Although it was located within a large city with many diverse peoples, an important part of the suburban ideal in Chestnut Hill, as elsewhere, was social homogeneity. This emphasis upon living with social equals was partly in reaction to the social, ethnic, and racial diversity that characterized large cities such as Philadelphia. Fearing that ethnic newcomers were introducing unsavory and even dangerous habits into urban life, and unfairly blaming urban problems upon such alien groups, many well-to-do families of British descent continued to seek havens in expensive suburban developments such as those in Chestnut Hill. They may have sought homogeneous enclaves also because of their own social insecurity.

Tables containing data relevant to the discussion in this chapter are found in the appendix.
especially if they had become wealthy or successful in recent years. The move to an upper-middle- or upper-class suburb could in itself help to still self-doubts and solidify the family's new status through close associations with other successful families.¹

In reality, of course, Chestnut Hill was home to many residents who did not live in the prestigious developments in Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin's and North Chestnut Hill. Thus, in addition to separating themselves from less privileged individuals outside the community, wealthier suburbanites sought to insulate themselves from servants and working-class families on the Hill itself. Here again, the motive may have been their own feelings of social insecurity, along with a desire to associate with only the "right people" in Chestnut Hill.

Yet these habits of social separation were also pursued by local servants and artisans, many of them recent immigrants, who self-consciously banded together in certain areas of Chestnut Hill and insisted that their children marry within strict ethnic and religious backgrounds. In this way Chestnut Hill continued to be an aggregation of communities that overlapped only at certain points.

In addition to the dual identity that commuters felt in Chestnut Hill, there were thus conflicts of identity on the Hill itself. One result was a fragmentation of local identity that would endure into the late twentieth century and combine with other factors to weaken a wider sense of community in Chestnut Hill. This chapter will seek to define different social groups numerically by making use of the City Directory, the Social Register, Who's Who in America, and other guides to socioeconomic standing. It and the following chapter will also attempt to bring these differences to life through oral histories and contemporary newspaper accounts.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, social divisions in Chestnut Hill had established themselves firmly. At the upper end of the scale, Chestnut Hill was home to a large concentration of socially and professionally prominent Philadelphians. According to E. Digby Baltzell, in his Philadelphia Gentlemen, Chestnut Hill was "more . . . exclusively upper-class" than any other community in the whole metropolitan area.²
A careful study of the *Philadelphia City Directory* for 1930 and editions of the *Social Register* for the late 1920s and early 1930s shows that Chestnut Hill was in fact home to more upper-class residents than any other single community in the region. Although the *City Directory* for 1929 would have been better as a guide to Chestnut Hill's population on the eve of the Great Depression, only the 1930 edition included a street index for the entire city, thus making it possible to identify the addresses and occupations of many heads of households in Chestnut Hill. Because the depression did not become truly severe until late 1930 and early 1931, the 1930 *City Directory* should be little different from the year before.

Because the *Social Register* had long been regarded as a reliable but not wholly perfect gauge of class prestige, it is an acceptable indication of how many socially prominent adults lived in Chestnut Hill around 1930.\(^3\) Approximately 550 entries of the 9,000 or so from the greater Philadelphia area were in fact from Chestnut Hill—or just over 6 percent of the total. Considering that the Hill’s estimated 8,500 people represented less than one-half of one percent of the region’s total population, these figures are revealing. More startling, perhaps, was the fact that there were more Chestnut Hillers listed in the *Social Register* than residents of Haverford and Bryn Mawr combined, even though these were among the most prestigious addresses on the Main Line. (There were about 220 entries from Haverford and 130 from Bryn Mawr, for a total of 350.) Of course, both communities were smaller than Chestnut Hill, given the fact that Lower Merion Township, in which both were located, had a total population of just under 5,900 in 1930.

Among the *Social Register* listings for Chestnut Hill, there were also at least twenty-six heads of households who descended from Philadelphia First Family Founders, as defined by Baltzell in his *Philadelphia Gentlemen*. These included the names of Biddle, Borie, Bullitt, Cadwalader, Clark, Dallas, Disston, Houston, Lea, Lippincott, McLean, Morris, Pepper, Strawbridge, Wistar, and Wood.\(^4\)

Chestnut Hill also contained more than its fair share of the nation’s meritorious elite, as measured by *Who’s Who in America* for 1930. At least forty of the approximately nine hundred entries from Phil-
adelphia, or 4.4 percent of them, lived on the Hill. The occupations of the 40 were: banker (9); architect (7); lawyer (4); engineer (4); physician (3); capitalist (2); artist (2); publisher (2); economist (1); chemist (1); educator (1); author (1); insurance executive (1); manufacturer (1); and symphony orchestra conductor (1). In this category, too, Chestnut Hill was ahead of either Bryn Mawr, with thirty-three entries in Who's Who; and Haverford, with thirty-four. If the faculty living at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges were removed, there were twenty-seven and twenty-eight, respectively.

Whether or not they were counted in the guides and directories, Chestnut Hill was home to some of the most successful and influential individuals in the region. Officers of many of the leading banks, for instance, lived in Chestnut Hill in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These included Joseph Wayne, Jr., president of the Philadelphia National Bank; Levi L. Rue, chairman of the board, Philadelphia National Bank; William J. McGlinn, president of the Continental Title and Trust; Livingston E. Jones, president of the First National Bank of Philadelphia; Albert Atlee Jackson, president of the Girard Trust; Marshall S. Morgan, chairman of the board, Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust; Samuel F. Houston, president of the Real Estate Trust; Thomas Sovereign Gates, vice-president of Drexel and Company and soon to become president of the University of Pennsylvania; Richard L. Austin, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; and Herbert E. Amidon, assistant manager of the Philadelphia Clearing House Association.\(^5\)

Several insurance executives also lived in Chestnut Hill at the time: John L. Cornog, president of the Philanthropic Mutual Life Insurance Company; Gustavus Remak, president of the Insurance Company of Pennsylvania; Harry S. Bradley, president of the Indemnity Company of America; and William H. Kingsley, vice-president of the Pennsylvania Mutual Life Insurance Company.\(^6\)

Among Chestnut Hill's corporate executives, there were Frederic H. Strawbridge, senior director of the Strawbridge and Clothier department store; T. Morris Perot, president of Perot Sons Malting Company; Harvey Miller, president of Southern Steamship Company; John E. Zimmerman, chairman of the board, Philadelphia
Boxly, near the northwest corner of Seminole Ave. and St. Martin’s Lane. This Georgian Revival house, designed by Mantle Fielding and built in 1903–04, was the home of Frederick W. Taylor, founder of industrial management. Portions of the house survive in 1991. CHHS.

Electric Company; Charles Bromley, president of Quaker Hosiery Company; Mahlon C. Kline, president of Smith, Kline and French pharmaceuticals; Samuel Porcher, chief purchasing agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad; Thomas H. Addie, president of the American Manganese Bronze Company; William D. Disston, vice-president of Henry Disston and Sons saw works; and William McLean, Jr., secretary-treasurer of the Philadelphia Bulletin. Until his death in 1915, the founder of industrial management, Frederick W. Taylor, lived in Chestnut Hill. 7

Also among Chestnut Hill’s most successful residents were its architects. These included the three men who had worked with George Woodward: H. Louis Duhring, Edmund Gilchrist, and Robert Rodes McGoodwin. Two other architects who made important contributions in Chestnut Hill and elsewhere were Walter Mellor and the nationally known George Howe, both of whom collaborated for a number of years with Arthur I. Meigs in the firm of Mellor, Meigs and Howe. Howe was also co-designer of the spectacular Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) building at 12th and Market
Street, which was commissioned just before the Great Depression and was one of the first international/modernist-style structures in the United States. In addition to these architects, the muralist Violet Oakley and the painter Jessie Willcox Smith made their homes on St. George’s Road, just across Cresheim Creek in West Mount Airy. Yet another talented resident was Leopold Stokowski, famed director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, who lived on the lower end of St. Martin’s Lane in a Woodward house.⁸

These talented men and women were generally well known throughout the Philadelphia area and thus easily identified themselves with the metropolitan region as a whole. A search of the Social Register also shows that many of them belonged to clubs and civic organizations in the city, which reinforced their sense of a dual identity with Philadelphia and Chestnut Hill.

The question of exactly how these and other Chestnut Hill residents should be categorized with regard to social class is not always easy to answer. Considered in European terms, there was no true upper class in Chestnut Hill—or anywhere else in America—because there was no titled or hereditary nobility. In this sense, the so-called American upper class was really an haute bourgeoisie, or upper-middle class, made up of families who could claim roots going well back into the nation’s history (preferably to the colonial period), along with some ancestor who had gained wealth or high occupational status. If the wealth were too new or the family founder still a little “rough around the edges,” it might take several decades for the family to be accepted into polite society. But if the family founder had established himself by 1865, few questions were asked about his descendants.

In Chestnut Hill there could be little doubt that the twenty-six heirs of pre–Civil War Family Founders formed the inner core of its upper class. Beyond that, it is difficult to say precisely where a prominent individual belonged in the upper class. However, by comparing the names of Chestnut Hillers who were listed in the Social Register with the 1,051 male heads of household in Chestnut Hill whose addresses and occupations appeared in the 1930 City Directory, it is possible to create a category of upper-class occupations for Chestnut Hill.⁹

The inclusion of several non-upper-class occupations, such as
“elected office holder,” “scientist/researcher,” and “college professor,” in the Social Register, was a local aberration explained by the fact that particular persons ranked high socially because of their family backgrounds rather than because of their occupations. However, the forty-eight lawyers in Chestnut Hill were significant enough numerically to allow conclusions about the social status of their occupation. Twenty-eight, or 58.33 percent of them, were listed in the Social Register. Bankers came next (20 of 35—57.14 percent listed), followed by brokers (12 of 22—54.55 percent), physicians (10 of 19—52.63 percent), insurance executives (5 of 11—45.45 percent), and corporate executives and substantial business owners (52 of 116–44.83 percent). It is also interesting that six of the nine architects (66.67 percent) in Chestnut Hill were in the Social Register. This was probably because only affluent parents could then afford to send their sons off to study architecture, and because a successful architect had to be acceptable to the wealthy and socially prominent clients who commissioned architect-designed structures.

Other occupations that were found among individuals listed in the Social Register were: real estate broker, manager, statistician, government bureaucrat, manufacturer’s agent, artist, sales manager, salesman, insurance agent, engineer, and clergyman. Of the 462 persons in these occupations from Chestnut Hill, 185 (40 percent) were in the Social Register. Comparing these 185 to the 1,051 heads of households listed in the City Directory, one might conclude that about 18 percent of Chestnut Hillers belonged to the upper class.

It would seem reasonable to categorize the 287 Chestnut Hillers in high-prestige occupations who did not appear in the Social Register as members of the upper-middle class. They amounted to just over 27 percent of the 1,051 households. Adding this to the 18 percent for the upper class, one finds that about 45 percent of those residents listed in the City Directory were from the upper or upper-middle classes.

The question of who belonged to the middle-middle or lower-middle classes presents some difficulties, too. Local tradition holds that there never has been much of a true middle class in Chestnut Hill, and in several interviews the author heard individuals from vary-
ing backgrounds assert that there really have been only two classes on the Hill: “the upper classes and those who served them.” Although this is a gross exaggeration, the numbers of householders in what might be considered middle-middle- and lower-middle-class occupations were comparatively small in 1930.

Beginning with officers of eleemosynary institutions and ending with local shopkeepers, Chestnut Hill’s middle-middle class comprised some 131 heads of households—or about 12 percent of the total. This categorization is admittedly somewhat arbitrary and unsatisfactory, particularly at the upper and lower ends. Among the forty-five shopkeepers, for example, there was undoubtedly a variation in income and status, depending upon the size and nature of their businesses. Pharmacist Frank Streeper, for instance, was obviously better educated and much more prosperous than Harry Mackrives, who ran a small shoe repair shop. Indeed, because the Streepers were among the original settlers of Chestnut Hill and had been modestly successful members of the community for over two centuries, one might well consider Frank Streeper to be a member of the community’s upper-middle class—or to be in a category all his own.

Also somewhat arbitrary is the categorizing of some occupations as lower-middle class; these begin with bookkeeper and end with apartment superintendent. There were seventy-five in this group, just over 7 percent of all the heads of households in the City Directory. Particularly difficult to categorize in this group were the forty-eight individuals listed as clerks, because the definition of clerk was then in transition. Some were obviously clerks in stores or shops; others were clerks in an older sense, in that they were more like male secretaries or office clerical workers.

Chestnut Hill’s working class in 1930 (excluding domestic servants) included skilled workmen, some of whom may have made more money than certain individuals in lower-middle-class occupations. But given the prevailing belief that men who did not “work with their hands” belonged to the middle class, it would make sense to place skilled workers on the upper rungs of the working class. These occupations included printer, electrician, tile setter, mason,
Frank Streeper's Drug Store (now Battin and Lunger) at the southwest corner of Germantown and Evergreen avenues. This Tudor-style structure is attributed to architect George T. Pearson and was built for Streeper in 1891–92. Local.

plumber, roofer, and tinsmith. At the other end of the working class were the unskilled workers, many of whom may have done manual labor in the construction trades. There were 234 individuals in the local working class, or a little over 22 percent of the male heads of households who listed occupations in the City Directory.

Finally, there were 139 householders in the upper ranks of the domestic servants who made enough money to live in their own homes and, presumably, to marry and have children. These were butlers, valets, stewards, housemen, cooks, chauffeurs, and gardeners. The large number of gardeners (70) and cooks (57) was a testament
to local wealth and the attention given to property in Chestnut Hill. The 139 individuals in this category made up approximately 13 percent of the total.

It was thus evident that the lower-middle and middle-middle classes were the smallest social groups in Chestnut Hill, with 7 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Next in order of size were domestic servants, with 13 percent; the upper class, with 18 percent; the working class, with 22 percent; and the upper-middle class, with 27 percent. (Because of rounding to the nearest whole percentage, these figures total only 99 percent.) Thus the local saying that there were only the upper classes and those who served them was partly grounded in reality. This is especially true if one sees local shopkeepers and skilled workers as servants of sorts, who were able to make a living only if they catered to the wishes and tastes of their social betters. Several older shopkeepers have indeed said that they were servants in this sense during the pre-World War II period. According to William Gillies, whose family owned a well-known fish market on Germantown Avenue for many years, some local shopkeepers were virtually “on call” twenty-four hours a day. It was thus not unusual for Gillies to receive a telephone call in the early hours of the morning asking him to deliver several dozen oysters to a party at one of the wealthier households. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it had been typical for a well-to-do matron to be driven in her carriage from shop to shop, and to have the owners run out to the carriage to take her orders, which would be delivered later in the day. To this degree shop owners and their employees really were servants of a sort.

Chestnut Hill’s many live-in servants did not, of course, appear in the City Directory sample, because they did not inhabit households of their own. Unable to afford their own dwellings, they had little choice but to live in their employers’ homes. Until the actual manuscripts from the 1930 census are made public early in the next century, there will be no way of counting these men and women with any accuracy.

The degree to which the class structure in Chestnut Hill differed from normal patterns is most striking. In most communities, then and
Gillies Oyster, Game and Fish Market, which once stood at the southeast corner of Germantown and Evergreen avenues, now the site of the First Pennsylvania Bank. CHHS.

now, a diagram of the social classes would look like a pyramid, with the fewest number of people at the top, representing the upper classes, and many more people at the bottom of the pyramid, representing the lower-middle and working classes. Such would have been the pattern for Philadelphia as a whole in 1930. But in Chestnut Hill the typical pattern was completely distorted, with the upper-middle and upper classes together accounting for 45 percent of the City Directory sample, and the working class making up only 22 percent—or 36 percent if one included the heads of household who were domestic servants. Of course, adding the uncounted live-in servants would have made it far larger than that. Even so, the result would still be a tremendous distortion of the usual configuration, especially since the middle-middle and lower-middle classes in Chestnut Hill were comparatively small, at only 19 percent of the sample. A diagram of social stratification on the Hill would look more like an hourglass than a pyramid, with the great majority of its residents in the upper and lower categories, and relatively few in the middle.
Another way to appreciate this distortion is to compare the class percentages in Chestnut Hill with percentages from the nation at large. According to the social historian Edward Pessen, a normal distribution of classes would be: upper (3 percent); upper-middle (9–10 percent); middle (32 percent); upper-lower (34 percent); and lower-lower (21 percent). But in Chestnut Hill the upper-class distribution of 18 percent was six times the national norm, and the upper-middle class distribution of 27 percent was about three times the norm. Pessen combines the middle-middle and lower-middle into one middle class. Nevertheless, the 19 percent making up those categories in Chestnut Hill is little more than half the size of a more typical community. For the two lower classes Pessen assigns the figure of 55 percent. If one includes in this category heads of household in Chestnut Hill who were workers and those who were domestic servants, then the figure for the lower (or working) class, as stated earlier, would be 36 percent.16

Because the City Directory for 1930 gave both occupations and addresses, it is also possible to discover how the various classes were distributed geographically with some degree of accuracy. Local opinion has loosely divided Chestnut Hill into the West and East sides, with the dividing line at Germantown Avenue. The fact that Germantown Avenue also separates the streets and house numbers into east and west has doubtless reinforced this convention. However, an examination of house size and architectural style, along with figures culled from the City Directory, shows that the residential divisions were (and are) more complex.

A carefully drawn map would show four main residential zones. The area north of Rex Avenue, along with a thin strip that lay along the easternmost segment of the community, is North Chestnut Hill. This portion of the Hill was the first area to be developed after the Chestnut Hill Railroad (later the Reading and now the Chestnut Hill-East line) arrived in 1854. Although its southeast extension lay east of Germantown Avenue and thus seemed to defy the points of a compass, it had much more in common with North Chestnut Hill than with the neighborhood just a bit further west. In any case, North Chestnut Hill remained an area of attractive single-family homes
Approximate residential divisions of Chestnut Hill. The commercial district is located along Germantown Ave. and the upper portions of Bethlehem Pike. Note that the small enclave of Woodward houses on the East Side is not shown here. Map adapted by Mary Contosta.
where many members of the upper and upper-middle classes continued to live in 1930. It should be reiterated, however, that the bulk of the population in North Chestnut Hill lived south of Bell's Mill Road: North of that line, most of the land was occupied by large estates or institutions such as the Morris Arboretum or Chestnut Hill College.

Wealthy and socially prominent residents of the Hill also lived on the West Side, much of which had been developed by Henry Howard Houston and George Woodward. The West Side began a block or two west of Germantown Avenue and reached all the way to Fairmount Park along the Wissahickon Creek, and was bordered on the north by Chestnut Hill Avenue and on the south by Cresheim Valley Drive. As in North Chestnut Hill, the streets closer to the railroad and nearer to the center of Chestnut Hill were more densely popu-
lated than those further away. West of St. Martin's Lane, the land had been given over to large estates such as Druim Moir, Stonehurst, and Krisheim, and to institutions such as the Philadelphia Cricket Club and Chestnut Hill Academy (the former Wissahickon Inn).

The East Side, where most of the workers and better-paid domestic servants lived, began on the streets slightly west of Germantown Avenue and continued east in a jagged pattern to the tracks of what was then the Reading Railroad. However, an island of Woodward houses protruded into the East Side along Benezet Street, East Springfield Avenue, and Winston Road. Thus for purposes of this study, they have been included as part of the West Side. Thus, the East Side resembled two islands. The lower island began at Chrisheim Valley Drive and ended at the Woodward developments on the corner of Springfield Avenue and Winston Road. The second island started just north of there along East Willow Grove Avenue and extended up to East Evergreen Avenue and then jogged west to Ardleigh Street, where it continued north again to the edge of Summit Street.

The fourth residential zone was actually part of the commercial district along Germantown Avenue, which extended as far north as Rex Avenue and then down Bethlehem Pike to the railroad station at the foot of Chestnut Hill Avenue. As the City Directory indicates, many shopkeepers lived above their establishments at that time. On the lower end of Germantown Avenue (south of Southhampton Avenue) there were also a number of residential properties that were home, for the most part, to the same kinds of people who lived on the East Side.

Table 5 (in the appendix) shows that the great majority of residents who worked in the more prestigious occupations lived in North Chestnut Hill or on the West Side. Of the lawyers, 34.69 percent resided in North Chestnut Hill and 59.18 percent on the West Side; only 6.12 percent reported addresses on the East Side. The great majority of physicians (73.68 percent) lived in North Chestnut Hill, with only 15.79 percent on the West Side and 10.53 percent on the East Side. These figures can probably be explained by the fact that the Chestnut Hill Hospital was located in North Chestnut Hill and was
within easy walking distance for the doctors who lived there. The 10 percent of physicians on the East Side doubtless carried on practices in houses there, a common arrangement in those days all over the city of Philadelphia.

At the other end of the occupational scale, 100 percent of the masons, mechanics, truck drivers, and laborers lived on the East Side. Chauffeurs and gardeners showed a slightly more mixed pattern because some of them lived in small houses on or near the large estates in North Chestnut Hill or the West Side. Even so, the great majority of them (87.72 percent and 88.57 percent, respectively) had East Side addresses.

Although the City Directory did not designate ethnic backgrounds, an examination of surnames gives some measure of the ethnic contours of Chestnut Hill in 1930. It might be argued that these family names gave no indication of the ethnic provenance of married women, but there was so much pressure at the time to marry within one's
The intersection of Highland and Seminole avenues, showing a deeply shaded streetscape that remains typical of North Chestnut Hill and the West Side. Photo c. 1970s. *Local.*

ethnic group that this factor was not as significant as it might have been two generations later. Other names posed a problem because they could have been derived from several linguistic traditions. As a result, the author did not try to differentiate among English, Welsh, Scotch, or Scotch-Irish surnames, choosing instead to place them all in the less-than-ideal category of "British." Likewise German, Austrian, Scandinavian, and certain Swiss names were lumped together in the less-than-perfect category of "Germanic." More serious than any of these problems was the understandable failure of the *City Directory* to include live-in servants. Despite these flaws and the inaccuracies that they have produced in the count, this examination of surnames gives at least a crude indication of ethnic backgrounds.
Of the 1,051 heads of household, 667, or 64.41 percent, appeared to bear British surnames. Next came Irish (128 — 12.18 percent); Germanic (124 — 11.80 percent); Italian (94 — 8.94 percent); French (20 — 1.90 percent); and “other” (8 — 0.76 percent). As might be expected, there were strong correlations between ethnic background and occupation in Chestnut Hill. Nearly 92 percent of the lawyers appeared to have British surnames. Another 8 percent bore Germanic names, whereas none carried identifiably Irish, Italian, or French names. Ethnic distribution among bankers was very similar: Almost 83 percent were British; 8.57 percent were Germanic; and 8.57 percent were French. One of the physicians was French (5.26 percent); one was Irish (5.26 percent); and two were Germanic (10.53 percent). The remaining fifteen were British (78.94 percent). These figures are not surprising, because men of Protestant, British backgrounds dominated the professions all over the United States at the time, though not always so overwhelmingly as in Chestnut Hill.
At the other extreme, 100 percent of the tile setters and quarriers were Italian, as were over 70 percent of the masons. The greatest variation came within the occupations of contractor/builder and local shopkeeper. Half the shopkeepers had British surnames, 20.45 percent were Italian, 15.91 percent were Germanic, and 13.64 percent were Irish. These figures would lead one to conclude that it was possible for less prosperous residents to open a local business and thereby rise into the ranks of the lower-middle class.¹⁷

A comparison of surnames with addresses also shows that some ethnic groups were heavily concentrated in certain neighborhoods. On Summit Street, in the heart of upper-class North Chestnut Hill, all the residents were either British or Germanic (81.25 and 18.75 percent, respectively). Even greater areas of British dominance were St. Martin's Lane on the West Side (87.50 percent British surnames), and George Woodward's Benet Street development (88.89 percent British surnames). The largest concentration of Irish names (57.89 percent) appeared in the unit block of West Highland Avenue, which was part of the East Side extension across Germantown Avenue. There were also a considerable number of Italians (42.86 percent) in the 200 block of West Highland. But the greatest concentration of Italians was in the lower East Side, and especially on the 7700 block of Devon Street, where 83 percent were Italian. There was also an Italian enclave just west of Germantown Avenue in the 8100 block of Shawnee Street (66.67 percent) and in the 8000 block of Roanoke Street (31.57 percent), both defined in this study as East Side neighborhoods.

Looking at Chestnut Hill as a whole, it becomes clear that North Chestnut Hill and the West Side were overwhelmingly British, whereas the East Side was home to nearly all the Irish and Italians. Residents with Germanic surnames, some of whom could trace their American ancestry back to the eighteenth century, were also concentrated in the North and West, as were the handful of French who, like the Germans, most likely had old roots in the region and were fully assimilated.

The City Directory gave no figures for religious affiliation, but the large number of British surnames would point to a substantial Protestant population in Chestnut Hill. According to Roman Catholic
leaders in the community, 30 to 35 percent of Chestnut Hillers have been Catholic in the twentieth century, a figure that corresponds roughly with the numbers of Irish and Italians in the community, particularly if one could consider live-in servants who were of Irish background. This would leave 65 to 70 percent for the Protestants, a figure that is close to the 64 percent of residents with British surnames. The remaining Protestants could have come from the 12 percent with Germanic last names, a portion of whom may also have been Catholic.

A breakdown of the Protestant denominations, which made up 65 to 70 percent of the Hill’s religious population, is more difficult for the period in question. One might estimate that the small Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran congregations did not account for more than 10 percent of the church population in Chestnut Hill. Even the small group of Chestnut Hill Quakers, who founded a meeting in 1924, might be included in that 10 percent figure, although the Quakers came from more socially prominent backgrounds than the Baptists, Methodists, or Lutherans. The considerable number of upper- and upper-middle-class residents would, of course, point to a substantial membership for the two Episcopal churches, perhaps as high as 35 to 40 percent of the church membership on the Hill. This would leave 15 to 20 percent for the Presbyterians, many of whom were also prosperous residents of the Hill.

Considered together, the demographic figures from the City Directory and Social Registers indicate that Chestnut Hill was one of the wealthiest and most socially elite suburbs in the nation, as well as Philadelphia’s most exclusive suburb in—or outside—the city. The prosperous suburbanites who lived on the Hill, among them the leaders of Philadelphia’s most important commercial and cultural establishments, maintained strong connections with the entire metropolitan area—and in some cases with a national or even international network of interests. At the same time, Chestnut Hill remained home to many families of humbler background, who had little social connection with the upper-middle- and upper-class suburbanites. Even less prosperous residents, divided as they were by ethnic and religious differences, frequently failed to find a common ground among themselves.