

Threats

Chapter 4 – The Workplace

During a labor conflict in 1810, journeymen house carpenters in New York City attempted to distinguish themselves from their country counterparts by attacking the craft skills of artisans from rural areas.¹ Responding to an appeal by their employers for out-of-state scab workers, the journeymen carpenters questioned the abilities of those "country carpenters (Green Hands)" who might heed the call. Although no longstanding point of disagreement existed with the country artisans before the episode and none would explicitly re-emerge in the decades following, union members warned the public about working men from the "Eastern states, (and the Back Woods) where it is known not one man out of twenty has half a knowledge of his business."² Given that a lively migration existed between the city and the country—including labor leaders Ely Moore, Adoniram Chandler, and Thomas Skidmore—the carpenters' declaration probably overstated the actual differentiation of skill levels between the workers. Nevertheless, the statement's importance lies in the unionists' attempt to draw some distinction between themselves and the country artisans during a discreet moment when they felt threatened by a competitive labor source.³ The carpenters' 1810 attack offers a brief but telling example of the way organized men conceived of their relationship to competing groups of workers in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. They did not distinguish themselves from one specific "other" as part of a binary configuration, but rather they malleably acted to distance themselves from a constantly shifting group of others who offered different challenges at different times. 1

Just as Chapter Three focused on working men's market engagement and their confrontation with numerous potential economic threats to their ideal of household-based masculinity, this chapter examines organized men's workplace engagement and their confrontation with numerous potential labor threats to their ability to fulfill their domestic obligations. Journeymen viewed the workshop as the arena where they utilized their craft skills to fulfill their domestic responsibilities. In order to preserve their craft standing and thereby earn enough to maintain their role as petit patriarchs in the home, organized men promoted the mysterious and fraternal aspects of their craft skills and defended their workplace position against possible competitive threats.

Perceived hazards came in the form of other groups of workers who threatened to de-skill production and potentially drive down skilled working men's wages. During the early nineteenth century, changing labor conditions resulted in a growing list of such competitive labor sources that included, at different times, groups such as: female workers, apprentices, foreign workers, Southern slaves, and prison laborers. Organized men's immediate reaction to competition was not blanket

racism, misogyny, or nativism but a case-by-case situational response that critiqued potential threats in terms of their craft skills and ability to challenge domestic provider roles.⁴ Skilled journeymen did not attempt to separate themselves from such groups as part of a defensive posture nostalgic for a workplace reality of the past, but instead they demarcated difference as part of a process by which they constructed workplace skill in terms of its function in sustaining household-based masculinity.

Upholding Craft Skill

Skilled artisans understood that their wage level and ability to perform domestic obligations required that they maintain a certain standing based on their craft skills. Journeymen subsequently championed the mystery and exclusivity of their art in order to play up their skills and keep wages elevated. Especially those craftsmen whose skills could be easily separated into smaller steps and assigned to a number of lower paid workers—such as shoemakers, locksmiths, carpenters, printers, masons, cabinet makers, and those in the needle trades—working men emphasized the importance of their skill and training. Artisans often referred to their difficult and lengthy apprenticeships to demonstrate the superiority of their knowledge base. Journeymen cordwainers, on trial for conspiracy in 1809, emphasized the learned, elite, and almost mystical nature of their craft, describing themselves as "workmen and journeymen in the art, mystery, and manual occupation of cordwainers."⁵ Bookbinder-poet John Bradford similarly celebrated the swashbuckling character of his craft by referring to himself as a "knight of the folding-stick of paste-castle."⁶

It was not just the mystery of craft traditions that made them special, it was their centrality to American economy and society. Working men supported printer Edward S. Bellamy's assessment that "domestic manufactures and national industry ought to be considered by the community, and encouraged by the government, as the main pillars of our national independence."⁷ Through such characterizations working men sought to solidify a craft position that more and more after 1800 was under assault from a variety of laborers with a different skill set and little or no formal training. 5

Another part of organized men's ongoing project to guard their secrets and skills derived from their defensive reaction to a number of early nineteenth-century publications that offered instruction in the arts and trades. Whereas at one time, a novice required many years of study and a formal apprenticeship to learn how craftsmen worked, a series of how-to books opened the process to anyone who could obtain a copy. Guidebooks proliferated in many fields, such as *Valuable Secrets in Arts, Trades, &c. Selected From the Best Authors, and Adapted to the Situation of the United States*, published in 1816, and *The Artist & Tradesman's Guide; Embracing Some Leading Facts & Principles of Science, and A Variety of Matter Adapted To the Wants of the Artist, Mechanic, Manufacturer, and*

Mercantile Community, published in 1829.⁸ *Valuable Secrets*, for example, included chapters that taught engraving, metallurgy, varnishing, sealing and waxing, dealing with precious stones, painting, and preparing ink for printing. While such materials ushered in a democratization of craft work and technological education as part of the market revolution, formally trained artisans viewed them as dangerous shortcuts. The end result of such shortcuts, journeymen argued, would be a dramatic surge in the number of partially-qualified workers who flooded the labor market and undercut skilled artisans' ability to demand respect and adequate wages for their expertise.

With the mysteries of their trades now revealed and open to the public, craftsmen also worried that their usefulness to society and the economy was in jeopardy. Members of the New York Typographical Society consistently reminded themselves how their printing abilities helped benefit mankind. Numerous Society Fourth of July speakers—John Clough, Thomas Ringwood, Ebenezer Mack, George Asbridge, and Edward S. Bellamy—echoed Adoniram Chandler's description of printing as, "an art truly divine ... but for which the mind to this day might have slumbered in the lap of ignorance."⁹ Like discussions about the mystery of craft skill, this line of argument was partly about self-promotion and partly about trying to transform artisanal knowledge into currency.



**Fourth of July
Toasts By the
Typographical
Society, 1804**

Protection of this knowledge was important both because of challenges from unskilled laborers and what Jonathan A. Glickstein refers to as defensiveness by artisans regarding the rise of professional and intellectual laborers in the nineteenth century. Glickstein writes that journeymen's uneasiness was "compounded by a general sense that the economic forces and social arrangements from which professionals, manufacturing entrepreneurs, and other capitalists profited were also depriving skilled manual labor of what mental content it did possess."¹⁰ Feeling this pressure from above as well as pressure from below redoubled skilled

artisans' efforts to demonstrate their unique economic and societal position that was critical to their household role.¹¹

Ely Moore, the first president of the General Trades' Union (GTU) and first pro-labor member of Congress, provided artisans their most eloquent proponent of the exalted position of skilled craftsmen within the economy. It is worth quoting Moore at length from a speech he made to union members shortly after the formation of GTU on December 2, 1833:

My object in inviting you to a consideration of this subject at the present time, is to impress upon your minds the importance of the situation which you, in reality, ought to occupy in society. This you seem to have lost sight of in a very great degree; and, from some cause or other, have relinquished your claims to that consideration to which, as mechanics and men, you are entitled. You have, most unfortunately for yourselves, and for the respectability of your vocations, become apparently unconscious of your own worth, and been led to regard your callings as humble and inferior, and your stations as too subordinate in life.¹²

Moore called upon organized men to fight any encroachment in order to maintain **10** their position in society because they deserved a certain level of respect based on their role as producers of goods and heads of families. Moore yoked unionists' workplace circumstances to their domestic masculinity by citing the audience's interlocking "duty to yourselves, to your families, and your brother mechanics."¹³ Throughout the speech, Moore reiterated this point by addressing his remarks alternately to men in "the workshop" and men in "the family circle," while referring to his audience as "artisans," "workmen," "producing classes," "Journeymen," "mechanics," "brothers," and "men."¹⁴ Moore specifically linked economic status, craft skill, workplace performance, and ideal household masculinity to demonstrate that by self-identifying as both "mechanics and men," organized journeymen could issue demands to their employers and the public as breadwinners and domestic actors.

Some of Ely Moore's sentiments about compensation, social standing, and masculine authority reflected his, and other artisans', support for labor theory of value. In its broadest sense, labor theory of value explained that the nation's prosperity belonged to those who had produced that wealth with their labor. Labor theory of value denigrated bankers because they produced wealth by pushing paper around an office instead of producing it by the sweat of their brow; however, labor theory contained wide-ranging rhetorical applications and ramifications for supporters of free labor ideology.¹⁵

For organized working men, a simple interpretation of labor theory prevailed: workers with formal training and craft skill produced a greater share of the economy, so they deserved a greater share of compensation and status. Likewise, organized men sought to differentiate themselves, their compensation structure, and their status level from those individuals or groups without proper training who, in a different way than bankers, did not produce as much wealth as skilled artisans.¹⁶ Whether or not such concerns also reflected a growing fear of labor commodification in the new market economy, unionists could read the economic indicators aligning against them. However, organized men did not experience de-skilling exclusively as a function of abstract theories of political economy; they personalized the process by making it an issue of community and brotherhood.

Trade unionists attempted to prevent the displacement of skilled workers by utilizing fraternal bonds in order to collectively promote their craft position. Organized men recognized that their success depended upon being bound "together in one fraternal bind," where the "principles of protection ... will guard the rights, and associate the interests of all."¹⁷ The United States did not possess the guild tradition that existed in Britain, France, or Germany, but new craft unions quickly adopted what Wilson Carey McWilliams terms, the "idea of civic fraternity and ... the brotherhood of craft."¹⁸

Similarly, part of working men's decision to form larger and more centralized trades unions in the 1830s stemmed from the lesson learned in the first two decades of the early nineteenth century that employers responded more quickly to collective attempts at remonstrance than they did to individual grievances about breadwinning (or related issues).¹⁹ John Finch cited the formation of the GTU as a tribute to the "utility of an organized union of all trades as *one body*."²⁰ Such bonds, however, sometimes became a satirical target because of members' unquestioning loyalty to their crafts. One example comes from a comical pamphlet entitled, *Every Man His Own Fattener*, which suggested that poor people could save money by living on a diet of air. The pamphlet contained a faux petition from the Butchers' Society who took umbrage with the line, "feed on *air*, and leave your beef and mutton!" The fictional butchers' response objected to the air diet because it "will tend to reduce to beggary your numerous petitioners, their wives, children, and attendants."²¹

As the butchers' example demonstrates, it was not always easy to accomplish **15** unionists like John Finch's goal of creating one harmonious collective body of organized men based on fraternal brotherhood. Inter-craft resentment marred a parade celebrating the GTU less than six months after its founding when several trades objected to their position in the procession. Journeymen Tailors, angry with their draw in the tenth slot declared that,

... like the Romans of old, we surrender to the source whence they sprung offerings which, as men, we consider unworthy of acceptance; and respectfully trust our resignation, under present circumstances, will be received with the full broad intention with which it is offered, viz. never to surrender our rights as tradesmen to fiends or foes!²²

Such language forcefully articulated the Tailors' expectation of certain treatment "as men" and the fact that they were loath to give up their standing—even to friends. The Journeymen Tailors' Union did not bolt from the GTU over the affront, but they did signal the organization not to disregard their artisanal position and craft skills.

The flipside of trade unionists' rhetorical posture that skilled artisans occupied a fraternal brotherhood was that organized men labeled those workers who chose

not to organize as less skilled, less important to the craft community, and less able to fulfill obligations of household masculinity. In testimony about the Journeymen Cordwainers' Society during their 1809 conspiracy trial, one witness stated that the union contained "one hundred and eighty-six members," while an equal number of the city's journeymen "were not members, but all the best workman were of the society."²³ Likewise, unionist evidence in the 1825 Hatters' trial noted that the young journeyman who brought the conspiracy complaint rather than join the union was "a good workman, although 'not of the first order.'"²⁴ Such designations functioned both to inform master craftsmen that disregarding union demands and utilizing non-union workers meant partaking of substandard labor and to inform non-union journeymen that they needed to join if they wanted to share in union members' exalted position and fraternal benefits.

Union rhetoric also proclaimed the masculine strength of organized craftsmen loyal to the brotherhood. One article in the *New York Transcript* told of a "respectable Journeyman tailor named Wright," who quit his job when his employer failed to grant union wages. He refused to divulge other union members' names, so the police took him "into custody as a criminal offender, and locked [him] up in one of the cells of Bridewell." After remaining silent through multiple inquiries, Justice Lowndes, "perceived—and perhaps admired—the consistency and firmness of the man, and, as he was bound to do, he discharged him from custody."²⁵ Such a poignant story reminded journeymen that to protect their craft standing and union brothers helped ensure at the end of the day that they upheld their masculinity.

Perhaps the most explicit example of organized men targeting non-union artisans by rhetorically linking craft skill and fraternal brotherhood with upholding household-based masculinity came from a strike notice by the Journeymen Ladies' Cordwainers' Union (men who made women's shoes) in June of 1834. Running in the pro-labor newspaper, *The Man*, it declared that in the face of harsh conditions, inaction was unacceptable or "infamy would be our certain doom, and penury and disgrace our children's only legacy."²⁶ For these cordwainers, wage cuts alone did not seem to be enough to garner full support for protest, but the threat of failing as masculine provider and father might have worked. These journeymen felt, as the appeal stated, that their "destinies, and those of our families, therefore, are, to a very great extent, in our own hands."

After these none-too-subtle reminders that nonunion journeymen let down not only their colleagues but also their families, the tract ended with an explicit challenge to non-unionized cordwainers: **20**

Let him who refuses to come forward at this time of crisis, and aid us in our present struggle against injustice and oppression, by joining our society and acting in union and concert with us, be regarded, from this time forward, by his fellow craftsmen, as unworthy the name man, and

a reproach to the craft which he disgraces by his conduct.²⁷

This challenge to nonunion cordwainers was not an economic plea or rally for class consciousness; it was a battle for masculine legitimacy. To union members, journeymen who would not join them committed two interlocking offenses. Firstly, they did not fulfill their ideal masculine role as a domestic provider. Secondly, they disgraced the craft of cordwaining and the acquired skill set and fraternal bonds that it encompassed. The conflated nature of an artisan's workplace activities and domestic masculinity meant that this challenge was doubly effective. Failing to be a man in one arena, one failed in others as well and lost the right to be called a man.



**Cordwainers'
Trade Union
Appeal, 1834**

Skilled journeymen adopted different rhetorical strategies when they distinguished themselves from unskilled workers without particularized training or even the possibility of joining unionists' fraternal bonds. Rather than drawing brittle lines of demarcation between organized men and other competitive labor sources, they attempted to distance themselves from potential challenges with a certain malleability. So, rather than fixating on one type of worker to define themselves in opposition to, journeymen trade unionists frequently shifted their attentions from group to group in order to respond immediately to perceived threats to their craft standing and ability to fulfill domestic obligations.

At different moments, organized workers felt threatened (whether from actual or impending circumstances) from bosses, female workers, apprentices and half-way journeymen, foreign journeymen, African American workers and slaves, and prison laborers. The following discussion about the way working men triangulated their relationship to these groups should not be construed entirely as defensive posturing by skilled artisans, however. What is important about the way organized men differentiated themselves from each group of other workers is that they did not resort to defending their position through knee-jerk racist, misogynist, or nativist rhetoric, but rather that, with some complexity, they fashioned their workplace performance in relation to would-be threats to their ability to maintain their craft standing and satisfy their household duties.

Masters

While journeymen did not usually view employers as a competitive other, labor organizers criticized certain master craftsmen who had lost their ability to claim craft skill or injured the trade through their workplace behavior. Tenuous divisions

existed between masters and journeymen in the early nineteenth century and in some crafts the lines became blurred. One letter from a Boston mechanic reprinted in *The Man* reminded "New York Trades' Union" members that "the bos (sic) is often brought back to journeywork by hard luck."²⁸ Such an eventuality offered little promise for aspiring journeymen, however, who responded by holding failed master craftsmen responsible for damaging the craft system. Following his "most solemn curse, pronounced upon those master binders who have injured the business," bookbinder John Bradford explained the problem. He wrote "of former times in which the trade flourished," and then "contrast[ed them] between those times and the present" because employers were now "working under price" and "ruining the trade."²⁹ Because artisans constructed their workplace persona as members trained in the art and mystery of a skilled craft, the charge that an employer injured the trade by underpaying workers was particularly damaging not only to journeymen's craft standing but also his ability to use that standing to provide for his family.

Some disgruntled working men likewise complained that if master artisans failed 25 to maintain their own high levels of craft skill, it damaged economic standing and viability of journeymen in their employ. At the turn of the century, journeymen house carpenters objected to "the negligence or indifference of many of those concerned in [the] employing of Workmen" and decided to open their own employment service named the "House of Call for Carpenters" to ensure that skilled journeymen obtained work from competent employers.³⁰ Ten years later, the Journeymen House Carpenters Union printed a blistering attack on "those *men* calling themselves Master Builders." The article, co-written by Robert Townsend Jr. and George Hansen Jr. noted that "there are a few among them whom we never did or can respect for their abilities as workmen or their conduct as men toward us."³¹ The unionists made the explicit connection between skill level and "conduct as men" because journeymen tied workplace ability with their ability to fulfill domestic obligations.

The snipe at master craftsmen also derived from a personal animosity between individual journeymen and their bosses; it reflected working men's growing uneasiness with the future of the artisanal craft system. As manufacturers and petty capitalists assumed more of the financial responsibility and profit from New York City's production sector, the possibility that skilled former journeymen could become employers decreased and resulted in more animosity between current journeymen and employers who they perceived as dandies who "glide in their Carriages."³²

On rare occasions, organized journeymen attempted to challenge their bosses' abilities by collectively pooling their resources and their skills in order to form their own artisanal businesses. Some members of the New York Union Society of Journeymen House Carpenters opened "The Carpenters' Shop" in 1833 and

pledged through "assiduity and skill, to give general satisfaction" to prospective customers.³³ Similarly, members of the Journeymen Cabinet and Chair-Makers of New-York, many of whom labored in Duncan Phyfe's large workshop, walked out and formed their own establishment in 1819.³⁴ They informed the public that "their work shall be executed in a style equal to any in the continent, and on the most reasonable terms—our principle object being the maintaining of our wages and the support of our families."³⁵ That these working men explicitly linked their decision to leave a master's employ and a declaration of their high level of skilled craftwork to their ultimate goal of fulfilling household duties serves as an important reminder that journeymen did not make claims of economic worth as ends unto themselves. Instead, they were integral to the relationship between workplace success and domestic success. The steps working men took to defend workplace status also served to protect their household roles.

Female Workers

Because organized men engaged master craftsmen every time they entered the workplace, there was unlimited potential for conflict over issues of skill and craft status; however, more layered and complex relationships developed between working men and female workers. The types of threats that they provided to upholding household-based masculinity elicited more nuanced reactions. Historians have tended to emphasize the contentious or inimical aspects of the relationship between working men and women. In different ways, studies of gender and work in the early nineteenth century by Christine Stansell, Sonya O. Rose, Jeanne Boyston, and Anna Clark all portray a culture of worker misogyny that explicitly or implicitly acted to limit female occupational opportunities and independence.³⁶ Howard Rock offers a slightly different picture of journeymen's gender ideology in his description of the *Independent Mechanic*, New York's first artisan's newspaper. While acknowledging a certain form of the "battle of the sexes", he paints male artisans as somewhat fearful of their wives and constantly on the defensive when it came to maintaining domestic roles.³⁷

In different ways, both of these models posit an antagonistic relationship between working men and working women, whether they were family members or not. This study suggests a more subtle view of such relationships, one where organized working men ideologically separated female workers into two camps: those whose labor potentially threatened men's craft standing and ability to satisfy domestic obligations and those whose labor did not offer any immediate threat. The result was that skilled journeymen neither uniformly supported nor condemned women's entry into New York's paid production workforce during the first four decades of the nineteenth century.³⁸

As with other potential forms of competitive labor, organized working men 30 differentiated between those types of women's work which would have driven down their own skill and wage levels and other work which would not pose the

same challenge. Organized men deemed most women's work in early nineteenth-century New York City as not posing a direct threat to their masculine identity, so their approach to the topic depended on how it specifically related to their real household economic situation. Because some of their own daughters began to work in fields such as the needle trades in these years, journeymen's relationship to female workers alternated between unionist sympathy with the effects of industrial work on women and paternalism offered as a type of protection for female laborers, who they deemed weak and dependent.

One poignant moment occurred at a meeting of the National Trades' Union (NTU), when a delegate implored the convention to prevent unionists' own daughters from becoming immoral and corrupt due to their participation in the factory system. The delegate cited the ideal of emulating the behavior of the Roman patriot who sacrificed his only daughter to save her honor and suggested, "If we cannot be Romans, let us act the part of men."³⁹ While the sentiment demonstrated no fear of competition from female workers, it did denote the connection between upholding certain aspects of masculinity in responding to the reality of other types of workers in the larger economy. The NTU consistently supported labor movement activities by the female mill operatives in Lowell, Massachusetts factories because of their uneasiness with the effect of the factory system on its employees and because of what such treatment meant for their own paternal role. At an 1834 meeting of the NTU, Robert Townsend Jr. and others noted that the mill workers' plight "demanded our serious consideration" because the "situation of the females in particular [in manufacturing] was truly deplorable."⁴⁰

While organized working men recognized the gravity of mill operatives' working conditions, they debated their effect on the operatives as women, rather than ungendered workers in the abstract. A report by the NTU committee on female labor commented that factory work destroyed in women "the qualities essentially necessary in the culture and bearing of healthy children."⁴¹ Critically, because Lowell's female labor force performed "women's work" and was not directly in competition with male workers, the committee did not recommend that all women should leave the workforce; however, they did acknowledge that female workers would be better placed in a stable household.

Mary Blewett has noted a similar development in Essex County, Massachusetts, where male and female family members combined their efforts to produce shoes in a strictly regulated division of labor based on sex and perceived skill. Throughout the period before 1840, this labor model did not provoke gender antagonism because male shoemakers did not see themselves in close competition with female workers.⁴² In New York, this viewpoint only changed when organized male workers came in contact with female laborers whom they saw as a direct challenge.

It did not happen often, but when skilled male artisans believed that female workers crossed the line between doing "women's work" and directly competing with journeymen, organized men responded as they did with other types of labor challenges, by emphasizing the allegedly inferior quality of female craft skill in order to limit women's work opportunities. The most pertinent example of a perceived threat from female competition came from a strike by the Tailors' Union in April, 1819. Male tailors traditionally performed more specialized sewing and fitting for men's clothes, while female seamstresses (or tailoresses) made children's clothes, dresses, and simple shirts. In the years following the War of 1812, clothing merchants altered this practice and expanded their production output by employing women as a cheap labor source to manufacture vests and pantaloons.⁴³ By 1819, women made up almost 90% of the employees hired by Henry Brooks (whose sons renamed the company Brooks Brothers) to sew in his downtown store.⁴⁴

The Tailors' Union objected to this development and struck to enforce the "privilege of making Vests and Pantaloons, a right which belonged to them alone." They decried the "unmanly and ungenerous conduct" of merchant tailors for offering men's work to tailoresses and argued that skilled male workers alone possessed the ability to perform certain types of needlework. The union declared that men "can make waistcoats and pantaloons ... with more judgement (sic) and solicitude than a woman can; hence we infer that women are incomplete, if incomplete they ought to disclaim all right and title whatever to the avocation of a tailor."⁴⁵ The union did not make the statement simply to defend an eighteenth-century model of sexual division of labor; rather, skilled male tailors attempted to differentiate themselves from a group of other laborers that would drive down their wages and disrupt their model of using the workplace to fulfill their household-based masculine identity. Significantly, their statements also indicted male bosses for their role in production changes and reinforced that more than just a binary notion of gendered labor was at stake for journeymen; organized men needed to constantly shift their attentions as multiple groups presented challenges to their workplace position. **35**

The 1819 strike was a public statement by male tailors about their gender notions at a particular moment when, as skilled craftsmen, they felt their workplace status under assault from outside forces.⁴⁶ Unlike some crafts—stonecutters, masons, or shipwrights—tailors frequently worried about skill devaluation because of women performing similar work; fears of emasculation saturated cultural representations of tailors in these years.⁴⁷ Contemporary comic valentine cards drawn to satirize tailors noted their difficulties in finding wives and questioned their trade skills.



**Tailor Valentine's
Day Card**

Two jokes—the association of tailors with cabbage and the aphorism that it "takes nine tailors to make one good man"—reiterated these messages.⁴⁸ Cabbage referred to the material which tailors pocketed after it was cut away from the main piece of cloth. Customers paid for the whole cloth, but tailors usually kept the trimmings and in turn developed the stigma that they

and their craftwork were cheap and deceptive. The origins of tailors being referred to as a "ninth of a man" are fuzzier, but go back hundreds of years to either a story about nine English journeymen who helped an orphan become an upstanding man or the custom of nine rings of



**Tailor Valentine's
Day Card**

the tolling bell (or tellers) following the death of a man in northwestern England.⁴⁹ Whatever the obscure origins of the jokes, the public certainly recognized the stereotypes and freely utilized them to question tailors' masculinity.⁵⁰ One writer, critical of the 1819 tailors' strike even made sure to ridicule the tailors as "the ninth part of a man."⁵¹

While it might be tempting to jump to the conclusion that a direct confrontation with female workers created a more dangerous challenge to working men than a threat from less skilled male workers, this view of gender/labor dynamics does not take into account the fact that organized men weighed potential workplace threats to their masculine identity primarily in terms of how much they upset their ability to fulfill household-based domestic obligations. So, those groups that provided more consistent and effective threats to workers' household maintenance represented more serious tests. Between 1800 and 1840, New York's journeymen artisans, with the exceptions of tailors, rarely faced explicit challenges from female workers and did not therefore engage in ongoing attacks on women's labor. This did not mean that the presence of female workers, both inside and outside of organized working men's families, failed to complicate discussion of breadwinning and family budgets (discussed in Chapter Five).⁵³ But, because of what they deemed as more dangerous and immediate threats to their household-based masculinity, skilled craftsmen from numerous trades regularly sought to differentiate themselves and their qualifications from the threat of competition from male workers with some level of formal training.

Apprentices and Half-way Journeymen

Even those craftsmen that did not cite the immediate danger of apprentices and partially-trained (or so-called half-way) journeymen in their own trade acknowledged that such individuals could become problematic without proper regulation and chafed at any plan to allow unseasoned white male workers to compete in the labor market. One way to try to police apprentices was to stop them from leaving their training early and resurfacing somewhere else claiming to be an experienced journeyman. Oramel Bingham, a leader of the Journeymen Cordwainers' Union and GTU even posted a runaway advertisement for "Peter Dodge, an indented apprentice to the Shoemaking business" in one attempt to prevent such a scam.⁵⁴

Most working men remembered their own apprenticeships, respected the apprenticeship system as the proper training ground for manly workplace performance, and used the opportunities they had for training individual apprentices in their own workshops in order to indoctrinate new members into a fraternity.⁵⁵ The pamphlet *Manhood*, written for young men entering adulthood, projected such an outlook when it combined lessons about how to "procure an honest and comfortable livelihood" with wood cuts that showed artisans (a tailor, shoemaker, mason, hatter, etc.) plying their trade. Similarly, the range of books available to young men in the Apprentice's Library offered a well-rounded education of both craft lessons and prescriptive literature instructing boys how to act like men. Some popular titles included *Carpenters' Guide*, *Murray's Ship Building*, *Duty of Man*, and *Lectures on Political Economy*.⁵⁶

However, firsthand familiarity with the apprentice world could breed contempt; skilled journeymen often demonstrated little patience for corruptions within the system. Organized working men viewed the breakdown of the traditional artisanal workshop warily and looked disdainfully upon the antebellum practices of either abandoning craft training or over-utilizing apprentice labor without providing adequate tutelage.⁵⁷ Andrew Deitz's lawsuit against his master John Tate confirmed organized men's fears that some bosses used apprentices merely as a cheap labor source. Deitz sued Tate for breach of contract because he had not been properly "taught the business of harness making, and was not sufficiently instructed to make first rate saddles."⁵⁸ Journeymen strongly objected to workshops such as Tate's, where the number of apprentices engaged grew too large to teach craft skills. Such circumstances even led to the famed cordwainers' conspiracy trial in 1809, when journeymen in master shoemaker Charles Aimes' employ refused to continue working until he fired an apprentice who worked outside of union guidelines. Aimes balked, the journeymen struck, and they were subsequently charged with conspiracy to influence trade.⁵⁹

Employers moreover exploited apprentice labor to undercut journeymen's skills and family wages by flooding a single labor market with large numbers of

unskilled indentured children at reduced wages. The New York City House of Refuge, for example, offered certain master craftsmen and petty manufacturers dozens of boys and girls for service in weaving, shoemaking, cane seat making, and carpentry.⁶⁰ Such large-scale transfers of labor immediately affected skilled journeymen working in the targeted trades. In the spring of 1826, when "Moses Spear contracted for 20 Boys as weavers" through the House of Refuge, the contract specifically detailed how the boys' pay-rate was pegged to the current wages of local skilled weavers. The House of Refuge agreed to pay the boys for the first three months, then for "the 2nd 3 months they were to have 1/3 Journeymen wages, there after that 2/3 Journeymen wages, the prices to be determined by the wages paid Journeymen at Greenwich Village."⁶¹ While such an agreement allowed Moses Spears to save money and expand his weaving business, journeymen weavers objected to the contract as a way to overwhelm the labor market and undercut their wages.

In *Journeymen Weaving: A Poem*, Adam Burt suggested that certain crafts utilize employment bars to prevent an overcrowded labor market. He warned skilled journeymen weavers that,

We'll ne'er be valued, nor have wages,
 'Till round our trade we plant strong hedges . . .
 All trades but ours are fenced and shrouded,
 But ours's open, free and *crowded*.⁶²

Given the ease of importing twenty or more unskilled apprentices from the House of Refuge or a similar institution, it is not surprising that Burt doubted the ability of journeymen weavers to obtain breadwinning wages without regulating the labor pool.

Trade unionists' fear of the potential and real challenge from unregulated apprentices who displaced working men from jobs was overshadowed by the threat of so-called half-way journeymen, adult male workers who possessed enough skill to perform many of their duties, but did not possess complete training. Skilled journeymen often offered sympathy for the plight of youthful apprentices, whom they saw as manipulated by corrupt master craftsmen, but they demonstrated little compassion for the "half-way journeymen, or rather, boys" who challenged their craft-standing.⁶³ Because organized men's position in the workplace, and by extension their ability to fulfill domestic obligations, was grounded in a particular level of skill earned through training, they did not respect men who tried to bypass the process in order to earn quick money, whatever their reasons.⁶⁴ 45

Bosses who employed half-way journeymen likewise angered union members due to the dangerous message it sent to apprentices about failing to honor contractual agreements. In 1811, the New York Typographical Society included this point

about employing half-way journeymen in an angry circular it sent to master printers. They wrote that the practice:

... holds out encouragement to boys to elope from their masters, as soon as they acquire a sufficient knowledge of the art to be enabled to earn their bread, [and] is a great grievance to journeymen; and almost certain ruin to the boys themselves . . . they plunge headlong into every species of dissipation, and are often debilitated by debauchery and disease before they arrive to the state of manhood.⁶⁵



**Printers' Union
Price List, 1809**

Importantly, the printers acknowledged here that they feared both the immediate competition from runaway apprentices that would upset their breadwinning labors and the future prospect that young apprentices, with money in their pocket but without proper training and full socialization into the journeymen's world of domestic-based masculinity, would turn to selfish and self-destructive behavior rather than upholding stable, family-oriented activities. With so many apprentices abandoning their commitments before they could learn the proper relationship between household-based masculinity and

workplace conduct, skilled journeymen did not want masters to acknowledge the existence of a labor market for partially-trained individuals that would destabilize their model of domesticity.⁶⁶

The Typographical Society also debated how half-way journeymen affected their own craft standing and how their inclusion in the labor force altered their attempts at fulfilling domestic masculinity. The Society stated vehemently that unregulated employment of half-way journeymen adversely altered the craft and degraded the position of skilled journeymen printers. Like other organized men's claims that de-skilling a craft specifically hurt the families of experienced men, the Society argued that it was the skilled "journeyman, and one who, probably, has a family dependent on his labour for support" who would lose out to wage cuts as a result of half-way journeymen driving down wages.⁶⁷

The Society's circular ended with a poignant appeal to master craftsmen that is worth quoting at length. They wrote:

When a parent puts out a child to learn an art, it is with the pleasing idea, that a knowledge of that art will enable him, when he becomes a man, to provide for himself a comfortable subsistence. Did he know, that after labouring from his youth to manhood, to acquire an art, he would be compelled to abandon it, and resort to some business with which he was totally unacquainted, to enable him to live, he would certainly prefer that he should in the first instance seek a livelihood on

the sea, or by some other precarious calling, than trust to the equally precarious success of a trade overstocked by its professors."⁶⁸

The statement exhibits how printers' skill and workplace performance related to domestic obligations by acknowledging the sacrifices that skilled journeymen made in order to earn a living for their families. Skilled journeymen feared the competition of unregulated apprentices and half-way journeymen both because of the breakdown of the traditional artisanal system (and its associated menace to craftsmen's economic standing) and because of what such challenges signaled for the future of skilled craft workers struggling to fulfill household obligations and earn breadwinning wages.⁶⁹ **50**

Foreign Workers

Apart from the issue of training, workers from *outside* the country posed a different threat to the standing and wages of skilled artisans than workers from *inside* the country. Union objections to foreign workers split into two very different potential threats: competition from cheap goods made by workers in another country (usually England) that merchants dumped into the New York market and competition from actual immigrant workers in the New York labor market. New York artisans championed their skills above those of international craftsmen, so it was not the quality of foreign-made goods that threatened them, but their reduced prices. Similarly, working men did not complain that superior European craftsmen threatened their jobs and reduced their earnings, but rather that some inferior immigrant workers accepted "knocked down wages" and upset the labor market.⁷⁰

Responding to the glut of British-finished products making their way into New York City in the early years of the nineteenth century, numerous artisans' organizations attempted to change trade policies concerning imported goods. In 1807, the Journeymen Hatters' Society petitioned Congress to object to the dumping of cheap European hats in the city. They argued that "by the constant importations of that article [hats], our home manufacturers in that particular have diminished, and probably will continue to suffer, and perhaps finally go to ruin." The Society noted that if the importation continued, men "who have served a long time as apprentices and journeymen to the said trade, [will have] to abandon it, and resort to other means for supporting themselves and families," even though their "hats, are equal, if not superior, to foreign produce of the same."⁷¹

Here again, organized men linked their superior workshop skills with their ability to satisfy their household duties; any economic threat to their workplace performance threatened their maintenance of domestic masculinity. It was not only established European craftsmen who New York's artisans deemed as a threat to their craft-standing. During the Panic of 1819, another petition sent to Congress cited the "embarrassment, depression, and distress which is so universally felt" by New York's artisans due to unrestricted trade with India and China, whose cheap goods of poor quality provided tough competition.⁷²



**Petition to Congress For
Encouragement To
Manufacturing, 1803**

Whereas virtual unanimity existed among New York's skilled journeymen in their opposition to the unregulated importation of foreign *goods*, the presence of foreign *workers* in the city elicited a more nuanced response. Part of the complexity of the situation—as with the relationship between unionists and all types of other workers—stemmed from the demographic composition of the two groups and their actual lived experiences. Just as many of New York City's organized men moved from the American hinterland, a large and growing proportion of the city's artisans hailed from Europe. Not only were some of the city's labor leaders, such as George Henry Evans and Edward J. Webb, foreign-born, but many of the rank-and-file came from England, Scotland, and Ireland.⁷³ In 1833, Robert Walker recognized the number of Irishmen present during his Fourth of July speech to the Stonecutters' Society, remarking that the Society was too connected to Ireland "ever to forget the Emerald Isle."⁷⁴ *The Union*, the GTU's official newspaper, refused to publish an attack on Irish immigrant workers written by a "Native American Mechanic" because of its policy prohibiting material that exploited religious intolerance.⁷⁵ During the Journeymen Tailors' 1836 conspiracy trial, labor critics emphasized that of the twenty men indicted, two had been born in "Ireland, three in Scotland, and four in England."⁷⁶

Some trade union members did join the contemporary Native American 55
Democratic Association, a nativist political party founded in 1835 and supported by the newspaper *Spirit of '76*, but such activities seemed the exception rather than the rule.⁷⁷ Overall, the prevalence of foreign-born working men in trade unions meant that labor organizations maintained a cautious acceptance of immigrant laborers. One British anti-emigration propagandist's contention that working New Yorkers' "prejudice consists in their hatred of the English people" was certainly an overstatement.⁷⁸

However, competition from foreign workers in certain capacities concerned organized men enough to voice their objections to the newly-arrived workers.

While most apprenticeships involved young boys and girls in their teens, some recently-arrived adults who could not find work because of suspect qualifications or references sought apprentice contracts. A typical example of a mature apprentice was George Ellis, a house carpenter from Scotland who indentured himself to George Graham for three years starting in May 1836, even though he was already "upwards of 21 years."⁷⁹ Ellis' contract, and similar adult apprenticeships, piqued union members' interest because apprentice wage-rates seriously undercut journeymen's earnings. Graham paid Ellis \$4 per week for the first year of his contract, \$4.50 the second, and \$5 the third year. Such wages amounted to just above one-third of the going rate for organized journeymen house carpenters in the mid-1830s, who pressed for \$2 or more per day for a six-day work week.⁸⁰

Skilled journeymen also viewed immigrant laborers who competed in trades already saturated by workers from Europe as potential threats. Adam Burt's poetry about the influx of new weavers into the city spoke to the problem:

Ship loads of men are landing here,
To us for work they'll bicker;
And gladly weave for less than you,
Yea, also weave it thicker.
'And all that rudely spurn, we'll drag
Before his honour Riker;
To think or speak you ne'er was form'd,
But just to weave it thicker."⁸¹

The lines require some unpacking, but the poem is mainly concerned with competition from new immigrant weavers who work for less money and do not give bosses trouble or unionize (union members often wound up in court, charged for conspiracy by prosecutor Richard Riker).⁸² Burt's fear stemmed from the fact that such a large percentage of New York's weavers had already arrived from overseas, primarily from Scotland. Most Scottish weavers settled in an area around West Seventeenth Street known as Weaver's Row and any addition to their ranks brought pressure not only to the labor market, but also to the housing market in the close-knit weavers' neighborhood.⁸³ Organized workers felt ambivalence between support for new immigrants and disdain for individuals who might upset the stable, interconnected world of household, neighborhood, and workshop.⁸⁴

African American Workers

Organized men's relationship to African American workers was similarly complex, and evolved continually based on the demographic realities of New York City and the determination of skilled white journeymen to rhetorically differentiate their craft traditions from other forms of work or labor. Unionists did not lump free African American workers or enslaved African American laborers together with unskilled white laborers, but they also did not consider them a more important

threat than the various other groups competing with skilled white working men. They viewed African-Americans as just one group of workers, amongst various other groups of workers, against whom organized men defended their workplace position. Following paths of both demographic and rhetorical inquiry, a nuanced picture of the relationship between skilled white artisans and African American workers emerges. Demographic information demonstrates that skilled white journeymen employed in the vast majority of New York City trades did not face real competition from free African American workers, but at a few particular moments, organized men constructed both free and enslaved African Americans as rhetorical counterpoints to their model of skilled workplace performance and domestic maintenance.

Skilled white journeymen would not have recognized a noticeable increase in African American workers in New York City's craft trades during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, although there was an upsurge in the number of female workers, half-way journeymen, and foreign workers. According to federal census categories, in 1800, New York City's population was 89.4% white, 5.7% free black, and 4.7% enslaved. In 1820, the numbers shifted to 91.3% white, 8.2 % free black, and .4% enslaved. By 1840, the city's population included 94.7% white with only 5.2% free black and no enslaved individuals.⁸⁵ What such numbers indicate overall is that between 1800 and 1840, the percentage of African Americans in New York City's population shrunk by half, from 10.4% to 5.2%, even as the number of free African Americans grew from 3,499 to 16,358.⁸⁶ Another important point in understanding possible workplace competition by African American male workers is that, due to an unbalanced sex ratio within the community, African American men accounted for only 42% of the total African American population.⁸⁷

Segregation in New York's labor market also meant that many African American men could not easily obtain positions that placed them in competition with skilled white workers. Most African American men worked in service sector jobs such as barbers, tubmen, and chimney sweeps which white society deemed "black work."⁸⁸ Sailors accounted for another common African American occupational category in these years.⁸⁹ With many African American men filling such positions, only a small number either sought or obtained work as skilled craftsmen. An 1837 letter to *The Colored American* even asked why more young African American boys did not try to procure craft apprenticeships. Using language similar to organized men's championing of their skill level, the article noted that a "knowledge of the mechanic arts, and several good operative mechanics, would, in a great degree, assist in the elevation of our people; and tend, as much as any thing else, to our respectability and worth."⁹⁰ Certainly, skilled white journeymen supported labor market segregation, but they did not need to work aggressively to maintain the division because, at least in the years before 1840, they were

joined by white master tradesmen who upheld racial barriers to most craftwork. So, while some African American men did find work as artisans or craftsmen, their numbers in the labor market were not great enough for skilled white journeymen to acknowledge them as particularly dangerous competition.⁹¹

The difficulty of gauging organized men's attitudes toward the institution of slavery complicates any understanding of the actual relationship between skilled white artisans and both free and enslaved African Americans. Like other issues of conscience, slavery provoked a range of reactions from New York's organized men. For every individual whose actions sustained Anthony Gronowicz's recent contention that antebellum white workers realized their "support for slavery" through their labor politics and activism, other individuals demonstrated organized men's agitation against the slave system and, as Jonathan H. Earle shows, helped launch political antislavery in these years.⁹² As early as 1813, Theophilus Eaton chided "the cruel master," who "beat alike the slave and horse."⁹³ Likewise, numbers of organized men joined the Northern anti-slavery movement in the 1820s and 1830s.⁹⁴ William Leggett, editorializing on the need to continue discussions about abolitionism, wrote that working men should consider "the poor negro a man and a brother."⁹⁵ John Jentz shows how artisans accounted for nearly 40% (the largest statistical group) of the men who signed the 1829 petition against the continuation of slavery in Washington D.C. While this statistic included some master craftsmen who acted as signatories, organized working men Robert Townsend Jr., John Commerford, Daniel Fanshaw, Levi Slamm, and Gilbert Vale all signed similar petitions during the 1830s.⁹⁶

Moreover, anti-slavery support did not isolate organized men from their fellow journeymen artisans because in these years, most working men did not view the institution of slavery as an immediate threat to their household-based masculinity. Early in his 1833 "Address to the Workingmen of the United States," Robert Rantoul Jr. casually noted that the "slave population of the South" possessed "by nature the same rights" he detailed for the nation's skilled white working men.⁹⁷ Historian William Trimble writes that perhaps the reason the Loco Foco Party "took no cognizance" of slavery one way or another was the "preoccupation of the average citizen in his own affairs."⁹⁸ Loco Foco secretary Fitzwilliam Byrdsall echoed such sentiments in his description of the political aspects of William Leggett's anti-slavery position, writing that opponents "had much more cause of dislike and fear of his 'agrarian spirit' in regards to Banks, than to abolitionism. The first was near at hand and portentous to themselves, the latter remote and dangerous only to those at a distance."⁹⁹ Byrdsall's comments insightfully expressed how early nineteenth-century northern working men viewed race relations and slavery within the context of other issues which often seemed more pressing at the time. His statements also reiterated the fact that organized men consciously defended their masculinity based on a number of factors, not merely

in binary opposition to a single issue.

The relationship between skilled white artisans and African American workers becomes more complicated when considering organized men's rhetoric and the demographic realities of New York City. Labor activists made a limited number of public references to slavery and African American workers in the years before 1840, but when they did make such comments, they offered illuminating examples of how opposition to a black other embodied only one aspect of a complex working men's masculinity.

An interesting early example of this rhetoric came from a debate about how shoemakers dealt with competition from the prison manufacture of shoes in 1801. **65** Writing in the *Commercial Advertiser*, Brutus argued that a plan by master shoemakers to require journeymen to get permission from the master they "had worked with last," before obtaining new employment with another master would limit journeymen's free engagement with the market. He wrote that if employers enacted such a system, it would "put the journeymen shoemakers upon the same footing with a *hired negro wench*, that must have a recommendation before she can get a place."¹⁰⁰ A cursory glance at this type of language has led David R. Roediger and others to argue that white male workers primarily constructed their identity in opposition to blackness; however, something more subtle was at work.¹⁰¹ Such an anecdote implied the *malleability* and *nuance* of working men's masculinity rather than a well-defined, zero-sum binary of white vs. black. In a few short lines, Brutus attempted to maintain his craft position by placing skilled white journeymen shoemakers in opposition to all of the following groups: employers, prison laborers, women, and African Americans. In this process, a rhetoric of racial exclusion combined with a larger discourse about a variety of other workers all of whom challenged and threatened skilled artisans' domestic obligations in different ways.

What this meant for the experiences of actual organized men is that journeymen probably adopted some labor rhetoric—such as the word "boss"—in order to consciously disassociate union men from slave labor, while they utilized other terms—such as "wage slavery"—in a more nuanced manner. It would therefore make sense for English visitor William Clark to note the unique usage of the term "Boss" in 1810s New York City because it did "not comport with a white American to call another master in plain English."¹⁰² However, organized men often used the term "wage slavery," originally coined by workers in England, to show how little perceived difference there was "between the negro slave of the South and the white wage slave of the North."¹⁰³

Overall then, organized men related to free and enslaved African American workers similarly as they did to the other groups who posed potential threats to their craft standing, by singling them out for differentiation only in moments of

crisis. In the years between 1800 to 1840, few such moments occurred, so the relationship between skilled white journeymen and African American workers in contributing to the formation of the masculine worker identity should not be overestimated or be oversimplified.

Convict Laborers

In contrast with their treatment of other groups who potentially threatened their workplace status, skilled journeymen approached the incarcerated laborers in state prisons with little nuance. Consistently and aggressively throughout the period, trade unions, working men's political groups, and other artisan organizations attacked New York's system of prison discipline for including craft-manufacturing labor.¹⁰⁴ The prison labor issue demonstrated that it was not merely undifferentiated opinions about African Americans, immigrants, or women that guided organized men's reactions to workplace competition; competition from prison workers became so hotly contested that one newspaper editor noted that it "swallowed up almost every other question, and pervaded almost every vocation."¹⁰⁵

Intense public outcry in 1834 resulted in petitions from over 200,000 artisans around the state demanding an end to the convict labor system.¹⁰⁶ One of the reasons for the staggering numbers of artisans interested in combating felon labor was that the output from "Sing Sing, Auburn, or any other State Prison" grew steadily throughout the period to become huge industries.¹⁰⁷ By 1827, Auburn's prison employed over 100 convicts as coopers and weavers, more than 50 as shoemakers and tailors, and more than 25 as blacksmiths and tool makers; such numbers and diversity of trades grew exponentially during the 1830s.¹⁰⁸

Journeymen artisans cited the unfair market aspect of the convict labor system and its effect on skilled working men's craft standing and subsequent breadwinning abilities.¹⁰⁹ One newspaper report declared that convict labor "patronizes delinquency to the injury of the virtuous and moral mechanic, who has been taught and matured in his art, calling, or business" and led to the "utter ruin of the moral mechanic, the pride and ornament of the land."¹¹⁰ Organized men then coupled this discussion about workplace status with the resulting threat to their ability to support their families. Outspoken advocate William Leggett explicitly complained that the State did not have to pay the convict workforce, so they could "afford to sell articles of prison manufacture at a price which would not supply the free mechanic with bread."¹¹¹ In 1834, a New York mechanics' convention met in Utica to discuss the prison labor system and took Leggett's objections even further, reporting that prison-made articles sold for "40 to 60 per cent below what the honest mechanic, *who supports himself and family*, can afford them for" and as a consequence, "their families are reduced to beggary."¹¹² The critique was clear: cheap (or technically free) prison labor directly undercut organized working men's wages and prevented them from

supporting their families and upholding their household-based masculinity.

Some detractors of the prison system objected to teaching prisoners mechanical skills because once convicts left jail, their acquired craft knowledge posed a threat to society's security and stability. As part of a larger early nineteenth-century debate about the usefulness of criminal rehabilitation, skilled artisans shocked the public with horror stories about the behavior of workers who "graduated" from training at Auburn or Sing Sing. One account described how an ex-convict "plundered his employer," while another depicted some of the "most arrant knaves" who could not "retain [their] place longer than a few days. Some of them pilfered [the boss's] small tools, and one broke open his shop at night and robbed it."¹¹³ The authenticity of such claims may be questionable, but their importance as markers of artisans' ardent desire to differentiate their moral behavior from prisoners' shady actions should not be understated.

Certain types of criminal labor presented more of a threat to the general public than others because of the range of skills they learned in prison. The Society of Journeymen Locksmiths, fronted by Loco Foco leader Levi Slamm, appealed to the public to help end the training of prison locksmiths because of their potential for harming private citizens. Alongside typical arguments about "the poor but honest artizan" suffering because of unfair prison competition, the locksmiths warned that:

... when the terms of those prison-made locksmiths shall have expired, they will be let loose to try their skill in the art, and in the dead hour of night, whilst our peaceable citizens will be in imaginary security, their doors will be opened, and their houses robbed; for, it is quite an easy matter for the maker of a lock, to open it whenever he chooses.¹¹⁴



**Travelling
Locksmith**

At a time when locksmiths commonly obtained work by traveling door-to-door or walking the streets and calling for customers, the description of a late night break-in from an ex-convict would have been chilling.¹¹⁵

Some trade union members altered their patterns as consumers in order to protest particular goods produced by prison laborers. In June of 1835, James Clohesey (one of the leaders of the Journeymen Hatters' Union) placed an ad in the *New York Transcript* alerting artisan readers of an "odious" situation that deserved their attention. His message, addressed to "all who are opposed to State Prison Monopoly," warned of a local shop that was "an extensive dealer in State Beaver Hats" sold by men "whose aim is their own aggrandizement, in opposition to the

whole class of mechanics."¹¹⁶ Nine months later, the Loco Foco newspaper *The Democrat* responded with the following advertisement:

Every Man's Interest.—Spock & Mcneal, 84 Bowery, offer a fine short nap Satin Beaver HAT, at the very low price of \$2.50 cents, equal in lustre and durability to any Satin Beaver Hat. S. & M. aim by all honorable means to compete with the product of State Prison Labor, and by surrendering a portion of their former profits, to put their Hats within every man's means, to afford a fair compensation to honest industry.¹¹⁷

While many objections to state prison labor focused on the type of unfair 75 production practices which occurred behind prison walls, the hat advertisements demonstrated that skilled working men thought enough about the issue to allow it to alter their consumer habits. Because organized men's workplace politics closely related to their domestic lives, such connections were not difficult to make. Like a union label in the twentieth century, salesmen could market a designation of 'not made in a prison' as a desirable quality for certain material goods. However, not all protests against convict labor inhabited the peaceful arenas of newspaper advertisements and hat-purchasing decisions.

The issue of state prison labor became so explosive that it directly led to a violent riot by union stonecutters in October of 1834. The trouble erupted after New York University's governors decided to use marble quarried by prisoners at Sing Sing for the school's first building. After a petition drive to reverse the decision failed, between 100 and 200 men attacked building materials and the shop of Elisha Bloomer, the contractor responsible for the prison marble, while chanting "No State Prison Monopoly!"¹¹⁸ Due to his assortment of prison contracts, including one for the manufacture of the same silk beaver hats denounced by James Clohesey, union members had long associated Bloomer with convict labor. However, not everyone who sought to end prison labor agreed with the stonecutters' "acts of violence" and some editors, such as William Leggett, wrote that "violence and outrage are in themselves *prima facie* evidence of a bad cause."¹¹⁹ Even such tempering words did not dissuade most of the journeymen stonecutters, who returned to work only after an encampment by the New York State National Guard's 27th Regiment.¹²⁰

Trying to deflect criticism, marble contractors countered the stonecutters' riot by declaring that cheap marble imported from Italy, rather than prison-cut marble, was driving down wages.¹²¹ Such an argument sought to distract skilled journeymen protestors by playing the threat of one competitive group (prison workers) against another competitive group (foreign workers). Complicating the circumstances even further, large numbers of the stonecutters were Irish immigrants (as noted by Robert Walker only a year earlier). Artisans responded by holding a statewide meeting on prison labor and lobbying the state legislature

for some respite.¹²²

While legislation passed in 1835 attempted to somewhat curb state prison production, it is important to examine how the new law addressed skilled artisans' concerns. The 1835 bill stated that "no mechanical trade shall hereafter be taught to convicts in the state prisons, except for the making of those articles, the chief supply of which for the consumption of the country is imported from foreign countries."¹²³ With these provisions, legislators hoped to kill two political birds with one stone by responding to skilled journeymen's concerns about both the state prison labor system and the importation of cheap foreign goods. Loopholes in the bill led to the passage of more legislation in 1842 and although prison officials continued to sidestep the regulations until the abolishment of all state prison labor a half century later, the issue of competition with convict labor remained central to trade unionists' protection of their craft standing.¹²⁴

Conclusion

While working men's responses to prospective competitive labor sources varied greatly depending on the type of challenge and who was making it, skilled artisans uniformly sought to frame such confrontations in terms of who possessed a larger and more formal skill set. So, organized men valorized proper training and respect for the art and mystery of craft work. Membership requirements in journeymen's unions, such as the New York Typographical Society critically required the ability to display proper knowledge and craft skill. Society by-laws explained that a potential member needed not only "a good moral character" and the funds to pay "monthly dues of twenty-five cents," but also the wherewithal to demonstrate a particular level of "competency as a workman."¹²⁵ Regulatory measures such as these functioned simultaneously to define who was eligible for membership and also who was not eligible based on training and skill.

Organized men subjected workers who did not possess proper training and skills to ostracism and derision because artisans feared that if they did not keep them in check, competing labor groups would eventually replace skilled craftsmen in the economy. Notably, none of these other worker groups occupied a binary position in opposition to skilled white male journeymen, but instead existed in a number of forms and in a number of different capacities; at different moments, threats came from employers, women workers, apprentices and half-way journeymen, unskilled laborers, free and enslaved African Americans, and convict laborers. Rather than jumping to reflexive judgments or actions, organized men balanced demographic and cultural realities in weighing their responses to potential competition. **80**

Skilled journeymen in early nineteenth-century New York lived between two worlds with very different labor systems: an eighteenth-century world where skilled artisans occupied an important place in the economy and in society by applying their well-guarded craft knowledge in small workshops and a late

nineteenth-century world where workers with some machinery and varying levels of skill and mechanical knowledge produced goods for markets that may or may not have been hundreds or thousands of miles away. Over the first four decades of the nineteenth century, a number of different groups of workers entered into competition with skilled working men, quickening the pace at which employers broke down artisans' craft secrets into small steps that could be emulated by almost anyone with limited training. Organized men responded to this process by constantly shifting their attentions to whatever group represented an immediate threat and consistently reiterating the gap between their unique training and skills, and those of lesser or unskilled workers. Through these efforts, they hoped to stem the tide of competitive labor and maintain their standing within the city's economic and social hierarchy.

Joined as fraternal brothers, men in trades unions and other labor organizations crafted a workplace identity that championed their artisanal abilities at the same time that it advocated for greater compensation for those abilities. Of course, to allow craftwork to thrive and organized men to reap breadwinning wages and other domestic benefits, their craft standing in the economy had to be protected from other types of workers who did not represent their model of workplace masculinity. By defending their position within the workplace, and the elevated wages they commanded, organized men sought to ultimately protect their breadwinning abilities and household-based masculinity. An editorial in the pro-labor newspaper, *The Man*, summed up this attitude by simply declaring that the "laborer should be paid in proportion to his usefulness."¹²⁶

Notes:

Note 1: It is hard to know exactly how many unionists or working men in general had been born in the city or in the hinterland in the years between 1800 and 1840, but given the rates at which the city was growing, the number of migrants was probably large. As a point of comparison, Richard Stott argues that even after massive foreign immigration had begun, over 11% of the city's population in 1855 had been born in other parts of the United States. See Richard B. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 70-75.

Note 2: *American Citizen*, June 6, 1810.

Note 3: On the seasonal migration of artisans, see Richard Stott, "Artisans and Capitalist Development," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16, number 2 (Summer, 1996), 256-258.

Note 4: For some recent studies that look at masculinity as contested and oppositional, see Chad Adrian Barbour, "Republican Fatherhood: Imagined Indians, Democracy, and White Manhood in the Antebellum United States," Ph.D.

diss., University of Kentucky, 2004, Ryan L. Dearing, "Violence, Masculinity, Image, and Reality on the Antebellum Frontier," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 100 (March, 2004), 26-55, and Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, eds., *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

Note 5: *Trial of the Journeymen Cordwainers of the City of New York For a Conspiracy to Raise Their Wages* (New York: I. Riley, 1810), 2.

Note 6: John Bradford, *The Poetical Vagaries of a Knight of the Folding-Stick of Paste-Castle. To Which is Annexed, the History of the Garret, &c. &c.* (Gotham: Printed For the Author, 1815), 1.

Note 7: Edward S. Bellamy, *Domestic Manufactures, the Source of Real Independence: An Oration, Delivered Before the New York Typographical Society, on the Celebration of their Twelfth Anniversary, July 4, 1821* (New York: J. Seymour, 1821), 8.

Note 8: See *Valuable Secrets in Arts, Trades, &c. Selected From the Best Authors, and Adapted to the Situation of the United States* (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1816) and *The Artist & Tradesman's Guide; Embracing Some Leading Facts & Principles of Science, and A Variety of Matter Adapted To the Wants of the Artist, Mechanic, Manufacturer, and Mercantile Community; To Which is Annexed An Abstract of Tonnage Duties, Custom-House Tares, Allowances, and Useful Mensuration Tables* (New York: J. C. Johnson, 1829).

Note 9: Adoniram Chandler, *An Oration, Delivered Before the New-York Typographical Society, On Their Seventh Anniversary, July 4, 1816* (New York: J. Seymour, 1816), 9. See also John Clough, *An Address, Delivered on the Fourth of July, 1801, Before the Franklin Typographical Association of New York, and a Select Company* (New York: George F. Hopkins), Thomas Ringwood, *An Address, Delivered Before the Franklin Typographical Association of New York, and a Select Company; on the Fifth of July, 1802: In Commemoration of the Twenty-Seventh Anniversary of American Independence, and of the Third of the Association* (New York: Southwick and Crooker, 1802), Ebenezer Mack, *An Oration Delivered Before the New York Typographical Society, on the Fifth of July, 1813, in Celebration of the Thirty-Seventh Anniversary of American Independence, and Fourth of the Society, By Ebenezer Mack, a Member* (New York: Samuel Woodworth & Co. , 1813), George Asbridge, *An Oration, Delivered Before the New York Typographical Society, at Their Second Anniversary, on the Fourth of July, 1811* (New York: C. S. Van Winkle, 1811), and Edward S. Bellamy, *Domestic Manufactures, the Source of Real Independence: An Oration, Delivered Before the New York Typographical Society, on the Celebration of their Twelfth Anniversary, July 4, 1821* (New York: J. Seymour, 1821).

Note 10: Jonathan A. Glickstein, *Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 298. For more on the relationship between manual and intellectual work in the early republic, see Stephen P. Rice, *Minding the Machine: Languages of Class in Early Industrial America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Note 11: A typical statement from a pro-labor newspaper declared the "indisputable fact, that the 'first' men of our country were or are mechanics." *The Union*, July 2, 1836.

Note 12: Ely Moore, *Address Delivered Before the General Trades' Union of the City of New-York, at the Chatham-Street Chapel, Monday, December 2, 1833* (New York: James Ormond, 1833), 20.

Note 13: *Ibid.*, 15.

Note 14: *Ibid.*, 15.

Note 15: See Chapter Three on working men's depictions of bankers. On free labor, see Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 157-158, Glickstein, *Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America*, and Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860: The Reaction of American Industrial Society to the Advance of the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964).

Note 16: This outlook also coincided with Jonathan A. Glickstein's discussion of Gresham's Law. Under this theory, skilled working men viewed unskilled laborers as dangerous because of "the principle that nominally cheaper, inferior products or practices tend to drive out superior ones." See Jonathan A. Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety: Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 144.

Note 17: John Finch, *Rise and Progress of the General Trades' Union of the City of New-York and Its Vicinity. With An Address to the Mechanics in the City of New-York, and Throughout the United States* (New York: James Ormond, 1833), 12.

Note 18: Wilson Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 271.

Note 19: See Chapter Five.

Note 20: Finch, *Rise and Progress*, 2. Italics mine.

Note 21: Soloman Dismallo Thicksullo Cephalico, *Every Man His Own Fattener, or, The Complete Art of Making Lean People Grow Fat, Made Easy to the Meanest Capacity: With An Appendix on Fly-Catching and Taking Snuff in the True English Style* (New York: Published for the Author, 1809), 10. On the butchers' reaction see also *Independent Mechanic*, August 31, 1811.

Note 22: *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, November 23, 1833.

Note 23: *Trial of the Journeymen Cordwainers*, 152.

Note 24: See *The People vs. Henry Trequier, James Clawsey, and Lewis Chamberlain* in Jacob D. Wheeler, *Reports of Criminal Law Cases, Decided at the City-Hall of the City of New York, With Notes and References* (New York: Banks, Gould, & Company, 1854), 144.

Note 25: *New York Transcript*, January 30, 1836.

Note 26: *The Man*, June 14, 1834. The appeal ran during the middle of June; however, it seems as if the strike ran much longer for some of the city's cordwainers. A notice from May 29th in *The Man* from cordwainers' secretary Oramel Bingham mentioned certain "members who are standing out."

Note 27: *The Man*, June 14, 1834.

Note 28: *The Man*, May 30, 1834.

Note 29: Bradford, *The Poetical Vagaries of a Knight of the Folding-Stick of Paste-Castle*, 21-22.

Note 30: *Mercantile Advertiser*, April 25, 1800. Master builders fired back a couple of years later when they printed their new price list and made sure to include that they would subtract costs due to "unnecessary waste that may be made through the carelessness of workmen." See *House Carpenters' Book of Prices, Made and Adopted by the Company of Master Builders For the City and County of New York* (New York: Isaac Collins and Sons, 1802), 4.

Note 31: *American Citizen*, May 23, 1810. Italics in original.

Note 32: *American Citizen*, May 23, 1810.

Note 33: *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, June 18, 1833.

Note 34: For more on Duncan Phyfe, see Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 36-37, 42, 74, and Howard B. Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic: The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 12, 86, 130, 158, 239-246, and 275.

Note 35: *National Advocate*, May 12, 1819. Journeymen cordwainers James Melvin and Morehouse formed their own business just a few years after Melvin was the lead defendant in the 1809 conspiracy trial. See *Evening Post*, February 4, 1815. See also an advertisement by Typographical Society member Adoniram Chandler and company in *The New-York Messenger*, December 14, 1819. The advertisement boasts that "having spared no pains in selecting and obtaining the best methods and materials for the above business, they do not hesitate to say that they can produce specimens of the art quality, if not superior, to anything heretofore exhibited in Europe or America."

Note 36: See Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihood: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Note 37: Howard B. Rock, "A Woman's Place in Jeffersonian New York: The View from the *Independent Mechanic*," *New York History* 63, number 4 (October, 1982), 434-459.

Note 38: Stansell does acknowledge that organized working men's attitudes toward women varied in the 1830s, but notes that "there is too little evidence to explain how and why workingmen's perspectives diverged." Christine Stansell, *City of Women*, 141.

Note 39: *National Laborer* (Philadelphia), November 12, 1836.

Note 40: *National Trades' Union*, September 13, 1834.

Note 41: *National Laborer* (Philadelphia), November 12, 1836.

Note 42: For more on Essex County's model of household-based artisan production as an alternative to New York City's, see Mary, H. Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 3-96.

Note 43: On the clothing industry in New York, see Jesse Eliphalet Pope, *The Clothing Industry in New York* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1905), Egal Feldman, "New York's Men's Clothing Trade, 1800-1861," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1959), and Stansell, *City of Women*, 106-126.

Note 44: Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the*

American Republic, 1760-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 142.

Note 45: *Evening Post*, July 13, 1819. For more on the strike, see Stansell, *City of Women*, 132-133 and Paul A. Gilje and Howard B. Rock, *Keepers of the Revolution: New Yorkers at Work in the Early Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 254-259.

Note 46: The actual threat from tailoresses to the work position of tailors in 1819 is hard to measure, but Howard B. Rock noticed that in the heavily artisan-populated Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth Wards, only 23 female tailors were listed in the 1819 census and jury list. See Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic*, 267. Only 42 women self-identified as tailoresses in the 1825 city directory, but the New York Association of Tailoresses formed in 1831 had upwards of 500 members. See Stansell, *City of Women*, 267. There was not even a strong reaction by male tailors when the New York Association of Tailoresses formed in 1831. See *The Constitution, &c. of the New York Association of Tailoresses* (New York: n.p., 1831). The association, like other female trade unions, was not invited to join the GTU or other male craft organizations, but they were not generally attacked either. Advertisements for tailoresses' meetings appeared in the *Union*, a GTU newspaper and the *New Era*, a Loco Foco newspaper. See *Union*, April 26, 1836 and *New Era*, October 3, 1836 for examples.

Note 47: One example of a female shipwright can be seen in *The Female Shipwright, or, Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Mary Lacy Giving an Account of Her Leaving her Parents Disguised as a Man: Serving Four Years at Sea, and Seven Years Apprenticeship in Portsmouth Dock-Yard* (New York: J.C. Totten, 1807), but this pamphlet demonstrates the uniqueness of the situation rather than its prevalence.

Note 48: *Tailor*, Box 10, Number 33 and *The Tailor*, Box 10, Number 35, Comic Valentines Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia. Most of the Comic Valentine Collection is undated, but most likely included cards from the years 1830 to 1870.

Note 49: On some of the possible origins of the phrase "nine full tailors to make one good man," see E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable Giving the Derivation, Source, or Origin of Common Phrases, Allusions, and Words That Have a Tale to Tell* (Philadelphia: H. Altemus, 1898), 875.

Note 50: One comical valentine offered the backhanded compliment that, "I'd sooner wed a tailor, than marry a sailor, The reason I give shall be plain; For the tailor he'd stay with me night and day, Whilst the sailor he's tost on the main." Peter Quizumall, *The New Quizzical Valentine Writer, Being an Excellent Collection of All the Humorous, Droll, and Merry Valentines Ever Published* (New York: W.

Borradaile, 1823), 24.

Note 51: *Evening Post*, April 20, 1819.

Note 52: *A Blacksmith*, Box 1, Number 46, *A Hatter*, Box 4, Number 40, *A Painter*, Box 8, Number 20, *A Shoemaker*, Box 9, Number 44, *Machinist*, Box 9, Number 44, *Painter*, Box 8, Number 19, *Tailor And Patron Bird*, Box 10, Number 36, *The Boot And Shoe Maker*, Box 2, Number 6, *The Cooper*, Box 2, Number 46, *The Tailor*, Box 10, Number 35, *To A Baker*, Box 11, Number 2, *To A Cabinet Maker*, Box 11, Number 8, *To A Machinist*, Box 11, Number 27, and *To A Ship Carpenter*, Box 11, Number 36, Comic Valentines Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia.

Note 53: For more on the limitations to women's wage earning and its relationship to household economics, see Seth Rockman, "Women's Labor, Gender Ideology, and Working-Class Households in Early Republic Baltimore," *Explorations in Early American Culture* 66, (1999), 174-200.

Note 54: *The Union*, April 21, 1836.

Note 55: For more on gender and workplace relations between journeymen and apprentices, see Ava Baron, "An 'Other' Side of Gender Antagonism at Work," in Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of Men, Women, and Work* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 47-69.

Note 56: See *Manhood* (New York: Samuel Wood & Sons, 1818) and *Catalogue of the Apprentice's Library, for the Years 1833-34, Instituted by the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York, November 25, 1820* (New York: E. B. Clayton, 1833), 5-29.

Note 57: On traditional artisan workshops, see Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (New York: New York University Press, 1950), and W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Note 58: Quoted in Mathew Carey, *Select Excerpta* vol. X, 338. This is from a collection of Mathew Carey's newspaper clippings housed at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Note 59: See *Trial of the Journeymen Cordwainers of the City of New York For a Conspiracy to Raise their Wages* (New York: I. Riley, 1810).

Note 60: See New York State Archives, Papers of the New York City House of Refuge, Contracts for Labor, Goods, and Services, March 21 and 23, 1826, April 12, 1826, and April 7, 1828. For more on the House of Refuge, see Raymond A.

Mohl, *Poverty in New York: 1783-1825* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 89, 195, 256-257 and Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27-60.

Note 61: New York State Archives, Papers of the New York City House of Refuge, Contracts for Labor, Goods, and Services, March 21, 1826.

Note 62: Adam Burt, *Journeymen Weaving: A Poem* (New York: Press of the Old Countryman, 1831), 11-12. Italics in original.

Note 63: March 23, 1816, New York Typographical Society Minutes, Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University. (Hereafter cited as NYTS Minutes).

Note 64: For more on the conflict between skilled journeymen and half-way journeymen, see Mark A. Lause, *Some Degree of Power: From Hired Hand to Union Craftsman in the Pre-industrial American Printing Trades, 1778-1815* (Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 1991), 36-40, 74-79, Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic, 273-274*, and Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 32, 130, and 232.

Note 65: July 13, 1811, NYTS Minutes.

Note 66: For an example of court proceedings about runaways, see "The matter of John Ayers with his Apprentices Henry Harrell and Hiram Hull" in Court of General Sessions Minutes, November 17, 1827, Roll 13, MN 10013, Municipal Archives of the City of New York.

Note 67: July 13, 1811, NYTS Minutes.

Note 68: Ibid.

Note 69: As craft labor became less skilled, fear of competition from not just partly skilled, but also unskilled workers rose. For more on the experience of contemporary unskilled laborers, see Peter Way, *Common Labor: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), and Seth Edward Rockman, "Working for Wages in Early Republic Baltimore: Unskilled Labor and the Blurring of Slavery and Freedom," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1999).

Note 70: *The People vs. Henry Trequier, James Clawsey, and Lewis Chamberlain in Wheeler, Reports of Criminal Law Cases*, 144.

Note 71: American State Papers 270, 10th Congress, 1st Sess., December 7, 1807, Finance vol. 2, 257. For a complaint that all of the trades associated with

shipbuilding would be affected by the European system of using primarily unpaid apprentice labor, see American State Papers 67, 7th Congress, 2nd Sess., Jan. 24, 1803, Commerce and Navigation vol. 1, 508.

Note 72: American State Papers 561, 16th Congress, 1st Sess., December 27, 1819, Finance vol. 3, 443-444. In addition to foreign goods, artisans made some calls to prohibit the importation of European machinery that would cut down on craftwork. For an example, see article by "anti-strap" in the *Banner of the Constitution* (Washington DC), September 22, 1830.

Note 73: On ethnic diversity within the GTU, see Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 222-223. F.E. Zerlaut also published a German language newspaper, the *Herold*, which supported the Loco Foco Party. See Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), 169.

Note 74: Robert Walker, *Oration Delivered at Clinton Hall, to the Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association, on the Fifty-seventh Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1833* (New York: George Evans, 1833), 12.

Note 75: *The Union*, June 1, 1836.

Note 76: *New York Evening Post*, June 13, 1836.

Note 77: See Leo Hershowitz, "The National American Democratic Association in New York City, 1835-1836," *New York Historical Society Quarterly*, XLVI, number 1 (January, 1962) and Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 268.

Note 78: The quote comes from a pamphlet by William Clark, who had spent some time in New York in the late 1810s and sought to convince his fellow English working men of all the reasons not to move to the United States, especially New York City. See William Clark, *The Mania of Emigrating to the United States, and its Disadvantages Developed: With a Correct Statement of the Prices of Provision, and Journeymen and Laborer's Wages: and a Dissertation on America Becoming a Manufacturing Country, With the Injustice of American Bankrupt Laws: To Which is Added a Description of New York, With the Effects of the Climate on Europeans: In Five Parts* (London: B. Stiell, 1820), 1.

Note 79: Apprentice Register, Police Court Docket Books, Municipal Archive of the City of New York, Roll 81, MN 11765.

Note 80: On the inability of a journeyman builder to provide for his family on less than two dollars a day, see *The Democrat*, April 2, 1836.

Note 81: Burt, *Journeyman Weaving*, 17.

Note 82: Richard Riker was the City District Attorney (Recorder) who prosecuted the Tailors' conspiracy trial and offered an opponent to numerous workers' legal endeavors throughout the period.

Note 83: On Weaver's Row, see Thomas A. Janvier, *In Old New York: A Classic History of New York City* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 189.

Note 84: For more on the experience of foreign immigrants in New York during these years, see Elliott J. Gorn, "'Good-Bye Boys, I Die a True American': Homicide, Nativism, and Working-Class Culture in Antebellum New York City," *Journal of American History* 74, number 2, (September, 1987), 388-410, Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City*, and Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*.

Note 85: Shane White calculates the African American population differently than the federal census did and his results show an even smaller population for the year 1800. See Shane White, "'We Dwell in Safety and Pursue Our Honest Callings': Free Blacks in New York City, 1783-1810," *Journal of American History* 75, issue 2 (September, 1988), 445-470.

Note 86: For federal census information, see Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, *Historical Demographic, Economic, and Social Data*..

Note 87: Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 200 and Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. Study 00003: *Historical Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: U.S., 1790-1970* (Anne Arbor: ICPSR, 1998).

Note 88: See Gilje and Rock, *Keepers of the Revolution*, 218-224 and Leslie Maria Harris, "Creating the African-American Working-Class: Black and White Workers, Abolitionists, and Reformers in New York City, 1785-1863," (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995), 62.

Note 89: See W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Note 90: *The Colored American*, April 15, 1837. For other articles about artisan life printed in New York's African American press, see *Freedom's Journal*, March 21, 1829 and *The Colored American*, August 26, 1837, May 11, 1839, and November 23, 1839.

Note 91: For more on African American artisans, see White, "'We Dwell in Safety and Pursue Our Honest Callings", 454-456.

Note 92: Anthony Gronowicz, *Race and Class Politics in New York City Before the*

Civil War (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 61. See Jonathan H. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery & the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Note 93: Theophilus Eaton, *Review of New-York, or Rambles Through the City. Original Poems. Moral, Religious, Sarcastic, Descriptive* Second Edition. (New York: John Low, 1813), 40.

Note 94: See Bernard Mandel, *Labor: Free and Slave: Workingmen and the Anti-slavery Movement in the United States* (New York: Associated Authors, 1955).

Note 95: *Evening Post*, October 10, 1835.

Note 96: John Barkely Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City: A Social History of Abolition and Labor Reform in Jacksonian New York," (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1977), 139, 307-388. Making matters even more complex, Ely Moore, the one-time leader of the GTU and congressman used some of his time in Washington D. C. to work against these very petitions. See Ely Moore, *Remarks of Ely Moore of New York, in the House of Representatives, February 4, 1839, On Presenting a Remonstrance From Citizens of the District of Columbia Against the Reception of Abolition Petitions, &c.* (Washington, DC: n.p., 1839).

Note 97: Robert Rantoul Jr., *An Address to the Workingmen of the United States of America* (Charlestown: n.p., 1833), 51.

Note 98: William Trimble, "The Social Philosophy of the Loco-Foco Democracy," *American Journal of Sociology* 26, issue 6 (May, 1921), 713.

Note 99: Fitzwilliam Byrdsall, *The History of the Loco-Foco or Equal Rights Party, Its Movements, Conventions and Proceedings, With Short Characteristic Sketches of its Prominent Men* (New York: Clement & Packard, 1842), 19. For a different interpretation of the issue of anti-slavery and the Loco Foco Party see Leo Hershkowitz, "The Loco-Foco Party of New York: Its Origins and Career, 1835-1837," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 46, number 3 (July, 1962), 316-321.

Note 100: *Commercial Advertiser*, April 20, 1801 (emphasis mine).

Note 101: David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso Press, 1991), Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), and Gronowicz, *Race and Class Politics*. I agree with many of the criticisms of these works on whiteness that are developed by Eric Arnesen, who has eloquently argued that these studies

often operate from questionable evidentiary positions because a survey of materials created by organized men themselves does not support such conclusions without "a problematic reliance upon psychohistory." See Eric Arnesen, "Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall, 2001), 3. Useful in this debate are the responses to Arnesen's piece by James R. Barrett, David Brody, Barbara J. Fields, Victoria C. Hattam, and Eric Foner in the same issue of *International Labor and Working-Class History*. For some recent work that addresses the issue of white and black labor in a more nuanced way, see John Bezis-Selfa, *American Crucible: Adventures, Ironworkers, and the Struggle to Forge an industrious Revolution, 1620-1830* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Graham Russell Hodges, *Slavery, Freedom, and Culture Among Early American Workers* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), and Seth Rockman, "The Unfree Origins of American Capitalism," in Cathy Matson, ed., *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 335-362.

Note 102: Clark, *The Mania of Emigrating to the United States, and its Disadvantages Developed*, 27.

Note 103: Labor leader Mike Walsh quoted in Mandel, *Labor: Free and Slave*, 79. Included in Mandel's 1955 work is a section entitled, "Chattel Slaves and Wage Slaves" that elaborates some of these points. On the origins of "wage slavery," see Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 66-67.

Note 104: Construction of the prison at Auburn began in 1816 and due to its success, Sing Sing was started in 1825. On the history of prisons in New York State and prison labor in the nineteenth century, see O. F. Lewis, *The Development of American Prisons and Prison Customs, 1776-1845, With Special Reference to Early Institutions in the State of New York* (Albany: Prison Association of New York, 1922), 77-146, W. David Lewis, *From Newgate to Dannemora: The Rise of the Penitentiary in New York, 1796-1848* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), Paul Robert Eisenhauer, "Organizing Discipline: Prison Organization and Penal Theory in 19th Century New York," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1988), and Adam Jay Hirsch, *The Rise of the Penitentiary: Prisons and Punishment in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Note 105: *Evening Post*, April 28, 1835. The issue of convict labor also became a major political issue in New York during the 1830s. For an example of the Democratic Party trying to use the issue to get votes, see *The Jeffersonian*, August 23, 1834.

Note 106: Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety*, 164. Chapter

Six in Glickstein's recent work offers a useful discussion of prison labor and Gresham's Law.

Note 107: *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 21, 1834.

Note 108: Lewis, *The Development of American Prisons*, 104. A report from 1833 stated that about 650 men were employed at Sing Sing in craftwork including locksmiths, shoemakers, weavers, tailors, masons, and stonecutters. See *The Man*, March 6, 1834.

Note 109: From the perspective of skilled journeymen, skill only worked in one direction. Skilled artisans could be degraded and morally corrupted by convict labor, but convict labor was not made noble or moral by its association with craft skills and upright journeymen. See Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety*, 12 and 178.

Note 110: *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 21, 1834.

Note 111: *Evening Post*, April 29, 1835.

Note 112: *Proceedings of the State Convention of Mechanics, Held at Utica, August 21st and 22nd, 1834, For the Purpose of Taking Into Consideration the Effect Produced on the Various Mechanical Trades By the Present System of State Prison Discipline* (Utica: R. Northway Jr., 1834), 8. Italics in original. See also *Mechanics Magazine*, September, 1834.

Note 113: *The Woman*, Oct. 9, 1834. For more on contemporary debates about the usefulness and effectiveness of prison rehabilitation, see Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety*, 174-182, Lewis, *From Newgate to Dannemora*, 157-200, and Hirsch, *Rise of the Penitentiary*. See also Larry Goldsmith, "'To Profit By His Skill and To Traffic On His Crime'" Prison Labor in Early 19th-Century Massachusetts," *Labor History* 40, Number 4 (November, 1999), 439-457.

Note 114: *The Man*, May 13, 1835.

Note 115: *The New-York Cries in Rhyme* (New York: Mahlon Day, [1812?]), 16.

Note 116: *New York Transcript*, June 5, 1835. James Clohesey or Clawsey had been a leading member of the Hatters Union since the 1820s and was one of three members put on trial for conspiracy in January 1823. See *The People vs. Henry Trequier, James Clawsey, and Lewis Chamberlain* in Wheeler, *Reports of Criminal Law Cases*, 142-152.

Note 117: *The Democrat*, March 9, 1836.

Note 118: *New York Transcript*, October 28, 1834. For more on stonecutters' attempts to use petitions and demonstrations to change the governor's decision, see *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, June 6, 1834 and *The Man*, June 7, 1834.

Note 119: *Evening Post*, October 28, 1834. Italics in original.

Note 120: For more on the Stonecutters' Riot of 1834, see Joel Tyler Headley, *The Great Riots of New York: 1712-1873* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1873), 95-96, Daniel J. Walkowitz, "The Artisans and Builders of Nineteenth-Century New York: The Case of the 1834 Stonecutters' Riot," in Mindy Cantor, ed., *Around the Square 1830-1890: Essays on Life, Letters and Architecture in Greenwich Village* (New York: New York University, 1982), 84-94, and Paul A. Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763-1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 198-202.

Note 121: *The Man*, June 7, 1834 and Walkowitz, "The Artisans and Builders," 89.

Note 122: For more on the meeting, see *The Mechanic*, August 25, 1835. New York City's delegates to the meeting in Utica included Paulus Hedle, a leading Loco Foco operative who would later be one of the organizers of the park meeting that lead to the February, 1837 Flour Riot.

Note 123: *Evening Post*, April 29, 1835.

Note 124: Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety*, 175-184.

Note 125: James Hardie, *The Description of the City of New York ... To Which is Prefixed, a Brief Account of its First Settlement By the Dutch, in the Year 1629; and of the Most Remarkable Events Which Have Occurred in its History, From That to the Present Period* (New York: S. Marks, 1827), 293.

Note 126: *The Man*, February 18, 1834.