The Outside World

No one regrets “to see men attempting to create sectional distinctions, and make invidious comparisons”—more than “the best and least of the editors of this paper; he also regrets a disposition in any, to see in others such sectional feelings, on no other evidence than that they come from this or that quarter. He never cared to ask which of our lawyers, doctors, or clergy came from New-England, and which from other parts of the union: we are all citizens of Ohio and of all the world; and the man that would array Yankees, Buckeyes, and Southerners, against each other—or invidiously distinguish between them—is yet but a very narrow and imperfect man.

“Yankees,” Mirror and Chronicle (1835)

The nations of Asia, Africa and Europe have prevented the diffusion of celestial wisdom among the citizens and preferred the petty triumphs of passion and the false splendor of military renown to the solid blessings of peace. America is a more happy planet, moving in an elevated orb, lighting and adorning and giving life and vigour to a higher sphere of human action.

Joshua Wilson’s Diary (December 1833)

Like most other Americans, the people of Cincinnati were preoccupied with the necessity of making a living. The little leisure time that remained they spent in amusing themselves or participating in various community activities. Local responsibilities enveloped the individual citizen. Unless he was a transient, marking time until he had acquired enough capital to buy a homestead or set up a store somewhere further west, he sought to establish himself in
his adopted city. Until he had made himself and his family secure, he had little opportunity to contemplate the outside world.

But whether he wished it or not, the affairs of the outside world constantly intruded upon him, touched his sensibilities, upset his calculations, or enraged him. However intensely he worked at his business, he could not, if he were a recent settler, totally obliterate the memories of his homeland. He could not avoid meeting settlers from other sections or the Irish and German immigrants who filtered into the city. He could not and did not want to remain apart from the excitement of national politics.

Discussion of the citizen’s relation to the outside world, his attitude toward people and events beyond his immediate sphere of interest, must always take into account the exclusive commercial character, the position, and the relative youth of Cincinnati. And since on this subject, like others in the study, no attempt has been made to be exhaustive, we must rely for evidence on typical or at least illuminating incidents. In making my generalizations, I have tried to maintain a balance of perspective so that if I have sometimes portrayed the people as suspicious, ill-informed, chauvinistic, and prejudiced, I have also recognized their impulsive generosity and splendid confidence, their realism and humanity.

Timothy Flint, who knew the South and West about as well as any American of his day, once confessed that he was unable to detect any distinct national character among the settlers of the middle and southwestern states. Ohio, for example, already known as the “Yankee State,” revealed traces of New England and New Jersey; Indiana showed distinct southern influences; and the inhabitants of Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri possessed the traits and mannerisms peculiar to their sections.¹

It became a favorite occupation of travelers and commentators to point out sectional differences, to contrast, let us say, the hardy, cautious, indefatigable New Engander with the easy, polite, and leisure-loving Virginian or the flamboyant and generous Kentuckian. Ohioans were regarded as less “high-toned” and proud than the people from Kentucky, “less assuming in their demeanor, but not less agreeable in conversation, nor less punctual in business transactions.”² According to James Hall, the “New Engander will be politely civil from a sense of duty, where the Virginian is profusely hospitable

¹. Timothy Flint, *A Condensed Geography and History of the Western States, or the Mississippi Valley* (Cincinnati, 1828), 208.
from generous feelings, and because he can enjoy the pleasures of society without its inconveniences."

The tendency to view the American character not as a "single portrait but as a family piece containing several heads" suggests at this time the persistence of a sectional rather than a national outlook. Without necessarily indicating national disunity, state pride and sectional self-consciousness would seem to show that developing transportation facilities and improvements in communication had not yet removed the prejudice that comes from isolation. On the other hand, a good deal of sectional bitterness (and I refer specifically now to the East-West antipathy) cannot be attributed to mere ignorance. Cincinnati, after all, was hardly a remote outpost peopled by bumpkins. Settlers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Germany, and the British Isles, in addition to native-born Ohioans, comprised her population. They read the newspapers, engaged in extensive business transactions with eastern firms, and kept in touch with current fashions, literature, and politics.

Why then did so many people in Cincinnati distrust the East? What provoked this western truculence? No one reason can explain sectional antipathy, but it might be said, first of all, that Cincinnati was a debtor community and that her merchants did not relish their dependence upon the eastern financial interests. To the city Jacksonians, moreover, the East was still tainted by the Hartford Convention and regarded by all these good Democrats as the center of odious Federalism. German and Irish immigrants still remembered the miseries of their first receptions on the seaboard. City conservatives, particularly those of southern origins, saw the East as the fountainhead of abolitionism and other "ultraist" movements; Queen City radicals identified the East with the "Bank Hydra"; and the mechanics identified it with low wages and unemployment. Finally, the loyal citizens resented the assumption that the West was uncivilized and needed to be saved from itself by liberal doses of eastern culture.

What most annoyed the sensitive westerner was the eastern critics' complete ignorance of western life, their vague and indiscriminate strictures. The easterner never particularized, a Cincinnati editor complained:

Some of our Eastern brethren seem not to know that the West, so called, embraces a large extent of territory and a number of states. They speak of

4. Ibid., 237.
the "West," as the Dutch of New York formerly did of New England, as "one prodigious great state." Whatever is wrong in Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, or any other state on this side of the mountains, is sufficiently located for our critics, if it be attributed to the West.5

The mass of the people on the seaboard seemed to know more about China than about the land west of the Alleghenies,6 a region described in their newspapers as a combination of fevers, freshets, bad water, poverty, and rough people. Readers of the Portland Gazette were told that in Cincinnati wages were low, living expenses high, and society brutal. Bullies walked the Cincinnati streets, so the account ran, chewing off the hands of their opponents "with as much deliberation as you would a slice of beef," and ripping out eyes with their fingers.7 In spite of Cincinnati's churches and religious societies and her orderly citizenry, she was pictured as "that equivocal region, where the shades of paganism have retreated westward, before the dawning light of civilization in the East."8

The eastern press promulgated these horrific tales of brawls and killings and poverty, many believed, in order to discourage mechanics from emigrating.9 As early as 1815, the "malignant, prejudiced, mercantile nobility in the New England states" sought to prevent workingmen from going West. A Boston mechanic, it was alleged, had been warned by his employers not to quit his job if he wished to avoid disaster. But the mechanic had enough courage to leave the "dark regions of New England" and "declining Boston" for a city which would soon outstrip this ancient seat of Federalism, a free community where a man might vote as he pleased without fear of losing his business.10 Western publicists felt obliged to offset these lies and to assure incipient settlers that the West was no bloody wilderness. To the man who asked, "Shall I stay, and enjoy the fruits of two hundred years labour of my ancestors; or go, and toil and sweat for those who shall come two hundred years after me?" they replied by promising certain prosperity if he would leave his benighted homeland.

5. Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette, Mar. 29, 1825.
7. LHCG, Oct. 20, 1817.
9. LHCG, Oct. 20, 1817. "I have a distant recollection," said Timothy Walker, "of a picture, which I saw in boyhood, prefixed to a penny, anti-moving-to-Ohio pamphlet, in which a stout, ruddy, well dressed man, on a sleek, fat horse, with a label 'I'm going to Ohio,' meets a pale and ghastly skeleton of a man, scarcely half dressed, on the wreck of what was once a horse . . . with a label, 'I have been to Ohio'" (Annual Discourse, 13).
10. LHCG, July 31, 1815; Niles' Weekly Register VIII (1815): 253–57.
The now well-known "skies-are-bluer, hearts-are-truer" legend began to be formulated. In the writings of its editors and apologists, the West took on the aspects of a paradise in which the American's infinite capacities would have opportunities to flourish. They answered the derogations of their critics by boasting of western superiority and making endless prophecies of future greatness, prophecies which became "dull to the westerner by repetition, and vexatious to the easterner by contrast." 11 The West, it seemed, was the promised land. Its people were more susceptible to vital truths than the slumbering, hide-bound East, or, as Daniel Drake phrased it, "The mental sensibility is alive to innovations, and the growth of the intellect which they impart has a corresponding vitality." 12 The East was static, conservative, old; the West was dynamic, progressive, young. "Greater rapidity and energy in decision," declared a western orator, "a more extemporary method of doing things, a freer and bolder eloquence now obtain here, than amidst the restraints and leadings of established forms and usages of the east." 13

In rejecting the aspersions of eastern slanderers Cincinnati spokesmen sometimes became ridiculous in their vainglory, but their exaggerations in favor of the West were no more extreme than the libels of their detractors. The West had been so long associated with violence, atheism, and ignorance that one can hardly blame western editors for conducting campaigns to build up the reputation of their section. Getting back at their tormentors, they took delight in commenting on tales of riot and brutality which took place in seaboard cities. A New Year's brawl in a Massachusetts town "would have glorified a river village in the West in the good old days of Mike Fink and his worthy associates." Once upon a time Ohio's riverboatmen were "lauded as unrivalled barbarians," but they lived before Boston's convent rioters and the election rioters in New York and Philadelphia had overmatched "Western lawlessness." Now it was the "refined" East which patronized "brutal outrages of dignity," the "pugilistic exhibition." 14

By writing sneering rejoinders of this kind, by continuously referring to the cheapness of provisions in Cincinnati (in spite of "the great influx of our hungry eastern brethren"), 15 and by reporting on Cincinnati's growth and remarkable achievements, Cincinnati publicists exposed eastern ignorance and ridiculed eastern pretensions. They proudly disclosed the luxury and

15. CCLG, Jan. 30, 1830.
culture of their great emporium; and the encomiums of travelers, startled at finding a metropolis where they expected a countrified village, helped to sustain those claims. At a time when the city still suffered from the false allegations of Mrs. Trollope, favorable impressions like the following enhanced the Queen City's reputation:

The first glance leaves an impression of splendor, which the traveller is far from anticipating in these remote western regions. Handsome brick houses, wide streets, and magnificent public buildings, strike the astonished eye of the stranger, who expected to find only wooden houses and narrow lanes. Near the bridge, he sees the same bustle and activity as on the quays of New Orleans and New York. Advancing into the town, he sees at each step brilliant shops, exquisites and dandies lounging about, and ladies attired in the last Parisian fashions. On entering the Hotel, he finds himself in a five-story building, containing apartments without number, and halls almost endless. Fatigued, after wandering about for an hour in these passages, which require months to get fully acquainted with, he throws himself at last carelessly on an excellent ottoman, inquiring, with an air of nonchalance, of a group of waiters constantly in attendance, "is there any newspaper in Cincinnati?" "Sixteen daily journals and periodicals are published here at present," answers the waiter, hastening to bring the inquirer not only these, but a number of others printed in different places."

Here was a picture of almost oriental opulence which would confound the mud-slinging and patronizing critics of the East. It would also attract the enterprising people beyond the mountains who had been put off by legends of the primitive West. Cincinnati boosters saw nothing inconsistent in praising the arcadian virtues of their river paradise (devoid of all the falsities which poisoned eastern society) and at the same time advertising its luxuries and refinements which the prospective settler had been told he was to abandon.

Unfortunately, intersectional rivalry and dislike were not limited to bickerings between the eastern and western press. When the Yankee, the southern, and the westerner met in Cincinnati, old prejudices were apt to flare up. Sectional pride and mutual distrust did not immediately disappear in the

Cincinnati melting pot, even though the settlers were now, technically speaking, Westerners.\textsuperscript{17}

Most of the antagonism, if we are to rely upon contemporary evidence, could be attributed to the character and activities of the New Englanders. Southerners and westerners, for the most part, lived together harmoniously, but they both resented the overweening Yankee who clung tenaciously to the New England institutions and sought to impose them on every community. Yankees fervently believed that they were “cleverer than the wisest.” New Englanders, working among themselves in “Boston fashion”—that is, with “perfect precision and without words”\textsuperscript{18}—had put Cincinnati ahead of Louisville and Pittsburgh. So, at any rate, the New Englanders themselves believed, and their opinion was echoed by travelers and historians. The following enthusiastic tribute is a sample of the pro-Yankee publicity which must have annoyed the citizens coming from less enlightened regions, even though the writer, in this instance, did not belong to the “Universal Nation.”

These Yankees—pushing, prying, singular, don’t-care-at-all as they are—and yet the best strangers that come among us. How soon they pick up our odd bits of snapping turtle and alligator dialect, and put on our habits, (we don’t mean those we wear upon our backs, for generally, almost always, come well provided in that respect), and become of us—us! The effects of New England enterprise and Yankee ingenuity, are visible in nearly every street in our city. Who built that splendid dwelling house we see yonder? which is such an ornament to the town? A Yankee. Who started the first notion of erecting a magnificent church? A Yankee. Who was the architect? A Yankee. Who gave the first impulse to the system of common schools in the west? A Yankee. Who did the first book publishing here, to any extent? A Yankee. Who are our best lawyers—doctors—schoolmasters—divines? Yankees! Yankees! Yankees!\textsuperscript{19}

The Yankee, then, often considered himself the civilizer, the bearer of culture, and it was for this reason, as much as for his cliquishness and

\textsuperscript{17} Pierson (“The Frontier and Frontiersmen of Turner’s Essays,” \textit{Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography} LXIV (1940): 465–67) asks the pertinent question whether “social blending” only occurred on the frontier or “whether our settlers, even on the real frontier, ever abandoned their ways and institutions completely,” as Turner seemed to imply. Certainly this amalgamating process operated slowly in Cincinnati, if at all. Men did acquire a “western” outlook, to be sure, as the following pages will show, but they retained many old traits and ideas.

\textsuperscript{18} Michel Chevalier, \textit{Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States} (Boston, 1839), 202.

\textsuperscript{19} From the \textit{Cincinnati Mirror}, quoted in \textit{NWR} XLIX (1835): 116.
reserve, that Yankeedom was so frequently execrated. One senses this messianic Yankee spirit in the letter written by the president of Harvard College to Timothy Walker, a young and distinguished graduate. In reply to Walker, who had been extolling the wonders of Cincinnati, where “three years make a generation,” his old master wrote:

I rejoice on your own account, but still more on that of the City in which you have established yourself—that it is to enjoy your talents and influence to aid, to shape and in time, I doubt not, to guide its destinies. It is to just men as you we look, to fix in that region the manners, principles and character of New England. In these are included the best stamina of any form of government or any mode of happiness, and the only stamina for a republic, or hope of happiness under it.20

Such was the attitude brought to the West by the New England settlers. Because they found the society of other folk disagreeable,21 they clung to their kind. To be a New Engander or at least of New England origins was the “great passport to society, and to business and its emoluments.”22

All of the articulate citizens, however, did not share this faith in Yankee superiority. The southerners, in particular, viewed Yankee contributions to western culture with somewhat less enthusiasm. The southern states had sent their full complement of settlers to the Queen City, and southern men had been largely responsible for Cincinnati’s commercial and cultural development. So had the settlers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. To them, as well as to Timothy Flint, a New Engander himself but an exceptional one, the Yankees were “poor, parsimonious, and fully impressed that no country, in moral advantages, could equal the country which they had left.”23 If they were “ingenious in devising, and indefatigable in executing any plan of which the end is gain,”24 as James Hall admitted, so also were

21. B. F. Powers to Norman Williams, Cincinnati, July 19, 1817, MS (Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society).
22. A. G. W. Carter, The Old Court House: Reminiscences and Anecdotes of the Courts and Bar of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1880), 120.
they noted for their cantankerous dispositions, their sharp business tricks, and their sly tact.

It would be easy to exaggerate these differences and to underestimate the forces which bound the people together irrespective of their origins. Southern merchants might frequent different social gatherings from those attracting Yankee lawyers; they might prefer Henry Clay to Daniel Webster. But Cincinnati lawyers and merchants tended to vote the Whig ticket. Southern businessmen sympathized with the plantation system and profited from it; the New Engander engaged in business with slaveholders in spite of his natural distaste for slavery. Every citizen was willing to cooperate for the continued prosperity of his adopted city. His dependence upon his fellow citizens, indeed, the very demands of urban life, forced him to put aside his ancient prejudices. Throughout the period we have been discussing, all sectional animosities did not disappear by any means; Cincinnati was never quite so tolerant and easy going as her friends maintained. Certainly it was no crucible where “identical peculiarities melted away.”

25. Of the many stories that accumulated in the West about Yankee cunning, the following is fairly typical. A writer in 1827 described the new “racket” engineered by the merchants of Hartford and Weathersford, Connecticut, after the “tin wagon, pit-coal-indigo, wooden nutmeg, and wooden-clock” trade died down. Collecting old unsalable books, changing the date of publication, adding maps and “the most glaring gorgeous bindings,” they unloaded their stock on the unsuspecting Westerners:

As we understand the business, the booksellers keep a runner ahead, with a subscription paper in his hand, instead of a highwayman’s pistol. What by blarney, brass, and perseverance, a long catalogue of names is obtained to a work which is represented as forthcoming, and promising to be the wonder of the age. . . . These sly people have a wonderful tact, in finding out the lay of the land; and the prevailing taste of the people. They have discovered, that it is a general trait here to be smitten by pictures, no matter whether they relate to subject or not. (WMM I [1827]: 85–86.)

26. “Here we all are—and there is no help for it. Nullifiers, Tariffites, Believers, Infidels, Frenchmen, Germans, Irishmen. The whole west is made up of emigrants.—Necessity compels us to lay aside sectional, political, and religious differences—and to unite as brothers—we are taken away from the local prejudices, and accidental influences which at home would have bound us down to one eternal routine of thought and action, and brought us into contact with strange beings in a strange land—we find them human beings like ourselves, torn like us, by the effect of circumstances away from the sphere of their early association; we need their society, their friendship, their confidence, their help; at any rate, we are forced to endure their company—and like reasonable folk, we made the best of it” (CCLG, Jan. 31, 1835).

The “typical” attitude of the westerner toward the national government at this time is, of course, impossible to determine, but to observers like Timothy Flint, the West’s sectional pride did not exclude a love and affection for the whole union. Joking references occasionally appeared in the Cincinnati press suggesting the possible consequences of eastern and western separation, and attacks against eastern presumptions seemed at times especially violent, yet there were also many counteracting forces working against particularism. Cincinnati’s mixed population, her cultural and economic connections with the eastern and southern states, and her hopes of future greatness determined her national outlook. As a mercantile center for the border states, engaged in mutually profitable business with Yankees and southern planters, she had everything to lose and nothing to gain from secession. This national outlook is reflected in the letter of a Cincinnati citizen to his congressman:

I consider that every member of Congress and every other citizen, should be much more closely bound and united, by national ties, national love, national welfare, and as one national family; than by any thing that can be scraped up, in any or all the parts of districts of our county.

A Cincinnati spokesman felt obliged, therefore, to soothe the “uneasy feelings which are but too apt to arise between different portions of our union” and to remove the causes of sectional controversy. “Diversity in commercial and agricultural interests, domestic regulations, and social character,” he observed, threatened “to dim the hopes of our happy confederation” and jar “the brave pillars of our social fabric.” His metaphor was mixed, but his meaning was clear. The well-being of the country as a whole depended upon the well-being of its constituent parts. What a mem-

30. R. H. Coke, An Address Delivered before Graduates of Erodolphian Society of Miami University (Cincinnati, 1837), 10–11. Cincinnati spokesmen constantly emphasized the national interests of the West. Thus, James Hall could write:

Do we hear of tumultuous meetings, of inflammatory addresses, or threats to nullify the acts of the government, in these loyal states? On the contrary, although a high degree of excitability pervades the Union, and the slightest spark produces an explosion of indignant feeling, the western states are quiet. The tenants of the ant-hill, or the bee-hive, are not more industrious nor inoffensive. The only excitement is that of enterprise, the only hum that of business. (Statistics of the West, at the Close of the Year 1836 [Cincinnati, 1836], 205–6)
ber of the Hamilton County Agricultural Society said of southern economy applied equally well to eastern economy: "Their prosperity must be our prosperity, their adversity must inevitably bring a correspondent depression among us."31

The Ohioan, then, perhaps more than citizens of other sections, depended to a large degree upon the prosperity of the country as a whole. Clay’s "American System," it might be added, received strong support in Cincinnati. The citizens regarded their commercial dealings with industrial and agrarian sections as at once patriotic and profitable. No system could be expected to reconcile perfectly the opposing interests of the states, or what a speaker in 1828 called the twenty-four "distinct and independent nations, occupying almost every habitable clime, and raising most of the productions of all foreign countries."32 But the Cincinnati merchant could maintain with some justice that the West was the only "national" section, since it combined the manufacturing of the North with the agriculture of the South.33 The border cities, in particular, resisting the extreme demands of the other two sections, felt obliged to work out an economic plan “based on the great principle of economy to the consumer” and independent of “the ebb and flow of election.”34

The "American System," associated with the name of Henry Clay, called for a judicious union of manufacture and agriculture. By protecting industries during their infancy, by keeping off the flies until the child could walk alone, as the saying went, domestic competition was expected to increase and cheapen American articles and drive out foreign imports. Agriculture, commerce, and manufacture, "the three great sources of national industry," had accelerated the growth of the flourishing cities in the upper Ohio Valley. Cincinnati, although primarily commercial, could attribute her prosperity to a balanced economy, to her manufactures and mechanics as well as her middlemen. Manufacturing, as we have already observed, made Cincinnati less susceptible to financial fluctuations and placed her economy on a more durable foundation. It enhanced the value of the lots and houses of the landholders; it extended the farmer's market and enriched the merchant. Finally, it made Cincinnati less dependent upon eastern industry. The South, by disdaining the manufacturing arts, continued to pay 300 to 400

31. CCLG, July 16, 1831.
32. NWR XXXIV (1828): 291.
33. LHCC, Apr. 27, 1824.
34. NWR XXXIV (1828), 290.
percent more for processed goods, and Cincinnati profited by the South’s unawareness of its best interests.

In her relations with the representatives from the various states to the East and West, Cincinnati played no favorites. The citizens entertained with impartial enthusiasm the various politicians who usually stopped at their city. Dinners, sponsored by the local political parties, were tendered to Clay, Webster, Jackson, Hayne, and numerous others. The toasts offered at these gatherings may have differed in their political sentiments, but all parties joined together in extending Cincinnati’s commercial hegemony. Although the city already served a vast inland territory, business now sought to assure her prosperity by forming closer ties with seaboard cities35 and by tapping new areas in the south.

The South Carolina palmetto was never “engrafted, by means of the Railroad, on the Buck Eye Stump,”36 but the zeal of the citizens to exploit eastern and southern commercial connections again illustrates how closely national unity and city prosperity were identified. The philanthropist, the moralist, the businessman, and the patriot could justifiably promote intercourse between hitherto isolated districts. As a citizen explained it in 1834:

Not only in a commercial, but in a social point of view is the improvement of roads of the first importance. Facilities of intercommunications greatly increased our knowledge of men and things, and these render us better fitted to transact the business of life and enjoy its blessings. Feelings and habits are thus assimilated, interests are blended, and social connections are extended as our dissimilarity of views is lessened by social intercourse. In a moral point of view, this subject is of great importance.37

After Ohio passed through its own nullification period (1819–24), many Ohioans came to look upon the national government as the agency to harmonize sectional difficulties and promote mutual understanding by internal improvements. New roads, they believed, would become the avenues of goodwill. Canal projects, by lowering the costs of transportation, would facilitate the interchange of commodities and restore unity between the states. But belief in this kind of federal legislation did not indicate a paternalistic conception of the state. Most westerners probably repudiated, with Timothy

35. David Henshaw, Letters on the Internal Improvements and Commerce of the West (Boston, 1839), 13.
36. E. S. Thomas, Reminiscences of the Last Sixty Years, Commencing with the Battle of Lexington (Hartford, 1840), I, 101.
37. CCLG, Jan. 4, 1834.
Flint, Sismondi's advocacy of government interference in social and political affairs. Government, said Flint, "has too often meddled with these things; and all that we can reasonably ask of it, is to repair with the least possible inconvenience the evil, which it has wrought in inter-meddling."

Flint happened to be a Jeffersonian with a profound distrust of the centralized state, but his opinions on this point were not unusual. Westerners had seen the bungling hand of the federal government in the steamboat legislation of 1838. Congress, shocked by the appalling number of explosions that had occurred since the introduction of steamboat navigation, finally passed a statute regulating the running of steamboats in all waters within government jurisdiction. This safety act probably improved conditions on ocean- or lake-going steamboats, but to western rivermen, it demonstrated the framers' complete ignorance of the western river system. Such requirements as the use of iron rods and chains instead of wheel or tiller ropes and other "errors," in their eyes, tended to make the act "a mass of absurdity unworthy of notice or respect."

All the same, the group of steamboat captains who met in Cincinnati during the fall of 1838 sent no militant manifestos to the federal government. Recognizing that all laws "emanating from so high a source, whatever be their features deserve at least the attention and respect of all good citizens," they recommended the repeal of certain provisions of the new act. Although they thoroughly discredited the act, the steamboat men made no complaints about the impairment of state sovereignty. They proposed to amend the law "peaceably and legally," but they resolved in the meantime to obey it implicitly.

38. Western Monthly Review II (1828); 385. The attitude of Cincinnatians toward the question of state vs. private enterprise differed in regard to specific issues. The LHCG, for instance, was in favor of having Ohio and Kentucky construct and operate a canal at the falls of the Ohio River (Feb. 3, 1824). Cincinnati merchants at this time were losing around $100,000 annually because the cargoes to and from Cincinnati had to be broken up and carted around the falls. Louisville merchants, of course, capitalized on this natural obstruction, a fact which particularly irked Queen City businessmen (see Moses Guest, "On Viewing the Falls of the Ohio," Poems on Several Occasions [Cincinnati, 1823], 76–78). When the Cincinnati Advertiser protested against "Government meddling with such matters for the sake of revenue" and demanded that such enterprises be left to "individual exertion" (LHCG, Feb. 3, 1824), the LHCG pointed out that a private company would charge the people just as much as the government: "If a canal at the falls will yield a large annual revenue . . . why not let it go to the state in preference to individuals?"

No private capitalists, the paper pointed out, had the means to undertake such a project.

41. NWR LV (1818), 180–81.
The government was occasionally criticized, as we have seen, for meddling with private business, but as Tocqueville pointed out, Americans did not consistently follow the laissez-faire principle: "By an exception to that rule, each of them craves its assistance in the particular concern on which he is engaged, and seeks to draw upon the influence of the government for his own benefit, though he would restrict it on all occasions." 42

Thus, if the steamboat owners might object to federal interference, Cincinnati merchants had no scruples about demanding it. In 1824 and 1825 glorifiers of western self-reliance and unrestricted enterprise found themselves threatened with ruin by a particularly vicious system of eastern dumping. Just as English companies had almost suffocated the incipient industries of America after the War of 1812 by inundating the country with cheap goods, so eastern firms flooded the western markets with surplus merchandise. Outside auctioneers raised and depressed prices, forced sales, and withdrew large quantities of specie from the city. These invasions cut heavily into the retail trade of Cincinnati establishments, since the auctioneers attracted country merchants in search of bargains. What is more, eastern wholesalers, after filling the orders of Cincinnati representatives in eastern cities, sent the identical order westward with the auctioneer. On returning home, the western merchant would find that his customers had purchased the auctioneer's identical but cheaper stock, leaving the merchant stranded with a large consignment of unsalable goods. Individual initiative could not efficiently remedy situations of this kind. Clearly, as one citizen expressed it:

If persons residing at a distance, and who, it is presumed, cannot have our welfare at heart, are in some measure enabled to control [sic] our destinies, and can and do affect the trade and prospects of a worthy and indispensable portion of our community, legislative interference is demanded. 43

Here was a case when the merchant felt justified in petitioning the federal government for a stricter licensing system.

Economic interests, in the main, at first appear to have determined the Ohioan's attitude toward the role of the national government in American life. He tended to look upon his government as an agency to facilitate his

42. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. Francis Bowen (Cambridge, 1869), II, 361–62.
43. LHCC, Dec. 20, 27, 1825.
section’s inevitable progress rather than as a directing or controlling force. And yet when it came to the important task of electing Congressional representatives, he could not always follow the “sensible” policy of supporting issues rather than candidates even when the community stood to benefit from them. “Provided the next president shall be a decided advocate for the great leading interests of internal policy, and well qualified in other respects for the office,” someone had remarked in 1823, “what matter is it to the western people where he resides or what his name is?”44 What need was there for acrimonious party strife, mudslinging, and bitter class friction which obliterated local unanimity? Those who asked these questions and criticized the unseemly party jangles as anti-Republican forgot the other issues which had crept in to complicate the political imbroglio.45 Class differences, sectional hostility, propaganda, and demagoguery blurred the picture. Men might vote as westerners or Ohioans or citizens of Cincinnati, but they also voted as mechanics and tradesmen and bankers. To support principles might be the sensible policy, but frequently the urge to prevent an “aristocrat” or a “gambler” or a “slaveholder” from entering the White House prevailed against crude self-interest.

The presidential campaigns of the twenties and thirties in Cincinnati differed little, if at all, from the campaigns in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, or New York. Party papers, those ephemeral publications filled with accusations and billingsgate, sprang up a few months before each national election and disappeared after the thunder of oratory faded. The Cincinnati Democrat, edited by a committee of the “Hickory Club,” is a good example of the more vituperative sort. A speech by a ship carpenter, printed in the Democrat, attacked the bank as that “colossus, this Hercules, this Mammoth; this Beast with seven heads and ten horns: this dragon, this Hydra-headed monster” and praised the hero “who saved the wives and daughters of the citizens of New Orleans, from the Brutish lust of British soldier.”46 Henry Clay, this speaker had been informed by a friend, gambled so inveterately that he “could scarcely spare time to eat or sleep.” The ship carpenter then informed his audience that certain Cincinnati gentlemen had told him they would rather see cholera sweep the city (as it did) than see Jackson re-elected. “Others,” confided the carpenter, “have said within my hearing, that

44. LHCG, November 1823.
46. Cincinnati Democrat, Oct. 9, 1832.
all their hopes of getting rid of Jackson, was that some person would kill him; and one said, if he could kill him, and not be discovered, he should not be any too good to do it." 47

The carpenter hardly exaggerated the hate of the "better classes" for Jackson. According to the reports of a young Unitarian minister in 1832, Jackson had friends only among "the drunken brawling mob." 48 His election in 1832 and Van Buren's success four years later more than disturbed the "respectable" Whig partisans who had struggled so valiantly to defeat him. During the campaigns anti-Jackson editors had dragged out the dirty linen with as much zeal as that arch-Democrat, Moses Dawson. The battles between Dawson and Charles Hammond reached fabulous proportions. Hammond made the familiar aspersions about Jackson's wife and named "Old Hickory" as a tyrant, murderer, and atheist; Dawson laid into Nicholas Biddle and his moneyed aristocrats with equal venom. When Hammond sneered at the Democratic "orgies" following the 1836 triumph, Dawson flared back and reminded him of the Whig celebrations two years before:

In what respect we would ask have the democratic party exhibited unmeasurable exultation? Have they fired cannon? No! Have they formed processions to perambulate the streets with their candidate at their head? No! Have they insulted their opponents in the streets by whooping, howling and groaning at them? No! Have they stoned any of their neighbor's houses or broken windows? No! Have they made bonfires at midnight and performed bacchanalian orgies around them to the disturbance of their neighbors? No! Have they gourmandized upon half roasted putrefying oxen? No! Have they fastened crepe on the doors of any of their neighbors? No! No such symptoms of unmeasurable exultation have been exhibited by those honest, industrious, hard working republicans who have been reproached with being "the lawless spirits of the age banded together," who have been called the hurrah boys, the drunken Jacksonmen, and other such

47. Ibid.

48. Francis G. Peabody, A New England Romance. The Story of Ephraim and Mary Jane Peabody. 1807–1892. Told by Their Sons (Boston and New York, 1920), 89. To be sure, Jackson had some supporters among the well-to-do, but even those who approved of his checking the centralist tendencies of John Quincy Adams, "a pedant well acquainted with books but ignorant of men," regarded him as a dangerous man. Some indication of the popular attitude toward the presidents may be found in a letter of a prominent Cincinnati lawyer, Joseph Benham: Washington and Madison were the purest presidents, Adams a monarchist and an autocrat, Jefferson a real liberal if "something of a demagogue & theorist," and Monroe a patriot but a weak man. See letter from Benham to Bush, Cincinnati, Apr. 5, 1837, MS (Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society).
contemptuous epithets. And by whom have they been stigmatized by those injurious & unworthy epithets? Why reader, by the ruffled shirt mob who performed all these extravagances themselves to manifest their unmeasured exultation at their short lived victory in electing their “two year old” in 1834.49

That both sides used questionable tactics is clear. Democrats, on the one hand, charged that wealthy Whig employers put pressure on their workers: “The mechanic is attempted to be proscribed for his politics; the working man is threatened with loss of employment, unless he will vote for an opponent of General Jackson.” On the other hand, Whigs could revile the steam-roller electioneering technique of the Jackson machine. Isaac Appleton Jewett, fresh from New England, described the democratic organization with unconcealed horror:

The Jacksonians were indefatigable—I never witnessed zeal so violent, shifts so abominable—in this city—every ruse of most contemptible demogogueism was resorted to. Immense wagons crowned with hickory brooms and laden down with ragged rascals, shouting “Hurra for Jackson,” paraded the streets, on the day of election, from morning till night—Splendidly dilapidated coaches, ornamented with flags and brooms, drawn by horses caparisoned in similar style, conveyed the Jackson leaders from one ward to another and seemed to give them the ubiquity of Napoleon . . . The imagination somewhat dazzled, and hundreds threw in votes for “hickory brooms,” “Whole hogs”—“bunkum chaps” and all that, who otherwise would have given their strength to liberty and patriotism—The truth is, my dear friend and co-thinker on these subjects, the truth is, mobocracy is up, and we to the constitution—Union is not worth a fig, and we may bid farewell to liberty. When the outrageous principles of Andrew Jackson are sanctioned by the approving voice of the nation, it is time for good men and patriots to clasp their hands in despair.50

Fortunately for the country, Jewett’s doleful predictions remained unfulfilled and the Union did not collapse.

Many of the wealthy folk in Cincinnati (whose “western optimism” fluc-

49. Cincinnati Advertiser and Ohio Phoenix, Oct. 15, 1832.
50. Jewett to Willard, Cincinnati, Oct. 25, 1832. Jewett Letters (Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia). Cincinnati could hardly be said to epitomize the western spirit of political democracy as set forth by Turner. Although many voters exhibited the egalitarianism and liberalism customarily identified with the West (but certainly equally typical of eastern urban centers), so here could be found also a hatred for Jacksonian principles no less bitter than the hatred shown by the most rancorous eastern conservatives.
tuated with the times) misunderstood the implications of Jackson’s victory and ridiculously exaggerated its importance. There were some, however, like Edward Deering Mansfield, who were not deceived by the jeremiads of the Whigs. Mansfield, an editor trained in law and political economy, observed that businessmen since the time of Jefferson had looked to election returns as a gauge for business. But party agitations, he believed, and the rise and fall of administrations did not affect the permanent interests of the people.

The only change which has yet occurred in our country, is the gradual one from poverty to comparative wealth. This change is so far unfavorable that it introduces habits of luxury into one class of people, and greater desire for riches into another. This habit creates effeminacy, and this desire loosens the principle of honesty; but neither of them affect[s] what the world calls prosperity. That goes on unchecked; never, in our country, or in any was there a period of greater abundance in all the advantages and facilities of successful industry that what now prevails in the United States.51

Mansfield, like most other Americans, maintained an abiding faith in his country’s destiny, a faith unshaken by the gloomy forebodings of the doubters.

The unbounded confidence of Mansfield and his fellow Ohioans during the twenties and thirties was not justified merely because it rested upon the prospects of almost certain material prosperity. They knew they were living in the most liberal country in the world, and their “vain-glorious boasting,” as one of them later observed, expressed this “inward feeling” which was, at bottom, “prophetic and true.”52 Perhaps at no other time in our history were the citizens more aware of the structure and nature of their political and social institutions. Government had not yet grown beyond the comprehension of the average citizen. “Machines,” to use a hackneyed metaphor, had not so far outstripped “institutions” that the individual was incapable of comprehending the world in which he lived and adjusting himself to it. In short, the conceptual “map” of the Cincinnatian, his assumptions and expectations, at least roughly approximated the actual “territory.”

The electorate might frequently be deceived. Like American voters today, they were often duped by emotions and prejudices and misdirected by their leaders. And yet they seemed almost instinctively to understand the proper

52. C. P. James, Address Delivered at Camp McRae Before the Citizen’s Guards (Cincinnati, 1842), 5.
relation of the individual to his government in a democratic society. Mrs. Trollope’s encounter with her milkman, like so many other instances in her book, may have been largely invented, but the story, symbolically if not literally, illustrates this awareness.

“You spend a good deal of time reading the newspapers.”

“And I’d like you tell me how we can spend it better. How should free-
men spend their time, but looking after their government, and watching
that them fellows as we gives offices to, does their duty, and give them-
selves no airs.”

“But I sometimes think, sir, that your fences might be in more thorough
repair, and your roads in better order, if less time was spent in politics.”

“The Lord! to see how little you know as a free country! Why, what’s
the smoothness of a road, put against the freedom a free-born American?
And what does a broken zigzag signify, comparable to knowing that men
what we have been pleased to send up to Congress, speaks handsome and
straight, as we choose they should?”

“It is from a sense of duty, then, that you all go to the liquor store to
read the papers?”

“To be sure it is, and he’d be no true-born American as didn’t. I don’t
say that the father of a family should always be after liquor, but I do say
that I’d rather have my son drunk three times in a week, than not look after
the affairs of his country.”53

The Cincinnati citizen’s “garrulous patriotism” was more than inflated rhet-
oric; it defined a goal which he expected would soon be achieved and for
which he hopefully and resolutely worked.

Although it is hazardous to generalize on American opinions of Europe and
the outside world at this time, it is probably safe to say that the American’s
interest and concern for his own country usually did not extend beyond the
national boundaries. His international-mindedness depended on the section
of the country in which he lived, his job, and his education, of course, but it
seems likely that distrust of Europe increased with the distance from the sea-
board. “To us, especially,” said Daniel Drake in 1820, “who inhabit an inte-
rior region, and have our dwelling places among the sources of a mighty
river; who cannot hold intercourse with foreign countries without an inland
voyage of more than a thousand miles, or a difficult overland journey across

53. Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (New York, 1927), 85–86.
rugged and lofty mountains, a dependence upon Europe is equally disastrous and degrading.”\(^\text{54}\)

Some westerners tended to look upon Europe as the seat of reaction, where anti-democratic monarchs hatched conspiracies to overthrow America. In Europe, they believed, vestiges of the “dark ages” still colored social institutions and sluggish populations were kept in shameful subjugation. The unfair and slanderous criticisms of foreign travelers, moreover, stung the western people and made them oversensitive to any claims of foreign superiority. Thus, at the height of his fame both home and abroad, Drake refused to visit Europe. “I don’t care to be brought into contact with the great physicians on the other side of the Atlantic,” he told his friend Dr. Samuel Gross, “men of university education, whose advantages were so much greater than my own. I think too much of my country to place myself in so awkward a position.”\(^\text{55}\) Generally speaking, it can be said that the average citizen’s notions of Europe were more positive than accurate. His newspaper devoted comparatively little space to events across the waters and the news reports heard from abroad did little to change his opinions.

Prejudice and ignorance may have distorted the attitude of the western people toward Europe, but this did not prevent them, at the same time, from sympathizing with foreign minorities and revolutionaries. Any effort by the downtrodden to break their shackles, any rebellion for freedom, received warm and enthusiastic encouragement. Judging by the response of the Cincinnati citizens to the Greek cause in 1824, Americans could not be censured for disregarding their fellow men across the ocean or betraying the “true democratic hope.”\(^\text{56}\)

During this campaign for Greek relief the people heard speeches, attended benefits, and contributed money. Ministers took up collections in their churches. Private organizations, like the Independence Fire Company, No. 3, also donated to the cause. The Eutereean Society held a concert and the Thespian Corps produced a play.\(^\text{57}\) Cincinnati orators, rising to the majesty of their theme, declaimed against the Holy Alliance and the barbarous Turk and invoked the “glory that was Greece.” William Henry Harrison


\(^{57}\) See Wilson MSS, XI, Library of the University of Chicago, 1595; *LHCG*, Feb. 6, 1824; Jan. 16, 20, 1824; *National Republican and Ohio Political Register*, Mar. 12, 1824.
urged the government to dispense with international law, already ignored by the Turks, and to send money and munitions for the sake of humanity, policy, and religion. Joseph Benham compared the death struggle of the Greeks to the revolution in South America and philosophized about Sparta, the battle of Marathon, and Greek culture. "The same sacred fire of liberty that blazed on Bunker's Hill," he said, "is now enkindled in the rocks of the Acropolis." Peyton Symmes, who seemed to have a hand in every city affair, composed an ode for the Greeks in which he asked, among other things,

Must Greece, surrounded by her foemen, strive
To Keep the expiring flame of hope alive,
Without one friendly arm a sword to wield;
In Freedom's cause, on glory's battle field?
Forbid it Heaven!—or be the tale unknown
That 'twas not thus our Sires achieved their own!60

The heroic Greek resistance against "the forces of reaction" afforded further confirmation that society was on the march. Firmly convinced that "progress and culture" moved inexorably westward, westerners nevertheless believed that the magic of democratic institutions could transform even the tyranny-ridden nations of the less-favored continents into something approximating the American heaven. If they seemed to gaze "with coolness and composure mingled with pity, on Europe in arms, and Asia and Africa in chains," they looked forward to a new day when "the despised and persecuted Jews" would be free and "the mischievous alliance between Throne and Altar" abolished. Democratic America stood as an asylum to oppressed peoples of the world and a perennial challenge to authoritarianism.

Europe, however, was remote. Americans could do little more than encourage the resistance of oppressed peoples against their masters and provide new homelands for the refugees. But revolutionaries in the western hemisphere might expect more than sympathy. Conscious of their role as the divinely appointed guardians of freedom on the North American continent,

59. LHCG, Feb. 6, 1824.
60. NROPR, Mar. 12, 1824.
61. H. V. D. Johns, An Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the President of Miami University (Cincinnati, 1841), 19.
62. W. H. Harrison, Address by General Harrison Delivered on the Fourth of July, 1833 at Cheviot, Greene Township, Hamilton County, Ohio (Cincinnati, 1833), 4.
numbers of Americans began to consider themselves duty-bound to spread the light of republicanism. Full-blown "Manifest Destiny" did not appear until the forties, but signs of "expansionist democracy" were evidenced, particularly in the western states, a decade earlier. In Cincinnati what might be called the "idealistic nationalism" of the citizens was reflected in their response to the Texas revolution.

As early as 1822 the Western Spy and Literary Cadet reported approvingly of the Santa Fe trade which would open up new sources of precious metal and provide the western country with "a greater supply of specie than has ever been possessed in the periods of prosperity." Reflecting on the implications of the new trade route, the paper concluded: "Through the New York and Ohio Canals by the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri, and thence over land, the manufacturers of New York and New England will find their way into the interior of the Mexican Empire."63 Seven years later Timothy Flint, reviewing the possibilities of inland trade with New Mexico, described Mexico as a dirty, backward, and stagnant region, a place of "cringing conformity," and contrasted thriving Cincinnati with moribund Chihuahua, half its size and thrice its age.64 By 1835 influential businessmen in Cincinnati who had been supplying southern planters with merchandise and machinery saw in the Texas uprising added opportunities of gain. Pro-Texas agitators in the Queen City played up the nobility of the "Texan" cause, but they did not fail to appeal to the cupidity of the mercenary. Cincinnati's citizens who dared to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm" were offered chances to build up their fortunes and "become the opulent sugar and cotton-planters of the finest country in the new world."65

To attribute popular enthusiasm for the Texas cause simply to raw and greedy imperialism, however, would be a gross oversimplification. Economic motives certainly influenced pro-southern and business groups in the city, but the majority of the citizens interpreted the Texas struggle as the battle of the poorer classes for liberty. In the words of a strong Texas sympathizer:

The enemies of liberal principles in this country, are mostly composed of men whom blind fortune, truckling subserviency, or narrow hearted policy, have elevated to pecuniary independence. They have acquired their eminence by turning a deaf ear to the calls for humanity, and by rendering the

63. Western Spy and Literary Cadet IX (Nov. 30, 1822): 4.
64. WMR II (1829), 606–7, 649–59.
noble feelings of the heart subservient to sordid selfishness. They look down from their gilded castles upon their less fortunate fellow beings, as if they were of an inferior race.

The Texans are mostly composed of the poorer classes of society: men whom misfortunes have driven from our country: men who have gone there at the instance of the invitation of the Mexican Government, on the full assurance of the protection of that government; in the hope and expectation of being able to retrieve their shattered fortunes, and procure bread for their suffering families. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the distress which has overtaken them should fail to excite the commiseration of the contemptible mushroom nobility of our country.

The Texas partisans spoke of American’s solemn obligations to the cause of liberty. “No matter in what part of the world it springs up,” they argued, “it cannot be considered an American offspring.” Let the “opponents of popular feeling and liberal principles” say what they will. Let them condone the subjugation of the defenseless Poland by autocratic Russia. “They might as soon attempt to arrest the falling avalanche in its descent from the loftiest alpine summit, or calm the turbulence of the tempest-lashed Atlantic, as to smother public sentiment in a land of freemen.”

Behind the rant and fury, the cheap appeals, the chauvinistic claptrap about the “generous anglo-Saxon blood” triumphing over the “blood thirsty barbarians of Mexico” was the widespread feeling that the “Texians” were fighting the war of humanity and democracy. Charles Hammond, it is true, detected the nefarious hand of the slavebreeder and attacked Texas volunteers from Cincinnati and Kentucky as a gang of “land brawlers,” but reasons other than land speculation and greed motivated Cincinnati supporters. Sympathetic citizens openly supplied the rebels with arms, and Cincinnati cannon figured in the victory at San Jacinto, mainly because the people’s hearts were touched by the “sufferings of the strugglingTexians.”

If the citizens professed sympathy for the oppressed at a distance, what was their attitude toward those foreigners who came to Cincinnati to escape political enslavement or make their fortunes? How did they receive the “unfortunates” who settled nearby?

Unquestionably, Americans in Cincinnati had been deeply touched by the

67. Ibid., Apr. 30, 1836. See also May 5, 10, 21, 1836.
68. *Cincinnati Gazette*, May 10, May 16, Sept. 9, 1836.
plight of the downtrodden. Their resolutions against Spanish aristocrats, French Bourbons, and Russian czars, and their condemnation of the effeminate, corrupt, and priest-ridden countries of Europe, had been made with complete sincerity. But their ardor diminished somewhat when the refugees streamed into their own city and created new sets of problems, problems which could not be met simply by holding a benefit performance or taking up a collection. The coming of aliens awakened latent prejudices and fears.

Ideally, according to Timothy Flint, the West acted as a kind of giant equalizer and reducer; the Germans, Irish, British, and French coming to the inland paradise with their jealousies and prejudices lost their alien idiosyncrasies and became westerners. But many of Flint's fellow citizens put no confidence in "Mr. Owen's grand engine of circumstances" and were frankly apprehensive about the immigrant untrained in American ways. Demagogues, they felt, might prey upon this "enormous mass of ignorant foreign mind and muscle" and lie to the "honest German," the "mercurial and lawless Irishman." They might seduce the "revolutionary Frenchman" with talk about the rights of man and delude the "radical Englishman" with arguments for the equality of property. If immigration increased the population, improved the arts and sciences, and added to the wealth of the country, it also attracted a depraved factory class who caused more harm than good—ignorant paupers susceptible to falsehood, prejudice, and party hatred.

This growing fear of ignorant foreigners came at a time when conservative Cincinnatians, particularly the anti-Catholic Presbyterians and Whiggish New Englanders, were noting with increased alarm the influx of German and Irish Catholics into the city. But even at an earlier period, antagonism to foreigners, aggravated by bad times and unemployment, was plainly evident. A newspaper debate which took place shortly after Cincinnati's incorporation illustrates this friction.

A correspondent signing himself "Hampden" attributed "the illiberal and unjust remarks" that were being made against the foreigners in Cincinnati to the Federalists. He recalled the Scottish, Irish, Polish, and French heroes who had helped to save the Republic, and observed that this fact alone "should call up the blush of shame in the cheek of any one who would reproach the naturalized citizen with the epithet of stranger." Hampden found it strange that American citizens should be designated as "foreigners" by the

69. Timothy A. Flint, Condensed Geography of History of the Western States, or the Mississippi Valley (Cincinnati, 1828), 207.
70. WMM V (1836), 743, 745–49.
children of "usurpers" who had snatched the land from the Indians, its "legitimate owners." Many foreigners, he believed, were more patriotic than certain residents of the city, particularly those who hailed from the region of the Hartford Convention. Nativist feeling, he concluded, only excited angry passions. "Ask not the question, is he a Yankee, a Frenchman, an Irishman or an Englishman. Determine the character of the man from his devotion to freedom & liberty, and his love for the Constitution."\(^{71}\)

The response to Hampden's reflections immediately showed that not all the citizens shared his benevolent views. It was all well and good that the United States remain an asylum for the humble and wretched, one opponent declared, but some foreigners tried to run American affairs and monopolize all the lucrative positions. About the higher class of immigrants nothing need be said:

They are not in search of offices—they are not discontented and turbulent demagogues, who never will be satisfied while they see one man stand higher in the community than themselves. They sought this country as shelter from oppression—they have found it to be what they expected, and they are content.

But the ambitious foreigners "meddling with political concerns" were another matter. Bred under monarchical systems of government, these men were either prejudiced in favor of tyranny or filled with "wild notions of liberty" antithetical to the American way and "totally opposite to anything like social order." They should be pupils, it was argued, rather than guides and allow the properly qualified to rule.\(^{72}\)

The controversy, which ended as abruptly as it began, settled nothing. Apparently many continued to regard the "assurance and self-sufficiency" of foreigners with extreme annoyance, but the wisdom of the moderates prevailed. To indulge in nativist conflict, they felt, was not only unprofitable but likely to provoke more real violence than the wildest political struggles between Federalist and Democrat.\(^{73}\)

Hostility toward aliens continued, nevertheless, throughout the twenties and thirties. As potential competitors for jobs, immigrants aroused considerable jealousy, and as Democrats and Catholics, they alarmed the guardians of law and order. Mayor Davies, it is true, told an Irish audience on St. Pat-

71. \textit{LHCG}, July 13, 1822.
72. Ibid., July 17, 1822.
73. Ibid., July 20, 1822.
rick’s Day, 1836, that he had expected trouble from the “sons of Erin” after his election, but he quickly learned that no group conducted themselves more peaceably.74 Most of the well-to-do, however, did not consider the Irish workingmen, who had poured into Ohio during the canal-building period, as the best kind of material. Although useful in performing rough labor,75 they drank too much and were ignorant enough to become the dupes of demagogues, that is, to vote Democratic. Even worse, the Irish remained faithful Catholics, and Catholic immigrants, said Lyman Beecher, were the least enlightened and the most religious.76 The English, Scots, and French all seemed less menacing than the bog-trotter. Only the Germans presented a greater problem.

Germans had come to Cincinnati prior to 1830 in very small numbers,77 but owing to a series of political upheavals and natural catastrophes in Germany during the thirties, hundreds of them poured into the city. Damaging floods in the Rhine Valley, the terrible winter of 1829–30, and the ensuing depression, followed by the popular uprisings of 1832,78 came at a period when America was suffering from a labor shortage. Coming to the Queen City chiefly by way of New York, Baltimore, and New Orleans, the Germans by 1838 probably composed about one-eighth of the population.79 In that year the repercussions of the 1837 panic temporarily deterred further settlement. Germans were later to contribute enormously to the culture and prosperity of Cincinnati, but they remained comparatively uninfluential, socially and politically, until about 1840.80

Individuals among them had, of course, acquired considerable promi-

75. *Celebration of the Forty-Seventh Anniversary of the First Settlement of the State of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1835), 15.
76. Lyman Beecher, *Plea For the West* (Cincinnati, 1835), 128.
nence long before the large migrations. Ferdinand Bödman made a fortune in the tobacco business; Nicholas Höfer introduced a taste for sauerkraut; and Albert Stein built the Cincinnati water works. These early arrivals, who had established themselves in Cincinnati before 1831, were called “Zwanzigers.” Conservative, self-made men, they supported Henry Clay in 1832 and organized a campaign paper, Der Deutsche Patriot, with the hope of persuading their democratic countrymen, “erfüllt von der Erinnerung an die Julitage, an den polnischen unabhäng-izkeitskampf und das Hambacher Fest,” to repudiate Jackson. “Show me a Jackson man,” Karl van Bonge, editor of the Whig paper, is reported to have said, “and I’ll show you a rascal.”

But the “Dreissigern,” those Germans who had come to Cincinnati since 1830, had their own notions about politics and opposed the leadership of Bödman, Brachmann, Lange, Hanselmann, and other leading Whigs. The Volksblatt, the organ of the “Dreissigern,” identified the Jacksonians with the workers and farmers, the Whigs with the Bank and monopoly. Henrich Rödter, Karl Gustave Rümelin, Ludwig Rehfuss, and others among the “Nobilitäten” had more appeal for the inarticulate poorer immigrants living in the lower part of the city than had the Whig politicians. Native Whig leaders equivocated on the issue of teaching German in the public schools and were lukewarm on the temperance question. The Democrats took a satisfactory stand on schools and came out openly against the temperance regulations, regarded by the Germans as sheer fanaticism. Attempts by Whig election officials to curtail the German vote through various technicalities only angered the immigrants and threw them into the arms of the Jacksonians.

But with the exception of a few literary figures, radical editors, and well-to-do businessmen, the average German in Cincinnati during the decade between 1830 and 1840 felt no great urge to participate in political and social affairs. Handicapped by language difficulties, working hard to gain a foothold in the community, these newcomers were apt to be docile. Ger-

81. *DP* V (1873): 21; VI (1874): 186–88, 192; 419–26; IX (1877): 6–17. For further accounts of these “Zwanzigers” or “Geschwollenen,” as they were soon nicknamed, see Ernest Bruncken, “German Political Refugees in the United States During the Period from 1815–1860,” reprinted from Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter, 1904, 22–23.

mans, for example, worked on Nicholas Longworth's estate for a shilling a day and their keep.83 During the disastrous year of 1832—a year of floods, fire, and cholera—they suffered almost as much as the Negroes. A period of consolidation and frugal living had to elapse before they became a substantial element in the community. Barred, for the most part, from native clubs and societies, they organized their own benevolent and cultural associations, military companies, and churches.84

Although they added a little color to city life and helped give Cincinnati a cosmopolitan atmosphere,85 the Germans were not regarded as a particularly positive force. A German nobleman, passing through Cincinnati in 1834, described his countrymen residing there as peasants, "the lowest and most uneducated class," a group, he said, "not calculated to give the Americans a favorable impression of our nation."86 A condescending reference to the Germans made during a city anniversary celebration would seem to bear him out. The speaker, a well-to-do citizen, declared that the German people were "submissive to the law," orderly, and pious. "I am one of those," he said, "who do not fear their degraded ignorance, nor their pauperism. They are great auxiliaries to the laboring classes; they will very much enhance our national wealth, splendor, and durability."87

To summarize, it can be said that intra-national understanding and comity increased in Cincinnati during our period. The steamboat, canal, and railroad, the improved roads and turnpikes, all tended to link Ohio with hitherto isolated areas. The Queen City's central position on a mighty artery of commerce allowed her merchants to extend their operations and made the city a gateway to the western and southwestern states. Intercommunication with other sections broke down narrow provincialism and inculcated a spirit of genuine nationalism in the people. The visits of Clay, Webster, Clinton, Jackson, Houston, and Hayne to Cincinnati had a symbolic meaning, perhaps,

83. "I remarked," recorded Mrs. Trollope's son, "that this seemed scarcely in accord with the current accounts of the high price of labour in the States, and was answered that his, Mr. Longworth's bailiff had said to him the other day, 'If these men get to Cincinnati they will be spoiled'" (T. A. Trollope, What I Remember [New York, 1888], 175).
84. See DP I (1869): 129–33; VI (1874): 26; Ford, 129.
87. Celebration of the Forty-Seventh Anniversary of the First Settlement of the State of Ohio (Cincinnati, 1835), 15–16.
which escaped the political partisans who invited them. But these visits illustrated Cincinnati's interdependence with all parts of the country. It is not insignificant, for instance, that the much-discussed project for a national university should have aroused particular interest in Cincinnati. Any scheme to promote national unity, to bind the sections together, received encouragement and sympathy.

There is no evidence, however, that the citizens modified their feelings about Europe. The old stereotypes about national characters seemed to prevail. Germans were mystics or skeptics or just ignorant, the English were anti-democratic or radical, and the French were licentious. Disinclined to inform themselves about Europe, Cincinnati delighted in holding it up to scorn and pointing out its great deficiencies.

Cincinnatians could be vainglorious and chauvinistic not only because they were compensating for certain cultural deficiencies, but also because they had a serene and positive faith in the superiority of their institutions. For them, the old world still retained vestiges of former magnificence, but it was rotting away, whereas America was new. The people of Cincinnati confidently assumed that the future was in their hands.