

The background of the cover is a blue-tinted illustration. It depicts a large steamship with two funnels, moving down a river. In the distance, a city skyline with various buildings and structures is visible under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is historical and atmospheric.

Caught between Revolutions: Wheeling Germans in the Civil War Era

Ken Fones-Wolf

ABSTRACT

On the evening of October 11, 1860, a troop of mostly German “Wide Awakes” paraded their support for Abraham Lincoln in the north end of Wheeling. At Colonel Thoburn’s house, the German Company C of the Wide Awakes received a wreath for its valiant support of Republicanism. As the demonstration worked its way through the streets, opponents of the “Black Republicans” responded by throwing stones at the rear of the line. Three more times, the parade ranks broke to fight off attacks, before speedily reforming their parade and returning to safer quarters. Approvingly, the Wheeling Intelligencer praised the Wide Awakes who “stood their ground like men who know their right.”

ARTICLE



“Wheeling, Virginia, Showing the Suspension Bridge and Embarkation of the German Rifles, Captain Plankey, 1861.” Sketch by J. A. Faris, from the Oglebay Mansion Museum Institute, Wheeling, W.Va.

On the evening of October 11, 1860, a troop of mostly German “Wide Awakes” paraded their support for Abraham Lincoln in the north end of Wheeling. At Colonel Thoburn’s house, the German Company C of the Wide Awakes received a wreath for its valiant support of Republicanism. As the demonstration worked its way through the streets, opponents of the “Black Republicans” responded by throwing stones at the rear of the line. Moving further up Main Street near the First Ward Hose house, the paraders found one intersection blocked. When they stopped to remove the barriers, a group of “ruffians” hurled stones and bottles while others pored in behind the Wide Awakes to set the trap. With no help in sight, the Wide Awakes decided to fight back, wading into the mobs on both

sides using torches as their weapons and eventually dispersing their tormentors. Three more times, the parade ranks broke to fight off attacks, before speedily reforming their parade and returning to safer quarters. Approvingly, the Wheeling *Intelligencer* praised the Wide Awakes who “stood their ground like men who know their right.”¹

Reading the *Intelligencer* in the fall of 1860 might lead one to believe that the vast majority of Germans in the city were strong supporters of Lincoln in the upcoming presidential contest. After all, many Americans felt that Germans, especially those who lived in urban areas, were hostile to slavery.² Moreover, the German Wide-Awakes had already earned plaudits from their counterparts as far away as Pittsburgh “for their independent manliness in being Republicans in a Slave State” and for standing up to “dastardly scoundrels” who threw stones at Republican gatherings.³ However, Germans probably also comprised a significant portion of the “ruffians” who cornered the Wide Awakes on the evening of October 11. The first ward of Wheeling was one of the most German wards in the city, and key leaders of the Douglas Democrats were north end Germans. The Wide Awakes, in contrast, came mostly from the south end of Wheeling or from Ritchietown, just beyond the city limits.⁴

The fighting between these two groups of Germans was more than a turf war. Instead, this division helps provide insight into the remaking of the German-American community in Wheeling in the middle of the nineteenth century. This remaking owed a great deal to the revolutions of 1848 that shook Europe, and particularly many German states. In the aftermath of failed uprisings emigration greatly accelerated, sending a flood of newcomers to such burgeoning midwestern urban centers as Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Detroit.⁵ This influx helped change the social, economic, and political makeup of those cities. Likewise, German immigrants changed Wheeling’s landscape during the 1850s in ways that would collide with the growing sectional conflict threatening to divide the United States. Thus, Wheeling’s Germans were caught between two revolutions, one that drove them from their homelands and one that

would draw them into the streets in 1860, into a brutal Civil War, and eventually into the new state of West Virginia.

The story of Wheeling's Germans contributes to our understanding of this critical era on several levels. First, it explores the political behavior of urban Germans in a slave state, offering an example for comparison with work done on German politics in free states. Second, it suggests some insights into the complex mix of factors that divided this ethnic community and contributed to the inconsistent voting patterns historians have long noted. Third, it highlights the important contributions Germans made in keeping the border regions attached to the Union, greatly facilitating the eventual triumph of the North in the Civil War.⁶ Wheeling's Germans helped make the city a haven of pro-Union sentiment that ultimately resulted in the creation of West Virginia. Finally, this story highlights the important trans-national character of German-American politics, a politics shaped by events in Germany and America.

WHEELING IN 1850

In 1850, Wheeling was a bustling industrial town with a population of 11,435 and a diversified economy. With iron, nail, glass, and textile factories leading the way, it ranked third in all of Virginia in manufacturing, employing nearly two thousand persons.⁷ Benefiting first from the National Road, Wheeling early staked its claim to preeminence in northwest Virginia. Although already far behind Pittsburgh in population and industrial development, the designation of Wheeling as the terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) positioned it to renew that urban rivalry. The erection of a suspension bridge across the river in 1849 threatened to make Wheeling the hub of Ohio River commerce, and evoked a frantic legal battle with Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania that reached the United States Supreme Court in 1852.⁸

Wheeling occupied an unusual place in the explosive sectional politics characterizing the 1850s. North of the Mason-Dixon Line in an area with a minimal attachment to slavery, the city resembled

its midwestern counterparts more than its sister cities in Virginia. Most noticeably, Wheeling had few African Americans (less than 1 percent), while free blacks and slaves made up between 20 and 40 percent of the male industrial workforce of Richmond, Lynchburg, and Petersburg. In contrast, 86 percent of Wheeling's 1850 household heads were born outside of Virginia, including many in the North, and more than half of its voting-age males in 1860 were either immigrants or their sons. Comparable ratios for Lynchburg and Petersburg would have ranged between one in four and one in six.⁹ Although smaller than Petersburg, Wheeling had a greater portion of its adult male population involved in manufacturing. Moreover, Wheeling industry relied to a far lesser degree on agricultural products or the trappings of a slave economy than Richmond, Lynchburg, or Petersburg did.¹⁰

In politics, however, Virginia's cities shared similar Whig inclinations in the early 1850s. The Whig program of expanded internal improvements and banks as well as higher protective tariffs appealed to urban manufacturing interests present in Wheeling and other Old Dominion urban centers. Although careful to distance themselves from the antislavery elements of Northern Whigs, party spokesmen in Wheeling continually praised the American Plan of Henry Clay and sought greater state support for the transportation and capital resources necessary to enable the city to compete with Pittsburgh. In most of these endeavors, Tidewater agrarians frustrated the Wheeling business interests.¹¹ Between the 1820s and the 1850s, these differences fostered sectional tensions within the state of Virginia. Westerners resented the political dominance of the Tidewater region and the state government's neglect of the needs of the trans-Allegheny region. By a vote of 643 to 3, Wheeling citizens overwhelmingly rejected the Virginia Constitution of 1830 that kept in place a representation system giving eastern counties a decided advantage in the state legislature. Westerners also resented state tax policies that fell heavily on their internal improvements and lightly on the assets of Tidewater slaveholders. Two decades later, trans-Allegheny counties made some gains in the convention bill that finally passed in 1850, but the mixed basis of white population and

property still gave the eastern counties a seventy-six to fifty-nine advantage in delegates to the state legislature.¹²

Despite frustrations, Wheeling's business leaders gained important benefits from the state government. When Pennsylvania won a Supreme Court decision against the Wheeling suspension bridge on the grounds that it inhibited river commerce and could thus be regulated by Congress, Virginia's congressional delegation successfully lobbied for an act protecting the bridge as a part of the post road and requiring boats "not to interfere with the elevation and construction of said bridge."¹³ Virginia also assisted Wheeling by requiring the B&O Railroad to create its terminus at that city, even if the legislature's intent was to prevent the B&O from intruding into Richmond's commerce. For southern business interests hoping to tap the trade of Ohio and the Midwest, this designation promised much. At the opening of the B&O, Wheeling leaders paid homage to its place in sectional politics; L. W. Gosnell toasted the railroad that brought forth the twin sisters of Baltimore and Wheeling. He added that soon "the West will marry one and the South the other, and join together, in bands of steel, their future destiny."¹⁴ Finally, the state government blocked the right-of-way of a competing railroad line through the northern panhandle of Virginia, a development that aided Wheeling at the expense of Pittsburgh.¹⁵ Thus, in terms of politics, Wheeling developed something of a split personality. In local and state elections, the city generally gave support to Whig candidates, but in the 1850s it voted for a Democrat to represent the district in Congress. Wheeling political and business leaders relied on Virginia's power to protect local commercial interests. The growing presence of Germans in Wheeling only added to this complexity.

Germans were among the early European-stock settlers who arrived in the Wheeling area in the eighteenth century. By the 1830s, they mixed with large numbers of Scots Irish immigrants and northern migrants to help make the trans-Allegheny portion of Virginia much more diverse economically and ethnically more cosmopolitan.¹⁶ Over the ensuing twenty years the German ratio would increase as a result of conditions in Europe. Through the mid

1840s the German economy experienced little of the dynamism that characterized the British and, to a lesser extent, the American economies. Especially in Germany's western and southwestern regions, which provided the bulk of the emigrants, an "agrarian and small-scale manufacturing economy existed with a framework of social and political institutions that seemed at least archaic" if not worse, according to historian Bruce Levine. Landed aristocrats, semifeudal obligations, craft guilds, and authoritarian state mechanisms constrained political and social change, while an explosive population growth constricted economic opportunity and drove down wages and standards of living.¹⁷ Particularly in places like Baden, Wuerttemberg, Hesse, and Bavaria, urban handicraft workers felt the squeeze of overcrowded labor markets and looked for avenues of escape. This social group provided the bulk of the German immigrants who ultimately settled in the northern panhandle of Virginia.¹⁸

By 1850 Germans comprised Wheeling's principal ethnic community. Especially in the more industrial sections—the First Ward in the north end and the Fifth Ward in the south—recent German immigrants and their children accounted for about one-third of the households. Overall, about two of every nine Wheelingites resided in a German immigrant home.¹⁹ They occupied a distinctly plebeian social stratum, reflecting their European backgrounds. Almost half (49.3 percent) of German males were craftsmen—butchers, tailors, shoemakers, leatherworkers, carpenters, coopers, and others. However, this encompassed wide variations; sweated trades like tailoring or shoemaking paid far less than more elite crafts such as making cabinets or coaches. Somewhere in between were building trades workers—the carpenters, plasterers, and masons who made up between a fifth and a quarter of the craftsmen. Another third of German men were laborers, many who had skills but were not able to obtain a skilled job, and 3.5 percent were miners. Already, there was a small core of merchants and manufacturers, epitomized best by the Stifels, who left Wuerttemberg in the 1830s to establish a calico print works in Wheeling. Finally, about one-ninth of the Germans were small

proprietors—operators of saloons, coffee houses, hotels, bakeries, butcher shops, and other small businesses. Some, like baker Gottlieb Bayha, who arrived in Wheeling in 1834, became quite prominent.²⁰

Although they comprised a significant and stable plebeian group that began to achieve some prosperity, Germans played only a small role in politics before 1850. For example, there were no German-born constables, school commissioners, or other city officials before 1849. In large part, the property restrictions on suffrage in the Virginia Constitution prevented the middling sorts from exerting any formal role in government until 1851.²¹ Informally, Germans did contribute; immigrant journalist Herrmann Schuricht claimed that Germans demonstrated against the state's unequal systems of taxation and representation that so distressed the western portions of Virginia. Principally, however, Germans concentrated on establishing their presence in the city's public culture and civic spaces. They originated or dominated many of the orchestras, brass bands, singing societies, fraternal orders, fire companies, and churches that constituted Wheeling's public life. They also formed a Benevolent Association; they obtained nearly half of the city's licenses for saloons and coffee houses; and they operated many of the halls that hosted concerts, balls, and other events.²² While these activities seem commonplace, for people from a more autocratic social order, this civic culture represented a tremendous step toward ideals of "social freedom and independent existence."²³

GERMAN REVOLUTION AND WHEELING GERMANS

The immigrants of the early 1850s changed the landscape of Wheeling. Their arrival coincided with changes in the city, especially residential development and the expansion of the iron, leather, and glass industries in the Fifth Ward and in Ritchietown, just south of the city boundary. This heavily industrial section received most of the incoming Germans who gave it a political character strongly influenced by the events in Europe. The north end, in contrast, was home to the more settled and prospering elements of the German community. Indeed, by 1860, nearly 60 percent of the

Germans living in the north end of the city had arrived before 1848; on the south side, only about one in three had been in the United States when the revolutions erupted. The coincidence of German immigration and the expansion of these neighborhoods meant that immigrants dominated the south end polity by the end of the 1850s (see table 2.1). Moreover, many of the post-1848 immigrants who influenced local politics arrived with knowledge of the opportunities present in Wheeling, attesting to the transnational character of this German community. For example, William Coleman sailed from Havre and landed in Philadelphia in the spring of 1854; within a week he was in Wheeling where he remained. John Boeshar arrived in New York on May 12, 1848, and in Wheeling on May 18; Charles Robeck was in Baltimore on November 16, 1854, and in Wheeling before the end of the month. All applied for citizenship in Wheeling soon after their arrival.²⁵

Table 2.1
Wheeling's Voting-Age Males, 1860,
by Poll Location and Ethnic Group²⁶

Poll	Germans	Irish	Other For.	American	Number
1st Ward	34.9%	13.5%	1.5%	50.0%	458
Court House	21.3	12.0	5.9	60.8	933
4th Ward	28.3	19.9	11.2	40.6	643
5th Ward	34.9	16.1	7.1	42.0	921
Ritchietown	52.6	6.1	12.7	28.7	544
City Average	32.8%	13.8%	7.7%	45.7%	3499

The recent flood of German immigrants did not appear to change significantly the ethnic group's social position in the city. In general, Germans occupied an occupational position between the Irish at the bottom and the American-born or those born in England, Scotland, and Wales. For instance, slightly more than one in five Germans occupied the upper rungs of the occupational ladder by 1860, while more than one-third of American-born and just under a quarter of those born in Great Britain had attained a similar status. Meanwhile, just over a third of German men were in the bottom

categories compared to less than one-seventh of American-born men. The Irish were clearly the most disadvantaged group; although one in seven achieved an upper-status occupation, over half remained laborers or service workers.²⁷

The aggregate picture for Germans, however, masks the important changes created by the post-1850 immigrants, reflected in the differences between the north and south ends of the city. By 1860, nearly 8 percent of German males in the north end had moved into the elite categories of merchant and manufacturer, and more than a quarter were in the upper occupational categories. South end Germans were far more heavily represented in trades and less skilled industrial jobs (see table 2.2). This mix of class and ethnicity periodically flared in labor unrest that affected the south end disproportionately. For example, German workers helped shut down the iron mills in December 1853 and participated in strikes of B&O Railroad workers in December 1855. They also made up the bulk of the rebellious iron molders who established a cooperative following a dispute with employers.²⁸

Table 2.2
Occupational Structure of Wheeling's Germans, by Residence²⁹

Wards	Elite	Mid. Class	Unskilled	Number in Sample
1-4	7.7%	17.9%	29.6%	274
5, S. Wheel.	2.6%	9.5%	45.8%	273

In politics, the impact of the events in Europe flashed rather quickly in Wheeling. Local Germans created a stir in the Old Dominion in September of 1852 when they hosted a "Congress of German Revolutionists" which supported the famed Hungarian revolutionary leader Louis Kossuth. Although the gathering was so small that it could convene around a single table, the Congress garnered a great deal of attention and issued grandiose proclamations. In a slave state that had only recently broadened its suffrage, this small gathering of Germans raised eyebrows with its statement "that democracy is a principle for which there is no local, but only a universal triumph, a principle which knows neither an

Old World nor a New. The world is its sphere, the human family its aim.”³⁰ The impact of such statements took on added significance because the Congress included three Wheeling Germans and led to public awareness of such organizations as the “Wheeling League of Freemen (Freie Gemeinde)” and a branch of the Turnverein. In the minds of many, both groups had links to revolutionary movements in Europe, and their radical principles “frightened the slaveholders and church-goers” of Virginia.³¹

During the next two years, Germans figured in a number of local social and political issues that became entangled with nativist sentiments, but typically in ways that cut across the German community. For example, temperance and anti-saloon agitation in 1853-54 united the majority of Germans in opposition to temperance legislation, but members of the south-end German Methodist Church disagreed with many of their countrymen.³² Likewise, in May 1853, Germans divided over an intense debate involving schools. The city had only recently implemented a public school system, but many leading Germans were Catholic and sent their children to Catholic schools. Wheeling Protestants worried that Catholics were secretly trying to undermine support for the public schools, and their fears quickly spilled over into a general anti-Catholic sentiment. While the Whig party led this, some leading German Democrats, like *Virginische Staats-Zeitung* editor John Buersner, also weighed in against the Catholics.³³ This anti-Catholic sentiment exploded within the German community between December 1853 and January 1854, sparked by the visit of the papal nuncio, Gaetano Bedini. Following the example of radical German Freethinkers and Turners in Cincinnati, Wheeling’s radicals posted handbills throughout the city and gathered to disturb proceedings at the city’s cathedral. Their handbills and posters harkened to the revolutionary republican spirit of 1848 in Europe, emphasizing “No Priests, No Kings, No Popery.”³⁴

Although some Wheeling Germans opposed slavery, community leaders worked to diminish any threat to the dominant social order. For example, in anticipation of the impending Kansas-Nebraska Act that potentially opened new territories to slavery through “popular

sovereignty,” a group of antislavery activists invaded Wheeling in March 1854 looking for recruits to colonize Nebraska on a “free state” basis. Less than a week later, a group of prominent Germans organized a mass meeting to protest the antislavery activists. The editor of the *Virginische Staats-Zeitung* spoke on the connection between abolitionism and the local temperance agitation that had targeted Germans. The meeting resolved to “stand by Virginia” in defense of principles and against Northern “fanatics.”³⁵ In a city where every local newspaper blamed sectional tensions on abolitionist agitators, few Germans raised their voice in opposition in 1854. Noteworthy here was the support from leading German manufacturers in the city, men like Jacob Berger, John Hoffman, and William Miller who had entered the business elite in the 1850s and had benefited from the state’s role in the B&O controversies. Importantly, they were also Catholics, a group denigrated by northern Whigs and abolitionists. At a time when sectionalism was intensifying, their stalwart support for the Democratic party and the South trumped nativist sentiments in the city.³⁶

In general, the nativists in Wheeling had little staying power. In contrast to the Know-Nothing movement in places like Louisville and Cincinnati, the party in Wheeling engaged in very few actions against the Germans. In addition, the substantial German (and especially German Catholic) presence in the city, particularly among the business elite, made local politicians reluctant to attack them. Occasional discussions of raising the bar against immigrant voters typically met only lukewarm support.³⁷ Thus, despite the early dramatic appearances of German radicalism in September 1852 and January 1854, post-1848 Germans appeared to have only a marginal impact on politics in the city through 1855. In the presidential contest of 1852, most of the city voted for Zachary Scott against Franklin Pierce, demonstrating the predominant local Whig sentiment. A year later, every ward in the city voted heavily for the local Democrat in the state senate race; the primary issue was his opposition to granting the right-of-way to a panhandle railroad that would connect Ohio to Pittsburgh. But in 1855, the city returned to its Whiggish traditions on state economic issues and voted for local

successors to the Whig party for Congress and governor by fairly consistent margins, even in immigrant-dominated wards.³⁸

German leaders in Wheeling also diminished anti-immigrant sentiment through their participation in patriotic commemorations and public events. Typically, Germans celebrated American Independence Day “in an enthusiastic manner,” participating in parades and hosting lavish picnics with beer and cigars. George Washington’s birthday was another popular occasion for Germans to demonstrate their allegiance to a heroic Virginia icon. Equally important was the part played by Germans in civic celebrations. Their bands routinely accompanied the annual fire company parades every September and provided most of the music for the dedication of the new Customs House. In February 1855, Germans formed their own militia company, the German Rifle Company, which emphasized their attachment to the state. The German Riflemen frequently put on martial displays or filled the ranks of periodic parades and worked closely with the older local militia company, the Virginia Fencibles.³⁹

Germans were also valuable contributors to Wheeling’s social calendar. By the mid-1850s, the balls and concerts of the Maennerchor, the leading German singing society, were major local events. These performances included a concert that alternated orchestra selections, choral pieces, and special vocalists and ensembles, interspersed with comic selections. After the concert, there was dancing, concluding with a midnight supper or buffet. The Maennerchor’s concerts and balls occurred around New Year’s Day and every May and October, but other groups offered scaled-down entertainments, especially in the smaller German public halls in the south end.⁴⁰ Likewise, the German Turnverein, despite its radical heritage, held popular athletic competitions that usually culminated with a ball and a dinner. The popularity of the Turnverein’s events soon spurred competing groups, the Wheeling Gymnastic Association and a branch of the Young Men’s Christian Association, but neither had the Turnverein’s following.⁴¹

In a variety of religious and voluntary organizations, Germans demonstrated their civic consciousness as well as pride in their

cultural heritage. The 1850s witnessed a surge of church building. Germans built a Reformed church, a Methodist church, St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church and St. Alphonsus Catholic Church to complement the Lutheran, Reformed, and Methodist churches already in existence. Germans also established their own lodges of the Odd Fellows (the William Tell Lodge) and the Red Men, fraternal orders that had large followings in Wheeling, as well as their own unique contribution, the Haru Gari order.⁴² With special pride they pointed to such activities as the German Christian Aid Society, established out of the German Methodist church, and the German Beneficial Society, organizations designed to demonstrate a republican concern for the community's well being. Indeed, in 1856 when residents of Wheeling began lobbying the state legislature for a House of Refuge to reform juvenile offenders, the *Intelligencer* traced the origins of this movement to Germany.⁴³

All of these German contributions to the civic culture of Wheeling diminished, but did not completely eliminate, anti-immigrant sentiments. On occasion, the predominately German "Guards" Fire Company from South Wheeling tangled with the "Old Reds" of the First Ward or with the "Young America" company from Wheeling Island. Likewise, individuals or small groups of Germans and Irish might clash during a Christmastime celebration or at a picnic. But Germans generally bristled at any hints that they were not good citizens. In April 1855 they met at the courthouse to protest comments made in the nativist *Times and Gazette*, which Julius Ballenberg called "a malicious misrepresentation, [and an] insult to foreign born citizens" which had the "tendency to incite riot and discord among our citizens."⁴⁴

SECTIONALISM AND GERMAN POLITICS

The presidential election of 1856 for the first time hinted at the divisions within Wheeling's German community created by the post-1848 immigrants. Throughout 1856, the Wheeling newspapers reported constantly on events in Kansas where "free state" forces battled pro-slavery groups in a bloody conflict. Meanwhile, former

Whigs wrung their hands at the demise of any alternative to the unabashed pro-southern agrarianism of the Democratic party in Virginia; the owners of the Whig-sympathizing *Daily Intelligencer* were so discouraged by political prospects that they sold the paper.⁴⁵ The Democratic paper, the *Argus*, gleeful at the disarray in the ranks of the American party did worry that the “Black Republicans” who nominated John C. Fremont for president posed a dangerous threat. In fact, a Virginia delegate to the Fremont convention had been arrested upon his return to Wheeling.⁴⁶ Even though Democratic candidate James Buchanan swept to an easy victory in the city, the number of voters in the heavily German Fifth Ward doubled, representing the first time that many of the post-1848 German immigrants were eligible to vote. Even more troubling, Fremont received 5 percent of the votes in the Fifth Ward and 6 percent in Ritchietown while no other ward surpassed 1 percent. These were not large numbers, but given the intimidation against Republicans in Virginia and the lack of a secret ballot, they represented a budding challenge to slavery.⁴⁷

The unsettled nature of Wheeling politics resumed its split personality the following year. In May 1857, Democrat Sherrard Clemens easily won the Congressional seat. However, in races for the state senate and house of delegates, candidates from the Distribution party (mostly ex-Whigs) won all three races. In each race, the two most heavily German wards, the First and the Fifth, were diametrically opposed—the Fifth was most advantageous for the Distribution candidates and the First was the most stalwart Democratic ward.⁴⁸ What these election results confirm is the dilemma facing an industrial city in a slave state; while in state politics Wheeling citizens could promote an alternative voice, in national politics state leaders expected them to elect Democrats loyal to the sectional interests of Virginia and the South. Germans opposed to slavery had little room to maneuver outside that paradigm; no local newspaper supported anti-slavery politics and leaders of the German community seemed submissive to the “slave power.”⁴⁹

Slowly, in 1857 anti-southern voices began to emerge, helped

by the antislavery conscience of the new *Intelligencer* editor, Archibald Campbell. As early as October 1856, he reminded Wheeling Germans that their countrymen in cities like St. Louis and Pittsburgh were defecting to the Republican party. Then, during campaigning in the spring of 1857, Campbell criticized the Democratic paper's obsession with slaves, "Black Republicanism," and the chivalry of Virginia, and began contesting the version of events in Kansas supplied by the *Argus*.⁵⁰ On the Fourth of July, the *Intelligencer* called for greater tolerance in local politics, claiming that free speech and a free press "should be the essence of our patriotism." Of special interest to Campbell was the Fourth of July celebration of the Germans in Elm Grove. There, Lewis Stifel Jr., son of a German manufacturer who would become prominent in the local Republican party, offered extemporaneous remarks. According to Campbell, "Every heart was deeply influenced by the patriotic and noble words as they heartily flowed from the mouth of the young speaker." Less than two weeks later when the Turnverein, of which young Stifel was a member, gathered to celebrate its anniversary, "a melee occurred between some Americans and Germans."⁵¹ It is impossible to know if the two events were related, but the *Intelligencer* had focused attention on the Germans in ways that might have drawn the ire of proslavery sympathizers.

The behavior of southern slaveholders on the national scene in 1857 and 1858 further eroded the support of south end Germans for the status quo. The Dred Scott decision enabling slaveholders to take their slaves into free states and the attempt to recognize the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution for Kansas led many people to believe that the Southern Democrats had become the aggressors in the sectional conflict. As a result, the Democratic party was losing popular support in the North, a situation made worse when proslavery party leaders worked to undermine their most charismatic free-state politician, Stephen A. Douglas, because he failed to support the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution. Wheeling Germans increasingly looked to the example offered by their countrymen to the west and the east—in Ohio and Pennsylvania—and began to desert the party of the "slave power."⁵²

The mayoral elections of 1858 and 1859 made it obvious just how divided the city was becoming. Democrats nominated James W. Paxton, a banker from the Third Ward, while the opposition chose James Tanner, a physician and pharmacist who operated an office in the south end. Paxton won all three northern wards with over 56 percent of the votes, but lost the election because the Fourth and Fifth Wards gave 71 percent of their votes to Tanner in a heavy turnout. Shortly after the election, the *Argus* accused the *Intelligencer* of promoting “the evil genius of abolitionism” among a “few narrow contracted Yankees.”⁵³ Another year widened the breach. The 1859 mayoral election pitted two men with Whig credentials, glass manufacturer Thomas Sweeney from the north end and south-end sawmill owner Andrew Wilson. One key difference was that the public associated Sweeney with pro-southern radicalism. Interestingly, Sweeney won in the north and center wards with 66.5 percent of the vote, but came up short because Wilson won 71 percent on the south side, almost 79 percent in the Fifth Ward.⁵⁴

These elections highlighted divisions in the city’s German community. The German weekly, *Virginische Staats-Zeitung*, which spoke principally for the more entrenched Germans in the First, Second, and Third Wards, supported the Democratic party. This German community had a greater proportion of Catholics and felt more at home with the Democratic party’s emphasis on personal liberty and its opposition to nativism. These wards were also home to the majority of those Germans who had risen into the local business elite, many of whom felt a loyalty to the state of Virginia.⁵⁵ In contrast, the more recent immigrants in the Fifth Ward and Ritchietown began to see greater advantages in the party opposing the Democrats. Especially important was the issue of the public lands. Pro-southern Democrats opposed opening western lands to homesteading, preferring that slaveholders be allowed to acquire property there. Republicans favored populating the new territories with free, white labor, promoting homesteading both to benefit the working class and to soothe northern racists who hoped to keep blacks out of the region.⁵⁶ In January 1858, German citizens

held a public meeting to lobby for a homestead act and against the monopolizing of public lands by slaveholders. Meanwhile, the *Intelligencer* made it acceptable to oppose the slave power, claiming that the predominant sentiment in the panhandle region was unionist and antislavery, but not abolitionist. Campbell provided an alternative for antislavery Germans; he praised the “intelligent and industrious” immigrants in Wheeling while chastizing the anti-commercial “spirit of the old cavaliers” which hampered merchants, manufacturers, and workers for the benefit of the large plantations.⁵⁷

By the spring of 1859, both parties openly courted the important German vote that represented nearly one-third of the city’s electorate. This enabled a significant number of Germans to play a more public role in local politics for the first time. The *Intelligencer* predicted that, because the “instinct of the Teutonic mind is toward individual liberty,” Germans would become the “most important influence” for free soil. Editor Archibald Campbell also praised the “ultra-democratic” tendencies of the group and remarked how important the German working class was to the Republican party. Indeed, over half (54.9 percent) of the Republican activists in the city were workers, and nearly 40 percent were foreign born.⁵⁸ At the same time, Wheeling’s most prominent Germans clung to the Democratic party. Shortly after the 1859 mayoral election, Democrats gathered to send delegates to the upcoming state party convention. Among the list of men who played key parts in the drama were Jacob Berger, Sebastian Lutz, John and Peter Zoeckler, and Jacob Zimmer, some of the wealthiest Germans in the city. Thirteen of the fifteen participants came from the north side; none were from either the Fifth Ward or South Wheeling. Twelve of the twenty-two for whom information is available were Catholic.⁵⁹

These divisions became evident and more contentious in the spring and summer of 1859. In the May contest for the Congressional seat from northwestern Virginia, the popular incumbent Democrat, Sherrard Clemens, ran against the former Whig, now Republican judge, Ralph Berkshire. Clemens won the city by carrying the First, Second, and Third Wards with nearly 59 percent of the vote, but he lost both the Fifth Ward and Ritchietown. The *Intelligencer*

gave the German element in the southern end of Wheeling credit for Berkshire's impressive showing. Just six weeks later, numerous incidents of fighting between Americans and Germans punctuated mixed gatherings to celebrate the Fourth of July. But the skirmishes were not limited to immigrants and non-immigrants; that fall police arrested several notable German Democrats for fisticuffs involving other Germans.⁶⁰ Clearly the political stakes were rising.

The political differences separating the two German enclaves (north side and south side) widened during the political campaign of 1860, but both groups staked a claim to American nationalism. German Democrats, hoping to combine their nationalist sentiments with support for the dominant Virginia party, formed a solid group of Douglas supporters. On the other side, *Intelligencer* editor Archibald Campbell sought to unite the Republicans "under the banner of Union and conservatism, and place our opponents under the opposite of secession and anarchy," particularly appealing to the interests of workingmen.⁶¹ Germans in the more plebeian south end openly supported Republicans, raising a "Lincoln/Hamlin pole" near the La Belle Rolling Mills and forming a company of "Wide Awakes."⁶² Thus, Germans were conspicuous in two (the northern Democratic and Republican) of the four political camps in the race. Jacob Berger, William Klinkler, and John Buersner represented the Douglas men at the state Democratic convention, but Lincoln rallies typically included German bands and banners with German slogans ("Unsere Einsige Wahl" or "Ehret Freie Arbeit, Freier Boden"), and retired to Naegle's Hall. Leaders of the Wide Awakes included Fred Naegle, John Ensinger, and John Oesterling.⁶³

A profile of German Democratic and Republican leaders provides useful insights and helps explain the factors dividing the German community. Newspapers identified forty-two Germans who played prominent roles in the Democratic party and twenty-nine influential Republicans. Occupationally, the two groups were similar: 41 percent of the Democrats and 45 percent of the Republicans were artisans or factory workers. The majority of both groups were merchants, manufacturers, professionals, proprietors, or white-collar employees, but nearly one-fourth of the Democrats compared

to only 7 percent of the Republicans were in the top merchant/manufacturer group. Relative wealth bears out this observation. Republican leaders' average wealth was \$2,096; for Democrats it was \$5,014. Six Democrats owned more than \$10,000 in property; no Republicans were that wealthy. Moreover, 38 percent of the Republicans owned property valued at less than \$100; only 17 percent of the Democrats were so poor. Much of this can be explained by the length of time in the United States. Although the average age of the Democrats was forty compared to about thirty-five for the Republican leaders, nearly two-thirds of the Democrats had arrived before 1848; less than one-third of the Republicans had been Americans that long. Leaders of the two parties were also residually segregated: 61.9 percent of the Democrats lived on the north side, while just 20.7 percent of the Republicans resided there. Finally, religion made a significant difference; of those for whom religion could be determined, 55 percent of the Democrats but only 25 percent of the Republicans were Catholics.⁶⁴ In short, the local Republicans were rooted in the more plebeian German communities of the Fifth Ward and Ritchietown among men and women who had experienced the European Revolutions of 1848.

German Republicans brought some of that same spirit of public rebellion to the Lincoln campaign. The South Wheeling Wide Awakes procured uniforms and torches, and began military-like drills, accompanied by their own glee club. They participated in numerous local parades and demonstrations, but also helped pro-Lincoln rallies in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Indeed, as the German Wide Awakes boarded a steamer to take them to Pittsburgh, "dastardly scoundrels" pelted them with stones. A week later their countrymen from Pittsburgh rewarded them with a wreath for their courage and "manliness." Special workingmen's meetings "struck terror or at least mortification into the hearts of secessionists," and resulted in Lincoln victories in straw polls at several South Wheeling factories. Of course, the most aggressive Republicans took their marches and torchlight processions to the pro-Democratic northern end of the city, where Wide Awakes wielded torches against hostile mobs.⁶⁵

The work of the German Wide Awakes paid off on election day. Not even Virginia's "slave power" could sap the pro-Union sentiments of Wheeling's Germans. In the First Ward, that translated into votes for Douglas, as more prominent Germans refused to break with the Democratic party but also rejected the proslavery Breckinridge Democracy. In the Fifth Ward and Ritchietown, however, Lincoln was the top vote-getter in the four-way race; this despite the fact that former Whig leaders like Chester Hubbard threw their support to Bell and the American party. In the showdown between support for the Union versus the interests of slavery, the most heavily German polling places (Wards 1, 5, and Ritchietown) chose the Union, defying a state torn between Breckinridge and Bell. In fact, many felt a growing confidence in their ability to be *antislavery*. The Republican party applauded "the Bully Fifth Ward" and the "Independent Republic of Ritchietown," acknowledging the influence of these plebeian German communities.⁶⁶

GERMANS AND WEST VIRGINIA'S REVOLUTION

The "revolutionary" task of northwestern Virginia's Germans was, as yet, far from complete. Lincoln's victory brought immediate repercussions upon Wheeling. State Democratic officials moved quickly to increase their control of its trans-Appalachian region. They fired *Virginische Staats-Zeitung* editor John Buersner from the post office for supporting Douglas rather than Breckinridge, and state banks suspended specie payments in the region, greatly disturbing monetary affairs. Finally, as expected, Democratic governor John Letcher called for a convention to consider secession.⁶⁷ This last measure required that counties choose delegates in a special February 1861 election. Four candidates—John H. Pendleton, Thomas Sweeney, Chester Hubbard, and Sherrard Clemens—announced for the two positions from Ohio County. Pendleton, Sweeney, and Hubbard were Whigs, Clemens a Democrat. Party, however, had little bearing on the vote. The consensus of belief was that Pendleton "probably" and Sweeney possibly would

vote for secession. On the other side, Hubbard was a pro-Union, old-line Whig and Clemens, although a Democrat, had begun voting with the Republicans in Congress. Wheeling Republicans boosted Hubbard and Clemens, despite the fact that neither was a party member, and they singled out workingmen for special attention. In a blatant appeal to Germans who had lived through the Revolution of 1848, a meeting of workers noted, “the world’s hope of freedom is centered in America, to which we with becoming and patriotic pride, have, for over three-quarters of a century, looked to as the asylum of the oppressed.” Secession, to the plebeian Germans in South Wheeling, was a rejection of that revolutionary spirit.⁶⁸ In parades and demonstrations and on election day, these Germans sent a pro-Union message (see table 2.3).

Table 2.3
1861 Vote for Secession Convention Delegates⁶⁹

Candidate	1st Ward	2d-3d Ward	4th Ward	5th Ward	Ritchietown
Pendleton	195	311	203	42	17
Sweeney	373	460	266	82	27
Hubbard	222	454	339	507	392
Clemens	167	357	402	475	386

The outbreak of war following the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861 would, for a time, unify the Germans of Wheeling, and help them contribute to yet another revolution, the creation of West Virginia. Within days of the outbreak of war, Germans began forming Union military companies and drilling in South Wheeling. The German Riflemen, which included Democrats August Rolf, John Salade, and Louis Franzheim among its officers, volunteered for service. Democratic leader Jacob Berger joined with Republican Louis Stifel to represent Germans in a local convention to oppose secession. When the Democratic *Virginische Staats-Zeitung* printed Lincoln’s call for volunteers to suppress the rebellion, recruiters were “soon overrun by applications from a large number of Germans.”⁷⁰ Wheeling overwhelmingly opposed Virginia’s secession, and the names of the eighty men who voted to secede were published in a broadside entitled “Traitors in Wheeling.” Only three of the

eighty were Germans. In the Fifth Ward, the iron works of John H. Pendleton, a secession sympathizer, burned to the ground under suspicious circumstances.⁷¹

Over the next year, Wheeling became a stronghold of Union support and hosted the conventions of trans-Appalachian Virginians that would eventually create West Virginia. The *Intelligencer* was the premier newspaper in support of separation from Virginia, and the presence of the Union Army made the city a haven for antislavery politics that would become a part of the state constitution. Germans united in the Union party and raised companies of recruits both for the Union Army and for a Home Guard militia. In fact, Battery A of the First Virginia Light Artillery and Company C of the Fifth Virginia Cavalry were entirely German units, raised largely in Wheeling. The south end of town also returned the largest pluralities for the new state movement, coinciding with a greater German presence in city government. Ritchietown, for instance, elected a majority of Germans to local offices.⁷²

The war years, however, taught both the Union Army and the local Republican party some sobering lessons about the independence of Wheeling Germans. They had gravitated to the Union cause because it represented certain ideals that they held dear, but they also expected the army and the Republican party to treat everyone fairly and respect personal liberty. Once mobilized politically, Wheeling Germans continued to assert the interests of their group in ways that challenged the Union Army and the Republican party. Indeed, less than a month after enlisting, members of Edward Plankey's Second Regiment, Virginia militia rebelled against the army's orders. Plankey, a carpenter from the Fifth Ward, had been a leader of the German Riflemen in the city for several years. When the *Staats-Zeitung* solicited volunteers, his militia group volunteered. When ordered into the field, however, about a dozen refused to go "on account of having no equipments." The army then imprisoned the rebels on Wheeling Island, forcing them to sleep on the bare ground, providing limited food, and denying them water for drinking and washing. Only after the *Staats-Zeitung* formally complained were the prisoners released and given a dishonorable discharge.⁷³

Local Republican officials charged with managing the war effort likewise ran afoul of the German community. In May, they threatened to shut down the Democratic newspaper, the *Daily Union*, which instead sold its interests. During the summer, city authorities began rounding up men suspected of pro-secession sympathies, including a few Germans, and the city council began arresting tavern owners who sold liquor to soldiers. The latter actions fell heavily upon Germans and involved substantial fines.⁷⁴ Germans directed much of their anger at Thomas Hornbrook, a prominent businessman serving as the state armorer of the provisional government. Hornbrook arrested William Kryter, a leading German Democrat, and confiscated a large number of his store's guns. Hornbrook also provoked a strike of the mostly German coal miners that winter when he arbitrarily raised the price of black powder, essential to the miners. Even the local court recognized that Hornbrook's services "have been altogether gratuitous." Many shared the beliefs of former Whig Chester Hubbard, who wrote to his son that the Republican party was putting party above patriotism, "thus dampening the ardor of some of our best men."⁷⁵

Germans retaliated against what they perceived as unjust treatment. Kryter successfully sued Hornbrook in court for the unwarranted seizure of his weapons, and George Franzheim pressed the city council to reduce fines for those charged with selling liquor to soldiers. Twice, in 1862, German boys from the southern end of town defended their group by taking on Americans from the center of town in melees.⁷⁶ Even some of the patriotic German men who volunteered for military service began to have doubts. Louis Myers wrote to Archibald Campbell to call attention to the way his unit had been "shamefully mistreated" by the army. Despite recognition as "a gallant, efficient and popular officer," Gus Rolf resigned his commission from the company formed by the German Riflemen in September 1862, and Captain Edward Plankey turned over leadership of his company in March of 1863. One man in the city wrote his brother that many of the south-end workers, who had been stalwart Republicans at the start of the war, were thinking of

heading to Canada when rumors of a military draft circulated in August 1862.⁷⁷

Despite their commitment to the Union, new divisions opened in the German community. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation cooled the ardor of some, but more troubling to most Germans was the heavy-handed treatment of anyone who raised objections to government policies. During 1862 and 1863, Democrats raised questions about the Confiscation Act, conscription policies, and proposals for the nationalization of the banking system. Particularly galling to many in West Virginia who believed in the Republic's guarantee of government by the people was the insistence by federal officials that West Virginia's new state constitution include an anti-slavery amendment.⁷⁸ Republicans also angered many Germans through their treatment of coal miners, stogie makers, and brewery workers. Germans made up the majority of these trades, and they all struck for wage increases in 1863 to match a rising cost of living. The workers received little support from either local officials or their employers, many of whom were noted Republicans.⁷⁹

In March 1863, some key Germans helped revive the Democratic party. Men like John Hoffman (a partner of Jacob Berger), George Franzheim, John Zoeckler, and Conrad Stroble counseled Germans who cared about liberty to refuse to vote for the state constitution. They also accused Republicans of padding election returns with fraudulent soldier votes and of intimidating Democrats with soldiers and violence. In May and October 1863, elections under the new city charter and state government passed with lopsided victories for the Union party, but Democrats claimed that the Republican party could not win an election without buying votes or threatening violence.⁸⁰ Democrats turned to sensational reporting about Republican promises made to blacks and stories about the "despotism" of the federal government, hoping to attract the votes of immigrants and workers. They expected some benefits from upcoming elections in 1864 under a new system using the secret ballot, asserting that "the secret ballot is the freeman's weapon—it is the laboring man's protection."⁸¹

Elections in 1864 did not quite meet the Democrats' expectations,

but they demonstrated some erosion of German support for the Republicans. The January mayoral election signalled the revival of the Democrats as the party's candidate garnered nearly two-thirds of the votes in the First and Second Wards. An expanding population in the south end caused the city to create two wards out of the old Fifth, but both the Fifth and Sixth Wards gave almost 61 percent of its votes to the Union party.⁸² In the ensuing six months, Democratic newspapers stepped up their attacks on the "Radical" Republicans and began making blatantly racist appeals to the fears of wage earners, with some success. Pro-Democratic sentiment grew to such an extent in the summer of 1864 that Union officials banned publication of the *Daily Register*, a Democratic paper, and put its editors in jail. *Register* editor Lewis Baker was also the proprietor of the only German weekly operating in the city, *Der Arbeiter Freund*. To many liberty-loving Germans it appeared that the Republicans had gone too far. Democrats hoped to exploit that advantage by including Jacob Berger on its county ticket and recruiting such leading Germans as John Bayha, John Pfarr, and George Franzheim to play important roles in party demonstrations and parades.⁸³

The presidential election in November demonstrated that Democrats were regaining parts of the German community. Democrat George McClellan won the First and Second Wards, where prominent Germans had clung to the party in 1860. Interestingly, McClellan also won the Fifth Ward, previously a stronghold of pro-Republican Germans. What had changed? Perhaps some Germans, as well as Irish and American-born workers responded to the Democratic scare tactics as well as to what often appeared as an overly aggressive Republican administration. Equally important, however, was the fact that in 1859 the German Catholics had built their church in this ward. By 1864, many of the Catholics who formerly worshipped and lived in the north end may have found it easier to relocate in the Fifth Ward, a place where industrial jobs were far more plentiful. The fact that Lincoln won 61 percent of the votes in the Sixth Ward and 57 percent in Ritchietown (by then called South Wheeling) suggests that religion had a significant role in winning the German Fifth Ward for the Democratic party.⁸⁴

Whatever the party, Germans by 1864 exerted a considerable presence in Wheeling politics. The part they played in the sectional drama unfolding in 1860 and in the statehood movement between 1861 and 1863 meant that they could no longer be ignored for positions in government. Ironically, given their pre-war role, as they began to win public office in the post-Civil War years, most won through the Democratic party. In 1864-65, six Germans served on the city council; all were Democrats. In South Wheeling, where Germans made up over half the polity, they dominated local government offices. But there, Germans split loyalty between the Republicans and the Democrats. However, a new German immigration would reshape the city in the 1870s and 1880s, altering the status, culture, and political power of Wheeling's dominant ethnic community, and reinforcing the transnational character of ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

Events in Germany helped reshape Wheeling twice in those crucial decades preceding the Civil War. Economic stagnation and archaic social and political institutions sent a wave of immigrants looking for economic opportunity, which the city provided. By the late 1840s, Germans had established themselves in the commercial and industrial life of the city. Like other groups involved in commerce, they chafed against proslavery politics that constrained the impact of the market economy. At the same time, some of these Germans benefited from the political clout of Virginia's "slave power." Then, in 1848, revolutions in Europe would bring a new wave of German immigrants, many of whom brought hopes for involvement in a more democratic and more egalitarian society where they might experience both political and economic opportunities. Many of these immigrants, during the political crisis of the 1850s, occupied a more plebeian world of small stores, artisan shops, and wage labor. They experienced the constraints of the slave society with fewer of the benefits. In Wheeling, these two groups were residentially

segregated; the first lived principally in the north end, the second was concentrated in the south.

The story of these two groups caught between the impact of a revolution in Europe and one that shook the United States with even greater force a decade later, provides a number of insights on the history of this era. First, it suggests the barriers that German immigrants confronted in a slave state. Certainly, those who were opposed to slavery operated in a political culture without many options. Pro-northern sentiments confronted a hostility that muted voices that might have earlier supported Free-Soilism, a position that ultimately proved attractive to the Germans in the south end of Wheeling. Second, as has been demonstrated in other studies of immigrant political behavior in the 1850s, the city's Germans were not a united group. Religion and economic status, in particular, divided the community's Democrats and Republicans. While they might unite when attacked, Catholic and wealthier Germans found a comfortable home in the Democratic party; more plebeian and Protestant Germans gravitated toward the Republicans. This finding supports the work of many earlier scholars, but carries the story forward a bit to explore just how the Civil War impacted that political behavior.

Finally, we might flip this story around and ask what insights the Civil War era might provide about the Germans of West Virginia. In that critical time, Wheeling's German community demonstrated the transnational character of ethnic groups. They implanted much of their culture and many of their institutions in their new home, but maintained critical attachments to their homeland. The post-1848 immigrants who would change the city's politics came directly to Wheeling because they had familial or local ties there and because those friends and family members wrote home about opportunities. In saloons, coffee houses, and singing societies or at gymnastic exhibitions, concerts, and picnics, recent arrivals made new connections and let established Germans know about events at home. At the same time newer Germans enjoyed the freedoms and joys of Fourth of July picnics or parades on Washington's birthday. New social and political ideas thus traveled back and forth across

the Atlantic but also interacted with political events in both places. In Wheeling, the integration of new arrivals did not lead to harmony, but mixed with the city's unique location in the sectional politics of the 1850s to create deep divisions within the German community.

NOTES

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1. Wheeling *Daily Intelligencer*, 12 Oct. 1860, 3; 13 Oct., 3.
2. The most complete recent work on Germans and the coming of the Civil War is Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Of course, there has been a long debate in the historical literature over whether Germans supported Lincoln. An excellent sampling of this literature is contained in Frederick C. Luebke, ed., *Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971).
3. *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 Oct. 1860, 3; 26 Sept. 1860, 3.
4. Among the leading Douglas Democrats in the north end were John Zoeckler, John Pfarr, William Kryter, and William Klinkler. See *Intelligencer*, 2 Aug. 1860, 3. For the formation of the German Wide Awakes in South Wheeling, see *Daily Intelligencer*, 8 Sept. 1860, 3.
5. See David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 62-3; Jon Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), chap. 1.
6. William Freehling's recent work suggests just how important the defection of this slave-state region was to the eventual triumph of the Union Army. See Freehling, *The South vs. The South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. chaps. 4-5. For studies that emphasize how divided the mountain South was generally, see John Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of

- Tennessee Press, 1989). For a view of the Wheeling area more specifically, see Kenneth W. Noe, "Deadened Color and Colder Horror": Rebecca Harding Davis and the Myth of Unionist Appalachia," in *Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes: Back Talk from an American Region*, ed. Dwight Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 67-84.
7. J. D. B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States . . . a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, D.C., A. O. P. Nicholson, 1854), 195, 326-31.
 8. L. Diane Barnes, "Urban Rivalry in the Upper Ohio Valley: Wheeling and Pittsburgh in the Nineteenth Century," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 123 (July 1999): 222-5; Elizabeth Brand Monroe, *The Wheeling Bridge Case: Its Significance in American Law and Technology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 32-6.
 9. Wheeling figures were compiled from DeBow, *Statistical View*, 326-31; Robert Simmons, "Wheeling and Its Hinterland: An Egalitarian Society?" (Ph.D. diss., West Virginia University, 1990), 174; and from a count of 3,499 voting-age males in the Manuscript Census schedules, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, for Ohio County, available on microfilm in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University (hereafter cited as 1860 manuscript census schedules, WVRHC). Figures for Lynchburg and Petersburg are from L. Diane Barnes, "Hammer and Hand in the Old South: Artisan Workers in Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1860," (Ph.D. diss., West Virginia University, 2000), 170. Richmond's numbers are derived from Werner Steger, "'United to Support, but Not Combined to Injure': Free Workers and Immigrants in Richmond, Virginia, during the Era of Sectionalism, 1847-1865," (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1999), 127-133.
 10. Barnes, "Hammer and Hand," chap. 1; Steven Elliott Tripp, *Yankee Town, Southern City: Race and Class Relations in Civil War Lynchburg* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), chap. 1; Steger, "United to Support," 130.
 11. Robert L. Morris, "The Wheeling *Daily Intelligencer* and the Civil War," (Ph.D. diss., West Virginia University, 1964), 23-4; Barnes, "Urban Rivalry in the Upper Ohio Valley," pp. 222-3.
 12. Richard Orr Curry, *A House Divided: A Study of Statehood Politics and the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), chap. 2; Morris, "The Wheeling *Daily Intelligencer* and the Civil War," 13; Charles Henry Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 259-61.
 13. Monroe, *Wheeling Bridge Case*, 145-6; Barnes, "Urban Rivalry in the Upper Ohio Valley," 225. Also, see James G. Dilts, *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, The Nation's First Railroad, 1828-1853* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
 14. William Prescott Smith, *A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: J. Murphy & Co., 1853), 186. On the battle over

the terminus of the B&O, see Curry, *A House Divided*, 23; and Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, 241-2. For an outstanding discussion of the role of railroads and sectional politics in southwestern Virginia, see Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

15. On the effort of Wheeling interests to block the panhandle right-of-way, see *Daily Intelligencer*, 7 May 1853, 2; 13 Aug. 1853, 2.
16. Herrmann Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), vol. 2, 108-9; William G. Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion: Virginia and the Second Party System, 1824-1861* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 47; Charles A. Wingerter, *History of Greater Wheeling and Vicinity* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), 48-9.
17. Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, 15-27.
18. These four locations were four of the top five points of origin for Virginia Germans. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth, *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1864), 520; Guenter Moltmann, "The Pattern of German Emigration to the United States in the Nineteenth Century," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, ed. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 17-21; Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, 27-34.
19. This percentage would be far higher if it included all who had German surnames. These numbers were compiled from the Manuscript Census schedules, *Seventh Census of the U.S. 1850*, Ohio County, Virginia, WVRHC; and from Simmons, "Wheeling and the Hinterland," 174-5.
20. This profile is drawn from 714 German-born men in the 1850 manuscript census schedules for Ohio County, Virginia. Information on Stifel and Bayha comes from profiles supplied in Gibson Lamb Cranmer, *History of Wheeling City and Ohio County, West Virginia, and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1902), 622, 683.
21. *Ohio County (WV) Index, Volume 1: Index to the County Court Order Books, 1777-1881*, compiled by Kenneth Fischer Craft Jr. (n.p.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1997), 37, 51, 183; Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion*, 50-54.
22. Schuricht, *History of the German Element*, vol. 2, 110; J. H. Newton, G. G. Nichols, and A. G. Sprankle, *History of the Pan-Handle: Being Historical Collections of the Counties of Ohio, Brook, Marshall, and Hancock, West Virginia* (Wheeling: J. A. Caldwell, 1879), 194-6, 228-9; William's *Wheeling Directory, City Guide, and Business Mirror* (Wheeling: John H. Thompson, 1856), 40, 42; *Ohio County (WV) Index*, vol. 1, pp. 116-7. This corresponds to the large German community in Richmond, described quite well in Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 52-54.
23. The phrase is Stephan Born's, quoted in Bruce Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, 35.

I also wish to thank Katherine Aaslestad for helping me contextualize the significance of this public culture for German immigrants.

24. Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, chap. 2; Carl J. Friedrich, "The European Background," in *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848*, ed. A. E. Zucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 3-25 (quote from Carl Schurz on 16-7). For the importance of the United States in the imagination of Germans in the 1840s, see Hartmut Keil, "German Working-Class Immigration and the Social Democratic Tradition of Germany," in *German Workers' Culture in the United States 1850 to 1920*, ed. Hartmut Keil (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 2-3.
 25. This information comes from "Alien Declarations," in the Ohio County Court Records, Reel 158, in WVRHC. Kimball, in *American City, Southern Place*, 53-4, found that Germans in Richmond were less interested in naturalization.
 26. Tabulated from the 1860 manuscript census schedules, WVRHC.
 27. The occupational structure of Wheeling, by ethnic group (percentages), tabulated from the 1860 manuscript census schedules. The occupational categories used were as follows: Upper—merchant, manufacturer, proprietor, white collar, and professional; Middle—artisans and factory craftsmen (skilled glass and iron workers); Lower—miners, laborers, and service jobs.
- | Group | Upper | Middle | Lower | Number |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| American | 33.4 | 53.2 | 13.4 | 605 |
| British | 24.0 | 46.4 | 29.6 | 125 |
| German | 20.7 | 43.4 | 35.9 | 546 |
| Irish | 15.5 | 30.2 | 54.3 | 212 |
28. *Daily Intelligencer*, 29 Dec. 1853, 3; 8 Dec. 1855, 3; John R. Commons, David J. Saposs, Edward B. Mittelman, Henry E. Hoagland, John B. Andrews, Selig Perlman, Dan D. Lescohier, Elizabeth Brandeis, and Philip Taft, *History of Labour in the United States*, Vol. 1 (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), 569.
 29. Samples were compiled from the 1860 manuscript census schedules, WVRHC.
 30. *Daily Intelligencer*, 22 Sept. 1852, 3; Schuricht, *History of the German Element*, vol. 2, 34; Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 210.
 31. *Daily Intelligencer*, 23 Sept. 1852, 3; 21 Oct. 1852, 3; Schuricht, *History of the German Element*, vol. 2, 34. On the importance of the Turners, see Augustus J. Pahl, "The Turner," in *The Forty-Eighters*, ed. Zucker, 79-110.
 32. *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 May 1853, 3; 12 Sept. 1853, 3; 14 Sept. 1853, 3; 25 Mar. 1854, 2.

33. *Daily Intelligencer*, 26 May 1853, 3; 16 June 1853, 2; Wingerter, *History of Greater Wheeling*, 453-5.
34. *Daily Intelligencer*, 30 Dec. 1853, 3; 9 Jan. 1854, 2; 10 Jan. 1854, 3. See also Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, 188-91.
35. *Daily Intelligencer*, 17 Mar., 3, 21 Mar., 2, 24 Mar., 2-3, and 25 Mar., 2, all 1854.
36. The list of prominent Germans attached to the Democrats included Gottlieb Bayha, Jacob Berger, John Hoffman, Christian Hess, William Miller, and John Pfarr, among others. Berger was perhaps the key. John Ingham notes that the Wheeling iron and steel elite was more open and fluid than its counterparts in other cities; even Catholics were accepted into the group. John N. Ingham, *The Iron Barons: A Social Analysis of an American Urban Elite, 1874-1965* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 69-78.
37. Anti-German riots in Louisville and Cincinnati received considerable coverage in the Wheeling *Daily Intelligencer*; see 27 Sept. 1854, 3, 6 Apr. 1854, 3; 9 Aug. 1855, 3. For German mobilization against efforts to restrict voting, see *Daily Intelligencer*, 6 Feb. 1855; 28 Apr. 1855, 3; and for the German support for the Know-Nothings, 1 June 1855, 2; 4 June 1855, 2. About 35% of the German households in Wheeling were Catholic. See John M. Lenhart, *History of St. Alphonsus Church* (Wheeling, St. Alphonsus Church, 1956), 34. Also, see Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, chap. 7. Steger, in "United to Support," 166-7, notes that the anti-abolitionism of Germans in Richmond also diminished the appeal of nativism in that city.
38. *Daily Intelligencer*, 4 Nov. 1852, 3; 27 May 1853, 3; 29 May 1855, 2. These party votes carried no antislavery implications, as neither party broke with the proslavery sentiments of Virginia; see Henry T. Shanks, *The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847-1861* (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 48-51.
39. *Daily Intelligencer*, 4 July 1853, 2; 6 July 1855, 3; 23 Feb. 1860, 3; 25 Sept. 1854, 3; 23 Feb. 1855, 3; 15 May 1855, 3; *Wheeling Argus*, 19 Sept. 1856, 3.
40. Edward C. Wolf, "Wheeling's German Singing Societies," *West Virginia History* 42 (fall-winter 1980-81): 1-56. Throughout the United States, Germans gained respect from Americans for their musical societies, even in the face of nativism. For one example, see the letter from Martin Weitz to his father, July 29, 1855, reproduced in *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, ed. Walter D. Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 345-6.
41. *Daily Intelligencer*, 1 Nov. 1854, 3; 17 July 1857, 3; *William's Wheeling Directory*, 1856, 42.
42. Wingerter, *History of Greater Wheeling*, 494-504; *William's Wheeling Directory*, 1856, 40-1.
43. *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 Jan. 1856, 2; 6 June 1854, 3; Newton, *History of the Pan-Handle*, 229.
44. Robert L. Plummer and William C. Handlan, *A History of Fire Fighting in Wheeling* (Wheeling?, n.p., 1925), 50; *Daily Intelligencer*, 4 Dec. 1855, 3; 28 Apr. 1855, 3.

45. *Daily Intelligencer*, 9 Oct. 1856, 2.
46. *Daily Argus*, 19 Sept. 1856, 1; *Daily Intelligencer*, 9 Oct. 1856, 2.
47. *Daily Intelligencer*, 27 Nov. 1856, 3; 5 Nov. 1856, 3; *Daily Argus*, 19 Sept. 1856, 1-2.
48. *Daily Intelligencer*, 27 Jan. 1857, 3; 29 May 1857, 3; 1 June 1857, 3.
49. Leonard Richards's fascinating new book, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), highlights the pressures that proslavery interests in the Democratic party were able to bring to bear to keep the South united; see esp., chap. 8. For a more pronounced German submission to the "slave power" in Richmond, see Steger, "United to Support," 166-7.
50. *Daily Intelligencer*, 28 Oct. 1856, 2; 13 Apr. 1857, 2; 8 July 1857, 2.
51. *Daily Intelligencer*, 7 July 1857, 2; 18 July 1857, 3.
52. Richards, *The Slave Power*, 202-8, wonderfully captures the extremes to which the Democratic party was willing to go to push the Lecompton Constitution, and the political toll it took. For the Germans in Cincinnati and Cleveland, see Levine, *Spirit of 1848*, 252; for Pittsburgh, see Michael F. Holt, *Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh, 1848-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).
53. *Daily Intelligencer*, 26 Jan. 1858, 3; 29 Jan. 1858, 2.
54. *Daily Intelligencer*, 26 Jan. 1859.
55. Five of the six members of the publishing committee of the paper hailed from the north and center sections of the city, *Virginische Staats-Zeitung*, 26 Mar. 1859. Likewise, the wealthiest Germans in Wheeling—Peter Beck, Jacob Berger, G. W. Franzheim, Christian Hess, Sebastian Lutz, William Miller, Jacob Zimmer, John Pfarr, and Lewis Stifel, all lived in either the north or center sections of the city or on the island. Wealth and residence were determined from the 1860 manuscript census schedules, WVRHC. Suggestions about the heavier Catholic concentration in the north end are based upon marriages in the Catholic church reported in the Ohio County Court records. I was able to link 50 marriages (1846-56) between German Catholics to names in city directories and the census manuscripts; 54% of the Catholics lived in the north end, 24% in the center of Wheeling, and only 22% in the south end. Ohio County Court Records, Reel 86, Ohio County Marriages, WVRHC.
56. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), chaps. 7-8; Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of Civil War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1992), chap. 9.
57. *Daily Intelligencer*, 8 Jan. 1858, 2; 1 Feb. 1858, 2; 5 Feb. 1858, 2; 10 Feb. 1858, 2. This, of course, also fed into the older trans-Appalachian hostility to the Tidewater planters; see Curry, *House Divided*, chap. 2; and Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, chap. 10.
58. *Daily Intelligencer*, 22 Jan. 1859, 1; 19 May 1859, 2; 13 June 1859, 3. For a

profile of the Wheeling Republican party, see Simmons, "Wheeling and the Hinterland," 155-6.

59. *Daily Intelligencer*, 16 Feb. 1859, 3. Information on the leaders came from the 1860 manuscript census schedules; the biographical sketches can be found in Cramner, *History of Wheeling City*.
60. *Daily Intelligencer*, 27 May 1859, 3; 6 July 1859, 3; 5 Sept. 1859, 2; 20 Oct. 1859, 3. The prominent German Democrats arrested by the police were Charles Zoeckler and William Klinkler.
61. J. E. Jacobs to Archibald Campbell, 10 Jan. 1860, in Archibald Campbell Papers, WVRHC; *Daily Intelligencer*, 2 Aug. 1860, 3; 6 Aug. 1860, 3.
62. *Daily Intelligencer*, 6 Aug. 1860, 3; 21-27 Aug. 1860, 3.
63. *Daily Intelligencer*, 13 Aug. 1860, 3; 8 Sept. 1860, 3; 14 Sept. 1860, 2; 15 Sept. 1860, 3.
64. This profile relies on names listed in the Wheeling newspapers between 1859 and 1863, and compares those names with information from the 1860 manuscript census schedules, WVRHC. See also n. 55 (above) for information concerning Catholics.
65. *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 Sept. 1860, 3; 8 Sept. 1860, 3; 17 Sept. 1860, 3; 26 Sept. 1860, 3; 5 Oct. 1860, 3; 13 Oct. 1860, 3; Jacobs to Campbell, 10 Jan. 1860, Campbell Papers.
66. *Daily Intelligencer*, 7 Nov. 1860, 2; Chester D. Hubbard to Will Hubbard, 8 Oct. 1860, 7 Nov. 1860, in Hubbard Family Papers, WVRHC; Clippings, undated, in the Campbell Papers.
67. *Daily Intelligencer*, 10 Nov. 1860, 3; Chester D. Hubbard to Will Hubbard, 10 Nov. 1860, 25 Nov. 1860, and 3 Jan. 1861, all in Hubbard Family Papers.
68. Chester Hubbard to Will Hubbard, 16 Feb. 1861, Hubbard Family Papers; Sherrard Clemens to Alexander Campbell, 23 Jan. 1861, Campbell Papers; *Daily Intelligencer*, 7 Jan. 1861, 3; 14 Jan. 1861, 2; Wheeling *Daily Union*, 2 Feb. 1861, 2; 4 Feb. 1861, 2; 6 Feb. 1861, 2.
69. *Daily Intelligencer*, 5 Feb. 1861.
70. *Daily Union*, 6 May 1861, 3; 7 May 1861, 2; *Daily Intelligencer*, 16 Apr. 1861, 3; 25 Apr. 1861, 3; 20 May 1861, 3.
71. *Daily Intelligencer*, 25 May 1861, 3; "Traitors in Wheeling," (ca. May 1861) in Campbell Papers; *Daily Union*, 7 May 1861, 3.
72. *Daily Intelligencer*, 31 Jan. 1861, 3; 24 May 1861, 3; 25 Oct. 1861, 1; *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of West Virginia for the Year Ending December 31, 1865* (Wheeling: John Frew, 1866), 394-6, 405.
73. *Daily Intelligencer*, 12 July 1861, 3; 17 July 1861, 3; *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of West Virginia for the Year Ending December 31, 1864* (Wheeling: John F. McDermott, 1865), 604.
74. *Daily Intelligencer*, 14 May 1861, 2; 18 July 1861, 3; 31 Aug. 1861, 3; 24 Oct. 1861, 3.

75. *Wheeling Daily Register*, 23 Sept. 1863, 3; *Daily Intelligencer*, 25 Dec. 1861, 3; Chester Hubbard to Will Hubbard, 20 Sept. 1861, in Hubbard Family Papers.
76. *Daily Register*, 23 Sept. 1863, 3; *Daily Intelligencer*, 13 Nov. 1861, 3; 28 Mar. 1862, 3; 7 July 1862, 3.
77. Louis A. Myers to *Daily Intelligencer*, 24 Jan. 1862, in Campbell Papers; *Adjutant General's Report, 1864*, 602-3; *Daily Intelligencer*, 16 Sept. 1862, 3; Dana Hubbard to Will Hubbard, 13 Aug. 1862, Hubbard Family Papers.
78. *Daily Intelligencer*, 11 Feb. 1862, 3; 5 Aug. 1862, 2; *Daily Press*, 26 Jan. 1863, 3; Curry, *House Divided*, 94-8.
79. For labor actions, see *Daily Intelligencer*, 2 Dec. 1862, 2; *Daily Register*, 23 Sept. 1863, 2; 6 Oct. 1863, 3; 24 Oct. 1863, 3; *Daily Press*, 28 Jan. 1863, 3.
80. *Daily Press*, 7 Feb. 1863, 2; 9 Mar. 1863, 2; *Daily Register*, 24 Oct. 1863, 3; 25 Oct. 1863, 3; *Daily Intelligencer*, 30 May 1863, 3; 23 Oct. 1863, 2-3.
81. *Daily Register*, 13 Oct. 1863, 1; 5 Nov. 1863, 3; 20 Nov. 1863, 3; 12 Jan. 1864, 1; 25 Jan. 1864, 2.
82. *Daily Register*, 25 Jan. 1864, 2; 27 Jan. 1864, 2; *Daily Intelligencer*, 26 Jan. 1862, 2.
83. *Daily Register*, 22 Sept. 1864, 2; 23 Sept. 1864, 2; 4 Oct. 1864, 3; 18 Oct. 1864, 2; 21 Oct. 1864, 2.
84. *Daily Intelligencer*, 1 Nov. 1864, 3; 9 Nov. 1864, 3; *Daily Register*, 21 Oct. 1864, 2; 4 Nov. 1864, 3; 9 Nov. 1864, 3. On the dedication of St. Alphonsus Church, see John Lenhart, *History of St. Alphonsus Church (Wheeling: n.p., 1956)*, 34.