was reopened as the Phoenix Duck Mill by a Mr. Velazquez and his partner, John Travers, in 1817. They began producing duck from flax, winning important contracts from the U.S. Navy. Although considerable numbers of hands left the town in pursuit of work elsewhere, many stayed there, waiting for the recovery of the economy. The population of the town, while not expanding, did not drop off that dramatically.

Paterson mill and shop owners dealt with the crisis by attempting to obtain protection for domestic manufacturers. On a number of occasions they submitted bills to the state legislature asking for relief for their hard-pressed industries. In 1815, a representative "from the industrial county of Essex" handed in a resolution "that a committee be appointed to enquire into the expediency of passing a law under the authority of which the citizens of this state may form companies for the further promotion of certain descriptions of manufactures."<sup>51</sup> The delegate argued that manufacturing would be greatly aided by the adoption of a general incorporation law which would make it unnecessary to obtain a special legislative act for the formation of such entities. The legislature took no action on the bill in 1815 or in 1816. This did not dissuade the Paterson factory owners. In 1817, they established the Essex County Society for Domestic Manufactures to lobby for the protection of industry. Supported by all segments of the community, the Society pressured legislators on both the state and national levels to erect tariff barriers against imported goods. Although meeting with little tangible success, the organization continued to function well into the 1820's.<sup>52</sup>

Few people doubted that the economy would eventually recover and that Paterson would once again be a

thriving, industrial town. David Blowe, a British visitor, captured this future vision in an account published in 1820:

The town of Paterson, in New Jersey, is perhaps as excellently situated as any spot in the world. The Falls of the Passaic River, upon which Paterson stands, afford every convenience that water can give to put in motion machinery to any extent. . . During the late war, the Paterson manufacture flourished, and were rendered profitable to the proprietors by their monopoly price. Since the peace they have declined considerably; but there still remain some valuable cotton and paper mills; and so admirable is the situation of the place, that manufactures cannot fail to flourish there as fast and as abundantly as the wants and inclination, and interest of the United States demand.<sup>53</sup>

An article published in the True American of February, 1821, supported Blowe's observations. The newspaper reported that nine mills employing 663 people were in operation. The nine mills had 12,600 spindles in use and planned to add more as the economy picked up. Approximately two thousand people lived in Paterson at the time.<sup>54</sup> Although the decline of cotton production had been a blow to the community, Paterson's advantages for industry made it inevitable that manufactures would continue to settle and operate there. The town's dependence on manufacturing placed the mill and shop owners in a pre-eminent role in terms of defining the nature of life in the community. The need to sustain and expand the cotton mills and machine shops provided a strong, unifying force in the community's early days.

Economic recovery and technological change led to

a rapid expansion of manufacturing in the late 1820's and early 1830's. Within the space of a decade, the town's population increased threefold. The small manufacturing village became a major industrial town. Rapid economic and political changes on both the local and national levels placed great strain on the fabric of community life in Paterson. The relative social harmony that prevailed prior to 1820 gave way to conflict and strife that often set neighbor against neighbor.

A key to understanding the process of change as it occurred in Paterson is an examination of the evolution of the town's industries and of the role that the manufacturers played in the community's social and political life. The policies and choices adopted by the factory and shop owners directly affected the lives of thousands and thousands of people. Though not a monolithic group, they tended to agree on many, if not most, of the crucial issues of the day. The following examination of their impact on the community is not limited to the operators of the cotton and duck mills alone; it includes machine shop owners, millwrights, cabinetmakers, merchant tailors and others. Together, they employed the overwhelming bulk of Paterson's working population, largely determining the nature and quality of life for every man, woman, and child residing in the town below the Passaic Falls.

## FOOTNOTES

1. L. R. Trumbull, A History of Industrial Paterson; Being a Compendium of The Establishment, Growth & Present Status in Paterson, N.J. of The Silk, Cotton, Flax, Locomotive, Iron and Miscellaneous Industries; Together With Outlines of State, County and Local History, Corporate Records, Biographical Sketches, Incidents of Manufacture, Interesting Facts & Valuable Statistics (Paterson: Carleton M. Herrick, Book & Job Printer, 1882), p.10.

2. Sir Augustus John Foster Bart, Jeffersonian America - Notes on the United States of America Collected in the Years 1805, 6-7 and 11-12, ed. Richard B. Davis, (San Marino, Cal.: Huntington Library, 1954), pp. 279-280.

3. William Nelson and Charles Shriner, History of Paterson and Its Environs (The Silk City) (New York and Chicago: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1920), I, p. 94. Another work identifies the year 1682. Adrian C. Leiby, The Early Dutch and Swedish Settlers of New Jersey (Princeton: D. van Nostrand Comp. Inc., 1964), p. 69.

4. Leiby, p. 111.

5. Nelson and Shriner, I, p. 160.

6. The impact of this problem in New England is examined in Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Family Structure in Seventeenth-Century Andover, Massachusetts," in William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., 23 (1966), pp. 234-256; and Kenneth Lockridge, "Land, Population and the Evolution of New England Society, 1630-1790; and an Afterthought," in Past and Present, 39 (1968); rpt in Colonial America - Essays in Politics and Social Development, ed. Stanley N. Katz (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), pp. 91-112, 466-491.

7. Will of John Ryerson, 1801, MS, in Ryerson Family Papers; Estate Accounts, Bills, Etc. of his father John Ryerson 1746-1801, New Jersey Collection, Rutgers University, N.J. His daughter Rebeckah received 100 pounds "York" money and a slave.

8. Nelson and Shriner, I, p. 148.

9. Biographical information on the inhabitants of Paterson in the 1820's and 1830's has been distilled from a diverse number of sources. The following list includes those most commonly used. Hereafter they will be designated as Bio Data. Information derived from other



sources will be specified. History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey, with Biographical Sketches of Many of its Pioneers and Prominent Men, Comp, W. Woodford Clayton (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1882); Trumbull; Nelson and Shriner; Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society 3, No. 1 (1944) and 5, No. 8 (1963); New Jersey: A History, ed. Irving Kull (New York: American Historical Society, 1930), II, V; William Nelson, History of the City of Paterson and the County of Passaic (Paterson: The Press Printing and Publishing Co., 1901); Interviews with Paterson inhabitants, TS, Manuscript Group 23, William Nelson Papers, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, N.J.; Scientific American 1, Nos. 18-21 (1859), Charles Shriner, History of the Catholic Church in Paterson, N.J.: With an Account of the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of St. John's Church (Paterson: Press Printing and Publishing Co., 1883); Charles Shriner, Paterson, New Jersey - Its Advantages for Manufacturing and Residence: Its Industries, Prominent Men, Banks, Schools, Churches, Etc. (Paterson: The Press Printing and Publishing Co., 1890); Rev. Samuel Fisher, Census of Paterson, New Jersey, 1824, 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832 MS, Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson, N.J.; D. Stanton Hammond, "Rev. Samuel Fisher's Census Paterson, N.J., 1824-1832" in Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society IV, Nos. 11 & 12, (1958) pp. 85-168.

10. Gerald F. DeJong, The Dutch in America 1609-1974 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), p. 121. Of forty Dutch Reformed ministers in New Jersey at the outbreak of the war, only six joined the Loyalist cause.

11. DeJong, p. 121.

12. The SUM was a direct outgrowth of the efforts of Alexander Hamilton and Tench Coxe to stimulate the growth of industry in the United States. The men who played active roles in the affairs of the Society were prominent in New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia financial and political circles. They included William Duer, assistant to Hamilton, Elias Boudinot, a former president of the Continental Congress, and banker Nicholas Low. All of them subsequently purchased shares of SUM stock. None of the Acquackanonk Dutch invested in the company.

13. Joseph S. Davis, "The S.U.M.: The First New Jersey Business Corporation," in Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 403.

14. Davis, p. 384.

15. Trumbull, p. 32-33. Some of the Dutch families selling land to the SUM were the Van Blarcoms (71 acres), Van Houtens (109.5 acres), Van Winkles (155.75 acres) and Posts (83 acres).

16. Bio Data.

17. This practice originated in England and was brought to the United States by immigrating cotton manufacturers. The workforce at the nation's first cotton mill located in Beverly, Massachusetts, was comprised of children between the ages of eight and fourteen. Samuel Slater employed nine children in his first Rhode Island spinning mill.

18. Peter Colt's Essay, undated, MS in John Colt Papers, New Jersey Collection, Rutgers University, N.J. The term manufacturer in this context connoted a factory hand, not an employer.

19. Peter Colt, Letter to Nicholas Low, 3 March, 1794, MS Nicholas Low Papers, New Jersey Collection, Rutgers University, N.J.

20. George S. White, Memoir of Samuel Slater, The Father of American Manufactures Connected With a History of the Rise and Progress of the Cotton Manufacture in England and America with Remarks on the Moral Influence of Manufactories in the United States, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: no publisher, 1836), pp. 177-178 n.

21. Davis, p. 492, Nelson Papers.

22. Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures, Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, April 15, 1794, MS, Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson, N.J.

23. Peter Colt, Letters to Nicholas Low, 23 August, 1794, 2 September, 1794, MS Nicholas Low Papers, New Jersey Collection, Rutgers University, N.J.

24. William Nelson, Historical Sketch of Schools of Paterson (Paterson: Board of Education, 1877), p. 17. Trumbull, citing Reverend Samuel Fisher, claims that less than fifty people remained in Paterson after the collapse of the SUM, Trumbull, p. 40.

25. George Wurts, "Paterson - Its Works and Ways," in Northern Monthly 2, No. 1 (1867) p. 176.

26. Clayton, p. 411. The use of store orders was widespread throughout the United States well into the 1820's, especially in rural manufacturing communities. By the mid 1830's, most employers paid their hands in cash instead of in orders.

27. The small number of operatives in the early mills facilitated close relationships between mill owners and their employees. As late as 1821, the average mill in Paterson employed seventh-three people. True American, 2 February, 1821.

28. The Paterson Bank subsequently sold the mill to John Travers and a Mr. Velazquez, who turned it into a linen duck factory.

29. Rev. Samuel Fisher, Census of Manufacturing, Paterson, New Jersey, 1825, 1827 MS Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson, N.J.

30. Scientific American 1, No. 20, 12 Nov. 1859, p. 314.

31. Colt, Letter to Low, 25 March, 1794; Thomas Marshall, Letter to Colt, 13 May, 1794; Davis, p. 487.

32. Davis, p. 565.

33. Bio Data. Two other sons, twins Henry and Edward, ran a hardware store. Edward later became a stockholder of the Boudinot Manufacturing Company.

34. Davis, p. 507; Petition of Roswell Colt to the New Jersey Legislature, 2 Nov. 1812, MS. Ryerson Family Papers; Autobiography of Peter Colt, 1822 MS, John Colt Papers, New Jersey Collection, Rutgers University, N.J.

35. Report to the State (of New Jersey) by James Parker on Affairs of (the) SUM, 19 Jan 1816, MS, Ryerson Family Papers.

36. Clayton, p. 456.

37. Fisher, Census of Manufacturing, 1832.

38. Clayton, pp. 452-453.

39. Douglass C. North, The Economic Growth of the United States 1790-1860 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1966) p. 56.

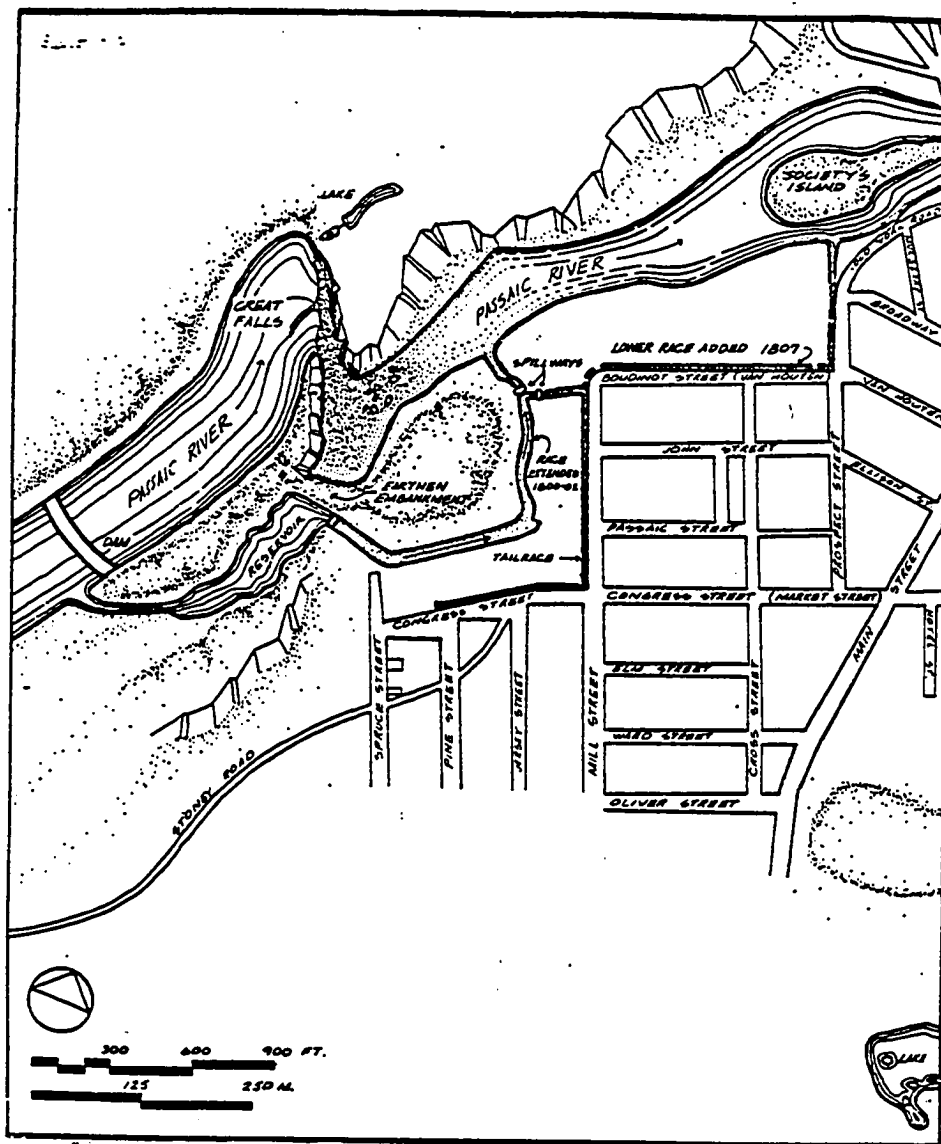
40. "Account of Manufacturing in Paterson,"  
Centinel of Freedom, 11 Nov. 1815.
41. Centinel of Freedom, 20 Dec. 1814.
42. Clayton, p. 419. Beetling of cloth refers to  
a finishing process whereby cloth was beaten by hand with  
wooden mallets.
43. Centinel, 18 April, 1815.
44. William Nelson, Interview with Bernard  
McNamee, 7 Nov. 1875, TS. Nelson Papers, N.J. Historical  
Society; Shriner, History of the Catholic Church, p. 8.
45. Shriner, p. 9.
46. Nelson, Schools of Paterson, p. 10.
47. Centinel, 2 Feb. 1815, 25 April, 1815.
48. North, pp. 178-179.
49. White, p. 221.
50. Scientific American, 1. No. 19, 5 Nov.  
1859, p. 298.
51. John W. Cadman, Jr., The Corporation in New  
Jersey: Business and Politics 1791-1875 (Cambridge:  
Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 19.
52. Centinel, 4 March, 1817.
53. David Blowe, A Geographical, Historical,  
Commercial, and Agricultural View of the United States of  
America, (London: Edwards and Knibb, 1820), p. 95.
54. True American, 17 Feb. 1821.

## CHAPTER II

Paterson's cotton industry did not fully recover from the effects of economic depression until 1821 or 1822. Lower prices for raw materials and the development of more efficient machinery helped to create a general increase in the world wide demand for cotton goods. At the same time, a mildly protective tariff, passed in 1816, began to limit the flow of coarse English textiles to American markets.<sup>1</sup> Between 1821 and 1825, the number of spindles in operation in Paterson mills almost doubled while the total output of cloth increased by nearly one million yards.<sup>2</sup> The revival of the town's primary industry initiated a period of economic growth which lasted nearly fifteen years. During this time, Paterson became identified as one of the nation's premier industrial centers both for its cotton manufacturing facilities and for its machine shops. While the Depression of 1837 virtually wiped out the cotton industry, the machine making industry survived, replacing textiles as the focal point of the town's economy in the 1840's and 1850's.

The development of efficient, inexpensive power looms during the second decade of the nineteenth century provided the major stimulus for the expansion of the cotton industry. Paterson's early mills specialized in spinning raw cotton into various grades of yarn. Millowners either sold the finished yarn on the wholesale

# PATERSON RACEWAYS, [1800-27]



THIS SHEET SHOWS THE EXPANSION OF THE RACEWAY SYSTEM, WHICH BEGAN IN 1800, WITH THE EXTENSION OF THE RACEWAY ALONG THE SIDE OF THE MILL BEYOND THE SITE OF THE FIRST BOUNDMAN (NOW VAN HOUTEN) STREET AND THE TAILRACE ALONG MILL STREET, ELIMINATING THE OLD DRAINAGE DITCH. SOURCE: CONCEPTUAL MAP BASED ON HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND 1" = 100' MAP. MAP PREPARED BY THE HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD, HAER.

market or distributed it to handloom weavers who produced cloth in their homes or in small shops. This system proved to be very inefficient. As spinning machinery became more productive backlogs developed because weavers could not keep up with the output of the spinning mills. The working habits of the handloom weavers, similar to those of other skilled craftsmen, contributed to the problem.<sup>3</sup> Working with no fixed schedule, they combined periods of intense labor with bouts of idleness or recreation. This often resulted in irregular, inconsistent patterns of output. English and American manufacturers and mechanics worked at a feverish pace to develop power driven looms that would eliminate their dependence on the handloom weavers. The first successful power looms went into operation in England and Scotland around the turn of the century. American millowners imitating the design of the English machinery, introduced the first power looms into production at Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1814.<sup>4</sup>

Millowners Robert and Aaron King first used power looms in Paterson in 1817. They built the machine themselves based on a model of a Scottish loom. Other Paterson manufacturers worked to improve their original design. In 1818, manufacturer Richard Ward and machinist Thomas Rogers received a patent for a power driven loom that could handle cotton, wool or flax. A correspondent for the Newark Centinel of Freedom reported that it operated at

a very fast speed and that "...it may be put into the hands of persons of the most ordinary ability." A later Paterson historian observed that the loom was developed "...so that the Irishmen could be turned out to the farms and let the women do the weaving."<sup>5</sup>

The introduction of the Rogers loom dramatically reduced the costs of weaving to approximately two cents a yard. Historian A. S. Bolles estimated that a handloom weaver, working in his home in 1815, could turn out four yards of cloth a day. By 1827, four Paterson mills produced between thirteen and twenty yards of cloth per day per loom. The overall decline in the costs of producing cotton sheeting between 1816 and 1829 reflected the increased efficiency of weaving operations. In 1816, it cost thirty cents to manufacture one yard of material. This dropped to thirteen cents by 1826 and to 8-1/2 cents in 1829.<sup>6</sup> The market price of the cloth turned out by Paterson mills with power looms followed a similar pattern, dropping from approximately twelve cents a yard in 1827 to nine cents a yard in 1829.

The dramatic reduction in the costs of production made it possible for American manufacturers to effectively compete with the English. This led to a rapid, nationwide proliferation of cotton mills. While some manufacturers utilized power looms to develop integrated systems of textile production, others did not. Paterson contained



both kinds of facilities, in contrast to a town such as Lowell, Massachusetts, which had only integrated textile mills. Contemporary observers and historians have delineated at least three distinct patterns of textile production concurrently existing in the United States in the 1820's and 1830's. The northern district was centered in eastern Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire, the central was located in southern Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island and the southern district was based in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.<sup>8</sup> Differences in the utilization of machinery, the organization of the work force, and the ownership of the mills had direct consequences for the types of communities that grew up around the facilities.

Unlike the owners of northern (Lowell) type mills, manufacturers of the central and southern districts had limited financial resources with which to conduct their operations. Depending either on their own capital derived from other business or on money borrowed from area banks or individuals, they proved highly susceptible to fluctuations in the economy. Their heavy dependence on immediate market conditions made it necessary for them to produce a wide range of goods. Northern mills, with the direct financial backing of Boston banks, proved much more resistant to economic hard times. These companies produced a few lines of specialized goods on a long term basis which made it

possible for them to limit their investments in new technology. In contrast, southern district mills of the Paterson type had to constantly upgrade their machinery in order to remain competitive.<sup>9</sup>

The utilization of different types of machinery led to a variety of employment practices. The use of throstle spinning frames and power looms in northern district mills made it possible to recruit a work force comprised almost exclusively of young, single women as neither machine required much skill to operate. Coming to the manufacturing villages as individuals, these women found lodging in company-owned boarding houses. This arrangement allowed mill officials to closely supervise the behavior of their employees. Central and southern district mills used spinning mules as well as throstle frames. They also depended very heavily, in the early years, on hand loom weaving. Mule spinning, a more complicated task than throstle spinning, required considerable skill and strength, which necessitated hiring adult males. These men, among the highest paid in the cotton industry, selected and paid young children to assist them in their work. Mule spinners viewed themselves as highly skilled craftsmen, constantly resisting the supervision of millowners and overseers. One of the motive forces behind the development of improved spinning machinery was the desire to eliminate these skilled men from the work

force.<sup>10</sup>

Mule spinning and handloom weaving, in addition to less complicated throstle spinning, required a mixed work force of men, women, and children. Mills of the central district, located for the most part in isolated rural areas, relied on the family contracting system of employment. Husbands, wives, and children all went to work for the same company. In addition to providing each family with a small home, central district millowners built churches for their employees and operated most of the local commercial facilities. Southern area manufactories, by contrast, hired people as individuals, with children and young women constituting the majority of their employees. While some men found work in the mills, most worked as journeymen, artisans, laborers, or machine shop hands. Few owners of Paterson type mills provided their hands with housing. Families lived in their own homes or rented dwellings often boarding single male workers. Millowners exercised little, if any, direct control over their employees once the work day ended.

While the southern pattern of organization provided workers with greater personal freedom, it also created a highly volatile economic environment which resulted in chronic instability for manufacturing firms. Paterson mills changed hands with alarming frequency. Between 1825 and 1838, no less than thirty-four individuals

manufactured cotton yarn and cloth. Arrayed in a shifting tableau of single proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations, it is difficult to determine who owned which firm at a specific period of time. John Parke, for example, began operating the Fayette Mill in the mid 1820's, after having lost his first mill in the 1816 collapse. Sometime between 1827 and 1829 Joseph Smith and Company took over Parke's facility. Smith already had one manufactory, the Hope Mill, in operation since 1822. By 1832, Mark W. Collet joined with Smith to operate both mills under the limited partnership of Collet & Smith. It soon became Paterson's largest cotton textile firm, employing 381 hands in 1832. Six years later, the firm operated as the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, with Collet as its president. Although the firm had the same number of spindles in operation in 1838 as it had in 1832, it reduced its work force to only 182 hands. Smith gave up manufacturing to become an agent of the SUM. Other firms exhibited equally checkered paths of development.<sup>11</sup> The lack of a unified manufacturing policy created much of the instability found in Paterson firms. Each millowner operated as an individual in terms of the nature of the goods he produced. This wide diversity of output made it impossible for the Paterson mills to collectively find a specific market niche. The failure of nearly two-thirds of the town's manufacturers to add power loom weaving to their

operations doomed them to marginal existence in the international cotton textile trade. At least two factors accounted for this state of affairs: limited economic resources and the force of tradition.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the Paterson mills operated as unincorporated single owner firms or as partnerships. This limited their ability to raise funds for expansion, making them dependent on their own resources or on personal bank loans. In 1838, for example, ten unincorporated firms averaged sixty-two employees per company while five incorporated enterprises employed an average of 154 hands. Only two of the unincorporated companies utilized power looms, having a total of seventy-two in operation. The incorporated ventures, in contrast, possessed a total of 326 power looms, averaging over sixty-five machines per firm.<sup>13</sup> By comparison, ten Lowell incorporated companies ran a total of twenty-seven factories in 1839. The smallest of the Lowell firms had an initial capitalization of over \$500,000 with at least four corporations having assets of over one million dollars. The Phoenix Mill, capitalized at \$170,000 had the largest resources of any Paterson firm.<sup>14</sup>

Boston banks directly financed the Lowell mills. A number of individuals sat on the boards of both sets of institutions. Paterson banks did not have the resources to provide any meaningful help to local companies. The Paterson Bank, chartered in 1815 with an initial capital of

\$200,000 had a history of poor management. In 1826, rumors abounded that the bank was about to go under. Although it survived that crisis, it finally failed in 1829. The People's Bank, organized that same year, had a more successful tenure than its competitors, surviving until 1851. Setting its starting capital at \$250,000 it raised only \$75,000 by 1832. This amount remained constant throughout the 1830's. A third financial institution, the Mechanics Bank, turned out to be nothing more than a wildcat operation organized in 1832 by a Dr. Sherman from New York. It never raised the amount of money that its charter provided for, although it had the backing of many prominent manufacturers. It failed within the year, with Dr. Sherman eventually winding up in a New York prison.<sup>15</sup>

New York banks represented the only realistic source of funds for Paterson millowners. Only one firm in town, the machine works of Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor, had direct links with New York financiers.<sup>16</sup> The available sources do not indicate whether similar ties existed between other Paterson manufacturers and New York capitalists. As Edward Pessen has indicated in his work on the social structure of ante-bellum New York, the city's financial interests did not share the enthusiasm for manufacturing ventures exhibited by their Boston counterparts. Comparing the two groups, Pessen found that:

The Lowells, Appletons, and Lawrences of Boston were

hardly typical capitalists of their day. More characteristic of the industrial involvement of the rich was Philip Hone's investment in textile mills in New York State. Although Hone derived emotional as well as financial profit from his directorship in the Matteawan Cotton and Machine Company, his business involvements in non-manufacturing concerns engaged much more of his time and capital.<sup>17</sup>

Anthony Wallace, in his study of early manufacturing in Rockdale, Pennsylvania, found a similar attitude among Philadelphia financial interests. Rather than invest in cotton mills, they preferred to commit their money to railroads, turnpikes, canals or insurance companies which promised a higher rate of return. According to Wallace, "...cotton manufacturing was only one of a number of investment possibilities for idle capital, and most other alternatives were properly looked upon as safe unless the associated real estate could be bought at bargain prices."<sup>18</sup> In 1832, Paterson manufacturers calculated their rate of return on initial investments at five percent. The alternatives listed by Wallace produced considerably more.<sup>19</sup>

The inability of Paterson manufacturers to attract outside capital does not totally explain their reluctance to restructure their firms. John W. Lozier, in his work on the early cotton and machinery industries, suggests that tradition represented a key factor in the unwillingness of the millowners to alter their mode of operation. Lozier points out that Paterson had more extensive water power than almost any other industrial site in the nation,

including Lowell. Had the town's millowners restructured their enterprise, they could have easily outproduced any other group of manufacturers in the nation. For some reason, however, they refused to change the way they ran their firms. Paterson millowners continued to rely exclusively on water power well into the middle decades of the century, even when most other manufacturers had switched to steam. This put the Paterson cotton mills at a distinct disadvantage which contributed to the gradual decline of the town's cotton industry.<sup>20</sup>

Within these limitations, cotton manufacturing expanded rapidly in the 1820's and early 1830's. The chart below illustrates the process of growth.

#### CHART 1

##### THE GROWTH OF COTTON MANUFACTURING IN PATERSON 1821 - 1838

|      | Mills In<br>Operation | Spindles In<br>Operation | Hands<br>Employed |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1821 | 9                     | 12,600                   | 663               |
| 1823 | 10                    | 20,000                   | ?                 |
| 1825 | 12                    | 17,552                   | 748               |
| 1827 | 14                    | 23,938                   | 927               |
| 1829 | 13                    | 28,000                   | 920               |
| 1832 | 16                    | 39,926                   | 1,597             |
| 1838 | 18                    | 42,658                   | 1,198             |

Source: True American, February 17, 1821; March 22, 1823  
Paterson Intelligencer, March 21, 1838  
 Census of Manufacturing, Paterson, New Jersey,  
 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832, MS., Paterson Free Public  
 Library, Paterson, New Jersey

The figure for the number of spindles in operation represents the clearest indication of the expansion of



cotton production. While the number of mills in operation and the number of hands employed varied, the number of spindles in use increased steadily from 1825. Even when employment dropped off significantly in 1838, the spinning capacity of the mills increased.<sup>21</sup> This reflected ongoing improvements in the efficiency of the machines in use. When compared to the Lowell mills, however, the New Jersey cotton manufactories came in a poor second. In 1839, Lowell firms worked an average of 18,156 spindles per mill and employed approximately 950 hands in each facility; Paterson mills had 2,370 spindles per factory and sixty-seven hands.<sup>22</sup>

A look at the operation of Warren Haight's Harmony Mill helps to convey a sense of the environment in which many Patersonians worked. One of the smallest of the integrated mills, it employed a work force of sixty hands in 1832. In order to enter the two story building, operatives crossed a bridge over a raceway. The wooden floor of the mill vibrated from the movements of the waterwheel while oil lubricated leather belts sped along overhead on a system of pulleys and shafts. Candles and oil lamps provided the light in the generally gloomy building.<sup>23</sup>

Before the cotton entered the main building, a crew of men and older boys cleaned it in a small shed nearby. They fed the cotton into a picker, a small spiked

cylinder, which removed most waste and dirt. The hands then placed the cotton on a wicker covered whipping frame where beaters knocked out more seeds and dust. The work crew then removed remaining debris by feeding the cotton through a lap spreader which opened up the fibers of the raw material. Large amounts of dust released in the process contributed to a constant threat of fire.<sup>24</sup>

The cleaned cotton then went to the carding room located in the main building. Young children carried laps of cotton from machine to machine. Haight utilized ten two-foot wide carding engines in that section of the mill. The young women and older children working in the carding room fed the material through a series of rollers onto a large cylinder. The cylinder carried the cotton through wire teeth set in metal cards at the top of the machine. The straightened fibers then passed through a series of rollers into metal cans. Working in the carding room required a moderate level of skill.<sup>25</sup>

In the next step of the process, machines twisted and stretched the cotton in preparation for spinning. A pair of drawing frames pulled the semi-processed cotton from metal cans, twisted it, passed it through other rollers, and deposited it in another set of cans. Operatives then fed the cotton through a series of rollers and angled, beveled, metal plates contained in the plate speeder. The speeder helped to wind the cotton around

wooden bobbins. The drawing frame and the plate speeders, both highly sophisticated machines, could be tended by young children.

Since the Harmony Mill turned out a variety of grades of yarn, it used both throstle frames and mules in its spinning department. The frames, operated by women, produced a thick, coarse yarn while the male-operated mules produced a finer quality yarn. The yarn produced in the spinning department went either to the mill's weaving department or to wholesale yarn markets. The weave room, located on the second floor, could only be reached by a wooden staircase at the end of the building. According to historian Anthony Wallace, noise represented the most distinguishing feature of a weaving department. "A room filled with power looms, in sharp contrast to spinning apartments, was so filled with the clacking of shuttles that it was impossible to hear a person speak."<sup>26</sup> Power looms, while duplicating the motion of the handloom, automatically carried out tasks previously dependent upon sheer human muscle power. Shuttles carried threads horizontally through automatically opened vertical threads while a power battan forced down each completed row. Weaving department hands prepared the looms for operation, removed finished cloth, and kept track of yarn supplies. The young women working in the weave room handled either two single looms or two double looms.<sup>27</sup>

Wages varied according to the difficulty and degree of skill needed for each particular assignment. Adult males, working in the spinning department or the cleaning shed, could earn up to eight dollars a week while the women and older children in the carding room made between two and two and a half dollars a week. The youngest children working in the mill often earned less than a dollar a week. Eleven and a half hours constituted the standard working day in the Harmony Mill as well as in most Paterson manufactories. Hands received one half hour for breakfast and forty-five minutes for dinner. In good times, millhands could expect fifty weeks of work a year. Given the instability of Paterson's early manufacturing economy, few firms consistently operated year round. Paterson's manufacturing companies maintained tight work schedules. Failure to report on time often resulted in fines and/or deductions from wages. In cases of insubordination or other serious violations of discipline, millowners preferred to fire rather than discipline employees.<sup>28</sup>

The Harmony Mill, originally organized as a spinning operation by John Rutan and John Benson around 1820, had financial difficulties from the very beginning. Limited resources made it impossible for the partners to keep large stocks of cotton on hand. Their New York agent waited on shipments of yarn from the mill before he could

forward raw cotton to Paterson. A chronic shortage of cash created problems for the workers. After missing two pay days, Nicholas Smith, an overseer at the mill, reported that "our hands are very uneasy." The problems continued after Haight purchased the enterprise from Rutan and Benson in 1826. At one point in 1828, Haight found himself unable to pay off his New York creditors due to a shortage of cash. He assured them that they would soon receive payment and that the firm still had great potential.<sup>29</sup>

Haight and other Paterson cotton millowners had great difficulty in competing in the national market. Increased competition continually forced down the value of yarn and cloth. In 1832, Haight reported that the value of his yarn had decreased six cents a pound over the preceding three years and that "...the profit of the last year is not equivalent to the loss of the two preceding years." Attempts to reduce costs through "...improvements and perfection of machinery and knowledge gained and more rigid economy..." proved unsuccessful.<sup>30</sup> Haight sold the mill to Duncan McEwing who subsequently lost it during the depression of the late 1830's.

The operation of Paterson's two duck mills provided a contrast to the general state of its cotton manufactories. John Travers of the Phoenix Manufacturing Company and John Colt both began to manufacture duck cloth for canvas during the second decade of the century. The

difficulties inherent in preparing brittle flax fibres for spinning and weaving led Colt to experiment with cotton as a possible alternative. By doubling and twisting cotton fibres, a strong, durable duck cloth could be produced that required no starching as did linen duck. Colt switched to cotton by 1822, while Travers continued to produce linen duck. The bulkiness of linen duck made it difficult to weave on power looms leaving manufacturers dependent on the services of male, Irish handloom weavers. By 1824, Thomas Rogers developed a workable power loom for Colt that young, unskilled women could operate. Colt eliminated all his handlooms by 1829.<sup>31</sup>

Chauncey Andrews, a turner and chairmaker, built a linen power loom sometime around 1826. The Phoenix Company quickly adopted the machine although the firm did not eliminate all its handlooms until 1832.<sup>32</sup> The U.S. Navy purchased duck from both mills, using the cloth for sails. Colt, recognizing the inconsistency of the Navy's demands for duck, invested most of his capital in a cotton mill and a rolling mill. The Phoenix Manufacturing Company did not diversify, an action which soon brought it to the brink of disaster. Early in 1830, rumors began circulating that a lack of orders might force the Phoenix Mill to shut down. According to accounts in Niles Register, the closing would directly idle over 420 people while indirectly affecting nearly one-fifth of the town's

population. Travers refused to believe that the Navy would allow the firm to fail. "We make canvas for the Navy, and they find it in their interest to sustain us." Although the firm survived the crisis, Travers realized that he had to diversify. "Not having any hope of permanency in any other article of manufacture than cotton, we have agreed to sink 7,000 dollars and put in cotton machinery in the mill, just keeping a sufficient flax machinery for the use of the navy; and if they do not think it worthwhile to encourage that, we will abandon it altogether."<sup>33</sup>

The Phoenix Mill began to turn out cotton bagging for the southern market. Although heavy duties on imported flax led to a six month cessation of operations in 1832, the company survived, producing both linen duck and cotton goods. By 1838, cotton manufacturing constituted the bulk of its output.<sup>34</sup>

In order for duck manufacturing to be profitable, it had to be conducted on an extensive scale. Incorporating their firms gave Travers and Colt greater access to the capital necessary to run their mills. Their ability to engage in a variety of manufacturing ventures likewise rested on their incorporated status, making it possible for both firms to raise large amounts of cash. The Phoenix Manufacturing Company and Colt enterprises continued in operation under the same management for a

longer time than almost all other Paterson firms.<sup>35</sup>

Ongoing efforts to increase the productivity of both the duck and cotton mills led to the wholesale elimination of handloom weaving as a viable trade. The editor of The Intelligencer reflected on this development in a March, 1838 article. "Handloom weaving, formerly extensively followed has almost ceased, there being but 24 looms in operation throughout the town at this time, and that portion of our population, formerly deriving their principal support from this source having either found other channels of employment or have left town..."<sup>36</sup>

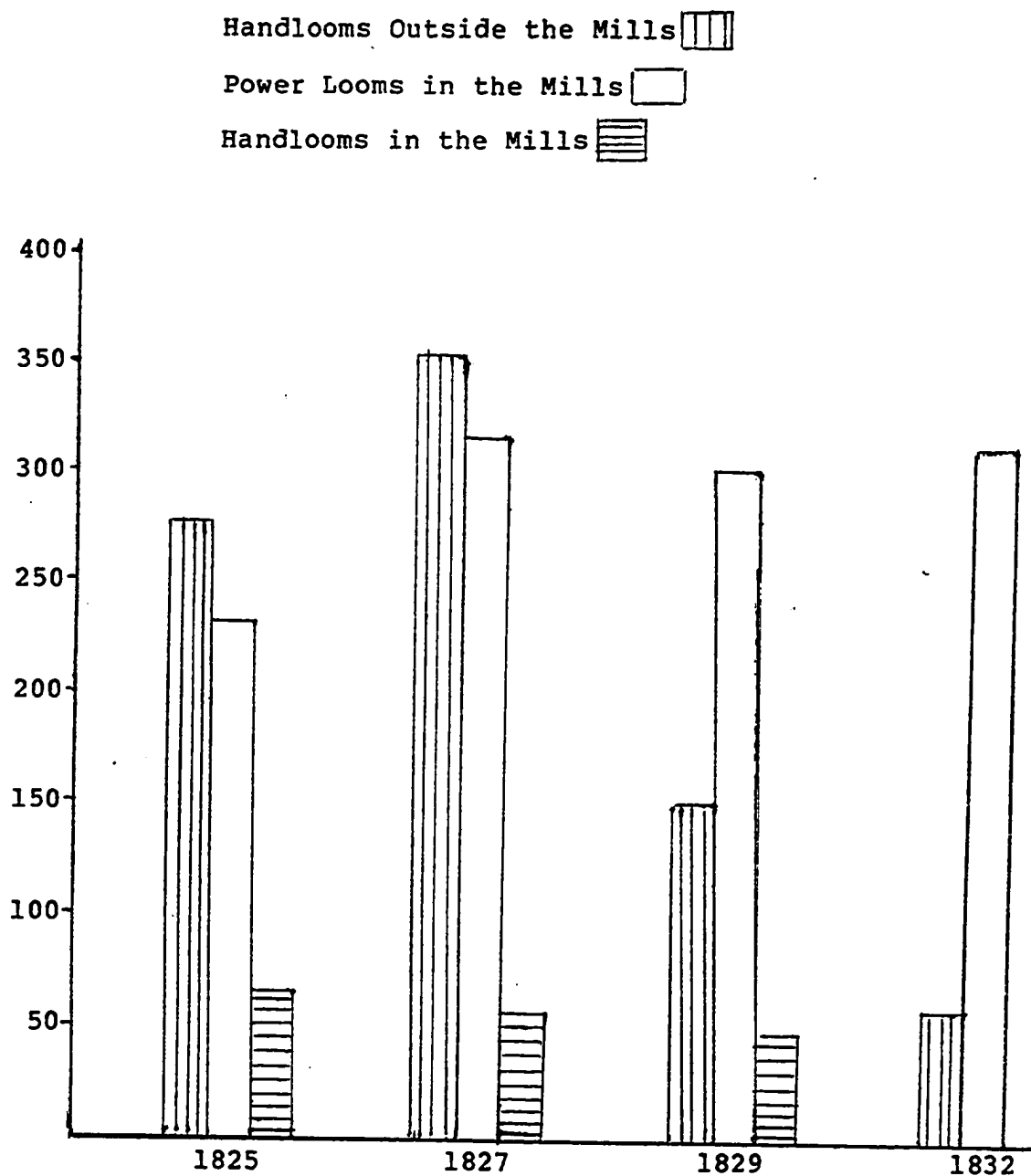
The development of the power loom in the late teens and early 1820's initially led to a dramatic expansion of handloom weaving. Spinning mills, taking advantage of the increased demand stimulated by the use of the power loom, pushed production levels to the maximum, creating a surplus of yarn. This encouraged many individuals to take up the weaver's trade. As power loom efficiency increased in the latter part of the decade, the handloom industry collapsed. Chart 2 graphically illustrates the trend.<sup>37</sup>

Most handloom weavers worked in their homes or in small shops. Only the Phoenix Mill made extensive use of handlooms on its own premises. Handloom weaving peaked in Paterson in 1827, with over 140 families having looms in their dwellings. Most handloom weavers functioned as outworkers for the mills. The Phoenix Manufacturing



CHART 2

NUMBER OF COTTON AND DUCK LOOMS IN OPERATION 1825 - 1832



Source: Rev. Samuel Fisher, Census of Paterson, New Jersey, 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832. MS, Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson, N.J.

Company made the greatest use of this system. In 1829, it had a total of 103 handlooms in operation outside the mill in addition to utilizing twenty-four handlooms and forty nine power looms within the mill itself.<sup>38</sup> Travers totally eliminated handweaving both in and out of the mill by 1832.

The relative simplicity of cotton weaving made it possible to enlist the entire family in the process. While the father operated the primary loom, his wife and older children could operate secondary machines. In those households engaged in duck weaving only the adult males could operate the looms, with spouses and offspring assisting by helping in the preparation of the loom and of the raw materials. While few, if any duck weavers followed other trades, many cotton weavers did. Reedmaker David Martin, shoemaker John Hunter, blacksmith James Beam, broommaker Thadeus Titus, and turner James Morris worked at their crafts, while other family members or hired hands operated their looms.<sup>39</sup> It cannot be determined whether individuals owned the looms they operated or if a company provided them. We also do not know if the manufacturers considered the weavers as employees or as independent contractors. Mill officials distributed the yarn to the weavers who returned it as cloth to the factories upon completion. Paid on a piece-rate basis, weavers had a strong incentive to be as productive as possible.

In addition to individual family weaving, Paterson had a number of weave shops. Utilizing anywhere from four to fifteen handlooms, the proprietors of the shops hired journeymen to turn yarn into cloth. Many weave shop owners ran other business ventures at the same time. Charles O'Neil, Dennis McKiernan, and James Ward operated grocery stores in addition to their weave shops, while John Shannon kept a tavern.<sup>40</sup> The shopowners bought yarn from the mills and sold the finished cloth in their own stores or through other merchants. A letter from "Publicola" published in The Intelligencer in November of 1826 illustrated some of the economic pressures on weave shop owners. The correspondent warned them not to accept offers from unscrupulous merchants who wanted to purchase muslin cloth for between three and six shillings per yard. Selling to them would drive already falling prices still lower, destroying the weavers ability to operate at a profit. "Publicola" failed to include the impact of the power looms on the trade; by 1832, weave shops had disappeared from the town.<sup>41</sup>

A third group of weavers worked independently of the mills, turning out specialized products. Using a maximum of three looms, they turned out carpets, diapers, and other goods. Their workforce consisted of family members or hired hands. Samuel Dolston's family, for example, constituted the entire workforce in his carpet weaving shop. When he died in 1829, his wife continued to

run the business. These small operations relied on hand looms even after they had been phased out by the mills. Robert Thompson, a Scottish immigrant, opened up a carpet weaving shop in 1831. Employing six men, a woman, and a boy, he used Jacquard handlooms well into the mid 1830's. Located on the third floor of the Paul and Beggs machine shop, he manufactured carpets until 1835, when fire destroyed the building. Other individuals opened up similar, small scale enterprises from time to time.<sup>42</sup>

While these types of businesses continued to function, most handloom weaving disappeared by 1832. Those cotton and duck weavers who could found employment elsewhere; those who couldn't or wouldn't left the town. Between 1824 and 1829, 219 families engaged in some form of handloom weaving. According to the Fisher census, 121 of these families left Paterson by 1832.<sup>43</sup> At the same time that cotton and duck manufacturers wiped out handloom weaving as a trade, they helped to create the machine making industry. Paterson historian L. R. Trumbull, writing in 1882, described the ties which bound cotton manufacturing and the production of industrial machinery:

The manipulation of cotton may justly be termed the parent industry of Paterson. In the earlier period of the reign of His Royal "Fibre-ness," it came to pass, most naturally, that the necessities of the cotton manufacture promoted attempts, and successes too, in the construction of machinery; and the working in iron, especially in the department of machinery, led to the building of locomotive engines when the necessity for them arose....<sup>44</sup>

A different relationship existed between cotton mills and machine shops in Paterson than in the northern manufacturing district. In southern district milltowns, individual mechanics established their own shops while in the north, manufacturers directly hired machinists to build, and repair, the machinery.<sup>45</sup> Middle district mills relied on a mix of old and new machinery since the small size and geographical dispersion of these manufactories discouraged the development of a unified pattern of textile production. The diversity of production in the southern district required the use of many different types of equipment. Mechanics in Paterson and Matteawan, N.Y., the centers of technological innovation in the district, relied heavily on the latest English developments. Ordering many of their prototypes from the British firm of Sharpes & Roberts in Manchester and from Shank's in Johnstone, Scotland, southern district mechanics modified the machines to fit in with American production techniques.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to turning out a wide variety of textile machinery, early nineteenth century mechanics produced machine tools which they utilized in the construction of power looms and carding engines. Power lathes, planers, drills and boring machines all came into use during the 1820's and 1830's. Manufacturers initially relied on English immigrants, already familiar with machine

making, to build the necessary equipment. As American carpenters, blacksmiths, millwrights, and cabinetmakers became more familiar with the production of such machinery, they began to supplant the English in the machine shops. Machine making remained a skilled trade even with the introduction of power driven lathes and drills. According to George S. Gibb, historian of the Lowell machine shops, the heavy dependence on traditional craft skills made the training of native born machinists a simple task. "It would appear that, though the supply of skilled mill operatives and skilled mechanics alike was small, the latter could be better trained than imported. Perhaps the task of making a workman who had never seen a mule into a proficient mule spinner, was greater than that of making a textile machinery mechanic out of a millwright, a shipwright or blacksmith."<sup>47</sup>

Paterson's early machine shop owners worked as mechanics before they established their own manufacturing facilities. With the exception of Englishman Benjamin Brunded and Irishman James Plunket, all of the town's machine makers were native born. A similar pattern appears to have existed among the hands employed in their shops.<sup>48</sup> A number of local Dutch, trained as skilled craftsmen, found work as machinists even as they refused to allow their wives and children to work in the cotton and duck mills.

The firm of Godwin, Rogers and Clarke dominated Paterson's machinery industry throughout the 1820's. Clarke and Rogers continued to run the shop after John Clarke, Sr., retired in 1816. They brought Godwin into the firm around 1822. He represented an important source of readily available cash for expansion since his family owned large tracts of land in the area. Unlike his two partners, Godwin never worked in a machine shop. In order to guarantee the quality of the metal components used in their textile machinery, the firm built their own foundry and a blacksmith shop. In addition to building machinery, Godwin, Rogers and Company operated a spinning mill which gradually declined in importance as their machine making business expanded.<sup>49</sup>

In 1825 the company employed fifty-six hands; its workforce grew to 144 employees four years later. Besides supplying machines to the Paterson mills, Godwin, Rogers and Clarke began to sell their equipment throughout the country, advertising in such cities as Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Cincinnati. The Intelligencer printed a complimentary letter about the firm's machines from a Petersburg, Virginia manufacturer:

The machine shops of Massachusetts and New Hampshire have been, for a long time, remarkable and...would not suffer on a comparison with those of the first manufacturing establishments of Europe. We are gratified to perceive the tribute which has now been offered to the machine shop at the Paterson manufactory....It is a merit of no ordinary character to stand first in a mechanical department, which exhibits

such an aggregate of skill as this does.<sup>50</sup>

In July of 1831, Godwin and Clarke bought out Rogers' share of the company for forty thousand dollars.<sup>51</sup> The two of them continued in the machine making business, adding Charles Danforth as a partner in December of that year. Rogers joined with two New York investors to form the incorporated firm of Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor which leased a mill site on Spruce Street for the Jefferson Machine Works. The works contained an erecting shop, a millwright shop, a foundry, and a blacksmith shop. The ever increasing demand for machinery resulted in plenty of work for both companies.<sup>52</sup>

The two companies adopted different production policies. Before joining Godwin and Clarke, Charles Danforth patented a new technique of cotton spinning in 1828. Historian Robert Naumberg considered it to be one of the most important technical breakthroughs in the history of the industry. "Danforth's invention of cap spinning ...was the first important improvement in spinning elements since 1519 and deserves to be ranked with the inventions of Arkwright, Hargreaves and Crompton."<sup>53</sup> The cap spinner increased the productive capacity of existing machinery by forty percent. By bringing Danforth in as a partner, Godwin, Clarke & Company obtained exclusive rights to the spinning process. Orders came in from as far away as Mexico. In 1832, the Lawrence Manufacturing Company of



Lowell approached Godwin & Clarke about purchasing some spinning machinery. The Paterson manufacturers readily agreed, reducing their prices in order to be the first outside firm to gain access to the Lowell market.<sup>54</sup> The firm's total reliance on sales of cotton textile machinery proved fatal during the depression of the late 1830's. By 1838, the workforce declined to 139 men; the following year the company went into receivership. Danforth bought out his partners, taking sole possession of the firm.

Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor turned out a diverse product line. In addition to textile machinery they sold hydraulic presses, lathes, "Iron and Brass Castings of all descriptions." and engaged in "mill geering and millwright work generally."<sup>55</sup> In 1836, the company moved into the manufacturing of locomotives. The building of locomotives required the same basic combination of hand craftsmanship and power driven machinery utilized in the production of spinning and weaving machinery. Although the workmen used familiar techniques and procedures, it took nearly sixteen months to complete the company's first locomotive, the Sandusky. As employees and supervisors became more experienced with the requirements of locomotive production, output increased dramatically. In 1838, Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor turned out seven engines, and in 1839, eleven. The company's payroll jumped to 265 hands by 1838.<sup>56</sup>

Visiting journalists and dignitaries never failed

to stop at the locomotive works. A writer for the New York American described how the firm used a variety of new machines to replace traditional hand labor.

Among the processes which struck us with astonishment in these works were two in particular - that of cutting the mortices in the interior of the iron nave of the rail car wheels - and that of planing iron - both by machinery. Both of these processes heretofore have been by slow and difficult and inevitably unequal handwork; now they are performed with dispatch, certainty and unerring accuracy, by machines - which once graduated to their work, do it without change or choice.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, locomotive construction still required the labor of skilled craftsmen as indicated by a description of the shop, published in the American Railroad Journal.

Our attention was of course principally directed to the shops for the construction of locomotives, the main building of which is 200 feet long and three stories high, and another of equal length, containing near 50 forges, most of which were in operation, not withstanding the pressure of the times. The truck frames whether of wood or iron, were admirably stiffened by diagonal braces, and where the crank axle is used, the large frame is very strongly plated in the manner of Stephenson's engines....We would observe that there is more finish on the engines of Messrs. Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor than we are in the habit of seeing; some parts usually painted black are highly polished....<sup>58</sup>

Unlike Godwin, Clarke & Company, Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor continued to operate throughout the 1837 depression. While they continued to turn out textile machinery, most of the firm's resources went into the production of locomotives.

The escalating demand for machinery in the second and third decades of the century made possible the

establishment of other machine shops. While none of them reached the scale of the town's two major firms, they became significant undertakings in their own right. Daniel K. Allen, a New Yorker, and Thomas Edge, an Englishman, opened a button manufacturing facility employing twenty-eight hands in 1830 or 1831. In 1837, Allen joined with Benjamin Brunded, another Englishman, to found the Paterson Machine Company which absorbed the button manufactory. Brunded and James Truelove, a blacksmith, originally operated their own small machine shop in 1825. Shortly thereafter, Brunded formed the Oldham Machine Works, a mile or two outside of Paterson. When his two co-owners ousted him from the firm in 1836, Allen took Brunded in as a partner. By 1838, the Paterson Machine Company had a total of 142 hands in its machine and button shops. Success proved short-lived; the firm went under in 1842.<sup>59</sup>

Paterson's machine making firms evinced the same pattern of organizational instability as did the cotton mills. Individuals rapidly moved in and out of shops, spurred on by clashes of personality, by more attractive prospects, or by financial disaster. James Plunket and John Thompson, two former apprentices at Godwin, Rogers & Clarke, opened their own machine shop around 1829. They quickly added a spinning operation to their machine making business, employing a total of forty-one hands in both

facilities. By 1832, the workforce increased to fifty hands in the cotton mill and sixty hands in the machine shop. An 1833 fire cut short their dreams of success, destroying almost all of their tools and equipment. The firm of Plunket and Thompson wound up in the hands of a receiver in June of 1834.<sup>60</sup>

A number of other individuals engaged in machine making in the 1820's and 1830's. These blacksmiths, millwrights, and former machinist's apprentices rarely employed more than eight hands. Unable to compete with the larger firms, they either built specialized machinery or they engaged in repair work. None of their efforts lasted more than five years. While many of the machine makers left Paterson, others quit the trade altogether. Henry H. Post, for example, gave up his machine shop in order to become the proprietor of a hotel and tavern.

Just as the expansion of the cotton industry sparked the growth of machine making, it also contributed to the development of a number of smaller manufacturing enterprises. These producers, rarely employing more than ten hands, turned out a variety of bobbins, heddles, reeds, spindles, and metal cans for use in the mills. The dependence of the smaller manufacturers on business from the mills can be seen in some advertisements which appeared in the pages of the Intelligencer. James Truelove placed this ad in 1828: "To the millowners he feels grateful for past

favours and hopes by his attention to business to merit a continuance of their orders. Orders for mill spindles, shafting and smith work in general will be executed with dispatch and at the most reasonable terms, at this shop..." Peter Van Riper notified his former customers they could once again obtain bobbins from him at his new location. "The subscriber takes this opportunity to inform his friends and the public in general that he has re-commenced business in the rear of the Harmony factory, ...where he will continue to make all kinds of Bobbins for cotton... Manufactories." William Cundell offered a more diverse line up of goods to the millowners in an 1831 advertisement. "All kinds of work for cotton and woolen mills made to order, such as Throstle and Mule Drums, Cards and Drawing Cans, and every other article in that line which may be wanted, as accurate and durable as any that can be made."<sup>61</sup> Rather than producing for regional or national markets, these manufacturers turned out custom made goods for the mills. The millowners placed all their orders with specific individuals, precluding the uncontrolled proliferation of such firms. Existing shops met increased demand by hiring additional hands. While heddlemakers or reedmakers utilized some machinery, they mainly relied on the traditional craft skills of turners, tinsmiths or blacksmiths. The custom nature of the work made it difficult to turn out material in standardized

lots.

Turning shops manufactured all the bobbins for the town's cotton mills. Edward Hazen, in his 1836 book on trades and professions, identified the turner as one of the most highly skilled mechanics of that time. "When compared with many other mechanical operations, the art of turning may be considered as perfect in its accuracy and expedition. The lathe is, therefore, resorted to for the performance of every work of which it is capable..."<sup>62</sup> While they performed all types of general work, most turners in Paterson concentrated on the production of bobbins. Bobbin turning illustrated the same shifting patterns of ownership evinced in the town's other industries. Thomas Van Riper operated one of two turning ships in 1832; Abraham Carter and Samuel Ensign ran the other one. Together they employed thirteen hands. Six years later, Carter ran his own bobbin shop with ten hands, while Ensign and Thomas Van Riper's son, Peter, worked twelve hands in another factory. Peter, at the same time, operated his own shop with six hands. All these shops concentrated exclusively on making bobbins for the mills.<sup>63</sup> Two other turners, Chauncey Andrews and William Jacobs, individually and in combination, manufactured bobbins in addition to other goods. Neither one continued in the trade after the mid 1830's.

Paterson's tin, copper, and sheet iron manufacturers followed a similar pattern of development. A

limited number of individuals participated in the trade, increasing the number of employees as demand warranted. In 1825, two tin and sheet iron manufacturers employed ten hands. Thirteen years later, thirty-five men labored in three shops. Of the three, only Horatio Moses operated his business throughout the period, hiring more hands than any other tin or sheet iron firm. A similar pattern existed among most of the ancillary industries with one or two firms dominating each branch. This effectively prevented other individuals from securing significant shares of the market. David Martin predominated in reed making, James Close and John Leazer in sizing and dyeing, Moses in metal working, and Joseph Warren and John P. Brown in tanning.<sup>64</sup>

Blacksmithing proved to be an exception. The number of shops fluctuated significantly from year to year with an overall downward trend in employment. In 1825, Paterson had eleven shops with forty-three hands. By 1838, it had seventeen shops with a total of only thirty-seven employees. As Susan Hirsch and others point out, the growth of large machine shops directly affected the working conditions of blacksmiths. Utilizing the same, basic skills, many of them chose to work in factories which offered higher pay and steadier employment than the small, artisan workshops. Paterson's blacksmith shops had a high rate of proprietary turnover. Between 1825 and 1838, twenty-eight individuals engaged in the trade. Only three

of them continued in operation throughout the period; the remainder moved in and out of the trade with great frequency.<sup>65</sup>

The length of time a small manufacturer lived in Paterson enhanced his prospects of long-term success. The dominant producers in each branch of manufacturing started out in the town in the 1820's. Once a cotton manufacturer became familiar with a particular supplier, it appeared that he stayed with him to the exclusion of all others. Limited market opportunities made it difficult for others to successfully break into the trade. While some latecomers met with success, the older, more established enterprises maintained the lion's share of the business.

Other types of manufacturing, unrelated to the cotton, duck and machines industries, flourished in Paterson. Ownership and employment patterns varied from trade to trade. Tailoring and cabinetmaking developed patterns strikingly similar to those of the mill related enterprises. Merchant tailors Hiram Hatheway and Andrew Griffiths, combining the functions of retailer and manufacturer, dominated their trade. Hatheway increased his work force from five hands in 1825 to eighteen in 1832. Griffiths doubled the number of his employees from eight in 1827 to sixteen five years later. Three other merchant tailors hired between six and nine workers each.<sup>66</sup> These five individuals produced both ready-made clothing and



custom tailored garments. In addition to merchant tailors, there existed another group of master clothiers. Employing one or two hands, they found themselves relegated to turning out special orders or to making repairs. This group experienced a much higher turnover rate than the merchant tailors. The large clothing manufacturers derived their operating capital from trade. The extra resources allowed them to hire enough hands to make possible the specialization of production, which resulted in higher levels of output. The owner, or foreman, of the shop drew a pattern for the garment and then cut it out by hand. Journeymen tailors sewed the cut goods into finished clothing, working in a shop or in their own homes.<sup>67</sup> Employers openly offered women in the trade the option of doing outwork in their dwellings.

Cabinetmaking proved to be an even more restricted industry. A localised trade, it encompassed the building of most household furniture. A highly skilled craft, it made only limited use of power driven machinery. Adam Newhouse and his brother Benjamin dominated the trade after 1827. Five Paterson cabinetmaking shops employed approximately seventeen hands in 1825. The Newhouse brothers, one of the five, had six workmen. Two years later, the brothers employed thirteen of eighteen individuals engaged in the trade. After Benjamin left the business, Adam continued to hold a dominant position.

William Ferguson, employing ten journeymen, represented the only challenge to Newhouse's control of the craft.<sup>68</sup>

Millinery work constituted a small, but important, segment of Paterson's manufacturing economy. Run primarily by women, it represented one of the few significant alternatives to mill work for the town's female population. In contrast to other types of manufacturing, no one operation gained predominance over the others. It remained a trade of small units of production. Only one milliner ever employed more than six hands; most shops had between three and five employees. Both married and single women ran millinery shops, with the former demonstrating a higher degree of stability over time. Access to extra financial resources may have been a key factor in the commercial longevity of the married milliners. Most of their husbands worked as artisans, as retailers, or as professional men. Married milliners also employed more hands than single ones.<sup>69</sup> The millinery trade declined slowly but steadily from its peak year of 1827, when it employed thirty-eight women. By 1838, it required the labor of only twenty-five.

The production of men's hats followed a similar pattern although it never employed the numbers that the millinery trade did. In 1825, Paterson's two master hatters provided work for fourteen hands. This fell to one master hatter with four workmen in 1832. The growth of

both hatmaking and shoemaking as major industries in Paterson may have been directly effected by the expansion of these trades in nearby Newark. As Susan Hirsch points out, hatmaking reached a fairly high level of mechanization in Newark where eight factories employed seventy-six people by 1836. Moving beyond the constraints of local markets, they already produced hats for regional markets.<sup>70</sup>

Newark's shoemakers went through the same process. A less mechanized industry than hatmaking, it utilized extensive specialization of labor in place of machinery. Unable to compete in the national market with the shoe manufacturers of Lynn, Massachusetts, Newark's manufacturers worked to establish their dominance in the local New Jersey area. During the mid 1830's, fourteen shoe factories, with an average workforce of fifty-two employees, turned out ready-made shoes. Their dominant market position may have prevented Paterson shoemakers from ever moving beyond the small shop stage. Paterson shoe manufacturing reached its peak in 1832, employing 133 hands in thirty-four different shops. No Paterson shoemaker ever hired more than eight hands; most shops employed four hands or less. No one firm ever ruled the trade in the town. Unable to compete with Newark factories on a regional basis, Paterson shoe and hat makers found themselves locked into a strictly local market.<sup>71</sup>

The extensive scale of cotton, duck, and machine

manufacturing in Paterson discouraged the development of a more diversified pattern of production as existed in Newark. Attempts to introduce new industries such as papermaking or firearms met with limited success. As a result, the town's other manufacturers depended on the economic health of the large mills and shops for their own financial survival. In good times they shared jointly in the blessings of prosperity; in bad times they suffered greatly and, sometimes, fatally. Financial instability and uncertainty plagued all Paterson manufacturers, from the largest to the smallest. Few, if any, possessed the cash reserves necessary to overcome substantial declines in the national economy.

Over 160 individuals engaged in some form of manufacturing between 1825 and 1838.<sup>72</sup> Although they differed in many ways, they all shared a commitment to the continued expansion of domestic industry. This commitment led many of them into supporting the same political party and into accepting similar employment practices towards their hired help. They also tended to share similar attitudes towards crucial social problems of the day. Differences over the abolition of slavery in the mid 1830's proved to be one of the few issues to divide manufacturers during this period. The size and nature of their enterprises greatly influenced the role that various producers played in local political and social affairs. By

breaking down the manufacturers into three groups based on the number of people they employed, a clearer picture of their beliefs and behavior can be drawn.

The largest manufacturers, employing twenty or more hands, represented the economic backbone of the town. In addition to the owners of the cotton mills, the duck mills, and the major machine shops, this group included the operators of a millwright shop, a button factory, and a large turning establishment.<sup>73</sup> All of them had an immediate stake in the health of the nation's textile industry. Their dependence on water-powered machinery forced them to keep abreast of the latest technological developments both in the United States and in Britain. The size of the manufactories made it impossible for owners or managing agents to directly supervise the workforce. The major manufacturers hired foremen, bookkeepers, and other supervisory personnel to oversee day to day operations.

Paterson's mill and large shop owners demonstrated a high degree of homogeneity. While a handful of them immigrated from the British Isles, most were born in the United States. A majority of these manufacturers identified as either Presbyterians or Episcopalians. Only two Catholics and one man of Dutch ancestry could be found within their ranks. In general, they tended to be long-term residents of the area. Mill and large shop owners congregated in the two residential districts. One

group lived on Congress, Mill, or Boudinot Streets, within a stone's throw from the mills. C. P. Longwell's father, a long time resident of the town, offered his recollections of some of the dwellings of the cotton millowners.

The Collet Mansion, on Mill Street, was one of the fine buildings of other days. It was a good sized stone building, ...reached by a wooden bridge, which led up a walk to the doorway, that opened into a broad, old fashioned hall...Each room had its fine open fireplace...Nearby was the fine home of Robert Carrick, the cotton manufacturer, surrounded by a large yard, on the corner of Mill and Congress...John Colt's house, the imposing structure that graced the village corner of Congress and Colt Streets for so many years, with its tall pillars in colonial style, and shaded by giant elms ...was nearby.<sup>74</sup>

A second group lived on Market Street on the outskirts of town, near Colt's hill.<sup>75</sup> John Clarke, Jr., and C. M. Godwin, for example, moved to Market Street from Congress Street sometime after 1825. This movement reflected the beginning of the breakup of traditional housing patterns found in the early industrial towns of the southern and middle districts. J. W. Lozier found that most millowners lived within sight of their manufactories in order to more effectively supervise daily production. The addition of different levels of supervisory personnel made it possible for the manufacturers to move further away from their factories. This trend became more pronounced as the area around the mills filled up with operatives and their families. Paterson's limited geographic area, however, limited the development of an exclusive, affluent neighborhood in the Market Street area. In between the

homes of the factory owners, stood the more modest dwellings of a significant portion of the town's free Negroes. Ten of Paterson's forty-six free black families lived on Market Street. Many of them worked as domestics in the households of the manufacturers while others found employment as common laborers. Some of them lived on the street prior to 1824, while many others moved there between 1829 and 1832.<sup>76</sup>

Family size increased and the number of children in each household tended to be higher among larger producers than among small ones. Mill and large shop operators, for example, averaged 8.1 people per household, while manufacturers with less than five hands averaged 6.2 individuals in each dwelling. Similarly, factory owners had approximately four children in each family as compared with 2.7 children for minor shop owners. An overabundance of females in the homes of the town's main employers represented another difference between themselves and the smaller manufacturers.

The greater number of females than males in the homes of the millowners can be ascribed to at least two factors. Many of the manufacturers employed unrelated females as domestic help. Since the census data does not differentiate between relatives and non-relatives, this may account for the larger than average number of females in these households. The lower number of males in such family

units may be due to the fact that few, if any, millowners continued to board their hands as they had in the early days. Smaller manufacturers with limited financial resources found it less costly to board single journeymen and apprentices than to pay them additional wages. The shop owners also utilized apprentices more as a cheap source of labor than as novices to whom they taught the mysteries of the trade.<sup>78</sup> The elimination of the old craft hierarchy in the cotton and duck mills and the growing estrangement between owners and their hands lessened the possibility of the major manufacturers boarding their workers.

Family size and male-female ratios constituted only two of the differences between Paterson's largest manufacturers and those who employed between five and twenty hands. Comprised of independent producers such as cabinetmakers, merchant tailors, and tin, sheet and iron manufacturers, as well as jobbers for the mills, the middle group exhibited a much higher turnover rate in terms of ownership. Most of the firms operated as single proprietorships. The productive capacity of these companies depended more on the efficient use of labor than on the utilization of power driven machinery.

Medium sized shopowners exhibited a greater range of religious and national backgrounds than did the major manufacturers. Catholics and Methodists played a more



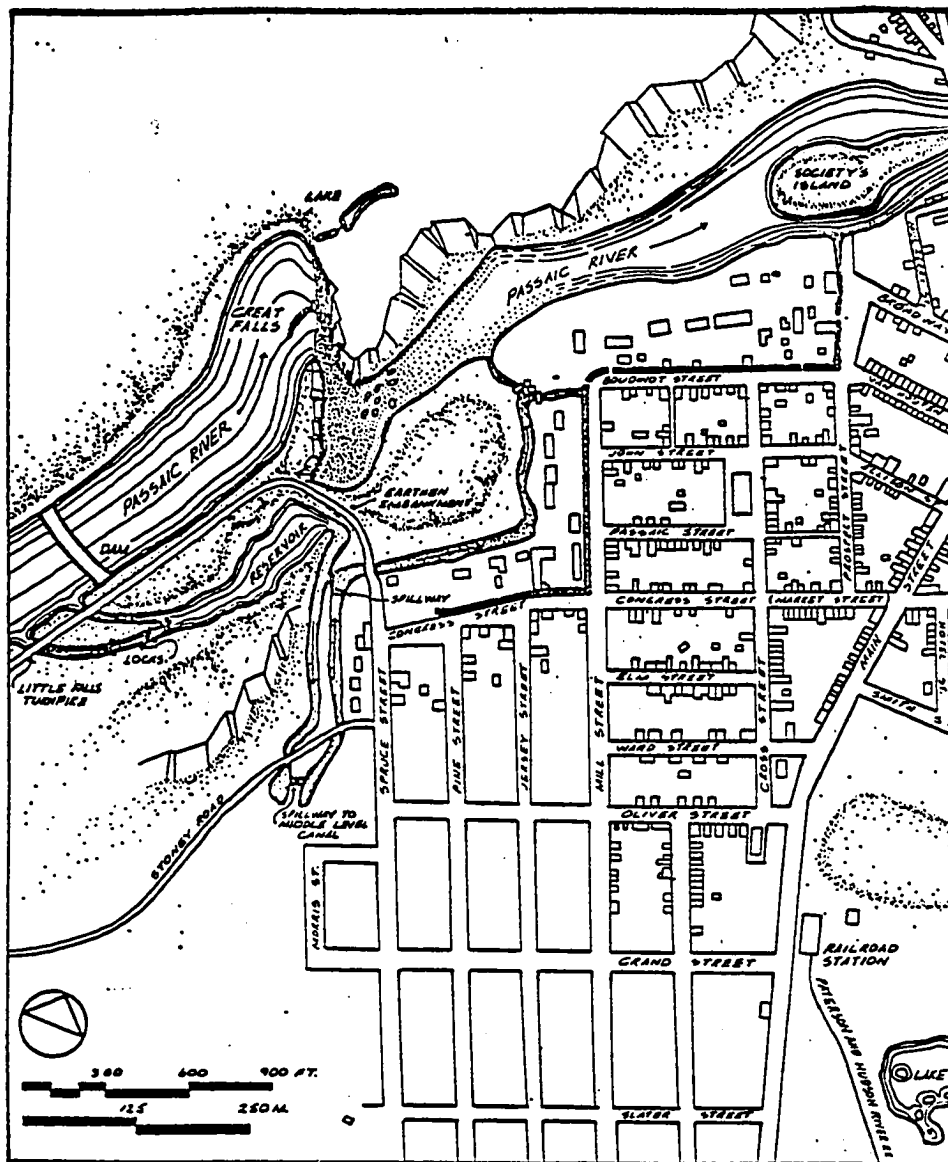
prominent role than in the latter group, as did immigrants of all religious persuasions. Foreign born Protestants and Catholics, for example, dominated the operation of the town's independent weave shops. Although Dutch-Americans ran a number of medium-sized firms, they still remained a distinct minority among Paterson's manufacturers.

Mid-sized factory owners located their operations away from the cotton mills and machine shops since few of their establishments depended on water power. Many lived in close proximity to their workplaces, along Paterson's three major commercial thoroughfares: Broadway, Van Houton Street, and Main Street. A large percentage of the town's retail merchants and professional men lived and worked along the same streets. A look at one stretch of Van Houton Street in 1832 indicates the high degree of intermingling between these groups. Walking down the street from east to west, one would have found the following individuals next to or near to one another.<sup>79</sup>

Robert Moorehead - barber  
 John Parke - magistrate  
 Stephen Allen - tobacconist  
 Daniel Barkalow - lawyer  
 David Burnett - printer & bookseller  
 Joseph Gledhill - shoemaker  
 William Cundell - tin, sheet & iron manufacturer  
 Andrew Griffiths - merchant tailor  
 Horatio Moses - tin, sheet & iron manufacturer  
 John Seager - painter & glazier  
 William Tupman - merchant tailor

Locating in the town's commercial district made practical business sense since many of the medium-sized manufacturers

# PATERSON RACEWAYS, [1828-37]



THIS SHEET DEPICTS A MAJOR MODIFICATION IN THE RACEWAY SYSTEM, BEGUN IN 1827 DUE TO A LACK OF WATER FOR ADDITIONAL MILL SITES. THE S.U.M. RAISED THE EARTHEN EMBANKMENT BLOCKING THE RESERVOIR FROM FLOWING INTO THE PASSAIC, THEN TURNED THE WATER AROUND TO THE TIP OF THE ROCKS AT L'ENFANTS GAP INTO A NEW UPPER LEVEL RACEWAY WITH A PARALLEL TAILRACE BELOW WHICH LED INTO THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM ALONG A NEW LINE. SOURCE: CONCEPTUAL MAP BASED ON HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND 1" = 100' MAP. MAP CULTURE FROM PATERSON, N.J. MAP, 1850, BY J.C. SIDNEY, PUBLISHED BY M. DRIPPS, NEW YORK, NY. PREPARED BY HAER.

combined the functions of producer and retailer. A similar pattern existed on Main Street and on Broadway. The juxtaposition of manufacturing, commercial, and professional facilities occurred frequently in early industrial towns.

The inclusion of millinery shop owners in the middle group of manufacturers increased the number of single women and widows found in this category of producers. Single men and childless couples also figured more prominently among the medium-sized operators than among the larger shopowners. Many of the former appear to have been at either the beginning or end of their working lives. This would explain the lower numbers of children found among these manufacturers. In contrast, most of the cotton mill and machine shop operators appear to have been in the prime of their working lives.

Traits found among the middle group of shopowners proved to be even more prominent among Paterson's smallest manufacturers, those employing four hands or less. Turning out a variety of goods for local consumption, they represented the largest single group of manufacturers in the town. The category included shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, hatters, and milliners, as well as specialized tradesmen such as cutlery manufacturers and reedmakers.<sup>80</sup> While some of them produced custom made items for the mills, many did not. A number of the individuals engaged

in manufacturing on this level fit the picture of the traditional master craftsman. Utilizing accumulated savings, as well as loans from family members and friends, they found a workspace, bought raw materials, and hired a couple of hands. Always operating on an extremely tight profit and loss margin, the number of hands they employed varied according to the immediate demand for their goods. Downward fluctuations of the economy often returned them to the ranks of the journeymen artisans. Few, if any, of the small manufacturers expanded the size of their enterprises during this period. Most remained petty producers, working in the shops alongside their employees.

Dutch-Americans played a prominent role in this category of employers, constituting its single largest ethnic group. Traditional craftsmen such as millwrights, shoemakers, and blacksmiths, serviced both the residents of Paterson and the farmers from the surrounding countryside. While refusing, for the most part, to work in the mills, the Paterson Dutch carved out a distinct niche for themselves in the town's expanding industrial economy. Utilizing skills passed down from one generation to the next, they turned out a wide variety of products for local consumption. The large number of Dutch among the small shopowners directly effected the geographical dispersion of the members of this group.

Significant numbers of small manufacturers lived

on the town's two major commercial streets, Broadway and Main Street. Residing in two-story, wood frame buildings, they used the upper floor for living quarters and the first floor for their workshops. The New Manchester section, north of the Passaic River, however, had the largest single concentration of petty producers, due primarily to the large number of Dutch with homes there. By 1832, over sixty-two per cent of the families living in the section identified themselves as Dutch Reformed. While many of them lived north of the Passaic since colonial times, a considerable number of Dutch moved there in the 1820's.<sup>81</sup> Most of the goods turned out in the shops of Manchester's craftsmen went almost exclusively to area farmers.

Shopowners employing four hands or less generally had fewer children and smaller families than the other manufacturers. One or two children represented the norm in approximately half of the families (48.5%) while thirteen families were childless. The small number of children indicates that young men predominated among the petty producers. Unable to support more than a pair of children, they invested most of their resources in their shops. The significant number of childless couples may represent either the newly married or older people at the conclusion of their working lives. Small manufacturers boarded their employees less frequently than operators of medium sized firms. Fewer individuals over the age of sixteen lived with

the former than with the latter.<sup>82</sup>

The three groups of manufacturers differed considerably in terms of family size, residential location, religion, and country of origin. They also differed as to their level of involvement in community affairs. Employers with twenty or more hands spent more time on such activities than did shopowners with fewer employees. As Paterson's cotton mills and machine shops grew, their owners spent less time directly supervising workplace operations. Overseers and foremen appropriated these duties, freeing the millowners to involve themselves in other fields of endeavor. The need for direct supervision increased significantly as the size of the firm decreased. A master cordwainer, working alongside his two or three journeymen, for over seventy hours each week, had little opportunity to participate in civic activities. Tailors and blacksmiths utilized most of their time and resources in a struggle for basic economic survival while cotton mill owners travelled to Washington, D.C., Trenton, N.J., or Harrisburg, Pa. to lobby for protection of domestic manufacturing or for a railroad link to Paterson. Their role as the town's major employers added to the leadership image of the mill and large shop owners.<sup>83</sup>

The general development of the region constituted a top priority for the area's largest employers. Rather than seeking to limit potential competition, they worked

hard at creating an attractive economic environment in order to tempt new enterprises. They served as commissioners and directors for a host of projects designed to enhance Paterson's standing in the eyes of potential investors while at the same time earning themselves a tidy little profit. Mill and large shop operators helped to establish new insurance companies, a gaslight company, a water company, a turnpike company, and a toll bridge company. A number of them served on the boards of newly incorporated firms such as the Boudinot Manufacturing Company.<sup>84</sup>

Efforts to obtain a railroad for Paterson absorbed a good deal of their time and energy in the late 1820's. It represented one of the few issues that garnered support from a considerable number of small manufacturers. Manufacturers of all descriptions recognized that such a railway line represented a major opportunity for Paterson producers to sell their goods in the national market. Nearly half of the millowners served on the committee which pressured the legislature to grant a state charter for the railroad. Other committee members included shoemaker Andrew Gallagher, millwright Alexander Paul, tin and sheet iron manufacturer Horatio Moses, and blacksmith John Vail. While the smaller manufacturers played an active role on the committee, the leadership spots went to the major manufacturers. This pattern held true when the Paterson

Railroad selected its first Board of Directors in 1830. Most of the positions went to millowners such as John Colt, Mark Collet, Abraham Godwin, Jr., and Daniel Holsman, who could afford to invest in the stock of the company. Although smaller and medium sized shopowners played an important role in obtaining the charter for the railroad, limited financial resources prevented them from directly profiting from the establishment of the line.<sup>85</sup>

Manufacturers also spearheaded the drive to effect a political separation between Paterson and Acquackanonk township. For nearly forty years, farmers from surrounding communities consistently outvoted Paterson's inhabitants on issues of local governance. The farmers refused to invest in the kinds of municipal improvements the town needed to become more attractive to industry. In 1827, for example, only half of Acquackanonk's elected officials lived in Paterson itself.<sup>86</sup> Only eight out of a total of twenty town officers had any connections with manufacturing enterprises. In the later 1820's, mill and shop owners took the lead in petitioning the legislature to free Paterson from Acquackanonk's political domination. A writer for The Intelligencer spelled out the rationale for such a division. "... (W)e believe, owing to the different occupations, views and interests of the present inhabitants of the Township of Acquackanonk, a division thereof is necessary."<sup>87</sup> Cotton millowners William Dickey and



Robert O. Robinson, as well as machine shop owner Abraham Godwin, Jr. held major positions of leadership in the effort. Their efforts paid off in the winter of 1830-1831, when the state legislature established the independent township of Paterson.

As in the case of the railroad, the larger employers received considerable support from owners of smaller shops. Button maker George Daniels, weaver Dennis McKiernan, and cordwainer David Doremus all played active roles in the campaign.<sup>88</sup> Manufacturers of all types played an increasingly important role in town government. Millowners such as Elisha Clark, Joseph Smith, and John Nightengale served in various positions, as did master shoemakers Joseph Gledhill and John Avison and tin manufacturer Horatio Moses. A parallel movement to form a new county around Paterson proved less successful. From 1828 to late 1836, manufacturers and their supporters repeatedly submitted bills to the legislature requesting that such an action be taken. A desire to free Paterson from the political domination of nearby Newark lay at the base of the movement. An intense lobbying campaign paid off in the establishment of Passaic County early in 1837. A subsequent election designated Paterson as the county seat.<sup>89</sup>

The unanimity evinced by employers of all sizes on issues of economic development and local political power

carried over into other areas as well. Paterson manufacturers adopted a surprisingly uniform attitude towards the issue of temperance, a major social issue of the day.

The crusade against the consumption of alcohol got its start in Paterson in April of 1830 with the establishment of the Temperance Society of Paterson. According to an account published in The Intelligencer, society members pledged "to refrain from the use of such liquors and to do the utmost in their power, by their concurrent testimony and their example, to aid in checking the ravages of intemperance." Within three years, the society claimed 221 active members and a total of four hundred people on its books. According to its 1833 Annual Report "the frightful amount" of poverty and disease in Paterson could be directly traced to widespread intemperance. According to the society, two major factors contributed to the unchecked use of ardent spirits: a proliferation of unlicensed grog shops and "the moderate use of ardent spirits by prudent temperate men."<sup>90</sup> The latter factor proved to be a continuing problem for temperance advocates. The town's manufacturers proved less than enthusiastic over efforts to limit or eliminate the use of alcohol. Their reluctance to whole-heartedly take up the cause seriously weakened the movement's momentum in Paterson.

Only four mill and large shop owners took leadership roles in the crusade against strong drink. Cotton manufacturer Caleb M. Godwin served as president of the Paterson Temperance Society in 1833. Two years later he switched to the Total Abstinence Society. When the Abstinence Society joined with the Temperance Society of Paterson and the Young Men's Temperance Society to form the Union Temperance Society in April of 1836, Godwin became an active member of the organization. Millowner John Benson took the lead in establishing a temperance reading room in 1833 and joined Godwin in the Union Temperance Society, serving as an officer between 1836 and 1838. Two other primary manufacturers, Elisha Clark and John Rutan, assisted Benson in the reading room effort. While other mill and shop owners may have supported temperance, they chose not to publicly assume leadership of the movement.

The unwillingness of many major producers to sign an 1834 public statement condemning the sale of liquor in unlicensed shops further indicated their ambivalence towards the temperance movement. Although over 190 of their fellow citizens supported the petition, only sixteen of thirty-five millowners added their names to the document. The authors of the document believed that the widespread consumption of alcohol in illegal shops presented both an economic and a moral challenge to Paterson's citizens. "... (T)he persons who frequent these

places, and by whom the business is chiefly supported, are dependent for their daily bread upon their industry, and the money thus spent is taken from their families who are often destitute of the comforts and even the necessities of life." The petitioners also pointed out that intemperance adversely affected the town's economic health. The continued use of alcoholic beverages represented "an unproductive consumption of capital" and increased the tax burden through the escalation of the poor rates.<sup>91</sup> Even this line of reasoning failed to impress many of Paterson's major employers who continued to keep the temperance movement at arm's length.

Manufacturers employing less than twenty hands evinced even less enthusiasm for the temperance movement. Only two of 127 minor producers took any leadership in the effort. Merchant tailor Hiram Hatheway served on the Executive Committee of the Temperance Society of Paterson in 1831. John Avison, an English shoemaker, moved from the Temperance Society to the Total Abstinence Society to the Union Temperance Society where he served as one of the society's first elected officials. Avison also helped to draw up the 1834 petition which received the support of only eighteen of the small shopowners. The unwillingness of a majority of Paterson manufacturers to assume positions of responsibility in the temperance crusade runs directly counter to their level of participation in most civic activities. It also raises a challenge to the

assumption made by many historians that early industrialists consciously used the temperance movement as a means of regimenting and disciplining a generally recalcitrant workforce. In Paterson, at least, manufacturers kept their distance from the movement, providing it with lukewarm support at best.

According to historians William Nelson and Charles Shriner, Paterson manufacturers traditionally shared with their employees a fondness for strong drink. "It was not until 1840 that any systemized attempt was made to check the evils of intemperance in this vicinity. Nowhere was the effort more needed than among the millowners and mill operatives of Paterson." These two groups represented only part of the problem according to the two historians. "... (I)t was also timely among the farmers and other denizens of old Acquackanonk."<sup>92</sup> Nelson and Shriner's observation may help to explain the lack of support for temperance among most of the town's manufacturers. Among factory owners, master artisans, and workingmen alike, the consumption of liquor remained an accepted social practice through the 1830's. While they could support controls on the illegal sale of alcohol, they rejected efforts to curb or totally eliminate drinking in public places or in their homes. This contrasted sharply with the behavior of manufacturers in other towns and villages who wholeheartedly embraced the temperance crusade, especially

when it acted to influence the social behavior of their employees.<sup>93</sup>

Unlike temperance, the issue of controlling the expansion of slavery evoked considerable interest from among the various ranks of Paterson manufacturers. During the 1820's, master artisans and cotton millowners alike supported a moderate, temperate approach to the problem. The rise of Garrisonian abolitionism in the 1830's led to a division within the ranks of the town's manufacturers, pitting the cotton mill and machine shop owners against a number of smaller producers. Many factors, including economic self-interest, effected their attitudes towards efforts to eliminate slavery.

Nearly half of the town's major manufacturers signed an 1828 petition calling for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Although the document also received considerable support from the mid-sized shop owners, smaller producers appeared less willing to join in the effort.<sup>94</sup> Manufacturers could, in good conscience, support the petition because it did not challenge either the concept of states' rights or the sanctity of private property. It appealed, instead, to their highest republican sentiments and their sense of the special mission of America handed down to them by their revolutionary forefathers.

It appears very obvious to your Memorialists, that the Code of Laws for the government of this District should

be in consonance with the Spirit of the Constitution, under which you are covered, and which was formed, among other things, to establish justice, and secure the blessings of liberty, to the people of the United States and their posterity. Moreover, it would seem that the great principles of republicanism, and equal rights, which our country in its national capacity, has announced to the world, should be exemplified in practice, in that small territory at least, subject to the immediate government of the National Legislature.<sup>95</sup>

Supporters of the petition believed that such a moderate first step would lessen the resistance of slaveholders, making it possible to gradually eliminate the institution itself. Millowners could feel comfortable exerting their leadership in the campaign without incurring any personal jeopardy or inconvenience.

The growth of abolitionism in the early 1830's radically altered popular attitudes towards the elimination of slavery. The nullification crisis, Nat Turner's revolt, the efforts to ban abolitionist literature from the mails, and the implementation of a Congressional gag rule on anti-slavery petitions all helped to create an atmosphere of tension, seriously straining relationships between the north and the south. Paterson textile manufacturers depended on the south both as a source of raw cotton and as a market for their finished goods. The town's millrights and machine shop owners sold machinery to southern manufacturers and planters, often sending mechanics south to set up the mills and to teach local workers how to use the equipment.<sup>96</sup> On a more general level, intensified sectional conflict created a poor business climate which

weakened foreign trust in the stability of the American economy.

The establishment of the Paterson Anti-Slavery Society in 1838 brought the conflict over abolitionism home to the town on the Passaic River. It created a split between millowners and lesser manufacturers. Although they enthusiastically supported the 1828 petition, Paterson's largest employers shunned the anti-slavery organization. A number of medium-sized manufacturers and their wives filled the leadership vacuum. Shoemaker John Avison and dyer John Leazer served as officers of the organization. The wives of Hiram Hatheway, a merchant tailor, and William Cundell, a tin and iron manufacturer, served on the Anti-Slavery Society's Board of Directors. Not a single cotton mill owner or machine shop operator took a leadership role in the Society.<sup>97</sup>

A number of them did, however, serve as officers of the Colonization Society of The Town of Paterson, which held its first meeting four months after the founding of the Anti-Slavery Society. Colonizationists opposed the abolitionist movement. Rather than eliminating slavery outright, the former hoped to further "by all legal and constitutional means, the intellectual and moral improvement of the African race."<sup>98</sup> The colonizationists believed that moral suasion rather than force would be enough to convince southerners to voluntarily free their



slaves. This approach offered a legal way out of the slavery dilemma without seriously disrupting the social system. Millowners John Colt, Abraham Godwin, Jr., and John Benson all served as officers of the Colonization Society, while tin and iron manufacturer Horatio Moses was elected as its treasurer.<sup>99</sup>

Great antagonism developed between the two organizations. In 1839, the Anti-Slavery Society retroactively blamed the colonizationists for an outburst of violence directed against a May, 1838, abolitionist meeting. On the night of May 21, a crowd assembled outside the meeting place, attempting to disrupt the gathering by throwing stones at windows and by beating a large drum whenever someone spoke. After the Anti-Slavery Society hurriedly concluded its meeting, the crowd attacked the building, breaking windows and doors. A constable standing nearby did nothing to halt the crowd. After approximately one-half hour, one of the town's most prominent citizens appeared on the scene and dispersed the crowd.<sup>100</sup>

A considerable difference of opinion existed over the night's events. The Anti-Slavery men claimed that a large and dangerous crowd jeopardized their personal safety. The Intelligencer, on the other hand, reported that the "mob" consisted of a couple of dozen boys and a few adults out for some fun. The paper also claimed that the abolitionists ingloriously ran away at the first sign

of trouble. The members of the Anti-Slavery Society launched a bitter attack against the colonizationists, implying that they secretly egged on the crowd and that they should take responsibility for the outbreak of violence. In a statement printed in The Intelligencer, the abolitionists judged their opponents to be morally bankrupt since their position on slavery actually contributed to its continuation rather than its demise. "The ethical code which it teaches sanctions slavery in practice. The theory which it advocates does not more essentially rivet the slaves chains than its practice, removing the free to where their condition cannot tempt the poor slave to disaffection, secures the continuance of slavery."<sup>101</sup> In the eyes of the anti-slavery men such immoral men could easily have stirred up a crowd to attack an abolition meeting. Events in Paterson mirrored those in other communities.

As Leonard Richards pointed out in his study of anti-abolitionists, advocates of colonization often played a key role in fomenting attacks on anti-slavery meetings in various towns and cities. Given the threat that abolitionism presented to Paterson's cotton industry, it would not have been surprising to find Paterson millowners involved in such activities.<sup>102</sup>

Differences between large and small manufacturers surfaced on other issues as well. In 1835, for example,

opponents of the efforts of the Boudinot Manufacturing Company to obtain a corporate charter from the state legislature, circulated a petition in Paterson. The drafters of the document claimed that such charters led to the growth of monopolies which unfairly limited competition. A number of small manufacturers obviously agreed with this perception since they added their names to the petition.<sup>103</sup> Mill and large shop owners, a number of whom had investments in the company, strongly opposed the petition, actively maligning the leaders of the movement. Although the company eventually obtained its charter, the incident indicated that in some instances, Paterson's employers had sharply divergent concepts about what course of action to follow in encouraging the expansion of manufacturing.

Whatever their differences over slavery or business incorporations, Paterson's manufacturers adopted similar workplace policies towards their employees. Given the realities of local, regional, and even international competition, Paterson's mill and shop owners attempted to run their operations as efficiently as possible. The high rate of turnover among manufacturers attests to the difficulty of their achieving that goal with the limited financial resources at their disposal. Concerted efforts to control labor costs or alter traditional workplace practices often put shopowners on a collision course with

their hands. Such unified actions on the part of employers evoked quick, organized responses from the men and women working in their shops and mills.

The town's merchants, shopkeepers, and professional men played a pivotal role in the conflicts that developed between manufacturers and their employees. Lawyers, doctors, grocers, printers, and barbers came to Paterson in search of the many economic opportunities available in a rapidly growing community. They supported the idea that the continued health and expansion of the town's manufacturing enterprises represented the key to future economic development. A significant number, however, parted company with the majority of the manufacturers on key social and political questions of the day. While recognizing the economic imperatives governing the actions of mill and shop owners, many of the people in the middling ranks of Paterson society formulated their own ideas about the nature and future direction of the society in which they lived.

## FOOTNOTES

1. North, pp. 192-193
2. True American, 17 Feb., 1821, Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society, IV, p. 166.
3. One of the fullest examinations of early 19th century handloom weaving can be found in Duncan Bythell, The Handloom Weavers - A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). Information of American handloom weaving is much scarcer. Material can be found in the following: David Montgomery, "The Shuttle and the Cross: Weavers and Artisans in the Kensington Riots of 1844," Journal of Social History, 5, (1972), pp. 411-446; Bruce Laurie, Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); and Jonathon Prude, The Coming of Industrial Order - Town and Factory Life in Rural Massachusetts 1810-1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
4. Nathan Appleton, Introduction of the Power Loom, and Origin of Lowell (Lowell: B. H. Penhallow, 1858), p. 9; and Samuel Batchelder, Introduction and Early Progress of the Cotton Manufacture in the United States (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1863) pp. 61-64.
5. Scientific American, I., No. 20, p. 314; Centinel of Freedom, 18 May, 1818; Nelson Papers, Interview with John Colt, 8 August, 1873.
6. Centinel of Freedom, 18 May, 1818; A. S. Bolles, Industrial History of the United States (Norwich: The Henry Bill Publishing Co., 1818), p. 414; Isaac Holmes, An Account of the United States of America; Derived From Actual Observation, During A Residence of Four Years in That Republic (London: Caxton Press, 1823), pp. 198-199; Fisher, Census of Manufacturing, 1829. The figure of 2 cents a yard refers strictly to the cost of weaving, including labor, loom repairs, and lubricants.
7. Census of Manufacturing, 1827, 1829.
8. The information is from James Montgomery, A Practical Detail of the Cotton Manufacture of the United States of America; And the State of the Cotton Manufacture of That Country Contrasted and Compared with that of Great Britain; with Comparative Estimates of the Cost of Manufacturing in Both Countries (Glasgow: John Niven, 1840); and J. W. Lozier, "The Forgotten Industry: Small

and Medium Sized Cotton Mills South of Boston," in Working Papers From the Regional Economic History Research Center, eds. Glenn Porter and William H. Mulligan, Jr., 2, No. 4 (1979) pp. 101-124.

9. Middle district mills tended to borrow machinery from both the northern and southern districts. They never developed their own machine manufacturing center as did the other two regions.

10. Caroline Ware, The Early New England Cotton Manufacture - A Study in Industrial Beginnings (Boston, New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1931), pp. 23-24; Anthony F. C. Wallace, Rockdale - The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 140-143; and Thomas Dublin, Women At Work - The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 62-67.

11. Collet's brother Robert had operated a cotton mill prior to 1816. The site was later incorporated in the Godwin, Rogers & Company machine works.

12. Census of Manufacturing, 1827, 1829, 1832; Paterson Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

13. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1938.

14. J. Montgomery, pp. 166-169.

15. Trumbull, p. 319; Centinel of Freedom, 25 April, 1815, 7 May, 1816, 29 April, 1817; Intelligencer, 17 May, 1826, 1 May, 1833, 21 March, 1838.

16. Jasper Grosvenor was a rich New York merchant. In 1845 he had an assessed wealth of between \$100,000 and \$250,000. Ketcham, while financially secure, did not have resources equal to those of Grosvenor. Edward Pessen, Riches, Class and Power Before the Civil War, (Lexington: D.C. Heath & Company, 1973), p. 324.

17. Pessen, p. 47.

18. Wallace, p. 122.

19. United States Congress, House Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States, 22nd Congress, 1st Session, House Executive Documents, 27, 1833 rpt. in The New American State Papers - Manufactures 1789-1860, Gen. Ed., Thomas C. Cochran (Wilmington, Scholarly Resources Inc., 1972), 6, pp. 135-169.

20. Lozier, p. 103. The SUM may have contributed to this situation. They leased both mill sites and water rights to Paterson manufacturers. It is possible that they could legally prevent millowners from replacing water power with steam power.

21. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

22. J. Montgomery, pp. 170-171; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

23. Patterson millhands normally reported for work at 5:00 a.m. in the summer and 7:15 a.m. in the winter.; Intelligencer, 20 August, 1835.

24. The information on the machinery actually used in the mill is from an advertisement in the Intelligencer, 7 October, 1835. The operating procedures are from J. Montgomery, pp. 26-111.

25. Ten carding engines per mill seems to have been standard in southern district cotton mills. See Wallace, p. 138. By the 1820's cards were made out of metal rather than leather in automatic machines.

26. Wallace, p. 145.

27. Dublin, p. 67.

28. Intelligencer, 20 August, 1835; New American State Papers, pp. 168-169; Kull, p. 601. Paterson wages were generally higher than those in the rest of the state.

#### Paterson

Men \$7-10 per week  
Boys \$2-3 per week  
Girls \$2-2.75 per week

#### New Jersey

Men \$6 per week  
Females \$1.90 per week  
Children \$1.40 per week  
(under 12)

29. Nicholas Smith, Letters to Andrew Backus, 5 July, 1822, 7 July, 1828; John Smith, Letter to Andrew Backus, 8 October, 1822, MSS., Rodman-Harvey Papers, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library, New York, N.Y.

30. New State Papers, p. 153.

31. Nelson Papers, Interview with John Colt, 8 August, 1873.

32. Census of Manufacturing, 1832.
33. Niles Register, 4th series, 2, No. 3 (1830); Intelligencer, 10 March, 1830; New State Papers, pp. 142-143.
34. New State Papers, pp. 142-143; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
35. Colt was obviously a shrewed businessman. He served on the Board of Directors of the Phoenix Manufacturing Company even as his firm competed with Travers' operation; Intelligencer, 8 October, 1828.
36. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
37. Material for the chart was drawn from Census of Paterson, New Jersey, 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832, and Census of Manufacturing, 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832. For more information on family weaving see Jonathon Prude, "The Social System of Early New England Textile Mills: A Case Study 1812-1840," in Working-Class America: Essays on Labor, Community and American Society, eds., Michael H. Frisch, Daniel Walkowitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 1-36.
38. Census of Paterson, 1827; Census of Manufacturing, 1829, 1832.
39. Census of Paterson, 1825-1832; Bio Data.
40. Census of Paterson, 1825-1832; Bio Data. Samuel Fisher was inconsistent in the manner in which he identified weave shops in the various censuses. In some cases he formally labelled them "weave shops," listing the number of hands employed. In other cases, he only noted that a certain individual had a considerable number of looms in operation, without identifying the facility as a shop.
41. Intelligencer, 8 Nov., 1826.
42. Census of Paterson, 1825-1832; Bio Data.
43. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
44. Trumbull, p. 51.
45. Lozier, pp. 101-104. Between 1810 and 1837, Lowell machine shops accounted for only 4% of all patents for cotton and woolen machinery.



46. Kull V, p. 102.

47. George S. Gibb, The Saco-Lowell Shops: Textile Machinery Building in New England, 1813-1949 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 177-178.

48. Of a sample of 73 owners, supervisors, and former apprentices attached to the Paterson machine shops, 63% were born in the United States. The remainder were immigrants from England, Ireland, and Scotland; Intelligencer, 8 August, 1836; Bio Data.

49. Census of Manufacturing, 1825-1832.

50. Samples of such ads can be found in the Intelligencer, 12 Sept., 1827, 20 Jan., 1830. The letter from the Petersburg manufacturer originally appeared in the National Journal published in Washington, D.C. The Intelligencer reprinted it on 26 July, 1827.

51. It appears that a fourth man, William Whitehead, Jr., had an interest in the firm of Godwin, Rogers & Clarke. An ad in the Intelligencer of May 7, 1828, notified the public that the firm of Godwin, Rogers, Clarke and Whitehead was being dissolved, to be replaced by Godwin, Rogers & Co. While Whitehead bowed out, Clarke continued on as member of the company. Whitehead apparently left Paterson around the same time. Census of Population, 1829.

52. Godwin, Clarke & Co. employed 210 hands by 1832, while Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor had a payroll of 121 people. Census of Manufacturing, 1832.

53. Robert E. Naumberg, "Two American Textile Pioneers," in Transactions of the Newcomen Society, 6, (1925-1926), p. 152. The basic cap spinner was still in use in worsted mills 100 years later. Arkwright patented the mechanized water frame for spinning. Crompton developed the mule spinner and Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny.

54. Gibb, p. 78.

55. American Railroad Journal, 24 Dec., 1836, p. 11.

56. Trumbull, p. 51; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838. Both the Baldwin works in Philadelphia and the Locks & Canals Company in Lowell switched from manufacturing textile equipment to the construction of locomotives.

57. New York American, 27 Oct., 1837.
58. American Railroad Journal and Mechanics Magazine, 15 Dec., 1839, pp. 14-15. Among the visitors to the shop during this period was Daniel Webster. George Stephenson, an Englishman, developed one of the first steam locomotives.
59. Intelligencer, 1 March, 1837, 21 March, 1838; Bio Data.
60. Intelligencer, 24 July, 1833, 4 Sept., 1833, 18 June, 1834.
61. Intelligencer, 27 Feb., 1828, 4 July, 1838, 11 May, 1831.
62. Edward Hazen, The Panorama of Professions and Trades; Or Every Man's Book (Philadelphia: Uriah Hunt, 1836), p. 220.
63. Census of Paterson, 1832; Census of Manufacturing, 1832; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
64. Tanners play a key role in relation to the mills. The production of leather belts to run the textile machines constituted a major portion of their output.
65. Susan Hirsch, Roots of the American Working Class - The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), p. 26. See also Gibb; Census of Paterson, 1825-1832; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
66. Census of Paterson, 1825, 1827, 1832.
67. Intelligencer, 20 Oct., 1836.
68. Census of Paterson, 1825, 1832.
69. Census of Paterson, 1825, 1832; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
70. Hirsch, p. 34; Census of Paterson, 1825, 1832.
71. Hirsch, p. 71.
72. Census of Paterson, 1825, 1832; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

73. Census of Manufacturing, 1825, 1827, 1829, 1832.

74. C. P. Longwell, A Little Story of Old Paterson - As Told By An Old Man (Paterson: no publisher, 1901), pp. 52-53. Longwell based his book on discussions with his father who had worked in the cotton mills. Bio Data; Census of Paterson, 1825-1832. Thirteen of twenty-one major manufacturers lived on these streets.

75. Colt's Hill was the site of a lavish mansion built by Roswell Colt, head of the SUM and brother of manufacturer John Colt. The hill upon which he erected his residence was an artificial one, created of local sand and rock by area laborers.

76. J. W. Lozier, "Rural Textile Mill Communities and the Transition to Industrialism in America," in Working Papers From The Regional Economic History Research Center, eds. Glenn Porter and William H. Mulligan, Jr., 4 No. 4 (1981), pp. 78-95; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832. An additional thirteen black families were living in the heavily Dutch Manchester section in 1832. Most slaves in the Acquackanonk area had belonged to Dutch farming families. In general, there is little information available on blacks in Paterson during the early industrial period.

77. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

78. Information on cabinetmaker Bernard Sheridan indicates that he relied exclusively on apprentices to perform the various tasks in his shop. In 1827 he employed five hands in his shop. In January of 1829, Sheridan placed an ad in the Intelligencer offering a reward of 6 cents each for the return of four runaway apprentices. When Samuel Fisher conducted his town census six months later, the cabinetmaker indicated that he only had one hand in his employ. Census of Paterson, 1827, 1829; Intelligencer, 7 Jan., 1829.

79. Census of Paterson, 1832.

80. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

81. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

82. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

83. Intelligencer, 4 July, 1827, 10 Feb., 1830.

84. Intelligencer, 11 Jan., 1826, 15 Feb., 1826, 25 Feb., 1835, 30 Dec., 1835.

85. Intelligencer, 20 Oct., 1830, 16 Feb., 1831.

86. Intelligencer, 11 April, 1827.

87. Intelligencer, 16 Dec., 1829.

88. Records of the Township of Paterson, New Jersey, 1831-1851; With the Laws Relating to the Township; Extracts From Contemporary Newspapers and Notes, ed. William Nelson (Paterson: Evening News Job Print, 1895), p. 4.

89. Intelligencer, 8 Feb., 1837, 14 June, 1837. Of the five towns which made up Passaic County, Paterson was by far the largest. In the vote for county seat, residents of the town cast 1160 votes. The other four towns cast a total of 664. Only nineteen inhabitants of Paterson voted to locate the county seat in one of the other communities.

90. Intelligencer, 14 April, 1830, 5 June, 1833, 25 June, 1834.

91. Intelligencer, 25 June, 1834.

92. Nelson and Shriner, p. 149.

93. Laurie and Wallace have dealt extensively with the relationship of the temperance crusade and evangelical protestantism to the decline of working class radicalism in the late 1830's. Paul Johnson, in his study of Rochester, New York, uncovered the closest links between the efforts of employers to discipline their workers and the spread of moral reformism. See Paul Johnson, A Shopkeepers Mellenium - Society and Revivals in Rochester, N.Y. 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). See in particular pages 116-141.

94. Memorial from Paterson in New Jersey - Praying the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia, MS, Library of Congress Collection of House of Representatives Documents, HR 20A-G5.1, Box #274, bundle labelled Jan 9- May 12, 1828, 20th Congress, 1827-1829. 128 Patersonians affixed their names to the document.

95. Memorial from Paterson.

96. In 1836, two Paterson mechanics, John Kershaw and William T. Bradley, were sent to Pendleton, South Carolina to install newly purchased equipment. See Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr., The Textile Industry in Antebellum South Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. 23. The Intelligencer also noted sales of machinery to southern mills from time to time.

97. Intelligencer, 11 April, 1838, 16 Jan., 1839.

98. Intelligencer, 29 August, 1838.

99. Intelligencer, 29 August, 1838.

100. Intelligencer, 23 May, 1838, 30 May, 1838, 30 Jan., 1839.

101. Intelligencer, 30 Jan., 1839.

102. Leonard Richards, Gentlemen of Property & Standing - Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

103. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.

## CHAPTER III

The rapid growth of Paterson's population resulted in increased opportunities for individuals involved in professional and commercial pursuits. Doctors, jewelers, grocers, bakers, and teachers provided inhabitants with vital services and resources. Depending on the patronage of manufacturers and operatives alike, the men involved in these occupations played a key role in the social, political, and economic life of the town. While recognizing the importance of manufacturing to Paterson's current and future prospects, many retailers, service workers, and professional men took the town's mill and shop owners to task for their failure to actively support issues such as temperance. At the same time, they repeatedly lashed out at the unseemly behavior exhibited by operatives and mechanics.<sup>1</sup> They found many of the actions of Paterson's workers repugnant to their sense of propriety and respectability.

In northern district milltowns such as Lowell, manufacturers dominated local social institutions. This was not the case in most southern district towns. Operating as individuals, southern district mill owners rarely exercised the kind of total control that the Boston Associates had over their manufacturing towns. Spending most of their time guaranteeing the survival of their firms, they could not afford the luxury of participating in

community affairs on an ongoing basis. Bankers, lawyers, and storekeepers moved to fill the leadership vacuum created by the absence of the shopowners. Being self-employed, they had the time to help shape the varied aspects of life in the New Jersey town.

Individuals engaged in retail or wholesale trades dominated the ranks of Paterson's non-manufacturers. This group included bakers, grocers, tobacconists, butchers, printers, and tallow chandlers, among others. While some of them functioned strictly as merchants, buying and selling goods, others actually manufactured the items that they sold in their stores. In 1825, approximately 110 establishments engaged in commercial activities; seven years later, the number stood at 175. The number of slaughterhouses and meat markets increased from two to seven, bakeries from two to four, and groceries from twenty-three to forty. Over time, the range and type of goods offered for sale became more diverse. By 1838, Paterson boasted a fancy hosiery store, a coal yard, a pianoforte manufactory, an oil store, and a silver and brass plating operation.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the recovery of the cotton industry in the early 1820's, farmers controlled the local retail trade. The Dutch established country stores during the SUM and post-SUM periods. These outlets sold a wide variety of goods to Paterson's millhands and journeymen. The limited

number of stores could not match the demand created by the industrial expansion of the 1807-1815 period. Manufacturers remedied the situation by establishing company stores. J. W. Lozier points out that this practice developed more out of economic necessity than out of any sense of paternalism.<sup>3</sup> Millowners, short of cash due to a scarcity of specie in the region, found it easier to pay off their employees with store orders rather than with hard cash. Charging approximately the same prices as local merchants, the manufacturers rarely earned large profits from their stores. As more hard currency came into circulation in the mid 1820's, cotton producers rapidly withdrew from the retail trade, preferring to pay their hands in cash.<sup>4</sup>

At least nine Paterson millowners continued to operate grocery or dry goods stores between 1825 and 1829. By 1832, the number fell to zero. Most of those with retail outlets began manufacturing in the area prior to 1820. Newly arrived shopowners avoided the trade altogether. Some of the early millowners operated commercial establishments prior to their entrance into the cotton industry. Adrian Van Houten, born in Acquackanonk in 1776, ran a country store before moving to Paterson in 1816. Van Houten's family received one of the original land patents in the late 17th century and still owned large tracts of property in the region. In partnership with his



father-in-law, Cornelius Van Winkle, he opened up a similar business in the manufacturing town. While running the store, he became involved in a small scale carding and spinning operation. By 1825, Van Houten employed eighty hands at spinning and weaving in the Passaic Mill while maintaining his interest in the store. He withdrew from cotton manufacturing in 1829.<sup>5</sup>

John Benson's career followed a pattern similar to that of Van Houten. His father, Johannes Benson, owned land in Acquackanonk in addition to being a resident agent for the SUM. The younger Benson, born in July of 1786, originally planned to be a doctor. Due to ill health, he gave up his medical career and became a storekeeper. In the early 1820's, he and John Rutan set up a cotton spinning operation in the Harmony Mill which employed twenty-three hands. They sold the firm to Warren Haight sometime before July of 1827. Benson returned to the spinning trade in 1831, establishing a co-partnership with a member of the Godwin family. This second venture failed during the 1838 depression.<sup>6</sup>

Other millowners, such as John Colt, John W. Berry, and Abraham Godwin, Jr., opened stores after establishing themselves in cotton or duck production. Choosing to devote most of their energy to manufacturing, which provided higher rates of return, they jettisoned their grocery stores as soon as it proved feasible. Even

after the millowners gave up their retail establishments, a number of smaller manufacturers in the clothing, shoe, and hat trades continued to combine the functions of merchant and producer. Increased nationwide competition made it increasingly impractical for individuals to carry out both functions. Only Paterson's merchant tailors were successful in combining both roles. Shoemakers, hatters, and others either became full-time merchants or worked in repairs rather than in primary production.

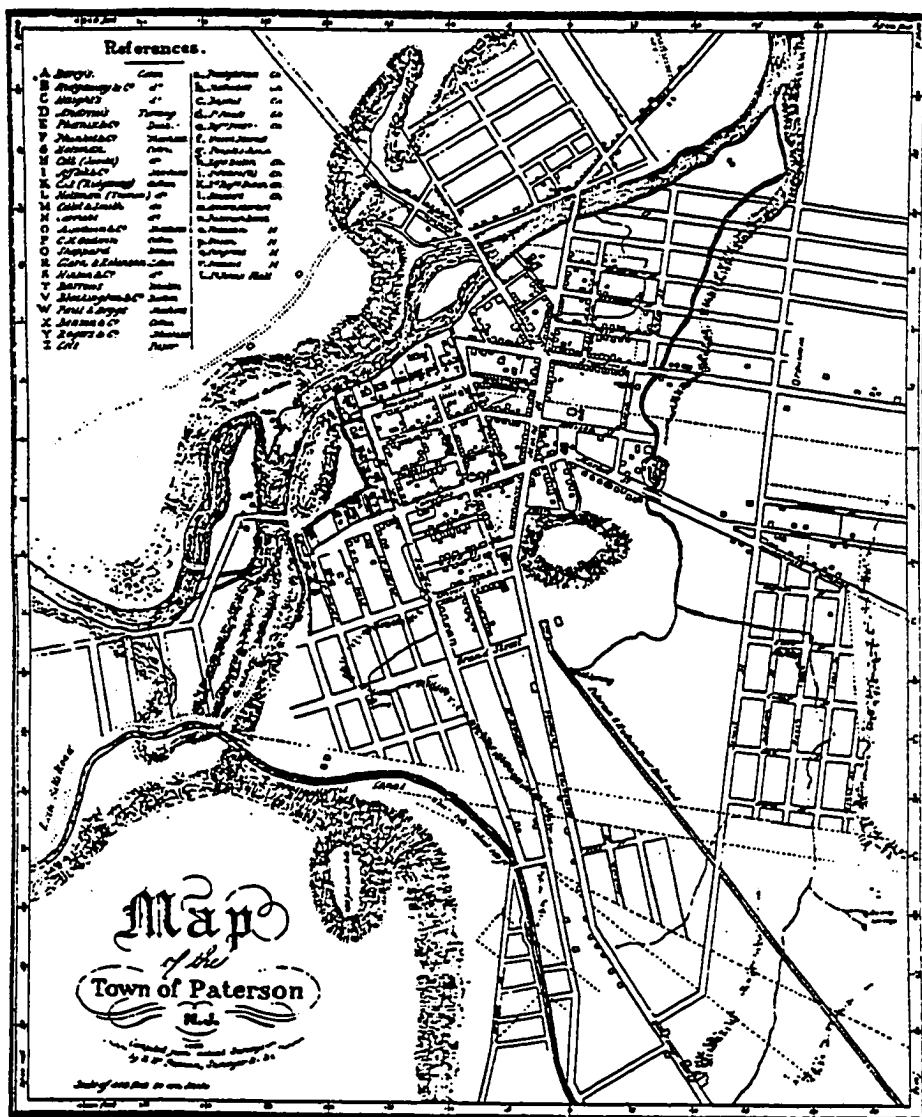
Main Street, between Ward and Division Streets, rapidly became the focal point of commercial activity in Paterson. C. P. Longwell referred to the one story, frame buildings along the street as "queer, low, old fashioned frame buildings." The few wooden or brick sidewalks constructed along Main Street could be seen "oozing trickling rills" on sunny winter days.<sup>7</sup> The thoroughfare itself remained unpaved; during the spring, wagons would sink up to their hubs in the mud. Of the 160 shopkeepers in residence between 1827 and 1832, forty-three lived on Main Street. Most of them lived in attic flats above their stores. A look at one small stretch of the street gives an indication of the diversity of commercial enterprises in existence in the town. The following individuals could be found living alongside each other on Main Street in July of 1832:<sup>8</sup>

Charles Hequembourg - watchmaker and jeweler  
James W. King - grocer  
Stephen F. Lawrence - merchant tailor  
James Moore - chair and looking glass merchant  
Robert Morehead - barber  
James McPherson - confectionary store owner  
William D. Quinn - watchmaker and jeweler  
James Rea - carpet weaver  
William MaGee - physician  
Charles H. May - saddle and harness maker  
Mose DeWitt - post office operator

A similar mixture of shopowners and professionals occurred along Broadway, the town's second largest commercial street, as well as along Congress Street. Nearly fifty percent of Paterson's businessmen and professionals lived on one of the three streets. The remainder lived scattered all across the town.<sup>9</sup>

The Reformed Dutch and Irish Catholics played a greater role in commerce than they did in manufacturing. Along with Presbyterians, they constituted over sixty-three percent of the town's merchants and professional men.<sup>10</sup> Catholics, however, functioned within a very circumscribed section of the town's mercantile economy. In 1832, fifteen of twenty-five Irish Catholics in commerce identified themselves as grocers. They tended to live on streets with high concentrations of Catholics.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that Irish storekeepers served a very localized traffic composed primarily of their fellow countrymen. They operated small stores, often combining their retail activities with other types of endeavors. James Ward, Francis Finnegan, and Patrick Agnew combined handloom weaving with the running of

## PATERSON 1835



COURTESY OF ARTHUR ROSEN, PRESIDENT, GREAT FALLS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
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their shops. Charles O'Neil plied his trade as a shoemaker while running a small store. Thomas Burke, Patrick Butler, and John Kear combined the functions of grocer and building contractor while John Slavin operated a bowling alley in conjunction with his grocery.<sup>12</sup> No other group exhibited such a high degree of occupational intermingling.

In contrast to Irish Catholics, Dutch-Americans gravitated towards the operation of taverns. Men of Dutch descent ran eleven of sixteen licensed facilities in Paterson.<sup>13</sup> There are a number of possible explanations for this connection. The Dutch owned most of the land along the major thoroughfares in outlying sections of the town. The steady flow of traffic in and out of the growing manufacturing center represented a lucrative market for someone interested in selling food and drink. Their close ties with area farmers assured the proprietors a consistent supply of locally produced spirits. A prospective owner had to obtain a license from town officials in order to operate a lawful establishment. The long tenure of the Dutch in the Acquackanonk area and their dominance over local government offices, gave potential tavern keepers a distinct advantage over newly arrived migrants from other regions or countries.

The predominance of Presbyterians in baking and watchmaking is more difficult to explain. Paterson's three watchmakers and eleven bakers all identified themselves as

members of that faith. Unlike Irish Catholics or Dutch-Americans, Presbyterians came from all over the United States and the British Isles.<sup>14</sup> Rather than congregating in well defined areas, they lived all over Paterson serving a broad cross-section of the population.

The family composition of Paterson shopkeepers resembled that of manufacturers employing less than five hands. Retailers had an average of three children below the age of sixteen in each household and a total of approximately 6-1/2 people per family unit. It appears that some of these young people were not family members. Although wives and children usually helped out in the stores, men involved in commerce also hired boys to help in their establishments. In February of 1831, storekeeper William S. Moore advertised for "A smart, active Boy, to attend a Dry Goods Store." Moore specified that he wanted a "youngster from the country." Bonnel M. Haggerty offered a similar position to a boy who could speak fluent Dutch.<sup>16</sup> While apprenticeship remained in existence in such vocations as printing and baking, no such system existed in most aspects of the retail trade. While some of the young men hired to work in stores boarded with their employers, most lived at home with their own families.

The relatively small number of children in the households of shopkeepers indicates that many of them were either older men at the end of their careers or young men

just starting out. The fact that twenty-four of one hundred and sixty families had no children below the age of sixteen supports this contention. Men involved in commerce experienced the same economic uncertainties as did those individuals engaged in manufacturing. Very often a skilled millhand or journeyman would save enough from his regular earnings to open a small store. Unless he produced his own goods he had to borrow money for the purchase of items to stock his shelves. A sudden drop in business proved to be a quick route to bankruptcy. As evidenced by advertisements in the Paterson Intelligencer, businesses changed hands rapidly. More than one shopkeeper found himself back in the ranks of the town's workingmen. While some Paterson men involved in commerce conducted extensive operations, most establishments remained small, depending heavily on a local trade.

A number of women became involved in commerce or manufacturing upon the deaths of their husbands. Phoebe Boyd took over the operation of a market house when her husband Daniel died sometime between 1827 and 1829.<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Kelly became a milliner after the death of her husband, Robert, a cabinetmaker. Lea Sims, following in the footsteps of her husband John, continued on in the tailoring trade. Other widows followed similar paths.<sup>18</sup> Some continued to carry on their husbands' businesses while others went into millinery work, one of the few non-factory

trades open to women. In either case, women constituted only a small segment of Paterson's manufacturers and shopkeepers.

Master artisans operated in the same general economic environment as did the town's shopkeepers and small manufacturers. These carpenters, masons, painters, wheelwrights, harness makers, and teamsters provided local inhabitants with a variety of vitally necessary services. They employed journeymen and apprentices on a fluctuating basis, depending on the nature of the work they obtained. Some of the masters operated as contractors, bidding for jobs, negotiating with employers, and supervising their workforce. Others labored right alongside the two or three journeymen in their employ. A number of the master artisans ran one-man operations out of small shops or other facilities. These craftsmen, heavily dependent on the millowners for much of their business, identified more with other manufacturers than with their own journeymen. Stage drivers and teamsters carried the millowners' cloth and yarn to New York, while masons and carpenters built their wheel pits and their homes. Machinemakers, merchant tailors, and successful shopkeepers, not mill operatives or journeymen, provided painters, glaziers, and upholsterers with most of their trade. In their role as employers, master artisans had to grapple with issues of wages and hours as did mill and shop owners.



The large number of Dutch-Americans working as master craftsmen reflected the traditional origin of that sector of Paterson's economy. Nearly one-third of all those engaged in such work identified themselves as being of the Dutch Reformed faith. They predominated in two specific trades: six of nine master wheelwrights and nine of eighteen master carpenters were Dutch-American.<sup>19</sup> A vital segment of the early farm economy, these two trades were among the first to be separated from the self-sufficient agricultural homestead. The Acquackanonk Dutch passed on these trades from generation to generation. A large number of craftsmen resided in the New Manchester section north of the Passaic River, the focal point of Dutch-American community life. Many of them continued to farm even as they practiced their trades.

In addition to Dutch-Americans, native born Presbyterians and Methodists from New York and New Jersey dominated the ranks of the master artisans. This mirrors the pattern found among manufacturers employing fewer than five hands. Immigrants from England and Ireland represented a clear minority of those employed in the crafts. Catholics, in particular, worked in less skilled jobs as teamsters, hacklers, and watergate tenders. Others worked as building contractors, providing general laborers for construction projects. Englishmen followed a more specialized path, finding work as painters and glaziers or stonecutters.

Many master craftsmen lived on Broadway, on Main Street or in New Manchester, as did nearly half of the small manufacturers.<sup>20</sup> While some of the artisans worked out of offices or small shops, others conducted business from their homes. Engaged in the selling of their own skills or in the labor of others, it made sense for them to live in the heart of the town's commercial section. The composition of their families bore striking resemblance to those of the merchants and small manufacturers. Craftsmen averaged about six people per household as did the shopowners. Both groups had approximately three children below the age of sixteen per family unit. The number of childless couples did, however, represent a major difference. Only six of the sixty families in this category lacked children. This represented one of the lowest rates for any of the town's occupational groups.<sup>21</sup> The high number of Dutch-Americans among the master artisans may account for this fact since they generally had fewer childless households than any other group. Even though many of the Dutch no longer depended solely on farming for their livelihood, they retained the custom of large families so common in early agricultural communities.

Craftsmen tended to board males over the age of sixteen somewhat more frequently than did the small manufacturers and storekeepers. Eight males and four females lived in the house of carpenter Cornelius Garrison,

for example. Of the twelve, only three were below the age of sixteen. Peter Tice, a wheelwright, indicated that seven males and two females dwelled under his roof. Tice reported that only two of them were younger than sixteen.<sup>22</sup> Given the fluctuating nature of the demand for their services, some of the master artisans found it convenient and more economical to board the necessary journeymen or apprentices. Most craftsmen did not, however, board more than one or two individuals, if indeed they kept boarders at all.

Master artisans shared the economic instability so common to Paterson's small manufacturers and commercial men. Having worked their way up from being apprentices and journeymen, their operating capital came almost exclusively from accumulated savings or the sale of property. Success depended heavily on a continual flow of work. Obtaining contracts proved no problem during the middle and late 1820's. The dramatic expansion of Paterson's population created a boom in construction which proved to be a bonanza for local artisans. Between 1824 and 1832, Paterson's builders constructed 421 homes as well as numerous factories and shops.<sup>23</sup> Once the initial surge tapered off, work proved to be less plentiful. Many of the journeymen who had graduated to the ranks of the employers now found themselves hard pressed to secure contracts. While many returned to the ranks of the working tradesmen,

others left the town or found employment in the machine shops.

Unlike master artisans, Paterson's professional men found steady employment throughout the period. Manufacturers and merchants depended on bankers and lawyers to help them manage their personal affairs. Cotton millowners hired bookkeepers and overseers to conduct the day to day functioning of their enterprises. Doctors, in both private practice and in the public dispensary, attended to the medical needs of the community while teachers provided for the education of the town's children. Judges, magistrates, and sheriffs enforced the law, handling everything from murder cases to mortgage foreclosures.

Magistrates, doctors, teachers, and others often reached professional careers through circuitous routes. Nicholas Smith worked as an agent for the Harmony Mill before becoming a magistrate while Judge Abraham Reynolds operated a cotton mill prior to the 1816 depression. Joseph Sherburne ran a grocery store and taught school before he joined Smith as a magistrate. A number of doctors, in addition to curing their patients, operated medicine stores which sold a variety of drugs and other goods. Dr. Lambert Sythoff taught school while he practiced medicine. Uzial Freeman combined teaching with his work as a surveyor while Andrew Parsons ran a grocery store after he served as a

bank president. Lawyers spent a good deal of their time involved in politics.<sup>24</sup>

The families of professionals most closely resembled those of the larger manufacturers although there were significant differences. While mill and large shop owners had more people per family unit than any other occupational group in Paterson, professionals had the fewest. The number of childless households represented another significant difference. Families without children comprised over one-fifth of the total of professional household units as compared to less than one-tenth for the major manufacturers.<sup>25</sup> Age played a major role in this case. Almost all of Paterson's professional men attained their status well into their working lives. With the exception of a few lawyers fresh out of school, most of the town's teachers, doctors, or supervisory personnel spent years at their occupations or at other types of work. Many of the millowners, by contrast, began manufacturing operations at fairly young ages, reaching their prime working years in the 1820's and 1830's.

Boarding individuals, either as a wage savings or as a supplement to the family income, proved to be unnecessary for professional families. Outside of employing an occasional clerk or assistant, most professionals worked by themselves. While a few of them earned genuinely high incomes, most earned a sufficient if

moderate salary. A number of doctors, lawyers, and clergymen employed free Negroes as domestics on a full time basis, indicating the relative lucrativeness of their callings.<sup>26</sup>

In his study of Episcopalians in America, William W. Manross determined that members of that faith occupied positions at the top of the social structure of most ante-bellum communities.<sup>27</sup> In Paterson, more Episcopalians could be found in the ranks of the large manufacturers and the professionals than in any of the other occupational groups. Most of those professionals not identifying as Episcopalians were Presbyterians. Adherents of the two denominations comprised a majority of the individuals in both job categories. The lack of Irish Catholics among millowners and professionals constituted another common trait. While many of Paterson's Irish came with specific job skills and some economic resources, few of them had any professional training. Their position as first generation Americans or newly arrived immigrants limited their access to education, a crucial first step on the road to becoming a doctor or a lawyer. A small number of Irish did receive such training in Ireland, following their callings upon their arrival in the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Although few if any Dutch-Americans could be found in the ranks of the large and medium sized shopkeepers, they did constitute a significant segment of Paterson's

professional community. Professionals of Dutch descent included a number of doctors, two magistrates, a judge, a banker, a teacher, and two mill supervisors. The relative affluence of many of Paterson's Dutch-American farmers plus their long tenure in the region made it possible for their sons to go to college to acquire the necessary training. A career as a lawyer or doctor proved attractive to many young men whose prospects of obtaining significant landholdings proved to be remote. Other Dutch-Americans utilized their artisan training to move into the ranks of the town's professionals. For example, Cornelius Blauvelt and Cornelius H. Post, the two mill supervisors, started out as skilled tradesmen in the Phoenix Mill. Blauvelt became a foreman after a number of years while Post, a millwright by training, served as a superintendent in a number of area mills.<sup>29</sup> While Dutch males maintained their ambivalence to mill work for their families, they wholeheartedly embraced the occupational opportunities provided them by the expansion of industry.

Professionals, in contrast to the major manufacturers, dwelled in various parts of the town. Doctors and teachers, serving local constituencies, could be found throughout Paterson. Twelve physicians lived on nine different streets as did thirteen teachers. Lawyers, given their involvement in commercial matters, gravitated towards Main Street. Three of five lawyers in 1832 resided

on that one street. Mill supervisors tended to live near the cotton mill and machine shop operators; other professionals generally shunned Mill Street, Boudinot Street, and Congress Street, the heart of Paterson's industrial district.<sup>30</sup>

The men engaged in commerce, artisan trades, and professions held divergent attitudes towards contemporary social concerns. In some cases their interests converged while in other instances they sharply differed. In a similar fashion, the individuals in these three occupational categories both supported and condemned the positions taken by mill and shop owners on a number of issues. Manufacturers and non-manufacturers alike displayed a great concern for the future of their town; disagreement sometimes arose over the best way to achieve that goal.

Grocery store owners, master carpenters, and lawyers all strongly supported efforts to obtain a railroad for the town and to politically separate Paterson from Acquackanonk. A railroad offered prospects for economic growth and expanded commercial opportunities for all of the town's inhabitants. Professionals, merchants, and craftsmen, along with the manufacturers, assumed major positions of leadership in the legislative campaign to obtain a corporate charter for a railroad. They played a similar role in the effort to establish Paterson as an



independent township. The separation of the town from Acquackanonk meant expanded opportunities for individuals interested in securing election to public office. Professionals and, to a lesser extent, men involved in commerce, saw local politics as a logical steppingstone to higher office. Upon the successful completion of the effort, a number of those active in the drive stood for election to town government.

For many of them, however, their concerns over economic growth did not extend to the arena of national politics. Only the professional men consistently backed millowners in their attempts to gain protection for domestic industry. Retailers and master artisans completely removed themselves from such efforts to secure protective legislation. Manufacturers did receive public support from the town's lawyers, doctors, and supervisory personnel. Economic self-interest represented a major factor contributing to this marked difference in attitude. Strong financial ties bound many professional men to the fortunes of Paterson's existing manufacturers and to proposed business ventures. Mill supervisors W. H. K. Bibby and William L. Clarke served as members of company boards of directors. Magistrate Abraham Reynolds and banker Andrew Parsons served on the board of the Paterson Fire Insurance Company while Magistrate Cornelius Westervelt and mill agent Josiah Crismond took the lead in

establishing an incorporated firm to bring anthracite coal to Paterson.<sup>31</sup>

The involvement of these men in the world of manufacturing and large scale commerce produced a strong commitment to expansion of industry, a sense that was lacking among many merchants and master artisans. While all Patersonians recognized that the town's fate depended on the strength of its manufacturing enterprises, a significant number of them feared the growth of ever larger incorporated enterprises. Many shopkeepers and master artisans signed a petition circulated early in 1835 opposing the incorporation of the Boudinot Manufacturing Company. Although considerable controversy erupted over the veracity of the document, the petition put forth the attitude of many Patersonians towards business incorporations and the threat of monopoly.<sup>32</sup> The authors of the petition stated that corporate charters impinged on individual rights by giving special privileges to a specific segment of society. According to the document, the group behind the proposed venture planned to use their charter rights to raise money to pay off outstanding debts. The petitioners claimed that the charter, as written, provided the company with broad economic leverage which would render it a virtual monopoly. Such powers violated the very spirit and intent of the actions of the founding fathers and threatened the ability

of the current generation to "...hand down to posterity, unimpaired, those rights and liberties which have been bequeathed to us by the wisdom of the sages and the blood of heroes."<sup>33</sup>

At least eight master artisans and twenty shopkeepers signed the petition. In contrast, only four professional men affixed their names to the document.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly enough, some of these same people supported efforts to obtain the legislative charter for a railroad. They truly believed that a railway line benefitted the entire community, even though some people made money on the venture. Incorporated manufacturing companies, on the other hand, produced profits for a few select individuals, extending to them all sorts of legal protection unavailable to unincorporated firms or commercial establishments. The first represented a positive step towards facilitating the operation of a free market system while the second resulted in the strangling of that economic structure. Differing perceptions as to what represented the best route to take to economic expansion divided many master artisans and commercial men from the professionals and major manufacturers.<sup>35</sup>

Paterson's merchants and professional men demonstrated much greater unanimity on issues of ethics and morality. They filled the vacuum created by the unwillingness of most Paterson mill and shop owners to

publicly and consistently oppose the widespread immorality perceived to be rife in the town.<sup>36</sup> In addition to being the driving force in the campaign against slavery, doctors, teachers, grocers, and watchmakers took the lead in such issues as temperance, the banning of theatrical performances, and the establishment of educational facilities.

To most of those concerned with public morality, the consumption of alcohol represented the most pressing problem. Most "respectable" ante-bellum Americans identified intemperance as the root cause of poverty, crime, disease, and social unrest - forces that threatened to undermine society. While the reformers identified Paterson millhands, journeymen, and laborers as their chief protagonists, they also attributed the problem to the unwillingness of the town's manufacturers to curb their own use of spirits. With little support from a significant segment of community leadership and active opposition from a majority of the town's citizens, the embattled merchants and professionals took the burden upon their own shoulders.

Professionals and shopkeepers assumed major leadership roles in the town's three temperance societies. They also headed auxiliary organizations such as the Paterson Bible Society and the Paterson Tract Society.<sup>37</sup> The Bible Society, founded in November of 1835, disseminated the scriptures at home and abroad with Dr.

Elias J. Marsh playing a key role in the establishment of the Society. In the Spring of 1837, the Paterson Tract Society came into existence. Another physician, Lemuel Burr, served as one of the directors of the organization. Once a month members of the Society distributed religious and moral tracts to any family that would accept them. In addition to distributing 72,000 pages of tracts in its first year of operation, the organization held eighteen district prayer meetings. Acting as a kind of moral clearinghouse, the Tract Society recruited sixty-nine children to attend sabbath schools, ten children to attend infant or public schools, and obtained 111 pledges to the temperance society.<sup>38</sup>

The deleterious effects of such public events as circuses and theatrical performances greatly concerned Paterson's professionals and shopkeepers. In April of 1833 they organized "a very large and respectable meeting" in order "to take into consideration the propriety of encouraging theatrical plays, circuses and other exhibitions of similar character." They believed that those activities historically undermined "the liberties, the morals and the happiness of nations and individuals." The existence of such amusements lured young people into wasting what little money they saved.<sup>39</sup>

Touring circuses regularly stopped in Paterson in the 1820's and 1830's. The low admission prices, ranging

from twenty-five to fifty cents for adults to half price for children under ten, attracted a broad cross-section of the town's population. According to C. P. Longwell, circus operators made concerted efforts to bring workers to the shows by parading horses around the mills at the end of the work day. The promoters wisely refrained from putting on performances in the afternoons because they realized that "time in those days was too precious to allow a circus to interfere with work." Longwell believed that workers would have left the mills in droves if shows had been held during working hours. There is little doubt that such shows were very popular. During the 1836 July 4th weekend, for example, the Columbian Circus put on six performances, drawing nearly three thousand customers.<sup>40</sup>

The conveners of the 1833 meeting generally found circuses to be a bad influence on the town's working people. A writer for the Intelligencer remarked that "it is but a few years since nearly all travelling circuses were regarded in anything but a favorable light, from the fact that generally speaking they were characterized by indecency and immorality." Even though circuses had been "...studiously divested of vulgarity, so that the most fastidious mind cannot be offended by a word or action introduced," many Patersonians still vehemently opposed their visits to the town.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the circuses, various theatrical troupes visited the town. According to historian Russel B. Nye, two types of touring dramatic groups operated during the ante-bellum period.<sup>42</sup> One type, emphasizing the writings of Shakespeare and other notable writers, appealed to more affluent members of society. In contrast, popular theater, geared to Paterson's less wealthy citizens, depended heavily on social satire, comedy, and colorful spectacles to attract audiences. The former charged as much as a dollar for its performances while a ticket for the latter usually cost between ten and thirty cents. Both types of ensembles performed in Paterson during the period.

In April of 1833, "Kotzebue" wrote to the Intelligencer describing a theatrical group which would soon be leaving Newark for Paterson. The correspondence advised readers that the troupe had recently completed successful performances, of the highest skill and quality, in New York and Philadelphia. Supporters of another group visiting the town in 1831 assured the public that "nothing will be performed that will have a tendency to give offence to the modest eye or ear." The notice went on to state that since the all-male company had been so well received, they planned to bring a couple of actresses from New York to join them in Paterson.<sup>43</sup>

Two promoters, Messrs. Belcour and Pennington, brought a different type of group to Paterson in March of

1831. They advised town inhabitants that their show included songs, rope tricks, pantomime, and the performance of a farce. The two showmen assured the public that "proper officers are engaged to enforce decorum," a sign they expected a far from sedate audience. A further indication of their target audience was the location for the sale of tickets, Post's "bar." The performance staged by Belcour and Pennington represented the kind of public entertainment that the people attending the April, 1833, meeting wanted to do away with. They urged town magistrates to take all steps necessary "for the suppression of such exhibitions."<sup>44</sup>

Master artisans, professionals, and men involved in commerce took responsibility for setting up the meeting. Teachers Joseph McKee and Uzial Freeman, mill foreman Cornelius Blauvelt, painter and glazier T. W. Whitely, postmaster Moses DeWitt, and storekeeper Ralph Doremus constituted the elected leadership of the gathering.<sup>45</sup> While Paterson's manufacturers may have attended the meeting, they did not assume positions of leadership. Their lack of interest in banning theatrical performances mirrored their failure to get heavily involved in the temperance movement. While they doubtlessly approved of the efforts of others to set limits on the public behavior of their workers, Paterson manufacturers demonstrated little enthusiasm for most aspects of the crusade for moral



reform.

Education represented a key element in restoring morality to social life, in the view of Paterson reformers. Men involved in commerce and the professions took the lead in efforts to provide educational opportunities both for their own children and for the sons and daughters of Paterson's workingmen. Their goals for the two groups varied greatly. Merchants or doctors sent their offspring to school to receive specialized training. Boys learned practical job skills such as bookkeeping or surveying in addition to reading, writing, and mathematics. Although girls received training in the latter three areas as well, their education focussed on domestic arts such as sewing and music. Privately run institutions like the Methodist Academy, the Paterson Select English and Classical Boarding and Day School, the Washington Academy, and the Paterson Select Female Boarding and Day School, catered to the children of manufacturers, professionals, and merchants. Instructors, many of whom were clergymen, rented space in buildings, charging a variety of fees, depending on the difficulty of the subject matter taught.<sup>46</sup>

In order to attract new students, teachers often solicited public endorsements from the parents of their former pupils. When Thomas Briggs opened a school in the fall of 1830 he obtained endorsements from a machine manufacturer, a merchant tailor, a cabinetmaker, two

blacksmiths, a tin and sheet iron manufacturer, five shopkeepers, a banker, and a doctor. Tough competition for students forced teachers to advertise in the Intelligencer on a regular basis. In his 1827 census, the Reverend Samuel Fisher found seventeen "pay" schools with a total of 633 pupils in operation in Paterson. The editors of the Intelligencer pointed out that this represented only one-third of the town's children between the ages of three and sixteen. The remaining two-thirds received no daily educational instruction.<sup>47</sup> While some of them received minimal instruction in Sunday schools, most of them had no contact with any type of formal education. Many people saw the lack of educational opportunities for the children of workers as representing a threat to the continued health and well-being of the community. The founders of the Youth's Sunday School, in 1834, voiced these concerns in an Intelligencer article:

They must of necessity grow up uninstructed and undisciplined in such courses of moral and intellectual action, as are befitting citizens and freemen - the victims of ill-regulated passions and appetites, vicious examples, and improper companionships. Such a state of things in a community whose happiness and prosperity depend almost entirely upon the intelligence and morals of its population, is an evil which calls for the wholesome interference of all who have its best interests at heart.<sup>48</sup>

In this view, education rescued young people from a life of ignorance and despair. It prevented them becoming either a burden or threat to society. While private schools also

taught morality and proper standards of behavior to the children of millowners or doctors, the context in which it was done was very different. The tone of an advertisement for Joseph McKees Select English and Classical School contrasted sharply with that projected by the founders of the Youth's Sunday School:

The discipline of the school is mild but firm; appealing in every case to the hearts and consciences of the scholars, rather than to their fears of punishment and public rebuke. And the most untiring efforts are made to secure their esteem and affection; to inspire them with a love of truth, independence and integrity and to teach them habits of industry, self-control and manly action. Strict attention is paid to their amusements, companionships and general conduct.<sup>49</sup>

Rather than have the offspring of mill operatives and journeymen go to school with their children, Paterson's more affluent citizens called a special meeting on April 7, 1827, to explore establishing a school for "poor children." People attending the meeting appointed a committee of two millowners and a doctor to formulate proposals in this regard for the upcoming Acquackanonk town meeting. On April 9th, that meeting allocated four hundred dollars for the education of the poor. Paterson residents utilized their share of the funds, \$250.00, to set up a poor school, while residents of other township communities used the appropriation to send children to existing schools. In its first year, Paterson's school registered 134 pupils of whom eighty attended on a regular basis. A committee of clergymen recruited and evaluated potential students. In

its first annual report, the committee urged continued support for the effort, appealing to the patriotic instincts of the town's inhabitants.

It was well said, by one of the early Patriots of our revolution that "intelligence is the life of liberty." What patriot, then - what real friend of American liberty and independence - yea, what philanthropist, who feels for the welfare of fellow man, when he surveys the population of Paterson, and sees how many children, who, in consequence of the poverty of their parents, are destined to grow up in ignorance unless the hand of charity is extended to them, will hesitate a moment to raise his voice on behalf of so interesting and important an object.<sup>50</sup>

Inadequate funding and the inability of a majority of "poor" children to attend daytime classes limited the effectiveness of the poor school. Most children from workingmen's families labored sixty-five to seventy hours a week in the cotton mills. Their wages were an important part of the family income. Few, if any, of the young millhands could be spared to attend school on a regular basis. Officials noted, however, that school attendance increased during slack seasons. In order to provide the bare rudiments of an education to the children of laboring families, concerned citizens established an infant free school as well as a number of Sunday schools. According to a statement published in the local newspaper, the families of working children generally failed to take advantage of the opportunities provided for their sons and daughters. "It is a subject of serious regret, however, that parents, whose children are necessarily employed at labour during

the week, do not more generally feel the importance of causing them to attend some of these institutions on the Sabbath."<sup>51</sup>

Despite many setbacks, Paterson's shopkeepers, professionals, and master artisans continued to push for an expansion of educational opportunities for the children of laboring men and women. From 1831 to 1835 men such as grocers John Brown and John Tilby, jeweler Charles Hequembourg, storekeeper James Moore, and doctor Elias J. Marsh, served on the town school board. When the town meeting switched to a trusteeship system in 1836, members of the three occupational groups secured seven of ten positions.<sup>52</sup> Throughout the period, efforts to regulate and improve the behavior of the town's citizens remained a constant concern of these individuals. A small number of people, however, disagreed with many of their actions. Drawn from the same trades and occupations, they rejected efforts to enforce a single standard of morality on Paterson's inhabitants. In a number of instances they came into direct conflict with their fellow merchants and professional men.

The establishment of a Philosophical Society in 1826 by English-born tailor Abraham Larwell marked the beginning of an active free-thought movement in Paterson. Composed of skilled artisans and "young professional men," the members of the organization openly criticized moral and

religious orthodoxy.<sup>53</sup> Freethinkers viewed secular education as a major weapon in combatting intolerance and in creating a truly democratic society. To further their aims they set up a library and Mechanics Institute as well as a lecture series. In March, 1829, they invited Francis Wright to deliver a lecture in Paterson. Her attacks on organized religion and her advocacy of non-sectarian, progressive education made her a notorious celebrity in many quarters. A "Free Enquirer on the Passaic," in an article in a freethought newspaper, described the impact of her visit on the town.

"...seldom has the spirit of truth more strongly manifested itself than on the present occasion;" members of every religious persuasion crowded to listen to the voice of the "apostle of knowledge"...Many have been added to the searchers after knowledge, who forever deserting the banners of faith, with unclouded reason, now follow fearlessly the footsteps of truth, towards the haunts of knowledge, the abodes of wisdom, virtue and happiness.<sup>54</sup>

Wright advocated the early education of the nation's youth as the most effective means of guaranteeing the future of the Republic. In line with her ideas, Paterson freethinkers established the Society for the Promotion of a Liberal System of Education. Shortly after her visit, the Society voted to establish their own school, The Jefferson Institute. George Rothery, a small manufacturer and a founder of the Institute, explained in an Intelligencer article that the freethinkers wanted a school:

...where no faith shall be taught, but where opinions of

one man shall be as much respected as that of another, and where that large proportion of time, usually directed to the learning of catechisms and sectarian doctrines and opinions, shall be occupied in teaching man his relations and his duty to this fellow creatures in the learning of some useful science and demonstrable knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

Many Patersonians, including the editor of the Intelligencer, objected to the establishment of such an institution. One correspondent to the newspaper attacked Wright's position on the family, sexual relations, religion, and the law. "Is then the design of these patrons of education to make this doctrine of unrestrained and promiscuous intercourse, a branch of education in their liberal seminary?" The anti-religious sentiments of the freethinkers rendered them totally unfit to be involved in the education of children, according to the writer. He believed that their rejection of Christian morality could only lead young people astray. A school founded upon Wright's ideas would encourage students, in the correspondent's view, "to steal the property of their generous patrons, or violate the chastity of their daughters, or even murder them," without fear of earthly or heavenly retribution.<sup>56</sup>

The irony of the situation was that the founders of The Jefferson Institute were all respectable members of the community, not wild-eyed, atheistic radicals. Prominent manufacturers Daniel Ridgeway and Thomas Rogers served on the committee as did mill supervisors Josiah

Crismond and John Stott. Other participants included a grocer, a tavern keeper, a weaver, and the operator of an auction market. Many of them played active roles in town affairs. While a number of the freethinkers identified as atheists or deists, others, such as Rogers, owned pews in local churches. Although many of them identified with mainstream religious denominations, they did not generally support the temperance movement. Only auctioneer Robert Chiswell ever publicly joined efforts to control the sale and use of alcohol.<sup>57</sup> Many of the founders of The Jefferson Institute assumed leadership in a variety of community activities. The crusade against liquor, however, failed to move them to action.

Concerted public opposition and a general lack of support led to the closing of the Institute within a few months. After this brief spate of notoriety, Paterson's freethinkers curtailed some of their public activities. In 1831, they held a celebration to commemorate the birthday of Tom Paine. English immigrants took the lead in organizing the festivities. Many British shopkeepers, artisans, and workingmen looked upon Paine as a hero because of his stinging attacks on the English monarchy and his active support of the French Revolution. While Americans had viewed him in much the same light during their own revolution, his attacks on organized religion and George Washington after the war made him a pariah in his



adopted homeland. Migrating Englishmen attempted to restore Paine's reputation in the United States through their yearly celebrations of his birthday.<sup>58</sup> Daniel Ridgeway, the English millowner and supporter of The Jefferson Institute, played an active role in the event as did Ralph Shorrock, an immigrant painter.<sup>59</sup> Shorrock delivered the following eloquent testimonial to Paine at the celebration: "Shall we forget," added the speaker, "the memory of this great political pilot, abused and outlawed, vilified and calumniated by the powers that be, because his irresistible pen cut too deeply against them, and exposed too forcibly the crimes and superstitions by which they made their living?"<sup>60</sup>

For these men, religious intolerance represented a real threat to political democracy. The association of the established church with the repressive policies of the English government created strong anti-clerical sentiment among many freethinking immigrants. Their aversion to the marriage of religion and politics shaped their attitude towards the temperance movement. Two incidents in the summer of 1834 moved Paterson freethinkers into open opposition to the anti-liquor crusade. Late in August, a group of disguised men attacked a beer house in nearby Bloomfield. They destroyed its stock of liquor and took its proprietor to a nearby field where they "stripped and otherwise abused him." Shortly after the Bloomfield

incident, a similar attack occurred in Newark.<sup>61</sup> Fearing the rising influence of the temperance movement, a group of Patersonians formed the Anti-Union of Church and State Society. The following excerpt from their constitution explained their attitude towards the combining of organized religion and state power. "We acknowledge a due respect to true religion and to the religious part of the community, so long as they remain separate from temporal power, ...But intemperate zeal of the over religious has perverted it (the temperance movement) into a tool for obtaining power and wealth by misrepresenting both the object and the cause.

The freethinkers did not oppose the use of education or moral suasion in the campaign against alcohol. They did, however, object to the efforts to establish legal constraints over the sale of strong drink. The Anti-Union Society believed that restrictive laws, both in England and the United States, deprived the general population "of all their former, popular, healthful, cheap and innocent recreations and amusements," substituting a "rigid System of would-be-religion," that forced people to turn to drink for their entertainment. It would be doubly wrong to then turn around and ban the sale of liquor as well. In retaliation, the freethinkers committed themselves to "exposing the vices and crimes of the rigid professors of religion, and of the pious

prosecutors of their neighbors."<sup>62</sup>

The Anti-Union of Church and State Society stirred up considerably controversy. Joseph McKee, local agent for the state temperance organization, used the pages of the Intelligencer to condemn the "church and state" and "Priestcraft" people as charlatans and drunkards. In January of 1835, members of the Society became embroiled in a controversy with one of their own supporters, George Henry Evans, editor of The Man in New York City. Evans failed to print a copy of the organization's constitution and by-laws which they had sent to him. He defended his lapse in a letter to "Edward Earle, Shoemaker and Agent for The Man, Paterson, N.J." He assured Earle that oversight rather than malicious intent lay at the base of his failure to publish the material. "...this friend Earle, is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; and so you need say no more about throwing 'a handful of shoemaker's knuckles' in my eyes for not making acknowledgement of crimes never committed."<sup>63</sup> Attacks against Evans also arose from opponents of the anti-church and state organization. A letter signed by "Many Patersonians" condemned his ties with the Society, claiming that he used The Man "as an organ of proselytism to this Society." The authors of the letter went on to condemn the freethinkers as "the tag, rag and bobtail of the barroom - a Society, the aggregate of whose moral worth is too minute to be appreciated by the keenest vision." Evans defended

the members of the Society as "men of the highest respectability" and as "followers of various useful occupations," reaffirming his support of any doctrine he considered "purely republican."<sup>64</sup>

Evans correctly characterized members of the organization. Officers of the Society included two mill supervisors, a teacher, four storeowners, a painter, and a journeyman shoemaker. Only one of them labelled himself a deist. The others identified with established denominations. Two Society members, Josiah Crismond and Ralph Shorrock, had participated in earlier freethought activities. Six of the nine leaders immigrated to Paterson from the British Isles.<sup>65</sup> While three members of the Anti-Union of Church and State Society supported efforts to end the sale of liquor prior to the Bloomfield attack, none of them did after the incident. The existence of an organized group of freethinkers in Paterson reflected the diversity of values and beliefs existing among the town's shopkeepers, professionals, and master artisans. While many lawyers or merchants attempted to enforce community-wide standards of behavior, others actively resisted the imposition of moral orthodoxy.

Differences over the nature of the relationship between employers and employees also existed within these occupational groups. Master artisans adopted the same policies as the town's manufacturers. Influenced by

similar patterns of economic instability and increased competition, the former found it necessary to control wages while increasing productivity. This brought them into direct conflict with the journeymen in their employ. Professionals and men involved in commerce adopted less uniform attitudes towards Paterson's journeymen and millhands.

Many of them, in their desire to guarantee Paterson's ongoing prosperity, agreed with the efforts of manufacturers and master artisans to mold a disciplined, productive workforce. These storekeepers and professional men found the anti-social behavior of supposedly inebriated workingmen distasteful and disruptive. Their desire to alter the situation dovetailed neatly with the goals of the mill and shop owners. Other men engaged in the professions or in commerce refused to condemn the actions of the town's laboring population. Recognizing that their fortunes were largely tied to those of the machinists and the millhands, they supported local workers in their conflicts with the employers.

The range of difference found among Paterson's master artisans, professionals, and merchants existed among the town's working men and women as well. Coming from a wide diversity of locations and experiences, these Dublin shoemakers, Dutch-American carpenters, British loomtenders, and New England machinists, found themselves in a common

environment struggling with the same basic issues. On a number of occasions, they responded as one, developing a unified plan of action to obtain redress of existing grievances. In other situations, they allowed ethnic, religious, or occupational differences to undermine or divert this sense of shared purpose. Their role at the base of Paterson's economy made them a factor that could never be ignored. In that position, they remained a constant catalyst of political and social conflict.

## FOOTNOTES

1. In A Shopkeeper's Millenium, Paul Johnson explored the pivotal role that the middle class of Rochester, New York played in that town's social and economic development. As was the case in Paterson, master artisans, merchants, and professional men dominated most aspects of life in the booming industrial town.
2. Census of Paterson, 1825, 1832; Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
3. Lozier, "Rural Textile Communities and the Transition to Industrialism in America," p. 87.
4. Lozier, pp. 87-88.
5. Nelson and Shriner II, p. 53; Nelson, History of the City of Paterson, p. 251; Census of Manufacturing, 1825.
6. Nelson and Shriner II, p. 70; Census of Manufacturing, 1827, 1832.
7. Longwell, p. 52.
8. Census of Paterson, 1832.
9. Census of Paterson, 1832.
10. The percentage of men engaged in commerce from these three groups approximated their overall standing in the town's population. In 1832, they comprised 63.1% of the total population as compared to 63.7% of those engaged in commerce. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
11. The fifteen grocers lived on eight different streets as did 63.1% of all the Catholics living in Paterson. Census of Paterson, 1832.
12. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
13. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
14. Bio Data; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
15. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.
16. Intelligencer, 2 Feb., 1931, 16 Feb., 1831.
17. Census of Paterson, 1827, 1829.

18. Census of Paterson, 1824, 1829, 1832;  
Intelligencer, 1 March, 1826.

19. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

20. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

21. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

22. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

23. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

24. Bio Data; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

25. Fourteen of sixty-seven professional families had no children below the age of sixteen in their households. In contrast, only two of thirty-five major manufacturing families were childless. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

26. Seven of sixty-seven professional families listed "colored" or "black" inhabitants. The number for major manufacturers was eight of thirty-five. In both of these cases, blacks worked as domestics. Sixteen families involved in retail trades also boarded blacks. These families primarily operated grocery stores, taverns, and hotels. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

27. William W. Manross, The Episcopal Church in the United States 1800-1840. A Study in Church Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), pp. 180-182. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, the author determined the occupational backgrounds of 424 individuals involved in the Episcopal Church. The largest number worked as professionals or held political office. Merchants represented the third largest group. Only sixteen of the total were craftsmen while twenty-six listed their occupations as manufacturers. Manross did point out that the nature of the sources used were heavily weighted towards the upper ranks of society.

28. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832. Only four Irish Catholics could be found in the ranks of Paterson professionals. Two were teachers, one was a doctor, and one served as a justice of the peace. Laws instituted by England after Cromwell's invasion of Ireland had severely limited professional opportunities for Irish Catholics. Although most of the restrictions had lapsed or had been repealed by the early nineteenth century, only a limited number of Irishmen received any type of professional training.



29. Clayton, p. 548; Nelson and Shriner II, p. 76; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

30. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

31. Intelligencer, 8 Oct., 1828, 25 Feb., 1835, 1 June, 1836, 4 Jan., 1837.

32. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.

33. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.

34. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832; Bio Data.

35. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835. At least seven of the petition signers had been active in the railroad campaign. Five of the seven participated in commercial activities.

36. Of sixty-eight artisans identified, no more than a handful participated in the crusade for moral reform. This was one trait that they shared with both Paterson's manufacturers and the town's workingmen.

37. Intelligencer, 18 Nov., 1835, 2 May, 1838; Bio Data.

38. Intelligencer, 2 May, 1838. The Society reported that Paterson inhabitants turned down 1700 pages of tracts, a very slight percentage of all tracts in the community.

39. Intelligencer, 10 April, 1833.

40. Longwell, p. 22; Intelligencer, 6 July, 1836. No performances were held on Sundays.

41. Intelligencer, 10 April, 1833.

42. Russel B. Nye, Society and Culture in America, 1830-1860 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974), pp. 146-148. Serious theatres charged as much as \$2.00 for tickers, although fifty cents or seventy-five cents was the norm. Popular theatres usually charged between ten cents and thirty cents for a performance.

43. Intelligencer, 3 April, 1833, 9 March, 1831.

44. Intelligencer, 16 March, 1831, 10 April, 1833.

45. Intelligencer, 10 April, 1833; Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

46. Intelligencer, 26 April, 1826, 28 May, 1834, 22 Feb., 1837. Fees in these particular schools ranged anywhere from \$4.00 to \$10.50 per quarter depending on the subject studied.

47. Intelligencer, 5 Oct., 1830, 1 Aug., 1827; Census of Paterson, 1827.

48. Intelligencer, 18 Jan., 1834.

49. Intelligencer, 28 May, 1834. McKee was also the primary Paterson agent for the leading temperance organization in the state of New Jersey.

50. Intelligencer, 19 April, 1828.

51. Intelligencer, 1 Aug., 1827.

52. Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, pp. 36-38.

53. Albert Post, Popular Freethought in America 1825-1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 115.

54. The Free Enquirer, 4 March, 1829. Attempts were made to disrupt the meetings conducted by Wright but they appear to have failed.

55. Intelligencer, 4 March, 1829.

56. Intelligencer, 25 March, 1829.

57. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832; Bio Data. Over 190 citizens of Paterson signed an 1834 petition against the illegal sale of small quantities of liquor. Chiswell was the only freethinker to add his name to the list. The freethinkers did not participate in any of the other temperance organizations or campaigns.

58. Accounts of the Paine birthday celebrations are found in Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) and John B. Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City: A Social History of Abolition and Labor Reform in Jacksonian New York," Diss., City University of New York, 1976.

59. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832; Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society, 5, No. 8 (1963).

60. The Free Enquirer, 12 Feb., 1831.

61. Intelligencer, 27 Aug., 1834.

62. Intelligencer, 10 Sept., 1834.

63. The Working Man's Advocate, 24 Jan., 1835.

64. The Working Man's Advocate, 7 Feb., 1835.

65. Interestingly enough, they were not all Englishmen. Three were from England, two were from Ireland, and one was from Scotland. Bio Data.

## CHAPTER IV

Throughout the 1820's and 1830's, wage earners constituted the bulk of Paterson's population. In 1825, approximately 1,295 men, women and children worked in the town's mills and shops. This number increased to nearly 3,250 by 1832.<sup>1</sup> The census figures do not begin to reflect the actual number of men and women who came to the New Jersey town in search of employment. Paterson, like many other ante-bellum communities, experienced considerable amounts of both in-migration and out-migration. Slight fluctuations in manufacturing employment resulted in families leaving Paterson to search for work elsewhere. Changes resulting from technological developments such as the decline of handloom weaving in the late 1820's, contributed to the instability of the town's population. Of the twenty-two weaving families living on Marshall Street in 1825, for example, only thirteen could be found in Paterson seven years later.<sup>2</sup> Of these thirteen only three still lived on Marshall Street and none of them were involved in handloom weaving. The tenuous status of many wage earning families and the lack of adequate systems of public relief contributed to high rates of geographic mobility so common during the period.

In contrast to the homogeneous workforce in the northern and middle district mill towns, Paterson's wage earners came from a wide variety of backgrounds and

locations. John Edwards, for example, was born in Trowbridge, England in 1809 and began working in cotton and duck mills at age eleven. In 1826, he became an apprentice at Godwin, Rogers and Clarke. He remained with Godwin, Clarke and Company as a journeyman until 1838, when they made him a foreman. Ten years later, he left the firm to become a partner in Charles Danforth's company. Another Englishman, John Royle, came to Paterson with his family around 1830. While still a boy, he went to work at Collet & Smith's cotton mill, remaining there for six years. Royle's father, a gardener by trade, found work as a laborer at the machine shop of Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor. They took John on as an apprentice after his father died in a workplace accident. After completing his term, John stayed with the company as a machinist. Cornelius H. Post, of Dutch-American descent, moved to Paterson around 1816. In 1817, his family apprenticed him to learn the wheelwright's trade. Taking advantage of this training, he obtained employment as a millwright at the Phoenix Mill in 1822 where he kept the various machines in operation. Four years later, the company promoted him to the rank of superintendent, a position he held in various area cotton mills for the next thirty years.<sup>3</sup>

Carpenter William Crosset, a farmer's son, moved in and out of mill work with considerable frequency. Born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in 1797, he arrived in

Paterson in 1819, after having previously lived in Eastport, Maine, and Bloomingburgh, N.Y. Beginning his apprenticeship at a late age, he learned the carpenter's trade from David Reed. After completing his term, he first went to work as a house carpenter, and then became a millwright, specializing in the repair of cotton manufacturing machinery. In the late 1830's he worked as a pattern maker and as a gunstock maker at Samuel Colt's gun manufactory. In between, he functioned as a contractor, employing other journeymen to help in the construction of buildings. In 1850, he still listed himself as a carpenter for U. S. census takers.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Pope, born in western New York in 1811, had an even more varied working life than Crosset. Moving with his family to Paterson at the age of two, he started working at Colt's Duck Mill in 1821. After transferring to the Phoenix Mill, he nearly sliced off the fingers of his left hand in an accident. After recovering, he learned the turning trade from William Jacobs. Rather than pursuing turning, he became, in succession, a stagecoach driver, a building contractor, and a railroad fireman, as well as the operator of a stone quarry and a lumber yard.<sup>5</sup>

Two Irish Catholics, Patrick Agnew and Charles O'Neill, turned to shopkeeping after laboring as skilled workingmen. Agnew, from County Armagh, came to the United States in 1820, at the age of twenty, already trained as a

handloom weaver. He worked as a duck weaver in Paterson for many years until he opened up a liquor store and a grocery. Charles O'Neill, from Dessartmartin, in County Derry, combined the trades of shoemaking and farming. He migrated to America in 1826, at the age of twenty-three. After landing in Quebec, he moved to Vermont, working as a farmer in the summer and as a shoemaker in the winter. O'Neill moved to New York the following year where he ran a boot and shoe store. In 1828, he settled in Paterson, working as a shoemaker. Forced out of the trade by ill health, he opened a retail coal store in 1836, a business he continued to operate for many years.<sup>6</sup>

All of these individuals experienced significant occupational changes over the course of their working lives. They began laboring at an early age, having been apprenticed to learn specific skills. Upon completion of their training, they worked at their trades in artisan shops, in the cotton mills or in machine shops. While a number remained in the mills moving up the occupational ladder over time, others permanently left the shops in favor of other lines of work. While not every Paterson working man became a manufacturer, a grocer or a mill foreman, many did. Paterson's expanding economy constantly created new possibilities for those male workers who possessed the necessary skills.

Women, however, did not have access to the same

opportunities. Sewing, spinning, and weaving constituted the focal points of vocational training for young girls. This generally limited their job possibilities to working in cotton mills, tailoring shops or millinery shops. Upon reaching adulthood, many women left the labor force to raise their families. Those who worked did so without any real prospects of significant change in their occupational status.

The structure of work in Paterson cotton and duck mills reflected fundamental divisions between male and female labor. Men held the few skilled or supervisory positions available in the mills while women worked as semi-skilled or unskilled operatives. The production of yarn and cloth became a highly segregated industry in terms of the gender and age of the workforce. The Phoenix Manufacturing Company, for example, was the only Paterson firm to employ large numbers of men in its textile operations. In the summer of 1832, the Phoenix Mill reported that it had 138 men on its payroll. Most of them worked on turning out linen duck on specially built hand looms. The maximum number of men employed in a cotton mill, by comparison, were the twenty-one working for Daniel Holsman in 1827.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the Phoenix hands, they either repaired machines or labored in the spinning department.

The male spinners in the cotton factories occupied



a very different position in the mill hierarchy than did the female operatives. Exercising complete control over their departments, they were responsible for the flow and tempo of production. Spinners hired and fired their own assistants, paying them from a lump sum received from the millowners. Even though they served in a supervisory capacity, spinners viewed themselves as skilled craftsmen, having progressed through the traditional apprentice and journeyman system. They formed their own trade and benefit societies in order to strengthen their position with the millowners. These associations often came into conflict with employers over hours of work or rates of pay.

A number of Paterson spinners came from the British Isles. Robert Stafford, who continued to work at his trade until the age of seventy, was born in Derbyshire, England, in 1758. He worked as a journeyman spinner for nearly fifty years. Robert McNamee, an Irish Catholic, started out as a cotton mill laborer. He soon learned to be a spinner, following the trade for many years, as did his son Bernard. James Wade, another Irish Catholic, also learned to spin after arriving in Paterson.<sup>8</sup>

The immigrant spinners antagonized some of the local populace. Timothy B. Crane, proprietor of a recreation area located near the Great Falls, complained bitterly about them to a visiting clergyman, Isaac Fidler. "From his conversation, I found that Americans, in general,

in the vicinity of Paterson, have degrading notions of England and its people, generally from the specimens they behold in our weavers and spinners....They quite demoralize the place. Their conduct and language are abominable."<sup>9</sup> The desire to get rid of the independent spinners provided much of the impetus for the development of simplified spinning machinery.<sup>10</sup> Although mechanized spinning increased dramatically during the nineteenth century, cotton manufacturers still depended heavily on recalcitrant spinners to turn out finer grades of yarn. The other men employed in the mills worked as machinery repairmen or as laborers, unloading and cleaning raw cotton. Women and children comprised the remainder of the mill workforce. Rapid advances in the design and operation of cotton machinery in the early 1820's greatly simplified the various manufacturing processes. The female and juvenile hands learned their jobs within a very short period of time, often doing little more than setting up the machines for operation and moving semi-finished goods from one location to another. Older girls and young women carried out complex tasks while youngsters below the age of sixteen did the more routine work.

The composition of Paterson's mill workforce in 1827 reflected the advanced level of mechanization already attained in the cotton industry. In that year, 686 boys and girls below the age of sixteen worked in the

manufactories as compared to 386 women and 232 men.<sup>11</sup> According to the Reverend Dr. Samuel Fisher and the editors of the Intelligencer, the availability of mill work for adolescents constituted a boon for the town's many widows. In 1832, the number of Paterson families headed by women stood at 163. These women supported 834 people. Fisher publicly stated that "were it not for the manufacturing establishments (they) would be dependent either on their friends, or the public, for their support." By 1838, the number of widows stood at 212. On that occasion, editors of the Intelligencer remarked that these single women "derived their support principally from the labor of their children in the various manufactories."<sup>12</sup>

According to an analysis of 20% of the town's female-headed households, there was an average of nearly 2.4 children below the age of sixteen in each family unit. This means that over half of the children employed in the mills may have come from such households.<sup>13</sup> Other children laboring in the mills came from the families of Paterson workingmen. One journeyman cordwainer, for example, had five of seven children employed in the mills. They ranged in age from a girl of twenty to a boy of twelve. William H. Campbell, another wage earner, sent four of his own children and a boarder to work in the cotton factories.<sup>14</sup> Advertisements in the Intelligencer indicate that some millowners, in addition to hiring

individual children, attempted to recruit whole families to work in their facilities. In September of 1834, an ad appeared for "a carder or spinner-one with a family who can work in the mills, preferred." An 1835 advertisement offered work to "one sober and industrious machinist-one with family of 2-3 girls suitable to work in the cotton factory, preferred."<sup>15</sup>

The practice of employing whole family units was more common in southern district mills than in Lowell mills. John Lozier, in examining payroll records from the Ramapo Mill in New York, the Bancroft Mill in Rockford, Delaware , and the Whitaker Cedar Grove Mill in Philadelphia, found the practice to be widespread. The Ramapo Mill, located fifteen miles from Paterson, hired eight members of the Brooks family. Leonard and Nathaniel worked in the spinning department, John labored in the carding room, Sally, Louisa, and Sally, Jr. operated looms, Polly reeled cotton, and Jane worked in the dressing department. Other families working in the same factory included the Smiths, Ackers, Huffmans, and the Conklins.<sup>16</sup>

The absence of such records for the Paterson mills makes it impossible to determine if a similar pattern existed in the New Jersey town. It is clear that most of the working women in Paterson were either widows or the wives and daughters of workingmen. This contrasted sharply with northern district mill towns where single women

comprised the majority of the workforce. The one all-female boardinghouse in Paterson appears to have been the exception rather than the rule. While unattached females may have boarded with families, it appears that in general few came to Paterson in search of work.

Those women unwilling or unable to work in the mills had few choices in terms of alternative forms of employment. The millinery and tailoring trades absorbed part of the non-factory female workforce. Retailing and domestic service represented the other major types of employment open to women forced to work outside of their homes. Men faced no such limitations. The development of the machinery industry provided hundreds of jobs for both skilled and unskilled male workers. Auxiliary trades, such as bobbin-turning or millwrighting, provided employment for skilled journeymen. The boom in the construction of mills, homes, canals, and railroads, required the services of carpenters, masons, and general laborers.

Machine making employed more men in Paterson than any other branch of industry or trade. In 1827, 129 men worked in the town's machine shops. Within eleven years, the number jumped to over eleven hundred.<sup>17</sup> Men trained as ironworkers, cabinetmakers, wheelwrights or turners found positions in the new factories. Although the large shops made considerable use of power-driven machinery, the construction of a carding engine or of a locomotive still

required the labor of highly trained craftsmen. As employers made improvements in production techniques, they increasingly relied on apprentices trained in their own shops. Most of these apprentices remained in the trade either as journeymen or as supervisors. A number went on to set up their own establishments.

The dominant position of machine making in Paterson's economy limited the development of other industries. Trades such as shoemaking or hat making either stagnated or showed slow rates of growth. Many of the artisans working in these crafts turned to making repairs in order to earn a livelihood. Others moved to communities where their industries continued to operate successfully. As Paterson's population leveled off in the mid-1830's, the construction of new homes and factories slackened. Lesser skilled employees in the building trades increasingly came to rely on alteration work as their major form of employment, while craftsmen found that their skills could be transferred to the machine shops. A number of artisans opened small shops or entered the retail trades, depending on accumulated savings for the necessary capital.

The total absence of manufacturing payroll records as well as Reverend Fisher's failure to list the occupations of millhands and journeymen in his town censuses, makes it difficult to compare wage earners with other Paterson population groups. Two petitions submitted

to the Intelligencer for publication, however, make it possible to identify at least some of the town's workers. In 1826, a group of thirty-eight journeymen carpenters petitioned their employers for a change in their hours of work. Ten years later, eighty-three former apprentices in the town's major machine shop signed a statement defending themselves against charges of intemperance. No such lists or petitions exist for the women and children working in the mills.<sup>18</sup>

Journeymen carpenters shared many demographic traits with master artisans. Over half of the journeymen identified themselves as being members of the Dutch Reformed faith as did a majority of their employers. The petitioners lived in the same sections of town and on the same streets as did the masters. Eight of twenty-seven journeymen lived in New Manchester, the Dutch section of town. Other carpenters could be found on Broadway and Main Street, Paterson's primary commercial thoroughfares. Additional clusters of journeymen carpenters could be found on Washington and Parke, two outlying streets near New Manchester. A total of twenty out of twenty-seven journeymen lived on the five streets.<sup>19</sup>

In a sense, the journeymen carpenters and the master artisans represented two poles of the same group, divided by time. The masters of the 1820's and 1830's had been the journeymen of an earlier generation. A number of

the 1826 petitioners, such as William Crosset and Cornelius Christie, became employers in their later years. Most journeymen believed that one day they would open up their own shops. While some did achieve that goal, most did not.

Most of the journeymen appear to have been in the early stages of their careers. The petitioners included more families without children than any other occupational group. Six of seven childless households were composed of one male adult and one female adult. The size of their families ranked below those of any other occupational group as well, with less than five people living in each household. Twenty-four year old John Smith, for example, lived with his wife and one child below the age of sixteen. Enoch Weller, aged twenty-seven, likewise had only one child in his household. The households of Peter Lydecker and Peter Van Allen each contained a total of eight people. Six of the eight individuals in each family unit were below the age of sixteen. The general lack of additional adult men in the homes of the carpenters indicates that few, if any of them, took in boarders. Most of the journeymen lived in small homes or in flats, having little room to spare. The generally high rate of wages paid to building tradesmen made the boarding of unrelated individuals less of a financial imperative.<sup>20</sup>

The former machine shop apprentices differed from the carpenters in many respects. Native born and immigrant



Presbyterians and Methodists, rather than Dutch-Americans, predominated among the machinists. Only three of twenty-eight machine shop workers labelled themselves as Dutch. The number of immigrants, primarily from England and Northern Ireland, nearly equalled the number of native born machinists. More Catholics could be found among the ranks of the former apprentices than among the journeymen carpenters, although they comprised a clear minority of both groups.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike the carpenters, the machinists resided on many different streets, with the exception of one concentration on Congress Street. Over a quarter of the machine makers who could be identified lived on that street, near Paterson's two major machine shops. Only one machinist lived in New Manchester as compared with eight carpenters. The former apprentices also shied away from the town's commercial district where a number of carpenters dwelled. Machine makers generally lived in close proximity to the mill district and could walk to their jobs in a short period of time.<sup>22</sup>

The families of the apprentice machinists and the journeymen carpenters shared a number of characteristics. The carpenters had smaller families than the machinists while the two groups reversed positions when it came to the number of children below the age of sixteen in each dwelling unit. The former apprentices averaged just over two children per household, the smallest number of any

occupational group in Paterson. The carpenters and the machinists differed considerably in relation to the number of couples without young children. Seven of twenty-seven journeymen's families had no children as compared to only three of twenty-eight machinists' families.

The information suggests that machinists tended to be older than the journeymen carpenters. The small number of youngsters in each household, as well as the lack of childless couples, indicates that many of these men had been working at their trades for years. The Intelligencer article which included the list of former apprentices mentioned that fifteen of the eighty-three machinist trainees already worked as foremen or operated their own shops by 1836.<sup>24</sup> Few men could hope to achieve such goals before the age of thirty.

Many machinists' households contained one or more adults over the age of sixteen. The high wages paid machinists made the boarding of unrelated adults unnecessary. It appears, however, that a number of families did take in male relatives who worked in the machine shops. Three Donaldsons, two Inslees, three Plunkets, two Keans, and four McCulleys could be found on the list of former apprentices. In 1832, for example, Francis McCulley, one of only two heads of households in Paterson with that name, lived on Boudinot Street, with nine people living in his household. Of the four males and

five females in his home, only one was below the age of sixteen. The only other machinist listed in the 1832 census with that surname, John McCully, lived nearby on Elm Street. The other McCulleys probably lived with one of the two families. Similar patterns existed for other individuals with the same names.<sup>25</sup>

The journeymen carpenters and apprentice machinists, along with widows, shared the distinction of having the lowest rates of home ownership in Paterson. According to the Fisher censuses, over fifty-three percent of the town's families lived in their own homes, with the remaining forty-seven percent renting or leasing their dwellings. Twelve of twenty-seven carpenters and twelve of twenty-eight machinists had their own homes; only about one-third of the town's widows owned their dwellings. Large mill and shop owners and merchants exhibited the highest rates of ownership, while smaller manufacturers and master artisans fell somewhere in between.<sup>26</sup>

Single family dwelling units constituted a major portion of Paterson's housing stock. In 1824, nearly fifty-five percent of the homes fit into that category. Two-family houses constituted an additional twenty-one percent. Only sixteen dwelling units contained five or more families.<sup>27</sup> This pattern remained constant through the 1820's and the 1830's. The policy of encouraging construction of single family dwellings dated back to the

early days of the SUM. Succeeding generations of manufacturers, limited by scarce financial resources, continued the practice. The policy of building boardinghouses or company-owned housing, so common in the northern and central manufacturing districts, never took root in Paterson. The SUM, which rented or sold land to prospective builders, acquired some houses through foreclosures and repossessions. The remainder of the town's housing stock was bought and sold on the open market.

Shopkeepers, master artisans, professional men, and small manufacturers, all participated in the buying and selling of local real estate. Painter and glazier, T. W. Whitely, wanted to sell a lot which included two stores, a dwelling house, a barn, and a "neat little garden spot." Master cabinetmaker John A. Van Riper offered a large building for sale with sixteen rooms that could serve as a boardinghouse. Gunsmith Lemuel White put a two-family house, two storerooms, an office, and a number of other buildings on the market in February of 1833, while dry goods merchant James Moore advertised his dwelling for lease in March of 1834.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to normal real estate transactions, sheriff's sales provided good investment opportunities for those individuals with access to large amounts of cash. In 1833, local officials rendered a judgment in favor of one

Samuel Burhans against storekeeper Nicholas Ryerson. Burhans received four lots worth a total value of \$2,150. Attornies Philemon Dickerson and Aaron Pennington offered to buy one-third of the land at one-third of the total cost plus interest and legal fees. Dickerson, along with cotton manufacturer Mark Collet, bought the remaining land on the same terms. The Reverend Dr. Fisher acted as legal witness for the transactions.<sup>29</sup>

Few, if any, wage earners possessed the resources to participate in such transactions. Although many of them bought their own homes, they could not get involved in purchasing dwellings or land for speculative purposes. Those that could not obtain their own residences rented apartments in multifamily dwellings. Renters apparently had some protection from unfair landlords. When Phillip Rafferty and Peter Taggart purchased a dwelling from John M. Gould, they agreed to keep on the current tenants under previously existing conditions. Taggart and Rafferty also recognized the rights of the tenants granted by the previous owner.<sup>30</sup> Even the non-payment of rent did not constitute grounds for immediate eviction. In May of 1838, for example, the SUM reported that some of its renters had fallen behind as much as two years in their payments to the Society. Although officials repeatedly threatened to evict scofflaws, the actual dispossession rate appears to have been low.<sup>31</sup>

The recent vintage of most of Paterson's housing stock and high population density prevented the growth of slum areas so common in many towns and cities. Of the 739 dwelling units in Paterson in 1832, 521 had been built after 1820.<sup>32</sup> While only the most successful manufacturers, merchants, and professional men could afford truly luxurious homes, most townspeople lived in comfortable, if simple, surroundings. The lack of large multi-family dwellings prevented the development of crowded tenement districts. The intermingling of people from various occupations on the same streets further limited the development of poorer workingmen's neighborhoods. Even streets close to the mills had diverse populations. On Congress Street in 1832, for example, there lived eleven machinists or former apprentices, fourteen men involved in commerce, four master artisans, six small manufacturers, eight professionals, and four major manufacturers. Similar mixing took place on other blocks.<sup>33</sup>

While machinists, bankers, handloom weavers, and manufacturers may have owned homes and lived on the same streets, they often participated in very different forms of recreational behavior. A sizeable number of merchants, manufacturers, professional men, and master artisans considered themselves the arbiters of public morality. As indicated by the earlier quote from Isaac Fidler, many of the town's "respectable" citizens took a dim view of the

disorderly conduct and rowdy actions of Paterson's immigrant and native born wage earners. Through campaigns against the consumption of alcohol or the visits of touring circuses and theatrical companies they attempted to establish the boundaries of acceptable public behavior. As evidenced by a riot which occurred in 1835 during Christmas, these efforts often failed.

In a scenario reminiscent of the middle ages, a group of Paterson workers decided to celebrate the holiday by conducting a bull bait. After tying the bull to a stake, they intended to unleash a pack of dogs on the bound animal. Getting wind of the plan, town officials issued a handbill expressly forbidding the event. Although Christmas went by without incident, the celebrants carried out their plan on the following Saturday. In defiance of the officials, the bull "followed by hundreds of men and boys, hallooing and shouting to the extremeity of their lungs," was paraded through the streets. The crowd then took the animal about a half mile from town where the event commenced. When a town official attempted to read the riot act, someone freed the bull and sent it after him. When the celebrants returned to town, other officials arrested "seven of the principal rioters" who were to be taken to Newark for arraignment the following morning.<sup>34</sup>

Great confusion reigned throughout the day and into the evening. In the middle of a pouring rain, someone

rang railroad and church bells in order to summon the militia companies to assist in putting down the alleged riot. The volunteer fire companies, mistaking the bells for a fire alarm, raced through the town looking for the non-existent blaze. During the night a rumor began circulating that an attempt would be made at midnight to free the jailed revellers. Two militia companies stood guard around the jail all night, but no further incidents occurred. The next morning, a Newark judge released six of the seven rioters on bail, holding over one man accused of having struck one of the magistrates.<sup>35</sup>

The responsibility for controlling such an incident fell upon the shoulders of the town committee and the constables.<sup>36</sup> The artisans, manufacturers, and shopkeepers elected to those positions could, in reality, do little to prevent such outbursts from taking place. According to accounts published in the Intelligencer, many of the town's "respectable" citizens contributed to the problem by failing to come to the aid of the very individuals they had elected. "Several of the magistrates, and all the constables, however, were on the alert; but, we are ashamed to confess it, not being properly aided by the citizens who were lookers-on, the rioters grew bold, and in order to show their defiance and contempt of the civil authorities, they paraded up and down several streets, leading their Bull with a long rope..."<sup>37</sup>



Although the bull bait represented a clear challenge to public order, many Patersonians decided to let it run its course rather than try to enforce the ban issued by town officials. The Intelligencer tried to place the outbreak in the best possible light, depicting its demise as the inevitable triumph of the law over disorder. "We think the result will teach those among us who would violate the public peace by such outrageous and disgusting exhibitions that they can no longer do so with impunity."<sup>38</sup>

If anything, the incident demonstrated the tenuous hold that Paterson's "respectable citizens" had over many of the town's workingmen. Showing complete contempt for duly elected civil authority, the crowd proceeded with its previously determined course of action, ignoring all legal threats. Efforts by officials to end the event were met with derision and threats of violence. The lack of concern evidenced by other Paterson inhabitants compounded the problem. The whole affair clearly demonstrated that conventional notions of public decorum and morality meant little to a significant segment of the town's working population.

At the same time, however, there existed a group of workingmen who rejected the popular street life of their fellow wage earners. These machinists and skilled mechanics enlisted in the various reform campaigns during the 1820's and 1830's. At least sixteen of them, for

example, signed a petition circulated in 1834 which called for tight controls on the illegal sale of alcohol. Machinists Ezra Gould, James Thompson, and John Thompson played active roles in the Paterson Temperance Society. The latter Thompson also took the lead in efforts to establish a Sunday School for adolescent millhands while Gould worked to set up an evening school for young men. Machinist Peter Fields helped to found the Paterson Tract Society in 1838 while his wife served as a manager of the Paterson Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>39</sup>

The willingness of many skilled mechanics to involve themselves in such issues reflected both their own perceptions of themselves and the view that others had of them. The rapid expansion in the use of power-driven equipment put the man who could build or repair machinery in an extremely important position. The trained millwrights, blacksmiths, and carpenters who turned to machine making, as well as the individuals who served their apprenticeships in the machine shops, came to represent a type of role model for other workingmen. Educators, clergymen, and professionals nurtured the vision of the "virtuous mechanic," the man who would become a success through hard work, frugality, and temperate behavior. Recognizing the important leadership role that skilled workers played in the labor unrest of the mid 1830's, these men attempted to isolate the mechanic from lesser skilled

journeymen and factory operatives. This strategy was spelled out by James Waddell Alexander, a conservative Presbyterian clergyman from New Jersey, in his 1838 work, The American Mechanic and Workingman.<sup>40</sup>

Alexander started from the premise that the rise of urban manufacturing could be directly linked with the general deterioration of the American way of life.

I am persuaded that it is our duty as Christian patriots, to encourage husbandry, and discourage overgrown manufactures. God has spread a wide country before us, yet thousands are herding into our factory towns, under influences ruinous to body and soul. The bloated establishments incite and receive some of the grandest villains of the old country. All our manufacturing towns are in an abnormal state. The policy engendered in these communities is necessarily agrarian; and the human race deteriorates, physically.<sup>41</sup>

Skilled workingmen, in Alexander's view, represented a major force in arresting the decline of American society. Through the increased cultivation of the mind and the sharpening of trade skills, mechanics would assume a prominent position in civil society. Other wage earners, seeing the practical results of moral, temperate living, would aspire to reach the same economic and social plateau. Alexander warned workingmen that participation in trades unions, social clubs, debating societies, and other such organizations, limited their chances of obtaining that goal. Involvement in politics made mechanics less effective workers and contributed to societal instability, which had the potential of negating whatever progress wage

earners had achieved. Alexander continued:

The apprentice and the journeyman should learn betimes, that to loosen a single pin of the social machine is like loosening the pin of a steam engine; and wherever the disorganization may begin, it will never stop till it ruins those who have begun it. When public disorders, and civil broils, and revolutionary violence once enter, the class of persons who always bear the worst of the tempest, is that for whose benefit I am writing - the honest, temperate, home-loving, industrial frugal, working man.<sup>42</sup>

The American Mechanic and Workingman represented one of the most comprehensive paeans ever written to the virtues of the skilled mechanic. Local newspapers, such as the Intelligencer, returned to this theme again and again. Throughout the latter years of the decade, the men working in Paterson's machine shops stood out as the primary targets for articles such as the following one printed in March of 1839.

The Mechanic - if there is any station truly enviable, it is that of an industrious mechanic, who by his own unaided exertions has established for himself a respectable place in society; who commencing in poverty has been able by his skill and perserverance, to overcome every prejudice, and build up for himself, a reputation whose value is enhanced for others, and let it be remembered, this situation is attainable by all who have health and practical knowledge of their business. It is a mistaken idea that fortune deals about her favors blindly and with a reckless hand. Industry and virtuous ambition are seldom exerted in vain.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to such general testimonials, the Intelligencer published helpful hints to aid aspiring mechanics in their efforts to improve themselves. "A Hint to the Working Classes" appeared in the Intelligencer in February of 1837.

If a man at 21 years of age began to save a dollar a week, and put it to interest every year, he could have at 31 years of age \$650, at 41, \$1,860, at 51, \$3,680, at 61, \$6,150, at 71, \$11,500. When we look at these sums, and when we think how much temptation and evil might be avoided in the very act of saving them, and how much good a man in humble circumstances may do for his family by these sums, we cannot help wondering that there are not more savers of \$1 a week. He who saves this sum may not only pay his own way, but he may help the afflicted, and subscribe to various benevolent societies.<sup>44</sup>

Many craftsmen and machinists shared the idea put forth by clergymen and newspaper publishers that they held a special place in society. Any challenge to their sense of respectability and integrity elicited a sharp, swift response. In August of 1836, Joseph McKee, local agent for the New Jersey Temperance Society, precipitated a major conflict with Paterson's machinists. In a report to the Society's annual convention, McKee claimed that forty-one of sixty-five former apprentices at Godwin, Rogers & Co. and Godwin, Clarke & Co. were "habitual drunkards," that "twenty drank occasionally" and that only five could be considered "temperate men." When Paterson mechanics found out about the charges they took action to publicly censure McKee.<sup>45</sup>

The former apprentices appointed a committee to investigate the veracity of McKee's charges. The mechanics believed that the allegations seriously affected "the prosperity and standing in society of many sober, industrious and skillful mechanics whose good name is dear to them." The committee found that only four of

eighty-three mechanics could be considered habitual drunkards. Eight others drank "to excess occasionally" while another fifty-two were "sober, industrious journeymen." Fifteen of the former apprentices either ran their own shops or worked as foremen in other facilities. The remaining four had died prior to the incident. The committee stressed that most machine makers considered themselves "warm and decided friends of temperance."<sup>46</sup>

While the machinists bore no personal ill will to McKee, they felt it their duty to protect themselves and their employer. McKee, in an effort to defend himself, blamed the incident on James Bently, a shop foreman, who provided him with the information. A number of hands then employed in the machine shops issued a statement supporting the claims of the former apprentices and attacking Bentley. The temperance society agent issued a statement praising the actions of the machinists. "The Mechanics behaved nobly in this matter. They have given me a frank, manly and impartial hearing...It is intelligence and sobermindedness alone that will give them that rank in society to which their industry and mechanical skills entitle them."<sup>47</sup>

The McKee incident and the bull bait represented two diverse and somewhat extreme examples of the range of beliefs held by Paterson's wage earners. Differing standards of public morality and behavior reflected both their current conditions of existence and their aspirations

for the future. These conflicting attitudes, in conjunction with religious, ethnic, and national differences, often led Paterson workingmen to identify more strongly with non-wage earners than with their fellow employees. English or Irish workers, for example, often believed that they had more in common with their fellow countrymen, whatever their economic status, than with native born journeymen or factory hands. Nativist politicians could glean a certain amount of support from American-born workers even while they publicly criticized the moral turpitude of their constituents.

Various institutions strengthened the ties that bound together ethnic or national groupings. Churches represented a form of social organization that cut across all occupational lines. A former Lancastershire handloom weaver attended the same Episcopalian church as did the immigrant merchant tailor. Irish Catholic laborers, shoemakers, and cotton manufacturers all gave confession to the same priest. Dutch-American machinists and lawyers both attended Sunday services at the nearby Totowa Church. In a densely populated, heterogeneous community such as Paterson these shared experiences created strong ties of loyalty and commitment.

Voluntary political and recreational organizations represented another arena for the development of such relationships. Groups such as the Native American

Democratic Party elicited support from workingmen in their efforts to control the influx of foreigners and to curtail the political rights of recently arrived immigrants. The Emigrants Society of Paterson attempted to mobilize the town's Englishmen to support political reform in their homeland. One of the largest of the voluntary organizations, The Friends of Ireland and Civil and Religious Liberty, enlisted many of the town's Irish immigrants in the effort to obtain Catholic emancipation at home.

On November 26, 1828, an advertisement appeared in the Intelligencer calling for the establishment of an organization to "assist and co-operate in the exertions now making, to obtain an alteration in that system of laws by which the majority of the people of Ireland are and have been so long oppressed." Modelled on a similar organization recently founded in New York, The Friends of Ireland and of Civil and Religious Liberty planned to raise funds to support the Emancipation Campaign.<sup>48</sup> The organization grew slowly at first, but by March of 1829 it claimed to have over eighty-five dues paying members.

While some non-Catholics joined, over three-quarters of the members identified themselves as Catholics, most of them recent immigrants to America.<sup>49</sup> They retained strong ties with their families and their friends, as well as a fierce sense of loyalty to their



native land. Peter Egan, a master tailor, in an address to the organization, expressed the sentiments of many of its members towards their homeland.

They for whom you toil, will with feeling of the deepest gratitude, turn to this country when they know that they have not been forgotten - when they find that the hearts of their countrymen still beat with warm affection for the land of their nativity - and that charity with open hand freely bestows the might of their redemption. They will feel that upon those who enjoy the value freedom, they may confidently rest for support in their hour of trial.<sup>50</sup>

The goals put forth by The Friends of Ireland - freedom of the press, education regardless of religion, and the right to participate in politics - already existed for Irishmen living in America. They believed that it was only just that those that they had left behind be able to enjoy the same rights and privileges.

Hoping to garner widespread support for their efforts, The Friends of Ireland issued an address to the citizens of New Jersey. Couching their appeal in the broadest possible terms, they linked the struggles of Irish Catholics with those of people in other parts of the world.

The services of Irishmen have been pre-eminent wheresoever the standard of freedom hath been unfurled to the breeze. Irishmen have aided in obtaining and preserving the liberties of our own proud land...it is unnecessary to enumerate those brave and gifted men whom Ireland sent to the aid of your Fathers during that momentous struggle against tyranny, or to dwell upon their exploits...We conceive that this noble hearted people have a claim to the assistance of freemen in every part of the globe, for they have ever been foremost in assisting others to obtain what they now seek for themselves.<sup>51</sup>

A diverse group of Irish Catholics joined the

organization. At least ten grocers, six handloom weavers, and six manufacturers became members. Others paying dues included a teamster, a butcher, a cotton spinner, a machinist, a foundry worker, and the tender of a watergate. The remaining thirty-two Catholic members of the organization cannot be identified.<sup>52</sup> Some of those not identified worked as laborers on area canals and railroads while others were either the sons of organization members or were single workingmen, boarding with local families. George Griffiths, for example, a tailor by trade, did not have his own residence; in all probability he lived in the home of his father, merchant tailor Andrew Griffiths. Another adult male, James Lynch, probably lived with the family of his brother, handloom weaver Andrew Lynch.<sup>53</sup>

Non-Catholics in the organization came from a variety of occupations and backgrounds. Phoenix Manufacturing Company owner John Travers, who employed many Irish male weavers in his duck mill, appears to have joined the organization because of his relationship to his hands.<sup>54</sup> Both he and a supervisor in his mill, New York born W. H. K. Bibby, actively participated in The Friends of Ireland. Auctioneer Robert Chiswell and mill supervisor David Cogan, two English freethinkers, and weaveshop owner William Russel, a freethinking Scot, likewise supported the emancipation effort. Two other Englishmen, John Hughes, Jr., a machinist, and John Fresher, a native

of Lancaster, also joined the organization. Six non-Irish members, including a judge, a physician, a shoemaker, and a tavern keeper, were native born Americans.<sup>55</sup>

The non-Irish joined The Friends of Ireland for a variety of reasons. Many of them had links with the Democratic Party in Paterson, which relied heavily on Irish Catholic support. It would have been politically expedient for them to participate in the drive for Irish civil liberties. Freethinkers such as Chiswell, Logan, and Russel, shared a strong dislike for the established church in England and its support of repressive government policies. The achievement of Catholic emancipation would hopefully lead to increased political and religious freedom for other inhabitants of Great Britain. Others doubtlessly joined The Friends of Ireland out of a deep concern for the welfare of the Irish people.

The establishment of The Friends of Ireland provided Paterson Catholics with one of their few opportunities to take leadership in a civic organization. The town's only Catholic millowner, James Plunket, became one of the driving forces behind The Friends of Ireland, serving as the group's secretary.<sup>56</sup> He played a major role in attracting new members to the organization and in building local support for their activities. Storekeepers and professional men filled most of the other leadership positions. As a rule, Paterson Catholics did not

participate in community activities. The few merchants or professional men who did join in rarely attained positions of major responsibility. The founders and supporters of The Friends of Ireland took great pride in their achievement of having brought together a diverse group of their fellow countrymen to assist the effort to obtain some measure of freedom for their beloved homeland.

The Friends of Ireland continued in operation through the winter and spring of 1829. The group kept in constant touch with their compatriots in New York, who published a newspaper, The Truth Teller. In February, the Paterson organization sent a letter along with \$100 which was to be forwarded to Ireland. "Our association is only in its infancy, not much more than a month in existence, which occasions our first remittance to be but small, but it is given with a noble disposition and a good heart, and ere long we expect to trouble you with sending another dollar bill or two, for the same purposes, addressed to the man of the people, Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P., Dublin."<sup>57</sup>

The Friends of Ireland abruptly disbanded itself on the night of May 18. The passage of an emancipation bill by Parliament on the tenth of April eliminated the primary reason for the organization's existence. The members voted to give part of the treasury to Philip Van Bussum who had contributed the use of a meeting room to the society. The remainder of the funds went towards the

completion of a new Catholic church.<sup>58</sup>

Organizations such as The Friends of Ireland tended to strengthen ties within a particular ethnic or religious group by stressing that one's traditions or place of birth held more importance than one's occupation. In the case of the Emancipation Campaign, the lack of involvement on the part of Paterson's non-Catholic workingmen could only help to reinforce the notion that the town's Irishmen constituted a distinct, identifiable subgroup within the general population. In such a situation, one's allegiance would naturally be to one's countrymen, regardless of their social or economic position. Churches and fraternal associations also contributed to this trend.

In a more general and subtle fashion, Paterson's volunteer fire companies contributed to the lack of unity among the town's wage earners. Throughout the 1820's and 1830's, the companies drew upon a broad spectrum of the community for their members. While many workingmen volunteered, leadership remained in the hands of those who traditionally exercised such authority in Paterson; manufacturers, merchants, and professionals. Commitment to fellow company members generally rivalled or superseded other sources of loyalty. The nature and structure of the companies contributed to the stable, hierarchical relationships that developed within them.

From their very inception, Paterson's volunteer fire companies operated under a detailed plan or organization. The Paterson Fire Association, incorporated by the New Jersey State Legislature in November of 1821, tightly controlled the activities of its member companies. According to the original charter, all citizens with evaluated property of two hundred dollars or more, including dwellings, buildings, and machinery, were to be enrolled in the association. The legislature mandated that the organization raise a capital stock of five thousand dollars to purchase equipment and maintain the ongoing operation of the volunteer units. In addition to electing officers, members also voted for a board of wardens which supervised day to day operations. An appointed group of assessors determined the financial responsibility of organization members. New Jersey lawmakers limited the size of each company to a maximum of thirty men.<sup>59</sup>

A hierarchy of authority similar to the one mandated for the fire association could be found in each individual company. A foreman and an assistant foreman took overall responsibility for the men under their command. It is not clear if the wardens appointed individuals to the positions or if the company members selected them. A chief engineer and two assistants, elected by dues paying members of the association, supervised the actual fighting of fires. The central

organization maintained the authority to recruit new companies as conditions warranted and to disband those that did not function properly. Election to a position within the association carried considerable prestige, often proving to be a stepping stone to local political office.

Paterson manufacturers provided most of the initial impetus for the formation of the fire association. The flammable properties of raw cotton and the wooden construction of most buildings created a constant danger of fire. While a number of mills used stationary engines to help combat fires, they could not aid in the control of blazes occurring away from the factories. Volunteer companies, composed of local citizens located all over town, represented the most attractive solution to the problem. In addition to the millowners, other manufacturers, master artisans, shopkeepers, and professionals enthusiastically supported the initial effort, viewing it as another important step in making Paterson attractive to industrial and commercial interests. Members of these groups generally retained control over the association throughout the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. Cotton mill owner Daniel Holsman served as the organization's first president. Others subsequently holding that office included duck manufacturer John Travers, merchants Brant Van Blarcom and Joseph Shannon, master carpenter David Reed, magistrates Abraham

Reynolds and Cornelius Westervelt, and tin and sheet iron manufacturer Horatio Moses.<sup>60</sup>

Other members of the community exhibited less enthusiasm for the association and its volunteer companies. Prior to the actual chartering of the organization efforts had been made, in February of 1821, to raise a company. The attempt failed due to a lack of recruits. The first full company did not begin operations until May of 1822, nearly seven months after the association received its incorporation papers.<sup>61</sup> Although it established new companies in 1826 and 1828, the association never had enough recruits to bring the rosters up to the thirty man limit. In a fruitless effort to stimulate interest, the association obtained exemptions from militia service and from most jury duty for volunteer firemen. Trying another approach, the central organization delegated increased responsibility to company members for the selection of officers. In 1836 they gave volunteers the right to nominate their own engineers while in 1840 the association extended this to include the actual election of engineers and their assistants. These measures accomplished little in terms of increasing participation.<sup>62</sup>

Lack of popular support for the association was also reflected in the organization's chronic financial difficulties. Assessments continually fell far below expenditures. In order to pay the fines of firemen missing



militia drill, for example, officials had to borrow a hundred dollars in September of 1825. The legislature increased the organization's capital stock to ten thousand dollars in January of 1828 to finance the addition of new companies. This did nothing to alleviate the ongoing financial crisis. In order to force reluctant citizens to pay their assessments, officials obtained another charter modification in February of 1831, allowing them to place a lien on a person's property until the individual paid off his debt to the association. Non-owners residing on such property could deduct the assessments from their rents. By 1839, the association accumulated a debt of over sixteen hundred dollars.<sup>63</sup>

The fortunes of the association hit rock bottom the following year when town merchants refused to honor the organization's credit. The companies responded by claiming that they had no oil or turpentine for lights at fires or for heating their engine houses. The volunteers also resented the refusal of Paterson's merchants to carry on the long standing tradition of providing them with free refreshments after a fire.<sup>64</sup> In desperation, company members threatened to abandon their firehouses and their engines, according to a statement they placed in the Intelligencer. "...we must say, however painful it may be to us and others, that unless the grievances set forth in the above resolutions are redressed before the 5th day

of September next, we shall feel justified in yielding up our Engines and Implements, and abandoning our station as Firemen, attached to the Paterson Fire Department."<sup>65</sup> The paper reported that a number of firemen had already left their stations. The job action soon ended and the companies continued in operation even as their indebtedness reached over two thousand dollars by the end of the year.<sup>66</sup>

Despite all the difficulties and setbacks, the companies generally continued to function, although they varied in terms of their memberships and their levels of effectiveness. The first two units, Neptune #2 and the 2nd Company of Engine #1, attracted a diverse group of volunteers. Their rosters included two cotton manufacturers, one machine manufacturer, a mill foreman, four weavers, three grocers, two master carpenters, a doctor, a tobacconist, a metal worker, and a shoemaker. Eighteen members of the 2nd Company had no identifiable occupations, indicating that many of them worked in the mills or as journeymen. The volunteers of the 3rd Company, organized in 1826, generally followed occupations similar to those of the members of the first two engine companies with one major exception. Three journeymen carpenters active in efforts to reduce the hours of work of their fellow craftsmen signed on with Engine #3. This marked the first time that a clearly identified group of journeymen

could be found on the membership roles of the volunteer companies.<sup>67</sup>

Small manufacturers and merchants dominated the ranks of the hook and ladder company founded in 1826. Due to the dangerous and complex nature of its tasks, the unit was considered an elite squad and was directly supervised by the Chief Engineer and the fire wardens. This attracted many of Paterson's most successful shopowners and employers. Adam Newhouse, the town's largest cabinetmaker, and Jacob Douglas, a major wheelwright, both served in the hook and ladder company, as did millwright Alexander Paul. Members George Farrant, John K. Flood, and Henry Whitely, conducted small manufacturing operations in addition to running grocery stores. Josiah Crismond worked as a mill supervisor while James McNally and Philip Van Bussum ran taverns.<sup>68</sup>

While the hook and ladder company maintained its operational efficiency, lack of public support adversely affected some of the other units. The members of Company No. 1 showed little interest in participating in the organization, allowing their equipment to seriously deteriorate. Almost all of the members of the third company withdrew from the association, which found it impossible to recruit new volunteers to replace the old ones. Of the original companies, only the second continued to operate at some level of efficiency. The newer fourth and fifth companies did maintain a high level of morale,

keeping their equipment in first rate condition.<sup>69</sup>

All of the companies experienced high rates of personnel turnover. Although most of the original volunteers continued to live in Paterson, not one of them could be found on the membership rolls of the companies by 1834. More limited occupational data on the newer firemen makes it difficult to conclusively determine if the nature of the membership changed in any significant fashion. For Engine Company No. 2, for example, the occupations of only nine out of twenty-two members can be determined. Five of the nine served their apprenticeships in the town's major machine shops. The remaining four included a painter, a merchant, a toy shop owner, and a millworker. The first company also retained people of diverse occupations although more of them appear to have been wage earners than had previously been the case.<sup>70</sup>

Engine Company No. 4 grew out of efforts by duck millowner John Travers to affiliate his firm's fire engine with those of the volunteer companies. As early as 1821, the Phoenix Manufacturing Company had its own fire fighting equipment. Upon the organization of the volunteer companies, Travers offered to sell his engine valued at five hundred dollars to the association, an offer which was refused. In 1825 he proposed that the mill owners raise a fire company from among their employees. In return, the association would pay to have the Phoenix Company's engine

mounted on wheels. The central organization rejected the proposal, claiming that they did not feel, "...themselves at liberty to spend the funds of the association on private property." At the same time it rejected an alternative plan which provided for the millowners to take over the running of the second engine company.<sup>71</sup>

In November of 1828, Travers put his engine under the jurisdiction of the fire association in return for a future exemption from all assessments. The firm continued to play an active role in the affairs of the fourth company, as it had been designated by the association. Travers and one of his administrators, W. H. K. Bibby, joined the unit, as did a number of the Irish weavers employed in his mill. Company No. 4 had more Catholics within its ranks than any of the other units. A number of employers, including cotton mill owner James Richards, painter and glazier T. W. Whitely, and tin and sheet iron manufacturers William Cundell and Nathaniel Lane, also joined the fourth company. Only one shopkeeper, John C. Cooke, became a member. The composition of the fifth company differed greatly from that of the fourth. Nine of its eighteen members lived in New Manchester, where they ran taverns or hotels, worked as millwrights or machinists, and operated dry good stores or shoe shops. Dutch-Americans represented the largest ethnic-religious group among the firemen of Engine No. 5.<sup>72</sup>

The volunteer companies became more homogeneous in terms of the religion or ethnicity of their members by the mid 1830's. Native born Dutch-Americans dominated Company No. 5 while immigrant Irish Catholics and English Episcopalians represented the two largest groups in the fourth company. Engine numbers one and two drew most of their volunteers from among native born Presbyterians. While volunteers continued to participate in diverse occupations, some of the companies became increasingly identified with specific types of work. Members of Company No. 5 tended to work as artisans and in commerce, while fourth company members generally participated in manufacturing. Company No. 3 attracted increasing numbers of wage earners as compared to its earlier membership. Engine No. 1 and the hook and ladder company continued to maintain diversified membership rolls.

Historians Bruce Laurie, Susan Hirsch, and Clyde and Sally Griffen, among others, have examined the role of volunteer fire companies in other ante-bellum manufacturing communities.<sup>73</sup> They found that workingmen increasingly dominated the units even where prominent citizens originally organized the companies. In the view of these historians, the companies became an integral part of an autonomous working class culture, providing their volunteers with opportunities to exert leadership without interference from their employers or other "respectable"

citizens. Laurie, Hirsch, and the Griffens believed that the volunteer fire companies served as an outlet for the energies of wage earners denied prospects of upward mobility.

Laurie, in his research on Philadelphia, linked the volunteer fire companies with the "traditional" element among the city's workingmen. Primarily workers in artisan trades, the traditionalists maintained pre-industrial values and patterns of behavior. Feeling more at home in their local taverns and at numerous recreational activities, the traditionalists took little if any leadership in the city's labor movement, although they did participate in strikes as rank and file members. These artisans strongly resisted the efforts of evangelical ministers and employers alike to impose standards of discipline and morality both in and out of the workplace. By the mid nineteenth century, the traditionalists controlled most of the fire companies.<sup>74</sup> Often aligned with gangs, the firemen operated on the thin edge of legality, participating in numerous assaults and ambushes as well as occasionally resorting to arson. Organized along ethnic, religious, and political lines, the volunteer companies reinforced the fragmentation of working class unity which began during the 1837 depression. The Griffens found a similar pattern among the workingmen of Poughkeepsie, New York.<sup>75</sup>

Although the Paterson companies underwent a number of changes in the late 1820's and early 1830's, they still retained individuals from differing occupational and religious backgrounds into the 1840's. Through the Paterson Fire Association, non-wage earners exerted considerable control over the day to day activities of the member organizations. Unlike Laurie's traditionalists, wage earners in Paterson's volunteer companies participated in a wide variety of community and political activities. A number of the town's most active working class leaders served as firefighters, including carpenters David Pruden and Peter Lydecker, machinists Ebenezer Pruden and Nathaniel Lane, and cordwainer Joseph Edwards.<sup>76</sup> Nine volunteers from Engine Company No. 4 signed a petition calling for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia while others joined The Friends of Ireland or participated in the controversy over the rechartering of the U. S. Bank. Some Paterson firemen even participated in the temperance crusade. Six of them publicly opposed the illegal sale of alcohol while painter and glazier T. W. Whitely worked to establish a youth's Sunday School and to ban all theatrical performances.<sup>77</sup>

Divisions in the political loyalties of volunteer firefighters rivalled their differences towards major social issues. The party affiliations of approximately thirty percent of the firemen can be determined. Nineteen



percent participated in National Republican or Whig party activities while eleven percent identified with the Democratic Party. Although the members of two companies exhibited a definite bias towards the National Republicans/Whigs, the members of the other three companies divided almost evenly in terms of their partisan affiliations. Laurie uncovered a very different pattern in Philadelphia, where companies clearly aligned themselves with specific parties.<sup>78</sup>

Through the early 1840's, Paterson's fire fighting establishment attracted a varied group of individuals. Although wage earners played an increasingly important role, they never took control over the central organization or the constituent units. While the sharp cultural distinctions identified by Laurie may have existed among the workers in the New Jersey town, they were not clearly manifested in the operation of the volunteer companies. Reform minded machinists, hard drinking carpenters, nationalistic Irish weavers, and radical cordwainers all participated in Paterson's volunteer apparatus as did temperance advocating storekeepers, politically active professional men, and nativist manufacturers.

The fire companies, as well as organizations such as The Friends of Ireland, or issues such as temperance, helped to blur class differences by bringing together dissimilar individuals around common goals. Emphasizing

religion and nationality or the benefits of service to one's community, such voluntary associations allowed the manufacturer and the millhand or the master artisan and his journeyman to work together as equals for a single purpose. This helped to reinforce the widely accepted view of America as an egalitarian society where each man was as good as any other.

Workingmen and employers in Paterson retained this vision even as the force of external developments placed an ever increasing strain on their relationship. Everyday life in ante-bellum manufacturing towns could not be separated from the broader economic, political, and social conflicts ever present in American society in the 1820's and 1830's. As the economy took off under the impact of national and international events, manufacturers and master artisans confronted a harsh set of realities. In order to compete effectively they had to increase their productive capabilities, either by introducing power-driven machinery or by improving the efficiency of their employees. In either case, they ran up against the very different set of assumptions about the nature and organization of work held by their employees. These differing perceptions made workplace friction inevitable.

Developments in the political arena gave new meaning to deepening workplace conflicts. National and regional economic growth led to increased political

polarization over such issues as protection for domestic manufacturers, the propriety of a national banking system, the continued expansion of slavery, and the government's role in fostering internal improvements. The full enfranchisement of white workingmen by the early 1820's made them an attractive source of votes for the parties that had gradually coalesced around the various issues. Office seekers often shaped their programs to appeal to the everyday concerns of journeymen and millhands. As wage earners became more involved in the process, they began to articulate their own political goals, many of which concerned the conditions under which they lived and worked.

Friction in the workshop and conflict at the polls complemented each other, straining the sense of shared purpose so prevalent in many early nineteenth century communities. While the factory hand and the millowner worked together for the emancipation of Irish Catholics, they often lined up on opposite sides of the political fence. The journeyman cordwainer and the master shoemaker might serve in the same volunteer fire company yet the former might go on strike against the latter for higher wages or a reduction in working hours. Paterson wage earners were being pulled in two conflicting directions during the 1820's and the 1830's. While they struggled to be accepted as full and equal members of society, the economic realities of everyday life pushed them into

identifying as a separate class with specific interests and needs. The remainder of the study will examine how this tension affected their behavior, both at the work site and in society at large.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Census of Paterson, 1829, 1832. These figures include those working in the cotton mills and machine shops as well as those working in smaller manufacturing establishments. In 1838, the number stood at about 2,560, due mainly to the collapse of the economy in 1837. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
2. Census of Paterson, 1827, 1832.
3. Bio Data.
4. Bio Data. United States Census Office, Census of the United States, Population Schedule, Passaic County (Patterson), 1850, microfilm, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
5. Bio Data. Pope's early entry into the mills appears to have been a direct result of his family's economic circumstances. The only Pope listed in the Paterson censuses is Mary Pope, a widow. In 1824, she had two children below the age of 16 in her household. Samuel was probably one of them.
6. Bio Data. Sometime before 1850, he added a lumberyard to his business operations.
7. Census of Manufacturing, 1827, 1832.
8. Bio Data.
9. Issac Fidler, Observations on Professions, Literature, Manners and Emigration, in the United States and Canada Made During A Residence There in 1832 (New York: J. J. Harper, 1832), pp. 97, 99.
10. The conflict between manufacturers and skilled spinners continued on through the end of the century. A cotton manufacturer in Fall River, Massachusetts, in the 1890's, came up with a solution. When the mill closed on Friday he had all the spinning mules smashed up, replacing them with ring frames. When the male spinners reported to work on Monday, they found young girls in their place. Rowland Berthoff, British Immigrants in Industrial America 1790-1950 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 36.
11. Census of Manufacturing, 1827. Of the 232 men, 89 worked in the Phoenix Mill. By 1838, the number of children employed in the mills dropped to 629 while the

number of women increased to 564. The change may have been the result of the economic downturn. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

12. Census of Paterson, 1832. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

13. Census of Paterson, 1832. The total number of female headed households equalled 163 in 1832. Multiplying 163 by 2.4 you get a figure of approximately 391 children in such households. No more than 700 boys and girls were employed in the mills at the time.

14. Intelligencer, 19 August, 1835.

15. Intelligencer, 10 Sept., 1834, 22 April, 1835.

16. Payroll records, Ramapo Mill, February, 1822, MS in Pierson Collection, Baker Collection, Harvard University. This material is used with the permission of J. W. Lozier, who is currently preparing a study of manufacturing in small and medium sized mills. Anthony Wallace found a similar pattern in eastern Pennsylvania.

17. Census of Manufacturing, 1827. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.

18. Intelligencer, 31 May, 1826, 4 Feb., 1835.

19. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

20. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

21. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

22. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

23. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

24. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.

25. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

26. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832. There is some ambiguity whether Fisher meant that people had their own homes or whether they actually owned their own homes. His first census in 1824 clearly separates tenants from those in whose dwellings they lived. From all indications, it appears that the latter did own their homes. The information in the subsequent censuses is not as clear.

27. Census of Paterson, 1824.

28. Intelligencer, 5 March, 1834, 12 Feb., 1834, 13 Feb., 1833, 19 March, 1834. Some of the others selling dwellings were master wheelwright Jacob Douglas, merchant tailor Hiram Hathaway, weave shop owner Stephen Murray, bookbinder and printer John S. Noble, bank cashier Brown King, and master cabinetmaker Benjamin Newhouse.

29. Untitled document, 7 May, 1833, MS in Philemon Dickerson Papers, MG.13A, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, N.J.

30. Untitled document, 6 April, 1846, MS, Dickerson Papers.

31. Intelligencer, 4 July, 1838.

32. Census of Paterson, 1824, 1838.

33. Census of Paterson, 1832.

34. Intelligencer, 30 Dec., 1835.

35. New Jersey Eagle, 1 Jan., 1836.

36. The constables and members of the town committee serving during the riot had been elected in April of that year. Those serving were merchants Henry Whitely, John Brown, and Moses DeWitt, tin and sheet iron manufacturer Horatio Moses, machine manufacturer Cornelius Speer, bookbinder and printer John S. Noble, and saddler James Sigler.

37. Intelligencer, 30 Dec., 1835.

38. Intelligencer, 30 Dec., 1835.

39. Intelligencer, 25 June, 1834, 18 Jan., 1834, 1 Jan., 1834, 22 June, 1831, 29 June, 1831, 2 May, 1838, 16 Jan., 1839.

40. James Waddell Alexander, The American Mechanic and Workingman, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1847). Although the work was published in 1847, Alexander wrote it during the late 1830's. The author labored in Newark during the mid 1830's. Some of the material for this book originally appeared as a series of articles in the Newark Daily Advertiser. Alexander used the pseudonym of Charles Quill.

41. Letter from James W. Alexander to John Hall, Princeton, N.J., 10 March, 1836, in Forty Years Familiar Letters of James W. Alexander, D.D. - Constituting, with the Notes, A Memoir of His Life, ed. John Hall, I (New York: Charles Scribner, 1860), p. 237.

42. Alexander, II, P. 134.

43. Intelligencer, 6 March, 1839.

44. Intelligencer, 8 Feb., 1837. The writer of the article was disingenuous at best. While some skilled workers made up to \$8.00 a week, most Paterson workmen earned no more than \$4.00. It was ridiculous to suggest that they put a dollar a week into savings.

45. Intelligencer, 24 Aug., 1836. McKee originally made the charge in January of 1836. The mechanics were not aware of the charges until they were published by the New Jersey Temperance Society.

46. Intelligencer, 24 Aug., 1836. It is significant that almost 20% of the 79 surviving mechanics had either become shopowners or foremen. Upward mobility was not just an illusion for this particular group of wage earners.

47. Intelligencer, 24 Aug., 1836.

48. Intelligencer, 14 Jan., 1829. The emancipation campaign, headed by Daniel O'Connell, aimed at altering existing British statutes that denied basic civil and political rights to Catholics. It marked the first genuine political mobilization of the Irish masses and received widespread support from the church and most segments of the community. Fearful of a general uprising, Parliament and the King agreed to the Act of Emancipation in April of 1829.

49. Bio Data. The membership of the organization was derived from lists published in the Intelligencer on a weekly basis from 7 January to 25 February, 1829.

50. Intelligencer, 11 Feb., 1829.

51. Intelligencer, 11 Feb., 1829.

52. Bio Data. The thirty-two unidentified members could not be located in any of the Fisher censuses or in the 1830 U. S. population census.

53. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.



54. Travers may have been an Irish Episcopalian which could, in part, explain his close relationship to his hands.

55. Bio Data.

56. Unlike many Paterson Irish Catholics, James Plunket started out as an apprentice in the town's machine shops. Along with another machinist, John Thompson, he opened up a cotton and machine manufacturing establishment in 1830. By 1832, they employed 115 people. By February of 1834, the firm had gone under. Plunket lived in areas with high concentrations of Irish Catholics. In politics, however, he broke with his fellow countrymen by consistently supporting the National Republican Party.

57. Truth Teller 5, No. 8, 21 Feb., 1829, p. 62.

58. Intelligencer, 20 May, 1829.

59. Records of the Paterson Fire Association 1821-1854, with the Laws Relating to the Association. Also Accounts of Fires, and Other Matters of Interest From Contemporary Newspapers, ed. William Nelson (Paterson: no publisher, 1894).

60. Information on the leadership of the organization and the composition of its constituent companies was drawn from Nelson, Records of the Paterson Fire Association. Larger manufacturers demonstrated decreasing interest in the affairs of the Association by the end of the 1830's. Small manufacturers, a few merchants, and professionals generally filled the leadership vacuum.

61. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, pp. 18, 23, 26-27.

62. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, p. 4.

63. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, p. 142.

64. This issue had been a bone of contention for many years. While some merchants had willingly provided refreshments, others had not. In 1839, the companies established a set scale. Each company was to receive \$2.50 for one hour and \$3.50 after two hours, up to a maximum of \$5.00 after four hours. The refusal of merchants to agree to this scale forced the companies to dip into their already depleted treasuries.

65. Intelligencer, 20 Sept., 1840.
66. Intelligencer, 11 Nov., 1840, 18 Nov., 1840.
67. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, pp. 23, 26-27, 57; Bio Data.
68. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, p. 43; Bio Data.
69. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, p. 112. The condition of the various companies was reported at a meeting of the Fire Association held on March 9, 1835.
70. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, pp. 104-105; Bio Data. Nelson listed all of the volunteers active in the companies as of August 28, 1834. A total of 92 men were then on the rolls of the various companies, although Nelson could not find information on the third company.
71. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, p. 35.
72. Nelson, Records-Fire Association, pp. 104-105; Bio Data.
73. Laurie, Working People of Philadelphia, pp. 58-61 and "Fire Companies and Gangs in Southwark. The 1840's", in The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life 1790-1940, eds., Allen F. Davis and Mark Haller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), pp. 71-86; Hirsch, Roots of the American Working Class, pp. 99-101; Clyde and Sally Griffen, Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 40-42.
74. Laurie, Working People, pp. 53-66.
75. Griffen and Griffen, Natives and Newcomers, p. 43. The Griffens came to their conclusions by comparing the names of known, local labor leaders with the lists of the members of the volunteer companies. Since they found few correlations, they concluded that more enlightened workers did not participate in the fire companies. At the same time they found many skilled carpenters and masons among the ranks of the volunteer firemen.
76. David Pruden and Lydecker both signed a journeymen carpenters' petition for the ten hour day in 1826. Nathaniel Lane helped to found the first trades union in Paterson. Ebenezer Pruden headed the Machine Makers

Society of Paterson while Joseph Edwards was a leader of the journeymen cordwainers.

77. Bio Data.

78. Bio Data.

## CHAPTER V

Politics in Paterson prior to the election of 1828, rarely exhibited the kind of harsh partisanship that became endemic in the years following Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency. This state of affairs could be attributed to the virtual demise of the Federalist Party in New Jersey after its unsuccessful opposition to the War of 1812. The disappearance of the Federalist Party left the Republican Party as the state's only viable political organization. With the support of the workingmen of Newark and Paterson, the Republicans maintained a strong hold on Essex County throughout the first third of the century. Between 1800 and 1824 only one Federalist successfully ran for the state legislature from the county. The Federalists did so poorly in Essex that they refused to run a party slate after 1815.<sup>1</sup>

The positive stand taken by such Republican leaders as John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay on the question of protection for domestic manufacturing constituted the major basis of the party's popularity in Paterson. Manufacturers, merchants, wage earners, and professional men all agreed that the town's future depended on the successful operation of its cotton and machine manufactories. Recounting the devastation caused by the economic crisis of 1815-1819, due in large measure to massive imports of English manufactured goods, the

inhabitants wanted to guarantee that their products would be able to compete fairly in national and international markets. Even non-Republicans supported protective legislation, temporarily putting aside partisan loyalties in the name of the common good.

In line with these concerns, Patersonians became part of a nationwide movement during the spring and summer of 1827 to revise tariff schedules first instituted in 1824. Paterson millowners founded the New Jersey Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanic Arts in June of 1827 to coordinate their participation in the effort. A June 29th meeting selected two Republican manufacturers, Abraham Godwin, Jr. and his brother Caleb M. Godwin, and Jackson supporter and manufacturer John Colt, to attend a statewide meeting in New Brunswick. Those attending the statewide meeting selected Colt and Abraham Godwin, Jr., to serve on the state's delegation to a nationwide convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of Jackson supporters in the movement for protective legislation was not as unusual in 1827 as it might have been in later years. Prior to Jackson's ascendancy to the presidency, it was difficult, if not impossible, to link the former general with specific positions or plans. As Robert V. Remini points out in his study of the 1828 election, Jackson, relying on support from both pro-tariff manufacturers and anti-protection

southern planters, never articulated a coherent economic and political program. He spoke vaguely of respecting states rights, of strengthening the country's defenses, of terminating the national debt, and of eliminating corruption from government. Concrete programmatic goals took a back seat to reinforcing the image of Jackson as a genuine military hero. Supporters depicted him as a man of the people while at the same time assuring merchants and manufacturers that he had their interests at heart.<sup>3</sup> In this context, it was possible for supporters of "Old Hickory" to participate in the drive for tariff reform without coming into conflict with their hero's antipathy to major government intervention in the economy.

The pro-Adams men who organized the Harrisburg meeting, Henry Clay, Hezekiah Niles, and Matthew Carey, took great pains to keep the gathering non-partisan. Most of the individuals involved in the pro-tariff movement believed that protection for industry represented a national concern that superseded narrow political interests.<sup>4</sup> This position was consistent with the doctrines of republicanism which represented the basis of popular political ideology in the United States throughout most of the nineteenth century. This set of ideas, which provided the philosophical rationale for the revolt of the American colonies, was rooted in traditional English republican thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries.

Republicanism viewed society as an organic entity where individual interest took second place to the common good. Each part of the whole maintained a fixed place in the structure. Failure in any one of its parts could lead to the collapse of the entire system. The virtuous citizen, through his willingness to maintain existing conditions, helped to guarantee the perpetuation of society. As historian Robert Shalhope put it, "A people noted for their frugality, temperance, and simplicity were good Republican stock. Those who wallowed in luxury could only corrupt others."<sup>5</sup> A major argument in the struggle for independence was that England, under the monarchy, had become a corrupt society, awash in vice and degradation. The uncorrupted virtue of the colonies could only be maintained by separation from the mother country.<sup>6</sup>

Sean Wilentz, in his study of the development of the New York City working class in the ante-bellum era, identified two other aspects of English republican thought that Americans incorporated into their political thinking. In addition to exhibiting a concern for the common good (commonwealth) and to maintaining public virtue, the true republican had to retain his independence of action, free of the political constraints of others. The retention of one's independence made possible an ongoing involvement in the political process which represented the epitome of

citizenship in a democratic republic. According to Wilentz, eighteenth century Americans also added the concept of equality to basic English theory. By equality, they meant that all citizens were entitled to full civil and political rights under a fair and representative system of laws.<sup>7</sup> As the author pointed out, most Americans in the revolutionary and early National periods did not extend the idea of equality to the economic sphere.

Formal republican thought was a political ideology, a world view that distinguished sharply between society and government and held that social disorder stemmed from political corruption. Nevertheless, it bore close associations to social relations out of politics, associations that were severely tested as Americans came to consider their own way of life as peculiarly conducive to a proper republican order.<sup>8</sup>

Republicanism reflected the static, hierarchical social system of agrarian England in which it developed. It continued to flourish in the United States in the latter part of the eighteenth century due to its compatibility with existing levels of economic development. Farmers and artisans, the two largest segments of the workforce, personified basic republican values. It was commonly accepted that these individuals, through honesty, frugality, and hard work, would eventually become successful landowners or master craftsmen. Individual achievement rather than constituting an end in itself, served to pull together and strengthen the social fabric by maintaining stability and order. In order for the individual to achieve his maximum potential, whether on the land or in



the workshop, he had to be free of all external controls and encumbrances. Freedom in the workplace and freedom in society at large constituted the twin pillars of popular political philosophy.

The victory of the colonies over England and the successful establishment of the world's first major democratic nation state reinforced republicanism's hold on all segments of American society. It truly functioned as a national ideology, holding out the promise of a better future even to those excluded from participation in electoral politics. The political and military struggles of the Revolution became the country's historical birthright while the leaders of that movement represented it's mythological pantheon. The observance of Independence Day became an institutionalized celebration of the virtues of republicanism. Skilled artisans, the very "bone and sinew" of society, adopted the holiday as their own, marching in parades under the banners or insignia of their crafts while eloquent spokesmen delivered speeches and offered toasts to the memories of Washington, Franklin or Lafayette.<sup>9</sup>

Even as Americans congratulated themselves on their perceived sense of historical uniqueness, the dynamic expansion of trans-Atlantic capitalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries raised fundamental challenges to republicanism. The ideological

doctrine underlying capitalist development, liberalism, emphasized the aggressive pursuit of self-interest as the basis of all social organization. Adherents of this philosophy rejected the concept of society as an organic construct, replacing it with the idea that individuals voluntarily bound themselves together according to a social contract. Each person succeeded or failed according to individual ability. Government derived its legitimacy from the collective will of the people; they endowed it with the responsibility of guaranteeing the individual's freedom to pursue his own personal goals. In this view, inequality represented a natural part of life, only becoming a problem when created by artificial institutions such as chartered corporations or monopolies. According to historian Joyce Appleby, "industry, ingenuity and effort" became the terms for progress, while the "cultivation of virtue and wisdom" were downgraded.<sup>10</sup>

As the economy of the United States evolved, the ideas embodied in liberalism became increasingly attractive to those positively affected by the changes taking place: financiers, merchants, and manufacturers. While most wage earners continued to believe in the collective promise of republicanism, other segments of society began to interpret traditional democratic philosophy in highly individualistic terms. Both groups continued to utilize the same language and symbolism to express their relationship to the nation's economic and

political system. As Wilentz has pointed out, however, beneath the rhetoric there remained substantial and often conflicting visions of what American society would look like in the future.

The differences identified by Wilentz were not readily apparent to the delegates gathered in Harrisburg in the summer of 1827 or to their counterparts in Paterson. Protection for domestic industry, believed to be crucial to the country's independence and survival, represented a clear expression of the concept of the commonwealth. Adams men and Jackson partisans could put aside their electoral differences to join together in common cause even as they bitterly attacked each other during the course of the presidential campaign. At the same time that they utilized republican imagery to recruit Jackson men to the cause of tariff reform, Adams supporters bitterly criticized the unrepudican behavior of the general from Tennessee in Paterson area newspapers.

The New Jersey Eagle, a Republican newspaper, questioned Jackson's commitment to the nation's democratic heritage. They accused him of making a devil's pact with their old foes, the Federalists. "The Federalists, our old implacable foe, have got up an imposing opposition. They are really the most inconsistent beings on earth - blow hot and cold with the same breath. They tell us all party animosity is extinct...and at the same time are pursuing a

regular systematic course of opposition to Republican principles and measures."<sup>11</sup>

A Young Men's Administration meeting raised similar questions about the challenger's fealty to democratic principles in an address published in the Paterson Intelligencer.

...a sense of duty imperatively compels us to declare, more in sorrow than in anger, that he is deficient in civil qualifications - that he stands forth in bold relief from the rest of society marked by acts of intemperate violence - by a disregard of the rights of individuals of the moral part of the community - by breaches of the peace - by insult to officers of the state governments - by dangerous innovations upon, and constructions violating, the constitution of the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Such vituperative attacks had been a staple of the nation's political contests since its founding. Their usage was more tactical than ideological. Individuals could accuse each other of being "aristocrats" or anti-republican and then sit down to draw up a petition to gain protection for domestic wool or flax. Political leaders recognized the symbolic appeal of republicanism, utilizing it at every turn to garner votes for favored candidates. The rapid economic and social changes of the 1820's and 1830's began to alter traditional forms of American politics. As Jackson supporters turned increasingly to wage earners as a major electoral base, political rhetoric took on a different meaning as journeymen and factory hands began the process of redefining republican philosophy. When Democrats attacked

their opponents as being "ruffle-shirt Whigs" in 1835 or 1836, the context of those accusations was very different from that existing in 1827 or 1828.

Amidst a heated presidential race, Republicans and Democrats continued to work together in Paterson in 1827 and 1828 to secure protection for local industry. Through the Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanic Arts, cotton, duck, and woolen manufacturers drew up a series of memorials in December of 1827 for submission to Congress. In the best republican tradition, the memorialists made it clear that they spoke not only for themselves but for "the mechanic, laborer, merchant and trader" as well. A Committee on Hemp and Flax carried this point further. They believed that "...as a population exclusively dependent on manufactures, we cannot but regard the American System as more effectual in producing general good than any other; our experience has taught us that a desert by its operation may be made a populous place."<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the fact that Jackson took a vague position on tariff reform, manufacturers Aaron King, John Colt, and John Benson wholeheartedly supported his candidacy as did many other prominent citizens. Even with the backing of such individuals, the Democrats could not break the Republican's stranglehold on Paterson and Essex County. While the Republicans carried Paterson, they knew the Jacksonians had made inroads among important segments

of the community. Of the forty-two manufacturers of all kinds participating in the campaign, nearly a quarter supported the Democratic candidate. Approximately forty percent of the merchants and shopkeepers active in the election likewise supported Jackson, as did many professional men, master artisans, and wage earners.<sup>14</sup>

Paterson Jacksonians, while they had little to cheer about on the local level, joyously celebrated the election of their hero to the nation's highest office. They turned the tables on their recent opponents, accusing them of harboring Federalist sentiments. In a series of victory celebrations in late 1828 and early 1829, Jackson supporters extolled the virtues of the common people while deprecating those of the Adams "aristocrats." At a dinner held on December 19, 1828, one of the celebrants offered the following toast. "The majorities of the present election will long be a lesson to the aristocracy of our country." Another toast echoed these sentiments. "The sound good sense of the laborious and industrious - many will teach the ruffle shirt gentry a lesson of wisdom." Participants at a January 8th meeting used similar language. Cotton manufacturer John Colt lauded "The Ballot Box - The insignia of the only legitimate sovereignty, that of the people." John McIntyre, owner of a hardware store, observed that "The People of the United States - Under Divine Providence, may they always be found the strong

bulwark and defence of virtue, integrity, liberty and patriotism." A third participant added, "The result of the late election - that event that must infuse confidence into our friends and teach our opponents, that in a Republic the voice of the people will prevail."<sup>15</sup>

Jackson's election marked the beginning of the restoration of a genuine two party system both in New Jersey and in the nation as a whole. The expansion of the electorate due to the general growth of the population and the broadening of the franchise democratized the political process for white males. Competition for votes in the public arena forced politicians to search for ways to convince voters to support them at election time. Just as Republicans had formerly accused Federalists of harboring anti-democratic sentiments, Jackson supporters now levelled the same charges at their Republican opponents with equally gratifying results. Democrats increasingly identified themselves as the representatives of the "people" while accusing their political foes of being aristocrats at heart.

The deepening political conflicts of the Jackson years reflected the contradictions developing within republican philosophy itself. Manufacturers and merchants, embracing more liberal principles, truly believed that through the pursuit of their own self-interest they were helping to strengthen the overall quality of life in the

United States. The employment and trade practices they adopted reflected that perception. Wage earners, attuned to traditional republican concepts viewed such actions as direct infringements on their rights as citizens. The expansion of industry and commerce in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century made a collision between the two points of view inevitable.

Rather than attempting to ameliorate existing tensions political figures exploited them for partisan purposes. Jackson supporters astutely used republican rhetoric to express the confusion and resentment felt by many people towards the emerging social order. Tapping into a long standing reservoir of resentment against established privilege, Democratic leaders depicted their opponents as purveyors of wealth and power. The Republican Party, relying on its heritage of Jeffersonian democracy and anti-Federalism, failed to take into account the impact of the dramatic changes taking place in communities such as Paterson. While they could sling the mud as effectively as their opponents, Republican politicians attempted to operate on a higher plane, emphasizing their support for economic development, protection for domestic manufacturing, and a significant place for the United States on the world stage. Their inability to respond to the challenge posed by popular support for Jackson's presidency resulted in the demise of the party by the early 1830's.



Democratic loyalists also actively solicited the votes of newly arrived immigrants. Many of the newcomers found their own ideological traditions strongly compatible with the popular republicanism of early nineteenth century America. Jackson supporters took advantage of these shared beliefs to build a strong following among the newcomers, especially among English workers and Irishmen of all descriptions. Republican leaders initially ignored the growing involvement of immigrants in local and national political affairs and then turned on them when their support for Jackson became evident.

The nature of ante-bellum politics in a heterogeneous community such as Paterson was shaped in no small measure by the political beliefs of the newly arrived immigrants. While some manufacturers, professional men, and merchants left their homelands for the United States, journeymen artisans, industrial workers, and agriculturalists composed the bulk of the immigrating population. They had little experience with formal electoral procedures since few, if any of them, had been entitled to vote in their respective homelands. Many immigrants had participated, however, in various forms of extra-legal protest. Open field rallies and street demonstrations, as well as food riots, machine breaking, and arson constituted major aspects of popular politics in England and Ireland in the early nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> While the nature of their respective experiences differed

considerably, newly arrived immigrants and native born citizens shared a keen interest in all aspects of political life.

England in the early nineteenth century bore little resemblance to the United States. The political process completely shut out all workers, shopkeepers, and many manufacturers since land ownership remained the basic criteria for voting in elections. The absence of a broad franchise, the nation's economic instability due to constant warfare, and the unresponsiveness of the government to the legitimate grievances of its citizens, forced people into taking extra-legal steps to obtain relief and redress. Such widespread popular protest made the period from the 1780's to the 1840's one of constant turmoil. Government repression fueled the fires of discontent still further.

Up until the end of the eighteenth century, most Englishmen adhered to the traditional republican philosophy first formulated by their countrymen in the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> They accepted the idea that a balanced government composed of the Monarch, the Lords, and the Commons represented the best structure possible. The ownership of property gave one a tangible stake in society and appeared to be a valid criteria for determining one's right to participate in politics. Servants, apprentices, and wage earners, defined as dependent classes, had no role

to play in the political process. This concept of government and society, rooted in the feudal past, produced a highly stratified society where each individual was bound by traditional ties and obligations.

This theory of social organization remained viable as long as the country remained relatively stable and prosperous. By the end of the eighteenth century a number of factors converged to weaken the bonds of traditional English society. The rise of industry and commercial agriculture created a situation where large numbers of people had no direct ties to the land. Ongoing warfare around the globe weakened the nation's international trade which, in turn, sapped the vitality of its economy. The rise of democracy, first in the United States and then in France, underscored the gross political inequality prevalent in England. These factors plus others created a general restiveness within many segments of the population.<sup>18</sup>

The writings of Tom Paine acted as a catalyst in the effort to redefine the boundaries of English politics. Returning to his homeland from the United States in 1787, he supported efforts by wage earners, shopkeepers, and professional men to secure basic political rights.<sup>19</sup> His advocacy of democracy and a laissez faire economic system found fertile soil among legions of discontented Englishmen. In Paine's view, all men, regardless of their

occupation or their real property holdings, were entitled to participate in the election of representatives to Parliament. He argued that individual labor free of all feudal ties and responsibilities gave one a tangible stake in society. His direct attacks on the monarchy, as evidenced by the following excerpt from the Rights of Man, made a mockery of the traditional English governmental system.

Many things in the English government appear to me the reverse of what they ought to be, and of what they are said to be. The Parliament, imperfectly and capriciously elected as it is, is nevertheless supposed to hold the national purse in trust for the nation; but the manner in which an English Parliament is constructed, it is like a man being both mortgager and mortgagee; and in the case of misapplication of trust, it is the criminal sitting in judgment upon himself.<sup>20</sup>

Paine singled out the church for particular abuse. Strongly objecting to all forms of organized religion, he accused the clergy of being freeloaders and parasites. "He takes up the trade of the priest for the sake of gain and in order to qualify himself for that trade he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive of morality than this..."<sup>21</sup> Many Englishmen shared his view that the established church functioned as an active accomplice in the repressive policies of the government. Paine tapped into this existing pool of discontent to further turn the people against all forms of authority.

Paine's writings helped to place long held grievances into a more modern political context. His

ideas, reshaped by local conditions and experiences, permeated most forms of popular protest. Machine-breakers, skilled Sheffield cutlery makers, and mutinous sailors all spoke of the rights of man, of freedom, and of liberty. Food rioters in Manchester spoke in a similar manner when they justified their plan to seize foodstuffs from a local market. "We strictly and separately have taken an oath to defend one another in the taking of bread, flour and meal where it is to be had on Friday next where we will attend the market for that purpose so God dam the mare and those that pretend justis and so I conclude with the tree of liberty a bloody town and dam the King. Amen."<sup>22</sup>

However bad conditions were in England, the situation was far worse in Ireland for both Catholics and Protestants. Since the time of Cromwell, England completely dominated all aspects of Irish economic and political life. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the non-Catholic minority, concentrated in the farms and towns of Ulster, began agitating for greater freedom from the English.<sup>23</sup> These farmers, artisans, weavers, and professional men accepted, as did their counterparts in America and England, the basic tenets of traditional republicanism. Protestants conceived of their conflict with the Irish government, which was under British control, in terms similar to those used by the colonists in their recently concluded struggle. This is indicated in the

following article from a Dublin newspaper.

You now have an opportunity of asserting your natural, unalienable rights, which if you let slip, may, nay probably, never will come again...The question is whether Ireland shall enjoy the very best constitution that ever was established, I mean the English constitution, or the very worst that any people pretending freedom ever had, that constitution, if it can be called one, by which Ireland is at present governed.<sup>24</sup>

Protestants hoped to break the stranglehold of large landowners and merchants over the existing structure of government. Catholics got involved in the effort in order to obtain the basic civil rights long denied them both by local Protestant leaders and by the English.<sup>25</sup> Inspired by the ongoing political agitation taking place in England and France, a group of Protestant professional men organized the United Irishmen. Basing their program on principles put forth by Paine, they advocated the extension of the suffrage to all segments of the population as well as complete Catholic emancipation. The United Irishmen recognized that only a united struggle of both Catholics and Protestants could overcome the opposition of the entrenched leadership. Although founded by professionals an increasing number of artisans and small shopkeepers joined the organization.

Fear of such a broad-based, democratic movement spurred officials in 1793 and 1794 to arrest many of the leaders of the United Irishmen. Frustrated in their attempts to achieve reform through peaceful, political

agitation, the new underground organization rose in armed revolt in 1798. Massive numbers of British troops quickly stamped out the rebellion, its leaders being executed or exiled to Australia or America. In the aftermath of the revolt, Catholics and Protestants turned against each other, eliminating the possibility of building a non-sectarian movement for political and social change.

Two groups of Catholics participated in the 1798 uprising. The weavers, artisans, and small shopkeepers of both Ulster and the city of Dublin shared many of the ideas of their Protestant counterparts about democracy and a free market economy. Their views differed greatly from their co-religionists in the southern part of the country. Catholic peasants who joined in the revolt, especially those living in county Wexford, used the opportunity to settle long-standing grievances with local Protestant landlords. Lacking the political sophistication of their northern brethren, they behaved in line with a much older tradition of popular protest that lingered on in the Catholic south well into the early eighteen hundreds.

Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries organized, violent protests racked southern Ireland as peasants unsuccessfully attempted to obtain equitable treatment from absentee Protestant landowners. Croppers and tenant farmers reinforced traditional claims to land, threatened by the

rationalization of agricultural production, by resorting to arson, assaults, and murder. They carried out these activities through autonomous secret societies such as the Whiteboys and the Hearts of Oak. Lacking defined political goals, the secret societies struggled to maintain the customary relationship existing between themselves and their landlords. The hierarchy of the Catholic church openly opposed the activities of the peasant organizations which resulted in the growth of a significant current of anti-clericalism among protesting farmers. Armed repression by British and Irish Protestant officials eventually quelled the disturbances.<sup>27</sup>

The first real political mobilization of the peasantry took place in the 1820's under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association. Although its goal of Catholic emancipation offered little of direct benefit to small farmers, tenants, and sharecroppers, they supported the movement as a vehicle for correcting years of unfair and arbitrary mistreatment. The association established branches in every town and village. Local chapters disseminated information on the progress of the campaign in addition to collecting the "Catholic Rent."<sup>28</sup> The church hierarchy gave its blessing to the effort and clergymen actively participated in the movement.

Historian Patrick O'Farrell clearly laid out the impact of the emancipation movement on the peasantry.

Where before, agitation had been negative, aimed



at destroying the immediate oppressive elements in the existing order, O'Connell stressed agitation towards achieving a new order. Where before peasant agitation had local and limited aims, O'Connell directed it towards national political ones. Where before the mode of popular agitation was violence, O'Connell introduced the idea of mass pressure towards constitutional ends.<sup>29</sup>

Rather than attempting to build an alliance with reform-minded Protestants, O'Connell emphasized the importance of a Catholic national identity. More concerned about getting Catholics elected to Parliament than about economic and social justice, O'Connell implicitly rejected the popular democratic idealism of Paine and the United Irishmen. Firmly committed to liberal political and economic theory, he showed little concern over the condition of wage earners. This attitude put him at odds with Catholic workingmen in Belfast and Dublin. In the eyes of most Catholics, however, O'Connell remained a national hero.

Early nineteenth century Irish and English immigrants brought a wide range of experiences and ideas to the United States. Taking advantage of America's open political system, they plunged headlong in the partisan fray. Irishmen quickly developed an affinity for the majoritarian, anti-elitist appeals of the Democrats, as did many English immigrants. Many of the latter supported the Jackson party as an outgrowth of their commitment to Paineite radicalism. Democratic attacks on the "aristocracy" and on established privilege had a strong

appeal for those Englishmen who had been engaged in similar struggles at home. English millowners, merchants, and professional men, on the other hand, felt more at home with the Republican and Whig parties.

Newly arrived immigrants in Paterson attempted to meld their experiences with those of native born citizens. During a Washington's birthday celebration in 1829, Englishman Robert Chiswell offered the following toast. "The native citizen-may his republican feelings never lead him beyond the feelings of the man whose birth-day we now celebrate, which were to encourage rather than retard the Alien to become an adopted citizen." Another Englishman, D. A. Cogan, identified Independence Day as a holiday for immigrants and non-immigrants alike. "the fourth of July-A day dear to the native born citizen, and worthy to be adopted by her adopted children." Charles McGee, an Irishman, praised America as a place of refuge for his persecuted countrymen. "America-The land of the free, the asylum of the oppressed, and the adopted country of Erin's exiles." Hugh Brady, an Irish Catholic machinist, articulated similar sentiments in an 1833 July 4th toast. "The radical reformers of Great Britain and Ireland, who are now trying to break the galling yoke of despotism. May the redeemed and independent freemen of America cheer them on."<sup>31</sup>

In Paterson, immigrant beliefs and symbols rapidly

found their way into popular republican imagery. A description of the site of an 1826 July 4th celebration reflected the amalgamation of ideas and traditions taking place in Paterson during the 1820's.

Facing the front entrance, lettered in an arch, was the motto of "Liberty Welcomes Virtue;" on the reverse, "Patriotism Supported by Religion and Truth;" in the centre of the table was an arch, sustaining a golden Eagle, suspended in his talons a wreath of mountain laurel, over a beautiful bust of Washington. Over the Eagle was a silken flag, with the motto of "Washington The Saviour of his country." On one side of this arch was, "The Shuttle: May its music, like the breeze, be heard on all our hills and through all our vallies." On the other side, "The Shuttle: May it produce wedding garments for Friends of Liberty and winding sheets for her enemies." On a conspicuous banner, was "July 4th 1776!" "Fifty years prosperity proclaim the wisdom and the courage of our Fathers." On another, "Robert Emmett: The dew drops from his country's shamrock are the brightest tributes to his memory."<sup>32</sup>

In at least one case immigrants made a direct connection between events at home and political developments in the United States. Paterson Irish Catholics established the Friends of Ireland late in 1828 to obtain popular support for O'Connell's emancipation effort. In the midst of the campaign, the organization held an official dinner on March 4, 1829, to celebrate Jackson's inauguration. After the organization officially disbanded, a number of its members assumed leadership roles in the local Democratic Party.<sup>33</sup>

Immigrating Englishmen and Irishmen had little difficulty relating their ideas and experiences to conditions in their new homeland. Wilentz found that

recently arrived British freethinkers played a key, if somewhat ambiguous, role in the political mobilization of New York journeymen.<sup>34</sup> Irishmen such as Hugh Brady or Andrew Griffiths organized their countrymen to support the Paterson Democratic Party. Most immigrants brought a strong commitment to liberty and political equality with them to the United States. Having experienced first hand the negative effects of class rule and autocracy at home, they tended to identify with the more democratic aspects of republican thought. Arriving at a time when the national ideology was undergoing a critical transformation, they contributed, in no small measure, to its eventual bifurcation. The increasing reliance of the Jackson Party on such people hardened the resolve of the Republicans to undo "Old Hickory's" electoral triumph.

Utilizing the pages of the Intelligencer, they constantly criticized the policies and actions of the new chief executive. The administration's decision in the fall of 1829 to remove Abraham Godwin, Jr., as the town's postmaster, in favor of Jackson supporter Moses DeWitt, provoked a strong reaction from local Republicans. On October 28th an anonymous correspondent charged that the action marked an attempt by the administration to punish Godwin's support for Adams in 1828. DeWitt, a relative newcomer to the town, got the position, according to the writer, because he agreed with Jackson's perceived

opposition to the American System.<sup>35</sup>

Paterson's Republican leaders returned to the issue of the President's lukewarm support for protection of domestic manufacturing again and again. Their attempts, however, to utilize the issue as a basis for the political mobilization of the town's inhabitants proved generally futile prior to 1832. In August of 1830, the Republican dominated "Friends of Domestic Industry and Internal Improvements" held a public meeting to generate opposition to Jackson's position on these issues. Only twenty-five people showed up. More distressing was the fact that only a few of the town's major manufacturers appeared. A September 8th letter to the Intelligencer assured the Republican faithful that "the industrious mechanics and manufacturers" would be present when truly needed, just as they had turned out to support Adams in 1828.<sup>36</sup>

Jackson's continued ambiguity on protection made it possible for Democratic loyalists to claim that he strongly favored domestic manufacturers. They based their claims on the President's resistance to southern efforts to lower existing tariff rates and the strong stand he took against South Carolina's doctrine of nullification when it was first put forth in 1828. A pro-Administration meeting held in October of 1830 passed the following resolution, reiterating its belief in Jackson's commitment to domestic industry. "Resolved - That the fact of his signing the law

passed at the last session of Congress, for the rigorous execution of the tariff laws, and the declaration that the tariff should have his steady but temperate support, are convincing proofs of his fidelity to this important interest, and quite sufficient to quiet the false alarms of the opposition of this subject.<sup>37</sup>

Such statements by local Democrats notwithstanding, Paterson Republicans felt that the issue of protective tariffs would work to their advantage in the 1832 election. As part of their strategy, they began to push the candidacy of Henry Clay, the individual most clearly identified with the encouragement of American manufactures. Efforts to secure the Republican nomination for Clay began in the summer of 1830. Cotton manufacturer Mark Collet played a key role in the organization of an Essex County Clay Convention held in Orange in August of that year. Delegates from seven townships appointed Collet presiding secretary of the convention.

The representatives at the meeting believed that internal improvements and protective tariffs were "...of vital importance to this State and to the Union." They considered Jackson's veto of the Maysville Road Bill "dangerous in principle and unprecedented in practice." Essex Republicans also alleged that the Administration misused political patronage. They claimed that the Democrat's utilized it "as a means of rewarding the

personal friends, and punishing those who honestly differ in opinion from the Executive..." Such a course of action represented a direct threat to "the liberties of the people."<sup>38</sup>

Convention delegates presented a sharply contrasting view of Clay, portraying him as a man of statesmanlike integrity, far removed from the sordidness and pettiness found within the sitting Administration. They incorporated these plaudits into the following general resolution, which emphasized Clay's commitment to fundamental republican values. "Resolved, that the stern republican virtues, the long and faithful public service, the unbending patriotism, the consistent support of every great measure of national policy, the brilliant talents of HENRY CLAY, just endear him to the American people, and that we cordially approve of his nomination by our fellow-citizens as a candidate for the next presidency."<sup>39</sup>

Paterson National Republicans strongly supported Clay's candidacy. Celebrants at a January, 1831 party made at least eight separate toasts praising Clay while at the same time taking swipes at the President and other Democratic politicians. Magistrate and former mill agent Nicholas Smith observed that "Farmer Jackson. He cannot plough New Jersey lands; they are too Clayey." Another partygoer attacked Martin Van Buren. "Martin the Magician - He goeth about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour."

Lawyer James Speer linked the town's fortunes with Clay's vision of a nationally integrated economy. "The town of Paterson - its Prosperity depends upon the success of the American System; may its influence never be directed against it." Protective tariffs attracted the attention of millowner Collet and attorney B. W. Vandervoort. Collet noted "The tariff - in theory an odious tax on the many for the benefit of the few. In practice a judicious arrangement whereby articles of primary necessity are furnished to the consumer at half price." Similar sentiments echoed through Vandervoort's contribution. "The tariff - For a while doomed, alike with its founder, to suffer the sneers and derisions of short-sighted politicians; the gratitude of the nation now proclaims its benefits."<sup>40</sup>

National events provided Clay's Paterson supporters with additional incentives. A measure submitted to Congress in the spring of 1832 calling for a downward revision of tariffs outraged southern planters and northern manufacturers. While planters wanted even lower tariffs, manufacturers actually hoped to raise existing rates. The proposed legislation created great excitement in Paterson. An ad-hoc group of citizens organized a public meeting of "Manufacturers, Mechanics, and Friends of the American System, of Paterson and its vicinity" for the night of June 2, 1832. They called the meeting "for the purpose of



obtaining an expression of public sentiment on the subject of Protecting Duties, and the Domestic Industry of the country."<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to earlier efforts, manufacturers did not take the lead in organizing the gathering. Cotton mill owners Daniel Ridgeway and John W. Berry, cabinetmaker Adam Newhouse, and merchant tailor Stephen S. Lawrence were the only major employers to sign the call. The remainder of the organizing committee consisted of two magistrates, a lawyer, a watchmaker, a grocer, a tavern keeper, an apothecary, and a master carpenter. While most of the men convening the meeting identified as National Republicans, a number supported the incumbent Administration. Up to the time of the meeting, Jackson had not committed himself one way or another to the legislation. This made it possible for Democrats in manufacturing towns such as Paterson to support an increase in tariff rates without coming into conflict with the leader of their party. Republicans and Democrats, millowners and operatives, merchants and professional men all believed that protection represented the best means of guaranteeing the continued survival of American manufactures against foreign competition.

The turnout at the June 2nd meeting exceeded everyone's expectations. The editor of the Intelligencer reported that between one thousand and fifteen hundred people attended the meeting. The original site of the

gathering proved to be too small to hold the crowd so the organizers moved the meeting to an outdoor location beside one of the town's hotels. The newspaper made special note of the fact that wage earners, the "bone and sinew of the town," attended in great numbers. They came to the meeting, according to the paper, because they recognized that any breach in the wall of protection threatened both their ability to "secure them liberal wages" and "...their employers a reasonable profit." The town's workingmen, according to the Intelligencer, refused "to be reduced to the starving condition of the paupers, who crowd the factories and workshops of Europe" in order "...to appease the blustering and impotent wrath of a few Southern discontents."<sup>42</sup>

The convenors of the meeting took great pains to keep it as non-partisan as possible. Democrat Abraham Godwin, father of Republican manufacturer Abraham Godwin, Jr., served as chairman while Democratic millowner John Travers served on the resolutions committee. Republicans held the remaining leadership positions. Speakers refrained from mentioning the American System, Henry Clay or Andrew Jackson. They placed great emphasis on the fact that protection affected all segments of the population. "...we regard the Protecting System as one entire system, embracing alike the interest of the Labourer, the Agriculturist, the Mechanic, the Merchant and the Manufacturer; that full and adequate protection should be

given to each; and that we protest against any measure which has for its object the protection of only one interest to the destruction of another."<sup>43</sup>

In an effort to mollify southern fears about the detrimental effects of higher tariffs, those attending the meeting passed a resolution which pointed out that continued protection would allow the south to develop its own slave based manufacturing system. The statement went on to list various cotton mills already in operation in that section of the country. The authors of the resolution stated that southern dependence on northern machinery effectively prevented them from competing with Paterson manufactories. It pointed out that "the machinery for most of those places having been purchased in this town, the fact of their success is well understood."<sup>44</sup>

The Intelligencer, in praising the great show of unity evidenced at the meeting, noted in passing that an unsuccessful attempt had been made early on to disrupt the session. The use of such tactics on the local political level increased dramatically during 1832. As the tone of political debate became increasingly shrill during the middle years of the decade, the line between local issues and national issues blurred. Party affiliations adopted for Presidential or Congressional elections became the basis for political alignments in township and state legislative contests. Every problem from the rechartering

of the U. S. Bank to the spending of town monies for public schools provided Patersonians with an opportunity to come into verbal and sometimes physical conflict with one another.

The first recorded confrontation between political opponents took place at the annual town meeting held in April of 1832, less than two months before the big tariff meeting. The editors of the Intelligencer noted that a group came to the meeting with the intention of pushing through a slate composed entirely of Jackson supporters, one that would have been "...almost exclusively obnoxious to the body of the people..." Getting wind of the plan, "...the friends of order" turned out in force. After securing the chairmanship for millowner Caleb M. Godwin, the anti-Jacksonians beat back an effort to allow a voice vote on the candidates. This prevented the Jackson men from utilizing illegal voters, leading to the overwhelming defeat of their candidates.<sup>45</sup>

A far more serious outbreak occurred at a special town meeting held at the end of June. On June 18, 1832, a number of concerned citizens gathered to explore what measures could be taken to spare Paterson from the ravages of an approaching cholera epidemic.<sup>46</sup> Those in attendance agreed that the generally dirty condition of the town represented a major obstacle in controlling the spread of the disease. They proposed that a special town meeting

be called to levy an assessment to pay for a general clean-up of streets and alleyways. Town officials set June 29th as the date for the meeting. According to a subsequent report in the Intelligencer, an organized clique arrived with the express purpose of disrupting the proceedings. The meeting degenerated into complete chaos after the chairman, town clerk Josiah Crismond, walked out to protest the disruption.<sup>47</sup>

After rescheduling the meeting for the night of Saturday, July 7th, Crismond informed the public that threats had been made against him because of his decision to terminate the meeting. He made it clear that he intended to defend himself if attacked and that he had the right as the presiding officer of an official town meeting to eject or fine anyone creating a disturbance. The disrupters, "greatly augmented," appeared at the July 7th meeting. On that occasion, however, the "honest" citizens of the town, especially "the bone and sinew," turned out to guarantee that events proceeded on schedule. They selected manufacturer and Democrat John Colt as moderator, which immediately defused the disruptive faction. The latter's attempt to secure voice voting failed. In the balloting that followed, nearly one-third of the protestors proved to be ineligible to vote. As a result, a proposal for a three hundred dollar assessment easily passed.<sup>48</sup>

The editors of the Intelligencer believed that

personal animosity and political ambition created the conflict. In their view, a small coterie of ambitious men stirred up a segment of the town's working population to disrupt the efforts to raise the badly needed funds. "The object of the meeting was frustrated - everything thrown into complete disorder by a set of men the greater part of whom would have suffered less by the assessment of the fund and been benefitted more by the disbursement of it than almost any other portion of our citizens."<sup>49</sup> The few "misguided individuals" who stirred up the protestors relied on "inflammatory speeches...to rouse their clannish feelings against the town." This behaviour moved a correspondent to publicly chastise members of the faction for not appreciating the rights and privileges extended to them.

...Permit me to suggest to those inhabitants of our town who are not citizens, to behave themselves at our public meetings as guests invited to participate in the liberal provisions which the citizens of this country are at all times ready to make for their convenience and comfort, and nobly to share the burden which circumstances may impose on them, without murmuring or discontent know that they are strangers and have not only been taken on but kindly treated.<sup>50</sup>

The writer, calling himself "A Republican," placed the burden for the incident squarely on the shoulders of recently arrived immigrant workers. Their actions posed a threat to the country's basic republican institutions. He believed that the "free born American" had "to adopt measures very different in their nature from those

anticipated by the founders of the present system of freedom and equality" to "stem the torrent of insult, abuse, outrage, usurpation, which is constantly brought forth by a misled and ungrateful portion of our population." Unnamed individuals distorted the facts "in order to blow the coals of opposition hotter and hotter." This led people into the vulgar error of confounding the idea of order with that of aristocracy."<sup>51</sup>

Another correspondent linked the incident to the earlier conflict at the April town meeting. The writer claimed that "a detestable faction, disappointed in their illegal attempts to obtain the control of all moneys and the occupation of all offices have now come to the determination, that since they cannot be rulers, they will at least prevent the present incumbents from doing their duty..." The writer heaped considerable abuse on the malcontents. "Men, if men they can be called, who have never paid, nor ever will pay, six cents towards any improvement, made or suggested to be made...Property, real or personal, they are not possessed of; and in the ordinary mode of raising funds for the repair, etc., of the highways, would not be called on for one farthing."<sup>52</sup> According to the correspondent, officials should have forced these individuals to work on town roads if they couldn't afford the taxes.

Throughout the decade Paterson's National

Republicans and Whigs repeated the charge that a small group of Democratic office seekers stirred up the town's wage earners against them. Unscrupulous politicians supposedly duped millhands and journeymen into supporting an administration hostile to the real needs of working people. While Jacksonians ran around condemning banks, monopolies and aristocrats, Republicans and Whigs believed that they were actually helping to improve the lot of the workingman by building a strong, competitive, national economy. The editors of the Intelligencer warned Paterson's workers to resist the siren song of the Democrats and to remain loyal to their traditional allies in the National Republican Party.

Developments on the national political scene in late 1832 and early 1833 only exacerbated the conflicts arising out of the spring and summer town meetings. As the race for the presidency between Jackson and Clay reached its final stages, political rhetoric became increasingly caustic. Charges and counter-charges appeared daily in newspapers all across the country. The controversy over South Carolina's efforts to nullify recently passed tariff legislation added fuel to the fire. Jackson withheld his response to South Carolina's challenge until after his triumph in the November elections. On December 10th he issued an address to the nation. While agreeing that tariff rates had to be reduced, he made it clear that he



would use force to prevent the southerners from nullifying the act. Paterson Republicans, already angered at Clay's election defeat, criticized Jackson rather than the nullifiers, while Democrats rallied to the President's defense. The partisan actions shattered the fragile sense of unity in evidence at the earlier pro-tariff meeting.<sup>53</sup>

Paterson Republicans called for a meeting as soon as the President's message arrived. Two Democrats, millowners John Colt and John Travers, joined the effort. As the tone of the meeting became evident Travers withdrew, refusing to serve on its resolutions committee. The organizers replaced him with Republican millowner Joseph Smith. The subsequent resolutions adopted by the committee made no mention of the nullification movement, focusing instead on Jackson's plan to seek reduced tariffs, which they saw as a direct attack on American manufacturing. "...in the opinion of this meeting, the sentiments expressed in the late message of the Executive relative to the tariff manifests a direct hostility on the part of the present administration to the protection of manufactures and give just cause of alarm to the friends of Domestic Industry throughout the whole country."<sup>54</sup> Taking their cue from the South Carolina nullifiers, people attending the meeting refused to support protection for commerce unless Congress extended the same benefits to agriculture and manufacturing. Meeting participants affirmed the

federal government's right to protect domestic industry, pointing out that such a policy directly contributed to the flourishing state of the country's economy.

Two weeks later, Paterson Democrats held their own meeting. They adopted resolutions emphasizing the threat that nullification posed to the nation's continued peace and prosperity. One resolution stated "that we consider the doctrine of nullification as inimical to our existence as a union, and it ought never to have been named in this happy land and we trust when it hides its hideous head in the South, it will 'fall like Lucifer' never to rise again." While condemning the course of action embarked upon by the citizens of South Carolina, Paterson's Democrats offered them the bond of friendship if they would reconsider their decision. The final resolution adopted by the supporters of the President made clear their commitment to domestic industry. "...we consider the protective system as identified with the interests and prosperity of our country, and that it should not be abandoned, and we cannot believe that public sentiment is changing respecting that policy."<sup>55</sup>

Paterson's Democrats adopted a more conciliatory attitude than their Republican counterparts. In addition to making clear their support for continued protection, they asked a number of prominent Republicans to participate in the gathering. Millowner Robert O. Robinson agreed to

read Jackson's message to the assemblage while other Republicans helped to draw up the resolutions. These gestures of friendship did not appease the editor of the Intelligencer. He believed that "the question of tariff or no tariff is, we think, to be the dividing question between the political parties of the country." In his view, this represented a positive step since elections would henceforth be decided "upon principle, and not a mere preference of men." Expressing little concern over nullification or the threat of civil war, the Intelligencer warned that further reductions in tariffs would destroy American manufacturing, leaving the country completely dependent on England.<sup>56</sup>

While the nullification crisis lingered on, Congress moved to diffuse the issue. In March of 1833 it adopted a compromise bill which provided for gradual reductions in tariffs over a period of years. Although manufacturers and their supporters bitterly attacked the measure, they could not prevent its adoption. The tariff remained a consistent source of tension for years although the developing struggle over the rechartering of the U. S. Bank soon overshadowed it. This second crisis greatly magnified the passions and hostilities unleashed by the conflict over protection for American industry.

Up until the last six months of 1832 most Paterson citizens viewed the U. S. Bank as a valuable institution.

In November of 1831, a bi-partisan committee undertook an unsuccessful campaign to have the bank open a branch in the town. Such a branch would have provided manufacturers with the capital necessary for expansion, a service that local banks could not provide.<sup>57</sup> The U. S. Bank's reputation for stability and sound judgment in its financial transactions made it an attractive source of investment funds. Supporters of the proposed branch opening held a series of local meetings and sent letters to Trenton to seek legislative assistance for the plan. A number of Paterson Democrats played an active role in the effort. Although the attempt failed, most of the town's citizens looked with favor on the bank.

Jackson's veto of the bank re-charter bill in 1832 did little to undermine people's attitudes towards the institution. Neither party in Paterson took a strong stand on the issue. During the fall of 1832, the President decided to withdraw government funds from the bank. In retaliation, Nicholas Biddle, President of the U. S. Bank, began to contract its obligations. Even these actions failed to arouse much interest among Paterson's citizens. The situation began to change in the summer of 1833. Biddle's tight money policies greatly reduced the amount of credit in circulation. Paterson manufacturers, operating on very tight budgets, depended on such credit for their economic survival. Unable to meet their mounting debts, cotton mill owners began to shut down, throwing a

considerable number of people out of work. The situation was serious enough to warrant the calling of a meeting to raise funds for the unemployed millhands. Those participating in the gathering feared that large numbers of mechanics and operatives would have to leave Paterson to search for work elsewhere. In addition to establishing a special relief fund, they praised those manufacturers who continued to operate their businesses.<sup>58</sup>

Political antagonisms engendered by a national crisis once again spilled over on to the local scene. The fall 1833 state and county elections reignited the public conflict between Democrats and National Republicans. The nomination of Democratic storekeeper John K. Flood to run for the State Assembly revived Republican claims that a small group of Democrats were trying to turn Paterson's wage earners against them. A correspondent to the Intelligencer, identifying himself as "Anti-Caucus," sparked the controversy by claiming that a caucus picked Flood as their candidate, prior to a general nominating meeting. Another individual, "Sledge and Pincers," reported that the clique had an election ticket with Flood's name on it printed in a Newark newspaper before he received an official endorsement.<sup>59</sup>

The Intelligencer's editor soon joined the fray. Identifying caucus members as being former members of the "Hickory Club," he charged that "one of the principle

objects at which this coterie aimed was to draw an invidious line of distinction between mechanics and the other classes of society, and array them against each other, and then to create an Impression among the former that their aims and principles were identical with those of the Jackson Party."<sup>60</sup> Accompanying letters support the charges. "Vindex" remarked "let me tell the whole secret: It is a manœuvre of the Jackson Party to enlist the working man in their ranks, under the pretense of sustaining the cause of the mechanics against professional men, or the aristocracy as they are generally termed." He urged the town's wage earners to "look ere you leap;...attach yourself to no party-keep yourselves uncommitted, and if it must be a party, let it be the Mechanics Party alone and nothing of shreds and patches." Another writer, "A Mechanic," challenged Flood's right to represent himself as a spokesman for Paterson's workingmen. He criticized other mechanics for not picking one of their own to run for office. "Fellow Mechanics! If we are determined not to take up a mechanic, let us, in the name of common sense, take some man from this town who would do something for it."<sup>61</sup>

A number of highly skilled workingmen represented the driving force behind Flood's candidacy. Ralph Shorrock, an English painter, James Bently, another Englishman and former apprentice machinist, and Richard

Ketcham played active roles in securing Flood's nomination. Identifying themselves as the "Democratic-Republican Party of the Old School," they directed their appeal for support to the "Farmers, Mechanics and Labouring Class" of Paterson.<sup>62</sup> While the Intelligencer and its supporters linked Flood's candidacy with the regular Democratic Party, it appears that Shorrock, Bently and Ketcham headed a distinct mechanics' movement separate and apart from the two established political organizations. Of the three, only Shorrock consistently supported the Democratic Party. Ketcham, along with many former machine shop apprentices, actively participated in National Republican activities throughout the fall of 1832. A minimum of sixteen of them attended a Republican Young Men's meeting in October of that year.<sup>63</sup> Bently, a long term National Republican, joined the newly formed Whig Party in 1834. Neither Ketchum nor Bently ever publically supported the Democratic Party or its candidates.

The existence of an independent workingman's movement is supported by the fact that these same three individuals played an active role in a mechanics Independence Day celebration, two months earlier. Ketcham served as president of the event's organizing committee while Bently served as its treasurer. All three men delivered toasts at the celebration which reflected their attitudes toward the role of the mechanic in the social

order. Ketcham observed that "The Mechanics of the town of Paterson - Industry their watchword, Honesty their guide, and Virtue their reward." Shorrock spoke in a similar vein. "The 4th of July, 1833 - It has been published to the world, that the mechanics are (not) only the bone and sinew of our country, but that the spirit and ability of Franklin exists among them." Bently linked the workingman's skill with their loyalty to their country. "The Mechanics of America - May the Precision they use when employed at their mechanism, be not so true as the aim they take when poising the gun against the enemy of their country."<sup>64</sup>

None of the men long associated with the Jacksonian party in Paterson involved themselves in Flood's campaign. A whole new group of individuals took the initiative in pushing the storekeeper's candidacy, presenting the established political leadership with a fait accompli. Traditional Democrats supported Flood in the election rather than risk a break with the town's workingmen.

The controversy over Flood's nomination paled in comparison with subsequent events. National Republicans issued a call for a September 27th meeting to select delegates to a county nominating convention. The Intelligencer described what happened that night.

Before the hour of meeting the supporters of John K. Flood, a decided Jackson man, assembled their forces at



Post's Hotel, and proceeded in a body to Roger's Congress House, filled the room, and when the meeting was called to order a Jackson office holder nominated a chairman of the true Jackson stamp (for we must judge them by the principles and men they support), and the meeting proceeded to appoint a Jackson delegation to the National Republican convention.<sup>65</sup>

Additional Intelligencer reports affirmed that Flood's supporters had met at Post's Hotel prior to invading the Republican meeting. Chaired by two longtime Jackson supporters, master carpenter David Reid and William A. Hughson, the early gathering did select a group to attend the National Republican convention in addition to appointing delegates to attend the Democratic-Republican convention, an Independent convention, and the Anti-Masonic convention. Democrats or skilled mechanics filled the ranks of the various delegations.<sup>66</sup>

The bona fide National Republicans withdrew from their original meeting place, reconvening at Post's Hotel in order to select their own delegation to the county convention. Cotton manufacturer Daniel Holsman and Intelligencer editor David A. Burnett, two committed Republicans, ran the meeting. The delegation selected by the National Republicans consisted of staunch party men, including magistrate Nicholas Smith, millowner Robert O. Robinson, master artisans John Vail and David Berdan, storekeeper Peter E. Merselis, and mill agent Josiah Crismond. The whole series of events outraged Burnett. He utilized the pages of the Intelligencer to launch bitter

attacks against the usurpers.

We say outrageous, and we appeal to the upright, honest and well meaning Republicans of Essex, to say if we are not justified in the appellation. Was ever a more bare-faced usurpation of the right of freemen peaceably to assemble and attend to their own business and express their own opinions, attempted, than that which we have recorded? Was ever so palpably tyrannical a proceeding conducted by men professing republican principles and enjoying the privileges of freedom?<sup>67</sup>

In addition to printing his own opinion, Burnett filled the pages of the newspaper with letters supporting his position. One writer, "Jefferson," repeated the charge that unscrupulous Democrats were misleading the town's wage laborers. "And now let me ask, will National Republican mechanics and workingmen of Paterson abandon the principles for which they have so long contended to become the tools of a party devoted to the interests (not of Andrew Jackson but) of Martin Van Buren, a master in the school of intrigue?"<sup>68</sup> He pointed out that Jackson's failure to support domestic manufacturing threatened to reduce Paterson's mechanics to the degrading level of English factory operatives. Jefferson even suggested that the town's workingmen select one of their fellow mechanics to run for office if they truly felt a need for special representation.

"Temperance" utilized sarcasm and irony to lambast the disruptive Jacksonians. Adopting the guise of one of the usurpers, he referred to National Republican leaders as "the gentlemen of our town who are opposed to the wishes of

the great body of mechanics." Temperance then asked "why did the National Republican Party retire when we broke up their meeting? Why did they not remain and observe and admire the order and beauty of its proceedings when we (the JKF party) took the matter in hand?" He repeated the charge that a small clique manipulated the town's workers for their own benefit. The author warned his fellow mechanics that they should right this terrible wrong before it was too late.<sup>69</sup>

Other contributors joined the fray. One implied that Flood daily violated the law by selling individual glasses of spirits to his customers. Another writer, identifying himself as "Paine," appealed to the jingoism of his fellow citizens. "We fear not the issue - the country is safe for National Republican principles, which are the firm and only support of American labor against the pauper labour of Europe."<sup>70</sup> While the country may have been safe for the National Republicans, Paterson was not. Flood and the remaining Democratic candidates overwhelmed their opponents by an average margin of 240 votes. Republicans managed to maintain their hold on Essex County even as they lost in the state as a whole. They rationalized their defeat by blaming themselves for incompetence rather than admitting that Jackson remained a popular political figure.<sup>71</sup>

An Intelligencer correspondent contributed a post

mortem on the election, two weeks after the debacle. In "P.L.A." 's view, the major cause of the Republican defeat remained "...the cunning of the Jackson men, who inveighed the National Republican working men into their ranks under the specious guise of friendship." In previous years the defeated party had routinely outpolled the Democrats by over one hundred votes. "P.L.A." contended that Jackson supporters, with help from some renegade Republicans, stirred up class hatreds in order to overcome their traditional lack of support at the polls.

A few cunning men of their own party, aided by the Jackson men, assured them of success, and that they would obtain power so long withheld from them by the lordlings and aristocrats, as they were pleased to term the employers and professional men. Now in the name of common sense, is not the interest of the employers that of the working man, and vice versa, so far as regards national politics?<sup>72</sup>

The writer also made a direct connection between the mechanics July 4th celebration and the ensuing political conflict.

The simple fact is that a few men, elated with the success of the delivery of a borrowed oration, and the reading of the Declaration of Independence...vainly imagined themselves modern Socrateses and Ciceros, and determined to show the world that Sam Patch asserted the truth when he stated the "some things could be done as well as others"...Inflated with their own greatness, they at once determined to take command, to put down all who dared differ with them, to proscribe all but their own profession, save their darling associates the Jackson men from whose ranks they selected their candidate.<sup>73</sup>

The author warned Paterson's mechanics that they would regret the day they joined forces with the Jacksonians,

accusing them of abandoning their "...principles for the gaudy phantom power." "P.L.A." only hoped that they would soon return to their senses and reject the appeals of the "artful, designing and hypocritical demagogues."<sup>74</sup>

The new year brought no respite in Paterson's ongoing political warfare. High unemployment continued and many of the mills remained closed throughout the winter. In January of 1834 the Mechanics Bank of Paterson faced a run on its specie reserves. The Intelligencer immediately blamed the bank's difficulties on the government's continued withdrawals of funds from the U. S. Bank. Although the bank war contributed to its problems, the Mechanics Bank had never been a stable financial institution. Chronically undercapitalized, it had nonetheless attracted the support of millowners and other manufacturers. Cotton mill owner Caleb M. Godwin served as the bank's president while a number of other prominent Patersonians served as commissioners of the institution. Although the failing bank met its obligations, Roswell Colt, head of the SUM, issued a statement reassuring the public of the bank's fundamental solvency, offering to absorb all of its outstanding notes. "We have about \$90,000 due to us in Paterson for lots sold. I will take Mechanics Bank Notes at the rate of ten percent premium for said debt - that is, every man indebted to us, who will pay one hundred dollars in Mechanics Bank Notes of Paterson,

within one month, we will credit him on his contract, one hundred and ten dollars."<sup>75</sup> Colt's action prolonged the inevitable. On June 4, 1834, the Mechanics Bank stopped all payments, withdrawing its bills from circulation as fast as possible. Within a week it passed into the hands of receivers.<sup>76</sup>

Still smarting from their recent electoral defeats, Republicans went on the offensive, calling a public meeting to discuss the continuing stagnation of the nation's economy. Although billed as a non-partisan gathering, the resolutions passed by those attending openly attacked Jackson's financial policies. The participants claimed that the country had been on the threshold of unmatched happiness and prosperity prior to the removal of the government's funds. Due to the President's actions the country "has been suddenly thrown into an unexpected and unexampled condition of difficulty and embarrassment in all its business arrangements." Few people retained confidence in the economy and "commercial and manufacturing operations" experienced considerable disruption. This in turn deranged the currency and led to a "depreciation of the reward of labour."<sup>77</sup>

According to the Intelligencer, the meeting attracted a sizeable and diverse crowd. "It was composed of all classes of the community - The manufacturer, the merchant, the Mechanic and the laborer - and of both the

great political parties of the day." The reporter for the newspaper claimed that a group of Jackson men unsuccessfully attempted to disrupt the meeting in its early stages. This behavior outraged a number of fellow Democrats at the meeting. "There were many very respectable supporters of the present administration present and their countenances exhibited much dissatisfaction at the proceedings of some gentlemen of their way of thinking."<sup>78</sup>

Meeting participants recommended that Congress restore the nation to economic health by re-establishing the U. S. Bank. At the same time they condemned New Jersey legislators for supporting the withdrawal of the federal funds. A committee drew up a memorial to be submitted to both houses of Congress which they claimed expressed the sentiments of the town's inhabitants on the issue. The document laid the blame for the crisis on the administration, especially "the hostile attitude assumed by the Executive towards the Bank of the United States." Within two months the memorialists obtained 454 signatures.<sup>79</sup> The document did not, however, go unchallenged. Paterson's Democratic Congressman Philemon Dickerson submitted a counter-petition with nearly seven hundred signatures, setting off yet another intense political feud.

David Burnett of the Intelligencer immediately

charged that approximately three hundred of the seven hundred signatures on Dickerson's memorial did not live in Paterson. Most of the three hundred, he claimed, hailed from New York or from distant sections of Bergen County. Condemning the Congressman's intense partisanship, Burnett accused Dickerson of claiming that the second petition had the support of most of Paterson's workingmen. He rejected Dickerson's perception that the tight money policies of the U. S. Bank, rather than the President's actions, were to blame for the ongoing crisis.<sup>80</sup>

The Dickerson petition became the subject of charges and countercharges for months afterwards. In May of 1834 a letter signed by "Paterson" implied that many of the allegedly fraudulent signatures belonged to Irish day laborers working on nearby construction projects. When the Congressman returned to Paterson in July of that year the Intelligencer noted that "...the honorable Representative of more than seven hundred sagacious inhabitants of Paterson and its vicinity arrived in town." Dickerson reportedly met with considerable hostility from those adversely effected by administration policies, his departure being greeted with "groans and hisses from a few individuals who happened to be assembled at the starting place."<sup>81</sup>

The economy showed few signs of recovery in the spring of 1834. New Jersey Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen



reported that 24,580 of Paterson's 43,439 textile spindles in operation in 1832 lay idle in March of 1834. He estimated that the spindles could have utilized over 2,200,000 pounds of cotton which now remained unused. Continued economic hardship did little to ameliorate the ongoing polarization of Paterson politics. Democrats and Republicans alike looked to upcoming town elections as a referendum on Jackson's bank policy, according to newspaper editor Burnett.

The time has arrived when every popular election is viewed as an indication of popular sentiment in relation to one single engrossing subject, and such indications, if not decidedly opposed to the ruinous measures of the Administration, are used to strengthen the hands of arbitrary power, and to weaken the arguments and discourage the efforts of those who have manfully and perseveringly resisted its encroachments.<sup>82</sup>

Democratic delegates to a March 29th county convention held just prior to the annual town meeting believed that the nation's survival was at stake. They saw themselves as the defenders of the "...great Republican principle of our independence that 'All men are created equal,' and endowed with the inalienable right of thinking and acting for themselves..." In their eyes, National Republican opposition to the Jackson administration represented a direct attack on the U. S. Constitution and on the venerable heroes of the Revolution. Both sides used the struggle for independence as a frame of reference for their charges and countercharges. Republicans began to

identify themselves as Whigs while referring to their opponents as Tories.<sup>83</sup>

The anti-Jacksonians hoped that continued economic hard times would bring Paterson's workingmen back into the Republican column. According to a letter from "A Mechanic Out of a Job," the town elections presented mechanics and millhands with an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the previous year. "No freeman of Paterson whose patriotism lifts him above the prejudice of a party to the dignity of a patriot, will suffer such a falsehood to go uncontradicted." In the correspondent's view, it was inconceivable that Paterson workers would continue to support an administration which had nearly ruined them. Judging by the results of the 1834 town election, many workingmen heeded the words of the jobless mechanic. National Republicans swept all the positions save for that of one assessor and one constable. The victory encouraged a reorganization of Republican forces which led to the birth of the Whig Party in August of 1834.<sup>84</sup>

The constitution of the new party made clear its commitment to providing an alternative to the policies of the existing administration. This entailed supporting tariff protection for domestic manufactures, internal improvements, and strong central banking, policies dear to the hearts of Paterson's major employers. Almost to a man they aligned themselves with the Whig Party, as did many

professional men and merchants. The lineup at the initial meeting of the party included nine cotton mill and machine shop owners, six professional men, and six individuals involved in commerce. Wage earners, small manufacturers, and artisans played no role in the gathering.

The leadership of the new party displayed a high degree of homogeneity in terms of religion and place of origin. Nearly half of the founders identified themselves as Presbyterians, three as Dutch Reform and two as Episcopalians. A smattering of Methodists and Baptists comprised the remainder of the leadership. No Catholics, Reformed Presbyterians or members of minor denominations could be found in the rank's of the party's heirarchy. Few, if any, of the Whigs were born outside of the United States. Most of them, with the exception of John Colt and Abraham Godwin, had been involved in National Republican politics. Colt, formerly active in Democratic politics, had moved consistently away from his former affiliations during the early 1830's, giving increased support to the anti-Jackson movement. He completed his conversion by serving as the first president of the Whig Association of the township of Paterson.<sup>85</sup>

A comparable group of men active in Democratic politics during the same period provides a sharp contrast with the leadership of the Whig Party. The group of Democrats included seven Presbyterians, eight Reformed Dutch, seven Catholics; three Baptists, two Episcopalians,

and one Reformed Presbyterian, as well as a couple of Methodists and a member of the Christian Baptist Church. Individuals involved in commerce constituted the largest single occupational group among the sample of Democrats. Their ranks included grocers, auctioneers, jewelers, tavern keepers, and brewers. Other active Democrats included three handloom weavers, three master artisans, three journeymen, two large manufacturers, one medium-sized manufacturer, one small manufacturer, and one professional man. Immigrants, especially Irish Catholics, played a more dominant role in the Democratic Party than in the Whig Party.<sup>86</sup>

Years of economic crisis and recurring electoral conflict created a highly volatile political environment in Paterson by the middle of 1834. While machinists, master artisans, small manufacturers, and journeymen could be found among the Whigs, the party clearly aligned itself with the needs of the town's major manufacturing and commercial firms. The constant railing of the Jacksonians against the "aristocracy" became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Whig Party did represent the interests of what can be considered the elite of ante-bellum northern society. The negative effects of Democratic policies on industry and trade, as well as the growing hostility on the part of organized workers, shopkeepers, and petty manufacturers contributed greatly to the coalescing of the Whig Party.

The attacks launched by Democratic politicians against wealth and privilege would have fallen on deaf ears had they not reflected the actual feelings of many citizens in towns such as Paterson. The handloom weaver forced from his trade by the decision of a millowner to use power looms, or the owner of a tailoring shop unable to compete with a merchant employing sixteen hands, found an explanation for their difficulties in the anti-bank, anti-monopoly rhetoric of the Democrats. Factory hands and journeymen resented having to send their wives and children to work in the mills for long hours and low pay just to make ends meet. Shopkeepers and small manufacturers, working with tight budgets, often found themselves in debt or unable to obtain the credit necessary to continue their operations. Economic issues did not, however, represent the only basis for party affiliation. Ethnic loyalty contributed to existing political alignments as well. Irish Catholics of all economic backgrounds, for example, overwhelmingly supported the Democrats. While part of this identification was based on Andrew Jackson's Celtic ancestry, a more important factor was the conscious effort made by Democratic politicians to recruit the Irish into their ranks. While many National Republican leaders looked down their noses at the immigrants, Democrats recognized that the Irish represented a vast reservoir of votes if properly approached. Similar though somewhat less

successful efforts were made among Irish Protestants and Englishmen. Since workingmen dominated the ranks of the newcomers, economic need and ethnic loyalty became closely intertwined. The formation of the Whig Party exacerbated rather than modified this trend.

The recovery of the economy in the spring and summer of 1834 undermined the efforts of the newly formed Whig Party to build upon its victory in the town elections. In fall congressional elections, Democrats decisively beat the candidates nominated by the new party. In order to celebrate their victory, the Jacksonians conducted a "jollification," according to accounts published in the Intelligencer. Referring to the revelers as the "tory party," the newspaper reported that a crowd of between seventy-five and one hundred of them marched through the town upon receiving the news of their party's victory. Accompanied by a fife and drum, they first went to Philemon Dickerson's house to salute their hometown leader. The crowd then marched through the town, pelting the houses of prominent Whigs with stones. When they reached the railroad station, they rang the bell there further annoying many town residents. The following night, members of the crowd returned to the house of millowner Daniel Holsman, President of the Paterson Whig Association, pulling up fence posts which they then implanted upside down. The paper also noted that James McCowen, a former Jackson

supporter turned Whig, was waylaid and clubbed by "tories" during the general commotion.<sup>87</sup>

Electoral politics in Paterson in the mid 1830's consisted of a wide range of legal and extra-legal activities. The anti-Jacksonian bias of the Intelligencer's publishers doubtlessly made them eager to report only excesses on the part of the town's Democrats. It appears, however, that the Jacksonians did resort to intimidation and public demonstrations to a greater extent than did their opponents. The affiliation of most of the town's major employers with first the National Republicans and then the Whigs, became an increasingly important factor as workplace relationships and conditions changed. Democratic leaders transformed economic disaffection into political partisanship, providing workingmen and others with a means of redressing existing grievances. As evidenced by their efforts to elect John K. Flood in 1833, Paterson's mechanics and millhands began to establish their own political agenda while generally following the lead of long time politicians. Politics, legal and otherwise, provided a relatively safe avenue for the open expression of intensifying class antagonisms.

The circulation of a petition critical of the proposed chartering of a new manufacturing company in the winter of 1834-1835 touched off yet another acrimonious partisan dispute. Distributed by three long time

Democrats, grocer James W. King, watchmaker William D. Quinn, and printer Andrew Mead, the remonstrance supposedly asked the New Jersey legislature to turn down the incorporation request of the Boudinot Manufacturing Company. Whigs Andrew Parson, a banker, and Elisha B. Clarke, a cotton manufacturer, charged that King switched the wording on the petition after obtaining over three hundred and fifty signatures. The reworded document called for a ban on all chartered corporations and banks. Parsons and Clarke submitted their charges to a grand jury which failed to take action against the three men.<sup>88</sup>

The veracity of the charges notwithstanding, the original petition reflected the feelings of many Patersonians to business incorporations. Such charters, in their view, impinged upon the individual rights of American citizens by granting special privileges to a small segment of the community. By legally protecting a limited group of investors from personal economic risk, the incorporation of such an enterprise would give it a tremendous advantage over non-incorporated firms. Such a state of affairs greatly reduced competition, a cornerstone of American economic life. Harkening back to the Revolutionary tradition, the petitioners claimed that the successful chartering of the firm would make it difficult for ordinary people to pass on to later generations the privileges and opportunities available to those who had participated in



the struggles of the Revolutionary era.<sup>89</sup>

The petition leveled specific charges at the backers of the Boudinot Manufacturing Company. According to the originators of the document, investors planned to use the company to raise funds to pay off existing debts rather than actually operate a manufacturing establishment. The proposed charter gave the firm broad powers which opponents charged would create a monopoly, equal to or greater than that possessed by the SUM. The recent success of anti-monopoly Democrats in the legislature and in electoral contests indicated that most of the state's citizens opposed such charters, according to the petitioners. To grant one to the Boudinot Manufacturing Company would violate the will of the people. "We claim equal rights, equal laws and equal suffrage; for those we have contended and have been victorious both in the field and at the ballot box."<sup>90</sup>

Although ostensibly a non-partisan document, the remonstrance received little if any support from Paterson Whigs. The political affiliations of fifty-three of the signers can be determined. Fifty-two of the fifty-three identified as Democrats while one had previously been affiliated with the Republicans. The petition elicited support among occupational groups most closely identified with the Democrats: shopkeepers, master artisans, former handloom weavers, and mechanics. Dutch Americans and Irish

Catholics strongly supported the campaign as did both native born and immigrant Presbyterians. Both King and Quinn were Irish Protestant immigrants.<sup>91</sup>

The original controversy over the petition soon degenerated into an ongoing conflict between the principals involved. While the editor of the Intelligencer was initially willing to print accusations and counter accusations, he soon washed his hands of the whole affair. Andrew Parsons attempted to discredit the petition by filing charges with a grand jury as well as by slandering one of its authors, James W. King. After extensive investigation Parsons publicly accused King of having been imprisoned in New York years before for criminal activities. He obtained sworn testimony about King's earlier brushes with the law which he published in the Intelligencer. A possible contributing factor to the attack on King and the others was Elisha Clarke's personal interest in the Boudinot Manufacturing Company. Clarke's original cotton mill which he ran in partnership with Robert O. Robinson failed in November of 1834. The establishment of an incorporated firm represented Clarke's best opportunity to re-enter the ranks of the town's manufacturers. Efforts to block the incorporation failed and the firm finally began operation under the direction of Elisha Clarke.<sup>92</sup>

As the controversy over the petition ebbed, the

intense level of political discourse briefly subsided. The 1835 election of town officials went smoothly with neither side obtaining a decisive majority. The subsequent wave of civil disturbances and strikes that engulfed the country during the spring and summer quickly overshadowed local electoral rivalries. As Wilentz demonstrated in his study of New York workingmen, political conflict and spreading workplace conflict constituted two aspects of a common struggle. The increasing involvement of wage earners in politics, both in New York and Paterson, reflected their concern over the future of democracy in the United States. Wilentz described the attitude of workingmen, especially journeymen, to the changes taking place in the mills and shops. "In their view, resistance to capital, defense of the Republic, and preservation of their rights to associate and to set the price of their labor were one and the same cause; above all, the notion of independence, central to both republican politics and the order of the artisan system, propelled their critique of proletarianization."<sup>93</sup>

While New York journeymen moved towards independent political action in the pre-1835 period, Paterson workers aligned themselves with the local Democratic Party. The controversy engendered by the campaign of John K. Flood for State Assembly in 1833, and the numerous attempts by organized groups to disrupt public meetings indicates, however, that wage earners did pressure local

Jackson leaders to move in directions compatible with their concerns. Democratic politicians responded to these pressures by attacking their opponents as aristocrats, more concerned with accumulating wealth and power than with extending full social and political equality to the nation's common people. Jacksonians consciously used the language of class conflict to retain the support of native born and immigrant workers. The class ties between most employers and the Republican and Whig parties made the task a simple one.

Although mill and shop owners and their hands still spoke in the traditional language of republicanism, the words had taken on different meanings for each group. The unity so evident in the struggles over protection for domestic manufactures in 1827 disappeared under the weight of increasing workplace regimentation and specialization, decreasing real wages, and periodic unemployment. The republican view of society as an organic whole took a back seat to the needs of manufacturers and master artisans for increased output and for reductions in operating costs.

Workingmen took to the polls to defend their rights as citizens of a free nation. At the same time, they transformed existing trade societies into journeymen's organizations in order to fight for more equitable treatment in the workplace. These organizations, in turn, established citywide and national trade unions in clear

recognition of the fact that the problems of individual groups of workers could not be separated from nationwide economic and social conditions. While trades unions and journeymen's organizations fought for reductions in hours or for wage increases, their underlying goal remained the maintenance of the country's democratic heritage. It is within this context that the strikes conducted by Paterson workers will be examined.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Rudolph and Margaret Pasler, The New Jersey Federalists (Cranbury, N.Y.: The Associated University Presses, 1975), pp. 181, 192.

2. Intelligencer, 20 June, 1827.

3. Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson (Philadelphia, Toronto, New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1963), pp. 72-76.

4. At least one historian believes that Adams' failure to use the meeting for his own ends contributed in no small measure to his defeat in the presidential election. George Dangerfield, The Awakening of American Nationalism 1815-1828 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Torchbook ed., 1965), pp. 276-278.

5. Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of An Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly 29, No. 1, January, 1972, p. 70.

6. Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood, writing in the late 1960's, provided the clearest exposition of this point of view. See Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) and Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

7. Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class 1788-1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 14.

8. Wilentz, p. 15.

9. Sean Wilentz, "Artisan Republican Festivals and the Rise of Class Conflict in New York City, 1788-1837," in Working Class America: Essays on Labor, Community and American Society, eds., Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 37-77.

10. Joyce Appleby, "The Social Origins of American Revolutionary Ideology," Journal of Social History 64, 1978, p. 945.

11. New Jersey Eagle, 20 Sept., 1822 quoted in William R. Fee, The Transition from Aristocracy to Democracy in New Jersey 1789-1829 (Somerville, N.J.: The Somerset Press, 1933), p. 226.

12. Paterson Intelligencer, 8 Oct., 1828. The article was probably referring to Jackson's actions while serving in Florida after the War of 1812. These included his unauthorized attack on Pensacola early in 1818 and his subsequent execution of two British subjects. He also had a largely unfounded reputation of being a violent, brawling man.

13. Intelligencer, 9 Jan., 1828.

14. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832.

15. Intelligencer, 7 Jan., 1829, 14 Jan, 1829.

16. For a good treatment of this phenomena, see Peter Holt and Malcolm I. Thomis, Threats of Revolution in Britain 1789-1848 (Hampden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977).

17. Among the major proponents of traditional English republicanism were James Harrington, John Milton, and Algernon Sidney. American republicanism was actually an outgrowth of English republicanism, at least until the time of the Revolution.

18. See Albert Goodwin, The Friends of Liberty - The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

19. The best treatment of Paine's role in the political struggles of the American and English people remains E. Foner Tom Paine and Revolutionary America.

20. Thomas Paine, "Rights of Man - Part First," in The Life and Works of Thomas Paine, ed., William M. van der Weyde, 6 (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Thomas Paine National Historical Association, 1925), pp. 84-84. Paine wrote Rights of Man in response to a pamphlet written by Edmund Burke which attacked the French Revolution. It has been estimated that nearly 500,000 copies of both parts of Rights of Man were sold by 1802.

21. Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason-Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology - Part First," in The Life and Major Writings of Thomas Paine, ed., Philip S. Foner (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1974), p. 465.

22. Mayor of Wigan to Portland, 20 Sept., 1800, in Alan Booth, "Food Riots in the North-West of England 1790-1801," Past and Present, No. 77, May 1977, p. 103.

23. Two good studies of conditions in Ireland during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are R. B. McDowell, Ireland in the Age of Imperialism and Revolution 1760-1801 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), and Peter Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism - The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975).

24. Dublin Evening Post, 11 Dec., 1779, in Maurice O'Connell, Irish Politics and Social Conflict in the Age of the American Revolution (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), p. 225.

25. For information on the relation of Catholic workers to the United Irishmen see Jesse Dunsmore Clarkson, Labour and Nationalism in Ireland (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925).

26. M. R. Beames, "Peasant Movements - Ireland 1785-1795," Journal of Peasant Studies 2, No. 4, July, 1975, pp. 502-506.

27. It appears that the church had far less of a hold on the peasantry before the famine than afterwards. There are estimates that only one-third of Ireland's Catholics regularly attended mass prior to the famine and that it took a major social and economic disaster to bring the peasantry back into the fold. Patrick O'Farrell, "Millenialism, Messianism and Utopianism in Irish History," Anglo-Irish Studies 6, 1976, p. 47; Gale E. Christianson, "Secret Societies and Agrarian Violence in Ireland 1790-1840," Agricultural History 6, No. 3, July, 1972, pp. 369-384; R. E. Burns, "Parsons, Priests and the People: The Rise of Catholic Anti-Clericism 1785-1789," Church History 31, No. 2 July, 1962, pp. 151-162.

28. The rent was a minimal contribution collected from all Catholics, no matter how impoverished. It gave them a sense of being part of a mass movement while providing O'Connell with the funds necessary to continue his lobbying efforts. The major goal of the movement was to secure the right of Irish Catholics to serve in Parliament.

29. O'Farrell, p. 51. Agrarian violence continued to flare up periodically in southern Ireland throughout much of the nineteenth century.



30. F. A. D'Arcy, "The Artisans of Dublin and Daniel O'Connell, 1830-1847: An Unquiet Liaison," Irish Historical Studies 17 No. 66, Sept., 1970, pp. 221-243. See also George O'Brien, Economic History of Ireland From the Union to the Famine (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921).

31. Intelligencer, 25 Feb., 1829, 7 July, 1830, 7 July, 1831, 7 July, 1833.

32. Intelligencer, 12 July, 1826. Robert Emmet was the brother of Thomas Addis Emmet who was exiled from Ireland for his involvement with the United Irishmen. Robert was hung for his part in an abortive rebellion in 1803. Robert Emmet was considered a great hero by the workingmen of Dublin. The father of Patrick Maginnas, a fledgling Paterson manufacturer, had allegedly been a member of the United Irishmen in 1798 and had left Ireland after the revolt failed.

33. Intelligencer, 11 March, 1829.

34. Wilentz, Chants Democratic, pp. 190-216.

35. Intelligencer, 28 Oct., 1829. DeWitt had arrived in Paterson three years earlier from New York.

36. Intelligencer, 11 Aug., 1830, 18 Aug., 1830, 8 Sept., 1830.

37. Intelligencer, 13 Oct., 1830.

38. Intelligencer, 18 Aug., 1830. The Maysville Road was a projected sixty mile turnpike that was organized by private investors. A bill was submitted to Congress to fund the project. Jackson vetoed the bill after it was passed by both houses, primarily because the road would have been located wholly within the state of Kentucky and because the investors were attempting to unload an unprofitable investment onto the government.

39. Intelligencer, 18 Aug., 1830.

40. Intelligencer, 26 Jan., 1831. Bio Data.

41. Intelligencer, 30 May, 1832. Bio Data.

42. Intelligencer, 6 June, 1832.

43. Intelligencer, 6 June, 1832.

44. Intelligencer, 6 June, 1832.

45. Intelligencer, 18 April, 1832.

46. Paterson, along with many eastern cities, was hard hit by the 1832 cholera epidemic. Throughout the spring and summer, the Intelligencer followed the spread of the disease from Europe to New York to New Jersey. The first bona fide cases appeared in Paterson in August. By the end of November, at least eight-two people had perished directly from disease. Another 103 people died from other ailments during the period. No doubt many of these deaths were connected with the epidemic. Among the 191 casualties were 93 children between the ages of zero and ten and 65 adults between the ages of 20 and 50. For more information on the epidemic see Charles Rosenberg, The Cholera Years (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). For an examination of the social impact of the epidemic in England, see Robert J. Morris, Cholera 1832 - The Social Response to an Epidemic (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1976).

47. Intelligencer, 11 July, 1832.

48. Intelligencer, 11 July, 1832.

49. Intelligencer, 11 July, 1832.

50. Intelligencer, 4 July, 1832. There were three basic grounds for voting in elections in Paterson:

1. Six months residence in Paterson prior to the day of election plus payment of some form of taxes;

2. A person had to be a freeholder; and,

3. Rent of a tenement with a yearly value of \$5.00 a month for a period of at least one year prior to the voting.

Almost any free man could qualify under one of these criteria.

51. Intelligencer, 4 July, 1832.

52. Intelligencer, 4 July, 1832.

53. Clay carried both Paterson and Essex County although he lost on the state level.

54. Intelligencer, 12 Dec., 1832.

55. Intelligencer, 26 Dec., 1832.

56. Intelligencer, 26 Dec., 1832.

57. Intelligencer, 23 Nov., 1831, 30 Nov., 1831. Interestingly enough, National Republican Abraham Godwin, Jr., and Democrat Moses DeWitt both served on the committee. DeWitt had replaced Godwin as Paterson's postmaster in a blatant political move after Jackson's 1828 victory. More Democrats than National Republicans served on the committee, an indication of the lack of hostility to the bank on the part of many Democrats prior to Jackson's veto of the bank recharter bill.

58. Intelligencer, 28 Aug., 1833.

59. Intelligencer, 11 Sept., 1833.

60. Intelligencer, 18 Sept., 1833.

61. Intelligencer, 18 Sept., 1833. There is no indication of the existence of a Mechanics Party in Paterson in 1833. In 1836, the Workingman's Party did run a slate of candidates in the fall elections.

62. Intelligencer, 11 Sept., 1833, 18 Sept., 1833. Bio Data.

63. Intelligencer, 24 Oct., 1832. Bio Data.

64. Intelligencer, 7 July, 1833.

65. Intelligencer, 2 Oct., 1833.

66. Immigrants were heavily involved in the rump group which sent a delegation to the National Republican convention. Hugh Brady and Andrew Griffiths were Irish Catholics while William D. Quinn, John Steele, and William Crosset were Irish Protestants. James Bently, John Edwards, and Ralph Shorrock originally came from England. Bio Data.

67. Intelligencer, 2 Oct., 1833.

68. Intelligencer, 2 Oct., 1833.

69. Intelligencer, 2 Oct., 1833.

70. Intelligencer, 9 Oct., 1833.

71. Intelligencer, 16 Oct., 1833.

72. Intelligencer, 30 Oct., 1833.
73. Intelligencer, 30 Oct., 1833. Sam Patch was a popular cultural phenomenon of the late 1820's. He made his reputation jumping off waterfalls, including the one in Paterson. His avocation eventually cost him his life.
74. Intelligencer, 30 Oct., 1833.
75. Intelligencer, 29 Jan., 1834.
76. Intelligencer, 4 June, 1834, 11 June, 1834.
77. Intelligencer, 22 Jan., 1834.
78. Intelligencer, 22 Jan., 1834, 29 Jan., 1834.
79. Intelligencer, 29 Jan., 1834.
80. Intelligencer, 19 March, 1834, 26 March, 1834.
81. Intelligencer, 14 May, 1834, 9 July, 1834.
82. Intelligencer, 9 April, 1834, 19 March, 1834.
83. Intelligencer, 25 March, 1834, 9 April, 1834.
84. Intelligencer, 9 April, 1834; Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, pp. 27-28.
85. Intelligencer, 6 Aug., 1834. Bio Data.
86. Paterson Courier, 25 March, 1834. A minimum of sixty delegates from Paterson attended the countywide meeting. We have demographic data on at least forty. Almost one third of the Paterson representatives (18) were Irish Catholics. Bio Data.
87. Intelligencer, 22 Oct., 1834.
88. Intelligencer, 29 Nov., 1834.
89. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.
90. Intelligencer, 4 Feb., 1835.
91. Intelligencer, 29 Nov., 1834. Bio Data.
92. Intelligencer, 21 March 1838.
93. Wilentz, Chants Democratic, p. 245.

## CHAPTER VI

The rapid growth of industry in the mid 1820's initiated a fundamental restructuring of traditional workplace relationships. In cotton mills, machine manufactories, and craftsmen's shops, the demands of increased competition forced employers to rethink their use of human and financial resources. Irregular patterns of work gave way to fixed schedules, set wages replaced jointly decided lists of prices for goods produced, greater specialization of labor supplanted the total construction of a single item, and new layers of supervision appeared in place of face to face contact between employers and their hands.

The scope and impact of these changes varied from locale to locale and from industry to industry. In major seacoast cities such as New York and Philadelphia, the small shop mode of production predominated well into the 1840's.<sup>1</sup> Large scale mill production represented the norm in the New England textile centers of Lowell and Waltham. Paterson, and other small factory towns, exhibited a mixture of productive facilities ranging from a cordwainer's shop with two hands to a fifty worker spinning mill to a locomotive manufactory employing 265 men and boys.<sup>2</sup> While the division of labor and the diminution of craft skills dramatically altered the shoe and clothing industries, the construction of locomotives remained

dependent upon the specialized talents of hundreds of trained journeymen. Handloom weavers in Philadelphia continued to turn out cloth in their homes even as Paterson millowners eliminated the use of hand looms by 1832.

Although the nature of their workplace experiences varied, early nineteenth century wage earners evinced a high degree of uniformity in their response to unfair or arbitrary treatment. Their reaction was shaped by their commitment to republican ideology. Republicanism, according to Sean Wilentz, linked political democracy with the workplace freedom common under the artisan mode of production. Opposition to centralized power, whether in the political or economic spheres, represented a cornerstone of this philosophy. The involvement of workingmen in the revolutionary struggle and their general enfranchisement in the early National Period led them to conceive of themselves as full and equal citizens of the Republic. The pivotal role of artisans in the economy reinforced the view that they represented the very "bone and sinew" of society.

Wilentz found that New York artisans, masters as well as journeymen, made strong connections between "the ideals of Republic and their ideals of craft."<sup>3</sup> As the nature of the crafts changed due to the expansion of the economy, the ideology rooted in the trades also began to change. Wage earners found their vision of republican

society under increasing attack, both in the polling place and in the workshop. They responded by increasing their participation in politics and by organizing journeymen's societies and trades unions to protect themselves in the mills and shops. The multitude of strikes that occurred in the 1820's and 1830's reflected deteriorating economic conditions for wage earners as well as the eroding of traditional artisan republicanism.

The working class organizations that flourished during that period had their roots in the trade associations that existed in many towns and cities by the latter part of the eighteenth century. As historians Howard Rock and Sean Wilentz have pointed out in their studies of New York City, these associations, composed of both master artisans and journeymen, closely resembled traditional English craft guilds.<sup>4</sup> Bound together by the "mysteries of the trade," the members of the organizations set prices, maintained standards of work, and controlled entrance to their crafts. Arrayed under elaborate banners and insignias, the trade groups played a major role in local community activities.

Trade organizations of the type described by Wilentz and Rock existed in Paterson as early as 1812. An account of a July 4th celebration in that year noted "the grand display of the mechanical insignias (being one for each branch) placed at certain intervals, attended

indiscriminately by the mechanics and citizens of various descriptions."<sup>5</sup> Hatters, cordwainers, coopers, masons, carpenters, millwrights, and blacksmiths all participated in the festivities. Paterson's workingmen put on an even more elaborate display in 1818, according to an article in the Paterson Bee.

The different artisans (says the Paterson Bee); preceded by machines mounted on a number of waggons, emblematic of their different occupations, comprised a part of the procession. Among the machines noted with particular satisfaction, was a Carding Engine in actual operation, very ingeniously put in motion by the wheels of the waggon. A Loom handsomely decorated with Laurels, &c., on which a lad was weaving, and another employed in winding bobbins. Nail Cutting and Heading Machines; Blacksmith with his forge, anvil, bellows and vise bench; cooper making a nail keg and turning laith...<sup>6</sup>

The craft societies took pride in the creativity and skill connected with their trades, as well as in their role as the producers of the Republic's wealth. The increased importance of textile manufacturing could be seen in the participation of spinners and weavers in the parade. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the celebration was that it occurred during a period of sharp economic decline. The cessation of hostilities with England in 1815 and the reopening of trade between the two countries led to the collapse of the domestic cotton and woolen industries. This, in turn, led to a nationwide depression which did not end until the early 1820's. Even though many workers left the town in search of employment, Paterson's craft associations appear to have remained in operation



throughout the period.

The economic crisis forced the town's wage earners to take a more active role in political affairs separate and apart from Paterson's master artisans and millowners. In January of 1816, a meeting of weavers, carders, and spinners was held to deal with the lack of work. The opening lines of their published statement made clear their status as wage laborers. "Resolved-That we do not consider the above evil as proceeding from any act of our employers but from the great influx and low prices of cotton manufactures..." They roundly condemned "any person who from political or speculative motives shall endeavor to check the progress of American manufactures." Those attending the meeting pledged that they would not buy any clothing of foreign manufacture "so long as the state of the times shall render this engagement necessary."<sup>7</sup>

Employers solicited support from Paterson's workingmen in their effort to obtain protection for domestic industry. The Essex County Society for Domestic Manufactures, established in March of 1817, appealed to all segments of the community to back their campaign. "We call upon every man who feels the patriotic glow at the name of Independence, to couple that idea inseparably with Manufactures, and with avidity seize the present time to enroll his name with the society." In order to attract a broad spectrum of support, the organization charged an

initiation fee of fifty cents and a yearly membership dues of fifty cents.<sup>8</sup> Although the Essex County Society accomplished little in terms of legislation, its program reinforced the republican concept that employers and employees shared common needs and interests.

The sense of shared purpose evaporated quickly, however, when wage earners believed that the actions of mill and shop operators threatened their ability to earn a living. A Paterson cotton manufacturer placed the following ad in a local newspaper in November of 1815.

"NEGRO Boys - wanted to purchase. Several Negro Boys, aged from eight to eleven, whose time of service, agreeably to the laws of this State, expire on their arrival at the age of 25 years. It is intended to have them instructed in the business of cotton spinning and weaving."<sup>9</sup> The millowner could not have picked a more inopportune time to experiment with slave labor. The collapse of cotton manufacturing earlier in the year left many Patersonians without work. The employment of slaves in the mills would have further undercut their ability to earn a living. The moral aspects of the slavery issue paled next to the question of jobs. According to historians William Nelson and Charles Shriner, "...the experiment was not a success, owing to the antipathy of the white employees to have them in the same mills." Later attempts in 1816 and 1817 to introduce slaves into the factories also failed.

These kinds of incidents contributed to a developing sense that workingmen had interests separate and apart from those of other members of the community. Non-wage earners showed particular concern about such differences. In the summer of 1820 a controversy erupted over a Fourth of July celebration. According to newspaper reports, town mechanics, led by one Peter Tice, marched under a "Mechanics Flag" to nearby Paterson Landing as part of the celebration.<sup>11</sup> At the ensuing festivities the mechanics allegedly toasted DeWitt Clinton, a sworn enemy of New Jersey Republicans. The following week a letter appeared in Newark's Centinel of Freedom reaffirming the anti-Federalist bias of most of Paterson's citizens. The writer, labelling himself "A Republican," claimed that nine-tenths of the town's inhabitants still supported the majority party and that the mechanics had no desire to separate themselves from other segments of the population. "A Republican" explained that the mechanics held their own parade because town leaders had failed to organize any general celebration of the holiday.<sup>12</sup>

Another correspondent emphasized the non-political nature of the parade.

It was that happy occasion on which the industrious citizen who throws his shuttle from morning to night for his daily subsistence, and the hard laboring mechanic who wields his hammer from sun to sun, and whose sounding anvil bids want defiance, together with the various artisans of every class among us could all unite at trifling expense and as a most useful and respectable body rejoice that notwithstanding the

difficulties of the times, the blessings of a free government are yet dispersed throughout our country.

Newspaper editors attempted to gloss over such controversies when they erupted although it became increasingly difficult to ignore the overall trend of events.

The course of events in Paterson mirrored those found across the Hudson River in New York City. Although employers and their hands continually reaffirmed their commitment to the commonwealth and their fealty to republican ideals, incidents such as the controversy over the Independence Day celebration pointed up the growing tension between the two groups. The meeting on protective legislation called by journeymen spinners and weavers, the opposition to slave labor in the mills, and the mechanics July 4th parade all reflected the sense of self-identity developing among Paterson wage earners. These minor events presaged the first major recorded rupture of the traditional journeyman-master relationship, which took place in May of 1826.

Thirty-six journeymen carpenters issued a statement to the Intelligencer demanding that the master carpenters institute a ten hour workday. On May 29th, the carpenters resolved "that the time of working on each day shall be ten hours, viz: to begin at six o'clock, A.M. and quit at half past six P.M. and allowing one hour for breakfast and an hour and a half for dinner." They

informed their employers that they would start adhering to the new schedule the first Monday in June.<sup>14</sup>

The actions of the journeymen carpenters coincided with efforts by fellow craftsmen in other cities to reduce their hours.<sup>15</sup> The recovery of the national economy in the early 1820's created a boom in both residential and commercial construction. In Paterson, sixty-one new houses were built between 1824 and 1825 alone.<sup>16</sup> In order to keep up with demand master artisans required long hours of labor from their employees. The journeymen believed that such requirements, in addition to exhausting them physically, left them with little time to develop and expand their mental capabilities. Failure to cultivate one's mind supposedly condemned one to remaining a permanent wage laborer rather than advancing into the ranks of the master artisans. The loss of independence connected with such downward mobility forced the individual to relinquish his role as a citizen of a democratic republic. Dependent on the whim of centralized authority, as represented by the employer, the permanent wage earner was no longer considered to have a tangible stake in the operation of society.

Other groups of journeymen, including those working in the cotton mills, appeared to have organized their own autonomous associations by mid 1826 in response to changing economic conditions. The Association of

Spinners, complete with "neat white uniform(s)" and "green badges," made a great impression on the editor of the Intelligencer during an 1826 Independence Day celebration. "The flag is of a very large size, composed of blue silk, and exhibits a view of the various processes comprised in their branch of the manufacturing business, surmounted by a beautiful spread eagle and appropriate mottos; the whole executed in a style of neatness, correct taste and splendid coloring, which I have seldom, if ever seen surpassed."<sup>17</sup> A Weavers Association also participated in the festivities as did a variety of mechanics' groups. The same groups marched in the 1827 and 1828 parades as well. In 1828, Paterson's millwrights clearly stole the honors for having the most impressive trade banner.

Among them we noted a new and elegant banner belonging to the millwrights, on which is exhibited in beautiful perspective the various implements and mode of their application, by which this useful class of mechanics enables the manufacturer to render the natural elements so eminently subservient to the comfort and prosperity of this town, the whole surmounted by an elegant spread eagle.<sup>18</sup>

After 1828, such pageantry declined, especially among journeymen attached to the cotton and duck industries. The rapid introduction of new spinning and weaving equipment eliminated the need for skilled craftsmen in the mills. As their role in the factories dwindled, their craft associations deteriorated. An 1829 account of the annual Fourth of July celebration marked the last time that any mention was made of craft organizations in the

textile mills. The Intelligencer noted in that year that a contingent of flax dressers from the Phoenix Mill marched as a body in the parade.<sup>19</sup> Unspecified mechanics associations continued to participate in Independence Day celebrations throughout the 1830's, but no further mention was made of elegant banners or uniforms.

As Wilentz pointed out in his article on New York City artisans clear divisions existed within trade associations as early as 1830.<sup>20</sup> Both groups established their own organizations to protect and further their respective interests. By 1830, Paterson wage earners had an extensive network of journeymen's organizations. The extent of ongoing organization among employers is less clear. In July of 1828, however, a group of millowners and smaller manufacturers did join together to establish a uniform lunch hour for their employees. The arbitrary action of the mill and shop owners precipitated one of the first recorded strikes of factory operatives in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

The following notice, which appeared in the July 16th edition of the Intelligencer, touched off the conflict.

The subscribers hereby give notice to their workers and others, that after Saturday, the 19th of July, 1828 they will stop their Mills and Factories, at half past seven o'clock, in the morning, for breakfast, and at one o'clock P.M. for dinner. This arrangement we consider will divide the day in a more equal manner than heretofore, and prove of advantage to the workers.

Alex and Robt. Carrick                      Post & Godwin

John Strong  
 Joseph Smith & Co.  
 James Shepherd  
 Daniel Thompson  
 Thomas Parker  
 C. M. Godwin  
 Clark & Robinson  
 J. W. Berry & Co.  
 Plunkett & Thompson

James Truelove  
 John Colt  
 David Hogg  
 Rutan & Benson  
 Warren Haight  
 John Vail  
 William Jacobs  
 Paul & Beggs  
 C. A. Van Houton & Co.

The manufacturers also claimed that switching the lunch hour from twelve to one would facilitate the operation of the millrace wastegates.

The signers of the notice included a weave shop owner, a dyer, a turning shop operator, two millwrights, a machine maker, a number of blacksmiths, and all but two of Paterson's cotton and duck manufacturers. Together they employed nearly fifty percent of all Patersonians involved in manufacturing.<sup>23</sup> While the cotton and duck mills directly depended on the water in the canals and raceways, many of the others did not use water power at all. This raises questions about the involvement of the non-millowners in the effort. Although the operation of the wastegates meant little to them, the idea of implementing common workplace policies in conjunction with the major manufacturers appealed to the shop owners, especially since they depended almost exclusively on the mills for the sales of their goods.

Millworkers, most of whom were women and children, had little use for the plan. A correspondence to the Intelligencer described their reaction.



On the day fixed for the alteration the children left the mill without leave at 12 o'clock. Huzzaing. Encouraged by some worthless citizens they remained from their employ till the next day, when the carpenters, masons and a few machine makers, taking advantage of the occasion, resolved to reduce their hours of labor from 11 to 10 hours per day and encouraged the children to acts of disorder and riot.<sup>24</sup>

The decision to walk out at noon appears to have been a planned and purposeful one. Prior to the action of the employers, twelve o'clock was a standard lunch hour for Paterson wage earners. The manner in which employers attempted to alter the traditional noontime break raised the spectre of an organized conspiracy to deprive wage earners of their rights. By acting in concert to implement a uniform work schedule, manufacturers tapped into one of the greatest fears of nineteenth century workingmen: the fear of arbitrary, highly centralized authority. The centralization of power, whether economic or political, threatened the independence of each citizen by opening the door to corruption and other anti-republican vices. A little more than a half century before, an analogous situation forced the colonists to overthrow the yoke of English tyranny. Now, fifty years later, Paterson workingmen and women faced an equally threatening exercise of arbitrary power.

The operatives found the proposed change unacceptable. Millhands never put forth a call for an increase in pay or a reduction in hours; they went on strike solely to maintain their customary noontime break.

A demand for the ten hour day arose at a meeting held the Tuesday following the start of the walkout. A New York newspaper reported that "inhabitants, but more generally mechanics" organized the meeting. Those attending affirmed "that from this day forward 12 o'clock shall be our dinner hour." This first resolution was followed by another, unanimously accepted, which stated that ten hours was to be "considered a full day's work in the town of Paterson."<sup>25</sup> While mill employees began the walkout, Paterson's journeymen seized the opportunity to put forth their demand for a reduction in the work week. This paralleled developments in cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston where skilled building tradesmen went on strike for the ten hour day. Meeting participants warned that "any workingman working more shall be considered an enemy to his fellow workmen." The mechanics made it clear that employers who did not accede to their demands would also be considered their enemies.

...such as our employers as shall agree to the above propositions, shall be considered friends to their fellow-citizens, and to mankind, in general and that any mechanic shall be perfectly at liberty to enter his or their employment - But such as our employers as continue requiring us to labour eleven hours for one day's work, shall not be entitled to our service, and we hereby declare, upon our honour, and in the face of our fellow citizens, here assembled, that we will not continue in their employment, and that we will do all which we can legally do, to prevent other people from working for them.

The people assembled there decided to meet on the evening of the twenty-fourth to "establish a fund for the support of

those who may be thrown out of employment, in consequence of the above measures."

The sentiments expressed by meeting participants illustrated the extent to which changing economic conditions had affected traditional republican thought. Accession to the demands of the strikers and their supporters replaced the internal unity of the trades as the governing principle of employer-employee relations. The concept of the commonwealth gave way to the recognition that opposing interests now existed that could only be resolved through negotiations or economic conflict. The wording of the statement reflected the workers' ambivalence to the situation. While making it clear to Paterson mill and shop owners that they would take all legal and necessary steps to prevent people from taking their jobs, they literally pleaded with their employers to settle the dispute peacefully. Even though manufacturers precipitated the strike by unilaterally changing the lunch hour, Paterson wage earners were more than willing to work together with them in the name of the common good. Millhands and journeymen only assumed an adversarial role when it became clear that employers had no intention of responding to their concerns in a constructive manner.

Although the account never indicated who provided the leadership for the initial walkout of the mill operatives, the New York newspapers blamed the conflict on

Paterson's spinners and weavers. The July 26 edition of the New York Evening Post claimed that the turnout resulted from the efforts of the weavers and spinners to gain a pay increase. The New York Commercial Advertiser supported this claim. Subsequent newspaper accounts corrected the claims of the Advertiser and the Post, identifying the switch in the dinner hour as the major cause of the dispute.<sup>27</sup>

While it may have erred in terms of the cause of the strike, the Post was probably correct in terms of who provided the leadership for the strikers. An article in the True American of July 30, 1828, identified the strikers as approximately two hundred men and many of their families. The writer for the newspaper reported that they were "among the best workmen." The existence of organized trade associations among Paterson's spinners and weavers gives further credence to their role in leading the walkout. As the strike continued, local papers placed less emphasis on the role of women and children in the dispute and more on the activities of the adult males.<sup>28</sup>

While initial accounts of the strike conveyed images of riot and disorder, including the summoning of militia companies from nearby towns, the editors of the Intelligencer made it clear that no such difficulties occurred.

The unhappy differences which lately arose in this town, between a large number of hands in the factories and

their employers, have formed a fruitful subject of remark for several of the public prints in the vicinity...and, as is very commonly the case in similar occasions, most of their accounts have been very inaccurate as to the facts and much exaggerated in their details...It was indeed conducted with some noise and show of outrage, but no appeal to the military of neighboring towns...was either made or necessary.<sup>29</sup>

Only one bona-fide incident of sabotage occurred during the turnout. Curiously, it took place at one of the two mills where the workers had not walked out. The Intelligencer printed the following ad on July 30, 1828. "Fifty-Dollar Reward-The above reward will be paid by the Phoenix Manufacturing Company on conviction of the person or persons who cut out the warps in their weaveshop, on the night of the 24th instant." Workers in the Phoenix Mill remained at their jobs throughout the strike because their employer, John Travers, made no effort to alter their lunch hour. Striking workers from other mills may have sabotaged the looms in order to force Phoenix employees to join them. It is also possible that a disgruntled operative may have taken advantage of the general tumult to settle some real or imagined score with Phoenix officials. In any event, no one ever came forward to collect the reward.

In addition to this one incident of sabotage, someone attempted unsuccessfully to set fire to one of the mills on the night of July 24, according to a published report in the New York Evening Post. As Gary Kulik pointed out in his study of the 1824 Pawtucket, Rhode Island mill strike, arson was a common means of workplace protest in

early nineteenth century New England. During the 1824 turnout, an arsonist attempted to burn down one of the Pawtucket factories. Someone discovered the fire and extinguished it before any real damage occurred. The same kind of incident took place in Paterson in the summer of 1828. Although the attempt to burn the mill failed, employers posted handbills all over town offering a reward of five hundred dollars "for the detection of the incendiaries." As in the case of sabotage at the Phoenix Mill, the reward remained unclaimed.<sup>30</sup>

New York newspapers used these few incidents to draw sweeping conclusions about the dispute and its relationship to the upcoming presidential election. While writers for the Intelligencer attempted to minimize the divisive effects of the strike, the New York Commercial Advertiser claimed that most of the strikers supported Jackson's drive for the presidency. The paper went on to charge that the workers struck only those millowners who supported Adams while leaving Jackson manufacturers free to operate their facilities. The New York newspaper alleged that strike leaders wore hickory sprigs in their hats while parading through the town huzzaing for Jackson.<sup>31</sup>

Rival New York papers disputed the Advertiser's claims. The New York Evening Post claimed that "party editors" took the facts of the dispute out of context to blame all the problems on Jackson supporters. According to

a Post writer, the so-called leaders with hickory in their hats turned out to be fifteen to twenty boys who marched up and down Paterson's streets. The two firms remained open during the strike because their owners refused to change the lunch hour rather than because of their political affiliations. The Evening Post blamed the tariff, that "pernicious legislation of the enemies of trade," for the disorders in the New Jersey town as well as for some recent troubles in New York City. Rather than condemning the conflict as a Jackson riot, writers for the New York paper suggested that it be considered an "Adams riot" since the actions of the millowners precipitated the whole affair.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to its observations on the politics of the strike, the Commercial Advertiser took a swipe at the town and its inhabitants. A writer for the Advertiser visited Paterson, reporting that "For a manufacturing town, Paterson exhibits no signs of wretchedness. There are no hovels and miserable cabins to be seen. The idle children around the place have not however the clean and tidy appearance of those connected with the northern and eastern establishments; and there are too many facilities offered for purchasing grog."<sup>33</sup> The New York Enquirer published a rebuttal to the Advertiser's observations. "A Friend to Veracity" directly attacked the first correspondent.

In vain did his eagle eye look for hovels and miserable cabins, none were to be seen; thus so far well, for had one house betrayed the least appearance of poverty the owner would have been instantly set down a Jackson man.

But the houses failing to afford a subject for his pen, he turns and makes a sly slap at the children, and tells us, "they are not so clean and tidy as those connected with the northern and eastern establishments;" in other words, they are little, dirty, ragged urchins.<sup>34</sup>

"A Friend to Veracity" went on to point out that Paterson compared favorably with other manufacturing towns and that the grog shops did not exceed the number found in most towns and villages.

Another New York newspaper, the Statesmen, examined the conflict from a different perspective. Editors of the newspaper believed that the position taken by the Post and the Enquirer represented an unwarranted condemnation of all manufacturing. The Statesmen pointed out that strikes of millworkers tended to be much more peaceful than a recent riot of three hundred local sailors. Even though it required the services of a volunteer cavalry squadron and all of the city's police to control the sailors, the press did not condemn trade and commerce. The Statesmen went on "...It will be found on examination, that much fewer riots have occurred and fewer outrages have been committed among the manufacturers of the United States or Great Britain than among mariners or perhaps persons engaged in mercantile pursuits." The paper believed that workplace conflicts in manufacturing towns could invariably be traced to immigrants "who have been educated and governed in a very different manner from the same classes of people in the United States." The writer indicated that



he would be very surprised to find any native born Americans engaging in such activities.<sup>35</sup>

Most area newspapers shared the opinion that English immigrants brought labor unrest to the United States. Opponents of domestic industry concentrated on the activities of such "agitators" to illustrate the deleterious effects of manufacturing on the general population. The Evening Post condemned British mill operatives as "the most dissolute, ignorant and disorderly part of the English population." A writer observed that "no riots are so terrible and so difficult to appease as those of the great British manufacturing towns." Continued efforts to encourage manufacturing in America could only lead to the duplication of the English experience in the new world, according to the Evening Post. "Instead of manufacturing villages we shall have manufacturing cities and when turning out for wages and frame breaking shall become common incidents of the day - with the establishment of Manchesters and Birminghams in our country we shall have Birmingham and Manchester riots, burnings and bloodshed."<sup>36</sup> While the Post welcomed the immigration of English agriculturalists and laborers, it suggested that "British spinners and weavers should make cloth for us in their own country." Writers for the Post, along with those of the Commercial Advertiser, identified Paterson strike leaders as Manchester Mobiles. It closed its account of

the incident by observing that "We fear that some of these turbulent fellows will never be easy until - But never mind."<sup>37</sup>

The Intelligencer did all it could to defuse the rhetoric emanating from the New York journals.

The misunderstanding was one purely of personal interest and convenience, and had no connection either with the supposed influence of the late tariff nor with the approaching presidential election. It originated from an attempt on the part of a number of proprietors to change the hours of breakfast and dinner with a view to divide the time more equally; and an effort at the same time by the mechanics to reduce the number of working hours in a day from eleven to ten.<sup>38</sup>

However much the editor of the Intelligencer wanted to minimize the meaning of the strike, the incident could not be separated from broader economic and political developments. Attempts to politicize the conflict reflected the intensifying nature of electoral politics brought on by Jackson's presidential campaign. Democratic Party calls for the "people" to rise up against the Republican "aristocracy" found fertile soil among workingmen concerned over the deterioration of both the artisan system of production and traditional republican values. A political philosophy initially formulated in a society of small craftshops and farms did not fit in well with newer forms of economic and social organization. Concepts of mutual dependence and civic virtue took second place to the unencumbered pursuit of self-interest, an idea seemingly validated by the rapid expansion of the U. S.

economy.

The many strikes conducted in the late 1820's and the growing participation of wage earners in politics represented two attempts by working people to come to grips with the changing environment. Their fundamental hostility to centralized authority led them to resist employer efforts to reorganize the work day. It also made them increasingly receptive to Jacksonian appeals for the restoration of popular democracy. Paterson workers did not go on strike to preserve an outmoded past; they walked out of the mills to guarantee their future.

The strike ended by the second week of August. A Paterson correspondent to the New York Commercial Advertiser described the atmosphere in the town upon its conclusion.

I am happy to say that the children have yielded their position and most of the mechanics returned quietly to work, to take their dinner at 1 o'clock. Order being completely restored the employers re-established the hour of 12 for dinner. The children are now perfectly docile and appear sorry for their conduct. The ringleaders of the mechanics, among whom were some Manchester Mables, have been discharged and things are going on quietly.<sup>39</sup>

Although mill and shop owners claimed victory in the confrontation, the strong resistance of their employees forced them to restore the original lunch hour. While employers discharged some of the ringleaders, they still faced a hostile, recalcitrant workforce. The ability of the strikers to remain from their jobs for nearly three

weeks, indicates that they received considerable support from many members of the community. The joining together of factory operatives and journeymen artisans in common cause represented a potential check on future efforts to reorganize and rationalize production. The widespread publicity engendered by the strike did little to improve Paterson's reputation as a site for industrial or commercial expansion.

The conclusion of the 1828 strike initiated a period of deteriorating relations between Paterson employers and their hands. The use of increasingly efficient power looms and spinning equipment led to a sharp decline in the employment of adult males in the cotton mills. Displaced spinners and weavers moved into other trades or left the town. Jackson's Bank War of the early 1830's and the subsequent manipulation of the nation's money supply seriously slowed down the town's economic growth. A general recovery late in 1834 created a sharp rise in prices which resulted in severe inflation. Static wage rates contributed to a significant decline in the purchasing power of Paterson's workers. Ever more inflammatory political rhetoric and economic instability contributed to growing hostility between manufacturers and their employees. Everything from the 1832 cholera epidemic to pervasive intemperance was blamed on wage laborers or people supportive of them.

A series of articles and letters published in the Intelligencer in 1834 reflected the attitudes of many Patersonians to the town's millworkers and laborers. In January of that year, a Committee for a Youth's Sunday School issued a circular on the need for an educational institution for young millworkers. Committee members explained that long hours of work deprived such individuals of the opportunity to obtain an education. "There are cares and wants which meet them almost upon the very threshold of life, and demand of them their utmost physical activities, to the entire neglect of mental and moral culture." This resulted in their growing up "uninstructed and undisciplined in such courses of moral and intellectual action, as are befitting citizens and freemen." Such a state of affairs jeopardized the future well being of the entire community, according to the authors of the circular. Young people fell victim to "profligacy and liscentiousness," becoming a threat to public peace and order. Establishment of a youth's Sunday school would provide these individuals with important moral skills and prevent them from spending the Sabbath out on the streets in "corrupting idleness."<sup>40</sup>

The circular put forth a clear message. Left to their own devices, millworkers could not behave in the manner required of members of a democratic republic. The prerequisites of mill labor left the operatives with little

or no interest in education and morality, two cornerstones of republican citizenship as defined by non-wage earners. Even though school supporters believed that the gratification of primal, physical wants remained the motivating force behind the actions of the young millhands, they hoped to "infuse in their hearts the elements of moral vitality, and to instruct them in their duties as social, moral and political beings." Only the proper moral and spiritual training could rescue the wage earners from their journey to ruin and decay.

A lengthy letter to the Intelligencer from "One Who Knows" published seven months later, reiterated and expanded upon the views presented by the Sunday School committee. The writer condemned the young people working in the mills for not showing due respect to their employers while at the same time criticizing parents for not properly disciplining their offspring. "Does any parent, having a due regard for his child, desire that it should run about the street, abusing and huzzaing at every individual that passes? Would they encourage such disreputable conduct-or have they ever heard of the fatal effects of idleness." The correspondent suggested that such ill-behaved employees be discharged in favor of individuals willing to pledge themselves to respect and obey their employers.<sup>41</sup>

The disrespect shown the millowners by their young hands bothered "One Who Knows" more than anything else. In

concluding his letter, he cited an incident which summed up, for him, the deteriorating state of employer-employee relations.

It appears there were some soldiers parading, from other States in our streets, and these boys had left the mills to see the soldiers; It was about 2 o'clock, when one boy about twelve years old says to a lad of fifteen "Well, if we go to the mill that fellow will dock us" "No," said the other, "he dare not do it, for if he does we can turnout again," to be, as I thought to myself, coaxed back into work.<sup>42</sup>

"One Who Knows" ended his correspondence by implying that the leniency and gentle nature of the millowners encouraged such behavior. Had they been more decisive and firm with their naturally unruly operatives, they would not have to face constant insubordination and disrespect.

Although millhands bore the brunt of such published attacks, at least one letter writer indicated that skilled journeymen were viewed in a similar light. "Franklin" informed the town's mechanics that most non-wage earners looked at them with open scorn and contempt.

What means the oft repeated exclamation, "the bone and muscle" of our country, the "working-men", they are the patriots of our land. Fellow working man this is all flattery, manufactured by the learned profession, to obtain your suffrages for their own ends...What inference are we to draw when we find that working men form but an insignificant part of the governing, and the law-making power of the land?...It is this; they undervalue the advantages resulting from mental cultivation; they believe that being born fine, they are fine indeed; and that to conceit and ignorance they are inseparably united.<sup>43</sup>

Although "Franklin"'s goal was to recruit workingmen for the Whig Party, his letter reflected the

dichotomy that had developed in people's attitudes towards journeymen artisans. The author's attempt to warn mechanics of their reduced social status directly contradicted the idealized portrait of the skilled workingman that appeared in the popular press by the mid 1830's. Journalists, educators, politicians, and clergymen ascribed to the mechanic all the traits identified with the archetype republican: thrifty, virtuous, hardworking, honest, and temperate. The "respectable" artisan became the prescribed role model for all wage earners. In almost the same breath, however, these people harshly condemned journeymen when they participated in unacceptable forms of public behavior, lumping them with allegedly drunken, immoral, ignorant factory hands. One's inclusion or exclusion from mainstream society depended almost totally on one's acceptance of the role of the mechanic as it was defined by non-wage earners.

By the mid 1830's, manufacturers, merchants, and professional men conceded that real divisions existed in American society. They set about the task of defining the boundaries of citizenship in the emerging social system, using their definition of republicanism as an ideological reference point. They emphasized desirable moral traits while ignoring such key aspects of republican thought as equality and distrust of centralized authority. Shopowners and their allies stripped popular ideology of its



democratic facets, turning it into a philosophy of hard work and temperate behavior that posed little threat to established centers of economic and political control.

The social tensions existing in Paterson could be found in communities across the country. As workplace relationships deteriorated in many towns and cities in 1834 and 1835, workers increasingly turned to trade unions and strikes as vehicles for expressing their discontent. Although specific conditions varied from one location to the next, a general tide of labor organization washed across the land in the spring of 1835. Hardly an edition of a newspaper went to press without publishing an account of some walkout in this or that community. In June of 1835 Paterson cordwainers walked off their jobs, followed a few weeks later by the town's cotton millhands. The latter strike quickly became a focal point of national attention. The walkout polarized the community and left a residue of bitterness which lasted for many years.

A look at events in nearby Newark, a national center of trades union organization, helps to illuminate the course of developments in Paterson. Available information indicates that trades unions in Newark, Paterson and elsewhere grew out of the earlier journeymen's associations. Moving beyond their role of guaranteeing the integrity of their crafts and of providing financial benefits to members, these organizations began to take on a broader economic role.<sup>44</sup> An anonymous contributor to the

New Jersey Eagle elaborated on the process of change. "A Real Workingman" contributed a series of articles to the Eagle in the spring of 1834, laying out the philosophical and practical justifications for the establishment of trades unions. He used the term trades union in a very narrow context, specifically referring to citywide combinations of existing trade societies. The correspondent laid out a detailed plan of organization for such unions.

The mode of proceeding to the formation of a "Trades Union" is simple and easy. Let each trade or art (some of them have societies already formed) hold a meeting, and after organizing as a Trade Society, appoint a delegate or delegates to attend a general meeting of the delegates appointed by several trade societies. This general meeting of all the delegates, when organized, will constitute the "Trades Unions" in which the various trades will be equitably represented.<sup>45</sup>

According to "A Real Workingman", employers forced workers to take these steps by violating the democratic rights of their employees both in and out of the shops. In the writer's view, "the idea for forming these Unions among journeyman mechanics was first suggested by the frequency of combinations among the bosses!" "They thought 'what was so good for the goose must be good for the gander!!!'"<sup>46</sup> He charged that Newark shopowners took advantage of slack winter seasons to cut wages, refusing to restore the cuts when spring arrived. "A Real Workingman" also claimed that employers forced wage earners to vote for their political candidates under the threat of being fired. These actions

violated the very spirit and intent of the nation's constitution. It therefore became the duty of every patriotic workingman to oppose such practices and policies.

Workingmen - How can we evince our love of country, the constitution and the laws, more effectually than in the nice, punctilious observance, maintenance and defense of those rights and privileges guaranteed us by the great Charter of Freedom? So long as we recognize the principle that "all men are created free and equal," just so long are we bound by every sense of duty to ourselves, by every tie of Patriotism, by our regard for the constitution and the laws, by our veneration for the heroes of the revolution, by our love of liberty, and by every tie that can bind the good man and the patriot to his country, to resist the very first dawning of an attempt to infringe or invade even the least of those enabling rights and privileges which it is our duty to preserve sacred and inviolate.<sup>47</sup>

In concluding his series of articles, "A Real Workingman" reiterated the goals of trade unions as he viewed them. The overriding aim of the organization was "the better to enable the oppressed to withstand oppression." This could be accomplished by obtaining the right of unrestrained suffrage for all workingmen, by securing decent, fair wages, by the general uplifting of the public reputation of the mechanical arts, and by the overall advancing of "the best interests of mechanics and workingmen." The writer repeatedly assured the citizens of Newark that trades unions did not advocate rebellion or revolution nor did they support attacks on private property. They evinced no desire to "dictate prices for labor" and tried to prevent strikes whenever possible. Trades union members, in his view, did not advocate turning

"journeymen into bosses and bosses into journeymen."<sup>48</sup>

The letters of "A Real Workingman" represent perhaps the most thorough exposition of the nature of early trade unionism in the United States. Deeply rooted in republican ideology, the analysis put forth by the writer laid the burden for the nation's continued success squarely on the shoulders of American workingmen. Employers, through their unrestrained pursuit of their own self-interest, forfeited the right to act as spokesmen for the will of the people. By organizing to further their own ends and violating the rights of their employees at work and in the community, manufacturers and master artisans forced wage earners to defend themselves and the nation's democratic heritage.

The split within republican thought was real and pronounced by the mid 1830's. While workingmen continued to speak out about protecting liberty against the encroachments of arbitrary power, employers focused on frugality, morality, and loyalty. The latter, operating under the pressure of an expanding commercial and industrial economy, grafted elements of liberal thought onto republican ideology. Millhands and journeymen continued to operate on the basis of more traditional republicanism, utilizing it to justify their resistance to unfair treatment by their employers. By taking such a course of action, they believed that they were defending

both their own interests and those of the country as a whole.

Frank DeVyver, in his study of ante-bellum labor in New Jersey, credited "A Real Workingman" with providing the spark for the establishment of trades unions in Newark.<sup>49</sup> Skilled workers had a strong tradition or organization that predated the 1830's. No fewer than twenty distinct mechanics societies participated in July 4th festivities in 1826. Three years later the number rose to thirty-four.<sup>50</sup> As early as 1830, Newark wage earners constituted an organized political force in the town, declaring themselves independent of both the pro- and anti-Jackson camps. Becoming involved in such issues as taxation and education, this independent workingmen's organization continued in operation through the summer of 1834, participating in the formation of the first citywide Trades Union in June. By August, the Newark Trades Union joined with the New York General Trades Union to establish a nationwide organization. The Newark Trades Union met on a regular basis throughout the fall and winter of that year.

"A Real Workingman" may have actually participated in the formation of the Newark Trades Union or he may have been an interested bystander. In either case, the Newark organization closely adhered to the scheme he laid out in his letters to the Eagle. The Trades Union brought

together existing craft societies under a common program and philosophy. Many of those involved in the formation of the Trades Union had been active in political affairs as well. These workingmen drew a strong connection between workplace conditions and the general political environment in a manner similar to that described by the unidentified correspondence to the Newark newspaper.

Other than participating in local Independence Day festivities there is no record of the activities of Paterson trade associations until the spring of 1835. While accounts of the electoral contests of 1833 and 1834 hint at the existence of an independent political movement among town mechanics, it never became a clearly defined force as it did in Newark. When Paterson workingmen actively began organizing in 1835 they depended heavily on their fellow wage earners in the nearby town for guidance and support.

The first recorded contact between Paterson workers and the Newark Trades Union took place in March of 1835. Shoemaker William Masters represented the Paterson Society of Cordwainers at the monthly meeting of the Trades Union.<sup>51</sup> Three months later, these same shoemakers went on strike demanding a ten per cent wage increase and a limitation on their hours of work. According to a letter published in the Paterson Courier, from a writer calling himself "Wax," cordwainers worked up to sixteen hours a

day, earning between four and four and a half dollars a week. This left them with little time for "gospel truths or mental knowledge." "Wax" believed that trade unionism represented the most effective weapon in forcing employers to correct existing abuses.<sup>52</sup>

The Paterson cordwainers requested support for their strike from the Newark labor organization. At a special meeting on June 18th, the Trades Union enthusiastically endorsed the walkout, urging member organizations to raise funds for the striking shoemakers. Those attending the session passed a resolution, stating "that in the attempt to crush the producing classes, we discover a fiendish intolerance alike disgraceful to those who nurture it and the country whose governing principle is Equality." The actions of Paterson's master shoemakers represented yet another example of employers attempting to beat down workingmen while undercutting the nation's most sacred principles.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to supporting the turnout, the Newark Trades Union urged Paterson workers to form their own "Trade Union Societies" which represented "the only means which they can adopt for protection against the merciless attacks of their grinding and powerful enemy." Taking the advice to heart, Paterson cordwainers called a meeting for the following night to discuss the suggestion. Delegates from Newark attended the gathering explaining their views

on trade unionism to the workers in attendance. They referred to "...the dire necessity of a general union throughout the United States in order that they may sustain themselves against monopolizing speculators who would wish to bring them upon a level with slaves!" The Newark trade unionists made it clear that Paterson wage earners should not interfere with "the just rights of their employers." While the Newark workers affirmed their support for their fellow New Jerseyans, they urged them to settle their differences with their employers in as peaceful a way as possible.<sup>54</sup>

The meeting took no specific action on the recommendations of the Newark delegation. Those in attendance passed resolutions thanking the visitors and requesting that the proceedings be published in "all other newspapers friendly to the cause of Mechanics and Workingmen." The proposal to form a trades union in Paterson remained dormant for another month. During the ensuing period of time the town's cotton mill hands began a strike which quickly overshadowed the walkout of the journeymen cordwainers. The operative's strike turned into one of the bitterest confrontations of the decade. At its height over two thousand millhands, or approximately thirty-five per cent of the town's total workforce, were off their jobs.<sup>55</sup> Countless others in the community felt the effects of the conflict.



Unlike the 1828 turnout, the 1835 strike did not result from some arbitrary action by the factory owners. Paterson millhands along with workers all across the country walked off their jobs in an attempt to reverse the drop in their standard of living created by rapidly escalating inflation. They also objected to the long hours of work required by their employers. The expansion of the economy which followed the 1833-1834 recession forced mill and shop owners to run their shops at full capacity in order to make up for previous losses. This made it necessary for some hands to work up to fourteen hours a day. These conditions led Brooklyn stone masons, Poughkeepsie cordwainers, Steubenville weavers, and Hartford mechanics to go on strike, demanding pay increases and reductions in hours. John R. Commons found that more than sixty-five strikes took place between January 31 and December 19 of 1835.<sup>56</sup> Due to its size and duration, the Paterson walkout attracted more attention than almost any of the other disputes.

The strike began on July 3rd. We do not know to what extent the manufacturers anticipated the turnout.<sup>57</sup> Unlike 1828, journeymen artisans did not join the protest. The cordwainers, who apparently resolved their dispute by the beginning of July, were the only other Paterson workers to go on strike during the summer of 1835. While the two groups of wage earners shared similar grievances in

relation to wages and hours, additional factors contributed to the dissatisfaction of the mill operatives. Factory hands were fined twenty-five cents if they failed to arrive at their machines before the actual start of the working day. Attempts to protest such fines almost always resulted in automatic dismissal. Workers received a half hour for breakfast and a forty-five minute dinner break. Manufacturers expected them to clean their machines after the conclusion of the workday, which added at least another hour onto their schedules. Millowners often held back a week's wages until the operative left their employ. DeVyver claimed that the store order system constituted another grievance, although the issue never appeared in any of the accounts of the dispute.<sup>58</sup>

According to the editors of the Intelligencer, employers thought the strike to be totally unwarranted. As far as they were concerned, the young people in their mills were treated as well as those in any other factories. "We do believe that the working classes, here, are better clad and fed, and opportunities not less for education, than they are in mercantile or agricultural districts; and that the children are as happy and comfortable in the factories in this town, as they would be in any other pursuit."<sup>59</sup> The owners strongly refuted the charge that they required excessive hours of labor from their employees. The millowners claimed that the operatives worked an average of

eleven and a half hours a day for wages comparable with those of any other manufacturing town. Millhands in the Paterson mills allegedly received more holidays than workers living elsewhere. The owners pointed out that young women performing the most difficult and arduous tasks in the mills received piece rate wages. According to the manufacturers, these women actually wanted an increase in hours which would allow them to earn higher wages. In general, the mill owners resented the charges levelled at them and rejected all requests to mediate the dispute.

Weeks passed and the manufacturers showed no inclination to give in to their employees. They refused to meet with a committee of townspeople chosen to try and find some solution to the impasse. The lack of progress in resolving the dispute prompted relatives and supporters of the strikers to establish a relief organization which called itself the Paterson Association for the Protection of the Working Classes of Paterson. It raised money from sympathetic Patersonians to provide aid to families adversely affected by the conflict. Although "considerable was received," it proved to be inadequate.<sup>60</sup>

The Association organized a meeting for the night of July 27 to discuss the shortage of funds. A delegation from the Newark Trades Union attended the meeting, roundly criticizing members of the Association for not having publicized their plight earlier. The organization responded by opening up a subscription book and by

preparing an appeal to "the friends of humanity, over the Union, to lend us a helping hand in this highly necessary struggle." Members of the Association passed a resolution calling for millowners to institute an eleven hour day for five days and a nine hour day for Saturdays.<sup>61</sup>

Journeyman took the lead in establishing the Paterson Association. Two of them, carpenter Peter Lydecker and shoemaker Edward Earle, played prominent roles in the organization of the town's wage earners. Lydecker, who served as president of the Association, joined the 1826 effort to secure a ten hour day for the town's carpenters and later served as a delegate to the Newark Trades Union. Earle, official agent for the newspaper The Man in Paterson, actively participated in local Democratic politics, helped to found the first trades union in Paterson, and played an important role in the Anti-Union of Church and State Society. Statements and resolutions issued by the Paterson Association reflected the thinking of these journeymen. They rejected the idea that employers had the right to arbitrarily decide the length of the working day. The Association resolved "that in future we will endeavor to prevent employers from dictating to us what quantity of time we shall dispose of for a day's work." The members of the organization warned that "we will use every honorable means in our power to prevent employers from exacting more."<sup>62</sup>

In all of the newspaper reports and correspondence there is no indication of who provided the leadership for the initial walkout. The craft associations of spinners and weavers who apparently led the 1828 strike had vanished by 1835. Women working in the mills may have organized their own trade societies, similar to those existing among Philadelphia tailoresses and seamstresses, although no mention of them exists anywhere.<sup>63</sup> The chances of such a vast walkout occurring spontaneously among a workforce composed primarily of children and teenagers is possible but not likely. According to accounts in the Intelligencer, the Paterson Association was running the strike by the third or fourth week. In all probability, journeymen from other trades took a hand in instigating and organizing the confrontation.

The involvement of cordwainer Joseph D. Edwards in the strike and other local labor activities gives some weight to this assumption. Edwards served as chairman of the June 19th meeting called by the cordwainers to discuss the formation of a trades union in Paterson. Five of his eight children worked in the cotton mills and participated in the walkout. Throughout the strike he played a key role in mobilizing community support for the millhands. His activities earned him the enmity of the Intelligencer which accused him of living off the wages of his children. "There is none more conspicuous than a certain lazy

shoemaker, who instead of making shoes, makes speeches at the corners of the streets and in market places. Yes, instead of working for his children, his children work for him."<sup>64</sup>

Even if journeymen such as Edwards, Earle, and Lydecker did not actually initiate the turn out, they played key roles in sustaining it for a six week period. In addition to supporting the millhands, these wage earners moved to protect their own interests as well. On the night of Tuesday, July 21, they held a meeting to discuss the formation of a local trades union. David Scott, a tailor and vice-president of the New York General Trades Union, attended the meeting making "a very eloquent speech showing the necessity and advantages of trades union in general..."<sup>65</sup> After deciding to establish such an organization in Paterson they spent the rest of the evening discussing the plight of the mill operatives.

Representatives from a number of different trades participated in the formation of the trades union. William Masters, the cordwainers' delegate to the Newark Trades Union, chaired the initial meeting. His fellow tradesman, Edward Earle, served on the union's organizing committee as did metalworker Nathaniel Lane, carpenter Mathew Crawford, and machinists James Buckley and Joseph Graham. They agreed to meet the next morning to draw up a constitution and by-laws.<sup>66</sup>

On Wednesday evening a delegation accompanied Scott to a meeting of the Newark Trades Union. James Field, a spokesman for the group, requested permission for Paterson mechanics to affiliate their organization with the Newark association. The latter group accepted the Paterson Trades Union on condition that they open their financial records to regular inspection. After agreeing to the request, the Paterson delegation asked the Newark Trades Union if it would "exert its influence in aiding them in a pecuniary matter, if, in the anticipated struggle for their rights it should be deemed necessary." This oblique request for possible financial aid for the strikers was supported by Scott, who ended the meeting with a dramatic account of the plight of the Paterson millhands.<sup>67</sup>

The efforts of the Paterson Trades Union and the Paterson Association to mobilize external support for the strikers met with considerable success. As word of the strike spread, newspapers from as far away as Pittsburgh covered the story. The Daily Pittsburgh Gazette condemned the unwillingness of the manufacturers to deal fairly with the grievances of their employees. "To make a child of eight or twelve years of age labor thirteen hours a day is brutal tyranny. It is most unmanly and unnatural which not only makes a slave of the helpless creature for the time, which inflicts on it an injury of life, stinting the growth of its mind as well as body, and in many cases

preventing it from attaining healthy adult proportions."<sup>68</sup>

Newspapers in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other sections of New Jersey printed similar articles. The United Blacksmiths Society of New Haven, Connecticut, forwarded ten dollars "for those poor children in Paterson." A delegation of Boston trade unionists stopped over in Paterson on its way to a meeting with the Philadelphia Trades Union. After investigating conditions in the town it moved on to Philadelphia accompanied by delegates from Paterson, Newark, and New York. This same group next travelled to New York where an unidentified Patersonian described local conditions to members of the New York Trades Union. The New Yorkers responded by holding a public meeting at Tammany Hall to build support for the striking millhands. Each ward established a three man committee to solicit funds for the factory operatives.<sup>69</sup>

Newark and surrounding New Jersey communities provided the strikers with their most consistent support. Belleville mechanics held a meeting on the night of August 17th to evaluate conditions in Paterson. Drawing upon their own experiences and "the opinions of the most distinguished and eminent Physicians" they resolved that no one should be forced to work more than ten hours a day. Any employer demanding more was considered "unreasonable, oppressive and unjust." The mechanics pointed out "...that



we view with feelings of abhorrence the attempt of the employers to coerce by starvation, the women and children by requiring of them 13-1/2 hours per day." The Belleville workers established a committee to collect relief funds for the strikers and vowed to meet the following week to evaluate the success of their efforts.<sup>70</sup>

Newark workingmen involved themselves in the conflict from the beginning. In addition to raising funds for the factory workers, they attempted to mobilize support in other communities. The Newark Trades Union sent a number of delegations to Paterson to conduct firsthand investigations of local conditions. One such delegation reported that the millowners showed absolutely no interest in resolving the conflict on any terms but their own. Newark wage earners reaffirmed their support for a reduction of the strikers' working hours at a July 28th meeting. According to the mechanics, long hours were "...manifestly destructive of their health and happiness, affording no opportunity either for education or recreation or the manifold duties devolving upon them, in order to constitute them good members of society, but on the contrary, laying the sure foundations of ignorance, disease and premature death..."<sup>71</sup>

Each Newark trade appointed a two man committee to raise relief funds from their respective members. In three days the committees collected over two hundred dollars.

The Trades Union picked three representatives to take the money to Paterson and to decide "the disposition thereof as will best carry into effect the intentions of the donors."<sup>72</sup> On the night of August 5th, the delegation delivered their report to a meeting of Newark workers.

The document, which the New Jersey Eagle printed in full, presented a picture of considerable gloom and despair, as indicated in the following segment of the report.

The committee has found it necessary to omit the mention of many of the most heart rendering cases of suffering among the poorer classes of operatives and especially in relation to the little children, whose pitiable condition it would require volumes to depict in all its soul-sickening detail, as given your committee by men acquainted with the facts which they narrated, the bare recital of which was sufficient to wring the tear of pity from these sturdy, iron-framed sons of toil, and to heave to sobbing the already agitated bosom of the aged veteran labourer, who man and boy for half a century had been doomed to the same unmitigated servitude and subject to the like sufferings, privations and abuses.<sup>73</sup>

The committee interviewed members of the Paterson Association, "respectable citizens," and individual workers directly affected by the strike. The three man delegation observed that the strikers remained from their jobs due to the "arbitrary and uncompromising course by their employers." The Newark trade unionists concluded that if employers generally adopted a different approach, strikes and trades unions could be eliminated.

Access to educational opportunities for the children working in the mills particularly interested the

investigating team. One widow they question replied "...how could it be possible for poor children who had to work in the mills, with bare time to sleep, and hardly time to eat a meal's victuals in peace, could get educated. Why if one of my children should be caught with a book about them in the mill, it would be the last either I or the child will ever see of it again." Another mother answering the same question responded "...as long as the long time continues there is no use to talk about education. I hope to heaven...that they would give the eleven hours for then I have thought I would try and turn their attention to study."<sup>74</sup> According to the Newark mechanics, these accounts reflected the sentiments of most workers in the town. The committee reported that the millowners rebuffed all efforts to discuss the issues involved, refusing to attend a meeting set up for that specific purpose. To the delegates it appeared "...that nothing short of an unconditional submission to the long hour system will answer their purpose."

The report issued by the delegation estimated that about one hundred families had been left destitute by the strike while many others, including "the most skillful of operatives," had left Paterson or were planning to do so soon. They asked one old lady, dependent on a couple of young boys for support, how she managed to get along. She replied "O it is whortleberry time now, and the boys

gather the berrys and they gets a little fruit here and there and we'll try and get along as well as we can; and let them have the money as can't get along no how."<sup>75</sup>

Such adverse publicity infuriated the millowners and their supporters. Through the Intelligencer they lashed out at the strikers, their Paterson sympathizers, and outside agitators. They zeroed in on the support given to the strikers by Newark and New York City workingmen. They claimed that

The great length to which this "turnout" has extended is mainly to be attributed to the impertinent and unjustifiable interference of some persons connected with the trades union in Newark and New York, who have made it their business to visit this place with the express purpose of urging the children, by inflammatory speeches, to continue their present strike, and holding out to them promises that they should be sustained in it until the employers should accede to their terms.<sup>76</sup>

The editors of the Intelligencer singled out the Paterson Association for particular abuse. The newspaper claimed that certain individuals from the organization "direct and control the whole town" preventing any settlement of the dispute. These people mobilized a force of "idle and dissipated" people who went around breaking up unauthorized meetings. In addition to attacking local journeymen, a correspondent to the newspaper criticized the activities of a "few low-bred store keepers." According to "A Friend to the Industrious Poor," these storekeepers "filch from the poor their hard earnings and curry favor with them, not with means to live on, but with 'Bravo, boys! stand out for your rights'." The writer then

proceeded to defend the manufacturers, pointing out that their primary concern was to provide work for needy children, rather than for the offspring of healthy adults. Anyone not satisfied with the required hours of work could "go where you will be more happy." The correspondent claimed "that they are seldom, if ever, whipped, and never severely punished." He ended his letter by warning that the strikers and their allies "may be taking nourishment from the afflicted widow and bread from her infant." 77

Questions over the actual hours and wages of the mill operatives became a focal point in the public debate over the validity of the walkout. The factory operators categorically stated their hands worked an average of eleven and a half hours a day, six days a week. They went on to claim that most workers earned between \$1.75 and \$4.00 a week, except for "inexperienced hands." Operatives and their supporters refuted the claims of the employers. According to the strikers, they often labored twelve or thirteen hours a day, rarely earning more than two dollars a week. A writer for the New Jersey Eagle made his own calculations "predicated upon facts which we believe cannot and will not be denied." He found that over the course of a year millhands averaged 12-3/4 hours per day, excluding time for meals. While the writer did not come up with any specific wage figures, knowledgeable people agreed that most female and juvenile factory operatives made a maximum

of three dollars a week. The Eagle believed that the difference between its figures and those of the manufacturers arose "more from the different modes of calculation than from any perversion of facts on either side."<sup>78</sup>

The article in the New Jersey Eagle did little to settle the dispute over rates of pay. On August 11th, Justice John K. Flood took affidavits from Joseph Edwards and a William Campbell in reference to their childrens' mill earnings. Each of them had five children, ranging in age from ten to twenty, working in the factories. Campbell stated that his children made between \$1.50 and \$2.75 per week, while Edwards reported that his offspring earned between 45 cents and \$2.00. Both fathers blamed the strike on the long hours demanded by the millowners.<sup>79</sup>

In order to discredit the affidavits taken by Flood, the manufacturers had another magistrate, Nicholas Smith, interview two mill supervisors and the operator of a turning shop. Benjamin Eckert and Hartley Smith of the Passaic Cotton Mill refuted Edwards by testifying that his daughter, Mary Jane Edwards, earned \$2.25 a week between April 27th and July 3rd. Turner Chauncey Andrews undermined Campbell's statement by charging that the latter had come into possession of a quantity of brass stolen from his shop sometime in March. Campbell allegedly told Andrews that a young boy had offered him the brass but that

he refused it only to find out later that his wife had accepted the pilfered material.<sup>80</sup>

The use of the respective magistrates by the two sides in the dispute reflected the political differences underlying the strike. Smith, a former mill agent, played a prominent role in National Republican and Whig politics, serving as a delegate to county conventions and holding a number of local political offices. Grocer Flood, a staunch Democrat, had strong ties with Paterson mechanics as evidenced by his tumultuous campaign for the State Assembly in 1833. During the walkout, Flood helped prepare a response to a formal inquiry on working conditions in the mills submitted by representatives of the New York and Newark trades unions. He and storekeeper John Tilby, who assisted him in the effort, depended heavily on the information contained in the affidavits taken from Edwards and Campbell. Both the Paterson Courier and the National Trades Union printed their response, an action which earned the two storekeepers the hatred of the Intelligencer and the millowners.<sup>81</sup>

Paterson's major newspaper stepped up its attacks on the strikers and their allies as the dispute dragged on. Its August 12th edition contained six lengthy letters critical of the walkout. "An Old Resident" lauded the generosity and good will of the factory owners, crediting them with much of the town's success. The correspondent

pointed out that during recent hard times, no one spoke about turnouts or trades unions. Operatives gratefully accepted whatever working conditions the manufacturers instituted. The writer reminded his fellow towns people that

All were docile and willing to work. Parents with their children would throng the mill doors, pleasantly urging the mill owners to give them work; yes with tears flowing from their eyes, they then asked for work. No hours were mentioned - "No, only give us work, and we shall be happy." This occurred but one year ago. The manufacturers, with generous enterprize, and but with little hope of much gain, started their mills.<sup>82</sup>

Given all that the mill operators had done for the people of the town, "An Old Resident" felt that the workers were not "right in their efforts to control their employers."

Another letter writer, identifying himself as "A Friend to Order," took a different approach, harshly criticizing the report issued by the Newark Trades Union. While assuring his audience that the investigators were "men of honor and were acting from pure feelings of philanthropy," he questioned the veracity of their information. He wanted to know, for example, "who is the widow that shed tears, and would try to educate her children." "A Friend of Order" implied that the Newark committee got most of its information from the Paterson Association, a source which could hardly be considered objective. He pointed out that "In truth, the world are entirely deceived by these men and although the town of Paterson is entirely under their dictation at present, the day of regret will soon return, when reason will no longer



be smothered in the boisterous, disreputable, feverish excitement of noisy demagogues."<sup>83</sup>

A third correspondent, "Many Poor Children," criticized both the Newark and New York Trades Unions for their observations on the lack of local educational opportunities for young mill workers below the age of twelve. He charged that the parents of these juveniles had little interest in educating their children. Men and women reportedly pressured reluctant manufacturers to hire their youngsters. "Nothing but the necessities and importunities of improvident parents induces the millowners in nine cases out of ten, to take them." "Many Poor Children" pointed out that these same parents repeatedly turned down proposals at town meetings to raise additional funds for education. He suggested that the "generous philanthropists who visit our town" contribute money to the Infant Free School which would provide the town's working children with the proper educational instruction.<sup>84</sup>

The letters by "An Old Resident," "A Friend to Order," and "Many Poor Children," emphasized the philanthropic instincts of the millowners and the near total dependency of their hands. These observations brought little comfort to local factory workers and journeymen, confirming their worst suspicions about the new industrial order. The expansion of large scale mill production directly threatened artisan independence, the cornerstone of

American republicanism. By reducing their freedom of action in the workplace, employers diminished the rights of their employees as citizens. This, in turn, jeopardized the nation's future as the independent workingman had long been considered the "bone and sinew" of society.

A letter from a parent of a striking millhand took a different approach, bitterly attacking the Paterson Association and the Trades Union. He singled out Joseph Edwards and James Field for particular abuse. The writer, calling himself "P.P.S.," alleged that a meeting to effect a settlement with the employers had been called for the night of August 10th. Members of the Association dispersed the gathering, in his account, claiming that it did not have their official sanction. The correspondent identified Edwards as the main spokesman for the organization, inferring that decisions were being made about the walkout without the involvement of the majority of the strikers or their parents. He continued "If Mr. J. D. Edwards, and Mr. James Field, and their very worthy associates would condescend so far as to enlighten their less favored Fellow-citizens, as to the course they wish pursued, to meet the approbation of either the Association or Trades Union, it will be thankfully received and gratefully acknowledged by the Association's very humble and much obliged servants."<sup>85</sup>

Such sarcasm was also evident in an unsigned letter which began with a purported discussion between two Paterson

Irishmen. Written in dialect, it made the Irish out to be ignorant bumpkins all too willing to resort to physical force to resolve disputes. "Now, I say as now, Jemmy, shillelahs aint no how the kinder arguements to use among our Folks. Gramachree! but its the most convenient argument in the world; for if you're not plased wid the discourse, just give the spaker a touch of the cudgel, and sure it will be a rale knock down argument, and no grumblin' after."<sup>86</sup> The letter also implied that the Irish did not understand what the turn out was all about and that they blindly followed the lead of unscrupulous manipulators. After completing their discussion, the Irishmen supposedly attended a meeting at which David Scott, the vice president of the New York Trades Union, delivered a passionate speech in support of the striking operatives. The anonymous writer, in describing the address, savagely ridiculed Scott.

Up rises the knight of the thimble and spectacles! - Fellow Mechanics! When I last left your little village, I did not expect to again be called on to vindicate your cause, but it seems your iron-handed oppressors still continue their diabolical course toward you. And I do assure you, when I heard that you were still idle, my heart yearned towards you; my bowels of compassion were rent asunder; my visage became elongated, and the salt, salt and briny tears bedewed by shopboard, and rolled thence to my heated goose and expired with a hissing noise...Yes my little ones, I immediate drew the silk from my neck, put on my stockings and shoes, put a coat round my body, for I was hard at my daily labor (a tailor) to earn a scanty pittance for my little family; and though I toil from morn till dewy eve (14 hours) for a bare subsistence for them, yet I felt myself bound to come and address you on the necessity of standing out for your rights, and to reduce the number of hours for working (11-1/2) teaching your oppressors that you will never yield, while bread can be had to subsist on.<sup>87</sup>

After describing this "cabbage oratory," the letter writer recounted a second speech in much the same manner. He repeated his earlier assertion that the Irish did not understand the issues underlying the controversy.

The final letter printed in the August 12th edition of the Intelligencer harshly condemned the Paterson Courier for its support of trades unionism. After initially refuting some of the charges levelled at the millowners, the correspondent, labelling himself "Sydney" launched into a bitter attack on the alleged excesses of trades unions. Since the millworkers had already undermined the sanctity of private property by demanding increased wages for less work, "Sydney" reasoned, why didn't they just seize a couple of mills for their own use. In his view, this represented a more moderate course of action than that proposed by Boston Trades Union leader Seth Luther. According to "Sydney," Luther delivered a speech in Boston in which he stated that "We...have pledged ourselves in Faneuil Hall, in that cradle of liberty, in sight of Bunker Hill, to effect this moral revolution or to have a revolution of blood!!!"

The anonymous writer accused the Paterson Courier of supporting such a course of action by pushing Paterson's workers to resist all efforts to mediate the conflict. He warned that the paper should

...not endeavor to foment discord among their fellow men and neighbors, or to encourage mobocracy, agrarianism or intolerance of any kind; and particularly not to espouse

the cause of those who go about preaching rebellion and revolutions of blood though advanced by a pop-gun or mudsquirt, as in the case of Mr. Seth Luther, who had so valiantly shed his blood (For brains he had none) in the noble and glorious cause of being maintained by the industrious, to ride around and lecture on the levelling system.<sup>89</sup>

As the various letters indicated, the nature of public discourse in Paterson had changed considerably from that prevalent in the early 1820's. Talk of common goals and shared purpose gave way to "revolutions of blood," "mobocracy," and "agrarianism." Although the intensity of the rhetoric could be ascribed to the existence of a bitter labor dispute, it still represented a major departure from the language and imagery of earlier periods of time. In the minds of many manufacturers and their supporters, the actions of their hands were aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of existing property and social relationships. They believed that irresponsible radicals such as local shoemaker Joseph Edwards or Seth Luther led misguided wage earners in useless forays against established and beneficial institutions.

Community leaders refused to see that basic divisions had developed in Paterson. Rather than admit that the policies of the millowners created the conditions for the strike, they blamed firebrands and outside agitators for their difficulties. The analysis of the problem put forth by Sidney reflected very traditional notions of the internal unity of society. In this view, corrupt individuals, not a

dynamic, inherently aggressive economic system based on individual gain, were to blame for social discord and strife. The curious juxtaposition of old line republican thought and liberal philosophy reflected the continuing evolution of popular ideology.

The various letters to the Intelligencer, when taken as a whole, constituted a broad and potent attack on all aspects of the strike. The journalistic onslaught helped to undercut the resolve of the strikers, which was already weakened by economic hardships and the unwillingness of the employers to negotiate. By the following week, the Intelligencer reported that most if not all of the factories had reopened. The article emphasized the fact that the operatives continued to work an average of eleven and a half hours a day as they had before the strike. This turn of events clearly pleased the newspaper's editor. "...our town has again resumed its wanted cheerfulness, and is now a scene of industry and contentment." He made note of the fact that the mills could not resume full production until workers who had left Paterson returned.<sup>90</sup>

Edward Earle, vice president of the Paterson Association, publicly admitted the bleakness of the situation. Throughout the strike he had kept in contact with George Henry Evans, editor of the New York Working Man's Advocate.<sup>91</sup> Evans, in conjunction with the New York Trades Union, served as a conduit for strike relief funds

raised from throughout the mid-Atlantic and New England regions. In a letter to Evans, dated August 25, 1835, Earle verified that nearly two-thirds of the hands had returned to work at the original hours. According to the Paterson shoemaker, millowners refused to rehire some of their former hands, "on account of their parents and guardians taking part in their favor." He claimed that manufacturers posted the names of Association members in mill offices to guarantee that their children did not obtain work. In addition to blacklisting some of the workers, a number of employers reportedly deducted a week's wages from their operatives in order to recoup some of the income lost during the walkout.<sup>92</sup>

The punitive actions of the victorious millowners angered allies of the strikers. On August 21st, Newark mechanics held a meeting to evaluate conditions in Paterson. They pledged to support "the much abused operatives" in spite of the claims that the walkout had ended. The Newark wage earners resolved

that in the view of this meeting, the Proscriptive System-which, by its unseen hand so frequently procures the discharges of the industrious poor, blasts and destroys the trade and business of the mechanic, the artisan and the merchant: - is most deadly hostile to the rights and happiness of the people, and utterly incompatible with the existence of Freedom, and contrary to the spirit of the Institutions under which we live.

Those attending the meeting promised to publicize this discriminatory treatment nationwide in order to raise funds for the blacklisted workers.<sup>93</sup>

The Working Man's Advocate adopted a similar position, committing itself to collect donations for jobless millhands. Evans, though disappointed at the outcome of the strike, retained a high opinion of the Paterson operatives.

There is no doubt that those who have returned to work have done so to avoid starvation, and that they will be ready to make another effort to free themselves from their terrible bondage the moment they can depend on assistance. From what we can learn, there is a spirit among them, as well as among the people elsewhere, that will never suffer the factory lords to go on amassing immense gains at the expense of the health and happiness of poor children.<sup>94</sup>

By September 5th, all hands had returned to work except for twenty-seven officially proscribed by the manufacturers. Earle wrote another letter to Evans on September 15th. He reported that the blacklist, which remained in effect, was designed to drive strike leaders from the town. He likened the employers response to the strikers to the refusal of a victorious nation "to give quarters to the vanquished." Earle believed that the unequal relationship between owners and employees forced the latter to resort to collective action to protect the value of their labor. In the shoemaker's view, the blacklisting of a few individuals would not end the basic conflict. "To be sure, by persecution they may succeed in forcing some to seek employment elsewhere, but it will only tend the more to excite the spirit of reform which is now too strong to be conquered. Yes! the days of gullification and unbearable



oppression are fast wearing by."<sup>95</sup> After completing his letter to Evans, Earle added a postscript explaining that he had just found out that the factory owners intended to keep the blacklist in effect for a whole year. He urged his fellow workingmen to exercise great caution in their choices in future electoral contests. Earle ended the postscript by issuing a warning to the shopowners and their allies. "Tell the lordlings of America, we shall curtail your power, as your turn may be next."<sup>96</sup>

In evaluating the costs of the walkout, the Intelligencer estimated that over \$24,000 was lost in wages alone. The millowners never indicated how the strike affected their sales. Small manufacturers, merchants and professional men also suffered losses due to the confrontation. It is even more difficult to gauge the social and political impact of the turnout on the community. The recalcitrance of the millowners and their use of the blacklist doubtlessly left a strong residue of hostility and resentment among the millworkers. The journeymen who had supported the operatives shared these sentiments as did the shopkeepers who threw in their lot with the factory hands. Paterson's manufacturers retained considerable hostility towards their recent opponents, harboring particular dislike for the Newark and New York trade unionists. In a spirit of hopeful optimism, the final Intelligencer article on the strike observed, "Long

may it be ere we are again so afflicted." Given the duration and nature of the conflict, the observation represented little more than wishful thinking.<sup>97</sup>

Paterson wage earners maintained close ties with the regional and national labor movements throughout 1835 and 1836. Delegates from various Paterson trades regularly attended meetings of the Newark Trades Union where they served on committees and participated in policy-making discussions. Even though they had just been heavily involved in the turnout of the millworkers, Paterson's mechanics quickly came to the aid of striking Philadelphia handloom weavers. The Newark Trades Union called a special meeting for the night of October 29, 1835 in response to the weaver's call for assistance. Peter Lydecker, cordwainer William Masters, and machinist James Buckley represented Paterson workers at the meeting. Those assembled passed resolutions condemning "the hydra of oppression" and "the insatiable worshipper of Moloch." In a more practical vein, they established a fundraising committee of one individual from each member society. Masters, Buckley, and Lydecker all served on the committee.<sup>98</sup>

In January of 1836, the Society of House Carpenters of Paterson proposed a change in the structural relationship between the Newark Trades Union and the various Paterson societies. On January 19th, the

carpenters requested that they be allowed to forward their monthly dues to the Trades Union without having to send official delegates to the meetings. The Newark central body agreed to accept the monthly assessment from "foreign" societies as long as they opened up their books to the Trades Union once every three months. In addition to maintaining their relationship with the Newark Trades Union, some Paterson trade organizations affiliated with nationwide organizations. In March of 1836, Christian Brinkerhoff and A. D. Ackerman represented Paterson shoemakers at the first national convention of journeymen cordwainers. In addition to adopting resolutions on wages, hours, the importation of foreign shoes, and convict labor, the delegates laid out procedures for supporting member societies when they walked off their jobs. They also adopted a plan to provide financial aid to itinerant shoemakers to prevent them from accepting work that paid less than the prevailing rates established by the national society.<sup>99</sup>

Paterson journeymen did more than attend meetings and conventions. In February of 1836, the town's house carpenters along with Newark journeymen hatters and Orange, New Jersey cordwainers sought the support of the Newark Trades Union in their efforts to cut their hours and advance their wages. All these groups requested a ten hour day and a wage rate of thirteen shillings a day from their

employers. A committee of one representative from each member organization evaluated the proposals subsequently recommending that the Trades Union give its blessing to the attempt. All three societies walked off their jobs in late February and early March. The strikes must have ended quickly as they never attracted any comment from the local press.

Long hours and low wages remained crucial issues for most workers in 1836. Skilled mechanics, as well as unskilled mill operatives, faced similar difficulties in making ends meet. Master artisans and non-cotton manufacturers adopted positions similar to those of the cotton mill owners the previous summer. This forced Paterson's machinists to go out on strike some time in late March or early April. The machinists wanted a ten hour day during the week and nine hours on Saturday. Long hours of labor, in their view, exhausted their minds and bodies, lowered their resistance to disease, prevented them from expanding their intellect, and limited their participation in the upbringing of their children. They were also concerned about the diminished value of their wages in relation to continually escalating prices. The machine makers spelled out their position in a statement published in the Intelligencer.

Were the remuneration that we receive for our labour of such amount that we could lay up a sufficiency to supply the wants of declining life, the grievance would be less to be complained of. But such is not the case.

The wages of our labour have diminished so as to leave us, with very few exceptions, a mere subsistence in health, and the galling prospect that, should we be reduced by sickness, we must be dependent on the charity of others.<sup>100</sup>

The issue of increased dependency appeared repeatedly in the statements and proclamations of striking workers in the mid 1830's. Although journeymen machinists maintained a higher degree of workplace freedom than mill operatives, they also feared that the end result of their labor in the shops would be a loss of independence. For men still living with the dream of becoming master artisans, such a prospect created considerable cause for alarm. Although they rarely experienced the kinds of deprivation common to millhands, journeymen machinists still found the new economic and social realities unsettling.

The Machine Makers Society of Paterson, which issued the statement, led the walkout. The strike shut down all of the town's machine shops. Although members of the Society launched verbal attacks against "the aristocracy" and "the haughty employers," the 1836 confrontation lacked the passion and deep-seated hostility so prevalent in 1835. The machine makers issued a circular on April 5, 1836, which was published in area newspapers. Primarily designed to prevent the recruiting of scabs, the document served another function as well. It stated that "when any body of workmen venture on a hazardous

experiment, it is due to their employers, to the public, and to themselves to state candidly the motives by which they are actuated." The circular went on to explain their case for shorter hours and better wages, placing a great deal of emphasis on their role as husbands and fathers.<sup>101</sup>

Fearing that employers would attempt to lure unsuspecting machinists to Paterson to serve as strike breakers, the members of the Machine Makers Society urged fellow mechanics to remain at home.

They may make you fair promises, to induce you to leave the situations you are present in. Your present interest may seem to recommend and sanction your acceptance of the offer, and for the present it might do. But would your welfare, and that of your families be promised by such proceedings? Certainly not. It would only entail upon yourselves, and your posterity, that misery and degradation against which we are striving.<sup>102</sup>

If scabs came to take their jobs, all wage earners and their children would be condemned to be "mere slaves...the hewers of wood and the drawers of water." This would help to create "separate estates in this great republic" and would "seal forever the degradation of your dependents, and consign your own memories to eternal infamy."<sup>103</sup>

Machine makers spoke in terms similar to those utilized by striking millhands and their supporters the previous summer, even though they were in a much different position than the factory operatives. Journeymen machinists received some of the highest wages of any group

of workers in ante-bellum America. Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor machinists earned an average of six dollars a week while skilled mechanics at Paul & Beggs' millwright establishment made one and a half dollars a day. John Colt paid his machinists eight dollars a week. Even apprentices to the trade earned close to two and a half dollars a week.<sup>104</sup>

As their numbers increased in Paterson, skilled machine makers became a major force in political and social affairs. Between 1835 and 1838 they organized their own Independence Day celebrations. Prominent townspeople vied for the honor of presenting toasts at such gatherings. Machine shop owner Benjamin Brunded praised his workmen at their 1835 July 4th dinner. "Independent Mechanics - Ye are your country's stay, a never failing spring of her resources." A William Miller echoed these sentiments at a celebration held by mechanics of Godwin, Clarke and Company the following year. "The Manufacturers and Mechanics of the town of Paterson, admired for their ingenuity and skill, beloved for their principles and patriotism - may they still persevere in the march of improvement until they cannot find a superior on earth." James Buckley, a machinist and member of the Trades Union, spoke in a similar vein at an 1837 gathering. "Mechanics - their power in the country is in exact proportion to their intelligence and incorruptibility."<sup>105</sup>

The response of the machine shop owners to the walkout reflected the attitudes expressed at such occasions. They came to an agreement with their employees within a short period of time. Although no record of the settlement exists, it must have satisfied at least some of their demands. Benjamin Brunded settled with his hands within a day or two of the beginning of the strike. The response of his workers to his actions reflected the nature of the relationship commonly found in the machine shops. In order to show their appreciation for Brunded's willingness to quickly settle the dispute, his hands took up a collection to buy him a gift. The Intelligencer reported that they presented him with a silver tankard. "...as a testimony of the respect he so justly merits at their hands, by the liberality ever extended by him to those in his employ, and particularly by the prompt and gentlemanly manner in which he acceded to their just demands in the late "strike" for hours."<sup>106</sup> Such behavior appears to have been common. Workmen at the Malleable Iron Foundry in Newark gave their employer, Seth Boyden, a pair of silver goblets when he liquidated his firm in May of 1835. The gift represented "...a token of respect and esteem, for the liberal and gentlemanly course of conduct pursued towards them while in his employ."<sup>107</sup>

The nature of the industry encouraged positive relationships between owners and employees. Most early



machine shop owners began their careers as practicing mechanics. Even after they established their own firms, most of them played an active role in day to day shop floor operations. The custom nature of the work required constant changes in design and modifications of construction techniques. Employers worked these out alongside the men actually building the machines. The nature of this working relationship encouraged an informality and camaraderie lacking from the cotton and duck mills.

Brunded, an Englishman from the Manchester region, exemplified the pattern. In the mid 1820's he requested that the Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey hold religious services in his home for the workmen in his employ, many of whom were immigrants like himself. He repeatedly showed concern for the welfare of his employees and their families. They, in turn, developed a strong sense of loyalty to him. This loyalty cost some of the machinists their jobs when Brunded's two partners forced him out of the firm in 1837. Upon hearing of the ouster, the machinists held a meeting "for the purpose of disposing of the Banner, Flag and other regalia which were purchased by said persons, and also of the Liberty Pole there standing on the Highway near the said Works, which were paid for by the same." They agreed to turn everything, including the liberty pole, over to Brunded "as the representative of the

new Paterson Machine Company." The mechanics expressed their appreciation to him in a formal resolution. They unanimously resolved "that a vote of thanks be passed by this meeting, being a majority of the Mechanics and citizens formerly of Oldham, and tended to Mr. Brunded, for the active interest he has always evinced for their welfare. And we also tended him our best wishes for success in his future undertakings."<sup>108</sup> Even if Brunded had closer ties with his hands than did other machine shop owners to their employees, there is little doubt that the atmosphere present in such enterprises differed dramatically from that found in other types of manufacturing establishments.

The quick resolution of the machinists' strike in 1836 reflected a trend that accelerated in the latter part of the decade. As the organized mechanics in Paterson's machine shops became an increasingly important segment of the town's population, non-wage earners looked to them as allies in the struggle to maintain civic peace and stability. In their view, these highly trained workmen personified the most fundamental values of republican society. Machine makers and other skilled craftsmen stood in sharp contrast to the immigrant laborers and millhands who continually disrupted the public peace. The widespread social unrest of the 1834 to 1836 period was attributed to foreign influence. The observations of New Jersey

clergyman James Waddell Alexander published in 1838 summed up this perception. Alexander believed that

Every year brings us nearer and nearer to the trans-atlantic pattern: we borrow their organization, their methods, their "slang terms," and their men. Here, as there, we have our weekly contributions, our forms of initiation, our committees of vigilance, our flags and mottoes and processions. Perhaps in due course of time we may have our burnings, maimings and assassinations.<sup>109</sup>

Many skilled mechanics, in their quest for respectability, wanted to distance themselves from any connection with such anti-social behavior. Some of them began to internalize the notion that somehow they were different from other wage earners. Their growing interest in temperance and other aspects of moral reform reflected their desire to be seen as full and acceptable members of the community. This attempt at separation from the ranks of ordinary workingmen by skilled mechanics had a long term, negative effect on efforts to build a stable, working class movement. It also weakened artisan republicanism as an ideology of protest against the growing power of manufacturers and master artisans.<sup>110</sup>

The changing workplace conditions which widened the gap between employers and their hands altered relationships among different groups of workingmen as well. Those most adversely affected by the reorganization of work, cotton mill operatives, tailors, cordwainers, and handloom weavers, for example, became increasingly hostile to the men who employed them. Other workingmen, such as

New York City butchers and maritime workers, or Paterson machine shop workers, maintained a more positive relationship with their employers due to the continued use of more traditional patterns of work.<sup>111</sup> Although their experiences differed, both groups of workers continued to use the language of republicanism to express increasingly divergent views about their role towards work and towards society in general.

Paterson machinists embraced the idea that they still represented the "bone and sinew" of society. Any attempt to connect them with radicalism or impugn their moral character brought a loud and sharp rebuke. Efforts to link them with excessive consumption of alcohol in August of 1836, evoked a devastating counter-attack which forced their accuser to make a public apology. Their form of republicanism emphasized the same elements that employers tended to focus on: public virtue, hard work, and frugality. Although machinists defended themselves resolutely when attacked, they generally hoped to achieve their goals through the exercise of temperate, moral behavior.

Most journeymen and operatives who became involved in trade unionism or other forms of resistance to their employers, embraced a different form of republican ideology, according to Wilentz. "In reaction, the unionists reasserted the old values, not as a nostalgic

reverie or as a bid for public approval, but as something approaching an alternate system, one that would offer a cooperative path to republican progress."<sup>112</sup> They were more prepared to accept the fact, however reluctantly, that their interests differed considerably from those of the mill and shop owners. As their vision of society as an organic construct slowly faded, they turned to trade unionism and partisan politics to protect themselves and their families.

The growing division with the ranks of the working class hindered its ability to respond to the crisis that it faced in the late 1830's. Adverse judicial decisions and the collapse of the economy in 1837 fatally weakened journeymen's associations and trades unions. Ethnic and religious tensions increased as people attempted to determine blame for the economic disaster. The crusade for moral reform picked up scores of new recruits eagerly seeking individual deliverance for past transgressions. Paterson machinists generally followed this path rather than undertake the more difficult task of rebuilding the labor movement.

As their craft organizations and unions went out of existence, workingmen relied even more heavily on politics and a means of obtaining redress of their grievances. Although Paterson wage earners flirted briefly with independent political action, the Democratic Party

remained their major access route into the political process. The continuing interest of many of the town's workingmen in electoral affairs did little if anything, to assuage the hostility existing between themselves and their employers. Political action became the primary means for wage earners to continue the struggle to retain both personal freedom and republican democracy in the United States.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Montgomery, "The Shuttle and the Cross," pp. 411-415; Wilentz, Chants Democratic, p. 28.
2. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838. The figures are for the firm of Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvneor, which ws the largest, single employer in Paterson.
3. Wilentz, Chants Democratic, p. 88.
4. Wilentz, "Artisan Republican Festivals," pp. 45-53; Howard Rock, Artisans of the New Republic - The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson (New York: New York University Press, 1979).
5. Centinel of Freedom, 21 July, 1812. Philip Foner, in discussing the role of workers in the War of 1812, noted that "several hundred union workers from Paterson, New Jersey" arrived in New York on August 17, 1814, to aid in the construction of the city's defenses. These men may have been members of the various mechanics associations in Paterson. Philip Foner, History of the Labor Movement in the United States - From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor, I (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 94.
6. Centinel, 14 July, 1818.
7. Centinel, 19 Jan., 1816.
8. Centinel, 11 March, 1817.
9. Nelson and Shriner, p. 183.
10. Nelson and Shriner, p. 183.
11. Centinel, 18 July, 1820.
12. Centinel, 18 July, 1820, 25 July, 1820, 8 Aug., 1820.
13. Centinel, 29 Aug., 1820.
14. Intelligencer, 31 May, 1826. A journeymen carpenter's organization had been in existence in nearby Newark as early as 1814.

15. John R. Commons, et al, History of Labour in the United States, I (New York, MacMillan Co., 1918), p. 158. Boston house carpenters went on strike for the ten hour day in 1825 while the Philadelphia building trades walked out over the same issue in 1827.

16. Census of Paterson, 1824, 1825.

17. Intelligencer, 6 July, 1826, 21 July, 1826.

18. Intelligencer, 9 July, 1828.

19. Intelligencer, 8 July, 1829.

20. Wilentz, "Artisan Republican Festivals," pp. 53-56.

21. It is now generally agreed that the first genuine strike of factory operatives took place in Pawtucket, Rhode Island in the spring of 1824. Gary Kulik, "Pawtucket Village and the Strike of 1824: The origins of Class Conflict in Rhode Island," Radical History Review 17, Spring, 1978, pp. 4-37. Philip Foner originally identified the 1828 Paterson strike as the first of its kind.

22. Intelligencer, 16 July, 1828.

23. Census of Paterson, 1824-1832; Census of Manufacturing, 1825-1832; Bio Data.

24. Letter from Paterson, New Jersey, July 31, 1828, printed in the New York Commercial Advertiser, 8 Aug., 1828.

25. New York Evening Post, 28 July, 1828. According to the newspaper account, a list of names was attached to the original document. The paper decided not to print the names.

26. Evening Post, 28 July, 1828.

27. Evening Post, 26 July, 1828; Commercial Advertiser, 25 July, 1828.

28. Adult male cotton spinners went on strike in Philadelphia sometime in February of 1828, in response to an attempt by millowners to reduce wages. Unlike the majority of Pawtucket and Paterson strikers, the spinners were journeymen craftsmen. It does not appear that any of the mills were shut down by the walkout. The strike lasted at least three months. Mechanics Free Press, 31 May, 1828.



29. Intelligencer, 6 Aug., 1828. Philip Foner, obviously not aware of the account in the Intelligencer, accepted the claims published in the New York papers. See Foner, p. 105.

30. Evening Post, 30 July, 1828; Kulik, pp. 24-25. Jonathon Prude also addresses this issue in his work on rural New England manufacturing villages.

31. Commercial Advertiser, 31 July, 1828.

32. Evening Post, 30 July, 1828.

33. Commercial Advertiser, 31 July, 1828.

34. New York Enquirer, 8 Aug., 1828.

35. New York Statesman, 28 July, 1828.

36. Evening Post, 26 July, 1828.

37. Evening Post, 26 July, 1828.

38. Intelligencer, 6 August., 1828.

39. Commercial Advertiser, 8 Aug., 1828.

40. Intelligencer, 18 Jan., 1834.

41. Intelligencer, 20 Aug., 1834.

42. Intelligencer, 20 Aug., 1834.

43. Intelligencer, 23 July, 1834.

44. New Jersey state legislators appear to have recognized some of the changes taking place. They inserted a provision in an 1835 charter for a benefit society which provided the document

Would be void and the property of the association would be forfeited to the state in the event that the group passed any law or regulation respecting the rate of wages of any of the members or the business which any of them may or do follow, and shall be connected thereof by due course of law.

New Jersey Laws, 59th Session, 2nd sitting (1835), p. 68 in Cadman, pp. 26-27.

45. New Jersey Eagle, 9 May, 1834.
46. Eagle, 27 June, 1834.
47. Eagle, 25 April, 1834.
48. Eagle, 20 June, 1834, 27 June, 1834.
49. Frank DeVyver, "Organization of Labor in New Jersey Before 1860," Diss., Princeton University, 1934, p. 230.
50. Eagle, 30 June, 1826, 30 July, 1829.
51. "Proceedings of the Meeting of the Newark Trades Union," March 17, 1835, in John R. Commons & Helen Sumner, Documentary History of American Industrial Society - Labor Movement: 1820-1840 V, Part 2 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), p. 175. The account lists the representative of the "Paterson Society of Cordwainers" as William Masten. No such individual lived in Paterson. William Masters was a cordwainer who was involved in setting up the Paterson Trades Union. He also continued to work with the Newark Trades Union.
52. Cordwainers also went on strike around the same time in the New Jersey towns of Newark, New Brunswick, and Orange. Eagle, 23 June, 1835; DeVyver, pp. 23-24. We do not know the outcome of the Paterson cordwainers' strike.
53. Eagle, 23 June, 1835.
54. Eagle, 26 June, 1835.
55. Newark Daily Advertiser, 10 Aug., 1835.
56. Commons I, pp. 479-481.
57. An ad printed in the Intelligencer of June 10, 1835, suggests that at least some Paterson employers may have anticipated a strike. Godwin, Rogers and Clarke were looking for "20 girls capable of or willing to learn to attend powerlooms." It specified that they would be needed in one month's time. It is possible that this was nothing more than a normal attempt to increase the size of their workforce. The Intelligencer printed little blurbs about strikes in other parts of the country through June. See Intelligencer, 24 June, 1835.
58. DeVyver, pp. 145, 153.

59. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.
60. Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835.
61. Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835.
62. Bio Data; Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835.
63. The Working Man's Advocate, 27 June, 1835.
64. Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835; DeVyver, p.
164. The Paterson Courier identified Edwards as the man being referred to in the letter to the Intelligencer.
65. Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835.
66. We cannot determine the occupations of six of the trades union leaders. Buckley and Graham worked at the nearby Oldham Machine Works, a mile or two outside Paterson. It is interesting to note that the committee agreed to meet the following morning, which happened to be Wednesday. This meant that they were on strike, on vacation, or had no fear of retribution from their employers for failing to report for work. It appears that the third scenario may be the most plausible.
67. National Trades Union, 22 Aug., 1835, in Commons, Documentary History 6, Part 2, pp. 177-178.
68. Daily Pittsburgh Gazette, 11 Aug., 1835.
69. Commons I, History, p. 384; Commons, Documentary History 5, Par 1, pp. 257-258; Working Man's Advocate, 29 Aug., 1835. Seth Luther, the famous labor leader, was a member of the Boston delegation.
70. New Jersey Eagle, 21 Aug., 1835.
71. Eagle, 31 July, 1835.
72. Eagle, 4 Aug., 1835.
73. Eagle, 7 Aug., 1835.
74. Eagle, 7 Aug., 1835.
75. Eagle, 7 Aug., 1835.
76. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.
77. Intelligencer, 29 July, 1835, 12 Aug., 1835.

78. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1829; Eagle, 14 Aug., 1829. Zachariah Allen in the late 1820's estimated that women made between \$2.00 and \$3.00 a week in cotton mills. Boys, ages 10-12, made about \$1.50. Zachariah Allen, The Science of Mechanics as Applied to the Present Improvements in the Useful Arts in Europe and in the United States (Providence: Hutchens & Carey, 1829), p. 222. Female hands working for the Hamilton Manufacturing Company in Lowell, made \$3.60 a week in 1836. Dublin, p. 66. Female hands in Rockdale, Pennsylvania earned \$2.00 a week. Wallace, p. 178. Paterson millowners provided wage rates to government investigators in 1832. No woman earned more than \$3.00 while no child made more than \$2.00. United States Congress, House Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States, pp. 135-169.

79. Intelligencer, 19 Aug., 1835.

80. Intelligencer, 19 Aug., 1835.

81. Commons, Documentary History 5, Part 1, pp. 63-66.

82. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835. According to the letter writer, the price of cotton goods went up three months after the mills reopened and continued to rise up to the time of the strike.

83. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.

84. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835. The Paterson Infant Free School was established by a group of affluent ladies in 1827 to provide a free education for poor children between the ages of 3 and 8. The school, supported by private donations, continued in operation at least through 1838. In that year, it admitted over 300 children. In the first year, 1827, it serviced approximately 90. Intelligencer, 29 Aug., 1838.

85. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835. Field was machinist. He represented Paterson workers at the July 22, 1835 meeting of the Newark Trades Union.

86. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.

87. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.

88. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.

89. Intelligencer, 12 Aug., 1835.

90. Intelligencer, 19 Aug., 1835.

91. Evans & Earle had been involved in an earlier controversy over the Paterson Anti-Union of Church and State Society. See Chapter 3.

92. Edward Earle to George Henry Evans, 24 Aug., 1835, rpt. Working Man's Advocate, 26 Sept., 1835.

93. Eagle, 28 Aug., 1835.

94. Advocate, 29 Aug., 1835.

95. Advocate, 5 Sept., 1835. Edward Earle to George Henry Evans, Advocate, 26 Sept., 1835.

96. Advocate, 26 Sept., 1835.

97. Intelligencer, 19 Aug., 1835. A very rough estimate can be made of the manufacturers' losses. In 1832, yearly sales were approximately \$621,042., or an average of \$1,380. per week. Twenty mills were struck in 1835. The weekly loss would have been about \$27,600. or a total of \$165,000. for the six week period.

98. Commons, Documentary History 6, Part 2, pp. 179-181.

99. Commons, Documentary History 6, Part 2, p. 321.

100. Intelligencer, 6 April, 1836. Their eleven hour day was still shorter than that worked by the cotton operatives.

101. Intelligencer, 6 April, 1836. Prior to the strike, there was never any specific mention of the Machine Maker's Society of Paterson. It may have been one of the "mechanics societies" frequently mentioned, but never identified, in the Intelligencer.

102. Intelligencer, 6 April, 1836.

103. Intelligencer, 6 April, 1836.

104. U. S. Congress, House Documents, p. 135-169.

105. Intelligencer, 8 July, 1835, 6 July, 1836, 12 July, 1837.

106. Intelligencer, 13 April, 1836.

107. Eagle, 19 May, 1835.

108. Intelligencer, 15 March, 1837. Brunded came from the Manchester area of England, probably from the town of Oldham. He established his machine shop about a mile outside of Paterson. The town of Oldham, now know as Haledon, grew up around the shop. Brunded's new firm went under in 1842, although he remained in town continuing to build and repair machinery.

109. Alexander II, p. 145.

110. Paterson machinists of the middle and late 1830's bear some resemblance to the skilled English workers decribed by Eric J. Hobsbawn in his essay, "The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth-Century Britain," in Labouring Men - Studies in the History of Labour (New York: Basic Books, 1964), pp. 272-315. Hobsbawn's aristocrats generally received higher pay, worked consistently, and adhered to more moderate political and social views than lesser skilled wage earners. Their trade unions articulated conservative programs well into the early twentieth century. Much work remains to be done on intra-working class relationships in the United States in the nineteenth century.

111. Wilentz, Chants Democratic, pp. 134-139.

112. Wilentz, Chants Democratic, p. 247.

## CHAPTER VII

The wave of labor unrest that swept the country in the 1834 to 1836 period came to an abrupt halt by 1837.

John R. Commons, in his pioneering study of American labor, identified over one hundred walkouts or calls for stikes between January of 1835 and June of 1836. During the subsequent eighteen month period, the number of such incidences fell to approximately twenty-five.<sup>1</sup>

Historians have attributed the drop in strike activity to the collapse of the economy in the winter and spring of 1837. The advent of the depression, however, does not explain the decline in walkouts after June of 1836. A more immediate contributing factor may have been the series of adverse judicial rulings handed down by New York judges in late 1835 and 1836. They based their rulings on the premise that strikes by organized workingmen directly threatened the unencumbered flow of commerce, a situation which represented a direct violation of existing law.

Late in the fall of 1835, Chief Justice Savage of the New York Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling against a group of Geneva, New York cordwainers. They had been found guilty of conspiracy in connection with a strike for higher wages. Savage found that such combinations forced up wages in an unnatural fashion which seriously threatened normal competitive business practices. Another New York court, headed by Judge Edwards, rendered an even

harsher verdict against a group of journeymen tailors in June of 1836. He found them guilty of "conspiracy to injure trade, riot, assault and battery" in connection with an earlier strike against a group of master tailors. In his ruling, Edwards pointed out that journeymen's organizations were a foreign import that illegally obstructed trade and commerce. He demonstrated the seriousness of the charges by levying crushing fines against the tailors' organization. He fined its president, Henry Faulkner, one hundred and fifty dollars, and another leader, Howard Vail, one hundred dollars. The remaining eighteen journeymen had to pay fifty dollars apiece. The judge ruled that all of them were to remain in jail until the fines were paid.<sup>2</sup>

The Paterson Intelligencer, which hailed the judicial decisions, reprinted a supportive article from the New York Herald. The Herald article spelled out the implications of the decision for the labor movement. "It is now settled by every legal tribunal in the state, from the highest to the lowest, that any combination of journeymen to prevent others from following peaceably their several trades and occupations is indictable, and, on proof of the facts, punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both."<sup>3</sup> Reiterating that this was now the law of the land, the New York writer pointed out that everyone had to obey the judge's decision until it was overruled or altered



through legislation. "All good citizens - all moral men - all honest mechanics - all masters - all journeymen must peaceably submit. We live in an age of law and civilization - in a community where order and obedience to legal restraint must be put into force."<sup>4</sup>

Both decisions outraged organized workingmen. In addition to raising funds for the tailors, workers turned to electoral politics with increased interest. Philip Foner believes that the rulings by Edwards and Savage provided the major impetus for the formation of the short-lived Equal Rights Party in New York as well as for the spread of loco-focoism beyond the limits of the city. The Newark Mechanics and Workingmen's Committee issued a long statement on local political conditions facing New Jersey laboring men. The negative impact of the court decisions was already being felt in Newark according to the Committee's statement, which was published in the New Jersey Eagle. The paper reported that hat manufacturers planned to discharge all workingmen affiliated with the Newark Trades Union.<sup>5</sup>

The judicial decisions doubtlessly had a chilling effect on the activities of trades unions and journeymen's organizations all across the country. Many, if not most, of them had taken part in similar strikes during the 1834 to 1836 period. Although some skilled craftsmen won significant wage increases or reductions in hours, factory

hands, such as those in Paterson, often wound up losing more than they gained for their efforts. While wage earners generally played an important role in electoral contests throughout the 1820's and early 1830's, the political process soon became their major avenue for obtaining redress of social and economic grievances in the mid and late 1830's. As the level of trade union activity rapidly declined, increasing numbers of Paterson's working class leaders entered the political arena. While most of them identified with the Democratic Party, they also flirted briefly with a bona-fide Workingmen's party in 1835 and 1836. Through the period they remained in constant communication with their fellow wage earners in Newark, working in conjunction on issues of mutual importance.

The 1835 millworkers' strike greatly polarized electoral politics in Paterson and in Essex County. In the wake of the dispute, two political movements developed which were independent of, though tied to, the major parties. The Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen of Essex County, formed in September of 1835, closely aligned itself with the Democrats, while the Native American Democratic Association, organized in late August, was strongly identified with the Whigs. While each group spoke of being representative of the people as a whole, they drew their support from specific and diverse segments of the population. Both the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen and

the Native American Democrats had considerable influence over the programs and politics of their related party organizations.

In September, 1835, the Executive Committee of the Mechanics and Workingmen of Newark issued an address to the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen of Essex County. The document placed the current struggle of "the people and the aristocracy" in the context of the recurring historical conflict between "the sellers of labor" and the "self-constituted task masters of the world." The Committee traced the roots of their problems back to the dark ages. They claimed that a wealthy minority traditionally manipulated the working classes, keeping them in ignorance through total control over all forms of knowledge. The subsequent development of printing, the revival of trade, and the general enlightenment which followed the dark ages did little to alter the inferior status of working men and women. Standing armies, controls on the press, and a general atmosphere of repression all contributed to the maintenance of existing economic divisions. Efforts to correct these abuses were instantly branded as "insurrectionary, revolutionary and rebellious."<sup>6</sup>

Committee members pointed out that their decision to form combinations mirrored the actions of the "self-constituted higher orders - the purchasers of

labor..." The authors believed that the

...almost illimitable power of capital have ever been combined, and in all countries and in all ages arrayed in direct hostility to the advancement and happiness of the producing or laboring classes...The powerful and the rich have combined and entered into compacts for the accumulation of wealth...Incorporated bodies have combined and struck for higher wages and chartered companies turned out for the advance of prices a hundred and fifty per cent. In fine the world is full of combinations...<sup>7</sup>

Such negative combinations kept down wages and created ever greater divisions in society. This violated "those inestimable rights and privileges guaranteed by the great charter of American Liberty, and in direct hostility to a fair and free participation in the present, prosperous and flourishing condition of our happy country." The continuing depressed state of prices and wages was a direct outgrowth of the actions of these various groups. The privileged few easily snuffed out the efforts of the many to alter existing conditions.

The Executive Committee proposed that all workers join together in a single political body to select candidates who would represent the interests of the "whole people." They made it very clear that they had no intention of challenging the established order. They pointed out that "the working man asks not, seeks not, desires not anything but what is right, nor will he submit to anything that is wrong." Their major goal was to make the existing economic and political system function in a proper manner. "...Revere the institutions of your country,

respect the powers that be, and observe the laws of the land with the most religious and scrupulous regard." They continued, "Maintain most inviolate and sacred the rights, property and privileges of all orders and classes of society..." This goal could only be achieved by putting aside all differences and working together. "You owe it to yourselves and to your children; you owe it to Freedom and to the course of Equal Rights, to come up as one man to this work..."<sup>8</sup>

The Essex County Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen's movement was founded by the Mechanics and Workingmen of Newark. The Newark organization came into existence in 1830 in order to select candidates for upcoming local elections. A number of individuals holding positions in the Mechanics and Workingmen of Newark had close ties with the local Trades Union. Executive Committee members David Doremus, a hatter, and Howard Schenck, a cordwainer, represented their respective craft associations in the Trades Union. Two other committee members, James Hewson and John C. Tomkins, served on the Trades Union delegation that visited Paterson during the 1835 strike. A Paterson cordwainer, Peter Van Houten, worked with the Newark group to establish the county-wide movement.<sup>9</sup>

The Address to the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen of Essex County typified the popular, republican

rhetoric of the day. While it lashed out at established wealth and privilege, it did not call for a far-reaching reorganization of society. Democratic politicians could easily embrace the cause of the workingman without seriously compromising the party's integrity or their own interests. It appears that in 1835, Essex Democrats actually supported candidates first nominated by the county's organized wage earners. On September 28th, the convention of the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen, meeting in Orange, selected five candidates to run in upcoming elections. Newark trade unionist James Hewson and Jonathon Hopper and John Wild of Paterson were among those nominated. Five days later, the county Democratic nominating committee gave the nod to Hewson, Hopper and Wild, rejecting the two other candidates. Since the regular Democratic organization backed a majority of its candidates, the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen decided to support the Democratic Party rather than run an independent slate.<sup>10</sup>

The county-wide Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen's movement and its parent organization in Newark, maintained their independence from the Democratic Party through 1836. They held their own nominating conventions and selected their own candidates to run for public office. With many Democrats in its ranks, the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen exerted considerable

leverage on the policies of the Jacksonian party organization. At their nominating convention, the Jacksonians committed themselves to "protect the rights and interests of our Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen," to fight against any repeal of existing immigration laws, and to totally oppose all "Monopolies." Their strategy appears to have had some success, at least in Paterson. While the Whigs triumphed in Newark and the remainder of the county, the Democrats secured a majority in Paterson.<sup>11</sup>

Their inability to unseat their Whig opponents, even with the support of the Democratic Party, convinced the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen to run an independent slate in the 1836 elections for State Assembly. Shortly before the election, Essex County Democrats endorsed two of their candidates, Andrew Mead and David Craig. They ran on both the Democratic ticket and the Workingmen's ticket. Although the Whigs defeated both parties on a county-wide basis, the Workingmen's Party did very well in Paterson. Each of the four men running on the Workingmen's ticket received 193 votes, while their Democratic counterparts garnered only 55 votes apiece. Mead, running on both tickets, easily outpolled his running mates. Even with the combined vote, Mead could not overtake his Whig opponents. Since the Democrats and the Workingmen appealed to the same constituency, this split vote assured a Whig victory. Democratic candidates ran well behind the Whigs throughout

the county except where they had been endorsed by the Mechanics and Workingmen.<sup>12</sup>

The events of 1835 and 1836 indicate that the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen represented a genuine effort on the part of wage earners and their supporters to establish an independent political presence. Susan Hirsch, in her study of ante-bellum Newark, found that close ties existed between the city's Mechanics and Workingmen's organizations and its trades union. Although she dismissed the movement as having made little or no impact on the predominantly Whig community, Hirsch made it clear that the Mechanics and Workingmen were a distinct organizational entity, related to, though independent of, the Democratic Party.<sup>13</sup>

The evidence is less conclusive for Paterson. During the 1833 elections for State Assembly, the Intelligencer accused an independent group of mechanics of manipulating the candidacy of storekeeper John K. Flood for their own ends. Throughout the mid 1830's, organized groups of wage earners attempted to disrupt partisan gatherings and town meetings. Although the newspaper tried to link these men with the Democratic Party, on at least one occasion local party leaders openly condemned the destructive tactics of the men involved. Workingmen did not surface as an organized, distinct political group in Paterson until the fall of 1835.



The Native American Democratic Association had as little success as the workingmen's movement in establishing a viable political alternative. Although its members were overwhelmingly drawn from the Whig Party, the Association never received the official blessing of the anti-Jacksonians. Formed in the wake of intense civil and workplace conflict during the summer of 1835, the organization hoped to obtain political power by playing on the fears and prejudices of native born citizens. Blaming strikes and riots on newly arrived immigrants, the Native American Democrats wrapped their appeals for support in patriotism and republican rhetoric.

A group of Whig politicians in New York established the first Native Democratic Association early in June of 1835. Initially committed to changing the naturalization laws to prevent immigrants from voting, the organization received a tremendous boost when a riot between Irish Catholics and native born New Yorkers resulted in the injuring of the mayor and the death of a prominent Whig physician.<sup>14</sup> The Native Democratic Association expanded its initial program to include a ban on the foreign-born holding elective office as well a greater restrictions on immigration. The Association emphasized that "Roman Catholicism" was "incompatible with free government." The movement rapidly spread from New York to cities as far away as Cincinnati and New Orleans

as well as to the New Jersey towns of Newark and Paterson.<sup>15</sup>

On August 4, 1835, the New Jersey Eagle printed a circular issued by the Executive Committee of the Native American Democratic Association. "A Mechanic" submitted the document to the paper, claiming that ninety-nine of one hundred Eagle readers agreed with the Association's program. After repeating the standard nativist program, including a bitter attack on the Catholic Church, the circular stressed that the Native Americans had no direct ties with any political parties "We belong exclusively to neither of the two great political parties of the present day. What is right in either we approve, but we are not to be influenced or controlled by either of them; we are what our name purports us to be 'Native American Democrats'." They believed that the "effect of Foreign influences and Foreign intrigue...will prove the overthrow of this Republic."<sup>16</sup>

The editors of the Eagle openly voiced their skepticism over the Association's claim of being non-partisan. "We should infer that its real object, not withstanding the declaration to the contrary, is to promote the cause of the federal (Whig) party." The large number of Whigs found in the ranks of the nativists in New York, Newark, and elsewhere gave support to the claims of the Eagle's editor. Within a couple of weeks, a branch of the organization appeared in Paterson. A letter in the

Intelligencer of August 26, 1835 explained the goals of the organization. The writer made clear the nativist movement's resentment at the control exercised by the Democratic Party over the Irish Catholic vote. Condemning the political clannishness of Paterson's Irish, the writer reminded his fellow citizens that at one point an organized group of Irish voters attempted to elect their countrymen to almost every local government position. According to the author, loyalty to their own kind led them to support Jackson against those who really had their interests at heart.<sup>17</sup>

The Paterson Native American Democratic Association, although technically a branch of the New York organization, drew up its own constitution at a September 3rd meeting. It called for a twenty-one year residency requirement for public office, a ban on the immigration of "foreign paupers and criminals," and a twenty-one year waiting period before immigrants could become citizens. While the nativists allowed naturalized citizens to join, they denied them the right to hold elective office within the organization or vote. The constitution expressly prohibited any discussion about potential candidates for the upcoming presidential election as well as any public evaluations of the incumbent administration.<sup>18</sup>

The known political affiliations of thirteen of Paterson's eighteen major nativists reinforces the

perception of the Native American Democratic Association as a Whig front. Ten of them consistently identified as National Republicans or Whigs while the other three had switched from the Democrats to the Whigs after formation of the new party. Small manufacturers and master artisans provided leadership for the organization along with one or two skilled workers. Neither the town's major manufacturers nor its wage earners gave much support to the Association. At least four of the nativists successfully ran for office at the April, 1835 town meeting.<sup>19</sup>

The organizers of the Native American association explained their program in broad and stirring terms. The preamble stated that "The rapid and unrestrained admission of emigrants from all nations, and every description of character," threatened to destroy the country's democratic institutions which had been "purchased by the blood and treasures of our ancestors." Lax naturalization laws gave foreigners the full rights of citizens even though they possessed little understanding of American society. Immigrants, in the view of the nativists, retained their loyalty to the "father land" and violated existing U. S. laws "by the consequent establishment among us of foreign combinations and foreign influences, which infringe upon our rights, and threaten our peace..."<sup>20</sup>

In addition to printing the constitution and by-laws of the Native American Democratic Association, the

Intelligencer published a number of letters supportive of the activities of the organization. One writer pointed out that aliens refused to shed their foreign ways, particularly when participating in partisan politics.

We esteem our adopted citizens as much as we do each other, so long as they are citizens; but when they so far forget themselves as to congregate together under their national name, feelings and prejudices, they cease to be citizens of America; and are to all intents and purposes citizens of the nation which gave them birth, and under whose behavior their feelings at least rally.<sup>21</sup>

Other writers, calling themselves Hancock, Justitia, and Americus, expressed similar sentiments.

The organization continued in operation through the fall and winter, claiming upwards of four hundred members in Paterson alone. As time passed, its program became increasingly narrow. In December, the nativists passed a resolution which would have permanently excluded foreign born citizens from voting. The Native American Democratic Association disintegrated by the spring of 1836 as did its parent body in New York.

The diverse nature of the town's population hindered the Association's effectiveness. Its policy of allowing naturalized citizens to participate on a limited basis reflected the fact that many Paterson Whigs were immigrants. Staunch party members such as millowner Daniel Ridgeway and shopkeepers John Brown and John Blundell all came from England, while banker Andrew Parsons, machine maker James Plunket, doctor William

Ellison, and James Jackson hailed from Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Although most of these individuals kept a clear distance from their more turbulent fellow countrymen, the restrictive legislation proposed by the nativists would have affected them as well. The town's heterogeneity also contributed to the rise of at least two centers of opposition to the nativists. Shortly after the publication of the Association's constitution, a group of "democratic-republicans" called for a protest meeting. Those attending the gathering passed a number of sharply worded resolutions, condemning the principles of the nativist organization. The democratic-republicans accused the nativists of being "...enemies to republican liberty, destitute of principles, bent on gain, who would be willing, for the advancement of their petty interests as peddling politicians, to sacrifice at the shrine of Plutus the rights, privileges and immunities bequeathed us by our revolutionary sires."<sup>23</sup>

They viewed nativist proposals to limit the rights of the foreign born as more dangerous to the country "than the treason of Burr or the defection of Arnold." In their efforts to obtain political power the nativists planned to divide the American people and set them against one another. Those organizing opposition to the Native American Association made a conscious effort to include both naturalized citizens and native born Americans in the

effort. Irishman Peter Archdeacon and two Englishmen, Ralph Shorrock and William Ridgeway, served on the committee as did Americans David Brands, Andrew Mead, Peregrine Sandford, and Garret C. Garrabrants.<sup>24</sup>

Only one of the anti-nativists, William Ridgeway, retained consistent ties with the National Republicans and the Whigs. Archdeacon started out as a Republican but switched his allegiance to the Democrats. The remainder of the individuals with identifiable political ties aligned themselves with the Democratic Party, which acted as the other focus for anti-nativist activity. The Democratic Paterson Courier printed the following anonymous question from one of its readers. "Why was Egypt, when it was visited by plagues, like the Native American Party in Pater(son)?" "Because it was filled with low curses (locuses)."<sup>25</sup> The Democratic electors of Essex County asked local farmers and workingmen to oppose nativist efforts to change existing naturalization laws. The appeal accused the Native Americans of attempting to "procure the repeal of existing laws respecting Naturalization, where by foreigners are to be deprived of their property and rights of citizenship." The Working Man's Advocate, of New York, joined in the campaign, printing articles critical of the Native Americans from as far away as Terre Haute, Indiana.<sup>26</sup>

Paterson Democrats perceived the activities of the

nativists as part of a conscious attempt to divide native born and Irish wage earners. Nativists in turn openly blamed the town's Irish for recent Democrat electoral successes. "Justitia," in a letter to the Intelligencer, put the charges in writing.

Messrs. Editors. I have myself seen the flag of my country torn from its staff and trodden under foot, and the green flag of Erin hoisted in its stead, at an election for charter officers in the sixth ward of the city of New York!...Who is there among us that does not recollect our own town meetings, where the same spirit has shown itself, that one year they to a certain extent succeed in electing their own countrymen to almost every office - and why? Was it because they were better qualified? No, the only reason they could assign was, they were Irishmen.<sup>27</sup>

Nativists David Burnett, Josiah Crismond, and Nicholas Smith had all attended the National Republican meeting in the fall of 1833 which was taken over by supporters of John K. Flood, many of whom were immigrants and active Democrats. Even where they or their fellow Republicans or Whigs beat the Democrats on the local level, developments on the state and national levels repeatedly frustrated hopes of comprehensive victory. Immigrants proved to be a convenient scapegoat for the unsuccessful political forays of the anti-Jackson forces.

The Nativist and Workingmen's movements symbolized the deterioration of traditional republicanism as a unifying ideology. On the one hand, fears for the future of the republic led men to seek to bar others from enjoying the fruits of liberty and political democracy. Adopting



a myopic view of society, Native Americans blamed increased civil unrest on the influence of newly arrived immigrants rather than on existing economic and social divisions. While privately they may have recognized that the old republic had ceased to exist, publicly they still envisioned a society as a unified whole without class divisions. Corrupt, inferior individuals with no understanding of the duties and obligations of democratic citizenship rather than systemic inequality threatened the well-being and future progress of the nation.

Participants in the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen's movement likewise believed that the country's institutions were under attack. In their view, however, the arbitrary and unfair use of power by a monied elite constituted the basis of the problem. The exercise of this power in the workshops and in the community threatened to reduce independent wage earners to the status of dependent English wage slaves. The free workingman had traditionally been viewed as the backbone of the republic; his diminution could only result in the total erosion of democracy in the United States. The Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen had no desire to tamper with the established social order. Their major goal was to make sure that every individual had an equal opportunity to share in the nation's bounty, free of artificial encumbrances.

The very existence of the two organizations

demonstrated the primary weakness of republicanism. By the mid 1830's, it had become all things to all men. Whigs and Democrats, nativists and "workies," millowners and factory hands, all spoke of freedom, of equal rights, of republican liberty, and of the sacrifices of their revolutionary forebears. Each interpreted the national ideology in terms of their interests and needs. Working men and women, relying on long-held notions of the commonwealth and of equality, struggled to maintain and further the rights and privileges they had fought for since the days of the Revolution. Individuals involved in the professions, industry, and commerce, embracing the ethos of individualism that framed the period's rapid economic transformation, utilized the notion of society as a singular entity to minimize the negative impact of their decisions on other segments of the population.

The involvement of both groups in the electoral process reflected the primary importance of politics as a means of influencing the course of events. Native Americans and Workingmen generally returned to their original parties after it was clear that independent political action had failed. The decline of the two movements did little to assuage the intensity of local political conflict in Paterson. As anti-labor judicial decisions and deteriorating economic conditions curtailed strikes, wage earners became increasingly reliant on the Democratic Party

as a vehicle for expressing their disagreements with the course of events. Since most of the nativists were Whigs to begin with, they quickly resumed their place in the ranks of the anti-Jacksonians.

Many of Paterson's labor leaders supported the Democratic Party and ran for office under its banner. Peter Lydecker personified the connection between working class activism and participation in partisan politics. Lydecker, a carpenter, joined his fellow journeymen in petitioning for a ten hour day in 1826, served as one of the leaders of the Paterson Association during the 1835 operative's strike, took an active role in the local trades union, functioned as Vice President of the Farmers, Mechanics and Workingmen, and ran for the office of town assessor as a Democrat in 1837. Other labor activists involved in Democratic politics included Edward Earle, the freethinking cordwainer, and Paterson Trades Union leaders James Field, Matthew Crawford, and Stephen Thurston. Machinist John Kershaw and cordwainer William Masters also assumed major positions of responsibility within the party.<sup>28</sup>

Wage earners and their supporters exercised increasing influence over Democratic Party affairs in the latter years of the decade. This, in no small measure, contributed to the bitter tone of local electoral contests in 1837, 1838, and 1839. In 1837, the Democrats swept

all but three township offices. Workers and their longtime supporters secured many local offices. Lydecker was chosen to be an assessor while mechanics Hugh Brady and John Wild were elected to serve on the town committee. Samuel Pope, a turner, defeated his rival for the post of constable while former handloom weaver Patrick McGee became a Judge of Appeals. In 1836 nominees of the Workingmen's Party, Jonathon Hopper and Andrew Mead, also won local positions as did James W. King, author of the disputed anti-corporation petition, and John Tilby who, in 1835, had testified on behalf of the striking millworkers.<sup>29</sup>

Their triumph proved to be shortlived. The onset of depression in the spring created a strong anti-Democratic backlash. The first signs of trouble in Paterson occurred too late to influence the 1837 town elections. Shortly after the elections, four Paterson cotton mills shut down due to the failure of a Philadelphia commission house.<sup>30</sup> As spring passed into summer, extended mill closings and layoffs increased. The deepening economic crisis provided town Whigs with fresh ammunition in the ongoing struggle with their Jacksonian rivals. The editor of the Intelligencer, in addition to blaming the crisis on the Democrats, lashed out at Whig employers for not providing work for the party faithful. The newspaper printed a series of letters from two mechanics which condemned the mill and shop owners for

their insensitivity to the plight of loyal Whig workingmen. On June 14th, "A Mechanic," identifying himself as "a hard workingman when I can get anything to do," sent a letter to the paper. He made it clear that he was a lifelong Whig and would be one till his death which, he intimated, might occur shortly if he did not find work. "A Mechanic" claimed that if employers studied the lists of their hands they would find mainly "...noisy, brawling Jackson Van Buren men" while loyal Whigs such as himself starved. The correspondent found this to be ironic in the sense that the manufacturers were keeping alive "...the very reptiles that poison our body politic."<sup>31</sup>

"A Mechanic"'s letter drew a response from Andrew Mead, former Workingmen's Party candidate and editor of the Passaic Guardian. Mead took exception to the idea that mill and shop owners should discriminate against workers who voted for Democratic candidates. Mead's observation drew an immediate attack from a second correspondent to the Intelligencer who labelled himself "Another Mechanic." He charged that the Democrats had discriminated against their political opponents at every opportunity. The writer claimed that a year or two earlier Mead himself had threatened to dismiss an employee if he voted for the Whigs. The threat allegedly convinced the man not to cast a ballot in the election. "Another Mechanic" believed that it was the height of hypocrisy for Mead to criticize the proposal put forth by the first mechanic.<sup>32</sup>

The response of "Another Mechanic" did not totally please the original correspondent. In a second letter to the Intelligencer he pointed out that Whig millowners should dismiss Democratic employees, or "tories" as he referred to them, since it was their party which had brought the country to the brink of disaster. "Is not every Whig satisfied that the widespread ruin in our country was brought upon us by the tories and the despots who control them? I deny that it would be persecution to discharge a tory. You do not thereby deprive him of his right to vote - nor prevent the tory employers from giving them work."<sup>33</sup> "A Mechanic" singled out John Travers, active Democrat and owner of the Phoenix Mill, for special abuse. He claimed that Travers currently had no Whig employees and that he had categorically refused to hire them over the preceding ten year period. A "Bullying overseer" allegedly herded Phoenix employees to the polls on election day, providing them with slogans such as "down with the U. State Bank," "down with the aristocratical Mill-owners and ruffle shirt Whigs." According to "A Mechanic," other Paterson laboringmen abused their employers in a similar fashion. He ended his letter with an appeal that he and his fellow Whigs be put back to work.<sup>34</sup>

"Another Mechanic" also contributed a letter to the June 28th edition of the Intelligencer, continuing his

attacks on Mead. Referring to the editor of the Passaic Guardian as an "addle-pated booby," he refuted a claim by Mead that Democrats frequently appointed Whigs to public office. The writer charged that the Jacksonians only appointed Whigs when they had no knowledge of the office holder's political beliefs. Once they found out that the appointees held Whig principles, the Democrats attempted unsuccessfully to have them removed. "Another Mechanic" also stated that he expected Mead to deny charges of intimidating his employees but that the refutation didn't matter since many people already knew about the incident.<sup>35</sup>

The journalistic interchanges did little to ameliorate the impact of worsening economic conditions. A town census conducted by the Intelligencer in March of 1838 provided tangible evidence of the impact of the depression on Paterson. After experiencing regular increases in population since the early 1820's, the town now faced an actual drop in the number of people taking up residence there. Although the number of families living in the town increased between 1832 and 1838, the overall population exhibited a slight decline. Paterson had thirty-seven fewer inhabitants in 1838 than it had in 1832. This contrasted sharply with the period from 1824 to 1832, for example, when the population of the industrial town increased from 4,763 people to 9,020 people.<sup>36</sup>

The Intelligencer census revealed another, more damaging, statistic in terms of the town's position as a major industrial center. In 1838, Paterson manufacturers employed four hundred fewer hands than they had in 1832. While part of the decline could be ascribed to technological changes in the mills and shops, most of it resulted from an ever dwindling demand for manufactured goods. A lack of savings combined with a wholly inadequate system of poor relief forced discharged wage earners to seek employment elsewhere.

As mill and shop employment fluctuated, demands for economic assistance grew. The amount budgeted for outdoor relief rose from fifteen hundred dollars in 1836 to three thousand dollars by 1839. Even with increased allocations, town officials found themselves continually short of funds. While widows, orphans, and familyless individuals represented the majority of those applying for relief, a significant number of married couples also turned to local government for help. Between April and December of 1837, fifty-three couples with families received either full or partial relief. They represented 40.3% of the total number receiving aid from the town. Over a third of these recipients were removed from the rolls when work became available in the mills.<sup>38</sup>

While the economic depression strained the town's resources, it did not dampen the fires of partisan



political conflict. Whig candidates, blaming the hard times on the policies of Democratic incumbents, scored impressive gains in the fall 1837 legislative elections and at the annual town meeting in April of 1838. The 1837 elections were particularly significant because Paterson inhabitants voted as citizens of newly formed Passaic County for the first time. After years of fruitless lobbying, the state legislature finally agreed to establish the new county in February of that year. Composed of the towns of Paterson, Acquackanonk, Manchester, Pompton, and West Milford, the action of the state lawmakers freed people in Passaic County from the political domination of heavily Whig Newark. Unfortunately for the Democrats, hard times initially offset any gains that might have resulted from the formation of the new county. Whigs carried four of the five towns in the state legislative elections while making a strong showing in Paterson as well.<sup>39</sup>

Flush with their success in the fall elections, the Whigs next moved to assure their victory at the April town meeting. Shortly before the meeting a letter to the Intelligencer raised questions about the actions of the Democratic town assessors. The writer charged that soon after their election in 1837, the two officials took it upon themselves to hire two additional assessors to assist them in their duties. According to the Intelligencer, such appointments could only be made at a special town meeting.

The issue involved more than just political cronyism. Assessors earned eight cents for every household they processed. The newspaper charged that the two appointees earned over two hundred dollars apiece over a two week period.<sup>40</sup>

A correspondent to the Intelligencer, identifying himself as "Taxes," used the opportunity to attack both the Democrats and the town's workingmen. Both groups were highly vulnerable on the issue since one of the original assessors was carpenter Peter Lydecker, perhaps the most consistently active of all of Paterson's labor leaders. Subtitling his letter "To the Victors Belong the Spoils," "Taxes" lambasted the four officials, charging them with taking double fees for their services. The writer noted that "These are the men who were loud in their cry of oppression, and so sympathizing with the poor leaders of the famed trades union, double-distilled loco-foco's etc." Harping on their identity as trades union leaders, "Taxes" urged that they be forced to refund the illegal fees or that their posted bond be confiscated. He promised that Paterson's Democrats would get their just reward at the next town meeting.<sup>41</sup>

"Taxes" and his supporters made good on their threat, capturing almost all of the offices in the April election. Their average majority of 139 votes over their Democratic rivals represented the most significant

Republican/Whig victory in a local election in over ten years. The April results did not, however, represent a long term trend. Whig candidates barely defeated their opponents in the next round of congressional and state legislative elections. Whig Andrew Parsons beat Silas Canfield for a seat in the legislature by only three votes. Congressional candidates did just as poorly. A number of Democrats charged that the Whigs won only by forcing their employees to the polls under the threat of their losing their jobs. That charge elicited a response from "A Whig Voter of Oldham." "By the votes lately polled in the town of Paterson, it is evident that of those who are employed both directly and indirectly by the Manufacturer, a very large proportion of them are men of opposite politics, as has frequently been shown on former occasions."<sup>42</sup> According to the writer, not a shred of evidence had been produced to show that any workingman had been discharged for voting against the party of his employer.

The Democrats made a strong comeback in April of 1839, capturing a significant number of town positions. Workingmen active in earlier labor struggles successfully ran for office, handily defeating their Whig opponents. The Intelligencer provided no explanation for this turn of events. The lack of comment on the part of journalists reflected a growing trend among area newspapers. Devoting less space to local news, they focussed more on national

events and advertising. In line with this policy, the editors of the Intelligencer all but ceased publishing letters from town readers, while continuing to print election results and official notices. They refrained from playing as active a role in politics as they had previously.<sup>43</sup>

The dearth of contemporary reporting makes it almost impossible for later generations to analyze community life in towns such as Paterson during the worst years of the first major economic depression. The disappearance of the labor press, combined with the marked disinterest in local affairs exhibited by mainstream newspapers, cast a veil over the collective attempts of working people to deal with the crisis at hand. From the limited materials available, however, it is obvious that such efforts did not entirely cease. In November of 1839, Boston journeymen shoemakers called a citywide strike to protest the hiring of hands not affiliated with the Bootmakers' Society. Philadelphia house carpenters walked off their jobs the same year in a futile effort to secure a pay increase. Weavers in Philadelphia and Rockdale, Pennsylvania, quit work in 1842 due to wage cuts instituted by their employers. In addition to participating in strikes, workingmen continued to play an active role in politics as well. These varied activities suggest that wage earners maintained, even in the darkest days of the

1837 Depression, many of the ties established during the workplace and political struggles of the 1820's and 1830's.<sup>44</sup>

In August of 1838, the Paterson Intelligencer printed a fictitious conversation between a young mechanic and a long time member of the Democratic Party. Segments of the dialogue captured much of the essence of the political and social changes that had taken place in the United States in the third and fourth decades of the century. The young mechanic, after faithfully supporting the Jacksonians for years, decided to join the Whigs. He explained the reasons behind his decision to his not so bright friend, who is identified as "Loco Foco."

The (Democratic) party has thrown discord into every department of society - into families, societies, neighborhoods, and towns, working upon the national prejudices of the Irish, because General Jackson is the son of an Irishman - estranging their feelings from the institutions of the "adopted country" - creating jealousies between the "poor and the rich" - denouncing banks and the whole "Credit system" of the country by which we have prospered beyond precedent.<sup>45</sup>

"Loco Foco" responded to his companion by presenting a sarcastic and cynical discourse on the philosophy of the Jacksonians "Fool, don't you know that we

must gull the lower classes to secure their votes. They will not listen to argument; only huzza for Van Buren - for specie currency - and cry down with rag barons, rag mills and the credit system, by which the rich is made richer and the poor, poorer, and we have them to a man - Principles, fudge...<sup>46</sup>

As the conversation progressed, "Loco Foco" became increasingly attracted by the arguments of the young mechanic. At one point he asked the newly converted Whig if he had any regrets for his actions while a member of the Democratic Party. "For joining with you against my own and my fellow mechanics' interest, for the sake of putting into office men, many of whom we do not know - specimens of which we daily see in our town - many of them of intemperate habits and licentious conduct - I am very sorry."<sup>47</sup> The young mechanic went on to explain how he too opposed the banking and credit system until he began to understand its operation. He proceeded to enlighten his compatriot on its true nature. By the end of the explanation, "Loco Foco" decided to desert his old party in favor of the Whigs.

I now see that it is the credit system that makes high wages, gives the farmer a good price for his produce, and aids young mechanics and others in business; and instead of making the rich richer and the poor poorer, it helps to put us on an equal footing with the rich - the rich by loaning us their money in this way obtain only six or seven per cent for it, while we in our business make from twenty-five to thirty per cent upon the capital - and often we see the borrower of money in this way because the capitalist himself - huzza! for the

credit system - I go for it in the next election. Down with humbuggery and starvation.<sup>48</sup>

In the mind of the dialogue's author, the discord and disruption of the 1820's and 1830's represent an aberration created by venal Democratic politicians. Inherent in this explanation was the traditional republican analysis of American society as a unitary construct free of internal divisions. Unscrupulous individuals, not growing economic inequality, created the conditions which led to social conflict and disunity. Proponents of this point of view found confirmation for their perspective in the nation's recent past. In 1776, a corrupt English monarchy forced its American colonists to declare their independence in order to perserve their basic rights and liberties. Now, sixty-two years later, a contentious, divisive political organization under the leadership of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren threatened to undermine the nation's freedom by setting class against class, native against immigrant, section against section. In order for the Intelligencer's editor to come up with a different explanation, he would have had to admit that economic change had fatally undermined republicanism as a unifying ideology.

While there had been workplace conflict and political discord throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, workingmen and employers alike generally believed that the United States was free of class

distinctions. Early efforts in Paterson to promote domestic industry or obtain tariff revisions reinforced this view by bringing together millowners, operatives, shopkeepers, and journeymen in common cause. They all agreed that the town's future prosperity depended upon the continued growth of manufacturing. This shared concern overshadowed most political and social differences.

As the pace of industrialization in Paterson and other towns dramatically accelerated in the mid 1820's, the community of interest prevalent in the early decades of the century began to unravel. The expansion and increased efficiency of manufacturing, both in the mills and in artisan shops, affected relationships between workers and owners. Those relationships became more structured and rigid as employers attempted to meet the demands of increased domestic and international competition. During the same general period of time there occurred a fundamental restructuring of the political system which exacerbated already festering workplace conflicts. Democratic politicians, whether out of genuine commitment or out of calculating political cynicism, tapped into increasing currents of discontent in order to elect Andrew Jackson to the nation's highest office. As "Loco Foco" put it in the Intelligencer article, the Democrats went about "creating jealousies between the 'poor and the rich'." The subsequent formation of the Whig Party only



added to this polarization, especially in towns such as Paterson.

Even though the leaders of both parties were drawn from the same social strata and used the same language in their public expositions, they appealed to very different segments of the population. The political divisions of the late 1820s and 1830's mirrored the intensifying economic and social conflicts brought on by the expansion of industry and commerce. Republican ideology, in its original form, proved insufficient in explaining new configurations of wealth and power. As millhands, shopkeepers, journeymen, and professionals experienced the impact of rapid change, they interpreted the national creed in a variety of ways. Democratic and Whig politicians reformulated republicanism to fit the changing times. The latter, embracing liberal thought, turned it into an ideology of fugality, morality, hard work, and acceptance of the status quo. Jackson supporters formulated their attacks on their opponents in terms of suspicion of centralized authority and egalitarianism. Whatever their ultimate ends, Democratic leaders increasingly turned to the rhetoric of class conflict to achieve their goals. Their verbal appeals would have fallen on deaf ears had they not touched upon genuine grievances held by workingmen and others. Economic discontent and heightened political partisanship fed upon each other, escalating conflict in

the workplace and in the polling place. The development of trades unions, workingmen's parties, and loco foco factions reflected the growing estrangement felt by many people towards existing political and economic institutions.

At stake was nothing less than the issue of what constituted the basis of citizenship in a democratic republic. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was generally accepted that any free white male, whether native or foreign born, had the right and the duty to participate in civic affairs. An inherent part of this belief was the concept of independence, of the man free and clear of any feudal ties or loyalties, a status largely shaped by one's calling or occupation. The rise of large mills and factories, as well as the expansion of artisan shops, led to a redefinition of traditional concepts of work. By its very nature, wage labor in larger establishments connoted a decline in one's skill as well as an increase in social dependence. This in turn raised fundamental questions about the ability of such individuals to carry out their duties as citizens.

To one extent or another, wage earners understood that the changes taking place around them were permanently altering the nature of society. The depth and intensity of their response to those changes reflected their concern for the future as well as for the present. Wage earners and others truly feared for the survival of the republic. An

earlier generation had overcome enormous challenges in the process of creating the world's first true political democracy. In the 1820's and 1830's a new set of challenges developed which threatened to undermine the accomplishments of their forefathers. Native born workers drew upon their traditions of collective action and popular protest, dating back to the War for Independence, to maintain the legacy which had been passed down to them. European immigrants, utilizing their own historical experiences, joined in the effort, having left the old country to obtain those very rights now under attack in their new homeland.

Together they established a pattern of organization and action that subsequent generations adopted as their own. While they did not achieve many of their immediate goals and objectives, wage earners in Paterson and elsewhere helped to reinforce the idea that they had a right, as well as a responsibility, to maintain their democratic heritage, whatever the odds. The tradition which began in the 1820's and 1830's has sustained workers for the past 150 years in their efforts to create a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities. In the process they played a major role in the shaping of America, helping to make it a more equitable and humane society than it otherwise might have become.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Commons, History, pp. 479-484.
2. P. Foner, p. 155. The cordwainers' strike actually took place in 1833; Intelligencer, 15 June, 1836.
3. Intelligencer, 8 June, 1836.
4. Intelligencer, 8 June, 1836.
5. P. Foner, pp. 155-159; New Jersey Eagle, 1 July, 1836, 30 Aug., 1836.
6. Paterson Courier, 23 Sept., 1835, 30 Sept., 1835.
7. Courier, 30 Sept., 1835.
8. Courier, 30 Sept., 1835. This document was also printed in the New Jersey Eagle of 26 Sept., 1835.
9. Eagle, 3 Oct., 1834, 31 July, 1835, 4 Aug., 1835; Commons, Documentary History 6, Part 2, pp. 175-183.
10. Courier, 30 Sept., 1835; Eagle, 26 Sept., 1835; Intelligencer, 17 Oct., 1835. The two other nominees were Henry B. Campbell and John Hume. Hopper was a storekeeper and Wild was a mechanic.
11. Courier, 23 Sept., 1835; Intelligencer, 21 Oct., 1835.
12. Eagle, 16 Sept., 1836, 11 Oct., 1836, 18 Oct., 1836. In Paterson, Mead got a total of 255 votes. Craig also outpolled the other Democrats in Paterson, receiving 189 votes.
13. Hirsch, pp. 112-115; Eagle, 18 Oct., 1836. The workingmen's slate countrywide got 8.7% of the vote in the Assembly race. With the addition of Meade's Democratic votes, that figure stood at 16.3%. In Paterson, the Workingmen received 33.7% of the total Assembly vote and 40.3% including Mead.
14. Leo Hershkowitz, "The Native American Democratic Association in New York City 1835-1836," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 46, No. 1, January, 1962, pp. 49-50. A plan to establish an Irish Catholic militia company was reportedly the spark which set off the riot. See also Louis Dow Sisco, "Political Nativism and

New York State," Studies in History, Economics and Public Law - Columbia University, 13, Whole No. 35, No. 1, 1901.

15. Hershkowitz, p. 50. Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 131.

16. New Jersey Eagle, 14 Aug., 1835. The Eagle was a Democratic paper with close ties to the Paterson Courier.

17. Intelligencer, 26 Aug., 1835; New Jersey Eagle, 14 Aug., 1835.

18. Intelligencer, 9 Sept., 1835, 23 Dec., 1835.

19. Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, pp. 30-32, 36-38. Bio Data.

20. Intelligencer, 9 Sept., 1835.

21. Intelligencer, 9 Sept., 1835.

22. Bio Data.

23. Intelligencer, 9 Sept., 1835.

24. Bio Data.

25. Paterson Courier, 23 Sept., 1835.

26. Courier, 23 Sept., 1835; The Working Man's Advocate, 5 Sept., 1835.

27. Intelligencer, 26 Aug., 1835. He criticized the English almost as harshly as the Irish.

28. Eagle, 16 Sept., 1836. Bio Data.

29. Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, pp. 44-46.

30. Intelligencer, 12 April, 1837.

31. Intelligencer, 14 June, 1837.

32. Intelligencer, 21 June 1837. The replacement of Postmaster Abraham Godwin, Jr., by Jackson loyalist Moses DeWitt in the late 1820's, gives some credence to "Another Mechanic's" charge.

33. Intelligencer, 28 June, 1837.
34. Intelligencer, 28 June, 1837. Travers was the only Paterson manufacturer to consistently support the Democrats, even as all the other millowners aligned themselves with the Whigs. His heavily Irish workforce no doubt also voted for Democratic candidates on a regular basis.
35. Intelligencer, 28 June, 1837.
36. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838; Census of Paterson.
37. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838.
38. Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, pp. 36-38, 63; Intelligencer, 27 Dec., 1837. In addition to the 53 couples, there were 52 widows, 18 orphans, and 11 individuals without families on town relief rolls. Fifty-two of 134 people receiving assistance returned to work in area mills and shops.
39. Intelligencer, 8 Feb., 1837, 18 Oct., 1837.
40. Intelligencer, 28 March, 1838, 4 April 1838.
41. Intelligencer, 21 March, 1838. There is no indication that a bona-fide loco foco faction existed in Paterson during these years, although the term appeared regularly in the pages of the Intelligencer.
42. Intelligencer, 18 April, 1837, 17 Oct., 1838, 11 Oct., 1838.
43. Nelson, Records of the Township of Paterson, p. 63.
44. P. Foner, pp. 163-164; Wallace, pp. 539-365; D. Montgomery, pp. 411-446.
45. Intelligencer, 29 Aug., 1838.
46. Intelligencer, 29 Aug., 1838.
47. Intelligencer, 29 Aug., 1838.
48. Intelligencer, 29 Aug., 1838.

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