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URBANIZATION AND REFORM: COLUMBUS, OHIO, 1870-1900

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School
of
The Ohio State University

By

Michael Sheppard Speer

The Ohio State University

Approved by

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PREFACE

In its broadest sense urban history in the United States has been history written about anything that happened in a town with a population of 3000 on up. Partially as a result of this broad sweep, the debate over just what urban history is, or should be, has also been wide, and it has sometimes been heated. It is not yet over; no consensus has been reached.\(^1\) The writer of such history is therefore still relatively free to pick and choose among a multitude of directions and emphases in reaching his own definition. Or he may indeed, if bold, formulate his own conception of what urban history is—-or at least of what his own urban history is.

I have selected what appears to be a reasonable definition of the term. This dissertation is concerned first of all with events that happened in a city.\(^2\) More important than this, it appears unlikely

\(^1\) The reader should consult Charles N. Glaab, "The Historian and the American City: A Bibliographic Survey," in Philip Hauser and Leo F. Schnore (eds.), The Study of Urbanization (New York, 1965), 53-80. Though this essay is seven years old, its basic statements and assumptions are still valid.

\(^2\) That urban history must concern cities seems self-evident, but the difference between town and city or non-urban and urban is not so simple to discern as it may seem. See Chapter 2 for various definitions of "urban" and for discussion of Columbus as an urban settlement.
that the phenomena discussed here could have happened anywhere else
but in a fairly large population aggregate. The urban context was
such that it placed on its inhabitants constraints non-existent in rural
areas. Similarly, it gave them opportunities that their counterparts
in other places were not able to experience.

What follows is more severely restricted than a general dis-
cussion of the urban context of Columbus, Ohio, in the last third of the
nineteenth century. It is limited to some specific cases of what I
have labelled reform. Not taking any normative position on this term,
I have used it broadly to mean a change urged so that those affected,
be they the entire population or a segment of it, would experience
what they felt was a better life. I have narrowed this definition so
that change to produce privilege or elite opportunities is not called
reform. I have limited the topic again by concentrating on reform
efforts that seem to have been a direct response to the urbanization
which all American cities were confronted with in the nineteenth
century. The problems of good government, morality, and efficient
services were large ones that urbanites increasingly had to face
during this time. They were not entirely new, but tremendous popu-
lation increases coupled with a rapidly changing technology made them
more blatant than they had ever been. As a result American cities
experienced a period of reform, or experiment with change, unlike
any in their previous history.
Specifically, I have examined the attempts of Colombusites to reform the government, the politics, the morality, and the public services in their city. In none of these categories were the exponents of change completely successful: one cause for the lack of success was that not all the population supported the advocated measures. I have therefore attempted to determine which groups in the city appeared most interested in change and which were most adverse to it.

The context of the discussion is a town becoming a city. In 1860 Columbus had a population of about 13,000; by 1900 this number had risen to almost 130,000. Such a significant increase put immense pressures on the inhabitants and government of the city merely to maintain the level of living they had had just before the Civil War. To produce a better environment for citizens required great expenditures of money as well as the application of new methods of administration and new technologies of urban services. These factors alone made the city a fertile ground for reform. Men faced with such great change could react apathetically or they could try to turn back the clock or they could promote further change. That the decade of the 1880's, the period when Columbus experienced a great increase in its population, was also the time when its citizens began advocating planned change on a large scale indicates that there were a number of persons who realized that urbanization had affected their lives so
that the first two of the above alternatives were impossible.

A brief statement about what is not included in this paper is also in order. The paucity of sources has practically dictated that a discussion of the efforts of black Columbusites to better their lives is not a part of this work. Nor is the city's labor movement included. Both these crusades, however, were small and merely tangential to the larger reform efforts of the period.

The most readily available source for municipal data in the late nineteenth century is the newspapers of that period. They provide a running commentary on day-to-day city life that otherwise is inaccessible, especially since virtually none of the papers of important citizens or civic officials has survived. Unfortunately, the high degree of partisanship of the period makes much of the published "news" suspect. This problem, however, had a happy solution in Columbus with the advent of the Evening Dispatch, a fiercely independent daily which originated in 1870. Its independence makes the Dispatch the most valuable source for any general study of the city. For more detailed information, reports of various organizations, especially the Board of Trade and the City Council, have been useful. General literature on urban reform has helped to place events in Columbus in a broader context and to compare experience there with that of other cities. Both nineteenth century and contemporary works have been consulted for this purpose.
The period covered here is 1870-1900, but the dates are not precise. Most of the emphasis is on the years after 1884 because there was more reform activity after the establishment of the Board of Trade in that year. Efforts to change the morality of the city and to improve its services, however, were underway earlier so it was necessary to begin investigation of this area in the years when the city began growing rapidly after a relatively minor increase in the 1850's. This was "sometime after the Civil War," so I have officially selected 1870. The year 1900 is also subject to tolerances. This is a good year to stop research because it has the crispness of century's end, but in this case there are other reasons. It was around this time that Columbusites began changing their attitudes toward reform. Where the 1880's and 1890's had generally been years of concern with broad reforms such as that of changing the city's form of government, the late 1890's and early twentieth century saw citizens becoming more interested in specific causes. The growing concern in Columbus with street car fares is one example. The election of Washington Gladden to City Council in 1900 and his interest in the city's gas rates is another. It was at this time that Columbus labor first demonstrated a real interest in reform. The Board of Trade, reform-minded in the 1890's, also began a shift in this period toward more purely public relations activities. Finally, the period around 1900 was notable for the decline in reform directed at changing the moral-
ity of the city's inhabitants. In all fairness it should be added that many of the concerns that had led to reform activity during the previous thirty or so years continued to exist. The problem of providing city services clearly had not been solved by 1900, and citizens still experimented with better means of providing for the physical needs of the city.

The following discussion demonstrates that urban problems are not new. They are, in fact, as old as urbanization. In a sense, the social and economic difficulties cities face today are quite similar to those they faced—with a familiar sense of urgency—almost a century ago. This is disheartening. The grounds for optimism are found in men still seeking solutions and in their historical ability to correct at least a portion of the ills that beset them.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would be a good idea, I feel, if writers of dissertations would eschew the temptation to name everyone they know when supplying the thank-yous. Actually, not very many people have helped me with this thesis; I shall keep this list, therefore, to a minimum.

To my adviser, Professor Mary E. Young, I am grateful. She was sometimes critical, but always positively so. Further, she had the kindness to leave me alone when I wanted to be. As scholar—as well as friend—she was a brilliant mentor.

Professors Austin Kerr and Roe Smith read the draft and provided helpful editorial comments.

The staff of the Ohio Historical Society Library, especially Marion Bates and Conrad Weitzel, were quite patient with me and provided superb assistance. They were also friendly.

My typist, Dianne Crump, spent long hours producing the beautiful work you see here. It was she who enabled me to meet the invidious deadlines.

As is customary, I claim the faults in this work as my own.
VITA

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CHAPTER I
COLUMBUS: AN OVERVIEW

In the spring of 1795 the surveyor Lucas Sullivant, Virginiaborn and bearing a striking physical resemblance to George Washington, moved along the Scioto River into the heart of Ohio country. Sullivant was one of several men plotting the lands west of Virginia and north of Kentucky, and like some of his better known predecessors he was careful to note choice tracts of land as he moved through the wilderness. After returning home, the young explorer began to make extensive purchases along the Scioto in what was to become central Ohio. By mid-1797 he had laid out a town, Franklin, which received settlers beginning the following year. That year Sullivant, still amassing what was to become almost 50,000 acres, moved to the new town and built a house, a public indication he had faith that the area was a good place to live as well as grow rich.¹

¹Alfred E. Lee, History of the City of Columbus (New York and Chicago, 1892), I, 135-40; Lyder L. Unstad, "A Survey of the Industrial and Economic Development of Central Ohio with Special Reference to Columbus, 1797-1872," (Ohio State University Ph.D. dissertation, 1937), 24. There are numerous general histories of Columbus during its early years; see bibliography; Lee's is the most detailed. All are pitifully weak on political development in the city, and critical analysis in these works, written mainly in the late
The little town did not grow spectacularly, but by 1808 it boasted three saw mills, two grist mills, and a rising population. It had also been designated as the seat of Franklin county. Located almost in the geographical center of Ohio, Franklinton seemed to have reasonably good prospects of becoming a medium-sized commercial center surrounded by farmers and wealthy land owners, a pleasant prospect for Sullivant and others like him who had invested heavily in land. In 1808, moreover, the outlook for the little town brightened when the state legislature, having met at Chillicothe since 1803, decided to move the capital. Franklinton's location made it an obvious competitor for the honor since primitive transportation facilities necessitated centrally situated capitals.

No Ohio town or city wanted to miss the opportunity of becoming the state's capital, and many entered the fray feverishly, each proclaiming its own special advantages. But the winner was none of these. Rather, on February 14, 1812, the legislature accepted an offer from four central Ohio land owners. Lyne Starling (Sullivant's brother-in-law), John Kerr, Alexander McLaughlin, and James

---

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is rare. More data on Sullivant is available in Joseph Sullivant, A Family Memorial (Columbus, 1874) and Andrew D. Rodgers, III, "Noble Fellow," William Starling Sullivant (New York, 1940), 1-39.

Johnson had offered to donate twenty acres to the state, to erect a penitentiary and state buildings worth $50,000, and to lay out a surrounding city of about 1200 acres. A week after accepting the offer of the four entrepreneurs, the legislature rejected the name "Ohio City" and voted the new town should be called Columbus, stipulating that it was to remain the capital until at least 1840.  

Columbus was located directly opposite Franklinton on the east bank of the Scioto near its confluence with the Whetstone (Olentangy) River. The area in 1812 was a wilderness, a settlement on paper only. For four years the incipient town was to be administered by a state director who would supervise laying out streets and erection of the public buildings. In 1816 the state government would provide a new form of administration.

When the legislature met for the first time in Columbus, the law-makers framed a new government for the capital. The city charter declared that within six months white male inhabitants should elect nine men. From this group would be chosen a mayor, a recorder, and a treasurer with the remaining six comprising a common council. Other officers of the city were to be the assessor, the mar-

3Osman C. Hooper, History of the City of Columbus, Ohio (Columbus and Cleveland, n.d.), 26-27.

4Alfred J. Wright, "Joel Wright, City Planner," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, LVI (1947), 287-94; Hooper, Columbus, 28.
ket clerk, and the marshal, appointed jointly by mayor and council. The mayor was to serve as a justice of the peace. The council was enabled to levy taxes upon objects taxed by the county (plus dogs), to erect public buildings, and to make and repeal ordinances for the "safety and convenience" of the city and its inhabitants. Two councilmen were to be elected each year. This charter served the town until 1834 and was typical of the forms of town governments established in the early nineteenth century. The mayor was an impotent executive and administration of the city was largely in the hands of the elected council. Like other state laws the one establishing government for Columbus was subject to amendment or repeal at the whim of the law-makers.

The official establishment of Columbus coincided with the outbreak of the War of 1812, and almost immediately the settlement became a center for the distribution of material and men. Times were prosperous. By 1814 about three hundred permanent inhabitants had moved to the settlement. Lots became expensive. The sitting of the legislature after 1816 enhanced the social life of the capital, and persons and businesses from nearby Franklinton and

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5 The original charter is reproduced in William A. Taylor, *The Centennial History of Columbus and Franklin County* (Chicago and Columbus, 1909), 88-92.

Worthington—about seven miles north—began to migrate to Columbus. This prosperity and growth lasted until the panic of 1819. In the years following the national financial reversal lots which had sold for $200-$300 in 1815 dropped in value to $10-$20. In spite of an auspicious beginning, Columbus eight years after its founding had only three brick residences; tree stumps impeded movement on all streets; springs and streams made travel hazardous even in the vicinity of Capital Square.  

But the future was not so bleak as it looked in 1820. The city's population continued to rise, reaching 1500 by 1830. Two newspapers served the townspeople; the Franklin Bank of Columbus, a sound bank, had opened in 1816 and served the city until its charter's expiration in 1844; in 1824 the county seat was transferred from Franklinton to Columbus; and by the fourth decade of the century the town had ten lawyers, eleven physicians, eight clergymen, thirty-six mercantile establishments, and nine taverns. 

Compared to what it was to become, public life (and probably to a smaller extent, private life) was uncomplicated. City government from 1816-1834 was simple and apparently unimportant to the inhabitants. It did not do very much. Civic officials were supposed to keep

7 Lee, History, I, 262-76; Henry C. Noble, "Historical Address (Columbus, 1876)," 52.

8 Lee, History, I, 379, 420-23, 402-06; Hooper, Columbus, 37.
the streets in repair, but as late as 1818 one reads of private citizens taking subscriptions to clear the stumps from High Street, one of the city's two main streets. This effort suggests first of all that individuals were willing to act to accomplish what they felt needed doing and saw no compelling need for the municipality to undertake such jobs, even though it was legally compelled to do so. In like manner, citizens organized hunts to rid the area of bears and squirrels, to petition the legislature to move the county seat to Columbus, or to organize volunteer fire-fighting brigades. Such activity certainly also suggests a strong sense of community. In the 1810's, '20's, and '30's the town was not large enough to be divided into neighborhoods, and there was a sort of local patriotism which activated numerous communal deeds. An complete absence of any local news in the papers further indicates the small-town quality of the capital. No such news appeared because by the time a weekly paper could print it, it had become common knowledge.  

The government of the city was obviously not aggressive or dominant in citizens' lives. The civic concerns of government, as well as the private population, were mainly in an "order-producing" category. In this sense, the much touted "search for order" which is reputed to have occurred after the Civil War in response to

9 See any of the Columbus weeklies for the 1810's and 1820's; for example, Ohio Monitor, November 21, 1816.
industrialization and urbanization, was not a post-Civil War phenomenon in earlier settled areas. From the very outset aggregations of population were forced to enact order-seeking laws because with or without industrialization even small numbers of people clustered in a compact area produced a host of problems which the same population dispersed could not have caused.

The problem of health was a difficulty that population centers faced from the beginning. One of the first ordinances enacted by the Columbus council was a provision for the quarantine of smallpox victims. The struggle to produce a healthy populace was never-ending. It grew as the population grew—partially a result of industrialization—but it has persisted since the establishment of towns, and regulation of men to make them healthy was one function small-town governments exercised early.

A second problem that faced the small settlement was provision of fire and police protection. Again, both these functions were quickly recognized as the province of municipal administration. Two years after Columbus got its own government, the editor of the Gazette opinioned, "Already there has been considerable damage done by fire in this place. We would most earnestly recommend to the citizens of

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11 Columbus Gazette. June 4, 1818.
this town to take the subject into serious consideration, and adopt some measures which will tend to secure our property against that devouring element."\textsuperscript{12} Neither "the citizens" nor the council acted at this time, but a conflagration in 1822 caused such alarm that the Council acted promptly. An ordinance passed in February of that year "to prevent destruction by fire" established three fire companies and required all residents to maintain buckets of ten-quarter capacity in their homes. A chief, usually a prominent citizen, served to direct the squads during emergencies; a degree of protection from fire was thus established.\textsuperscript{13}

Generally, the same pattern characterized the police force. In 1821 a night watch consisting of "all able-bodied white males of said burrough" was created by town ordinance. This meagre troop, operating only during dark hours, gradually became a viable police force; additionally it grew into a powerful political agent for the party which happened to control it.\textsuperscript{14} Besides the establishment of a watch, Council exercised its privilege of making the city safe and healthful

\textsuperscript{12}December 31, 1818.

\textsuperscript{13}Ohio Monitor and Patron of Industry, February 9, 1822; Gazette, February 14, March 22, April 11, 1822; Lee, History, I, 544-46.

\textsuperscript{14}Lee, History, I, 470; Ohio Monitor, August 4, 1821; D. H. Bryant, History of the Columbus Police Department (Columbus, 1965), Chapter 1.
by enactment of numerous laws to curb nuisances. Acts to prevent livestock from running loose, requiring the removal of carcasses, and establishing a pound were calculated to produce a more liveable town. If they were not always rigorously enforced, they are still an indication of the ideal of orderliness which these townspeople accepted. Council also used its police powers to make the settlement morally healthy. Ordinances passed in the late 1820's forbade gambling, proscribed serenading, and attempted to suppress generally unnecessary noise and disorderly conduct. A curfew was set for ten o'clock. Finally, in an early effort to produce order in the new city, Council tried to improve the "streets" and sidewalks requiring certain widths for sidewalks, demanding property owners keep public areas on which they fronted clean, and providing rudimentary street gutters.

The foregoing is not intended to be a detailed discussion of the activities of the Columbus government in the 1810's and 1820's. Rather, this cursory survey of local legislation is meant to demonstrate that practically from the very establishment of the town its

15 *Gazette*, June 4, July 2, 9, 1818; July 8, August 12, 1819; November 7, 1822; May 20, 1824.

16 *Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette*, August 17, 1827; August 28, 1828.

17 *Gazette*, July 23, 1818; August 12, 1824; April 14, 1825; *Journal and Gazette*, March 15, 1827.
citizens and government faced problems that would later be called "urban." Their early reaction to these difficulties was enactment of "order-producing" ordinances in an attempt simply to remove that which was distasteful about town life. In no case, however, were they totally successful. Cholera ravaged the city three times before it ceased to be a threat, and general health problems persisted.

The police and fire departments clearly made the city safer, but they were clearly primitive. As the departments became larger and more sophisticated later in the century, they created financial and political problems. The efforts to legislate morality were also notoriously unsuccessful. The need to remove wastes effectively mounted as the city's population burgeoned, but gradually the city fathers did come to the realization that simple dumping of garbage and sewage was an inadequate solution. This knowledge posed immense problems, financial and technical.

Clean water and clean, easily travelled streets were desirable from the start, but in this area also the municipality's solutions fell constantly short of the desired goals. The result was continuous experimentation, expenditure, and frustration. Obviously, these problems were not present on so grand a scale in 1830 as they would be in 1890; however, it should be clear that "urban" problems did not spring up full blown when the city's population reached a certain large number.
But as the town gradually grew into a small city after 1830, the original problems of managing city services also grew. The increase in numbers of inhabitants mounted sharply after the bad times of the 1820's, and though comparatively retarded in the decade of the sixties, growth was constantly upward.

TABLE 1

POPULATION GROWTH AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE, 1820-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent Increase from Last Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2435</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>6048</td>
<td>148.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>17,882</td>
<td>195.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>18,554</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>31,274</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>51,647</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>68,150</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>125,560</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>181,511</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aFrom Henry L. Hunker, Industrial Evolution of Columbus, Ohio (Columbus, 1958), 40; U.S. Census Reports, 1860-1910 (Washington, 1864-1913).
In absolute terms Columbus grew most in the three decades following the Civil War. It was at this time that inhabitants were also experiencing a new order of communication and urban technology. The problems generated by such massive changes were more intense than the city had yet experienced. The response of concerned citizens was two-fold. First, they reacted just as they had from the beginning noting the town needed improved services. Second, they more readily admitted the importance of municipal government and acted as though they were well aware that private effort would no longer suffice to solve problems now grown so large. This second reaction was new; it brought about a fresh interest in effective city government.

Since men, even reformers, are more apt to accept that which is familiar, a survey of the successive governmental forms which the city had in the nineteenth century is necessary. It has already been noted that the charter of 1816 provided the city with its first government and that this form was typical of American cities at that time. On May 3, 1834, the legislature provided the city with its second government. The new charter was slightly more complex than the old, but it retained most of the same forms. The mayor, elected for a two-year term, remained relatively powerless being vaguely charged with the execution of the laws and designated as a
justice of the peace. Power resided in the council. Four representatives from each of three wards, one fourth elected each year, made appointments, taxed, borrowed money, regulated the morals of the citizenry, and passed general ordinances. By law, Council was required to keep the streets clean and in good repair within a total tax limit of five mills. There was thus little for the mayor, primarily a figurehead, to do.

Public reaction to this change was minimal. Since only a fourth of Council could be elected in any one year, the charter was contrary to the democratic trends of the day, but this system had already been established in the 1810's. Voters were not yet deeply concerned with their city's form of government. After all, its functions were still relatively limited, and it intruded rarely into the every-day activities of those it governed.

One potential problem with this government was that as the number of wards increased the council could easily become unwieldy. Such was the case, and in March 1850 on petition of the city, Ohio's legislature provided a third form of government whose primary new feature was a three-man delegation from each ward rather than the

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18 Lee, History, I, 474-75; the charter is reproduced in entirety in Taylor, Centennial History, 111-127.

19 Cf. Bessie L. Pierce, History of Chicago, I, The Beginnings of a City, 1673-1848 (New York, 1937), 364, 386-87 where political indifference to local affairs is also noted.
previous four. One-third was elected yearly, and the fifteen man assembly remained supreme. The mayor's functions were further reduced by provision for a biennially elected marshal who preempted many of the mayor's police and law enforcement functions. This short-lived government, however, was replaced in the spring of 1852 when, under new constitution, the state reorganized all its cities. The 1852 Municipal Act provided for a beginning of the Ohio urban classification system which lasted into the twentieth century. The constitution of 1851 had forbidden special legislation, but as control of Ohio's cities became more important for political success, legislators began to pass special laws under the guise of general regulations. Simple in theory, the classification system was so complex in reality that the state could legislate for any city it wished. Under the new constitution Columbus had its fourth government. Council was no longer the supreme committee. The mayor was enabled to appoint the police chief. Council membership was reduced to two men per ward, but the mayor's new power did not leave the legislature impotent. It still retained all the other functions vested in it since 1816. 20

With modifications, Columbus retained this form of government until citizen protest led to a change early in the 1890's. The

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20Lee, History, II, 481-83.
primary type of change that occurred in the period after the Civil War was the result of state interference. In the '70's and '80's the legislature passed laws five times changing the method of administering the city's police force. Power to appoint the police chief was taken from the mayor and given to a Board of Police Commissioners, which was selected in various ways, usually politically motivated. With a Democratic state legislature commissioners were usually elected city-wide since Columbus most often voted for that party. With the Republicans controlling the legislature, this form was changed so that they would control appointment of the Board and therefore of the police. This usually meant that the governor or some other Republican official would appoint the members. 21 At a time when the functions of the government were still relatively unimportant state interference probably would not have made much difference to Columbusesites who were not themselves policemen. Since the city administration was increasing its functions to meet the needs of larger population, however, frequent changes in governmental form became frustrating. Legislative meddling produced a large degree of uncertainty in the city, prevented realistic planning, and was not to the liking of those who paid for running the city.

21 Ibid., 488-93; Journal, Saturdays, May-July, 1884; Dispatch, July 13, 1895.
The increase in the activities of the municipal government that made it so much more important to the tax-paying citizens was both absolute and relative. The early functions, largely the exercise of police powers, had been increasingly supplemented as time had passed. By 1860 Columbus boasted professional police and fire departments. The employment of such men on a full-time basis was much costlier than use of volunteers in time of emergency only. The municipality also undertook completely new functions. By the 1850's the city fathers were contemplating the advisability of erecting a city-owned water works where private wells supplemented by a few public cisterns had previously sufficed. A water works would make the city healthier and lead to better fire protection, but it would also be expensive and would eventually cause the creation of a size-able bureaucracy. As the city grew, demands of convenience, taste, and economics dictated that the government also work harder for better urban transportation. Where pre-Civil War expenditure for street paving and repair had been minimal, the post-war period saw the city spend millions of dollars on new and improved streets. The situation was similar with the creation of a vast sewer system. So much of this public work was new to the city and so fast did technology change that in many cases a newly completed street or sewer was usable for only a few years. The result was very often something which approached chaos. Gaping holes and trenches for water,
sewage, and gas filled streets covered with mud and garbage. Ladies could not cross, and if they could not cross, they would not go shopping in downtown stores. Men would do so, of course, but they too had to face what many saw as unnecessary hazards. Simply stated, the city needed better streets. 22

The change from a relatively inactive city government to one concerned with a host of urban problems, some new and some old, was gradual. A very active government was the result of incremental processes, and consequently it is difficult to say at exactly what point one would call the municipality interventionist. It is clear, however, that this change—a new approach both in degree and in kind—did not take place until after the decade of the 1860’s. One example will demonstrate this.

In 1866 Columbus Democrats elected six of nine councilmanic candidates tying the council nine-nine on a partisan basis. The new Council’s first order of business was to elect a president, but after 128 ballots on a warm spring evening neither side had been able to elect its candidate. The Democratic Ohio Statesman praised members of its party for standing firm: they had won a majority in the election and therefore had the right to organize Council. This partisan recalcitrance was a result of two facts. First, the city had been deeply

divided during the Civil War, and the editor of a Democratic paper had had his office and presses wrecked. So partially there was an ideological struggle resulting from very recent history. Second—and one gets the impression this was more important since the Democrats denied it so vociferously—government in the city had become more important during the 1860's, and now a certain amount of local spoils went to the party in control. Since the Democrats already controlled the mayoralty, if they won in Council, they could effectively govern the entire city.

A second attempt, this one consisting of 287 ballots, resulted in the temporary chairman, a Republican, declaring his colleague, Theodore Comstock, elected since a majority of those present and voting opted for him. This solution did not quite suit the Democrats who contended that presidential election required an absolute majority of Council. The Democrats now simply boycotted Council meetings. Since the legal requirement for compelling attendance was a majority of a quorum and since Council was unable to gather a quorum, this partisan tactic meant rather simply that the main branch of government in Columbus ceased to exist. The day following Comstock's "election" the Democrats indicated officially how important patronage had become in the city when they told the op-

^{23} Ohio Statesman, April 3, 10, 14, May 4, 1866.
position they would yield to the election if they could have a "fair share" of offices including control of the Council police committee. A second conference at the end of May again indicated the Democrats' desire for powerful offices.  

Meanwhile, certain city functions were suffering from lack of Council attention. The Republicans naturally blamed the Democrats for all that was wrong. They claimed especially that the city's new Board of Health, directed mainly by a Council committee, was suffering. By mid-June, the time for making the annual city tax levy had passed without any action. Suits against the city began to pile up as police went without pay; the city approached general bankruptcy. Police discipline was disappearing. In July many on the force began refusing the mayor's and marshal's orders to serve a beat at a specific time. Reasoning that there was no existing council and no pay, the policemen assumed the right to run their own department. As the summer went by, judgments began to come in against the city. A late July constable's sale saw the city's horses and garbage carts go to the highest bidder, the money to go for police salaries which were nearly four months past due. Finally, obviously after a secret compromise had been agreed upon, Council met on July 27 and elected Republican Luther Donaldson president. The body immediately passed

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24 Ibid., April 17, 18, May 1, 10, 11, 15, 18, 22, 30, 31, 1866.
the tax levy. 25

The episode appears ludicrous, but it was not. The Democrats were determined to make a come-back after suffering discredit during the Civil War. Such a return to power necessitated control of the police since this was the city's largest department. With control of the police went over fifty jobs which could be used as political rewards. It was also said that saloon keepers were known to reward the party which controlled the police and allowed bars to remain open late at night and on Sundays.

This seemingly absurd adventure also demonstrates that the city could function fairly well without any official Council direction for a period of months. Such a fact means two things. First, unlike the period of the late 1870's and after when such disorganization would have been unthinkable, it is clear that the day-to-day functions of the Council committees such as supervision of police and health boards was not imperative for the operation of these organizations, at least for a while. This indicates that city functions were not yet so expanded as they would become. The contingencies which departments had to face without official supervision were obviously not as varied as they would later be. On the other hand, operation of the

25 Ibid., June 12, 13, 16, July 11, 13, 21, 27, 1866. For an example of city intervention on a wide scale see the proposed fire pre-ordinances in Ohio Statesman, January 31, 1866; Journal, January 23, 1877.
government would not have been possible except for a second factor. That was the presence of an incipient bureaucracy. Without some sort of established routine, the police and health boards could not have acted even so well as they did during the period. Thus, one can see that although the official functions of the municipality were not yet "interventionist" as they would soon become, the government of the city had developed considerably since the pre-Civil War days.

What kind of city was this former town becoming? It is clear that population was increasing fairly rapidly and that some force was drawing migrants to Columbus. To what did they come? There had never been any guarantee that the town would become a city. Columbus lacked outstanding resources. Its importance originally came from its being the state's political capital. Geographic centrality assured only that it would be marginally important as a trading center. The National Road had reached the city in 1832, and after that date it was on a primary national transportation artery. Access to the Ohio and Erie Canal after 1833 also increased commercial activity, but not in great proportions. In fact, from its inception it seemed the city was destined to remain only a political center and a small commercial town. The National Road and the canal made Columbus more of a stopping-off point than anything else; it was not a primary commercial or distributing
Neither did the city appear destined to become heavily industrial. From the beginning Columbus possessed a number of diverse, but small, manufacturing firms. This pattern was to remain: a fair amount of industry, but lack of domination by any single one. There were several causes for this phenomenon. First, until 1870 when the Hocking Valley Railroad tapped the rich mineral resources of southeast Ohio, Columbus lacked an abundant source of modern industrial raw material. Its manufacturing concentrated mainly on finishing farm and forest products. Second, its markets were limited both in character and scale, especially since the market hinterlands of Cleveland and Cincinnati were large and had been better established from the beginning than those of Columbus. Third, there was the early lack of any good power source until the application of the steam engine beginning in 1833. Fourth, the entire transportation network radiating from the city was geared to supplying agricultural, not industrial, wants. Even after 1850 when the first railroad reached the city, this pattern remained. In fact, though the advent of the first railroad was hailed as a great boon to the city, it had little immediate economic impact. Fifth, Columbus lacked a large supply of skilled labor, especially until

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the beginning of the German migration in the 1840's, and the absence of a skilled working force kept wages lower than in other cities where craft workers were organized into a more potent force. Additionally, the low state pay scale and use of contract prison labor helped keep wages down and discouraged in-migration of skilled artisans. Finally, the Columbus business community was generally not economically innovative; it was more interested in land and transportation than in industry. There was a "passive opposition to manufacturing." Small manufacturers already settled in the city were not anxious to encourage more local competition.

There was a slight increase in the rate of industrialization after the arrival of the Hocking Valley Railroad in 1870. This road, backed by a large contingency of city businessmen, gave Columbus its first large market for manufactured goods in the mining communities of southeast Ohio. The easy availability of coal was

27 Ibid., 18-33; Walter R. Marvin, "Columbus and the Railroads of Central Ohio Before the Civil War," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1952), 34, 313. Marvin concludes, "The most striking thing about the economic impact of the railroads on Columbus is that... it was so slight during the decade 1850-1860 when raillines were actually beginning to serve it. Even the impact from all four of them starting operations within the brief period of three and one-half years February 1860-September 1853 seems to have left Columbus relatively unmoved." Columbus Dispatch, September 4, 1893, July 3, 1895; Eugene H. Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873 (Columbus, 1944), in Carl Wittke, History of the State of Ohio, III, 28, 41; Lee, History of Columbus, II, 342; Board of Trade Report for 1887, 5. Compare this Columbus business conservatism to that of Chicago's aggressive
attractive to industry, and it also made Columbus a center for hauling the product. The timber and natural gas now attainable acted as a further spur to industrialization. The greatest hope of those who did want Columbus to become a large industrial center was that the city's iron industry would grow to large proportions. Such hopes, however, were never realized, and small shops continued to dominate the industrial scene after 1870. The city's largest firm in the 1880's was the Columbus Car and Wheel Works, employing only 400 men. Production of carriages and railroad products were important for the remainder of the nineteenth century, but no single industry, such as the manufacture of iron, gained a dominant hold. 28

Underneath this current of small shops and lack of heavy industrialism ran the conservatism of the business community. It is, of course, simplistic to speak of a business "community" when discussing so large an entity as a city approaching a population of 100,000, but generally speaking the daring entrepreneur with the risk capital never appeared. The more influential conservatives were able to give the city the business tone they favored. "Don't

businessmen; Bessie L. Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, The Rise of a Modern City, 1871-1893 (New York, 1940), 117.

28. Hunker, Industrial Evolution of Columbus, 42-49. By 1890 the city was served by fifteen railroad lines.
make economic waves" could easily have been the motto of the Board of Trade. 29

A final general factor retarded great industrial development. This was the presence of a great optimism that Columbus could not do otherwise than succeed industrially. Boosters had insisted from the foundation of the city that its location made almost any sort of economic endeavor a guaranteed success. This type of thinking led to complacency and the absence of hard efforts to make the city prosper more than it already did. Those who felt it took work to make Columbus grow were faced with the reality that booster propaganda had worked better on the inhabitants of the city than on anyone else. 30

The population that worked in the small manufacturing enterprises in Columbus grew rapidly after the Civil War, but it tended to remain largely homogeneous and "native." In 1880, at a time when other American cities were being inundated by the foods of European migrants, Columbus claimed 82 per cent of its population

29 Dispatch, October 18, 1886; July 31, 1889; Robert H. Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement (Chicago, 1968), especially 179-224, demonstrates persuasively on a national scale the futility of using a simple monolithic concept of "business." Such also proved the case on the local scale in Columbus.

30 Dispatch, August 1, 1889; November 2, 1898; Ohio State Journal, October 28, 1874; January 16, 1875; November 6, 1879; December 27, 1880.
was native born. By 1900 this high figure had risen to over 90 percent; in that year less than seven percent of the population was black. 31

The largest single ethnic group to populate the city was German. Clustered in the area south of downtown, the Columbus Germans whose migrations to the city had begun in the 1840's did not present what could be termed an "ethnic problem" to the city. There was some antagonism toward them, but it stemmed primarily from the immigrants' importation of the continental Sunday rather than from any purely racist interpretation of newcomers. Although the Germans were fairly successful in maintaining some of their original culture, they were integrated into the new milieu socially and politically by the 1870's. By that time the outbreaks of nativism which had occurred in the city during the pre-Civil War decade were a thing of the past, and Germans were prominent in city government. They remained staunch supporters of the Democratic ticket throughout the period. 32

Jews and Italians comprised the most important "other" ethnic groups in the city. The number of Jews in the city

31 Hunker, Industrial Evolution of Columbus, 41.

32 For typical anti-German bias see the Dispatch, July 17, 1889; Margaret Sittler, "The German Element in Columbus Before the Civil War," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1932), 5-17, 71-79
in the period after the Civil War is difficult to determine but lack of overt prejudice against them indicates the group was not large and semites in the city conformed relatively well to what middle Ohioans expected of them. The Italians, numbering only about 1100 by 1900, were the least respected of the new Americans. Bearing the onus of Roman Catholicism during the 1890's in addition to that of unskilled labor earning low wages, Columbus Italians were the subjects of villification and religious bigotry. Their small numbers and lack of interest in politics made most sorts of political or legal redress impossible. After 1893 the problems of unemployment caused the feeling against Sicilians and Campaniaians to rise since the consensus was that these immigrants competed unfairly with native workers.

Blacks comprised only a small portion of the city's population. With the outstanding exception of the Reverend James Poindexter no Negro in Columbus was actively engaged in politics or publically visible. Blacks traditionally performed duties as laborers and domestics. This group voted Republican, and although white

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politicians occasionally courted the black vote, the overall political power of the minority was rather slight. For example, after the 1899 election where black votes were important in securing the election of Republican Mayor Sam Swartz, the promised patronage was far greater than the actual delivery after election time.  

The presence of these minorities in the city obviously sometimes gave certain sections a "foreign" flavor. Sunday liquor sales, strongly favored by the Germans and generally opposed by the natives, was a real issue. Yet, these differences were not great; they did not divide the city into hostile camps opposed on every issue. Political party preference was a much more potent force leading to division, and this basis for opposition was quite American. The result was that strikes or similar upsets which could easily divide a city were not so divisive in Columbus as they were in places where the presence of overt ethnic hostilities made an already delicate situation even more so.  

35Dispatch, April 11, 29, 1899; see also Journal, July 2, 1879.  

36The events of a street car employees strike in early summer 1890 show the general sympathy of Columbustes for worker problems. See Dispatch, June 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 1890. The strikers received a token pay raise. In 1892 and 1893, however, the public (and the police) were less sympathetic. Dispatch, September 10, 12, November 8, 9, 10, 12, 1892; April 12, October 24, 25, 1893. Even at these times there was no violence, and a part of the public's reluctance to sympathize with the strikers stemmed from fear of economic problems in 1893, not from a broad hatred of strikes or laborers. Cf. Melvin Holli, Reform in Detroit, 40-41, for a similar reaction.
The population growth of Columbus, the rise in number of railroads serving the city, the relative increase in manufacturing and in services provided by the municipality, the formation of numerous professional groups in the 1870's and 1880's, and an increased civic concern clearly point to the phenomenon of urbanization. Columbus was becoming a city.

One indication of the metamorphosis is a commentary provided by two of the city's most famous citizens. William Dean Howells spent much of his youth in Columbus, and in 1914 he wrote what the city had been like in the 1850's. His description may have been somewhat tempered by nostalgia, but Howells' comments clearly support the view that Columbus was not "urban" in the pre-Civil War decade. The dean of American letters began his essay by remembering the awe he felt when viewing the unfinished state capital building; it would cost over a million dollars, a large sum for any building in 1851. Columbus was then, he noted, a "small city" of about 20,000, "and though it had already begun to busy itself with manufacturing... the industries... were still in their beginning." For page after page the essayist described the informality of Columbus high society in the 1850's. He remembered

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37 The Columbus Board of Trade, discussed in the following chapter, was the primary example, but during this period local attorneys, ministers, physicians, and other professionals organized occupational groups.
the ease with which a young newspaper reporter could visit the governor's mansion or any house he cared to enter. This clearly meant "small town." On the negative side, Howells noted that rain and rats were the only street cleaners of those days. After a heavy rain, the streets might be practically impassable. The town was "not pretty," nor was it well endowed with restaurants or hotels.

About five years before Howells wrote his article, the renown social gospeler, Washington Gladden, remembered what the city had been like in 1882. As a man of God, Gladden's concerns with Columbus were somewhat different from those of a man of letters, but one still gets the clear impression that thirty years had seen much change in the city. First of all, the population had grown to around 50,000. Yet, "Columbus, on the physical side, was rather crude; few of its streets were paved, its lighting was primitive, its domestic architecture was not, as a rule, a delight to the eyes." But more positively Columbus had become important as the political and philanthropic center of the state. It was the site of the state university and institutions for the blind, the deaf, the feebleminded, and the criminal. Gladden noted that businessmen of the city were economically conservative, that growth in the town had been "solid and steady" and not much given to booms. He did not discover Howells' social informality, and he could have noted
that shortly after the Civil War newspapers had begun printing
lists of those persons receiving guests on New Year's Day; pre-
viously, it had been assumed that all homes were open for casual
company on this day. Nor did he note that July 4, 1876, was the
last time national independence had been toasted in a single,
city-wide celebration. 39

38 William Dean Howells, "In An Old-time State Capital,"
Harper's Magazine, CXIX (September, October, November, 1914),
593-97, 740-49, 923-24; Washington Gladden, Recollections
(Boston and New York 1909), 284-86.

39 Ohio State Journal, January 1, 1871; July 6, 1877, August 12,
1878.
CHAPTER II

URBANIZATION AND MUNICIPAL THEORY

Washington Gladden and William Dean Howells together were observing one of the great historical trends of the nineteenth century. The growth of Columbus was congruent with what was happening elsewhere in the United States and throughout the world.¹

The rise of cities gradually led to scholarly examination of the phenomenon, and since the advent of urban sociology at the University of Chicago in the late 1910's, there has been a running debate on just what the concept of urbanization entails. The definitions of this idea are legion. Students of the subject, be they historians, sociologists, or urban planners often emphasize different elements of the concept making the problem even more difficult. A brief survey of the literature on urbanization, however, reveals the confusion is not so great as it may first appear.

With variations, there are three basic definitions of "urban." The oldest is the simplest. Urbanism is simply the growth of large

cities. Such a hypothesis was suggested in the nineteenth century,
and today it remains an integral part of any definition of the con­cept. 2 Following this early explanation, sociologists became
less concerned with arriving at a firmer definition. Early in the
twentieth century they began to concentrate more on description of
cities with less concern about exactly what they were describing.
The Robert Park school of urban sociologists, for example, bur­
geoning in the late 1910's in Chicago, posited the hypothesis that
cities grew in concentric zones, each having special ecological
qualities. This type of sociology led to all sorts of neighborhood
studies, attempts to formulate a typology of cities, and in-depth
analyses of census tract data. It did little, however, to extend
the definition of urban from meaning only having a large population
in a small area. 3

2See, for example, Weber, Growth of Cities. Size is included
in all modern definitions of "urbanization." The essays in Scott
Greer et al (eds.), The New Urbanization (New York, 1968) are
illustrative of this point; Leo F. Schnore and Eric Lampard,
"Social Science and the City: A Survey of Research Needs," in
Social Science and the City: A Survey of Urban Research (New York,
1968), 24, 26.

3The series of essays in Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Bur­
gess (eds.), The City (Chicago, 1925), is a typical example of this
sociological approach; see especially, Burgess, "The Growth of
Harvey W. Zorbaugh, "The Natural Areas of a City," Publications
of the American Sociological Society, XX (1926), 188-97, is typical
of neighborhood studies noted. For Columbus, see R.D. McKenzie,
The Neighborhood: A Study of Local Life in the City of Columbus.
In the 1930's, however, Louis Wirth wrote what has become a classic formulation of the urban concept. "Urbanism As A Way of Life" commenced by noting—as had earlier studies—that one of the distinctive features of modern man was his tendency to settle in huge population aggregates relatively removed from organic nature. Cities, claimed Wirth, had become the controlling centers of almost every aspect of modern life, and this had more importance for the inhabitants than the fact of mere numbers. Wirth defined a city as a "relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals." As such it had three very important characteristics. It was, first, the seat of a large population. Such meant—at least in modern industrial society—that true urban conglomerates were places of great variation in occupational grouping, cultural orientation, ethnicity, and general life style. Second, the city was not only heavily populated, it was dense. This trait, Wirth argued, meant that while

Ohio (Chicago, 1925). The most sophisticated attempt to create an urban typology to date is Jeffrey K. Hadden and Edgar F. Borgotta, American Cities: Their Social Characteristics (Chicago, 1965), wherein the authors type every U.S. of greater than 50,000 according to numerous factors such as total population, degree of industrialization, educational levels, etc.


5 Compare this with Gideon J. Sjoberg, The Pre-Industrial City (New York, 1966).
physical contact among individuals was close, social contact, because of social and economic heterogeneity, was distant. The place of work was highly differentiated from the home; the city was generally segregated into various types of neighborhoods. Such a mosaic pattern was very apt to cause jealousy among different sections. Competition and mutual exploitation were likely to arise. As a result, formal controls had to be instituted to counteract potential, and sometimes actual, disorder and irresponsibility. Third, the city was heterogeneous. Diversity tended to break down caste lines and complicate the social structure. Heightened geographical and perhaps social mobility forced individuals into diverse social groups where no single group could command the undivided attention or loyalty of a citizen.

Expatiating on these basic characteristics of urbanism, Wirth discussed the difference between rural and urban life styles. City birth rates were lower, foreigners more prevalent, women more numerous, and a larger proportion of the population in the prime of life. Socially, the urbanite relied to a much greater extent than did his rural counterpart on secondary personal contacts rather than primary ones. Weakened kinship bonds, a decline in the importance of the neighborhood, and the undermining of traditional social solidarity all characterised "urbanism as a way of life."
Thus, according to this new definition, not only was the city a large population aggregate, but those persons living in the city experienced a different social organization making their personal lives, goals, and activities somewhat alien to the non-city dweller. In spite of numerous attacks on the Wirth hypothesis, it has stood as a sound definition of urbanism and as an excellent description of what happens when an area becomes urban. Wirth's detractors have generally engaged in an ineffective, if not pedantic, sniping action that has changed some minor points of his conceptualization but has left the basic structure intact.

A third definition of urbanism supplements Wirth's and changes his emphasis somewhat. One of the foremost exponents of this broader concept is Scott Greer. Greer argues that urbanization is not just a phenomenon of cities. Urbanization, he says, affects whole nations, if not the world. It molds the life-style of the ruralite almost as much as that of the urbanite. Basic to understanding this concept of urbanization is Greer's (and others')

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6 Wirth's attackers have engaged in guerilla warfare in various ways. For example, though not a direct attack on Wirth, Wendell Bell and Marion D. Boat, "Urban Neighbors and Informal Social Relations," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXII (January 1967), 391-98, found a higher than to be expected degree of informal neighboring in all types of economic areas they surveyed; they add, however, that men are more likely to meet good friends at work than in their neighborhood.

idea of an increase in the "scale" of life. Such an increase means
greater complexity, though not necessarily depth, of interpersonal
relations and a widening of the zone of urban influence. Given
this phenomenon, urban dwellers take on the characteristics
mentioned by Wirth, but so do those not living in cities. In effect,
whole nations become hinterlands, socially, politically, economi­

cally, and culturally of national urban centers. Thus all life styles
are subject to change: the wife of the Kansas farmer looks to Paris
and New York to decide what style dress she wants to buy. Within
the city, relationships are enlarged, complicated and depersonalized.
The machine makes possible a host of intricate operations previous­
ly difficult, if not impossible. Telephones, typewriters, and
electric street cars, all innovations of the late nineteenth century,
sped the pace of urban life, increased its scale—and the scale of
all the nation. 8

8 Some of the effects that Greer and other exponents of the
"increase-of-societal-scale theory" of urbanization posit are
obviously more directly related to modern industrialism than
urbanism alone. The mix of urbanization and industrialization is
exceedingly complex and determination of the necessary and suf­

cient cause of either alone is as yet an unsolved problem. Suf­

tice it to say that each encouraged the other in a vast spiraling
effect—e.g. the industrial and technological advance of rapid tele­
phonic communication contributed to the efficiency of every city

group and organization; on the other hand, technological progress
was an urban phenomenon in that most nineteenth century inventions
came out of cities. It should also be noted that Greer's formulation
of the concept has a western bias in that many emerging nations of
today have immense metropolitan centers but have not successfully
One can see that in their basic form these three conceptions of urbanism are more complementary than contradictory. It is interesting to note that after the Civil War, Columbus began to fit all these definitions of urban. It was rapidly becoming a settlement of some size. Wirth would have discovered urbanism in Columbus in the growing population, the increasing density manifested by more use of street car travel and the necessity of getting downtown, the presence of varied ethnic groups in the city, and the rise of blatant sectionalism, with each section—especially the north and south ends—competing for all the government services it could get without consideration of other areas. Such sectionalism in Columbus led, as Wirth would have hypothesized, to formal attempts by various groups, including the government, to create a more united city. Wirth would also have noted the rise of formal organizations after the Civil War. Apparently, the less formal primary relations no longer satisfied the needs of the citizenry for a host of formal groups now acted where before there had been only a few.  

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exported urbanism to the hinterlands. Consider the case of Rio de Janeiro and western Brazil.

Greer would note the general increase of urban dominance throughout the United States and see Columbus's growth as a part of the larger pattern. Specifically, he would note the enlargement of the city's economic hinterland after the opening of the Hocking Valley Railroad and the heightened awareness that Columbus was becoming urban. The "increase in scale" so popular with this school of urbanists would be noted in the expansion of governmental activities, the widened social and economic activity made possible by technological advances such as the electric street car, an increase in banking and postal receipts, and more local news in the newspapers, to mention just a few. Thus by any definition, or by all definitions, Columbus, if not already urban, certainly was becoming so.

In their attempt to formulate a conceptual definition of urbanism, sociologists have generally noted characteristics of cities and city dwellers without making normative statements about the effects of traits they were discovering and cataloging. Increasing heterogeneity, for example, was a fact of urban life, and researchers were primarily interested in seeking devices for operationalization of the concept; secondarily, they studied the impact of this phenomenon on the complete city. And so it was with the other factors that concerned scholars.
To those persons living in urban settlements, however, growth and complexity posed specific and often very pressing problems. Like men experiencing any kind of rapid change, they were aware that something new was in the offing, but they were not sure exactly what the final result was going to be. Citizens recognized, for example, that Columbus was growing rapidly, but they apparently did not foresee many of the ramifications of such growth. As a result the solutions proposed for perceived problems were often piecemeal. In actuality, no one can blame the administrators for a lack of total awareness of the processes they were involved in, for reformers were too close to the action to perceive it with even the limited objectivity possible today. But they did react.

The reactions of men concerned with urban change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries go by various names. Generally, historians have called the late 1800's an era of municipal reform and the following years the "age of progressivism." Progressivism was mainly different from its forerunner in that it was national and concerned with much larger problems than was municipal reform, but in a sense both were reactions to an increasingly complex social, economic, and political structure.

Viewed one way, the men and women who go by the name of reformers were not so innovative as the name implies. They were often doing only the minimum necessary to keep the new cities
viable. Successful reformers always worked within the extant system of government seeking to make political and social forms more amenable to the perceived new order. They were seldom truly on the offensive, but their rhetoric made them sound as though they were sounding a trumpet of the future. It takes no complex theories of status revolution, climate for cooperation, or alienated intellectuals to explain the actions of most of these urban reformers. 10

Very simply, urban dwellers recognized certain problems that practically cried out for a quick solution. The attempt to solve an apparently simple, non-political dilemma such as getting a street paved in reality posed tens of other problems in almost every imaginable category. Paving a street meant going through a city government that was often lax, if not corrupt, in supervising the execution of contracts; it sometimes meant a cogent demonstration of the inability of city government to act in an

10Cf. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York, 1955), Chapter 4, where the argument is that loss of social status led men to become reformers; David P. Thelen, "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism," Journal of American History, LVI (September 1969), 323-41, hypothesizes that not social tension, but the ability of men to cooperate led to the reform movement on a national scale; Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963 (New York, 1965), argues that many of the "radicals" of the progressive era were intellectuals alienated from general American culture; in The Triumph of Conservatism (Chicago, 1963), Gabriel Kolko finds that reformers were large businessmen attempting to reduce economic competition.
efficient, businesslike manner; it always meant the intrusion of partisanship into an area many felt should be non-political; it posed innumerable technical problems; it presented social problems in the questions of whom to hire—the unemployed, aliens, cheap labor or more skilled but more expensive workers, convicts, or Democrats? It clearly posed economic and fiscal dilemmas—whom to tax, how much, when, and so on. Such problems were perceived more strongly by some men than others. Those whose businesses were adversely affected by poor city services would be more apt to have an interest in making the municipality efficient. Taxpayers would logically be more concerned about where their money was going and how wisely it was being spent than non-property holders.

Given urbanization and its consequent problems, American political theorists and reformers in the 1880's and 1890's began to develop plans for changing city government forms to make them more amenable to the recent growth of towns and the new municipal functions. 12 Nationally, this theorizing was a process of give-

11 This is not to say that the theories of reform hypothesized by the authors cited above have no use. Clearly some who were "reformers" were motivated by loss of status or the desire to produce a more rational economy. In Columbus, however, "reform" was a much more straight-forward activity. Certain changes did need to be made, and those who worked for reform naturally would advocate the sorts of systems that they felt would be to their best interest.

12 This concern is evidenced in the number of articles concerning urban affairs printed at this time; during 1882-92 twice the number
and-take debate which went on many years before ideas began to solidify. We are not here concerned with the national argument over what was "best," but a presentation of some of the ideas discussed on the national scale will help the reader put what was happening in Columbus into a more realistic frame of reference.

There were in the late nineteenth century three broad faults which theorists and popular writers found in cities. First, they saw a need for greater public concern with the activities of government and a concomitant need for better men in politics. Second, writers wanted greater administrative efficiency in municipal government. Third, theorists desired a form of government that would easily permit interested citizens to discover where responsibility for a fault or good deed lay. The popular literature of the period is rich in discussions of the need for municipal reform. A survey of some of this will explain just how reformers saw the problems of urbanization and how their solutions would theoretically work.

The cry for better men in politics was universal in the post-Civil War period. On every level of government reformers felt that one solution to the recognized problems would be to get the rascals out. This proposal was no less important on the municipal level than it was in the national government.

of such essays as had been written in the previous eighty years appeared; Frank Mann Stewart, A Half Century of Reform: A History of the National Municipal League (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950), 3-4.
than the national level. In the 1880's American municipal governments were pronounced the "worst in Christendom." One reason for this state noted the crusading E. L. Godkin was a decline in the "anglo-Saxon tradition" of "respectability" in politics. Other explanations for this decline ranged from the general depravity of man to the corrupting influence of a new immigration supposedly unschooled in the ways of an honest democratic state. One obvious solution was more education for voters. In times of pessimism, especially during depression when the new immigrant was feared because it was commonly felt he would work for lower wages than "natives," such a suggestion took back seat to the hue and cry for immigration restriction. But generally the urban theorists were confident that the correct method of getting bad men out of politics was not so drastic. Writers generally argued that the problem with government was a lack of democracy epitomized in boss rule. In such a state it was reasonable for voters and especially the "better elements" to be apathetic. "The people," given the opportunity, would vote for the honest candidate if they

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15 Dispatch, April 22, 1880; July 10, 1897.
thought he might win. The reformers thus hypothesized that government needed to be purified so that the good candidate would have a real chance. In sum, the way to get the best men into politics was to awaken the citizenry to the existing graft and inefficiency in his government and make him aware that he could be a potent force in improving the situation. It would be to his self-interest to do so.

The second fault perceived by writers of the period was inefficiency in city governments. Inefficiency meant that taxes were higher than they need be, that urban services were not provided as fast as they might be, and that a city's government in general had not kept pace with change. There is no doubt that such indictments of municipal administration were true. Observers were quick to point out that American cities need not be poorly paved, lighted, and cleaned. European cities were efficient; they followed scientific advice on technical questions and were therefore less

subject to political jobbery. American cities could learn a lesson.

A most obvious lesson, the reformers thought, was that politics did not interfere with administration so much in European cities as it did in the United States. The theorists argued strongly that the vast majority of municipal functions were in no way political. They noted that a man's position on the tariff question, for example, should have no bearing on how he voted on municipal lighting. Logically, politics probably should have made little or no difference, but in fact it did. It was important mainly because political patronage made every question of city government, even those theoretically purely technical, a question of party. The articulated solution to this problem was to make city government more administrative and to make the head administrator visible to all. If council passed an ordinance requiring the paving of a street, the decision of who should pave and with what should be publically decided on fiscal and technical grounds by a mayor. Such decision, the reformers hoped, would virtually make themselves in cut-and-dried fashion. This view of the city as a business-type corporation gained

in popularity as the spoils system wreaked havoc with municipal expenditures and as state legislative interference made prediction in government virtually impossible.  

Finally, theorists noted the need for responsibility in government. The board system of government made it possible for governmental officials safely to shift the blame for mismanagement or corruption to others. Further, boards were usually elected on a rotating basis so that a complete membership turn-over might take years to effect. Frequent elections, a truly executive mayor responsible for his entire department and constant publicity leading more citizen interest were the means suggested of effecting the requisite location of responsibility.  

The three "faults" noted above were general. There were numerous variations on these themes, and outstanding reform mayors usually had peculiar schemes of their own. But for  


\[19\] Will, "Reform," 556.  

two reasons these general ideas are important in this context.
First, they represented part of a national consensus on municipal reform. Second, because Columbus never had any single reformer so outstanding as "Golden Rule" Jones of Toledo or Hazen S. Pingree of Detroit the city reformers were able to draw on the entire body of reform suggestions without having to suffer the pet schemes of a powerful individual.21

One of the best ways of determining exactly what reformers of the period were striving for is to examine a document that was the logical consummation of national reform efforts after about 1880. A Municipal Program, written in 1897 by members of the reform-minded National Municipal League, provides a convenient synopsis of what the League saw as desirable and also what it saw as possible.22

The Program began with a history of American municipal government forms from colonial days to the late nineteenth century. An everpresent theme in this brief resume is the increase in scale

21Theodore Glaab and Robert Brown, A History of Urban America (New York, 1967), argue that Jones and Johnson were atypical reformers, that reformers usually were more "business oriented;" 215.

22The Program is reproduced completely in National Municipal League, A Municipal Program (New York, 1900). For scholarly comments see especially Clinton Rogers Woodruff, "An American Municipal Program," Political Science Quarterly, XVIII (March 1903).
of municipal functions. For example, New York City in 1810 with a population of about 100,000 spent $100,000; a similar sized city in 1898 would spend one to two million dollars on expanded activity like fire fighting or street paving and on entirely new functions like garbage disposal, street cleaning, and street lighting. As cities grew, noted the author, the spoils available made them more and more political pawns. This situation was especially worrisome in cities where control moved often from one party to the other. 23

Moving to a general discussion of the "Municipal Problem in the United States," the authors found that a paucity of delegated power and legislative political interference sharply reduced the efficiency of city government. The Program noted that since the main functions of urban centers were "administrative," that is business-like, there could logically be no political differences on most questions. "The remedy is plain. The city must govern itself." Home rule would hopefully reduce both legislative meddling and local partisan activity. The authors expressed optimism that given the opportunity citizens would rush for the chance to govern themselves and that they would do a good job of it. 24

Concerning the proper role of city councils and mayors, the Program advocated a strict dichotomy between the mayoral execution and council's making of policy. "The treatment of the administrative service as political patronage renders both administration inefficient and legislation corrupt." Since "municipal government is business," it would function best if the council acted mostly as a board of directors and left the daily running of the city to the mayor.  

To increase public interest and encourage fiscal responsibility, the authors urged municipalities to present systematically financial data so the public could more easily reach intelligent conclusions. "Wearied of the uncertainties of the city's financial management, the population is soon prepared to turn over public services to private corporations." Strict accounting would ameliorate this chronic problem. City debts should be restricted, but not at the expense of true progress.  

York, and New Jersey, 1893-1896 (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1965), "172-76, for a brief discussion of the role of politics in New York attempts to produce home rule. The difficulties "reformers" had in the state legislature in that state in 1894 were remarkably similar to those that Columbus reformers faced.

25 Municipal Program, 74-76.

26 Ibid., 93, 102, 114.
The optimistic theme of increased voter participation was present in practically every section of the "Program." In a discussion of the problem of municipal franchises, the author states,

There is much force in the argument that so long as each voter can directly affect the character and conduct of his local government, his interest in it will be proportional to the number, importance, and directness of different ways in which that government serves and affects him... So far as it becomes the servile instrument of private corporations in which he has no voice or share, he will cease to respect or care for it.

And it should be remembered that a large majority of the voters have no private property directly subject to assessment, and are therefore much more likely to have an interest in the management of their public property and public services than they are in any questions of municipal income or rates of taxation. If we want the people to develop higher civic ideals, we must enlarge the scope and importance of city government. 27

In conclusion, the authors noted three familiar municipal evils. They were the corrupt use of civic power for personal goals, a habit that made "political" a pejorative term; second, lack of economic efficiency; and third, the political and social

27Ibid., 124-25. The question of municipal franchises was a relatively late development in the growth of municipal reform. The flamboyant attempts of Mayor Tom Johnson in Cleveland to secure the three-cent fare for street-car passengers has perhaps led to a slight historical exaggeration of the importance of this particular type of reform. See also, 146, 149, 150-51, 154; Dispatch, November 8, 1899.
evil of inadequate service to the people. The causes ascribed to these phenomena were likewise familiar: ignorance, partisanship, indefinite municipal organization, state interference, lack of "civic consciousness," inadequate municipal power, and the absence of effective democracy.  

Finally, the Program presented an important series of specific suggestions. To correct ignorance on the part of voters and government alike, the merit system should be initiated, and there should be strict periodic financial reports to the public. The latter would increase financial responsibility. To hasten a decline in partisanship municipal elections would be separate from state and national ones; nomination for office should be by petition, not party convention or primary; and the civil service system would prohibit political assessments. To prevent negative state interference, the main outlines of a state's municipal system should be constitutionally incorporated. To combat indefinite organization and irresponsibility, only the mayor and council were to be elected, the mayor to be responsible for the entire executive department and all appointments. To make the system more democratic and less prone to factionalism there would be city-wide elections with proportional representation to provide for minority represen-

Such was the national consummation of the need for a true urban reform platform. The Program was nowhere fully implemented, and there were those who called it radical. What is interesting is that this program, written in 1897-98, was very close to the reforms that had been suggested some years earlier in Columbus. Such a statement is not intended to demonstrate that Columbus was in the vanguard of municipal reform theory or practice, but it does suggest that the city was clearly in the mainstream national activity. A cursory examination of the ideas and wants of Columbus "reformers" will make this clearer.

The independent Columbus Evening Dispatch provides a good indicator of reform ideas in the city. During the years after the Civil War it carried on an unceasing crusade to introduce a more efficient system for city government. It agitated the old concerns of street cleaning and paving as well as favoring a host of other urban services. A new form of government gradually

29 Ibid., 229-37. Although proportional representation is seen by Sam Hays as a means of providing for better representation of city-wide economic interests and opposed to more "democratic" reform, the Program's system was based on the rationale that a complete city would be more difficult to corrupt than a single ward; minorities and special interests would be represented in this system. See Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LV (October 1966), 157-69.
became desirable to the editors; this was quite similar to the form advocated in the Municipal League's document. The Dispatch constantly harangued apathetic voters and urged "better" men to enter politics. Partisanship was the nemesis of city government: it led to a host of evils ranging from waste to outright dishonesty.

The cures for these faults favored by the Dispatch will become clearer in later discussions of specific events, but an overview of the ideas being discussed in Columbus can be gained by examining Washington Gladden's *The Cosmopolis City Club*. Published in 1893, this book contains the minister's personal thoughts on the methods of reform, ideas congruent with those of the Dispatch and most Columbus groups specifically interested in reform. Since Gladden had been in Ohio's capital since 1882 and had been publically concerned with improving city government and morality since 1885, it is safe to assume that a large portion of *The Cosmopolis City Club* reflected his experiences and his goals for Columbus.

Gladden began with an indictment that was becoming typical. The "inertia, rascality, and inefficiency" in city government had caused a decline of public interest and knowledge of local government. Men of station had despaired of effecting real changes and had thus abandoned government to base political types. Cast in the framework of a novel, the discussion continued with the
assumption that although men might disagree on particular ideas on city government, all could agree, no matter what their other interests, on the need for an honest, efficient government. The need was to clarify and purify public opinion so that it could act intelligently. Once again the desire for municipal patriotism was evident.

Gladden summarized the municipal dilemma under five heads: new technical problems and possibilities had led to corruption and jobbery; the city, imaginary in the novel, possessed a restrictive outdated charter; the legislature too often interfered to the detriment of the city and its population; there appeared to be a general lack of respect for the law among all groups; and the "natural leaders" neglected their "duty." In addition, Gladden argued that the board system sprang from a fear of democracy and made the locus of responsibility so nebulous that even concerned voters could not figure out who the rascals were. 30

One can easily see that the actual Columbus, its society and its government, was far from the norm that reformers adopted. It is also apparent that there was little interest in solving what we would today call social problems. True, there were efforts to rid the city of tramps by erection of a work house, and in the 1880's

reformers' efforts led to the creation of a short-lived Charity Organization Society. But compared to the attempts of citizens to get better government and more decent city services, these social reforms were ephemeral. They never aroused so much interest as other attempts to produce change. 31

There is one other sort of reform effort present in the city that has not yet specifically been mentioned. This was the assault against vice. In one sense it was a moralistic crusade to rid the city of prostitution, gambling, and illegal alcohol. But in spite of the convenience of this categorization it would be simplistic to say that this operation was the product of mere bigotry, prudish religious intolerance, or nativism. It was, without a doubt, all of these things, but it was also more. Businessmen, though not giving this moral crusade top priority, tended to support it because they felt Sunday saloon closing would cause a decline in Monday worker absenteeism; law and order advocates felt less alcohol would lead to less crime, especially if saloons would close at the prescribed midnight hour. 32

By way of concluding this introduction of Columbus and

31 This is not to say that governmental change could not produce desirable social change, but any such changes were not the first priority.

32 See Chapter 4.
Columbus reformers, a general note concerning what "groups" or types of people were most interested in change is in order. First on the list was the Columbus Board of Trade. This body of men, from the time of the organization's founding in 1884, worked diligently to secure a new type of city government. Secondly, two municipal "theorists" should be mentioned. Washington Gladden, author of The Cosmopolis City Club spoke and wrote often on the subject. Taken together his ideas form a coherent whole, and eventually they were partially put into practice. Henry C. Noble is the second man whose ideas seem to have had a great influence on Columbus's urban reformers. Attorney, businessman, and Board of Trade member, Noble in retirement was also a strong worker in the cause of reform. Third, a very nebulous group of men, and a few women, were concerned with moral reformation of the city. These included many of the city's clergy, some businessmen, and an amalgamam of "others". Perhaps one reason for the failure to achieve any lasting moral reform in the city was the amorphous character of this group.

Who was not included? And who voiced outright opposition to the reform proposals? Perhaps most notable in opposition were the politicians who felt that they stood to lose by any change whatsoever. Democrats typically favored reform when they were out of power, but the motives of this political group make their
true rationale for reform suspect, to say the least. A second group that does not appear in the reform column were those who openly enjoyed the activities characterised by reformers as immoral. Most important here was the German population of the city which traditionally enjoyed beer on Sunday. Very often they viewed any attempt to enforce Sunday closing ordinances as anti-German. They were sometimes correct. Labor was a third group which did not appear reform-oriented in the period of the eighties and nineties. At least three factors explain this group's non-participation. First, since Columbus was not a heavily industrialized city, the growth or organized labor was slow. The Columbus Trades and Labor Assembly represented primarily those apparently satisfied workers who engaged in skilled occupations. Thus, there was no well-organized union or group of unions which was militantly unhappy with the way the city was being administered. Second, it must be remembered that during this period of periodic depressions both non-union and union workers were faced with economic hardships. It has been demonstrated that such conditions lead the employed to be more concerned with immediate bread-and-butter issues than with somewhat theoretical government reform efforts. And even more basic issues, like wages and hours, were troublesome for the city's workers. At a time when strikes were rampant through the rest of the nation there were not many strikes
in Columbus. And Columbus workers did not win one of their major strike efforts. This phenomenon indicates the marginal position of organized labor in the city and suggests that political reforms did not in themselves evoke a positive response from workers as individuals. Since most of the laboring force of the city was propertyless, it was not deeply concerned with tax rates. Municipal government generally did not intrude into the life of the worker. When it did, it was just as often to give him a pork barrel job just before election time as it was to appear inefficient. So in a sense the worker, and especially the unemployed one, stood to profit from the inefficient and expensive system so abhorred by the reformer. It was naturally difficult for workers to appreciate the argument that they should be deeply concerned with the broad changes in government the reformers were urging; these reforms just did not affect them. So they remained outside the movements.

It is evident that those Columbusites who were interested in reforming the city were by no means a majority. The data available suggest that those who were willing to take their reform ideals

33 For example see Dispatch, October 25, 1893.

34 Joseph Huthmacher, "Urban Liberalism and the Age of Reform," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIX (September 1962), 231–41, argues the workingmen played a significant role in urban reform in the early twentieth century. This was not the case in late nineteenth-century Columbus.
to their logical conclusions and attempt to remove partisanship completely from the city were an even smaller group. Such a game of numbers meant that in no case would the exponents of change be totally successful. Moderate goals would clearly have a much greater chance of success than grand plans. Grandiose schemes had the effect of arousing an otherwise apathetic majority which was willing to acquiesce to some change but which would not permit overwhelming change in the system which ran the city.
CHAPTER III
THE BOARD OF TRADE AS A REFORM AGENCY

Of all Columbus's religious and secular organizations none was so consistently concerned with reforming city government and improving urban services as the Board of Trade. The Columbus Board of Trade, which became the Chamber of Commerce in the 1910's, was a multi-faceted organization. Unlike its counterparts in larger industrial and commercial cities like Chicago, its primary function was not to provide a place for business transactions; rather, the Columbus Board of Trade building served mainly as a noon meeting place where businessmen discussed social, political, and business issues.¹ Its monthly meetings touched on topics ranging from railroad rate discrimination to the Spanish-American War to the necessity for pure water. Although the Board was clearly not established as a reform group, its organizational format

¹Cf. Bessie L. Pierce, History of Chicago, II, From Town to City: 1848-1871 (New York, 1940) 77-79. The Columbus Board of Trade was more akin to the Chicago Commercial Club, an elite group of businessmen who proposed to boost the city and engage in general civic reform. See Pierce, III, The Rise of a Modern City, 1871-1893 (New York, 1957), 190.
left ample room for members to discuss urban problems.

The first permanent board of trade in the city was established in 1884, the heir of several earlier abortive attempts to found a businessmen's organization. As early as July 1858 a group of men had met in City Hall to "promote integrity, good feeling and just and equitable principles in business transactions" and "to protect the rights and advance the commercial, mercantile and manufacturing interests of the city." This first Board of Trade, however, proved short-lived; it disappeared from the Columbus scene during the excitement of the Civil War. A second attempt to establish a permanent organization occurred in 1866, but again with lack of support from the business community, the endeavor foundered.

In 1872 Columbus business again attempted to organize. The city's third Board of Trade was preceded by almost a year of newspaper agitation which asserted that a Board could perform the normally expected functions of such an organization as well as bring the city "to its deserved station," a position which indicated that molders of public opinion in Columbus expected to compete with larger Ohio municipalities like Cleveland and Cincinnati.

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2 Quoted in Osman C. Hooper, _History of The City of Columbus, Ohio_ (Columbus, n.d.), 263.

3 Ibid.; _Ohio Statesman_, July 2, 1866.
The organizers of the Board wanted to promote integrity and good faith in business activities, encourage the "just principles" of business, discover and correct any abuses in the business sphere, establish and maintain uniformity in commercial transactions, and gather business statistics such that businessmen might know just how the city stood in its quest to secure new industry. This set of five specific goals was broader than those of the two earlier organizations; it demonstrated that the interested parties were amenable to reform activity in correcting business abuses.5

For four years this Board of Trade maintained a precarious position, but it set the stage for a great deal of the 1884 Board's activity. The Board immediately assumed a quasi-public air when Council donated a rent-free room in City Hall; it exuded a conservative business philosophy of "make haste slowly;" it worked to make Columbus a more important city by securing the state fair, the new state university, and better railroad schedules; and it urged Council to undertake public improvements which would make the commercial activities of the city more secure, but which would also improve the general well-being of the citizenry.6

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4 Cf. ibid., September 16, 1871; Ohio State Journal, October 24, 29, November 7, 1871; Hooper, History of The City of Columbus, 263.

5 Journal, November 11, 1872.

6 Ibid., December 10, 1872; October 11, 1873; November 19, 20,
Membership in the Board once approached one hundred fifty, but from the outset the body was plagued by lack of interest and funds. Apparently, businessmen during this time of economic depression were more concerned with their immediate financial interests than with the largely theoretical advantages a board of trade could provide. In 1874 the membership fee was reduced from $10.00 to $5.00, but even so the number of dues-paying firms declined from 15 to 10. Newspaper editorials noted and scored the apathy in the group: if Columbus were to secure its destined prominence in Ohio, businessmen would have to boost the city more energetically. 7

Boosterism did become the Board's primary function after the onset of the depression of the 1870's. In this case the leaders of the organization faced a dilemma in that since the recent opening of the Hocking Valley Railroad Colombusites had tended to assume their city would automatically become enormously prosperous. Such a position produced apathy among some Board members. Coupled with some businessmen's fear of new industrial competition in the city, it led to the demise of the organization in 1876. 8

1874; February 6, 1876.

7Ibid., May 9, June 14, 1873; November 19, 20, December 11, 1874.

8Ibid., December 12, 1873; Hooper, History of The City of
An effort in 1880 to reorganize this Board was spearheaded by Columbus millers and grain dealers but was without results.\textsuperscript{9}

Then, after almost a quarter century of failure, Columbus businessmen succeeded in securing the establishment of a permanent board of trade. The stated goals of this organization were broader than those of the earlier bodies, but they did not indicate the degree to which organized businessmen would attempt to reform the government and services of the city.

The proximate impetus for the 1884 Board came from a series of floods on the Ohio river. Businessmen and editors reasoned that Columbus could reap benefits from the expected relocation of several inundated firms if only their city could maintain a consistent campaign of positive publicity. This rationale indicated that the Board would serve as a booster agency and as a by-product would try to collect hard statistics on Columbus business and finance.\textsuperscript{10}

Second, the association reasoned that it should encourage legislation designed to aid commercial and manufacturing interests. This goal was constricted in no way. Eventually the Board of Columbus, 263.

\textsuperscript{9}Journal, May 26, June 2, 1880.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., February 16, March 22, April 30, May 13, 1884.
Trade would petition the state and national governments as well as local agencies to secure legislation to promote business prosperity. The businessmen rather quickly acted as though they knew that any legislation whatsoever would somehow affect their daily activities. As President W.Y. Miles, a dry goods wholesaler, stated in the first published annual Report, the questions of water supply, public health, and honest and economical expenditure of the public money were "of great importance" to the organization. The Board stated that it would strive "in all ways" to promote its interest in the city. 11

Third, the Board planned to work for better freight rates and more shipping security. It desired to be able to adjust differences or controversies among its members and thus assure a predictable and rational functioning of business within the city.

In general, members of the Board of Trade did not join as reformers. They clearly expected immediate economic advantages to redound to them. The early officers feared that the association would fail because it would not seem stable or financially useful to the membership, but apparently such fears were groundless. After 1884, membership in the organization continued to grow throughout the remainder of the decade. If the mass of the organ-

11Columbus Board of Trade (BOT), Annual Report of the Directors and Secretary (Columbus, 1886), 8, 10, 37.
ization was neither active nor immediately interested in urban political reform, the Board clearly provided a respectable base from which the reformers could work. 12

The method of establishing the association was similar to that of earlier attempts. In 1884, perhaps prompted by rumors that businessmen were again considering forming a board, Columbus newspapers began to state the need for such an organization. The goals which would appeal directly to the potential founders' pecuniary needs were clearly stated, and editors also noted that a commercial body would generally aid the city. A metropolitan air was one thing Columbus lacked; this could be partially supplied by a board of trade. Organized businessmen could help the city by helping themselves.

The need for broad support was also recognized by the original promoters. Before formal incorporation of the Board, April 30, 1884, the first pledge of eighteen supporters had grown to well over fifty. At its first meeting the Board of Directors set a membership goal of five hundred, a figure far above that which any of the earlier Boards had attempted. 13

A question that logically arises is why this particular

12 Ibid., 5-6.

13 Journal, February 16, March 22, 1884; BOT Report for 1885, 14; cf. Dispatch, August 8, 1898.
organization became successful when the previous attempts proved abortive. Several possibilities suggest themselves. One was a simple increase of the city's business population which increased the absolute numbers of those interested in the organization. According to the Board's own estimate, the population of the city in 1884 was almost twice that of 1872 and almost four times greater than in 1858.  

A second positive factor was the general financial condition of businessmen in 1884. Where earlier boards had disappeared in times of war or prolonged depression, the 1884 Board was born in relatively good times and did not have to face a severe economic crisis for almost ten years. The validity of the proposition that businessmen were more likely to support such an organization in good times is borne out by the earlier experiences and by a decline in membership after 1893. A third, very general positive factor was the political and social climate of the city in the 1880's. Businessmen were aware of the increasing costs and importance of city government. They were therefore more concerned than before with seeing that tax dollars were well spent. High taxes were a chronic concern of the Board of Trade. Labor disputes during the 1870's and 1880's led many to reason that a businessmen's organization might somehow prevent these costly

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14 BOT Report for 1892, 120.
Finally, many agreed with the need for urban patriotism more than they had previously. Given the hypothesis that any increase in the business activity of the city helped the city government and all the inhabitants as well as the particular merchant or manufacturer affected, civic concern was inextricably tied to all the Board's activities.

Having noted these general concerns of the founders of the Board of Trade and possibilities for the Board's success as an organization, it is possible to probe deeper into the rationale behind establishment of the organization by taking a closer look at some of the original supporters. On March 22, 1884, the Ohio State Journal published a list of eighteen businessmen who had pledged to support formation of a commercial body. These eighteen were obviously at least an important segment of the population which was most concerned with the establishment of an on-going association. Generally, their interest continued after formation of the Board: one became president, eight served as

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15 Ibid., for 1885, 10.

directors or vice-presidents, and all maintained active memberships and served on various committees.

The group shared certain other characteristics. With the single exception of Clinton D. Firestone, president of the nationally prominent Columbus Buggy Company, the early promoters' business activities were tied strongly to the behavior of the Columbus economy. Seven of the eighteen sold consumer products, primarily dry goods but also real estate, home furnishings, and lumber. These businessmen would logically be concerned about city tax rates, the condition of streets and urban transportation facilities, and the general health of their potential Columbus customers. Such interests meant that these merchants would necessarily demand good city services and would likely be keenly aware of how cheaply and efficiently local government provided these items. Since merchants would comprise a majority of the Board's future membership, it seems clear that the Board would be drawn into activity which would attempt to improve, or reform, certain urban functions.

Four of the promoters were connected with banks—one as a president and three as cashiers—and one was a freight agent. This group's concerns were also tied closely to the city. The bank president, William S. Ide, had a patent interest in general prosperity of the city, and the other four in this group were similarly oriented. In the late nineteenth century a bank cashier or freight
agent was apt to be on the financial make. Advancement from these positions was certainly not automatic, but holding such a job usually indicated that one was the close relative of a high official or that a worker had somehow demonstrated exceptional ability and was therefore being watched. Even if a man did not advance from a position like this, it is important that a nineteenth century cashier or freight agent was more a "junior executive" than a clerical employee. On a purely selfish basis, the four men in this category could not have helped being aware that their fortunes were closely tied to the growth of their city.

Besides Firestone, two industrialists had signed the list of promoters. One was president of a small, but growing coal company, and the other dealt locally in real estate and manufactured sewer pipe and brick. Again, this group's financial interests lay squarely in Columbus.

The remaining three fit into an "other" category. The occupation of one is not available; the second was an attorney, the third general manager of a daily newspaper. The direct economic interest of these men in a successful Board of Trade is less easy to discern, but nevertheless apparent. This lack of direct interest,

17Principal occupations of members are listed in BOT Reports for all years. Additional biographical information on some of these men may be found in the general histories of Columbus listed in the bibliography.
however, brings up an important point. It would be foolish to say that all members of the association, early promoters or late joiners, were active from purely selfish motives. No doubt self-interest played a role, but the other non-business activities of the original eighteen indicates a general civic concern: support of public libraries, a desire to have a university located in the city, or interest in finding a better way to care for the poor of the city. Such urban patriotism clearly played a role in the decision of many to support the new organization.\(^\text{18}\)

Sixteen of the eighteen had no difficulty in calling Columbus home, having lived in the city for at least ten years.\(^\text{19}\) Residentially, the eighteen fell into three neighborhood groups. Eight, the largest portion, lived in the newly fashionable areas north of Broad Street, nine to eleven blocks east of High Street, and a ninth lived just south of there. Three lived in the older prime area of East Town Street, while two others boarded in the downtown area. Three lived just on the outskirts of downtown, and the last far north on East Third Avenue. The last six mentioned tended to live in no neighborhood at all; that is, the downtown area cannot

\(^{18}\text{Cf. Daily Ohio Statesman, February 1, 1866; September 4, 1868, June 16, 1871; January 18, 1872; Journal, November 19, 1881; February 7, 9, 1882.}\)

\(^{19}\text{Data from Bailey's Columbus Directory, 1871-72 (Columbus, 1871), passim.}\)
be considered so well defined as the East Town and East Broad neighborhoods which had distinctly high social and financial characteristics. Thus, the large majority of the Board of Trade's promoters lived in cohesive neighborhoods located within walking distance of downtown. The south side of the city, largely the province of Germans, the west side, closest to the industrial areas, and most areas north of Long Street were unrepresented.

The founders were generally young with an average birthdate in the 1840's. None was ever strongly involved in partisan politics.

To sum up, the typical man interested in establishing the Board was a young, relatively wealthy resident of the city. He could in no way be classed as marginal or deracinated, but had either "arrived" or was aware that his chances of doing so were good. He was, obviously, a businessman, and he and his future colleagues tended to be of the merchant or commercial class with direct interests in the city. He was not the stereotyped reformer; he would probably have recoiled at the thought of being so labelled. Yet, more than any other single group--and especially more than groups that officially set up "reform" as a goal--Board of Trade members would be highly instrumental in advocating local change.

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Data from Watson's Columbus Directory, 1884-85 (Columbus, 1885), passim. Sam B. Warner, Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge, 1962), 15, places the "walking city" inside a two mile radius from downtown.
It may appear anomalous that this group of prosperous businessmen were the reformers of the city, but it was primarily their concern with efficient city government and city services, not any concern with "reform" per se, that put them into this class. In other words, the result of the drive for efficiency was reform.21

21Here a word about a much-discussed typology of reform is in order. Among others, Melvin Holli in Reform in Detroit makes a broad distinction between social and "structural" or technical reform, arguing that Mayor Hazen S. Pingree's concern with the poor of his city made him primarily a social reformer. Such a clear-cut dichotomy does not describe Columbus in the late nineteenth century. An explanatory example: One of the Detroit mayor's foremost social reforms was the Pingree Potato Patch, a vacant city lot where the unemployed were permitted to grow vegetables using seeds and implements supplied by the city. This is a clear example of social reform, a reform designed to help the poor. Such a plan, copied from Detroit's, was also used in Columbus in the late 1890's. This, too, was social reform, but it was enthusiastically supported by those hard business types theoretically not supposed to favor such aid to the poor. The reason was simple. Given an ineffective and expensive system of welfare, those interested in technical and efficient reform saw the potato patches as just that. They were inexpensive and were designed to become self-supporting. They were morally correct because men worked for what they got; this was not the dole, but good, honest labor. Finally, it was clear that the workers in the potato patches were better potential customers for a merchant's goods than were men with less money. Thus, any clear separation of social and technical reform is difficult at best. Social reform that succeeded in Columbus often did so because it found support on the basis of efficiency, not social concern, though this concern obviously did play a role with some who supported, say the potato patches. Melvin Holli, Reform in Detroit (New York, 1969), 173-77; Dispatch, May 17, September 28, 1895; September 28, October 7, November 8, 16, 19, 29, December 7, 1897; April 15, 30, May 20, 28, June 25, July 9, September 13, October 1, 1898; Columbus City Council, Annual Report for 1898, 351-53; for 1899,
What were the concerns of the Board of Trade that led it to a position of reform? From its founding the Board engaged in many booster activities. An attempt to get a plow factory to move to the city, greetings sent to Senator Sherman, and a pamphlet on the advantages of Columbus were typical of this strain in the association. But a large part of the Board's interests lay in improving the city. At the second regular meeting of the organization the Committee on Public Improvements presented a short report suggesting the improvement of High Street at the railroad crossings. The ramifications of such an apparently simple request were practically unmeasurable.

The Board's concern with the street improvement stemmed from economic interests. The Union Depot was located just north of downtown on the east side of High Street. Crossing the street at grade were the tracks of three railroads which ran a large number of trains into the city each day. Imagine, if you will, the situation created by this condition. Traffic headed north or south was typically tied up many times every day; crossing the tracks

337-41; for 1900, 625-26. For inefficiency of the city's social services, see Cornelia W. Miller, "Columbus Charities," unpublished B. Ph. thesis (Ohio State University, 1902), 5; Dispatch, September 28, 1895; November 30, 1896; September 28, November 29, 1897.

22 BOT Report for 1885, 24; for 1890, 4; Journal, August 6, 1884.
was hazardous at best, and this led many of the new inhabitants north of the depot to prefer encouragement of new businesses in their area rather than risking the crossing. Downtown was thus being increasingly cut off from the city's most rapidly growing area. The problem of effecting a safe and speedy crossing of the tracks was further compounded by the lack of any "keep right" ideas in the 1880's. As soon as a train passed, carriages, horses, horse-drawn street cars, bicycles, and pedestrians all completely filled the street in a mad effort to pass the tracks before the next train pulled in. The resultant chaos is easy to imagine. In effect, businessmen wanted the situation remedied because it hurt the business of downtown merchants; it was clearly a safety hazard; and the crossings hurt the public image of the city.\footnote{\textit{BOT Report} for 1891, 8.}

Removing the problem, however, was considerably less simple than the mere recognition of it. The final solution was erection of a viaduct over the railroad tracks. Such a project required seven years to complete, approximately five years of Council discussion followed by two years of construction. During the interim members of the Board of Trade petitioned Council and held public discussion to arouse greater interest.\footnote{\textit{Dispatch,} December 4, 9, 17, 1889.} For the city itself problems...
 lingered for years after completion of the viaduct. Legal complications with street car lines desiring to use the overpass and difficulties with the railroads' share of the cost were still partially unresolved in 1900. Although such a long, drawn-out process of building public works is common today, it was not so common in the 1800's. Businessmen were frustrated by the role of partisanship in contract letting and in Council discussion of a "non-political" project. Such frustration gradually led many members of the association to favor altering the city's government so that it would work more effectively and responsibly. A discussion of a most complex public project will appear later in this paper; suffice it to say here that in every instance where businessmen saw the need for improved city services--lighting, a plentiful supply of pure water, keeping the streets in repair and clean--they met frustration. Politics interfered with technical progress; this was not to the liking of the membership of the Board of Trade. Such a dislike was a major contributory factor in the Board's efforts to change the city's form of government.

25 Ironically, technical advances had rendered this viaduct obselete practically as soon as it had been built.

The first indication that the Board had a potential interest in a more effective form of city government came within less than two years after its establishment. In late autumn 1885 the Board invited Washington Gladden to speak on the problems of municipal government. Columbus's most famous clergyman began his discussion by noting the frequent complaints of government inefficiency. Although he presented no comprehensive plan for a new type of charter, Gladden did emphasize the present role of mayor, decrying the lack of executive authority. The mayor, he stated, was forced to spend too great a portion of his time acting as police judge. Morning after morning Columbus mayors had to deal with last night's drunks, brawlers, and prostitutes. This in itself was a waste of time and talent, but since the mayor received a large portion of his income from court fees, he had "a pecuniary interest in the increase of crime." Gladden's solution was simple: make the mayor a real executive and remove the judicial functions which had gone with his office since 1816. There would be two positive results. The mayor would have more time to see to the effective functioning of his city, and more importantly, freed from the Board of Police Commissioners, he could manage the police force with greater foresight and efficiency.

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27 Dispatch, November 28, 1885.
Throughout his speech, Gladden was especially hard on the Police Board. The mayor, as an ex-officio member, comprised only one-fifth of the management of the city's police. Four others were elected, one member each year. This procedure, said Gladden, was not only inefficient but was conducive to the formation of rings; since only one-fourth of the Board's membership could be ousted in any given year and since members could always blame other members for police deficiencies, voter intelligence was hard to attain. A separate police judge and more powerful mayor, coupled with abolition of the Police Board, would hopefully ameliorate such unproductive conditions.

At this point two facts should be emphasized. First, Washington Gladden, for all his reputation as a social reformer and as a friend of the workman, was not a radical social reformer. His "radicalism" came from his early efforts to socialize Christianity, not from the basic ideas he presented. In the 1880's and 1890's businessmen all over the United States articulated many of the same social reform ideas concerning capital-labor relations that Gladden did. On another plane, Dr. Gladden was quite a "conservative" reformer working diligently to close saloons on Sunday and to secure a general execution of Ohio's Blue Laws. Thus,

28 Ibid., December 2, 1885; BOT Report for 1885, 32.
his speaking to the Columbus Board of Trade did not indicate any radicalism on the part of the Board's membership.

Second, in 1885, Gladden did appear quite advanced in his basic ideas on municipal government. In the middle eighties many of the Board felt the solution to municipal inefficiency was the creation of independent, non-partisan boards similar to the police board of the city. Gladden's speech was not favorably received. It smacked too much of favoring "one man rule," a system which the Board feared would produce more municipal extravagance, higher taxes, and lawlessness. New York City had had what the Board felt was one man rule with Boss Tweed. The membership clearly did not wish to encourage the possibility of a dictatorship by changing the city's government form. At the monthly meeting following Gladden's speech, the Committee on Legislation reported the speech had been "so radical and embraced so much" that it had been sent to a special committee headed by Henry C. Noble.


If the Board of Trade was ever to produce a man who could be termed a municipal theorizer it was Noble. Sixty years old in 1886, Noble had been born in Lancaster, Ohio, the son of Colonel John Noble. The family was financially secure, and Henry was educated in private schools in Lancaster, Cincinnati, and Columbus, and graduated from Miami (Ohio) University in 1845 after serving briefly as a dry goods clerk in Columbus. Following college graduation, Noble read law and was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1848. When he retired from active law practice in 1876, he was widely regarded as one of Columbus's most successful attorneys, an honest, upright citizen. As a businessman, Noble had been a strong advocate of the Hocking Valley Railroad, later becoming a director of this road as well as the Columbus and Xenia Railroad. From 1872 to 1878 he served as a trustee of the Ohio Blind Asylum in Columbus. Although he was noted as a non-office-seeking political independent, he served one term as a Republican state senator. A Presbyterian, he was thought to be highly religious though not intolerant. His obituary described him as a "respected citizen, a Christian gentleman, a cultured scholar; ..."  

From 1884 to his death in late 1890 Noble was an active

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31 Dispatch, January 6, 1886.

32 Ibid., December 13, 16, 19, 1890; Franklin County Bar Association, In Memoriam: Henry C. Noble, 1826-1890, passim.
member of the Board of Trade. In 1888 he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Legislation. A year later he became chairman of the Municipal Reform Committee, a post he held until his death. This position gave Noble a forum for developing his ideas on municipal government he would not otherwise have had. It was he more than any other individual who encouraged the Board to consider positively the ideas that Dr. Gladden had hinted at.

Within a year Noble's theories were becoming evident in official resolutions passed by the association. Whereas in early 1886 the Committee on Legislation had called Gladden's goal of increasing the mayor's powers "radical," in December of the same year a unanimous resolution called for the creation of an independent police judge and advocated making mayoral duties "purely executive." The resolution further urged that both men should be salaried, an attempt to abolish the fee system, and that fees or fines should be paid directly to the city treasury.33 These were almost exactly the ideas Gladden had espoused. Because there seemed to be no outside forces, one must assume that Noble, as a trusted and safe businessman, had influenced his committee and the Board to make the about-face.

But making the mayor a real executive and creating an

33 Dispatch, December 8, 1886.
independent police judge were only small parts of Noble's overall plan. Two theories of municipal government soon became dominant in the reformer's mind, and he effectively publicized them both. One was the federal plan of municipal government; the other was that of home rule for Ohio's cities, a goal not achieved until 1912. To Noble both were needed for effective city government. The federal plan would assure the best chances for good government; home rule would lessen the state legislature's interference with the regular functioning of municipal government and reduce the element of political uncertainty.

Late in 1887 Noble privately presented a comprehensive plan for the federal system to certain Board members and to the city's newspaper editors. The federal plan was simple, deriving its name from the national form of government. According to Noble, the mayor should be the chief executive with power to appoint his administrative agents as well as to execute the law. The Council, analogous to Congress, should be solely a legislative body with no executive or administrative functions. The judiciary should be separate from the other two branches. The independent Dispatch quickly endorsed the plan arguing that rather than leading to a municipal dictatorship, this system was "American" and had

34 Ibid., December 7, 1887.
been tried successfully since 1787. The Dispatch's editor agreed the plan was simple and would facilitate citizens' being able to place blame squarely on negligent public officials. Under the board system of government, claimed the editor, such easy location of responsibility as nearly impossible.

Discussion of Noble's ideas—though they had not yet been formally presented to either the media or the Board of Trade—continued throughout 1888. Early in the year Allen W. Thurman, son of the former Democratic Ohio governor, spoke at length to the Board on the topic of municipal government. This Columbus lumber dealer told his colleagues that in spite of recent labor disturbances and an apparent rise in the acceptability of socialism neither of these phenomena was a real danger to urban government. Agreeing with Noble, he stated that the greatest danger was not anarchy, but corruption and graft. The federal system of city government, he felt, would help solve the problems which were worst.

The Columbus Dispatch, noted in November that the federal plan was getting considerable attention by Columbus citizens. The paper strongly urged adoption of the system, and from its

35 Ibid., December 7, 1887; November 19, 21, 22, 1888.
36 Ibid., January 4, 1888.
editorials one may infer the arguments which advocates, as well as opponents, of the plan presented. As previously stated, the editors felt the plan was American. Noting that the government of the city was "not all that it should be," the paper moved to a discussion of a new plan and said the chief problem was the city's lack of a real executive. Without such a head there was nowhere to place blame for administrative mismanagement, a much greater problem than some theoretical fear of one man rule. The paper called the ideas of Noble viable, "based on economic and common sense." This rationale, the idea that the federal plan was cheaper than others, was a favorite with proponents of the system. The federal plan aped not only the United States government but also private American business organization where only one chief executive supposedly produced the least expensive and most efficient methods. It seems clear that opponents of the proposed system of government would be those who legitimately feared that the city's mayor would have too much power. Others against the plan were "politicians" and their partisan compatriots. A more efficient government, among other things, would mean a decline in the number of political jobs available. Laborers who paid no direct taxes would be slow to perceive that such a new form would

37 Ibid., November 17, 19, 21, 1888.
make any difference to them. Some undoubtedly looked at the city's present government and found it not to be so bad after all. It had sufficed quite nicely for almost forty years. The new suggestion was as yet untried and unproved, at least on the municipal level.

Nor was there total agreement among Board of Trade members on how to make local government better. On the heels of an election scandal in the autumn of 1885 many businessmen logically felt that prevention of such frauds should take the prime spot. 38 Efforts to avoid future election scandal dominated much of the reform effort until late in 1888. Allen W. Thurman, now chairman of the Committee on Legislation, while favoring the federal plan, had his own scheme to improve the city's political machinery. Political primaries should be more of the public concern, he argued. The Board of Elections should supervise them, and all parties should have their primaries on the same day. Politicians tended to look askance at such a proposal, but the businessmen generally favored it. One argued that such a primary law would help do away with the "system of political ward worker." A colleague agreed that the law would lead to a decline in the "bummer element," party hacks who bought votes surreptitiously and engaged in other

38 BOT Report for 1885, 10.
illegal, but winked-at, election practices.\footnote{39}

Yet, a concern for the more general reformation of the government remained. Board president, E.O. Randall, an attorney and a wholesaler, speaking at the annual meeting in early 1888 called the city's administration "well-meaning, but sorely afflicted." The machinery of government had become so complex, its functions so chaotic that even the best of men, should they ever decide to go into government, would have a difficult time making the city run smoothly.\footnote{40} City expenditures, Randall continued, were getting too high and the municipality's debt too heavy. Creation of the office of city auditor would aid the city fathers in ascertaining just how much was being spent—-a datum that no one was ever totally sure about—and where the money was going.\footnote{41}

About this time Noble was prepared to present officially his plan of government to the Board for consideration. He and his committee had spent the better part of 1888 preparing a final draft of the proposal, and in January 1889 a series of "Measures" was presented.\footnote{42}

\footnote{39} \textit{Dispatch}. December 10, 13, 14, 1888.

\footnote{40} \textit{BOT Report} for 1887, 3.

\footnote{41} \textit{Ibid.}, 8.

\footnote{42} \textit{Dispatch}. December 15, 28, 1888; January 8, 1889.
The "Measures" were the federal plan. The legislature of the city was to be composed of two houses, a Board of Alderman and a Common Council. The Aldermen were to represent two wards each and had to have been Columbus residents for four years. Councilmen were elected from wards for two-year terms, one half of the body being elected each year. Neither Councilmen nor Aldermen would be permitted to hold any other city office. The two houses would be equal, and a majority of either could reject or amend the proposals of the other. Ordinances and resolutions were to be permitted to originate in either body. Where ordinances involved the expenditure of money, approval of a contract, or "granting any franchise or creating any right" at least one week would have to elapse before approval by both bodies.

The city's executive was to consist of a mayor and department heads who would administer areas of auditing, law, police, health, fire, and city works. Department heads would be mayoral nominees taking office after Council approval. The mayor and comptroller were to be elected for two-year terms, and mayors could serve only two consecutive terms. The proposed office of mayor was a much more important one than the figurehead Columbus had in 1889. Under the new system he would be able to remove his

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43 "Measures to be considered by the Board of Trade (n.p., n.d.)," 2-5.
appointees at any time without consulting Council, a privilege which would theoretically give him absolute control of executive administration. Department heads could also remove their appointees, but no policeman or fireman could be removed "without cause;" such removal would not be official until after a public trial of the suspended employee. 44

The judicial department of the city was to be independent of the other two branches and was to consist of a police judge elected biannually. 45

An analysis of these proposals reveals that above all, Henry Noble and those who agreed with him were interested in achieving efficiency and responsibility in city government. An executive with real power would be able to act effectively without long delays in implementing executive programs. Like a business executive, the mayor was almost purely an administrator. Except for an annual report to the Council and Board of Aldermen where he would assess the state of the city he would have little room for initiative so far as city law or broad programs were concerned. Since he would appoint all his administrative assistants, there would be no need for wasteful partisan disputes over running the

44 Ibid., 7-11
police or fire departments.

Partisanship would be further removed by the clause forbidding suspension of police or firemen except for cause. Traditionally, a Republican police board would simply fire Democratic policemen, just as the Democrats would root out Republicans. In a city where the political complexion of the various boards was never secure such partisanship led to a tremendous turnover in personnel. This in itself was expensive. But a more pointed reason for introducing the merit system was that after a man had already been hired on civil service, he could no longer be compelled to pay political assessments by threats of losing his job. This new freedom for police and firemen would have direct benefits for city taxpayers. Political assessments were not the topic of everyday conversation, but their existence was no well-kept secret. Businessmen argued, and some politicians admitted, that city salaries could be lowered as much as 10 percent by eliminating assessments. Since salaries comprised a large proportion of city expense, a pay reduction coupled with the demise of assessments would help the taxpayer and leave the employee

\[\text{\textsuperscript{46}}\text{\textit{Dispatch}, February 10, 1897. This is one of the most direct statements by a city official on the existence of political assessments. Also April 1, 1886; February 28, 1895; May 17, December 26, 1898.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{47}}\text{\textit{Ibid.}}\]
as well off as before. The principle of civil service had the appeal of moral reform, the hardheadedness of American capitalism, and the enticement of job security for employees.

The Council under the proposed federal plan would also be more efficient. Its duties were clearly defined as legislative, and that function, felt the reformers, would be sufficient to keep the two houses active. Because the mayor was largely independent of the legislature, the councilmanic functions could be more easily performed since members would not get bogged down in administrative detail. Like the United States government, however, the municipal federal plan did not solve the problem of having an executive of one party with another party dominant in the law-making bodies. Perhaps the theorizers felt that the proposed separation of personnel and functions would erase much political bickering, but in this instance the future was to prove them wrong.

To say that the suggestions submitted to the Board of Trade emphasized the business needs of the city and the desire of the Board for the city to be honestly and efficiently administered would be correct. It would not, however, be the entire picture. Advocates of the new government did not look upon themselves as social reformers, and they were not. But the federal plan conceivably had benefits for everyone even while benefitting the taxpayer most. A more effective police or fire-fighting force would
aid all who needed these sorts of protection. A less expensive city government would have more money to spend on the necessities of water, streets, and waste disposal. And whether it would ever become a fact or not, some argued that lower taxes would mean lower rents. 48

Thus, the program should have appealed to almost everybody except perhaps the politicians. This fact was not a happy one for the reformers because the "politicians" turned out to be a larger group than had been originally expected. The reformers were not unanimous either. Noble himself caused problems when he suggested that the mayor be permitted to appoint department heads without consent of Council thereby further removing chances of executive-council deadlocks. This was going too far for many who favored most of the rest of the program. Here was one man rule run rampant, and many Board members balked at this point. 49

Noble remained persistent, however, pointing out the new mayor of Brooklyn possessed such power and had exercised it without abuse; an independent mayor, he reasoned, would lead to better sorts of men being interested in the position. He was finally successful in persuading the Board to accept this change in the

48 *Dispatch*, March 9, 1895.
Further amendments to the original proposals made the city solicitorship an elective instead of appointive office. An amendment to elect four councilmen at-large failed to pass the Board. It is unclear why this amendment did not succeed. If Columbus businessmen had acted as one noted historian has implied they should, this suggestion would have passed easily as an attempt to remove part of the constraints which the provincial ward system imposed on men interested in uniting the city to make it function economically as a whole. Perhaps in 1889 Columbus businessmen were themselves a part of wardism, but their concern with public improvements does not indicate any overt sectionalism. Unknown reasons, perhaps personal, at any rate, led to defeat of this motion.

Finally, the members of the Board struck from the "Measures" the provision that department heads had to prove cause before firing an employee. The rationale behind this move is

50 Ibid., January 23, 1889.


52 Dispatch, January 30, 1889.

53 Ibid., February 6, 1889.
also unclear. One obvious hypothesis is that since business administrators were subject to no such restraint, political administrators should not be either. This idea, however, loses some of its force when one remembers that removal for cause was the prime method of eliminating political assessments and achieving a lower tax rate. A more probable reason is that Board members included "politicians" who realized the utmost importance of the assessments and use of city employees as political workers. Even as non-partisan businessmen they were reluctant to part with this political device. 54 Those who had favored the original provision could take solace in the idea that department heads would be totally responsible for their divisions and could therefore be held strictly accountable.

The purpose of the Committee on Municipal Reform had been to prepare a bill to submit to the legislature, but the Board failed to reach agreement on the Noble plan before the legislature had adjourned in summer 1889. By November it was rumored that a new plan of government for Columbus was to be introduced in the legislature in January, and the editor of the Dispatch urged the

54 Mayor Philip Bruck, a Board of Trade member and a strong Democrat, admitted freely that this device was used and stated it was necessary. The Board of Trade had previously condemned politics in non-political departments; see BOT Report for 1887, 16.
The president of the Board shortly observed that although there had been "considerable interest" in "municipal reform" in the winter of 1888-89, there had been no concrete legislative results. "The needs of the city in this respect," he continued, "are in no wise diminished and should command the immediate attention of this committee, so as to get a suitable bill through the legislature this season."\(^{56}\)

The bill submitted to the legislature early in 1890 was not suitable. It was clearly a ripper designed to give control of important parts of city government to the Democrats and to insure more patronage to loyal Democrats. All of this, however, was not evident to the Board of Trade or the Dispatch until late 1889.

The ripper, introduced into the legislature by Franklin County representative and Board member, A.D. Heffner, was typical of the negative state interference which had more and more come to plague Ohio's cities. Under the Ohio constitution municipal legislation was supposed to be general law, but a complex system of classification had grown up so legislators could pass general laws applicable only to one city. Classes and divisions of Ohio.

\(^{55}\) Dispatch, November 8, 1889.

\(^{56}\) President John S. Morton, BOT Report for 1889, 6.
cities had been so refined that by the late nineties there were fifteen distinct classes, ten of these having in them but one city. Since the late 1860's the legislature had been harassing Columbus with special legislation. Most of this had been creation of special police boards appointed so that the party in power in the state could also control the police of the city. Such control provided patronage and possible pay-offs to the party from gamblers and saloonists who wished to operate illegally. It was commonly stated that the party which controlled the police and fire departments could win any city election. Though this was not always true, politicians of the day did act as though they believed it. Those who typically opposed these state ripper bills were the members of the minority party who cried "foul" when such an act threatened

57 Ohio Constitution of 1851, Article XIII, Section 6; Samuel P. Orth, "Municipal Situation in Ohio" Forum, XXXIII (June 1902), 432-33; also James A. Fairlie, "Municipal Codes in the Middle West, Political Science Quarterly, XVI (September 1905), 434.


59 Dispatch, October 12, 1888; March 30, 1889; Journal, September 18, 1880. It was Mayor Sam Swartz's realization that the fire and police forces were "not especially effective" in campaigns that contributed to his desire to have civil service in these departments; Dispatch, August 17, 1899.
them and reformers who warned that constant change was not conducive to good municipal administration. Most accepted as a foregone conclusion that what the Republicans did one year, the Democrats would try to undo the next.\textsuperscript{60}

This is not to say that state interference in local government in Ohio was always negative. Many times "interference" which enabled the city to tax more heavily, to build streets more effectively, or to require better municipal accounting received only praise from those who discussed these acts.\textsuperscript{61} State meddling was a sword that cut both ways, and it was sometimes possible for the legislature to pass an act which reformers favored when the city council either would not or could not pass such a law.\textsuperscript{62} On balance, however, as the amount of state intervention increased, reformers and government theorists gradually began to opt for home rule as a constitutional guard against possible negative legislation.\textsuperscript{63}

Much has been written about the nature state interference

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60}\textit{Dispatch}, February 21, May 14, 1890.
\item \textsuperscript{61}\textit{Journal}, April 10, 1876; \textit{Dispatch}, February 28, 1888.
\item \textsuperscript{62}The Burns Act passed in the 1880's requiring cash on hand before a city contract could be let is one example.
\item \textsuperscript{63}In Columbus, Henry C. Noble proposed this because even a "good" state law could be very simply repealed. Ohio cities got home rule in 1912. \textit{Dispatch}, July 30, 1892.
\end{itemize}
in local government. Scholarly works have typically emphasized the negative character of this meddling and have often attributed it to the dominance of ignorant or jealous rural elements in state legislatures. In the case of Columbus, Ohio, this analysis is less than perfect. As indicated, not nearly all the state laws governing the city were negative in intent or effect. More importantly, there is no apparent evidence that rural legislators were either jealous of Ohio cities or that they were worried about any decay of urban morality. In fact, there is no clear evidence to indicate that a rural-urban dichotomy was involved in state interference at all. The necessary and sufficient ingredient was simply political. It was on party lines that legislatures framed laws for cities; it was with political gain pure and simple that the irritating bills concerned themselves.

The Heffner bill epitomized negative state interference motivated by political considerations. The bill was designed to give Democrats control they seemed unable to get through local elections. This condition had resulted from an 1879 redistricting

64 Cf. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 116-18; John A. Garraty, The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890 (New York, 1968), 75-76; Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialism (Chicago, 1957), 110-11, 125; George Washington Plunkitt noted the "hayseeds" wanted to run New York City but observed the paramount motives of partisanship and greed rather than any ideological differences; William L. Riordon, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (New York, 1963), 21-24
of the city by a Republican council. Since that time the Republicans had elected only two mayors, but they had run Council with large majorities throughout the period. With a weak mayor, Republicans controlled the city except for the important Board of Police Commissioners which was popularly elected and which in 1890 was Democratic. In this year Democrats had a healthy majority in the legislature, and Mr. Heffner introduced a bill "to create a board of public works" for the city.65

The response was immediate. The Dispatch called the bill an attempt to take the government out of the hands of the people and compared Heffner's tactics to those of southern whites who were simultaneously depriving blacks of their voting rights.66 The editor was referring to the proposed board which would be appointed by the county auditor, the mayor, and the city solicitor. The Board of Trade agreed and on March 5, 1890, adopted a strong protest warning that the Heffner bill would impose a government "not chosen by the people" on the city.67 On March 14 the bill,


66February 25, 1890.

67Ibid., March 7, 1890.
now amended to give appointive power to the mayor alone, failed to pass. But Heffner immediately got a reconsideration of his proposal. At this point it seems that the Board of Trade had done all it felt should be done, and the only non-partisan opposition to the bill came from the <em>Dispatch</em> which continuously denounced it as undemocratic.

The faults of municipal government are not with the people, but on account of a lack of system which has been thrust upon them. . . . The people of the cities are intelligent. . . . They are law-abiding. They manage great private enterprises. They compel each other to obey the law, generally, speaking, better than any other class of men on earth.\(^{68}\)

On April 4, 1890, the Heffner bill became law. Under the act all city boards, with the notable exception of the Democratic police board, were abolished. In their place the mayor was required to appoint a four-man Board of Public Works which would devise legislation and execute it after Council approval. In effect, the act left a formerly powerful Council with only the veto power. It was stripped of its patronage, a cruel blow. Shortly, members of the city legislature were referring to the Board of Public Works as that "creature of imperialism."\(^{69}\)

\(^{68}\) <em>Ibid.</em>, March 14, 20, 27, 1890.

\(^{69}\) <em>Ibid.</em>, March 28, April 4, May 13, June 26, July 4, 1890; Williams, "Columbus," 328.
There are several possible reasons why the Board of Trade did not protest very vociferously against the Heffner Act. To a degree it represented a rationalization of government. The Board of Public Works (BPW) was required to meet daily thereby insuring constant supervision of city works and departments. The Board would eventually become democratic with one member elected yearly. The decrease of Council's power also worked toward more efficient government, and the BPW was, in effect, a powerful central executive which had been a Board of Trade goal.

President Andrew D. Rogers summed up the Board's official attitude in his annual speech in January 1891: "Changes have been made in the machinery of our city government by recent legislation, which, if not in principle, accord with the views heretofore expressed by the Board, yet in their practical operation through the instrumentality of capable and efficient agents, have brought improved business methods into the administration of our affairs."\textsuperscript{70}

The appointments to the BPW were calculated not to arouse the suspicions of anyone except the Republicans. Three of the appointees were Democrats, the other a Republican; three were members of the Board of Trade; all were successful businessmen who, according to the Dispatch, had "made their way up."\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{70} BOT Report for 1890, 4.
The new BPW acted with some predictability. The Democratic majority commenced by decrying the high tax rate and debt left by the Republican Council. Rates, however, remained approximately the same. On a partisan basis, the Board wasted little time in removing Republicans from the fire and water departments. All this had been expected. And while the Dispatch had predicted victory for the Republicans as a rebuke against the Democratic ripper, local Democratic candidates continued to carry the city.

Although the Board of Trade had not been energetic in its opposition to the Heffner Act, it soon became clear that some members were dissatisfied with the new arrangement. In May 1890, E.C. Beach, a local railroad agent, spoke to the Board and declared the city government "defective." It was defective, he said, because responsibility was not localized, a charge against the BPW, and because it was clear to him that as soon as the Republicans achieved a majority in the legislature, they would attempt to rip up the city again. Throughout the summer and autumn Board of Trade members discussed the possibility of securing a permanent

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71 April 3, 1890; BOT Report for 1892, appendix of membership; included were an attorney, a well-to-do plumber, a farm equipment manufacturer, and an Irish-American "well known and wealthy."

72 Dispatch. May 1, 2, 3, July 26, August 11, 1890.
city charter, by constitutional amendment if necessary. Uppermost in the minds of the concerned businessmen was the fear that the city was shortly to be ripped. 73

By November 1891 these fears had taken on more substance for in the state elections the Republicans got the majority they sought. The Dispatch quickly quoted the Columbus Republican's most recent municipal platform, noted it had called for the federal plan, and urged state Republicans to make their local counterparts' pledge good. The Republican Journal began the expected about-face: it now espoused the federal plan for some time "in the future." But the Dispatch became more adamant, criticizing the Republicans and demonstrating that the Democratic BPW had not produced the lower expenditures its proponents had promised:

There has been no actual curtailment of street improvement expenditures. The work goes bravely on; streets in the country are being paved; contractors are rejoicing and property owners are groaning.

The absence of a federal plan was hurting everyone, property owners and the "little man." A change could not come too quickly. 74

73 Ibid., May 14, November 12, 21, 1890; January 7, 1891.
74 Ibid., November 5, 6, 23, 1891; Journal, November 22, 1891.
And a change was soon in the offing. House bill number 7 was presented by Representative Harry M. Daugherty in January 1892. The Daugherty bill was quickly dubbed federal plan by Republicans, but independents were reluctant to call it that. It merely substituted a Board of Control appointed by the Republican governor for the extant Board of Public Works appointed by a Democratic mayor. This time, however, the city was spared reorganization because of a variety of circumstances.

Members of the Board of Trade spoke often at committee hearings arguing for a true federal plan instead of the partisan Daugherty bill. The number of speakers representing the Board caused the committee hearings to last several weeks, and delay was on the side of the reformers. The Dispatch warned that even with the Board's representatives opposing reorganization, the "businessmen" were sleeping while Republican "contractors" worked diligently for the bill. The true salvation of the opponents, however, came from the split in the Ohio Republican party which had resulted from the feud between John Sherman and John Foraker. So divided was the party that the Sherman men who

75Ohio Statesman, January 6, 1892; Dispatch, January 5, 6, 7, 8, 1892.

controlled the Senate refused to vote because the Daugherty bill stated that a Foraker probate judge should appoint the Board of Control. The result of a fantastic political log roll was that the bill was finally laid over to the next session. A second bill providing for a federal plan which had been introduced at the request of a few members of the Board of Trade was even less successful.

The president of the Board of Trade in 1892 was William F. Burdell, a savings bank vice-president who had evidenced an interest in effective municipal government just as the Daugherty bill was being considered. Speaking to the Board in his inaugural address, he urged his audience to "stand for moderation and conservatism in public affairs. We should demand that the public business... be conducted with the public welfare in mind, rather than be made to serve as the reward merely of partisan politics. We should demand the least expensive and simplest form of municipal government." Burdell did not name the best form of government, but he did intimate that given the present "indifference" to party primaries the federal, vesting enormous power in the hands of the mayor could be dangerous.

77 Dispatch. March 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, April 12, 15, 16, 18, 1892.
78 Ibid., January 12, 13, 20, 22, February 3, 1892.
A possible solution to Burdell's inability to decide immediately the most preferable form was presented by the Dispatch in May. The editor felt that some sort of municipal convention should be called by Council to decide on a new system for the city. The resulting "charter" could then be presented to the legislature as a substitute for the Daugherty bill which was scheduled to reappear in January 1893. Apparently the Board's president liked the suggestion because on November 19 he issued a call for all interested citizens to attend meetings on Thanksgiving Day to select three delegates from each ward to attend a "municipal reform convention" on December 1. The committee should be charged only with devising a government for the city "based on economical business principles."

The business principles that Burdell referred to had recently been spelled out in detail by Washington Gladden. On November 1, 1892, the minister had given a second speech on municipal government to the Board of Trade. Unlike the first, which called mainly for a stronger executive, this lengthy address suggested a comprehensive revamping of Columbus government.

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80 Dispatch, May 16, 1892.
81 Ibid., November 19, 1892; BOT Report for 1892, 7.
"The Government of Cities" began with a consideration of politics and partisanship. Gladden stressed the absolute need for non-partisan reform if changes were to be lasting, but he emphasized that experience had taught him that parties would never disappear from the American scene. Thus, reform would necessarily be a compromise between contending factions. If reformers would realize this, they could be more realistic in their planning and could accomplish more than if they retained ideas that were too idealistic for success.

Given partisanship, reformers should concern themselves with three facets of local government. These were the need for home rule, better governmental methods, and better men in politics. The need for home rule was self-evident. If cities were ever to attain a degree of stability, one necessary condition was that states not interfere in the operation of their creatures. The necessity for a better form had also been stressed in recent years. At this point Gladden emphasized the need for good men in local government, a difficult goal that increasingly occupied the minds of reformers. The minister admitted that a better system of primaries and elections was more apt to encourage good and honest men to participate in local political processes, but "the best system of nominations and elections which the wit of man can devise will never give us efficient and economical government
in this city until we get a more business-like organization of our
government. . . ."

The business-like organization which Gladden now espoused
was the federal system, and he presented one of the most cogent
arguments for it that the Board of Trade had heard. He first
attacked the common argument that the federal system meant
one man dictatorship as the kind of "reasoning common among
savages." To the contrary, he said, a single executive would lead
to more cooperation and general amity than was present in other
forms. He stated that the combination of several departments
under the Board of Public Works had been a step in the right
direction, but added that even with all the members of the BPW
belonging to the same party deadlocks were possible. If the
Board were ever to become divided equally by party, it was pro-
bable that city government would come to an almost absolute halt.
The federal plan would prevent this.

Having stated that the federal system would produce more
governmental cooperation and greater efficiency, Gladden returned
to the attack of the opponents. He noted that "one man power"
was common in governments all over the world. The notion that
this was autocracy while the same functions performed by a com-
mittee-type executive was democracy he found a "curious delusion."
In both cases the people delegated their power to someone else.
Whether this someone else was one or several made little difference. The real question, he declared, was how quickly the people could decide if the delegated power had been abused; the system that provided this was the most democratic. His analysis damned the executive board system on three counts. It was difficult to tell just which member had been at fault when power was misused. If the public did succeed in deciding who to blame, it might take years before the guilty party could be removed since elections of boards was staggered. Finally, the board system tended to "dupe" newly elected "honest" men because new-comers entered a system containing a number of already entrenched old-timers.

Not all of this was mere theory. Cleveland had recently received a federal system. In that city the new system had brought forth a better class of men to work in local politics. The general public interest in local government had increased since the voters were aware of the importance of the mayor and could vote more intelligently for a single person than for a board. The tax rate in Cleveland had fallen since the federal plan had been instituted, and Gladden made the expected cause-result analysis.

Finally, he touched upon a point that usually did not seem of crucial interest to most of the Board of Trade members. Gladden, as a strong opponent of vice, closed with the statement that
Cleveland's federal plan had ended the coalition of the police and the "disorderly classes." He compared this to the situation in Columbus where the attitude of the present administration toward morality had been "constantly hostile to all that is taught in our homes, our schools, our churches."  

Thus, in the period from 1885-1892 Washington Gladden had systematized his ideas on municipal government. What had earlier appeared "radical" to the Legislative Committee of the Board now did not seem so. The federal plan, if one accepted the Cleveland experience, was less expensive than a system of boards. Efficiency was clearly not a radical concept to businessmen. The problem of "one man rule," however, was not completely removed by Gladden's presentation, especially since businessmen and political theorists were commenting on the lack of good men in government. Gladden hoped that the federal plan would help defeat these venal types. The businessmen were at least willing to experiment.

Such an experiment was in the offing when President Burdell

82 The entire speech is reproduced in the BOT Report for 1892, 41-63. The felt importance of this speech is evident since it was the only address printed verbatim by the Board in the period before 1900. Gladden's speech was probably the result of his forthcoming book, The Cosmopolis City Club, published in 1893, which advocated a plan for municipal reform much like that he presented to the Board.
proposed that the city hold a municipal reform convention. The president's call elicited a favorable response from those who had long favored governmental reform. The Dispatch noted that "All will be open, and unworthy motives will find themselves at a disadvantage in the publicity. . . ." An open convention with delegates freely elected could dispense with the "evils of party government" which held little respect "for the people." Two days later the editor continued to praise the planned convention urging the election of "broad, liberal men, who will meet in no factious, partisan spirit, but with an earnest desire to agree on a concise and business-like plan that will inure to the benefit of our whole city." Of necessity the convention would have to be as non-partisan as humanly possible, for if either party received unjust gains from the charter proposal, the other was sure to change the act as soon as it could command a legislative majority.

But all was not to be so agreeable as the reformers hoped. The Thanksgiving Day primaries resulted in the election of only "a handful" of Democrats. As the secretary of the Board of Trade put it in his annual report, "The spirit of Burdell's call

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83 November 22, 1892.
84 Ibid. , November 24, 25, 1892.
was ignored in some instances where the neglect or indifference of the citizens made it possible for the organized machinery of one of the parties--employed for the purpose--to capture the delegates."\(^8^5\) Clearly, the Republicans, recent victims of the Heffner ripper, had the most interest in seeing a new form of government instituted. As matters stood, they had no chance of winning the patronage away from the opposition; a new system might put them on the winning side; at worst they would remain in the same position. In spite of the unpropitious circumstances surrounding the selection of delegates, the reformers remained optimistic. The Board's secretary noted that the selected men were by and large "decent." Others felt that although the "hand of the ward politician" had been evident in the election, the publicity which would surround the convention would encourage honesty and thwart partisanship. \(^8^6\)

On December 1, 1892, Burdell welcomed the delegates sitting in convention. In a long speech he noted the urgency of the meeting and argued that the city's government affected citizens in every realm of their activities. The causes of poor government were simple: partisanship and public apathy. \(^8^7\) The delegates

\(^8^5\) BOT Report for 1892, 7. Forty-five delegates were elected.

\(^8^6\) Ibid.; Dispatch, November 28, 1892.
began their business by electing "good men" as officers. The chairman was a well-known and highly respected attorney, Henry C. Taylor, and the committee on permanent organization, also composed of respected citizens, included three Republicans and two Democrats.

The actual business of the convention commenced December 7, and at a well-attended second session Judge George K. Nash, Republican, Board of Trade member, and respected citizen, assumed the permanent chairmanship. In spite of seeming amicability among the delegates, two days later the Dispatch observed that some Democrats were "fighting shy" of the convention. The paper warned that such non-participation could discredit the results and urged the Democrats, even though they were in a minority status, to adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

The work of the committee drafting a plan to present to the convention was not speedy, and it was two weeks before they were ready. Although the papers generally refrained from reporting on the committee's deliberations during this period, occasional references to the convention indicated that the onus of partisanship

\[87\text{Ibid.}, \text{December 1, 1892.}\]
\[88\text{Hooper, History of Columbus, 306-307; Dispatch, December 2, 1892; March 27, 1927; Journal, March 29, 1927.}\]
\[89\text{Dispatch, December 2, 3, 6, 1892; Journal, December 2, 3,}\]
was omnipresent. When the convention met again, the draft committee reported its lack of agreement. Four of the members stated they were agreed only that some form of the federal plan was in order. The schemes of the minority included retention of the present Board of Public Works, a two-house legislative branch, and another unspecified plan. Three days later the committee issued its official reports to the convention. By this time the majority, now one of five which included the group's lone Democrat, had worked out the details of its version of the federal plan.

The executive, it was suggested, should consist of an elected police judge and a mayor. The mayor, serving a two-year term, would appoint for one-year terms a four-man Board of Control roughly analogous to the present Board of Public Works. These members would serve at the mayor's pleasure and would be completely responsible for their respective departments. With the mayor voting only in case of ties, the Board would be required to meet at least weekly. The mayor would possess the veto which could be overridden by a two-thirds majority of the council. The legislature would consist of a single house with ward representatives.

1892.

90 Dispatch, December 7, 9, 12, 20, 1892.

91 Ibid., December 20, 1892.
elected biennially. Council would perform the traditional functions and additionally would establish a fire department and would appoint a health officer for the entire city. There were financial safeguards including a required one-week lapse before passage of a money or contract bill, a provision that officers could hold only a single public office, and a statement that city officials could not accept any railroad passes. The majority report also favored civil service for the police and fire departments. Two minority plans were presented, both by Republicans.

Shortly after Christmas the convention began considering the reports section by section. The minorities on the draft committee remained minorities in the meetings of the whole, but the convention was clearly slanted to favor the Republicans. Efforts to effect a reorganization of council and a redistricting of ward boundaries—Republican ward eight had 965 voters, Democratic ward eleven had 2400 voters—were unsuccessful and both

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92 Ibid., December 24, 1892.

93 Ibid., December 24, 28, 1892; a suggested "sliding-scale" would enable the recently elected Republican Director of Public Works to hold office three more years. This position was the most powerful and important one on the Board and carried with it the initiative for all public building in the city. Jerry P. Bliss had won because of his reputation for helping the south-end, usually a Democratic stronghold. See Lee, History of Columbus, II, 822-23. Additionally the Republicans would retain the Director of Public Safety.
partisan Democrats and independents were frustrated, the independents fearing that such a stand would only lead to a Democratic ripper. 94

Within a little over a week the convention had agreed to most of the majority report, and the final draft, except for leaving the Republican council intact, was closer to the pure federal plan than the pessimists had feared. Amendments to the original draft had included provisions to redistrict the city—a reform victory—to limit the number of consecutive terms the mayor could serve, and to provide for two-year appointments for Board of Control members. The reformers were not completely happy, but the Dispatch favored the proposal calling it "as good as could be expected under the circumstances." Nor were partisans totally pleased. The Journal declined to support the suggestions calling them a "ripper." That both Democrats and Republicans referred to the proposal as a ripper indicates that the general tenor of the document was non-partisan.

The proposed charter, however, still had to run the gamut of the state legislature. This meant a long series of committee

94 Ohio law did not require equality of ward populations; Wilcox "Municipal Government," 67.

hearings and undoubtedly an attempt by the Republican majority to secure a more partisan document under the aegis of reform. But the reformers were optimistic.

The tactic of the opponents of the new charter was two-pronged. First, they claimed in legislative committee that the reforms were not really popular. William Sater, the proponent of one of the minority plans said that poor attendance at the primaries indicated a lack of interest in the proposals, and a colleague, John J. Stoddart, argued that the "whole mess" was stirred up by a "solitary preacher" and a single newspaper. Second, the opponents advocated a delay in executing the plan if it should pass. This was the "sliding scale" whereby the mayor would appoint members to the Board of Control only as the terms of BPW members expired. Two plans, one the majority report and the other a bill providing for the sliding scale of appointments and denying the mayor the veto on street improvements and services, were presented. The Dispatch called the second a bill for politicians and contractors. It could not be doubted that Republicans would prosper under this version more than under the majority plan.

After days of committee hearings, the intervention of the

96 Dispatch, January 16, 18, 1893.

97 Ibid., January 20, 26, 30, February 6, 7, 8, 1893; Journal, January 8, 10, February 5, 1893.
Franklin County Republican Association in an attempt to produce compromise, and several amendments, the reorganization bill passed the Ohio legislature. The plan was clearly not a pure federal system, but it was a definite step in that direction. The vociferous opposition of the Dispatch, Democrats, and general proponents of the federal plan had led to the mayoral veto being reinserted for all legislation including public improvements; the executive was to be a powerful one. Council was not to be reorganized, and it was thus evident that this body, though not so powerful as previously, would remain Republican. The mayor would only gradually become completely responsible for his office since the sliding-scale provision was included in the final act; it would be three years before he appointed the heads of all departments. The reformers were happy they had achieved so much. Yet, many were bitter that partisanship had delayed operation of the new form to its fullest extent and feared that the Republican Director of Public Safety, William Muchmore, would not execute the civil service provisions of the act since the mayor had no real control over him. Such fear proved correct, but given the rampant partisanship of the period, it seems clear that the reformers had scored a formal victory. 98

98 Dispatch. February 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 28, March 1, June 6, 1893. Lyman H. Cozad, "The Columbus Civil Service
With the passage of the new municipal charter act in March 1893 political reform action by Columbus citizens and members of the Board of Trade in particular began to decline. There were several reasons for this change. The most obvious is that after almost ten years of relatively constant agitation for a better form of government, that form was a fact. Although many doubted the efficacy of the new federal plan, it would be necessary to wait at least three years before a final judgment could be made by either supporters or opponents. This left reformers with the task of attempting to make sure the government lasted the necessary period and no rippers interfered with it. Filling the offices with capable men rather than creating an effective form was now also an obvious need. Thus, concern with government would necessarily be highest during the time preceding elections, and year-around agitation would no longer be so necessary. In short, one reason for the decline of this particular political reform movement was that it had been successful. A wait-and-see attitude prevailed.

But there were other causes for the Board of Trade's falling interest in municipal reform. These factors can be taken as an indication that "success" alone may not have been sufficient to produce the changing priorities. Certainly there was yet much
that could be improved within the city; however, the Board's concerns were shifting almost completely away from municipal problems. One important cause was the rise of two organizations which competed with the Board for public attention, membership, and money. The new federal plan did not produce the immediate tax-payers' utopia which some of its strongest advocates had predicted, and while the Board of Trade presented a concerned, but not overly concerned appearance, some of its members began discussing formation of a tax-payers' league.

This league was officially established in October 1894. No man could argue with its stated purpose which was to promote "honest and efficient" administration in city and county affairs, but one of the Board's former functions had been preempted by a new organization. The League, composed of many of those men most active in efforts to secure a new charter, received ample publicity from the Dispatch and was highly visible in the city for about ten months. After that it faded from the scene, but during its short life it helped shift attention away from the Board of Trade as a reform-minded organization.

99 The activities of the League ranged widely from attempting to secure better franchises for the city to investigation of alleged election frauds. Its continuity with earlier reform efforts is evidenced in some of its leadership: William F. Burdell was president, Washington Gladden a strong supporter. The League shared the problem of earlier reform groups that the "little man"
A second, more enduring group competed even more directly with the Board of Trade. The Columbus Businessman's League, established in August 1896, drew members clearly disaffected with what they saw as the Board's lack of energy. They were generally younger than most Board members and were more concerned with specific business needs of members than was the Board of Trade. The Businessman's League was a booster organization, and judging from newspaper accounts, its main concerns were publicizing the industrial advantages of the city and getting conventions to locate there. Again, two functions of the Board of Trade had been usurped by a group displaying great vitality.

Besides competition from these organizations, a competition which probably would not have occurred had the Board of Trade been more energetic, the Board suffered from an interior decline. Without property was generally uninterested in the group's activities. Formation of this organization outside the Board of Trade was evidence not only of the Board's shifting priorities but also of a change in direction of reform. The Tax Payers League attacked specific abuses with specific suggestions where earlier reform efforts had been considerably more general. This is not to say that organization of the League ended concern with generalities, but it was a definite move in that direction. See the Dispatch, September 12, October 3, 4, 5, 27, November 7, 10, 13, December 10, 17, 18, 1894; January 23, 24, 25, February 5, 6, 14, 27, May 28, 1895.

100 Ibid., August 3, 11, September 22, 18, 1896; April 7, 24, May 1, November 11, 1897; January 4, 5, February 3, 1898.
The annual meeting in January 1896 was attended by only eighty-four persons, a sharp drop from previous years; in 1897 the number was down to seventeen.

It is difficult to state with any assurance what led to this precipitous decline, but one thing is clear. The Board gradually began to respond to the decrease in membership by copying the booster activities of the Businessman's League. In 1896 the president's speech at the Board's annual meeting was devoid of any mention of municipal problems; the next two years saw the Board evidence considerable interest in securing conventions for the city. Such a tactic was successful. Late in 1898, after over two years of criticizing the Board for its "comatose" state, the Businessman's League disbanded; its membership was absorbed into the now burgeoning Board of Trade. But the revived Board did not return to reform activities typical of the early 1890's. There was still concern with specific abuses in government and continued attention to providing efficient municipal services, but these old reformist activities took a poor second place to those which have more traditionally become associated with Chambers of Commerce.

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101 Ibid., January 22, 1895; January 21, February 5, 1896; January 21, March 19, 1897; January 21, May 11, October 10, 1898; January 21, 1899. Board of Trade Reports, 1894-1900, especially 1895, 25.
There is one more factor which should be mentioned in the discussion of the Board's change of direction. That is the depressed state of the economy after 1893. The national depression of the 1890's was a severe one, and its intensity in Columbus grew to a peak in 1896. In that year building permits, which had been declining since 1893, were only half of what they were in the previous year. According to the Board of Trade the business failure rate stood at 2 per cent, and the total number of firms in the city was declining. There are no clear statements that the Businessman's League was a direct response to the economic hardships, but its establishment in 1896 and its consequent single-minded concern with increasing business activity in Columbus are strong indications that the members were acting to ameliorate problems at least partially caused by the depression. If this is actually the case, and it seems to be, then one may say that in this instance economic difficulty was part of the cause for the decline of municipal reform. There was not time for the Businessman's League to concern itself with long-range projects which had only indirect bearings on profits and losses. To many businessmen of the day the League's efforts must have seemed

\[102\] *Dispatch*, January 21, 1897. See also Columbus City Council Reports for 1894, 3-4.
much more relevant than those of the Board of Trade—and the League prospered while the Board became practically moribund.

So, in a period of about sixteen years the Columbus Board of Trade had experienced several influences and gone through major changes. From the original energetic reformist spirit of the late 1880's and early '90's the Board had declined. Its resurrection had come after about five years of relative inactivity, but the "new" Board was not like the old. In an effort to revive the organization members had copied the tactics and program of the competing Businessman's League. This meant that "reform" and concern with activity not purely and immediately business oriented would be severly deemphasized.
CHAPTER IV

THE ATTEMPT TO PRODUCE MORAL ORDER

Ever since the abortive attempt to enforce national prohibition in the 1920's Americans have tended to look upon such extreme "morality" in politics as retrograde and wasteful. Such a view cannot help but color the historian's interpretation of crusades to introduce a moral order into American society by closing saloons, rooting out gambling, or eliminating prostitution. Too often it is tempting to describe such events as little more than futile and unimportant exercises in religious fundamentalism.¹

When one recalls prohibition, he usually thinks of camp meetings and cold-water pledges or of the speakeasy, none of which produce

¹Richard Hofstadter, for example, treats national prohibition as a perversion of Progressivism and indicates it was not a "true" reform; The Age of Reform, 289-93; Eric Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York, 1958), 220, argues similarly calling prohibition the "crowning symbol of the drive for conformity." These are the two most popular general histories of American reform in the twentieth century. Paul A. Carter, The Twenties (New York, 1968), treats the topic more objectively noting its importance for many reformers of the period. True enough, prohibition did restrict the freedom of a multitude of individuals, but so did other acts of the early 1900's which modern liberals put under a reform heading.
much in the way of sympathetic vibrations for contemporary Americans. When temperance is mentioned, the same reaction is usually present, though in the past those concerned with temperance were outstandingly careful to keep the concept separate from prohibition.

It is a mistake to confuse these two ideas, and it is distorting to assume that all those who tried to introduce morality into the political order were simple products of rural intolerance. This is not to say that such elements were absent from anti-vice crusades, nor is it to say that the narrow-minded did not have important influence in moralistic efforts. It is to emphasize, however, that during the post-Civil War era one can easily observe two important characteristics of the anti-vice movement which make it appear more than an exercise in bigotry, futile though it may have been. First, many of those involved in this reform movement did not conform to the stereotype of the unthinking religious fundamentalist. Second, given the rapid urbanization and consequent disorder of the period, it is evident that the introduction of public morality was often as much an effort to reduce social disorder as it was to reform the habits of individuals. This shift in emphasis makes the temperance movements during the last third of the nineteenth century different from those that occurred in the ante-bellum era.
Most American cities of the late nineteenth century experienced temperance crusades, and Columbus was no exception. Though certain years saw greater activity than others, from about 1870 until the end of the century there was chronic anti-vice agitation. These thirty years display two periods of morality efforts, each with its own special characteristics. The reform zeal of the seventies was concerned mainly with prohibition and was more a product of religious morality than the movements of the latter twenty years. After about 1880, the emphasis shifted. Anti-vice agitation became broader, more concerned with temperance and legal order, and involved larger numbers of persons than had the earlier movement.

Most probably Columbus was never the wide-open city that places like San Francisco or Chicago were. It is also likely that the scale should be lowered more than this, and one could say that the city was not so open as contemporary Cincinnati under the rule of Boss Cox, a man who openly admitted the presence of the back-door saloon in the Queen City. But this was not the

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2 Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, Illinois, 1963), 44-49, notes the ante-bellum qualities of self-improvement and perfectionism that were present in the temperance movement. These remained after the Civil War, but the desire to produce civil order--whether motivated by status loss of native Americans or not--was generally an urban and post-1860 phenomenon.
way natives of Columbus viewed their situation. To them the city was variously wide-open, lawless, immoral, or disorderly on a scale practically unequalled in the civilized world. Consequently, reformers expended a great amount of energy to make the city more law-abiding or more moral. Such crusades are important for the urban historian. They demonstrate how one group of legitimate reformers was responding to an ancient problem, but one which now appeared in a new setting, the emerging city. That these reformers were unsuccessful does not detract from the importance of their efforts.

Columbus citizens engaged in three types of vice which reformers desired to root out. Most prominent, because it was in the open and because it involved the greatest number of persons, was the problem of drinking alcoholic beverages on Sunday and after midnight, activities illegal according to city ordinance. Gambling was a second institution which reformers saw as either immoral, illegal, or both. Third, there was the problem of prostitution which was clearly both illegal and very immoral. In 1866 a Columbus minister estimated that his city with a population of about 30,000 had 400 liquor shops, of which only 280 were licensed,

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118 gambling houses, and fifty-five brothels. Since "respectable" women did not frequent saloons and liquor shops, this meant that there was a liquor store available for about every thirty-five males, including children. To the speaker such statistics indicated moral depravity. ⁴ These figures, however, may have been significantly inflated for public relations purposes. In 1871 the Columbus Temperance Alliance reported a total of 236 saloons in the city, a high number for the Alliance members, but much lower than the 1866 figure. ⁵

Whatever the exact figure, it was too high for temperance and prohibition advocates, and in the 1870's the movement demanding closing of establishments on Sundays and after midnight burgeoned. The Temperance Alliance had reported that only thirty-five of the total number of liquor establishments actually obeyed the law and shut their doors on Sunday. Of this number, twenty-eight were dram shops owned by "Americans;" four were owned by Irish; and only three that closed were owned by Germans who operated 148 of the total number.

⁴Ohio Statesman, January 22, 1866. The minister was C. E. Felton; see ibid., March 8, 1865, for a statement on prohibition. The statements about the "wide-open" city persisted throughout the century; see Dispatch, December 21, 1891.

⁵Statesman, February 1, 1871.

⁶Ibid.
The 1870's saw two major crusades against the abuses of alcohol in Columbus. Neither of these efforts was successful in the long run, but they indicate the diverging paths of prohibition and temperance and show the political nature of this supposedly moral question.

The first liquor reform effort was a sporadic one which took place over the first four years of the decade. Late in 1870, 5500 citizens petitioned the mayor to see that saloons closed on Sundays. George Meeker, a Republican, responded that he would consider the petition and its relation to the 1853 Columbus ordinance requiring the cessation of Sunday saloon business. The persons who had signed the petition, the mayor noted, were of the highest character; included were businessmen, clergy, and the wives of many prominent citizens. The list tended to be weighted toward the Republican side of the political spectrum, and within a week after receiving the petition, Mayor Meeker announced that he was powerless to enforce the Sunday closing law. This was a true statement. He cited an 1869 state law which vested this particular enforcement power in the Board of Police Commissioners, now Democratic, and responded that he was practically helpless to answer the requests of the petitioners. The reply apparently

7 Ibid., October 12, 13, 21, 1870.
put off the reformers for the time being because there were no more reports of requests for closings for about one and a half years.

Several traits of this brief effort in the early seventies should be noted. First, this was a plea for temperance, not prohibition, and the petition was widely accepted by the citizenry. The number signing was about seventeen per cent of the total population of the city and must have been nearly twice that percentage of the voters. Second, although the presence of large numbers of clergy on the petition probably indicates that the morality factor was large in the movement, the petitioners called simply for enforcement of the law. There was no fanatical moral censure of those who sold liquor on the sabbath. Third, it is noticeable that in spite of the temperateness of the petition and the large number of signatures on it, nothing was done. An immediate answer to the implicit question is that the Democratic party of Columbus was heavily in debt to the city's German population which was strongly opposed to any enforcement of laws they felt impinged on their personal liberties. Proscription of the traditional continental Sunday was fiercely resisted by the German population throughout the nineteenth century, and their political power was such that they could usually prevent rigid and long-lasting enforcement of any Sunday closing laws. It is further apparent that either the majority of the citizenry, including those who signed
the petition but failed to follow through strongly, were not yet overly concerned about sabbath-breaking, or that they realized the near impossibility of moving the Police Board to enforce the law.

A second, brief attempt to enforce the Sunday closing laws followed in March 1872 but never gained momentum. One year later came a third act in the closing drama. Once again the outcome of the effort was negligible, but this episode affords a closer look at how the German-Americans viewed attempts to stop sales of liquor and beer on Sunday.

Most probably in an effort to cause the repeal of the Sunday ordinance the Democratic mayor, John Bull, announced that he was going to enforce the law. The Republican Journal immediately hailed the statement, urged support of the mayor by the Police Board, and added that if any laws were unjust, repeal could best be secured by vigorous enforcement. "We hope that this is no spasmodic attack of municipal virtue, which will begin and end with a violent proclamatory symptom. The times are auspicious

For similar situations in other areas of the mid-west and the impact of moralizing on German-Americans, see Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Mid-Western Politics (New York, 1970), 40-43.

Statesman. March 9, 11, 18, 1872.
for permanent reform." The ordinance which the mayor proposed to enforce demanded the cessation of all business on Sundays, but probably in an effort to undercut Bull's attempt to have the ordinance repealed the Police Board, now Republican, announced the law should be enforced only against those who trafficked in liquor. The Republican Journal responded by stating that the mayor should enforce the laws impartially, thus criticizing the Board, but added that it would editorially present suggestions for sweeping changes in the Sunday ordinances. The first Sunday after the mayor's proclamation there was a general closing of saloons, and the following day there was a resolution by a nebulous group of "temperance men" supporting the actions of the mayor and police force. 

Two groups, however, were unhappy. The saloonkeepers quickly called a meeting to decide what action should be taken in relation to the new order. Comprised of diverse ethnic and economic groups, the organization adjourned without any action but the appointment of a seven-man committee to consult attorneys on the best course.

10 Ohio State Journal, May 31, 1873.

11 Ibid., May 31, June 2, 3, 1873.

12 Ibid., June 2, 6, 1873. At this time many of the larger saloonists stated their satisfaction with Sunday closing. Disagree-
The second group dissatisfied with Sunday enforcement was the German-Americans. The German Westbote immediately began a series of editorials attacking the mayor for turning on those who had been instrumental in his narrow election victory. The Westbote, in effect, demanded that since Sunday recreation was a part of the European heritage, Americans should respect the newcomers' desire to have beer that day. This position angered the natives. The Journal responded immediately that Germans should not try to remain separate from the rest of the population. "The rights of the naturalized citizens are never safe, so long as they erect themselves into a separate class, demanding special immunities." The Westbote replied that Germans were less hypocritical than the puritan Americans and argued the editor had not advocated a separation of Germans from Americans. The editor further stated that most of those who supported Sunday closing were not the men who worked six days a week. The Germans found support from the Democratic Statesman which claimed that blue laws unjustly attempted to regulate morality, an especially bad fault since the Germans had emigrated to what they had expected to be a free land. This debate was interminable.

ment came from smaller businessmen who claimed they needed Sunday's profits, from those who felt others were sure to gain advantage by cheating on Sundays, and from many German owners of beer gardens.
The Journal retorted that Americans had received Germans and "their customs, giving them equal rights... only hoping that they will adopt our language and customs." The real question, claimed this editor was rights for Americans, not rights for a special group. The more conservative and prohibition-minded protestant clergy suggested that if the Germans did not like the United States, they could return to Europe. 13

In this instance the middle-of-the-road Journal was caught in a dilemma which typified that which moderate reformers faced on this particular question. The newspaper and its editor were attempting to maintain a consistent policy of non-discrimination and non-political rationality. Neither was highly popular. To the German, enforcement of the law was discrimination since it hurt him more than other Americans. The Journal had argued that laws should be based on the need for "civil order," not any religious or moral grounds. Logically, this was a good position, but to those who wanted their Sunday beer it was sophistry. To those who demanded that the Germans go back to the fatherland, the moderation of the Journal and its failure to condone enforcement

13 Ibid., June 7, 9, 13, 1873; Statesman, June 10, 1873. The use of the terms "liberal" and "conservative" here is not intended to place reformers or their opponents on a political spectrum. Opponents of "law and order" called themselves liberals in this period.
on grounds of morality indicated a lapse.  

By the mid-eighties the position of the Journal would be supported by more newspapers, many of them reform-oriented. This stance would be popularized under the banner of "law and order," covering enforcement of all laws, especially blue laws. But the campaign in 1873 ended rather rapidly. Because there is so much lost history of cities of this period, it is impossible to say just why enforcement foundered this time. It is, however, quite tempting to speculate that Mayor Bull, who had initiated the whole crusade in an effort to change the law, saw he could not succeed and simply stopped his pressure. The extreme anger of the Germans and lack of great popular support for closing would have indicated that this was the correct tack for a politician. The insistence of the Democrats in Council that the law apply to all establishments—all knew that such a law was patently unenforceable—supports this hypothesis. For whatever reason, by the end of June 1873 the saloons were opening again on Sunday. The citizens and the politicians would not experiment in this fashion with blue laws again until the 1880's.

One year later, however, the city experienced a very different

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15 Ibid., June 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 30, 1873.
kind of liquor reform movement. This was the "Women's War on Whiskey" which had begun in the small towns of southern Ohio and had gradually spread throughout the state. If the earlier temperance movements had been less than successful, this attempt to eradicate whiskey totally from the city scene was not only a dismal failure but also the subject of popular ridicule.

On February 17, 1874, the first of a series of temperance meetings was held in City Hall where Columbus women were urged to pray and sing in saloons just as had been done in rural parts of the state. Meetings continued for two more weeks with mounting revivalistic fervor; letters to newspapers observed the association of alcohol with crime. Although warned by the editor of the Journal that even liquor was property, the women began to take their crusade to the bars in early March. After the bartenders of the Neil House Hotel had been confronted with women praying for them and their customers, the Columbus Liquor Dealers' Association met and declared that it would sign no pledges nor "allow or tolerate any... ladies in their places of business." Events quickly assumed a carnival atmosphere when owners began to dump beer on the praying women. The Journal did not say that a woman's place was in her home, but it did opine that this type of tactic could easily go too far, prayer becoming prosecution.

The Women's War Against Whiskey was the last time in the
nineteenth century that Columbusites experienced anything approaching the old-style campaign against alcohol. It was clearly a morality effort with all the intolerance that such a crusade implies. Although cities are perhaps not so liberal as they have been described when comparing them to non-urban areas, it is clear that if any sense of community were to prevail at all, mounting heterogeneity would necessitate an increased willingness of citizens to let others act in manners different from their own. That Columbus did not experience such a totalitarian crusade again after the mid-seventies would seem to indicate a realization on the part of most of the citizens that a more tolerant philosophy should prevail in a growing urban center. 17

16 Ibid., February 9, 11, 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, March 4, 6, 16, 1874.

17 This is not to say that citizens of the city, or any city, could not in the future be as bigoted and intolerant as their rural neighbors were supposed to be. The crusade against liquor continued for the rest of the century, but it became more of an attempt to enforce blue laws rather than proscribe whiskey altogether. The complexity of this type of crusade is indicated by the "Waiter-Girl" ordinance passed by Council in 1876. This law forbade girls serving in saloons. It was, of course, supported by "moralistic" elements, but a strong force causing passage was saloonists who did not employ girls and felt that those who did had an unfair competitive advantage. See Journal, June 27, 1876; Dispatch, July 25, August 7, 22, 1876. For the continuing, but spasmodic war against whiskey, see Journal, April 6-13, June 29, 1877, May 12, 1879.
By the 1880's the anti-liquor crusade was taking a generally new approach. Although earlier attempts to squelch the selling of alcohol on Sundays had concerned the illegality of such sales, reformers had also put at least equal emphasis on the immorality of the act. The new approach would not overtly consider morality at all. Rather, proponents of temperance would emphasize the necessity for preserving civil order and urge the claim that disrespect for one law could easily lead to a dissolution of the whole legal fabric.

Concurrent with the 1870's attempts to moralize the city in relation to whiskey, there was also an effort to eradicate gambling. Gambling had been declared unlawful in Columbus as early as 1827, but it had flourished despite the legal interdict. Periodic raids on gambling dens were a part of city life in the years after the Civil War, but like the crusade against alcohol the net result was less than optimum for the reformers. The pattern was similar to that of other vice crusades; it was sporadic and only ephemerally successful.

One of the first acts of the new Columbus Metropolitan Police Board in mid-1873 was to issue an order for the suppression of gambling, a repetition of an old city ordinance. The editors of the Ohio State Journal found this position eminently acceptable
and argued that gambling should cease for three reasons. First, gambling was clearly more immoral than most other vices in the city. Prostitution was worse but was neither so widespread nor so open. Second, rampant gambling gave Columbus a bad reputation. It was becoming known as a "wide-open" town, attracting certain unsavory types while discouraging honest men from visiting the city. This would hurt business. Such a statement in time of depression was clearly calculated to win the support of sound businessmen in town. Third, the existence of widespread gambling directly hurt the worker. Such a man, not rich at any rate, was likely to be the victim of a wiley gambler and lose earnings which could have been used for "necessities" of life.

This was ample rationale for anyone.

In July 1873 all the gambling houses in the city were closed by the police. Keeping them shut, however, required constant vigilance. Since the police department was chronically understaffed and under-paid, suppression of gambling was something of a police luxury; there were so many rumors of gamblers' pay-offs to police that at least some of these must have been true. So it was not surprising that within five months all the houses had reopened for the Christmas holiday season. At this point the

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18 Ibid., June 21, December 25, 1873.
Police Board reannounced its intention to shut the houses. Again results were the same: gradual reopenings following the initial banner closings.

Certain clues to the reasons for the failure to enforce the gambling ordinances are available from notes on a Police Board meeting held in 1878. It seems that gambling should have been easier to eradicate than illegal alcohol. Gambling was not so widespread as non-observance of the liquor laws. It was not a vice practiced by a specially identifiable set as the German-Americans who could act as a group to oppose law enforcement. More people were agreed that gambling was immoral than held the same ideas on alcohol. However, gambling was often more covert than Sunday drinking. Taking place mostly at night, it occurred when police were busiest with other duties—duties ranging from lighting and checking the street lights to making immense night rounds. In the Police Board meeting mentioned above, David W. Brooks, a respected member of the Board, argued that this "social evil" could be abated, especially when it occurred in the open and on the streets, but that it could not be totally extinguished. "The captain added that if a 'respectable' gambling establishment could be

19 Ibid., December 25, 1873, January 19, April 6, September 24, 1874, April 5, 1881, January 17, 1882; Dispatch, April 11, 1889, November 8, 9, 1894; New York Times, April 3, 1887.
shadowed by officers and pulled in, the probabilities were that
a member of City Council or some wholesale merchant would
come out with the gang and their business reputations injured." Substantial men, claimed Brooks, had approached him to say that
the moralistic public would most likely be satisfied with a police
attack on the "lesser fry." Completely candid at this point, the
Board decided that the street gamblers, the lesser fry dubbed
"curbstone ornaments," should be run out. The Journal called
this position a cowardly compromise with thieves. But the episodic
approach was deeply entrenched, and it did appear that a well pub­
licized gambling raid now and then sufficed to pacify extreme
moralists. 20 If such practical suggestions from police directors
were not reason enough for the failure to root out gambling, the
Journal, highly moralistic on this question, later added one more.
In September 1880 an editorial noted a recent raid with seeming
approval, but it went on to argue that it would be a better idea to
stage arrests when there were fewer state fair visitors in town.
"They may go away and talk of the city and its regulators." 21

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20 Journal, January 4, 5, 15, 16, 1878; January 22, July 14,
August 5, 1879. Although Brooks was speaking in 1878, five years
after the crusade discussed, it is the author's opinion that his argu­
ments must have been valid also in 1873. That there was no appar­
tent changes in the official approach to gambling in these years
supports this hypothesis.

21 Ibid., September 3, 1880.
Another brief attempt under the mayoralship of businessman Philip H. Bruck to root out gambling in 1889 resulted in little accomplishment. Following Bruck's unsuccessful attempt, another Democrat, George J. Karb, ordered the gambling houses closed in 1891; this move was also unsuccessful. In the later 1890's there were three more attempts to close down the gamblers' havens, but all these met the fate of earlier attempts: brief success was followed by a return to the old practices, and approximately fifty "joints" continued to flourish in the city.

By the early nineties, there was growing opinion that such efforts to change men's morality were doomed to failure. In 1892 Dr. J. E. Overly, a newly elected member of the Police Board, stated that suppression was impossible and therefore the attempts were wasteful. He argued for regulation of gamblers in an effort to make sure that visitors to the city and poor men were not taken advantage of. This idea was more businesslike than moralistic, but the ordinances for suppression of gambling remained on the city's books without change. Overly's philosophy did make some de facto headway since there were occasional reports of police raids to revenge bad treatment of an out-of-towner.

The change in city government which occurred in 1893 theoretically

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22 Dispatch. April 16, 29, May 1, 3, August 8, 9, 1889; January 6, 1891.
should have made suppression of this vice easier since citizens could place the blame for failure of enforcement directly on the mayor and Director of Public Safety, but the new form actually made little difference in the face of general public apathy.  

A second type of vice which failed to arouse great public sentiment was the institution of prostitution. Brothels had been outlawed at the time of the gambling ordinance in the 1820's, but they too had persisted. There was never so much effort to dispense with or regulate prostitution as there was to eradicate and regulate gambling. This was not for a lack of whore houses in the city, but prostitution, unlike the "curbstone ornaments" and the saloons, was not in the open. Further, the elevated status of "respectable" wives dictated that many of the upstanding men of the city would at least occasionally visit brothels. As in the instance of gambling, "respectable" citizens exerted a tacit influence to see that prostitution did not become the outstanding moral issue of the   

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Ibid., October 7, December 5, 7, 1891; February 29, May 5, December 14, 15, 17, 21, 1892; May 2, 4, 7, July 3, 20, 1896; May 29, 31, 1877; July 23, 1898; New York Times, May 4, 1893. Although Columbus was never racked by any spectacular gambling corruption, the rationale that illegal gambling of necessity produced connivance of the outlaws and police was also one reason why many non-morally oriented men favored eradication of the vice. Perhaps, had there been outstanding proof of this relationship, the anti-gambling effort would have been more successful.
Thus it was that neither anti-gambling nor anti-prostitution efforts would consume the energy of Columbus reformers concerned with changing moral attitudes and habits. They concentrated primarily on the problem of alcoholic sabbath-breaking, a problem intrinsically bound up with politics and possible ethnic hostilities. The temperance crusade begun in the 1870's continued in the early and mid-eighties with sniping action by various ministers. But there was no widespread activity during this years, and the activity of moral social reform reached its apex during the late eighties and early nineties. The concern was mainly with the problem of midnight closing of saloons, but it resulted in a larger campaign in 1891 for an independently selected ticket of law and order candidates.

The movement that culminated in the formation of the Citizen's

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24 For quite a different response to this "problem" see John C. Burnham, "The Social Evil Ordinance, A Social Experiment in Nineteenth Century St. Louis," Bulletin of the Missouri State Historical Society, v. 27 (April 1971).

25 Journal, February 8, 14, March 29, May 9, 25, June 6, 7, 18, 21, August 1, 6, November 1, 1881; April 5, 19, 24, July 27, 18 24, September 30, October 9, 11, 1882; June 29, July 17, 1883; March 17, 26, April 21, 22, 24, May 19, 20, 26, June 9, 17, 23, 24, 30, July 18, 22, 1884; New York Times, June 29, 1882.
League and the Committee of One Hundred in 1891 actually began in 1887. In June of that year the newly elected mayor, Philip Bruck, a Democrat, asked Council to pass an ordinance providing for midnight closing of saloons. Mayor Bruck's motives are difficult to fathom. As a Democrat and as the son of German-born parents it seems unlikely that he should make such a proposal.

The Ohio Dow Law already required the closing of saloons on Sunday and after midnight, and although it was popularly thought that an 1853 Columbus ordinance providing for midnight closings had been declared unconstitutional, it had not. Bruck surely was aware of at least one of these laws. On the other hand, it should be noted that he made no mention of closing the saloons on Sunday, a measure which would have alienated many more of his Democratic supporters than would the stated proposal. There was also the possibility that by twisting actual events the Republican council could be blamed for passing the proposed ordinance in those sections of town which opposed it or blamed for not passing it where it was favored. In making his request to Council the mayor presented no moral arguments but stated in simple business terms that forty per cent of the arrests in the city were made after midnight and seventy-five per cent of these were drunks. Midnight closing would make the business of the police less onerous and hopefully lower the cost of city government. 26
Bruck's proposal received immediate support from the independent Dispatch which argued that seventy-five per cent of the population favored the suggestion and that the saloonists would also favor it if the law were impartially enforced. The following day Council passed the bill on its first reading with all Republicans voting yes and all Democrats, except two, voting no. Given more time to think about the proposal, however, the Republicans began to voice fear that this was some kind of Democrat trick to hurt them in the next councilmanic election. Should an amendment to provide for Sunday closing, a sure way to defeat the ordinance, be added? This expedient was not needed for in July the bill failed on its final reading; clearly enough Republicans joined the now unanimous Democrat minority to assure that this onus did not fall on their party. 27

After taking a month-long summer recess, Council reversed the responsibility and officially requested the mayor to enforce the state Dow Law. The mayor did not reply. 28

In spite of obvious use of the issue as a political football, 26

26 Dispatch, June 20, 1887. Thus, Bruck's reputation as a businessman and concern for efficient government--so far as politics would allow--was to many ample cause for his policy.

27 Ibid., June 20, 21, 24, 25, July 12, 13, 1887.

28 Ibid., September 6, 1887.
some changes in attitude are evident. Mayor Bruck's request, whether politically motivated or not, was couched in the language of efficiency, not morality. The day before Council had asked Bruck to enforce the law, Washington Gladden had urged his congregation to favor closing. Again there was no moral castigation; in fact, Gladden argued that this was not a moral issue but a social one which concerned the community welfare. The saloons he blamed for contributing to seventy-five per cent of the pauperism in the city; they enjoyed privileges which no other business in the city did; other cities engaged in more vigorous enforcement than did Columbus and consequently enjoyed greater civil order. For these reasons, not because of moral imperatives, the saloons should close at midnight. Later Gladden expatiated on his remarks favoring Sunday closing so that saloonists would not get "first crack" on laborers who received their wages on Saturday night. 29

The editor of the Dispatch was also refining his rationale for the proposed closings. First, closing was provided for in law. This in itself was enough to indicate the saloons should be closed. But just as important this law was one that encouraged rationality

29 Ibid., September 5, 1887; November 30, 1888; September 9, 1889; Jacob Dorn, Washington Gladden (Columbus, 1966) emphasized the preacher's concern with the "breakdown in public order," 308-311.
at a time when it seemed that order in American cities was disappearing. If men could disregard one law with impunity, so could they disregard others. The editor did not predict anarchy if the saloons disobeyed the statutes, but the drift of his opinion was clearly in that direction.

In the spring of 1888 the Dispatch opined that the question of midnight closing would be important in the approaching municipal election because publicity and politics during the previous year had aroused popular interest. Agreeing with pro-closing sentiment, the paper noted the official expense which Mayor Bruck had earlier observed. In the following election twelve Republicans--versus three Democrats--were elected to Council, most surely an indication, said the editor, that a majority of citizens favored midnight closing. Prodded by election results and by a writ of mandamus presented to the police commissioners, Bruck ordered the police chief to close saloons after midnight as well as on Sundays.

The Dispatch happily recalled that not since 1873 had there been a real effort to keep within the bounds of law on this question and hoped that reform would now last longer than the five weeks of 1873. Again, however, the Westbote, which had not criticized the mayor on his midnight closing efforts, was unhappy that Sunday was also included. But the Dispatch continued its rationality approach to closing stating that the mayor should be commended for helping
turn the tide away from "burning courthouses, dealing leniently with criminals, stuffing ballot boxes, forging tally sheets, knocking prosecuting attorneys into the gutter, and fighting, stabbing, and killing men after midnight and on Sunday." When certain German societies met in July to consider working against laws they felt were abridging their personal liberty, the editor called it "the first step toward the use of the shotgun."30

This was probably going a bit too far because gradually, as before, the mayor and Police Board allowed enforcement to lapse.31 Within six months the mayor, lacking support from the Police Board to enforce the closing ordinances, went farther and announced it was not his duty to enforce laws obnoxious to the people. Expectedly, the Dispatch severely castigated him for this statement, but Bruck rather nonchalantly replied that Sunday closing was a dead letter in every city of any size in Ohio.32

30 Dispatch, September 10, 1887; March 3, 17, May 5, 7, 8, 14, 17, June 25, July 3, 9, 10, 25, 1888. It seems likely that Bruck's decision to close saloons after the Democratic defeat in April was more political than legal. Although Republicans had commanded a majority in Council since 1879 the ratio was traditionally much better than 12 to 3 for the Democrats. The writ was not actually served on the mayor but on the Police Board of which he was an ex officio member. The events mentioned by the Dispatch all had occurred in Columbus with the exception of the Cincinnati court house burning in 1883.

31 Ibid., June 25, July 3, 1888.

32 Ibid., December 5, 7, 1888. Bruck's dead-letter statement was correct.
After the mayor's statement the issue remained quiescent until the approach of spring elections in 1889. At this point the Dispatch initiated a campaign to elect a pro-closing man to the Board of Police Commissioners, arguing that such a man, whatever his party, would tilt the balance firmly in favor of enforcement. The editor supported the Republican candidate, who had had no previous political experience, but who vowed that as a commissioner he would enforce all the laws. The incumbent Democratic opponent, George J. Karb, had earlier voted against Sunday and midnight closing resolutions when they had been presented to the Board, but Karb won handily as did Mayor Bruck. This left the Board properly tied with two enforcers and two non-enforcers. Again "politics" arose, the Republicans demanding that Bruck close the saloons on Sunday, the mayor being willing to enforce only the midnight ordinance and trying to embarrass the opposition by getting it to suspend all Sunday activity except church. Once again Mayor Bruck briefly enforced the night law, but by winter it was again the dead letter it had been before the election.

The situation remained thus with little effort to initiate a new crusade, and in the elections of 1890 the anti-enforcement

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33 Ibid., March 21, 26, 27, April 6, 8, 9, 13, 1889; January 8, September 29, November 4, 1890. For more information on the election, see Dispatch, March 18, 22, April 2, 1889. Journal, April 8, 9, 1889.
Democrats won every city-wide office they contested and additionally whittled the Republicans' Council majority down to two.

By the early 1890's it seemed that Columbus voters would not deny office to a man solely on the grounds that he did not favor strict enforcement of blue laws. Old party loyalties continued to play a significant role in determination of voting patterns in Columbus. Further, it was becoming evident to many that prohibition had only slight chance of success in an inadequately policed city where protection of life and property was a more important police function than saloon surveillance. The ideas enunciated by two of the city's foremost citizens, Mayor Bruck and Dr. Gladden, demonstrated that in both the political and the religious worlds, temperance had become a more important goal than prohibition. The reasons for these men's stands were not moral. Bruck had noted the cost to the city police force that late saloon closing caused, and Gladden had argued that rampant disregard for the law produced social and economic ills, especially for the poor. Men more conservative than these two clung to the old

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34 Ibid., April 8, 1890.

35 This pattern or tendency to vote old party loyalties at least as much as issues, though not quantitatively documented here, has received both quantitative and theoretical treatment in Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York As A Test Case (New York, 1964), especially 270-287.
idea of a completely quiet Sunday and perhaps hoped even for a return to a crusade against whiskey, but they were increasingly becoming a minority, though quite a vocal one.

It is important that the changing consensus was at least partially the product of an urban environment. The physical complexity of the city made the task of law enforcement more difficult than in contemporaneous small towns. The city also provided a degree of anonymity impossible in smaller places. Both these factors made cost of enforcing midnight closing and blue laws high at a time when tax payers were troubled by the increasing cost and inefficiency of local government. It was the case, therefore, that although important taxpayers may have favored strict law enforcement, they were not willing to pay the necessary costs. The city also hosted various "foreign" groups which tended to look askance at any attempts to force them to give up part of their European traditions. Small towns usually did not have to contend with this factor. And these factors were in play during every enforcement attempt in Columbus after the Civil War. The experiences of urban prohibition traditionally left the taste of failure in the mouths of the reformers. Some profited from the experiences and moved to other causes. So it seems relatively clear that liberalism on the part of urbanites was not necessarily a factor in their decision—a reluctant one—to make "law and order" at most a
second priority item. It was simply that other concerns were more pressing and that money was too important.

The activities of the Committee of One Hundred and the Law and Order League in the months preceding the municipal election of 1891 demonstrate conclusively how far Columbusites had moved from their rather stern position of twenty years earlier. This political effort turned out to be a failure, but it indicates the degree of moderation which "moral reformers" had accepted by this time.

In one sense the law and order campaign of 1891 was the apex of the crusade against alcohol. It was a direct culmination of the frustration temperance men and women had experienced since the question of saloon closing had again become a political issue in the late 1880's. It was also the last time in the century when citizens engaged in a city-wide political campaign to enforce the anti-liquor laws. Columbus had had earlier law and order organizations whose main concern had been the abuse of alcohol, but these groups had vanished almost as soon as they appeared. 36 The League of 1891 was also short-lived, but it made a much greater impact than any of its forerunners.

The immediate effort that led to the formation of the

36Ohio State Journal, November 13, 1883; December 10, 1886; Dispatch, December 29, 1887.
Committee of One Hundred and the law and order campaign was begun by the Columbus Pastors' Union. This organization, comprising most of the city's protestant clergy, was becoming increasingly irate because Mayor Bruck had not closed the saloons even when the Republican Board of Police had said it would support him. On December 14, 1890, the Union passed a resolution "to take steps toward reforming the city government," and the clergymen indicated their willingness to engage in a political campaign in the spring. The ministers also stated their desire to work for law and order, but as has been historically true, the phrase in this instance meant a selective enforcement of the law: the clergy wanted the blue laws acted upon; this was "law and order." 

Public reaction to the proposal was mixed. The Dispatch, though supporting temperance, argued that the question of securing a federal plan for the city was more important and that the ministers should direct their efforts in that direction. Only by doing so could any permanent results be attained. Expectedly, most of the city's clergy favored the plan and indicated so publicly by preaching for law and order from their pulpits. Like others concerned with different facets of municipal reform, they too noted

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37 Ibid., December 15, 1890.
the absolute necessity of public concern on the part of their congregations. The Police Commission reacted, safely it should be noted, by again suggesting that the mayor close the saloons after midnight and on Sundays. Bruck responded by requiring a brief period of midnight closings; nothing happened to concern the Sunday saloonists.

Though it was clear that reform agencies like the Board of Trade or the Dispatch were supporters of law and order, it was also clear that their priorities were not congruent with those of the Pastors' Union. Washington Gladden also fell into this category and several times urged his congregation and the Union to concentrate on general governmental reform rather than specific abuses. But having achieved at least indirect support from some of the powerful organizations in the city, the pastors went a step farther to broaden their base. They appointed a Committee of One Hundred which was to act freely on the question of morality, but which was not too subtly directed to attempt the formation of a large Law and Order League. The first meeting of the Committee (about seventy-five per cent attended) in Wesley Chapel produced few results. Various sub-committees were appointed; it was agreed that the Committee should either get the Council to act or

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Ibid., December 16, 20, 22, 1890.
work with public opinion. The members engaged in a brief discussion of the federal plan where several speakers observed that no specific system of government assured law enforcement. 39

The next meeting of the Committee of One Hundred was devoted to the formation of the Citizens’ League of Columbus, Ohio, an organization popularly known as the Law and Order League. The League, with dues of only one dollar a year, was devoted to "secure by all proper means, laws and ordinances in the interest of public health and... morals and the enforcement of all laws" which would promote its goals. The founders planned to hold monthly meetings and clearly expected that the low dues and general aims would encourage a large membership. 40

Beginning early in February 1891, the League held a series of public meetings calculated to arouse the citizenry and produce the desired law enforcement. In the first meeting General John Beatty, Civil War hero, banker, and constant crusader against alcohol, spoke out against general law-breaking. Arguing that

39 Ibid., January 12, 16, 19, 1891. The Pastors' Union had also got the support of the General Council of Roman Catholic Societies of Columbus representing nineteen Roman male groups. Even with the discussion of the federal plan in the Committee, the editor of the Dispatch was not sold on the organization: he rather shortly pointed out that though governmental forms did not assure law enforcement, the federal plan would surely ease the burden.

40 Ibid., January 23, February 6, 1891.
"law is law" he claimed that disobeying closing laws was "no better, no worse" than disregarding law causing destruction of property. The general noted the importance of public opinion and declared the necessity of working with the law-abiding brewers and saloonists if the campaign were to succeed. Lesser speakers sounded the same themes and gave token support to the federal plan of city government.

Generally, the League avoided having strong prohibitionists on the platform. Speakers of the caliber of Professor Edward Orton of Ohio State University made quiet appeals for law and order and governmental reform. The Dispatch, however, continually warned that if the organization allowed many fanatical prohibitionists on its platform, its appeal would be vitiated.

About a month before the municipal election the League began to map out its political strategy. On March 5 the executive committee submitted a report urging members to try to get their parties to nominate "good men." If candidates of high caliber failed to secure party nominations, then the League should enter

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41 Beatty also referred to a recent street-car operators' strike which had several times resulted in violence. This strike may have given some impetus to formation of the League, but the general absence of any discussion of it indicates its influence on the League was slight at most. On Beatty, see Hooper, City of Columbus, 441-43.

42 Dispatch. February 11, 21, 25, 28, 1891.
its own independent candidates. The executive committee also cautioned members to begin effecting organization on the precinct level so that they could keep all options open. Finally, the committee endorsed the federal plan. 43

The membership of the citizens' group was a large one and included a multitude of opinions. There were some who urged that an independent campaign be initiated immediately since the reformers could expect nothing from the established parties. For a few, not evil officials, but ignorant voters caused the city problems. And there were others who had joined the movement in an effort to change the government of Columbus to the federal form. Such diversity could be taken as an omen of failure, but the League apparently was maintaining a vital existence with meetings, petitions to the legislature, and frequent pronouncements. 44

And perhaps there was some ground for optimism. At the city Republican convention the party took an unusual step and presented a platform. Though brief, the statement pledged to support law enforcement as well as the federal plan. The mayoral candidate was Edward Pagels who spoke strongly on the necessity of law enforcement; the candidate for the Board of Public Works

43 Ibid., March 6, 1891.
44 Ibid., March 6, 9, 11, 12, 1891.
was James Loren, a highly respected attorney. The Democrats, on the other hand, refused to frame a platform. George J. Karb, the mayoral nominee, was known to be a close friend of the Germans, and many felt that even if he should wish to, it would be politically impossible for him to enforce the Sunday ordinances. The Citizens' League and the Dispatch both gave their support to Pagels and Loren. Shortly, the Dispatch took a position of favoring all the candidates selected by the League. Further support for the League came from the Prohibitionist Party which declared that the League-endorsed men were not completely to their liking but were best for the present.

The League's campaign statement came two days before the election and clearly indicated how broad its official goals had become: it appealed for the support of fathers whose sons faced the prospect of "ruin" in a wide-open city; it appealed to mothers who wished to see their daughters grow up in a moral, law-abiding community. Workingmen should vote for the endorsed ticket so that they could reduce "temptations" and so have more dollars for "real needs." Businessmen should be able to see that honesty would lead to efficiency in government and then to lighter taxes and greater economic security. Finally, any property

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45 Ibid., March 30, 31, April 1, 2, 3, 4, 1891; Hooper, City of Columbus, 453-54. Karb had refused to support midnight closing
owner should vote the ticket to produce order, safety, peace—and enhanced real estate values.

The platform theoretically had something for just about everyone. The Germans were the only major group left unnamed, but many of them were covered under the rubric "workers."

However, the umbrella-like platform failed to produce the results the League had wanted. On April 6, the Dispatch's editor noted that there had been "a surprising lack of interest in today's election."

The Democrat mayoral nominee won his position by the usual 1000-vote margin. Fifty per cent of the League's selections won seats, but the two most crucial positions for law enforcement, the mayorship and a seat on the Police Commission, went to Democrats not endorsed by the organization. In Council the Republicans held on with a majority of three.

So the League had scored fifty per cent, but it had lost the most important positions. The Dispatch's post election analyses decried the unthinking adherence to party labels of Columbus voters, but there was an absence of total gloom. First, League members recognized their organization was new and that they

in 1889.

46 Dispatch, April 4, 1891; New York Times, April 6, 1891.

47 Dispatch, April 6, 7, 14, 1891. The League had not endorsed any Council candidates.
had not worked vigorously enough on ward and precinct levels. Second, they could take solace because two of their men had won. Third, the Dispatch’s analysis of precinct data revealed that compared to the state elections in 1890 about one eighth of the voters had split their tickets to vote for the League suggestions. That 700 Democrats and 1200 Republicans had bolted their parties was taken as at least a hopeful sign, and League officials warned Mayor-elect Karb that the totals indicated a desire on the part of voters to have their laws enforced. Karb did go so far as to order theatres closed on Sunday, but the crusade for law and order stopped at about this point. Although the League had stated that the election was proof for the need of its existence, its demise after April 1891 was rapid. Having in fact failed and facing the prospect of waiting two years before another political campaign could be mounted, membership dwindled away. The League never died an official death. It just did not surface again. 48

By taking a look at those who comprised the original Committee of One Hundred and by observing a bit more closely the results of the mayoral election, one can get a better idea of just who those persons were who favored "law and order" in 1891. The Committee of One Hundred was composed of 106 men.

48 Ibid., April 5, May 4, 1891; Journal, April 7, 1891.
The immediately surprising fact is not in the numbers, but in that not a single woman was on the committee. At a time when women were able to take public stands on safe moral issues, it seems odd that the Pastors' Union omitted this group from their selection. A second notable omission was Germans as a group. Although some Union members had noted the necessity of selecting men who would be clearly involved in the issues at hand, the number of German names on the list was at most seven. None of these was involved in the saloon or brewery business.

Who was selected? The most outstanding group—and the largest single one—was twenty-five protestant clergymen, mostly Methodists and Presbyterians. Here was a contingent appointed by peers with a clear stake in the issue of morality. The concern of these men with the problem of morality is clearly demonstrated by the reports of Sunday sermons in the weeks before the election: there was too much crime and social waste in the city much of which was directly traceable to the pernicious effects of intemperate use of alcohol. 49

If it can be called a group, another large contingent of the committee was represented by twenty-seven members of the Board of Trade. This category, however, appears artificial since less

49 See Dispatch or Journal for Mondays, February - March 1891.
than thirty per cent of the group was ever strongly involved in the business of the Board. It seems likely that members of the committee were not picked primarily because of associational memberships but by their willingness to expound the cause of law and order. That of the fifteen attorneys on the committee seven were members of the Board of Trade while the others were not supports this view.  

In occupation, the members of the committee, excluding the clergy, fall into a middle and upper class grouping. Most of the men were involved in retail trade, law, and clerk-type "junior executive" positions. Others not so readily classed included the president of Ohio State and one of the university's professors, a publisher and an editor, two bankers, three manufacturers, a blacksmith, a cobbler, a watch repairman, and a baker. By far the largest membership on the Committee could be classed as business or professional men. No one tagged simply as "clerk" or "laborer" was included indicating a lack of interest by these groups or an official feeling that these men were superfluous to the work of the committee, or both.  

50 Membership in BOT Report for 1891.  

51 Occupational data from R. L. Polk and Company, Columbus City Directory, 1891-92 (Columbus, n.d.), passim. Occupations for thirteen of the members were not listed; a fair proportion of this group was retired from occupational life.
One of the most easily accessible groupings into which this committee may be placed is that of neighborhood. Had the committee been anything approaching a community cross-section, one would expect a fair representation from the various areas (in this instance wards are used) comprising the city. However, as in the case of occupational groupings, the residential areas of the members were by no means random. The pattern of residences was strikingly middle and upper class. Though the physical expansion of the city caused more dispersion than had been the case with the Board of Trade supporters almost ten years earlier, the largest proportion of the membership lived in the still well-to-do areas east of downtown. Almost half of the population whose residences were discovered lived in wards five, nine, ten, and eleven. Seven wards each had less than five members representing them. The entire south side of the city, German, gave only four members. The former city of Franklinton, now the west side of Columbus, an area that was beginning to decay socially and economically, gave only two. Ward twelve, where most of the city's industry as well as its railroad yards were concentrated, was represented by one member. The greatest geographical difference between the membership of the Committee of One Hundred and the early supporters of the Board of Trade was a result of the city's growth northward.
Where only one of the Board supporters had lived north of downtown, the Committee's membership was comprised of twenty representatives from this area. Generally, this area north of Buttles Avenue could be compared to the earlier Town Street neighborhood; this was especially so of the divisions north and east of Ohio State University. Another similarity of these men with the Board of Trade supporters was that the group did not contain a large number of historically outstanding individuals. Of the 106, only seven were included in the biographical section of a history written in the 1920's.

The pattern of voting for the mayoral candidates could not have been predicted from the residences of the membership on the Committee (See Table 2.). Wards nine, ten, and eleven, the areas where membership was most heavily concentrated voted for the League candidate, but they also voted for every other Republican mayoral nominee in the elections of 1889-93. The

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*Ibid.*; R. D. McKenzie found that as late as 1916 "artificial" ward boundaries in Columbus did, to a surprising degree, surround neighborhoods. *The Neighborhood: A Study of Local Life in Columbus, Ohio* (Chicago, 1925), *passim*. The place of residence of ten members was unavailable. It is unfortunate that the party affiliations and birthdates of this group are not available. The impression one gets, however, is that members were generally well-established and tended to be Republicans or independent politically. Hooper, *History of Columbus*, *passim*, but the index is easier; about 300 biographies are given.
Table 2
VOTE BY WARDS FOR THE MAYORAL ELECTION OF 1891 WITH WARD PERCENTAGES, BY PARTY, OF VOTES CAST IN THE 1892 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION^a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARD</th>
<th>CANDIDATES AND VOTES RECEIVED</th>
<th>PERCENTAGES OF 1892 PRESIDENTIAL VOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pagels (R)^b</td>
<td>Karb (D)^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>741</td>
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<td>493</td>
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<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>498</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>549</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7730</td>
<td>8754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aWard voting data from the Ohio State Journal, April 12, 1889; April 7, 1891; November 11, 1892; April 4, 1893; April 13, 1893.

^bR=Republican; D=Democrat.
Columbus Wards
1889-1894
vote in these wards in 1891 was approximately that of other years. Wards one through four voted Democratic as they did in practically every election, but the influence of the League was felt negatively in these areas, and the percentage of electors voting Democratic was considerably higher than in comparable elections. Democrats in the city were generally more prone to vote in mayoral races than Republicans were, but in 1891 south Columbus Democrats tallied 82-95 per cent of their 1892 presidential vote versus percentages usually in the 60-80 range. Clearly, those opposed to the League and its law and order principles were more strongly opposed than the proponents were in favor. The fifth ward was one area from which came a large contingent of the Committee of One Hundred. The division, however, was a very mixed one harboring the wealthy on Town and Broad streets but becoming more German and labor-class as one moved south. Politically, elections here could and did divide about evenly. Republicans outnumbered Democrats but were not so prone to vote. In the 1891 election it is probable that Republicans relied too heavily on their sheer numbers, especially since the area had voted Republican two years earlier. The Republicans, running the League candidate, maintained their usual voting strength, but Democrats turned out in numbers almost as great as they would in the 1892 presidential election and defeated the Republicans 589-569. The northern wards of the
city—thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen—reversed their decision of 1889 and now voted Republican, a position they would maintain until the end of the century. Here was a case of former Democrats switching parties to vote for a law and order candidate who had great appeal to the middle- and upper-class Americans of North Columbus. Where Republicans in the north had previously demonstrated little actual interest in local elections—in 1889 their votes totaled only forty-seven per cent of their 1892 presidential votes—in 1891 they came to vote in large numbers—over seventy per cent of the future voters of 1892 turned out. The remaining wards exhibited little deviation from usual voting patterns.

Thus, although a look at the city totals would demonstrate that the Committee of One Hundred had failed to change voter behavior, a closer inspection of the ward totals does indicate that the League had an impact. George Karb had won by the usual Democratic margin, but had not traditional Democrats turned out in numbers much greater than usual, especially in the south German wards, the League would have been much closer to success than it actually was. It further seems apparent that League defeat came more from fear of reform than from any lack of favor by

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53 The propensity of Wards 9 and 11 to vote for Republican candidates is partially explained by the concentration of blacks in those areas. U.S. Census for 1890, v. 1, Pt. 1., 474.
law and order men. The negative reaction of Germans to the proposal to shut down the saloons on Sundays was intense. Had they not been so opposed, they would not have given Karb a 2100-vote margin over Pagels.

The experience of the Citizens League had at least one lasting effect on reformers of the city. Although the League officially had tried to disassociate itself from the radical law enforcers, it never quite managed to do this. The League had been initiated by ministers, and its unofficial public image remained one of puritanism in spite of efforts to appeal to voters on the grounds of efficiency or the federal plan. The line of causality is not completely clear, but it is tempting to speculate that the League's failure helped determine the nature of future reform movements. Never again in Columbus did reformers begin with law and order. Henceforth, the issue was de-emphasized, and campaigns which had undercurrents of morality were presented more strongly under a banner of efficiency or political independence.

Moralists or temperance men did continue striving to make the city more law-abiding and to speak out against the evils of alcohol, especially when used intemperately. Yet, the movement away from prohibition and toward temperance continued.

54 The independent campaign of 1895, discussed in Chapter 6, is a prime example of this reform format.
Immediately after the inauguration of Mayor Karb he implied that the efforts of the Citizens League had not been totally in vain. Although Karb had refused to support Mayor Bruck's closing efforts in 1889 and although in the campaign he had not indicated any intention to be a rigorous law enforcer, he shortly announced that he would rout the gamblers and close the saloons at midnight. This was approximately the position Mayor Bruck had taken; it was a compromise between the law and the German demand for the continental Sunday. As previously, however, the reform was short-lived. Mayor Karb's greatest contribution to the moralists was the closing of a few unsavory theatres on Sundays. Saloons remained open at all hours, and gambling continued.

The election of 1893 followed a similar pattern so far as law and order were concerned. George Karb was reelected over a weak Republican opponent. This time, however, there was a slight variation on the theme of post-election law enforcement. The Republican Director of Public Safety, William Muchmore, appointed a new police head. Chief Edward Pagels, the Republican and Citizens League candidate for mayor two years earlier, announced in early June that he intended to "enforce the law." The result was a flurry of closings, and although the rate of police success

55 Dispatch, April 14, May 2, 4, 1891; Journal, May 4, 1891.
varied, enforcement was still generally effective in September when Council Democrats introduced an ordinance to permit saloons to remain open on Sunday. The ordinance was defeated, 20-8, but the wets won in the end. By mid-October the Sunday saloon, often the back-door variety, was once again a fact in Columbus.

In the spring of the following year officials again attempted to enforce the law. Although the final result was as before, this episode serves to demonstrate that Columbus's German citizens, as in the 1870's, saw enforcement as directed mainly against them. In a sense, they were right for it was they who most insisted on Sunday beer.

The affair began with an announcement by the police judge that saloons with lunch counters could not remain open on Sundays or after midnight even if they claimed to obey the liquor laws at those times. Almost immediately Judge Biggers received a host of commendations for the city's protestant clergy. In a short time they were openly praising him for standing firm against mounting "German opposition."

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56 Dispatch, June 9, 11, 26, July 1, August 21, September 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, October 16, 1893. Law enforcers began facing a new problem in Columbus in the century's last decade: Population was expanding geographically more rapidly than the city limits, and the Dispatch's editor noted that when saloons in the city were closed on Sundays the suburbs were "having fun." Someone will undoubtedly soon study the effect of temperance on suburban growth.
The Germans felt they were being discriminated against. On July 24, 1894, the South-side citizens held a mass meeting to protest "police espionage." Almost 1500 attended the rally which was conducted in German. In the protest against "arbitrary and outrageous" police methods the discontented charged that police raided only small gambling places and let the wealthy go free; that police acted as agents provocateurs; that police watched, but did not interfere with brothels that sold liquor illegally; and that generally the police were too concerned with trivia. Following these charges were a series of demands: impartial law enforcement and legal searches; a cessation of espionage over private individuals; closing the brothels; an end to provocative action by police; and the elimination of personal revenge.

The protest, in petition form, was duly presented to the Republican Director of Public Safety, William Muchmore, who

57  Ibid., May 5, 8, 14, July 12, 1894.

58  Ibid., July 24, 1894. The Dispatch refused to take sides immediately in the issue, perhaps an early indication of the paper's later position (see below). The editor did observe that under the city's federal system it was clear that the blame lay squarely on the Director of Public Safety if police were over-zealous or "oppressive" as the Germans claimed; July 24, 1894. Roger Lane, Policing the City: Boston, 1822-1885 (Cambridge, 1967) observes that enforcement of liquor laws involved an unprecedented amount of "detective" work, a police function that was only gradually becoming recognized by citizens; the function probably served as a further irritant to the Germans; especially 44.
had "no comment." By this time it seems that the protesters were gaining some sympathy. The Dispatch's editor shortly observed that although he felt the laws had to be enforced, it was quite unfair to act only against one group. He stated further that the petition was not a political scheme, thereby indicating he felt the Germans had legitimate grievances. The result was not impartial enforcement of the law, but a gradual relaxation of it altogether.

The German population never again engaged in such a strong protest against the enforcement of the blue laws, but except for this difference, the same scenario was played over and over again for the remainder of the nineteenth century. The results were always an eventual return to the status quo ante enforcement. Even the B. Fay Mills revival which swept the city in December 1895 and which one minister went so far as to call "The Great Awakening in Columbus" produced no lasting results.

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60 Ibid., November 1, 1895; February 24, May 6, 7, 8, June 1, November 28-December 12, December 16, 18, 30, 31, 1896; January 1, May 2, June 22, July 15, 19, 1896; June 20, July 8, 1899. Henry Stauffer (ed.), The Great Awakening in Columbus, Ohio. Under the Labors of Reverend B. Fay Mills and his Associates (Columbus, 1895). The writers of this series of essays testify clearly that the anti-alcohol movement had become one of temperance, not prohibition. The essay "In Darkest Columbus" (93-96) indicts officials for allowing, but vehemently denying, the existence of gambling, prostitution, and illegal alcohol. Although some clergy-
The reasons for the repeated failures of this reform movement, or more correctly, this series of reform movements, are not difficult to understand. It takes no simplistic and erroneous theory such as "government cannot legislate morality" to explain the lack of lasting accomplishment. Politically, the city's Democrats could not enforce the laws—even if they had wished to—and remain in office. The outspoken opposition from the city's German population made such a position impossible for the party so dependent on this group's votes. This was a primary cause.

Second, it is clear that the reformers themselves lacked good tactics and strong public relations. Often when they were not, they appeared as puritans and thus failed to gain the support of a number of citizens who might otherwise have come to their aid.

The repeated number of failures must also have taken its toll on the morale of those who entered this movement. Further, many of the city's important citizens had other priorities. In the early 1890's, for example, the Dispatch had warned temperance men

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men urged social redemption produced by individual salvation, others spoke primarily from a social viewpoint (62, 71-75, 80-82, 85-89, 96-122). In 1901 the city had 115 police and 569 saloons; U.S. Department of Labor, Bulletin, "Statistics of Cities" (Washington, 1901) V, 839. Today when bars generally obey liquor laws the ratio has risen to 1025 uniformed police and 925 establishments serving liquor; 1971 figures from Columbus Police Department and Ohio Board of Liquor Control.
to stay away from the issue of alcohol and work for the federal plan; this plan, one of the editor's pet schemes, came first with others--businessmen--who did not have the time to take on two such projects simultaneously. It is also tempting to speculate that the large numbers of Columbus policemen of foreign birth, especially those from Ireland and Germany, may have been an additional factor in the failure to achieve enforcement. Finally, even without any of these problems, it seems likely that the moralists would have failed. The physical and financial aspects of enforcement in urban surroundings were forbidding, to say the least. It is highly doubtful that even men who favored rigorous law enforcement would have been willing to pay the price.

Although the reformers who have been dubbed moralists were not successful in the period here discussed, this should not detract from their importance or from that of their movement. The temperance movement in the late nineteenth century was important because it clearly demonstrated that an urban environment produced peculiarities in such a crusade that did not appear elsewhere. If cities were supposed to be places containing numerous and often antagonistic ethnic and racial groups, it was only the

61 "Reports" of the Board of Police Commissions in Reports of the City of Columbus, Ohio (title varies) for 1879 (118-119), for 1881 (82), for 1884 (113-114), for 1886 (118-199), for 1888 (180-181), for 1893 (277-278).
Columbus temperance movement that made the supposedly omnipresent hostility between Germans and Americans patent. In no other instance did the city's largest "foreign" group indicate publicly its dissatisfaction with the laws, politics, or morality prevailing. Third, this movement is important as a good example that all temperance ment were not radicals or extreme moralists. In many instances, the desire for enforcement of liquor laws sprang from a wish to lower the costs of city government or to make the government more efficient or from a fear that the whole legal fabric was in danger. Thus, the efforts to moralize the city were actually more than just that. The crusades were often religious, but they carried with them a distinctly urban flavor and emphasis on efficiency that made them an integral part of the history of the city in the late nineteenth century.

62 A similar situation prevailed in New York City where the German population generally supported efforts at reform but balked strongly at any attempt to close saloons on Sundays. McSeveney, "Politics of Depression," 355-57.

63 That the reformers often failed to note the high cost of a real enforcement probably does not indicate any hypocrisy on their part. They may have been correct that in the long run less alcohol would have produced a less crime-ridden and therefore more secure and cheaper city in which to live.
CHAPTER V
SUPPLYING THE CITY'S PHYSICAL NEEDS

If the American city of the late nineteenth century hosted reform movements different from those of contemporaneous rural areas, so were its physical needs vastly greater, more complex, and in many cases different from those of its non-urban neighbors. Everywhere men needed clean and abundant water, convenient means of transportation, cheap and easily attainable fuels—among other necessities—but the consequences of failure to provide these in a city were worse for more people than was the case in other areas.

Take the simple case of roads. Farmers have traditionally desired good roads to move their produce to market, but this demand was seasonal; transport could be deferred for some time if a road were impassable. Such was not the case in a city. There the rigor of the clock demanded that businesses open at the appointed hour every working day of the week. Wage earners would be severely penalized if a muddy street forced them to be late to their jobs. Where an inadequate or polluted water supply
would have disasterous consequences for the particular rural individual involved, the same problem in a city would lead to much greater social costs in the forms of ill health and perhaps epidemics, an inability to provide fire protection, or the lack of a vital industrial raw material. The point should be clear. The scale of the city forced its inhabitants to be concerned about urban services every time they travelled, ate, heated their homes, or considered investing money in their home town. Where the precise form of a city's government may have been the concern of a minority, the disposition of animal wastes, ashes, and mud from the street in front of one's home was a more encompassing problem.

Thus it was that Columbusesites in the last third of the nineteenth century manifested a great concern about the efficient provision of urban services. What they wanted were good cheap services. Very often they got neither. A variety of factors contributed to these unpalatable circumstances. Obviously, what was good was often not cheap. Perhaps even more frustrating than this omnipresent fact was the havoc played with city services by rapid technological changes. During the time when men were continuously concerned with the question of getting streets paved, the most advanced street surface, the one which promised to be the "best," very often failed to live up to expectations or was
rendered quickly obsolete by a new invention. Historians have noted the great esteem in which nineteenth century men held "science," but conversely, men who were relatively unaccustomed to rapid technological innovation must also have been frustrated by the phenomenon. It was also during this period that government officials came to rely increasingly on the testimony of "experts" who were supposed to provide sound advice on a variety of problems. A difficulty, however, was that the experts did not always agree on optimum solutions, a circumstance that clearly could lead to all sorts of uncertainties. Another factor causing hardships for the users of urban services was what many called politics. The supreme adherence of voters to party has already been noted in the case of moral reform. Such behavior was equally reprehensible to those who wanted to get a street paved quickly, without partisan interference. Politics was intrinsic in all city activities, but many felt it should have no place in solution of technical problems. But in actuality no problem was purely technical. Provision of urban services always involved money; here was a good place for a politician to help his friends. Where experts disagreed, elected officials had plenty of latitude for dilatory discussion. Given the fact of scarcity, the politician would undoubtedly be concerned that a limited service go to his constituents whether or not the service was needed most in that
particular area. This was another cause of intro-urban jealousies and inefficiency.

This chapter is devoted to an examination of some of the problems that Columbus citizens faced when attempting to provide better physical services and surroundings. It does not survey the entire spectrum. For example, the old problems of fire and police protection are not treated. Rather, the emphasis is on provision of streets, water, and outdoor lighting for the city. It was in these areas that citizens had to confront all the old problems of "politics," sectionalism, and inadequate monies as well as technological changes that produced great opportunities but also difficult problems.

In the years immediately after the Civil War Columbus was not a physically impressive city. The descriptions given by William Dean Howells and Washington Gladden as late as the 1880's attest to the filth of the streets as well as to their periodic impassibility. The newspapers of the period constantly bewailed the condition of the city's thoroughfares, but generally failed to present any solutions. There was no city water works. Inhabitants got their water from fire cisterns and from individual or communal neighborhood wells. Although Columbus had begun building sewers in 1848,

1See Chapter I, 29-31.
there was nothing that could be called a city sewer system, and many places lacked sanitary connections. Consequently, those who lived in these areas dumped their wastes in the same vicinity from which they took their water. The city was generally unlit at night. The few existing street lights were supplied with coal gas by the Columbus Gas and Coke Company, but the inability or the refusal of City Council to pay bills often resulted in many of the lamps not being lit.²

Recognition of these evils was not hard, but the problems frustrated the city's governors in all efforts to rectify them. An outstanding example of the difficulties brought on by technological change and political partisanship was the city's efforts to provide an adequate surface for High Street. This was Columbus's main street. Running north and south, it stretched the length of the city; downtown it was the primary business artery; it was the street that farmers used to bring their produce to market; it was a part of the road link between Cleveland and

²These conditions are discussed in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 519-35, 541-44, 555-59; there are ample newspaper citations from the 1850's and 1860's to demonstrate the widespread concern with all these problems. It should be noted that a bad street was not a total disaster. It provided editors with a plethora of material for down-home humor: newspapers continually referred to "today's tides," the navigability, or the condition of the skating ice on various streets in the city, especially High Street.
Cincinnati; on either side of downtown it became a residential street; it was the first street to have horse car service; and the city's busy rail depot faced it. It was, at least, a multi-purpose thoroughfare. The original surface had, of course, been merely dirt. Beginning in the 1820's various treatments of the roadway were tried—especially planking and gravel—but none proved satisfactory to support heavy traffic.  

In the years after the Civil War one of the problems with paving was ignorance. An American engineer who had had a great interest in the efficient provision of municipal services noted in 1900 that about 1885 there was less literature on paving than on any other branch of engineering; further, what had existed then had "practically useless" by the twentieth century.  This was hindsight, but the experiences of the previous decades indicate that the author was correct in his assessment. In addition to the ignorance and lack of experience which plagued municipal engineers was the problem of their being no single "best" pavement.

In the period around 1875-85, the time when Columbus began

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3Ibid., 519-524. For contemporary comments on the bad condition of High Street, see Ohio Statesman, June 8, July 25, September 18, 23, 1865.

4George Tillson, Street Pavements (New York, 1900), iii, 5.
street building in earnest, there were five basic types of street surfaces. The modern American tends to look at smooth, hard asphalt as the supreme pavement, but a surface good for the tire of an automobile is not so desirable for the elastic footing of a horse. The best footing was provided by brick pavement, but this surface was expensive, and the uneven quality of brick manufactured at this time usually made the road surface non-uniform. The following table summarizes the qualities of various road surfaces available during the late nineteenth century; higher integers indicate positive quality:

Table 3
ROAD SURFACES AND RATINGS OF SELECTED QUALITIES (1910)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SURFACE:</th>
<th>Asphalt</th>
<th>Brick</th>
<th>Belgian Block</th>
<th>Macadam</th>
<th>Cobble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QUALITIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheapness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durability</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Cleaning</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Resistance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-slippage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy Maintenance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favor to Travel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Qualities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 4

### RANKING OF SELECTED ROAD SURFACES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durability</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Sanitation</th>
<th>Service on Grades</th>
<th>Gross Annual Cost</th>
<th>Ease of Cleaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RANK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>granite</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>granite</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>brick</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>granite</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>granite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>granite</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>asphalt</td>
<td>granite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Thus the engineer had a large potential selection. To compound the difficulty, road-makers in the late nineteenth century did not have sufficient information to construct tables like the ones above. The newness of asphalt roads made it impossible to state with assurance how long these streets would remain serviceable. In addition, the above tables assume that the surfaces will be kept clean and in good repair. Without constant attention an asphalt road, for example, deteriorates rapidly. The reluctance of American cities to care for new street surfaces was one reason why so many American engineers clung to the idea that expensive stone roads were best. When these experts were not agreed, or when they admitted mundane considerations such as the likelihood of a city's repairing its roads annually, the possibility for debate was large.

5 Richard Sheldon Kirby, et al, Engineering in History (New York, 1956), 200; Harwood Frost, The Art of Roadmaking. Treating the Various Problems, ... (New York, 1910), 31-36. Belgian block was a pavement of stone; macadam a surface of crushed stone which its inventor insisted must be laid so that it was impervious to water; wood pavement was usually laid in blocks of various sizes and sealed, optimally, with sand and hot tar. For a discussion of the good qualities of stone pavement, see N.B. Abbott, "Recent Street Paving in Columbus," in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 539-40. For Table 3 Harwood does not explain the value of the integers, or whether they are relative of absolute. E. P. Goodrich and W.B. Holton, Jr., treat the difficulty of street repair in "Efficiency in Highway Administration with Specific Reference to Pavements," Annals, XLi (May 1912), 115.
The process of selecting a pavement for High Street in the years after 1865 was one of frustration for engineers, government officials, and citizens. Chronic complaints in the newspapers indicated that all the city's streets were in poor condition, and in the weeks immediately after the war Council acted to have High Street regravelled. This surface, however convenient for infrequently travelled roads, could not withstand the traffic on High. By 1866 the papers were again complaining that movement on the street was impeded by a layer of mud, and Council began debating a permanent solution. The result was a contract to cover the street with a new surface, Nicholson wood pavement. Three-inch wooden blocks were to be set on a bed of planks laid over a gravel foundation; both the boards and the blocks were to be coated with pitch to insure impenetrability by water. The debates in Council and the public reaction to the proposal, however, delayed completion considerably. It was not that citizens were opposed to a new surface; they recognized the need. Rather, the Nicholson was more expensive than any other surface ever used in the city, and those who fronted on the street objected to a new tax burden. Property holders tried to press for a less expensive surface; when they failed, they suggested that Council petition the legislature to permit a general levy for street-making and repair. They reasoned that since all the city would benefit
from an improved High Street, all should help bear the costs.

In this case, though, some of the wealthiest men in the city had no apparent effect on the municipal legislature; construction began as planned in May 1867. Work progressed with only one stoppage, and by October the downtown section of the street was covered with Nicholson pavement. At this point many former sceptics reversed their stand to praise the improvement. It was clean, quiet, and comfortable to ride on. The wealthy residents of Town Street began discussing the possibility of having Nicholson in front of their properties. 6

All was not to remain so pleasant. In the winter of 1867-68 residents, as was their wont, dumped their ashes on the street; mud collected; the one cart allotted for street cleaning was grossly inadequate. Street pavers had recognized the imperative of keeping wooden pavement clean, but the city refused to spend

6 See above, note 3. Ohio Statesman, January 20, December 7, 10, 1866; January 3, February 17, March 12, 18, 27, April 29, May 7, August 23, 24, October 7, 1867; March 21, April 18, 1868. The Statesman strongly supported the Nicholson pavement and in March urged election of Democrats to Council arguing the Republicans, a "party of capitalists," opposed the improvement. The Democrats won a majority in Council, but they usually did so until 1879 when Republicans won and redistricted the city. The work stoppage resulted, according to the contractor, from property owners' refusal to pay assessments. This was no special act of civil disobedience because tax collections were typically behind schedule at this time. Within a day after the stoppage the money was paid, and work resumed.
the necessary money. By 1872 the pavement was deteriorating severely. Some repairs were made, but they were not done with the rapidity or on the scale needed. Expansion of the city's water mains and gas and sewer lines further complicated the process of keeping the pavement watertight. 7

By 1873 the Nicholson was an obvious failure. The Journal noted that "the pavement question" had become "one of the most important we have to consider" and decried the necessity of re-surfacing a street paved only six years earlier. Though citizens and Council would delay action as long as possible, the debate on how to repave High Street began anew. Columbusites would be reluctant to try wooden surfaces again, but there were numerous other possibilities. 8

During the hot summer of 1874 public interest in improving the street began to mount. In June representatives of the "large property interests" met to consider the feasibility of repair. No vote was taken, but the consensus appeared to be that a new pavement was necessary and that this might be "asphaltum." Since none of these citizens was familiar with the product, a

7 Ibid., January 5, April 30, September 3, 1872; January 20, 1873.

8 Journal, February 21, July 9, November 13, 1873; February 17, 1874.
group was appointed to examine pavements in other cities. In October the committee reported its findings to about forty property owners. The statement indicated that repair of High Street was not feasible and proposed a new asphalt, or vulcanite, pavement. The committee further suggested narrowing streets to a width of twenty-five feet—all that was needed for horses and carriages—so that the property tax might be reduced. Finally, Council was urged to act. The only dissent to the report came from a physician who argued that asphalt was yet "experimental."

Now, however, Council too began its own series of pavement jaunts. The committee inspected even the wooden streets in Pittsburgh. Debate continued on all sides, and it is clear that citizens felt laymen were fully qualified to make technical judgments. By late autumn, the Journal observed a plethora of literature and discussion on the street problem and urged a quick decision. Then in December citizens circulated a petition where property owners could name the surface they preferred. The startling result was that over two-thirds said they desired a new wooden pavement.

Meanwhile, the discussion of various pavements' merits had

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9 Ibid., June 10, 13, 15, September 19, October 19, 1874.
10 Ibid., October 31, November 9, 19, December 9, 14, 18, 1874; February 10, 1875.
continued in Council. This body seemed reluctant to make a decision. After well over a half year of debate and acquisition of information provided by several trips, Council members maintained they still lacked the data requisite for an intelligent vote. Then with almost amazing speed the Council committee on streets decided to recommend Hastings Trinidad asphaltum at a cost of $2.25 per square yard. One Councilman argued this was the correct course to take because the contractor bidding for the Trinidad company would save the city $24,000 as well as provide a seven-year guarantee. "The proposition of... Mitchell seemed to affect the committee with a feeling of wonder that they did not think of that before," and they voted to make the recommendation to Council. 11

The problem had not yet been resolved, however, for the committee soon discovered that the price difference between the Cuban asphalt, the nearest competitor, and the Trinidad—seventy-five cents per square yard—was not a result of the topping, but of a stronger foundation for the Cuban variety. The report was changed to favor an asphalt pavement patented about one and a half years earlier. This posed a slight difficulty in that competitive bidding on a patented article was impossible. The solution was

11 Ibid., February 11, 12, 13, 1875.
that the city purchased the right to make the improvement and then took bids on labor and materials. In early March the pavement ordinance succeeded in passing its third reading on a voice vote. A minority strongly disapproved of the proceedings claiming that the Parisen asphalt had been accepted only because of "Mr. Parisen's favors" to some of the members.

The bids in, work commenced in summer 1875, and by mid-October the street boasted a new surface. Still, all the problems had not been completely resolved. "The questions involved in improving High Street are becoming about as intricate as a war in Europe," noted the Journal referring to the problem of who should pave between the tracks of the street railroad. The Columbus Street Railroad claimed it was not a party to the improvement while Council argued the road was obligated to keep the area between its rails in the same condition as that outside. Even if the road agreed to reimburse the city, the question of amount would be debatable. Did the presence of the rails raise the cost of paving, and if so, should the road be required to pay for all of this increase? Questions like these remained unanswered for some time, and at the completion of the paving, no decision

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12 Ibid., February 16, 23, March 2, 1875. All the asphalt surfaces discussed were similar. The primary differences were in methods of laying foundations for the pavement and the site of the product's origin.
had been reached. This problem would plague the city for the rest of the century. Paving only one road had other drawbacks. Shortly before completion of the project, W. P. Parisen wrote Council noting the large amount of mud being dragged on High Street at its intersections with unpaved thoroughfares and warned that the street must be kept clean. Finally, after the celebrating the new pavement in "street promenade" citizens had to be more wary than ever about speeding vehicles.

Although the question of assessing of the street railroad remained after completion of the project, it seemed that the problem had been agreeably solved. But not so. Within less than a year after completion of the work newspapers began noting the impassibility of the road and observing that the contractor was not living up to the agreement to maintain the surface in good repair during the term of his guarantee. Council finally capitulated and appropriated $500, a miserly sum, to repair the surface. In 1876, however, it looked as though the city might be on the verge of moving rapidly to improve other streets also. The Ohio legislature had recently passed the Penn Act, applicable only to Columbus, which allowed the city to sell bonds for street

13 Ibid., September 2, 13, 15, 29, October 19, 25, 1875; May 26, 27, 1876.

14 Ibid., June 9, 12, 1876. Dispatch, July 8, 10, 11, 1876.
improvements and then retire them from property taxes for a period of up to seven years. If the city did not act, property owners were allowed to petition to have streets improved. Such being the case, a Council committee late in the year suggested improvement of seventeen streets under what it called a "systematic" reconditioning of all roads in Columbus. At the same time, the committee declared the Parisen surface on High Street "worthless" and advocated resurfacing it in the spring.  

But Council was not so quick to act. Almost a year later High Street was still in "worthless" shape. The street committee had decided that if the street was repaved, the guarantee of the contractor would be invalidated; further, residents could not be legally assessed for repairs until the contractor's bond had expired--five years away. Gradually property owners began to make private improvements under a provision of the Penn Act, but even this stop-gap device was forbidden when the state Supreme Court declared the act invalid late in 1877.  

15 Penn Act, 72 Ohio Laws 153; this act, unlike later technical "reform" acts was politically possible because it in no way detracted from any party's power and greatly added to possible patronage. Before passage of the Penn Act payment for improvements had to come from the city's general treasury and had to go to the contractor when work was completed. Dispatch, December 19, 1876.  

16 Ibid., August 7, November 21, December 27, 1877.
continued to deteriorate. Since they had paid for the road and had been given a seven-year guarantee, residents would not allow assessments for repairs. Council reasoned that High Street was not a "common thoroughfare"—logic that seems a bit contrived as a result of sectional jealousies and a reluctance to pay taxes—and therefore repairs could not be made from the general expense fund. In short, everybody agreed that the road was bad, but no one could decide where to get money to rectify the situation.

Since the street was becoming practically impossible to travel, downtown property owners petitioned Council for permission to improve the street privately. Private paving would get the job done, or at least most of it, but there were serious drawbacks to this method which was practiced extensively in the city for over a year. Some residents refused to have their frontage resurfaced privately, so the pavement was full of gaps. Those who were not merely recalcitrant but who lived on sections especially expensive to repair were naturally reluctant to undertake the job when it would be cheaper for the city to act and assess costs along the length of the street on a pro rata basis. So great did the confusion and legal morass over this issue become—that in May 1881 Council resolved to

17 Journal, October 3, November 14, 1878; June 2, July 3, 15, 23, October 24, 28, November 13, 1879.
entertain no more requests for private repairs.

From that time until the establishment of the Board of Trade talk of street improvement continued, but no affirmative action was taken. In 1886, however, upon the urging of the Board, the state legislature passed the Taylor Act, similar to the defunct Penn Act in that the city was enabled to sell bonds for street improvements; additionally, a majority of residents were not required to give approval before an improvement could be undertaken, and there was no provision for private paving. Work began with vigor. By early 1887 the Dispatch was praising Council, a rare event, for its "businesslike" improvement of the city's streets under provisions of the Taylor Act. High Street received a suitable asphalt surface; there was an attempt to keep it clean. In 1888 the paper added that the city seemed to be "getting out of the mud." Indeed, it should have. Dollars spent for street improvements had in ten years risen from $7032 to $1,500,000. The consensus seemed to be that work should go on apace.


19 Taylor Act, 83 O.L. 140; Dispatch, November 24, 1885; March 3, 9, 10, June 15, October 6, 20, 1886; May 17, 24, June 13, 1887; February 28, April 4, 17, October 6, 28, 1888. BOT Report for 1885, 8, 26; for 1886, 10-17. Lee, History of Columbus, II, 538.
But with the blessing of good streets came the concomitant costs. By early 1889 men who had praised the initial flurry of street-making were now speaking against the "improvement mania." In Council, however, a resolution to require approval from fifty per cent of the property owners before an improvement could be made was tabled. A similar proposal to modify the Taylor Law met the same fate in the legislature. The Dispatch, becoming conservative on this issue, blamed the defeat of both amendments on the "contractors' lobby." Such a charge, however, was impossible to prove. Going farther, the editor even claimed street assessments had become so high that persons were leaving the city for the less convenient, but cheaper, suburbs. One may assume that both these statements were at least partially correct.

The sentiments of the Dispatch were becoming shared more and more by those businessmen who had originally pressed for the Taylor Act. In 1891 members of the Board of Trade several times discussed the necessity of providing "protection for the property owners" who, they felt, were being treated unjustly by a spendthrift Council abetted by over-reaching paving con-

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Dispatch, January 15, January 30, April 16, June 24, 1889; November 27, December 22, 1891. The degree of truth of the Dispatch's charges is beyond the scope of this paper.
Although neither the Board nor the newspapers were successful in securing immediate amendment of the Taylor Act, in fact street building slowed considerably. The pressure put on Council by the papers and the Board of Trade was clearly one cause, but there were also other factors. The city had paved so many streets since 1886 that many improvements were now being made before gas, sewer, or water lines had been laid. This necessitated a street's being ripped up after it was built. The notoriety of utility contractors for failure to restore streets to their original condition was widespread; the patent extra expense of paving, then laying pipes, and then paving again was obvious; and usually a street that had been dug in would not be guaranteed by the original contractor. Thus the city, as well as property owners, stood to lose money and guarantees by too rapid paving. A third reason for the decrease in the rise of the city's debt. Whereas in 1885-86 in debates on the proposed Taylor law businessmen and council members had argued that the city need not fear the debt that would be created, both groups now felt things had gone too far. The bonded debt of the city, as of all American cities, grew phenomenally in these years. Total debt rose from less

21 BOT Report for 1891, 15, 16, 23. Dispatch, February 5, 6, 1889.
than $2,000,000 in 1886 to almost $7,000,000 in 1893. Tax payers felt that since street improvements accounted for well over fifty per cent of the total, this was an ideal place to begin cutting. Finally, the pace slowed because the city generally had got "out of the mud." Over eighty-five miles of streets had been improved since passage of the Taylor Act, the vast majority of these by asphalt, stone block, or brick pavement. In the six years before 1893 street improvements averaged 14.4 miles per year; in the six years after, 3.8 miles per year. 22

It is difficult to state with any assurance whether Columbus got a good bargain on its new streets. References to contractors' lobbies and "jobs" lead one to believe that some corruption attended the improvements, but there were no outstanding scandals. Speaking in 1899 Mayor Sam Swartz looked back over the improvements of the previous decade and noted of the Public Works Department: "The most difficult problems of municipal work, closely touching the public health and convenience, arise in this department for solution." This was bad enough, but it was also

22 Council Report for 1893, 69, 303. By the late 1880's use of improved brick for paving was widespread in the city. See Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the American Society of Engineers, E. A. Kemmler, "Construction and Maintenance of Brick Pavements (Milwaukee, 1899)," 133-43. Undoubtedly, some of the decrease was caused by the national depression, but it appears this was not a necessary factor in retarding the "improvement mania."
in this department that men were most likely to experience "conflict of selfish interests. It is the history of all cities that jobbery attacks the department of public works with the most determination...." Swartz had been elected partially on a promise to curtail unneeded municipal expense, so in a sense his speech was public relations. But his statements must have been partially true at least.

One example—though the picture is by no means complete—of a man who became wealthy as a result of the Taylor Act was the street contractor N.B. Abbott. Abbott appears to have a generally honest businessman, and his large role in the city's street improvement phase may have been one reason for the absence of any notable paving scandal. Local papers were eloquent when describing the municipal advantages of paving a street, but they rarely approached the rapture of Abbott when he discoursed on the same topic: New pavement made people proud; it made travel easier; it made property easier to rent. "One of the surest signs of a high state of civilization and general intelligence of a community is a liberal expenditure in a variety of public improvements. Chief of these should always be well paved streets...."

Abbott was born in Connecticut in 1835 of "poor parents." At age eight he was sent to earn his way on a farm where he remained until he was sixteen; he then became a carpenter's apprentice. After the Civil War his carpentry started to branch out into sewer building and street paving. In 1867 he began work for a paving company in Brooklyn. For the next ten years he learned the techniques of the business and obviously made a fair amount of money, for in 1876 he moved to Columbus as a street contractor. The reasons for his move are not clear; perhaps he was looking for a city that needed paving.

Abbott was a go-getter. He even took on contracts to sweep the streets though the money from Council did not usually last very long. In 1885 he joined the Board of Trade and pushed for the Taylor Act. Although the exact date is unclear, Abbott established the Ohio Paving Company in Columbus. By 1892 he had paved about fifty miles (of a total of some eighty miles) of the city's new streets. His company, which also manufactured the Hallwood paving block, did a business averaging $1,000,000 a year. He was the most important contractor in the city, and he was doing well. By the late 1890's he had purchased a winter home and fruit farm in California. He had a reputation for "energy, push, and superior work."24

There seems to have been not even a hint of graft or
corruption in Abbott's work. He was a respected businessman. The Board of Trade listened carefully to his recommendations. He was an effective one-man lobby, but there was not the degree of covertness attached to his actions that many other lobbies were saddled with. This may have been because he was a local man not burdened by suspicions that foreign "syndicates" from Chicago or Indianapolis aroused. Officially, Abbott was neither scientist nor engineer, but he shared many of the characteristics of both. His essay on "Recent Street Improvements" indicates a great appreciation of the technical problems involved in street making, and he was coldly scientific in his discussion of different pavements for varied circumstances. Such a stance made him somewhat of an aberration from the general stereotype of the street contractor. With him the financial conflict, though surely present, was not so great as usual between the contractor and the engineer. That Abbott lived in the city where he did most of his work may have been a contributory factor, but for whatever


25 On this problem see Daniel Hovey Calhoun, *The American Civil Engineer: Origins and Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), ix, 61, 78-79. Abbott's Hallwood block was widely used in Columbus paving, but he praised the good sense of the city for using a variety of surfaces as the situation dictated.
reason, it is clear that Columbus had got decent streets and that Abbott had been an important ingredient in the process.

Abbott was, in short, an honest expert with real civic zeal. But he was not the sort of expert one thinks about when considering the attempt of public officials to produce more rational, non-political decision-making. A key requirement in the definition of such men is that they have no financial interest in the projects they evaluate, a criterion Abbott obviously did not meet. The drive for efficiency in city services began in the 1880's, and with it came the propensity to consult technicians. That Abbott and the other street contractors in the city had generally avoided this approach indicates that the job they performed was acceptable. Further, the strongest push for expert consultation did not come in Columbus until after 1891, until after street paving had tapered off.

If the service provided to citizens seemed impossibly bad or if the city were going to spend a great amount of money on a single project, the desire for sound and non-political advice

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26 On the national scale this phenomenon has been adequately discussed by George H. Daniels, Science in American Society: A Social History (New York, 1971); see especially 188, 190, 196, 303, 305-06. Daniels finds that an extreme faith in the utility of science to solve a variety of problems was a trait of the national Progressives. It appears that local use of experts antedated the national occurrence by at least ten years.
tended to be greater. Supplying the city with clean and plentiful water is a prime example of this phenomenon. In a very real sense the problem of providing the city's inhabitants with water was of a different sort from that providing decent streets. Compared with the necessity for water, streets were a luxury.

Where wells and cisterns would suffice in the country or in small towns—as they did in Columbus until after the Civil War—they were not acceptable in a city. Size and proximity of populations dictated that water be brought from an outside source and that it be relatively clean. Even before the discovery of germs in the 1870's, citizens wanted pure water. The only question was how pure. Where Americans today mean clean and germ-free by "pure," their nineteenth century counterparts meant relatively clear water that did not smell too bad.

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27 This was also the case with sewage provisions in the city. It should be noted that water and sewer provisions ideally were systems where simple flaws in construction or maintenance could easily render the whole less functional. Therefore, although the cost of neither of these items was as great as that of street paving, the felt need for a good system was greater. One poor job of paving did not make transportation impossible, but a faulty intercepting sewer wrecked the entire structure.

28 Cf. Nelson M. Blake, Water for the Cities: A History of the Urban Water Supply Problem in the United States (Syracuse, 1956), vii, 7, 17. (The reader is warned that the monograph is rather pretentiously titled: the "United States" in this case is Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.)
The citizens of Columbus were relatively satisfied with a primitive water supply for the first half of the nineteenth century. The little town was the site of numerous free-flowing springs which served the earliest inhabitants. As the population grew, shallow wells supplemented the original supply, but this was inadequate by the early 1850's. In 1853 there officially began the long process of attempting to provide the city with a water works to give more and cleaner water.

The immediate impetus for the Council resolution requesting investigation of a water works came from a series of fires in 1852-53, but the suggestion presented by the future Ohio governor, William Dennison, came to naught. Similar resolutions for the remainder of the 1850's produced no tangible results, but interest in securing a water works persisted. Each time a fire occurred, there was a flurry of activity aimed at getting more water. The burning of the Neil House hotel in 1860 produced the expected reaction but no real results. It was the destruction of the state insane asylum in 1868 that finally moved Council to act with more vigor. The fire in this complex building was slow-burning, but so inadequate was the supply of water that all the property went up in flames and several persons died.

29 Lee, History of Columbus, II, 541.
After the asylum fire, Council directed a committee to travel to Lockport and Albany, New York, to examine water works. After their trip the committee urged establishment of the Holly system whereby water was pumped throughout the city directly from wells or from a river.

The reasons for Council's actions were numerous. First, the city needed water for fire protection. The activity of committees after every major fire indicates clearly that this was the prime objective. Second, there were technical reasons for desiring better water. The city's water supply was hard and made "the boilers of our steam engines look like honey combs." This produced another clear economic incentive for building a better system. Third, the water was not desirable for drinking, being "discolored by coal soot." In addition to providing water for fighting fires the Holly system, which provided the product under pressure, would also obviate the necessity for costly steam fire engines. Though the germ theory of disease had not been established at this point, there was a general recognition that clean water produced healthier citizens. Finally, better

30 Ibid., 542-43; Journal, August 3, 1885. Also Statesman, April 23, August 15, November 18, 20, 21, December 24, 1867; January 24, February 11, 1868.

31 Ibid., November 24, December 5, 23, 1868.
water would encourage immigration of manufacturers and make
the city more prosperous. 32

All of these reasons were presented to Council in a committee
report in late 1869, and despite statements that citizens wanted
a private water works so that they would not have to pay additional
taxes, the municipal legislature went ahead with plans for a public
system. There was a minor delay when the city solicitor brought
suit against Council because it could not under state law execute
the contract to build the works; supervision was legally given
to an elected board of water works which the city did not have.
Council remedied this defect by providing for election of a three-
man board in April. Although the Statesman noted an excessive
amount of interest in being elected to the board and suggested
that one candidate was more interested in selling iron pipe than
getting the $200 a year salary, general opinion was that the
winners were adequate to perform the job expected of them. 33

The Holly Manufacturing Company began construction soon
after Council had voted to sell $250,000 worth of eight per cent

32 Ibid., August 15, 1867; December 23, 1868; September 22,
1869.

33 Ibid., April 1, 1867; December 23, 1868; September 22, Novem-
ber 16, 1869; February 8, 15, 16, March 17, 18, April 1, 5, 8,
1870. The debate over public or private water works was short-
lived and inconsequential. No one seriously questioned city govern-
ment's assumption of this new function.
bonds to finance the project. By early March water was pumped through the pipes by steam engines. The initial project was pronounced a success. Even at this early stage, however, one thing had become clear. Water in Columbus was going to be as political as any other public undertaking that involved money. The election of the Water Board members had been highly partisan. After all, the Board was going to dispense huge sums, and if one party could gain control of the Board, as the Republicans did in 1870, the money could be used to promote the party. Further, the Water Board was not only political, it also diminished some of Council's power. At the outset it was apparent that jealousy between these two bodies could lead to friction, especially since the supposedly independent Board got its money from Council appropriations. Different parties controlling each group could cause many of the problems that reformers later cataloged when they disparaged the board system of government.

The activities of the Board in the years immediately after erection of the water works were largely calculated to improve the city's supply. Growth continued throughout the rest of the century with expansion of water mains and the pumping plant. Though Council occasionally demonstrated its jealousy of the

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34 Ibid., May 3, 19, 1870; January 17, May 26, 1871; January 1, 1872; Journal, November 2, 1878.
Board by refusing to appropriate asked for funds or by demanding that the Board pay the bond interest out of its water revenues, differences never became overwhelming. The Board was clearly successful, for in the years 1876-1886 it supplied water so that consumption in the city rose by over 400 per cent. This was no small accomplishment because the greatest percentage increases had occurred in the first five years of the Board's life when the system was just getting under way. Though the Board's payroll always increased significantly in pre-election periods, this was an accepted practice. There was never any notable malfeasance or corruption.

By the late 1880's, however, there were indications of dissatisfaction with the technical aspects of the system. By that time most of the city's water was pumped from the Olentangy river, and during summer dry periods water was in short supply. The Board of Trade also demonstrated its concern by observing the increase in fire damage--$300,000 in the first ten months of 1889--and asking if the city might have "outgrown" the original system. The members recognized that rejuvenation of the Holly works or building a new system would be expensive, but they reasoned that the real question was one of either increased water

35 Ibid., July 14, August 19, 1873; May 23, 1876; Dispatch, October 19, 1876; August 5, 1886; July 24, 26, 1897.
continued past what an anxious editor felt was necessary.\footnote{37}{Ibid., September 18, 19, October 3, 1893; August 29, 1895.}

It is unclear exactly what the disagreement was over since the advice was virtually unanimous, but the jealousy between the Board of Public Works and the City Council produced long delays. The quarreling continued for over two years before the BPW and Council agreed that the best plan was building storage dams. Given this, the necessity of selecting a site produced more delays. The immediate result of what the Dispatch called a "party quarrel" was that Council voted $20,000 for the purchase of two dams, an ordinance that the mayor promptly vetoed arguing that the dams were not worth that much and that they would hold only a twelve-day supply of water.

So the matter stood for over a year and a half when the members of the BPW suggested to Council that the city hold a referendum on issuing $100,000 in water bonds to build a storage dam on the Scioto river. Little information accompanied the suggestion. Two days later a large contingent of councilmen surveyed the proposed site and observed that proximity to the city would pose social as well as financial and technical problems.\footnote{38}{Ibid., June 9, 10, 19, 20, 24, 1896. The Water Works Board had been subsumed under the BPW in 1893. Council Report for 1893, 14-17; for 1896, 103-108.}
But by this time it seems as though the BPW might have won its point: Council quickly voted to send the bond question to the people in the approaching November election. A majority of those voting favored the issue, but because the necessary two-thirds did not approve, the measure failed. The Director of Public Improvements expressed disappointment over the tally and noted the still pressing problem of providing the city with more and better water.

By this time the situation was becoming so confused that a private firm, the Columbus Water Company, made an offer to supply the city. An editorial in the Dispatch immediately referred to the company as "the syndicate." The day after the offer was officially made, Council got itself off the hook by offering a new $175,000 water bond issue. Although the company stated it could save the city over $300,000 a year, Mayor Black, a Democrat, maintained private cost could not be less than public since profit had to be involved in the former; he added that he was "for the people." 40

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39 Dispatch, October 12, 14, 16, November 3, 5, 1897. BOT Report for 1897, 15.

40 Dispatch, February 21, 22, 26, 1898. The "syndicate" was a subsidiary of the Seckner Contracting Company of Chicago. The offer included a provision that the city could purchase the company after five years.
The suggestion that Columbus get out of the water business brought out some of the city's laissez-faire citizens. At a Board of Trade meeting in early March 1898 some members argued that the proposed new system would be much costlier than the old one, especially since water from the reservoir would have to be subjected to filtration. One of the Board's members felt the project needed still more study and that the proposal might indicate a wider entrance of the city into public ownership.

At the same meeting, however, Professor Edward Orton, an Ohio State geologist and an active citizen in the cause for better municipal services, suggested that the best interests of the city required continued public water, the proposed storage dam, and a system of filtration. One week later Orton went on to argue that as a monopoly occupying the city's streets a water company had to be semi-public at the least. His resolution passed, and the members stayed to hear a lecture on filtration by N.W. Lord, an Ohio State professor of engineering.

In the meantime, social considerations were impinging on the theoretically technical problem of water supply. Besides determining a location for the proposed dam, a problem which

41 Ibid., March 2, 9, 1898. The objection to increased municipal ownership may have come from the city's recent interest in a municipal light plant.
the city officials seemed unwilling to allow the experts to solve, there was another difficulty presented by a fairly large and vocal group of the city's unemployed. Building a dam would obviously create the possibility of paying labor for these men, and they sought from Mayor Black assurance of work if the bond issue passed. Black gave them the promise they wanted and further stated that this would be no contractor's "job." But again it seemed the Republican Council was dragging its heels.

In late April the finance committee suggested postponement of the ordinance to issue water bonds until the state Board of Health approved the proposal. Mayor Black and his department heads argued that this project did not require state approval and that the city would face serious water shortages in the summer if work did not begin immediately. The resolution for postponement, however, succeeded.

42 Ibid., March 16, April 29, 30, May 9, 10, 1898. The constant fighting between Council and BPW was not foreseen by the earlier framers of the federal plan. One cause was the split which had occurred in the Democratic party during the presidential election of 1896, but it was Republican versus Democrat on the water issue. There was apparently much behind-the-scenes activity concerning the private company's officer to supply water. The unemployed felt that delay was against them because disapproval by the state would add to the "syndicate's" appeal. A Democratic councilman said that state Republicans were "interested in not approving the storage dam plan" and that he had "been approached" by the syndicate to favor delay. Republicans who voted to delay the bond issue protested that they were for "the workers" as much as their opponents, but they felt the city should get approval from the
Those who wanted public work were growing increasingly impatient. Finally, after almost a month of apparent dilatory tactics in Council, they attended one of the group's sessions. About 400 "workers" jammed the chambers disrupting temporarily the meeting. After Council had voted another delay, several members were roughed up by the spectators. But this tactic had little positive effect. The Dispatch which had urged Council to expedite the matter, called the spectators "hoodlums" and their activities an "outrage." These "intimidators," claimed the editor, were in no way representative of the people of the city, a rebuttal to the administration claim that the unemployed represented popular opinion. But the potential conflict with Council was averted. Early in June the State Board of Health approved the plan on condition the extant, but inadequate filter gallery be supplemented "as soon as possible." Four days later Council passed the bond ordinance unanimously. 

After ten years of concern about the city's water problem and after at least five years of expert consultation, Columbus began physically attempting to rectify the situation. In the meantime it had become clear that expert consultation, though advisable, Board of Health before going on.

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43 Ibid., May 24, 25, 26, 27, June 6, 14, 1898.
was not the panacea that some had expected. In an editorial "On Experts" the Dispatch noted their usefulness, but added that whenever politicians disagreed among themselves, they would be forever calling in another expert so to defend their position. Further, it was apparent that an expert was not infallible and that a good administrator or legislator should examine an engineer's opinion as thoroughly as he would that of any other man. In all cases, expert consultation was beneficial, but it could delay as well as hasten a needed project. Besides expert fallibility and the tendency of politicians to over-consult, there were also social and financial contingencies to be considered. The desire of men wanting work immediately was logically not considered by scientists. Nor was cost so important to advisers as it was to legislators. All the experts had agreed that Columbus sorely needed to expand its system of filtration. But this suggestion was not immediately heeded. Late in 1899, after completion of the new reservoir, the Director of Public Improvements warned citizens to boil their drinking water. A supplementary order the next day noted the increase of typhoid fever victims in the city. 44

A final example will serve to demonstrate further the complexity of supplying effective urban services. The problem of lighting the streets of Columbus was as onerous as that involving other public improvements. For about forty years after its founding the city had no outside lighting whatsoever. As one historian put it, "The streets of the borough, when the borough began to have streets, were not lighted at all except by planetary agency and such cheerful rays as reached them from the windows of the cabins." Though this description has a certain picturesqueness about it, citizens were aware that lighted streets would produce safer pedestrian and vehicular travel as well as safer homes. However, there was no effective means of lighting the outdoors until the advent of the Columbus Gas and Coke Company in 1848. Even with a usable fuel at hand Council delayed the installation of gas lamps until 1855. At this time the area lit was confined to downtown. The light provided was not good. Streets were still relatively dark at night, and wind frequently blew out the lamps. Additionally, the police force resented having to light the lamps while performing their other night duties.  

Although after the Civil War streets were better lit than

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46 Ibid., 556-559; *Statesman*, November 5, 1869.
before--the gas was supplemented by oil lamps outside of downtown--the city fathers faced the problem of paying for the service. The history of the city's relations with the Columbus Gas Company is one of constant bickering over prices and contract agreements. It is clear that both sides were after the best relationship, but the company was reluctant to forego profits while Council pressed for lower rates. The situation was never a good one, and in 1878 the city ordered one-third of the lamps left unlit because its debt to the gas company was so great. 47

The immediate result was that Council began to search for an alternate form of light. A professor from Ohio State urged use of carbon arc lamps on an experimental scale. One councilman supported his idea arguing that electricity was the light of the future and that it was cleaner than any other available product. The others, however, were skeptical of the innovation. The debate became one over the relative merits of coal oil and naptha--a petroleum product not as smoky as coal oil. Naptha was adopted to light the streets, and in December 1878 a contract with the Mount Vernon Lantern Company for 1000 lamps was let. The new lights supplemented the gas fixtures throughout the city. Many members of Council hoped that what some had called this "step

47 Dispatch, November 14, 1876; Journal, May 28, 1878.
backward" would "teach a lesson" to the gas company. The naptha lamps cost less than $14.00 a year, so the savings could be used to pay the long-overdue gas bill, a sum of about $18,000. Provision was made that policemen would no longer be required to light the lamps.

Naptha did not produce as bright a light as gas, but the city was now more extensively lit than it had ever been. There were some complaints such as one from the disgruntled man who noted that lights were not lit on evenings when the moon failed to make a scheduled appearance. The original naptha lamps had a disadvantage in their propensity to overheat and explode, but the problems were overcome quickly. By early 1879 the editor of the Journal happily observed that the "streets were never more brilliant." 49

This was the system that lit the city for most of the 1880's. The naptha company continued to have its contract renewed yearly or semi-annually depending on how much money was available. In 1881, though, a new company was organized to supply the city with the Brush electric light. After a series of

48 Ibid., July 23, October 29, November 26, December 3, 1878.
49 Ibid., January 30, February 6, 25, 1879; Council Report for 1882, 123.
inspection trips to see the light in other cities, Council authorized experimental electric lighting on the perimeter of downtown. The new carbon arc system would cost about twenty per cent less than gas and would provide much better illumination than naptha. But this project failed to produce any positive results when the Columbus company was unable to place its stock because of certain patent stipulations.

The incorporation of the Columbus Light and Power Company in 1884 was the immediate impetus to Council's obtaining electric lighting. The city began using the new arc light system that year, gradually adding fixtures as money became available. The poor condition of city finances, especially the gas and light fund, necessitated a swapping process where an electric light would replace a gas or naptha lamp. Although the city solicitor declared this process illegal, it continued so that by 1890 Columbus had almost 800 arc lights. Like the city's dealings with the gas company, however, its relations with the electric company were less than perfect. The original lights had been installed at a cost averaging $48.00 a year, approximately one half the charge to other Ohio cities. By 1888, though, Councilmen and editors

were becoming concerned since the "usual process" of lowering charges had not developed. Rather, charges to the city had almost doubled to an $80-$90 yearly rent for each lamp. The relationship was not totally amenable for the power company either. Actually, it had no franchise, but operated the public lighting system on the strength of a series of Council resolutions passed in 1883-84 when the city lacked funds to initiate a legal contract. 51

In 1893 the power company began pushing for a contract with the city. Company officials may have been prompted by a desire to wear down Council so that they could get a real contract, or they may have reasoned that the longer they waited the more irate Council would become at increasing costs and the less willing to give a favorable contract. The initial thrust of the company in 1893 toward securing a new agreement brought editorial suggestions that Council carefully consider what it was buying and what it was giving away this time. Late in 1894, the Board of Public Works began a series of hearings on the matter culminating with a recommendation to Council that a new contract with the

51 Ibid.; Dispatch, September 20, 1887; May 17, 1888; March 25, 1889. The problem of light supply was complicated by the arguments over location. There was a clear suburban-central ward clash over this question, and there were chronic citizen complaints of discrimination; Cf. Journal, February 13, 23, 1883; Dispatch, October 16, 1888; November 1, 1898. BOT Report for 1886, 5, 10-17; Hooper, City of Columbus, 123-24; Council Report for 1884, 59; for 1890, 139.
Columbus Light and Power Company be drawn to include provision for the company to pay two per cent of its annual gross income to the city treasury. After a brief debate caused by the entrance of a short-lived competitor, the old company was awarded a five-year contract to light certain streets. The cost was to be $74.50 annually for each light, a reduction from the previous charge; the city was also to receive the suggested two per cent rebate on the company's gross receipts. Additionally, Columbus acquired its first incandescent outdoor lighting when Council simultaneously awarded a contract to the Columbus Edison Light Company.

Still many were not satisfied. A few councilmen pointed out that although the city had got a better contract, the two per cent paid to the treasury was merely coming from the pockets of private customers; it was therefore not much of a concession from the company. Given the previous history of Council action on social reform, however, it is doubtful that this factor alone

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52 Dispatch, August 19, 1893; December 24, 1894; May 2, September 30, October 1, 18, November 12, 1895. Council Report for 1896, 109-110. Mayor Cotton Allen vetoed an ordinance granting a contract to the Citizen's Light Company because it contained no provision for underground wires; the Columbus Power Company's lines were already on poles; the Edison Company used buried wires. The last organization had been established in 1887, but until had not provided lamps for outdoor lighting until the 1896 contract agreement.
had much influence on the eventual decision to establish a municipal electric plant. The most immediate cause for this move was the discovery that the power company was not living up to its contract. The agreement had called for 460 watts and 2000 candle-power per lamp, but on prodding from Council the Director of Public Improvements reported that the averages were 405 and 1065 respectively. The Director of Law suggested the city should get penalty money from the company, but the movement for a municipal plant had grown to such a degree by this time, that Council was now willing to engage in the experiment of municipal socialism.

The initial suggestion that the city should own its lighting facilities had come in 1881 concurrent with the first attempt to introduce electric lamps. It is not clear whether the "some people" who made the suggestion of ownership were referring to the entire lighting system or merely the proposed electric system, but with lack of interest and the success of the Mount Vernon Lantern Company, this proposition quickly disappeared. A stronger suggestion, a proposed Council resolution, met a similar fate in 1886. In 1889 the president of Council argued

53 *Dispatch*, August 24, 1897; February 15, September 7, 1898. The Edison company provided only a small percentage of the lamps and was not in issue in this case.
that a municipal light plant was a real possibility because it could save the city money. Two years later the Columbus Trades and Labor Assembly, a rather conservative organization of skilled laborers, made the same proposal. In 1892 Mayor Karb came out in favor of municipal ownership with the result that Council passed a resolution supporting his position. Discussion continued with advocates favoring the municipal system because so many lights were not lit at night. An 1896 resolution favoring a public system noted that it would save the city "thousands of dollars."  

This resolution passed Council 15-3. In the process of debate, however, the official commitment to municipal ownership had been diluted by a provision that the ordinance to issue $300,000 in bonds be subject to a referendum. In April 1896 the people voted, and their answer to the question was positive: yes, Council should issue bonds for up to the stated amount. At this point enthusiasm still lagged. Perhaps surprised by the referendum results or pressured by the private electric companies--the reason is not apparent--Council delayed introduction of the ordinance to issue bonds until September 1897. In late

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54 Journal, July 22, 1881; Dispatch, December 21, 1886; August 22, 1889; October 7, 1891; April 19, August 30, October 18, 1892; January 28, 31, 1896.
November Council unanimously voted to sell only $63,000 worth of bonds. By 1898, however, the municipal plant was in operation supplying electric arc light to supplement that provided by the private firms.

One of the historically interesting aspects of the decision to engage in socialism is the debate that occurred around the topic. For the most part it was businesslike. There was little sloganizing, although a few opponents sometimes used phrases like "entering wedge" or "unfair competition."

The most popular argument against the public utility was not ideological at all. It was simply that although a municipal plant was a good idea, the "objection against this course is that politics could not be kept out of it." Whether or not this was sufficient reason to delay the project, the statement was true. The ubiquitous partisanship of the period had made it clear

55 Ibid., March 3, 1898; July 27, September 28, November 23, 1897; May 5, August 10, 11, 1898; Journal, August 11, 1898. United States Department of Labor, Bulletin (September 1903), 895. Council Report for 1897, 40. Despite an earlier mayoral veto of a franchise because it permitted overhead wires, the city used this ugly system. Mayor Allen had opposed the municipal plant at the time Council passed its resolution in 1896; see Hooper, History, 123-24. For a general description of the electric light industry as well as discussion of carbon arc and incandescent technologies, see Harold C. Passer, The Electrical Manufacturers, 1875-1900 (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), especially Parts I and II.
that "spoilsmen" would become involved in the project were it ever carried out. This approach had numerous variations. The Dispatch argued the project would thrust business into politics and vice-versa--the order was apparently not too important--and further, if the city spent money for municipal lighting, how could it afford more pressing necessities? Advocates of civil service reform used the issue to push their pet scheme. They would support socialism, but not until reform assured efficient plant operation. Another argument against the proposal was that electric light was still experimental; delay was the best course. It should be pointed out that although it was clear to most by the mid-1890's that the innovation, especially the arc system adopted, was not experimental, acquisition of data on costs was difficult. Various bookkeeping methods, failure to allow for depreciation, and usage of different systems and wattages all compounded the difficulty of arriving at a simple statement of the cost-effectiveness of electricity, much less of the advantage of a municipal system over a private one.

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56 Journal, July 22, 1897; Dispatch, December 21, 1886; August 22, 1889; February 5, 6, October 7, 1891; August 30, 1892; January 31, March 31, May 6, September 17, November 23, 1897; March 6, 1899. John R. Commons, "Municipal Electric Lighting," in Edward W. Bemis (ed.), Municipal Monopolies: A Collection of Papers by American Economists and Specialists (New York, 1889). The argument by the Dispatch that the city could not afford this type of socialism was not so conservative as it might appear;
Though the arguments of the conservatives were thus reasonably acceptable, the statements by advocates of the new system were grounded even more strongly in sound business principles. While some opponents accused those who favored ownership of having a misguided "zeal for 'the people'," the proponents rarely resorted to social arguments. The favorable argument concentrated on two ideas. First, the present private system was inefficient, and the city was not getting all it paid for. This statement was easily corroborated. Persons could see lights not burning where they should have been; they could read the report of the Director of Public Improvements which stated that those lights burning were not up to the required standards.

Given this argument, the second part logically followed. The city could get what it paid for—-and could pay less—-if it owned its electric facility. This portion of the argument was more difficult to prove, but the proponents had one factor to their advantage. It seemed that the city was chronically bankrupt. It was never officially so, and the sinking fund allowed a reasonable

the editor preferred to spend the money to socialize the street railroads. For a similar civil service argument see James B. Crooks, Politics and Progress (Baton Rouge, 1968), 110.

57 Dispatch, October 7, 1891; October 18, 1892; July 27, 1897; March 14, 1898.
servicing of the municipal debt, but departments were continually borrowing money in anticipation of the next tax collection. All costs were spiraling, especially those for public services. By 1889 the cost of lighting, practically non-existent twenty-five years previously had risen to about $80,000 annually. By the mid-1890's city bonds were selling poorly partly because of the depressed national market but also because of Columbus's extensive debt. In the second half of the decade Council and the Board of Public Works made real efforts to save money. Salaries were lowered and improvements generally curtailed as the rhetoric of economy swelled. The municipal plant was therefore presented as an important means to achieve a goal that most citizens had agreed upon. Finally the advocates of change stated that electricity was not experimental and that the experience of other cities proved the public system could and did work.

So the decision was made to engage in socialism, though only a few really thought of it as that. The results proved an anti-climax to both sides. Those who had voiced fears that the

58 Ibid., August 22, 1889; January 28, March 4, 1896; July 7, November 6, 23, 1897. For the city's economy moves see ibid., December 1, 30, 31, 1896; January 5, 11, February 6, 24, 1896; August 10, 1897; September 1, 2, 4, October 3, 1889. For the chronic money problem see Journal, July 27, 1895; April 11, May 2, October 3, 1876; Dispatch, December 9, 1891; February 8, 1892; August 15, 1895.
new departure would unfairly compete with private business had little to fear since the funds allocated for the project were small. About eight years before the plant was built, a councilman had stated that the project would cost between $150,000 and $200,000. The original suggestion in 1896 had been for $300,000. The $68,000 actually spent was far short of what was needed for an efficient plant. Further, the Columbus power plant was not a direct threat to the private company because it was designed only to supplement those electric lamps already placed. As such its costs could be used as a yardstick to compare with those of the private company, but businessmen, when pressed, admitted that the private company would, and should, be more costly to a consumer if both systems were equally efficient. If the Columbus Municipal Light Plant was designed to punish the private electric company, Council and the Board of Public Works had effected only a weak disciplinary measure.

Nor were those who had favored the plant blessed with the better system they had predicted. Because of failure to achieve economy of scale and perhaps because of the inefficient spoils system the Director of Public Improvements stated in 1900 that the public facility was providing electricity for lamps at approximately twice the cost of the private company. This was disheartening indeed, and in July, after four months of debate,
Council voted to stop the experiment and close the utility.

After years of agitation and after new technology had produced a short-lived experiment, the city had not truly solved the problem of municipal lighting. Although the example of lighting may not be a fair one since the new technological problem was compounded by that of competition, or feared competition, with private enterprise, Columbus had not actually solved its problems in other areas of city services either.

Where citizens were now able to travel on better, but costly, streets, attention began switching to provision of cheaper public transportation on street railroads. The dilemmas posed by provision of decent sewer and water systems remained in spite of considerable expense and improvement. Obviously, city services was one area where "reform" had been less than totally successful.


60 See, for example, George A. Johnson, Report on Sewage Purification at Columbus, Ohio (Columbus, 1905), 4-7 for a brief history of sewers in the city. The Report is an expert document.
Yet in the thirty or so years before 1900 some new ideas and approaches to the provision of these services had emerged. It was clear that in spite of failure citizens demanded continued efforts to produce desirable physical conditions in the city. And sound businessmen as well as politicians did not conform to ideological stereotypes. If a project could be proven useful and efficient, like the proposed municipal electric plant, it got support. There was also an increasing number of persons who relied on the use of experts to come up with non-political solutions to such problems. That the advice of these men was not always followed by city administrations does not indicate that the goal of efficiency was absent; it was that non-technical considerations often impinged on decisions concerning public works. Finally, the effort to provide better services greatly increased the degree of urban interventionism practiced by Columbus. The amount of dollars spent on all city improvements late in the nineteenth century approached $350,000 annually, not including money from receipt of bond sales. The taxing power of the city, though still circumscribed by the state legislature,

61 Council Report for 1898, 67, 11. In 1869 the city spent $183,566 including a payment of almost $50,000 on its bonded debt and repayment of $61,000 on temporary loans; Council Documents for 1869, 6.
clearly affected the lives of citizens much more than it had in the years immediately after the Civil War.
CHAPTER VI

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION OF 1895:
THE FAILURE OF INDEPENDENT REFORM

During the decade before 1895 Columbus citizens had experienced a variety of reform. Outstanding were the attempts to root out urban vice, to introduce efficiency and business methods into municipal government, and to provide the city with cheaper, but more effective services. With the exception of the law and order campaign of 1891 and the more general movement to halt sabbath-breaking, these efforts, though not totally successful, had in fact produced many changes that their advocates had urged. Yet, reformers still felt they had fallen short of their goals. The federal form of government which was to be fully implemented in 1895 had not produced the efficient, inexpensive government many had hoped for. Nor had it made law enforcement any simpler, for vice and crime had showed no apparent decline after 1893. Though the city was engaged in making lasting improvements in its services, reformers, represented in this instance by the Tax League, still felt municipal expenditures were too high and that increasingly rigorous accounting methods coupled
with competitive bidding would produce a more pleasant situation for tax payers.

Given these circumstances, it is apparent that room for reform was still quite available in Columbus. By 1895 those who had originally urged a wait-and-see attitude toward the new federal form had concluded that a necessary ingredient was absent. Though leaders of the Board of Trade and the Tax League, protestant ministers who favored temperance, and the crusading Dispatch did not believe the federal plan needed to be supplanted by yet another governmental form, they now began to re-emphasize the need for "good men" in administration.

The result of this renewed emphasis was an independent campaign for the mayorship of the city. In a large sense, this political effort was the consummation of all the reform efforts Columbus had experienced since the mid-1870's. It was surely in the Columbus tradition of reform since it was ad hoc and since those who supported it thoroughly represented a minority of the population.

By the time citizens began discussing the upcoming spring election in early 1895, a variety of circumstances were contributing to a felt desire for reform. The feeling of betrayal experienced by men who had pushed earlier reforms and had thought themselves successful was one factor leading to dissatis-
faction. That the federal plan would become fully operable after the election made proponents of efficiency who had supported this change more anxious to elect a good mayor. Those who were in favor of Columbus becoming a more temperate city typically pushed for candidates who leaned toward the law and order banner, and they were ever ready to preach for the election of such men. Two of these factors had generally been present in earlier attempts to get a better government, but in 1895 another was added. This was a stronger than ever interest in making the city government cheap. The national depression made this desire increasingly important in 1895. Columbus businessmen were in dire financial straits; the city itself was deeply in debt, and its bonds were selling poorly. Whereas housing in the city had earlier been difficult to obtain, almost one out of ten units was now vacant. When money was scarce, taxes seemed especially high. To these conditions Columbus reformers responded with a puritanical desire to reduce municipal expenditures and taxes. The activity of the Tax League in 1894-95 further abetted the interest in reduction of city expense.

1Dispatch. April 14, 17, 1894; March 16, 1895. This interest in economy should not be taken as an indication that the depression alone was sufficient to produce the 1895 independent campaign; it primarily had the effect of supplementing the ranks of reformers already committed to government economy. As will become clear, most of the campaign issues were not directly related to the economy. The Board of Trade, which at this time was losing membership, was not active as an organization in the campaign.
As was usually the case, interest in the April mayoral election began mounting about three months before the actual event. In early January the papers commenced carrying items about "pipe layings" for the nomination; activity was being carried on "with great dexterity." At this early date when the prospective candidates were busy lining up votes, the papers began expatiating on the kind of man who should be the next mayor.  

The degree to which reform had become expected and acceptable in the city is indicated by the approach of two papers, the independent Dispatch and the Democratic Post-Press. The Dispatch usually launched a good government crusade before municipal elections, and early in the year the editor began admonishing citizens to see that the parties selected "good men" who would be brave enough to take real stands on the issues of finance, law enforcement, and administrative ability. Maintaining its non-partisan stance, the paper continually decried the evils of party rule and credited it with having "produced high taxes, left nine per cent of the houses vacant, silenced industry, and hurt the poor." It is clear that the depression had added to the issues facing the city and that the Dispatch's response was primarily to readvocate ideas articulated in previous years.  

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2 Post-Press, January 4, 1895; Dispatch, January 22, 1895.
The Post-Press, on the other hand, had no immediate reason for sounding the good-government trumpet unless it felt that "reform" had become a vote-getter in the city. Democrats had won the mayorship during the vast majority of elections since the Civil War without posing as reformers. Yet, the paper vociferously called for "reform." Was the Post-Press attempting to woo the Republican business vote, or was it striving to get a real reformer nominated by its party? Although the latter is a possibility, the paper's actions in supporting so enthusiastically the non-reformer eventually nominated indicate that its editorials were mostly window-dressing. Still, the willingness of the editor to speak as he did demonstrates that the general concept of reform was popular with a large number of Colombusites.

The changes urged by the Post-Press were amazingly similar to the pet schemes of the Dispatch. A basic theme pursued by the Democratic paper was retrenchment; it was quite safe to blame a profligate Republican council for the city's debt. Such a stance, however, meant that the paper would have to support the non-partisan Tax League presided over by the Republican reformer, William Burdell. But the editor went the
logical route and praised the League almost daily—and with a minimum of partisanship. Further, the paper noted that "Columbus has caught the inspiration of municipal reform going on in many of our cities" and urged "smashing" the local machine. On the issue of law and order the Press was silent.

With the campaign getting underway, it was not clear there would be four mayoral candidates instead of the usual two. In early January the Press noted talk of an "independent reform ticket" for mayor, but this brief statement was the only public mention of the possibility until March. Things seemed to be going on as usual.

The Democratic campaign was the dullest. In late February the city's papers reported the contest in that party was between the semi-prominent businessman, Cotton Allen, and the city's assistant director of accounts, David E. Williams. Neither appeared highly political. Allen had never held public office, and Williams, a member of the National Municipal League who had supported the federal plan, was known mainly as an honest and competent accountant. Williams's campaign, however, lacked vigor, and in early March he withdrew from the race.

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Post-Press, January 7, 8, 15, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, February 19, 1895. As it turned out the "local machine" was Republican only. The Republican Journal was unusually silent on potential election issues.
leaving the field to Allen. The Dispatch reported that the "local machine" had cleared the way for Allen fearing perhaps that Williams was a bit too honest for party purposes. The election of delegates to the Democratic convention attracted little attention; Allen was nominated by acclamation. He was presented as a conservative businessman who owed no political favors and could give the city a business government. The Democrats, as usual, made no campaign promises.

On the Republican side the result was not such a foregone conclusion. The "out" party was faced with the necessity of selecting its man from four serious contenders. The first to announce was the superintendent of police, Edward Pagels, the "law and order" candidate of 1891. A man in his position would be especially strong if the party nominated its candidate in convention rather than in a primary. In either case support by the police department could make his defeat difficult. Though the Press remonstrated against Pagels's failure to enforce the closing law impartially, the Dispatch labelled him a man of "principle not policy," and the city's Methodist ministers favored him. Second to announce was Oliver M. Evans, a strong Republican with rather indistinct views on law and order. He was

5 Post-Press, January 7, 8, February 24, March 1, 3, 12, 1895; Dispatch, February 25, March 4, 9, 12, 1895.
followed by Henry C. Taylor, the author of the Taylor Law and a man of moderation on any issue. The quartet was complete when Frank E. Hayden, a noted businessman and the 1893 Republican mayoral candidate, said that he too was in the running.

The winner in the primary was Oliver Evans. Although Pagels had had the support of the police department, he did not have the support of the Director of Public Safety which cost him the influence of the firemen. Further, the Republican Director of Public Improvements, Jerry Bliss, was an Evans man who not too secretly bought south-side votes with promises of work laying water lines. The Republican candidate had fair credentials. He was a Civil War veteran, a merchant who had worked his way up from being a stonemcutter, and he had the support of the "liberal" element of his party. Accepting the nomination he said, "I stand for law and order, good government, and retrenchment all along the line consistent with good government."\(^6\) Saying one stood for law and order, however, was not necessarily interpreted to mean he would enforce all the laws.

\(^6\) Ibid., February 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 25, March 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 1895; Journal, February 17, 24, March 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 1895; Post-Press, February 1, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23, 25, March 8, 1895. Republican interest was manifested when only two thousand fewer persons voted in the primary than had voted in November 1894.
The third candidate to enter the race was another merchant, George Twiss, who ran on the Populist ticket. Initially, editors opined that the Populist candidate might be an important factor in the election since the party had got 1800 votes the previous November. But this expectation was not realized. Twiss was not himself a Populist and could not therefore appeal to the hardliners; the organized laborers in the Peoples Party convention were unsuccessful in nominating their candidate, and they indicated that they could not support Twiss. After being nominated, Twiss virtually disappeared from public view.

For those interested in a businesslike city government as well as for those who felt non-observance of legal restrictions on alcohol was a prime objection to usual government practice the official nominees were not desirable. The candidate of the temperance men had been Edward Pagels. In spite of the Press's accusation that he was unfair in his enforcement of the closing ordinances he had received the support of the Columbus Methodist

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7 Ibid., March 1, 3, 1895; Journal, March 3, 1895; Dispatch, March 16, 1895. The Populists were the only group that presented a detailed platform, and their urban demands had a different emphasis from the hell raised in rural Kansas. The Columbus Populists wanted more businesslike municipal government and strict enforcement of all laws; additionally they supported municipal ownership of utilities, the eight-hour day, and referendum and initiative. Twiss got 120 votes in April.
Ministers Conference and the Dispatch. The liberals, that is those who did not favor strict observance of the law, especially German and Irish Republicans, had clearly been in the Evans camp. To temperance men this indicated a political debt that would prohibit the nominee's strict enforcement of laws. Besides the ministers, the Dispatch reported that "law and order men" generally had favored Pagels. 

Other reformers were likewise distressed by the nominations. Even before the parties had acted, William Burdell, President of the Tax League, had pronounced all the potential candidates "totally unfit" for the mayorality. The city's Good Government Club seemed to concur in this judgment, for in late February it effected ward organization so that it could better act politically in the forthcoming election. Thus two highly visible, if not numerically strong, groups were overtly dissatisfied with the party nominations. Additionally, the Dispatch was not pleased. Nor were those members of the Columbus Trades and Labor Assembly who had attended the local Populist convention satisfied with the candidate of "the people." 

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8 Post-Press, February 27, March 3, 26, 1895; Dispatch, February 25, March 6, 7, 1895.

9 Post-Press, February 5, 26, March 5, 1895; Journal, February 26, 1895; Dispatch, February 26, March 5, 1895. The Good Government Club had been established in late 1894 by the
The result of this dissatisfaction was that a former candidate for the Democratic nomination, David E. Williams, was persuaded "by the friends of good government" to engage in an independent campaign for the mayorship. When Williams announced his candidacy, he presented what, for Columbus was a detailed platform. Critical of mayors who also held other jobs, the independent candidate promised to devote all his time to the office. He would institute the merit system so that only changes directed toward efficiency would affect the police and fire departments where political appointments had been the accepted practice. In the area of finance, the independent promised to weed out unnecessary city employees, lower city expenses, and thus place the municipality in a position to lower taxes. Finally, he vowed to work vigorously to deracinate gambling and violation of liquor laws. In a word, the platform that Williams presented covered most aspects of urban reform concerned chronic reformers Burdell and Gladden. In 1895 it urged (1) division of local from non-local politics; (2) management of local affairs on business principles; (3) "official fitness, capacity, and efficiency" for all public officials; (4) retrenchment; (5) election primaries; (6) home rule for cities. The organization was also briefly active before the municipal elections of 1896. Although the Journal, of course, supported Evans after his nomination, it had earlier taken an unprecedented step by supporting Henry C. Taylor, as a sound reformer, for the nomination. This position indicates that many Republicans would be more dissatisfied than usual with their party's selection. See Journal, March 1, 6, 9, 1895.
citizens had been discussing in Columbus and throughout the United States for at least ten years. Perhaps notable by its omission was any reference to achievement of better relations between the city and private corporations serving the public, but this issue had not yet become important in Columbus. 10

David Williams had not been an outstanding political figure. His main claim to ability to handle the mayorship was his successful tenure as the city's assistant director of accounts, a position he had apparently held honestly and capably but unspectacularly. Soon after his announcement, he was chided by the Democratic Post-Press for ingratitude to the party that had given him a job for so many years. The Republican Journal labelled him a "frustrated Democrat." Both these statements were, of course, partisan. Such does not make them untrue, but in this case it appears that they were exaggerations. Williams had held a party-given job, but he had never been active in partisan affairs. That many members of the Columbus Trades and Labor Assembly had urged his nomination by the Populist convention further indicates his independence within the Democratic party. That "the friends of good government" had promoted his independent campaign is another factor demonstrating Williams's positive

10 Dispatch, March 13, 1895; Post-Press, March 13, 1895.
credentials as a non-partisan.

The three-sided campaign for the mayorship was one of the liveliest the city had ever experienced. The political fight indicates how well entrenched were the traditional parties as well as the fear which the independent campaign aroused in old partisans.

From the outset Republicans admitted they had the most to lose from Williams's candidacy. It had initially been reform-minded Republicans, disappointed by the selection of Evans as their party's candidate, who had urged Williams to run. Thus the Republicans, who traditionally lost mayors' races anyway, now had the extra burden of getting wayward members of the party back into the fold. Their attack on the Democrats was fairly typical. The Journal noted with glee that although Cotton Allen was a "decent man," he was not fit (for unnamed reasons) for the mayoralty. Also as usual, the paper claimed truthfully that the Democratic candidate had the support of the Columbus liquor dealers and that the city's debt had risen under the Democratic Board of Public Works.

Initially the Journal had little ammunition to fire at Williams.

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11 Ibid., March 14, 1895; Post-Press, March 11, 1895; Journal, March 14, 18, 1895.
but the disclosure that he had received one salary as assistant
director of accounts and another as secretary of the sinking fund
trustees provided an avenue for attacking a man who said he
favored retrenchment but received one salary illegally. This
was about the extent of valid arguments that the editor was able
to discover, however, for the Williams platform was virtually
identical to the ideas the *Journal* had espoused in non-election
years. The paucity of available anti-Williams material is in-
dicated by the editor's plea that Republican should vote for Evans
because it was their "plain duty" and because the gubernatorial
candidacy of George K. Nash would be strengthened if Columbus
had a Republican executive. In a more positive vein the paper
noted that Evans's commitment to "law and order"--a statement
which had come as a direct response to Williams's announcement
of a platform--had "destroyed" the independent.  

The Democrats' campaign was less frenetic than that of
the Republicans, but they too recognized the threat posed by the
newcomer. Tending to emphasize positive qualities in its candidate,
the *Post-Press* presented Allen as an experienced, but non-political
businessman. It claimed he would give the city a clean adminis-

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12 Ibid., March 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25,
26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, April 2, 1895.
tration as well as get out the "gangsters," a nebulous group. Additionally, Allen was promoted as a friend of the workers.

About its opponents, the Press had only slight comment. Evans apparently was little threat, for the editor's main concern with him was in observing the chagrin many of his supporters experienced when this supposedly liberal Republican came out with a law-and-order statement. Williams, the Press observed, was an ungrateful renegade who was dishonestly receiving two salaries. The editor urged Democrats not to go after "new gods and false prophets." 13

Since Williams had declared his candidacy only a few weeks before the election and so lacked any real vote getting machinery, it was imperative that the non-partisan candidate achieve as much publicity as possible. This he accomplished by writing a multitude of letters to editors and by a taxing schedule of speech-making. Most of Williams's pronouncements rehashed the themes of non-partisan economy in government and enforcement of the laws. Shortly, his platform had won support from the independent Dispatch which boomed his candidacy in the two weeks before the election. As had the Committee of One Hundred four years earlier, so now the independents tried to appeal to the entire

13 Post-Press, March 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 28, 29, 1895.
spectrum of Columbus voters. Partisanship was decried as a basic root of social and economic evils. Williams was presented as a candidate who would effect tax savings so that all, renters as well as landlords, could expect lower costs. Leaping on the Journal for its argument that a vote for Williams would hurt the Republicans on the state level, the independent candidate explained to a fascinated Board of Trade audience that it seemed his election was as historically significant as Julius Caesar's death.

But despite an active campaign, despite humor as well as gravity, and despite supposedly moral women voting for the first time in Ohio municipal elections, Williams did not win. He received a total of 2599 votes, or 11.6 per cent of the total. As was traditional, the Democrat candidate, though carrying a minority of the wards, won the election. Allen had 10,747 votes, 48.2 per cent, and Evans got 8968 votes, 40.2 per cent of the total.

14 Dispatch. March 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 1895. Williams also got the endorsement of the city's Prohibition Party—usually worth about 400 votes.

15 1895 was the first year women were permitted to vote in municipal elections; the Dispatch had opined that these new voters might add morality to city politics, especially in the areas of temperance and education. Ibid., April 2, 1895; Post-Press April 1, 2, 1895; Journal, April 2, 1895. See Table 5 for a detailed summary. The Prohibitionists gave Williams 438 of his total.
Two questions logically present themselves. Why did Williams lose so badly, and what sort of effect, if any, did the independent, reformist candidate have on the usual voting patterns of Colombusites?

The first question is not difficult to answer. William's campaign was brief, and he faced insurmountable obstacles presented by traditional parties. As Columbus reformers continually noted, their constituencies were comprised of strong partisans who rarely broke the party yoke. Clearly not enough citizens shared those reform ideas that concentrated on efficiency and law and order to elect any candidate solely because he espoused those opinions. Conversely, it appears that just as in the reform campaign of 1891 men tended to vote strongly against the candidate when he suggested ideas that threatened their traditions. This is evident in the very high percentage of Democrat votes in the German wards 1-4. On the other hand, Williams got over ten per cent of the vote in ten wards; in four of these he won over fifteen per cent. Those wards that gave him 10-15 per cent of their votes were generally within the older parts of the city. The neighborhoods east of downtown, long the stronghold of the wealthy and of many reformers, fit into this group. The two exceptions were a new suburban ward, 14, recently created on the far west side of the city, and ward 17,
### Table 5
WARD TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES FOR THE MAYORAL ELECTION OF 1895\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>EVANS Number/Percentage</th>
<th>ALLEN Number/Percentage</th>
<th>WILLIAMS Number/Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>188 29.1</td>
<td>437 67.8</td>
<td>20 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>313 24.5</td>
<td>921 72.1</td>
<td>44 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>311 19.8</td>
<td>1217 77.7</td>
<td>39 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>536 31.8</td>
<td>1085 64.4</td>
<td>65 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>455 38.5</td>
<td>647 57.0</td>
<td>53 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>482 46.8</td>
<td>409 39.7</td>
<td>140 13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>565 41.2</td>
<td>529 38.6</td>
<td>276 20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>391 50.2</td>
<td>275 35.3</td>
<td>113 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>692 50.3</td>
<td>523 38.0</td>
<td>160 11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>622 45.0</td>
<td>641 46.3</td>
<td>120 8.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>517 45.0</td>
<td>496 43.2</td>
<td>135 11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>364 49.6</td>
<td>330 45.0</td>
<td>40 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>460 37.3</td>
<td>706 57.2</td>
<td>68 5.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>417 47.2</td>
<td>355 40.2</td>
<td>111 12.6</td>
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<td>326 37.2</td>
<td>504 57.5</td>
<td>47 5.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>591 49.5</td>
<td>395 33.1</td>
<td>207 17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>540 44.9</td>
<td>515 42.8</td>
<td>147 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>565 48.2</td>
<td>267 22.8</td>
<td>339 28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>503 47.0</td>
<td>286 25.0</td>
<td>282 26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{TOTAL: 8968} \quad 40.2 \quad 10,747 \quad 48.2 \quad 2599 \quad 11.6 \]

\(^a\) Compiled from Dispatch, April 2, 1895; Journal, April 2, 1895.
### Table 6

1895 MAYORAL PARTY VOTES AS PERCENTAGE OF 1892 PRESIDENTIAL VOTES BY SELECTED WARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>120.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>67.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>57.6</td>
<td>94.3</td>
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<td>67.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from *Journal*, November 11, 1892, April 2, 1895. The creation of 4 new city wards in 1894 makes comparison with earlier elections more difficult. Wards 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 18 were geographically new in 1895; the selected wards correspond to the 1892 wards.

*Williams's highest percentages came in the three northern wards of the city--American and perhaps even suburban--and from ward 7, which bordered on East Broad Street. Generally then, the votes that Williams*
got were from middle- and upper-class Americans.

In its post-election political obituaries, the Journal claimed that Evans had been slain "in the house of his friends." The implication was that many Republicans, those who had originally supported either Pagels or Taylor, had deserted the party to stay home or to vote for the independent candidate; Evans had needlessly lost to the Democrat.

The debate over just how Evans could have won the election would be a non-productive exercise. It does seem, however, that the Journal's editor was partially correct in his assessment of the situation. Almost 10,000 Republicans had voted in the primary, but in the election fewer than 9000 votes, about three-fourths the number Republicans cast the previous November, went to Evans. Although the candidacy of Williams may or may not have been a factor in this reluctance to vote, some 1000 Republicans had not voted the party ticket. It is difficult, however, to correlate the Williams votes with the decline in the Republican percentages. In five of ten comparable wards the Williams' percentages added to that of Evans is near the Republican percentage of 1891, an analogous election year because of the law and order campaign. In the other five, Evans's total percentage is almost equal to that of 1891 without the addition of Williams votes. However, in the five wards where the correlation is high, Williams received only about 600 votes. It thus does
not appear likely that nearly all Williams votes came from renegade Republicans.

Some, therefore, had to come from Democrats. Where the Democrat percentage in mayoral races had previously averaged about fifty-four per cent, it now fell to just over forty-eight. Using the comparable year of 1891 again, it seems that approximately forty per cent of the independent votes had come from Democrats. Even if the sixty per cent of independent votes taken from the Republicans had gone to Evans, he still would have lost. Thus, the independent campaign had cost the Republicans votes, but not the election.

The Dispatch in its election analysis opined that Allen's victory was due to widespread Democratic support, his reputation as a good businessman, his failure to take a strong law and order stance, and his general position as a "compromise" candidate. 17 The suggestions appear reasonable. They had been factors in all the Democratic victories since the Civil War.

16 Journal. March 10, April 2, 1895.

17 Dispatch. April 2, 1895. Nor did the Columbus Republicans seem to be the local beneficiaries of the national swing toward the Republicans which began occurring in 1893. See McSeveney, "Politics of Depression," 116-17. The suggestion that the attempt to introduce morality in 1895 caused Democrats to de-emphasize the issues of "hard times" and thus vote traditionally is supported by Kleppert, Cross of Culture, 144-47, 178, 317.
If the Committee of One Hundred's campaign in 1891 had forced Columbus reformers away from political efforts based solely on law and order, the independent movement left such a pall of failure that reformers never again attempted political action outside the established parties. This made the job of reform difficult, for although a party man might sincerely promise change, he would be constrained from free action by political debts once he got in office. The promised reform administration of Mayor Sam Swartz in 1899, the first Republican elected to that position since 1885, was unsuccessful by reformers' standards partially because of traditional political contingencies.

The issue of law and order aside, Cotton Allen had preached ideas close to those of David Williams. But Allen's easy victory coupled with the usual demands for political rewards left the inexpensive business-like government reformers had wanted far from reality. Hindsight proved to the Democrats that they were still well in control of the mayorship and so had little reason to respond directly to the suggestions for change. By every possible measure the independent campaign had been a dismal failure.

18 At least on a city-wide basis; Gladden's independent election to Council in 1900 was not the beginning of a pattern.

19 Dispatch, April 2, 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, November 23, December 10, 1895.
CONCLUSION
URBANIZATION, REFORM, AND URBAN HISTORY

In reviewing the history of Columbus reform for the one-third century after the Civil War, one sees some outstanding failures. Specifically, the advocates of change had not achieved a lawful city. Men who wanted more morality—or more order—persistently failed to realize this goal; the law and order movement and the independent campaign for the mayorship are two blatant instances of this group's defeat. On a slightly different plane, where reformers had successfully established a municipal electric plant, they had been temporarily thwarted because the utility did not compete effectively with the city's private power firm.

Yet, those who called themselves reformers had scored some specific victories, and in more general terms they had also found a degree of success. Though the federal system did not turn out to be the hoped-for panacea, the new form had been successfully implemented after a long political battle. The possibility of government boards shirking responsibility and passing blame to "everyone else" had been diminished considerably.

Further, citizens were able to judge administrative activity rather
easily. The mayor alone was clearly responsible for the entire executive department.

In more general areas also, reformers could discern achievement. There was clearly—with the exception of the issue of temperance—a more positive attitude toward efficiency and good government in 1900 than there had been twenty-five years earlier. Municipal candidates were expected to promise a business-like government even if they remained silent on the question of law enforcement. Additionally, reformers had very broad successes to their credit: in spite of a rapid rise of the city's population, the services provided had not severely deteriorated; in some areas inhabitants got much better service than they had had in 1870. Though the maintenance and improvement of the level of living was not exclusively attributable to reform activity, the advocates of change did play a role by constantly agitating for more efficient public services. Expansion of the water and sewer systems, street paving, outside lighting, the absence of any flagrant instances of graft or corruption, the continual expansion of the police and fire departments—in all these areas the reformer had been active. It is difficult to say with precision that the advocates of change had scored a specific number of positive points. Certain successes, however, were obvious: the general tone of the city, the attitude of the citizenry toward effective change, and the government's
ability to keep pace with urbanization were important indirect results of the reform effort.

The objectives of reform in Columbus had been clear-cut. It is for this reason that very specific groups can be singled out as proponents of change, advocates of the status quo, or citizens who remained uninvolved with the issues presented to them. The supporters of reform fall generally into two sets. There were the businessmen, merchants, bankers, and professional men who had a direct interest in seeing the city run more efficiently. Protestant clergy formed a second group. Their main interests often lay in the area of moral regeneration and law enforcement, but they were also willing to support other ideas such as those articulated by Washington Gladden, Henry Noble, and William Burdell.

Likewise, the opposition is not difficult to categorize. Generally, the political party in power opposed alterations in the status quo. On the specific issue of law and order, saloonists and brewers—legitimate businessmen—usually stood against reform. Another identifiable group, the German population, typically opposed efforts of the law and order advocates.

This is not to say that such groups were always adverse to reform. The German laborer was quite likely to support expansion of city utilities. So was the brewer. Since various reforms
affected different populations positively or negatively, one must say that an overview of the reformers shows a series of shifting alliances held together primarily by a small group of men who consistently supported all changes that were urged. It is an oversimplification to say that "businessmen" supported reform, or that "Germans" were not progressive without considering the specific issue.

Finally, there was a group of apathetic "others." It has been noted that working men, as working men, and not as Germans, for example, were rarely involved in the reform issues of the period. The continual attempts of reformers to interest this group by promising change that would lead to lower rents is an indication that the votes of workers were missing from the reform column. Women, as a group, were also absent, though there was no direct attempt to get them involved in the political process. One must conclude that most of the time the majority of the population had little direct interest in reform. This was one cause of the movement's frequent political failure.

The type of reform that involved Columbusites is also subject to categorization. There was not a single instance of activity pushed by reformers that was not justified as "efficiency." From socialism to street improvements, advocates of change argued that their goal would somehow make the city more efficient, cheaper,
more orderly, or more responsible. All these terms were used interchangeably to indicate a goal that today would probably be called rationality. More specifically, reformers were concerned with the technical questions of government, city services, and law enforcement. These were areas where the language of efficiency was easily applicable. They were not spheres of social concern, but it is a mistake to assume that there was a simple dichotomy between social and non-social change. Each spilled over continually into the other category. Better streets had definite financial advantages for the downtown merchant, but they also made travel easier for the worker. The Columbus potato patches were justified on grounds of efficiency, but they were clearly a social experiment. The same logic also holds for temperance, socialism, or more responsible government.

Use of the language of efficiency meant that an issue much discussed today received only slight attention in the late nineteenth century. This is the question of whether reform was democratic. Historians have recently noted the large number of businessmen involved in urban reform. They have denied the existence of any sort of conspiracy of the wealthy to defraud the non-wealthy of money, rights, or votes, but they have observed that ideas presented as reform really favored the businessman at the expense of "the people."
This concept of history is too neat to have much relevance in Columbus. The extreme complexity of the issues and the even greater complexity involved in implementation of ideas mean pinning an all-inclusive label on Columbus reform is simplistic. Further, if the reforms accomplished or advocated in Columbus were not consciously designed to be democratic, they were not anti-democratic. Most probably the best description of these movements is "non-democratic," but even that label would introduce an issue not generally present in the minds of reformers.

Apparently it was also absent from the minds of those who were most likely to be the victims of any elitist change, for there was never a hint from Columbus's organized workers that reform goals were undemocratic. Further, on occasion Columbus Populists and the Trades and Labor Assembly indicated favor toward the general programs that businessmen in the Tax League and the independent movement also supported. One would have to make a disagreeably large number of assumptions to conclude that Columbus businessmen were attempting to rationalize their city by muting the non-rational voice of the people. Thus, reform in Columbus was relatively non-ideological, unless one would want to call the goal of efficiency an ideology. The willingness of the same groups of men to support such diverse goals as a municipal light plant and the federal plan of government as well as law and
order indicates that such had to be the case.

Why did the city experience such an on-going movement toward reform when the pace of advocated change had been so much slower in the years before the Civil War? The desire for efficiency was not a reaction to an outstandingly corrupt government such as it had been in New York and some other cities. Rather, a combination of less spectacular forces seems to have produced this accelerated drive to change. Civic pride, the desire for more pleasant physical surroundings, the realization that government did not always perform its duties efficiently, and the social concerns of clergymen moved citizens to advocate reform. It is, however, likely that all these factors had also been present in Columbus before the temperance crusades or before the founding of the Board of Trade. The rapid increase of scale of all activities in the city after the Civil War—urbanization—was a new factor that contributed directly to the rise of reform activity. The advent of a more interventionist government meant that tax payers would be more concerned about where their money was going. The apparent rise of disorder throughout the United States and especially in the nation's cities meant that some men would generally be more apt to act to produce an orderly society.

Given this mounting interest in municipal government and general urban affairs, it may seem odd that much of the advocated
change did not succeed. Why the great rate of failure? Since a large majority of the advocated reforms required voter approval for success, failure was due in part to the absence of popular support. This lack had to stem from either opposition or apathy. It was apparently difficult for the majority of the population to imagine any benefit from many of the proposed changes. The form of government was not very important to a man who paid no taxes and who probably felt that the city administration was serving him adequately. Repeated attempts by reformers failed to convince this large group of the urgency of change, but it seems likely that the reformers would have been more successful if they had had a better campaign of public relations. No amount of propaganda, however, was able to convert many of those who opposed change for ethnic or political reasons. The extremely strong hold of party over Columbus voters meant that reformers had a valid point when they blamed evils of partisanship for many of their failures.

In addition to apathy and opposition, the reformers were often unsuccessful for more general reasons. The urban social, political, and economic structure was extremely complex. Intricate interrelationships mitigated against any wholesale change, and a positive movement in one area could easily cause undesirable effects in another. Sometimes the reformers were a bit naive. They believed their own propaganda. Many actually were surprised
when the federal form of municipal government, for example, failed to produce immediate utopia. But the political sphere was so tied to individual loyalties and a system of rewards that the effect of a change in form was severely diluted by traditional practices.

Though changing the political system probably gave reformers more troubles than anything else, areas of supposed non-partisan technology also were sites of difficulty and failure. With the problems of streets and water, politics constantly interfered. This drawback was compounded by the rapid pace of innovation and a real lack of knowledge on which to base technical decisions. Social considerations also impinged disagreeably in this area. And when one thought he had achieved success, he often was immediately faced with a new problem: though the expansion of the city's water system was strongly pushed by the advocates of reform, it also gave less reform-minded politicians another opportunity to buy votes. With so many factors working directly and indirectly against change, it seems that those who had urged it had not done so badly at all.

Had they been more persistent or more tenacious, the reformers might have achieved greater success. But changing priorities in the city worked against these characteristics. It seems that when a reformer failed to achieve efficiency in one area, he moved
to another. This is what was happening in Columbus at the end of
the century. The old emphasis on morality had almost completely
disappeared. More importantly, there was a change in other
facets of reform. Where the Board of Trade and men like William
Burdell had concentrated primarily on broad issues such as law
enforcement or governmental form, after 1895 reformers began
to turn to more specific concerns. By 1900 the problems of the
cost of a street car ticket and the price of gas occupied the
attention of those who had previously concerned themselves with
much wider topics.

The concept of home rule for cities, a quiescent issue in
the early 1890's, became the single large reform desired by the
generalists. For those who favored it, home rule became as much
an anodyne as the federal form had been earlier.

The author of any monograph is always tempted to conclude
that what he has written about is representative. The microcosm
becomes the world, and its history is closely analogous to that of
areas not covered in the essay. Such being the case, wide-ranging
conclusions can be made from a limited study. For various reasons,
however, the Columbus microcosm had several non-typical
qualities. Columbus, Ohio, was not representative of "the late
nineteenth century American city." Nor does it even fit a smaller
group, such as "the mid-western city."

Columbus hosted a variety of manufacturing interests and mercantile and commercial establishments, but it was dominated by none of these. No single business or group of businesses gave the city a characteristic hog-butcher ing or Wall Street flavor. Columbus was thus importantly different from all American cities which had a dominant business interest. Unlike southern cities such as Memphis, Baltimore, or Atlanta, its black population was small. Compared to the great cities of the East, the Mid-West, and the West, its immigrant population was neither large nor new and was generally well assimilated. After Hartford, Connecticut, its population was reported to have the highest per capita income in the United States. It lacked a large laboring class, and its labor "problems" during the years after the Civil War were minimal.

The above categories are presently used by sociologists in making typologies for cities. Historians also assume, for example, that the percentage of foreign population in a city is an important determinant of urban characteristics. A city dominated by a single industry logically consummates in the company town which has qualities distinct from other cities. A poor city is thought to present a different profile from a wealthy one. And so on.

Yet, for all its differences from other cities with outstanding or peculiar characteristics, Columbus shared the common trait
of municipal reform. The ideas that reformers in this atypical city articulated from 1880-1900 were the same as those espoused in such diverse places as Pittsburgh, Baltimore, or Chicago. In these other cities businessmen were in the vanguard of reform, and there too was the emphasis on efficiency and order. The great similarity between the ideas of Columbus reformers and the suggestions of the National Municipal League in its Municipal Program further demonstrates that in spite of all the social and economic differences, Columbus shared this one characteristic with other cities.

The problem implicitly posed is why Columbus, different in so many ways, was typical in reform and reform theory. Discounting the probability of chance, two other possibilities appear. Some common quality, for example, the presence of a "foreign" element even in small numbers, may have been enough to make reform efforts similar. This seems intuitively unlikely. More appealing is the idea that Columbus shared a generally important factor with other American cities. Besides reform efforts, urbanization was a vital characteristic all American cities experienced during the period. Urbanization implied always a degree of disorder. Such would be the case in an American, non-industrial settlement as well as in a place which had more theoretically "typical" urban characteristics. The response which urban disorder elicited was
reform that advocated efficiency and civil order.

This is not to imply that a city with a large proportion of foreign-born population or a city racked by chronic labor disputes might not have peculiar reactions to these contingencies. The experience of Columbus reformers, however, does suggest that such qualities may have served primarily to intensify and complicate the more universal problems of urbanization. Relying on the definition of urbanism presented earlier—an increase of scale on every level, mounting social, cultural, ethnic, and economic heterogeneity—it is easy to see how this factor alone could produce a concerted drive toward reform.

Another characteristic implied by an increase in scale is the vitality of urban life. Different groups competing, coalescing, or disappearing have a profound effect on a city's recognized "problems" and their possible solutions. This phenomenon helps explain diversity of reform; it suggests a possible cause for the ad hoc nature of much of the activity in Columbus. On a rather different level, it suggests that until the time urbanism indicates stasis, the city dweller will always be confronted with situations that require the introduction of some type of agreeable order.

That urbanism in very general terms was sufficient to produce Columbus's reform activity may have some implications for the writing of urban history. If, for example, ethnic heterogeneity
was not necessary to produce certain typical responses by urbanites, then one may say writing about an urban foreign group is not urban history. It is the history of a people that lived in a city. Obviously, this example could be multiplied. On the positive side, an urban historian might concern himself as much as possible with broad urban characteristics and problems. Provision of services for a compact population is one common area of interest for all cities. How do the responses to this problem vary? Since urbanization seems to imply a certain amount of disorder, what has been the historical approach of cities to this difficulty? Have any been successful?

It is these kinds of questions, among others, that ought to concern the urban historian. Perhaps, if many of the apparent differences among cities are found to be less important than we have previously assumed, arrival at an agreeable definition of urban history will be less difficult.
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