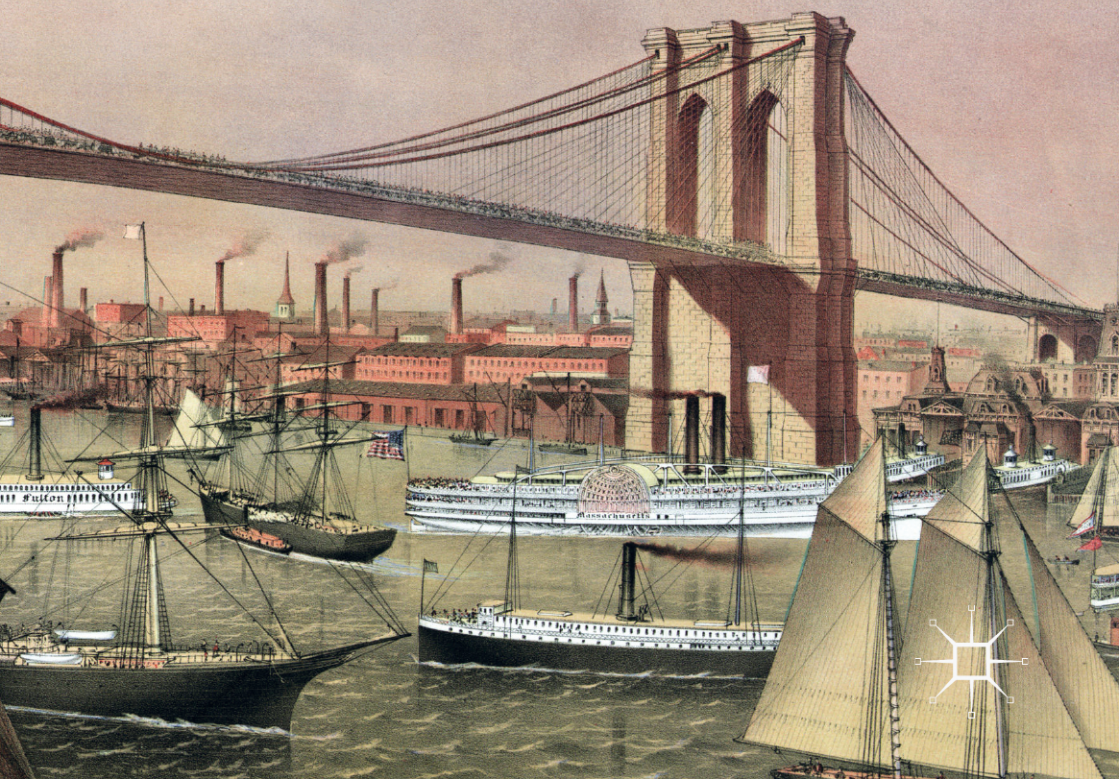


# Brooklyn's Renaissance

*Commerce, Culture, and Community  
in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*

**Melissa Meriam Bullard**



# Brooklyn's Renaissance



Brooklyn from the East River, nineteenth-century bird's eye view

Melissa Meriam Bullard

# Brooklyn's Renaissance

Commerce, Culture, and Community  
in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World

palgrave  
macmillan

Melissa Meriam Bullard  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

ISBN 978-3-319-50175-8  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-50176-5

ISBN 978-3-319-50176-5 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017936657

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2017

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration © Science History Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature  
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*In memory of my mother Julia Ellen Powers Meriam, whose love  
of history inspired my own*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Books, like arts foundations, receive sustenance from the encouragement and support of many people. My interest in Brooklyn was sparked almost serendipitously by my curiosity to uncover the story behind Luther Wyman's portrait that my mother had inherited from a very distant cousin. I first visited Brooklyn with an eye to researching there during a meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Manhattan. My first stop was the Brooklyn Historical Society, whose friendly staff have over the years provided me invaluable guidance and resources. I had the same encouraging experience in the Brooklyn Collection at the Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Museum, Prospect Park, and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of New York University, and Packer Institute, as well as in the Brooklyn and New York municipal archives. Even an impromptu visit to the First Unitarian church, across the street from the Brooklyn Historical Society, proved fruitful for my research thanks to helpful and friendly staff. Subsequent visits to New York drew me to the New-York Historical Society, the New York Society Library, the New York Public Library, the New York branch of the National Archives, and the offices of the New England Society. A meeting of the American Historical Association in Boston gave me a chance to use resources in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

I participated in two National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) seminars that greatly facilitated my late education in early US history, one in Mystic, Connecticut, at the Munson Institute, that immersed me in the Atlantic maritime world. At the NEH seminar hosted by the Library Company in Philadelphia, I received assistance from the library's welcoming staff and those of the Athenaeum, American Philosophical Society, and

the Bartrum Botanical Garden as I chased down some early US–British connections. I am grateful to the leaders and participants at both seminars who were such intelligent interlocutors about my work. Other forays took me to archives in Montgomery, Alabama, Washington DC, and west to Los Angeles to explore additional leads. I have had the advantage of fellowship and leave support from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), its Institute for the Arts and Humanities, Medieval and Early Modern Studies program, and a Z. Smith Reynolds fellowship. I also benefited from helpful critiques by members of the Triangle Intellectual History Seminar and from members of my department. My colleagues Bill Ferris, Joe Glaathaar, Ellen Wittig, Flora Cassen, and Tobias Hof, kindly read and critiqued all or sections of the manuscript. Professor Zsolt Nagy, then a graduate student, helped enter material into my database, the design for which Rodney Henson of the Odum Institute lent his technical knowhow. Bill Schultz and Joe Ryan of UNC’s Information Technologies Services patiently adapted and expanded it to my needs. My editors at Palgrave Macmillan, first Kristin Purdy, and then Molly Beck and her assistant Oliver Dyer have been unfailingly helpful in guiding the book into production.

During my years of research, I had fruitful opportunities to explore holdings in Britain. During a semester as director of the UNC honors program in London, I worked in the Baring Archives and read voraciously at the British Library. I also ventured to Liverpool to the archives of the Maritime Museum, Liverpool Record Office and Public Library, and Liverpool University library and archive. In 2011, a visiting position at Queen Mary’s, University of London, gave me opportunity to lecture on my work and continue exploring the English side of Atlantic exchange. My own hopping back and forth across the Atlantic drove home how vital transatlantic ties were for understanding the appetite for European and Renaissance culture in the fledgling USA and throughout the nineteenth century.

I am most appreciative of the many friends and colleagues who have encouraged my leap into the nineteenth century while keeping one foot in the Italian Renaissance. Among those who deserve special mention for their generous hospitality are David and Penny Palmer, friends from graduate school days, who hosted me during many a quick research trip to New York. Anna Glen Vietor expressed immediate interest in my curiosity about her Marshall ancestors, owners of the Black Ball Line of Liverpool Packets, and invited me home to view her collection of elegant



ship portraits. Professors Stella Fletcher and Kate Lowe spurred my research into London and Liverpool materials. My friends Diane Zervas and Michael Hirst lent me their lovely London flat several summers while they sojourned in Italy. My husband and son watched patiently as I filled my study with books and materials about Brooklyn and Liverpool and US history. Special tribute goes to my mother in whose memory I dedicate this book. I grew up on the stories she told about her Alabama ancestors, how much they prized education and their early English and New England origins. Her nanny used to tell her, “The time to have cake is when cake is being passed.” That remembered remark, together with my solving the mystery behind Luther Wyman’s portrait, spurred me to take this leap into his world.

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Parallel Renaissances in the Atlantic World</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Black Ball Business and Commercial Networks</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>First Steps Toward Brooklyn's Renaissance</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Symphony of the Arts</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Sociability, Civil War, and a Diverted Renaissance</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Culture of War Relief</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Brooklyn's Changing Complexion</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Impact on the Arts</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>A Fading Renaissance</b>	<b>377</b>

<b>Appendix</b>	423
<b>Works Cited</b>	427
<b>Index</b>	439

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

## ARCHIVES

BA	Baring Archive, London
BAHC	Baring Archive, House Correspondence
BALB	Baring Archive, Letterbook
BAM	Brooklyn Academy of Music
BHS	Brooklyn Historical Society
BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records	BHS, Collection of Brooklyn, N.Y. Civil War relief associations records, ephemera and other material, <i>c.</i> 1794–1964 (bulk 1861–66), ARC 245
BMA	Brooklyn Museum Archive
BMA, BPS Minutes	BMA, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Records, 1823–1980, Minutes of the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn, 1857–1917
BMA. BAA Minutes	BMA, Brooklyn Art Association, Minutes 1864–1905
LOC	Library of Congress
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
NARA-NYC, RG	National Archives and Research Administration, New York City, Record Group
NARA-Washington, DC	National Archives and Research Administration, Washington, DC
NYHS	New-York Historical Society
NYPL	New York Public Library
NYSL	New York Society Library
PRO	Public Record Office, Liverpool

## NEWSPAPERS

BE	<i>Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i>
BU	<i>Brooklyn Daily Union</i>
LA	<i>Liverpool Advertiser</i>
LM	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>
NYE	<i>New York Evangelist</i>
NYN	<i>New York Daily News</i>
NYH	<i>New York Herald</i>
NYT	<i>New York Times</i>
TB	<i>Troy Budget</i>
TP	<i>Troy Post</i>
TS	<i>Troy Sentinel</i>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Frontispiece: Brooklyn from the East River, nineteenth-century bird's eye view	ii
Fig. 2.1 Canning Dock Liverpool showing the Custom House 1841	26
Fig. 2.2 William Roscoe (1753–1851) portrait, oil on canvas by Sir Archer Shee, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool	34
Fig. 2.3 Porcelain bust of William Roscoe, by Franceys, Liverpool, that James Mowry sent as a gift to Thomas Jefferson in 1820	35
Fig. 3.1 The Black Ball Line Packet Ship <i>New York</i> off Ailsa Craig, signed and dated, lower right: “W[illiam]. Clark 1836,” oil on canvas	67
Fig. 3.2 Five-piece silver service by Gelston, Ladd & Co. and William I. Tenney, silversmiths, engraved and presented in 1842 to Luther B. Wyman by the Masters of the Old Line of Liverpool Packets	92
Fig. 4.1 First Unitarian Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, hand-colored lithograph by Ezra Bisbee, published by A. Spooner & Co. 1845	118
Fig. 5.1 Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1861, shortly after its completion	199
Fig. 5.2 The Brooklyn Academy of Music during the opening concert on January 15, 1861	206
Fig. 6.1 Pedestrian Bridge over Montague Street, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair, 1864. Lithograph on woven paper	211
Fig. 7.1 Luther Boynton Wyman (1804–1879) c. 1869, oil portrait on canvas by Matthew Wilson (1814–1892)	257

Fig. 7.2	Great Hall, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair 1864, viewed from the First Tier Balcony	289
Fig. 7.3	Title page, autograph album assembled by Luther B. Wyman for the 1864 Brooklyn Sanitary Fair	294
Fig. 7.4	The Old New England Kitchen, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair 1864	298
Fig. 8.1	Merchant ships unloading at South Street docks New York City 1870s	314
Fig. 10.1	Currier & Ives lithograph entitled: “The great East River suspension bridge: connecting the cities of New York & Brooklyn from New York looking southeast, 1877” (imagined)	406

## Introduction

Brooklyn has always been a place of possibility where dreams big and small can hatch. “Brooklyn Works” was the title of the 2004 opening exhibition at the Brooklyn Historical Society’s elegant, newly renovated quarters on Pierrepont and Clinton Streets in Brooklyn Heights. The multimedia exhibit highlighted four centuries of unheralded labor by thousands of men, women, and children, mostly poor immigrants from around the globe, who settled in Brooklyn, found employment, and explored the possibilities their new lives offered. That very working-class immigrant demography gave rise to Brooklyn’s distinct ethnic neighborhoods and ethnic identities, subject of much nostalgia as new gentrification threatens to erode them.

Brooklyn also works in another sense, as a vibrant center of the creative arts and of start-up companies, many housed in old repurposed nineteenth- and early twentieth-century factory and warehouse spaces and former waterfront sweat shops. Since the early 1800s Brooklyn’s traditionally lower rents and propinquity to Manhattan’s cultural venues made it an attractive place of residence for struggling musicians, artists, authors, and actors, many of them early European émigrés. But how Brooklyn first developed its noted reputation as an arts-friendly community, subject of this book, has been less understood and little studied. Lower rents and proximity to the larger metropolis do not by themselves explain Brooklyn’s receptivity and active encouragement of the arts. Rather, that welcoming attitude toward the creative arts traces its roots to the mid-nineteenth



century when a core of wealthy commercial men and their families, who had settled the Brooklyn Heights neighborhood, created a cultural renaissance in their adopted city. Working together they laid the groundwork for Brooklyn's modern cultural scene by building the societies and institutions that encouraged the arts and gave them physical spaces in which to develop. The explosion of the arts in Brooklyn before and after the Civil War merits attention, for Brooklyn's renaissance at the hands of her then commercial and cultural elite became the foundation for the thriving arts in Brooklyn today.

Most of Brooklyn's early cultural patrons participated directly or indirectly in the Atlantic trade through their businesses on Wall Street and South Street in Manhattan. The world of Atlantic commerce brought them in close contact with European traditions and the latest in musical and artistic fashion. Their cosmopolitanism fueled the dream to make it possible to enjoy in Brooklyn the high-toned cultural amenities offered in Europe and developing across the East River in Manhattan. These nineteenth-century cultural as well as commercial entrepreneurs founded arts societies, envisioned and financed the construction of libraries and schools and the first Academy of Music, which became Brooklyn's nineteenth-century cultural hub. They also strove to shape a civic identity for Brooklyn separate from Manhattan, one that centered around the arts. Now, more than a century since Brooklyn relinquished its urban independence and became one of the five boroughs of Greater New York City, that arts identity still holds alongside Brooklyn's heritage as a haven for working-class and immigrant peoples. Both these strands of Brooklyn's modern identity which trace their heritage into the nineteenth century remain full of dreams and possibilities today.

A reviewer of the "Brooklyn Works" exhibit remarked on the contrast between the populist, nitty gritty subject of the exhibit and its location in the Brooklyn Historical Society's elegant renaissance revival edifice designed by George B. Post, architect of the New York Stock Exchange, which buildings the author said reflected nineteenth-century aristocratic impulses.<sup>1</sup> The motivations behind the Brooklyn Renaissance, which included the founding and construction of the Historical Society's headquarters, however "aristocratic" they might seem today, had roots in the Atlantic World of its time, where commerce ruled and its purveyors could

<sup>1</sup> NYT, 6 February 2004, p. E35.

consider themselves Renaissance-style merchant patrons through their encouragement of the arts. At that time these haut-bourgeois families nurtured a civilizing ethos and sense of duty to endorse refined culture and education that they might serve as uplifting examples to their grubby and untutored urban neighbors. As in George Post's buildings, in the nineteenth century, commerce and culture went hand and hand. And during the explosion of the arts during the Brooklyn Renaissance, commerce and culture linked to consolidate Brooklyn's sense of communal identity around them.

More generally, the Brooklyn Renaissance formed part of a series of urban renaissances on both sides of the Atlantic in the long nineteenth century. The pervasive free trade, liberal ideology of the day sanctioned the accumulation of private wealth. Their new prosperity from commerce and industry enabled urban elites, notably in places like Liverpool, to develop high-toned tastes in culture, which in turn helped legitimate their claims to social prominence and as arbiters of taste. The historical precedent of the Italian Renaissance, patronized by wealthy merchant princes, provided an enticing model for moderns to emulate, whether in Liverpool or Brooklyn. The civilizing impulses that nineteenth-century urban elites expressed in their pursuit of gentility and that led them actively to create cultural spaces where like-minded, genteel folk could congregate, should also be seen against the background of rapid, unsettling economic and social change over the course of the century. Polite cultural venues not only bestowed social legitimacy, but provided elite families a welcome retreat from the wild fluctuations in the boom and bust world of Atlantic commerce where the increasingly impersonal nature of the marketplace heightened risk and competitiveness. In a city such as Brooklyn, whose nineteenth-century population doubled every decade, elite families also felt encroached upon by the swelling masses of their social inferiors whose greater numbers threatened to displace them from political, if not economic power. The disruptions brought by the Civil War challenged the earlier model of genteel society, and by century's end what later came to be called popular culture had significantly eroded the perimeters of elite taste.

The complex story of how the Brooklyn Renaissance unfolded, blossomed at mid-century, and then faded after the Civil War engages a number of related issues. This book illustrates how commercial networking facilitated local cultural networks. It shows how buildings contributed to changing relationships between public and private spaces and configured the consumption of culture in Brooklyn. It illuminates the difficulties

elites faced in their attempts to maintain spatial separations in light of demand for larger and larger cultural venues such as the Academy of Music. The dynamics of class, power, and status played out in the lives of Brooklyn's cultural patrons and exacerbated divisions within the city's local elite. Finally, urban change and its relationship to cultural memory illuminates why Brooklyn's renaissance impulses faded in the new Gilded Age.

This book, like a Renaissance tapestry or a mosaic, has been crafted from many elements. Events and individuals work like threads or small tiles that compose its larger design. Brooklyn's renaissance, that is, its cultural awakening in the mid-nineteenth century, compares metaphorically to those art forms on two levels. On one level, its founders among the city's commercial and business elite, working together, taking small steps at a time, built an arts district centered in Brooklyn Heights, whose larger composition only became visible later, after the disruptions of the Civil War. In fact, movements that have been designated as "renaissance," including the original Italian Renaissance, invariably acquired that label of distinction only in retrospect, viewed from a remove.<sup>2</sup>

The second level of comparison widens our scope to encompass several historical contexts that shaped Brooklyn elites' cultural understanding and thus demarcated the parameters of their patronage practices. Several backstories lend perspectival depth and shading to the tapestry of Brooklyn's renaissance. Those thread-like backstories and how they intertwine signal that the Brooklyn Renaissance engages more than local history. Its roots stretch back in time to the Italian Renaissance and in space well beyond the East River and across the Atlantic. Brooklynites catalyzed their renaissance, but the city's cultural flowering emerged from those wider historical, economic, and cultural influences. It drew energy from the Atlantic World and its thriving transcontinental exchange that anchored on the US side in the Port of New York, along the docks on both the Brooklyn and Manhattan sides of the East River. Brooklyn's merchant patrons of the arts participated actively in this transoceanic

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Jacob Burckhardt's classic work on the Renaissance in Italy, which solidified the idea that Italy was home of the historical Renaissance, first published in Basel in 1860, was only translated into English in 1878: Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. Samuel G. Middlemore (London: C. K. Paul & Co., 1878).

exchange. Through commerce they accumulated the private wealth they used to sustain the arts. They modeled their patronage practices on those of the historical Italian Renaissance filtered through the more recent urban renaissances in Northern England, particularly in Liverpool, Britain's gateway for North Atlantic trade. Early America's connections with Liverpool followed the pathways of transoceanic trade, and the ships plying the Atlantic provided the physical conduits whereby expectations that elite families should sponsor high culture came to America and reached Brooklyn.

In this picture of Brooklyn's renaissance, a third strand personalizes and vivifies Brooklyn's cultural endeavors and connects the broader historical, commercial, and cultural dimensions of our story. This strand traces the contributions of an exemplar, Luther B. Wyman (1804–1879), merchant shipper with the Black Ball Line of Liverpool packets and major impresario of Brooklyn's renaissance. Through his guiding hand and those of his fellow cultural entrepreneurs, we can trace how commerce, cultural awakening, and community awareness grew, interwove, and affected one another. Together they made Brooklyn a proud, arts-friendly community in the decade before the Civil War. Then we witness its fate afterwards too. The Brooklyn Renaissance sits at the intersection of those three story threads, namely cultural context, commercial enterprise, and individual endeavor on behalf of the arts.

This study of Brooklyn's renaissance fills an important gap. No one has written a history of Brooklyn inclusive of the city's cultural affairs since Henry Stiles published his massive three-volume *History of Brooklyn* in 1867–1870. Nor does there exist a recent, carefully researched and documented history of Brooklyn in those formative decades preceding and following the Civil War. Furthermore, certainly no one writing local history has ever illuminated Brooklyn's active participation in the larger Atlantic World of shipping and cultural exchanges and more distant ties to the Italian Renaissance. The historical amnesia regarding Brooklyn's nineteenth-century legacy results in large measure from its annexation in 1898 as one of the boroughs of the City of Greater New York. That union suppressed interest in Brooklyn's earlier history, as the former city, then borough, became absorbed in the Greater New York story. This book seeks to draw attention back to Brooklyn when it was still an independent city, then third-largest in the nation, bursting with ambition and pride to make itself into an arts-friendly metropolis near but separate from Manhattan.

Why an Italian Renaissance scholar chose to write a book about nineteenth-century Brooklyn calls for some clarification. After working on Florentine history and the Medici family, I welcomed a new challenge. I felt drawn to explore how that Italian Renaissance tradition of wealthy merchants such as the Medici patronizing the arts continued in the later Atlantic World. Parallels between the Italian Renaissance and the nineteenth century were first suggested to me many years ago by Felix Gilbert of the Institute for Advanced Study, who wrote about the political and cultural histories in both the Renaissance and modern eras. Another inspiration came from Bernard Bailyn, pioneer in the field now known as the Atlantic World, who recognized early that the inherent instability of merchant cultures in Colonial America made them catalysts for change.

My curiosity to identify the mystery man in an elegant nineteenth-century portrait initially drew me to Brooklyn. By the twenty-first century what the sitter had done or even that he had lived in Brooklyn had long been forgotten as had appreciation of Brooklyn's remarkable renaissance. After much painstaking research, to my surprise, I discovered that the man in the portrait, Luther Boynton Wyman, our shipping merchant and long-time Brooklyn resident, had been a moving spirit in the associational culture that fostered the flowering of the fine arts there. Atlantic commercial exchange between New York Harbor and Liverpool, that he knew so intimately through the Black Ball Line, proved significant for understanding the transatlantic transfer of goods, passengers, and cultural ideals, including a hunger for the fine arts, that expressed itself in early America and by mid-century in Brooklyn.

Once I began digging into Brooklyn's urban and cultural past, certain similarities suggested themselves between merchant patrons in fifteenth-century Italy and those in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic World, especially in England and America. Rapidly urbanizing commercial communities with elevated cultural pretensions emerged notably in Northern England during the early Industrial Revolution. They developed soon thereafter in the US during the decades of expansion, urban growth, and prosperity following Independence. In the Italian Renaissance, in early nineteenth-century Liverpool, and in Antebellum America, commercial men and their families regarded themselves to be members of a cultural as well as business elite. In the liberal and enlightened world of the early nineteenth century, these men of commerce felt a special obligation to improve society. They promoted education and

exposure to the fine arts assiduously. Their collective efforts arose from the associational networks they formed in their commercial and social surroundings. How and why that process unfolded in Brooklyn, later but more rapidly than in other American port cities, such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, is the focus of this book. The renaissance optic I use to explore the flowering and coalescence of the fine arts in Brooklyn helps clarify its notable characteristic, namely how Atlantic commercial networks, collaborative patronage of culture, and civic pride all flowed together around the arts. The enterprise of building an arts-centered community coupled with intense urban pride were orientations shared by Italian Renaissance cities such as Florence; they emerged later in Liverpool and early America, and unfolded in Brooklyn before and after the Civil War. What happened to the arts and their patrons in the changed circumstances after the war in the dawning Gilded Age forms a fascinating coda to the story.

The city's renaissance recovered here illuminates old Brooklyn in the decades before the massive waves of immigrants poured into the city at the end of the nineteenth century and into the next. That huge influx of new arrivals gave the city yet another historical layer and vibrant personality marked by its diverse ethnic neighborhoods and developing industrial base, still visible today. These new Brooklynites, perhaps without knowing, were shaped by and thus, in turn, shaped their modern city on the foundations of cohesive local civic pride and the arts-friendly environment their earlier nineteenth-century predecessors had laid. In the mid-nineteenth century, Brooklyn was already a bustling, proud, and captivating place. That legacy of pride, personality, and bustle continues to draw people there today. Brooklyn's almost magical fascination endures.

## Parallel Renaissances in the Atlantic World

The Brooklyn Renaissance, that remarkable mid-nineteenth century cultural flowering, had rather odd beginnings that can be traced emblematically to 1829. That year Luther Boynton Wyman, aged twenty-five, became the new proprietor of a bathing house and pleasure garden in Troy, New York, gateway to the navigable waters of the Hudson River from the recently opened Erie Canal.<sup>1</sup> Wyman's bathing establishment, the only one of its kind then in Troy, appealed to persons of taste and means. It promised to be "handsomely fitted up" and boasted male and female bath attendants to assist with hot, tepid, cold, and shower baths of healthful mineral waters. In the adjacent strolling garden, for his guests' delectation Wyman offered ice cream, confectionaries, soda, and popular

<sup>1</sup> Using the West Troy Sidecut, canal boats could bypass Albany to get in and out of the Hudson River. After the canal opened in 1825, Troy grew prosperous from the freight and passenger traffic at this crucial junction between the canal and the Hudson River. Troy must have seemed like a good business opportunity for a spa experience, for its location would have attracted not only residents but travelers in all but the winter months when the river and canal traffic came to a halt. Consequently, "Troy has reaped some share of the boundless benefits diffused by that great undertaking, as it has opened her markets, in some measure, to the immense regions of the west, from which they had been previously almost entirely excluded," and from fewer than 4,000 souls in 1810, by 1829 Troy boasted a population of nearly 11,000, *Troy Directory*, 1829, xvi.

Congress Water from nearby Saratoga Springs. There he hosted musical entertainments, and fireworks for the Fourth of July. Wyman vowed in print that in his new establishment “no pains shall be spared to render it at all times a pleasant and agreeable place of resort.”<sup>2</sup>

Operating a bath house and leisure garden may seem an unlikely, inauspicious beginning for the future founder and long-time president of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society and ideator of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, both still active today. The story of Brooklyn’s cultural renaissance thirty years after Wyman took over the bathing establishment in Troy and his personal story as Brooklyn resident, shipping merchant, music lover, and patron closely intertwine. Yet the brief, brushed-over bathing house interlude in his long and distinguished career of service as cultural entrepreneur and “papa” of Brooklyn, illustrates the major themes of this study. At a basic level, the refined pleasures and uplifting entertainments he nurtured there remained like a melodic refrain throughout his life. Indeed, he spared “no pains” to engage and inspire his fellow Brooklymites through a love of music, art, and natural beauty. He and fellow entrepreneurs strove to make each of the many cultural foundations and charitable works they created and their city itself “at all times a pleasant and agreeable place of resort.”

Wyman settled his young family in Brooklyn in 1840 or 1841 and remained there until he died in 1879. His path to Brooklyn typifies a larger New England diaspora in the early nineteenth century. Many young men left their fathers’ farms to seek fortune elsewhere. One Wyman brother, Justus, set out in 1818 from the family home near Boston, to settle as a clerk, then merchant in the Alabama Territory; his oldest brother Benjamin became a music professor in Boston and for a time in New York City. In Luther Wyman’s case, he moved first to Boston and then Troy, New York, before being drawn like one of so many iron filings to a magnet, toward the opportunities and growing economy in Manhattan, and from there to Brooklyn. Many of his associates and fellow patrons of Brooklyn’s renaissance shared strong New England ties. Their similar background, common commercial interests, and religious

<sup>2</sup> Wyman’s ad in the 1829 *Troy Directory*, (unnumbered pages at the back), states, “every exertion made to please.” See similarly in the *Troy Budget* (hereafter, TB), 3 April 1829, 3, with his promise to open April 15, serving ice cream, soda waters, Congress Water, and with an appeal for subscribers.



affiliations, often as members of Congregational and liberal Unitarian confessions, bound them together in making their new home in Brooklyn a city on the Heights, marked by its cultural foundations. During the Civil War in 1864 when Brooklyn hosted the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair in support of the US Sanitary Commission, one of the most frequented exhibitions was the nostalgic Old New England Kitchen. Wyman identified so strongly with his New England roots that he stayed a member of the New England Society of New York until he died.

New England transplants settled in old Brooklyn Heights in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, often, like Wyman, coming by way of Manhattan. Many ship captains and up-and-coming businessmen resided there. From Brooklyn Heights they took a short steam ferry across the East River to their places of business in shipping and commerce in Lower Manhattan. In fact, the Fulton Street Ferry traversing the East River formed but a brief watery interlude connecting Fulton Street in New York City with Fulton Street in Brooklyn. We can only speculate how many neighborly conversations and business transactions took place among those commuters standing side by side on the ferry.

In the early nineteenth century Brooklyn Heights developed as a bedroom community for Manhattan, or (as it was often called) the first suburb of New York City. Conveniently located across the river from the docks and commercial houses along South Street in Lower Manhattan, Brooklyn Heights enjoyed a reputation as a congenial place to raise a family with its lower costs, quiet, tree-shaded streets, and numerous churches. The fact that many of these New England migrants to Brooklyn were fairly affluent or had excellent prospects to become so, may help explain their success in marshaling the private resources needed to make their new home a recognized cultural center and do so over barely a decade in the 1850s and early 1860s.<sup>3</sup> They invested money they earned in Manhattan to improve the quality of their families' lives in Brooklyn.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Pessen stressed the inherited wealth that accompanied Brooklyn's New England elite, a profile which Luther Wyman and many of his patron peers did not necessarily fit; *Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War* (D. C. Heath, 1973), 109–10. On the early development of New York commerce in the colonial period, see Cathy Matson, *Merchants & Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), esp. 121–69.

The nexus among commerce, culture, and community that enabled Brooklyn's rapid renaissance forms a central theme in this book. Brooklyn participated fully in the oceanic trade connecting the Atlantic, East and Hudson Rivers, and Erie Canal that provided the lifeblood for the Port of New York. The docks that dotted Brooklyn's waterfront joined in the frenetic activity spurred by the merchant houses and commercial banks along South Street and Wall Street. The broader context of this Atlantic exchange, so necessary for understanding the sinews of the Brooklyn Renaissance, is part of the background for this study. The purveyors of trade spawned the commercial networks, business acquaintances, and accumulations of what Robert Putnam termed social capital that provided the bedrock beneath Brooklyn's newly refined culture and attendant civic consciousness.<sup>4</sup> Luther Wyman serves as a telling exemplar, as we follow his path from Massachusetts farm boy, to clerk in Boston, to bathing house proprietor, to agent in the Troy Towboat Company on the Hudson River, and finally to shipping agent and merchant with the famed Black Ball Line of ocean packets between New York and Liverpool. His emergence as cultural impresario of Brooklyn derives in large part from the vital role transatlantic commerce played as the single avenue of exchange whereby knowledge and the experience of more sophisticated European musical, artistic, and literary cultures became known in early America.

European culture and its transmitters voyaged in the same ships whose holds brimmed with English manufactories, iron, coin, and immigrants coming West, and American cotton, grain, timber, and ship stores going East. Until the advent of steamships and the transatlantic telegraph, ocean-going sailing packets remained the principal agents of this bidirectional Atlantic exchange. Foremost among them, the Black Ball liners had pioneered a regular schedule between New York and Liverpool, the port

<sup>4</sup> Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). Of more specific relevance, see his study of nineteenth-century US city directories to document urban associative patterns, Gerald Gamm and Robert D. Putnam, "The Growth of Voluntary Associations in America, 1840–1940," in *Patterns of Social Capital. Stability and Change in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 179–219.

for industrial Manchester and principal entrepot for Britain's North Atlantic trade. American-built Black Ballers were the biggest and sturdiest three-masted ships on the Atlantic. They dominated the mail, transfers of bullion, and high-end passenger service. Brooklyn's Renaissance could not have occurred without the news, money, business connections, and people they, and soon other competing lines, transported across the ocean to and from the wharves on either flank of the Atlantic. The commercial networks that grew around the Black Ball Line and its imitators formed the basis for cultural networks that upstanding Brooklynites, many of them engaged in oceanic commerce, used to bind themselves together. Through their networks they created a civic culture and municipal identity for Brooklyn focused around the arts. As participants in that process, they endeavored to set their city alongside, yet apart from the metropolis across the river. By the start of the Civil War in 1861 Brooklyn stood as the proud, third largest city in the nation, no longer just a bedsit for Manhattan.

### PARALLEL RENAISSANCES

To highlight Brooklyn's mid-century renaissance, however, begs the question why did prominent merchants, bankers, professional men, their wives, and their preachers choose choral and orchestral music, opera, art, literature, science, and horticulture around which to build their community of interests?<sup>5</sup> Our exemplar Luther Wyman promoted and belonged to several dozen cultural and charitable foundations in Brooklyn. The associative culture these merchants and their families created for themselves through their various memberships and business networks helped establish their professional and personal profiles as dignified, leading citizens worthy of respect. These identities also distinguished them socially from the thousands of new immigrants, mostly poor and uneducated, who, in the aftermath of the Irish Potato Famine in the 1840s, poured into Manhattan and

<sup>5</sup> My use of the term culture refers to the support for the fine arts and education given by these nineteenth-century commercial entrepreneurs, not culture in the more specialized sense used by business historians such as Robert Lee to characterize the shared business ethos and practices among merchants; in other words, a culture of business attitudes and practices that helped reduce transaction costs in the conduct of their affairs. See his *Commerce and Culture [electronic resource]: Nineteenth-Century Business Elites* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 1–35.

Brooklyn. Before the Civil War their numbers remained modest compared to the floods of immigrants who arrived toward the end of the century and thereafter, but even at this early stage, immigrant labor fueled Brooklyn's rapid growth.<sup>6</sup>

In the span of barely more than a generation, Brooklyn swelled from a small Dutch settlement and agricultural village that incorporated as a city only in 1834, into a teeming metropolitan center by mid-century. The Brooklyn experience illustrates a pattern found in other American commercial centers productive of new wealth in the nineteenth century, namely the developing distinction between polite culture and what later will be called popular culture. Brooklyn's renaissance shared many characteristics with other rapidly growing commercial centers in early America, whose newly minted, high-toned cultural profiles depended upon the investment of private, mercantile wealth in the arts and in education. Brooklyn's renaissance experience makes a good case study of this larger phenomenon, because Brooklyn's was a particularly self-conscious endeavor, centrally localized in Old Brooklyn Heights in the hands of a small but expanding elite, and compressed into the space of little more than a decade.

But why did Brooklyn's commercial men and their wives look to culture following a European model as the markings of polite society? Put simply, they were following happenings in England and in continental Europe that shaped their cultural expectations. Northern English provincial towns, once exposed to the economic boom that accompanied the early Industrial Revolution, had had a similar cultural flowering, only earlier.<sup>7</sup> This British experience occurred fully a generation before its

<sup>6</sup>To describe the social cohort to which Brooklyn's renaissance patrons belonged, I follow Sven Beckert's preference, drawn from European historiography, for propertied bourgeoisie and the elite haute bourgeoisie, over the more imprecise and deceptively inclusive term "middle class." For an excellent overview of the literature defining the American middle class and the need to make finer distinctions within it, see Beckert's "Propertied of a Different Kind: Bourgeoisie and Lower Middle Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, ed. Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 285–95.

<sup>7</sup>Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). For similarities

imitators in America. Great Britain supplied important living models to emulate in the US—men such as William Roscoe of Liverpool, widely regarded as emblematic of English cultural influence carried along channels of commercial networking. Together with a small group of like-minded Liverpoolians, Roscoe had initiated a cultural renaissance in Liverpool in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His influence in America deserves further discussion, for he became the icon of newly emerging polite culture consciously molded on an historical Italian Renaissance model. Roscoe and his associates harkened back to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century heyday of Italian merchant princes, who patronized and interested themselves in culture. In his best-selling biographies of Lorenzo de' Medici “the Magnificent” and of his son Pope Leo X, Roscoe had cast them as patrons par excellence. Roscoe’s biographies, writings, and personal example had a profound influence in shaping educated tastes in the early American Republic. The Boston Athenaeum, founded in 1807, the library and watering hole for polished Brahmins of that city, first of its kind in the US and widely imitated elsewhere, used as a template the Liverpool Athenaeum in which Roscoe had had a guiding hand.<sup>8</sup>

Roscoe’s admiration for the Italian Renaissance example of cultural achievement and patronage by its merchant elite also helped his admirers in America expand their horizons by embracing the refined cultures of continental Europe. In welcoming European stimuli, they offered a partial response to men such as Noah Webster and Peter Du

with nineteenth-century industrial cities of Northern England, see Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840–1914* (Manchester; New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2000), 3–5; 14–24. See also John Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in Its History and Art*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 60–78, and Patricia Emison, *The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1–7; 212–19.

<sup>8</sup> Josiah Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum: With Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders* (Cambridge: Metcalf and Co., 1851); Katherine Wolff, *Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenæum* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 21, 38–57. Philadelphia followed suit in 1814.

Ponceau among others, who wanted to foster non-British traditions in America.<sup>9</sup> Particularly in classical music, opera, painting, and sculpture, Europe continued to set the standard of performance in America throughout most of the nineteenth century. Mastery of these arts required years of disciplined training, usually by studying abroad or under Old World teachers. A further tie with Italian, particularly Florentine Renaissance culture, which Roscoe had boldly touted under the Medici, came via the “Machiavellian Moment,” the republican civic tradition that John Pocock argued had such a powerful resonance throughout the Atlantic World.<sup>10</sup> We can observe a strong civic element in Brooklyn’s renaissance, as its merchant patrons found that their cultural societies fostered civic pride and gave their city a loftier metropolitan flare.

William Roscoe was obviously not the sole agent of European influence and education to reach America in the early nineteenth century. But he stands out among them and enters these pages to signify an important conduit from industrial Northern England, especially Liverpool. He represents the civilizing potential of mercantile prosperity invested in the fine arts and education, all part of a larger civic enterprise. Directly inspired and informed by his study of Medicean Florence, Roscoe’s renaissance in Liverpool was the first “modern” renaissance to blossom in the Atlantic World, and it shone like a powerful beacon across the ocean to America. The self-consciousness behind Roscoe’s efforts to emulate the Medici of Florence, their culture and especially their style of merchant patronage, lent his Renaissance example a particular clarity, which helped it take root in early American port cities. These cities were

<sup>9</sup> Peter Du Ponceau, *A Discourse on the Necessity and the Means of Making Our National Literature Independent of that of Great Britain: Delivered before the Members of the Pennsylvania Library of Foreign Literature and Science, on Saturday, Feb. 15, 1834* (Philadelphia, PA: E. G. Dorsey, 1834). Du Ponceau, an early director of the Philadelphia Athenaeum, specifically advocated Americans incorporate literary and cultural models from other European countries, not just Great Britain. See also Eve Kornfeld, *Creating an American Culture, 1775–1800: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2001), 7–8.

<sup>10</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, 2nd pbk. ed., with a New Afterword (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 333–552.

in direct contact with Liverpool, the main gateway to England's industrial North that fed the North Atlantic trade. The idea that commercial and professional men of means should take the lead in promoting refined culture quickly took root. In a sense, these prospering US port cities sat like blank slates, receptive to impressions from Europe, absent any well-developed, or distinctive, pre-existing traditions of refined urban culture of their own.

Another stimulus came from those who traveled to Italy as part of a grand tour to soak up the marvels of Antiquity and Renaissance art. Educated Englishmen and Americans, including many commercial men and clergy, those who could afford the leisure and stimulus of travel, went on tour and wrote about their experiences in letters and diaries. They included men such as Joshua Bates, American-born managing partner of Baring Brothers and Company, one of the largest banking and mercantile houses in England and part owner of the Black Ball Line. In 1851 Bates and his wife embarked on a ten-week tour of Italy. He found the culture and artworks preserved there absolutely overwhelming, "at the present day there are more works of art collected at Rome than in all the world besides her. The perfection of the marble statues, bronzes and paintings in oil and fresco, mosaics is wonderful to say nothing of the surpassing splendor of the architecture of the churches and palaces." So he recorded in his diary upon returning to his mercantile duties in London, to which he added the comment that all he had ever seen in his previous travels was nothing next to the magnificent churches and palaces he beheld in places such as Rome and Florence.<sup>11</sup>

In reconstructing Brooklyn's cultural life in the mid-nineteenth century, I use the term renaissance in two parallel senses. At one level, renaissance references the original Italian Renaissance Roscoe admired. On another level, it denotes later cultural flowerings, or parallel renaissances, that emerged in cities such as Roscoe's Liverpool and in mid-century Brooklyn on the eve of the Civil War. Leading Brooklynites founded a dozen major cultural societies and significant municipal projects in barely a decade. These foundations included the Brooklyn Athenaeum (1852), Horticultural Society (1854), Philharmonic Society (1857), Mercantile Library (1857), Academy of Music (1859), the Brooklyn

<sup>11</sup> Joshua Bates' Diary, Baring Archive, Baring Ms. (B) DEP 74 Copy, n.d., 4: 44-45.

Institute (1848; 1862), Art Association (1864), Packer Institute for Girls (1854), Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute for Boys (1853), Prospect Park (1859), the War Fund Committee (1861), and the Long Island (later Brooklyn) Historical Society (1863). Though not a cultural arts institution, the Brooklyn Baseball League (1858) formed part of Brooklyn's growing associative culture. Numerous charitable endeavors augmented these cultural foundations, such as the Society for the Relief of Unemployed Women, the Charity Hospital, and Brooklyn Temperance Union. Local churches sponsored many others, in which Brooklyn's civic leaders and their wives invested considerable energies for the betterment of their city. Luther Wyman involved himself in most of them in one capacity or another. His early commitment to high standards in musical performances and healthy living, exemplified on a small scale as proprietor of the Troy Bathing House, reached full flourish in Brooklyn during his nearly forty years of residence.

The perspective of the Italian Renaissance and of Roscoe's renaissance in Liverpool serve as bifocal lenses through which to view Brooklyn's experience. When we place these parallel renaissances in dialogue, they offer new appreciations of what those Brooklyn merchants and their wives accomplished in rooting and nourishing so many cultural institutions in the city. We view their efforts as part of a larger, concerted cultural enterprise, namely a renaissance, which differs conceptually from treating their societies and activities *ad seriatim* as singular, unconnected endeavors. The fact that our Brooklyn patrons collaborated so often lends further credence to the insight that they made a renaissance happen. The rapidity with which it occurred reinforces the perception that their activities coalesced and can fruitfully be regarded in terms of one another.

Finally, from the perspective of the Italian Renaissance, what were some of the common characteristics associated with that epoch that found fertile soil in Liverpool and America, and in Brooklyn in particular? For one thing, fifteenth-century Florentines had remarkable self-awareness of living in a new age, full of promise and remarkable civic endeavors. The Florentine merchant, humanist, and civic leader Matteo Palmieri (1406–1475), Medici contemporary and author of a treatise on the civil life, perhaps best symbolized this awareness when he expostulated, “Now, indeed, may every thoughtful spirit thank God that it has been permitted to him to be born in this new age, so full of hope and promise, which already rejoices in a greater array of nobly-gifted souls than the world has



seen in the thousand years that have preceded it.”<sup>12</sup> In addition to his optimism about living in a new age ripe with potential, Palmieri is remembered for his advocacy of effective action in one’s community as the best proof of civic virtue. He lived during the golden years of Medicean Florence and would certainly have approved of William Roscoe, Luther Wyman, and other civic-minded promoters of culture in their own cities several centuries later.

Optimism and civic pride characterized patrons and participants in nineteenth-century urban renaissances, particularly in Brooklyn, but they did not emerge spontaneously or unbidden. In order to understand more fully the pathways by which desires for such cultural awakenings worked themselves into the fabric of urban experiences on both sides of the Atlantic, we must briefly examine William Roscoe’s leading role in fostering Italian Renaissance cultural values in the Anglo world. He tipped his cup generously toward newly urbanizing and affluent Americans who shared his palpable thirst for uplifting undertakings that added polish and distinction to their lives.

### ROSCOE’S RENAISSANCE IN AMERICA

The numerous editions of William Roscoe’s popular biographies of the early Medici of Florence attest to his standing as the foremost interpreter of the Italian Renaissance for the nineteenth-century English-speaking world, to the point that he has been called the “inventor” of the Renaissance.<sup>13</sup> Roscoe’s persuasive historical portraits led new generations

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in English translation in Kenneth Bartlett, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1992), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Most recently by Amedeo Quondam, *Tre inglesi, l’Italia, il Rinascimento: sondaggi sulla tradizione di un rapporto culturale e affettivo* (Napoli: Liguori, 2006), 181–290. Basic biographies include his son Henry’s *The Life of William Roscoe*, 2 vols. (Boston, MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1833); George Chandler’s literary appreciation, *William Roscoe of Liverpool* (London: Batsford, 1953); Donald A. Macnaughton, *Roscoe of Liverpool: His Life, Writings and Treasures 1753–1831* (Birkenhead: Countyvise, 1996); and now, Arlene Wilson’s fine study, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008). An earlier version of this section on Roscoe has been published in Stella Fletcher, ed., *Roscoe and Italy: The Reception of Italian*

to recognize Florence as the center of the golden age of Italian culture and the Medici as its prime promoters via their patronage of arts and letters. Roscoe's reputation for erudition and his extensive private collection of early Renaissance art, books, and manuscripts lent him cachet as a connoisseur of taste and the sobriquet the Lorenzo of Liverpool. Of special relevance here is how Roscoe and his circle of friends turned Liverpool into a showcase of cultural enterprise and the influence those efforts had in early America. Under Roscoe's leadership Liverpool experienced a renaissance with the founding of a variety of new institutions, among them its Athenaeum (1797), Lyceum (1802), Botanical Garden (1802), Liverpool Royal Institution (1814), and subsequently a Philharmonic Society (1840) that grew from the city's triennial music festivals.

Following the War of American Independence, commercial ties between the US Atlantic ports and Great Britain flourished but for a brief downturn during the War of 1812. Liverpool soon became the most important English port for the Atlantic trade. In the early nineteenth century the volume of American cotton and raw materials shipped across the waters to feed the industrial mills of Manchester and Lancashire grew exponentially. English manufactures and capital flowed steadily Westward in pursuit of new investment opportunities in commerce and infrastructure. The exchange created mercantile fortunes on both sides of the ocean.

Liverpool thrived from the American trade but also depended upon it. Trade with the US, especially concentrated through the Port of New York, contributed to Liverpool's openness to America and Americans. That openness, in turn, intensified the cultural influence Liverpool's example held in developing American cities. The Atlantic commerce brought English cultural fashions to American seaports, among them William Roscoe's writings, his refiguring of Italian Renaissance culture around Medici patronage, and his own enlightened activities in Liverpool. Roscoe's writings and the compelling example of Liverpool's own modern renaissance found fertile soil in America and quickly took root among the newly prosperous urban elites. They were eager to become a better educated, more cultured people and to transplant the accouterments of European civilized society into their own more rough-hewn urban environments. The combined examples of Roscoe and Liverpool's urban

renaissance reinforced among the liberal merchant elite in America the notion that new wealth could and should dignify itself through culture.

In addition to his admiration for the achievements of the historical Italian Renaissance, deeply embedded in Roscoe's Liverpool and subsequently Brooklyn's renaissance lay Italian *campanilismo*, or bursting civic pride and civic loyalty. In his historical biographies Roscoe had depicted Florence as the birthplace of the Renaissance and the Medici as its most important promoters. Under his influence, Liverpool had become the proud "Florence" of Northern England, a noteworthy cultural center apart from, sometimes even rivaling, London.<sup>14</sup> Up-and-coming American cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and later Brooklyn found inspiration in this Italian/Liverpudlian example. In the case of Brooklyn, eager to distinguish their city from its near neighbor, Manhattan, mid-nineteenth century Brooklynites founded cultural institutions as a means to give their city its badge of distinction.<sup>15</sup> Most of these endeavors found financing, like their progenitors in Liverpool, through private subscriptions.

Roscoe and Liverpool had helped promote the liberal idea that mercantile wealth brought with it certain civic responsibilities in the form of benevolent acts toward the less fortunate and support for cultural societies whose underlying aim was to educate and civilize. Inevitably, this transatlantic noblesse oblige by successful businessmen and professionals meant that cultivated tastes became the hallmark of polite society. Those elevated tastes effectively separated and insulated participants from the rest of the rapidly growing, largely poor immigrant populations crowding their cities

<sup>14</sup>Writer Anna Letitia Barbauld from Stoke Newington appreciated the civic pride that imbued Roscoe's participation in good causes in Liverpool. In response to his moving address delivered at the opening of the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1818, she wrote him, "It gives me great pleasure to think that so liberal an institution is rising under your auspices . . . Liverpool has long been proud of you, dear Sir, and I hope you will live to be proud of Liverpool. Indeed it has, as you observe, always been ready to take the lead in every public spirited exertion," 20 March [1818], Public Record Office Liverpool (hereafter, PRO), 920.191.

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (hereafter, BE), <http://www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/brooklyn-daily-eagle-online-1841-1902>, 13 May 1850, 2, which drew the connection between Brooklyn's need for a new music hall and the model of Liverpool's regular concert series.

and ports. But wealthy patrons of culture firmly believed that their projects held forth the promise, albeit from a safe distance, of improving the lives of the less fortunate and less educated.

Roscoe and Liverpool enjoyed three routes of communication and influence with America: increased contact via intensifying commercial ties between Liverpool and the US Atlantic ports; Roscoe's correspondence and his hospitality toward American visitors; and their perceptions of him and his contributions coupled with their desires to follow Liverpool's example.

### ACROSS THE WATERS

One of the clearest signs of increasing trade between Liverpool and the United States in the early nineteenth century came from the institution of regular packet service between New York and Liverpool in January 1818 by a group of Quaker textile merchants, who had immigrated from Yorkshire.<sup>16</sup> Theirs constituted the first attempt, soon imitated by other firms, to offer a scheduled service with sailings once a month from both ports. Ships of the new Black Ball or Old Line, as it was originally known, departed New York, full cargo or not, on the fifth, and from Liverpool on the first of every month. Before this time, Atlantic traders had no set route or schedule of departures. Rather, they advertised for cargo and did not sail until their holds were full, and they varied their routes depending on the freight. The newer square-rigged packets, built for speed, sported huge spreads of canvas and made much speedier crossings than unscheduled traders. The regularized service the Black Ballers offered depended initially upon a fleet of four ships and soon increased to eight, with two sailings a month from each port.<sup>17</sup> Before the introduction of oceanic travel by steamship in the late 1830s and for at least a decade afterward, sailing packets were queens of the sea, the biggest, fastest, most elegantly appointed ocean-going vessels. The New York-built Black Ballers bested their own records for speediest crossings, once making a westward passage

<sup>16</sup> Albion, *Square-Riggers on Schedule: The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965), 112–13.

<sup>17</sup> Albion, "Planning the Black Ball," *The Log of Mystic Seaport*. 18, no. 4 (1966): 96–100.

in just seventeen days.<sup>18</sup> Because of their reputation for sturdiness and reliability, courteous captains, and well-disciplined crews, packets attracted the most expensive and time sensitive cargos, including mail, diplomatic pouches, newspapers, bullion, and the luxury end of the passenger market. Deeper in their holds rode bales of cotton shipped up the coast from the American South, and other raw products such as linseed, timber, and ash. On the return voyage from Liverpool, in addition to passengers and fancy freight, came pig iron, rails, manufactured textiles, and a growing number of immigrants relegated to cramped steerage accommodations. Another Yankee firm, following in the wake of the Black Ball Line, established its Swallowtail Line in 1822. Swallowtail became the biggest of the packet enterprises. In 1832, the year following William Roscoe's death, in his honor, Swallowtail's owners launched their New York-built 622-ton ship, the *Roscoe*, soon filled with cotton, hogsheads of flaxseed, barrels of naval stores, and sometimes tobacco on its way to Liverpool.<sup>19</sup>

Regularized lines of communication between US Atlantic ports and Liverpool facilitated commercial and personal networks among the purveyors of trade. Business correspondence in particular developed into a trust-based, self-sustaining system for the exchange of information. Like the widening ripples in a pond, the networks extended to circles of friends and acquaintances on both sides of the ocean. They densified as they were constantly reinforced by commercial exchanges. To take an example, on the Liverpool side, the early agents of the Black Ball Line, the firms Rathbone, Hodgson & Co. and Cropper, Benson & Co. were, like the American founders of the packet service, dissenting Quaker or Unitarian merchants.<sup>20</sup> William Rathbone was a close friend of William Roscoe. Both were mainstays of the Unitarian chapel in Renshaw Street and

<sup>18</sup> By the *Caledonia*, Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 192–93.

<sup>19</sup> The company of Grinnell and Minturn, *ibid.*, 278; 307–8.

<sup>20</sup> An American branch of Rathbones supplied a Black Ball captain in New York, Capt. John Rathbone, lost overboard in 1847, Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 340. Black Ball agent, Luther Wyman was appointed special guardian of the estate, BE, 24 June 1853, p. 3. On networks of communication, see I. J. Barrett, "Cultures of Pro-Slavery: The Political Defence of the Slave Trade in Britain c. 1787 to 1807" (PhD. Diss., King's College London, 2009); also Sheryllynne Haggerty, *The British-Atlantic Trading community, 1760–1810. Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods* (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2006).

co-participants in various literary societies and charitable undertakings. Rathbones used the same American agent in New York, Goodhue & Co., that handled business for Baring Brothers and Co., later English backers of the Black Ball Line, whose manager in London was Goodhue's friend and fellow Bostonian, Joshua Bates.<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Goodhue, a prominent New York commission merchant, certainly knew Black Ball founder Jeremiah Thompson, from whom he subsequently bought part interest in the line. He was also close friends with Baring's chief American agent, Thomas Wren Ward in Boston, and he handled their business in New York. Goodhue, like the Liverpool Rathbones and William Roscoe, was a believing Unitarian who owned a pew in the Unitarian church in New York.<sup>22</sup> His father, a US senator from Salem, Massachusetts, and some of his friends had been admirers of Dr. Joseph Priestley, the well-known chemist, intellectual, and founder of Unitarianism in England.<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Goodhue traveled to England via Liverpool first in 1830. The Rathbones probably entertained him and introduced him to Roscoe.<sup>24</sup>

Frequent correspondence and more rapid exchange of goods and ideas brought Europe and America closer together, bridging the distance between Liverpool and the US. Roscoe's legal training and involvement in his friend William Clarke's bank did not engage him directly in the day-to-day conducting of the American trade, but he was certainly well acquainted with its workings. He frequently took advantage of the ships' mail and diplomatic pouches to carry his missives and publications to far-flung correspondents and to receive letters and packages in exchange. On one occasion, he exclaimed to an American friend, "Ho! Another government packet arrives which I look upon to be no less than a communication on affairs of state. To me, however, it soon turned out to be something infinitely more interesting, inclosing your most obliging letter of the twelfth

<sup>21</sup> The Liverpool branch of Baring Brothers invested in the Black Ball Line.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Goodhue, "Notes of Events," n.d., unpaginated entry for 1824, Goodhue Ms. Collection, NYSL; see also the brief biographical sketch in Walter Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox: Unitarian Beginnings in New York City, 1819-1839* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1974), 256-59.

<sup>23</sup> Goodhue, "Notes of Events" entry for 1824.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* entry for 1830. He also spent many hours at the Liverpool Athenaeum and Royal Institution.

instant.”<sup>25</sup> In the time-tested manner of Italian Renaissance mercantile correspondence, the letters Roscoe received often carried the name of the transporting ship on the obverse.<sup>26</sup> At Tontine’s coffee house on New York’s East River waterfront, where the packets birthed, hung a canvas bag to collect letters to be put aboard the next packet. Upon arrival in Liverpool, Roscoe’s letters were sent up from the ship, or the bearer might bring them in person. The author of one such letter delivered by a ship’s captain, wrote “Altho’ a stranger to Mr. Roscoe, I thought it might give him some pleasure to see the influence his writings had produced on the mind of an American Lady.”<sup>27</sup>

Liverpool became the usual port of disembarkation for American visitors crossing the Atlantic and thus offered to many their first view of England. On one level Liverpool and England seemed familiar to many Americans by virtue of their common language and ancestry; but on another, they would have appeared strange and wonderful places, offering much to learn and emulate back home. Nestled on the hillside along the banks of the Mersey, visitors entered Roscoe’s Liverpool from the impressive wet dock system at the port (Fig. 2.1). Proceeding uphill away from the bustle and squalor in the immediate vicinity of the docks, they encountered a well-ordered and reform-minded city of parks and monuments, graceful homes, and civic buildings, a Parnassus of flourishing literary, artistic, and scientific societies, well-stocked libraries, with an orchestra and music hall, and all sorts of benevolent foundations working to help the poor, disabled, and destitute. American travelers usually lodged in one of the well-appointed hotels. At the turn of the century an early favorite was the American Hotel, near the port, watering hole for sea captains and US visitors with its proud American eagle over the door bearing the familiar motto “*e pluribus unum.*”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 28 November 1826, PRO, 920.2167.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Mease of Philadelphia sent his letters to Roscoe first to New York where they were placed aboard ship, in at least one documented case on the very swift Black Ball packet *Montezuma* bound for Liverpool, 17 June 1824, *ibid.*, 920.1695.

<sup>27</sup> 15 October 1826, *ibid.*, 920.4430. The letter was delivered by Captain Terrill of the *Tuscarora*.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Silliman, *A Journal of Travels in England, Holland and Scotland, and of Two Passages over the Atlantic, in the Years of 1805 and 1806: With Considerable*



**Fig. 2.1** Canning Dock Liverpool showing the Custom House 1841. The Print Collector/Alamy Stock Photo

Even if Liverpool was not their principal destination abroad, American visitors usually spent a few days there upon arrival or before departing for home. They toured the city, accompanied by a local host if they enjoyed prior connections, or aided by early guidebooks, one with engravings of the most notable sites. The 1816 edition of *Stranger in Liverpool* featured such illustrations, among them a handsome view of Allerton Hall, Roscoe's country residence before bankruptcy forced him and his family back to town to a more modest abode. The *Stranger* also featured views of the imposing structures housing the Liverpool Lyceum, Athenaeum, News Room, Music Hall, and Botanic Garden, which Roscoe had helped establish. His special pride, the Athenaeum, recalled a Tuscan Renaissance building with rusticated stone façade on the ground floor and classicizing

*Additions, Principally from the Original Manuscripts of the Author*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Printed and published by S. Converse, 1820), 1: 34–39.



elements incorporated above.<sup>29</sup> In *Redburn*, loosely based upon his visit to Liverpool in 1839, American novelist Herman Melville had his character pilot himself around the city with an early edition of the *Stranger* he had pirated from his father's library back in America.<sup>30</sup> Unlike earlier travel diarists in Liverpool, who stressed its cultured society and elegant architecture, Melville relished the seamier side of the city, in the rough and tumble areas around the port, which by the late 1830s thrust themselves ever more blatantly before visitors arriving by sea. In studied contrast, Redburn's attempt to insert himself into the more educated arena of the Lyceum uptown resulted in a swift boot to the seat of his scruffy sailor's pants.<sup>31</sup> Clearly Redburn was on the wrong side of the social divide from polite society. Indeed, even well-heeled, respectable American visitors needed the right contacts and introductions to gain entrance to Parnassus.

An early visitor, Benjamin Silliman (1779–1864), later to become a noted chemistry professor and diarist, had stopped in Liverpool in 1805 on his way to Edinburgh to study and purchase books and scientific equipment. He noted in his diary all he saw with an eye to what might be replicated in America.<sup>32</sup> Silliman commented,

In a city so commercial as Liverpool, these establishments must be considered as highly honourable to the intelligence and taste of the individuals, who have created and patronized them. . . . [T]he mere man of business finds here the best means of information, and the man of literature can retire

<sup>29</sup> The Illustrations were published as an appendix, "Views in Liverpool and its Vicinity," to the 1816 edition of *The Stranger in Liverpool*, 5th ed. (Liverpool: Kayeme, 1816).

<sup>30</sup> Herman Melville, *Redburn: His First Voyage: Being the Sailor-Boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service*, Modern Library pbk. ed. (New York, NY: Modern Library, 2002), 164–84. A scribbled note claimed that Redburn's father had dined with Roscoe one evening, p. 168.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 240–41.

<sup>32</sup> He lodged at the American Hotel, and through a series of introductions he met members of polite Liverpool society. American Consul, James Maury, who also headed the local American Chamber of Commerce to promote the American trade, had presented him at the recently established Lyceum and Athenaeum. Silliman remarked in his diary, "I had the honour of an introduction to Mr. Roscoe on my first arrival in Liverpool," Silliman, *A Journal of Travels*, 1: 56.

in quiet to the library. . . . [The] library of the Athenaeum is much superior. . . for [it] was selected by Mr. Roscoe and Dr. Currie. Such institutions as these would be highly useful in America, and most of our large commercial towns are rich enough to found and sustain them.<sup>33</sup>

Silliman had been quick to observe how in Liverpool, as in Roscoe's refigured Italian Renaissance, mercantile wealth had been put to the service of education and culture. Silliman also perceived their social value as an uplifting force, a much-repeated theme in the subsequent founding of parallel institutions in America.<sup>34</sup> Roscoe had shined new light on the historical example of Italian Renaissance merchant patrons, which made them easier to imitate in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic worlds. Silliman's invitation to Roscoe's Allerton Hall counted as the highlight of his sojourn. In accompanying him to Allerton, Roscoe's son had paused at the Italianate Botanical Garden that Roscoe and his friend Dr. Currie had instituted.<sup>35</sup> The engravings in the 1816 *Stranger in Liverpool* show a well-designed lodge and impressive glasshouse.<sup>36</sup> The garden and Roscoe's life-long scientific interest in plants brought him additional contacts in America. Silliman remarked upon the "air of grandeur" about Roscoe's home, so well suited to its distinguished occupant, "[The] house is filled with statues, busts, and pictures, principally Italian, and in his study, he is surrounded by the figures of the men, who are the subjects of his history of Lorenzo, and of Leo X. . . . Mr. Roscoe has diffused around

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 41–42.

<sup>34</sup> He added, "Independently of the rational amusement which they afford, they give a useful direction to the public taste, and allure it from objects which are either frivolous or noxious," *ibid.*, 42.

<sup>35</sup> Earlier, an English gentleman who had spent time in America guided Silliman around the city, and he had dined with a group of wealthy gentlemen including the mayor and city officials, *ibid.*, 56–57. Jyll Bradley described the Botanical Garden "as if a template of renaissance Italy had been lightly placed upon this corner plot of northwest England," *Mr. Roscoe's Garden* (Liverpool: Distributed in Canada, Mexico and the USA by University of Chicago Press, 2008), n.p. The first Renaissance botanical garden was founded in Pisa in 1543, soon followed by similar gardens in Florence and Padua.

<sup>36</sup> Silliman described the layout on five acres with various wet and dry habitats: "the hot-houses are extensive and handsome, and exhibit a great variety of exotics, while the whole garden is a place of great beauty," Silliman, *A Journal of Travels*, 57.

him a general taste for Italian literature . . . . I was particularly solicitous to hear Mr. R. speak upon his favourite subject, the revival of arts and literature in Italy.”<sup>37</sup> An outsider among the assembled guests at Allerton, young Silliman felt awed before Roscoe’s erudition and refined taste, his own sense of cultural inferiority betrayed by his impatient eagerness to catch Roscoe’s every word on his favorite Italian subject. Grateful for his host’s courteous hospitality, the diarist noted the ease with which Roscoe had diffused to a widening circle of acquaintances his personal delight in early Italian art and literature and their revival, a theme repeated in later appreciations of him. Already present in Silliman’s diary are the tropes common to other nineteenth-century American travel accounts: the American traveler as stranger in the land of his forefathers;<sup>38</sup> his gratitude for English hospitality; his acute awareness of English cultural pre-eminence compared to America; and his desire to imitate aspects of English culture back home.

### ROSCOE THE EVERYMAN

Many more stay-at-home American readers would have been familiar with Roscoe from Washington Irving’s literary portrait of him in *The Sketch Book* (1820). Irving’s description probably derived from his encounter with

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–58. Roscoe gave him a preview of his *Leo X*. “From him I received every attention which was consistent with the obligations of politeness to a considerable number of gentlemen assembled at his table. Some of them were men of literature . . . and one in particular [Dr. Shepherd] was said to be engaged in a biographical work upon one of the distinguished literary men of the period of Lorenzo.” He characterized Roscoe himself, “Mr. Roscoe was, (as I am informed), bred to the bar, but being disgusted with the profession, he turned his attention to literature. He is now connected in business with an extensive banking-house in Liverpool, and returned to this place that he might have more leisure for indulging in his favourite pursuits . . . . Mr. Roscoe’s person is tall, his figure is graceful, his countenance intelligent . . . He is now in middle life, and is possessed of a private character of distinguished excellence.”

<sup>38</sup> Washington Irving and Susan Manning, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 19; on the idea of transatlantic hospitality breaking down barriers of national difference, see Cynthia Williams, *Hospitality and the Transatlantic Imagination, 1815–1835* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), esp. 109–16.

Roscoe during his European trip of 1815. Irving more than anyone popularized and Americanized Roscoe for a broader audience. Master of the picturesque, Irving's focus on Roscoe the man, his humble origins and noble character, his misfortunes, and selfless contributions to elevate Liverpool's cultural life, drew him down to a level of accessibility. Irving heroicized his subject as the educated everyman. His Roscoe was a learned but simple figure, whose intellectual accomplishments by bootstrap and hard work lay within reach of all. Roscoe had shown that learning and cultivated tastes were not the exclusive preserve of the titled and wealthy, but within the purview of anyone willing to dedicate himself to their pursuit despite whatever obstacles that lay in his path. Irving set the tone of almost veneration by which American visitors and readers came to view Roscoe as the epitome of the best Liverpool had to offer in terms of a cultured life and gracious hospitality to visitors. Irving brushed over vital but potentially controversial aspects of Roscoe's character such as his anti-Trinitarian religious dissent and strong reformist and abolitionist politics that had flown in the face of pro-slavery leanings and the wealth Liverpool's merchants had accrued from the slave trade before its abolition in 1807.<sup>39</sup> Irving's Roscoe appeared apolitical, a cultured, scholarly gentleman, who presided at the Athenaeum and at home with gentlemanly grace and unfailing hospitality to visiting strangers. Irving's character Geoffrey Crayon recalled the encounter with Roscoe, and how upon spotting him at the Athenaeum, he "drew back with an involuntary feeling of veneration. This, then, was an author of celebrity; this was one of those men, whose voices have gone forth to the ends of the earth; with whose minds I have communed even in the solitudes of America."<sup>40</sup> Here stood Roscoe the real man:

To find, therefore, the elegant historian of the Medici, mingling among the busy sons of traffic, at first shocked my poetical ideas; but it is from the very

<sup>39</sup> He was an active founding member of the African Institution in Liverpool that continued to work for the cause of African emancipation; Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe*, 1: 468–79. Unlike Irving, Melville acknowledged Roscoe as "the intrepid enemy" of the slave trade, Melville, *Redburn*, 180.

<sup>40</sup> He continued, "Accustomed, as we are in our country, to know European writers only by their works...they pass before our imaginations like superior beings, radiant with the emanations of their genius and surrounded by a halo of literary glory," Irving and Manning, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, 20.

circumstances and situation in which he has been placed, that Mr. Roscoe derives his highest claims to admiration. It is interesting to notice how some minds seem almost to create themselves, springing up under every disadvantage, and working their solitary but irresistible way through a thousand obstacles . . . . Born in a place apparently ungenial to the growth of literary talent, in the very market place of trade; without fortune, family connections, or patronage; self-prompted, self-sustained, and almost self-taught, he has conquered every obstacle, achieved his way to eminence, and, having become one of the ornaments of the nation, has turned the whole force of his talents and influence to advance and embellish his native town.<sup>41</sup>

The Americanized Roscoe had successfully married commerce with culture. He

presents a picture of active yet simple and imitable virtues, which are within every man's reach . . . . Like his own Lorenzo de' Medici, on whom he seems to have fixed his eye as on a pure model of antiquity, he has interwoven the history of his life with the history of his native town, and has made the foundations of its fame the monuments of his virtues. Wherever you go in Liverpool, you perceive traces of his footsteps in all that is elegant and liberal. He found the tide of wealth flowing merely in the channels of traffick; he has diverted from it invigorating rills to refresh the garden of literature. By his own example and constant exertions he has effected that union of commerce and the intellectual pursuits . . . and has practically proved how beautifully they may be brought to harmonize and to benefit each other . . . . The man of letters who speaks of Liverpool speaks of it as the residence of Roscoe. The intelligent traveler who visits it inquires where Roscoe is to be seen. He is the literary landmark of the place, indicating its existence to the distant scholar.<sup>42</sup>

Irving's portrait made Roscoe the living monument of Liverpool imbued with the associative values of scholarship and cultural heritage put to the

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–21.

<sup>42</sup> Irving referred to Roscoe's inaugural address at the opening of the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1818, *ibid.*, 21–22. He dwelled at length on Roscoe's economic misfortunes and the tragic loss of his books and treasures under the auctioneer's mallet. Especially sensitive to the embarrassments of financial ruin in the failure of his own family's business, Irving stressed Roscoe's ability to use his culture and learning to rise above his misfortune, *ibid.*, 25. Irving had compared Roscoe to Pompey's column at Alexandria, "towering alone in classic dignity," *ibid.*, 20.

service of the common good, whose character, hard work, civic good deeds, intellectual prowess, and fascination with the Italian Renaissance, like the beam of the lighthouse, beckoned to America.<sup>43</sup>

Roscoe himself was, in fact, keenly interested in America. His eager curiosity and desire to spread his ideas to this new land help explain his willingness to extend hospitality to so many American visitors to Liverpool, who came bearing letters of introduction like supplicant pilgrims.<sup>44</sup> As a liberal, reform-minded man, Roscoe had been sympathetic with the goals of the American Revolution. In his treatise, “Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Failures,” he had expounded upon the righteousness of American independence and predicted its stimulating effect on free trade for both sides.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, Roscoe’s early abolitionist stance did not attract particular note among his nineteenth-century American admirers.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Irving had opened his sketch with an inspiring epigraph shaped from Scottish poet James Thomson: “In the service of mankind to be/ A guardian god below; still to employ/ The mind’s brave ardor in heroic aims,/ Such as may raise us o’er the groveling herd,/ And make us shine forever—that is life.” As Perry Miller wrote, “For Irving himself *The Sketch Book* was a victory of sensibility over a dire threat of disintegration. For his American public it was a welcome interlude from the strenuousness of prosperity, after the reading of which they could return, with refreshed enthusiasm, to the making of more money,” Washington Irving and Perry Miller, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York, NY; Scarborough; London: New American Library; The New English Library, 1961), 378. Irving’s influence on interpretations of Roscoe was not limited just to America but has continued even in recent English scholarship. Arlene Wilson’s biography of Roscoe uses Irving’s motif of commerce and culture as its point of departure and guiding theme.

<sup>44</sup> According to his son Henry, Roscoe unhesitatingly devoted “a portion of his valuable time to their service, promoting, to the utmost of his power, the objects of their visit,” Roscoe, *Life*, 2: 466–67.

<sup>45</sup> “Ever since the acknowledgment of the independence of America, which was dreaded long before it took place, as an event that was to be the ruin of the commerce and manufacture of Great Britain; that commerce, and those manufactures have been gradually and steadily increasing. A trade has been opened with America herself, now she is free, which, whilst she remained subjected to us, we should probably never have enjoyed,” Fourth edition, London, 1793, 6–7.

<sup>46</sup> Roscoe was an early abolitionist. His anti-slavery poem, *The Wrongs of Africa*, published 1787–88, had sparked the ire of Liverpoolians engaged in the slave trade before parliament outlawed the trade in 1807. See Wilson, *William Roscoe*, 28–29;

Ever optimistic about the prospects for a humanitarian, liberal, and free society, later in life Roscoe directed a series of pamphlets and exchanges on prison reform to America.<sup>47</sup> It was one thing to get his pamphlets printed, quite another to get them into the right hands. When a parcel containing one of Roscoe's publications lay abandoned in the Customs House, a friend suggested Jeremiah Thompson, the Black Ball owner and reform sympathizer, as an excellent New York contact to distribute parcels in the US.<sup>48</sup> Roscoe also enjoined his friend General Lafayette to promote his views on penal reform with people the general met throughout his 1825 grand tour of America.<sup>49</sup> Roscoe had an American publisher for his biographies. In 1803 the Philadelphia press of Bronson and Chauncey printed his *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*. One assumes its great success stood behind Bronson's renaming his press, "The Lorenzo Press." When Roscoe's *Life of Leo X*, Lorenzo the Magnificent's son, appeared in London in 1806, Bronson published the first American edition that same year from his Lorenzo Press.<sup>50</sup> Roscoe enjoyed extensive American connections and participated in transatlantic cultural exchanges. Letters of introduction, personal visits, and ensuing correspondence widened his circle of admiring acquaintances and spread his renaissance and reformist ideas there (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3).

126–32; Roscoe and Chandler, *William Roscoe of Liverpool*, 6–66; 343–78. After thirty years of speaking out against the evils of the slave trade, Roscoe had the satisfaction of voting for its abolition in parliament during his brief service as MP.

<sup>47</sup> Roscoe's pamphlets on penal reform, all composed in his later years, have been studied by K. M. R. Lloyd in an unpublished thesis "Peace, Politics and Philanthropy: Henry Brougham, William Roscoe and America 1808–1868" (Oxford, 1996); they are also discussed in Roscoe, *Life*, 2: 189–239.

<sup>48</sup> "A parcel directed to him by the packet of the first [of the month] is sure to reach his hands since he is one of the owners," 27 February 1826, PRO, 920.276; also Roscoe, *Life*, 2: 232, on the fact that the parcel lay unclaimed for nearly a year. Commission agent Robert Benson who discovered it was probably the same Benson, who was the early Black Ball agent in Liverpool.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 232–33.

<sup>50</sup> Enos Bronson, editor of the federalist *United States Gazette*, operated a commercial press aimed at the wider reading public of the sort who delighted in Irving's *Sketch Book*. Although the *Leo X* did not sell as well in America as Roscoe's *Lorenzo*, Bronson declared himself gratified that "it is highly approved and relished by men who occupy the first rank of taste and literature in our country." Quoted *ibid.*, 1:349.



**Fig. 2.2** William Roscoe (1753–1851) portrait, oil on canvas by Sir Archer Shee, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Photo with permission of National Museums Liverpool

Roscoe's renown in America also expanded through connections with persons he never met but who belonged to the Republic of Letters. Thomas Jefferson stands out as the most famous American to have entered an extended epistolary exchange with Roscoe, and he kept Roscoe's Medici biographies in his personal library. Jefferson echoed the American impulse





**Fig. 2.3** Porcelain bust of William Roscoe, by Franceys, Liverpool, that James Mowry sent as a gift to Thomas Jefferson in 1820. Photo with permission of ©Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello

to pay homage to the superior heights of European culture, which he attributed to the leisure for study afforded by wealth. America was still behind but had hopes to stride forward. He wrote Roscoe, “My busy countrymen are as yet too much otherwise occupied to enter the lists in the race of science. When the more extended improvement of their country

and its consequent wealth shall bring them the necessary leisure, they will begin their career on the high ground prepared by their transatlantic brethren from the days of Homer to the present time.”<sup>51</sup> Years later Roscoe sent Jefferson a copy of his inaugural address at the opening of the Liverpool Royal Institution as though in response to Jefferson’s 1806 letter, which he thought “may serve to shew the efforts that are making in a provincial town for the promotion of literature and science; and is intended to demonstrate that for the moral and intellectual improvement of mankind they must depend on their own exertions, a sentiment, which tho’ sufficiently obvious, is too often forgotten, and can therefore never be too much enforced.”<sup>52</sup> If Liverpool, “a provincial town,” could create its own renaissance, then so could other cities across the Atlantic.<sup>53</sup>

In 1820 an old friend sent Jefferson a small bust of Roscoe intended for his collection of busts of famous men at Monticello.<sup>54</sup> (Fig. 2.3) Later that year

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> 28 February 1819, *ibid.*, 920.2206.

<sup>53</sup> Roscoe’s interest in the great men of history was not limited to the Italian Renaissance. He may have been compiling data on Lafayette’s life, for upon his request Maury sent him information clarifying the general’s date of birth and 1777 as the year he had arrived in the US, 11 November 1824, PRO, 920.2685.

<sup>54</sup> <http://explorer.monticello.org/text/index.php?id=36&type=4>. The bust was based on the original by artist William Spence and reproduced for sale in Liverpool by Franceys, a porcelain manufactory. See Maury’s letter to Jefferson, 26 June 1820, Library of Congress (hereafter, LOC), American Memory Project, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, Ser. 1, General Correspondence, n. 68. [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/), last accessed 2 October 2016. Jefferson replied he was pleased to “arrange [it] in honorable file with those of some cherished characters” in his study. James Maury had written, “In passing a Porcelain Warehouse the other day, I was so struck with a correct likeness of Wm. Roscoe in a small Bust that I thought it would be pleasing to you to have the opportunity of giving it a place in your collection at Monticello,” 26 June 1820, LOC, American Memory Project, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, Ser. 1, General Correspondence, n. 68. [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/). Jefferson’s reply, in which he sent Roscoe his “highest consideration and esteem,” is dated 27 December 1820. Thomas Jefferson et al., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Andrew A. Lipscomb, vol. 15 (Washington, DC: Issued under the auspices of the Thomas Jefferson memorial association of the United States, 1903), 302–4.

Jefferson wrote his most famous letter to Roscoe, which named the Liverpool Royal Institution as the model for his new university in Virginia; “Your Liverpool Institution will also aid us in the organization of our new University, an establishment now in progress in this state, and to which my remaining days and faculties will be devoted. When ready for its Professors, we shall apply for them chiefly to your island. Were we content to remain stationary in science, we should take them from among ourselves; but, desirous of advancing, we must seek them in countries already in advance.”<sup>55</sup> On another occasion, noted American botanist Dr. William Barton, sent Roscoe his *Elements of Botany*, “which I ask you to accept, as a return for the pleasure and information I have derived from the perusal of your excellent *Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici*.”<sup>56</sup>

The unabashed admiration and respect Roscoe enjoyed took a practical turn in the US, as Americans, emboldened by their new wealth and desirous of rising to British and continental standards of education and culture, turned to Roscoe’s Liverpool as the model to emulate for their own cultural institutions. Philadelphians had wanted to clone Roscoe’s Botanical Garden and Athenaeum and informed Roscoe, “you will have a right, Sir, to consider yourself as one of the founders of the establishment.”<sup>57</sup> Thomas Jefferson would model his new university on the Liverpool Royal Institution. One of the most pointed tributes to Roscoe’s influence had come from Boston at the opening of its Athenaeum in 1807, just nine years after its Liverpool predecessor. One of the founders had visited Liverpool and sent home the regulations and

<sup>55</sup> 27 December 1820, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/75.html>, last accessed 2 October 2016. A phrase from this letter was inscribed over the entrance to the American Library in Berlin, “This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it.”

<sup>56</sup> 3 September 1807, PRO, 920.260.

<sup>57</sup> 19 July 1811, *ibid.*, 920.4408; also in Roscoe, *Life*, 2: 457. William Short was anxious: “to learn so much of the history of the establishment of your Botanical Garden and of the Athenaeum, as would enable me to induce some of our citizens here to attempt a transplantation from them. It certainly does great credit to Liverpool, considered generally as a mere commercial port, that such establishments and so numerous should be formed there.”

a list of that library's holdings.<sup>58</sup> In the 1807 inaugural document, the Bostonians stated their intent to create an establishment "similar to that of the Athenaeum and Lyceum of Liverpool" containing a library, newsroom, and museum.<sup>59</sup> Among the merchant subscribers and treasurer stood Thomas Wren Ward, Baring Brothers' American agent and good friend of Jonathan Goodhue, investor in the Black Ball Line of New York packets.

With their own brand of civic pride, or renaissance *campanilismo*, the Boston founders projected that their athenaeum "will become the honor and pride of our city."<sup>60</sup> Roscoe could have easily written their renaissancesque justifying statement that neatly linked commercial prosperity with the civic obligation to patronize culture in the interests of the common good: "Let men of leisure and opulence patronize the arts and sciences among us; let us all love them as intellectual men; let us encourage them, as good citizens. In proportion as we increase in wealth, our obligations increase to guard against the pernicious effects of luxury, by stimulating a taste for intellectual enjoyment."<sup>61</sup> As the years progressed, Americans eager to honor and pay respects to Roscoe, began to vote him honorary memberships in their various societies.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Stevens Buckminster included the exhortation, "O when will the day come, when the library of our own dearly-cherished Athenaeum shall boast of including the labors of Muratori, the thesauri of Graevius and Gronovius," Josiah Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum: With Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders* (Cambridge: Metcalf and Co., 1851), 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; On the role of the Athenaeum in furthering consolidation of a Boston elite prior to the Civil War, see R. Story, "Class and Culture in Boston: The Athenaeum, 1807–1860," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1975): 178–99; For a more recent study which explores similar themes, see also Katherine Wolff, *Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenaeum* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> Quincy, *The History of the Boston Athenæum*, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Among them the New-York Historical Society voted him member in 1813, the Philadelphia Linnaean Society in 1817, and the New York Horticultural Society in 1828, 27 December 1820, PRO, 920.2007; 26 October 1813, *ibid.*, 920.2797; 29 September 1824, *ibid.*, 920.2798; and Roscoe, *Life*, 2:168–69; 328–30.

Some admirers sent copies of their own publications to him. One Philadelphian sent the flattering comment, “I believe I have read every thing published from his [Roscoe’s] elegant pen, always with great edification.”<sup>63</sup> Roscoe’s renown spread beyond the cultured elite in America’s largest cities. His address at the opening of the Liverpool Botanical Garden even found its way into a popular botanical textbook. The address concluded with a civilizing appeal regarding the beauty and utility of plants and to their study as “contributing in a high degree to the welfare of the community at large.”<sup>64</sup>

Roscoe had come to represent the harmonious union of commerce and culture for the common good. In the American narrative, education and culture were accessible to anyone willing to invest the hard work and effort like William Roscoe, who had risen by his bootstraps from humble beginnings to become a world-renowned litterateur and patron. Irving’s Roscoe and Liverpool’s modern renaissance example had not only helped draw Liverpool and America closer, but had shortened the historical distance between the golden age of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Florence and the hustle and bustle of the nineteenth-century industrializing world.<sup>65</sup> Roscoe’s reinterpreted Medici as patrons and Roscoe himself in Liverpool modeled for America how the cities in a young nation might harness Mammon to Minerva’s will. For his American visitors and admirers, Roscoe remained a liminal figure, a compelling monument to Liverpool’s accomplishments, a doorway to the creative

<sup>63</sup> C. J. Ingersoll, 24 May 1825, PRO, 920.2198. Josiah Quincy, long-time secretary and historian of the Boston Athenaeum, sent him a copy of his *Memoirs* dedicated “with respect,” *The History of the Boston Athenaeum*. The Liverpool public library has Roscoe’s copy with Quincy’s autograph dedication dated 28 October 1825. The editors of the *New York American* via Consul James Maury consulted him as an authority on a matter of antiquarian interest in 1823, 24 September 1823, PRO, 920.97.

<sup>64</sup> Priscilla Wakefield, *An Introduction to Botany: In a Series of Familiar Letters* (Boston, MA: J. Belcher, and J. W. Burditt and Co., 1811), 182.

<sup>65</sup> Roscoe had even adopted for his own seal with laurel branch Lorenzo de’ Medici’s happy augury, “Stassi il lauro lieto,” Roscoe, *Life*, 2: 471. The line comes from Lorenzo’s mythological poem *Ambra*, celebrating the natural beauties of the passing seasons.

genius of the long-ago Italian Renaissance, a beacon of possibility for what America and Americans could become.

Roscoe's Liverpool formed part of the cultural awareness of the leading citizens of Brooklyn. Its example remained very familiar to those such as Luther Wyman engaged in maritime commerce and those who had occasion to travel there, be in epistolary contact with Liverpoolians, or to read about the Liverpool happenings as frequently reported in their local newspapers.<sup>66</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century Liverpool stood out as a glowing example of the modern renaissance city, and in 1853, Roscoe's accomplishments were placed squarely in the public eye once more during celebrations on both sides of the Atlantic in honor of the centenary of his birth.

### BROOKLYN'S RENAISSANCE

Roscoe had instructed his British and American readers about the Italian Renaissance through his Medici biographies, his vast correspondence, and powerful personal example. He reinterpreted and popularized the idea that the Renaissance in Italy had centered on private patronage of arts and letters, a message that Brooklyn's merchant patrons fully embraced. Though it shared much in common with a broader Roscoeian Atlantic Renaissance, as experienced in other American cities piecemeal and over decades, the Brooklyn Renaissance stands out for the solid determination, consensus, self-consciousness, and rapidity with which members of the city's business, professional, and ecclesiastical social circles set about making their city a cultural destination. Compared to cities such as Boston and Philadelphia, Brooklyn's cultural awakening came late, but unlike theirs, all at once. Thus, Brooklynites' efforts to create an uplifting cultural environment in their rapidly growing city constituted a purposeful and

<sup>66</sup>The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* regularly reported Liverpool commercial news, shipping reports, departures and arrivals, as well as advertisements for fine Liverpool watches and instruments, and mail and newspaper forwarding services. Even the Troy newspapers carried Liverpool news such as reports on the growth of Liverpool's population, information of interest to urbanites in nineteenth-century America experiencing their own demographic explosions.

rapid urban renaissance. Behind their inspired determination, one senses Roscoe's example, coupled with Brooklyn's efforts to advance their parallel commercial, communal, cultural, and civic goals.

Recent scholars have emphasized the underlying socio-cultural motives for why professional men and their wives actively sought involvements in societies that sponsored lectures, concerts, and exhibitions. For some, participation constituted a political quest to establish cultural authority via discerning taste, loosely what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu termed cultural capital;<sup>67</sup> for others elite control facilitated socializing with their peers and kept members and their families at a safe distance from the uneducated and unwashed echelons of society. Still others busied themselves developing an associational culture that originated in church-sponsored charitable efforts and/or in commerce, and they built out from there into the more secular venues of lecture and concert hall.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Peter Field, *The Crisis of the Standing Order: Clerical Intellectuals and Cultural Authority in Massachusetts, 1780–1833* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 82–110. See also, Pierre Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital* (1986). Last accessed 2 October 2016, <http://marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>. In nineteenth-century Brooklyn and other American cities, financial capital and the social capital derived from arts and culture were closely allied, whereas Bourdieu had seen them as oppositional. Sven Beckert traced the rise of a bourgeois elite in New York for whom culture was a means to legitimate power, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 38–77. He detected more social divisiveness in New York around the time of the Civil War than the case of Brooklyn demonstrated, whose elite, despite the strains of war, showed remarkable cohesion. See chapters 7 and 8. Edward K. Spann's earlier study of nineteenth-century New York focused more on the wealthy themselves than on their cultural pursuits, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840–1857* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1981), 211–22. See also Thomas Bender's classic, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), especially 97–157.

<sup>68</sup> S. Wright, *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350–1750* (London: Hutchinson, 1988); On the importance of communities coalescing around institutions, see Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1993).

I argue, in addition, that compared to other East Coast cities, Brooklyn's relatively late but accelerated quest for a distinct urban identity compelled her leading citizens to smooth over political and confessional differences, those "civic wars" analyzed by Mary Ryan,<sup>69</sup> in order to come together and collaborate in common cultural endeavors.

The appearance of elites and elite culture in the nineteenth century, their associational habits, and strengthening civic identities are all themes that emerge as markers of place and space in recent historical criticism.<sup>70</sup> With Brooklyn's renaissance, I recover the memory of those often-overlooked markers in the city's historical space. To do so requires the historical imagination to reach back in time past the artsy modern Borough of Brooklyn and past its late nineteenth- and twentieth-century personalities as a manufacturing city of workers dotted with distinctive ethnic enclaves. This study reimagines the mid-nineteenth century city in the midst of a remarkable cultural efflorescence and seeks to understand the concomitant factors that enabled it. This attempt to recapture renaissance Brooklyn draws upon German philosopher and literary critic Walter Benjamin's awareness how cognitive and affective insights pulled from both past and present can enter into dialogue and recombine to generate new meaning and understanding.<sup>71</sup> It also employs an appreciation modified from sociologist Jürgen Habermas of the importance of public spheres. Here public spheres are interpreted to have both a physical setting in Brooklyn Heights, and to be manifest as a broader socio-cultural sphere nestled among the

<sup>69</sup> Mary Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 165–222.

<sup>70</sup> Betty Farrell, *Elite Families: Class and Power in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 22–75; 163–67; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580–1800: the origins of an associational world* (Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 487–91.

<sup>71</sup> The concept is explained well by Vanessa H. Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians," *AHR*, 106, no. 5 (December 2001): 1721–43.



surrounding commercial and cultural networks. These networks also define discursive spaces that facilitated the buzz whereby the cultural aspirations of upstanding Brooklynites could coalesce, transform into action, and bring into being societies such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music or the Brooklyn Art Association that became the hallmarks of their renaissance and the landmarks of their identity as an autonomous civic community.

However, if one were to ask the leading citizens of nineteenth-century Brooklyn what they thought they were doing, the rhetoric of European liberalism they would have used, and often did employ in print, placed heavy emphasis upon their deeply felt, collective obligation as privileged commercial families to elevate and civilize society in the interests of the common good. In their minds, success in commerce went hand in hand with fostering cultural initiatives, just as merchant elites had done back in the Italian Renaissance and more recently in Roscoe's Liverpool. By founding academies, orchestras, and art galleries, they believed they participated in an enlightened civilizing mission for which a crying need existed in the raw, unstable society of early America. For them, refined European standards became the rod by which social and cultural achievement should be measured. Urban Americans, including Brooklyn's commercial community, eagerly hosted the latest European talent arriving across the Atlantic. They listened attentively to the lectures proffered by foreign visitors. American academics, clergy, diarists and aspiring literati, artists, and some businessmen freshly returned from the grand tour of Europe, publicly shared their insights and reflections on how they had absorbed elements of high culture and the latest fashions and social graces in Liverpool, London, Paris, or Italy. Some of William Roscoe's most eager correspondents were Americans seeking his wisdom and advice on cultural matters.

The latest beguiling European fashions, whether in music, art, or dress offered inspiration and invited emulation, but they were not ends in themselves. No matter how elevating and civilizing, arts in the city also aimed to transcend the mundane and ugly aspects of existence. The arts stimulated the imagination, engaged and entertained the mind, body, and emotions. The same sort of relaxing spa mentality at the Troy Bathing House with its refreshing baths, strolling garden, tempting refreshments, and musical entertainments found expression in Brooklyn, minus the bathing chambers, in such

fashionable leisure entertainments as floral promenade concerts coordinated between the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Brooklyn Horticultural Society, and Brooklyn Art Association. At the Athenaeum or Academy of Music, patrons promenaded to music through corridors exquisitely decorated with cut flowers and greenery. They paused to admire dozens of paintings on loan from members' homes that had been hung in the adjacent galleries. Arts activities in the city refreshed and delighted mind and body, much as Wyman had indicated in one of the Troy Bathing House ads, summoning "all who are inclined to indulge in a luxury immediately conducive to health, likewise to delight the eye and please the taste."<sup>72</sup>

This study brackets the Civil War and ends with plans for the Brooklyn Bridge, designed by and mainly for Brooklynites to facilitate access to Manhattan. The bridge project at the end of the period examined here signifies what happened to the Brooklyn Renaissance after the Civil War. Social and political pressures changed, cultural interests shifted, and some, though not all, of the pre-war foundations experienced financial difficulties and had to close their doors or alter their missions. A new generation deeply affected by the war experience emerged in Brooklyn. Many were sons and daughters of the families who had done so much to promote polite culture in their city before the war, but many of these new leaders had other interests and lacked the same sense of civilizing purpose and pride that had motivated their elders to create Brooklyn's renaissance. Their image of polite society and its responsibilities changed for some, such as Alfred Tredway White (1846–1921), heir to a fortune in the fur trade, who became a social visionary and pioneer in constructing housing for the working poor on an English model.<sup>73</sup> The social problems connected to immigration and sanitation had become all the more pressing after the Civil War. White devoted himself to solving those issues; others of his generation retreated into elite enclaves characteristic of the emerging Gilded Age. Brooklyn's renaissance cultural foundations, well established by the 1870s, felt the impact of social change.

<sup>72</sup> *Troy Directory*, 1829, unnumbered pages at the back.

<sup>73</sup> Wendy Walker, *The Social Vision of Alfred T. White* (Brooklyn, NY: Proteotypes, 2009), 5–35.

The overlapping commercial and cultural networks among Brooklyn's chief affiliators reveal the strength of neighborhood, business, and confessional ties in support for Brooklyn's cultural institutions. I have identified a group of principal leaders from among the officers and board members of the most prominent cultural societies. This group of forty-two principal patrons and key participants forms the nucleus around which the Brooklyn Renaissance coalesced. Luther Wyman clearly represents a node of intersecting cultural interests and leadership, but he, like Lorenzo de' Medici in fifteenth-century Florence and William Roscoe in late eighteenth-century Liverpool, did not act alone. This study of Brooklyn's renaissance in the making through the efforts of its prime promoters points to the essential collaborative nature of urban cultural movements. It highlights how and under what circumstances key participants found ways of working together for the greater goal of making their city that "pleasant and agreeable place of resort" to which Luther Wyman had aspired as a young entrepreneur in Troy, New York.

This book also demonstrates the fragility and contextual contingency of the Brooklyn Renaissance. Its lantern had burned brightly at mid-century, but the Civil War disrupted it, sapped or diverted its promoters' energies and altered the city's cultural directions. Even though many of the pre-war cultural societies survived, the social and political climate in the city changed rapidly. Early leaders such as Wyman would soon fade from the scene, and there were new pressures, including a controversial theater movement in the early 1860s, that forced Brooklyn's cultural elite to expand their embrace of what could be deemed respectable entertainment in polite society. More and more interest shifted in the direction of popular amusements, which baseball and Coney Island would come to symbolize.

Though the remarkable mid-century renaissance flowering began to fade after the war, it had accomplished a great deal. The seeds of artistic and literate culture had been firmly planted in Brooklyn, entwined as they were with the city's emerging sense of itself as a distinctive metropolis, not just an appendage of Gotham across the river. Brooklyn would continue to conceive of itself as a proud center of music, art, and learning rather than just a city of churches and schools and residential refuge from Manhattan. Its municipal identity and cultural heritage endured long past 1898, when debt induced the city to incorporate as one of the five boroughs composing Greater New

York. A solid civic sense forged in mid-century around the arts survives in Brooklyn to this day, though it is largely overlooked in celebrations of Brooklyn pride, which typically focus for its roots on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries when the great influx of immigrant peoples gave Brooklyn its stimulating multiethnic personality and distinct neighborhood enclaves. But it is worth considering the extent to which Brooklyn's earlier renaissance around the time of the Civil War provided the backbone and the brag behind the pride shared by Brooklynites who resided and still reside in that special city, then borough, across the river from Manhattan.

The "Where" as well as the "How" and "Why" of any cultural movement beckons a historian's gaze, for the physicality of place and space, even when reconstructed from historical maps, gives a concreteness to testimony about what happened there and is vital to our understanding of the "What," "Who," "How," and "Why" of what developed in mid-nineteenth century Brooklyn. It is important, for example, to know that the Brooklyn Academy of Music found its first location on Montague Street in Brooklyn Heights and why the Mercantile Library was so eager to move itself several blocks to be across the street from it. Where people lived and worked, and where they mingled and sought stimulating cultural engagement form part of the story of the Brooklyn Renaissance. That they promoted the cultural life of Brooklyn rather than elsewhere is all about location as well.

I hope the bifocal concepts of renaissance employed here, at once associated with the historical Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and then used more generally as a signpost of cultural flowering, provide heuristic lenses through which to view and understand what occurred in Brooklyn on the eve and in the aftermath of the Civil War. The historical Italian Renaissance was urban in nature, promoted by wealthy entrepreneurs, and bound to local pride and identity. The concept of renaissance as cultural flowering imbues the understanding that cultural efflorescences remain essentially collaborative. For collaboration to occur, like-minded people have to associate with one another in specific locales. Networking provides a useful concept for how ideas, people, resources, and locations all came together to inspire new cultural venues in the Atlantic world and more particularly in Brooklyn. The thrust of the following chapters makes the case that a renaissance happened in Brooklyn, discussing when, where, at whose hands, and under what inspirations.

The renaissance there, as with Liverpool and historical Italian predecessors, emerged as the brainchild of a well-intentioned, civic-minded group of patrons. It promoted Brooklyn pride and unity. It provided a means for upstanding Brooklynites both to mingle and to separate along the fault-lines of their different interests. It gave them a cultural profile in the midst of rapid urbanization; and it provided physical spaces for their cultural experiences. It also opened up broad horizons for the people of the city and initiated a long legacy of Brooklyn pride that continues to this day.

## Black Ball Business and Commercial Networks

William Roscoe and Liverpool's example of a modern urban renaissance inspired by the historical Italian Renaissance constitutes a vital background perspective through which to understand similar cultural flowerings in early America. A pool of invigorating ideals imported from across the Atlantic needed to be present before a parallel renaissance in an American city such as Brooklyn could occur. Another similarly important enabling context involves the actual means and pathways through which those inspirations and examples reached American shores. Regularized transatlantic shipping served as the premier channel through which European associative habits and Roscoe's remade renaissance idea of cultural patronage in the hands of mercantile men arrived in America and made their way to Brooklyn. Those sturdy ships transported people's ideas and cultural norms as well as commodities.

Lines of commerce and communication between New York Harbor and Liverpool show how Atlantic mercantile networks formed that led to the cultural and community complexes behind Brooklyn's cultural awakening. In order better to understand how commercial ties led to cultural initiatives, in this chapter we examine two related exemplary trajectories. First, we follow Luther Wyman's early career from bathing house proprietor to Atlantic shipping merchant, which leads us into the world of a regularized packet service between New York and Roscoe's Liverpool that the Black Ball Line of Liverpool Packets, Luther Wyman's long-time employer, had inaugurated. Second, the business schemes underlying Atlantic shipping continued many of the conventions pioneered in the

Italian Renaissance, in terms of partnership arrangements, accounting and record keeping, risk management, and insurance. Atlantic shipping involved considerable physical and financial risks, and how commercial men managed risk through networking forms a key link between their commercial sphere and the social bonds they and their families developed that in turn facilitated their cultural initiatives.

If William Roscoe provided inspiration for what America could accomplish culturally, how Americans took up that challenge in places such as Brooklyn and in the hands of commercial men like Luther Wyman forms a complex story woven of many threads. Obviously, having a renaissance model in Roscoe's Liverpool and a vision of cultural advancement was not enough. There had to be the means and the will to devote the time, effort, and resources to bring schools and fine arts institutions into being and attract large numbers of patrons, subscribers, and participants. When Roscoe died in 1831, Brooklyn was still three years away from being incorporated as a city. Its population was growing rapidly, from 8,800 in 1825, toward 24,000 in 1835, even though the metropolis across the East River still considered Brooklyn little more than a sleepy town and dormitory for New York City.<sup>1</sup> Brooklyn also served as a convenient warehouse for New York merchants. Jonathan Goodhue, an owner of the Black Ball Line, and leading commission merchant, for years warehoused large quantities of goods there.<sup>2</sup>

A cultural renaissance in Brooklyn, however, was unthinkable until the city had grown larger and its business class had accumulated enough wealth to begin investing in culture. By 1852 the population had swelled to 120,000, making Brooklyn the seventh largest city in the USA, an occasion for local celebration.<sup>3</sup> The city's remarkable advance in the second quarter of the nineteenth century connects intimately to the expansion of Atlantic commerce, particularly between the ports of New York and Roscoe's native Liverpool, which together handled and financed

<sup>1</sup> Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh*, 3 vols (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867) II, 224; 251.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Goodhue, "Notes of Events" n.d., Goodhue Ms. Collection, NYSL. In 1822, to avoid the yellow fever sweeping lower Manhattan, his partner Peletiah Perit even took up temporary residence in Brooklyn.

<sup>3</sup> Stiles, *A History*, II, 295.

much of US cotton exports and the imports of English manufactured goods. The Atlantic commerce and the accompanying rise of Brooklyn constitute a key backdrop to how Luther Wyman, erstwhile Boston clerk and bathing house proprietor in Troy, should have been enticed first to Manhattan as a shipping agent and subsequently to Brooklyn. There he devoted his considerable musical and organizational talents honed in the commercial world to make Brooklyn's renaissance happen.

### EARLY YEARS: BATHS TO BOATS TO PACKETS

Except for his love of music, there was little in Luther's family background that portended either his career in Atlantic shipping or his leadership in Brooklyn's cultural flowering. Unlike many of the New Englanders who settled in Manhattan and Brooklyn to pursue careers in transatlantic trade, Luther Wyman had not come from seafaring stock. The Massachusetts Wymans were landlubbers, substantial yeoman farmers, tanners, and brewmasters who had originally immigrated to the Boston area from Westmill, Hertfordshire, nearer London than Liverpool. They had arrived in Massachusetts more than a century before William Roscoe was even born. Two brothers, Francis (1619–1699) and John (1621–1684),<sup>4</sup> struck out for the new colony in the 1630s. These two brothers, second

<sup>4</sup> Parish records in Hertfordshire, England show Francis and John baptized in 1619 and 1621, respectively. They may have come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony with their maternal uncles Samuel and Thomas Richardson, early settlers in Charlestown. The two brothers worked together in a successful tanning business and as yeoman farmers. Curious facts about them include record of their harboring dissenting Baptist sentiments for which they were summoned to the county court, but received no sentence. Francis' eldest son was killed in Phillip's War against Native Americans, so they brought into their employ a Scotsman trained as a tanner, reputedly a bigamist, and a "negro servant," once fined for assaulting some Native Americans. See the genealogical website [www.wyman.org](http://www.wyman.org); Samuel Sewall, Charles Chauncy Sewall, and Samuel Thompson, *The History of Woburn, Middlesex County, Mass. from the Grant of Its Territory to Charlestown, in 1640, to the Year 1860* (Boston, MA: Wiggin and Lunt, 1868), 36; 114–15; 154–56; 506–7; and Melissa Dearing Jack Hurt, *Alabama Bound: Family Sketches of a Long Line of Storytellers: The Jacks, Morgans, Wymans, Boyntons, Martins, Hunters, and Dearing's* (Atlanta, GA: M. D. J. Hurt, 1988), 127–30.



and third sons respectively, had left their father's land, perhaps under pressure of insufficient inheritable acreage for their generation.<sup>5</sup>

Both brothers signed the papers incorporating the town of Woburn in 1640, then only the twentieth town in the Massachusetts Colony.<sup>6</sup> Over time they became the largest landowners in the area.<sup>7</sup> Luther Wyman's great grandfather Benjamin (1706–1774) served as town treasurer of Woburn and, like his father before him, had been a respected captain in the local militia.<sup>8</sup> By the time of the War of Independence, Wymans were already in their fourth and fifth generation as Massachusetts men and were firm patriots. When Luther was born in 1804, the seventh child and fourth son in a family of ten offspring, the descendants of Francis were already in their sixth generation. Luther's mother, Hannah Boynton, could trace her roots to wealthy English colonists who had founded the nearby town of Rowley, Massachusetts.

Around 1824 at age twenty, Luther Wyman left his father's farm and moved to Boston to work as a clerk.<sup>9</sup> His older brother Justus had already

<sup>5</sup> These early pioneering Wyman brothers, both in their teens when they set forth from Westmill, joined the ranks of religious dissenters headed for Massachusetts in the years preceding the English Civil War. They may well have been part of John Winthrop's migration in 1630.

<sup>6</sup> Sewall et al., *History of Woburn*, 23–24 and Hurt, *Alabama Bound*, 127.

<sup>7</sup> They purchased one tract of land stretching over five hundred acres and another large adjoining farm, Sewall et al., *History of Woburn*, 366; Hurt, *Alabama Bound*, 130.

<sup>8</sup> This Benjamin owned the Wyman tankard now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The tankard bears the mark of John Hancock and had reputedly been fashioned from coins Benjamin Wyman provided him. Tradition has it that at the outbreak of the war, in the fighting at Lexington, John Hancock and Samuel Adams sheltered in the Wyman home to escape pursuit. Capt. Benjamin Wyman died in 1774, shortly before the war. His son, Luther's father, Benjamin IV (1767–1836) served as captain, then major in the Massachusetts State Militia and became magistrate and Justice of the Peace in Woburn. The Wyman tankard was in Luther Wyman's possession at his death in 1879. He bequeathed it to his eldest son Benjamin, "my Silver Tankard which formerly belonged to my Grandfather Benjamin Wyman, whose name is engraved on it," Surrogate's court, Kings County, will 82 probated 22 November 1879, 66. The tankard subsequently came into the possession of Nathan Wyman, then Judge Clearwater, whose collection passed into the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<sup>9</sup> From his obituary, BE, 29 July 1879, 2.

settled in the Alabama Territory in 1818, from where he sent back one of the earliest geographic and business surveys of that new land.<sup>10</sup> Luther's eldest brother Benjamin had probably already moved to Boston, where he established himself as a music professor. Musical talent must have been cultivated in the family, for in turn, Luther became a featured soloist in the renowned Boston Handel and Haydn Society and performed at Harvard graduations. That oratorio society, founded in 1815 by a group of merchants and musicians, aimed to promote the skilled performance of sacred music.<sup>11</sup> Here began Luther's exposure to how business and cultural interests could mesh together in a collaborative setting. He had a well-trained bass voice, and standing nearly six feet tall, he commanded immediate respect that later in life led to comparisons with George Washington.<sup>12</sup> In 1828 he was accepted at the rank of ensign in the state militia, later known as the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> Luther Wyman's honorable discharge in 1829 officially recognized his departure from Boston, from where he traveled west to explore the recently opened Erie Canal. He first settled in Troy, New York. Troy marked the highest point on the Hudson River, from where one could access the new canal via a short man-made

<sup>10</sup> Partially published in Thomas McAdory Owen, ed., *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, v.3, 1898-1899* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Printed for the Society, 1899), 107-27. See also Hurt, *Alabama Bound*, 37-38.

<sup>11</sup> H. Johnson, *Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston* (B. Humphries, 1965), 27-49; H. Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (New York, NY: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1986), II, 318.

<sup>12</sup> BE, 29 July 1879, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Two other Wyman kin were militia members at the time, Captain Francis Wyman, listed as a trader by profession, and Lieutenant Colonel Nehemiah Wyman, a butcher from Charleston, Massachusetts, Oliver Ayer Roberts: *History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts Now Called the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts: 1637-1888, vol. 3* (Boston, MA: Mudge, 1898), III, 66; also, Zachariah Whitman, *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company [electronic Resource]: (revised and enlarged) from Its Formation in 1637 and Charter in 1638, to the Present Time: Comprising the Biographies of the Distinguished Civil, Literary, Religious and Military Men of the Colony, Province and Commonwealth.*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: J. H. Eastburn, printer, 1842), 396, 403, 419.

connector that brought freight, passengers, and news further north than the canal's designated endpoint at Albany.

Why Luther Wyman left Boston where he had established acquaintances in the business, militia, and musical worlds, probably finds explanation in the economic assessment by Boston merchant Thomas Wren Ward, a prominent, well-connected commission merchant, member of the Boston Athenaeum and treasurer of Harvard College. He and Wyman likely became acquainted through Boston business, Harvard, or other cultural, particularly musical associations. They certainly knew each other later in connection with the Black Ball Line, where Wyman worked for forty years. In 1828 Ward had agreed to become exclusive US agent for the powerful merchant banking house of Baring Brothers & Co., British investors in the line. In his diary for 1829 Ward described the diminishing economic horizons in Boston. First, Ward reviewed the remarkable economic growth of Boston since the War of Independence up until the depression of 1828, at which point manufacturing slowed, decreasing the demand for labor. Companies began to fail, and Boston's shipping, once the pride of the city, but newly burdened with tariffs, had begun to lose out to other port cities. For Ward, Boston's growth had been too fast and the profits too little. He noted that Bostonians looked with envy to the prosperity of Philadelphia and especially New York.<sup>14</sup> For an ambitious young man like Luther Wyman, prospects looked brightest not in Boston but elsewhere. He was not alone, for it is worth noting that the Low family, who made their immense fortune in the China trade, and who later became Wyman's neighbors in Brooklyn Heights, had also left Massachusetts for New York in 1829. The Low brothers, Abiel Abbott and Josiah, together with Luther Wyman became prominent patrons of Brooklyn's renaissance twenty-five years later.

Wyman's little-known years in Troy before he moved to Manhattan and then Brooklyn, turn out to have special relevance for his later career. They set his life's course, and not just in terms of his long career in maritime shipping. Troy also introduced him to the world of cultural entrepreneurship built

<sup>14</sup> *Thomas Wren Ward Diaries, 1827–55, Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms N-1726, 41.* In the midst of the 1828 downturn, Ward noted “a panic seized upon the community and the feeling became general that Boston was declining and all was going to ruin.”

out from his various musical involvements, which he expanded in scale later in Brooklyn.<sup>15</sup>

In Troy, Luther Wyman met Cecilia Warren, a clergyman's daughter, whom he married in 1829 after a brief engagement.<sup>16</sup> Music and the friendly sociability of church and choral societies had brought the young couple together. Cecilia bore the name of the Roman and early Christian martyr Cecilia, patroness of sacred music. Like Luther, his bride displayed musical talents and later published some of her songs. While in Troy, Wyman served as choir director for the Second Presbyterian Church and played violoncello for the choir of the First Presbyterian Church.<sup>17</sup> Given his well-trained voice, Luther quickly associated himself with Troy's sacred music society. Probably at Wyman's initiative, the society reorganized as the Troy Handel and Haydn Society, patterned after the Boston choral society where Wyman had featured as soloist.<sup>18</sup> The new Society aimed "to elevate the style of Sacred Music in all our churches."<sup>19</sup> Next, Wyman partnered with a friend to open a school to teach the theory and practice of sacred music in a rear room of the local Universalist Chapel.<sup>20</sup> Apparently members of the Troy Handel and Haydn Society and others interested in sacred choral music could use the extra instruction to improve their musical technique. The Society planned an ambitious

<sup>15</sup> BE, 29 July 1879, 2. According to his obituary notice written long afterwards, Luther Wyman had left Boston upon the invitation of a friend to view the newly opened Erie Canal.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* The Troy 1830 census lists Luther Wyman, US Census, Rensselaer County, NY, Troy Ward 2, roll 105, 36 accessed via <http://www.Ancestry.com>. The *Troy Budget* of 15 May 1829 carried an announcement of the evening nuptials between Luther B. Wyman and Miss Cecilia Augusta Warren, Rev. Mr. Whitmore presiding, TB, 15 May 1829, 3.

<sup>17</sup> BE, 29 July 1879, 2. The Second Presbyterian Church was dedicated in August 1827 with Rev. Dr. Tucker as pastor. Rev. Nathan Beaman had been installed as pastor of the First church in 1823, *Troy Post* (hereafter) TP, 24 June 1823, 3.

<sup>18</sup> First meeting advertised TB, 24 October 1828, 3. It replaced its predecessor, the more modest Harmonic Society.

<sup>19</sup> Troy Sentinel [hereafter TS], 8 December 1829, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Erastus F. Brigham, TB, 6 October 1829, 3.

program for a public concert including various harmonic pieces and selections from Handel's *Messiah*.<sup>21</sup> Wyman and his music school partner featured as soloists.<sup>22</sup>

Oddly, none of Luther Wyman's later obituaries mention his first employment in Troy where he began his career as a business entrepreneur, namely as proprietor of the respectable Troy Bathing House and attached strolling garden. The press first announced Luther Wyman's new proprietorship 3 April 1829, just a month prior to his wedding. The establishment would open 15 April, "if a sufficient number of subscribers can be obtained." The text continued: "The GARDEN will be handsomely fitted up; Ice cream, soda, and Congress Water, and Refreshments will be kept constantly on hand; both male and female attendants will be in constant waiting, and every exertion made to please."<sup>23</sup> In those days, absent much indoor plumbing, bathing in special waters recommended itself for one's health. The *Troy Budget* crooned over the benefits of bathing: "This delightful exercise is daily

<sup>21</sup> One letter to the editor of the *Troy Budget* from someone signing him or herself "*Musica Sacra*," aimed to drum up support: "This society is the only one in Troy, that offers to the public a rational cause of amusement; it has done more to elevate the standard of sacred music in the city, than every exertion of every kind has done before . . . Will the public 'nourish this vine?' Or will the members sustain it for their own pleasure?" TB, 27 April 1830, 2; the program is listed TB, 21 May 1830, 2.

<sup>22</sup> "The 'Songs' by Messrs. Wyman and Brigham, were well executed, and the bass, throughout every piece, was sustained with spirit and energy." The editor, however, complained about "modern" music that ventured beyond old-fashioned harmony into a strange "chromatic jargon." The ambitions of the society had overreached the more conservative tastes of the audience. Soon the local bookstore Kemble & Hill began offering for sale copies of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society's Bridgewater Collection of church music, TB, 6 November 1830, 3, datelined 22 October.

<sup>23</sup> The bathing house stood on Seventh Street below State Street. A subsequent advertisement stated: "This establishment is now open for the season; where BATHS may be had at any hour of the day or evening. The HOUSE & GARDEN have been put in complete order for the reception of visitors, and the proprietor is determined that nothing shall be wanting on his part to please its patrons," TB, 3 April 1829, 3; TB, 12 May 1829, 3. The baths and garden opened 25 April, TB, 24 April 1829, 3.

becoming more in use. The *Journal of Health* recommends bathing in warm terms, to all who are anxious to preserve a free circulation of the blood, and an habitually easy perspiration.”<sup>24</sup>

The two-story Troy Bathing House featured two separate entrances, presumably one for men, the other for women.<sup>25</sup> Six bath chambers stood on one side; four on the other, with a corridor running along the end of an “L” that housed stoves for warming the water and the ambient air in winter.<sup>26</sup> The attached garden, illuminated in the evenings, boasted to be “a healthy and beautiful retreat, containing arbors and groves neatly prepared for comfort or retirement.”<sup>27</sup> Italian Renaissance painters had depicted Heaven as a garden of delights where the happy souls of the Saved found pleasure as they meandered among fountains, flowers, shrubs, and trees. At Troy, New York, Luther Wyman’s baths and garden were fed by refreshing, if not heavenly, spring water. People came there to relax, enjoy polite company, and promote their health. In an appeal to popular patriotism Wyman renamed his locale, “The Washington Garden.”<sup>28</sup>

Just when his business promised to expand, the supply of spring water feeding the bathing house diminished, now inadequate to meet

<sup>24</sup> TB, 25 June 25, 1830, 2. The bathing house, originally opened in 1825, had had two proprietors before Luther Wyman, a Mr. Mayo who had opened the establishment with backing from George Tibbits, Esq., TS, 19 November 1825, 3. Luther Wyman took over from I. B. Lottridge, proprietor in 1828, TB, 9 May 1828, 3; TS, 13 Jul 1824, 4; *ibid.*, 18 November 1825, 3.

<sup>25</sup> The bathing house opened for bathing from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. “The baths are in the rear, in an L of the building, which is about forty feet long, divided lengthwise through the middle by a thick partition, on the side of which the baths are arranged in small rooms conveniently constructed for the purpose,” TS, 20 August 1824, 4. A cellar and kitchen lay below.

<sup>26</sup> “The water is sufficiently soft and pure; the price of a bath is moderate; and the rooms are kept so warm and comfortable that bathing there is as safe and agreeable at this [winter] season, as in the summer,” TS, 18 November 1825, 3.

<sup>27</sup> And further, “The Garden is situated on the side of the hill east of the city, which overlooks and presents a delightful prospect. The warm weather, which is now approaching, will render so fine a retreat peculiarly grateful,” TB, 30 May 1828, 3.

<sup>28</sup> TB, 22 June 1830, 2.

demand.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Wyman recognized the handwriting on the wall, for he threw his energies into the Washington Garden as a venue for grander public entertainments, especially music. He also staged summer fireworks displays that the *Troy Sentinel* hoped would sell many tickets “for the sake of Mr. Wyman, who has not realized much from his bathing establishment this summer.”<sup>30</sup> They celebrated Monday, 5 July, since Sunday, the Fourth, was reserved for religious services. The *Troy Budget* hinted at a special evening treat at the Washington Garden: “Our friend Wyman has hit the very nick of time for his banquet of music, and rockets and ice-cream and soda.” Wyman’s entertainments were to conclude the festivities that had featured a parade around the center of town with military escort, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, oration, prayers, music, and a band performance at the Universalist Chapel, following which a procession led to Rensselaer House for a celebratory dinner. He advertised the appearance of a celebrated Opera Buffo singer to perform comic songs accompanied by the “good music” of a band.<sup>31</sup> In 1830 Wyman planned celebrations around Independence Day to have a special evening treat at the Washington Garden featuring a banquet of music, rockets, and ice cream sodas.<sup>32</sup> A band of twenty musicians serenaded Wyman’s guests with a “variety of National Airs.”<sup>33</sup> The fireworks spectacle promised “rockets and wheels and figures and serpents (none of the family of the old Serpent, the devil . . .) and various other fiery forms and colours.”<sup>34</sup> For twenty-five cents admission, spectators could watch the “Grand Gala of Fire Works” that the “celebrated Pyrotechnist of the Vauxhall and East

<sup>29</sup> The first alert came in September 1829 and again in early 1830 when a new spring had to be tapped for the bathing house, and Wyman informed his patrons of “an increased supply of water” assuring that they could obtain a “hot, tepid, cold and shower bath” any day of the week, TS, 8 September 1829, 2; TB, 22 June 1830, 2 and 3; 25 June 1830, 2.

<sup>30</sup> TS, 8 September 1829, 2.

<sup>31</sup> TS, 31 July 1829, 2; 11 August 1829, 2. A Mr. Hill was the singer.

<sup>32</sup> Those so inclined could also attend an afternoon meeting and speech at the Troy Temperance Society at the First Presbyterian Church on First Street. A parade and festivities beginning with a gun salute began at dawn, TB, 2 July 1830, 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* The gala at the Washington Garden began at 8PM with the firing of signal rockets.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 July 1830, 2.

River Gardens” in New York had prepared, which promised to be “surpassing in splendor any thing of the kind which has ever been witnessed” in Troy. Wyman’s nearest competition, Mr. Munerett’s Troy Garden offered only refreshments and occasional rockets. Another venue was “Mr. Allen’s *Grand Fête Champetre*,” to take place aboard a Hudson steamboat chugging between Troy and Albany and featuring a mere thirteen rockets and the release of a hot air balloon emblazoned with the inscription “Prosperity to the State of New York.” Mr. Allen’s entertainment cost seventy-five cents, or three times as much as the show at Wyman’s garden, and the *Troy Budget* pronounced that the river show “will better be seen in the Washington Garden from its elevated position, than from any other part of the city.”<sup>35</sup>

Soon thereafter, however, Wyman announced a brief closure of the bathing house in order to make improvements to its water works. As the summer wore on, less and less water flowed from the nearby springs that fed the baths. Wyman focused instead on the Washington Garden where he continued to offer fireworks displays “in the New York style,” to musical accompaniments by a full band.<sup>36</sup> He needed the admissions money in these tough times. Though the bathing house reopened when adequate supplies of water returned, he had had enough of the sour taste from being a sole proprietor who bore all the risks of failure.<sup>37</sup> In 1831 the Troy Bathing House was advertised to let.<sup>38</sup> By then Wyman had moved into the employ of the Troy Towboat Company.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* and 2 July 1830, 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July 1830, 2. The *Troy Budget* helped advertise: “We cannot doubt that in a generous community, where Mr. Wyman is so much and so well known, he will be warmly repaid, in patronage to these exhibitions, for his misfortune in the lack of a supply of water during the past months.” Admission to the show fell to only twelve and a half cents with children half price. “The sight from the *outside* will, on this occasion, be partially obstructed by a canvas which will be raised *ten feet* above the present height of the Garden fence,” *ibid.*, 20 August 1830, 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 November 1830, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1831, 2. March ads featured drawings of the establishment, e.g. *ibid.*, 4 March 1831, 3. Mr. Day, the new lessee of the bathing house, was a florist and practical horticulturalist. He repainted, replaced the piping, and expanded the garden to include a seed store and flower garden. Gone were the band concerts and fireworks that had distinguished Wyman’s proprietorship, *ibid.*, 26 April 1831, 2 and 3; 3 July 1831, 2.



The completion of the Erie Canal, linking to the tide waters of the Hudson at Troy, opened vast new freighting possibilities to and from the Port of New York, bringing the produce of America's vast interior to the Atlantic coast for transshipment abroad. Two Troy merchants, grocer Elias Pattison and Philip Hart, Jr., partnered in the freight business to transport goods by river sloop between Troy and New York City. They took advantage of the opening of the Erie Canal as far as Troy in 1823. Pattison managed the Troy end of the business from his former grocery stand. Hart moved to New York to an office along the East River docks in lower Manhattan.<sup>39</sup> Going downriver to the metropolis, the towboats carried mainly agricultural commodities from upstate, such as wheat, flour, ash, wool, and nails, many of which products would find their way on board the big ocean packets headed for Liverpool.<sup>40</sup> Coming upriver for sale at Troy, their advertisements list mainly hard-to-get goods purchased from Caribbean traders. These included comestibles such as alcoholic spirits, notably rum, brandy, and gin, tea, wine, sherry, molasses, sugar, tobacco, coffee, and salt, but also shot and powder, even some Alabama cotton. Towboat service connected the Port of New York with both the Erie and Champlain Canals, allowing subscribers to contract freighting through agents in Troy or New York for the transport of merchandise into upstate New York, Vermont, and Canada and back.<sup>41</sup> Soon the partners planned a daily line of steamboats between Troy and New York.<sup>42</sup> The *Troy Budget* bragged, "We have wealth enough, enterprise enough and mechanics enough to put such a line of boats into existence."<sup>43</sup> Troy itself had expanded rapidly. By 1830 its

<sup>39</sup> At 31 Front Street.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. TS, 17 September 1824, 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July 1824, 1. The Troy line gave Albany competition. It claimed goods would reach further to Troy via its side cut canal in the same amount of time it took to get to Albany, thus saving time and expense. Subscribers to their service would save on tolls, at the rate of about \$30 per ton. Shipping from Troy to New York rather than from Albany should save customers about twenty percent on freight as well. The early canal boats, fitted with two cabins and cargo space, were propelled by teams of horses in relay that trudged along the towpath twenty-four hours a day, *ibid.*, 12 September 1824, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 December 1830, 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 and 21 December 1830, 2.

population soared to over 11,000 souls, quadruple its size back in 1810.<sup>44</sup> In 1830 customs tolls climbed more than forty percent over the previous year.<sup>45</sup> Such was the impact of the Erie Canal on Troy. To Luther Wyman, the rapidly expanding freighting business along the canal and river offered many more opportunities and much less risk than running the Troy Bathing House.

When Luther Wyman joined Troy Towboat, steam power had already reached Troy. Hart had been an early investor in the Troy Steam Boat Company that plied the waters of the North Hudson River.<sup>46</sup> By 1828 Pattison and Hart launched a new consolidated scheme named the Troy Towboat Company. The plan utilized their steam tug *New-London*, newly outfitted to carry respectable passengers. The tug, with its human cargo, pushed or pulled barges loaded with freight.<sup>47</sup> By the end of the year Troy Towboats had nine freight barges departing Coenties Slip on the East River for the overnight trip upstream to Troy, returning to New York on alternate days.<sup>48</sup> About the time Wyman joined the company, Troy Towboat enjoyed such success that they streamlined their business. They announced an express direct service between Troy and New York that

<sup>44</sup> TB, 24 August 1830, 2. Census figures were reported by gender and race with 5,378 white males, 5,696 white females; 129 “Coloured” males and 202 “Coloured” females; four deaf and dumb; and 733 foreigners.

<sup>45</sup> In the month of September more than \$73,000 had been collected in tolls at the West Troy collector’s office, a \$20,000 increase over the same month in 1829. *Ibid.*, 5 October 1830, 1; *ibid.*, 3 December 1830, 2.

<sup>46</sup> TP, 22 April 1823, 4; TS, 13 July 1824, 1, datelined 4 June. When he left the Troy Bathing House, Wyman’s wife Cecilia was pregnant with their first child, a son Benjamin, born in 1832. The baby joined a long line of Benjamin Wymans in America, stretching back to the son of Francis, the original Wyman brother who emigrated from England in the 1630s. The child’s middle name, Franklin, honored Benjamin Franklin, [www.wyman.org](http://www.wyman.org).

<sup>47</sup> TB, 14 March 1828, 1. They departed New York on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Troy on Tuesdays and Fridays.

<sup>48</sup> Troy Towboat made headlines in the *New York Enquirer* when it touted the arrival in New York of “the largest load of produce that ever came down the Hudson River, consisting of flour, ashes, whiskey, pork etc. etc., amounting to about 426 tons,” *ibid.*, 22 May 1829, 3.

eliminated all intermediate stops.<sup>49</sup> In 1831, the same year William Roscoe died to great mourning on both shores of the Atlantic, Luther Wyman had widened the economic horizons that would draw him to New York and then Brooklyn, where he took a leading role transforming the cultural life of his adopted city and making the Brooklyn Renaissance happen, much as Roscoe had done in Liverpool.

Over the next four years with Troy Towboat, Wyman became familiar with a punctual line service that handled both passengers and freight. He began work in the line's New York office, and by 1833 had moved his small family to Manhattan. The following year he left Troy Towboat to embrace even wider opportunities in the employ of Captain Charles H. Marshall, new managing partner in the Old Line/Black Ball Line of ocean packets to Liverpool. The switch led Wyman from managing river freight to managing ocean freight. Both businesses involved the same concept, but on a different scale, namely shipping produce and goods and providing scheduled passenger services from one point on the river or side of the Atlantic to the other. With Troy Towboat, Wyman had worked along the East River docks where river and ocean captains and ship owners mingled. Wyman probably met Captain Charles H. Marshall there, and they had prior service on the Hudson River in common.<sup>50</sup> When Luther Wyman left Troy Towboat to join Marshall's employ, the wealthy, well-known ship captain had just partnered with commission merchant Jonathan Goodhue to purchase the ocean packet line. Luther Wyman moved his place of business only a short distance from Coenties Slip—where Troy Towboat docked its barges—to Pier 23 where the Old Line/Black Ball ships moored.

When Wyman began employment with the Old Line/Black Ball Line, oceanic and canal shipping had already established itself as the wellspring of the New York economy. He would not have been so well on his way to

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 October 1830, 2; Wyman's obituary stated that Troy Towboat virtually monopolized towing between Troy and New York, BE, 29 July 1879, 2.

<sup>50</sup> In his early days during the War of 1812, Marshall had crewed aboard a Hudson River steamer before he went to sea and became a packet captain and later part owner of the Black Ball Line. In 1814 he went to sea under a Capt. Wiswall, and by 1816 had shipped as a mate on the *Courier* owned by Francis Thompson before the Old Line/Black Ball Line was officially organized, William Butler, *Memorial of Charles H. Marshall [electronic Resource]* (New York, NY: D. Appleton and company, 1867), 35–36.

becoming “papa” and cultural impresario of Brooklyn, had it not been for the Atlantic commerce that fueled the rapid growth of the port and brought leading Brooklynites their fortunes. Already at the close of the War of 1812 when trade with England greatly expanded, the Port of New York was the fastest growing port in America, outstripping older Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston.<sup>51</sup> Beyond its natural advantage as a navigable deep water port, New York’s remarkable growth depended heavily upon the triangular trade in cotton that connected Liverpool, New York, and the American South.<sup>52</sup> New York controlled much of the coastal shipping that brought cotton from the South up the Eastern Seaboard to the port whence large quantities were forwarded to Europe. Initially, even the smaller volume of cotton that shipped directly from Southern ports to Europe often found financing through New York, making the East River docks and Wall Street banks, commercial houses, and insurance companies the central hub of the antebellum US cotton trade that in turn connected them to a global cotton economy centered in Liverpool.<sup>53</sup> On their westward return, many of the

<sup>51</sup> R. G. Albion argued the New York Port that was rapidly surpassing Boston and Philadelphia as the most important entrepot for Atlantic shipping, owed less to the opening in 1825 of the Erie Canal which connected New York’s Hudson River with the American hinterland via the Great Lakes, than to a combination of other factors. Robert Albion and Jennie Barnes Pope, *The Rise of New York Port 1815–1860* (New York, NY: C. Scribner’s Sons, Ltd., 1939), vi–ix. By contrast, Jeffrey Bolster downplayed the relative value of the US import and export economy in this period compared to the meteoric rise of the US domestic market. See the discussion in Alex Roland et al., *The Way of the Ship: America’s Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600–2000* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 144–47.

<sup>52</sup> Albion developed this thesis in his two books *Square Riggers on Schedule* and *The Rise of the New York Port*. See especially chapter 3 in *Square Riggers* on “Enslaving the Cotton Ports,” 49–76. On the same theme, see also Francis Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey: An Economic History of a Port, 1700–1970* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1971), 34–35.

<sup>53</sup> Between 1820 and 1850 annual cotton arrivals in Liverpool tripled from less than 500,000 bales to over 1,500,000 by 1850, D. M. Williams, “Liverpool Merchants and the Cotton Trade 1820–1850,” in *Liverpool and Merseyside. Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and Its Hinterland* (New York, NY: A. M. Kelley, 1969), 182–211, at 183. See also D. M. Williams and Lars U. Scholl, ed., “Shipping of the North Atlantic Cotton Trade in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *Merchants and Mariners: Selected Maritime Writings of*

ships departing from Liverpool sailed directly to New York, even though some of their cargoes of British manufactured goods were ultimately destined for the US South and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup> The Old Line/Black Ball Line of packet ships concentrated on that New York–Liverpool route.

This lucrative “cotton triangle” which fueled the expansion of the port and the docks in Manhattan and Brooklyn, flourished well before the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, leading the early historian of the New York Port, R. G. Albion, to argue that oceanic, not inland commerce, induced the port’s ascension in contrast to the more popular belief that the Erie Canal sparked New York’s economic primacy in the early nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Still, the canal, which connected America’s vast interior via the Great Lakes and fed the further growth of the Port, quickly became the physical symbol of New York’s economic prowess. As the engineering marvel of its day and poster child in the era of US internal improvements, the canal drew young men to explore its contours. Excited by the opportunities and risks awaiting them, enterprising young people such as Luther Wyman, many of them New Englanders, had found their way to New York to take advantage of the new economic horizons there. Jonathan Goodhue, himself a Massachusetts transplant, leading commission merchant, and major partner in the Old Line/Black Ball Line, had described the prospects of New York

*David M. Williams* (St. John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2000), 53–79, at 58. Sven Beckert has written a global history of cotton that transcends national political boundaries to embrace the shifting tides of a new global capitalism in which plantation owners, merchants, speculators, and manufacturers, joined with the power of the state and pioneered worldwide networks to produce, transport, manufacture, finance, and market cotton products, *Empire of Cotton: a global history* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014). On Liverpool’s central place in that empire, see especially 200–30.

<sup>54</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 98–110; also D. M. Williams and Lars U. Scholl, ed., “Shipping of the North Atlantic Cotton Trade in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” 68–69.

<sup>55</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 95–102. Belief that the canal was the most important motivator of New York’s growth features in Peter Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2005). See also Roland et al., *The Way of the Ship*, 144–46. Though shipping was not his focus, Beckert’s emphasis on the global nature of the cotton economy underscores the import of oceanic transport and trade, *Empire of Cotton*, 199–200.

to his diary well before the construction of the canal as “a place possessing unexampled commercial advantages and having more advantages also of climate and society than any other place in our country.”<sup>56</sup>

Oceanic shipping served as a sensitive barometer of the cycles of commercial prosperity in the early nineteenth-century Atlantic World. The unsettled economic trajectory of the Old Line/Black Ball Line of packets between New York Harbor and Roscoe’s Liverpool, which is the major subject of the remainder of this chapter, makes a handy bellwether. Placed within the larger frame of transatlantic exchange, the line tracked the growth spurts of the New York Port along the East River waterfront, which was so vital for Brooklyn’s expanding wealth and eventually for its cultural renaissance at mid-century.

### STARTING THE LINE

Quaker émigré Jeremiah Thompson from Yorkshire, originally an importer of English woolen cloths to the USA, became an early pioneer of New York Atlantic commerce and the cotton trade. Already experienced in textiles, early on he saw the potential profits in shipping American raw cotton to feed the Manchester and Lancashire mills and in speculating on prices at both ends of the trade. By the 1820s Thompson was reputedly the largest cotton merchant in the world.<sup>57</sup> A professed and principled opponent of slavery like his Quaker partners, ironically, by virtue of stimulating the trade that expanded cotton production in the US, he contributed indirectly to the American South’s growing dependency on slavery as the key source of agricultural labor.

Scheduled line service across the Atlantic had originated with Thompson and his four partners, three of them textile men originally from Yorkshire.<sup>58</sup> They came together through shared ownership in several ships and eventually combined four vessels to constitute the Old Line of packet ships between New York and Liverpool. Only later in the

<sup>56</sup> Goodhue, “Notes of Events.”

<sup>57</sup> Walter Barrett, *The Old Merchants of New York City*. Series 1–5 (New York, NY: Carleton, 1870) 4: 184–85, 214, 218, 217–12; Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 114. See also Roland et al., *The Way of the Ship*, 159–61.

<sup>58</sup> Jeremiah and his brother Francis Thompson, Benjamin Marshall, and two Long Islanders Isaac Wright and son William, Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 112–13. Jeremiah Thompson and Isaiah Wright were the active managers.

1840s was the line denominated the Black Ball Line after its distinctive house flag featuring a black ball on a white or red field (Fig. 3.1). In the early years, Thompson and his partners filled their eastbound cargo space with thousands of cotton bales. They also shipped across the Atlantic such commodities as naval stores, flour, and linseed oil as occasion presented. Westbound ships brought English manufactured goods to New York. The ships featured passenger service as well. Cargoes either belonged directly to the ships' owners or were taken on a consignment basis, charged at current freight rates. By taking freight on consignment, the partners provided a valuable service to dozens of merchants and commission agents whose business did not warrant them maintaining ships of their own.

The Old Line achieved its place in shipping history in 1817 by pioneering the practice of speedy scheduled service between New York and Liverpool, full cargo or not.<sup>59</sup> The volume and rising demand for trade between the two ports warranted this innovative programmed service, soon imitated by others, including Troy Towboat's regular service on the Hudson River. Swift scheduled sailings facilitated transoceanic communication about sensitive market conditions in cotton and other commodities. Early news of price trends brought considerable advantage.<sup>60</sup> The Old Line collaborated in installing a rudimentary semaphore on Staten Island in 1821 that signaled news from approaching ships before pilots had even boarded to guide them into the East River docks.<sup>61</sup> Another semaphore perched atop the New York Exchange, destination of the earliest market and political advices. Just beyond the channel leading into the harbor, news boats crowded around arriving packets in a race to see who could rush ashore the latest European newspapers the packets had ferried over the ocean.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, on the British side, hours ahead of

<sup>59</sup> The first sailing under the new arrangements was set for January 1818. Initially, the ships departed on the first of the month from Liverpool and on the fifth from New York. See also Butler, *Memorial*, 40–41.

<sup>60</sup> Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 182–83 for the packets' role in the 1825 speculative boom.

<sup>61</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 217.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* In 1829 a semaphore was erected atop the Merchant's Exchange. In 1833, Irish actor Tyrone Power who arrived in New York aboard the *Europe*, a Black Ball ship, remarked on the news boats crowding around the ship, quoted in Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 178.



**Fig. 3.1** The Black Ball Line Packet Ship *New York* off Ailsa Craig, signed and dated, lower right: “W[illiam]. Clark 1836,” oil on canvas. Yale University Center for British Art Accession # B1981.25.105. Artokoloro Quint Lox Limited/Alamy Stock Photo

a packet’s arrival at Liverpool’s famous wet docks, early sightings of ships in the Irish Sea were transmitted by semaphore from Holyhead, a promontory on the Welsh coast. Until the age of steam, sailing packets remained the chief means of regular communication across the North Atlantic, and as their service became more frequent and faster, they drew Great Britain and America closer together, both economically and culturally.

With regular sailings, the Old Line owners aimed to capture the premium cabin passenger market, high value or “fine” freight, mails, and bullion shipments, as well as the cotton bales that fed the hungry English textile factories. They fitted their sturdy New York-built ships with luxury accommodations for affluent cabin passengers. Notables including actors and diarists Fanny Kimble and Tyrone Power, and later Swedish singing sensation Jenny Lind, P. T. Barnum and his little showman Tom Thumb voyaged back and forth to Europe on Black Ball ships, attracted by their



reputation for solidity, swiftness, and safety, but also for their superior accommodations and fine food and wines at the captain's table.

In the 1820s other competing packet lines sprang into being, notably the Red Star Line and the Swallowtail Line, the latter which would later become New York's largest shipping company.<sup>63</sup> Competition led the Old Line/Black Ball Line to double its service in 1822, adding four more ships to its fleet that now sailed from New York on the first and sixteenth of the month.<sup>64</sup> Its designation in newspaper advertisements as the Old Line had given it pride of place as the first line of scheduled Liverpool packets. In the 1820s, as new lines were established, they were likewise commonly known by their chronology as the Second, Third, or Fourth Line and only secondarily by their more colorful names taken from their house flags such as Black Ball, Red Star or Blue Swallowtail. Only later in the 1840s did the flag names predominate, and hence the Old Line-Black Ball became shortened just to Black Ball Line.

By the mid-1820s scheduled packet service had become the expected means of transport for cabin passengers and high value goods, mail, and specie. That situation remained unchanged until the 1840s when steamships began making speedier crossings and gradually took over the luxury passenger and fine freight, leaving to the sailing packets bulkier, less valuable cargos. To fill the void on their return voyages from Liverpool, the packets moved quickly into the lucrative business of transporting immigrants to the New World. Beginning in the 1830s, but increasingly in the 1840s in the wake of the Irish famine and well into the 1850s thousands of new Americans entered the country in crowded, unsanitary steerage quarters below decks, hastily converted from former cargo space.

Sadly, few records from the US side of Black Ball Line operations have come to light. The Charles H. Marshall papers in the New-York Historical Society contain only a handful of shipping documents, notably some bills of sale and insurance contracts for Black Ballers in the latter years of the line's history, mostly in the late 1860s under Captain Marshall's son Charles, Jr. Fortunately we can obtain a good sense of the fortunes and practices of the line from the correspondence records and accounts of Barings, Liverpool, in the Baring Archive, London, in customs records, and from the diary entries and letters of three of the line's main American

<sup>63</sup> New Englanders Fish and Grinnell & Co., later Grinnell, Minturn & Co., organized the Swallowtail Line.

<sup>64</sup> Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 30-31.

protagonists, Thomas Wren Ward, Baring's chief US agent in Boston, Jonathan Goodhue, Baring's chief commission agent in New York and major investor in the line from 1834 to 1842, and Joshua Bates, managing partner of Barings, London. These sources, plus more recent research on maritime commerce and the cotton trade during this period, allow us to track the history of the line against general advances and twists in the Atlantic economy over the more than three decades it addressed ships to Barings, Liverpool. During those years Wyman experienced the ebb and flow of the line's business from its office in Burling Slip.

The trajectory of Black Ball business followed general trends in the larger Atlantic economy. Records of Barings' investments in the line indicate the general direction of its fortunes dividing roughly into three ownership periods following its sale in 1834 to Goodhue & Co., Charles H. Marshall, and the other captains.<sup>65</sup> The initial period lasts from 1834 until late 1842 when Goodhue withdrew financing from the line, forcing a reorganization. When Goodhue died in greatly reduced circumstances in 1848 leaving his business to his sons, they no longer had any affiliations with the packet line. After a shaky start, the initial period post-1834 saw steady growth and prosperity and the ability of the line, buttressed by Barings, to weather the transatlantic financial crisis of 1837. The second and longest period stretched from 1842 until Captain Charles H. Marshall's death in 1865 and defined an era of larger and faster ships and increased competition in the Liverpool service. This second period embraces the line's efforts to maintain a steady service while adjusting to the changed nature of shipping, fresh opportunities in the immigrant trade, and in the cotton market, and looming competition from steam.

We observe sailing vessels' initial persistence in the midst of altered economic and commercial circumstances as they absorbed the impact of the new, larger, and faster steamships and weathered the next big crash of 1857. Steamships eventually dominated Atlantic commerce, but for the first two decades after the maiden Atlantic crossing by steamship in 1838, the two classes of ship sailed and chugged along similar routes. With design improvements, larger cargo capacity, and faster, more reliable service, by the

<sup>65</sup> This chronology differs from Albion's study of the packets which divided the periods of ownership of the Black Ball into an early period 1817 to 1834; a middle period to 1848; and a final period post 1848 to its closing. He emphasized the initial founding period, *Square-Riggers*, 30–31; 115–18; 271.

late 1850s steamships had successfully captured the most valuable, time-sensitive cargo, mails, and high-end passenger service that the early scheduled packets had so proudly pioneered. For a few more years, anyway, the packets adjusted by concentrating on cheaper bulk cargo and immigrant passenger service.<sup>66</sup> The laying of the first transatlantic cable in 1858 allowed telegraphed news across the ocean in a matter of hours rather than days or weeks by ship. The cable removed the all-important advantage ships, both sail and steam, had long enjoyed for bringing the latest market and political advices across the ocean. The 1860s brought more stressful adjustments and a contraction of operations, which shrinkage was accelerated by the impact the Civil War had upon US Atlantic commerce for both North and South and the accompanying cotton famine in England.

The third ownership period runs from Marshall's death in 1865 to the closure of the line in 1878 under Marshall's son Charles, Jr. The line barely survived the crash of 1873, and toward the end of this final phase, Wyman, ever-faithful member of the firm for nearly forty years, became incapacitated by a stroke in 1875 and was no longer able to attend to business.

The fortunes of the line saw steady growth and prosperity in the first period; the second period brought prosperity and persistence but gradual decline in the shifting sands of changing economic circumstances. Finally, after the Civil War and the death of Charles H. Marshall, in the late 1860s and 1870s, the old Black Ball Line had a diminished presence in the maritime world until its breakup as a line followed soon by the closure of Charles Marshall, Jr.'s company in 1881. Commerce by sail continued around the globe, but in the big port cities such as Liverpool and New York/Brooklyn, it had lost its competitive edge to steamships, to new rail connections that disrupted coastal navigation, and to telegraphed communications. Although traders under sail with no fixed program continued to operate into the twentieth century, scheduled sailing packet service across the Atlantic had become obsolete.

After its sale in 1834 to Goodhue, Marshall, and partners, the fortunes of the Black Ball Line cannot adequately be understood except through the perspective lens of Baring Brothers & Co., prominent commercial house and merchant bankers based in London and part owners of the

<sup>66</sup> For more on the decline of sail, see J. B. Knight, "The Last Years of Sail," in John B. Hattendorf, ed., *Maritime History*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth century and the classic age of sail* (Malabar, FL: Kreiger Pub. Co, 1997), 257–74.

line through their Liverpool branch. Although sailing packets between New York and Liverpool comprised but one area of Barings' global sphere of investments, the economic trajectory of the line during the thirty years it sent its ships to Barings, Liverpool, helps us understand the contribution maritime commerce made to the densifying transatlantic interconnectedness between the US and Europe and the dynamic in Brooklyn's, and more generally in America's, rising prosperity in the Antebellum era. Since so many of the leading Brooklynites who sponsored the Brooklyn Renaissance owed their personal fortunes to those connections, they merit our attention. The transatlantic web forms the economic underpinnings to their ability to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars privately to underwrite Brooklyn's cultural initiatives in mid-century. In fact, much of US prosperity in this period, whether in financing the cotton trade or building transportation infrastructure, was facilitated by infusions of foreign, especially British, financial capital through giant merchant banks such as Barings, Rothschilds, and W. and J. Brown & Co. (later Brown & Shipley), which invested copiously and profited greatly in America. For their success and that of their American partners, transatlantic communication first by sail, then steam and cable were essential ingredients.

When the Black Ball Line changed hands in 1834 and the new owners hired Luther Wyman in Marshall's Manhattan office, the nature of its business changed as well, for it now closely tied into the investment strategies of Baring Brothers' Bank through its Liverpool house. Barings, Liverpool focused primarily on the North American market through direct and commission trades and in the re-export business. As such it tracked the larger economic trends in Britain that saw William Roscoe's Liverpool rise to being the second largest seaport behind London and surpass the capital in total imports.<sup>67</sup> The city's magnificent system of wet docks that allowed ships to circumvent the tidal variations in

<sup>67</sup> Graeme Milne, *Trade and Traders in Mid-Victorian Liverpool: Mercantile Business and the Making of a World Port* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 103; Francis Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey*, 31, 97; F. Neal, "Liverpool Shipping in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Liverpool and Merseyside. Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and Its Hinterland*, ed. J. R. Harris (New York, NY: August M. Kelley, 1969), 147–81, esp. 153–58; D. M. Williams, "Liverpool Merchants and the Cotton Trade 1820–1850," in *Liverpool and Merseyside*, 182–211.

the Mersey facilitated the more regular Liverpool departures and arrivals that packet service had been built upon. The Black Ball Line became a crucial link in Barings' American agent Thomas Wren Ward's larger scheme for marketing cotton from the US South, a link which also made the line a key conduit of British high finance into America.<sup>68</sup> When Ward had first been researching transatlantic commerce in 1830 with an eye to involving Barings directly in shipping, he had been excited by progress on the US side. In just two years he estimated US shipping had become ten to fifteen percent more efficient; the size of ships had increased as had skill levels in handling cargo, all bringing down freighting costs. He estimated US tonnage at 1,600,000 and growing rapidly.<sup>69</sup>

Thriving Atlantic commerce, the private wealth it generated, the increased communication it facilitated between England and the US, Americans' fascination with William Roscoe and Liverpool's cultural bloom, and the hunger it awakened among urban elites for more and better fine arts in their communities all swirled together through the channels of trade. Together these constitutive elements helped generate an atmosphere conducive to the growth of the fine arts in America, once the scions of commerce took pointed interest in education and culture and began committing the resources to promote them. In Brooklyn they created a flowering of the arts. They worked through collaborative networks, first commercial and then more broadly social.

### COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

Jeremiah Thompson and the successive owners of the Old Line/Black Ball Line help us appreciate the social dimension of transatlantic commerce, namely commercial networking, so vital for later cultural affiliations. Thompson served as a node around which a considerable mercantile network developed, one that drew his and his partners' contacts and agents in New York, the US South, and Liverpool closer together. Relations were often solidified by marriage. In the case of the early Back Ball proprietors, Jeremiah Thompson married the daughter of his partner

<sup>68</sup> Ralph Hidy, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance; English Merchant Bankers at Work, 1763–1861*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 185–87.

<sup>69</sup> Ward to Bates, 26 February 1830, BAHC 5.1.2

Isaac Wright; and Benjamin Marshall, a third partner, married the daughter of one of their ship's captains.<sup>70</sup> Early agents for the line in Liverpool were fellow Quakers.<sup>71</sup> Through those same connections, William Roscoe had sent a box of his pamphlets to Black Ball owner Jeremiah Thompson for distribution in the US.

During the Italian Renaissance, merchant companies had also been family affairs. Brothers frequently partnered and pooled their capital. Soon their sons joined the firm. Often a merchant accepted younger relatives or sons of friends as clerks to learn the business, apprenticing their own sons as clerks in other friendly firms. Similar patterns held in early American transatlantic commerce.<sup>72</sup> Thomas Wren Ward of Boston, chief American agent for Baring Brothers, and Jonathan Goodhue, Black Ball owner, remained life-long friends. They enjoyed multiple ties as in-laws and as fellow New Englanders. They had both gotten their starts in business as young men by going to sea, and briefly as business partners.<sup>73</sup> Ward placed one of his sons in Goodhue's commission house.<sup>74</sup> The appointment thus extended into the next generation the tightly knit transatlantic connections between Barings' offices in London

<sup>70</sup> Capt. Stanton's daughter Niobe, *ibid.*, 114. Later the daughter of Jeremiah's niece married Joseph Walker, a Quaker originally from Yorkshire like them, who enjoyed a brief partnership in the line in the early 1830s.

<sup>71</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 114–15. Jeremiah Thompson and his partners actually had two prominent Liverpool companies in mind to handle their packet business, the firm of Cropper and Benson and that of Rathbone, Hodgson & Co., with Cropper and Benson taking charge of the correspondence and actual management, Albion, "Planning the Black Ball," *The Log of Mystic Seaport*, 18, No. 4 (1966), 98–100.

<sup>72</sup> Barrett cites the example of young John. W. Lawrence, who began as a clerk in Samuel Hicks' office, then moved up to William Howland's firm and eventually became a partner of Howland & Lawrence, prominent shipping and commission merchants, Barrett, *Old Merchants*, V: 102.

<sup>73</sup> Their brief partnership finds mention in Goodhue, "Notes of Events." Ward had withdrawn from Goodhue's company in 1816 and returned to Boston.

<sup>74</sup> In his notes for 1844, Goodhue commented, "Mr. George Cabot Ward son of my friend T. W. Ward of Boston takes his desk, to spend a few months with us." But in October 1845, George left to return to Boston to go into business there, *ibid.*

and Liverpool and in America via Boston and New York.<sup>75</sup> Goodhue handled Barings' New York business for Ward and in 1834 became principal owner of the Black Ball Line in which Barings held part ownership. Another of Ward's sons eventually succeeded him as manager of Barings' US business, a further latch onto the next generation.<sup>76</sup> Historians have argued that by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the links between family and business associations loosened with the increased volume, variety, and distances involved in transatlantic economic activity. That may well have been true on the expanding peripheries of commerce, with agents and correspondents in far-flung places; however, at the core, at least in traditional maritime commerce, family members, in-laws, and close, long-time trusted associates dominated the companies examined here.<sup>77</sup> Once Goodhue had retired as a Black Ball investing partner, Captain Charles H. Marshall brought in his son Charles H., Jr. and son-in-law Charles Lamson as new junior partners. Luther Wyman's long friendship and forty faithful years with the Black Ball Line also enhanced continuity.

Thomas Wren Ward provides another example of tight networking. He had gone to sea in his teens as supercargo for his father's business, before coming ashore and becoming Barings' top American agent in 1828. He was related by marriage to the prominent Gray family of Boston whose scion William had mentored him, Jonathan Goodhue, and Joshua Bates, managing partner of Barings, London. Those three young friends collaborated closely and transatlantically for years afterward. When Goodhue

<sup>75</sup> *Ward Diary*, 98. In 1847 another son, Sam, was eager to join Barings, *ibid.*, 126, 134.

<sup>76</sup> John and Sam, Jr. a third son traded in Canton, and yet another trained in business with the powerful New York house of Howland & Aspinwall, *ibid.*, 123, 134.

<sup>77</sup> Sheryllyne Haggerty observed a trend in eighteenth-century Philadelphia of unrelated parties in business together, joined by bonds of trust. However, we see in Goodhue's diary the large number of relatives, his sons and nephews he welcomed into his counting house for short or long periods of time alongside others who were unrelated. In Ward's case, his sons took over the Barings' agency for him. Charles H. Marshall also passed the Black Ball Line to his son Charles and son-in-law Charles Lamson.

left Boston to set up business in New York, William Gray sent many referrals his way to help him get started.<sup>78</sup>

Businessmen knew each other, married into each other's families, socialized together and met daily at the New York and Liverpool exchanges to transact business and gather news arriving on the latest packets. Jeremiah Thompson and his Liverpool agents' confessional ties as Quakers extended their circles of acquaintance, as did the Unitarian circles William Roscoe, Thomas Wren Ward, Jonathan Goodhue, and Luther Wyman frequented. The pattern of intersecting business and personal friendships so noticeable in the example of Roscoe and his Unitarian allies, found parallels among the personnel of the major commercial houses dealing in the transatlantic trade. Roscoe's network was admittedly outstanding in its remarkable extent by virtue of his active correspondence and intellectual interests in everything from history, art, and poetry, to botany, to penal reform, and by his reputation for hospitality in Liverpool. But most commercial men of any note could claim a wide complex of interlocking business and personal affiliations.<sup>79</sup> Roscoe had corresponded with and offered hospitality to many Americans landing in Liverpool. Joshua Bates performed the same function in London for Barings' customers. As a prominent, well-connected American residing abroad, scores of visitors arrived with letters to the House of Barings or to Bates personally. Visitors ranged from friends and business associates to friends of friends; well-heeled travelers touring Great Britain and the European continent; intellectuals such as Noah Webster; and political dignitaries such as former president Martin Van Buren. The volume of persons wanting attention and introductions led Bates to confide to his diary his exhaustion at having to entertain an endless parade of Americans, especially during 1851 with

<sup>78</sup> Goodhue, whose father had been a US senator, also availed himself of his parents' friends, among them Oliver Wolcott, Alexander Hamilton's successor as Secretary of the Treasury and later Governor of Connecticut, then in business in New York. Such recommendations enlarged Goodhue's circle of acquaintances, and soon he found himself invited by "most of the principal families in the city," another instance of densely networked Yankee solidarity in New York, Goodhue, "Notes of Events."

<sup>79</sup> Good examples exist in the diaries kept by Thomas Ward and Jonathan Goodhue and in the thousands of connections traceable for Luther Wyman in local newspaper reports in Brooklyn.



the opening of the great London Exhibition at the Crystal Palace.<sup>80</sup> Barings' second in command in Liverpool, Mathias Purton, faced a similar deluge of Americans to entertain, and he argued for an increase in his salary to finance the larger household he and his wife needed to entertain these guests properly.<sup>81</sup>

Overlapping personal and mercantile networks could be global in their reach. Roscoe regularly exchanged letters on botanical matters with the superintendent of the Calcutta Botanic Garden, and he had received the honor of having had named after him the genus *Roscoea* of the ginger family, newly discovered in Nepal.<sup>82</sup> The networked Atlantic connections of the early Black Ball Line partners found parallels even in the more distant trade with China. Take, for example, the Low brothers, Abiel Abbot and Josiah, Unitarians and neighbors of Luther Wyman in Brooklyn and leaders in the China trade. Their father Seth had partnered first with Russell & Co., the pre-eminent Boston firm trading in Canton. Seth Low specialized in East Indian and Chinese drugs, and in 1829 moved his business from Massachusetts to New York.<sup>83</sup> His oldest son

<sup>80</sup> He complained of "the immense labour of receiving strangers." Joshua Bates' Diary, 7 August 1851, Baring Archive [hereafter BA], Baring Ms. (B) DEP 74 copy, 4:45v. For an earlier lament, see also Philip Ziegler, *The Sixth Great Power: A History of One of the Greatest of All Banking Families, the House of Barings, 1762–1929*, 1st American ed. (New York, NY: A. A. Knopf, 1988), 143.

<sup>81</sup> Purton to Bates, 5 and 7 December 1850, BAHC 3.35; also Ziegler, *The Sixth Great Power*, 167.

<sup>82</sup> Dr. Nathaniel Wallich, see Arline Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 76. Francis Buchanan Hamilton (1762–1829) brought *Roscoea purpurea* from Nepal back to Liverpool. This was the first species of a new genus named after Roscoe by his great friend Sir James Smith (1759–1828), the founder of The Linnean Society. The ginger family, to which *Roscoea* belongs, held especial fascination for Roscoe. Over twenty years later he wrote a beautiful 'hymn' to them, *Monandrian Plants of the Order Scitamineae: Chiefly Drawn from Living Specimens in the Botanic Garden at Liverpool. Arranged according to the System of Linnaeus. With Descriptions and Observations* (Liverpool: Printed by G. Smith, 1828). See Henry Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe*, 1: 261–65; 2: 321–25. A recent appreciation is Jyll Bradley's *Mr. Roscoe's Garden*.

<sup>83</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 201. In getting started there Low also served as the agent for a New England manufacturer of glass bottles.

Abiel Abbot (known as A. A. Low) joined the business and went to China in 1833 where he also partnered with Russell & Co., then still leader in the US–China trade. Seven years later, after accumulating sufficient capital, Abiel returned to New York and began trading on his own account. Another brother, Josiah, joined him in the New York office and established residence in Brooklyn about the time Wyman moved there.<sup>84</sup> The Lows positioned a third brother in Canton, who like Abiel partnered with Russell & Co. Still a fourth brother served as a ship captain for the company, which operated some of the finest and fastest clippers in the China trade.<sup>85</sup> Abiel and Josiah had their New York offices in Burling Slip, across from the offices of the Black Ball Line. The paths of Wyman and the Low brothers intersected frequently. In addition to all being Massachusetts transplants, near business neighbors in Manhattan, and neighbors in Brooklyn Heights, they attended the same Unitarian Church of the Saviour there. They also participated in many of the same philanthropic endeavors, which illustrates the seamless connection between Brooklyn’s networked business community and the cultural renaissance to follow at mid-century.

These examples show how futile it would be in the mercantile world examined here, whether in Renaissance Florence, Roscoe’s Liverpool, or Wyman’s Brooklyn, to try to separate the forces contributing to participants’ commercial capital from their cumulative social capital and associative habits that underlay their support for the fine arts. In addition, new ventures, whether commercial or cultural, usually involved risk. How commercial men calculated risk and learned to soften its impact forms part of our understanding of why they were willing to risk their money and time to invest in the arts.

## A RISKY BUSINESS

Considerable risk accompanied transatlantic commerce and shipping, subject not only to loss of life and cargo from disasters at sea, but to huge swings in the speculative markets of price sensitive commodities such as cotton, flour, flaxseed, and railroad iron. Failures and bankruptcies

<sup>84</sup> Low initially lived on Concord Street, *Brooklyn Directory*, 1840–41, transcribed <http://bklyn-genealogy-info.stevemorse.org/Directory/1840.html#L>.

<sup>85</sup> Albion and Pope, *The Rise*, 265.

occurred frequently and especially plagued smaller concerns less able than big merchant houses along the lines of Barings or Rothschilds to withstand the ravages of market variability.<sup>86</sup> The Black Ball Line, our illustration here, experienced its share of unsteady times. It teetered in 1822 when it lost to heavy seas and icebergs two of its newest ships within months of one another.<sup>87</sup> Those tragedies at sea occurred in the same year that the line doubled its service to meet the competition. Disaster finally did strike during the panic of 1828, which panic, it will be remembered, had prompted Thomas Wren Ward's dismal predictions for Boston's economy. It also hit New York hard. Overextended debt forced Jeremiah Thompson and his brother to sell their interest in the Old Line. During the speculative crash that year cotton prices dipped sharply. The line's Liverpool agents refused the Thompsons' sizable drafts on their Liverpool account, returning them unpaid to New York. The Thompsons had counted on that Liverpool backing to finance their next year's cotton advances in the South. Instead, financially embarrassed, bankruptcy forced them to sell their interest in the packet line to cover debt.<sup>88</sup>

In 1834 the line came up again for sale. Jonathan Goodhue, leading commission merchant in New York, made the purchase at Barings' urging.<sup>89</sup> He partnered with two of the captains of the line, Charles H. Marshall

<sup>86</sup> Scott Sandage chronicled the many businessmen who lived lives of quiet desperation in his *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 2–21 and passim. See also Scott Nelson, *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: A. A. Knopf, 2012), ix–xiii; 29–34; 79–84; 146–77.

<sup>87</sup> The *Albion* and the *Liverpool*.

<sup>88</sup> *Albion*, *Square-Riggers*, 114–15; Richard C. McKay, *South Street: A Maritime History of New York* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1934), 128–31. Ownership of the line remained for a time in the hands of the remaining partners, Benjamin Marshall, ship builder Isaac Wright, and his son William. In 1832 both Isaac Wright and Francis Thompson had died, and management of the line fell upon the shoulders of the younger William Wright.

<sup>89</sup> On Goodhue, see his diary "Notes of Events"; also Barrett, *Old Merchants*, I: 22–30; *Albion*, *Square-Riggers*, 116; McKay, *South Street*, 103–6. Goodhue's partners were Pelatiah Perit and Calvin Durand. Perit handled the packets. *Albion*, *Square-Riggers*, 187.

and Nathan Cobb. It will be remembered that Captain Charles H. Marshall, himself of Massachusetts Quaker stock, came ashore to assume active management of the line at which point he hired Luther Wyman. Wyman was taking a risk in leaving the security of Troy Towboat Company for the potentially more lucrative but more uncertain domain of the transatlantic packet business.

As Italian Renaissance merchants had discovered, family connections helped mitigate risk. Two of Marshall's brothers, domiciled in Brooklyn, served as Black Ball captains. A nephew, also a resident of Brooklyn, served as captain for the line in later years.<sup>90</sup> The new partners expected the packets to enlarge their business greatly. During this 1834 shuffle in ownership and anticipated expansion, when Luther Wyman joined the company, he probably entered at the level of a salaried and experienced clerk. He gradually worked his way up in the firm to merchant status with the privilege of having ownership shares in various ships, though the line's few surviving documents never refer to him as full partner.<sup>91</sup>

The new ownership arrangement in 1834 strengthened Black Ball connections in Great Britain and in America via the powerful merchant house of Baring Brothers. Barings also provided the Black Ball owners with a sheltering financial umbrella. As already noted, Barings' and Black Ball connections remained tight. Goodhue & Co. functioned as Barings' New York commission agent responsible in that aspect of their business to Barings' chief American agent, Thomas Wren Ward in Boston. Ward in

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 313 and 338. Captains Alexander C. Marshall, Edward C. Marshall, and nephew Charles C. Marshall. In 1872 another nephew, Captain Charles A. Marshall of Monroe Street in Brooklyn, died at sea at age thirty-two of a sudden stroke on a return voyage from Liverpool while captain of the ship named for his uncle, the Charles H. Marshall. He left a wife and children; BE, 30 August 1872, 3. The other sea captain and part owner, Nathan Cobb had complete ownership of several ships. He brought one of his regular traders, the *Orpheus* and his new ship *Columbus* into the line. The *Orpheus* remained part of the Black Ball fleet until 1841, *Albion, Square-Riggers*, 117–18, 259.

<sup>91</sup> Wyman is listed as partial owner in several ship contracts surviving in the NYHS, Marshall Papers, including the *Manhattan* (1858) and the *William F. Storer* (1864). Starting in 1850s, Brooklyn city directories list him as “merchant” or “shipping merchant,” no longer a clerk; e.g., *Smith's Brooklyn Directory 1856*, 337, <http://www.bklynlibrary.org/sites/default/files/files/pdf/bc/citydir/1856.pdf>.

turn answered to their mutual friend Joshua Bates at Barings' head office in Bishopsgate Street, London.

Barings had opened its branch house in Liverpool in 1832 to take advantage of the lively Atlantic cotton trade. Ward, as Barings' US representative, had been researching transatlantic commerce as early as 1830 with an eye to involving Barings directly in US shipping. In February of that year he had reported to Joshua Bates in London that the size of American ships was increasing and costs diminishing by ten to fifteen percent.<sup>92</sup> Adding a shipping line to transport cotton and other commodities the Barings owned or had under commission comprised a next logical step in expanding the business of their new Liverpool house. In addition, Bates recognized particular advantage in American shipping because there was security in their operations since the US was unlikely to get involved in any European wars.<sup>93</sup> Ward was all in favor of the new venture. He wrote: "It being your desire to cultivate good American business, the plan of an arrangement in Liverpool has appeared to me an effective means of aiding it, besides bringing in commissions."<sup>94</sup> Thus, together Ward and Bates spurred Jonathan Goodhue to purchase the Black Ball Line in 1834. Barings made a hefty financial investment in it by granting the new owners a substantial £20,000 loan at low interest.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ward to Bates, 26 February 1830, BAHC 5.1.2.

<sup>93</sup> October 1833, *Ibid.*, 1:70v.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 February 1830. The new Liverpool house had Joshua Bates' enthusiastic support, and the bank arranged a partnership in Liverpool with one of the members of the existing firm of Latham & Gair. Samuel Gair was an American transplant in Britain like Bates, which factor probably made him seem a congenial collaborator to both Bates and Ward. The new Liverpool arrangement between Barings and Gair was to be limited to acceptances, forwarding, and commission work connected with Atlantic commerce. The Liverpool house was an immediate success. By 1833 Bates noted how well it was organized and functioning, such that "we shall have but little trouble with it. The reputation of our House is higher than it ever was before," and he added, "The Liverpool house will take much from us in the way of labour and will add much to profits." The following spring he noted, "The Liverpool house goes on successfully and all our worldly concerns seem to prosper," Bates' Diary, 1: 55v.

<sup>95</sup> According to the correspondence of Barings, the loan for £20,000 had been negotiated at four percent interest for a period of two years. The line began with

Barings was actually a latecomer to the Liverpool market in 1832, but after a year and even before the acquisition of the Black Ball Line, Joshua Bates crowed that the new house was enjoying such success as one of the very top firms in Liverpool that it already employed more than a dozen clerks and was still growing. He thought the Liverpool House might one day overtake Barings' London House in volume of business.<sup>96</sup> Barings had opened its Liverpool enterprise at a very propitious moment in terms of world trade. Bates noted in his diary the happy confluence of the Reform Acts of 1832, soon followed by the Slavery Emancipation Bill, Bank Charter Renewal Bill, the East India Company Bill that relaxed its monopoly, and the China Trade Bill, and such like, all set to open new markets and stimulate business.<sup>97</sup> By May 1834 the Liverpool house had expanded to twenty clerks and was creeping up on the London House which had enlarged to forty, at which point Bates declared: "The world seems to be growing more prosperous and rich," especially in the American market where conditions were "in a very prosperous condition commercially," and "Railroads under steam begin to show themselves in England, the US, France and Belgium. Commerce and manufacturing are everywhere increasing . . . Trade continues to flourish and there seems to be a general demand for almost every kind of goods at advancing prices."<sup>98</sup> The shipping line added to Barings' basket of investments fit this moment that was so ripe with opportunity.

Following the purchase of the Black Ball Line, Barings took over as exclusive overseer of the Liverpool side of its operations. The New York side remained under Goodhue and Marshall, ably assisted by Wyman. The privileged connection with Barings greatly extended the network of Black Ball affiliations, and the shipping line contributed in no small measure to

eight ships in March 1834. See Ward to Bates, 2 January 1834, BAH5.1.2; Gair to Bates, 20 February 1834, BAH3.35; and Ward to Bates, 19 May 1836, BAH5.1.2. Ralph Hidy listed a loan at five percent interest for the purchase of four ships, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance; English Merchant Bankers at Work, 1763-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 187.

<sup>96</sup> Bates to Ward, 21 September 1833, Thomas Wren Ward Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms N-1726, also referenced in Ziegler, *The Sixth Great Power*, 131.

<sup>97</sup> Bates' Diary, 1: 64v."

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 7r; 13v-20.

the handsome profits returned by Barings' Liverpool branch. The new arrangement, however, required time to be established. As Samuel Gair, Barings' American manager at Liverpool, noted, "You must be aware that it requires some time to fit everything to its place in bringing together so many objects and persons to act in unison."<sup>99</sup> The way Bates and Ward had negotiated the packet deal with Goodhue & Co. illustrates the skills and considerations in maritime trade that transferred so easily into the cultural enterprises that the commercial men of Brooklyn subsequently used to launch the Brooklyn Renaissance. The maritime world, like its cultural cousin, depended on private financial resources, complex collaborative effort, mutual trust, and the willingness to absorb a certain amount of risk in any new venture.

Barings wisely kept its eyes fixed on New York. Correspondence between Joshua Bates in London and Thomas Wren Ward in the US makes clear that locating along the East River wharves offered the best opportunities for Barings' expansion. New York supplied the most current market and financial news as well as the best access to passengers and freight whose numbers and volume well surpassed those of Boston or Philadelphia. Ward admitted, "the old feeling that New York is running away with our [Boston] business prevails."<sup>100</sup>

Barings had solid previous connections in New York with Jonathan Goodhue's commission house that added a level of depth—and hopefully security—to their investment in the shipping line. It will be remembered that Bates, Ward, and Goodhue were all protégées of William Gray's company in Boston and enjoyed long acquaintance and a high degree of mutual trust. In 1830 Goodhue had sailed in the Black Baller *Brittania* to Liverpool and thence traveled by carriage to London to meet personally with Bates and senior partner Tom Baring regarding their mutual interests.<sup>101</sup> On the voyage over, his future partner, Charles H. Marshall had captained the *Brittania*, on which occasion they would have had ample opportunity to size one another up. In fact, Goodhue commented in his diary upon his return voyage in the same ship, "I was so impressed with

<sup>99</sup> Gair to Bates, 20 July 1833, BAHC 3.35.1.

<sup>100</sup> Ward to Bates, 30 November 1828, BAHC 5.1.2.

<sup>101</sup> Ward to Bates, 19 April 1830, *ibid.* In his diary Goodhue described in detail his trip aboard the *Brittania* under Captain Marshall, Goodhue, "Notes of Events."

the merits of Captain Marshall as well as of the ship that I should have been less satisfied with any other opportunity.”<sup>102</sup> It comes hardly as a surprise that Goodhue wanted Marshall to be the managing partner once they purchased the line.<sup>103</sup> Goodhue hired new personnel in his office, a head of the correspondence department at a salary of \$2,000 and a cashier at the salary of \$1,000 per annum.<sup>104</sup> For his part, Charles H. Marshall, now come ashore to actively manage the line, hired Luther Wyman as his knowledgeable assistant, probably with similar compensation.

Business looked good for the Liverpool House in its capacity as shipping agent. It handled vessels arriving and heading for various ports such that, “We are kept rather busy with ten ships on hand, five of which are ready for sea.” The Liverpool House reported that the packets “give less trouble than other ships.”<sup>105</sup> Thomas Wren Ward had correctly foreseen the benefits to Barings of the new arrangement.<sup>106</sup> On the New York side

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Goodhue recorded the inauguration of the new partnership in his diary on 4 March 1834: “The ship *South America*, Captain Robert Waterman sailed for Liverpool, being the first vessel under the new arrangement by which Goodhue & Co. became joint proprietors in what is called the Old Line of Liverpool Packets. The establishment contracts eight ships which are intended to be kept in the trade between New-York and Liverpool. The particular charge of the business here will be with Captain Charles H. Marshall and on the other side Messers Baring Brothers & Co. at whose instance mainly is the undertaking commenced on our part.” “Notes of Events” for February 1834.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Joseph Fowler was the head correspondence clerk and Woodbridge S. Olmsted (1803–1871) from Harford, CT, the cashier. The latter, son of Sage Olmstead, was cousin to the younger Frederick Law Olmstead, the famous landscape architect, who with Calvert Vaux designed Central Park in Manhattan and Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

<sup>105</sup> MHS, Ward Papers, 10 May 1834.

<sup>106</sup> Ward wrote, “In the forwarding business from Liverpool and in the procuring consignments from New York it will be quite important to your Liverpool house and serve to bring the attention of Goodhue & Co. more directly to this object and that the gain on the ships will be important, and if the department in Liverpool be properly arranged it need not be troublesome. I hope it will prove right, and have assured Goodhue & Co. that everything will be done on our part to give it patronage and efficiency and promote their success in this as in their other business,” *ibid.*, 29 March 1834.



of operations, Goodhue and his partners took considerably more risk by assuming managing ownership of the line: “[and] they have from circumstance gone further than they intended, and will look for all the encouragement that you [Barings] can give them.”<sup>107</sup> Reassurance came from close-knit personal ties on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1834 Goodhue sent his son William and another junior partner to Liverpool aboard the *Brittania*, the same ship Goodhue had sailed with in 1830.<sup>108</sup> Also on board came their good friend and Barings’ US agent Ward.<sup>109</sup> To solidify the business understandings between Barings, Liverpool and Goodhue, the following year, Goodhue hired a nephew of Barings’ Liverpool director.<sup>110</sup> Later that year he took on another Barings’ employee in his correspondence department “on experiment.”<sup>111</sup> By sending relatives and employees to Goodhue, Barings familiarized itself with the American market and further tightened its transatlantic ties. Goodhue’s sons, partners, and employees traveled to Europe several times to consult with their British partners, though none remained for work there.<sup>112</sup> By all these means a strong transatlantic network had taken shape.

<sup>107</sup> Ward to Bates, 3 February 1834, BAHC 5.1.2.

<sup>108</sup> Calvin Ward. The ship was now under Captain William Sketchly since Marshall had gone ashore to run the line.

<sup>109</sup> Ward’s daughter Martha Ann came as well. They made passage in only twenty-one days, “after a most agreeable voyage,” Goodhue, “Notes of Events.” William Goodhue and Calvin Durand stayed in Europe five months returning on the ship *Europe* with Charles H. Marshall’s brother Alexander C. as captain, *Albion*, *Square-Riggers*, 338.

<sup>110</sup> W. G. Russell; Goodhue, “Notes of Events.”

<sup>111</sup> Joseph J. Eschalaz, *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* In 1836, Goodhue’s son William returned to Europe as companion to William W. Scarborough who was going as supercargo for Goodhue to Liverpool and thence to Cadiz, Manila, and Canton. Later that year Goodhue’s partner Peletiah Perit and his wife sailed for Liverpool in the Black Baller *England*. In 1838, Goodhue’s daughter and her husband together with Goodhue’s younger son Robert embarked for Liverpool in the *Europe* with Capt. Edward Marshall. They departed 16 May, just three weeks after the new British steamships the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* had arrived on their maiden voyages to New York. In 1844, Goodhue’s son Henry sailed to Liverpool on the Black Baller *Yorkshire* with Capt. Bailey. He went for reasons of health, hoping the sea voyage would be restorative

Fortunately for the new owners, the Old Line/Black Ball Line had built up a solid reputation for fast, well-built ships and reliable service. As the first of what would soon be five regularly scheduled packet services between New York and Liverpool, it maintained proud position as the oldest and most distinguished of the lines. Packet captains had bragging rights over the speed records their ships set. In the days before steam, the premium on speed meant market news as well as cargo and passengers reached the other side soonest, to the benefit of the company to whom the ship was addressed. Speed and reliable information worked to advantage in a speculative trade like cotton. The eastbound passage between New York and Liverpool, shortened by favorable currents, averaged between twenty and thirty days; the longer westbound route against headwinds averaged well over a month in the best weather conditions.<sup>113</sup> The Black Ball ship *South America*, the first to arrive in Liverpool under the new arrangement, was one of the fastest ships in the early 1830s, making its swiftest westbound passage in only twenty-two days. Later in the 1850s, another Black Baller, the *Yorkshire* (996 tons), once made it to New York in an unusual, record-breaking sixteen days!<sup>114</sup>

### RENAISSANCE CONNECTIONS

Goodhue's commission house, backed by Barings, held the major share in the new ownership of the line; the two ship captains, Marshall and Cobb, held fractional shares. This arrangement typified traditional maritime commerce. Collaborative ownership based on proportional capital

in the fashion of the day, but he also carried letters of introduction to Joshua Bates, Samuel Gair, William Rathbone, and friends and booksellers in London.

<sup>113</sup> Albion, *Square-Riggers*, Appendices 2 and 3, 275–82; 320–21. On the westbound route to America, captains either sailed the shorter, potentially more brutal Northern route toward Halifax, or alternatively headed South as far as the Caribbean in hope of catching the gulf stream and favorable winds up the Atlantic coast. Charles H. Marshall was so proud of the *Montezuma's* swift eastward passage of fifteen days that he had his sea chest decorated with the ship's portrait and the inscription "fifteen days to Liverpool. Belay all." Marshall's sea chest is on display at Mystic Seaport, Mystic, CT, part of the Munson Institute's collection of maritime memorabilia, inventory #1965.1037.

<sup>114</sup> Albion, *Square-Riggers*, 276, 320.

investment mirrored the business practices developed in Italy in the Renaissance, and had remained largely unchanged since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In very early Italian *commenda* contracts, usually the managing partner, and in the case of shipping, the ship's captain, relative to his own capital investment, had claim to a slightly larger percentage of the profits from a particular voyage than the investing partners who remained ashore. Financial backers on shore risked their money but not their lives. In packet shipping in the early nineteenth century, captains claimed a disproportionate slice of passenger fares and postage fees as added incentive to deliver their ships, passengers, and cargo swiftly and safely.

Continuities with Italian Renaissance business practices were not limited to partnership schemes that spread risk. Merchant banks such as Barings that handled both commercial and financial transactions were also a carry-over from the Renaissance. Until the completion of the first transatlantic telegraph cable in 1858, all communication between Europe and America went by letter aboard ships. In the Renaissance, an agent's recognizable handwriting and his company's distinctive insignia and wax seal authenticated letters. In the nineteenth century, business correspondents still used the convention of registered agency signatures and wax seals. To improve the security of correspondence, Barings had suggested that each Black Ball ship carry a sealed bag for greater security of legal conveyances and other important documents.<sup>115</sup>

In the early nineteenth-century commercial world, news was everything, just as it had been in the Renaissance. Letters focused on business advices such as price trends, cargo rates, and currency exchanges. They included advices on relevant political developments, rumored or actual bankruptcies, and the weather, which impacted crop forecasts, current prices, and the probable availability and future prices of commodities such as cotton yet to be purchased, shipped, and resold. Through merchants' correspondence, one can get a good sense of the overall health of the markets in which they engaged, the status of their own business and

<sup>115</sup> "It would be a great point to have a sealed bag for the ships . . . [to] secure a regular conveyance for legal and other documents which are now much exposed to loss etc.," 12 November 1834, BAH3.35.1.

level of profits, the immediately pressing concerns of partners and agents, and occasionally news of a personal nature.<sup>116</sup>

The format and content of merchant letters between branch houses or with headquarters had not changed much since the Renaissance either. Nineteenth-century correspondence even maintained some of the linguistic conventions of its Renaissance progenitors. Letters often carried date references such as *inst.* referring to the current month, *ultimo* referring to the previous month, or *prossimo* for the next month. Standard practice also referred to the dates of the last letters sent and received, and duplicates often arrived via different ships in case originals were lost. In the nineteenth century, clerks made duplicate, or “press copies,” by pressing tissue paper over the original ink while still wet, thus preserving a copy of the message at the point of origin. Barings and its correspondents referred to their commercial houses as *hanse*, a carry-over from the late medieval usage of the old Hanseatic League.

Book-keeping continued Renaissance-style double entry with open journal accounts for a company’s various clients. In managing the Black Ball Line from New York, Captain Charles H. Marshall always kept an account open at Barings, Liverpool. Bills of exchange, another Renaissance invention, were still in use in the nineteenth century as the primary means to transfer credit from one location to another through currency exchanges payable at a destination after a set period of time. As in the Renaissance, bills were traded and discounted, making them valuable credit instruments in an era when specie was often in short supply, especially in the early US. The Italians had also pioneered insurance, especially marine insurance, which was usually arranged on a voyage-by-voyage basis.<sup>117</sup> In the early nineteenth century, US insurance firms dealing in

<sup>116</sup> E.g., Josiah Bates wrote Thomas Wren Ward about the death of his son in 1835. Ward offered him consolation and advice not to suppress his grief, as a mutual Boston acquaintance William Sturgis had regretted doing following the loss of his son, Ward to Bates, 20 February 1835, BAHC 5.1.2.

<sup>117</sup> Florence Edler de Roover, “Early Examples of Marine Insurance,” *Journal of Economic History* 5, no. 2 (1945): 172–200. On the growth of the American insurance industry and the risks marine underwriters faced, see John Bogardus and Robert H. Moore, *Spreading the Risks: Insuring the American Experience*, 1st ed. (Chevy Chase, MD: Posterity Press, 2003), 39–54.

maritime policies proliferated—firms such as New-York Life, one of the oldest and most respected companies in which Jonathan Goodhue was among the founding directors.<sup>118</sup> The firm later commissioned an Italian Renaissance revival building on Broadway for its headquarters.<sup>119</sup> As in the historic Renaissance, each voyage was still individually insured. With such large and expensive ships as the Black Ballers weighing upward of 1500 tons in the 1850s and carrying valuable cargoes worth \$100,000 or more, insurance risks were usually spread among three or four separate underwriters for a particular voyage.<sup>120</sup> Charles H. Marshall, Luther Wyman, Goodhue, Ward, and all their collaborators in the Black Ball Line and at Barings shared with their Italian Renaissance predecessors the same mental world of business conduct. Small wonder their commercial habits made a strong imprint on their patronage practices as well.

### MANAGING RISK

Given the size, global complexities, and unpredictability of the markets in which shipping companies, commission houses, and their financial backers engaged, risk assessment developed into a vital aspect of doing business. As Barings extended its American reach, identifying reliable and trustworthy US correspondents who would address their business to Barings became one of Thomas Wren Ward's most important responsibilities. Factors such as the distance from Europe and distances within the US, the recognized volatility of the American market, the controversies over the US bank under President Andrew Jackson, uncertain reliability of bonds being floated in new states such as Louisiana or on behalf of ambitious railroad projects, all figured into Barings' calculus and complicated Ward's task. Lots of money could be made but also lost on the basis of good or bad

<sup>118</sup>When the company received its charter in 1830, Goodhue was pleased to have been named, for "the Directors appointed by the charter are amongst the most wealthy and judicious of our merchants and citizens," Goodhue, "Notes of Events." He was also among the founding directors of the Globe Fire Insurance Company (1814), the American Insurance Company (1815), and the Atlantic Insurance Company (1824).

<sup>119</sup>The architects were the firm McKim, Mead, and White. See the building's website <http://www.placematters.net/node/1753> (accessed 2 October 2016).

<sup>120</sup>A number of insurance contracts for later Black Ball ships survive in the NYHS, Marshall Papers.

information gleaned from reliable or, all too often, untrustworthy informants. Ward admonished himself in his diary: “In my business for Messers Baring, to recollect that I am bound to be satisfied of security before I act, and that all proper questions are to be asked, and all reasonable information required. Not to rely too greatly on people’s own statement, however right-intentioned. They may be deceived.”<sup>121</sup> A firm’s reputation needed protecting.<sup>122</sup> As mentioned earlier, in 1828 when Jeremiah Thompson’s drafts had been denied in Liverpool, just the news of their refusal caused serious damage to Thompson’s business in New York.

Periodically, especially in the early years of his work as Barings’ chief American agent, Ward sent Bates reports on the creditworthiness of various US businesses. Barings made considerable profits from its American investments, but always maintained a cautious stance in the face of new, unproven opportunities. Much of Ward’s time was spent traveling around to Barings’ various American correspondents and in compiling early credit ratings on the firms with which he did business. Business failures and bankruptcies were common enough occurrences in the early nineteenth century to warrant extreme caution on his part. To protect themselves against bad credit risks, Barings had a coded system, whereby each company was assigned a number, known only to partners and their top agents. In their letters back and forth can be found frequent mention of assessments of firms by their code number.<sup>123</sup> Centuries earlier, Italian Renaissance business and diplomatic

<sup>121</sup> Entry dated 30 July 1830, MHS, *Ward Diary*, 41. Among the many possible business associates, Ward endeavored to identify “a few whose character and standing will influence others, and thus increase the number of your [Barings’] safe correspondents,” Ward to Bates, 29 November 1829, BAHC 5.1.2.

<sup>122</sup> Ward determined “to make a new Book of Private Remarks on business and on houses and send a copy to London, putting in this Book remarks on all the leading articles of trade, price, etc.,” MHS, *Ward Diary*, 56.

<sup>123</sup> E.g., Ward to Bates, 7 October 1835, *Ward Papers*. More generally, R. W. Hidy, “Credit Rating before Dun and Bradstreet,” *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 13, no. 6 (1 December 1939): 81–88. Barings’ coded lists had to be updated periodically as in 1834 when Barings, London wrote Barings, Liverpool: “The chief object of the present [letter] is to enclose a list of such of our correspondents as do not appear amongst the numbers you gave us last year to be added to your list...[so] that we may send their names and numbers to Mr. Ward who wrote us for a similar list,” Gair to Bates 28 January 1834,

correspondence had adopted the same convention of using codes and ciphers to communicate sensitive and confidential information. For Barings, #174 stood for Goodhue & Co., for example. Such prudence protected confidentiality. Barings and Ward were using their coded system of ratings long before Lewis Tappan began compiling credit reports through his Mercantile Company (founded 1841).

The complexities of managing transatlantic commerce and its risks drew together dozens of suppliers, commission agents, shippers, banks, and insurance firms. Together they navigated the uncertain shoals of weather dependent crops, dangerous oceanic transport, price swings, uncertain credit, and the very real risk of failure and bankruptcy. The interlocking challenges they faced help us appreciate the high value merchants placed on trustworthiness and reputation, that merchants had referred to as *onore*, or personal honor, back in the Italian Renaissance. In their minds, reputation, buttressed by longevity in business, linked closely with success. Solid reputation, often described as “moral influence,” even more than personal friendship, explains why Thomas Wren Ward and Barings preferred to rely on business associates such as Jonathan Goodhue and Captain Charles H. Marshall, who had proven themselves over time.<sup>124</sup> Their correspondence is full of references to guarding their own reputations and assessing those of others. Even the rumor of decline or reverses could cause “embarrassment” or injury to a company. “Moral influence” worked as a kind of insurance that was difficult to quantify, years in the making, but quickly lost in unfortunate circumstance.

Another aspect of managing risk involved giving trust its due recognition. How did firms signal trust in their agents? Personal and public testimonials provided one means.<sup>125</sup> When Joshua Bates toured America

BAHC 3.35.1. On the culture and frequency of business failures, see Sandage, *Born Losers*, esp. 1–43.

<sup>124</sup> Ward had written Bates regarding Goodhue’s company, “the moral influence of such a house is quite important and in the end we shall accomplish all that is desirable in New York,” 15 March 1830, *ibid*.

<sup>125</sup> After hearing Goodhue’s glowing account of his travels and visit with Bates and Barings’ London office, Ward reported the following to Bates, “His [Goodhue’s] ideas of England and English people are more elevated than before he went abroad, and in general his views like those of every reasonable man are enlarged and corrected. He speaks very pleasantly of the attentions received, particularly from yourself, and from your partners. He says he received all that he anticipated

in 1841 on behalf of Barings, he visited at length with Goodhue in New York and with Ward in Boston. Undoubtedly while in New York he consulted with both Captain Marshall and Luther Wyman.<sup>126</sup> Confidence could also be signaled publicly through gifts and tokens intended for display. Here again mercantile and social standing coalesced. In 1842 when the captains of the Black Ball Line wanted to signify their appreciation for everything Wyman did on their behalf, they presented him a handsome five-piece silver tea and coffee service made from coin silver in rococo revival-style with ivory insulators on the pot handles. The servers bore the following engraving, part on one side, part on the other: “Presented to L. B. Wyman 1842 by the Masters of the Old Line of Liverpool Packets.”<sup>127</sup> (Fig. 3.2) Seven years later, when Ward contemplated retiring as Barings’ US agent, Joshua Bates made another trip to the US to discuss the future of the agency. In the name of Barings, he presented Ward an eloquent letter of appreciation and an elegant pair of branched silver candelabra worth £300.<sup>128</sup> Such handsome silver presided over sideboards in their owners’ homes, ever ready to be admired on special social occasions. These gifts gave tangible form to the social capital

or that he had reason to expect. . . . [He reported] they [Baring & Co.] expressed great confidence in you [Ward] and being satisfied that they are safe with you and that you are wide awake for them, they think but little about you, and he added ‘they are doing a most enormous business’,” Ward to Bates, 10 November 1830, MHS, Ward Papers.

<sup>126</sup> The visit gave Bates the opportunity to tell Ward in person how much Barings trusted him with their US business. Ward reported in his diary that Bates wished “to leave all to me, assuring me that I possessed the entire confidence of the house and that they had permitted me to exercise a power which no one partner would have been allowed to exercise—that they should not carry on their American business without me,” 30 August 1841, *Ward Diary*, 95.

<sup>127</sup> The top New York jeweler, Gelston, Ladd & Co. on Broadway in Manhattan, precursors to Tiffany & Co., made the set. See Vanessa Brett and Sotheby’s, *The Sotheby’s Directory of Silver, 1600–1940* (London: Distributed in the USA by Harper & Row, 1986), 338; Kristan McKinsey et al., *Elegant Plate: Three Centuries of Precious Metals in New York City*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Museum of the City of New York, 2000), 351–53. The creamer was made by William I. Tenney, whose store was located at 251 Broadway at Murray Street, *ibid.*, 407.

<sup>128</sup> Entry for 21 June 1849, *Ward Diary*.





**Fig. 3.2** Five-piece silver service by Gelston, Ladd & Co. and William I. Tenney, silversmiths, engraved and presented in 1842 to Luther B. Wyman by the Masters of the Old Line of Liverpool Packets. Photos by the author and G. David Hughes

accumulated by their recipients, who so prized these treasured tributes that they often specified them in their wills.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>129</sup> E.g. Luther Wyman specified in his will one of two pitchers and salvers, gift of the Church of the Saviour, to go to his eldest daughter Helen Cobb, wife of William Henry Mallory. To his son Leon Hale Wyman he willed his gold mosaic

Businessmen also saluted one another and affirmed their common values at testimonial dinners such as at the New England Society's annual banquet at Delmonico's around Thanksgiving to celebrate the Pilgrims' arrival in Plymouth. There, members toasted one another and complimented outstanding character, which tributes frequently found their way into the next day's newspaper for all to appreciate. Such occasions bound the business community more tightly together in comradeship and companionship, a community of interests, shared values, and communal feelings that also undergirded the cultural foundations in which they collaborated as patrons.<sup>130</sup>

Successful merchants in good standing embedded themselves in tightly woven webs of contacts and associations. Distance did not necessarily constitute a barrier, as long as trust was present.<sup>131</sup> Upon occasion, long-time associates such as Bates in London and Ward in Boston might share personal feelings with one another, not just business reports. Both had suffered the loss of a son, coincidentally both boys named William. Ward remarked "what a strange providence" that they should have suffered a similar loss. To comfort his friend, he wrote, "It is the order of providence that our grief should be lessened and our joys increased by being shared with others."<sup>132</sup> A businessman's solace apparently came from his work, for a month later Ward was gratified to learn that Bates had been "actively and constantly engaged in business which must be a great relief from very harmful recollections. Time rolls onward and reconciles us by degrees."<sup>133</sup>

vest and sleeve buttons, that Charles H. Marshall, "the worthy son of my most valued life long friend Captain Charles H. Marshall deceased" had gifted him, Surrogates' Court, Kings County, NY, will book 82, 66, probated 22 November 1879. The 1842 silver service stayed with his widow and passed to her heirs.

<sup>130</sup>The classic study on the reciprocity, solidarity, and honor embedded in gift giving remains sociologist Marcel Mauss' *The Gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1990).

<sup>131</sup>E.g. Ward, Goodhue, and Baring relied heavily on Henry Oxnard in New Orleans and Archibald Gracie in Charleston, Gair to Bates, 13 September and 29 November 1834, BAHC3.35.1.

<sup>132</sup>Ward to Bates, 20 February 1835, BAHC5.1.2.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*, 21 March 1835.

If we glance for a moment toward the sphere of the fine arts and education, the business and professional men, who were well networked and secure in their professional standing, found it relatively easy to collaborate with one another in cultural enterprises. In the case of Brooklyn's cultural patrons, many were also neighbors, since so many clustered in Brooklyn Heights. Founding a school, an orchestra, an art association or a library drew upon many of the same skills they honed in their businesses, namely the willingness to collaborate with other like-minded and honorable persons, to identify clearly their goals, establish an organizational structure, arrange financing, and publicize the fruits of their endeavors in the local newspapers.

### VIEW FROM BROOKLYN

The history of the sailing packets in the nineteenth century represents a vital but transitional chapter in the development of transatlantic commerce, one in which lingered elements of traditional practices dating from the Renaissance, when companies were still relatively small-scale endeavors centered at their core on family members and a few trusted friends. At the same time, in the midst of flourishing transatlantic packet service in the decades before the Civil War can already be detected new more impersonal economic forces of scale and competition, first with other new packet lines and then steamships, with which sailing lines could not keep pace. It is tempting to suggest that as their business environments expanded and became less intimate in developing urban centers such as Brooklyn, commercial men and their women turned to culture in order to find community. At least as far as Luther Wyman was concerned, in the later decades, as Black Ball business began to tail off in the 1850s and hence managing its operations was perhaps less onerous, he found more time to devote to the numerous cultural activities in Brooklyn that engaged him and his peers and that made the Brooklyn Renaissance happen.

Brooklyn's economy in general found fuel and new wealth in the thousands of immigrants pouring in by ship from Europe. But in the years following the city's incorporation in 1834, social divisions also widened between the masses of initially poor immigrants and the wealthier residents, many of them New England transplants connected with maritime commerce, who clustered in Brooklyn Heights, the heart of Brooklyn's renaissance. New wealth soon brought broader economic and

investment interests outside of maritime commerce for the smart money, particularly in finance, manufacturing, and railroads. With Brooklyn's rapidly expanding population, real estate became another boon investment. Wyman's next door neighbor on Joralemon Street, Irish immigrant Samuel Sloan, provides a good example. After a successful career as a commission merchant, he switched to railroads and banking and became one of the wealthiest railroad executives at the time through the Hudson River Railroad and the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Line.<sup>134</sup> On the side he also held investment shares in two of the newer Black Ball ships, perhaps at Wyman's invitation, one of them in which Wyman was also part owner.<sup>135</sup> Earlier Samuel Sloan and his wife had sold Wyman property next door on Joralemon Street for his new home.<sup>136</sup>

Alexander M. White provides another example of the expanding business opportunities and accompanying social bonds Brooklyn's elite enjoyed. Transplants to Brooklyn from Connecticut, White and his brother set up business in the fur trade, importing pelts from Latin America and Europe for processing in the US. From furs he moved into banking and finance. Like Wyman and White's next door neighbors the Lows, whose fortune started in the China trade, White was member of the Unitarian Church of the Saviour at Pierrepont and Monroe Place in Brooklyn Heights. Together with Wyman he became a charter member of the Brooklyn Academy of Music and served many years as its treasurer. Another neighbor and businessman, Henry Pierrepont, served as president.<sup>137</sup> White's son Alfred T. White, better known today, in the 1870s

<sup>134</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, NY: C. Scribner's Sons, 1928), 17: 213–14.

<sup>135</sup> In 1864 Sloan and Wyman each held a 4/64 share in the *William F. Storer*. Wyman's share rose to 6/64 in 1866, but in 1868 Sloan had 6/64, Wyman 4/64. In 1868 Sloan also invested in the *Alexander Marshall* with a 1/32 share, ships documents dated 23 January 1864, 11 March 1865; 2 July 1866; 5 February 1868; and 28 March 1868, NYHS, Charles H. Marshall, Jr. Papers, 1860–1912, unnumbered.

<sup>136</sup> Brooklyn Land Conveyances, Block 265, Lot 39, 15 April 1851, Liber 242, 440.

<sup>137</sup> Obituary NYT, 1 November 1906, 9; Wendy Walker, *The Social Vision of Alfred T. White* (Brooklyn, NY: Proteotypes, 2009), 6. White was also trustee of

became a pioneer in affordable worker housing in Brooklyn modeled on Sydney H. Waterlow's efforts in London.<sup>138</sup>

If the Whites, Sloans, and Lows represented the new frontiers in business success, Wyman with his more modest means did not stand abreast of them financially. Slightly older and already established in the business of managing sailing packets, he never reached the pinnacles of wealth achieved by these neighbors in Brooklyn Heights. His loyal and dedicated service to the Black Ball Line for almost forty years and his firm friendship with Captain Marshall throughout the line's prosperous and then thinner years, provides a clue to understanding the devoted effort and organizational talent he willingly invested in developing Brooklyn's cultural life and to endure its changing tides, flowing between remarkable success and notable frustration, not unlike those in transatlantic commerce.

Weekdays, Luther Wyman left his home in the Heights, crossed the East River by ferry, and walked several blocks to his office at 38 Burling Slip. Burling Slip, a former docking area that had been filled in, sat at the foot of John Street and opened onto South Street. Marshall & Co.'s office was the first door on the south side of the slip. The Black Ball ships usually docked at Pier 23 at the foot of Beekman Street. City directories, maps, and newspaper accounts track Wyman's residential and career patterns, giving us a sense of the physical spaces and places he frequented. We can locate seven different residences he occupied in Troy, Manhattan, and Brooklyn over the nearly fifty years he lived in New York State. Nineteenth-century city directories often listed a person's occupation. Through them we can also follow Wyman's *iter* from clerk to shipping merchant with ownership shares in several packets. In Troy he was a bathing house proprietor; with Troy Towboat he worked as a clerk; he moved to Manhattan with Troy Towboat, and in 1834 when he joined the Black Ball Line he would have been an experienced operator, perhaps advanced to head clerk with steadily increasing responsibilities. His various Brooklyn addresses, briefly on Prospect Street, on Henry Street, and then Joralemon Street in the Heights reflected his rising economic and social status in those years in which

the Brooklyn Trust Company, the Nassau National Bank and a long-time member of the Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

he also became Brooklyn's leading renaissance impresario. After he moved to Brooklyn, Leslie's 1841–42 Brooklyn directory begins to list him as "shipping merchant."<sup>139</sup> In 1842, already eight years on board with Marshall, he must have received a big promotion, signaled by that elegant silver service gifted him by the line's captains. His listing as "shipping merchant" continued in subsequent years through the Civil War.<sup>140</sup>

A shipping business required both clerks to manage the company's correspondence and book-keepers to keep accounts. From book-keeper one could advance to managing day-to-day operation of the office on behalf of the partners and then as a merchant shipper make investments on his own account. Wyman's impeccably clear merchant's handwriting developed from decades of such employment. His many years' experience in shipping also made him a trusted expert witness in legal disputes over commercial practices. In 1859 Wyman testified in a case involving one of his Brooklyn Heights neighbors and fellow Unitarian, a respected New York broker and commission merchant, Benjamin Blossom, who had sued another merchant for restitution of certain bills of lading that the defendant had used fraudulently as collateral for a cash advance.<sup>141</sup>

The press reported the trial extensively. Wyman's testimony demonstrated the complexities of the shipping business, the types of commercial paper in use, and the negotiability of ships' documents. As commission agent, Blossom had sold 844 barrels of turpentine to another merchant acting on behalf of a third party. In good faith, Blossom had the barrels delivered by lighter to the ship *Victoria* readying for Liverpool. The mate in charge of loading made out what are known as ship's receipts as the barrels were placed on board. Blossom presented those receipts to the purchaser for

<sup>139</sup> Longworth's Manhattan directory for 1835–36 lists him as clerk, *Longworth's American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Fifty-Seventh Year of American Independence* . . . (New York, NY: Thomas Longworth, 1835), 730; Leslie's 1841–42 *Brooklyn Directory and Yearly Advertiser*, 170. By 1844 he had moved from 7 Prospect Street to 110 Henry Street, *Hearne's Brooklyn Directory and Yearly Advertiser* for 1844–45, 207, <http://galenet.galegroup.com/>.

<sup>140</sup> Dodgett's and Rode's directories still have him as a clerk in their 1851–52 lists and as merchant first in the 1852–53 listing, 557 and 587 respectively; Trow's directory for 1852–53 lists him as a shipper and as a merchant through its 1876–77 listing, 669 and 1496 respectively.

<sup>141</sup> NYT, 26 February 1959, 2.

payment, but the latter refused. When Blossom hastened out to the ship and demanded the captain give him the bills of lading for the cargo, again he was refused, for the captain had already given the bills of lading to the actual shipper, the third party in the transaction, one Albert Woodhull. Quickly Blossom requested the sheriff hold the turpentine under bond. The *Victoria* sailed for Liverpool without the cargo, and Blossom sued the purchasing agent for payment. The court case turned on common port usage. Woodhull had obtained the bills of lading without surrendering any ship's receipts to the purchasing agent. He had used them, instead, as collateral to obtain a cash advance of close to \$12,000 from another merchant house. The purchasing agent, defendant in the lawsuit, testified he was within his rights to turn over the bills of lading to Mr. Woodhall, the actual shipper, without having the ship's receipts. Lawyers for Blossom argued that it was a "well settled and uniform usage at this port" for ship owners to give bills of lading only to the party holding the actual ship's receipts.<sup>142</sup>

To buttress their case, they summoned for testimony "persons long engaged in the shipping business in this City." The *New York Times* excerpted Wyman's sworn statements: "I reside in this City and am connected with the house of C. H. Marshall & Co., agent for the old Black Ball line of packets; I have been connected with that house for twenty-eight years; [I] am familiar with the custom and usage of the port in regard to the shipment and delivery of goods." Wyman affirmed that as long as he had been in shipping, the custom was to give out bills of lading only upon presentation of ship's receipts, although he allowed that there had doubtless been exceptions, namely: "instances in which we have delivered bills of lading without receipts where we knew the parties to be responsible and on the guarantee that the receipts would be forthcoming, but the general course of business was not to deliver the bills of lading to persons who had not the ship's receipts."<sup>143</sup> After considering the evidence and

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Wyman continued his testimony, "The bills are generally made out from the receipts; they are usually made out by the shippers, and they bring them to the office with the receipts; we always compare them with the receipts; there are no other regular means to ascertain the correctness of the bills except the mate's cargo book." He further explained office procedures: "The bill of lading clerk when the bills of lading are sent in prepares them for the captain's signature; and in case the receipts do not accompany the bill of lading, it is usual for the bill of lading clerk to

testimony to the customs of the port, the jury deliberated only a few minutes before finding for Benjamin Blossom, awarding him close to \$15,000 damages.

How does this sketch of Wyman's various residences and advancement in the Black Ball Line relate to Brooklyn's renaissance in the 1850s and early 1860s? For one thing, the Black Ball Line's Burling Slip headquarters in the center of Manhattan's commercial strip provided Wyman decades of steady employment and the financial means to become a leading patron of the arts in Brooklyn, topic of the next chapter. The story of the line also vivifies the close economic bonds that stretched like vibrating cords between Great Britain and America, the one feeling the twitches and strains of the other. Like the often-choppy seas those elegant ships forged their way through, sometimes with, other times against the winds and tides of economic change, the Black Ball Line and the uncertain fate of its vessels gives a good example of the instabilities and uncertainties of the greater Atlantic economy. The commercial men on both sides of the ocean shared that economy and the contacts it promoted in those vibrant decades in the Antebellum and Civil War years, which affected Brooklyn just as much, if not more than, Manhattan or Boston, since in those years Brooklyn experienced its most rapid demographic growth and expanding wealth. Brooklyn was closely tied to maritime commerce, not only because so many sea captains and agents such as Luther Wyman employed directly in the Atlantic trade chose to reside there, but because the city became the location of many new manufactories fed by the Atlantic commerce. It also became the rapidly expanding home place to thousands of new immigrants who poured in through Castle Garden, long before Ellis Island became their reception center. From that economic foundation and at the closely networked hands of commercial men such as Wyman emerged Brooklyn's cultural flowering.

Luther Wyman's business acumen and various cultural enterprises in Brooklyn testify to his unusual organizational talents and abilities to get people working together efficiently. In addition to running a shipping office, witness his many years as treasurer of the New York New England

append a notice, 'Receipts wanted,' so that in case he is not in the office and a party sends for the bill of lading, we say, 'We cannot give the bill of lading unless you bring in the receipts.'" Long-time agents from the Red Star Line and the Dramatic Line of Liverpool packets testified to the same uniform procedures.



Society, his oversight and accounting responsibilities for the construction of both the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and his long presidency of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society among many others.

Most leading Brooklynites, who, like Luther Wyman, patronized the city's culture initiatives at mid-century, made their money in Lower Manhattan in the commercial and financial districts around South Street and Wall Street. The profits of Atlantic commerce, though headquartered in Manhattan, thus fed the Brooklyn Renaissance. Those Black Ball ships, especially in the early decades of their association with Barings, Liverpool, stabilized a key route for the transfer of wealth and news, commodities and manufactured goods, and very importantly of passengers, who expanded their social networks and cultural awareness on board and on shore on both flanks of the Atlantic. People, their letters and treatises crisscrossing the ocean, brought Renaissance ideas of patronage and culture to America through conduits such as William Roscoe and the beckoning example of the renaissance "Florence of the North" he had created in Liverpool. Those ideas expanded and molded to fit new circumstances in America through the dynamic of the Atlantic Exchange during the first half of the nineteenth century. The Brooklyn Renaissance would have been inconceivable without this lively transatlantic commerce. The webs of connectivity it promoted among its participants required ships such as the Black Ballers to ferry people and ideas relentlessly back and forth from one shore to another. How these commercial ties bore fruit in Brooklyn's new cultural life leads us into the next chapter.

## First Steps Toward Brooklyn's Renaissance

### OVERTURE

How does an urban renaissance come into being? In Liverpool, thanks to Roscoe's keen desire to draw inspiration from the achievements of Renaissance Florence, the cultural transformation he facilitated had a self-conscious flare, which made it easier to emulate across the Atlantic in America. Roscoe embraced the early nineteenth-century ethos of creating community for the common good, evident in cities such as Liverpool and later Brooklyn, where ordinary men attempted extraordinary things for their communities because they believed they could and that it was the proper thing to do. Yet, a handful of cultural societies, an athenaeum or an art association here and there, does not create an urban renaissance. Rather it requires a significant community of people with shared values and goals collaborating over a sustained period of time to generate the cohesion and consciousness that their combined efforts promote civic pride and an urban identity with refined culture as its core. In Brooklyn that awareness awakened by increments and then accelerated rapidly on the eve of the Civil War. The following chapters explore how the urge for more and better cultural venues unfolded there and what happened to the city during and after the war.

Brooklyn's renaissance had barely begun in 1853 when the centenary of Roscoe's birth was celebrated and his life example freshly praised on both

shores of the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> By that time, in addition to Roscoe and Liverpool itself, Brooklynites could find inspiration in other American port cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston that had already begun their own cultural initiatives from similar stimuli. As those cities grew in population and wealth, their elites developed a thirst for more venues of polite, morally uplifting entertainments, and had turned to Europe for inspiration. As we have seen, Boston had established its Athenaeum already in 1807, modeled directly on Liverpool's. It was widely imitated. The New York Athenaeum opened its doors in 1824 to warm congratulations conveyed from Roscoe's Liverpool Royal Institution. The opening address of Henry Wheaton, New York judge and prominent Unitarian, could have been written by Roscoe himself, for it stressed the theme of commerce conjoined with culture and the promise of greatness that young America held.<sup>2</sup> Wheaton's frequent references to the Medici of Florence stressed their role as merchants and patrons and their dedication to uplifting and preserving culture. The theme was by then very familiar in America. First a poor people pursues commerce to gain its well-being. Then it can turn its efforts toward culture, for commerce spurred by reason and science has an obligation to give back to society.<sup>3</sup>

American potential gearing itself to catch up to superior European civilization pervaded American thinking at the time. In copying Liverpool's Athenaeum, the founders of the Boston Athenaeum had felt it; Thomas Jefferson had expressed it in his correspondence with William Roscoe regarding the creation of his new university; the inaugural speakers at the New-York Historical Society and the New York Athenaeum had organized their addresses around it. Visiting Europeans were quite smug about it. Fanny Trollope, mother of the more famous author Anthony Trollope, in her *Manners of the Americans* (1832), after

<sup>1</sup> Celebrated 8 March 1853 and widely reported, e.g., NYT 24 February, 2; 23 March, 2 and 3.

<sup>2</sup> On Wheaton's distinguished political career as expert in international law and as diplomat and his historical interests, see Walter Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox: Unitarian Beginnings in New York City, 1819–1839* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1974), 51–52.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Wheaton and New-York Athenæum, *An Address Pronounced at the Opening of the New-York Athenæum, December 14, 1824* [electronic Resource], 2nd ed. (New York, NY: J. W. Palmer and Co., printers to the Athenæum, 1825).

visiting all the artistic exhibits in New York had observed that “The Medici of the Republic must exert themselves a little more before they can become even respectable.”<sup>4</sup> She was, however, impressed with the curriculum at the Brooklyn Collegiate Institute for young ladies “as a specimen of the enlarged scale of instruction proposed for young ladies” with vocal music, Latin, and classical authors taught at all levels.<sup>5</sup> In her description of Cincinnati’s barren cultural landscape, she might also have been describing Brooklyn in the 1830s, a cultural wasteland, where the women dress up and gather at church.<sup>6</sup> By mid-century Brooklyn was trying to catch up not only to Europe but also to nearby New York City. That sense of competition and coming from behind may help explain why Brooklyn’s cultural flowering happened so rapidly beginning in the 1850s and with such fierce dedication on the part of its promoters.

The Brooklyn Renaissance grew from private, not public initiatives. Private patronage of culture, long considered a hallmark of the urban patriciate in the Italian Renaissance and later Enlightenment Europe, found parallel expression in early America through organized philanthropy. Without royal- or government-sponsored support of the arts, commercial and professional elites in young America considered cultivation of the fine arts and education to be their particular obligation in society. Different from its historical Italian roots and European exemplars, patronage of the fine arts in America often went hand in hand with philanthropic efforts aimed in another direction, namely aiding the poor and needy. These two wings of bourgeois benevolence in America, the one oriented toward high culture and the other toward charity for the needy, often commingled in sponsored

<sup>4</sup> Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. (London: Whittaker, Treacher, & Co., 1832), 305. Burrows and Wallace in their massive tome on the history of New York City, used Frances Trollope’s allusion to the Medici in their chapter 25 entitled “The Medici of the Republic,” which briefly described patrician patronage of the arts and architecture in Manhattan. See Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 452–72. Interestingly, they adopted a post-consolidation 1898 perspective, for the book incorporates aspects of Brooklyn history seamlessly into the history of Manhattan. In effect they de-emphasized Brooklyn’s proud struggle through much of the nineteenth century to be seen independently from Gotham.

<sup>5</sup> Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, 301.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

benefit concerts and other fundraising events designed by and aimed toward fellow members of the urban upper crust. Organizers frequently designated proceeds from ticket sales for charitable causes, whether support for a local hospital or orphan's home, in disaster relief elsewhere, or in the 1860s toward war relief efforts. Early benefit concerts and lectures thus bore a resemblance to the activities traditionally sponsored by ladies' church groups and sewing circles dedicated to Christian charity. But soon the gatherings that new nineteenth-century cultural societies fostered built toward a much larger, and soon civic, scale.

Organized urban philanthropy typified early American bourgeois self-expectations and formed part of the shared commitment to the enlightened civilizing mission to improve and uplift society that this social cohort embraced. The effusive language of genteel politesse in which they couched their letters and communications further emphasized the refined social atmosphere they created around themselves. Brooklyn's commercial men and their families were hardly unique in their zeal to participate in both cultural and charitable endeavors. Commercial networks bred social connection, and the social networks that coalesced around their philanthropic efforts helped strengthen bonds of shared feeling and community among these upstanding urban residents. Many of them, like Luther Wyman, transplants to city life, were attracted to their new locations by the prospect of employment and promise of prosperity. The collaborative efforts these educated, engaged commercial men and their families dedicated to found Brooklyn's philharmonic orchestra, its Academy of Music, Art Association, and Mercantile Library, to name a few, had the added benefit of lending their city a new, more polished, cosmopolitan image as a locus of refined culture. That awareness, in turn, enhanced civic pride and helped Brooklyn shed its old image as merely a bedroom community for New York.

Brooklyn's mid-nineteenth century cultural efflorescence had its early beginnings in music, notably sacred music and in amateur oratorio societies, similar to the famous Boston Handel and Haydn Society (founded 1815),<sup>7</sup> to which Luther Wyman had belonged before he departed for Troy. Nineteenth-century choral societies drew their membership from among young commercial and professional men who, with the addition of a few musicians and soon women's voices, joined together to further

<sup>7</sup> H. Johnson, *Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston* (Boston, MA: B. Humphries, 1965), 15–42.

their love of music and promote the practiced performance of cherished oratorios such as Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *Creation*. Commerce and culture thus combined literally in chorus to build networks of shared interests that fostered community.

Music makes a fitting metaphor for Brooklyn's renaissance, for the sum of voices coordinated in song created a whole greater than their individual parts and provided an important stimulus for further foundations. Out of Brooklyn's choral societies grew other musical and non-musical cultural initiatives, which unfolded and interlaced much like the movements in a symphony, one theme or group building force and spilling over into another. Once catalyzed, Brooklyn's cultural awakening progressed rapidly with a dozen new cultural foundations in the space of a decade in the 1850s before the outbreak of the Civil War, which makes it an excellent lens through which to investigate the development of a young city's budding urban consciousness with an arts emphasis at its core.

## EARLY DAYS

From the mid-1830s Brooklyn experienced a population explosion, stimulated by the growth of New York Harbor in the greater Atlantic economy and from the immigration it attracted. When Brooklyn was yet a village, it had been oriented toward the Atlantic World by its East River docks and location as a convenient place to reside, especially for sea captains and commercial men who commuted daily by ferry to their Manhattan offices. Wealthy businessman and landowner Hezekiah Pierrepont, an early land developer in the 1820s, had advertised his Brooklyn Heights lots for sale as being the "nearest country retreat" to Manhattan, on average less than thirty minutes away, including the river crossing. He targeted "Gentlemen whose business or profession require their daily attendance in the city" and who desired to "secure the health and comfort of their families."<sup>8</sup> He figured correctly that families would

<sup>8</sup> *Long Island Star*, 25 December 1823 as quoted in David Ment et al., *Building Blocks of Brooklyn: A Study of Urban Growth* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979), 31. On his land speculations, see also Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 449–50. For more on Pierrepont's life, see Kenneth Jackson and New-York Historical Society, *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: New-York Historical Society, 2010), 1001.

prefer to reside in Brooklyn's less expensive, quieter, more suburban surroundings, at a convenient remove from the bustle of America's premier commercial and financial hub in Lower Manhattan. He divided his farm lands that became Brooklyn Heights into comparatively large lots, marketed toward mercantile, not working-class clients. In a relatively short time, considerable wealth accumulated in Brooklyn Heights, much of it made in Manhattan by those mercantile commuters. Brooklyn consolidated as a city only in 1834, the year Luther Wyman started work with the Black Ball Line of Liverpool packets. It continued to grow, gobbling up nearby Williamsburgh (1854)<sup>9</sup> and other small towns within its inflating perimeters.

Early Brooklyn before the 1840s, and before its big population explosion, had offered limited cultural opportunities for its well-to-do. Social entertainments considered well-mannered and morally upright centered mostly on church and an early Apprentices Library founded in 1823 for the education and improvement of the city's young tradesmen.<sup>10</sup> Choral singing and performances of sacred music in churches, admonitory and inspirational exhortations from the city's pulpits or the local Temperance Union, annual Sunday School outings in the spring, and the occasional lecture on foreign travel, scientific marvels, and oddities of nature, composed the elevating local cultural fare. Besides reading on one's own or gathering with friends, up until the 1850s, sermons and lectures constituted the chief forms of stimulating intellectual offerings. To be sure, bands gave lively concerts in public gardens charging admission, similar to what Luther Wyman had provided at his bathing house in Troy. There might be on offer an occasional demonstration by a traveling magician, the usual social gatherings of churchgoers, and the all-important church ladies' sewing circles dedicated to worthy causes such as the Protestant Orphans Asylum.<sup>11</sup> Lowbrow, comic theater existed, but those wishing to

<sup>9</sup> April 17, 1854 the legislature passed the act to merge the City of Williamsburgh (later spelled Williamsburg) and the Town of Bushwick into the consolidated City of Brooklyn, Stiles, *History*, II, 300.

<sup>10</sup> General Lafayette laid the cornerstone 4 July 1825. Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh* (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867), I: 24, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> The Unitarian Ladies' Samaritan Society at the Church of the Saviour (founded 1838) was particularly active in disaster relief, aiding the destitute, and relief for

display cultivated tastes generally did not consider theater proper entertainment. For more refined venues such as one of the highly skilled performances by the New York Sacred Music Society, or a symphonic concert by Manhattan's new Philharmonic Society founded in 1842, Brooklynites usually had to take the ferry or hire a rowboat to cross the East River and return.

But Manhattan, which like Brooklyn was experiencing its own growing pains, began pushing uptown, sweeping wealth and high society and its entertainments with it. In 1848 shortly before his death, Jonathan Goodhue, New York commission merchant and recent Black Ball Line owner, had lamented the changes in Lower Manhattan. His old neighborhood on Whitehall Street in the First Ward had been virtually abandoned by the principal families who, on his first coming to New York, had clustered there. The encroaching warehouses, stores, and the South Brooklyn Ferry docks had turned his street into a noisy thoroughfare no longer suitable for dwelling houses.<sup>12</sup> Once Manhattan's cultural venues moved uptown, Brooklynites began developing their own cultural scene so that they could attend first-rate concerts and elevating entertainments right there in the Heights. They could save themselves the hassle and time it took to cross the river, continue uptown by carriage and back in an evening. The growing cultural vacuum in Lower Manhattan worked like a catalyst on Brooklyn.

An ingrained rivalry born of envy and inferiority to the megalopolis across the river also stimulated Brooklyn's cultural initiatives at mid-century. Elite Brooklynites well knew that their city was fast becoming one of the largest urban centers in the US, yet it lacked the cultural accouterments worthy of a municipality its size. They also felt the urge to step out from under cultural dependence upon Manhattan. They chose high culture as the medium around which to shape a distinct, very proud municipal identity. The *Brooklyn Eagle*, founded in 1841, the city's premier daily newspaper, helped bring Brooklyn into the spotlight with its nationwide circulation and engaging editorials by, among others, Walt Whitman in

sick and wounded soldiers in the Civil War. See Olive Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, One Hundred Fifty Years: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, 1987) 17, 35, 53n.

<sup>12</sup> Entry on 2 November 1848 shortly before his death, Jonathan Goodhue, "Notes of Events."



the 1840s. Under its long-time owner-publisher, conservative Democrat Isaac Van Anden, the *Eagle* became the premier spokesman for bubbling Brooklyn pride, and it rarely passed up the opportunity to poke a little fun at the island behemoth across the river.<sup>13</sup>

The decade of the long 1850s and early 1860s witnessed a rapid Renaissance in Brooklyn through the following major cultural initiatives:

- Brooklyn Institute (1843–1848; refounded 1862)
- Brooklyn Sacred Music Society (1848)
- Brooklyn Athenaeum (1852)
- Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute for Boys (1853, opened 1855)
- Packer Institute for Girls (1854, recreated from the Brooklyn Female Academy of 1845)
- Brooklyn Horticultural Society (1854)
- Brooklyn Philharmonic Society (1857)
- Brooklyn Mercantile Library (1857)
- Prospect Park (1859)
- Brooklyn Academy of Music (1859, opened 1861)
- Long Island and Brooklyn Historical Society (1863)
- Brooklyn Art Association (1864)

To the list should be added the War Fund Committee and Woman's Relief Association (1862), the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair (1864), and other Civil War organizations that hosted newsworthy cultural events and exemplified the spirit of community participation in support of the war effort. Luther Wyman engaged himself in all these associations and others, usually in a leadership capacity. He illustrates the high level of associative behavior that fed Brooklyn's cultural flowering. Such exciting new initiatives at the heart of the Brooklyn Renaissance, which did so much to shape the city's urban identity, stand in contrast to the wearying and increasingly troubled business of packet shipping in those same years. In Wyman's mind, perhaps the new opportunities to expand and develop Brooklyn's cultural waterfront helped offset the heavy headwinds the Black Ball Line faced in securing adequate freights and passengers for its ships in the face of new competition from steamships.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Schroth, *The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper, 1841–1955* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), xi–xii, 3–7.

This and the following chapter explore the emergence of Brooklyn's high culture via the societies its elite established and which enabled Brooklyn's renaissance. It uses Luther Wyman as exemplar to follow how he and his chief collaborators brought them into being. It illuminates the aspirations and circumstances from which these early associations sprang, and the range of programs and activities they provided for Brooklyn. How others perceived their efforts, and how they contributed to Brooklyn's new consciousness as a city of culture merit attention. Subsequently, we will consider their placement in Brooklyn's urban landscape to illustrate the relevance of place and space to these cultural initiatives.

### MUSIC THE METAPHOR; UNITARIAN THE CONTEXT

In 1835 in his *Outre-Mer*, New England's favorite poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published that famous line: "Music is the universal language of mankind."<sup>14</sup> He had traveled abroad in Europe on a "pilgrimage beyond the sea," subtitle of the book he modeled after his friend Washington Irving's *Portrait of Geoffrey Crayon*, familiar to us from Irving's poignant sketch of William Roscoe discussed in [Chapter 2](#). Longfellow and Irving had met in Madrid, and Irving had strongly urged the younger man to write. In *Outre-Mer*, Longfellow's first published prose work, he reflected upon his European travels and the many different cultures and languages he encountered there. Music "spoke" to all by touching the emotions and plucking the heartstrings as it were. It resonated at the core of human understanding, possessing an expressive, communicative capacity that went beyond mere linguistic and cultural differences among peoples.<sup>15</sup> As the editor of the *Troy Budget* expressed it during Luther Wyman's residence there, "If there is a charm on earth, which, more than any other serves to elevate the affections, tranquilize the mind, and to enrapture the feelings, it is music."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Henry Longfellow, *Outre-Mer, a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea.*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton, 1866), 197.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussion "Music as Language" at <http://music.arts.uci.edu/dobrian/CD.music.lang.htm#Note06>

<sup>16</sup> TB, 13 September 1831, 1.

That Longfellow singled out music as the universal language carries special significance for the Brooklyn Renaissance. Luther Wyman's life-long involvement with music provided inspiration for the many Brooklyn cultural initiatives into which he threw himself. Making music together provided an all-important metaphor for men and women collaborating and practicing together, first in choral then combined in more complex orchestral venues, to produce the heavenly harmonies that Longfellow and others found so universally and emotionally satisfying. Yet music had a very rational, mathematical basis, and it required organization, exacting discipline, and rehearsal to be worthy of performance before a public audience.<sup>17</sup> It appealed not just to the heart, but also to the mind, as must have been the experience of anyone in antebellum Brooklyn who entered a church to hear sacred music or could afford admission to a concert. Polyphony had been a signature of Italian Renaissance music in the fifteenth century and provides a fitting historical referent; independent voices singing together, sometimes in contrast, other times in harmony to produce a whole greater than its parts, well describes in metaphor what Brooklyn's renaissance achieved. Rational organization to coordinate many interrelated, moving elements over time also describes the skills honed in international commerce and shipping that Brooklyn's mercantile men knew so well.

In the case of Luther Wyman, we look to the early inspiration he drew not just from commercial shipping, but from music and from his association with liberal Unitarianism. When he moved his family from Troy to New York in the early 1830s to work for the Troy Towboat Company and then the Black Ball Line, he wasted no time affiliating with a church and a choir. He associated with the Second Unitarian Church of the Messiah in Manhattan, and when he moved his family to Brooklyn, he affiliated with the First Unitarian Church of the Saviour under construction on the corner of Pierrepont Street and Monroe Place.<sup>18</sup> While resident in

<sup>17</sup> In a letter to the *Troy Budget*, the writer under the name "Strike the Harp" had compared the science of music to mathematics and declared that, "Sacred music is a delightful part of social worship" with the added caveat, "when well performed." *Ibid.*, 10 March 1829, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Designed by well-known architect Minard Lafever, the cornerstone was laid in 1842 and construction completed in 1844, Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 18–22.

New York, he sang bass at the Church of the Messiah and became a member of the New York Sacred Music Society, soon serving for five years as its president.<sup>19</sup> In Brooklyn he took charge of the music program at the Church of the Saviour and helped organize the new Brooklyn Sacred Music Society, becoming its president until he stepped down in 1850. On that occasion the Society presented him a large folio Harpers' Bible handsomely illustrated and bound in red Morocco, a further example of gift-giving in recognition of a member's outstanding contributions.

The original Unitarian church of New York had been founded in 1819 as a Channingite fellowship. That spring Boston Unitarian William Ellery Channing had first preached at his sister's home in New York City to several dozen, mostly New England transplants. He had stopped on his way to Baltimore to deliver his famous sermon at the installation of Jared Sparks as Unitarian minister there.<sup>20</sup> His Baltimore sermon had placed heavy stress on human potential rather than man's sinfulness. His oration showed the affinities between nineteenth-century Unitarian thought and the incarnational theology and commitment to the civic life so characteristic of the humanist thinkers of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>21</sup> On his return trip, Channing preached again in New York, three times in one day, this time to large audiences in the lecture hall of the Medical College. Greatly impressed by what he had heard, commission merchant and soon to be Black Ball Line owner, Jonathan Goodhue, attended all three sermons.<sup>22</sup> Plans were quickly put together to build a Unitarian church in Manhattan, despite the general hostility there to liberal religion. Goodhue purchased a pew and became a faithful attendee along with his friend Henry Wheaton, who delivered that Renaissance-themed inaugural address at the New York

<sup>19</sup> BE, 29 July 1879, 2; Henry Stiles, L. P. (Linus Pierpont) Brockett, and L. B. (Lucien Brock) Proctor, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y., from 1683 to 1884* (New York, NY: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 2: 1034–35.

<sup>20</sup> Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 27.

<sup>21</sup> John O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450–1521* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 123–74.

<sup>22</sup> Goodhue, "Notes of Events"; Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 33.

Athenaeum mentioned earlier.<sup>23</sup> By 1826, members of the First Church dedicated the Second Church with Channing presiding.<sup>24</sup> The new church, where Luther Wyman sang bass, took as its name the Church of the Messiah. Perhaps Wyman came to know Goodhue through their Unitarian connections as well as through South Street commerce, which mercantile and church affiliations may have recommended the younger man for hire when Goodhue and Charles H. Marshall bought the Black Ball Line in 1834.

Among American Protestants, Unitarianism was the most liberal and intellectual denomination, well on the liberal side of mainstream Episcopalians or Presbyterians. The editor of the *Christian Inquirer* put it simply: "One of the marked distinctions between those denominated Orthodox Christians and those called Liberal Christians is, that while the former work for the world to come, the latter work for the present life."<sup>25</sup> American Unitarians had split off from the Congregationalists, rejecting their strict Calvinist emphasis on sinfulness in favor of a more humanistic theology that focused on a rational approach to religion and doing good in this world. An offshoot of English dissenting traditions, most Unitarians also rejected traditional notions of the Trinity in favor of a single, or unitary godhead. Unitarianism enjoyed great appeal among the merchant elite steeped in English Liberal, utilitarian thought. Those New Englanders, especially around Boston, regarded themselves among the most advanced and enlightened thinkers. They found congenial Unitarianism's appeal to the rational mind and, for its day, more scientific approach to religion. Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), the English founder of Unitarianism, well familiar to William Roscoe and his Unitarian friends

<sup>23</sup> Though he bought a pew in 1821, Goodhue did not immediately become a member. Rather he kept the Episcopalian registry of his wife, Goodhue, "Notes of Events"; Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Goodhue was present, entry for 6 December 1826, "Notes of Events." In October 1829 Goodhue invited Channing to dinner with his family and commented "He is undoubtedly one of the most rarely gifted men of the age and in the devotion and purity of his conceptions on moral and intellectual subjects, I think posterity will place his among the most honored names," *ibid.* The new church was constructed at Waverly Place and Broadway. Goodhue attended the dedication in May 1839.

<sup>25</sup> *Christian Inquirer*, 12: 39, 26 June 1858.

in Liverpool, is better known today as a chemist for his discovery of oxygen. A prolific writer and publisher of dissenting tracts, Priestley, like Roscoe, kept up a lively transatlantic correspondence. He suffered ill repute in England as a notorious, outspoken dissenter, was driven from his Birmingham home in 1791 during the riots there, and emigrated to America. He arrived in New York before Unitarianism had caught hold. No church welcomed him to their pulpit. Instead he settled in more religiously tolerant Pennsylvania and there founded the first US Unitarian church in 1796.<sup>26</sup>

Rejection of Unitarians was not unique to Priestley's experience. Reverend Orville Dewey, pastor at the Church of the Messiah in Manhattan, had remarked during his English travels in the early 1830s that English dissenters were still treated with "absolute indignity."<sup>27</sup> Unitarians fared little better in America. Outside their New England and Boston centers, Unitarian avant-garde approaches to Christianity met with suspicion. In New York during the 1820s several Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Baptist ministers launched a series of attacks upon Unitarian beliefs, linking them to English Socinians, a radical group that traced its origins to the sixteenth-century Italian humanist and anti-Trinitarian dissenter Lelio Sozzini. True to his intellectual roots in Renaissance humanism, Sozzini had placed theological emphasis on the basic humanity of Christ.<sup>28</sup> Members of the New York church defended their Rational Christianity in the press, but upon the advice of mentor William Ellery Channing, they did not strike back directly at their critics,

<sup>26</sup> Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 21–24; Robert E. Schofield, "Priestley, Joseph (1733–1804)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edition, September 2013. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/view/article/22788>] [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>27</sup> Orville Dewey, *The Old World and the New, Or, A Journal of Reflections and Observations Made on a Tour in Europe* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1836), 144–45.

<sup>28</sup> On the 1820 controversy in New York sparked by an attack in print from the Episcopalian rector Rev. Henry James Feltus that unintentionally convinced Jonathan Goodhue to join the Unitarian fellowship, see Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 105–08. On the influence of Renaissance Neoplatonic thought on Roscoe and his circle at Liverpool, see Donald A. Macnaughton, *Roscoe of Liverpool: His Life, Writings and Treasures: 1753–1831* (Birkenhead: Countywise, 1996), 47–48.

preferring instead to let their example of upright living and good works speak for itself. Gradually, Unitarians found more acceptance through their humanitarianism. When Jonathan Goodhue's friend Judge George Thacker died in 1824, Goodhue remarked that acquaintances considered the deceased's Unitarian sentiments to be "a subject of regret though not of condemnation."<sup>29</sup>

Partly in consequence of the theological controversies over their unorthodox views on the Trinity, Unitarians placed unusual emphasis on social service and community involvement. They made themselves useful as volunteers. Thus, their deeply held conviction favoring communal enterprise and Renaissance-style civic commitment also helped them gain acceptance in new surroundings.<sup>30</sup> It should come as no surprise that the Unitarian congregation in Brooklyn's Church of the Saviour under the leadership of Boston native and Channing devotee, Rev. Dr. Frederick Farley, fostered so many community leaders, good Samaritans, and cultural patrons. Men such as Luther Wyman, the Low brothers Abiel and Josiah, Judge John Greenwood, Augustus Graham, Theodore White, William Cary, and Benjamin Blossom counted among Brooklyn's leading merchant capitalists involved in Atlantic trade and were also very active renaissance patrons.

Unitarians on both sides of the Atlantic maintained an excellent network of connections through their commercial and intellectual/theological interests. We have already glimpsed Roscoe's impact in America via his and Liverpool's living example, his publications, the visitors he entertained, and the transatlantic correspondence he maintained. His and Priestley's strong Unitarian ties expanded their spheres of influence.<sup>31</sup> William Ellery

<sup>29</sup> Goodhue, "Notes of Events." Goodhue, ever sensitive to the tides of change, noted with relief that among the "most intelligent class" now "the sons of all his [Thacker's] old associates are Unitarians."

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Joseph Tuckerman's description of the idea of a ministry at large in service to the poor in his *The Principles and Results of the Ministry at Large in Boston [electronic Resource]* (Boston, MA: I. R. Butts, 1838) as cited in Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 176. Unitarian ladies were especially active in charitable works and social welfare for the poor.

<sup>31</sup> It is worth noting that Priestley and Benjamin Franklin were friends and that Thomas Jefferson was one of his admirers.

Channing was among Roscoe's visitors in Liverpool in 1822.<sup>32</sup> Reverend Orville Dewey arrived too late to meet Roscoe in person during his travels in 1833–1834, for Roscoe had recently died.<sup>33</sup> Among the Americans working for Baring Brothers & Co. in both the US and England, all people in Wyman's circle of acquaintances, we find frequent mention of Channing's speeches and writings in the diaries and letters of Jonathan Goodhue, Thomas Wren Ward in Boston, and Joshua Bates in London.<sup>34</sup> The *Christian Inquirer*, a Unitarian periodical published out of New York, enjoyed a wide circulation and often reported noteworthy local events, which helped keep scattered church members in touch with one another. Brooklyn Unitarians had their own special connection with their Liverpool brethren. Channing's nephew, William Henry Channing, an early supporter of women's suffrage, had been called for an extended stay to preach at the Brooklyn church. In 1857 he became pastor of Roscoe's Unitarian Chapel in Liverpool, successor to noted transcendentalist James Martineau.<sup>35</sup>

Unitarians on both sides of the East River also kept in close contact. Before Brooklyn had its own Unitarian fellowship, early Unitarians such as the Lows, Dows, Carys, Blossoms, and Hales had crossed the river to reach their pews in the First or Second New York churches. The Manhattan Unitarians helped found the new Brooklyn church, and Rev. Orville Dewey from the Church of the Messiah, delivered the sermon at

<sup>32</sup> They stayed in correspondence, also Channing with Roscoe's daughter Jane after her father died, and at least until 1835, Henry Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe* (Boston, MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1833), 2: 349, 466–67.

<sup>33</sup> Roscoe died in 1831. Dewey was mainly impressed with the Liverpool Docks. He did not tarry there but set out on his tour of Northern England, Scotland, and Ireland before proceeding to the Continent. His *Old World and the New* is filled with awareness of American cultural backwardness. See also Orville Dewey and Mary E. Dewey, *Autobiography and Letters of Orville Dewey, D.D.* (Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 100–01, 143–45, 169–79.

<sup>34</sup> Ward expressed pleasure at Bates' praise of Channing as "truly one of the first of the age," Ward to Bates, 31 July 1835, BAH.C.5.1.2. Ward attended some of Channing's sermons and handled some of his accounts, *Thomas Wren Ward Diaries, 1827–55*, MHS, Ms N-1726, 12, 50. The Charles H. Marshall papers in the New-York Historical Society contain several items relating to the life of Rev. Orville Dewey of the Manhattan Church of the Messiah.

<sup>35</sup> Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 14.



the ordination of Rev. Dr. Frederick Farley, Wyman's new pastor in Brooklyn and long-time friend. The aging Farley would preach at Wyman's funeral in 1879. Long after the Brooklyn church had been established, Brooklyn Unitarians attended annual conferences in New York. In 1860, for example, members from the Church of the Saviour crossed the river on church business, this time to attend a farewell breakfast at the Fifth Avenue Hotel honoring one of their ministers set to sail that day for California.<sup>36</sup> They joined an illustrious company of Unitarian lightning rods that included William Cullen Bryant, Horace Greeley, Peter Cooper, and Rev. Samuel Longfellow.<sup>37</sup>

The growth of the Unitarian movement in New York and Brooklyn reflects changing urban patterns in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s—patterns which Luther Wyman's own movements duplicated. The first Unitarian Church in Manhattan had been located on Chambers Street between Broadway and Church Streets near present-day City Hall, close to the commercial heart of the city and not far from where merchants such as Jonathan Goodhue then lived.<sup>38</sup> The second New York Unitarian Church of the Messiah laid its cornerstone in 1825, fourteen blocks further uptown at the corner of Prince and Mercer Streets, just west of Broadway. After Wyman moved to Manhattan, by 1835, he and his small family lived at 10 Dutch Street, off Fulton, close to the South Street/Wall Street hub. Sometime after the big New York fire of 1835, he moved his family further uptown to 5 Delancey Street, off Bowry Street and near the present-day anchorage for the Manhattan Bridge. His and Cecilia's second child, Helen, was born there.<sup>39</sup> His new location made the new Church of the Messiah the closest Unitarian church to the Wyman residence.

<sup>36</sup> Rev. Thomas Starr King was the honoree. Luther Wyman and A. A. Low were among the Brooklyn Unitarians in attendance, *Christian Inquirer*, 14.29, 14 April 1860, 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* Samuel Longfellow was younger brother of William Wadsworth Longfellow and pastor at Brooklyn's Second Unitarian church.

<sup>38</sup> The Cornerstone was laid 29 April 1820. An etching shows a classicizing federal-style façade with Renaissance Palladian windows in the nave and in the interior white marble pilasters topped with ionic capitals and pediment. Edward Everett preached at the dedication, Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 78–86.

<sup>39</sup> *Longworth's American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory* (New York, NY: Thomas Longworth, n.d.), 701.

The Brooklyn church traced its roots back to 1833, a year before the city consolidated. Brooklyn members of the New York churches, many of them originally from New England, wanted to establish their own fellowship near their homes. At first they held services in rented quarters and in 1835 incorporated as a church and started a Sunday School. As though to underscore their New England affinities and separation from Manhattan, the Brooklyn church adopted the Unitarian hymnal recently published by Rev. Greenwood of King's Chapel, Boston.<sup>40</sup> In their choice of music they departed from their Manhattan brethren, who used a collection of hymns by their own Henry Sewall.<sup>41</sup> The Brooklyn church faced tough times initially, thanks to the ravages of the 1837 financial crisis that forced several of its founding members into bankruptcy and meant they could no longer maintain their promised contributions or pew rents. Among the victims stood wealthy merchant Josiah Dow, the first and largest original subscriber who had been a guiding light in 1833. Dow, a twenty-year Brooklyn resident, whose business interests had taken him from Salem, Massachusetts, to Boston, and then to New York and Brooklyn, lost his business and his home in the crash.<sup>42</sup> Seth Low, another well-to-do founder, was apparently saved from the same fate only by the riches his son Abiel Abbott Low had accumulated in the China trade.<sup>43</sup> In addition to its financial woes, or in part because of them, the Brooklyn congregation struggled through an internal rift that only healed under the leadership of Rev. Frederick Farley. Luther Wyman had moved his family to Brooklyn in 1840 or 1841, but his name does not appear among the fifty-nine men who founded that reunited fellowship in 1842 (Fig. 4.1).

Once reunited, members of the Brooklyn fellowship pondered how to build a new, larger church at the corner of Pierrepont Street and Montague Place. They hired well-known New York architect Minard Lafever, himself a Unitarian, to draw up plans in then popular Gothic-revival style. They dedicated the new Church of the Saviour in April 1844, by which

<sup>40</sup> Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 1–3; Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox*, 193–94.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 and n. He retreated to New Hampshire where he ran a school.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



**Fig. 4.1** First Unitarian Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, hand-colored lithograph by Ezra Bisbee, published by A. Spooner & Co. 1845. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

time Luther Wyman had taken over as music director.<sup>44</sup> For the dedication, guest preachers from Boston, Buffalo, and New York presided, and the hymns had been written specially for the service.<sup>45</sup> In a separate ceremony the following day, Rev. Farley was installed as minister.<sup>46</sup> Here Wyman's hand is evident. His elder brother, music professor Benjamin Wyman, then residing and teaching in Manhattan,<sup>47</sup> wrote a cantata for the occasion:

Father in Heaven to thee we bow  
 In humble supplication now:  
 On thee our fondest hopes depend,  
 Guide us, O guide us to the End!  
 Our sins forgive, our life protect,  
 Our fears dispel, our steps direct;  
 Be thou our shield, our constant friend,  
 Guide us, O guide us to the end!<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 383, 390. Wyman remained in that position until he resigned in 1851 because of a controversy over congregational singing. Hoogenboom lists him as choir director until 1855. He also served two terms as church trustee from 1846–49 and again in 1865–68.

<sup>45</sup> 24 and 25 April. For the order of service for the consecration, see A. P. Putnam, *Unitarianism in Brooklyn: A Sermon Preached by A.P. Putnam, in the Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, N.Y* (Brooklyn, NY: Rome Bros., 1869), 25.

<sup>46</sup> The celebratory events were reported widely in the press and in Unitarian publications such as the *Christian Register*, 23:18, 4 May 1844, which noted that invitations had been sent out for delegates to attend all the way from South Carolina to Maine.

<sup>47</sup> He is listed as residing at 230 E. Broadway and teaching at 111 Nassau St. in Dodgett's New York Directory of 1842–43, 354. The 1845–46 Directory places him at 192 E. Broadway, 435. Benjamin was also a publisher of the short-lived *Journal of Sacred Music* in 1845–46. He left New York, perhaps for points South, and West. A Benjamin Wyman, either Luther's brother or son Benjamin F. took passage in 1858 from New York to Savannah. Both Benjamin and Benjamin F. are listed in the 1860 US Federal Census as resident in the household of nephew/cousin Justus E. Wyman, a lawyer in Humboldt, California. (accessed through <http://Ancestry.com>). Justus E. was son of Luther's older brother Justus, who, it will be remembered, had left Massachusetts in 1818 to settle in the then Alabama Territory.

<sup>48</sup> The order of worship with lyrics are reproduced as an appendix to A. P. Putnam, *Unitarianism in Brooklyn*, 51–52. Poet, Mrs. A. R. St. John, William Cullen Bryant, and I. H. Frothingham also wrote hymns for the occasion.

The church boasted a new and bespoke state-of-the-art organ designed and built in Boston and installed just in time for the dedicatory concert that evening.<sup>49</sup>

Music occupied an important place in Unitarian worship, and the Church of the Saviour raised musical standards in Brooklyn. Member Judge John Greenwood, an accomplished musician and Brooklyn Renaissance patron, volunteered his services on the organ until they could hire a professional organ master. The church engaged four professional singers for its choir to ensure high quality in its musical program.<sup>50</sup> The church also offered its sanctuary for small benefit concerts such as one for fire victims where members of the New York Sacred Music Society and church organist John Zundel volunteered their talents.<sup>51</sup> Unitarians also welcomed secular, non-sacred styles of music. At the aforementioned Unitarian breakfast in 1860, the musical fare consisted of a band playing familiar operatic tunes.<sup>52</sup> Between the dedication of the Church of the Saviour in 1844 and that breakfast in 1860, under the leadership of church members such as Luther Wyman, John Greenwood, and A. A. Low, music and musical tastes in Brooklyn noticeably secularized, another indication of how Brooklyn's renaissance impulses were stretching beyond church sanctuaries.

### OPENING BARS UN PO' MOSSO: SACRED MUSIC

Upon relocating to Brooklyn, Luther Wyman quickly involved himself in the musical and beneficent cultural affairs of his new city. As president of the New York Sacred Music Society, he began to arrange performances in Brooklyn. In fall 1841 he invited four prominent Society members to sing at the benefit festival for the Brooklyn Protestant Orphans Asylum held the following January at the Central Dutch Church on Henry Street, practically next door to his home. The festival featured addresses and readings by the young orphans on topics such as "*Battle of Bunker Hill*" and "*On Eloquence*," alternating with songs by an orphans' chorus and Wyman's adult choir. For

<sup>49</sup> Built by E. and G. G. Hook at a cost of \$2,375, Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 26.

<sup>50</sup> Church records; also Hoogenboom, 27

<sup>51</sup> BE, 14 October 1848, 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Christian Inquirer*, 14.29, 14 April 1860, 2.

the adult singers, the music of Handel predominated with selections from the *Messiah* including his *Multitude of Angels*, and a rousing *Hallelujah* chorus to conclude the program. The *Brooklyn Eagle* lauded the “Lilliputian” orators. Although the reviewer objected to the creaky organ in the Dutch Church, he praised members of the audience for their unusual good manners by staying in their seats rather than exiting during the final chorus.<sup>53</sup> Two months later, the Sacred Music Society performed the whole of the *Messiah* at the Broadway Tabernacle Church in Manhattan. On this occasion, Wyman enjoined the audience to stand during the final chorus in what became a long-standing tradition in *Messiah* performances.<sup>54</sup> Audiences and musicians in this period were developing a respectful rapport, one well suited to the concert halls that lay in Brooklyn’s near future as a renaissance city.

But those pushing to transit toward large public performance spaces, a signpost of Brooklyn’s renaissance evolution, encountered obstacles. Tensions soon arose regarding music and its appropriate venues. The orphans’ benefit festival had passed muster with the *Eagle*. Probably because it served a charitable cause, the conservative *Eagle* looked the other way at the combination of sacred music with children’s songs and secular topics in a place of worship. When it reviewed a different concert hosted at the New York Tabernacle Church, however, the *Eagle* felt obviously discomfited over the musical mix. The editor found Charles Edward Horn’s *Oratorio of the Remission of Sin* acceptable, but “we feel bound to express our disapprobation of the use of a place consecrated to the worship of God, for the singing of such songs as we associate only with the stage, *J’ai de l’argent* and *All’idea di quel metallo*,” dealing with greed and money, which he deemed “entirely improper to be sung in a church.”<sup>55</sup> In retrospect, this small *contretemps* foreshadowed more vexing controversies almost twenty years later over what constituted proper

<sup>53</sup> BE, 19 January 1842, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1842, 2. Once again the *Eagle* remarked approvingly that the audience remained in their places until the last note had been sung.

<sup>55</sup> BE, 5 January 1842, 2. Ironically, Horn was known for his compositions both of sacred music and of stage productions. A transplanted Englishman, he was one of the founders of the New York Philharmonic Society (1842) and later in Boston became president of the Handel and Haydn Society where earlier Luther Wyman had performed as a soloist. “*J’ai del argent*” was by popular French composer Louis Jullien and “*All’idea di quel metallo*” came from Rossini’s opera *The Barber of Seville*.

entertainment at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Especially during the divisive years of the Civil War, tensions and stronger feelings leaked through cracks in the veneer of old-fashioned gentility.

In the meantime, at the next Orphans' Benefit festival for which Wyman again called upon members of the Sacred Music Society, secular topics and songs formed one part of the program; the sacred music, again mostly by Handel, formed the separate second half. In that second section Benjamin Wyman composed the music for an ode he had written for the occasion.<sup>56</sup> For both benefit concerts, Luther Wyman received a special thank you "card" in the *Eagle* for "the handsome manner in which he conducted the adult exercises." Such recognition of his special efforts and the singers who volunteered their talents drew public attention to refined music put to the service of charity.<sup>57</sup>

In another decade such hesitations as expressed by the *Eagle* would fade, especially as Brooklyn's renaissance got underway, for it enlarged people's notions of what kinds of music were appropriate where, and provided important secularized performance spaces outside church sanctuaries for opera, Shakespearean drama, orchestral concerts, and lectures, as well as sacred oratorios. Before the 1850s, outside of churches there existed no adequate public halls for big gatherings or concerts either in Manhattan or in Brooklyn. Thus the Broadway Tabernacle, which had one of the largest sanctuaries, was frequently pressed into service for meetings and performances attached to special causes, whether it be the American Temperance Union, American Bible Society, American Seaman's Friend Society, or the American Anti-Slavery Society, to name a few groups that met there over one week in April 1842.<sup>58</sup> In the 1830s, during Rev. Orville Dewey's European travels and while visiting Unitarian founder Joseph Priestley's old residence in Birmingham, England, he had noted that city's new hall constructed specially to host its music festival. Birmingham's hall led him to remark, "We have no such places in America for music . . . We have too much noise. Our orchestras are too powerful for our buildings,"<sup>59</sup> and here he indicated

<sup>56</sup> BE, 30 January 1843, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 February 1843, 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 April 1842, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Dewey, *The Old World and the New, Or, A Journal of Reflections and Observations Made on a Tour in Europe*, 1: 113.

church sanctuaries whose size and acoustics were too confined to accommodate more than a modest choir. US cities needed new bigger auditoriums for non-sacred musical offerings to expand and to accommodate the larger audiences eager to attend.

In early America, celebrations of big public events usually took place out of doors, such as the elaborate staging of the marriage of the Hudson and Atlantic waters at the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. In October 1842 the inauguration of the Croton Aqueduct, New York's impoundment reservoir, attracted an estimated 200,000 spectators from the city and surrounding communities. The crowds witnessed parades of military and firemen, artisans, and every conceivable society that could muster a group to march through the streets with banners waving as bells tolled throughout the city. In front of City Hall, Wyman's New York Sacred Music Society performed "*The Croton Ode*" commissioned by the Corporation of New York from General George P. Morris "the greatest poet of this or any preceding age—not excepting William Shakespeare, John Milton, or Pop Emmons."<sup>60</sup> Lines from the ode which married music and flowing waters for the common good, included the following:

Gushing from this living fountain,  
 Music pours a falling strain,  
 As the Goddess of the Mountains  
 Comes with all her sparkling train. . . .  
 Water shouts a glad hosanna!  
 Bubbles up the Earth to bless!  
 Cheers it like the precious manna,  
 In the barren Wilderness. . . .  
 Round the Aqueducts of story,  
 As the mists of Lethe throng,  
 Croton's waves, in all their glory,  
 Troop in melody along.<sup>61</sup>

Popular, nature-inspired poet, songwriter, editor and co-founder of the *New York Evening Mirror*, George P. Morris (1802–1864) must have

<sup>60</sup> BE, 8 October 1842, 2.

<sup>61</sup> The Typographical Society distributed printed sheets with the lyrics. BE, 8 October 1842, 2.



been more than a casual acquaintance.<sup>62</sup> In 1843 Wyman's brother Benjamin, the music professor, collaborated with Morris and soprano Mrs. Strong on the *Cantata of the Pilgrim Fathers*, written and performed at the Broadway Tabernacle by the Sacred Music Society for the thirty-eighth anniversary of the New York New England Society. They dedicated their hymn "*Rock of the Pilgrims*" to long-time Society member Luther Wyman.<sup>63</sup> Then, 1846 saw the publication of *Sweet Poetry* for which Luther's wife Cecilia composed the melodies for Morris' lyrics.<sup>64</sup> Music was in the air everywhere, but acquiring suitable indoor spaces for uplifting cultural events continued to be a stumbling block.

By the 1840s Brooklyn's old Apprentices Library had failed, its books boxed and in storage. The most important new education and arts initiative came at the hands of Augustus Graham, wealthy civic-minded Unitarian businessman, who made his fortune as a distiller and then as manufacturer of white lead paint. An early supporter of Unitarianism in Brooklyn, pew owner, and large benefactor of the Church of the Saviour, Graham provided the vision and the funds behind the Brooklyn Institute (incorporated 1843; its building acquired 1848). The Institute resembled the Liverpool Royal Institution in its dedication to adult education. During the rest of the 1840s, the Brooklyn Institute became Brooklyn's cultural center, providing a library, lecture rooms, and exhibition space for debates, presentations, small concerts, and exhibits on topics in the natural sciences, art, literature, and music. Graham had purchased the building of the struggling Brooklyn Lyceum (1833) on Washington Street, moved

<sup>62</sup> George Morris and H. B. (Horace Binney) Wallace, *Poems by George P. Morris [electronic Resource]: With a Memoir of the Author*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Savage & McCrea, 1860), 57. Morris was a very popular and well-published poet and composer of song lyrics. In 1842 he collaborated with C. E. Horn on a popular opera *Maid of Saxony*.

<sup>63</sup> In the Library of Congress collection of American Sheet Music 1820–60, viewable online at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=sm1820&fileName=sm2/sm1844/410000/410440/mussm410440.db&recNum=0&itemLink=D?musm:56:./temp/~ammem\\_06NC::&linkText=0](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=sm1820&fileName=sm2/sm1844/410000/410440/mussm410440.db&recNum=0&itemLink=D?musm:56:./temp/~ammem_06NC::&linkText=0)

<sup>64</sup> See [http://imslp.org/index.php?title=User:Clark\\_Kimberling/Historical\\_Notes\\_7&oldid=188007](http://imslp.org/index.php?title=User:Clark_Kimberling/Historical_Notes_7&oldid=188007) ([http://toolbar.google.com/archivesearch?q=%22luther+B.+Wyman%22&scoring=t&chl=en&ned=us&sa=N&sugg=d&cas\\_ldate=1846&cas\\_hdate=1846&lnav=dt](http://toolbar.google.com/archivesearch?q=%22luther+B.+Wyman%22&scoring=t&chl=en&ned=us&sa=N&sugg=d&cas_ldate=1846&cas_hdate=1846&lnav=dt)) [accessed October 2, 2016].

into it the books from the old Apprentices Library and donated building and contents to the Institute.<sup>65</sup> In 1844, as program committee chairman, Luther Wyman organized a concert at the Institute featuring soloists from the New York Sacred Music Society. The event attracted an overflow attendance.<sup>66</sup> The concert showed that music, including sacred music, could find ample audience outside of church. Upon his death in 1851, Graham left the Brooklyn Institute a substantial endowment that enabled it to continue operations for many years. By providing meeting space and subventions, it helped spawn much later such venerable institutions, vital to Brooklyn's renaissance, as the Brooklyn Academy of Design, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and the Brooklyn Museum, most of them still functional today.<sup>67</sup>

The Brooklyn Athenaeum, which opened in 1852, provided the newest, largest non-sectarian public spaces for lectures and performances. Judge John Greenwood, another scion of the Church of the Saviour, chaired the committee that launched construction of the Athenaeum and Reading Rooms on Atlantic Street. The plans for the new building stipulated it be of sufficiently ample size to "include a lecture and concert room of the first class."<sup>68</sup> Like the Liverpool Athenaeum and its many imitators in the US, the Brooklyn Athenaeum featured a reading room furnished with the latest national and international newspapers together with a book collection, heavily larded with fiction, made available to subscribing members. As with the earlier Brooklyn Institute, the Athenaeum sponsored popular lecture series and let its rooms for programs and meetings. The Institute and especially the Athenaeum became incubators for Brooklyn's renaissance.

The Athenaeum with its modern, more spacious rooms, hosted dozens of cultural events in those early years. Its fourth annual report noted that its

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/about/building.php>; on the strange personal history of Graham, see Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 36–41.

<sup>66</sup> BE, 27 December 1844, 2. He arranged another one the following year, *ibid.*, 8 December 1845, 2.

<sup>67</sup> In 1936 it even absorbed the Brooklyn Academy of Music (founded 1859). Institute records can be found in the Brooklyn Museum and the Brooklyn Historical Society.

<sup>68</sup> Organizers planned to raise \$25,000 by subscription, BE, 21 November 1851, 2.

largest hall had been used 102 evenings for “concerts, lectures, dramatic readings, and amusing exhibitions—the lectures and concerts making by far the largest demands for accommodation—the former numbering thirty-eight and the latter thirty-three.”<sup>69</sup> The Athenaeum also hosted organizational meetings where attendees discussed the crucial ideas for founding other cultural and educational institutions, further enabling the Brooklyn Renaissance. They included the Mercantile Library, Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn Horticultural Society, Art Association, and the Long Island, later Brooklyn, Historical Society. Members of the Athenaeum’s Board of Trustees themselves hatched plans for the Mercantile Library and the Brooklyn Art Association.<sup>70</sup> The new breakaway Second Unitarian Church of Brooklyn led by Rev. Samuel Longfellow, brother of the poet, held its earliest worship services at the Brooklyn Institute and then for five years at the Athenaeum before constructing its own church at Congress and Clinton Streets.<sup>71</sup> Thus, in addition to sponsoring and providing public space for cultural events, the Athenaeum and Brooklyn Institute worked as veritable hatcheries for new initiatives both sacred and secular.

By the 1850s Brooklyn was providing its own locations for cultural programs, and some entrepreneurs thought they could profit from making available more venues. In 1850 Gothic Hall on Adams Street near Concord underwent extensive remodeling and expansion aimed to make it the “largest and most splendid Assembly Room in Brooklyn or New York.”<sup>72</sup> In 1853, from his office across the river on South Street, businessman J. H. Brower announced his intentions to convert the old Central Dutch Church, where the Protestant Orphans’ Benefit festivals had been held, into a concert hall seating up to 1,000 persons. The refurbished hall would be available for rent for “lectures, scientific exhibitions and public meetings (party political excepted) by the evening, or for a series of

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 April 1857, 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* The Mercantile Library housed its collection at the Athenaeum until it acquired its own building. The need for a picture gallery was being discussed in 1857 as well.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March 1857, 3; Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 45–48.

<sup>72</sup> BE, 18 September 1850, 3.

evenings”<sup>73</sup> The very existence of these locations for meetings, lectures, and concerts indicated a growing restlessness and demand for more cultural spaces and better educational opportunities in Brooklyn. Augustus Graham and the founders of the Athenaeum had anticipated the curve; others soon followed, and Brooklyn’s renaissance was getting underway.

Music played a particularly important role in broadening Brooklyn’s cultural horizons. Sacred music, which enjoyed immense popularity in the 1840s and early 1850s, served as the springboard. Featured performances included oratorios such as Handel’s *Messiah* or Charles E. Horn’s cantata *Christmas bells, A tale of Holy Tide*, offered at St. John’s Episcopal church in Brooklyn in 1843 by members of Wyman’s New York Sacred Music Society to the accompaniment of the composer on the “newly invented Piano Forte.”<sup>74</sup> Performances of modern sacred oratorios such as Carl Loewe’s *Seven Sleepers*, advertised to astonish the sacred music world for its unusual “dramatic and spirited” presentation by the New York Sacred Music Society, often debuted in Manhattan at the Broadway Tabernacle and then enjoyed a repeat performance in Brooklyn.<sup>75</sup>

In this period under Wyman’s presidency, the New York Sacred Music Society’s reputation remained unsurpassed, and it received invitations to perform further afield. In Summer 1846 Society members together with Dodsworth’s brass band boarded the *Albany*, a chartered Hudson River steamer, on its way sixty miles upriver to Newburgh, NY. There members unloaded their piano and performed the *Seven Sleepers* in a nearby church to an appreciative audience. On their return downriver, the excursionists enjoyed more secular entertainments including a grand banquet. They sang and danced until 5:00 a.m. with “vocalism of all kinds—choruses booming over the waters in the stillness of the moonlight and waking up the eternal Palisades,” in what turned out to be “the treat of a lifetime to attend” and “one of the most memorable pleasure-takings of the season.”<sup>76</sup> Music and flowing waters General Morris had highlighted at the Croton Aqueduct celebration had combined once again for the Society’s

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 April 1853, 3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1843, 3. Charles E. Horn’s cantata was published in London in 1846.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 July 1845, 2; 25 September 1845, 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 July 1846, 2; 9 July 1846, 2.

excursion. In August they made another trip by boat, this time to New Haven, where, by special request, they performed the *Messiah* for the Yale College commencement exercises.<sup>77</sup> Water, the essential medium of transatlantic commerce, and uplifting music again harmonized and streamed together, a metaphorical indicator of the different forces flowing and mixing that spawned Brooklyn's cultural awakening.

That same year as the Society's shipboard excursions, Ives' music school in New York branched into Brooklyn, offering morning classes for ladies, afternoon classes for young ladies and girls, and classes for men and women two evenings a week, as well as lessons on the pianoforte. Choral singing promoted social mixing. It provided highly respected and refined ways in which men and women could work and perform comfortably together.<sup>78</sup> Men and women singing and collaborating in public performance presaged further renaissance developments. A New York music school had branched into Brooklyn, but Brooklynites also busied themselves organizing their own societies distinct from similar New York groups. In 1846, some fifty leading Brooklynites hailing from New England issued a call to found their own Brooklyn New England Society. Among those listed were Unitarians Luther Wyman, Abiel Abbott, and Seth Low, William Cary, and John Greenwood, along with other leading citizens who figured prominently in Brooklyn's renaissance.<sup>79</sup>

That same year the *Eagle* reported that Wyman would be resigning his office as president of the New York Sacred Music Society; no specific reason was given other than his inability to attend to those duties.<sup>80</sup> His friend and fellow Brooklynite Cyrus P. Smith took over as president in October.<sup>81</sup> Wyman may have curtailed his activities because his pregnant wife Cecilia

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 August 1846, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Among those who lent their names to endorse the new school in Brooklyn, besides Luther Wyman, could be found well-known Democratic Senator Henry Cruise Murphy, *ibid.*, 21 April 1846, 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 December 1846, 2. Wyman also continued his active membership in the New York New England Society, serving for many years as its treasurer.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1846, 2; 5 October 1846, 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 October 1846, 2.

had taken seriously ill. She passed away leaving him a widower with four young children, one less than a year old.<sup>82</sup> Wyman had begun a four-year term on the board of trustees of the Church of the Saviour, and when tragedy struck, the close-knit Unitarian community gathered around him in support. A. A. Low, fellow Board member, friend, neighbor, and maritime merchant whose office also located in Burling Slip, wrote him a special letter of condolence on behalf of the board.<sup>83</sup> Tragedy, close-knit business connections and friendships reinforced by church and mutual socio-cultural affiliations drew the well-networked Brooklyn elite ever closer together.<sup>84</sup>

His personal tragedy notwithstanding, Wyman threw himself into further developing Brooklyn's musical scene. In 1848 emerged not one but two new Brooklyn choral societies dedicated to sacred music, the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society of which Wyman served as president, and the Mendelssohn Society, headed by fellow Unitarian and musician, Judge

<sup>82</sup> She died in July 1847, leaving children Benjamin (1832–1907), Helen (1838–1911), Luther Boynton Jr. (1845?–1871), and Cecil (1847–1895).

<sup>83</sup> Wyman responded with feeling: "In the bereavement in which through an all wise and overruling Providence I am suddenly placed I feel quite unable to express to you my feelings upon the reception of your note of this morning. From my heart do I thank you for the tender expressions of condolence and sympathy and the offer of the Services of our worthy President and the other kind friends with whom I am associated in the Board of Trustees. Our beloved Pastor together with several other friends have been in attendance early and late ever since Mrs. Wyman's decease and as far as I know have completed the arrangements for the last sad offices that of consigning her remains to the grave, tomorrow, when I trust I shall have the melancholy gratification of being supported in my affliction by yourself and the other members of the Board," 9 July 1847, BHS, First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn records (Church of the Saviour) 1790–1970s, ARC.109, Ser. 2:15.

<sup>84</sup> The Church of the Saviour had reserved plots in Brooklyn's Green-wood Cemetery on Vista Hill, a high knoll with a view over New York Harbor. Green-wood rivaled Boston's Mt. Auburn for its lovely park-like surroundings, strolling paths, and careful landscaping. Luther's son and namesake Luther B. Wyman, Jr. would join his mother there in 1871; Wyman himself was buried in the family plot in 1879, Green-wood Cemetery, Brooklyn Lot 834, Section 71. Luther Wyman had purchased his plot in February 1846. In 1901 his second wife Frances joined him there.

John Greenwood.<sup>85</sup> The latter Society rehearsed Mozart's *Requiem* and music by Mendelssohn to the 42nd Psalm.<sup>86</sup> Wyman's new Brooklyn Sacred Music Society presented German composer Loewe's more modern *Seven Sleepers*. The *Eagle* opined, "We are glad to see a movement commenced, by which the musical resources of our city may be properly developed and placed on a high basis. If it should prove successful, as we have no doubt it will, the community will be greatly indebted to Mr. Wyman, who was for a number of years president of the N. York Sacred Music Society."<sup>87</sup> The Brooklyn Sacred Music Society had been rehearsing in Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church, until a fire forced them over to the Old Dutch Church on Henry Street and to give their performance at the Female Academy.<sup>88</sup> The *Eagle* gushed again in its review, comparing it favorably with earlier presentations in Manhattan by the more seasoned New York Sacred Music Society: "We are glad that through the efforts and public spirit of Mr. Wyman, the president of the society, Brooklyn has started on her own responsibility in the matter of an elevated style of sacred music and that we shall have it in its perfection without the trouble of going to New York."<sup>89</sup> Brooklyn was becoming its own center of refined music.

Music was definitely in the air, for the first lecture offered at the Brooklyn Institute that winter, given by Rev. Storrs of the Congregational Church of the Pilgrims, had music as its subject.<sup>90</sup> Three months after its *Seven Sleepers*, the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society preformed Andrew Romberg's *Song of the Bell* in April. Ever ambitious in his capacity as president, Wyman advertised for instrumentalists to assemble an orchestra to accompany the Society's performances.<sup>91</sup> From these modest

<sup>85</sup> BE, 11 November 1848, 3; 8 December 1848, 3; 28 December 1848, 3; 9 January 1849, 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1849, 2; The Mendelssohn Society performed Mozart's *Requiem* in May, *ibid.*, 17 May 1849, 2.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 January 1849, 3.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 January 1849, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 January 1849, 3.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 January 1849, 2.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 February 1849, 3; *ibid.*, 26 February 1849, 3. They performed at the Female Academy, *ibid.*, 13 April 1849, 2; 14, 16 April, 3.

beginnings under Wyman's leadership, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society would emerge in 1857, and four years later in 1861 the building to house it, the Brooklyn Academy of Music. These two societies, the Philharmonic and the Academy of Music, became cornerstones of the Brooklyn Renaissance.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* heaped the performance and the Society with praise for its uplifting effect, since the "moral tendency of such an effort must have a powerful influence in smoothing the asperities of our nature."<sup>92</sup> The Society advertised itself as having been organized "for the purpose of producing ORATORIOS and other music of the highest order, and for promoting the cause of SACRED MUSIC generally in the city of Brooklyn."<sup>93</sup> It boasted an ambitious repertory of nine oratorios and various cantatas.<sup>94</sup>

Music may have been in the air in 1849, but the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society could not survive on numen or ticket sales alone without additional support. Now firmly established, it advertised subscriptions at \$5 for the entire season.<sup>95</sup> Its June performance of Handel's *Oratorio of Samson* garnered more praise from the *Eagle*, namely that the "society has already achieved wonders and will, we are persuaded, on this occasion add another leaf to the laurels they have already won."<sup>96</sup> Boosting Brooklyn pride, a comparison with Manhattan quickly followed: "The taste of our citizens in music is advancing with rapid [s]trides in Brooklyn, and ere long we shall hold as high a rank in that particular, as our Mammoth sister city."<sup>97</sup> That fall the Society performed Loewe's *Seven Sleepers*, followed by the *Messiah*. In a statement reminiscent of the genteel sentiments Wyman had expressed twenty years earlier at the Troy Bathing House, the *Eagle* reported, "Preparations on a grand scale have been made by the managers, to render it every way worthy of the public patronage."<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1849, 3; *ibid.*, 14 May 1849, 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 May 1849, 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* The repertory included Handel's *Messiah* and *Samson*, Hayden's *Creation*, Neukomm's *David and Goliath*, Loewe's *Seven Sleepers*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, M. P. King's *Intercession*, Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*, and Benjamin Wyman's *Daniel*.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 June 1849, 3.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 June 1849, 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1849, 2.



Despite the great success of the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society, and Wyman's rising public visibility as its president, the late 1840s had proved stressful. Not only had Wyman been widowed, but his world of Atlantic shipping experienced upheaval. Banks failed on both sides of the Atlantic in 1847, and several shipping companies, though not the Black Ball Line, went under from the pressure of declining cargo rates. Growing competition from steam squeezed the packets. For sailing ships this meant lower profits and the necessity to shift their business toward immigrant traffic, all taxing changes to manage. Testimony to the added stress came in the form of an advertisement for Hutchings' Bitters for Dyspepsia. Wyman apparently needed something stronger than the Congress Water he had once sold at the Troy Bathing House to ease his anxiety and settle his stomach. He gave personal affidavit for the Hutchings' cure in ads that appeared in the *New York Times* and *Brooklyn Eagle*: "The undersigned was afflicted with the Dyspepsia of the worst form for one year and a half, during a greater portion of which time he made use of no remedies, but suffered the disease to take care of itself, until he was recommended to try Hutchings' Dyspepsia Bitters: he very soon derived benefit from the use of a few bottles of this medicine, and now considers himself entirely well."<sup>99</sup> Another factor in his recovery may have been his new marriage in November 1849 to Miss Frances Ann Hale, twenty-one years his junior and a gifted musician from the Church of the Saviour, and likely member of the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society.<sup>100</sup>

When the Mendelssohn Society performed its musical renderings of the 42nd Psalm that November, the *Eagle* panned it. The orchestral accompaniment was deficient; the violoncellist "evidenced a lack of practice"; the main female soloist "lacked sweetness of tone" and the bass gave his part all "too somber a cast." Members of the Society still "have much to learn," which led the *Eagle* to conclude: "We should like to see this society and the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society merged into one: 'twould be a glorious musical phalanx."<sup>101</sup> Wyman's Sacred Music

<sup>99</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, 10 October 1849, 23 and many others.

<sup>100</sup> Rev. Farley officiated at the 15 November nuptials, *ibid.*, 16 November 1849, 2. Ida Frances (b. 1851) and Leon H. (1856–1920), and a male child who died in infancy (1861) were born of this union. There may have been another daughter, Eliza, perhaps an infant, buried in the Wyman plot in 1864.

<sup>101</sup> BE, 7 November 1849, 2.

Society had proved its superiority. It busied itself practicing for a Christmas performance of the *Messiah* in Plymouth Church featuring Brooklyn's own Julia Northall, "the nightingale of America" and the Society's chorus of now over one hundred voices.<sup>102</sup> The *Eagle* delighted at the concert, "Sacred music should (so we presume to think) be given in places devoted to the worship of the Creator. The one is in unison and harmonises with the other."<sup>103</sup> The performance attracted an estimated 1,400–1,500 people. "The concert was one of the best that we have ever attended in this city, and Mr. Wyman is entitled to great pr[a]ise for the manner in which he has conducted the affairs of the society."<sup>104</sup> Soon, however, musical performances in Brooklyn moved in decidedly more secular directions.

Both the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society and the Mendelssohn Society gave benefit concerts. The latter supported the Brooklyn sufferers of the 1850 Hague Street calamity in which an exploding boiler had killed sixty men and boys in Manhattan; the former selected Haydn's *Creation* to benefit the widows and orphans of deceased firemen.<sup>105</sup> In anticipation of the concert, the *Eagle* continued its effusive praise of the Sacred Music Society and its president: "The progress made by this amateur society in the short period it has been embodied would appear little short of a miracle but for the known fact that the entire of its movements are under the superintendence and control of L. P. [*sic*] Wyman, Esq, its President, than whom as an amateur, there cannot be found a more distinguished tactician."<sup>106</sup>

By then the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society had its own rehearsal rooms upstairs in Cary's Building at the corner of Orange and Fulton Streets near

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 December 1849, 2; 24 December 1849, 3. One reason why they performed in Beecher's church involved the musical talents of organist John Zundel, who had played first at the Church of the Saviour and then had been lured away with a higher salary to the larger Plymouth Church, Annual Report 1 April 1850, BHS, ARC.109, Ser 1:1.

<sup>103</sup> BE, 6 February 1850, 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 February 1850, 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 February 1850, 3.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 March 1850, 3. The *Eagle* gave the performance a laudatory review, 11 April 1850, 3.

Henry Ward Beecher's church.<sup>107</sup> Eager to promote higher standards in choral singing, the Society invited music teacher and composer William B. Bradbury to lecture on the subject of vocal music and its proper instruction. Bradbury had recently returned from two years study in Leipzig.<sup>108</sup> Germans were well known for their superior methods of teaching music to young children in their common schools. Upon request, Bradbury repeated the lecture the following week.<sup>109</sup> Soon, by demand he began giving singing classes to ladies and gentlemen two evenings a week in the Society's rooms.<sup>110</sup>

The Society let their rooms for other worthy causes, such as a lecture by prison reformer Charles Spears on what could be done to assist the more than 3,000 vagrant children in the state of New York.<sup>111</sup> The Society provided space for a meeting concerning the Brooklyn Institute. A hundred leading citizens including the mayor organized themselves to offer a public testimonial and subscription fund for James Walters, who for twenty-five years had donated his time and efforts on behalf of the Apprentices Library and Brooklyn Institute.<sup>112</sup> Apparently not everyone in Brooklyn was as pleased as the *Eagle* with the Society's activities, for in April, an arsonist broke into their rooms and set fire to one of the curtains! Fortunately, passersby noticed the flames and extinguished them in time to prevent serious damage.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to its oratorio offerings, the Society now received invitations to perform at civic events that drew it out from under the folds of church and sanctuary to the steps of City Hall. Long-time Brooklyn

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1849, 2.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 February 1850, 3.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 March 1850, 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 March 1850, 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 March 1850, 3. Charles Spears (1803–1863) was editor of the monthly periodical *Prisoner's Friend*. He was an early opponent of the death penalty.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 9 March 1850, 2; 11 March 1850, 3. Judge John Greenwood presided and Luther Wyman was among the committee of five appointed to execute the wishes of the group. Other members included Samuel Loundsbury, Jonathan Trotter, Alonzo G. Hammond, and Francis Pares.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 17 April 1850, 3. In June 1850 the Society performed Handel's *Oratorio of Sampson* in Beecher's Plymouth Church. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1850, 3.

resident and Mexican War hero Captain Charles H. Pearson received obsequies in both Manhattan and Brooklyn. General Morris composed a mournful ode sung by the Society at City Hall.<sup>114</sup> When President Zachery Taylor died, Brooklyn honored his passing with full pageantry of military honor guard, gun salutes, bells ringing, colors at half mast, and a long procession of citizens organized by professions that wound its way through Brooklyn Heights to City Hall, where, following the oration, the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society performed a funeral dirge.<sup>115</sup>

Another change got underway in the precincts of culture as concerts began to supplant some lectures as recommended entertainments. In 1844 Wyman had organized a concert at the Brooklyn Institute;<sup>116</sup> in 1847 one of his concerts comprised the closing event for the Institute's regular lecture series;<sup>117</sup> and in 1849, he planned a musical evening to replace one of the usual lectures. Miss Northall and select members of the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society sang ballads and an "amusing burlesque of 'going to California with my wash bowl on my knee' set to music by Zundel, the organist/composer."<sup>118</sup> The Sacred Music Society had clearly enlarged its repertory for public performance.

Much as the New York Sacred Music Society had enjoyed outings in the last year of Wyman's presidency, he now made arrangements for the Brooklyn Society and guests to go on a steamboat excursion of their own. They journeyed up Long Island Sound to Bridgeport, Connecticut to visit Iranistan, P. T. Barnum's fabulous estate, with its Moorish styling, onion domes, and extensive gardens modeled after King George IV's Royal Pavilion at Brighton. An estimated 175 people made the trip to Bridgeport accompanied by the lively strains of Snyder's band and much hilarity, singing and dancing all the way home in the wee hours.<sup>119</sup> The

<sup>114</sup> A full account of the ceremonies both in Manhattan and Brooklyn and text of the mournful ode are in the *Eagle*, 12–13 July 1848, 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 July 1850, 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 December 1844, 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 February 1847, 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 March 1849, 3.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 August 1850, 2.

*Bridgeport Standard* remarked upon the spontaneous concert Society members had performed dockside before embarking on their return trip. After dinner at Bridgeport's City Hall, "Reforming, and preceded by the band, the company marched down Main Street, State and Water Str[ee]ts, to the boat, and arriving on the promenade deck, the whole company of singers sang two or three fine airs, viz:—'Away, Away,' 'Home, Sweet Home,' etc., in a very beautiful manner, and they pleasantly sailed out of the harbor, amid the cheers of those on the wharf and on board, and the music of the band."<sup>120</sup> Water and music had once again combined most agreeably and presaged Brooklyn's Sacred Music Society's expansion into a veritable Philharmonic Society with full orchestra in 1857.

Barnum himself had been unexpectedly called away from hosting the company at Iranistan by business concerning his popular Jenny Lind concerts. The Swedish Nightingale was due to arrive shortly from Liverpool to great orchestrated fanfare. Barnum sent a telegram with his apologies for not being able to meet "friend Wyman and his musical family at Iranistan," which Wyman read aloud to the group and which subsequently found its way into the *Eagle*.<sup>121</sup> As mentioned earlier, P. T. Barnum had taken frequent passage to Liverpool with the Black Ball Line which may explain Wyman's personal acquaintance with him. They may also have known each other through music, for in September 1850, the great showman urged Wyman to invite members of the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society to audition for places in the chorus to accompany the Swedish Nightingale's New York appearances. Applications by "duly qualified" singers could be made through Luther Wyman and several other Society members.<sup>122</sup> Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Haydn's *Creation* were listed among the oratorios envisioned for the concerts.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 August 1850, 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 August 1850, 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 September 1850, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Miss Lind had her own Black Ball and Barings connections. While in Boston on tour she became good friends with Barings' US agent Thomas Wren Ward's son Sam and his wife. She became a frequent guest at the Ward home and in 1852 married her pianist and composer Otto Goldschmidt in the privacy of the Ward parlor. Thomas Wren Ward and his wife were among the guests, NYT, 6 February 1852, 2.

The tradition of sacred choral music, especially at the skill level the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society boasted, required serious rehearsals under a choirmaster's strict baton. Oratorios in particular, now harmonized, now contrasted male and female voices in an intricate network of notes designed to inspire and raise the soul toward the divine. The idea that sacred music performances were uplifting and transformative, binding singers and their audiences together and elevating them toward more lofty heights of inspiration and communion, in the case of Brooklyn, comprised more than just a metaphor. Sacred music, whether performed in churches or in public spaces, provided Brooklynites with the all-important experience of inspired community and ecumenism that generally characterized the city's unfolding renaissance at mid-century.

### FIRST MOVEMENT: ANDANTE MARCATO

The early promoters of Brooklyn's new high culture, people such as Luther Wyman, Judge Greenwood, A. A. Low, Dr. A. Cooke Hull, Samuel Sloan, and many others, shared several traits in common. They came from mercantile and professional backgrounds, many from New England stock, and had more than modest economic means. They engaged in projects that brought people of different church affiliations and political persuasions together, bridging divides, filling social gaps, and reaching out to the larger community through their charitable endeavors. The renaissance they created had broad communal goals and expressed civic pride. Intense committee work characterized their efforts, for the same people cropped up again and again at organizational meetings or as board members of the associations they created.<sup>124</sup> In the style of the day, the *Brooklyn Eagle* published the names, usually of men, who attended these meetings and composed planning committees. Most of them knew each other from their business, church, neighborhood, social, or charity affiliations. They enjoyed working together on cultural initiatives to improve their city and lend it a distinct identity. From their assorted business affiliations they were accustomed to working with others, planning, managing, and effecting. They also fervently believed their efforts benefited greater Brooklyn. The decisive organizing of crew, passengers,

<sup>124</sup> For a listing of Brooklyn's top patrons of the arts and their affiliations, see Appendix.

goods and ships practiced by the Black Ball Line to meet its schedules, in which Wyman was so well skilled, together with his musical talents and affable, gracious manner, made him a very desirable collaborator, someone who could get projects done efficiently, graciously, and with clear purpose.

The year 1850 seems to have been decisive for expressing desires and congealing some of the ideas behind Brooklyn's renaissance. Not only had the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society attracted more attention and invitations to perform around and outside the city, but a handful of far-thinking individuals already began talking about the desirability of a new music hall in Brooklyn. These discussions, duly reported in the *Eagle*, planted the seeds that would germinate first into the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society in 1857 and then in the construction and opening of the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1858–61.

By 1850 the population of Brooklyn had mushroomed to nearly 140,000 souls, about three times its size in 1840, and seven times what it had been back in 1830 before incorporation. In the five years since 1845, Brooklyn had gained 60,000 residents. By 1860 the population would double again, making Brooklyn, with nearly 280,000 citizens, the third largest US city.<sup>125</sup> Improvements to the urban infrastructure were everywhere visible, as more streets received paving, gas lamps, and sidewalks; lots were filled and graded, wells and pumps installed, water piped in, and a new Board of Assessors stood in place with taxing authority to pay for it all.<sup>126</sup> The city was ripe, if not overdue for a cultural renaissance.

In an editorial titled "Brooklyn Enterprise" in May 1850 the *Eagle* announced:

<sup>125</sup> See Kings County's population statistics from 1698 to 1980 taken from the US and New York State census records in Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program), and Margaret Webb Latimer, *Brooklyn Almanac: Illustrations, Facts, Figures, People, Buildings, Books* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1984), 24.

<sup>126</sup> E.g., in the report of the meeting of the Brooklyn Common Council, BE, 18 March 1852, 2. The reservoir was constructed in 1856 on Mt. Prospect, where the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Botanic Garden are presently located at the edge of Prospect Park. For a description of the great celebrations for the introduction of piped water to the city in April 1859, see Stiles, *A History*, 2: 430–34.

There is no danger of our city's retrograding in the way of enterprise; but the prospect is, that she will go ahead of the great Gotham. A meeting was held during the past week by Messers. L. B. Wyman, Gen. Duryea, Jacob Underwood, George S. Howland and E. J. Bartow—the object of which was, to discuss the propriety and practicability of erecting a new musical hall in our noble city. Such a building is much wanted. That the investment would prove a profitable one, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Its capacity should be equal to that of the Tabernacle in New York; which would enable those giving entertainments, to charge the lowest possible price for admission. This would also enable the working classes to participate in such intellectual amusements as are best fitted to improve their minds.

Note the rhetorical emphasis on the civilizing potential of the project, which resonated with Brooklyn's elite. Where did they look for inspiration, but to Roscoe's Liverpool? Information about the recent cultural activities there probably arrived via Wyman's Black Ball Line connections. As the editor noted:

The experiment of Saturday evening concerts has been tried in Liverpool and England, and has been successful beyond the most sanguine expectation of its benevolent projector, Earl [of] Sefton. The best singing talent that can be procured is always engaged; the prices of admission are three pence in the arena, and six pence in the galleries . . . . The beneficial results have been every way satisfactory to the philanthropist, with whom they originated. There is a decided improvement in the habits and morals of the people of that densely populated town.<sup>127</sup>

The small group of five intent upon a music hall was thinking big and exploring whether the experiment in Liverpool might be possible in Brooklyn. They did not have the backing of a wealthy English earl, but rather depended upon their own collective efforts, and it would be a number of years before their ideas bore fruit. In the meantime, Brooklyn's musical connections with Liverpool continued to strengthen when a leading member of Liverpool's Philharmonic Society accepted the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society's invitation to become its new conductor. Once in Brooklyn, John Russell also began offering classes at the Brooklyn Institute, featuring

<sup>127</sup> BE, 13 May 1850, 3. Charles Molyneux, Earl of Sefton.



his new instructional methods for sight-reading music with special attention to church music, both choral and congregational singing.<sup>128</sup>

After one of their weekly rehearsals, this time of Louis Spohr's *The Last Judgment*, a small committee of the Society retired from the rehearsal chamber and returned, "bringing with them a neat rosewood table, upon which lay a large folio Bible, elegantly embossed and gilded, and which was intended by the members of the society as an offering to their President, L. B. Wyman, Esq., expressive of their high appreciation of his merits as President of the Society, and of their esteem for him as a friend."<sup>129</sup> Wyman had been president for five years. He had not only encouraged the Society to raise its level of artistry but to perform ambitious modern compositions by Loewe, Spohr, Neukomm, and Horn, in addition to the more standard repertory of Handel and Haydn oratorios. Wyman also thought expansively in terms of wanting regular professional orchestral accompaniment for their concerts. In a signal of Brooklyn's own orchestral future, in early 1851 he arranged for the New York Philharmonic Society (founded 1842) to come to Brooklyn to provide the orchestra for Spohr's *The Last Judgment*.<sup>130</sup>

Not all change in the early 1850s was welcome. The Sacred Music Society's new conductor from Liverpool, in advertising his singing lessons, gave early mention of congregational singing. This movement was sweeping through church communities and reflected the increasing popularity enjoyed by choral music, sacred or otherwise, and a welling desire among congregants to participate more fully in the liturgy of song. Prior to 1850, while Luther Wyman was music director, the Church of the Saviour had employed a small number of professional singers for the worship service, which practice guaranteed high-level performance. Congregational singing by a motley collection of untrained voices, instruction in sight-reading notwithstanding, posed a problem. In the view of people like Luther Wyman, who maintained exacting standards and wanted their sacred music to be well executed, congregational singing was nothing short of grating on their well-trained ears.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 October 1850, 3; *ibid.*, 18 October, 2.

<sup>129</sup> The article continued: "Mr. Wyman responded with marked emotion and feelingly acknowledged the deep sense of their great kindness he did now and ever should entertain for the members," *ibid.*, 20 November 1850, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Performed 13 February 1851, *ibid.*, 11 February 1851, 2.

Congregational singing embodied the idea of community and equality with everyone singing hymns together; it could also save money, for a church would no longer have to employ paid professionals.<sup>131</sup> But the simplistic, more old-fashioned style of music necessary for unskilled voices to follow, altered the musical experience of the liturgy. Luther Wyman would have nothing of it and tendered his resignation as music director of the Church of the Saviour. In his letter to the Board of Trustees he stated, “I have become fully convinced that what is termed Congregational Singing, to consist of music of an antiquated character, will be quite as acceptable to a large portion of our Congregation, as the more modern compositions performed by a regularly organized Choir, and I see no good reasons then for why the society should be subjected to an annual expense of some seven hundred and fifty dollars for music which it seems has become tedious and irksome to listen to.”<sup>132</sup> In accepting Wyman’s resignation, Rev. Farley acknowledged his years of dedicated service to the church and recommended the Board allocate \$250 for a pair of silver pitchers with salvers bearing the engraving, “To Luther B. Wyman from the Church of the Saviour, April 18, 1851.”<sup>133</sup> Wyman exited his role at the church with a handsome display of silver and his status of great respect intact. He readied himself for more ambitious projects.

<sup>131</sup> Saving money had probably helped motivate the change, at a time when it was discovered that over a period of four years the sexton had stolen as much as \$1,000 from the church’s pew rents, BHS, 1 April 1857, ARC.109, Ser 1:1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 April 1851, Ser 2:15.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April 1851. Wyman was just as quick to acknowledge this handsome token of esteem via an appropriately flowery, very gracious letter written in his flowing mercantile hand: “Permit me, Gentlemen, in acknowledging the receipt of these flattering testimonials of respect to assure you of my perfect appreciation of the partial consideration which has prompted this unexpected evidence of kindness. Thus to be esteemed affords me infinite gratification. It not only approves the slight service I have been able to render, but admonishes me that my future ambition should be to merit ‘the personal respect and friendship’ of my fellow Worshipers. . . . I beg you to be assured that I am ready and willing to unite my feeble efforts with those of the Board of Trustees in carrying out any plan in regard to this part of our church worship which will be likely to meet the wishes of the Congregation,” *ibid.*, 19 April 1851. Wyman continued as a member of the Music Committee until 1859 and served again from 1866–74, but no longer directed the choir, *ibid.*, Ser 2: 7.

By 1856 the church abandoned congregational singing as a failed experiment. An interim report had voiced initial enthusiasm for it, since fifty to a hundred persons of both sexes had signaled their readiness to “join in this part of the services of the church either in the choir or in their own pews, if an opportunity for rehearsal can be given them. And quite a number of the younger members of the society have desired that a school of instruction in sacred music should be commenced with a view of qualifying themselves to unite in this part of the service.”<sup>134</sup> Unfortunately, or perhaps predictably, good intentions did not mature into reality, for in a subsequent report from 1860, the board recorded its disappointment in stark terms, “The experiment has been tried and abandoned, and nothing seems to have been gained by the trial, but a new experience of the incapacity of our people to conduct any part of the service for themselves, or of their unwillingness to make the sacrifice of time necessary to the perfection of a system, which for want of personal devotion and personal interest is too often found to fail.”<sup>135</sup> Wyman’s high standards for sacred music had won out. By 1861 the church was spending \$1,300 annually for professional singers; by 1864 that sum had risen to \$1,800!<sup>136</sup> By then Wyman had long turned his musical and organizational talents toward grander, more secular venues.

In the mid-nineteenth century, music, especially sacred music, was meant to inspire, and it carried serious moral overtones. As the *Troy Budget* had stated, music could “elevate the affections, tranquilize the mind and enrapture the feelings and constitute a delightful part of social worship when performed well.”<sup>137</sup> The *Eagle* had placed particular emphasis on how Liverpool’s Saturday evening concerts had noticeably improved “habits and morals” of the people in that densely populated city, such that there was less public drunkenness and fewer disturbances requiring police intervention.<sup>138</sup> Such pronouncements on the social benefits of

<sup>134</sup> 21 January 1855, ARC.109, Ser 2:15.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, April? 1861, Ser 1:1. They concluded that henceforth the “choral services of the Church will be conducted in a becoming manner, gratifying the taste of the refined and humanizing the feelings of the most devout worshippers.”

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1861; 4 April 1864. By May 1868, the estimated yearly expenses had risen to \$2,350.

<sup>137</sup> TB, 3 September 1831, 1.

<sup>138</sup> BE, 13 May 1850, 3.

Liverpool's concerts modeled what many well-meaning Brooklynites aspired to. Statements claiming moral improvement for the masses frequently issued from nineteenth-century Sunday pulpits and from the public admonitions by beneficent societies such as the Temperance Union. Those expressions formed part of the genteel rhetoric of the day, and though undoubtedly people sincerely believed them, it is questionable just how many of the truly downtrodden and drunk were drawn to evening concerts alongside their social betters. Rather, those social betters could congratulate themselves on their own noblesse oblige and enjoy entertainments befitting their own tastes.

The polite rhetoric, however, provided the grander community-oriented justifications for elite efforts to establish the sorts of schools, societies, and refined entertainments that they wanted for their own friends and families. The moral value accorded music also meant that the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society received many invitations to perform for worthy causes, such as a benefit for the Brooklyn Fire Department. For that occasion, renowned abolitionist Rev. Henry Ward Beecher delivered a long and impassioned address naming firefighters a critical element in the body social for which efforts should be made "for the social and moral improvement of firemen" featuring fireman's lectures and fireman's libraries.<sup>139</sup> Members of the Society sang the anthem from Psalms, *Blessed Be the Lord God of Israel*. President Luther Wyman and the whole Society received published thanks for their performance "of a high character [that] produced a very favorable impression on the audience and added greatly to the dignity and attractiveness of the scene."<sup>140</sup> Such gracious statements reinforced the value of like-minded people working together for a larger cause.

## EDUCATION AND POLITICS

The congregational singing controversy had shown Luther Wyman and others that choral music of a "high character" and standards of performance, preferably with orchestral accompaniment, needed to find new

<sup>139</sup> BE, 17 September 1851, 2.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 and 3. Some members had also been invited to sing at a meeting of the nativist, anti-Catholic, Order of United Americans celebrating the Battle of Lexington in the Revolutionary War, BE, 13 February 1851, 3.

venues outside of church. The opening of the Brooklyn Athenaeum in 1852 with its large lecture/concert hall provided an interim solution. More immediately, however, Brooklyn's leading families wanted better schools for their children. Education in humanistic disciplines, the *studia humanitatis*, had been a supporting pillar in Italian Renaissance culture, and Brooklyn had similar aspirations for its young. Here, too, Wyman along with other budding Brooklyn patrons took an active part. Two private schools emerged from their efforts, the Packer Collegiate Institute for Girls, which is still in existence as a private preparatory academy in its same location on Joralemon Street, and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute for boys, for which a new building was constructed on Livingston Street near Court, not far from City Hall.

Several small private academies had existed in Brooklyn since the early nineteenth century,<sup>141</sup> but none on the scale or ambition of these two foundations, which were clearly directed, if not openly articulated as such, for the education of Brooklyn's well-to-do. The Packer Collegiate Institute for Girls (1854) offered an ambitious curriculum with classes in geography, arithmetic, chirography (handwriting), music, drawing, rhetoric, natural history, ancient history, moral philosophy, Latin and French. The Packer was a remaking of the older Brooklyn Female Academy (1845), which had hosted many a concert by the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society and other groups in the 1840s. In 1853, fire had destroyed the Female Academy, but under the generous patronage of wealthy Brooklyn widow, Mrs. Harriet Packer, the school renamed itself and employed the Church of the Saviour's architect, Minard Lafever to rebuild and expand its facilities. The school hired new faculty and increased the educational fare offered to Brooklyn's finest young ladies. Luther Wyman's eldest daughter Helen, who had enrolled at the old Academy in 1849, stood among the Packer's twenty-three graduates in 1856. She contributed to the graduation exercises her composition "Musings in Greenwood," perhaps reflections upon the grave of her mother in Brooklyn's famous park-like cemetery.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Stiles, *A History*, 1: 391–92.

<sup>142</sup> BE, 3 July 1856, 2. Helen married William H. Mallory, 14 October 1863 and took up residence in Bridgeport, CT, also home of Wyman's friend P. T. Barnum.

The plan for a boys' academy was hatched in 1853. A dozen interested parties met at Wyman's home in April 1853 to plan and select a suitable location.<sup>143</sup> Soon a group of stockholders had raised \$30,000.<sup>144</sup> Shareholders met at the Brooklyn Institute to select a committee of five to report progress at their next meeting, when they elected trustees.<sup>145</sup> Lawyer and former mayor, Cyrus P. Smith, presided. He was Wyman's friend, close neighbor, and his successor as president of the New York Sacred Music Society.<sup>146</sup> More than half of the seventeen trustees were among the up-and-coming civic-minded gentlemen who formed the core of patrons behind the Brooklyn Renaissance.<sup>147</sup> They appointed Wyman head of the building committee to oversee planning and construction, and in little more than a year the Institute's imposing four-story Italianate building had been erected for just \$65,000. Wyman's committee hired as architect the designer of Cooper Institute in New York, which may explain stylistic similarities between the two buildings, both of which incorporated Renaissance Revival, Palladian-style windows and a rusticated ground-floor façade, not unlike the many Renaissance-style *palazzi* that dotted Liverpool's central district.<sup>148</sup> They built Brooklyn Collegiate

<sup>143</sup> *First Quarter Century of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. June 16th 1880* (Brooklyn, 1880), 7, Polytechnic Institute of New York University, Bern Dibner Library.

<sup>144</sup> An early idea had been to transfer some stock from the Brooklyn Female Academy, which had been destroyed by fire January 1853, to establish a school for boys, *ibid.*; Miles Merwin Kastendieck, *The Story of Poly* (Wilmington, DE: H. Matthews and Company, 1940), 2–4.

<sup>145</sup> BE, 28 March 1853, 3. A further committee of twelve was selected to obtain additional stockholders.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> BE, 2 April 1853, 3. In their published order, the trustees were: G. A. Howland, L. B. Wyman, J. T. S. Stranahan, Joseph L. Putnam, James How, J. T. Martin, H. K. Worthington, J. E. Southworth, D. S. Landon, I. H. Frothingham, Charles S. Baylis, R. S. Tucker, H. B. Claflin, S. S. B. Chittenden, C. R. Marvin, C. Brevoort, and J. O. Low. Claflin and Brevoort are not included in the appendix listing the forty-two leading Brooklyn patrons, but both were important citizens and supporters of worthy causes, but not board members of many other societies.

<sup>148</sup> Joseph Sharples and John Stonard, *Built on Commerce: Liverpool's Central Business District* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2008), 5–51. The architect was F. A. Patterson.

and Polytechnic to a smaller scale than Cooper's, for the Brooklyn school had no enormously wealthy backer like Peter Cooper, who could construct a grand edifice and then offer students free education. Rather, Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic had been built more modestly with the money raised from its shareholders. The *Eagle* remarked that "much credit is due Mr. Wyman, the chairman of the building committee, for its completion."<sup>149</sup> The Institute operated without an endowment, paying expenses of about \$25,000 annually from tuition receipts. Tuition fees were kept as low as possible to make the school affordable and still support ten departments, nine professors, and sixteen instructors.<sup>150</sup>

The Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic opened for public inspection and initial enrollments in September 1855. The dedicatory addresses all emphasized how the new boys' academy would "meet the wants of the community." After the dedication, trustees and friends repaired to the Wyman home, "where an elegant and sumptuous entertainment awaited them; and a very interesting and agreeable interchange of sentiment took place between the friends of the Institution."<sup>151</sup> That pleasant exchange of sentiment embodied the ecumenical feeling that underlay the broader Brooklyn Renaissance and drew friends and neighbors together to make common cause for the cultural enhancement of their city. As with choral music, civic-minded projects helped bridge denominational and political differences in a decade when the US was tensing and beginning to fracture along tangled fault lines of divisive issues such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), The Dred Scott Decision (1857), and more generally, slavery itself.

In the early 1850s, the widely reported, impassioned sermons of abolitionists such as Rev. Henry Ward Beecher from his Plymouth Church pulpit kept the evils of slavery on everyone's mind. Plymouth Church itself became a stop on the Underground Railroad that brought fugitive slaves to freedom. In the abstract, ending slavery was a worthy ideal, but few went so far as to champion social equality between blacks and whites. The issue of slavery divided the nation, the State of New York, and distressed

<sup>149</sup> BE, 7 September 1855, 3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 May 1864, 2.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

even Brooklyn's elite clustered in the shelter of the Heights, but it had not yet significantly unsettled everyday life there. It would take the outbreak of civil war for the political divisions within the city's genteel ranks actually to rupture. For the time being and especially as Brooklyn's elite collaborated on cultural initiatives, habits of gentle social courtesy, like oil, calmed the surface of the caldron bubbling beneath. Brooklyn sat at a safe remove across the river from unrulier Manhattan, and blacks were not yet a dynamic political presence there. In 1860, when Brooklyn boasted a population of 280,000, the US Census listed 274,000 as whites and only 5,000 as blacks, less than two percent of the total.<sup>152</sup> In the shelter of the Heights, unless employed as coachmen or domestics alongside the many more plentiful Irish and German immigrants, black people were not highly visible, for they generally lived in the peripheries of Brooklyn in places such as Weeksville, a free black community, that during the Civil War would give safe haven to refugees from the 1863 Manhattan draft riots.

Brooklyn Democrats, who rivaled Whigs to control the city's politics, included conservative "Hunkers" who openly favored compromise with the Southern States to preserve peace. They would happily have let the South keep its slave economy rather than have the nation go to war. The *Brooklyn Eagle's* owner Isaac Van Anden stood prominently among them. Though not a proponent of slavery itself, he had no sympathy for Abolitionism and saw no purpose in dividing the nation over the issue.<sup>153</sup> In politics, though not in politesse, the Van Andens of Brooklyn differed from many of their Whig neighbors, who, like Luther Wyman, combined economic liberalism, in the traditional English sense favoring free trade, with solid support for the national government. But the Whig Party weakened and split following its decisive loss in the 1852 election. Some, such as the Low brothers and fellow patron Simeon B. Chittenden, moved easily into Lincoln and William Seward's new Republican Party. Others drifted toward the Democrats. In the 1850s even the Hunker Democrats suffered a split between "Softs" who favored compromise with the Southern States and "Hards," who like the earlier Barnburners, came to support a military solution to the nation's problem.

<sup>152</sup> Latimer, *Brooklyn Almanac*, 24.

<sup>153</sup> Schroth, *The Eagle and Brooklyn*, 60–63.



Once war broke out, most of Brooklyn's leading cultural patrons like Wyman, whether Republican or Democrat, became steadfast supporters of the Union side in the conflict. Wyman's older brother Justus, who had moved to the Alabama Territory in 1818 and remained as a prominent Montgomery merchant, had married into a landed, slave-holding family. Luther Wyman, like other mercantile men employed in the North Atlantic trade, undoubtedly feared the calamitous impact of war upon Atlantic commerce centered along the East River docks. He joined 150 prominent New York businessmen of "wealth and worth," among them the Lows, Chittenden, Pierrepont, Blossoms, and Whites from Brooklyn and top New York commercial men and ship owners such as Charles H. Marshall, Hamilton Fish, Robert Minturn, William B. Astor, and Peter Cooper, in signing a petition to Congress as late as December 1860 urging compromise and all measures to "restore peace to their agitated country."<sup>154</sup> However, following the attack on Fort Sumter, putting all caution aside, Wyman became one of Brooklyn's most active and committed supporters of the Union cause and especially of local regiments sent to fight in the war.

In the 1850s these political boundaries were not yet clearly drawn. On the local level, Brooklynites elected Whigs and Democrats alternately as mayors, and New York-style machine politics under Tammany Hall's Boss Tweed lay distant on the horizon. The *Eagle's* Van Anden expressed his barely disguised, mounting irritation at what seemed to be an endless round of lectures repeated between New York and Brooklyn by Rev. Beecher and others beating the anti-slavery drum.<sup>155</sup> The *Eagle* also jabbed at Whigs, many of them Van Anden's neighbors and friends, as when an editorial jested that the new Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute gave every appearance of being a "close corporation for the education of Whig young men," for there were no Democrats among the seventeen trustees.<sup>156</sup> But even as the veneer of decorum seemed to be wearing thin in places, under Van Anden the *Eagle* never ceased to be a clamoring claxon for Brooklyn pride and never questioned the worthiness of the projects that Wyman and his friends, both Republican and

<sup>154</sup> BE, 12 January 1861, 2.

<sup>155</sup> E.g., "The Gospel According to Beecher," BE, 30 July 1861, 2.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1853, 2.

Democrat, undertook for the betterment and beautification of their community. In the arena of elite culture, until 1861, political differences took a backseat.

As Brooklyn's booster, *The Eagle* delighted in fanning, then soothing the rivalries with Brooklyn's now "sister city" across the river. In late 1851 when exiled patriot, revolutionary, and ex-Governor-President Lajos Kossuth of Hungary, "the celebrated Magyar," came to New York, Brooklyn's Common Council appointed a bipartisan committee to invite him to visit their city. According to the *Eagle's* report, Kossuth himself had been quite willing to participate in a public reception in Brooklyn, but his New York City hosts had given the idea a cold shoulder, even going so far as refusing to reserve a place for Brooklyn representatives in their official procession to which such smaller communities as Williamsburgh and Jersey City had been invited. According to Van Anden's editorial, New York's snub resulted from the conduct of previous Brooklyn authorities who had "repeatedly declined to unite with New York, and who had treated all such invitations with studied neglect, not even replying to them in a respectful manner." Probably an exaggeration, the occasion did provide the editor with an opportunity to poke at former Whig mayors, but then to underscore the message that "due courtesy should be observed between all official bodies."<sup>157</sup> Rivalry with New York, however, never abated, and even in the midst of the Civil War, in 1864 Brooklyn would insist on hosting its own Sanitary Fair separate from New York City's.

The decade of the 1850s proved significant for Brooklyn's cultural development. That advancement brought significant new foundations including the Athenaeum, the Horticultural Society, the Mercantile Library, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society and soon the Academy of Music, the Art Association, and Historical Society. Those societies, particularly in their early years, depended heavily on the connectivity among interested supporters. Luther Wyman provides a good example of the associative behavior binding Brooklyn's cultural leaders. Wyman joined or received invitations to join numerous organizations, which also augmented his social standing and visibility. In 1851 he left his residence on

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1851, 2. Members of the twenty-seven-member bipartisan committee to welcome Kossuth had included such notables as Sen. Henry Cruise Murphy, Judge John Greenwood, Luther Wyman, Cyrus P. Smith, Henry E. Pierrepont, Benjamin Silliman, Arthur Benson, J. S. T. Stranahan, and others.

Henry Street and moved his family to a larger, more elegant three-story brick home on Joralemon Street, very near the Packer Institute.<sup>158</sup> He also moved up in the world of transatlantic shipping. City directories now identified him as a merchant, no longer clerk or shipper. At least by 1858 he had ownership shares in several Black Ball ships,<sup>159</sup> and his summons as expert witness in several legal actions involving shipping practices further testified to the high regard he enjoyed in the world of transatlantic commerce. His endorsements of Hutchings' Dyspepsia Bitters in 1849 and 1850 indicated he was well known in both Brooklyn and Manhattan society.<sup>160</sup> During the decade he expanded his affiliations beyond the musical and shipping worlds and began to accept invitations to sit on the boards of directors of insurance companies and banks in both New York and Brooklyn. He continued his membership in the New York New England Society, serving as its delegate to the Boston funeral of Daniel Webster in 1852.<sup>161</sup> He advanced in the leadership of the Society from assistant counselor and member of the Committee of Arrangements, eventually to treasurer by 1860.<sup>162</sup> Wyman became a founding member of the National Geographic Society, incorporated in 1854.<sup>163</sup> He served on

<sup>158</sup> He acquired the property for \$10,500 from neighbors Samuel and Margaret Sloan. His purchase (Block 265, lot 39), effected 31 March, is recorded in Brooklyn City Hall Conveyances 15 April 1851, Liber 242, 440–43. It remained in his possession at the time of his death in 1879, Liber 1354, 30–31. Trow's Brooklyn City Directory for 1852–53, 669 lists Wyman as a merchant residing at 131 Joralemon St. After the city's streets were renumbered in 1871, his address became 184 Joralemon St., Trow's Brooklyn City Directory 1871–72, 1260.

<sup>159</sup> E.g. that year Wyman is listed as having a 2/32 share in the Black Baller *Manhattan*, NYHS, Charles H. Marshall Jr, Papers, 1860–1912.

<sup>160</sup> E.g., BE, 10 October 1849, 2.

<sup>161</sup> NYT, 1 November 1852, 6.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 December 1854, 5; *ibid.*, 24 December 1860, 1.

<sup>163</sup> In 1850 Wyman first served on the Executive Committee of New York's new Geographical and Statistical Society, "Origin of the Society," *American Geographical Society of New York. Bulletin of the American Geographical and Statistical Society (1852–1857)*, 1.1, Aug 1852, via <http://proquest.com/docview/125732290/>, [accessed 2 October 2016]. He continued in that position after the Society was incorporated first in 1852 and subsequently in 1854 as the American Geographical and Statistical Society.

the boards of various insurance companies and banks in Manhattan and Brooklyn.<sup>164</sup> In 1859 he became vice president of the Brooklyn Dispensary and served as president of the Committee on Arrangements for the Brooklyn Horticultural Society.<sup>165</sup>

Wyman and his wife frequented the best social circles and counted among the familiars of newly elected senator Samuel Sloan, whose friends honored him at a bipartisan testimonial dinner at Pierrepont House, a local Brooklyn hotel. Among the postprandial toasts reported in the *Eagle* was a pun aimed toward their mutual friend A. A. Low, Brooklyn's wealthiest merchant, saluting "'the merchant Princes of New York,' some of whom are so *low*-minded they are willing to reside in Brooklyn."<sup>166</sup> Reference here to merchant princes, an allusion to the merchant princes of Renaissance Italy, indicates how Brooklyn's prosperous elite now regarded themselves. Those merchant princes of Brooklyn were also becoming the city's merchant patrons of the arts.

As part of this associational culture and the public attention it commanded, we find, for example, Wyman's name frequently listed among the patrons of a wide variety of lectures and concerts, whether a series of presentations on the "War in the East" between Turkey and Greece at the Brooklyn Athenaeum,<sup>167</sup> or the list of opponents to the extension of slavery into new territories under the Missouri Compromise, who had

<sup>164</sup> He became trustee of the Astor Mutual Insurance company, sat on the Finance Committee of the Reliance Mutual Insurance Co. specializing in marine insurance on Wall St. The Reliance company liquidated in 1855. The following year he became a director of the new Security Fire Insurance Co. and the Astor Mutual Insurance Company, and in 1860 joined the founding board of the Home Life Insurance Company, soon followed by an invitation from Dime Savings of Brooklyn to join their board, NYT, 11 February 1852, 4; *ibid.*, 26 February 1855, 6; *New York Daily News*, 19 December 1856, 7; NYT, 18 June 1856, 7; *ibid.*, 11 February 1852, 4.

<sup>165</sup> BE, 26 January 1859, 3; *ibid.*, 15 May 1858, 3.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 December 1857, 2.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 November 1855, 3. He was also among the signatories inviting Dr. Wills De Hass to deliver a lecture on American archeology, *ibid.*, 21 March 1859, 11. And also to Miss Lavinia Thomson, recently returned from Europe, to recite selections from Shakespeare and other authors, the event to take place at the Athenaeum, *ibid.*, 24 December 1859, 1.

attended a meeting at the New York Tabernacle “for the sake of the Union.”<sup>168</sup> He was one of the gentlemen who invited Edward Everett of Boston to deliver his noted “Charity Address” at the Athenaeum<sup>169</sup> and sat on the organizing committee appointed by the New York Chamber of Commerce to pay honor to Captain Hudson of the US steamship *Niagara*, for his part in successfully laying the Atlantic cable which brought England and America in ever closer communication.<sup>170</sup>

Wyman was by now a practiced affiliator and a node of intersecting networks. His booming voice, jovial manner, ready hospitality, and willingness to work hard for the organizations to which he belonged proved to be valuable assets not only in his efforts to bring better music and cultural variety to Brooklyn, but also in connecting people from among his various associations. He exemplified the well-networked commercial and social relationships that drew members of Brooklyn’s bourgeois elite closer together in support of education and culture in their city and to spawn Brooklyn’s renaissance. Glancing ahead, he would never occupy the top position as president of the Academy of Music. That title called for a high society individual with deep pockets such as Henry Pierrepont, who contributed visibility as well as money to the Academy. But Luther Wyman did much of the work and was a logical choice to take charge of programming and arrangements, given his musical knowledge and presidency of the Philharmonic Society.

In the 1850s Brooklynites also began to recognize connections among their various institutions, to see them as part of a single and singular cultural fabric in their city. At the first exhibition and commencement of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, the *Eagle* bragged about the Polytechnic, the Athenaeum, and the Packer Institute as a collective, noting that “within a few years past the cause of education, literature and art, has advanced more in our city than during all the preceding years of its existence, thanks to the liberal public spirit of our leading men, and the zeal and intelligence of our citizens at

<sup>168</sup> NYT, 29 April 1856, 2.

<sup>169</sup> BE, 25 January 1858, 3. Proceeds from the lecture were to go to the Graham Institute for the Relief of Respectable Aged and Indigent Females, founded by the late John Bell Graham (d. 1853), Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn*, 38–40.

<sup>170</sup> NYT, 26 August 1858, 1.

large.”<sup>171</sup> As trustee of the Polytechnic, Wyman sat on the stage and watched with pride as his second son and namesake Luther Boynton Wyman, Jr. received his diploma from the Academic Department with distinction in five branches of study.<sup>172</sup> The very next evening, he and his family attended the graduation of eldest daughter Helen in a class of twenty-three young women from the Packer Institute.<sup>173</sup>

The collaborative renaissance culture then developing in Brooklyn found curious expression in promenade concerts, an innovation for Brooklyn in the 1850s. These concerts, which enjoyed popularity among elites in the decade before the Civil War, aspired to combine music, exquisite floral decorations, and fancy dress in a grand *coup d'oeil* expressive of an aesthetic of beauty, inspiration, and pleasure. The promenade concert organized at the Athenaeum in 1857 provided an early example. A dozen leading “influential and benevolent” civic-minded gentlemen formed the organizing committee for the event in support of the Female Unemployment Society, a charity that provided work for indigent women. The event was an “affair such as never was witnessed in this city before.”<sup>174</sup> Calling forth the muses of music and poetry, wreaths woven in the shape of a huge harp and numerous bouquets adorned the stage; ships’ flags, some of which Wyman procured from the Black Ball Line, together with bunting and more bouquets suspended from windows and ceiling completed the decorations. Dodsworth’s Coronet Band, the Pyne and Harrison Opera Troupe, and several instrumental and vocal soloists provided the concert and dance music. The promenade concert was a high fashion event. Part of the entertainment and ambience came from Brooklyn’s elite promenading in their finest dress, a “galaxy of beauty” displayed in “richness and taste” that “would have outshone the parvenu moths of the Fifth avenue and the [New York] Academy of Music.” The whole event, it was claimed, “appealed to the higher faculties of the soul, and awakened trains of thought and fountains of feeling

<sup>171</sup> BE, 2 July 1856, 2.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 Jul 1856, 2.

<sup>174</sup> Luther Wyman, A. A. Low, A. Cooke Hull, and Samuel Sloan, *ibid.*, 29 January 1857, 2, and *ibid.*, 11 February 1857, 2.

where fancy might revel, and whence poetry could draw inspiration.”<sup>175</sup> Dancing followed the concert, and an elegant supper was laid out in the Library for committee members. The evening’s entertainments proved all the more remarkable for the generosity of its nearly fifty sponsors, who pledged themselves to cover the entire cost of the evening, so that one hundred percent of the revenues from ticket sales, some \$1,506, could go to the Female Unemployment Society.<sup>176</sup> Such generosity toward the needy would bear even greater flower during the Civil War and at the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair of 1864.

The concert organizers expressed delight that now “the citizens of Brooklyn can be relied upon to support all enterprises deserving support.”<sup>177</sup> The outcome and collaborative effort behind the promenade concert augured well for the future of Brooklyn’s renaissance that grew rapidly in the years to follow. The next big enterprise to take shape was the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society. Already dreamed of by Wyman and a few like-minded collaborators back in 1850, the success of this first promenade concert may have provided the spark that ignited into a full-fledged effort to establish a musical society that could provide skilled accompaniment to choral performances and also perform separate symphonic pieces. The *Eagle* proclaimed the time to be ripe for a new musical society because the “lecture business has been run to death; but the taste for musical entertainments are [*sic*] fresh and vigorous.” Tastes were changing. Whereas up until mid-century vocal music predominated in American musical preferences, and oratorio societies such as the Boston Handel and Haydn Society, the New York and Brooklyn Sacred Music Societies flourished,<sup>178</sup> by the 1850s in Brooklyn and elsewhere, more secular music in the form of opera and symphony concerts was beginning to attract cultivated audiences. Besides, the *Eagle* contended, there existed in Brooklyn more local musical talent per capita than in any other city in the nation. All it needed was encouragement and

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1857, 2.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 February 1857, 2.

<sup>178</sup> Johnson, *Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston*, 57.

cultivation. Why waste further enthusiasm and public support on imported performers, those “stray birds of passage whose merits are often overrated, and consist more in pretentious plumage than raising powers of song.”<sup>179</sup> There also existed in Brooklyn by this time an identifiable core of individuals interested and willing to devote the time, effort, and resources necessary to organize societies and create a renaissance in their city.

<sup>179</sup> BE, 14 April 1857.



## Symphony of the Arts

### SECOND MOVEMENT: CON BRIO

Brooklyn was known for its music, both sacred, and now increasingly, secular. Its music-loving population numbered in the thousands, between aficionados and the many New York artists who resided there.<sup>1</sup> No wonder Brooklyn wanted its own larger performance space. Judging from the overflow crowds for the Philharmonic's concerts at the Athenaeum, by the late 1850s, the need for a bigger, better venue was pressing. Prospects for garnering organizational and financial support looked promising. Planning meetings that first brought forth the Philharmonic Society, the Horticultural Society, and the Mercantile Library crescendoed at the end of the decade with construction of a vast new multipurpose space for their activities in the Academy of Music. Its location on Montague Street in the heart of Brooklyn Heights gave its elite sponsors a new physical anchor for their largesse, one convenient to their homes. They named it the Academy of Music since it grew out of the Philharmonic Society, but it might well have been called an academy for the arts, since it hosted more than musical events and drew under its capacious roof activities of numerous associations whose members often worked together and enjoyed each other's society.

By the time the Academy opened its doors in January 1861, we note that nearly three-quarters of Brooklyn's most committed patrons in the

<sup>1</sup> NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

fifteen years between 1857 and the financial crisis of 1873 actively engaged in one or more of the aforementioned associations that sprang to life in the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> These men, with energetic, if unheralded, support from their wives, had learned to work effectively together on behalf of promoting the arts in their city. They invested not just money, but time and effort to bring their cultural associations into being. Looked at another way, Brooklyn's leading patrons show themselves to have been an endogenous bunch of well-networked, wealthy friends, neighbors, and business associates in Brooklyn Heights, whose shared outlooks and expectations shaped their new organizations around elite bourgeois tastes. In this regard, they reflected the parallel impulses in Liverpool where William Roscoe and his close circle of friends a generation before had created their city's renaissance sodalities. This chapter follows the process whereby the committed elite of Brooklyn Heights consolidated their shared interests in the fine arts. First, they formed a series of cultural corporations, and subsequently they constructed for them a dedicated entertainment space in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In so acting they even laid the foundations for Brooklyn's signature urban green space in Prospect Park.

In Brooklyn music held pride of place. Meetings to plan a music society began already in 1857. Many of the same men who had sponsored the recent promenade concert at the Athenaeum gathered there to draft a plan of organization, constitution and by-laws. The *Eagle* voiced the project's moral overtones, delighting in the effort that would create a musical society "not merely as connected with aesthetics, but for its moral influence." There existed no better way to wean the working classes "from gin slings and whiskey toddy," than by "substituting for the wild exuberation of intoxication the rational delights arising from the contemplation of the beautiful in art and nature." The new philharmonic society would draw music out from the "parlors of fashion" into a wider public where musical taste could be cultivated and society harmonized with a "concord of sweet sounds." The paper reported the rumor that a forward-looking, "prominent citizen of Brooklyn, who is always foremost in good works, has it in contemplation to erect a musical hall

<sup>2</sup> More precisely thirty of the forty-two chief patrons. See the Appendix for a listing of the Brooklyn Renaissance's principal patrons, their occupations, residential and business addresses.

worthy of the third city in the Union.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, the idea did not spring from just one man, but rather a small group of musically inclined, forward-looking individuals. Amazingly, hardly had they founded the Philharmonic Society than plans for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the most ambitious of projects that created a true centerpiece for Brooklyn’s renaissance in bricks and mortar got under way the very next year. The success of the Philharmonic Society enabled the Academy of Music.

The Philharmonic’s initial organizational meeting at the Athenaeum in April 1857 brought together the two leading local promoters of sacred music, both Unitarians from the Church of the Saviour, one Democrat, one Whig, namely Judge John Greenwood and Luther Wyman. The former chaired the meeting; the latter served as secretary. The *Eagle*’s wish that the leaders of the Mendelssohn Society and the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society join forces had been realized in this plan for the Philharmonic. At the meeting, Professor Robert Raymond of Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute presented a series of five resolutions that articulated the thinking behind the new organization. Most important, it was resolved that “the first duty of every community is to advance its own moral and spiritual well-being, and that every plan and purpose of material prosperity should be made to harmonise with this object and to promote its accomplishment.” Secondly, it was resolved that they should avail themselves of the “ministrations of Art,” considered the most effective way to instill “pure and elevated recreations for the people,” since “removed from vicious association, and consecrated to the utterance of noble sentiments, [Art] is lifted out of the category of mere amusements, and becomes an educational influence of the highest order.” Next, it was resolved that Brooklyn should provide for its own cultural uplift, for the city had been for too long dependent upon Manhattan; while “in the wealth and intelligence of her citizens, and in the peculiarities of her position, so favorable to elegant pursuits, she possesses every assurance of the ability to cultivate upon her own soil, the arts which are so intimately allied to her best interests.” Thus, the assembled agreed that the time

<sup>3</sup> BE, 14 April 1857, 2. On the importance of music and the concert hall in haut bourgeois culture in the northern England, see Simon Gunn, *The public culture of the Victorian middle class: ritual and authority and the English industrial city, 1840–1914* (Manchester; New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2000), 134–54.

was ripe to establish a “Society for the proper performance of the works (especially orchestral) of the great masters in music.” They envisioned an association similar to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society (1840), the New York Philharmonic Society (1842), and other kindred music societies. By the end of the meeting they were calling for a Music Hall “which shall be a worthy arena for such entertainments, and a fit exponent of the taste and liberality of this community.”<sup>4</sup> An ad hoc committee of ten gentlemen formed to prepare the foundational documents for the new Brooklyn Philharmonic Society. Local clergy, including Rev. Farley of the Church of the Saviour added their eloquent remarks in support.<sup>5</sup>

An estimated sixty to one hundred supporters met again in May to incorporate the Society, approve a constitution and by-laws, and select a nominating committee to propose a slate of officers and board of directors.<sup>6</sup> They elected Luther Wyman president, a position to which he was re-elected for more than twenty years until his death in 1879, even in the last four years of his life when, incapacitated by a stroke, he could scarcely attend meetings.<sup>7</sup> During those two decades Wyman devoted himself to

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* See also Maurice Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn: A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>5</sup> BE, 15 April 1857, 2. Committee members included Luther Wyman, Judge Greenwood, Robert Raymond, Edward Whitehouse, Paul R. Weizel, proprietor of a local music store, Carl Prox, Dr. A. Cooke Hull, Leopold Bierwirth, Charles Congdon, and Mr. Spies. See also the historical narrative printed in the “Constitution and By-Laws of the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn” (Brooklyn, NY: L. Van Anden’s Steam Presses, 1857), 1–9, BHS, Arc.172.6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–9.

<sup>7</sup> The printed pamphlet, *ibid.*, 8, says the board held its first meeting and officers were voted on 11 April, which may be a typographical error for May, since the slate had not been formed until after the 5 May meeting. The *Brooklyn Eagle* reported the results 18 May, BE, 3. The other officers included: Edward Whitehouse, First Vice-President; John Greenwood, Second Vice-President; Robert R. Raymond, Secretary; A. Cooke Hull, Treasurer. The Executive “Committee was composed of Messers Congdon, Weizel, Ripley, Newell, and Townsend,” *ibid.*, 8–9. The minutes of the early board meetings reveal some jockeying and resignations of early elected officers. At the meeting on 29 May, Luther Wyman was unanimously elected president. He had served as interim secretary and teller before assuming duties of president, BMA, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Records, 1823–1980, Minutes of the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn, 1857–1917, (hereafter, BMA,

furthering the cause of music in Brooklyn and to fulfilling the goals of the Society as set out succinctly in the first article of its constitution, namely to have as its primary object “the advancement of Music in this city, by procuring the public performance of the best works in this department of Art.”<sup>8</sup>

Besides administering the Society and its finances, the officers and board of the Philharmonic tasked themselves with appointing a musical conductor to direct all concerts, select the music, and hire performers, all subject to board approval. Even though they shared some conductors and many musicians, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society differed from the New York Philharmonic in one very significant feature. The New York Society had been founded as an association of musicians who determined all performance matters themselves and whose income depended upon ticket sales. By contrast, the Brooklyn Philharmonic raised capital through the sale of stock. As a corporation of shareholders, the Brooklyn Philharmonic followed Liverpool’s organizational scheme.

Control by the board rather than by the musicians kept Brooklyn’s Philharmonic Society an elite association. Members paid an annual subscription of five dollars. In return they received the privilege of discounts on tickets to concerts and rehearsals and the right to attend the annual meeting of the Society to elect officers and discuss Society business. As an organization of shareholders, not musicians, the Brooklyn society saved itself some of the financial woes experienced by the New York Philharmonic Society in later years. The Brooklyn Philharmonic still flourishes today.

At the same time, the board, composed mainly of Brooklyn’s elite, lent its enlightened but heavy stamp to programming, financing, and all other Society activities, which sometimes, as they found out, placed them at odds with their hired musicians. Board control over the distribution of tickets, even seating arrangements, would become a bone of contention within the membership and the larger concert-going public and brought

BPS Minutes) 1: 21–22. Later minutes show he last attended a board meeting in October 1877, *ibid.* 2, unnumbered. He was re-elected president for the last time in May 1879. A memorial to him is recorded at the September meeting following his death in July.

<sup>8</sup> “Constitution and By-Laws of the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn” (Brooklyn, NY: L. Van Anden’s Steam Presses, 1857), 15.

unsavory accusations of favoritism and special privilege. As time would show, the Brooklyn Philharmonic experienced its own share of fiscal ups and downs.

The concert season ran from late October to May. In its first year, 1857–58, the Society arranged four concerts and twelve rehearsals at the Athenaeum. The inaugural concert featured Beethoven's resounding *Eroica*, overtures by Mendelssohn and Weber, and Schubert's *Ave Maria* performed on the cornet. Soloists sang selections from Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* and Donizetti's opera *Linda*.<sup>9</sup> The Philharmonic's promoters and the *Brooklyn Eagle* held their collective breath whether the new enterprise would be a success, especially its launch in the unfavorable economics of the 1857 financial crisis. In its review, the *Eagle* used nautical metaphors appropriately drawn from the Atlantic World of sailing ships battling stormy seas:

This enterprise was fairly launched on Saturday evening last, and bravely plunged into the tide of public opinion with all sails set and pennant fluttering in the gale. It was no fair-weather experiment; the eddies of financial maelstroms have sucked down into the abyss existing enterprises which had weathered many a previous storm, and it was with a boldness almost amounting to temerity, that the authors of the new craft committed her to the caprices of wind and wave during such a perturbed state of these unruly elements. But the result justified the confidence. Never did a more complete success crown an undertaking; and the plaudits which arose from those present...were as fully earned as heartily bestowed.<sup>10</sup>

By late spring the board could exhale in relief. The Philharmonic had enjoyed such resounding success with subscription and ticket sales, that

<sup>9</sup> Conducted by Theodore Eisfeld of the New York Philharmonic, BE, 16 November 1857, 2; also listed in Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn*, 9. The program included a concerto for cornet by contemporary German composer Louis Schreiber, who performed his own piece. On Schreiber in New York, see John Erskine et al., *Early Histories of the New York Philharmonic* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1979), 119.

<sup>10</sup> BE, 16 November 1857, 2.

the next year the Society increased its offering to five concerts and fifteen rehearsals without raising the price of subscription.<sup>11</sup> To increase participation, they made tickets and subscriptions available for purchase at various music stores and businesses throughout the downtown area, from board members, or at the door.

After paying all the first-year expenses, the Philharmonic began its second season with a healthy surplus and well over four hundred subscribers.<sup>12</sup> Even the *New York Herald* sang its praise: “These results have, of course, only been attained by judicious management and the employment of first rate artists. The gentlemen of the committee deserve the thanks of their fellow citizens for the activity and discernment which they have displayed in the administration of the affairs of the Society.”<sup>13</sup> Luther Wyman’s abilities as a leader and organizer, together with his high musical standards, which set the tone for the Society, paid off handsomely. With a view to increasing the number of subscriptions and enlarging the orchestra in the coming season, the Philharmonic’s first annual report concluded with the call for a large physical space, a “Hall, to be dedicated to Literature and the Arts, and to serve at once as a symbol to illustrate, and an instrument to perfect and perpetuate, the taste of our community.”<sup>14</sup> Building on its successes the Philharmonic leadership began planning Brooklyn’s greatest monument to the combined arts: the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

The remarkable success the Philharmonic achieved in its early years reflects changing tastes in music, Brooklyn’s desire for its own independent musical venues, and its growing sense of independence from Manhattan. Its success bears remark from a further perspective, namely that of the economy. Leading Brooklynites took this musical initiative in a

<sup>11</sup> BHS, Arc. 172.6, “Programmes of the Second Season, 1858–9,” 5–14.

<sup>12</sup> Its first year the Society had taken in over \$3,000 in receipts, and, after paying all expenses, had an excess of \$105 cash plus the value of music, instruments, stands, etc., BAM, BPS Minutes, 6 April 1858, 1: 31; BE, 20 and 25 May 1858, 3. Luther Wyman and Paul Weizel’s “tastes and judgment” were specially praised.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 11 October 1858, 3.

<sup>14</sup> BE, 25 May 1857, 2. In its review of the Society’s first concert in November 1857, the *Eagle* had stated that the “success of the Philharmonic Society will in all probability lead to the speedy erection of a public Hall capable of accommodating a large assemblage,” Brooklyn lacking such a facility, *ibid.*, 16 November 1857, 2.

very tough economic climate, in the midst of the financial crisis of 1857, which had exacted a heavy toll on banking, Atlantic shipping, and on commerce more generally, not to mention the thousands of poor in the New York area alone who suffered deprivation. The Brooklyn and Manhattan economies depended heavily upon the health of transatlantic trade and finance, and during the crisis banks were failing on both sides of the Atlantic. The Black Ball Line where Luther Wyman worked, among other shipping firms, lost money on freight in this period and had to suspend some sailings for want of cargo.<sup>15</sup>

Whereas the economic misfortunes of the Black Ball Line may have freed Wyman's time and energies to devote to Brooklyn's cultural development, 1857 seems hardly an auspicious year to begin such an ambitious undertaking as the Philharmonic Society, much less an expensive construction project like the Academy of Music. But despite the financial risks facing the new enterprise, the Philharmonic Society determined to move forward. They did not believe that the "intelligent and thrifty citizens of Brooklyn were going to be so impoverished, or so panic-stricken, as to lose faith in the pregnant future, to abandon the institutions which, in brighter hours, had been their pride and joy . . . or to refuse a generous provision for the cultivation of those Arts which adorn the soul and feed it with the bread of life."<sup>16</sup> They figured correctly.

The economic crisis of 1857 may actually have drawn potential patrons to seek outlets in the direction of more refined culture that reflected their expanding tastes in the arts and in ways that could absorb their uninvested capital. In addition, social and demographic factors may have contributed. By the late 1850s there existed a solid core of Brooklyn's prosperous citizens who enjoyed collaborating in organizations and societies devoted to promoting sophisticated culture. During the 1850s Luther Wyman had involved himself in more than ten such groups and assumed many leadership roles. He was not alone, for many other like-minded individuals worked side by side to create Brooklyn's renaissance. Often the same individuals and their wives who had engaged

<sup>15</sup> Barings, Liverpool sent regular reports to Barings, London of the decline in freight rates and profits for the packets. The slump also affected the passenger business, for by the end of the year "more passengers now coming from than going to America," BAHC 3.35.21, 15 December 1857.

<sup>16</sup> BE, 25 May 1858, 2.



themselves, for example, in the Brooklyn Institute and Athenaeum, founded the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic, the Packer Institute, and sponsored the first Floral Promenade Concert, now founded the Philharmonic. With pride, they watched it thrive. Most were neighbors in Brooklyn Heights, and many boarded the same ferries that took them to their places of business in Manhattan. They banded together, determined to foster bigger and better cultural amenities in Brooklyn, suitable for the third largest city in the Union, economic downturn or no. They strengthened shared communal values by collaborating and developed that strong ethos of Brooklyn civic pride the *Eagle* touted so often.<sup>17</sup> They also circumscribed the arts within the corrals of polite society and its cultivated traditions.

The Philharmonic Society was not the only new cultural association successfully inaugurated in 1857. Later that year, many of the same Brooklyn patrons organized themselves to establish a new subscription library for the young men of Brooklyn that aimed to surpass the old Apprentices' Library founded back in 1823. Ten years elapsed before the new Mercantile Library could construct its own building on Montague Street across from the Academy of Music, but in the meantime the Athenaeum offered to house its books rent free for five years and to make available its own collection of roughly 4,000 titles to which the new association agreed to make yearly additions.<sup>18</sup> The process of founding the Mercantile Library resembled that of other initiatives such as the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute and the Philharmonic. First the press advertised its organizational meetings. Over 600 interested individuals showed up at the first gathering; donations and

<sup>17</sup>The intimate collaborative spirit that characterized Brooklyn Heights is well conveyed in the preface to the Citizens Committee for New York City's book on the neighborhoods of Brooklyn: "A neighborhood is more than a physical space; it is a social, cultural, and emotional home, an arena of civic engagement, a place people organize around—that they work to preserve and improve," Citizens Committee for New York City, Kenneth T. Jackson, and John B. Manbeck, *The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), xiii. Kenneth Jackson in his introduction called Brooklyn an "enigma" and a "mystery," "an urban delight and . . . a center of culture," *ibid.*, xvi.

<sup>18</sup>Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh* (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867), 2: 929; 3: 900–01.

subscriptions were collected; a constitution approved and a board of trustees elected. When the library opened to the public the following spring, it claimed over five hundred members. One hundred of the subscribers were women, the most rapidly expanding group of new readers in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> The public meeting to celebrate the Mercantile's inauguration raised a further \$3,000.<sup>20</sup> Brooklyn's elite now had a growing library, if not yet a dedicated building.

Brooklyn's new cultural foundations, though essentially established by and for the elite, did not abandon their beneficent impulses toward the larger community. The Philharmonic Society inserted itself fully into Brooklyn's polite and charity-minded society. Under Wyman's leadership, the Society continued the tradition of the earlier sacred music oratorios that willingly donated their services for benefit concerts. The Philharmonic had hardly begun its first season when the orchestra gave a grand promenade concert to benefit six local charities. The generosity of certain unspecified individuals defrayed concert expenses so that all proceeds from ticket sales went to the charities.<sup>21</sup> Soon followed musical contributions by the Philharmonic at two benefit floral concerts for the Brooklyn Horticultural Society and a charity concert with orchestra and vocalists for the Industrial School Association and Home for Destitute Children.<sup>22</sup>

Members of the Philharmonic even performed at the graduation exercise of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. The central graduation oration focused on the era of the European Renaissance and Age of Discovery. The topic must have struck a chord among Brooklyn's elite families, who could imagine themselves among the cultural descendants of the historical Renaissance, as people "starting into life" after the Black Death, when "commerce had commenced to spread again its broad sails over the Mediterranean"—all themes appropriate to Brooklyn's own ties to

<sup>19</sup>The large number of female subscribers helps explain why the collection contained so many fiction titles, a favorite genre among women. See Belinda Jack, *The Woman Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 228–31. Some regarded female fiction as corrupting, Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 265–91.

<sup>20</sup>Stiles, *A History*, 3: 901.

<sup>21</sup>BE, 4 January 1858, 3.

<sup>22</sup>The event raised over \$1,000, *ibid.*, 1 July 1858, 2; *ibid.*, 8 September 1858, 3; *ibid.*, 29 December 1858, 3.

Atlantic maritime commerce and its rising sense of importance and prosperity that formed the seedbed for its own Renaissance.<sup>23</sup>

The link between the Philharmonic and the Brooklyn Horticultural Society illustrates the infectious nature of the Brooklyn Renaissance. The Athenaeum incubated, but the Philharmonic and its leadership quickly became a catalyst for collaboration, as seen, for example, in the early floral promenade concerts in which the Philharmonic and Horticultural Societies joined forces. In charge of the music, Luther Wyman and two of the Philharmonic directors joined the Horticultural's Committee on Arrangements, which the *Eagle* claimed "will guarantee that it [the music] shall be of the highest order."<sup>24</sup> These floral promenade concerts put on jointly by the two societies became a fixture of Brooklyn's polite social and cultural scene in summer months, until disrupted by the Civil War in the 1860s.

The Brooklyn Horticultural Society predated the Philharmonic. It had been founded in 1854 and incorporated in 1855. It held meetings and judged semiannual exhibitions of plants and flowers at the Athenaeum. Although the Horticultural Society had existed longer than the Philharmonic, it never achieved a high level of public attention until it began collaborating with the latter in their floral promenade concerts. It then began to attract more of Brooklyn's upper crust, especially female. The connections contemporaries drew between the benefits of the cultivation of nature in the form of plants and flowers and the cultivation of the arts in the form of music, painting, sculpture, and literature helped it enter the more rarified ambience of elite culture. Separately or preferably together, the arts elevated the spirit and with their beauty inspired the soul. The *Eagle* promoted the idea of the public benefit that could come from a projected botanical garden near Green-wood Cemetery, trotting out the usual moral injunctions, claiming such a garden would become a place of resort where visitors and Brooklynites alike "would not only be withdrawn from the debasing influences which beset the leisure of the working classes, but would have their tastes elevated and their feelings

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 July 1858, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 May 1858, 3. The preliminary organizational meeting had been held at Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute the previous day, 14 May.

purified by intercourse with these choice productions of nature.”<sup>25</sup> In a later expression of similar sentiment, the editor asserted the cultivation of plants and flowers to be an employment which “unites physical, mental and moral advantages.”<sup>26</sup> He advocated that ladies specialize in flower culture, for “it is the cry of the age that women have not a sufficiently enlarged sphere of duty, that their minds are cabined and confined for want of expansion,” and being unsuited for masculine pursuits, flower gardens would promote female health and provide a distraction from the monotony of domestic duties.<sup>27</sup>

Another lecturer before the Society, perhaps in a bid to solidify a masculine interest in flower raising, claimed the practice to aid in the “refinement of the mind, especially in keeping alive those delicate sentiments of early life, which are so essential to the character of true manhood.”<sup>28</sup> He looked back in history to the Renaissance revival of learning when a new, more rationalized interest in plants facilitated “scattering the seeds of the most beautiful species over the civilized world.”<sup>29</sup> In his mind at least, the cultivating spark of the European Renaissance had brought together plant cultivation, civilization, and culture represented by the fine arts and literature more generally.

Initially, the Horticultural Society had attracted a more particular but actually larger vertical swath of society than organizations such as the Athenaeum or the Philharmonic. The Horticultural Society drew in some wealthy men such as John DeGrauw, highly successful Manhattan grocery importer, and Atlantic Dock owner James S. T. Stranahan, who took particular pride in their gardens. But it also attracted their hired gardeners, who came from an entirely different social stratum. It drew in professional nurserymen, whose awarded plants at a Society exhibition helped boost their reputations in the nursery business.<sup>30</sup> The Horticultural Society’s exhibitions appealed beyond Brooklyn. Interested participants

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 April 1857, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1858, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 April 1858, 2.

<sup>28</sup> George Taylor, Esq.’s remarks, *ibid.*, 20 September 1856, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Plant sales and other commercial aspects of the horticultural shows kept the Society from receiving tax exempt status upon its incorporation in 1855, a

included well-known growers from upstate New York, Connecticut, Staten Island, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, who wanted to display their prize flowers and fruits. Among them was a long-time contributor from Albany, NY, who imported “rare and new plants” from Europe,<sup>31</sup> enjoyed entering them in competitions, and won many ribbons for his excellent plant specimens.<sup>32</sup> Led for many years by president John DeGrauw, noted gardening aficionado, the Brooklyn Horticultural Society aimed to foster a scientific knowledge of plants and their cultivation along with a love of horticulture.

The mid-nineteenth century enjoyed a fascination with Linnaean categorizing and naming of plants, as well as the excitement over news from naturalists such as Charles Darwin, who sailed the seven seas in search of new and interesting species. Black Ball ship cargoes often contained cases of botanical specimens being sent across the ocean. William Roscoe’s Liverpool Botanical Garden built its famous collection with specimens from around the world, and his correspondence with naturalists and botanists from India to America illustrate the fascination with plants shared by the intellectuals of the day. Wardian cases, glass boxes in which to grow plant specimens under controlled temperature and humidity, were a novelty, and the first cases to arrive in Brooklyn from England occasioned special note in the press. Brooklyn did not yet have a botanical garden, but the Horticultural Society filled the function of educating members and citizens at large about plants, both common species and more exotic ones, such as orchids and pineapples. Rising attendance at the Society’s exhibitions indicated a growing interest among the citizenry in both botany and gardening.<sup>33</sup> That interest had long-established local roots, for in earlier times the rural Village of Brooklyn had, after all, been a market garden for Manhattan.

Building on the success of the 1857 promenade concert at the Athenaeum, the two floral promenade concerts in 1858, put on jointly

situation that caused it financial hardship, *ibid.* 16 April 1855, 2; 12 June 1856, 2. The *Eagle* listed prizes won by cultivators in categories of plants in pots, cut flowers, baskets and bouquets, vegetables, and labeling. Other local horticultural societies were invited to participate.

<sup>31</sup> A Mr. Maynard, *ibid.*, 16 April 1857, 3.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, 20 September 1860, 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 Apr 1858, 2.

by the Horticultural and Philharmonic Societies, did much to draw interest in horticulture into the wider folds of the arts and its greater community of interested supporters. On equal footing with the music provided by the Philharmonic's orchestra, these events featured the Horticultural's flower displays as a specific focus of attention, not just stage and window dressings as in 1857. Organizers planned to create a format to "sustain the science of Music and Horticulture" jointly.<sup>34</sup>

These concert/exhibitions had an integrative function, for they brought attention to the beautiful gardens in South and East Brooklyn, where properties were more spacious than in Brooklyn Heights proper and afforded more room for cultivating plants and flowers. At the same time, the residents of those newer districts of Brooklyn were drawn toward the high culture of the Heights. The Athenaeum's location on Atlantic Street, at the southern edge of the Heights, made it a strategic threshold that beckoned to the Stranahans and others who lived beyond the Heights to take part in its expanding cultural programs.

The floral promenade concert in June 1858 had been intended to benefit the Horticultural Society, which, although enjoying growth in public interest, had experienced financial difficulties caused in part by the economic retrenchment of 1857.<sup>35</sup> More people came to exhibitions, an expression of the public's generally increased interest in horticulture and scientific botany, but the Society's finances had declined, and members' dues came in very slowly. Active members thus eagerly collaborated with the Philharmonic in the concert event, which claimed to be the "first concert ever given in this country which could be truly called strictly floral."<sup>36</sup> Members of the Horticultural Society outdid themselves in constructing a floral temple covered in blossoms and large enough to hide the whole ceiling of the Athenaeum's concert hall. The Society's board approved the design for the

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July, 1858, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1858. According to the *Eagle*, it had failed to awaken "the sympathy of the people at large," and but for the financial support of a few, it would have struggled to exist, *ibid.*, 9 April 1857. At the same time, however, the *Eagle* had bristled at the Society's attempt to raffle a basket of flowers, claiming it contrary to New York's gambling laws. The raffle had been part of the Society's efforts to attract a larger audience to its exhibits, *ibid.*, 18 April 1857, 2. There was also indication that some members were not paying dues, *ibid.*, 13 May 1858, 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 June 1858, 2.

floral canopy estimated to cost over \$150! The larger complex included festooned arches, a floral colonnade dotted with statues of floral deities, and a giant harp, all composed of fresh flowers.<sup>37</sup>

The floral concert promised appeal to both eye and ear.<sup>38</sup> The *Eagle* trilled that “such a combination of all that is charming to esthetical appreciation and delicious to the finest physical perceptions—the pleasure of the imagination, and the joys of sense” had never before been attempted anywhere in the country.<sup>39</sup> The editor compared it to a “poetical dream,” and a “combination of bliss,” where the different aspects of the event “harmonized into a grand whole.” The *Eagle* judged it an experience that “marks the onward progress of the taste of our citizens in those matters which beautify and decorate the hard and thorny ways of life, and create an appreciation of something higher and nobler than the perpetual idolatry of the almighty dollar.”<sup>40</sup> Lofty aspirations indeed.

The extravagant event, which had been set to coincide with the Horticultural Society’s annual rose exhibit, unfortunately lost money.<sup>41</sup> All the same, effusive thanks went to Luther Wyman and members of the Philharmonic’s board of directors for their “indefatigable exertions.”<sup>42</sup> The floral temple of June 1858 was beyond what had ever been attempted, and as before, the beautifully attired ladies who attended the floral concert were aptly compared to exquisite blossoms, the pride of a virtuous Nature, “their natural charms set off to perfection by all that art could lend to nature.”<sup>43</sup> Further, if, as the *Eagle* had parodied on an earlier occasion,

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 25 June 1858, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 15 June 1858, 5. For a fuller description of the floral displays, see *ibid.*, 15 June 1858, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 June 1858, 2. The ad for the promenade concert 24 June read, “the floral decorations are to be supplied by the Horticultural Society, and the music by the Philharmonic; presenting a combination of attractions to eye and ear such as has never before been offered to the citizens of Brooklyn,” *ibid.*, 15 June 1858, 5, also *ibid.*, 21 June 1858, 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 June 1858, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July 1858, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, “for their indefatigable exertions to make the late Concert of the deepest interest to the lovers of music, as well as to the Brooklyn Horticultural Society.” Unfortunately record of the musical program has not survived.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 June 1858, 2.

women were “cabined and confined” at home, then Brooklyn’s new cultural institutions provided unprecedented occasions for the polite mixing of the sexes and for females to participate and enjoy concerts, lectures, and exhibitions, many of which, like floral promenade concerts, suited their allegedly more exquisite tastes.

Enthusiasm for collaboration between the Horticultural and Philharmonic Societies remained vibrant, and plans were soon afoot for another joint endeavor. Wyman, elected president of the Horticultural’s Committee on Arrangements, eloquently endorsed another proposed floral concert. He underscored the importance of “sustaining every science that would add to the character of our city, as well as to the importance of promoting such entertainments as would add to the gratification and intellectual resources of our entire community.”<sup>44</sup> The ambitious floral theme under discussion involved transforming the Athenaeum into an elaborate suburban chateau made of flowers, one imagines perhaps reminiscent of a Renaissance memory palace with different rooms allocated for different themes revolving around the arts and sciences.<sup>45</sup>

This latest floral promenade concert added a novel feature, namely an exhibition of paintings and sculptures to accompany the flowers and music. The Athenaeum had long desired a picture gallery on its premises. The board had envisioned that owners of the many excellent and valuable paintings in the city would willingly lend them for an exhibition, which in turn would spark public interest and generate the momentum necessary to found a permanent gallery and art society.<sup>46</sup> An early attempt had failed financially, but the Athenaeum Board conceded that even though a taste and appreciation for art and encouragement for local artists were “fit objects of popular regard . . . such tastes are not developed in a day.” They determined to remain optimistic for the future.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 September 1858, 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 June 1858, 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 April 1857, 2

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* The board assured that the event’s financial loss of \$170 was “but a trifling consideration when placed in the scale as against the large amount of gratification which the undertaking afforded in other respects, and should not be regarded as a decided indication of the improbability of future success.”



The floral promenade concert provided just the venue to display and promote the visual arts alongside the flower exhibits, music, and dancing.<sup>48</sup> One might call the event a symphony of the arts, a prelude to Brooklyn's Academy of Music, for it integrated the various arts in one magnificent composition. It encouraged each art to play off the others polyphonically, while together they resonated through all a participant's senses and aesthetics. As the lecturer before the Horticultural Society had stated earlier and the speaker at the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute had also articulated, contemporaries understood the era of the historical Italian Renaissance to be that age of discovery and rebirth of refined culture that made possible the "seeding" of civilization into the New World.<sup>49</sup> By bringing the arts and botanical sciences together on these occasions, in concert as it were, Brooklynites started to experience their own renaissance. The *Eagle* repeated the planned significance of the event by quoting from its advertisement: "The display of fruits and flowers, statuary and painting, and general decorations of the hall, together with a choice selection of music by the Orchestra of the Philharmonic Society, will form one of the most magnificent entertainments ever afforded to the citizens of this or any other city."<sup>50</sup> Attendance filled the Athenaeum to capacity.<sup>51</sup>

In its review, the paper praised the music, "gems from the leading operas, performed in the usual Philharmonic style," and the floral exhibitions, but the editor found totally captivating the new element, namely the gallery of paintings and sculpture.<sup>52</sup> The exhibited pieces had all emerged from private collections. The *Eagle* gave encomia to examples of the then popular genres of landscape and religious painting. A series of panels depicting the four seasons by well-known Hudson River School painter and Brooklyn resident Régis François Gignoux (1816–1882), received special mention for his "soft fleecy clouds" and "light mists curling up the mountains." Another work singled out for its moving emotive quality, depicted, fittingly for the occasion, St. Cecilia, martyred patroness of music

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 September 1858, 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 July 1858, 2; *ibid.*, 20 September 1856, 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1858, 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 June 1858, 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 September 1858, 3.

and the fine arts, whose angelic expression gave glimpse of her heavenly destiny.<sup>53</sup> It would be several years yet, but the birth of the Brooklyn Art Association, for which Gignoux served as first president, became more than just a dream that September.

### THIRD MOVEMENT (FANFARE): THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, MOSSO CRESCENDO FORTE

The two floral promenade concerts of 1858 gave Brooklynites a glimpse in embryo of what a Renaissance-style integration of the arts could deliver. The year also brought forth a steady chorus of voices from the various cultural societies, calling for a bigger hall that would also put Brooklyn on the map as a destination for uplifting entertainments. Church sanctuaries, the Institute, even the Athenaeum, no longer provided viable spaces for hosting their grand visions of Brooklyn's future as a city of culture. Facilities at the Athenaeum had become too small for the ambitions of the Philharmonic for a larger orchestra and space for lyric opera performances; the Horticultural Society angled for bigger exhibition spaces and an urban park; from the Mercantile Library sprang the desire for its own adequate physical space; and from the literary groups affiliated with the Athenaeum, was the need for a larger hall for big public lectures and meeting rooms for other events. These Brooklynites also wanted a physical monument to the cultivation of the arts, free-standing, and in Brooklyn, not Manhattan. That the new center should be called the Academy of Music marked it the offspring of the Philharmonic Society in its conception, financing, and construction. That its planners envisioned the project to be more than a music hall, rather a performing arts and cultural center with space for many different kinds of activities, concerts, lectures, meetings, and exhibitions, and eventually the magnificent 1864 Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair, indicates just how successfully the Renaissance idea of the amalgamated arts had taken hold in Brooklyn. Even today, over 150 years later, the new Brooklyn Academy of Music continues its innovative multi-arts tradition and prides itself in being the first performing arts center in the US.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> See BAM's website, <http://www.bam.org/about>, "America's oldest performing arts center."

Led by the Philharmonic Society, plans for the Brooklyn Academy of Music quickly took shape. A preliminary meeting appointed a committee of twenty to propose a plan: “Resolved. As the sense of this meeting, that the time has arrived when the city of Brooklyn, with a population of 250,000 people, should have places of refined and refining public entertainment; that music has always been a great resource and reliance of the people, and we think the time has arrived for an ample Hall competent to the production of opera and concerts of the highest order of ability.”<sup>55</sup> The first three names on the committee list, A. A. Low, John Greenwood, and Luther B. Wyman, plus a fourth, Robert Sherwell, nephew of early Brooklyn philanthropist Augustus Graham, were all Unitarians and stalwarts from the Church of the Saviour committed to civic good works.<sup>56</sup>

As a goad, the *Eagle* satirized the modest meeting, comparing it to the typical conversations among beer garden lay-about who ridiculed “grave and solemn subjects, by the inauguration of stupendous monuments which begin and end in the explosion of a little gas.” Since the project required the princely sum of at least \$100,000–\$150,000, the editor gave the participants “to the end of their natural lives to raise as much capital as would supply an opera house with lightning rods.”<sup>57</sup> The paper wholly endorsed Brooklyn’s desire for a large multipurpose performing arts center able to accommodate a large public. It considered such a hall to be one of the most pressing needs in Brooklyn, but an undertaking of this kind should be in the proper hands, such as those of “the same parties whose zeal, liberality and culture created the Philharmonic Society, and the Mercantile Library,” but also more than that select group of gentlemen. To make the dream a reality would require involving “capitalists who have the means and the taste requisite to carry out such an enterprise,” and whose pecuniary investment would also secure “its founders to posterity as public benefactors.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> NYT, 14 August 1858, 8, also lists the committee members.

<sup>56</sup> On Robert Sherwell, see Olive Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, One Hundred Fifty Years: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: The Church, 1987), 39. He served as church trustee in 1851–54.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 August 1858, 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

By the conventions of the day, tax monies could go to public schools and parks but not music halls and the like. An ambitious and costly project of this nature had to be funded by private subscriptions, which gave the merchant patrons of Brooklyn the opportunity to become benefactors publicly recognized for their largesse. It also allowed stockholders to maintain control and ensure that the Brooklyn Academy of Music would become the city's renaissance monument to uplifting music, fine arts, and culture under their guiding hands, rather than a venue for low-cast entertainments. The building would be open to the public but would not belong to the public. At the outset, the unsuspecting stockholders had no idea what stresses and strains Brooklyn's polite society would encounter when larger numbers of people with their more catholic tastes and preferences in entertainments began to frequent the new hall.

The *Eagle* urged organizers to think big. The dreamed-of hall should not be located in some crowded and dingy alleyway, but in the "centre of the city, where the leading avenues of travel converge, and where there is space enough for the edifice and the crowds that would frequent it."<sup>59</sup> Appeals to Brooklyn pride and invidious comparisons with Manhattan were ready at hand to spur support. The very absence of a lyric hall in Brooklyn served as one of the "links in the chain of vassalage which binds us to New York, and keeps Brooklyn in the character of a suburb and provincial dependency of the sister city."<sup>60</sup> On the positive side, the new hall would encourage in Brooklyn an augmented "feeling of local attachment on the part of its inhabitants." The *Eagle* faulted Brooklyn's past leaders who had pursued a "penny wise, pound foolish" plan that allowed Manhattan to remain the "mecca" for both business and entertainments. It was high time for Brooklyn's business and professional elite to step forward and cement the ties between commerce and culture and foster community feeling in the form of a new academy of music. Before this time, "men of capital, the leaders in business, and the men of intellectual force and social supremacy have never attempted to erect and foster institutions which would attract the people and attach their regard and make them feel proud of being Brooklynites."<sup>61</sup> Attitudes were changing,

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 October 1858, 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

however, for “our capitalists are coming forward to aid in establishing institutions that will elevate and concentrate the intelligence of the city, cement the social feelings of the people, and give to public spirit a local habitation and a name.” Already these enlightened attitudes had borne fruit in founding the Philharmonic Society and the Mercantile Library, and hopefully Brooklyn’s new music academy would emerge as a “general shrine upon which the votaries of each [art] can present their offerings to the genius of intelligence and the spirit of harmony and sweet sounds.”<sup>62</sup> These lofty sentiments found expression in the *Eagle*, but did not originate with the editor. The paper may have embroidered the rhetoric, but its statements reflected prevailing feelings among many of Brooklyn’s cultural leaders.

Yet, underneath the high-sounding words in the newspaper lay some deeply embedded concerns, even fears. Well-to-do Brooklynites had long enjoyed a sense of harmony and uniformity in old Brooklyn Heights, that “city of churches and schools,” a safe and pleasant place of residence near their business locations in Manhattan, but far enough away to avoid the urban stress across the river. Brooklyn’s population explosion fed by immigration and the development of new manufacturing and commercial interests, and new neighborhoods expanding across the bottom of Long Island away from the Heights, meant that residents of the Heights were shrinking in relative numbers and location. They retained their social, financial, and political prominence, but for how long? Most of Brooklyn’s cultural patrons remained clustered in the Heights, and as part of reasserting their pride of place, they wanted their neighborhood to remain the center of culture as well as of money in Brooklyn. For them, the new Academy belonged in the Heights.

In the late 1850s national politics threatened to splinter not just the nation, but cities and neighborhoods as well. In the immediate aftermath of the divisive Lincoln–Douglas debates in Illinois, the *Eagle*’s long October editorial urging ahead the project for a Brooklyn music hall for all the reasons described above, prefaced those remarks with references to the “din of politics fill[ing] the public ear.” Even though that “noisiest” subject of public debate dominated the news, other civic matters “though quieter and less obtrusive, are not less important to the community” and “ought to ensure attention and co-operation in the most heated times of

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

political warfare, no matter to what extent the public mind may be pre-occupied by party politics.”<sup>63</sup> Civic projects definitely had their political dimensions, but in Brooklyn, as expressed in the *Eagle* and shared more broadly among the residents of the Heights, the feeling ran strong that the new Academy of Music should embody a harmony of interests, since the fine arts, particularly music, was something people of different political persuasions—Whig, Democrat, and Republican alike—could enjoy together and mostly agree upon. The unsettled times gave a new urgency to the music hall enterprise to erect that temple of harmony that would help keep Brooklyn’s elite united.

The Philharmonic Society supplied the leadership to get the Academy of Music underway. The Society felt the most pressing need for more space for a larger orchestra and audience, which need had been part of their discussions all along. To a meeting at the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic, a committee of the Philharmonic invited “some forty or fifty gentlemen, whose names would command the influence and ensure the confidence of the community in any movement they might inaugurate.”<sup>64</sup> Prominent attendees singled out for mention included such familiar names as A.A. Low, Luther Wyman, Judge John Greenwood, Henry E. Pierpont, wealthy real estate developer, and owner of ferry and transportation services, the Rev. Drs. Storrs and Farley of the Congregational and Unitarian churches respectively, Professor Robert Raymond of the Collegiate and Polytechnic, and Simeon B. Chittenden, wealthy Brooklyn philanthropist and Manhattan merchant.<sup>65</sup> To underscore the requirements of the Philharmonic, the treasurer, Dr. A. Cooke Hull, reported that the Society’s remarkable success had seen Philharmonic members increased from 448 to near seven hundred in the course of one year.<sup>66</sup> Such a crowd was bursting the walls of the Athenaeum and would rush to fill a new larger music hall.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* The congressional election of 1858 was upcoming.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 October 1858, 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* He may have had in mind seven hundred attendees, for according to the Society’s annual report, the number of stockholders at the beginning of the second season was barely over 500, BHS, ARC 172.6.

All the gentlemen present concurred on the necessity of a music hall and voiced their optimistic conviction that the project enjoyed community support and that it would be “well sustained, and money be subscribed by all classes [of society].” Financing presented the biggest obstacle. To raise the huge amount of capital required, eventually \$200,000, the music hall would have to be a community project with a wider base of support than earlier societies had required. Some discussion ensued as to whether it would be advisable to call a large public meeting right away to excite interest or to wait until they had firmer plans about financing the project through stock sales and a possible location for it. Should the site be near City Hall or in the spot favored by the Horticultural Society, on undeveloped land in the middle of the Military Garden?<sup>67</sup> A small committee was appointed. Edward Whitehouse, New York banker and board member of both the Philharmonic and the Mercantile Library, sat in the chair, joined by Wyman, Greenwood, Chittenden, and Dr. Hull, all officers in the Philharmonic Society. At the strategic suggestion of the chair, they added Brooklyn’s wealthiest do-gooder, Abiel A. Low.<sup>68</sup>

The Philharmonic Society claimed full credit for originating and launching the Academy of Music, “a project which . . . is destined, we trust, to reflect honor upon its enterprise, while enlarging the sphere of its usefulness.” The Philharmonic had issued its own resolution calling for the new music hall. The officers formed a small committee to catalyze the project and organize a series of public meetings to build support. They wasted no time. They ran large ads in the press that emphasized the “want of a proper building in Brooklyn with a HALL, adapted to Musical, Literary, Scientific and other occasional purposes, of sufficient size to meet the requirements of our large population and worthy in style and appearance of our city, is now strongly and generally felt in this community.”<sup>69</sup> Thirty-five of Brooklyn’s most prominent gentlemen endorsed the call. Three of Brooklyn’s preachers and five leading citizens all spoke to the virtuous cause, using many of the well-rehearsed themes of Brooklyn pride, comparisons with the cultural offerings of New York and other

<sup>67</sup> BE, 6 October 1858, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> E.g. *ibid.*, 16 October 1858, 3. The officers were President Luther Wyman, Vice-Presidents, Edward Whitehouse and John Greenwood, Secretary Robert R. Raymond, and Treasurer A. Cooke Hull.

cities, and the frank reality that Manhattan's libraries and concert halls had moved inconveniently uptown. Brooklyn needed to build its own cultural resources, not rely any longer just on those offered by New York.

Called to the chair, A. A. Low discoursed on a "universal law" governing the growth of cities, what he called the "law of attraction," namely that in order to entice people of taste, a city had to offer "larger attractions," for, "how can we expect to draw to our city simply because of its location the intelligent, scientific and literary in every order of society, unless we do something to make our city attractive?" Brooklyn might have the third largest population in the nation, but without these "larger attractions" such as a prominent music hall, it would remain third rate in point of reputation.<sup>70</sup> Judge Greenwood jumped to his feet, two resolutions at the ready. The first acknowledged that since Brooklyn already had religious and educational institutions, it should now have a "building adapted to musical performances, literary and scientific objects, and the exhibition of works of art and nature, with a hall of sufficient capacity to accommodate the largest audiences which will be likely to be drawn together." He then proposed that a committee of twenty be charged with formulating terms of incorporation as a joint stock operation. Once an initial sum of \$125,000 had been raised, then the shareholders could decide the further steps to be taken to achieve their object.<sup>71</sup> Given doubts whether such a large and expensive undertaking would actually get off the ground, they decided that the necessary capital must be raised before any cornerstone was laid. When it opened, they wanted their Academy of Music to be debt free.

Plans progressed rapidly. In January 1859 New York Senator and Brooklyn Heights resident, Samuel Sloan, introduced a bill in the New York Legislature incorporating the Brooklyn Academy of Music with a capital of between \$150,000 and \$200,000, shares to be sold at \$50 each, and an elected board of twenty-five directors to manage it.<sup>72</sup> In the *Eagle's* eyes, the music academy project, now incorporated, signaled that Brooklyn had passed through its cultural adolescence into adulthood.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October 1858, 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 January 1859, 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 February 1859, 2.



But how and from whom to raise the capital? The announcement of the next planning meeting, issued a pointed summons: "Ladies are invited to attend."<sup>74</sup> The ladies, who were among the most voracious readers at the Athenaeum and Mercantile Library, who out of their religious and communitarian impulses ran all manner of charitable societies through their churches to help the sick, orphaned, and indigent, could be counted on to pressure their husbands and male kin to open their wallets on behalf of the Academy. Moreover, some women could open their own wallets.

Chairman A. A. Low announced a list of forty-one new vice-presidents, all prominent Brooklynites, none of whom had been associated before with the early meetings or original incorporating body of the new Academy of Music. The committee made a major attempt to broaden its base by drawing in new supporters, such as wealthy Atlantic Dock owner, James S. T. Stranahan, associated more closely with the Horticultural Society. Their next meeting was a model of fundraising, a cross between a political rally and oratorical exercise. First, A. A. Low rehearsed Brooklyn's need for a great hall; then came the history of the movement "destined to do great good to our city" and reassurances that the organizers had committed to begin construction only once the entire capital had been raised: "We need to have it paid for at the very beginning, or we do not need it at all." He concluded with a direct appeal to those present, "You have embarked yourselves and have invited others to join you in the enterprise; and now, gentlemen, if you fail you have done a wrong to our city. You must succeed. It is necessary to your reputation and to the reputation of the city."<sup>75</sup> Who would rise to the challenge?

Simeon B. Chittenden, businessman and outspoken Whig Republican, and acting treasurer, reported that efforts to date had already attracted 267 subscribers. To help visualize the goal and impart a heightened sense of immediacy, he announced to great applause that the committee had decided on a central location for the Academy in the Heights, in the vicinity of City Hall. As to the character of the building, after studying similar edifices in the US and abroad, the organizers concluded that Brooklyn's Academy of Music should be "an elegant Hall large enough to accommodate 2,000 sittings." Inside it should feature both a large

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 February 1859, 2.

auditorium and a small auditorium, meeting rooms, and a kitchen where food could be prepared for three hundred people, all of which could be built and furnished for \$150,000. Design and construction could begin as soon as that amount had been raised. He announced subscriptions already committed ranging from \$50 to \$3,000, for a total of over \$91,000. Hearty applause followed. In a thinly veiled appeal to the hard-nosed businessmen, who kept a firm grasp on their wallets, he held out the wishful prospect that the Academy of Music would be a money-making venture paying a five percent annual dividend on its shares.<sup>76</sup>

In less than two weeks Academy backers had raised over sixty percent of their goal! The breakdown of the various subscription amounts shows the extent to which Brooklyn's elite had stepped forward to contribute. Of the first 267 subscribers, the greatest number, ninety-three contributed \$500, followed by ninety-one subscribers at \$100. Only thirteen bought a single \$50 share. Despite appeals for support from a broader segment of society, the telltale distribution of these early stock purchases shows the Academy of Music remained, unsurprisingly, a project of Brooklyn's elite, most of them residents in the Heights. Ten gentlemen had poked in \$1000 each; three topped the list at \$3,000 each, one at \$2,000. Those fourteen top contributors, provided almost a quarter of the total money raised. They had delivered the seed money, but many others still needed to contribute to reach the goal.

After this overture of historical and financial information, speakers, drawn from among Brooklyn's most eloquent clergy, gave addresses peppered with erudition and humor,<sup>77</sup> among them the well-known, blind Methodist preacher Rev. William Henry Milburn, former chaplain to Congress and a recent Brooklyn resident.<sup>78</sup> Used to larger, more resonant surroundings for his orations, he decried the shabby and

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Curiously, Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn's most famous preacher/orator and abolitionist did not involve himself prominently in Brooklyn's cultural endeavors other than the Art Association.

<sup>78</sup> See his autobiography: William Milburn, *Ten Years of Preacher-Life: Chapters from an Autobiography* (New York, NY: Derby & Jackson, 1859); John Howard Brown, *Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States*; (Boston, MA: James H. Lamb Company, 1900), 5: 473. His obituary mentioned his death in Santa Barbara, CA, NYT, 11 April 1903, 9.

cramped quarters of the Athenaeum's lecture room, comparing it to "a Dutch ship, as broad as it is long, and totally unfitted for all purposes of public speaking."<sup>79</sup> Another compared the projected new hall to a Tower of Babel, not of conflicting tongues, but a "Babel to send forth words and melody that any heart in the community might be reached with a language familiar to itself." He envisioned large public lectures at the Academy of Music by men such as Edward Everett, "whose words moved the hearts of the community." In his appeal for a house of music in Brooklyn, the Congregationalist minister referenced Frederick Douglass, who had recalled thoughts from his days as a slave that the "first necessity in order that family life may be developed, is a house."<sup>80</sup>

The significance of having such a house of music, an edifice that solidified in bricks and mortar Brooklyn's renaissance fine arts dream, echoed through all the speeches. Professor Raymond of the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, the only lay speaker to address the meeting, queried the theme of what made a city great. It was not its number of inhabitants, nor the number of acres it embraced, its numerous homes and shops, its churches, nor the wealth and accomplishments of its individual residents, even its various literary or religious fraternities; not the "blocks of marble with which the architect piles the ground." But rather greatness comes only once these "scattered fragments have been organized and combined, until out of this scattered chaos emerges a cosmos, and we see the connections of one superintending and controlling intelligence, vitalizing and combining all these into one complete perfection out of which each of these parts derive a new and deeper significance than it presented in itself."<sup>81</sup> In this vision of an integrative cultural renaissance with its locus at the Academy of Music, he might have been describing a symphonic composition. He certainly gave voice to the aspirations and achievements of Brooklyn's renaissance patrons to bring forth their own symphony of the arts.

Could the Academy of Music represent all of Brooklyn's renaissance ambitions and gyre upward to become a whole greater than the sum of its parts? Certainly a tall order, and maybe not entirely possible, but the

<sup>79</sup> BE, 15 February 1859, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Revs. Kennedy and Storrs, *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 February 1859, 2.

coalition of well-networked individuals and interests behind the Academy of Music did represent the greatest expression of collaboration for cultural purposes in Brooklyn to date. Furthermore, for the purposes of the meeting, such oratorical flourishes readied the audience for the next, more difficult phase of raising the remaining capital. A. A. Low stepped forward to announce a number of new subscriptions of close to \$3,000. He read aloud a poignant letter from a lady who had enclosed a \$500 subscription, which was met with a burst of applause. The committee passed out subscription forms to the audience. After more speechifying, by the meeting's end late that evening, another \$10,000 had been raised, an impressive result in just one evening.<sup>82</sup> Pledges toward the Academy's capital fund had now reached two-thirds of the goal.

Fundraising rarely comes easily, and the penultimate portion of the effort can be the hardest, to get a campaign close enough to its goal where a few eager hold-outs will rush forward at the last to complete the drive. After its February meeting, the Academy's campaign sat in that very funding hole. At the next meeting the committee reported another \$13,100, hardly an auspicious increase. They still lacked \$30,000. Time was pressing, if they wanted to get construction underway in the spring and have the building under cover by winter. Treasurer Chittenden admitted they stood in a "tight place, and must either advance or recede."<sup>83</sup> He insisted they must proceed. Luther Wyman rose to suggest that each gentleman present pledge himself to raise \$1,000 over the next week to close the gap. Others answered the call with pledges, and A. A. Low chimed in for another \$2,000. He made an appeal to Brooklyn's business interests, opining that the investment in land and buildings, plus income from use of the house, would bring a decent dividend, perhaps now not five, but six percent! Wyman made a further appeal that each man present pledge another \$500, urging those present to make up the remainder before they left the room. Subscriptions fluttered in, and with great flourish, Wyman and fellow patron Alexander McCue increased their contributions with the final \$500 that completed the campaign.

The *Eagle* declared the Brooklyn Academy of Music a "Fixed Fact." The whole \$150,000 had been subscribed! Enthusiastic applause greeted

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 February 1859, 2.

the announcement, and the Committee promised that in just a year's time subscribers would gather in the new hall itself. The building would "stand as a monument of the energy and liberality of our citizens."<sup>84</sup> There was no time to waste. Within weeks the building committee was appointed and plans developed preparatory to selecting an architect. The Academy had become more than just a dream.<sup>85</sup>

Thanks to all these efforts, in March 1859, prospects for the Academy of Music looked rosy. The Philharmonic Society itself was cresting its own wave at the finish of its second season, which it judged to be even more successful than the first. Subscribers had increased from 435 to 503, among whom more than seventy were women. The thirty-three professional musicians, half of them female, who became members, joined at a discounted rate of \$3. The season had expanded from four to five concerts with fifteen accompanying rehearsals. Rehearsals included lectures and presentations aimed to educate the audience. The musical offerings were performed at the "same high grade of excellence" under the baton of Carl Bergmann. Bergmann had replaced the original conductor Theodore Eisfeld, who had been shipwrecked at sea.<sup>86</sup>

The programs offered a rich mix of music and performance styles. The season featured symphonic pieces including Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, and works by Schubert, Spohr, and Mendelssohn. Operatic

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 March 1859, 3.

<sup>85</sup> In its subsequent annual report and program for 1858–59, the Philharmonic summarized progress made as follows: "Under the call of the Committee so appointed, a succession of public meetings was held; our citizens promptly responded to the summons; the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was speedily subscribed; and we have now every reason to anticipate that before the close of another season, our eyes will be gladdened by the fair proportions of the Brooklyn Academy of Music rising in our midst; and our ears refreshed with the strains of a noble Philharmonic Orchestra resounding within its walls," BHS, ARC 172.6. 7.

<sup>86</sup> At the 5 October 1858 board meeting of the Philharmonic Society, it was announced that Mr. Eisfeld, "had been severely injured . . . in the burning of the Steamer *Austria*, and although rescued, had been carried to Fayal, in such a condition, that his services could hardly be counted on at present," BMA, BPS Minutes, 1: 34. Eisfeld's absence also struck a blow to the New York Philharmonic, since the two societies shared conductors and many of the same musicians.

selections drew from among others Donizetti and Verdi. Soloists included then popular Mme. Marietta Gazzaniga-Malaspina. Her faithful service and interest in the success of the Philharmonic Society and her “depth of expression and delicacy of execution” had so enthused the audience throughout the season, that at the final concert, during the intermission, Philharmonic president Wyman came forward, and with a “few well-chosen remarks” in the name of the board, offered to Madame a complimentary concert in appreciation “on behalf of the citizens of Brooklyn.” At the June concert in her honor, Wyman made another special announcement, this time the near miraculous return of conductor Theodore Eisfeld. Severely injured, Eisfeld had barely escaped his burning vessel. He had been rescued by a ship bound for the Azores, which diversion had long delayed his safe return to New York. Eisfeld rose from his seat to warm applause and offered a charming response in his halting English.<sup>87</sup>

In light of Brooklyn’s success, members of the New York Philharmonic, which had been experiencing financial difficulties in the aftermath of the 1857 crisis, groused that most of its Brooklyn subscribers had withdrawn their memberships and were attending the Brooklyn concerts instead.<sup>88</sup> The *Eagle* chimed in that the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society “winds up its second season under auspices the most flattering that ever marked the career of a similar Society at such an early period of its existence.”<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the Society’s operating expenses that year had stayed within budget.<sup>90</sup> They only lacked the new enlarged performance space promised for the Academy of Music.

The Brooklyn Renaissance did not stop with the Academy of Music. If anything, the Academy project became a catalyst for more. The energy and excitement generated by such a grand collaborative effort spilled over into the yearning for yet another “larger attraction” that would help Brooklyn become the truly great city A. A. Low had described in his earlier remarks. In early 1859 shortly after Senator Sloan had introduced the bill

<sup>87</sup> BE, 18 April 1859, 11. The complimentary concert took place in June, *ibid.*, 10 June 1859, 3. Instrumental solos on the piano, coronet, and clarinet, featured performers such as Louis Schreiber, who had figured prominently in the first season. Annual report and program for 1858–59, BHS, ARC 172.6.

<sup>88</sup> Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn*, 10; NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April 1859, 11.

<sup>90</sup> Annual report and program for 1858–59, BHS, ARC 172.6. 21.

incorporating the Academy of Music, the New York State Legislature voted approval for Brooklyn to acquire land and develop a series of parks. Thirteen men from across the city received appointments as Park Commissioners “to select and locate such grounds... as may in their opinion be proper and desirable, to be reserved and set apart for public parks, and also for a parade ground for said city.”<sup>91</sup> Unlike the Academy of Music, the park projects could be funded by taxpayers through a series of bond sales and rate increases. Washington Park near the Navy Yard had been developed on this model back in 1847. The new Board of Park Commissioners met in March; Judge Greenwood was elected president and Luther Wyman secretary. Over the summer, subcommittees representing different sections of the city began scouting potential park locations in their areas, preparatory to recommendations to the Brooklyn Common Council that fall.<sup>92</sup>

Debates and editorials evaluating park proposals centered on two criteria, both related to Brooklyn’s civic identity and desire to be recognized as a “great city” filled with “larger attractions.” Enlightened thinking at the time favored urban green space. Manhattan had just developed Central Park, and Brooklyn needed a grand signature park, too, especially in light of its exploding population and too few open areas. One senses that the already crowded conditions in the older neighborhoods helped fan the desire to create a large urban park with green spaces and fresh air promotive of citizens’ health and recreation. As justification, in an egalitarian gesture, the needs of the poor were trotted out, for workers coming to the park at the end of the day could “breathe the fresh air, and enjoy with their families the luxury of cultivated taste.”<sup>93</sup> Everyone could agree on the need for a large park, but not where it should be and exactly who should pay for it.

Two areas were suggested. The Eastern District favored the Ridgewood area in East New York, adjacent to Jamaica Bay, which could accommodate a 1,200-acre park by incorporating land surrounding the Water Works reservoir and several cemeteries; it was accessible via existing roads and six urban railroads running to the East River ferries.<sup>94</sup> The subcommittee for

<sup>91</sup> Among them Luther Wyman, Judge Greenwood, and J. S. T. Stranahan, from the Academy committee. The *Eagle* printed the text of the bill, BE, 1 March 1859, 2.

<sup>92</sup> NYT, 7 June 1859, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Letter to the editor signed H. J. R., BE, 22 September 1859, 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 September 1859, 3. Also NYT, 16 September 1859, 8.

the Southern District recommended the park be laid out on 303 acres on Prospect Hill, one of the highest points in Brooklyn with (then) commanding views of Brooklyn and Manhattan, the Narrows, Staten Island, and New Jersey, and across the farm lands of Flatlands and Flatbush out to the ocean.<sup>95</sup> That location would place the park closer to City Hall.

A further criterion concerned the desirability of a central location. The Eastern District people promoting Ridgewood made their argument for its desirability based on thinking about New York and Brooklyn as a combined metropolitan area. Ridgewood was not central to old Brooklyn Heights and City Hall, but it was accessible to a combined Brooklyn, New York, and Queens. Existing urban railroads passed nearby taking people to and from the various East River ferry crossings. In contrast, those favoring Prospect Hill argued that central meant distance from City Hall. Prospect Hill was only a mile and a half removed; whereas Ridgewood was five miles away from the heart of Brooklyn. Proximity to City Hall had already motivated the decision to locate the Academy of Music nearby on Montague Street in the Heights.<sup>96</sup>

James S. T. Stranahan, future president of the Park Commission, presented the arguments articulated by the Southern District subcommittee in favor of Prospect Hill. He praised its elevation and wonderful panoramas, but emphasized more particularly a concern for what was best for all the people of Brooklyn, a rhetorical appeal to the common good quite similar to that used in drumming up interest in the Philharmonic and Academy of Music. Arguments in favor of a nearby urban park had long been part of the desires of the Brooklyn Horticultural Society of which Stranahan was an active member, and his area of South Brooklyn was known for its lovely gardens. In his supporting remarks, he made clear that the proposal was not made just to benefit the nearby Southern District, here a jab at the Eastern District's self-interest in Ridgewood.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 September 1859, 2.

<sup>96</sup> For a summary of the arguments regarding the Ridgewood site, see *ibid.*, 15 August 1859, 2 and 16 September 1859, 3. The Archives of Prospect Park, located in the Italianate Litchfield Mansion on Park property, include all their early reports. Wyman remained as secretary and member of the board for one year. James S. T. Stranahan, whose name is most closely linked to the development of the park, replaced Judge Greenwood as president and saw the project through its early development.



Rather, location on Prospect Hill would be acceptable and accessible to all Brooklyn. Curiously, he made no mention of New York's Central Park as a point of reference, preferring to allude to the vast Bois de Boulogne in Paris recently created under Napoleon III which was several times the size of New York's Central Park and featured wooded areas, lakes, and open meadows. His subcommittee had consulted Lieutenant Egbert Viele, chief engineer who worked with landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux on Central Park. Viele, an Army civil engineer, had drawn up a tentative plan for a Prospect Hill site for the subcommittee to present to the board.<sup>97</sup>

Back in Renaissance Italy, *campanilismo*, loyalty to one's bell tower, described the strong feelings of connection to one's city of origin. Those bell towers attached to city halls or cathedrals were in center city, like the hub of a wheel, out from which the municipality spread. Although Brooklyn, like New York, was a city of immigrants whose citizens boasted many different geographical origins, unlike New York, Brooklyn's pride and identity remained focused in the downtown area around City Hall and Brooklyn Heights, its civic center and center of wealth. Brooklyn's major cultural institutions purposefully attached themselves to the center, either by physical proximity, such as the Academy of Music, or like Prospect Park, via definition of centrality as nearness to City Hall. Much larger New York, with its rapid spread northward along Manhattan Island, developed multiple nodes or centers, and its cultural institutions tended to disperse, moving uptown and away from City Hall.

As we know, Brooklyn's cultural leaders in the pre-Civil War era were endeavoring to pull their city out from under the shadow of New York. They were busy constructing an image for Brooklyn as a "great city" filled with "larger attractions" in which culture became the main constituent component. That Italian Renaissance notion of *campanile*, or bell tower, as center and key to an urban identity in both a physical and symbolic sense, helps us understand Brooklyn's inbred homophily, especially

<sup>97</sup> BE, 23 September 1859, 2. Viele was an army engineer, schooled at West Point, who saw service in the Mexican American and Civil Wars. He became the chief engineer for Prospect Park and worked with landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvin Vaux, earlier designers of Central Park. See *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress* <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=V000097>.

among residents of the Heights, and why the Park Commissioners recommended a smaller park on Prospect Hill nearer City Hall over a more expansive suburban park further away.<sup>98</sup>

During the discussions that led to the selection of Prospect Hill as the site of Brooklyn's signature urban park, the Brooklyn Academy of Music hit a major funding hurdle attributable to underestimated costs. Until more money was raised, the project could not proceed. The Building Committee had purchased ten undeveloped lots on the South side of Montague Street between Clinton and Court, not two blocks from City Hall. Work had begun to prepare the site and the committee had invited a dozen architects to submit designs and cost estimates. Every one of the proposals came in well over budget. \$150,000 simply did not suffice to construct the Academy. The committee selected prominent Jewish architect Leopold Eidlitz, whose designs of P. T. Barnum's exotic Iranistan mansion in Bridgeport, CT, and New York's vast new Tabernacle Church would have recommended him as someone who could design large, distinctive buildings.<sup>99</sup> They instructed him to submit a new plan that contained costs as much as possible.<sup>100</sup> In September work on the site had been called to a halt, pending more funding, which sparked a round of anonymous snide criticisms.<sup>101</sup>

To keep to their promise that the Academy would be built only if debt free, backers had to raise another \$30,000. A further problem reared its head. Of the original \$150,000 pledged, by September only \$140,000 were considered viable.<sup>102</sup> With the infusion of the extra \$30,000, the

<sup>98</sup> Sociologists use homophily to describe the tendency of like-minded people to connect with one another. Zachary Neal identifies three types of modern connectivity, network, spatial, and social. See *The Connected City: How Networks Are Shaping the Modern Metropolis*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 21–23.

<sup>99</sup> BE, 5 September 1859, 3. On Eidlitz, prominent New York architect of Czech and Jewish descent, see “Christian Inquirer,” *Christian Inquirer (1846–1864)*, 14 April 1860; Kathryn Holliday, *Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008), 50–55. According to Holliday, Eidlitz's pioneering designs can be best described as organically functional and as striving to uplift and evoke an emotional response.

<sup>100</sup> BE, 5 September 1859, 3; 17 September 1859, 2.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

board's new target was a capital of \$170,000. The planners had had to adopt a more realistic view of what it cost to erect a building of the Academy's magnitude. A superior music hall seating over 2,000 could not be built on the cheap, when, as S. B. Chittenden pointed out, Boston's Academy of Music had cost \$400,000; Philadelphia had spent \$350,000; and New York nearly half a million dollars on theirs. Could Brooklyn not afford to build hers for \$170,000?<sup>103</sup>

Eidlitz's plan called for an edifice with a 250-foot frontage on Montague Street and several entrances. Major features included a performance hall seating 2,200 people with two galleries above the dress circle. The stage would be seventy-five feet deep and fitted for backdrops and opera scenery, and with dressing rooms and so forth nearby. A smaller assembly hall 42/82 feet and an equally large vestibule would be included, and the basement would contain a janitor's quarters and a "great kitchen for the preparation of the annual dinners of the New England Society." The exterior would be faced with Philadelphia brick or sandstone; window surrounds, cornices, and the like of Nova Scotia sandstone; the roof of slate.<sup>104</sup> The building, gas lights, and furnishings would come to \$170,000.

Raising that extra money was the challenge laid before the stockholders at a meeting on a stormy September evening.<sup>105</sup> The choices were two, increase the number of subscriptions, or levy an assessment for the difference upon the present stockholders. Next came the hard sell, repeated in the *Eagle*—a combination of the threat to halt the project entirely for want of funding, and chides to certain wealthy Brooklyn land speculators about their "apathy and indifference," men who are "never to be seen encouraging any enterprise that will give a higher tone to society, and benefit the city." They also lambasted those "local money grubbers" and "remorseless monopolists who grind the last penny they can out of the people and never contribute anything in return." In contrast to such appalling "apathy and indifference" stood the laudable few, who have "borne the burden of this enterprise and contributed most to its success in money and the stimulus imparted by their influence and energies." Ironically, the pitch continued,

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 September 1859, 3.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1859, 2.

Brooklyn had the least call upon these latter worthy gentlemen, because they had their business interests and made their wealth in Manhattan and used Brooklyn mainly as a place of residence.<sup>106</sup> These were the “merchant princes,” men such as A. A. Low, Simeon Chittenden, Luther Wyman, and others who boarded the East River ferries to get to their offices in lower Manhattan, brought their wealth home to Brooklyn Heights, and expended generous portions of it on civic and cultural enterprises to make Brooklyn that great city of larger cultural attractions. Despite the funding shortfall, the project was to remain an affair of Brooklyn’s business elite, for no one recommended selling more shares at cheaper prices, a tactic that might have attracted a larger pool of subscribers and broadened the social base of Academy supporters.

Low rose to report progress to date followed by Chittenden, who pledged to raise his own subscription from \$3,000 to \$5,000, which offer met with applause. By the end of the evening eleven men had stepped forward with pledges totaling \$9,400, all from wealthy men and all but one, Academy board members.<sup>107</sup> A committee of twenty-five was empowered to solicit additional subscriptions, but only \$12,300 in new money came in. They were closer, but still well shy of their goal. Wyman, in his capacity as secretary *pro-tem*, noted that some committee members had not themselves contributed. He read out the names to get their responses, but the recalcitrants had apparently skipped the meeting. Mr. Low thought some of Brooklyn’s old Dutch families could be tapped, but he acknowledged that the Academy needed a broader base of contributors beyond the same steadfast supporters who showed up at meetings. Several new members were voted onto the Committee in hopes they could solicit their neighbors. Judge Greenwood commented that if the project should fall through, “the people of Brooklyn would be disgraced.”<sup>108</sup>

Time was running out if they wanted the foundation laid that autumn before winter set in, at which point Wyman rose to say he would pledge another \$2,000 on condition that the foundation work be commenced

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 September 1859, 2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* Their names were published next day in the *Eagle*. In addition to Chittenden, they included A. A. Low, C. H. Townsend, H. E. Pierrepont, A. H. Lowber, E. A. Lambert, C. H. Sand, A. M. White, G. F. Toomey, Senator Samuel Sloan, and William M. Richards—none with a pledge for less than \$500.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 September 1859, 3.

immediately. He opined that had the work started three months prior and Brooklynites could have seen the foundation and walls of the Academy rising, the needed money would already have been secured. Greenwood concurred, but Low and several others objected, insisting that they had made pledges on condition that all the money be raised before proceeding with construction. By way of compromise, they agreed to solicit additional pledges for another week to close the gap. Finally, the funding hurdle surmounted, work could proceed.

For Wyman, October meant the beginning of the Philharmonic's third season. The Society needed more subscriptions to sustain its programs and to enlarge the orchestra in anticipation of the grander venue under construction. As the chief beneficiary of the new Academy, the Philharmonic had to augment its base of support to fill the seats in the new hall. The first concert featured the Philharmonic's forty-person orchestra and several well-known singers and musicians. The advertisements for the new season took pains to address the purpose and scope of the Philharmonic in relationship to the new Academy of Music:

The organization of this society differs in some respects from that of any other of its class. It consists of ladies and gentlemen associated for the purpose of procuring a worthy interpretation of the works (especially orchestral) of the great masters in music... [that] tend to elevate and refine the community.... The music presented has been of that high classic character which the growing taste of the public demands.... [The] audiences which have attended its performances have been large and intelligent, its concert season has become one of the social necessities of Brooklyn, and the art spirit thus created has already manifested itself in the raising of nearly \$200,000 for an Academy of Music which is now in process of erection, and which had its origin in the Board of the Philharmonic.<sup>109</sup>

The Philharmonic Society was in a self-congratulatory mood. Instead of its regular December business meeting, Luther Wyman hosted the Board at his home. After opening "divers *green seals*,"<sup>110</sup> "pleasant addresses were

<sup>109</sup> E.g. *ibid.*, 22 October 1859, 3. Featured were the popular Mme. Gazzaniga, soprano and S. B. Mills, pianist.

<sup>110</sup> Perhaps envelopes enclosing statements of appreciation. The more familiar, modern green seals on Federal Reserve bank notes had not yet come into being.

made and congratulations interchanged upon the flattering prospects of the Society and the fast-rising Academy of Music, which was justly referred to as its offspring.” Wyman, the “popular president became a popular host.”<sup>111</sup>

As a popular president and a popular host Wyman received additional recognition in Brooklyn’s genteel society. The new Home Life Insurance Company set to open the following spring, invited him onto its board.<sup>112</sup> All thirty-five board members were recognized men of good standing in the community and nine of them were among the most active patrons of culture in Brooklyn, including such familiar names as A. A. Low, J. S. T. Stranahan, S. B. Chittenden, and E. A. Lambert, former mayor. Wyman stood alongside many of the same men, this time as members of the Mercantile Library Association in calling attention to that Society’s upcoming board election.<sup>113</sup> Soon Wyman and Low were seated near William Cullen Bryant, who presided at a breakfast in New York given in honor of the area’s Unitarian clergymen and their wives. Wyman’s name was also found among the trustees of the new Brooklyn Dime Savings Bank.<sup>114</sup> His hard work and commitment to improving Brooklyn’s cultural offerings had secured him a respected place in the city’s patriciate.

#### CODA: ACCELERANDO OSTINATO

In 1860 all seemed to be going well. By March not only had the Academy of Music’s foundation been completed, but the walls had risen to thirty feet, ready to receive the first course of beams. The *Eagle* remarked on the large number of interested gawkers drawn to the site.<sup>115</sup> Completion by late fall seemed possible. As if in anticipation, the final concert of the third Philharmonic season was standing room only. Some subscribers could not get within earshot of the music, and the line of carriages outside the Athenaeum extended for several blocks. During the intermission, Wyman stepped to the front of the stage to make announcements.

<sup>111</sup> BE, 7 December 1859, 3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 February 1860; also 15 May 1860, 4.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1860, 3.

<sup>114</sup> *Christian Inquirer*, 14 April 1860, 14:29, 2; BE, 25 August 1860, 3.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 March 1860, 3.

He thanked everyone for their generous support of the Society which had made the concert series possible and declared next season's performances would likely be in the new Academy of Music! Loud applause followed.

In tribute to the enthusiastic support enjoyed by the Philharmonic, he continued: "Ladies and gentlemen . . . I said this would probably be the last concert of this season; it has, however, been proposed that one more concert should be given . . . . If such a concert take place the Directors will endeavor to secure the co-operation of four of the principal artists at present in this country, and to bring together an amount of attraction that has not been surpassed on any occasion in this country." More applause followed.<sup>116</sup> The Philharmonic hired Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church for the extra performance. The prima donna of the evening was newest opera sensation in Europe and America, Italian coloratura soprano, Miss Adelina Patti in her first Brooklyn performance.<sup>117</sup> At the end of the concert, Wyman strode forward and presented her with an enormous bouquet.<sup>118</sup> The lady returned gracious thanks and sang what was to become her signature encore, "Home, Sweet Home." Not only had the Philharmonic endeared itself to its membership, but it had shown it could attract the very latest and best musical talent available.

In the months ahead recognition and respect continued to follow Wyman for all he had accomplished with the Philharmonic and the Academy and as one of Brooklyn's most dedicated citizens. Mr. S. Knaebel, violinist, composer, and charter member of the New York Philharmonic, dedicated to Wyman his *Clipper Waltz* for full orchestra. The nautical theme seemed appropriate not just in light of Wyman's Black Ball maritime connections, but for the occasion of its performance in a concert sponsored by the Brooklyn City Guard. Ticket sales raised money for a monument commemorating Revolutionary War captives from the

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1860, 3.

<sup>117</sup> Patti (1843–1919), together with Jenny Lind was one of the most famous opera singers of the nineteenth century. See J. F. Cone's biography, *Adelina Patti: Queen of Hearts* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993).

<sup>118</sup> Wyman remarked, "On behalf of the Society, and I may say on behalf of the audience, I desire to present you this slight token, to show that we are not unmindful of the great honor which you have conferred upon us in making your appearance for the first time in Brooklyn before the Philharmonic Society," BE, 11 May 1860, 3.

Battle of Brooklyn who had died aboard the infamous British Prison Ships anchored in Wallabout Bay.<sup>119</sup>

The last week in June found Wyman mentioned in the paper on three very different occasions. Perhaps he was too busy to pay his taxes, for his name was published regarding a sewer tax assessment among nearly two hundred delinquents, including A. A. Low.<sup>120</sup> He also appeared as one of forty-eight honorary vice-presidents at a meeting of Kings County Republicans to rally support for Lincoln's nomination for President behind the slogan "Free Soil. Free speech. Free men," which translated on the local level to opposition to slavery and opposition to corruption in the local Democratic Party.<sup>121</sup> J. S. T. Stranahan, who had just returned from the party's Chicago convention, acknowledged that the New York State delegation had been sorely disappointed that their favorite son William H. Seward had not been chosen as the Republican candidate, but that members were determined to throw their efforts solidly behind Lincoln's candidacy.<sup>122</sup>

Wyman's political involvement was cut short on 29 June. As a member of the Academy's Building Committee, late that afternoon, he had stopped to inspect progress at the construction site on Montague Street. At least forty men were busy at work; the roof trusses were all in place, and two dozen men labored atop the walls getting ready to lay tin sheathing for the roof. At that moment, a huge squall blew across the city, ripping awnings and billowing clouds of dust. As someone in the shipping business well familiar with the damage gale force winds and storms could wreak on ships at sea, Wyman probably did not think there was unusual danger in the strong landward gusts in Brooklyn that afternoon. But the sudden high wind dislodged the end truss of the Academy's skeletal roof, toppling it into the next one, and like dominos, the trusses came crashing down into the middle of the building, carrying seventeen workmen with them. Four others, trapped on the walls under a beam, suffered severe

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 May 1860, 3. On Knaebel, see Karl Klausner, John Knowles Paine, and Theodore Thomas, *Famous Composers and Their Works*; (Boston, MA Millet Co., c. 1891), 4: 946.

<sup>120</sup> BE, 25 June 1860, 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 June 1860, 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*



injuries. The crash “sounded like the discharge of heavy artillery” and brought hundreds of people running to the scene. Members of Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 freed the injured from beneath the truss and removed other men from the debris. Fortunately, though dazed, most were able to limp or be carried away from the scene. When the dust began to settle, the first person to be discovered, probably unconscious, was Luther Wyman. He had been inside the building at a good distance from the door. A heavy beam lay across one side of his body. He was extricated and carried to a doctor and then home late that evening.<sup>123</sup>

The *Eagle* reported: “Mr. Wyman’s injuries are serious but not of a dangerous character. He is well known as a most enterprising and useful citizen and his many friends will greatly regret the misfortune which has befallen him.”<sup>124</sup> Wyman had been scheduled to preside over the graduation exercises at the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, but obviously could not attend.<sup>125</sup> He recuperated at home with a badly damaged knee and a severe injury to one arm. More than a month passed before he was able to hobble about.<sup>126</sup> Damage sustained by the Academy building would cause at least a three-week delay in construction, which meant completion of the building could not possibly occur before the end of the year.

Following that terrible accident, the Academy continued to be plagued by cost overruns, some of which could be attributed to the board’s inexperience and inexpert estimates about what finishing and furnishing a building of that magnitude entailed. The accident with the roof had set back finances a hefty \$5,000; insurance costs ran higher than expected; and the painted scenery for stock operatic performances cost more than foreseen. Stockholders convened in a special meeting that December to get an update from the Building Committee. A. A. Low announced that a further \$20,000 would be needed to complete the Academy’s furnishings. Of that amount, initial rentals of the building could cover about a third, but the remaining \$12,500 had to be raised from new subscriptions.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 June 1860, 3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> “Among those occupying the platform many anxious inquiries were made, and much sympathy manifested with this respected gentleman,” *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 August 1860, 3.

As incentive, every subscriber who upped his subscription to \$500 would get a free admission to any Academy entertainment open to the public. Any amount remaining to be funded would be assessed *pro rata* upon existing stockholders.<sup>127</sup> Chittenden iterated their communal responsibility to finish the project “in a manner worthy for the city of Brooklyn and in accordance with the affluence and ability of its four hundred stockholders.”<sup>128</sup> Wyman, as chair of the Committee on Arrangements, rose unsteadily to assure the assembly that prospects for renting the building were excellent. It had already been engaged for \$1,000 for two nights in February, and in all probability the Academy would become the venue for a new series of popular Italian operas. He predicted that from a financial point of view, the Academy would return a reasonable profit to stockholders. To set an example, Low and Chittenden upped their pledges, and a small committee was formed to see to the remainder. These extra capital funds remained elusive.

To encourage further interest and satisfy the curious, the *Eagle*, the *New York Times*, and the *New York Herald* each devoted several columns to detailed descriptions of the new Academy, intended to be “the ornament and pride of Brooklyn (Fig. 5.1).”<sup>129</sup> Eidlitz had designed the façade in an interesting, if uneasy combination of Moorish and Gothic styles.<sup>130</sup> Gothic Revival elements recalled the predominate architecture of Brooklyn’s many mid-nineteenth century churches, among them the Church of the Saviour, designed by well-known urban architect Minard Lafever, also known for his Greek revival designs. The Neo-Moorish element, with its nod toward Eidlitz’s design for Barnum’s Iranistan estate (1848), reflected the European orientalist vogue and connoted leisure and pleasure with a hint of exoticism. The more conservative *Eagle* hesitated, but the *Times* praised the interplay of fine brickwork and Dorchester stone facings and the

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 December 1860, 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> NYH, 14 January 1861, 5.

<sup>130</sup> For a street-view photo taken shortly before the disastrous 1903 fire, see: <http://theatretalks.wordpress.com/2011/12/13/brooklyn-academy-of-music-176-montague-street-brooklyn-new-york/> and illustrations from *Harper’s Weekly* with a brief history of the original Brooklyn Academy of Music [accessed 2 October 2016]. See also Cezar Del Valle, *The Brooklyn Theatre Index* (Brooklyn, NY: Theatre Talks, LLC, 2010), 2: 22–26.



**Fig. 5.1** Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1861, shortly after its completion. Everett Collection Historical/Alamy Stock Photo

groupings of Gothic windows which interrupted the broad expanse of masonry, giving it an “air of lightness and grace which makes it a fitting entrance to the very handsome and unique interior. . . . It is not too much to say that the Brooklyn Academy of Music has the finest exterior of all the public buildings of its kind in America” both for its grandeur and its balanced proportions.<sup>131</sup> Entering from Montague Street into the spacious vestibule, visitors might glance up at the painted and paneled ceiling which repeated the elegant decorative scheme in the theater itself. From the vestibule one passed to the dress circle (seating 460) and down to the parterre (seating 425). The orchestra area was some fifty feet long, and behind it the stage, touted as “without exception one of the finest in this country” for its seventy-five-foot depth and tall ceiling which allowed scenery to be lifted straight up without folding. In the wings and underneath the stage lay all kinds of machinery run on iron rails, ropes, pulleys,

<sup>131</sup> NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

windlasses, blocks, trap doors—in short, there was “enough rigging there to supply a good sized ship, and rope enough to hang every traitor from Charleston to Tuscaloosa.”<sup>132</sup>

On either side of the stage ranged dressing rooms for male and female performers and the green room for those waiting off stage. Above were more spacious dressing rooms for the stars fitted with mirrors and wash-stands, “superior to those of any building of the kind in the country.”<sup>133</sup> A special feature of the design was how the parterre, then referred to as the *parchette*, could be boarded over to the height of the stage and turned into a magnificent ballroom. To the side of the dress circle were the ladies’ “retiring room” and a suite of rooms for the directors’ use. Taking the stairs up, one arrived at the first of two balcony tiers, the “family circle” (seating three hundred), with nearby the ample Assembly Room/Concert Hall with its forty-foot ceiling and decorated in Gothic/Moorish style, which hall could be used for large dinners, lectures, meetings, smaller concerts, or balls. The third tier above divided into two sections (seating six hundred). Four ample proscenium boxes and thirty-two private boxes completed the seating plan. Directly above the boxes ran an open arcade or gallery like a necklace around the whole theater, even above the stage, and which was intended for promenading. The feel of the building with its pillars, arches and paneling was Gothic, but the brilliant red and yellow color scheme throughout was Moorish. The overall effect, especially with all the gas lights ablaze, was stunningly “unique and pleasing.”<sup>134</sup> The new hall demonstrated an amazing flexibility in its interior spaces, suitable for the variety of entertainments and meetings to be accommodated there.

The *Eagle*, the *New York Times*, and the *New York Herald* in their descriptions of the house, made special mention of the exquisite scenery painted by well-known artist Hannibal Calyo. He had in preparation a dozen sets for the most popular operas. One, for Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*, set in the Italian Renaissance, rendered Venice by moonlight with all the palaces along the Grand Canal illuminated. The act curtain featured a beautiful Italian villa on the edge of a lake. Nearby entered a troubadour surrounded by groups of ladies and gentlemen “listening to the strains of

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

his music.”<sup>135</sup> The painted scene on the drop curtain depicted the Temple of Apollo with crowds of men, women, and children advancing toward it, bearing votive offerings to a statue of the god of Music. Nearby stood two figures representing Fame, holding aloft the great seal of the Brooklyn Academy of Music.<sup>136</sup>

The whole theater could seat from 2,000–2,500 people comfortably, and nearly all seats had an unobstructed view of the entire stage. The basement housed four large furnaces consuming four tons of coal per day when lit, a spacious kitchen, worthy of note, connected by dumb-waiters to the Assembly Room, and a janitor’s apartment, store rooms, and so forth. The *Times*’ columnist especially appreciated the versatility and adaptability of the building, how the stage and parterre could combine to become a ballroom, and the gallery used for promenade concerts with ample space for the Horticultural Society to display its flowers. The Assembly Room could be used for lectures and dinners as well as smaller functions. In the design one can detect how the architect met the needs of the various societies which planned to utilize the Academy’s spaces. The columnist for the *New York Times* claimed to have seen all the famous theaters in America and Europe, London’s Drury Lane, Paris’ Imperial Opera House, La Scala in Milan, San Carlo in Naples, even the Tacon opera house in Havana. None of those theaters can be compared favorably with Brooklyn’s Academy of Music “for size, convenience, detailed appliances, simplicity of construction or complete adaptability to the desired end.”<sup>137</sup>

The Academy was a triumph to behold and the jewel in the crown of the Brooklyn Renaissance. The *Times* gave a short, glowing history of how it had come into being, starting with the observation that the music-loving population of Brooklyn numbered in the thousands and that hundreds of Brooklynites in past years had been among the subscribers of the New York Philharmonic until it was deemed “seasonable by certain public spirited and influential citizens to open subscription books for a Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, which should equal in every respect that of this City, whose reputation is most favorably regarded not only in all

<sup>135</sup> BE, 31 December 1860, 2; NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*; NYH, 14 January 1861, 5.

<sup>137</sup> NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

this country, but in France and Germany, and wherever good music is appreciated and enterprise approved.” The first season of the Brooklyn Philharmonic had been “wonderful”; the second season “prodigious,” such that the Society soon needed more space beyond what the Athenaeum or even Beecher’s capacious Plymouth Church could provide. Thus, it was to the “success of the Philharmonic Society that Brooklyn owes the architectural triumph” of its Academy of Music:

The principal men—the originators, the directors, and the life of the Philharmonic, were and are, LUTHER B. WYMAN, Dr. HULL and ROBERT R. RAYMOND. They worked early and late, ingeniously devising, and efficiently executing plans for its success, and when that success was achieved, and better accommodations were demanded by the public, they eagerly embraced the opportunity to enforce upon the enterprising men of the city the propriety, the necessity and policy of erecting at once a building suitable not only for the exigencies of the present emergency, but which would meet the entire want of the amusement loving public—musical, operatic and terpsichorean. A board, comprising many of Brooklyn’s most prominent men, of whom the animus are LUTHER B. WYMAN, A.A. LOW, S. B. CHITTENDEN, A. COOKE HULL, ARTHUR BENSON and Judge GREENWOOD was organized.<sup>138</sup>

Now that the Academy of Music was built, had received its well-deserved encomia, especially from across the East River, and was readying itself for an opening gala over two evenings, 15 and 17 January 1861, it still needed more money to complete the finishing touches. Stockholders received summons for another meeting days prior to the grand opening, this time in the new building itself, to hear an updated financial report and select trustees. They learned that the Academy labored under a \$15,000 deficit accumulated from the higher than estimated cost of furniture and last minute finishings. Chittenden urged the gentlemen present to come forward with further pledges, appealing to them as proud citizens of Brooklyn not to let the Academy open under the shadow of debt. He also addressed certain grumblings and suspicions voiced regarding the directors, whether they had paid up their own pledges, and whether they had appropriated the best seats in the house for themselves. Suspicion over the distribution of seats had already reared its jealous head.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

As chair of the Committee on Arrangements responsible for letting the Academy's spaces, Wyman spoke encouragingly about the building's rental prospects. Immediately following the opening nights' gala events, the building would host several weeks of opera, and it was already engaged on intermediate nights for various other entertainments.<sup>139</sup> He had received a large number of applications to rent the house for lectures, and he fully expected it to be a building that would realize a "handsome income."<sup>140</sup> In the hope to spark more investment, the group moved to inspect the theater itself, and seeing Mr. Calyo and his crew at work on the scenery, gave him enthusiastic applause. But no additional pledges came forward that evening. Presumably the Academy's Board found the final monies, although the *Eagle* does not tell us when or from whom or how much of the deficit those early rental receipts offset.

An academy where music reigned had long been a dream of Wyman and the Philharmonic Society's other officers. But bricks and mortar, machinery, scenery, and furnishings cost a bundle of money, more than a few individuals could have mustered on their own. Academy boosters had to interest members of other societies, their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances—some four hundred others—willing to loosen their purse strings and purchase the remaining stock. At the same time, the Academy was a business, and many of its contributors were themselves businessmen of one sort or another. As such they had familiarity with the exigencies of running a house, whether it be a trading, financial, or opera house. All expected a return on their investments, hence the planners' reassuring recitative throughout the process that Academy stock would pay dividends. Their cautious estimates of construction costs, repeated underestimates as it turned out, formed part of their desire for economy and efficiency. The Building Committee had required Eidlitz redesign the building, which had had the beneficial effect of simplifying the structure and making it adaptable to the multiple needs of its users in the community.

To widen support, but not necessarily to descend the social ladder, the planners advertised the project as symbolic of Brooklyn's civic pride, hence

<sup>139</sup> From their advertisement in the *Eagle*, the group calling itself "The Artists Association" had engaged the Academy of Music for operatic performances, BE, 12 January 1861, 3.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

the oft-repeated envious depictions of its lag behind New York. That type of rancorous rhetoric noticeably disappeared when the *New York Times* reporter ventured over to Brooklyn to inspect and praise Brooklyn's and the Academy's accomplishment. Rehearsing the history of the Academy, its growth from the bosom of the Philharmonic and the exertions of its civic-minded backers to bring it forth, all helped embed the project in the fabric of Brooklyn society. The reporter characterized the Academy of Music as the major marker on Brooklyn's path to greatness as it emerged from its past as a small village and bedsit for Manhattan into third largest city in the nation.

The Academy's ideators made a series of strategic organizational decisions that set them apart from their predecessors in New York, starting with the Philharmonic Society. New York's Philharmonic Society had been founded as a consortium of artists who owned and managed their own business. The Brooklyn Philharmonic, followed by the Academy of Music, belonged to a limited number of stockholders under management by their boards of directors. Musicians and performers were employees, not employers, which insulated potential investors and their money from disruptive squabbles or discontent among the musicians and artists as happened in Manhattan. In addition, to quell suspicions of any special privileges they might be granting themselves, Academy board members made it very clear that even though investors of at least \$500 in stock would receive free admission to public performances, they would not have reserved seats without paying extra on the same terms as everyone else. They hoped thereby to avoid the problems that had made the New York Academy of Music less attractive to the public and left it heavily in debt.<sup>141</sup>

This gesture toward nominal egalitarianism among ticket holders supposedly protected them from rancorous stratification while they were enjoying entertainments at the Academy. Van Anden, the *Eagle's* conservative Democratic owner and publisher, never accused the Academy of being dominated by sectarian interests of one political party over another, as he had years earlier when he poked at the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute for giving the appearance of an exclusive school for young Whigs. At a time when national politics were falling apart over slavery and split deeply along partisan lines as the nation descended rapidly

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1860, 2; 7 January 1861, 3; also similar remarks in NYH, 14 January 1861, 5.



toward civil war, the Academy of Music became all the more important to Brooklyn as a source of harmonious pride that worked as glue holding citizens together despite their political divides. Just days before the Academy opened, over 150 leading worthy and wealthy gentlemen from New York and Brooklyn had signed a memorial to Congress seeking moderation, conciliation and, if necessary, concession—anything to keep the union together. Among them counted at least a dozen of Brooklyn’s leading renaissance patrons.<sup>142</sup>

With all the economic stress and political drama that swirled through people’s lives in 1860 and early 1861, as the *Times* reported, the Academy of Music’s planning and construction had proceeded stolidly ahead.

Trade became stagnant, but the sound of the hammer ceased not;...an embarrassing financial crisis swallowed up little men and broke down great ones, but the busy workman started not at the sight, nor heeded the wail; political troubles swept the entire country as a tornado does the forest, but not a brick the less was placed or a nail left out; the elements warred upon the edifice, broke in the roof and maimed its best friends, but the said friends hobbled out as fast as crutches would let them, and rebuilt the roof, which now defies the utmost virulence of elements..., and at last, in less than one year from the incipient movement, its builders are enabled, with pride and satisfaction, to say, our work is done, and AHOLIBAMAH.<sup>143</sup>

The *Eagle* touted the Academy as source of Brooklyn’s fame, “a position and a name throughout the country that we did not before possess.” Ever the conservative moral watchdog, the editor praised it for providing “accessible, pure and elevating amusement.” It would also attract new business from across the river and help keep at home money otherwise spent in New York.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>142</sup> For a list of all the signatories, including such familiars as Brooklynites Luther Wyman, A. A. and Josiah O. Low, Henry E. Pierrepont, William and Alexander White, and S. B. Chittenden, and from New York shipowners Grinnell, Fish, Minturn, Marshall, and Lamson along with other notables such as Peter Cooper and the Astors, see BE, 12 January 1861, 2.

<sup>143</sup> NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

<sup>144</sup> BE, 7 January 1861.



**Fig. 5.2** The Brooklyn Academy of Music during the opening concert on January 15, 1861. Everett Collection Historical/Alamy Stock Photo

Tickets for the opening cost \$5 and gave admission to two events. On the first opening night, 15 January 1861, Brooklyn's leading citizens were all in attendance, including prominent local clergy, the mayor, and members of Brooklyn's Common Council, along with stockholders, ticket holders, and their families (Fig. 5.2). The musical program followed the pattern of the Philharmonic's concerts. It featured the Philharmonic's full orchestra and four leading operatic voices, all of whom made many subsequent appearances on the Academy's stage. The audience enjoyed overtures from Weber's *Der Freischutz* and Rossini's *William Tell* and select solos, duets, and quartets from operas by Bellini, Donizetti, Mozart, and Verdi. Meyerbeer's triumphal *Schiller March* concluded the evening. In his dedicatory remarks before the concert, Chittenden reviewed how the Academy of Music had come into being, how it grew from the Philharmonic Society's need for a larger performance space and the planners' determination to construct a multipurpose

edifice in which to stage concerts and operas, lectures, the Horticultural Society's flower shows, and those "numerous exhibitions in which the citizens of Brooklyn delight." He also stressed how the planners wanted the Academy to be a place of harmony, for social gatherings and entertainments "where men of all parties and creeds can meet on common ground."<sup>145</sup>

Two nights later the Academy held its Grand Promenade and Ball, the second opening night event. There, too, the flower of Brooklyn society, its "beauty and fashion" strolled and danced the night away. The *Eagle* crowed, "for the first time in the history of Brooklyn, its youth, its wealth, its beauty had a proper field for their display." The stage and parterre joined into a ballroom space, and couples whirled beneath a giant canopy draped in red, white, and blue. Two temples of fresh flowers graced opposite ends of the stage, courtesy of Mr. DeGrauw, president of the Horticultural Society, and the nimble fingers of a Mrs. Henderson who fashioned both a lyre and a harp from blossoms in floral tribute to Music. The building was festooned throughout. At nine o'clock sharp a trumpet sounded and "five hundred of the gayest and fairest party that ever assembled in Brooklyn or perhaps elsewhere, formed into sets for the opening quadrille." The *Eagle* made careful note that there was "no offensive distinction such as disgraced the Prince of Wales ball in New York of officious or purse-proud nobodies thrusting themselves forward for the distinction of opening the dance." Older attendees gazed down from seats in the dress circle and galleries above. In what was apparently a "novel plan for Brooklyn" and another nod toward egalitarianism among the attendees, the supper tickets were offered at a fixed price for all. Dancing lasted until 3:00 a.m., when, carriages summoned, attendees made their weary way home. The *Eagle* named thirty of the most distinguished men in the crowd, the mayor, judges, clergy, military officers, and leading businessmen. According to the custom of the day, wives and young ladies notable for their beauty and attire were identified only cryptically with dashes between the first and last letters of their surnames, enough to guess who they were, but just shy of printing

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 January 1861, 2. Mme. Colson, and Signors Brignoli, Sussini, and Ferri sang.

their full names. For example, Wyman's wife became "Mrs. W—n" of Joralemon St. The street names given for the selected few came mostly from Brooklyn Heights with the exception of a "Miss L—n, South Brooklyn," and a "Miss G. K—s of N. York [who] was one of the decided belles of the evening." Needless to say, the gala was judged an "unqualified success."<sup>146</sup>

The opening nights' entertainments were a triumph, a celebration of persistence and of obstacles overcome. In his address, Chittenden had compared Brooklyn before the Academy to an "overgrown village, an incomplete chrysalis—a city without the accessories that make city life bearable and enjoyable." Brooklyn now celebrated its Academy of Music as the "forerunner of other metropolitan attractions, and as the first practical realization of a spirit which we have labored to foster, and which we trust will go on gathering strength until our beautiful city shall be as much indebted to art as she is to nature."<sup>147</sup> Here, then, was the Academy of Music conceptualized and articulated as the foundation of Brooklyn's renaissance, standing like a lighthouse on Montague Street, whose beam would attract other arts organizations and make Brooklyn truly a proud city of culture. The Academy's backers had succeeded in making their new edifice both the symbolic and the real fine arts center of Brooklyn. Stockholders had also successfully transformed an institution conceived as catering mainly to elite tastes, getting it to stand for the whole city of Brooklyn. But what would looming civil war do to the Academy and to Brooklyn? Would the conflict dampen the glow from her inaugural celebrations? Could the Academy of Music remain that harmonious, non-partisan place of educated and refined entertainment? Only the actual experience of war would tell.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1861, 3.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 January 1861, 2.

## Sociability, Civil War, and a Diverted Renaissance

The Brooklyn Renaissance in its visionary, early associational, get-up-and-go phase began in the 1850s. During this time the Brooklyn Athenaeum, Philharmonic Society, Horticultural Society, and the Mercantile Library had been founded. Like the first movement in one of the Philharmonic's symphonic programs, this initial phase of Brooklyn's renaissance led into a second institutionalizing and building phase in the 1860s, focused around the Academy of Music and the sociability it promoted. By then, the Athenaeum, once the largest venue for Brooklyn cultural events and host to so many high-toned occasions at mid-century, simply could no longer contain the ambitions of Brooklyn's cultural societies, which now sought their own dedicated spaces. This second, institutionalizing and construction phase, began with raising the Academy of Music's imposing edifice. The Academy opened with grand *éclat* in January 1861 as the nation teetered on the brink of civil war. The war itself placed an indelible stamp upon the future of the arts in Brooklyn, and the next four years brought to a halt further construction on Montague Street for the Mercantile Library and the new Art Association. War also exposed the Academy of Music and its sponsors to a wider public and forced them to refigure the confines of polite culture. War also brought to the surface tensions among its elite supporters. The threat of social disunion haunted the Academy and the Philharmonic Society. But at the same time the war galvanized Brooklyn beneficence as citizens threw their energies into home front and war relief projects. This chapter charts that unfolding story.

## EXPANDING SOCIABILITY IN STONE

In the 1860s the new arts buildings on Montague Street enhanced social feeling and community by giving the arts a public space and monumental presence that vastly expanded the smaller shared locations earlier provided in the Athenaeum or the Brooklyn Institute. Until then, the Athenaeum had functioned as Brooklyn's largest site of sociability, where like-minded persons could meet and mingle around the various musical, literary, lecture, horticultural, and fine arts events. By the end of the 1850s, the mounting numbers of people eager to participate in arts events had outgrown the Athenaeum's building. Pressure on available space had increased once the Mercantile Library accepted use of rooms upstairs in 1857 and began an active program of lectures and fundraising to build its collection and eventually construct its own edifice.

Alongside the Athenaeum, the Brooklyn Institute, and the new Academy of Music, the *Brooklyn Eagle* in its own way promoted sociability in print, faithfully reporting announcements and reviews of the city's arts and educational activities, thereby articulating and encouraging its cultural aspirations. Newspapers functioned as prime disseminators of information about cultural events, and the publicity helped augment the appetite of Brooklyn's cultural leaders to expand and construct. Once completed, the Academy of Music greatly enlarged the public arenas for both social and cultural performances. Because of its impressive size and seating capacity and the flexible configuration of its interior spaces, the Academy enhanced opportunities for more people to socialize in its vestibules, auditoriums, meeting rooms, and promenade areas. The Academy had been conceived originally as a home for the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, but its uses stretched far beyond musical entertainments. It became the go-to venue for club meetings, fine arts events, large public lectures, and political assemblies, especially during the Civil War. The war baptized the Academy beyond the arts as a community hub and neutral ground in a politically divided city.

Throughout the war years the Academy served as Brooklyn's meeting house and forum that drew people together. City Hall represented often bitter factional divides, whereas at the Academy people could socialize notwithstanding their different party affiliations. The Academy quickly came to symbolize Brooklyn, much as Faneuil Hall, that famous market and meeting place, had done for Boston in the eighteenth century. When the Academy of Music hosted the



**Fig. 6.1** Pedestrian Bridge over Montague Street, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair, 1864. Lithograph on woven paper. Bequest of Samuel E. Haslett to the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Accession # 22.1911. Photo courtesy of the museum

Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair in February 1864, it extended its physical reach by embracing extra exhibition sites along both sides of Montague Street, thereby creating a vast, block-long display ground of civic and patriotic pride. It drew in thousands of fair goers. Organizers closed the street to carriage traffic and constructed a temporary pedestrian walkway overhead that linked the various fair locations together (Fig. 6.1). The amazing success of the Sanitary Fair and its expanded physical setting foretold the development of that same area into a cultural corridor after the war.

Why the Mercantile Library and a new Brooklyn Art Association wanted to locate in the immediate vicinity of the Academy finds explanation in the Academy's war experience and the success the Sanitary Fair had

in transforming a whole block on Montague Street into the Fair's venue. The new Mercantile Library was built directly across the street from the Academy. The Brooklyn Art Association's edifice rose next door. The Park Theater, devoted to serious drama, found location at the corner of Montague and Fulton Streets, adding another arts presence to what could now be considered Brooklyn's arts hub.<sup>1</sup> Brooklyn's new arts buildings stood within two blocks of the city's political center at City Hall (later Borough Hall) on Joralemon Street, but distinct from it.<sup>2</sup> In 1869 when the Brooklyn Art Association began constructing its building adjacent to the Academy, it gave physical form to the idea that the arts link together. The architectural plans, which incorporated an elevated pedestrian walkway to the Academy, as it were, joined painting and sculpture to music.

After the Civil War, the combined arts buildings on Montague Street gave physical embodiment, and hence an impression of permanence and stability, to the societies that commissioned, financed, and occupied them. Their impressive facades beckoned members and guests inside. Though separate structures, they nuzzled up to the Academy. Their close physical proximity reinforced their common cultural purpose. They did so more concretely than any discourse or newspaper editorial on the centrality of the arts in human life ever could. By contrast, Manhattan lacked a dedicated arts district; rather, its concert halls and cultural societies were scattered, and they straggled gradually uptown following the wealth as the city expanded north. New York City's uptown migration made access from Brooklyn more difficult, which had only increased Brooklynites' appetite for developing their own dedicated cultural spaces.

Despite the city's rapid demographic growth in this period, Brooklyn Heights remained the most desirable residential and business area. The Academy of Music stood at its heart. Its sedate, imposing Moorish-Gothic-Revival-inspired structure anchored the city's new cultural quarter.

<sup>1</sup> Cezar Del Valle, *The Brooklyn Theatre Index* (Brooklyn, NY: Theatre Talks, LLC, 2010), 1: 274–81. The Park Theater was built in 1863 with private funds following a controversy regarding “legitimate” theater at the Academy of Music, discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> City Hall had been constructed on land donated by two prominent landowning early Brooklyn families, the Pierreponts and Remsens, shortly after Brooklyn had been consolidated into a city in 1834. The Greek revival building, however, was not completed until 1849.



The style of the neo-Gothic Mercantile Library and the highly decorative neo-Gothic façade of the Art Association buildings purposely played off of the Academy in appearance, both complementing and contrasting it, thus creating a coordinated architectural polyphony among the three major buildings in Brooklyn's arts epicenter.<sup>3</sup> Their combined achievement in brick and stone represents a high-water mark in Brooklyn's development in the middle years of the nineteenth century and crowned the concerted efforts by its commercial and professional core to uplift, inspire, and unite their city around culture, despite the social upheaval and ravages of Civil War. Sadly, no trace of Brooklyn's nineteenth-century cultural heart remains today. After the Academy burned down in 1903, it and the Philharmonic Society moved away from the Heights to larger, still functioning quarters on Lafayette Avenue.

The nineteenth-century bourgeois fascination with exhibitions constitutes another important, tension-filled context linking sociability and place in Brooklyn and at the Academy of Music. By mid-century the long tradition from the Italian Renaissance of connoisseurship of the arts and passion for scientific collecting had moved from private into large public spaces. Exhibitions fed the public's fascination with the unique and marvelous, whether paintings, rare plant, animal, and mineral specimens, or oddities of nature, some real, others contrived, such as the famous Fiji mermaid or General Tom Thumb—featured spectacles in P. T. Barnum's Great American Museum that had opened in lower New York in 1841 and moved to Brooklyn in 1871.<sup>4</sup> As an intermediate stage between private collections and large public exhibitions, and before the advent of permanent

<sup>3</sup> NYT, 12 November 1869, 2, "they have made Brooklyn a great centre of art, and a home of artists."

<sup>4</sup> In the late fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, prize collectibles were kept in their owners' private studies, or *studioli*, and in wonder cabinets. These marvels were for private enjoyment, not public display. See my "Possessing Antiquity: Agency and Sociability in Building Lorenzo de' Medici's Gem Collection," in *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance. Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*, Ed. Christopher S. Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2006), 85–111; Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: British Museum Press, 2001); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994). On the

museums open to the public, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century lyceums and athenaeums on both sides of the Atlantic had assembled collections of plaster casts of ancient sculptures and scientific specimens for study.<sup>5</sup> But these troves generally had access restricted to members of those institutions. Herman Melville had given voice to their early exclusivity, when his character Redburn, it will be remembered, had been ejected from the Liverpool Lyceum because he did not belong. By mid-century big public venues were becoming popular. Size was everything. London's 1851 Crystal Palace endorsed the idea of mass exhibitions. Joshua Bates, American manager of Barings Brothers, London, had remarked in his diary how he had been besieged by acquaintances from the US arriving to visit the amazing glass and iron pavilion, a marvel in itself, that housed the exhibits showcasing products of the vast British Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Concerts appealed ephemerally to audience emotions and aesthetic sensitivities without respect to class, and one can imagine a similar effect from viewing an exhibition. There, for the price of a ticket and for a limited period of time, visitors marveled at unusual objects and displays to which they might otherwise never have been exposed, much less possess for themselves—objects such as the incredible American Eagle hovering suspended in mid-air over the auditorium, or the illusionistic skating pond stretching to infinity thanks to skillfully placed mirrors, which was one of the most remarked-upon sights to behold at Brooklyn's Sanitary Fair in 1864.<sup>7</sup>

Exhibition experiences both stimulated the senses and promoted social mingling. The augmented venues of the 1860s had been foreshadowed on a more limited scale by Brooklyn's early floral promenade concerts to which had been added exhibitions of paintings to enhance their aesthetic

American Museum's move to Brooklyn, <http://www.barnum-museum.org/man/mythlegend.htm> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>5</sup> George Thomas Shaw and W. Forshaw Wilson, *History of the Athenæum, Liverpool, 1798–1898* (Liverpool: Printed for the Committee of the Athenæum by Rockliff Bros., 1898), 1–64.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua Bates' Diary, Baring Archive, Baring Ms. (B) DEP 74 Copy," n.d., 4: 45–46.

<sup>7</sup> Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission (1864). Executive Committee, *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair [electronic Resource]: 22 February 1864* (Brooklyn, NY: "The Union" Steam Presses, 1864), 32–34.

appeal, making them, in essence, participatory visual marvels set to music. Exhibitions, whether of music, paintings or collections of rare tropical seashells or exotic plants, provided the setting for people to interact and mix. The war years in the 1860s increased the size and frequency of those experiences and hence opportunities to draw together a wider swath of society. During the Civil War, the energies behind the Brooklyn Renaissance were diverted in new, more popular directions. Luther Wyman, so active in the early organizational and building phases of Brooklyn's renaissance, showed himself as well to be a leader in this new evolutionary stage in the cultural life of Brooklyn during and after the Civil War. The Academy, his brainchild, proved similarly catalytic. But expansion laid bare underlying tensions among elite sponsors that ironically threatened to disrupt social harmony among them, especially at the beginning of the Civil War.

Sheer size had social impact. Bigger venues drew bigger crowds, promoted social mixing, diluted exclusivity, and stimulated the evolution of cultural conventions. To build the Academy of Music on a scale unprecedented for Brooklyn, its organizers had appealed to an ever-larger number of contributors to finance construction, thus broadening the Academy's social base. The 1860s exhibitions, like those featured at the Sanitary Fair and other large public events such as the popular lectures in support of the war effort, attracted audiences from different social strata. If the elite members of the Academy's Board of Directors felt satisfied that their goals to uplift, educate, and civilize society at large were being advanced through such events, at the same time they found themselves uncomfortably exposed to more popular tastes.

Large-scale public entertainments attracted diverse throngs eager to be enthralled. The bigger the venue, the grander and more spectacular the event (like the Sanitary Fair), the more crowds of people pressed to attend, and the more money sponsors could raise for worthy causes such as the US Sanitary Commission. Large exhibitions like those at the Sanitary Fair, designed to attract the curious public in significant numbers, however, posed the question whether Brooklyn's cultural events should or could any longer remain as exclusive as in the past. An early indication of strain revealed itself in controversy, discussed below, that boiled up in 1861 soon after the Academy opened. It pitted the need to rent the house against the moral concern whether the Academy should host theatrical performances that some regarded as unfittingly risqué. Those stresses also had the unwelcome effect of dividing even the board

of directors. Tensions over propriety, even seating arrangements, bubbled to the surface. The Academy's interior spaces had to contain concerns beyond those of just expanded crowds.

The war years had the effect of loosening boundaries of what constituted polite culture and who could enjoy it, boundaries that elites had traditionally defined in smaller spaces such as the Athenaeum. The 1864 Sanitary Fair was Brooklyn's centerpiece, its grandest exhibition that attracted Brooklynites by the thousands, and also drew in Manhattanites, New Jerseyites, and visitors from further afield. The purpose behind the Fair was to raise funds for the US Sanitary Commission, and Fair organizers wanted to attract sizable crowds, not just the city's wealthy patrons and their families. The larger-than-expected attendance at the Fair introduced Brooklyn's polite society to the emerging culture geared to the masses, of which at century's end, Coney Island would become the local icon.<sup>8</sup>

The institutionalization of the arts within the walls of distinctive and purpose-built edifices such as the Academy of Music harbored another tension. The buildings themselves helped shape visitors' experience. Sedate, imposing structures like the Academy disciplined public enthusiasm, but the Academy's capacious interior and expanded use by a larger public also destabilized those restraints. Exhibitions, like concerts, framed visitors' experiences temporally. At one of the Academy's concerts, ticket holders might socialize during the intermissions and afterward, but they were expected to sit attentively during the performance for a measured period of time until the last notes faded away. Transgressive behavior drew frowns. School boys found themselves chastised in print for talking in the balcony.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the circumstance of civil war and the need to marshal citizen support behind it probably did more than any specific group of events to loosen the parameters of polite culture formerly set by Brooklyn's elite. Those unstated limits, separating what was appropriate from inappropriate entertainment, proved no match for the crowds jamming into the Academy during the war years, crowds who pushed their own way forward into history.

<sup>8</sup> John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York, NY: Hill & Wang, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> BE, 16 April 1864, 2.

Both phases of Brooklyn's renaissance development, first in forming sodalities and then institutionalizing and constructing buildings for them, had required talents promoted by early nineteenth-century capitalism—the organizational skills fostered through mercantile exchange and collaboration; the confidence to invest in new ventures and manage risk; and the financial means pooled together from commercial success to pay for it all. In one reflection of the telltale optimism and confidence underlying the renaissance effort to bolster Brooklyn, the owners of the prosperous Brooklyn Savings Bank proudly placed a medallion over the bank's entrance depicting a busy beehive whose inscribed motto boasted, "Organization, Industry and Thrift."<sup>10</sup> The Civil War experience tested Brooklyn's optimism. Initially, war fostered a strong sense of community but over time threatened to divide Brooklyn's elite in unexpected ways.

#### PRELUDE TO WAR AND TENSIONS AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC

South Carolina seceded from the Union 20 December 1860, soon followed by Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama. In Charleston Harbor on 9 January, cadets from the Citadel fired upon the *Star of the West*, a New York-built coastal steamer, bringing supplies to Fort Sumter.<sup>11</sup> Just days after these headline-grabbing events, the Academy held its gala opening. Despite rumblings of war all around, on Montague Street, for the moment, its threat seemed remote. That week Brooklyn's polite society seemed more concerned with what to wear to the Academy Opening than with news of events unfolding in the Deep South. The *New York Herald* commented, "The dissolution of the Union and the prospect of civil war pale in interest before the excitement of the great local event which is to come off. Tomorrow the Brooklynites inaugurate their new Opera House, which was the only thing wanting in their eyes to give them metropolitan rank. Henceforth Brooklyn considers herself in a position to run *paripassu* with New York."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Brooklyn Savings Bank, *Old Brooklyn Heights, 1827–1927: To Commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Brooklyn Savings Bank*. ([Place of publication not identified]: J.C. Powers, 1927), 48.

<sup>11</sup> The *New York Herald* gave extensive, front page coverage of the steamer's safe return to New York Harbor, NYH, 14 January 1861, 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. The article also gives a lengthy description of the building. See also NYT, 15 January 1861, 2.

Construction of Brooklyn's Academy of Music had required plenty of civic and personal sacrifice, of the sort that helped smooth over political differences. The sponsors of the Academy had made common cause to erect a monumental building that both enhanced their cityscape and their sense of community through shared cultural enterprise. In those early months of 1861, the Academy stood as a more effective symbol of the City of Brooklyn than did City Hall, which in the period leading up to the war had come to exemplify political divisiveness and factionalism, not just between Lincoln's Republican party and the opposing Democrats, but among various internal factions and disagreements over both national and local issues, notably within the Democratic Party. Some favored war and emancipation of the slaves; others, such as the outspoken Copperheads, favored the Union but opposed war; milder accommodationists wanted to save the Union by appeasing the South on slavery; at the other extreme, committed abolitionists such as the eloquent pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, supported a morally just war against slavery and its abuses whatever the cost in bloodshed. Meanwhile, more locally, the *Eagle* complained of the constant bickering on the Board of Aldermen that had endlessly prolonged decisions on where to site a new court house and a much needed lunatic asylum.<sup>13</sup>

Even as the drums of war beat louder and faster in early 1861, the first concern facing the Academy's directors was to fill the house and pay the bills. Because of its established reputation and stature as proud parent of the Academy, the Philharmonic Society's concerts guaranteed a big draw, but more modest income compared to the new opera performances invited to use the Academy's stage. The Philharmonic held its first concert in the Academy soon after the Opening. As many as 1,500 persons attended the final rehearsal the morning of the performance, many of them ladies who took the opportunity to stroll through the building's spacious interior.<sup>14</sup> The program under Theodore Eisfeld's skilled baton began with Mendelssohn's third symphony, *Recollections of Scotland*, followed by a selection of favorite operatic arias and duets, and a virtuoso

<sup>13</sup> BE, 25 January 1861, 2

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1861, 3.

cornet-a-piston solo. The evening performance completely filled the house. A huge public waited outside long before the doors finally opened, and disappointed latecomers had to be turned away, amidst grumblings by some that certain “friends” had been admitted early and occupied the best seats before the general public was allowed in. Trouble over the divisive issue of preferential seating lay ahead. To soothe tempers, the editor of the *Eagle* quickly disavowed the rumor, based on his personal observations. Rather, he stressed the success of the evening that augured well for the Philharmonic Society that “so large an audience was called together” showing such ample patronage as truly to hearten the directors to make their concerts even more attractive in the future.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, for their next concert in February, the Philharmonic promised to feature two new prima donna sensations.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the well-attended and fashionable Philharmonic concerts, in those early weeks enthusiasm for the new building brought in various bookings that catered to an ever-widening variety of public tastes. The most important engagement, both culturally and financially, came from the new Italian opera company, the Artists’ Association, that rented the Academy on a regular basis for several months. The Association planned a winter season of performances of Italian opera in both New York and Brooklyn. An enterprising group of artists and owners of their own company, they counted among their number some of the best operatic voices of the day.<sup>17</sup> Ticket prices for the opera ranged from twenty-five cents general admission to \$20 for a private box with ten chairs. The cheapest seats, comparable to the admission price at Barnum’s American Museum, offered the possibility to persons of modest means to attend this “most refining of recreations.”<sup>18</sup> By contrast, tickets to the Philharmonic cost twenty-five cents for subscribers, but fifty cents for non-subscribers.

The opera Artists’ Association had quickly recognized the potential of a dual venue, opening first in Manhattan followed by a second night in

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1861, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1861, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Sig.<sup>ri</sup> Brignoli and Ferri, Mme. Colson, Miss Phillips, and Miss Isabella Hinkley, the newest American sensation, who made her debut in Donizetti’s popular *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *ibid.*, 25 January 1861, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 January 1861, 3.

Brooklyn. They even made arrangements with local streetcar companies to have additional cars waiting at the conclusion of the opera to whisk home attendees from Williamsburgh, Flatbush, Greenwood, Bedford, Jamaica and “other remote points.”<sup>19</sup> Mrs. Lincoln and her sons and a “large company of ladies” skipped the first night in Manhattan to come to Brooklyn to attend its opening performance of Mercadante’s *Il Giuramento*. The occasion marked the first time a complete opera with costumes and scenery was performed in Brooklyn.<sup>20</sup> The *Eagle* opined that the “large, cultivated and appreciative audience” did not attend the opera because it was fashionable to go, but rather, because Brooklynites sincerely enjoyed the “refining influence of music, and love it for its own sake,” this in contrast to the stuffier, “overdressed, fashionable audience” the artists had encountered in Manhattan the previous evening.<sup>21</sup>

When it became apparent that the opera was enjoying greater success in Brooklyn than in Manhattan, the newspapers gave fresh voice to the spirited rivalries across the East River. According to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, opera did not flourish in Manhattan for two reasons, because the managers of their Academy of Music were “self-conceited epicures who disgusted the public and the artists” and because the opening of Brooklyn’s Academy of Music had robbed them of a significant portion of their audience. The *New York Herald* conceded the point in its headline: “Curious Complication in Operatic Matters.—Brooklyn Ahead of New York.”<sup>22</sup> The Artists’ Association decided to offer three performances a week in Brooklyn, compared to only two in Manhattan!<sup>23</sup> They also agreed to give a second series of six operas at the Academy before leaving on tour.<sup>24</sup> Hull’s dry goods on Fulton Street advertised opera cloaks made to order on short notice, giving further indication that opera had indeed captivated Brooklyn.<sup>25</sup> Someone from Manhattan even advertised in

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1861, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 January 1861, 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Reprinted, *ibid.*, 26 January 1861, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 January 1861, 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1861, 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1861, 2.



the *Eagle*, eager to acquire Academy stock, presumably to obtain tickets at the subscribers' discount.<sup>26</sup>

But symphonies and opera alone could not keep the house filled sufficiently to cover expenses. Lectures, balls, even magic shows, drew in needed paying customers that winter. Between opera performances, the redoubtable blind preacher, the Rev. William H. Milburn, gave the inaugural lecture at the Academy entitled "The Stump and one of its Sprouts." The house sold out with standing room only. The *Eagle* had announced the lecture to be worth more than the twenty-five-cent price of admission just to see inside "this magnificent palace."<sup>27</sup> Apparently many came for just that reason, for Milburn had already given his humorous take on the political stump speech in a Brooklyn church the week before.<sup>28</sup> Another clergyman filled an evening lecturing on "Man and his Work."<sup>29</sup> Then, in a nod toward the growing popularity of art exhibitions, came an explanatory lecture and display of paintings and sketches from Italy, entitled "S. B. Waugh's Italy," fruit of the well-known Philadelphia artist's seven years there.<sup>30</sup>

One of the most popular early engagements turned out to be Rarey's horse training exhibitions, where for the ticket price of fifty cents, in three separate performances, he put "vicious and refractory" horses through their paces on the Academy's main stage. Complaints later surfaced about the low class of persons Rarey's several appearances had attracted, many of them ill-mannered, who stood on the Academy's new cushioned seats to get a better view.<sup>31</sup> Were local *hoi polloi* darkening the Academy's door? Soon, Brooklyn firemen held their twenty-third annual benefit ball for firemen's widows and orphans at the Academy. Four festooned fire trucks graced the expanded stage under garlands made of fire hoses

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 April 1861, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1861, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1861, 2. He had delivered this same talk on 12 January, *ibid.*, 14 January 1861, 2. Because of indisposition he had not had time to ready a new lecture for the Academy audience.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin, *ibid.*, 28 January 1861, 2; 8 February 1861, 2. Tickets could be purchased in local bookstores for twenty-five cents.

<sup>30</sup> B. P. Worchester, *ibid.*, 29 January 1861, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1861, 2; 24 January 1861, 2; 14 December 1861, 2.

looping out from a suspended hydrant overhead.<sup>32</sup> Not to be outdone, the new Brooklyn Art Association used Academy facilities for its first reception and exhibition, a more exclusive event, to which many leading Brooklyn and New York artists contributed paintings for display in the Assembly Room. The Association hired the whole building and planned orchestral and solo entertainments to turn the reception into a grander affair. They had additional gas fittings installed for better illumination. Tickets for admission, however, could only be acquired through Association members, a subject of some grumbling amongst the uninvited.<sup>33</sup> The Association expected Ladies to appear “in full dress or demi-toilette” to this fancy affair that combined “fashion, beauty and art.”<sup>34</sup> Such social events at the Academy lent a higher tone to entertainment in Brooklyn, compared to concurrent offerings elsewhere, such as a demonstration of pool cue proficiency at nearby Montague Hall, a Bohemian troupe of glass blowers appearing over on Fulton Street, or the exhibitions of “Wild African Savages,” “skins of wild beasts and birds,” war and festive dances and songs by the “Aztec Children” and thirty living monster snakes, among the headline features at Barnum’s American Museum in lower Manhattan.<sup>35</sup> The *Eagle* concluded its announcement of upcoming Brooklyn events with the statement that the listing “shows that Brooklyn is fast gathering round herself the accessories of city life.”<sup>36</sup>

The Academy’s directors willingly made the house available for a string of charity fundraisers, reminiscent of earlier days when local church societies encouraged such efforts and hosted them in churches, at the Athenaeum or other smaller venues. The sacred music societies during Luther Wyman’s presidencies had offered many benefit concerts. Given the Academy’s huge seating capacity, charity events held there could raise a lot more money. Professor John Henry Anderson, “Great wizard of the North,” engaged the Academy for six nights of magical demonstrations. He donated proceeds from the final night to the fireman’s fund for widows and orphans.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1861, 3; 5 February 1861, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1861, 3; 18 February 1861, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 February 1861, 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1861, 3; 31 January 1861, 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1861, 3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March 1861, 3; 15 March 1861, 3.

Boston's Edward Everett, famous Harvard professor, popular lecturer, politician, ex-governor, secretary of state, and ardent Unionist, lectured at the Academy on behalf of the Mercantile Library Association. In his presentation, he extolled Renaissance Florence, "The City of Flowers, the home of [Michel]Angelo, Raphael, Titian and Galileo."<sup>38</sup> Inspiration from the Italian Renaissance still hovered over the Academy despite the stress of civil war.

On another occasion, Bristow's oratorio "*Praise to God*" raised funds for the Graham Old Ladies Home, a long-time Brooklyn charity founded in 1851 by philanthropist John Bell Graham.<sup>39</sup> The *Eagle* reviewed the performance with nostalgia. An oratorio has to "stand, simple and pure, on its musical merits alone . . . entirely unaided by stage effects" or the "theatrical adjuncts and contrivances, and . . . the histrionic ability of the artists" characteristic of the modern passion for opera.<sup>40</sup> It is worth noting that by the 1860s musical tastes had changed. The oratorios, which used to be the most frequented grand musical events in the 1840s and early 1850s, and which had been performed by the New York and Brooklyn Sacred Music Societies, in the 1860s had given way in popularity to symphonies and opera on a grander scale.

With the Academy of Music's early and recognized success, Brooklyn patrons had achieved their goal of giving metropolitan status to their city through its newly expanded cultural offerings. In those early weeks following the Academy's gala opening, evidence of the looming war

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, 22 March 1861, 3. He had first delivered "The Uses of Astronomy" in history and science in Boston.

<sup>39</sup> Formally, the Brooklyn Society for the Relief of Respectable, Aged, Indigent Females, the home had been founded in 1851 with land and building costs donated by John B. Graham, "brother" of better known Augustus Graham. It was located on Washington Street in the then fashionable Clinton Hill section of old Brooklyn. Its annual reports, subscription lists etc. are in BHS 1985.114.

<sup>40</sup> BE, 15 March 1861, 3. The full statement read: "Unlike an opera, for the success of which so much is done by theatrical adjuncts and contrivances, and in which the histrionic ability of the artists aids so largely in the due interpretation of the composer's meaning, an Oratorio has to stand, simple and pure, on its musical merits alone—its melodic ideas—its proportion—balance—entirely unaided by stage effects. Somehow, we are among those who believe that the really grand things in sacred music were written years ago, and the like, in all probability, will never be written again."

manifested itself mainly in ceremonial fashion. The Academy hosted several military balls and promenades, starting with one for a Brooklyn National Guard company that featured a precision drill demonstration and seventy-piece regimental band.<sup>41</sup> The whole regiment held another ball on the occasion of Washington's birthday.<sup>42</sup>

But the calm did not last. News of the Confederates' 12 April attack on Fort Sumter sent a shockwave through the city that penetrated the Academy. Saturday 13 April, in its final performance, the Artists' Association presented Rossini's *Moses in Egypt*. The performance had been delayed for a last-minute substitute to replace the tenor indisposed with laryngitis. After an hour, the impatient audience began stomping their feet. The commotion brought Wyman to the footlights in his capacity as director in charge of programming to explain the delay. Finally, the curtain rose. According to the *Eagle's* review, the singing was respectable,

But the *piece de resistance* of the evening's performance was of a totally unoperatic character, viz: the second appearance, prior to the beginning of the fourth act, of Mr. L. Wyman before the curtain, which quite took the audience by surprise. Most of the audience expected another dose of 'indisposition,' but were much astonished when Mr. L. Wyman made the following startling announcement, which possibly answered the purpose for which it was intended: 'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—I have the pleasure to announce that a dispatch has just been received which states that Fort Sumter has been reinforced—(cheers, waving of handkerchiefs and some hisses.) I intended to add when your applause interrupted me, that the Stars and Stripes still wave over its walls (renewed applause) and by general request, Miss Hinkley at the close of the Opera will sing 'The Star Spangled Banner.'<sup>43</sup>

After the final act, the curtain rose again. There stood Miss Hinkley, like an elegant figurehead on the prow of a ship, draped in red, white, and blue bunting and surrounded by the opera chorus. As she sang the national anthem, the Stars and Stripes were lowered from the ceiling over her head to delighted cheers from the audience. News of the reversal at Fort Sumter

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 February 1861; 8 February 1861, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 February 1861, 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 April 1861, 3.

turned out false. The *Eagle* reported the next day: “At the Academy of Music on Saturday night, the President, Mr. Wyman, whose aspect of mild and amiable benevolence is an index of a heart as kind and a disposition as pacific as a pet lamb, came forth to announce the apocryphal intelligence that Fort Sumter had been reinforced which was greeted with as much enthusiasm as if it had been true.”<sup>44</sup>

War had penetrated the halls of culture at the Academy, but it did not halt pre-programmed events. The Artists’ Association opera company had departed for Philadelphia on an extensive western tour, so more lectures and demonstrations filled the evenings. These entertainments showed the increasingly eclectic and broadening tastes among Academy-goers. The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) sponsored two addresses by a popular temperance lecturer on street life in London,<sup>45</sup> soon followed by a strong man’s demonstration. At age twenty-seven, five feet seven inches and 140 pounds, the showman claimed to be the “most powerful man in the world” since he could lift over 1,500 pounds and raise himself by his little finger, a spectacle perhaps better suited for Barnum’s American Museum.<sup>46</sup> To satisfy more elevated tastes, Wyman headed a special committee that included Judge John Greenwood and A. Cooke Hull, ever faithful Brooklyn patrons and music lovers, to organize a testimonial concert for a well-known English bass singer, actor, and later professional agent, who for many years had made Brooklyn his home.<sup>47</sup>

Soon, however, political themes became more prominent at the Academy. After the attack on Fort Sumter, five hundred pupils from local schools and Sunday schools performed. Through the voices and acting of these children, the divided nation and looming war dominated the stage. The show included a “grand National Allegory and Tableaux called DISUNION” written specially for the occasion to illustrate the “present troubles of the Country, and the Sin and Folly of Destroying the Union.” Costumed children portrayed figures such as the Goddess of Liberty,

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1861, 2.

<sup>45</sup> John B. Gough, *ibid.*, 15 February 1861, 3; 15 April 1861, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. George B. Windship, *ibid.*, 13 April 1861, 3.

<sup>47</sup> William F. Brough (1798–1867) had made his New York debut in 1835, singing the part of Dandini in Rossini’s *Cinderella*. The evening’s testimonial concert featured Bishop’s English opera troupe, *ibid.*, 19 April 1861, 1.

United States, Negro Boy, Famine, and Warfare. Dodsworth's band played all the most popular airs. A pamphlet giving the lyrics of "Disunion" went on sale after each show.<sup>48</sup> As the Civil War progressed, even Brooklyn's Academy of Music could not maintain its equanimity and neutrality.

### DISUNION AND REBELLION AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC

In 1861 the Academy of Music stood as a civic as well as cultural monument that testified to the ability of its subscribers to set aside political differences and unify around culture. Nonetheless, the directors and Academy audiences held no immunity from the stresses war uncovered and their own uncertainties about what the future might hold. Tensions floated just below the surface. Hardly had the Academy opened its doors before a public disagreement erupted over its proper use in service to the city and its citizens. As the nation was being torn apart, the Academy experienced its own disunion in the controversy that pitted discontented subscribers against those among the Academy's directors who held very conservative views regarding what kinds of entertainments should be allowed on the premises, and specifically whether prose drama should be permitted. Time-honored Shakespearean plays excepted, the conservatives among their number regarded popular drama to be decidedly low-brow, of scant literary value or morally uplifting qualities.<sup>49</sup> Opposing these, certain "Good Citizens" fired a salvo in the *Eagle* within days of the grand opening. They objected to board member Simeon B. Chittenden's opening night speech that declared "no theatricals or low exhibitions of any kind would be permitted, but that the building would be devoted entirely to music and the higher

<sup>48</sup> Staged by Mr. J. M. Hager, BE, 13 April 1861, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel L. Leiter, "The Legitimate Theatre in Brooklyn, 1861–1898" (PhD thesis, New York Univ. 1968), 47–53; Barbara Parisi and Robert Singer, *The History of Brooklyn's Three Major Performing Arts Institutions* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 9. More generally, nineteenth-century drama existed under a cloud with the sort of criticisms that William Archer (1856–1924), influential drama critic later expressed. He used contrasts of dark and light ages in reference to nineteenth-century drama, which in his view had fallen into darkness since the time of Shakespeare. See Richard Farr Dietrich, *British Drama: 1890 to 1950: A Critical History* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1989), ch. 1.

order of amusements.”<sup>50</sup> Chittenden, a long-time Brooklyn resident of New England Puritan stock, prominent Manhattan dry goods merchant, staunch abolitionist, and later Republican congressman, and a well-known moral conservative, held firmly to his conviction that “this temple of music and art,” should not be demeaned by any performances “to which we would hesitate to invite our sons and daughters.” It should be kept clear of “vice and dissipation” by which everyone understood him to mean the “immorality” of theater.<sup>51</sup> In their letter, these “Good Citizens” pointed out the contradiction in Chittenden’s position, for the directors had allowed Mr. Rarey’s horse training exhibitions, which could hardly be considered “music” or one of the “higher order of amusements.”<sup>52</sup> Soon “All of the People” fired another shot. The writer(s) had expected not only opera at the Academy, but good drama as well. If the morality of theater was in question, why, then, had Chittenden and the directors scheduled the “most immoral opera, *La Traviata*, that was ever put on the stage?”<sup>53</sup> Verdi’s enormously popular *Traviata*, in fact, had been set as the Academy’s inaugural opera, only to be replaced last minute by Mercadante’s more stately *Il Giuramento*, perhaps in response to those very charges of hypocrisy.<sup>54</sup>

But at issue stood something more than long-standing nineteenth-century debates over the immorality of theater and its propriety at the Academy,<sup>55</sup> which could be resolved, after all, at the level of personal choice. Mr. Chittenden and his circle did not have to take their families to the theater if they chose not to. The criticisms directed at Chittenden and his fellow

<sup>50</sup> BE, 21 January 1861, 2, letter dated 19 January.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 January 1861, 3.

<sup>52</sup> They quipped: “Or can we attribute this deviation from ‘set rules’ to the same influence Mr. Rarey exercises over vicious horses as having been applied to vicious horses—Mr. Chittenden in particular,” *ibid.*, 21 January 1861, 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1861, 1. The writer cited the perennial problem of more than two hours travel time required to take his wife and daughters uptown to the theater in Manhattan.

<sup>54</sup> Parisi and Singer, *The History of Brooklyn’s Three Major Performing Arts Institutions*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Leiter interpreted the theatre controversy solely through the lens of moral aversion among conservative residents and preachers of old New England Puritan stock, notably Brooklyn’s Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, though Beecher’s dislike of drama gradually softened in his old age, “The Legitimate Theatre,” 15–20.

moralists, however, included more grievous charges of elitism. A subscriber signing himself “Equitas,” complained that a “gross violation of the rights of the public” had occurred at the inaugural Philharmonic concert. He and his wife had arrived a quarter hour before the performance only to discover that “after jamming in when the doors were opened, we found to our great disgust, that a very large number of an aristocratic clique well known in Brooklyn for their dictatorial assumption on all occasions, had been admitted by private doors, and were occupying the best seats in the house with a complacent self-sufficiency by no means gratifying to the outsiders.” As if to add insult to injury, after the concert had begun, “certain lordly individuals,” provided with special keys from the directors, had unlocked the proscenium boxes to admit certain persons who bore an “expression which said louder than words, ‘ain’t we big things.’” “Equitas” demanded an explanation, for if such unfairness and partiality continued, “people will become disgusted with the Philharmonic [and] I shall certainly discontinue my subscription, and hundreds have told me they mean to do the same.”<sup>56</sup>

The suspicion of undemocratic favoritism could not be taken lightly, particularly if it drove away scores of persons like “Equitas,” whose ongoing patronage the Philharmonic and the Academy badly needed. The *Eagle* turned for explanation to Luther Wyman, president of the Philharmonic and an Academy director, asking why certain people had been admitted early and allowed to occupy the best seats. Wyman explained that given the huge crush at the entrance, after those at the front of the crowd had been admitted, they had passed into the main auditorium by the less congested side doors, creating the false impression they had gotten in early. Satisfied, the *Eagle* declared that the alleged preferential treatment accorded special friends would have been a total departure from the “uniform courtesy, fair play and self-denial even, which the gentlemen [directors] have always displayed and which has contributed more than any other circumstance, except the high character of the music they provide, to the success of the Society.”<sup>57</sup> But the divisive suspicions of unsavory elitism and favoritism persisted.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> BE, 23 January 1861, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 January 1861, 2.

<sup>58</sup> A lawyer and early supporter of BAM, John N. Taylor, wrote to “absolve the managers of the Philharmonic concert from all participation or censure” for the “disgraceful rush” for the best seats that had occurred once the crowd pushed in, *ibid.*, 25 January 1861, 1. His name does not appear among the original BAM stockholders.



“All the People” and “Equitas” had raised twin issues of programming and seating. Resentments against any whiff of preferential treatment given to certain of Brooklyn’s social elite struck to the heart of a double paradox embodied by the Academy. First, the original sponsors had sold their idea for an academy of music in Brooklyn and raised the necessary funds, by depicting the Academy as a unifying civic project where elevating entertainments would be offered for the benefit of large numbers of citizens. Indeed, according to its charter, the Academy was a public arena for the express purpose of cultivating the arts, whose entertainments were to be made available to the public. With the exception of the private boxes, plans for the building provided for no reserved blocks of seating. Once the doors opened, all ticket-holders should have equal opportunity to obtain a spot. At the same time, however, the Academy’s ideators among the city’s well-connected social and cultural elite had conceived the Academy primarily as a hall for musical events after their own refined tastes. These gentlemen and their wives had in earlier years attended the sacred music oratorios, the Philharmonic Society’s original concerts, and the other uplifting entertainments held at the Athenaeum before the Academy was built. Men like *Eagle* owner Van Anden and Luther Wyman probably considered themselves members of an “open” rather than “closed” elite, that is, men of refined tastes in music and the arts, but whose social and political orientation leaned decidedly democratically. But refined tastes and broad public access to a limited number of seats did not harmonize. Instead, they bred discontent, not as much between the wider public and the elite, as among elite subscribers themselves.

The second paradox concerned finances. Practical exigencies of a fiscal nature increasingly conflicted with refined elite tastes. Since its opening, the Academy had been strapped to pay operating costs, especially once the popular Italian opera concluded its season. The need for income explains why Rarey’s horse training demonstrations, the strong man show, and illusion artists were allowed to rent the building. But Chittenden and others on the board had drawn the line at prose theater, which provoked the indignant outcry. Not only did significant numbers of subscribers favor dramatic offerings, but many resented that Chittenden’s old-fashioned moral strictures held hostage the programming at “their” new Academy. To add insult to injury, Chittenden and his ilk seemed to receive preferential treatment in regards to seating, reinforcing the unflattering

impression they were snobs and self-designated aristocrats. The Academy's small group of original sponsors, while claiming to have benevolent and egalitarian motives for the project, seemed to be establishing themselves as a privileged elite, which contradicted the purported democratic, civic spirit behind the original enterprise of cultivating a taste for music, literature, and the arts among the public.<sup>59</sup> The Academy, fruit of enormous and united efforts by Brooklyn's well-to-do, had become a bone of contention among that very elite who faced the real possibility that some stockholders might be more equal than others.

From its very start, even without the threat of war that held people on tenterhooks, the Academy experienced stresses coming from changing, broadening tastes in what "acceptable" entertainment meant. Growing numbers now crowded the Academy's entranceways, more and more from outside the tightly knit social elite residing in the Heights. Utility had necessitated expanding the Academy's base of support to include subscribers such as "Equitas," who definitely did not identify with the old established guard. If utility and art had been forced into uneasy partnership in Academy programming, so too, on a broader level, art and society stood in creative tension as well.<sup>60</sup>

In its lead editorial, the *Eagle* had at first praised the inauguration of the Academy of Music in suitably familiar nautical terms: "It has been launched on the ocean of the future with swelling sails and under a favoring gale, and fair hands have waved the fluttering emblems of sympathy in token of their interest in the craft and good wishes for the prosperity of the voyage."<sup>61</sup> The paper also adopted a conciliatory tone on the issue of the theater ban. First, the editor reiterated the foremost founding purpose of the Academy for advancing the science of music and

<sup>59</sup> BMA, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences Records, "Charter and By-Laws of the Brooklyn Academy of Music" (Brooklyn, NY: The Union Book and Job Printing Establishment, 1874), 5.

<sup>60</sup> In her dissertation Marlyn Baum studied BAM'S revival in the 1960s under Harry Lichtenstein as an exercise in survival in a context where art was an "instrument of cultural goals, as well as a tool for the achievement of other goals, not the least of which is urban redevelopment," in "The Brooklyn Academy of Music: A Case Study of the Rebirth of an Urban Cultural Center" (PhD dissertation, CUNY, 1986), 1.

<sup>61</sup> BE, 23 January 1861, 2.

of musical tastes, thus increasing the capacity of the people to enjoy the “more elevated productions of the masters of the divine art.” the *Eagle*’s editor thought the Academy should host opera and “any sort of intellectual entertainments” not discordant to its “character and purposes.” He defended Mr. Rarey’s horse-taming show as proper in a respectable public hall, since “decent people can safely attend without any danger of having their moral sensibilities offended.” He acknowledged that the “moral atmosphere of the theatre is bad and the reputation of many of its professors is deservedly low,” but he predicted that in a democratic society if the “wants and tastes of our citizens” so demand, older tastes and the “moral requirements of the nineteenth century will give way.” For where “this class of opinions come[s] into collision with the almighty dollar, the dollar carries the day.”<sup>62</sup> At this juncture, utility and society had joined forces in a manner that eventually dissolved the ban against theatrical performances at the Academy.

On the related matter of elitism in the seating arrangements, the *Eagle* retracted its earlier exoneration of the directors. In the face of so many complaints and accounts of how the managers had sneakily permitted a large number of “personal relations and friends, chiefly ladies” to slip through the side doors before the main doors opened to the general public, the *Eagle* reversed its position. The paper reprimanded the Philharmonic and Academy directors for their “surreptitious usurpation of the rights of others,” which would lead the public to turn away and damage the reputation of both institutions should any repetition of partiality ever be attempted or tolerated.<sup>63</sup> Vindicated, “Equitas” reiterated he had plenty of eyewitnesses to the offensive behavior, but stated magnanimously his willingness to accept Mr. Wyman’s face-saving explanation.<sup>64</sup>

At the Philharmonic’s next concert, the directors scrambled to redress the thorny seating problem, this time by opening the doors at 6:00 p.m. for the 8:00 p.m. concert, to give the public adequate time to secure seats as “fairly as possible” and hence avoid a crush at the entrance. The new arrangement, however, proved unsatisfactory. Those attendees who arrived early had to wait two full hours before the performance began.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 January 1861, 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 January 1861, 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 January 1861, 2.

Why not allot a certain portion of the house to reserved seating for those willing to pay an extra fee? That way everyone would know that “those who do better have to pay for it.”<sup>65</sup> Not willing to entertain even that concession, a local wit signing himself “Laryto” made his rejoinder. If the Philharmonic Society numbered over 1,200 subscribers, who were entitled to two extra tickets each, when the ticket office was open to the public for “outsiders,” few tickets would be available for sale. The writer seemed to think such a restricted audience a good thing.<sup>66</sup>

Members of the Philharmonic and Academy boards must have felt chagrined by the charges of elitism leveled against them. They, after all, had been the movers and shakers of Brooklyn. They were the early immigrants, many with New England pedigrees, who became Brooklyn’s entrepreneurial leaders; most were involved in Lower Manhattan’s commerce, and many had worked their way to wealth from modest beginnings. They were the heads of household who had settled in the Heights in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, had built Brooklyn up from a village into a city and had had the early vision of enhancing the city’s educational and cultural opportunities and of promoting a sense of community around the arts. Some, such as the Low brothers, Alexander White, or Henry Pierpont, enjoyed considerable wealth. The Lows were millionaires even in the nineteenth century. Others, such as Luther Wyman, were upstanding members of this seemingly somewhat stuffy old guard, but possessed much more modest means. Together they had invested their private funds in support of churches, schools, libraries, a Lyceum, an Athenaeum, Philharmonic, and most recently the Academy of Music. They did so with an eye to providing suitable entertainments for their families and friends, but also to promote a grander civilizing influence in the community in which they firmly believed. Now, however, these letters to the *Eagle* characterized them as a closed aristocratic elite, undemocratic, and privilege seekers for their ilk. Worst of all, on the issue of drama at the Academy, their refined tastes labeled them as outmoded.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1861, 3.

<sup>66</sup> He added that the Philharmonic Society had become such a Brooklyn institution that “if they still continue to cater for the public in as efficient manner as formerly, there will be a society so large that a new building much larger than the said Academy of Music will have to be erected in order to contain only the subscribers,” *ibid.*, 27 February 1861, 2.

The group who opposed prose drama at the Academy probably did not include Luther Wyman. As proprietor of the Troy Bathing House he had arranged musical entertainments and fireworks displays at his Washington Garden that appealed to a broader, not just elite public. He counted P. T. Barnum among his friends and enjoyed jovial company as much as anyone. Far from an opponent of drama, he joined a handful of sponsors to honor the early proprietor of the Park Theater dedicated to that art.<sup>67</sup> Further, he knew firsthand the challenges and difficulties of keeping a commercial enterprise solvent, both from his failing bathing house experience and subsequently during his many years' work with the Black Ball Line of Atlantic packet ships, witness to its fortunes both rise and fall. At the same time, however, Wyman held high musical standards. As a skilled vocalist and instrumentalist himself, who had received frequent praise for the elevated tone he had insisted upon during his presidencies of two sacred music societies, as music director at the Church of the Saviour, and president of the Philharmonic, he and others among the founders of the Academy of Music remained adamant about keeping the entertainments, especially the musical ones, at a high level.

The issues of programming and seating at the Academy did not dissolve following these initial exchanges. Chittenden and his collaborators were slow to retract their ban on any theater at the Academy and slow to surrender their veto over the entertainments it booked. Their opponents proved just as tenacious. They got up a stockholders' petition and gathered over two hundred signatures.<sup>68</sup> The petition respectfully requested that "the use of the Academy may be given to dramatic representations,"<sup>69</sup> evidence that "respectable citizens of Brooklyn" desired drama as well as opera at the Academy. They saw little distinction between the two art forms or reason why one should be permitted and the other prohibited. The Academy's directors could provide good drama simply by admitting only those actors respected for their "worth and ability [such] as Mr. Edwin Booth of New York." They also made an implied threat to the Academy's bottom line, that if the directors did not admit drama, they would take their support for it elsewhere.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Gabriel Harrison, *ibid.*, 2 April 1864, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 December 1861, 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 February 1861, 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

The *Eagle* published a long editorial congratulating itself on the forum of debate it provided for “whatever subject agitates either the social or political circles of our Brooklyn society.” In defense of the Academy directors, the editor iterated that none of them were personally prejudiced against respectable theater, being “men of educated minds, liberal feelings, and cultivated taste, and being, moreover, sensible men of the world, and neither sour fanatics nor sanctimonious hypocrites.”<sup>71</sup> Admittedly, a “bad odor has clung to the theater” that was often justified by the “notoriously scandalous lives” of many actors. Theater, however, was not the cause of its own ill repute, but merely reflected the current low level of morality in society. If the directors were not squeamish regarding theater, then their objections came from a desire to uphold the original purpose of the Academy of Music, namely its dedication to musical and literary entertainments. From a practical point of view, however, if stockholders made sufficient demand, then drama should be offered, but held in secondary status, ceding priority to entertainments that more closely fulfilled the Academy’s original purposes. The best solution to the theater problem, argued the editor, would be to build a separate dedicated playhouse.<sup>72</sup>

Tastes in entertainment were indeed changing in Brooklyn during the war years. The Athenaeum, also pressured to meet its bottom line, began experimenting with a new hybrid form of what were called “parlor entertainments,” part concert, part drama. The initial dramatic afterpiece, Louis Angely’s *Craft and Simplicity*, filled with racy dialogue, convulsed the audience with laughter and lusty applause.<sup>73</sup> Could theatrical performances at the Academy be far behind? The *Eagle* took the neutral middle ground, arguing that the business rather than the moral aspects of the question should predominate. Since the Academy was a corporation of stockholders, its management should operate in the interests of the same.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 March 1861, 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* In fact, in 1863 the new Brooklyn Park Theater, a dedicated space for drama on Fulton at Montague Street was leased to actor/manager Gabriel Harrison. It struggled under various managers until it closed in 1905, condemned as a fire hazard, Del Valle, *The Brooklyn Theatre Index*, 1: 274–81.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 November 1861, 3.

Practically speaking, the Academy could hardly sustain itself if it were open only a few nights a year for opera, for four or five Philharmonic concerts, and assorted lectures.<sup>74</sup>

The directors decided to put the matter to a stockholders' vote, either yes or no, whether drama should be allowed in the Academy. This announcement provoked a new round of letters to the editor, in which the sniping grew more pointed. "A Stockholder, will ever pray" addressed his missive to "Fellow Sufferers" and complained in view of the upcoming vote. He grumbled that Simeon B. Chittenden and a small group of Academy directors and leaders among Brooklyn's elite, including Abiel A. Low, Arthur Benson, and Samuel Sloan, though apparently not Luther Wyman, had passed a circular opposing pressure from the pro-drama contingent on the grounds that, early on, organizers of the Academy had promised certain friends not to allow drama on moral grounds. Thus, they could not now go against their pledge.<sup>75</sup> A rebellious "Stockholder" launched into bitter satire, pointing up the snobbery of Chittenden and his friends whom he parodied as follows:

We, Messers Low, Benson, Sloan etc. want a place of amusement kept open for the exclusive use of our respectable selves and families, (in short, for our set,) where the amusements are of such a character that the general public will care nothing about them, and will not frequent the house, or, if they do come, they must be content with such diet only as is palatable to us. And you, our dear Brother Stockholders, (but not of our set) must help us bear the expense of this nice arrangement . . . and see the Academy closed eight months in the year, because forsooth, should we open it for the Drama, or amusements that the general public taste approves, it might interfere with the delightful reunions of the Balcony and Dress Circle, where we and our set take care to secure the best seats.

Next, "Stockholder" queried his fellow subscribers whether, at the time they had been solicited to purchase stock, they had had "any idea you were helping to raise a building where the rich and exclusive could hold their court and the amusements could be such only as would tickle their epicurean palates?"<sup>76</sup> Another "Stockholder" pointed out the weakness

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1861, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 December 1861, 2; 4 December 1861, 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 December 1861, 2.

in the conservative group's claim to honor pledges to "friends," which promises had been made "unauthorizedly and privately . . . in deference to the scruples of a few bigoted individuals," and without the agreement or knowledge of the stockholders.<sup>77</sup>

The conservatives struck back. "A Brooklynite" wrote that whereas no dispute existed over the excellence of Shakespeare or other fine English dramatists, most likely these were not the plays that the "great mass of theatre-goers patronize . . . for the simple reason that something less refined, and more exciting, pays better."<sup>78</sup> Another missive urged the directors to hold firm to the original purpose of the building as a house of music. Even if the plots of opera did not differ from popular drama, he argued, the audience, most of whom did not understand the Italian in the lyrics, attended opera primarily for the music.

The study of music is an effort of the intellect, it refines and elevates the mind, and sounding the great deeps [*sic*] of the emotions, floods the purer, calmer regions of the human soul. In love of music all minds grow kindred . . . We can look beyond the sneers of the [NY] *Herald* and its Brooklyn cooperators, who would gladly see our city of churches a city of theatres instead; we can look into the future and see Brooklyn the home of the arts, see the religious and the worldly, stand side by side in their love of music, learning charity from that common feeling.<sup>79</sup>

This genteel sentiment, perhaps penned by one of Brooklyn's prominent clergymen, was highly reminiscent of the pre-Civil War feelings Brooklyn's leading citizens had shared in their early efforts at building community and in making music and harmony its symbol at the Academy. But those noble feelings lost much of their effective force during the war years when disharmony and disunion characterized the day and split even Brooklyn's elite. In the

<sup>77</sup> This "Stockholder" hoped the Academy would offer good drama, for the "good people of Brooklyn have yet to learn that in the works of Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Addison, Sheridan, Bulwer, Knowles, and other bright and good men . . . there is anything but high literature and art, and most rational and instructive entertainment," *ibid.*, 4 December 1861, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 December 1861, 3.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*



end, the protesters against the theater ban prevailed, and by year's end Academy directors voted to let the house for a short run of select drama.<sup>80</sup> In 1862, programming at the Academy of Music became more war themed, as suited the times. Fittingly, the dramatic offering on 1 January was Dion Boucicault's popular melodrama *The Octoroon*, illustrative of "Southern slavery, Southern character, Southern scenes, and Southern homes" featuring the character of Zoe, an octoroon "white slave." The play gave the evening audience and school children attending a special Saturday matinee opportunity to consider the evils of that "peculiar institution."<sup>81</sup> The divisive squabbles over drama at the Academy of Music paled before the new challenges presented by Brooklyn's response to the Civil War.

At its 1862 annual meeting the Academy's treasurer submitted the first financial statement. Despite the convulsions over drama, the Academy had enjoyed a successful inaugural year. After expenses of over \$53,000, accounts showed a cash balance of nearly \$2,000. Opera had generated the largest receipts at \$3,800, followed by exhibitions at \$2,100, lectures at \$1,600, the Philharmonic Society at \$1,500, balls \$1,500, and dramas at \$1,100.<sup>82</sup> The stockholders unanimously re-elected Luther Wyman to the executive committee with, as president, Henry E. Pierrepont, fourth generation Brooklynite, prominent Republican, merchant, bank president, founder of the Union Ferry service across the East River, and land developer.<sup>83</sup> Three other familiar faces made up the new committee: Samuel Sloan, Isaac H. Frothingham, and Marcellus Massey.<sup>84</sup> The *Eagle* put the

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 December 1861. The first offering on 27 December had been Boucicault's comedy, *London Assurance*, starring James W. Wallack, Jr. in the role of "Dazzle." Perhaps in response to the vitriol in the controversy over allowing drama at the Academy of Music, two years later, in 1863 the Brooklyn Park Theatre was built using private funds and dedicated to "legitimate" theater. Its façade in Nova Scotia stone was purposefully classicizing, perhaps to lend it extra dignity.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 December 1861, 3; 2 January 1862, 2.

<sup>82</sup> NYT, 12 January 1862, 8.

<sup>83</sup> NYT, 29 March 1888, 5. He and Luther Wyman also associated as members of the Brooklyn and Long Island Historical Society, the Brooklyn Club, the American Geographical Society of New York, and in working together to organize Brooklyn's 1864 Sanitary Fair. The Pierrepont family papers are in the Brooklyn Historical Society archives.

<sup>84</sup> BE, 11 January 1862, 2; 22 January 1862, 3.

brouhaha over drama in ironic perspective. “It seems wonderful that such a fuss should have been made about so comparatively small a matter. If the fate of the nation had been involved in the question, there would hardly have been more excitement than has been manifested about it.”<sup>85</sup> The exigencies of war and war relief finally drowned out the Academy’s petty squabbles.

### BROOKLYN AND WYMAN AT WAR

If the upset over drama at the Academy of Music appeared to be a tempest in a teapot, underneath this local issue lay tensions over larger, more stressful matters, principally the escalating war effort that increasingly consumed the energies and attention of Brooklynites from all sectors of society. The question remained, however, whether discontent over the ban on drama, the charges of elitism, and the war itself were serious enough to disrupt the close-knit community of the Heights. Or whether, despite problems in the Academy of Music, the Civil War actually brought that community closer together in a patriotic effort to support the Union and the local boys called to defend it. Only time would tell, especially after initial war fever died down and the conflict dragged on much longer than anyone expected.

Brooklyn, like Manhattan, suffered deep political divisions. Lincoln’s Republicans continued to gain strength while the local Democratic majority party split between its National and Union wings, the one more eager to pursue the war, the other, to preserve the Union as it had been, with slavery not endorsed, but tolerated.<sup>86</sup> In Brooklyn both wings convened

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 December 1861, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Mary Ryan used “hard” and “soft” to describe the split, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 151. Edward Spann preferred to call those soft on war the “peace” wing of the party, to indicate those Democrats who opposed New England abolitionism and rallied under the slogans of “the Union as it was; the Constitution as it is,” *Gotham at War: New York City, 1860–1865* (Wilmington, DL: SR Books, 2002), 90. Brooklyn’s divisions described in the local paper as “National” and “Union” factions, while certainly reflecting the divisions characterized by Ryan and Spann, did not appear as mutually hostile as in Manhattan, which was split over the mayoralty of Fernando Wood, a staunch Union Democrat, whose almost paranoiac anti-abolitionism embraced racist rhetoric.

separately in February 1861 to form ward organizations. The National men failed to raise a quorum, evidence of their minority status, interpreted as a sign they were content for the nation to solve its problems through war. The Union General Committee, with Luther Wyman in the chair, met in sufficient numbers to select one commissioner from each ward to organize locally for the next elections.<sup>87</sup> But once Fort Sumter had surrendered, the “war feeling” surged upward in Brooklyn and many Union Democrats, like Wyman, became avid supporters of efforts to suppress the Southern Rebellion. Public places, private shopkeepers, and home owners prominently displayed the Stars and Stripes throughout the city. Youthful mobs marched on local Democratic newspaper offices, including, notably, the *Eagle*’s, and demanded they display the national colors.<sup>88</sup>

Initially, hundreds of men crowded the recruiting station at the Brooklyn Armory on Henry and Cranberry Streets, ready to enlist and start drilling. Recruitment was on the upswing, and several Brooklyn regiments formed, among them the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Twenty-Eighth, and Seventieth. Their ranks filled with over a thousand volunteers, and soon enough men had volunteered to form a brigade. New recruiting offices opened in various parts of the city, in next-door Williamsburg and in adjacent areas of rural Long Island. The *Eagle* reported that post Fort Sumter, the “demonstration in favor of the Government is quite as positive among Democrats as Republicans.” Everyone had great hope the federal government would raise a large military force quickly enough to put down the Southern rebellion swiftly and definitively, thus bringing the war to a speedy end.<sup>89</sup> A noticeably non-partisan group met at the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company to organize a patriotic demonstration at Fort Greene in support of the Constitution, the laws of the US, and for the defense of the Stars and Stripes.<sup>90</sup> But in the midst of such patriotic fervor, mobism was also on the rise. The police stood on alert after certain private citizens known for their “obnoxious” views, received anonymous

<sup>87</sup> BE, 16 February 1861, 3.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April 1861, 2. Similar demonstrations had taken place in Manhattan.

<sup>89</sup> The *Eagle*’s long editorial and opinion piece appeared 19 April 1861, 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 April 1861, 2. The *Eagle* stressed that the organizers were “among the most prominent conservatives in the city, while some of the others are among the most ultra on the other side.”

threats to their property. Maintaining public order received priority, and leading citizens considered the propriety of organizing local guard units to keep the peace.<sup>91</sup>

On 15 April, two days after Fort Sumter surrendered, President Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 volunteers to put down the Southern rebellion. A proclamation followed for every city, town, and electoral district to organize support for the families of departing soldiers. Brooklynites quickly took up the challenge. About fifty prominent citizens, both Republican and Democrat, met to form an association “to aid and protect the families of those persons in this city who may be drafted or ordered, or who volunteer to join the army of the United States in defense of the Government, the Constitution and the Union.” Within days the new Patriotic Relief Association had been constituted. As an initial measure, the executive committee decided to set up a visiting committee in each ward, similar to what the Democratic Union men had proposed earlier.<sup>92</sup> The war-inspired energy behind this new Patriotic Relief Association spilled over and invigorated general poor relief in Brooklyn. By the next week members of the Association, joined by the mayor and several prominent pastors, including Rev. Farley of the Unitarian Church of the Saviour and Rev. Richard Storrs of the Congregational Church of the Pilgrims, called for a public meeting at City Hall to address the chronic problems of Brooklyn’s “suffering poor.” The existing Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor had exhausted its funds and needed additional support to keep the unemployed and their families from destitution.<sup>93</sup> To raise public awareness, the *Eagle* periodically reported sad cases such as the sudden death of a sixty-two-year-old man with no apparent means of support, who had expired from “general debility and want of care.”<sup>94</sup> Brooklyn’s charitable community consciousness held firm and helped overcome wartime party differences.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Luther Wyman, elected first vice-president, took an active part, *ibid.*, 24 April 1861, 3; also see NYT, 5 May 1861, 9, listing Luther Wyman as second vice-president.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 February 1861, 3. The sponsors included such familiar names among Brooklyn’s key cultural patrons as S. B. Chittenden, Edward A. Lambert, Isaac H. Frothingham, Henry E. Pierrepont, Luther Wyman, Arthur W. Benson, George S. Stephenson, and Abraham B. Baylis.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1861, 3.

The Patriotic Relief Association incorporated itself as the Home Trust of the Trustees of Brooklyn with as president, Abiel Abbott Low, Unitarian, Academy director, and New England Republican. Luther Wyman served as second vice-president. Its various committees listed among their numbers many of the most familiar names in Brooklyn Heights and Wyman's associates in the Philharmonic Society, Academy of Music, and patrons of other cultural and charitable organizations.<sup>95</sup> They hoped that the Board of Aldermen might transfer over to the Home Trust for distribution those city and county funds to be designated for relief. City and county funds would augment the \$3,000 the Home Trust volunteers had collected privately to aid soldiers and their families.<sup>96</sup>

A separate Relief Guard organized soon thereafter that brought together civilians and military officers. They elected Luther Wyman president. Along with the great respect he commanded in Brooklyn society, perhaps his service as a young man in the Boston militia recommended him now. The Relief Guard formed part of various home guard volunteer organizations. Wyman's group met for drill in Gothic Hall near the Armory and also established its own Finance and Relief Committee to support local soldiers.<sup>97</sup>

After Fort Sumter, the board of directors willingly involved the Academy of Music in various war related activities. In May, the Academy turned into a house of prayer for the Fourteenth Regiment, the day before it departed for the front. The soldiers' families and supporters packed the house. Twenty military officers and distinguished civilians sat prominently on the stage. Rev. John S. Inskip, Chaplain of the regiment, dressed in military uniform and with heretofore unfamiliar sword, and Rev. Farley of the Church of the Saviour conducted the services. Inskip delivered a rousing patriotic sermon comparing the righteousness of the Northern cause to

<sup>95</sup> They divided into executive, finance, distributing, and communication committees. Members included such familiar Brooklyn patrons as James H. Frothingham, Robert R. Raymond, Samuel Sloan, Edward A. Lambert, James S.T. Stranahan, Simeon B. Chittenden, Abraham Baylis, Jonathan Schenck, James How, George Hall, Alexander Moss White, Peter Cornell, Nicholas Luqueer, Robert H. Burdell, and Charles Christmas, *ibid.*, 3 May 1861, 1.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*; also NYT, 5 May 1861. Between city and county, an estimated \$100,000 was to be designated for relief.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 May 1861, 3.

that of the Israelites under Moses fighting the Amalekites, and likening the flagpole at Fort Sumter to the rod of Moses. He invoked the Christian duty to love their Southern Brethren “so earnestly that we ought to teach them how to behave themselves,” a message greeted with boisterous cheers and applause. That day, in churches across Brooklyn many other sermons sounded patriotic themes and congregants sang hymns mixed with patriotic songs.<sup>98</sup>

Under the auspices of the Philharmonic Society, the directors lent the house for a concert benefiting the Patriotic Relief Fund. The Philharmonic’s orchestra, several instrumental soloists, and six leading opera singers, all volunteered their musical talents. As an added attraction, Wyman’s friend the well-known lyricist General George P. Morris, promised a new patriotic song written for the occasion, *The Union Right or Wrong*. It will be remembered that on earlier occasions Luther Wyman’s first wife had set some of Morris’ verses to music, and Morris had written the lyrics for a cantata by Luther’s brother Benjamin, sung before the New England Society of New York.<sup>99</sup> Tickets for the benefit gala ran at double the usual prices and targeted the wealthy and fashionable audience who crowded the Academy that evening.<sup>100</sup>

Red, white, and blue bunting festooned the main auditorium from floor to chandelier. They printed programs in the national colors. When the audience demanded an encore of Miss Hinkley, instead of repeating

<sup>98</sup> Luther Wyman sat among the dignitaries on stage, BE, 13 May 1861, 2. The *Eagle* published an extensive report of Henry Ward Beecher’s sermon of 28 April, which also built upon the story of Moses from the Book of Hebrews and in which he urged war to be “fought not for the sake of conquest, not for ambition, or anger, or revenge, but to defend the principles of justice, religion and liberty,” *ibid.*, 29 April 1861, 2.

<sup>99</sup> Singers included Miss Hinkley, Miss Kellogg, the Comtesse De Ferussac, and Signori Brignoli, Susini, and Centemeri.

<sup>100</sup> BE, 14, 16, 20 May 1861. Once again, committee members included such familiar names and Wyman associates as Charles A. Townsend, Dr. A. Cooke Hull, Judge John Greenwood, Lyman S. Burnham, and Prof. Robert R. Raymond. The committee on arrangements, headed by Wyman, made tickets available for advance purchase at their places of business in Brooklyn and Manhattan, at the box office, and in several music stores. Admission to the dress circle cost one dollar with twenty-five cents extra for a reserved seat; places in the Family Circle and balcony cost fifty cents.

her aria, she burst forth with the “Star Spangled Banner,” at which point Luther Wyman came to the footlights and asked the audience for three cheers for a special guest, Captain Abner Doubleday of Fort Sumter fame, seated in one of the boxes. Instead of just three cheers, Doubleday received three more. To add to the festive musical program, attendees were invited afterward to view an exhibition of paintings by Brooklyn artists, including Régis Gignoux’s well-known *Niagara*.<sup>101</sup> Music and art had again combined, this time in support of the war effort.

War failed to dampen the spirits of the Philharmonic’s subscribers. At the annual stockholders’ meeting, President Wyman congratulated the Society on a highly successful year. The treasurer reported that more than a thousand season ticket holders plus healthy receipts from five concerts and related rehearsals had produced nearly \$8,000 in income. After expenses, the Society held a handsome bank balance of \$2,000. Voting for the new board placed Wyman again at the head of the list as president. Alongside him served many of Brooklyn’s familiar and most generous patrons.<sup>102</sup> The new policy of charging extra for reserved seats at Philharmonic concerts seems to have temporarily settled the seating controversy, for the minutes from the meeting gave it no mention. War had brought more pressing matters to the fore.

Early in the conflict a persistent problem facing state governments and local communities concerned not only relief for impoverished families of departed soldiers, but funds to provision the soldiers themselves. When the Thirteenth Regiment deployed early to Annapolis and then Baltimore to help quell anti-war riots, half of the four hundred men reportedly had no uniforms.<sup>103</sup> Newly formed regiments depended heavily upon private

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 May 1861, 3. They included Edward Whitehouse, John Greenwood, Robert R. Raymond, A. Cooke Hull, Lyman S. Burnham, Charles A. Townsend, Alexander V. Blake, Willard M. Newell, Charles Congdon, Samuel Sloan, Henry F. Vail, Edwin D. Plimpton, William Poole, George S. Stephenson, Henry K. Sheldon, J. J. Ryan, James H. Frothingham, Henry R. Worthington, Henry H. Dickinson, J. Charles Berard, Gordon L. Ford, John Bullard, Julius Ives, and A. B. Vandyke.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1861, 2.

donations from relatives and friends to prepare them for war. Such private support helped many local soldiers, but those like the men of the Twenty-Eighth Regiment, mainly working-class German immigrants, whose families were too poor to offer much in the way of assistance, received little or nothing beyond government-issue uniforms and weapons when available.<sup>104</sup>

In Brooklyn and in countless other cities, depending on the strength of their enthusiasm for the war, elected officials often disagreed on the legality of appropriating public resources for soldier support. In Brooklyn, the commanding officers and more than a dozen wealthy sympathizers petitioned the Brooklyn Board of Aldermen on behalf of the Continental Guard, a regiment enlisting men for three years' service as the Forty-Eighth Regiment of New York Volunteers. The regiment was under the command of a local Methodist minister and veteran of the Mexican War, Colonel James H. Perry. The petitioners sought a subvention of up to \$10,000 to help equip the soldiers, the majority of whom were Brooklynites. The petition sparked a heated debate among the aldermen. Opponents of a motion to refer the matter to the War Commission argued that the board had no legal power to allocate funds for the regiment and would be exceeding its authority. Supporters in favor of using municipal funds to aid the regiment accused their opponents of harboring secessionist sympathies. One proponent expressed chagrin that "the representatives of a city of 300,000 inhabitants—a city worth \$100,000,000—[were] squabbling and wrangling over the proposition" whose "patriotic purpose" was to furnish no more than \$10,000. Sadly for the petitioners and soldiers, the measure went down to defeat.<sup>105</sup> The petition's failure was not an isolated event. That first year the majority of aldermen remained peevish, if not outright defiant, in matters relating to the war. In Spring 1862 when Luther Wyman and seven other prominent citizens, members of the new War Fund Committee, requested a meeting with the Board of Aldermen to discuss a means of honoring Commodore Andrew H. Foote, long a Brooklyn resident, former commander of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and hero of the

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 May 1861, 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1861, 2. Luther Wyman was among the signatories.



Tennessee and Mississippi River campaigns, none of the aldermen deigned even to show up for the meeting.<sup>106</sup> Three weeks earlier, Wyman and friends, acting as private citizens, had honored another commodore, Silas Stringham, with a magnificent sword and celebratory dinner at Mansion House.<sup>107</sup> Stringham had distinguished himself early in the war by capturing rebel forts at Cape Hatteras off the North Carolina coast.

In 1861 with fading hope of reliable subventions from city officials even for such basic needs as tents or money to rent temporary barracks and drill grounds for soldiers awaiting deployment, concerned citizens stepped into the breach, redoubling their efforts to supply enlistees' wants through various private relief organizations and individual donations. Luther Wyman, who had helped Col. Perry obtain his regimental command, took the Forty-Eighth "Continental Guard" under his personal wing. According to the regiment's biographer, they regarded Wyman to be a "gentlemen of high social qualities, of cultivated taste, of wide influence and considerable money, and his personal friendship for Colonel Perry induced an active interest in the regiment...[to whom] he was known as its special friend and patron."<sup>108</sup> Soldiers of the Forty-Eighth Regiment were known as "Perry's Saints," for the number of ministers in its ranks and for their reputation of upstanding, exemplary moral conduct. Before and during their deployment, Wyman opened his wallet to the officers of the regiment, advancing pay and providing any other financial assistance they or their families might need to prepare themselves and the men under their command.<sup>109</sup> Such was Wyman's generosity that in gratitude the regiment named its campground at Fort Hamilton as Camp Wyman.

<sup>106</sup> Reprinted from 17 March 1862 in *ibid.*, 24 March 1889, 10.

<sup>107</sup> Luther Wyman and friends organized the event. Stringham had captured the rebel forts in August 1861, *ibid.*, 28 February 1862, 2.

<sup>108</sup> James Moses Nichols, *Perry's Saints, Or, The Fighting Parson's Regiment in the War of the Rebellion* (Boston, MA: D. Lothrop, 1886), 31.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–28. Nichols called Luther Wyman "the most prominent and most constant" of the friends of the regiment.

Colonel Perry's men soon received a full supply of tents and other amenities for a "comfortable camp life."<sup>110</sup> Support for the Forty-Eighth stood in sharp contrast to the situation of returning veterans in other regiments such as the Fourteenth New York State Militia, also from Brooklyn, many of whom were poor and who had "no rich friends here who can send them on little delicacies" such as longed-for fresh fruit.<sup>111</sup> The *Eagle* helped promote an appeal especially for the ladies of Brooklyn to involve themselves in relief efforts "for these poor fellows." The Thirteenth and Twenty-Eighth Regiments, mentioned earlier, fared little better. After completing their service, they had been mustered out but had not received their pay. Upon returning to Brooklyn, the Thirteenth, at least, had been treated to a festive reception with flags and welcome banners waving and a ceremonial escort from the Fulton Street Ferry dock to City Hall composed of members of ten fire companies and thirteen baseball clubs. The veterans themselves looked "rough and sun-burnt" but still made a soldiery appearance.<sup>112</sup> Despite their differences, Brooklynites' civic fabric remained sturdy to support, often with private funds, the patriotic public parades and celebrations that harkened back to an earlier, more peaceful day.

Over at Camp Wyman, recruits fared considerably better. When a terrible nor'easter swept through the area, the torrential rains flooded out troops camped on nearby Riker's Island. By contrast, at Camp Wyman "by industrious ditching, and the superior character of their tents," soldiers stayed comparatively dry.<sup>113</sup> A week before the Forty-Eighth received its marching orders for the South, their sponsors and officers hosted a festive farewell evening for family and friends to which the public was invited. Thousands attended, many of them young ladies. Festivities began with a full dress parade and demonstration of military maneuvers in the afternoon. That evening, Chinese lanterns suspended from arches illuminated the whole camp. Evergreen garlands entwined with flowers and flags festooned the neat avenues in the encampment. Each of the ten companies had marked its

<sup>110</sup> BE, 7 August 1861, 3. The Forty-Eighth had been so successful in recruiting an overflow that Col. Perry received permission to raise a second regiment, *ibid.*, 12 September 1861, 3. Many of its new recruits flooded to Brooklyn from New Jersey and Connecticut.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 August 1861, 3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1861, 2.

<sup>113</sup> NYT, 14 August 1861, 5.

area by sculpting its company letter and devices in sod. The men had constructed a large dance floor in front of their camp where couples and sets swayed in the silvery moonlight accompanied by Stuart's full Brooklyn band. Attendees feasted on delicacies catered by Burrows of Fulton Street, on strict temperance terms. Of all regimental leave-takings, the *Eagle* judged this *fête champêtre* to be the "most interesting, appropriate and acceptable." The "high social qualities" and "cultivated taste" of Luther Wyman and peers were everywhere evident at Camp Wyman as much as at the Academy of Music. In anticipation of the large crowds feasting and feting until the wee hours, the City Railroad Company provided car service throughout the night.<sup>114</sup> With similar forethought, at the regiment's departure from Brooklyn, Col. Perry's friends gifted him a handsome gray horse.<sup>115</sup> The farewell celebration left the soldiers something pleasant to remember as they trudged through the war first at Fort Royal, SC, then Florida, Georgia, Virginia, and finally on the North Carolina coast at Fort Fisher, Wilmington, and then Raleigh and north toward Richmond in 1865.

Sadly, Col. Perry collapsed and died from a sudden heart attack in 1862.<sup>116</sup> Wyman arranged to have his remains returned to Brooklyn for interment at Cyprus Hill military cemetery with a granite monument that recorded his deeds,<sup>117</sup> and, as trustee for Perry's widow and children, he organized a benefit by offering for sale photographs of the deceased and then popular *cartes de visite*.<sup>118</sup> The regiment itself fought on, preserving its reputation for courtesy and high character in the midst of the brutalities of war. At Christmas 1863 word arrived from Hilton Head, South Carolina, that the Forty-Eighth had pooled their supplies and invited the New York Forty-Seventh to a holiday dinner. The celebrations recalled the Forty-Eighth's departure fête in Brooklyn, for the men erected poles from which streamed flags beneath beautiful arbors of greenery at the entrance

<sup>114</sup> BE, 10 September 1861, 3; 12 September 1861, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Nichols, *Perry's Saints*, 113–14.

<sup>116</sup> He was writing at his camp desk. Nichols described him as "a man to respect, to trust, to obey," *ibid.*, 113.

<sup>117</sup> Nichols, *Perry's Saints*, 114. Luther Wyman was later reimbursed by the War Fund Committee of the Home Trust of Volunteers, BHS, Frank J. Bramhall Civil War collection, 1977.006, 1: 5, 52.

<sup>118</sup> BE, 9 August 1862, 3.

to each company's street where could be seen welcoming mottoes formed from moss and beaded with red berries.<sup>119</sup>

Gentlemen such as Luther Wyman and others associated with war relief efforts strove to render financial assistance to soldiers and their families, but also to promote civility and a high moral tone among them. Their efforts seemed to have alleviated some of the dehumanizing harshness of war, especially when such news reached home that the soldiers in Wyman's favored Forty-Eighth, so far from their families, had slaked their homesickness not with grog, but by performing Shakespearean plays in camp.<sup>120</sup> Grateful for Wyman's unstinting financial and moral support, in June 1863 the officers of the Forty-Eighth, then stationed in Georgia at Fort Pulaski on the Savannah River, sent Wyman a beautiful photo album with a complete set of their *cartes de visite* and a note signed by all in appreciation of the "many acts of kindness conferred on our corps by our esteemed fellow citizen and friend, Luther B. Wyman, Esq." who, they wrote, will always be remembered as their "affectionate friend." A letter from Chaplain William Strickland accompanied the gift describing the ongoing exemplary conduct of the regiment; how its morals remained high; how it had from the beginning prohibited gambling and drunkenness; how it held regular Sunday religious services, and had prayer at every dress parade. Furthermore, the generals had praised the Forty-Eighth for its precision in infantry and artillery drills and, considering the length of time it had been in service, Strickland boasted that no other regiment in the Union Army had been able to keep up its numbers like the Forty-Eighth. According to the chaplain and judging by the example set by the Forty-Eighth, there was no reason why the army might not be a "school of morals and education as well as a school of military discipline."<sup>121</sup> Looking briefly ahead, the Forty-Eighth finally returned to Brooklyn in September 1865 with little advance notice. Wyman hurriedly engaged Dodsworth's band to meet them at the dock from whence they marched toward City Hall, passing in front of the Wyman home where Mr. and Mrs. Wyman saluted them from their stoop. At City Hall they marched in review before

<sup>119</sup> BHS, Frank J. Bramhall Civil War collection, undated newspaper clipping.

<sup>120</sup> Bell Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*, updated ed. with a foreword by James I. Robertson, Jr. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 176.

<sup>121</sup> BE, 3 June 1863, 3, under the headline, "Presentation to a Citizen."

a messenger of the mayor, an injured veteran of the Fourteenth Regiment, who rehearsed all the battles in which the Forty-Eighth had fought.<sup>122</sup> But for Wyman's last-minute efforts, the reception given to the Forty-Eighth contrasted sharply with homecomings filled with crowds and banners accorded veterans in earlier years, when the city was not so war wearied.<sup>123</sup>

Back in 1861 despite the strains of war and the political divisiveness it wrought, or to some degree in light of them, cultural life in Brooklyn continued to flourish, its social glue thickening, though in some sectors more than others. The board of Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute advertised the start of the new academic year as usual.<sup>124</sup> More than a dozen socially prominent gentlemen, along with three of the most distinguished Brooklyn clergy, the Revs. Farley, Beecher, and Storrs, joined together to encourage the establishment of a new mercantile college in Brooklyn, to be part of the popular Bryant and Stratton Chain of Business Schools, one of which had opened in New York at Cooper Institute in 1858. They wanted a separate Bryant and Stratton school in Brooklyn.<sup>125</sup> In their letter of invitation to the schools' founders, they stressed the old theme of Brooklyn pride as a city near to, but distinct from New York that has "a separate existence and separate interests . . . and aside from the great inconvenience of sending our sons to New York to be educated, we are possessed of a degree of local pride which is most gratified in witnessing the prosperity of our institutions."<sup>126</sup> Brooklyn's sense of self-importance remained strong despite, or perhaps because of the war.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 September 1865, 2 and 3. In its years of fighting up and down the Atlantic coast, the regiment had lost more than 850 men and engaged the enemy close to forty times, Livingston, *Brooklyn and the Civil War*, 84.

<sup>123</sup> The *Eagle* was noticeably ashamed at the paltry welcome given the Forty-Eighth, which it attributed to their arrival at dusk with little advance notice. The editor also made the snide suggestion that perhaps Mr. Wyman, one of the few who knew about it, had desired to have "all the glory of singly and alone representing the people of Brooklyn," *ibid.*, 6 September 1865, 2.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1861, 1.

<sup>125</sup> Luther Wyman was one of the plan's supporters. Since its founding in Cleveland in 1852 seven other Bryant and Stratton schools had been established in New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis, *ibid.*, 30 November 1861.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1861, 3.

This same sense of optimism and pride of accomplishment shone forth in Rev. Storrs' lecture at the Academy of Music, part of a series on the concept of a just war and its ability to foster a citizenry's and a nation's highest development—for a just war “becomes a great improving, regenerating agent of the State.”<sup>127</sup> Luther Wyman, Samuel Sloan, and Simeon B. Chittenden constituted the lecture committee who chose three ministers to present their views on subjects designed to invigorate the home front, the second lecture being on the subject of “Home” as the “social system what the heart is to the physical system.”<sup>128</sup> The annual winter Fireman's Ball in support of the widows and orphans fund took place again at the Academy of Music, and the new Philharmonic Society program and the season of Italian opera featuring Miss Isabella Hinkley, got underway as well.<sup>129</sup>

In addition to managing the Philharmonic Society and programming at the Academy and now war relief efforts, Luther Wyman, like many of his peers, involved himself in many other different arenas. He kept up his associations in New York as well as Brooklyn and appears among the elected officers in 1862 of the American Institute in its Committee on Commerce.<sup>130</sup> The American Institute for the encouragement of inventions in industry, science, and agriculture sponsored an annual fair at which it distributed coveted medals for the best inventions. Wyman also sat on the board of directors of the Home Life Insurance Company of Brooklyn and New York along with familiar Brooklynites and friends such as A. A. Low, Isaac Frothingham, James S. T. Stranahan, Henry E. Pierpont, S. B. Chittenden, Edward Lambert, and others.<sup>131</sup> He also continued as an officer in the New York New England Society.<sup>132</sup> The annual celebrations for Washington's birthday, long a traditional event from the days of the Early Republic, had special poignancy in 1862 in a nation divided. Earlier, the *Eagle* had expressed a dark pessimism that with the nation split into two hostile camps, “all our present occasions of

<sup>127</sup> NYT, 11 December 1861, 12; BE, 11 December 1861, 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 February 1862, 1.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 January 1862, 3; 27 January 1862, 3.

<sup>130</sup> NYT, 15 February 1862, 3.

<sup>131</sup> *New York Evangelist*, 6 March 1862, 10.

<sup>132</sup> NYT, 20 December 1864, 7.

national jubilation shall become seasons of shame and reproach.”<sup>133</sup> But in 1862, after almost a year of war, the occasion afforded Brooklynites a welcome opportunity to renew public commitment to the founding ideals of the nation as symbolized in its early heroes, who were such “fountains of public sentiment, the builders of public character, the architects of national fame and fortune,” among whom Washington stood as the nation’s ideal. Brooklyn celebrated that year with spectacular illuminations throughout the city. The Wyman home on Joralemon Street was among those homes and businesses lighted for the occasion, and City Hall itself stood ablaze with 1,400 lights that the mayor had provided in its 108 windows.<sup>134</sup>

Luther Wyman’s standing in Brooklyn society continued to rise. In May 1862 at the conclusion of another successful season, the directors of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, who described themselves as “fellow laborers in the good old Philharmonic Cause,” offered its esteemed and long-serving president a complimentary supper, “to manifest in some appropriate way our sense of the value of your services as the Presiding officer of the Society, and of the genial courtesy and elegant hospitality its directors have so often received at your hands.” Overcome by emotion at being so honored by his friends, Wyman, when called upon to say a few words, concluded with the sentiment offered as a salute to “the Society and all who love it.” There followed many toasts, reminiscences, and remarks until 1:00 a.m., when, with the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” and the “Star Spangled Banner,” the company dispersed in the best of spirits.<sup>135</sup>

Looking back, 1861 had been quite a year for Brooklyn’s arts community with the inauguration of the new Academy of Music, which in turn proved catalytic. It had introduced entertainments on a new larger scale. Over 2,000 people could attend performances, more than doubling the number who could crowd into the Athenaeum. The building offered more performance space and better acoustics for the Philharmonic concerts; its state-of-the-art stage, with easily moveable scenery, now permitted performance of complete operas. Its flexible configuration meant more users

<sup>133</sup> BE, 18 February 1861, 2.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1862, 2.

<sup>135</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, May 1857–May 1876, 1: 100–5.

for multiple purposes, whether a concert, exhibition, popular lecture, fancy ball, art show, or congratulatory dinner. The building itself promoted sociability, admitted a larger public, and welcomed inside its capacious walls Italian opera and other entertainments in response to changing, more popular tastes, and finally even drama. It had contained even its own internal quarrels. The Academy of Music symbolized the city's dedication to the arts and became a rallying ground for renewed civic spirit and social feeling during the war.

Brooklyn's cultural societies had survived the first period of the war. They continued with their meetings and programs and had seemingly put their internecine squabbles temporarily to rest. At the same time, civic-minded individuals such as Luther Wyman threw themselves enthusiastically into the new arena of war relief. As the Academy of Music entered its second and third years, the Civil War dragged on. Casualties mounted, the need for urban poor relief mushroomed, and an unpopular military draft amplified the threat to social stability. The destitution and sickness among the indigent poor and soldiers' families seemed overwhelming. The claxon of such pressing social realities swept aside the refined cultural sentiments among Brooklyn's elite that had characterized the antebellum years in the 1850s when Brooklyn's renaissance around the arts had gotten underway. To address the huge weight of these new social problems in a meaningful way would require unprecedented community effort on a scale never before attempted. The city's practiced patrons took up the challenge while at the same time they redoubled their commitment to the civilizing potential of the arts.



## Culture of War Relief

### REDEDICATION TO THE ARTS AND AID EFFORTS

In the Civil War's middle years, Brooklyn's genteel society seemed all the more resolved both to provide relief services and to promote the arts. The two wings of their philanthropy complemented one another. Regarding the arts, Brooklynites seemed determined to stick together around their cultural societies as neutral ground. In so doing, they downplayed their different party affiliations and mitigated the stark reality of the national conflict even as the hospital ships and trains filled with the wounded kept arriving from the front and draft riots threatened. Culture and war relief progressed hand in hand. The city's compassion for the sick and wounded crescendoed at the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair in 1864, but before then, the success of Brooklyn's new Art Association gives one of the clearest signs of Brooklyn's unabated, even more determined dedication to cultivate the arts during and despite the War. By contrast, the demise of the Horticultural Society also showed that culture was not immune to war.

In the years preceding the outbreak of hostilities, appreciation of the visual arts, as with music before it, had just begun to catch the fancy of Brooklyn society, as indeed more broadly art was finding growing favor in bourgeois tastes in American and European cities.<sup>1</sup> Back in the 1840s the

<sup>1</sup> The uptick in interest in the visual arts was by no means unique to Brooklyn, as noted in David McCullough's *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New

Brooklyn Institute had hosted a series of small exhibitions of paintings on loan, but the Institute's meager means prevented the establishment of a permanent gallery of art.<sup>2</sup> In the 1850s limited exhibitions of paintings had been included almost as a lagniappe in Brooklyn's floral promenade concerts. By early 1859, practicing artists, amateurs, and friends of art began meeting together as "The Brooklyn Art Social" at the Montague Street studio of a local painter and art teacher. They proposed to rouse public interest and in a true renaissance spirit, to "encourage the revival of the arts."<sup>3</sup> A growing number of painters and portraitists resided in Brooklyn, and more of Brooklyn's youth, such as Luther Wyman's son and namesake, received instruction in drawing and painting as part of their education and considered themselves good amateur artists. The same went for Brooklyn's educated young ladies, for whom skill in painting was a social nicety. Interest in art was definitely on the rise, and several local artists of recognized talent were displaying and selling their work.<sup>4</sup> In order to publicize and encourage that local talent, members of the fledging Art Social sought gallery space. The directors of the Mercantile Library offered them free use of one of their rooms in the Athenaeum for the exhibition and sale of art to the public.<sup>5</sup> The *Brooklyn Eagle* kept an eye on the "progress of art in our city" and was quick to note that "New York, with all her boasted superiority in all matters connected with the arts, has not such a gallery!"<sup>6</sup>

York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 3–15, 47–48, 214–18, 243–51, that shows the art movement was relatively late in taking off in America.

<sup>2</sup> BMA, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, records, 1823–1980, N57 B8 B79a. Luther Wyman had loaned a portrait of a lady and a landscape for the 1845 exhibition.

<sup>3</sup> BE, 12 January 1859, 2; 13 January 1859, 2. *Brooklyn City Directory, 1862* (J. Lain and Co., 1862), 469, lists John Bernard Whittaker's studio at 137 Montague St., not far from the Academy, and his home at 301 Hudson Ave.

<sup>4</sup> BE, 12 January 1859. They included Professor Smith of the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, landscape painter John Gadsby Chapman, John Bernard Whittaker, Régis Gignoux and others. Chapman is also known for his publication *The American Drawing Book: A Manual for the Amateur, and Basis of Study for the Professional Artist: Especially Adapted to the Use of Public and Private Schools, as Well as Home Instruction* (New York, NY: J. S. Redfield, 1858).

<sup>5</sup> BE, 12 January 1859, 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 January 1859, 2.

Widening interest among artists and friends meant they soon outgrew meeting space in John Whittaker's studio. They formed themselves into the new Brooklyn Art Association and elected president well-known Hudson River School painter Régis Gignoux.<sup>7</sup> Membership grew,<sup>8</sup> and the new Association began preparations for their first formal reception and exhibition at the Academy of Music.<sup>9</sup> An elegant soirée for members and their friends preceded the exhibition's opening to the public the next day. The Association claimed for Brooklyn the pride of having the first free public art exhibitions in the nation.<sup>10</sup>

In its review of the inaugural Art Association reception, the *Eagle* caught the renaissance spirit of collaboration that lay behind the mutual flourishing of the fine arts in Brooklyn, initiated with music, now with painting:

The successful cultivation of any one branch of the fine arts stimulates the sister branches. One cannot rise and flourish in the breath of popular appreciation and approval without the rest feeling the same influences and springing up to meet them. The wide-spread musical taste which undoubtedly distinguishes the citizens of Brooklyn has not only secured a success for the Academy of Music beyond the most sanguine expectations, but has opened the way for a more general and generous recognition of the claims of kindred arts, particularly that for which Brooklyn is likely to obtain an unusual celebrity at no distant day—the art of painting.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The Brooklyn Art Association is not to be confused with the Artists' Association, the Italian opera troupe mentioned earlier.

<sup>8</sup> In February 1861 they voted to limit the membership to two hundred persons. Luther Wyman served on the Nominating Committee, *ibid.*, 10 May 1864, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1861, 3. The *Eagle's* review of the event lists some of the artists and the paintings they contributed, *ibid.*, 18 February 1861, 2.

<sup>10</sup> BMA, Minutes of the Brooklyn Art Association, 507, 1 (hereafter, BMA, BAA Minutes) 26 April 1869, "We congratulate the Association with all its friends of Art in Brooklyn that as our City was the first to establish free exhibitions of pictures, and works of Art in this country, we shall also in all probability be the first to establish a permanent gallery which shall be free to all."

<sup>11</sup> BE, 19 February 1861, 2.

The Art Association incorporated in 1864 and continued to hold its meetings and events at the Academy of Music until it could raise funds to construct its own building and gallery space next door.<sup>12</sup>

The Art Association offered an interesting social mix of practicing artists, art lovers, and patrons among Brooklyn's polite society. Starting in the 1860s and 1870s, art became the new darling of Brooklyn's fashionable social set. The Association began printing catalogs of the paintings on exhibit with the artists and names of the owners prominently listed.<sup>13</sup> Its exhibitions attracted so much public attention that at its 1864 annual meeting, attending members voted unanimously to amend the by-laws to double the dues from five to ten dollars, as a practical measure of limiting subscribers, given the "large influx" of interested persons eager to join.<sup>14</sup> Was this simply a measure designed to ensure a certain social exclusivity among the existing members, or did it embody a concern that if their numbers grew too rapidly, the Association would lose its cohesion and purpose?

Artists, such as Matthew Wilson, painter of President Lincoln's last likeness before his assassination, specialized in portraits and catered to the rising bourgeois taste of having family members immortalized in oils and pastels. Wilson painted a handsome bust-length portrait of Luther Wyman that graced the homes of several generations of Wymans from where it gazed down from its elaborate gilt and stucco frame (Fig. 7.1).<sup>15</sup> Luther Wyman lent the portrait for display at the Art Association's exhibition in 1869.<sup>16</sup> For several years before that, his son Luther, Jr. placed on

<sup>12</sup> BMA, BAA Minutes, Certificate of Incorporation, 29 June 1864, 11, with well-known artist Régis Gignoux, still as president.

<sup>13</sup> A partial collection of these catalogs survives in the archives of the Brooklyn Museum.

<sup>14</sup> BE, 10 May 1864, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew Wilson (1814–1892), born in England, first established himself in Philadelphia but in the second half of the nineteenth century kept a studio in Brooklyn. Luther Wyman's portrait, still in private hands, passed to his daughter and granddaughter, who loaned it for display at the Palace of the Legion of Honor museum in San Francisco. Wilson was also noted for his portraits in pastels and may have executed an unsigned pastel of Luther Wyman's youngest daughter, Ida Frances (b. 1851), also in private hands.

<sup>16</sup> BMA, BAA, Minutes, Exhibition lists, Spring Exhibition 1869, n. 196.



**Fig. 7.1** Luther Boynton Wyman (1804–1879) c. 1869, oil portrait on canvas by Matthew Wilson (1814–1892). Photo by G. David Hughes and the author

view several landscapes he had painted.<sup>17</sup> The exhibitions combined works loaned by local collectors with those of professional and amateur artists, some with a view to sell. The paintings hung salon-style from floor to ceiling in the Assembly Room of the Academy. Eventually, students from the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute and the Packer Institute received invitation to show their works. The role of women as artists, exhibitors, members, and as auxiliaries on reception committees grew in visibility in this period, as in other Brooklyn society events.<sup>18</sup>

The high cost of labor and materials after the war forced the Brooklyn Art Association to postpone construction of its own building until 1869, but, despite that setback, it continued to flourish. Eager to bring the arts further together, in early 1865 the Art Association proposed that it, the Philharmonic Society, and new Long Island Historical Society jointly purchase land to erect a building capacious enough to accommodate all three societies.<sup>19</sup> After discussion they deemed the idea unfeasible at that time. Instead, with the encouragement of the Academy of Music's directors, the Art Association purchased two vacant lots next door with plans to connect its building permanently to the Academy. The Association intended to raise a capital stock of \$100,000 composed of two hundred shares priced at \$500 each. As incentive, stockholders would enjoy the privilege of admission to the gallery, library, and receptions, and the right occasionally to nominate a pupil to the proposed School of Design. Despite the extraordinary financial demands of the war and related charities, the Association managed to raise half the planned amount, more than enough to purchase the land and later build an appropriate "Temple of Art" next to the Academy of Music and add another architectural ornament to Brooklyn's arts corridor on Montague Street.<sup>20</sup>

From its earliest beginnings under President Régis Gignoux and its board's leadership, the Art Association had expressed a strong commitment to expose and educate the public to art. They had in mind a school of design, similar to one at Cooper Institute in Manhattan, then enrolling

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Exhibition Lists, 1867–69.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. the *Eagle's* listing of the ladies Reception Committee, 21 November 1866, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 May 1865, 2. Later renamed the Brooklyn Historical Society, it still thrives today.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

six hundred pupils. The Art Association prided itself on its innovative free exhibitions from which “no greater satisfaction has attended anything which has been done during the year.” The free exhibitions drew together many art lovers, who came to enjoy and study the pictures, “but to whom at present private ownership of expensive works of art was denied.”<sup>21</sup> At the most recent exhibition, the rooms at the Academy had been crowded day and night, and the sale of catalogs had been sufficient to pay expenses. Art had begun to reach its wider public.

The Art Association had been a late addition to Brooklyn’s renaissance. Its board remained mindful of the strong foundation and pre-existing spirit of collaboration to which their society attached and how it helped make Brooklyn a city of the arts. In its report, the board expressed appreciation to the “citizens of Brooklyn for the ready encouragement and aid which they have given to our efforts to domesticate art among us. Side by side stood the Long Island Historical Society, the Philharmonic Society, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the Brooklyn Art Association,—not rivals—but each striving in its own way to make Brooklyn a place of unsurpassed interest among the cities of our land.”<sup>22</sup> The Association always kept a strong commitment to educate the public about art. In addition to its regular exhibitions, once in its own building in 1871 it sponsored a free School of Design, a lecture series on art, and provided permanent gallery space open free to the public.<sup>23</sup>

Civil war did not treat all cultural societies equally. The fate of the Brooklyn Horticultural Society contrasted with the brilliant successes of the Art Association. Co-sponsor of those early floral promenade concerts that had done so much to foster Brooklynites’ notions of beauty in nature and in the combined arts during the early phase of Brooklyn’s renaissance, the Society did not survive the Civil War. It dissolved in December 1864.<sup>24</sup> Several reasons account for this cultural casualty of war. In large measure due to the efforts of its indefatigable president John W. DeGrauw, the Society had incorporated, but it had not achieved tax exempt status, since local nurserymen, the commercial members of the Society, sold their

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 May 1865, 2.

<sup>23</sup> BMA. BAA minutes, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> BE, 7 December 1864, 2.

nursery plants for profit at the Society's shows.<sup>25</sup> From this early setback the Society struggled financially. It was hard pressed to attract sufficient new members, especially once the Mercantile Library had been established in 1857. Members who could not afford dues to both chose books over plants and abandoned the Horticultural Society, in one of the few instances when a new cultural foundation actually detracted from an existing one.<sup>26</sup> But that setback proved temporary, for when the Society started hosting floral promenade concerts together with the Philharmonic in 1858, its fortunes were again on the upswing, and by 1861 it operated in the black.<sup>27</sup>

However, Brooklyn still did not have a botanical garden which would have fostered a greater public interest in horticultural science and given the Society a location for its own meetings and programs.<sup>28</sup> The Society felt it was running out of space for exhibitions and for its growing library at the Athenaeum. Members discussed the desirability of having their own "establishment."<sup>29</sup> As a sign of their commitment to building community, rather than pressing just their own suit, the Horticultural Society participated enthusiastically in discussions supporting the construction of the Academy of Music and in plans for what was to become Prospect Park. There was some grumbling in the press about how the Society used unnecessarily long scientific names in Latin rather than common plant names at its shows, but members made genuine efforts to attract a larger public, even instituting premiums for "Best Design for a City Yard." The *Eagle* did its part to emphasize appeal to a broader public by listing first the names of the gardeners who had plants on exhibit before those of their wealthy employers such as the Lows and Stranahans.<sup>30</sup> In late 1860 the paper crowed that interest in gardening and the business of horticulture was growing in Brooklyn, with rising attendance at the floral exhibitions and the opening of several new gardening stores.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1855, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1858, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1861, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> See DeGrauw's appeal in his address before the Brooklyn Horticultural Society, 7 December 1854, preserved in pamphlet form at the NYHS, and also reported in *BE*, 9 April 1857, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 November 1860, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April 1861, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1860, 2.



But something changed with the onset of the war, perhaps reflective of the same restlessness behind the dispute over legitimate drama and preferential seating brewing contemporaneously at the Academy of Music. The issue of exclusivity reared its head also at the Horticultural Society. Someone signing himself “Improvement” made a list of suggestions how to make the Society more appealing and serviceable to a wider public.<sup>32</sup> In the absence of the longed-for, proper botanical garden, “Improvement” felt the Society should obtain its own defined space to host a permanent exhibition of plants and to maintain its growing library. It should publish lists of local nurserymen, print exhibition catalogs as reference tools, and set up plant and seed exchanges. “Improvement”’s suggestions elicited a disparaging response from “Brooklyn” that the Horticultural Society should not cater to the “public” in the broadest sense of the word, or even try to educate public tastes, but rather focus first on educating its member gardeners.<sup>33</sup> In summer 1861, the Society voted to hold a special exhibition of choice plants, flowers, and fruits “to which none but members and their families will be admitted.”<sup>34</sup> The Society boasted many lady members, and some felt that exhibition meetings limited to members and their families afforded the ladies the best discreet opportunity to inform themselves about what was needed in their own gardens.<sup>35</sup> The Society’s lean toward exclusivity and to sheltering its ladies contributed to its expiry.

The Horticultural board tried to achieve a balance between addressing the desires of members favoring closed “conversational meetings and exhibitions” and those committed to providing a wider public service, sometimes through eye appeal of the unusual. For the members bent upon selectivity, they offered such “conversations” as on specimens grown in Wardian glass cases<sup>36</sup> or how to eradicate the measuring worm

<sup>32</sup> Rather than “begging the public to support it, they would be eager to become members,” *ibid.*, 1 December 1860, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 December 1860, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 June 1861, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 July 1861, 3; 3 July 1861, 3; 7 August 1861, 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 August 1861, 2; 2 September 1861, 2. Early terrariums, called Wardian cases, were the invention of Dr. Ward of London to preserve his collection of delicate ferns from pollution.

in the city.<sup>37</sup> For the second, in its large public exhibition at the Academy in fall 1861, they featured a display called “Old Abe’s Cottage,” a facsimile of President Lincoln’s modest dwelling in Springfield, Illinois, made entirely from the bark of Norway spruce trees that had taken the artist a full year to construct.<sup>38</sup> In the aftermath of the exhibition appeared a thinly disguised peeve from a would-be-affiliate who complained that the Society did not advertise itself enough to “let the public know where they are to be found,” neither when and where they met or how interested parties could join.<sup>39</sup>

Suspicious of exclusivity coupled with insufficient revenues contributed to the Society’s demise. But of equal importance, in its later years, the Society found itself victim of changing cultural tastes that in the war years seemed to favor cultivating gusto for the art of landscape painting more than cultivating actual fruits and flowers. Still, the Society prided itself on having educated Brooklynites about plants and gardening for more than a decade and for having introduced the public to tropical and exotic plants from all corners of the earth, among them rare epiphytic orchids and even a night-blooming cereus from the cactus family, together with many native plant specimens.<sup>40</sup>

The Horticultural Society, more than the Art Association, could claim a social mix in its membership, which included a spectrum of high society aficionados, commercial nurserymen, and hired gardeners. Like the Art Association and the Philharmonic Society, it attracted many of Brooklyn’s most prominent citizens, such as Luther Wyman. The Horticultural Society also availed itself of meeting and exhibition areas at the Academy of Music, but the expanded space proffered did not work in its favor, for attendance at the Horticultural’s events withered rather than flourished, and its financial base ultimately shrank below the level of sustainability. The *Eagle*, usually a booster of the Society and its mission to promote floral cultivation as a “healthful and refining pursuit,” began to note there

<sup>37</sup> Luther Tucker, *The Horticulturist, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (Published by Luther Tucker 1862), <http://archive.org/details/horticulturist>, August 1862, 17, 194, 378.

<sup>38</sup> BE, 19 September 1861, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 September 1861, 2.

<sup>40</sup> At their closing meeting President DeGrauw recapped the Society’s activities and contributions, *ibid.*, 7 December 1864, 2.

was a little “too much old fogyism about it” when at its educational meetings long-winded gentlemen held forth on such topics as the worm question or the medicinal properties of dandelions that were not of general interest and caused attendance to decline.<sup>41</sup>

During the war years the Horticultural Society struggled on, continuing its public exhibitions and strawberry festivals in the spring, typically concluded by a gala event such as a grand promenade concert that catered to the elegant crowd.<sup>42</sup> In early 1864, the Society offered its services as a decoration committee for the upcoming Sanitary Fair,<sup>43</sup> but it elicited a complaint against the organizers from among the gardeners in the Society, namely that the \$600 raised by one of the Horticultural’s officers for the floral decorations had been spent in Philadelphia among florists there rather than with local Brooklyn growers.<sup>44</sup> In fact, one local, signed “Gardener,” complained that the reason for the Society’s decline lay not with old fogyism but with his fellow gardeners, “my brothers of the blue apron,” who provided the sustaining energy in the Society as well as the plant specimens, but who felt increasingly alienated from it. His example, directed at those members among the gentle sex, told of internal divisions within the Society that had surfaced in those hard times. Apparently, after the meetings, ladies were in the habit of helping themselves to the display flowers. The “fair fingers that opened widest took the most.” With their finest specimen plants literally deflowered, the gardeners returned home empty handed and with empty pockets, such that in time “the flowers diminished in attendance and so did the ladies.”<sup>45</sup>

In response to criticisms, the board expressed its desire to bring more public attention to the Horticultural Society, but then planned two exclusive promenade concerts for late spring 1864.<sup>46</sup> Those plans elicited little energy on the part of the flagging membership.<sup>47</sup> In the spirit of sustaining

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 June 1864, 2.

<sup>42</sup> In June 1862, Wyman is remarked as having announced the order of the dancing at one of these events. *Ibid.*, 21 Jun 1862, 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 January 1864, 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 June 1864, 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 January 1864, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 May 1864, 3.

the war effort, the Horticultural ladies hosted a reception for the war-worn Fourteenth Regiment. Their efforts were met with a humorous but unkind parody in the press, as though the ladies and the regiment had engaged in a mock battle separated only by a floral temple on the Academy's stage. President DeGrauw became the "imperturbable" and Luther Wyman "the bland, who introduced the order of dancing," once the band had "refreshed themselves with a nap, after playing six tunes in three hours."<sup>48</sup> The Horticultural's promenade concert seemed shabby, more promenade than concert, thanks to Dodsworth's band who were not playing any more than they were being paid for. The Academy's vast interior was sparsely decorated, lacking the usual profusion of greenery even in the vestibule. The central spectacle, meant to be eye-catching, had been a continuous cascade of water on the stage that was kept in operation by a man hired to carry a bucket of water to the top of the waterfall, leaving another container at the bottom to catch the stream he poured down.<sup>49</sup> The *Eagle* attributed the poor showing to poor management not just to the "disturbing influences of the war."<sup>50</sup>

The Horticultural Society had gladly provided the much-admired, elaborate floral decorations at the opening of the Academy in early 1861, but by 1864 perhaps elaborate festoons of flowers and fruit had become such expected aspects of gala events that they no longer brought attention to the Horticultural Society as in the early days of the Brooklyn Renaissance. By the end of 1864 even President DeGrauw's generous subventions to the Society could not keep it afloat. Its regular meetings, featuring presentations on the more technical aspects of gardening and taxonomy failed to attract enough new members, and by then, the ladies, one of its key elements of support, had found better occupation in war relief projects. It held its final meeting in December, long-time president DeGrauw in the chair. His closing remarks rehearsed the Society's many accomplishments and commendations by distinguished horticulturalists from abroad. In stepping down, he reminded the meager assembly of a previous society's epitaph, parodied from scripture, that "flowers and beauty soon fade."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 June 1864, 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 June 1864, 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 June 1864, 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 December 1864, 2. Taken from 1 Peter 1:24.

As they evolved, inevitably tensions surfaced within societies such as the Philharmonic, Art Association, Horticultural Society, and the Academy of Music. The older, more socially and morally conservative members of the founding generation of Brooklyn's renaissance patrons resisted relinquishing control or altering their vision of what Brooklyn needed in terms of polite, uplifting, and civilizing entertainments. They haltingly accommodated themselves to the changing times and expanding public tastes that accelerated during the unsettled Civil War years. The Horticultural Society's stodginess hastened its demise, whereas, by adapting, other societies continued and even flourished during the 1860s. The Art Association's public outreach through its permanent exhibition galleries and art classes rode the cresting wave of the new public passion for painting. The Philharmonic Society, stepping to the tune of the times, had one of its concerts described as a form of musical "word painting."<sup>52</sup> The Academy of Music had first resisted, then welcomed drama within its precincts.<sup>53</sup> The Mercantile Library attracted new audiences to its lectures and growing collection and with the prospect of its new building across the street from the Academy. The Philharmonic Society and Academy of Music collaborated in offering voice classes and in 1863 together established a new Choral Society for "social," not sacred music.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, also in 1863, to meet changing fashions, the Philharmonic stated that its primary focus in the future would be on orchestral rather than choral compositions.<sup>55</sup>

The Philharmonic Society had received its share of criticism from the editor of the *Eagle*, who, under the signature "Dead Beat," wrote another farcical parody, this time of one of the Society's 1864 rehearsal concerts. He jabbed at conductor Eisfeld, the orchestra, even at

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 May 1862, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Some of the best theatrical talent was invited to perform, including noted American tragedian Kate J. Bateman and Shakespearean actor Daniel Bandman in the role of Shylock, *ibid.*, 16 June 1862, 1; 1 May 1863, 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 April 1863, 3; also in BMA, BPS Minutes, 8 April 1863, 137–40, and copy of a letter 9 April 1863, appended.

<sup>55</sup> The shift was gradual. Not until 1897 did the Philharmonic give its collection of some 4,000–5,000 volumes of choral works to the Brooklyn Institute. Then president, Henry K. Sheldon, Luther Wyman's successor, claimed that since orchestral music was liked much better than choral music in Brooklyn, the Philharmonic no longer had need of the scores, BE, 5 April 1897, 10.

Beethoven's symphonic abilities. He singled out the annoying youth who jabbered throughout the concert and several alleged streetwalkers who admired not the music, but a performer's shapely legs. When Philharmonic president Luther Wyman came on stage to introduce part of the program, he was caricatured as having his face "haloized in smiles, with white gauntlets and tip-top boots." Mean-spirited under the veil of humor, the satire contained obvious criticism of the Society's time-worn directorship. It also criticized the unrefined, broader public drawn into the Philharmonic's cheaper-priced rehearsals and of the directors such as the "benevolent Wyman" who tolerated, even encouraged it. "Wy-man you don't say so, who'd a thunk it?"<sup>56</sup> Whether in response to the *Eagle's* pokes at the lack of a cultivated, vibrant interest in the Society's offerings, or whether for personal reasons, Wyman addressed a letter to the Philharmonic's board, declining his re-election as president to allow a new direction. But the board promptly rejected his proffer, suspended its own election rules, and *vive voce* unanimously re-elected him president.<sup>57</sup> Spirits rose with the end of the war in 1865, and the *Eagle* conceded that the Philharmonic Society was flourishing, its concerts well attended. Notwithstanding the "peculiar condition of our national affairs," the paper noted that the Philharmonic had prospered, "a result which is much due to the energy of its excellent President, Mr. Luther B. Wyman, as to the excellence of the performances."<sup>58</sup>

### WAR RELIEF AND BROOKLYN'S HOME FRONT ACTIVITIES

Internal dynamics aside, outwardly, through their various activities held at the Academy of Music, groups such as the Philharmonic, Art, Mercantile Library, and Horticultural societies reinforced social cohesion among residents of the Heights and provided a welcome respite from the flow of distressing news arriving from the front as the war dragged on. The Academy of Music continued to host lectures and charity events to support the war effort, often adapting usual ones to a charitable purpose, such as a Young Men's Promenade Concert that raised \$1,800 for the US

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1864, 2. The editor's peevishness at criticisms of the *Eagle's* less than enthusiastic editorial stance on the war was embedded in the parody.

<sup>57</sup> BMA, PBS Minutes, 7 June 1864, 175.

<sup>58</sup> BE, 8 May 1865, 2.

Sanitary Commission.<sup>59</sup> Cultural cohesion within the refined aura of the fine arts did not, however, insulate members from the social and political realities swirling around them. War wounded and the poor required special attention, and the specter of the military draft and efforts to alleviate its impact loomed large on the horizon already in 1862. Brooklynites joined together in an amazing outpouring of support for their soldiers and veterans, regardless of their opinions of Lincoln's government in Washington or its prosecution of the war. Contemporary historian Henry Stiles recorded instances of residents, ranging from the postmaster to an unidentified widow, who spontaneously opened their homes to feed and house soldiers from other states who were transiting to the front.<sup>60</sup> Many of the upstanding citizens, who had been so active in Brooklyn's renaissance and fostering the city's civic and cultural identity, also took leading roles in the city's home front activities during the war. Restoring the Union became the watchword, whether that meant to some individuals favoring political concessions to restore the nation's pre-war status quo, or, to others, vigorously prosecuting the war to end slavery and bring the Confederacy to its knees.

Women, who had become increasingly visible at concerts, horticultural exhibitions, and art shows in the 1860s, assumed an enhanced and very public role in war relief. The extraordinary energy and dedication they exhibited for humanitarian causes at mid-century, before, during, and after the Civil War, likely built upon the exuberance unleashed during the religious revivalist movements of the 1830s. The women of Brooklyn had long been active in church sewing circles, bazaars, and in charity to the poor through such well-established relief agencies as the Female Employment Society (1854), but their efforts had had low public visibility.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 May 1862, 15; 15 May 1862, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh* (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867), 2: 450.

<sup>61</sup> Fortunately for the Female Employment Society, during the war in 1862 it received a generous bequest of \$5,000 from the estate of William H. Cary (d. 1861), native of Boston, one of the founders of Unitarianism in Brooklyn, and a very successful fancy goods merchant in New York, NYT, 30 December 1862, 3. On the Cary family, see Olive Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, One Hundred Fifty Years: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: The Church, 1987), 3, 13–14.

Now, however, the exigencies of war allowed bourgeois women to stake out a greater position and higher profile for their good works on behalf of sick and wounded soldiers, veterans and their families. Ladies' church circles stood in the forefront. At the Church of the Saviour, the ladies' Samaritan Society sprang into action, sending hundreds of home-made flannel shirts and hand-knit stockings to the front, rolling thousands of bandages, and stitching more than 5,000 garments for wounded veterans.<sup>62</sup> The new Woman's Relief Association of the City of Brooklyn (1862) headquartered on Court Street united women from sixty different churches, among them more than seventy Unitarian women. These women assumed a prominent role in relief efforts, making clothes and bandages, scraping lint used to pack wounds, and raising funds. The indomitable Mrs. James S. T. Stranahan led the organization. Her husband, James S. T. Stranahan, President of the Atlantic Dock Company, headed the men's War Fund Committee. He was also Luther Wyman's associate as trustee of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute and fellow commissioner of Prospect Park. The two relief groups partnered to organize and host Brooklyn's centerpiece home front event, the magnificent 1864 Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair in support of the US Sanitary Commission. The *Eagle* marveled at the Stranahans' combined leadership of both the Women's Relief Association and the gentlemen's War Fund Committee: "It is possible for man and wife to agree, but it's hardly possible for them to agree so well as to make outsiders eager to adopt their every suggestion."<sup>63</sup>

The War Fund Committee grew out of what had been the Patriotic Relief Association discussed earlier. It involved Brooklyn's usual patrons, leading the *Eagle* to muse that the War Fund Committee "appears to be another name for the directors of the Academy of Music."<sup>64</sup> The Committee coordinated support for active-duty Brooklyn soldiers, veterans, and their families, "to smooth somewhat the rough and thorny way of

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 53, who reported they spent more than \$3,600 caring for the soldiers.

<sup>63</sup> BE, 7 Mar 1864, 2. On the role of women in support of the Sanitary Commission, despite resistance, see Judith Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2000), esp. 105–12.

<sup>64</sup> BE, 15 April 1863, 2. The War Fund Committee had been organized in September 1862.



the soldier.”<sup>65</sup> Noticeably non-partisan, initially it comprised 136 gentlemen, among the most influential and “monied men of the city,”<sup>66</sup> most of them familiar names from already established cultural societies such as the Academy of Music, the Philharmonic, Horticultural, and Art Association. Members threw themselves, their considerable energy, organizational expertise, and financial resources into the task. They set up headquarters on Court Street, upstairs in the Hamilton Building, where they met every Saturday evening. Once the city and county finally agreed in 1862 to authorize financial relief to the families of volunteers, the War Fund Committee broadened its compass of support.<sup>67</sup> The subcommittee on correspondence, for example, kept in regular contact with all Brooklyn regiments in the field and maintained a file of the latest war bulletins in their office to assist family and friends wanting news of their loved ones.<sup>68</sup>

One of their chief functions involved raising money from among members and friends to help veterans and their families. Once the draft was in place, they contributed funds for volunteers and substitutes and, later, bounties for recruits. Member Simeon B. Chittenden, the wealthy dry goods merchant, fervent Republican and abolitionist, and adamant opponent of prose drama at the Academy, contributed \$10,000 for extra bounties to repopulate the Fourteenth Regiment,<sup>69</sup> and by the end of the war he claimed to have donated a total of \$25,000.<sup>70</sup> The War Fund Committee sponsored lectures at the Academy to raise money, drawing upon the talents of popular local clergy, including the scholarly Richard Storrs, the moderate A. A. Willits<sup>71</sup> and the fiery

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1864, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1864, 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1864, 2. See also the discussion at the meeting on 30 April 1862 to shift their focus once city and county decided to support families of volunteers in BHS, Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, I, War Fund committee, unnumbered. Luther Wyman was elected Vice-President of the War Fund Committee in May 1862.

<sup>68</sup> BE, 2 April 1864, 2. Wyman belonged to this committee.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 December 1863, 3; Stiles, *A History*, 2: 454.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1866, 2. In another column on the same page, the *Eagle* labeled him, rather demeaningly, that “munificent little nabob.”

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 March 1863, 2.

Henry Ward Beecher.<sup>72</sup> The money and support the Committee marshalled may help explain why Brooklyn did not experience widespread riots in 1863 like New York City following the congressional act establishing the draft. When prospects dimmed of attracting enough volunteers to fill the city and Kings County's draft quota, the War Fund Committee held a large public meeting at the Academy of Music, "irrespective of party," to figure out a plan. The well-attended gathering featured motivational speeches by several generals and leading citizens of Brooklyn aimed at drumming up support for volunteers and raising funds for bounties.<sup>73</sup>

The year 1863 proved tough for military subscriptions, making payment of bounties more of an exigency to fill the mandated quota of soldiers. Luther Wyman saw two of his sons, Benjamin F. and Luther B., Jr., head off to Pennsylvania to fight in the Gettysburg Campaign as members of the Twenty-Third Regiment of New York Infantry National Guard.<sup>74</sup> In recognition of the Twenty-Third's service, on the opening day of the Sanitary Fair, the ladies of Brooklyn presented the regiment with a pair of US and NY State flags in silk with silver mountings. The ceremony took place in front of the Chittenden home on Pierrepont Street.<sup>75</sup> Luther Wyman served as member of a committee on the draft for the Third Ward, organizing meetings at the Polytechnic and providing

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 October 1863, 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November 1863, 2. The act passed 3 March. A. A. Low and Chittenden both spoke at the meeting.

<sup>74</sup> [http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm?submitted=1&SDkeyword=&SDOriginState\\_count=1+Selected&SDOriginState=NY&SDIName=wyman&SDRankIn\\_count=None+Selected&SDfName=benjamin&SDRankOut\\_count=None+Selected&SDsideName=U&SDfunction\\_count=None+Selected](http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm?submitted=1&SDkeyword=&SDOriginState_count=1+Selected&SDOriginState=NY&SDIName=wyman&SDRankIn_count=None+Selected&SDfName=benjamin&SDRankOut_count=None+Selected&SDsideName=U&SDfunction_count=None+Selected) [accessed 2 October 2016]. Benjamin, recently returned from California, served as a sergeant, his younger brother as a private. The regiment saw action at Oyster Point and Carlisle, PA, as part of the Union defenses in the Gettysburg Campaign. The regiment was mustered out in late July, Stiles, *A History*, 2: 450–51. See also <http://www.civilwararchive.com/Unreght/unnyinf2.htm#28>. Luther, Jr. died quite young at age twenty-eight in 1871, BE, 28 March 1871, 3. Benjamin survived until 1907. He married Mary W. Anderson of New York in 1866, *ibid.*, 16 November 1866, 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 February 1864, 2; Stiles, *A History*, 2: 459.

extra backing for volunteers in the hope of avoiding recourse to the draft.<sup>76</sup> But Wyman himself, though nearing age sixty and ineligible, saw his name among those drawn for the draft. His selection sparked comment in both the Brooklyn and New York Press: "Luther B. Wyman, whose handsome but patriarchal countenance is familiar to the habitués of the Academy of Music, from the fact that his services are always called into requisition when there is any charming artist to be introduced, or any shortcoming to be attoned for, was among the chosen in the 3[r]d Ward. Mr. Wyman is prominent on almost all public occasions. Even on this occasion his name has secured a prominence which few of his juniors envy."<sup>77</sup>

Still, social life in Brooklyn Heights continued alongside war and relief activities in those middle years. For example, at the Church of the Saviour, Rev. Farley presiding, Wyman gave in marriage his eldest daughter, graduate of the Packer Institute and a "favorite Belle" of Brooklyn. A grand reception followed at the Wyman home, attended by a "full representation of our best known citizens, both old and young."<sup>78</sup> Soon the Academy of Music hosted a grand literary festival, promenade concert, and *soirée dansante* that attracted the Philharmonic crowd as well as the "more cultivated classes of the community" to hear several patriotic-themed presentations. Celebrated lecturer R. J. De Cordova recited his new poem "The Soldier," composed with musical accompaniment that emphasized the current crisis facing the nation; the latest prima donna sensation, Miss Blanche Carpenter, sang a medley of patriotic airs with variations of her own composition. Some two hundred couples took to the dance floor to round out the evening. Wyman, who had headed the organizing committee, earned a special compliment. "Mr. Luther B. Wyman, whose courtly grace and general *savoir faire* lead him into many a pleasant office, performed this little operation with his accustomed urbanity and skill; in fact, we don't know exactly what the Academy would do if it were not for Mr. Wyman."<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> BE, 16 November 1863, 2; BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, five Other Relief Organizations, unnumbered.

<sup>77</sup> BE, 1 September 1863, 2; NYT, 2 September 1863, 8. Since the draft targeted males ages 18–45, Wyman was too old to be an active soldier. His selection may refer to his service on the local draft board.

<sup>78</sup> BE, 15 October 1863. Helen Cobb Wyman married William H. Mallory. The couple headed to Washington, DC, and later resided in Bridgeport, CT.

<sup>79</sup> NYT, 25 December 1863, 7; BE, 30 December 1863, 2.

In 1864 the War Fund Committee became deeply involved in the Sanitary Fair, discussed subsequently. Later in the year they sponsored a fancy Grand Patriotic Subscription Ball at the Academy of Music aimed at Brooklyn's upper crust, who turned out in large numbers to admire and be admired. The benefit event raised over \$8,000 for relief of destitute families of Brooklyn soldiers, which monies the lady managers of the Female Employment Society distributed to the needy. The *Eagle* announced it to be "a work of the noblest charity, which appeals both to our patriotism and our humanity."<sup>80</sup> To keep the flagging war spirit alive, the Committee commissioned a series of medals for bravery to award deserving soldiers and sailors from Brooklyn and Kings County.<sup>81</sup> Recipients included a fifteen-year-old boy, a student at Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic, whose father had permitted him to join the Navy. He had been on board the Union gunboat *Cayuga* as powder boy in the battle for New Orleans and had lost a leg when struck by a shell fragment. The Polytechnic's whole student body attended the presentation ceremony and heard the principal's moving speech.<sup>82</sup>

The War Fund Committee often took the initiative when support by the city or county leaders lagged, whether with financial support in welcoming troops home, or by initiating celebrations and illuminations following the surrender of Richmond in 1865 that signaled the imminent end of the Confederacy. Absent plans from City Hall, the Committee stepped in to host a great public celebratory meeting at the Academy of Music. Finally, at the last minute the mayor requested that homes, businesses, and City Hall be illuminated.<sup>83</sup> After Lincoln's assassination, the Committee raised funds for a monument to the slain president to be erected in what became Grand Army Plaza at the entrance to Prospect Park.<sup>84</sup> In the afterglow of the Sanitary Fair,

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1864; 22 November 1864; 6 December 1864; 9 December 1864, 3; 10 December 1864, 2; 19 December, 3; and BHS, Civil War relief associations records, I, War Fund Committee, unnumbered. Luther Wyman served on the executive committee and chaired the music committee.

<sup>81</sup> BE, 29 August 1863, 2; 6 May 1864, 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 May 1864, 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 April 1865, 2; and 24 April 1865, 2. Some of the surviving accounts for the committee show Luther Wyman disbursing money to hire bands and provide receptions for returning troops. Catered refreshments for the returning Ninetieth Regiment cost \$1,000, BHS, Civil War relief associations records, 1.6.

<sup>84</sup> BE, 15 October 1869, 3; Stiles, *A History*, 3: 620.

which had attracted so many patriotic visitors, the Committee's thinking behind the Lincoln monument project had been to involve as many citizens of Brooklyn as possible by having each contributor subscribe the modest amount of one dollar toward the monument.<sup>85</sup> For example, Luther Wyman turned in one dollar contributions from forty-two people, including eight Wymans and three members of the Charles Marshall family of the Black Ball Line.<sup>86</sup> But the effort designed to demonstrate widespread, democratic, and popular support came up short. It raised only \$3,000 of the more than \$15,000 needed.<sup>87</sup> Out of a population of over 300,000 and with more than 46,000 votes cast in the last election, why did more people not pledge their dollar to the project? Were monuments, or this particular one, out of fashion? Or had Brooklynites simply become too accustomed to having the "moneyed men" of the Heights subvent the costs of public and philanthropic projects with their personal largesse? In an ironic twist of logic, it was finally concluded that the original idea to involve a wide swath of the populace in the subscriptions was misguided and unbalanced because it was unfair not to let those men of means, who could afford it, contribute more than the poorest citizens to whom a dollar represented a significant sacrifice.<sup>88</sup>

The War Fund Committee did more than sponsor monuments, medals, and large public gatherings to raise awareness and collect funds. They also backed the US Sanitary Commission with services to injured local veterans. Luther Wyman served on the subcommittee for the sick and wounded,<sup>89</sup> which may explain how he came to be a founder and trustee of the new Soldier's Home Association established to provide care for mounting

<sup>85</sup> BE, 24 April 1865, 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 September 1865, 4; BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, unnumbered.

<sup>87</sup> BE, 26 May 1865, 2.

<sup>88</sup> BE, 26 May 1865, 2. The nine-foot bronze statue, commissioned from local sculptor, H. R. Brown and the rest of the monument ended up costing \$15,000. It was unveiled and erected finally in October 1869, BE, 15 October 1869, 3; and BHS, Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, Lincoln Monument Fund, unnumbered.

<sup>89</sup> BE, 2 April 1864. The local branch of the US Christian Commission from its office in the Hamilton Building helped the Sanitary Commission assist soldiers by distributing Bibles, pamphlets, and chapel tents, Stiles, *A History*, 2: 468–69.

numbers of needy local veterans and their families.<sup>90</sup> In the fundraising custom of the day, Wyman presided over arrangements for the Association's Patriotic Subscription Ball at the Academy, which raised over \$6,000 for the Female Employment Society to distribute among the destitute families of Brooklyn soldiers.<sup>91</sup> Wyman also served as trustee and vice-president of the Brooklyn Dispensary, which in 1863 alone, treated over 5,300 poor and needy persons.<sup>92</sup> One of the War Fund Committee's most helpful services involved assisting individual families of wounded or missing soldiers and prisoners of war file for pensions and benefits owed them, but which were horribly in arrears. In the Civil War, a wounded soldier unable to fight again was quickly discharged from service, and it could take six months or longer before he or his family received his back pay or pension. A Committee member, who was himself a war veteran, sat behind a desk in the War Fund offices helping claimants complete specially designed forms to be submitted with proper verification to the government. The Committee also used a voucher system whereby applicants received a small allocation from the Committee for food and coal to tide them over.<sup>93</sup>

By putting the needs of Brooklyn's soldiers first, the bipartisan War Fund Committee remained remarkably above partisan politics. A notable exception came from the *Eagle*, whose conservative Democratic editorial stance lent it several favorite targets, notably outspoken War Fund Committee activist and Republican Simeon B. Chittenden, whom it nicknamed "Simple Chit." Already from the controversy

<sup>90</sup> Following the by-now-established pattern, in June 1864 many of Brooklyn's leading citizens signed a call for a public meeting at the Academy of Music to organize the new association. Chittenden chaired the meeting and Rev. Farley acted as secretary, BE, 25 June 1864, 2. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher gave the address. The association then incorporated as the Soldiers' Home Commission of Brooklyn, *ibid.*, 1 October 1864, 2, also reported in the NYT, 3 October 1864, 8.

<sup>91</sup> BE, 19 December 1864, 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 June 1864, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Dr. Strickland, *ibid.*, 26 September 1864, 2; also records in BHS, Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, 1, War Fund Committee, unnumbered. Not atypical was the heart-rending story of an immigrant war widow of German descent who had nothing to support herself and her four children while her husband, whom she had not heard from, was presumably either a prisoner of war somewhere in the South or dead, BE, 16 February 1865, 2.

over drama at the Academy of Music, the *Eagle* considered him too moralistic and overly zealous in his enthusiasm for the war and abolitionism. The paper accused the diminutive merchant of profiteering from government contracts in his dry goods business.<sup>94</sup> The *Eagle's* peevishness emerged after Chittenden, A. A. Low, and some of their Republican friends founded a rival newspaper, the *Brooklyn Daily Union*, which adopted a pro-Republican editorial stance.

As the war wound down and the Committee's tasks diminished, members wanted to record for posterity the remarkable work the soldiers and citizens of Brooklyn and their War Fund Committee and affiliates had done to support the Union. They wanted an account of the valorous deeds of each of the Brooklyn and Kings County regiments and then of the whole citizenry. They commissioned Col. Frank Bramhall to compile a history of Brooklyn and Kings County during the war. In conjunction with the State Bureau of Military Statistics, Bramhall began the task of collecting material with an appeal to all military and civilian groups who had participated in war-related activities to provide him with information. To get started and to distribute blank forms for individuals to complete, he met with a small group of knowledgeable gentlemen closely associated with the war effort.<sup>95</sup> He was still soliciting information a year later via press notices, but he apparently never completed the work.<sup>96</sup> In 1867, Bramhall's notes for the project were to be turned over to historian Dr. Henry R. Stiles, librarian of the recently founded Long Island and Brooklyn Historical Society (1863), who was already at work writing an urban history.<sup>97</sup> Between 1867 and 1870 Stiles published his remarkable three-volume, *History of the City of Brooklyn*, still the most comprehensive history of the city from its founding up to his own day. He dedicated the work to the "Citizens of the City of

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 October 1864, 2; 27 October 1866, 2; Stiles, *A History*, 3: 941.

<sup>95</sup> BE, 5 August 1865, 2. Luther Wyman was among them.

<sup>96</sup> BE, 7 September 1865, 3; 12 July 1866, 2. The New-York Historical Society holds a copy of his unpaginated work, *The military souvenir; a portrait gallery of our military and naval heroes. Illustrated with engravings on steel*; Frank J. Bramhall, *The Military Souvenir [electronic Resource]: A Portrait Gallery of Our Military and Naval Heroes* (New York, NY: J. C. Butter, 1863).

<sup>97</sup> BE, 4 October 1867, 2.

Brooklyn and to all whose interest in her present prosperity may lead them to look with kindly favor upon this Record of her Past.”<sup>98</sup>

The Long Island, later renamed Brooklyn Historical Society, founded in 1863, gave an institutional presence to the growing awareness of Brooklyn’s past in relation to its present. Fruit of the city’s Civil War experiences, the Historical Society embodied the ripening of Brooklyn’s renaissance consciousness of itself as a city of culture and now thriving metropolis free of New York’s shadow. The War Fund Committee’s desire to record the city’s deeds in the Civil War and its interest in Brooklyn’s history more generally, as evidenced in Stiles’ monumental account, shows that Brooklyn’s renaissance had arrived at a mature point of self-recognition and self-appreciation. The city was justifiably proud of its first generation of accomplishments and progress since incorporation in 1834. The war crystalized that process. The founders of the Historical Society were among those gentlemen who took “great interest in everything that tends to increase the prosperity and fame of the city of Brooklyn” and included among others, such familiar names as Art Association’s Régis Gignoux, Judge Greenwood, A. Cooke Hull, E. S. Mills, Charles A. Townsend, Charles Congdon, and Gordon L. Ford, all associates in other cultural venues.<sup>99</sup> The Society began meeting in that incubator of culture, the Academy of Music, and then moved to more spacious quarters in Low’s Building near the War Fund Committee’s office.<sup>100</sup> On a material level, the War Fund Committee and the Sanitary Fair helped secure donations that augmented the Historical Society’s growing collection of artifacts,

<sup>98</sup> Stiles, *A History*. The work includes sections on each of the local regiments, and at the end of vol. 3, 956, Stiles noted that considerations of space in his now nearly 1,000-page opus kept him from including more information about the War Fund Committee’s activities or more about Brooklyn’s volunteer regiments, since the Committee had planned its own history and referred readers to a brief account published in the *Brooklyn Union*, 3 May 1865. Stiles also published the mammoth, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y., from 1683 to 1884* (W. W. Munsell & Co., 1884).

<sup>99</sup> BE, 11 March 1863, 2. The Society began meeting in the Directors’ Rooms at the Academy of Music.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 June 1865, 2.



curiosities, and war mementoes.<sup>101</sup> Finally, in 1881 the Historical Society occupied its own handsome building, part museum, part library, still in use, at the corner of Pierrepont and Clinton Streets, just a block from the Academy. History had now joined the arts in the Montague Street district.

### PLANNING THE WOMEN'S 1864 GREAT SANITARY FAIR

Brooklynites took special pride in their contributions of soldiers and support throughout the Civil War, which pride had given impetus to the Historical Society. But by far the single most important element that gelled Brooklyn's self-appreciation and sense of progress came from its Sanitary Fair at the Academy of Music in February 1864. The Fair bespoke the honor of the city on a wider than local stage, bringing it into direct comparison with other metropolitan areas hosting their own fairs. By way of a challenge, Cincinnati sent Brooklyn a giant broom to see if it could best the \$240,000 its own fair had "swept up" for the US Sanitary Commission.<sup>102</sup> Brooklyn's women and men were more than equal to that challenge. Initially, organizers thought they might raise \$70,000 to \$80,000 during the two-week event.<sup>103</sup> Reverend Farley of the Church of the Saviour and secretary of the Fair, made the bold speculative dare that Brooklyn and Long Island could raise \$150,000.<sup>104</sup> In the end, their Fair surpassed every estimate and brought in an amazing \$400,000 for the US Sanitary Commission, topping by more than \$150,000 the largest amount the Commission had received to date!

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 July 1866, 2.

<sup>102</sup> Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission (1864), Executive Committee. *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair [electronic Resource]: February 22, 1864* (Brooklyn, NY: "The Union" Steam Presses, 1864), 81–82; E. A. Livingston, *Brooklyn and the Civil War* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012), 111. The giant broom was hung in the Mechanic's Hall with its challenge appended, to which at the closing of the Brooklyn Fair, someone appended another note saying, "Brooklyn sees the \$240,000, and goes \$150,000 better."

<sup>103</sup> Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission (1864). Executive Committee., *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 7.

<sup>104</sup> BE, 9 January 1864, 2.

Why was the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair so successful? What had the Woman's Relief Association and the War Fund Committee done to inspire and marshal the volunteer labor of over 730 citizens divided into thirty-three subcommittees reporting to the two executive committees, one male, one female, to plan and execute the Fair in a matter of weeks? And behind the named committee members stood thousands of other Brooklynites and Long Islanders who contributed their labor, materials, and money to the effort. What led the ladies of the Women's Relief Association to think that Brooklyn and Long Island could go it alone and in less than two months organize their own fair rather than accept New York City's invitation to join its metropolitan fair scheduled for March?<sup>105</sup> Numerous contributing factors suggest themselves.

The women of Brooklyn had taken an early lead in providing war relief through their church groups. Those long-standing groups had involved members in humanitarian good works around the city since anyone could remember. They held annual church bazaars for charity, and for years women ran organizations such as the Brooklyn Protestant Orphans Asylum (1834) and the Female Employment Society (1854).<sup>106</sup> The Woman's Relief Association, established in 1862 soon after the War Fund Committee, brought a centralized administrative structure to those various church efforts.<sup>107</sup> Crowds packed the Academy of Music the night of 24 November 1862 when the president of the US Sanitary Commission, Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, and the charismatic Rev. Henry Ward Beecher spoke to the assembly in praise of the Sanitary Commission's work. Bellows portrayed the Commission as having developed into a national movement. Its close relationship to the federal government, together with its efficiency and instrumentality in assisting the sick and wounded recommended it to great advantage over other benevolent agencies Brooklynites might affiliate with. Attendees made a unanimous resolution that certain "named ladies, in co-operation with the pastors of their respective churches, are appointed to take measures to provide and

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 December 1863, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Stiles, *A History*, 3: 834–35, 847.

<sup>107</sup> For a description of the Woman's Relief Association's role in the fair, see *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 8–26; Stiles, *A History*, 2: 459–60. Some documents survive at BHS, Brooklyn Civil War Relief Associations records, Women's Relief Association, unnumbered.

make up material for the comfort of our disabled soldiers, to act auxiliary to the Sanitary Committee of the Brooklyn War Fund Committee.”<sup>108</sup> Under its President, Mrs. James S. T. Stranahan, the Woman’s Relief Association became the central coordinating agency for the labors of sixty churches and other benevolent groups. The women’s association operated a depot on Court Street where they collected literally tons of clothing, medical supplies, equipment, and money the church ladies forwarded to the grateful US Sanitary Commission. As they got underway, and to gain greater public visibility, the ladies sponsored a promenade concert at the Academy of Music that netted close to \$6,000 for their cause. The affair was deemed more magnificent than even the opening ball at the Academy two years earlier.<sup>109</sup>

The women of Brooklyn united humanitarianism and patriotism on an unprecedented, city-wide scale. As Mrs. Stranahan expressed it, “Our work now presents itself to us, not only as a plea in behalf of humanity, but as a test of patriotism.”<sup>110</sup> They boosted Brooklyn’s civic pride and drew the various parts of the city together more effectively than even the project to build the Academy of Music had done. It took a civil war and the collaboration of thousands of the city’s benevolently inclined women to achieve for Brooklyn a renaissance civic spirit based on widespread cooperative teamwork for the greater good. It helped that many came to view the US Sanitary Commission as a truly national charity that rose above local or political issues. At their meeting in early December, the women decided to hold a sanitary fair in Brooklyn. In view of the “zeal and patriotism displayed by the ladies of Brooklyn,” their fair would undoubtedly rival Manhattan’s great metropolitan fair planned for later.<sup>111</sup> Brooklyn’s ladies wanted their fair to open 22 February in honor of George Washington’s birthday. At their next meeting, speaker Rev. Henry Ward Beecher exhorted them to “inaugurate a movement to

<sup>108</sup> *Report of the Woman’s Relief Association of the City of Brooklyn*,” 30 April 1863, 2; and its Article of Association, list of officers, and first affiliated churches, 3–8, online from the Library of Congress’ American Memory site, <http://memory.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2012/20120911004re/20120911004re.pdf> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>109</sup> BE, 13 February 1863, 2; NYT, 29 March 1863, 6.

<sup>110</sup> Report of the Woman’s Relief Association, 11.

<sup>111</sup> BE, 4 December 1863, 2.

which all classes of society from the top to the bottom should contribute.”<sup>112</sup> The involvement of the many rather than just the few would strengthen the Fair and guarantee its success.

In organizing their efforts, the women enlisted the labor of numerous groups, including those needy women under the umbrella of the Female Employment Society, the residents of the Graham Old Ladies Home, and public school children. The volunteers knitted and sewed articles of clothing using the patterns and materials the Association provided. In the first five months of operation, the Association had forwarded more than 22,000 pieces of apparel and other goods with a value in excess of \$30,000. These included over 8,000 shirts, 6,000 drawers, assorted bed-sacks, blankets, caps, combs, mittens, bandages, jellies, dried fruits, and many more items. Their prompt, persistent, and untiring services earned Dr. Bellow’s special praise, that the “union of so many Churches in this common charity . . . especially when in the face of war sectarian divisions all fall to the ground.”<sup>113</sup> The executive committee of the US Sanitary Commission subsequently passed a special resolution commending its Brooklyn auxiliary as a “model for all other cities, and [this] places Brooklyn at the very head of all single communities as a methodical benefactor to the camps and hospitals; that the union of a whole city, in its churches, for a common object, presents an unprecedented spectacle of enlightened charity.”<sup>114</sup> The men of the War Fund Committee were so impressed by what their sisters in the Relief Association could accomplish that they published a fifteen-page report praising their achievements.<sup>115</sup>

No wonder these Relief Association women felt confident they could stage their own sanitary fair without joining New York City.<sup>116</sup> No wonder in preparing for the Fair, their tightly structured organization and working depot, ready for the Fair donations about to pour in, functioned

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1863, 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 February 1863, 2; Report of the Woman’s Relief Association, 8.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–9; also BE, 17 January 1863, 3; 9 February 1863, 2; 19 February 1863, 2; NYT, 29 March 1863, 6.

<sup>115</sup> *Report of the Woman’s Relief Association of the City of Brooklyn*, available online from the Library of Congress’ *American Memory* site, <http://memory.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2012/20120911004re/20120911004re.pdf>. [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>116</sup> BE, 4 December 1863, 2; 9 January 1864, 2.

so efficiently.<sup>117</sup> Part of the genius in the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair lay in the Woman's Relief Association's ability to engage large numbers of supporters through its network of churches, both in Brooklyn and throughout Long Island. In accord with Beecher's vision, the Fair became a genuinely broad-based endeavor under the guiding hands of Brooklyn's genteel ladies and their gentlemen who headed the various subcommittees and set to work under the direction of their two executive committees, one of the Woman's Relief Association, the other an advisory committee from the War Fund Committee.<sup>118</sup> Unlike the frictions that erupted between the men running the US Sanitary Commission in Washington and their female collaborators and local leaders, which Judith Giesberg examined,<sup>119</sup> the press reported few tensions between the female and male Fair organizers in Brooklyn, and in general the ladies of the Woman's Relief Association and the War Fund Committee gentlemen worked well together for their common cause.

Volunteerism and good works formed part of expected nineteenth-century church behavior, especially among groups such as the Unitarians, who initially won acceptance in their local communities through effective social outreach. Reverend Farley of the Church of the Saviour had been one of the earliest and most outspoken supporters from the pulpit of the charitable work of the US Sanitary Commission, urging

<sup>117</sup> Mrs. Stranahan posted the following notice in the paper: "The Ladies who have been notified of their appointment as Managers of the Fair...are respectfully reminded that they are expected to take immediate measures within their respective congregations and social or family circles, according to their own best judgment and discretion for ensuring the largest possible amount of aid to this great enterprise," *ibid.*, 9 January 1864, 1. Starting 30 December, a member of the ladies' executive board was available at the depot between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to answer questions and receive donations for the fair, *ibid.*, 30 December 1863, 3.

<sup>118</sup> At their meeting 4 December 1863, the ladies had resolved that the War Fund Committee be requested to appoint an Advisory Committee of twenty-five or more, "to assist us in carrying out the object and plan of the fair," *ibid.*, 4 December 1863, 2.

<sup>119</sup> Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood*. Her study emphasizes women's struggles for political empowerment.

all within the sound of his voice to organize locally in support of the Commission.<sup>120</sup> The sanitary fairs of 1863–64 held in various cities across the country sprang from long traditions of church bazaars for charitable causes. Women usually ran them, and they featured locally made items and prepared food for sale.<sup>121</sup> Organizing and managing a huge city- and island-wide fair, however, required planning expertise that drew upon the mercantile practices and associational networks that Brooklyn’s leading commercial families had built up over the years and put into practice throughout the city’s cultural renaissance. If these Brooklynites, male and female, could run their businesses and large households, finance and construct schools, organize dozens of benevolent and cultural societies, and build an ambitious project such as the Academy of Music debt-free, they could certainly put on a sanitary fair in a matter of weeks and raise an amazing amount of money for soldier relief.

Like the women, the men from the War Fund Committee sprang into action by utilizing their commercial networks. Each member agreed to contact personally “every business and manufacturing interest in the city, and in every department of business and trade in the city” to elicit support and donations for the Fair.<sup>122</sup> With Brooklyn’s honor at stake, or so they stated, donations came in “like the popping of the champagne corks at the Russian ball.” In a “rivalry of generosity,” in short order they raised \$26,000 in subscriptions from amongst themselves, A. A. Low, being the largest contributor with \$2,500, followed by forty others with pledges of \$500–\$1,000.<sup>123</sup> Reverend Farley, recently retired as pastor of the Church of the Saviour,<sup>124</sup> and in his capacity as Fair secretary, declared himself ready to be present at the War Fund Committee’s Court Street offices six days a week mornings and afternoons, to give out information

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 105–6. *Christian Inquirer*, 6 December 1862, 17.11. Unitarians were heavily involved in the Sanitary Commission’s work at all levels, including its president, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

<sup>121</sup> Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood*, 105–6.

<sup>122</sup> BE, 18 December 1863, 2.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1863, 2; *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 18.

<sup>124</sup> BE, 31 March 1863, 2; *Christian Inquirer*, 4 April 1863, 17, 27.3. He had served twenty-one years in the pulpit of the Church of the Saviour. In gratitude, the congregation gave him a \$26,000 parting gift, *New York Evangelist*, 11 June 1863, 33.24, 5.

and answer questions.<sup>125</sup> Fair planning was widely regarded as uniting the citizens of Brooklyn “with one heart and one mind,” which phrase quickly became the Fair’s mantra repeated again and again.<sup>126</sup> The head of the finance committee gave a rousing speech at an organizational meeting in December. Enveloped in the afterglow of his and other merchants’ efforts to alleviate the plight of African-Americans following the summer’s draft riots in New York, he extolled the “catholic feeling among ourselves which this effort was bringing about. Here were men of all persuasions in politics and religion, working together cheerfully in a holy cause and feeling more and more of the spirit of brotherhood every moment.”<sup>127</sup>

Glowing rhetoric aside, soon, however, three potentially divisive policy issues emerged that the joint managers had to resolve. First, the fear arose that religious sectarianism among the many different participating churches and denominations might undermine the ecumenical spirit of the Fair. After careful discussion, the male and female heads of the committees on internal arrangements and reception of goods, issued a joint statement stipulating that no tables of “religious or other organization distinctly as such” could be set up, for on this occasion citizens, “ignoring all party or sectarian lines, should all unite as with one heart in aid of the noblest charity which has ever been presented to our people.”<sup>128</sup> Lest any feel slighted, all donations from all the different congregations were carefully noted and reported.<sup>129</sup> The second issue concerned ticket prices, already familiar from the earlier discussions over the cost of admission to Philharmonic concerts. Those who wanted to charge a dollar for a single admission were promptly accused of exclusivity, of wanting to make the Fair “a nice little place for themselves and their friends.” Indeed, in the last few days of the Boston fair, ticket prices had been raised to one dollar precisely to limit the throngs pressing at the doors.<sup>130</sup> After long debate, the committee members favoring admission at “popular rates” won out, so that the “wives and children of the soldiers in the field, the laborers at

<sup>125</sup> BE, 9 January 1864, 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1864, 2.

<sup>127</sup> J. D. McKenzie, *ibid.*, 21 December 1863, 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 January 1864, 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1863, 2.

home, the mechanics in our shops, the clerks in their stores, and the salaried people of the land” could all attend. The Fair was meant to be democratic and inclusive.<sup>131</sup>

The third issue, concerning alcohol and raffling, proved to be less tractable, but not insurmountable. Temperance-minded committee members, many of them women, flatly opposed the sale and consumption of any alcoholic beverages at the Fair or any gambling in the form of raffling donated items. The issue of drink surfaced over some wine contributed in response to an appeal by Edward J. Lowber, a well-connected New York grocer, ex-alderman, board member of the Academy and soon of the Art Association. Lowber headed the Fair’s refreshment committee, one of the most important and potentially lucrative areas in Fair receipts.<sup>132</sup> He and his committee had solicited donations from grocers, suppliers, and restaurateurs. In rolled three hundred barrels of flour, promises of an endless supply of fresh oysters and game, turtles from Florida and other specialty food items for the Fair restaurant, including the gift of some three hundred boxes of wine, which Lowber apparently planned to serve discreetly at various committee functions and dinners during the Fair period. Overblown rumors quickly spread, however, that Lowber’s real intention was to sell spirits to attendees. The specter of drunk and rowdy fairgoers sparked a petticoat rebellion. Those morally minded women and their male supporters, Mr. Chittenden and A. A. Low undoubtedly among them, objected to the presence of any alcohol whatsoever. Mounting the temperance hobby horse, those opposed to liquor made the rounds of all the churches, inflaming emotions, even accusing Lowber of wanting to turn the Fair into an “enormous rum shop.”<sup>133</sup>

Deeply insulted, Lowber and committee members declared their intention to resign, which action would have removed an estimated \$20,000–\$30,000 in donated victuals from Fair coffers. The executive boards held a protracted discussion, punctuated by urgent appeals to the Fair’s governing principle of “one heart and one mind” and to its beneficial influence upon the “common heart, because of the social bond it has

<sup>131</sup> General admission was fifty cents the first week with different options of what to attend, *ibid.*, 16 February 1864, 2; *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 28–29.

<sup>132</sup> BE, 8 February 1864, 2.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1864, 2; 22 February 1864, 1, 2.



strengthened, and the new impulses to patriotic duty it has everywhere awakened.”<sup>134</sup> As in the dispute over drama at the Academy in 1861, once again, practical, monetary considerations carried the day against the strict moralists. The joint executive committees issued a very carefully worded, face-saving resolution, recommending, but not mandating, that the refreshment committee not serve alcoholic beverages. The ladies’ refreshment committee wrote Lowber and the executive committee a long conciliatory statement praising his work and begging him not to resign.<sup>135</sup> Still, someone or several on the executive board made an end run and slipped a statement into the official program of the Fair, asserting that “in deference to a largely expressed public sentiment, and heretofore published, there will be no sales of wines and no raffling.” The statement brought a sharp rebuke from the *Eagle*, which reminded the public that the boards had passed no such unilateral resolution.<sup>136</sup>

Discussion over whether to permit raffling of donated items at the tables staffed by volunteer church women split the joint boards along similar lines. Temperance folks deemed raffling, akin to gambling, to be immoral. They wanted none of it. A visitor from Cincinnati, who had been involved in the fair there, reported his city’s compromise solution, namely to permit raffling only at the display tables manned by women who did not object. The gentleman observed that in Cincinnati, the tables that held raffles disposed of all their goods, whereas those without it had an embarrassing surplus of unsold items by fair’s end. He added that Cincinnati’s solution to the liquor question had been not to serve any spirits, wine, or beer, despite the local German brewers’ generous offer to supply lager. Instead, supposedly in deference to old New England preferences, they had put up a cider mill, whose sweet liquor was sold and consumed in great quantity.<sup>137</sup>

In Brooklyn, the raffle issue came to a head at the close of the Fair, concerning the disposition of the Artists’ Album, a collection of 120 sketches donated by local artists, among them Régis Gignoux and well-known New York painter John Falconer.<sup>138</sup> Over five hundred shares at

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1864, 2.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*; 10 February 1864, 2; 20 February 1864, 2.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 February 1864, 2.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 61–63.

ten dollars each had been sold for a chance to take home a portion of the collection. Rumors circulated that the raffle would be disallowed because of objections on the boards. But with the tide of opinion clearly against him, Mr. Chittenden withdrew his vocal opposition. The *Eagle*, ever opposed to the “ill-advised interference of venerable men, who having come down to us from former generations, think they are entitled to meddle with what they cannot mend, and frustrate what they cannot forward,”<sup>139</sup> printed a biting headline pointed toward those excessively moralistic opponents of the raffle. It stated very simply, “The Gospel of St. Matthew, 23<sup>rd</sup> Chapter, 27<sup>th</sup> verse” [Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!].<sup>140</sup>

In the end, the sketches were divided into six packages. Over one hundred people and “at least one pickpocket” gathered in the Assembly Room at the Academy of Music to see who would be the lucky six winners. Organizers pressed a draft wheel into service. “Brother Wyman in the attitude of Washington and the hatchet, turned the wheel” and the comely daughter the Academy’s janitor drew out the winning names. Only three were Brooklynites, and of them only one a resident of the Heights. Two others hailed from New York City, one from Baltimore. The album had been duly and widely disbursed to the lament of some who preferred the collection remain intact and in Brooklyn in the hands of some public entity. They imagined perhaps the prospective Brooklyn Art Association which would care for and periodically exhibit the drawings as a “fitting memorisation of Brooklyn’s greatest achievement.”<sup>141</sup>

Such internal squabbling among both male and female board members could be expected. Similar ideological differences had certainly surfaced on previous occasions. For all the fodder they provided the press, they did not seriously disrupt the Fair. Predictably they found no mention in the official history written on behalf of the executive committee by Rev. Farley. The notion of “with one heart and one mind” prevailed.

Reverend Farley, as Secretary, had issued a grand public appeal to “our fellow-citizens and noble women here and throughout the Island . . . to lend their aid by personal efforts, and by the largest contributions of material

<sup>139</sup> BE, 10 February 1864, 2.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 February 1864, 2; 18 March 1864, 2.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1864, 2.

and money, of Agricultural produce, of the fruits of manufacturing and mechanical skill; of works of art; of anything and everything from their industry, ingenuity, or abundance which may swell the grand result for which we look.”<sup>142</sup> The Horticultural Society immediately offered its services as a decoration committee.<sup>143</sup> Someone else sprang forward with a gift of 1,000 pounds of Java coffee valued at \$250;<sup>144</sup> the grocers’ committee sent out an appeal for donations and quickly raised \$9,600 with another \$1,650 close behind from twenty-three different parties.<sup>145</sup> The Brooklyn City Railroad volunteered to donate all receipts the opening day of the Fair, estimated at no less than \$2,000.<sup>146</sup> Not to be outdone, the Philharmonic Society announced an extra concert with full orchestra, from which it designated the entire proceeds to the Fair. The advertisement encouraged all members and their friends to purchase tickets so that “our society may not be behind other associations in aiding the great work now in progress.”<sup>147</sup> Luther Wyman, who sat on the executive board of the Fair as chair of the music committee, arranged a stream of musical entertainments over the duration of the Fair, drawing in not just the Philharmonic’s orchestra, but such popular groups as Mr. Hooley’s Minstrels, who agreed to give two benefit performances.<sup>148</sup> Dodsworth’s band and the military band from the US receiving ship *North Carolina* provided music most other evenings.<sup>149</sup>

For the more exclusive set, a New York commercial merchant and Brooklyn resident arranged one of a number of parlor entertainments for friends at his Jorammon Street home. His affair featuring seven well-known Brooklyn and New York vocalists and instrumentalist raised \$175 for the Fair and earned from Rev. Farley grateful thanks in print.<sup>150</sup> For the artistically and dramatically inclined, the Athenaeum brought to life a series of paintings in a touching series of *tableaux vivants*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1864, 2.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 January 1864, 3.

<sup>144</sup> Mr. Lewis A. Osborn of New York, *ibid.*, 9 January 1864, 2.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 January 1864, 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 January 1864, 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 January 1864, 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 January 1864, 1.

<sup>149</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 28.

<sup>150</sup> John B. Hutchinson, Esq., BE, 9 March 1864, 2.

with musical interludes, featuring such maudlin scenes as “The Death of Little Paul,” “Marie Antoinette” at her sentencing, and “[Benjamin] Franklin at the Court of France.”<sup>151</sup> Little girls aged ten to twelve from South Brooklyn staged their own local fair and presented \$164 to the War Fund Committee.<sup>152</sup> Various such ancillary benefit events took place across the city and Long Island, which drew contributors together to sustain what they understood to be an overarching national cause and the nation’s premier charity. The Sanitary Commission’s national appeal, transferred to the local level, helped consolidate Brooklyn and Long Island’s community spirit and synergy around the Fair.

### THE SANITARY FAIR

The Academy of Music served as the Sanitary Fair’s central venue, the obvious place for several reasons. By 1864 the Academy had come to symbolize Brooklyn more than any other location; it had also hosted many large public gatherings related to the war; and its huge interior spaces could be adapted for the planned bazaar and exhibitions. Volunteers set to work furiously. Inside the Academy extra flooring extended the main stage over the parterre and orchestra to accommodate the many tables piled high with merchandise for sale. A huge painted backdrop depicted wounded soldiers standing outside a Sanitary Commission hospital tent and conveniently hid the Academy’s usual stage scenery stored behind it. A contemporary lithograph of the Academy’s main auditorium shows its expanded stage filled with long display tables. Ladies and gentlemen stroll among them while others rest in the dress circle and balcony seats above, to chat and admire the spectacle below. Hundreds of yards of red, white, and blue cloth streamers transformed the interior into a patriotic wonder, and a magnificent American eagle suspended by invisible wires from center ceiling watched over the crowds. Tiny gas jets above the arch of the stage blazed out the message “In Union is Strength” (Fig. 7.2).<sup>153</sup> *Harper’s Weekly* published double folio engravings of various scenes from the Fair and showed the Academy’s

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1864, p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 51.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.



**Fig. 7.2** Great Hall, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair 1864, viewed from the First Tier Balcony. Bequest of Samuel E. Haslett to the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Accession # 22.1910. Photo courtesy of the museum

every nook and cranny filled with booths and displays, even the areas under the stairs.<sup>154</sup> Space totaling more than 20,000 square feet was devoted to the sale of goods.<sup>155</sup> Only the upstairs meetings rooms were unoccupied by the bazaar. Those rooms housed the art exhibit for which Brooklyn's artists and leading citizens had loaned their prize paintings.

For such a grand enterprise that had London's Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 as inspiration, one building, even one as large as the Academy of Music, hardly provided enough room to contain all the various departments of the Fair. The planners incorporated several other locations next door and across the street from the Academy, turning the block of Montague Street from Clinton to Court Street into a single Fair complex. Organizers pressed into service two lots owned by A. A. Low and Mrs. Packer, benefactress of the Packer Institute, as well as the Taylor Mansion building at the corner of Montague and Clinton Streets. A two-story restaurant, named Knickerbocker Hall, quickly rose upon Mr. Low's lot next to the Academy, future site of the Brooklyn Art Association. Gilbert Stuart's full-length portrait of George Washington on loan from the Pierpont family presided over the main hall, surrounded by patriotic bunting and flags. An eye-catching five-foot gâteau, depicting a Temple of Liberty done in white sugar, ruled over tables of cakes and confectioneries for sale. The restaurant proper served food to the hungry crowds at seventy tables on two floors as well as at some larger banquet tables. Lunch fare featured delicacies such as cold fowl, chicken, and lobster salads, tongue, ham, and other favorite New York dishes. The Duryeas donated and staffed an entire department devoted to concoctions of their family's novel specialty maizena, or corn starch.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Illustrations are available online through the Brooklyn Museum from its 2010 display, "Healing the Wounds of War," [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/open-collection/exhibitions/3218/Healing\\_the\\_Wounds\\_of\\_War%3A\\_The\\_Brooklyn\\_Sanitary\\_Fair\\_of\\_1864/set/0ef8c371f29ff236b30044d2a0193f43?referring-q=Healing+the+wounds+of+War](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/open-collection/exhibitions/3218/Healing_the_Wounds_of_War%3A_The_Brooklyn_Sanitary_Fair_of_1864/set/0ef8c371f29ff236b30044d2a0193f43?referring-q=Healing+the+wounds+of+War) [accessed 2 October 2016]. The *Eagle* devoted long columns on 22 and 24 February and 7 March to detailed descriptions of the Fair, its displays and the crowds attending. Every day of the Fair the *Eagle* published long descriptions of Fair doings and the rapidly increasing revenues from each day's take, 22 February–8 March 1864. The *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 26–55, has a detailed walk-through room by room.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 67–68.

Across the street on Mrs. Packer's land where the Mercantile Library would soon relocate, volunteers constructed the Old New England Kitchen and the Hall of Manufactures. They connected the Hall to the Academy via an elevated covered walkway (cf. Fig. 6.1). Volunteers enlarged the Taylor Mansion to accommodate the Museum of Arts, Relics, and Curiosities and the editorial rooms of the Fair's daily newspaper, the *Drum-Beat*, underwritten by Mr. Chittenden.<sup>157</sup> The Fair literally spilled out the doors of the Academy and enveloped the surrounding area. Thus, the footprint of Brooklyn's fine arts district on Montague Street, anchored by the Academy of Music, together with the Art Association and the Mercantile Library, buildings soon to replace those temporary structures, already existed in embryo during the weeks of the Fair and in people's memories afterward.

The Fair held a little something for everyone. To de-emphasize any sectarian feelings, the committee on internal arrangements divided goods donated for sale not by church, but by category, with worsteds all together, baskets, men's and women's white goods, children's clothes, toys, dolls, books, stationary, wax flowers, glassware, furniture, afghans, leather, silver, and imported fancy goods, which Mr. Low had arranged with the Customs House to pass duty free. A sizeable collection of over five hundred donated clothes wringers, priced at discount levels of seven dollars each, graced one end of the main lobby.<sup>158</sup> The fascinating "skating pond" occupied the other end. The lady responsible employed a series of angled mirrors to create an illusionary scene of beautifully costumed skaters circling around an unending field of ice.<sup>159</sup> Several refreshment stands offering soda water and a choice of flavored syrups were placed strategically throughout the Fair buildings. There was even a post office where attendees, especially young men and women, could exchange private messages, many in verse, for the price of a stamp. Near the entrance to the covered bridge leading to the Hall of Manufactures and Old New England Kitchen, stood a replica of a Civil War soldier's tent. Inside volunteers sold Civil War photographs, and tokens and memorabilia donated from

<sup>157</sup> For descriptions of the different Fair buildings, *ibid.*, 26–27.

<sup>158</sup> Mrs. Edward Anthony, *ibid.*, 35–38, 80; a map of the locations of the various departments of goods is also in BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, 3, Brooklyn and Long Island Fair, unnumbered.

<sup>159</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 36.

the battlefield or from the hospital beds of appreciative soldiers. One veteran sent his gift accompanied by an explanatory note, "This ring was worn in ten different engagements, being made by myself while on picket duty."<sup>160</sup>

Souvenirs associated with the war either as curiosities in the Museum or donated for sale enjoyed particular popularity. For example, Luther Wyman loaned or donated the following curiosities found or captured in South Carolina: a rebel sabre captured at Hilton Head, an old human skull found at Bluffton and a rebel musket captured nearby, a rebel flag, knife, pistol, and coat all captured at Pocatoliga. His friends in the Forty-Eighth Regiment of New York Volunteers had probably sent him the souvenirs in appreciation of his patronage. Wyman also donated for sale five mounted Palmetto canes and ten other walking sticks made from orange, lemon, and Asia wood, along with several works of art, a copy of an unidentified Rembrandt painting, a crayon drawing of a female head, and an unidentified photograph in a nut wood frame. His son Luther, Jr. contributed a battle flag. Further, Wyman provided what was then considered one of the prize Confederate souvenirs, an exploding mine, called a torpedo, fished out of Charleston Harbor. It had been designed barrel-like to float beneath the surface and explode on contact with a patrolling Union gunship. The mine was one of three perfect specimens sent North, the other two having gone to West Point and to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. After the Fair, Wyman donated the torpedo to the Long Island Historical Society for its collection.<sup>161</sup>

In the nineteenth century, collectors prized albums containing autographs of well-known figures. Several were auctioned at the Sanitary Fair, among them one Luther Wyman had put together for which he obtained

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 41–43.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–58; BHS, Annual report, May 1864 and correspondence dated 27 January, 1 February, and 5 May. Luther Wyman in his letter of 5 May to Rev. R. S. Storrs, wrote: "My Dear Sir, Capt. Balch of the U.S. Steam Gun Boat "Pawnee" sent to me through Lt. Col. Hall Provost Marshall General of Hilton Head, a Rebel torpedo fished up by him in Charleston Harbor for Exhibition at the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair. In accordance with the privilege granted me by Capt. Balch to make such disposition of the torpedo after the Exhibition as I might desire, I have much pleasure in presenting it through you to the Brooklyn Historical Society. Very respectfully, Your ob[edien]t Serv[an]t L. B. Wyman."



the signatures of President Lincoln, his cabinet, all the members of Congress, Union generals, along with distinguished writers and poets such as William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edward Everett, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, and Henry Ward Beecher (Fig. 7.3).<sup>162</sup> A month before the Fair opened he had sent out letters soliciting submissions on an enclosed sheet of stiff paper.<sup>163</sup> Some sheets came back filled just with signatures, such as the pages signed by all the members of the men's and women's executive committees of the Fair. Others arrived with short good wishes such as "God bless the friends of the Soldiers, chief of whom are the ladies of the Union," or "May Heaven save the Union, preserve the soldiers, and bless the Ladies." The authors among the contributors rose to the occasion with handwritten copies of their poetry. Longfellow wrote out a stanza from his "Excelsior"; Emerson, a version of his patriotic "Ode," sung at the town hall of Concord, Massachusetts, on 4 July 1857; and Lydia Huntley Sigourney her "Fall of the Charter Oak at Hartford, Connecticut." For his page, dedicated to "Our glorious Republic," Wyman chose a biblical passage:

The Rains descended, and the Floods came,  
And the Winds blew and beat upon  
that House and it fell not, for it was  
founded upon a Rock.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>162</sup> The album survives in the New Jersey Historical Society, MG 51 Sanitary Fair autograph album 1864.

<sup>163</sup> The invitation stated: "Dear Sir: I have the honor to transmit to you herewith, a blank sheet of Bristol board, on which I desire to obtain your autograph, coupled with such sentiment as may suit your pleasure and convenience . . . I design to have these sheets, when completed, elaborately bound into a volume for presentation to the "Brooklyn and Long Island Fair," in Aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which is to open at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, on the 22nd day of February." *American broadsides and ephemera*. First series; no. 11952., <http://catalog.nypl.org/search~S1?/tAmerican+broadsides+and+ephemera.+First+series+;+n/tamerican+broadsides+and+ephemera+first+series+no+11952/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CB/frameset&FF=tamerican+broadsides+and+ephemera+first+series+no+11952&1%2C1%2C> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>164</sup> Matthew 7:25.



Fig. 7.3 Title page, autograph album assembled by Luther B. Wyman for the 1864 Brooklyn Sanitary Fair. Photo by the author with permission from the Collection of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey

He had the album beautifully bound in Moroccan red leather and embossed in gold. Such a rare and prized trophy auctioned for \$250,<sup>165</sup> more than the other autograph albums brought, and more than the \$225 A. A. Low paid for an elaborate, one-of-a-kind cut-glass epergne, measuring three-feet high to grace his dining table.<sup>166</sup>

The Victorian era had particular fascination for oddities and rarities, which usually counted among the most popular attractions at large public exhibitions. The 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London, held in the stupendous iron and glass pavilion Joseph Paxton designed, had showcased modern art and manufactured items from around Queen Victoria's global empire. American sanitary fairs, beginning with Chicago's in October 1863, generally included the newest in manufactured and consumer goods of the industrial age as well as art, but they juxtaposed these with curiosities and rarities often of an historical character. Items memorializing the Republic's founding and New England colonial days enjoyed particular popularity. The Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair had on display in the Museum of Arts, Relics, and Curiosities at the Taylor Mansion such American historical curiosities as a copy of Miles Standish's will, a skillet from the Mayflower, several autograph letters of George Washington, his punch bowl "from which Lafayette, Clinton and others drank," a cup made from the wood of Connecticut's Charter Oak, a musket and sword used in the Revolutionary War, and locks of General and Mrs. Washington's hair.<sup>167</sup>

Brooklyn was a pulse point in the global Atlantic trade. Low, Chittenden, Wyman, and many other contributors enjoyed extensive international commercial connections and were recipients of gifts and souvenirs from the four corners of the globe. As their families picked through their curio cabinets and homes for items to loan to the Museum, they brought forth dozens of curiosities from disparate zones, among them a vial of water from the River Jordan, shells strung by

<sup>165</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 88. The album was purchased by John W. Hobart and presented to the New Jersey Historical Society by his daughter, NJHS, notes on MG51.

<sup>166</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 46. An epergne was a fancy centerpiece with various basins designed to hold seasonal flowers or fruit. The piece had been contributed by Gould and Hoare, glasscutters.

<sup>167</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 150–58.

the monks of Mount Athos, a pair of 150-year-old Japanese shoes, a Ceylonese Spelling Book, a Roman lamp, a Nubian Woman's Dress, a bracelet of Hungarian coins that belonged to the sister of General Kossuth, a war belt of human and monkey teeth worn by an Amazon River chief, an old Venetian time piece, a model of Shakespeare's Globe theater, several rare fifteenth-century incunabula, an African idol, a Himalayan praying machine, an inlaid battle axe from India, a Chinese opium pipe, and tapa cloth from the Sandwich Islands. Many souvenirs of Native American tribes found their way into the Fair, including Tecumseh's pipe and a set of buffalo horns from the Great Plains. Of interest to naturalists were a case of Cuban insects and scorpions, and a curious bean from India.<sup>168</sup> Undoubtedly, P. T. Barnum would have happily claimed such treasures for his American Museum on Broadway. These exotica on display underscored Brooklyn's reach into the wider Atlantic and global worlds.

Nineteenth-century Americans also enjoyed re-enactments of literary, artistic, or historical themes. The Fair had incorporated several *tableaux vivants*, including one staffed by children portraying the nursery rhyme "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." By far the most remarked feature of the Fair was the Old New England Kitchen in which lady volunteers, dressed in colonial garb, entertained fairgoers with domestic activities typical of a New England farmhouse in olden days. It must have reawakened nostalgia among the many Brooklyn transplants from there. Intrigued by the idea of representing Old New England, several nationally prominent political leaders from old colonial stock had sent descriptions of their boyhood recollections of kitchen life.<sup>169</sup> Colonial antiques and souvenirs furnished the Kitchen's wall decorations. A huge oven, large enough to roast an ox, was the central focus. Around it hovered colonial-clad ladies cooking up huge quantities of chowder and mush. From the side ovens emerged steaming loaves of Boston brown bread, baked pork and beans, Indian puddings, and all manner of pies. Costumed damsels affecting old-timey speech, waited tables. Eating implements were old-fashioned two-tined steel forks, and drink was limited to cider. Ladies

<sup>168</sup> BE, 22 February 1864, 2; *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 150–57.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. They included Lincoln's Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin, Secretary of State William Seward, and former Massachusetts governor and ambassador Edward Everett. Everett died on 15 January, weeks before the fair opened.

in starched caps and kerchiefs sat knitting by the fire, and every so often an “Indian” “hideous in horns and paint, would stalk solemnly through the crowd, and one could almost feel the scalp creep uneasily on his head.”<sup>170</sup> The ladies in the Kitchen labored long hours to feed the steady stream of fairgoers eager to experience what the enactors imagined life to have been back then, often with a twist of humor. They put on special entertainments to dramatize their old New England theme, such as an old folks’ concert, a humorous visit to the parson’s house, a quilting party, apple bee, storytelling, and, to culminate, a colonial wedding with the officiating minister tricked out in a laced cocked hat and knee breeches.<sup>171</sup> The popularity of the Old New England Kitchen underscored the colonial ties among many of Brooklyn’s well-established commercial elite, but the wistful nostalgia for the past it evoked also gave evidence of just how far modern Brooklyn had progressed since then (Fig. 7.4).

Next to and in sharp contrast to the Old New England Kitchen stood the Hall of Manufactures, a temple to products of the modern industrial age and the new consumer culture growing in middle-class America. Here fairgoers’ appetites for practical material goods could be fed from tables loaded with every sort of household implement imaginable, trunks, leather and rubber goods, soap, skates, guns, and even a small steam engine valued at \$700. On a raised platform running the entire length of the hall rested a row of the newest in consumer gadgets, the “indispensable” sewing machine, set to working in a constant clatter. Then came stoves and grates, lamp and gas fixtures, steam pumps, paints, grindstones, farm implements, saddles and harnesses, even metallic coffins, several carriages, and two elegant pleasure boats for sale. One area featured musical instruments including several donated Mason and Hamlin parlor organs. The Chicago fair had paraded farm equipment and livestock. Not to be outdone, Brooklynites paid homage to their own recent agricultural past with a cattle show. A superb Durham bull for auction stood in his stall next to the Kitchen. He went for \$500 in shares.<sup>172</sup>

Also on exhibit were several products of free labor in the South, a bale of Sea Island cotton, another from New Orleans, hogsheads of sugar, and

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 72–75.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–77.

<sup>172</sup> BE, 26 February 1864, 2; *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 92–93.

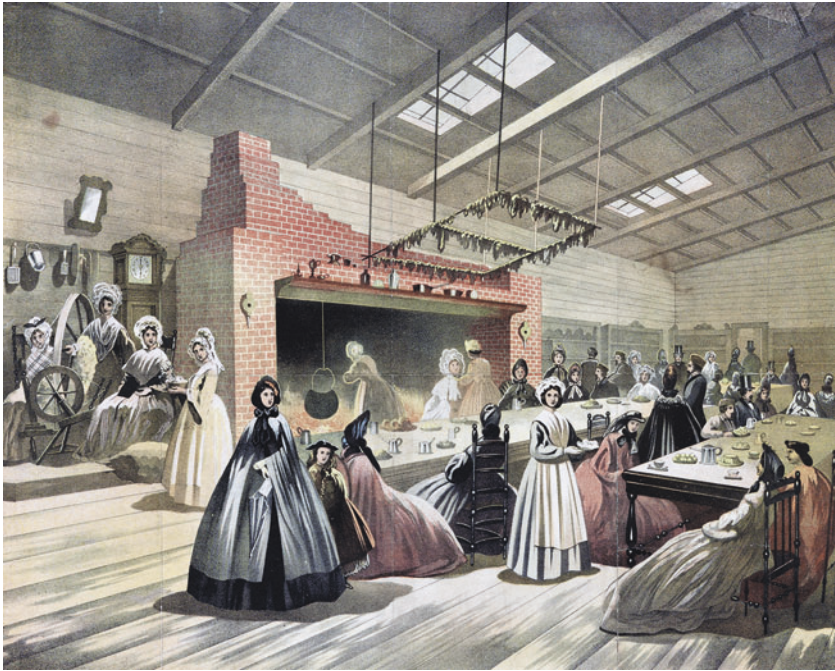


Fig. 7.4 The Old New England Kitchen, Brooklyn Sanitary Fair 1864. World History Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

a barrel of molasses. A couple of Louisiana plantation owners accompanied their gifts with a note that two of their partners had been former residents of the “City of churches” and now ran their thirteen plantations proudly with paid, not slave labor and gave testimony to the “zeal, intelligence, and application” of the freemen in their employ.<sup>173</sup> The exhibit showcased the economic viability of free Southern labor and prodded visitors not to forget that the abolition of slavery was a major objective on the Union side in the Civil War.

Nearby the Woman’s Relief Association made visible their oft-unremarked, ongoing contributions to the US Sanitary Commission. They

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 80–81.

temporarily transferred their processing depot from Court Street to the Hall of Manufactures. Fair attendees, separated by a low railing, watched the lady volunteers sort and pack clothes and supplies to be sent to soldiers and to the Sanitary Commission's various hospitals. The depot acted as kind of a *tableau vivant* in motion, a reminder of the humanitarian purpose behind the Fair. It also served as an eloquent prompt in the words of Rev. Farley, that "but for woman's hand, and woman's heart sustaining the national cause, that cause would ere this have sunk in gloom and blood."<sup>174</sup> Brooklyn's women volunteers contributed much of the brain, heart, and muscle behind the Fair.

Both the opening and closing ceremonies of the Fair emphasized patriotism and local pride. To test public enthusiasm, prior to the opening, the Art Association had held a preview reception and promenade concert in the upstairs rooms at the Academy housing the Fair's art exhibit. Nearly 2,000 attended even at the stiff price of one dollar admission.<sup>175</sup> On the official opening day, Washington's birthday, well-wishers lined the sidewalks to cheer a grand parade of local military and police forces and representatives from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The men marched in smart formation through the streets passing in review before distinguished platform guests in front of the Academy of Music.<sup>176</sup> At 7:00 p.m. sharp the Academy swung open its doors to admit the first throng of visitors to the music of Dodsworth's band positioned in the dress circle.

The Treasurer's Office, located on the main floor between the wax flowers and the Sanitary Commission tent, posted daily tallies of receipts. That first evening, the Fair took in over \$10,000. Right before closing the last evening of the Fair, the treasurer hung out his final sign that boasted \$400,000 collected!<sup>177</sup> Before the assembled crowd in the main auditorium, A. A. Low, president of the Fair, mounted an improvised rostrum. After a few well-chosen words commending the brilliant success of the Fair, he proposed that Brooklyn pass on to Manhattan the great broom Cincinnati had sent as a challenge to sweep up funds for the Sanitary Commission, but with Brooklyn and Long Island's total of \$400,000

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–61.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–33.

<sup>177</sup> James H. Frothingham treasurer, *ibid.*, 43.

attached. The motion passed by acclamation. The band struck up the “Stars and Stripes;” the assembled crowd sang in unison, and finally disbursed to the strains of “Yankee Doodle.”<sup>178</sup>

The very next day, volunteers began the task of dismantling the Fair structures and decorations. Two Brooklyn auctioneers took charge of selling any remaining stock and the construction materials themselves, together with a donated plot of land on Atlantic Street, all of which added several more thousand dollars to Fair coffers.<sup>179</sup> The Fair’s final official “crowning feature” was the gala Calico Ball at the Academy of Music.<sup>180</sup> A committee of one hundred organized the affair. Luther Wyman, member of the executive committee, arranged for the music. His oldest son Benjamin Franklin Wyman served on the refreshment and reception committee, sign that the mantle of civic and cultural patronage was now passing to the next generation of Brooklynites. Ladies attired in calico dress and gentlemen in calico ties whirled around the recently emptied stage. They raised another \$2,000 for the benefit of soldiers’ families for the Female Employment Society to distribute. The next day, many women donated their calicos to needy wives and daughters of Union soldiers.<sup>181</sup>

In many ways, the Sanitary Fair, less than eight weeks in the organizing, and only two weeks in session, had actually been thirty years in the making. The Fair culminated the long years Brooklyn’s renaissance patrons and visionaries, men such as Luther Wyman and others, had spent founding societies, sustaining them through private subscriptions, and constructing their physical spaces, among which the Brooklyn Academy of Music stood as their crowning achievement. Their exertions gave Brooklyn pride in itself, not as merely a city of churches and dormitory for New York, but as a noteworthy community of culture fully capable of providing for itself the educational and artistic amenities of urban life, and even to stage its own Sanitary Fair. The Brooklyn Renaissance, though diverted by the Civil War, had actually been boosted by the outpouring of generosity and community spirit surrounding Brooklyn’s war relief activities, especially those organized by the city’s women. When they laid aside

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>179</sup> The buildings and lumber alone brought in \$1,500, *ibid.*, 54–55.

<sup>180</sup> BE, 12 March 1864, 2.

<sup>181</sup> *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair*, 93–94.



political and sectarian differences, Brooklynites and their Long Island neighbors created remarkable synergy around their all-out efforts to sustain soldiers, veterans, and their families. Reverend Farley concluded his history of the Sanitary Fair with the following praise not just of the Fair but of Brooklyn itself and with it a challenge for the future:

Brooklyn has seized and secured new vantage ground for future consideration and respect throughout the land, and for the truest greatness, attractiveness, and enjoyment within herself. She has nobly illustrated her resources. She has shown the taste, the wealth, the co-operative energy of her population . . . . Now let her be faithful to the great trust, which, as an unavoidable inference, is in her hands. Whatever she needs in Institutions of Art, Learning or Charity, to make her, in a far higher sense than that of mere numbers, wealth, and growth, a great city, she shows to the world she has ability to possess.<sup>182</sup>

During the Civil War, Brooklyn's renaissance had been diverted from its initial course, but it achieved a triumph with the Sanitary Fair that successfully integrated the arts and the people. Traditional high culture, represented by art exhibits and concerts, had combined with spectacle and the marvelous in the bazaar and exhibitions to attract widespread public interest. The Fair raised amazing sums for a good, humanitarian cause, put Brooklyn prominently on the nation's map as a model city, and gave the city great pride in its own accomplishments. That early vision Luther Wyman had had back at the Troy Bathing House, of creating that "peasant and agreeable place of resort" and "to delight the eye and please the taste" had not only been fulfilled, but expanded to include greater numbers of both male and female participants. The Fair also embraced more popular tastes in the Academy of Music's entertainments and opened the way for Montague Street, between Court and Clinton Streets, to become the arts zone and cultural heartbeat of Brooklyn's renaissance.

In the swell of pride that had accompanied Brooklyn's national *éclat* for raising so much money in such short order for the US Sanitary Commission, it seemed that the city's struggle for a proud civic identity had been mostly won and its aspirations toward an urban, cosmopolitan vision for itself largely attained. Thanks to the Philharmonic Society's

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

ongoing concert series, the successful early seasons of Italian opera and then drama, and regular art exhibitions, the Academy of Music's founders had achieved their ambitions to create an arts forum in Brooklyn, where high-toned entertainments and public gatherings found focus. The *Eagle*'s faithful reporting had won it respect as the city's mouthpiece, for even a self-confessed radical Republican wrote in recognition of the Democratic paper as "less the organ of a party than the daily companion of the people . . . fearless and independent, and much fairer in political matters than most party papers."<sup>183</sup> The *Eagle* also boosted the arts. Brooklyn's renaissance patrons had much to be proud of. They had laid a solid foundation for their city's cultural institutions that still flourish today and continue to make Brooklyn a welcoming place for the arts and for practicing artists.

During the "Great Rebellion" the energy behind Brooklyn's renaissance had been diverted, shifted toward supporting the war effort with the Academy of Music as its *campanile*-like rallying point. The Sanitary Fair had reached a pinnacle of achievement that best symbolized Brooklyn's ability to draw together for a common cause. At its closing, the *Eagle* gushed, "Hundreds of people from all sections of the city, from all the towns in the County, have by this Fair been brought together in a sort of open communion arrangement. The ladies have met their fellow townswomen, acquaintance and friendships are formed, prejudices dismissed, icy barriers thawed out and a vast deal of genuine philanthropy done which in the end will tend to renovate to a large extent our entire social system . . . [toward] a common humanity."<sup>184</sup> It was doubtful whether such a communitarian vision of Brooklyn united and mingling around the arts could sustain itself once the incentives of war receded, leaving in their place disturbing new social and economic realities.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1866, 2.

<sup>184</sup> BE, 25 February 1864, 2.

## Brooklyn's Changing Complexion

The zeal and unity Brooklynites displayed during the Civil War and at the Sanitary Fair began to dissipate afterward. Brooklyn's renaissance symphony of the arts that the city's elite had worked so hard to accomplish in the 1850s and early 1860s found itself subject to new pressures. It could not sustain itself in the face of the city's changing social and economic complexion. Elite residents of the Heights continued their social networking and highbrow entertainments. But from the perspective of community building that had united Brooklyn during the Fair, one might wonder whether the city's renaissance vision of commerce, culture, and community united in sympathy around the arts was starting to dissolve in disharmony. Several crosscurrents threatened to erode communitarian impulses as Brooklynites witnessed mounting urban pressures in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The widening social and economic disparities bred separation and elitism among the wealthy. Coupled with the natural aging and lessening energies of cultural entrepreneurs such as Luther Wyman and his peers among Brooklyn's most active generation of patrons, that spreading elitism threatened the city's sense of community. How Brooklyn's cultural face was affected by the creeping exclusivity on the part of its well-to-do deserves further examination in this chapter.

Whether at the time Brooklynites were aware or not, during the Civil War years, their city had fought its own culture wars. The old-fashioned moralists such as Simeon B. Chittenden opposed to liquor and drama had lost out to newer, more inclusive tastes and a fleeting spirit of egalitarianism. The controversies over permitting theatrical performances at the

Academy of Music and the sale of wine and raffles at the Fair had been largely settled under the justificatory guidance of war and of such a noble, Union-wide charitable cause as the US Sanitary Commission. But after the war Brooklyn's leading patrons closed ranks in the face of a litany of criticisms against them. At the same time, they struggled to confront new social realities and the accelerating pace of life in their fast-growing city, still the third largest in the nation.

Initially, the city's seasoned patrons remained undaunted in the postwar era. They turned first to dismantle their war support agencies and to develop new beneficent veterans' aid societies. They also revitalized and expanded their vision of Brooklyn's cultural frontiers. Projects delayed during the war, such as the fundraising and construction of the Mercantile Library and the Art Association's new buildings on Montague Street, could finally get underway. The long-delayed development of Prospect Park resumed as well, though now frustratingly mired in petty city politics. Members of the Long Island Historical Society sprang into action to absorb heaps of donated war memorabilia and to commission a history of Brooklyn's contribution to the war.

In the midst of postwar optimism and rising prosperity as the nation got back to work and resumed many delayed enterprises, disquieting social tensions lay close at hand. For all the egalitarian sentiments occasioned by the war and during the Fair, social disparities became progressively obvious. After the war, as the economy was recovering and as Brooklyn continued its rapid expansion with new influxes of immigrants, one can observe the beginnings of ethnically oriented neighborhoods spreading beyond Brooklyn Heights that would come to typify the city in the later nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> By 1867, Brooklyn's population was expanding at a faster rate than even Manhattan's.<sup>2</sup> Immigrants arrived in New York Harbor by sail and steam in growing numbers, no longer mainly Irish and German, but now also Southern Europeans and newly emancipated African Americans abandoning the war-ravaged South. Many found work and settled in Brooklyn, fueling the city's economy and its urban problems.

<sup>1</sup> BHS, Flat Maps (B B-[1920].Fl), Map of the borough of Brooklyn: showing location and extent of racial colonies (New York, NY: A. R. Ohman Map Co., H. B. Petersen, Daughtsman & Engravers, 1920).

<sup>2</sup> BE 22 January 1867, 2; 11 March 1869, 2.

The circumstances of the working poor stood in stark contrast to those of the comfortable, long-established professional families. Huge differences in wealth and lifestyle became markedly visible. The continuation of income taxes inaugurated during the war and the greater willingness of the press to publish lists of assessments and census reports, meant that the reality of social separation and gross disparities in wealth became all the more apparent. They formed a disquieting subject of discussion in the press. Even the *Eagle*, that conservative Democratic mouthpiece, adopted a more critical stance toward Brooklyn's wealthy elite. Fabulously rich men such as A. A. Low and his brother Josiah had long been respected residents of Brooklyn Heights and greatly appreciated for their philanthropy and support of the city. Before the war, the extent of their fortunes had not been publicly pinpointed or emphasized. That changed after the war. In census declarations published in 1871, the Low brothers, the richest men in Brooklyn, admitted an astonishing combined family fortune of nearly \$8 million under the headline, "Low is Most High."<sup>3</sup> Publicity targeting wealth contributed to a new consciousness of it alongside resentments about it. Ironically, that consciousness fostered greater elitism among the rich and the sense of privilege that big money permits.

The founding of the exclusive Brooklyn Club in 1865 illustrates the retreat by Brooklyn's finest families into private enclaves to which admission came by invitation only. As Brooklyn moved into the Gilded Age with its wealth envied, yet partially tainted by publicity, its cultural claims shifted as well. The lofty sentiments so prevalent in the 1840s and 1850s that Brooklyn's new cultural societies had as their purpose to civilize and uplift the whole citizenry dissipated. After the war, the sheer weight of a burgeoning population militated against the city's sense of democratic community carefully crafted before and during the war. Even among the respectably well-off, almost predictably, the old seating issue at the Philharmonic concerts at the Academy, touchstone of perceived unwarranted privilege, reared its head again. Diverse elites among Academy-goers still contested with one another over access to the best seats in the house.

Success in business, though always risky, had been a major pillar supporting the Brooklyn Renaissance. Commercial wealth in the hands of its networked community of patrons had permitted stockholders in the

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 Jul 1871, 4, taken from census figures.

Philharmonic, Academy of Music, Art Association, Mercantile Library, and other similar societies to invest capital willingly toward their cosmopolitan vision for Brooklyn through the advancement of uplifting entertainments. But Black Friday, 24 September 1869, caused by speculators' attempts to corner the gold market, caught Wall Street and its many Brooklyn residents off guard. It shook their confidence in a reliably prosperous future and in some cases made them reluctant or unable to invest in culture. Unsettling though it was, Black Friday's impact was limited compared to the great financial Panic of 1873, which swept away whole fortunes, led to charges of corruption, dishonor, even suicide among Brooklyn's most prominent citizens. Our exemplar Luther Wyman became one of the victims of the postwar economic dislocations. His financial misfortunes were soon followed by a debilitating stroke, four long years of paralysis, and the embarrassment of a son caught up in scandal, before death took his hand in 1879. Even for the wealthy, life in postwar Brooklyn came fraught with uncertainty.

### BROOKLYN'S CHANGING FACE

The Confederate surrender at Appomattox in April 1865 ended the Civil War, and Union soldiers began returning north by the boat- and trainload. Some, such as Luther Wyman's favored Forty-Eighth Regiment, remained several months in garrison duty, this time in North Carolina along the Cape Fear River and in Raleigh, until their re-entry to Brooklyn in September 1865. Even more than twenty-five years later, his son Cecil remembered how the returning guard had marched up Joralemon Street and halted at the Wyman home. "Father, standing on the top step of the stoop, bareheaded, received the hand of Colonel Cohen [*sic*], with tears in his eyes. The colonel turning to the regiment called out, 'Three cheers for Mr. Wyman, the father of the Forty-Eighth'."<sup>4</sup> Much work remained to be done to meet the needs of returning veterans and their families and also to close down the agencies that had been so active lending support and supplies during the four long years of conflict. The sense of common cause amalgamated during Brooklyn's cultural renaissance, and reinforced in the crucible of war, persisted afterward, but political and economic

<sup>4</sup> BE, 30 May 1892, 5. Col. William B. Coan.

disruptions worked as solvents around its edges. Brooklyn's face changed after the war.

Their active home front missions accomplished, the Brooklyn War Fund Committee and the Woman's Relief Association phased themselves out. A subcommittee of the War Fund Committee stayed active to organize aid for returning soldiers and their families, but the last big public assembly under its auspices at the Academy of Music took place in early June 1865 at which Rev. Dr. Storrs delivered a stirring oration on the "Life, Character and Public Services of Abraham Lincoln." The Woman's Relief Association, sponsors of the Sanitary Fair, held closing exercises in the Chapel of the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. Beyond the proceeds of the Fair, the Association had averaged monthly contributions of \$3,000, which, when added to Fair receipts, meant the ladies had raised over \$500,000 for the US Sanitary Commission!<sup>5</sup> Remarks at the gathering noted how faithfully under Mrs. Stranahan's leadership the ladies of Brooklyn had taken part in the great struggle with fidelity and energy. Following a benediction, officially Brooklyn's Woman's Relief Association ceased to exist.<sup>6</sup> New smaller charitable societies emerged such as the Ladies' Southern Family Relief Association of Brooklyn.<sup>7</sup> As a fundraiser, they helped sponsor a performance at the Athenaeum of the popular British play *Richelieu*, which contains the Cardinal's signature line, "The pen is mightier than the sword."<sup>8</sup>

After 1865 activities by members of the old war support associations assumed a more social and commemorative character. For example, in February 1866 a small committee collaborated with the Army to arrange a welcome for the Ninetieth Regiment upon its belated return from

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Stranahan, president of the Woman's Relief Association, submitted three reports of the ladies' activities and successes, *ibid.*, 30 June 1865, 3; BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, Woman's Relief Association, unnumbered.

<sup>6</sup> Remarks by Rev. Farley of the Church of the Saviour, BE, 30 June 1865, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Luther Wyman, Judge Greenwood and three others served as advisors, *ibid.*, 6 May 1867, 2; 13 May 1867, 2.

<sup>8</sup> By Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Act II, Scene 2. On Bulwer-Lytton, see Sarah Stanton and Martin. Banham, *Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre* (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49.

Savannah that included a celebratory dinner at the Brooklyn Armory.<sup>9</sup> Two weeks later the Twenty-Third Regiment, in which two of Luther Wyman's sons had served at Gettysburg, received a grand reception at the Academy of Music which featured General Ulysses S. Grant as special guest. The flags, flowers, and bunting decorating the Academy cost over \$1,000. The long queue of people eager to greet the general seemed interminable. Ready to shake the outstretched and honored hand, the *Eagle* spotlighted Luther Wyman, now labeled "courtly," and "without whom the Academy would be as a groomless bride."<sup>10</sup> While members of the Twenty-Third Regiment danced into the night at the Academy, General Grant was whisked away to the recently opened Brooklyn Club for a more elegant and exclusive reception. The clubhouse on Pierrepont at Clinton Street stood in a blaze of lights, festooned with sumptuous decorations and flowers donated by John DeGrauw from his greenhouses. Guests enjoyed a lavish supper catered by Delmonico's of New York. The event, for members only plus one guest each, had been limited to 250 ticket holders.<sup>11</sup>

Cyprus Hills, Brooklyn's second major cemetery after Green-wood had been opened in 1848 in East Brooklyn on a scenic ridge that General Washington once had fortified during the Revolutionary War.<sup>12</sup> Part of the National Cemetery system since 1862, it was where some 4,000 Union dead were interred. In a meeting at the Academy in 1873 Luther Wyman was elected chairman of the Monument Association of the City of Brooklyn, a citizens' movement to erect by subscription a permanent memorial to the Civil War dead in the cemetery. In his acceptance remarks, Wyman lamented how it was "discreditable that there should be so large a number of our soldiers buried among us without a suitable monument over them," and he

<sup>9</sup> It consisted of Luther Wyman, J. S. T. Stranahan, and a Mr. Reeve, BE, 12 February 1866, 2. For catering services, Stratton's bakery billed Luther Wyman as chairman of the Committee for 716 dinners at the Arsenal, which, with the addition of various whiskeys brought the total discounted bill to \$1,300, BHS, Collection of Brooklyn Civil War relief associations records, War Fund Committee, unnumbered.

<sup>10</sup> BE, 27 February 1866, 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> <http://cypresshillscemetery.org/timeline-2/history/> [accessed 2 October 2016]. Today Cyprus Hills is part private cemetery and part national military cemetery.



hoped that “not far in the future the ‘boys in blue’ who now rested beneath the sod of Long Island might have above them a proper and respectable testimonial to their bravery and memory.”<sup>13</sup> Another larger monument would be erected in Fort Greene to commemorate Brooklyn’s own war dead. But other events, including the Panic of 1873, intervened, and by the following year insufficient funds had been raised to erect the memorials.

In 1874, the local executive committee of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a fraternal organization of Civil War veterans, tasked with placing flags and flowers on military graves for Decoration Day at the end of May, came up with a novel plan for honoring the dead. Rather than decorate individual graves, the committee chairman proposed a large public commemoration with a regimental parade, music, and speeches, for which a temporary wooden monument would be constructed and draped in muslin to receive the commemorative flags and flowers. The proposal for a muslin monument had first been floated in New York City to be held in Central Park, but was quickly cast aside. The executive committee then brought the idea before the floral committee of the GAR in Brooklyn in a “long and stormy session.” Some members blamed Luther Wyman for lack of progress on the proposed permanent monuments. Privately he must have been reminded of the difficulties encountered in the earlier effort to erect by subscription a statue honoring President Lincoln. Wyman and others supported the proposed large public gathering at Fort Greene and together with Rev. Henry Ward Beecher endorsed a petition to invite the governor to review the ceremony. But it was not to be. Less egalitarian-minded attendees opposed the plan. The kinds of criticisms voiced reveal the growing social separations in Brooklyn. Some did not want a “sham monument,” or a “muslin effigy” to replace decoration of the actual graves. After all, ladies with relatives to honor had been raising flowers in pots during the winter to have them ready for Decoration Day and had no desire “to throw [them] at the foot of a muslin mockery.” Others did not want their wives and daughters going to Fort Greene amidst the “crowd of ragamuffins and scum of the city.” They argued the event would be poorly attended, and none of the “better class of citizens” favored the proposal. The petition to the governor was tabled, the executive committee promoting the plan dissolved, and Brooklyn’s ladies decorated the actual graves as they had always done

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in BE, 21 March 1873, 4; also NYT, 21 March 1873, 5.

since the war.<sup>14</sup> These signs indicate that the general euphoria that had initially accompanied the ending of hostilities in 1865 was wavering.

In addition, the solid cohort of Brooklyn's boosters, who had provided the energy and means behind the city's renaissance cultural leap forward, became less active as they aged; and a few had already died. Gradually, they relinquished their roles as Brooklyn's Brahmans to a younger generation, but rarely to their offspring. The ranks of the forty-two men identified as Brooklyn's principal patrons (see Appendix), who exemplified the dedication, enlightened public spiritedness, and philanthropy that had made the Brooklyn Renaissance possible, began to thin after the war. The early death in 1868 of much-loved physician, Dr. A. Cooke Hull, who, from the very beginning, had so generously sustained the Philharmonic Society, Academy of Music, the Art Association, Historical Society, Brooklyn Club, and so on, came as a great shock to his friends and fellow patrons.<sup>15</sup> The Philharmonic's memorial statement praised his zeal, constant efforts, and friendship in any plan for the "elevation and improvement of the city" as a "bright example of public spirit and philanthropy to all who succeed him."<sup>16</sup> The loss of Ethelbert S. Mills, another leading Brooklyn patron, came as a different sort of shock in July 1873, in what turned out to be a prelude to the financial Panic in September of that year. Mills had drowned early one morning off Coney Island, a suspected suicide; for the news soon emerged that he suffered financial embarrassment in the Brooklyn Trust Company and was implicated in the misuse of public monies on deposit there.<sup>17</sup>

The *Brooklyn Eagle* was aging alongside Brooklyn's early patrons. In 1872 it celebrated thirty years of publishing the city's news. It noted its physical expansion with clock tower on lower Fulton Street and its national recognition as a premier daily newspaper. That year the *Eagle* also began a series of retrospective articles about the city and its long-time residents. The articles signaled a developing nostalgia for the city's past civic and cultural accomplishments and the individuals who had fostered them. One article compiled from voter registration lists gave the names

<sup>14</sup> BE, 2 May 1874, 3; 9 May 1874, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Obituary, *ibid.*, 6 July 1868, 2.

<sup>16</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 1:281–82 and BE, 10 July 1868, 2.

<sup>17</sup> BE, 19 Jul 1873, 4.

and ages of the noteworthy “venerable old men” and longest residents of the first four wards. Among these venerable seniors, Luther Wyman, then age sixty-eight, had resided in the Third Ward for more than thirty years. Others of the group of forty-two leading civic patrons had mostly achieved sixty years of age, including retired judge John Greenwood at seventy, S. B. Chittenden at fifty-six and twenty-five years in the ward; and A. A. Low, age sixty-two. Henry E. Pierrepont, then president of the Academy of Music, had been born and lived all of his sixty years in the First Ward. Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn’s most famous pastor, listed himself as fifty-nine years old. Advancing age was not always treated kindly in a fast-moving era. The previous year, when the Philharmonic Society seemed to be losing some of its audience, letters to the editor had stingingly characterized its directors as old fogies who should step down and bring in some “young blood” to revitalize it.<sup>18</sup>

But plenty of indications also show that, despite advancing age, the old guard of Brooklyn patrons had not yet retreated from public life, nor was it uniformly stodgy. Men such as Luther Wyman welcomed new ideas and new initiatives, one of the most curious being a novel “co-operative cookery,” or community kitchen on a French model. For a minimum of thirty families, the cookery would function as a kind of concierge meal service that employed a cook to prepare meals to subscribers’ orders and deliver them in a tin pail lined with heat-preserving felt. Wyman, together with Henry Ward Beecher, heartily endorsed the plan for its rationality and example of an economy of scale, since ingredients would be purchased wholesale. Furthermore, it promised to eliminate cooking fumes from the home!<sup>19</sup> Wyman and his peers also took an active interest in their city’s big new urban projects, Prospect Park and the Brooklyn Bridge discussed below.

Friends and business associates for sometimes decades, Brooklyn’s older elite happily engaged in a variety of social entertainments, such as the celebration of Mr. and Mrs. John DeGrauw’s golden wedding anniversary at their spacious home at Clinton and Amity Streets. More than fifty carriages lined the street, spilling forth a “brilliant throng of handsome and richly attired ladies with somberly clad and gallant escorts.” Mrs. Luther Wyman alighted in an “elegant fawn colored

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 October 1871, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 November 1869, 2.

silk" gown. As might be expected, given DeGrauw's special passion for the horticultural, floral decorations abounded, some in the form of medallions spelling out the years 1820 and 1870.<sup>20</sup> In another gesture to recognize one of its own, in December 1871, eighty-two men, including at least twenty of the principal Brooklyn patrons, gathered to offer a complimentary dinner to Simeon B. Chittenden, long-time member of the boards of the Academy of Music and the Art Association, and, it will be remembered, outspoken critic of drama at the Academy and the sale of spirits at the Fair. Chittenden's departure to Nassau for health reasons furnished the occasion.

Chittenden's published response to the invitation captured the sentiment pervading his social set. He deemed the tribute an "occasion of great satisfaction and unfeigned thankfulness... in a community so intelligent and homogeneous as ours, for a private citizen to be made the recipient of attentions, so disinterested and friendly, by a body of men so strong and influential."<sup>21</sup> Chittenden represented a Brooklyn rags to riches story, a penniless orphan from Connecticut, who started work as a store clerk at age twelve, went into business for himself by age twenty-one, moved to Brooklyn in 1842, and made his fortune in dry goods in Manhattan. He was vice-president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, founder of several insurance companies and banks, a ferry company director, and actively involved in railroading, serving as president of the New Haven and New London Railroad Company. Together with A. A. Low, Henry Pierrepont, George Stephenson, Gordon Ford, and Abraham Baylis, all members of the forty-two select Brooklyn patrons, he was a founder and chairman of the executive committee of the *Brooklyn Daily Union*, the city's Republican mouthpiece established in 1863.<sup>22</sup> Like Wyman, Chittenden made time to promote Brooklyn's principal charities and public institutions. Among others, the Academy of Music, the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, the Brooklyn Mercantile Library, Historical Society, and War Fund Committee all received his attention and largesse.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1870, 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 December 1871, 4; *New York Tribune*, 30 December 1871, 2.

<sup>22</sup> BU, 14 Sep 1863, 1. Walter S. Griffith, president of the Home Life Insurance Co. of which Luther Wyman was a director, also served as trustee. The *Union* listed no fewer than fourteen of Brooklyn's forty-two principal patrons as stockholders, including Luther Wyman, *ibid.*, 17 September 1863, 2.

<sup>23</sup> BE, 15 April 1889, 1.

The unstable postwar years also brought changes in Brooklyn and New York's world of maritime commerce, traditional bellwether of the area's economy (Fig. 8.1). Notably, the number of American ships engaged in global commerce had declined. The Black Ball Line where Luther Wyman worked illustrates the larger trends. In the early years of the Civil War, the line still fielded a fleet of eight ships running between New York and Liverpool. Increasingly the line made its money in the immigrant trade, as freight rates fell and little cotton was shipping from the US South. To draw business, the owners promoted a system allowing relatives and friends in the US to purchase advance passage for immigrants. But in the 1860s more and more of that business shifted to steamers, and an increase in the head tax on immigrants cut more profits.<sup>24</sup> The construction near Liverpool of iron clad rams destined for the Confederacy disrupted Union shipping even further. In 1863 the Black Baller *Isaac Webb* had fallen victim to the satellite raider *Tacony*, which exacted a handsome \$40,000 ransom for the release of the ship and passengers.<sup>25</sup> Maritime insurance rates skyrocketed. By late 1864, freight from New York had fallen off, and the Black Ball Line considered suspending its regular service. Owner Charles H. Marshall was heavily in debt to Baring Brothers, Liverpool, and his death in 1865 severed the line's long-standing ties with its original British agents. In subsequent years, the remaining ships stopped regular line service to become tramps, picking up cargo wherever they could and not bound for just Liverpool or New York. Shipping by sail was never again as profitable as it had been before the war. As foreign steamships proliferated, the overall number of American ships plying the Atlantic shrank.

The postwar period also saw an upsurge in free trade, anti-protectionist sentiment that had long been a popular political force in England. In

<sup>24</sup> See ads in the *Brooklyn Daily Union* in 1863, BU 1. 1, 14 September 1863, 1. Their New York agent, Roche brothers and Coffey, 69 South St., NY, had far flung agents in Cincinnati, St Louis, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

<sup>25</sup> BU, 1.8, 22 September 1863, 2. The *Tacony* itself had been captured and repurposed by the CSS *Florida* and was known for several weeks as the *Florida 2*. The CSS *Florida* was built by William C. Miller & Sons, one of several raiders, including the infamous CSS *Alabama*, constructed in Liverpool and nearby Birkenhead for the Confederacy. The *Florida* had been deceptively launched as the *Oreto*. See the account of her exploits and prizes published in the *Charleston Mercury*, 3 August 1863, available via the Accessible Archives at <http://www.accessible.com>.



**Fig. 8.1** Merchant ships unloading at South Street docks New York City 1870s. Hand colored woodcut. North Wind Picture Archives/Alamy Stock Photo

1869, Brooklyn founded its own Free Trade League, a branch of the American Free Trade League.<sup>26</sup> The League hoped to establish a library and reading room, modeled on the Mercantile Library, where people could educate themselves about political economy and attend short presentations on the benefits of free trade. The League's platform advocated lifting artificial restrictions on labor, manufacturing, and trade. It called for reform of the tariff system and the abolition of protective tariffs, by public agitation if necessary. In their self-description, the Leaguers expressed the thinking behind the associative culture that had long been the hallmark of Brooklyn's business and commercial community. It claimed not to be affiliated with any political party, but rather composed itself of a "comparatively small number of citizens of Brooklyn, who are

<sup>26</sup> They elected Luther Wyman treasurer and reelected him in 1871 and 1872, *ibid.*, 24 May 1869, 11; 1 May 1871, 2; 26 April 1872, 4.

associated together by the ties of social intercourse, by business relations, personal friendship, and mutual respect."<sup>27</sup> Brooklyn's renaissance had grown out of such a collaborative mentality, but by the 1870s, mounting evidence showed signs of its fracturing and gradual dissipation.

An early indication of creeping indifference came in the affairs of the New York Chamber of Commerce, which included many prominent Brooklynites whose businesses were located in Manhattan.<sup>28</sup> Among the officers elected in 1870, we find four of Brooklyn's most active patrons: Luther Wyman of the shipping committee; Josiah O. Low of the committee on arbitration; Samuel Sloan of the railroad committee; and Henry Worthington of the manufactures committee. That year the Chamber had over seven hundred members, but only sixteen cast votes for the officers, which led the *Eagle* to decry this new era of "selfishness and isolation," when "merchants and leading business men seem to show the same apathy towards co-operative movements for the representation of commercial interests, as they show toward political movements."<sup>29</sup> Undeterred, Wyman's committee on shipping set about proposed extensive improvements to the New York dock system on both the East River and Hudson River. Old rotten pilings needed replacing with masonry-filled columns anchored in cement. Wharves would be widened to accommodate new three- and four-story warehouses, and the entrance to each wharf would be secured with masonry bulkheads. Sewage that emptied into the river from under the old piers was to be diverted and channeled through new brick-lined drains. These were the kinds of more lasting improvements to infrastructure, long overdue, that Liverpool had introduced in its fancy wet dock system much earlier.<sup>30</sup> The Brooklyn waterfront was also undergoing improvements in the 1870s, and three new steamer lines, all of them European companies, heavily involved in the transport of

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 June 1871, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Annual Report of the corporation of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, for the year 1870/71, 122–23, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hb0ym8;view=1up;seq=138-139>, last accessed 2 October 2016.

<sup>29</sup> BE, 20 May 1870, 2.

<sup>30</sup> David Brazendale and William Moss, *The First Liverpool Guide Book by William Moss, 1797* (Lancaster: Palatine Books, 2007), 16–54; also Graeme Milne, "Maritime Liverpool," in John Belchem, *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character & History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 257–309.

immigrants and freight, docked along Furman Street between the Fulton and Wall Street ferry landings. The Brooklyn docks had the superior advantage of the consistently deep water that big steamships required.<sup>31</sup>

In 1873, when A. A. Low chaired the executive committee, the Chamber continued to focus on pressing issues of maritime commerce and its dockside dimensions. They lamented such realities as too few American ships in oceanic trade; problems with crimps and runners interfering with crew hiring; regulating sailors' boarding houses; adequate support for navigational training; and unfavorable revenue and shipping laws. Luther Wyman, A. A. Low, S. B. Chittenden, and J. S. T. Stranahan were among the Brooklyn commercial men and leading Brooklyn patrons who attended the Chamber's annual meeting followed by dinner at Delmonico's and accompanying speeches. The Chamber president delivered the main address, reiterating the older generation's stubborn confidence in commerce as a civilizing element, when he spoke on "Commerce, the great disseminator of Christian Civilization." In subsequent remarks Brooklyn's S. B. Chittenden observed that since Manhattan was running out of commercial space, its future as a great metropolitan center lay in the bridge spanning the East River then under construction and further expansion into Brooklyn. After all, he noted, his home in Brooklyn and business in Manhattan were but a half mile apart. Those brief remarks included not only a vision of the future Brooklyn Bridge (opened 1883) that would draw together the peoples from both sides of the East River, but the specter of political unification by century's end.<sup>32</sup> The Brooklyn boosterism of the 1850s and 1860s was giving way to a larger commercially driven image of union with New York City in the not-so-distant future.

If Brooklyn and Manhattan could be seen as inevitably drawn closer together as "sister" cities, by the 1870s, Brooklyn, which had worked so hard to define its separate identity through its own urban renaissance in the 1850s and 1860s, could no longer distance itself from Manhattan even rhetorically, especially from the financial and political corruption rife in New York during the postwar Tweed era. Newspaper editorials feasted on the speculations in railroad stock and dividends by financial predators such

<sup>31</sup> BE, 30 Jul 1873, 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 May 1873, 2.



as Jay Gould. The *New York Times* filled pages reporting the arrests for a second time of Tammany Boss William Tweed and Comptroller Richard Connolly and associates for fraud and corruption. The *Eagle* crowed a little too early about the “cleanliness” of Brooklyn’s civic affairs compared to the scandal and dirt in Manhattan.<sup>33</sup>

Even Luther Wyman, that most upstanding of commercial men, unwittingly found himself caught in Tammany’s scandalous net. His resulting financial losses in 1871 signaled the approach of the dark clouds of economic misfortune awaiting him. Wyman had invested in the initial stock offering of a promising new enterprise, the Nickel Plating Company, but he was no match for the scoundrels who watered the stock and seized control of the firm. The company had formed to promote a useful and potentially profitable invention. But Wyman and his partners “suddenly found themselves the involuntary business associations of Tammany politicians, and their names incorporated with such names as Connolly, Tweed, and [Nathaniel] Sands.”<sup>34</sup> Their mistake had been to entrust the business to a corrupt agent who perpetrated the stock fraud. Wyman sued the offender, an associate of Jay Gould, but the case languished in court.<sup>35</sup> During those years even the venerable businessman and philanthropist Peter Cooper, founder of Cooper Institute, later Cooper Union, as well as many other “worthy gentlemen” became surprise victims of Tammany shenanigans.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps the disastrous experience with the Nickel Plating Company spurred Wyman and many of his patron peers to join the political reform movement known as the Citizens Reform Committee of One Hundred.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1872, 2; 20 November 1871, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 December 1871, 2.

<sup>35</sup> William Belden, *ibid.*, 6–7 February 1872, 11; 8 May 1878, 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 December 1871, 2.

<sup>37</sup> They included Abraham Baylis, S. B. Chittenden, Isaac Frothingham, Walter Hatch, A. A. Low, Samuel McLean, H. E. Pierpont, Henry Sanger, and Alexander M. White, *ibid.*, 6 May 1873, 2; 19 May, 4; The Committee of One Hundred grew out of the Committee of Seventy-Five, and targeted election fraud, the misdeeds of the attorney general, reforming the city charter, and other issues. Manhattan’s Committee of Seventy had worked effectively against the Tweed ring. On the reform efforts in Brooklyn, see Harold Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898: A Political History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1944), 55–69.

Similar citizens' reform groups had been springing up in many American cities. They sought to combat election fraud and to break up the collusion between local government officials and corrupt businessmen. Originally a nonpartisan group working for reform and a new city charter, the Brooklyn Committee met in the Directors' Rooms in the Academy of Music.<sup>38</sup> The face of corruption was ugly, increasingly partisan, and included the scandal surrounding Ethelbert S. Mills, the socially prominent president of the Art Association and president of the Brooklyn Trust Company, whose drowning had uncovered malfeasance and theft of \$200,000 from the city's treasury.<sup>39</sup>

Just as corrupt politics and largely fruitless reform movements were changing Brooklyn's business environment, new ambitious plans altered the city's physical face and had the effect of lessening its former sense of cohesiveness. The population of Brooklyn had doubled every twelve years, necessitating urban expansion and spurring rampant land speculation, particularly in the areas around Prospect Park, then in the course of construction.<sup>40</sup> Former pastures and fields were plowed under to make room for new wards and new neighborhoods such as Stuyvesant Heights, off Atlantic Avenue, where Wyman would end his days in reduced circumstances. Even Montague Street, where the Academy of Music had been built before the war on vacant lots in the midst of private residences, in the course of a dozen years had lost its residential character. The Mercantile Library and Art Association had constructed there. The US court had also relocated to Montague Street in a former residence, which move attracted lawyers and insurance offices. The street had been newly paved in 1869, and by 1873 not a single private dwelling remained on the block between Court and Clinton Streets. In another dozen years, the *Eagle* predicted the entire street would be devoted to businesses, making it no longer the arts district, but the "Wall street of Brooklyn."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 July 1889, 7. Wyman resigned in December 1873, giving as a reason his inability to attend the meetings, *ibid.*, 2 December 1873, 2.

<sup>39</sup> The *Eagle* published many articles about the Mills case, starting in mid-July 1873, especially 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, and 23, 4; also Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898*, 67-68.

<sup>40</sup> BE, 1 August 1873, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 June 1869, 3; 1 August 1873, 2.

Before that happened, Brooklyn's commercial men entertained big ideas about building a suspension bridge over the East River. Back in 1857 in the same spirit of renaissance optimism that had given birth to the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society and Academy of Music, the city's entrepreneurs entertained the possibility of making a bridge to New York City, among other conveniences, to expedite the commute to their jobs in Lower Manhattan. The *Journal of Commerce* proclaimed civil engineer John A. Roebling to be the greatest living authority on suspension bridges. He had already designed several ambitious projects using his soon-patented wire cabling system. Back in 1857 he had declared a suspension bridge high above the East River was practicable and could be built for \$2 million.<sup>42</sup> The height of the bridge would allow most tall ships to pass beneath it.<sup>43</sup> The State Legislature in Albany considered proposals both for spanning or tunneling under the river,<sup>44</sup> but the Civil War placed all plans on hold. Only in late 1866 did the bridge proposal re-emerge with the founding of the Brooklyn-based and financed New York Bridge Company. To get cooperation and some start-up financing from Manhattan, of necessity, they invited Boss Tweed to be a company trustee. Predictably, estimates of labor contracts and other expenses escalated to \$5 million, the projected cost of an initial stock offering to get the project underway. It was clearly Brooklyn's Bridge, for Brooklyn's moneyed men agreed to finance the first \$3 million in stock, New York only \$1.5 million, and the remaining half million dollars was to be raised from other sources.<sup>45</sup>

The project received new urgency when the unusually vicious winter of 1866–67 made crossing the river by overcrowded ferry in snow and ice especially hazardous. Weather conditions, on top of the exploding population, quelled any objections from ferry operators whose services were

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1857, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Initially, the project encountered some opposition from ship owners who feared the bridge's height might be reduced such that big ships would have to lower their topmasts to pass beneath it, *ibid.*, 5 May 1869, 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 April 1857, 2.

<sup>45</sup> The bridge bill containing these terms passed the Legislature in February 1869, *ibid.*, 4 February 1869, 2. The actual cost of the bridge exceeded \$15 million.

already at capacity.<sup>46</sup> In May 1867, Roebling received appointment as chief engineer for the bridge and permission to begin boring for the substructure of the twin towers to support the bridge's elevated roadway with a span stretching nearly 1,600 feet.<sup>47</sup> Reminiscent of the friendly challenge that had launched the Sanitary Fair in 1864, instead of a broom to sweep up fair receipts, this time Cincinnati sent Brooklyn a musical offering, a new march by Henry Mayer entitled *The Suspension Bridge Grand March* that featured a picture of Roebling's recently completed Cincinnati Bridge on the title page.<sup>48</sup> When it opened in 1883, Brooklyn's bridge outdistanced the Cincinnati Bridge as the longest suspension bridge in the world.<sup>49</sup> Further, as the Brooklyn Bridge took shape over its thirteen years of construction, it became the definitive icon of Brooklyn, replacing the Academy of Music in that capacity.<sup>50</sup> The arts had relinquished pride of place to steel cable and masonry neo-Gothic towers. The huge anchorages necessary to support the bridge cut into the downtown Fulton Street area, and as Carol Lopate observed, Brooklyn's urban focus began to move uptown in the direction of Prospect Park.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 January 1867, 3, here called the East River Bridge. It soon became known as the Brooklyn Bridge, e.g., *ibid.*, 17 August 1867, 2; 17 April 1868, 2. On ferry companies' lack of opposition, see *ibid.*, 23 December 1868, 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1867, 2.

<sup>48</sup> By composer Henry Mayer, *ibid.* For the score, see <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/26178> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>49</sup> The best treatment of the bridge project remains David McCullough, *The Great Bridge* (Simon and Schuster, 1972). The *Eagle* followed its construction closely along with the mishaps of the Roebling family, first the death of John Roebling, and then his son Washington's incapacity from the bends. See, e.g., the long articles following John Roebling's death at his Brooklyn residence from tetanus developed following a foot injury on the project, *BE*, 22 Jul 1869, 2.

<sup>50</sup> E.g., William Coit's remarks, "We are a growing people, we are to have a bridge which will join us to New York, with cables of steel and hooks of iron, Its foundations will be so well bedded in the earth that they shall not be moved," *ibid.*, 11 March 1869, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Carol Lopate and Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program), *Education and Culture in Brooklyn: A History of Ten Institutions* ([Brooklyn], NY: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979), 35–36.

Over the next generation, Brooklyn's main cultural institutions followed suit, including the Academy of Music after it burned down in 1903.

The bridge symbolized great postwar optimism in the power of human ingenuity and the efficacy of big finance. It received unanimous endorsement by the New York Chamber of Commerce, which boosted its chances of gaining speedy final approval in the US Congress.<sup>52</sup> The bridge was hailed as the "greatest work of modern civilization, uniting the commerce and the political influence of two cities, the destinies of which are one, and the greatness of which the most daring imagination cannot now foretell."<sup>53</sup> But in 1869 news arrived that Liverpool might give chase to Brooklyn's bridge project with a proposed railway bridge over the River Mersey connecting Birkenhead with Liverpool. The proposed structure would have a span two hundred feet longer and be ten feet higher than Mr. Roebling's project. The urban rivalry gave pundits on both sides of the Atlantic opportunity to remark on the physical similarities between the East River and the Mersey and the difficulties to be overcome in bridging them.<sup>54</sup> But this time Brooklyn bested Liverpool, for the latter's bridge remained on the drawing board.

Brooklyn's signature urban park on Prospect Hill was another long-delayed civic project. Park commissioners had set the park's location and basic plan before the outbreak of Civil War hostilities. Following the war, discussions over the park resumed. Already in September 1865 a group of thirty gentlemen, "well known and influential citizens," among them many leading civic patrons and interested clergy, met in the directors' room at the Academy of Music to review plans drawn up by the landscape designer and approved by Calvert Vaux, chief architect. Full of Brooklyn pride, various attendees expressed the hope that their park would "rival if not surpass" Manhattan's Central Park. In typical expressions of old renaissance-style aspiration, they shared a civilizing and educational vision for the park. It would become a venue for summer concerts sure to attract 10,000 people to relax under shade trees while they enjoyed uplifting music. The park would also instruct the public in the various departments of natural history, similarly to the greatest botanical and zoological gardens in Europe. Such

<sup>52</sup> BE, 24 February 1869, 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 June 1869, 2.

parks had other functions as well. "They enable opulence and fashion to air themselves, to see and be seen; they stand as agents for the education and refinement of the working classes; and of some overcrowded and over-worked cities they are not inaptly called 'the lungs'."<sup>55</sup> So soon after the war, members of Brooklyn's elite had already normalized the social distance separating them from the working classes even in how they would use public park lands. In a subsequent summer concert in 1871 held in Prospect Park, the *Eagle* observed the "thousands of family groups who sat in front of the orchestra. Nearly all represented the hard-working middle classes of society, and neatly dressed, gamboling children were in abundance . . . . On the other side of the rivulet which divides the orchestral ground from the main drive, some fifty carriages filled by the elite of the city stood, and the occupants seemed to enjoy the music as well as their less wealthy fellow-citizens on the other side."<sup>56</sup> The bucolic if divided vision of what the park might be like proved short lived.

James S. T. Stranahan, who had headed the old War Fund Committee, and his fellow park commissioners had their appointments from the State Legislature and thus enjoyed control over the park project free of interference by city government. They also managed the public funds for park development, which they spent lavishly acquiring new land at newly inflated prices.<sup>57</sup> Their independence rankled, and Stranahan's high-handed manner sparked resentment, especially since property values hung in the balance, depending on how the park would be configured and which neighborhoods would benefit most. Suspicions came to a head in 1869 when the commissioners, led by Stranahan, petitioned the Legislature for permission to sell undeveloped park lands lying East of Flatbush Avenue to finance other park improvements. Eastside property owners and their sympathizers organized opposition in a series of meetings, which once again split members of the city's elite. In the name of the public interest, long-time friend and collaborator with Stranahan in the War Fund Committee, the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic board,

<sup>55</sup> H. A. Graef was the designer, *ibid.*, 27 September 1865, 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 July 1871, 3.

<sup>57</sup> The archive of the park and the commissioners' annual reports are preserved in park headquarters at Litchfield House on the grounds of Prospect Park and on line [http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/3985annual\\_report\\_brooklyn\\_prospect\\_park\\_comm\\_1861.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/3985annual_report_brooklyn_prospect_park_comm_1861.pdf) [accessed 2 October 2016].

and original park commission, Luther Wyman joined those opposed to the sale.<sup>58</sup> Opponents wanted control of park plans to be returned to the citizens of Brooklyn, especially since the Brooklyn Common Council had voted overwhelmingly against the sale of those park lands east of Flatbush Avenue. All but two of the park commissioners hailed from South Brooklyn. Accusations flew that Stranahan and his neighbors were trying to hijack the park and bend it toward South Brooklyn by selling off those eastern lands. Critics charged that Stranahan and fellow commissioners were themselves becoming real estate speculators. Others said it should be renamed Stranahan Park, and perhaps the statue to Lincoln would be replaced with one of Stranahan. A columnist wrote only half in jest, that if Brooklyn did not hurry up with the bridge project, Stranahan, who also served on the board of the bridge, would divert its Brooklyn exit to Union Street in South Brooklyn.<sup>59</sup> The noble sentiments praising the promise of Prospect Park as a locus of culture and education had evaporated in the steam of controversy.

Friends Mark Twain and journalist Charles Dudley Warner published their novel, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873), which provided the now conventional label for the final decades of the nineteenth century. Ostensibly, they had in mind the corruption and cupidity of the rich and powerful in Washington, DC. From their vantage point in Connecticut, however, the doings around New York would have been more familiar to them. Brooklyn experienced its own gilded age. The veneer of wealth enjoyed by the business and professional elites and land speculators arguing over Prospect Park could not disguise the festering social problems that accompanied the gilt. The newspapers sensationalized and reported it all. The *Eagle* made news out of the bold and adroit sneak thief, a “front door man,” who slipped into the foyer of Luther Wyman’s home and stole his new \$50 overcoat right before its owner was about to leave for the Fireman’s Ball.<sup>60</sup> Then came the case of Judge McCue’s prized Alderney cow, surreptitiously sold to a slaughterhouse by a thief who had gained release that very day from the penitentiary. There

<sup>58</sup> BE, 11 March 1869, 2; 18 February 1870, 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 February 1869, 2; 11 March 1869, 2. On the opposition to Stranahan, see also Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898*, 49–50.

<sup>60</sup> BE, 31 January 1865, 3.

followed a detailed description of a man demented with opium and stimulants plus laudanum and chloroform.<sup>61</sup> That same day came the weekly announcement that the “gentlemen in blue” of the police department had made 534 arrests.<sup>62</sup> Social reality was close at hand even in the Heights. In 1865, during a severe outbreak of cholera, kindhearted friend and steadfast patron Dr. A. Cooke Hull became so dismayed over the unsanitary conditions in Brooklyn’s tenement houses that he decided to run for alderman. His friend Wyman was among the first to endorse his candidacy in the press on a platform that urged sanitary reform, the cleansing and whitewashing of buildings, running water and lidded access to sewers in every unit, and regular health inspections and street cleaning.<sup>63</sup> In 1869, Brooklyn mortality figures rose alarmingly. The 155 deaths in one week in January, actually represented a thirty-five percent decrease from the week before! Among those deaths, most resulted from consumption, pneumonia, and scarlet fever; over twenty babies were still-born. Of the total, more than twice as many women as men died and more girls than boys. Beyond those born in the US, the largest ethnic grouping among the dead were Irish immigrants, then German, “Colored,” and English in that order.<sup>64</sup>

Poverty, disease, and unsanitary living conditions exacerbated social unrest, especially among the Irish. The Orangemen riots of 1870 and 1871 between Irish Catholics and Protestants grew so grievous as to command attention in the city’s pulpits. A number of prominent concerned citizens called for the publication of a sermon on the riots preached at the Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute concerning the tension between the rights of assembly, in this case by the Orangemen, and police directives to cancel their parade in the interests of maintaining public order.<sup>65</sup> Public drunkenness remained another problem. The Temperance Movement, a favorite of elite do-gooders, continued to be active in postwar Brooklyn. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, a firm advocate of the movement, and Luther Wyman who served as one of thirty-one honorary vice-presidents, attended

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 June 1878, 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1871, 4.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1865, 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1869, 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 July 1871, 2.



a temperance event at the Academy of Music, complete with eighteen-piece band and the odor of peppermint oil wafting about, usual fare at such gatherings.<sup>66</sup>

Charity toward the less fortunate had long been a hallmark of Brooklyn pride. Church groups assumed the lead in charitable outreach and social action, groups such as the women's Samaritan Society at the Unitarian Church of Saviour, ever busy tending to the needs of orphans, unemployed women, schooling and settlement housing for immigrants, disaster and war relief. They did so out of a mixture of Christian piety, local civic mindedness, and a certain noblesse oblige, especially on the part of wealthy congregations in the Heights. The Samaritans had assumed a prominent role during the Civil War, having sewn more than 5,000 garments for sick and wounded soldiers and raised thousands of dollars toward their care before the war's end, this apart from their monumental efforts in the Sanitary Fair.<sup>67</sup> Alfred Tredway White's pioneering work in settlement housing and education of the poor starting in the 1870s, had grown out of such Unitarian charitable energies. He represents a younger generation of Brooklyn patrons and philanthropists who turned their philanthropic energies toward alleviating social ills.<sup>68</sup> The older generation had established Brooklyn's signature cultural societies, men such as Alfred's father, Alexander M. White, wealthy New York furrier and banker, who was one of Luther Wyman's friends on the boards of the Academy of Music and the Polytechnic starting back in 1859.

After the war, Brooklyn's social needs increased. Brooklyn women remained active in charitable works through their churches. Elected managers from fifty churches to oversee aid to the Brooklyn Industrial

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 May 1866, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Olive Hoogenboom, *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, One Hundred Fifty Years: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: The Church, 1987), 34–36, 53. The Second Unitarian church of Brooklyn, which had formed itself as a more liberal congregation in 1851, while under the pastorates of avid abolitionists Samuel Longfellow, brother of the more famous poet, and Nahor Staples, had already sent over 250 items of warm clothing to the front before other churches had yet involved themselves in war support, *ibid.*, 53.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 153–64; Wendy Walker, *The Social Vision of Alfred T. White* (Brooklyn, NY: Proteotypes, 2009), 5–55.

School Association and Home for Destitute Children, served some 850 youngsters.<sup>69</sup> The ladies also organized a highly successful week-long charity carnival at the Academy of Music to benefit the Brooklyn Orphan Asylum that raised close to \$10,000.<sup>70</sup> The Brooklyn Dispensary, which had been founded in 1846 to supply medical assistance to the poor, needed expanded permanent quarters by 1866. That year it had treated over 6,000 patients and dispensed gratis nearly 12,000 prescriptions.<sup>71</sup> Early that year, Brooklyn's patrons passed the hat and quickly raised among themselves over \$15,000 toward establishing a much-needed home for neglected children. The Brooklyn Homeopathic Maternity Hospital received support from proceeds raised at a series of charity balls in the 1870s geared toward Brooklyn's high society. Many of the city's principal patrons attended, and both Luther Wyman and Mrs. Wyman were active on the Men's and Ladies' executive and reception committees. Organizers auctioned the boxes at the Academy of Music, the best places to see and be seen, with bids starting at \$200. The *Eagle* called these occasions "immense assemblages of the elite of Brooklyn." Those who could not afford tickets but wanted to gawk, formed a file on each side of the entrance to watch the elegantly dressed ladies and their gentlemen escorts alight from the carriages and sweep into the building.<sup>72</sup> The scene rendered unstated social divisions patently obvious.

Despite their widening social divisions, in the face of disaster, Brooklynites could still pull together. When the Brooklyn Tabernacle burned down in 1872, at an estimated loss of \$100,000 including its prize organ, two members hastened to Luther Wyman's home to request use of the Academy of Music for their church services until they could rebuild. Although a Sunday, Wyman called together his executive board

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 16 April 1873, 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 25 November 1872, 11.

<sup>71</sup> BE, 29 March 1866, 2. John McKenzie, on the boards of the Art Association, War Fund Committee, and Polytechnic, served as president of the Dispensary and Luther Wyman, vice-president and trustee, *ibid.*, 15 January 1867, 3. Wyman was re-elected in 1869, *ibid.*, 19 January 1869, 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 December 1871, 2; 6 December 1871, 3; 3 January 1872, 4; 27 January 1872, 1; 12 January 1875, 3; 9 February 1875, 2.

and wrote his affirmative response within hours.<sup>73</sup> The Rev. Dr. Talmage expressed his gratitude to “that worthy patron and exemplar of morality, pure relations and the finest of the arts, Mr. Luther B. Wyman” for offering his congregation use of the Academy of Music for its Sunday services, even though it meant in the first instance postponing a program on Dr. Livingston and Stanley’s Africa.<sup>74</sup> Wyman’s almost immediate response showed that people considered the Tabernacle fire to be a civic event, a loss shared by the whole city and one that evoked appropriate generosity in response.

Brooklyn’s largesse in the face of disaster extended well beyond its city limits. Fire was a particular hazard, and when a disastrous conflagration, the worst recorded before the great Chicago fire in 1871, devastated Portland, Maine, leaving 10,000 homeless, Brooklynites rushed to send money and goods. The tragedy gave the president of the Dispensary occasion to voice his Brooklyn pride in reference to Manhattan: “The great city across the river gets credit for so much charity that really belongs to Brooklyn . . . . For my part, I like Brooklyn better than New York. I go there to get a living, but if I have any good to do or anything to give, I prefer to do it at home.”<sup>75</sup> On the occasion of the Chicago fire, Brooklyn experienced another great outpouring of civic generosity toward a sister city in its hour of need. Several thousand attended a meeting at the Academy of Music to galvanize support for the victims. On stage sat the mayor, assorted aldermen, pastors, and other notables. The mayor intoned that their “city of churches, the city of charities, cannot be otherwise than the city of sympathies, for their suffering fellow citizens.” Brooklynites felt

<sup>73</sup> The *Eagle* published Wyman’s letter of response: “Please accept the sincere and deep regret which I experience in the destruction of your beloved Tabernacle, its noble organ and other appointments. The loss is a calamity to the city of Brooklyn as well as to your own church and congregation. Until otherwise provided for the Academy of Music is at the service of your society, and you are at liberty to make that announcement at your meeting this evening. [signed] L B Wyman on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Academy of Music,” *ibid.*, BE, 23 December 1872, 2; 14 October 1889, 1. The church burned again in 1889.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 31 December 1872, 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 Jul 1866, 2. John McKenzie was president of the Dispensary, and Luther Wyman served on the initial committee of three to organize support for the fire victims.

a definite sense of urban solidarity as they stood together in common cause to support the suffering “Western Metropolis.” Reminiscent of Civil War support, a one hundred-person committee formed to marshal aid for the Chicago fire victims. Three men from each ward coordinated efforts, and pastors called for donations from their pulpits. Luther Wyman served as vice-president of the steering committee to oversee donations. All manner of offerings poured in. Students volunteered to give a gymnastics exhibition dedicated to the sufferers; the president of the Excelsior Baseball Club sent a handsome check; P. T. Barnum donated floral decorations to be auctioned; and the Erie Railroad Company promised free transport of Brooklyn aid parcels to Chicago. Brooklyn’s wealthiest made generous contributions, led by millionaire A. A. Low who gave \$11,500. The city itself pledged its credit for \$100,000.<sup>76</sup> Brooklyn’s solid sense of community remained intact when reaching out to help disaster victims. The city’s social outlook, however, showed change.

### THE NEW ELITISM

Scholars of Renaissance Florence have used the concept of an open as opposed to a closed elite to describe that city’s urban patriciate in the fifteenth century. Unlike the inherited rigidity of a traditional Northern European landed aristocracy, an open elite had no strict boundaries determined by birth or inherited title, but lay open to new men of proven talent, wealth, and social standing. Like Renaissance Florence, Brooklyn’s elite in Luther Wyman’s generation sprang from very diverse backgrounds, though many had New England roots. Most of Brooklyn’s cultural patrons had made their way in the world from modest beginnings and had achieved their place among the elite through a variety of means—hard work, luck, or the good fortune of an opportune marriage or inheritance, and by building associative networks in their businesses, churches, neighborhoods, and through membership in various societies. To belong to Brooklyn’s upper crust meant having more than modest means, but not necessarily a grand fortune. Reputation for good character, and for honesty in business and in personal relationships contributed to one’s standing, perhaps a reason why only a smattering of political men, unless dignified as legislators at the state or federal level, could count themselves among Brooklyn high society. The

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1871, 2.

scandal surrounding the defalcation of Ethelbert S. Mills in 1873, defied those norms and rattled his unsuspecting peers, who had heretofore seen him as one of them, president of the respected Brooklyn Trust Company and from 1869 president of the Brooklyn Art Association after Régis Gignoux had departed for Europe.<sup>77</sup> The older generation of Brooklyn patrons had distinguished themselves by their collective contributions to charitable works and by participation in cultural associations. Luther Wyman, though hardly a man of great wealth, hit all the other points. In addition to his spotless, dignified character, others recognized him to be a man of culture and talent, especially in matters musical; he was an able organizer and managed to get things accomplished in an orderly and timely fashion. A commanding and visible presence at Philharmonic and Academy events, he was well known around Brooklyn and his congenial personality and very approachable demeanor earned him great affection as “Father” and “papa” of Brooklyn.

But as Brooklyn moved from its culturally and civic-minded renaissance period into the more money-conscious Gilded Age, stratified and polarized extremes of wealth increasingly became a public matter and, for some, uncomfortably so. The Civil War had brought federal income tax laws in 1862. In 1865 the *Eagle* began publishing long lists of wealthy individuals’ reported incomes, for “as the law provides that the books shall be kept open for public inspection we give to the public no more information than any citizen can obtain at any time by calling at the Assessor’s office and looking over the books.”<sup>78</sup> Further, the “enlightened curiosity which prompts men to regard with deep interest the affairs of his neighbor will be highly gratified by the publication of the income tax list. If it is true that one-half of the community do not know how the other half lives, they will now know how much they have to live on.”<sup>79</sup> At that time the three richest men in Brooklyn were wealthy New York dry goods merchant, H. B. Claflin, taxed on \$350,000, followed by A. A. Low on slightly over \$300,000, and S. B. Chittenden on \$200,000.<sup>80</sup> In February there emerged lists of incomes upon which the special war tax of five percent was charged.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 May 1869, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1865, 3; 13 January 1865, 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 February 1865, 3.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1865, 3.

Luther Wyman reported a modest \$7,703 in taxable income compared to Chittenden's \$210,000 and A. A. Low's \$313,279.<sup>81</sup>

The amount of wealth accumulating in Brooklyn staggered the imagination. For the 1864 federal income tax, residents of the Third Assessment District, which covered much of old Brooklyn, had taxes totaling \$706,472. Of this amount, residents of the Third Ward, covering much of the Heights, had been assessed by far the largest chunk, some \$244,233, or double the amount paid by any of the other wards. Residents of the First Ward came second with assessments totaling \$132,283, whereas the much poorer Second Ward was to pay only \$3,228. Horace B. Claflin, at that point richest man in Brooklyn, was assessed the then whopping sum of \$17,516.<sup>82</sup> The newspaper published the taxes owed by the top thirty-two tax payers in the whole district, which amounts ranged from \$209 to \$17,516. Luther Wyman was certainly not among them. Removing the three wealthiest men, Claflin, Chittenden, and Low, who were paying more than \$15,000 each, of the remaining twenty-nine householders, five owed more than \$5,000, which left fifteen assessments of more than \$1,000 but less than \$5,000, and nine at under \$1,000. In July of that year the paper published new tax lists with comparisons between reported taxable incomes from 1863 and 1864. Luther Wyman listed for \$7,794 for 1863, and \$7,231 in 1864. Chittenden's reported income had also declined from \$230,000 to \$201,828, whereas A. A. Low's had risen from \$342,279 to \$421,783, which, however, hardly compared with H. B. Claflin's increase from \$350,000 to \$600,600, much of it probably earned from wartime government contracts.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 February 1865, 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1865, 2. The assessment district covered eleven wards in the city, *ibid.*, 13 January 1865, 1. These three men were only moderately wealthy compared to Manhattan's richest. The New York City assessments for 1864 had been over \$28 million, and the special war tax on incomes expected to generate more than \$4 million. Manhattan's richest, dry goods merchant A. T. Stewart was assessed \$92,181 on an income exceeding \$1.8 million. William B. Astor and Commodore Vanderbilt's combined taxes approximated Stewart's. Moses Taylor, the fourth highest Manhattan tax payer owed over \$28,000 on an income of nearly \$600,000, *ibid.*, 17 January 1865, 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 July 1865, 2; 19 July 1865, 2. The figures represent net incomes after rents, interests, improvements, and taxes had been deducted.

As curious as people were about the economic circumstances of their neighbors, many felt that the publication of the entire tax list was an invasion of privacy, especially for those with smaller incomes, who did not want the modesty of their means made public, and in 1866 the federal government forbade the practice.<sup>84</sup> The *Eagle* then resorted to publishing fragmentary lists of the wealthiest citizens. Those tax figures are no indication of total wealth, only of assessment on declared incomes which could fluctuate considerably, such as for S. B. Chittenden whose assessment in 1867 reached close to \$28,000, compared to over \$72,000 in 1868, or A. A. Low whose figure for 1867 reported almost \$430,000 but only \$111,000 in 1868. In a list of those paying over \$1,000 in taxes in 1869, Luther Wyman declared income of close to \$36,000, an excellent year for him, but hardly in the same league as Chittenden's \$96,000 or A. A. Low's \$224,000.<sup>85</sup> In 1871, following the federal census of the previous year, the *Eagle* published what it believed to be the most reliable estimates of the total assets, including both real and intangible property, belonging to Brooklyn's wealthiest men. But the paper cautioned against taking the figures at face value, for, "Citizens known to be worth a million dollars, and who confess to those figures in the statement we publish today, pay personal tax on a valuation of from five to ten thousand dollars." Real estate holdings and investments, which did not show up in income tax declarations, but were admitted to in the census, gave a different, vastly enlarged view of Brooklyn's wealth. The 1871 headline read, "Our men of means . . . What our wealthy men are worth in their own estimation." In three fat, full-page columns, the *Eagle* published the names of close to 1,000 persons, including dozens of women, with estimated estates valued over \$25,000. Chittenden listed himself at \$950,000; A. A. Low at \$4,500,000; his brother Josiah at \$1,600,000, making the two brothers among Brooklyn's earliest millionaires. The Low brothers' assets would have included investments in their fleet of ships in the China trade, real estate, stocks and bonds, as well as profits from trade. In this august company of Brooklyn's wealthiest, Luther Wyman, also a shipping merchant in the Atlantic

<sup>84</sup> Attempts to prohibit publication of the tax rolls date back at least to 1865, *ibid.*, 16 January 1865, 2. Professional men of "small means" were particularly vocal opponents of having their meager assets made public.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1869, 2.

trade with ownership shares in several Black Ball ships as well as real property and an in interest in the ill-fated Nickel Plating Company, judged himself to be worth \$90,000. By comparison, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, known as a wealthy preacher, declared his estate worth \$54,000. Among Brooklyn's leading patrons, thirteen of whom made the 1871 list, only four, including Wyman, had estates of less than \$100,000. John T. Martin, who had made his fortune as a clothing manufacturer and had benefited from large government contracts during the war, by 1871 had long retired, to the status of a "gentleman," and gave his worth at \$1,350,000!<sup>86</sup>

Wealth in itself was more an object of curiosity and envy than of scorn, and, indeed, men such as the Low brothers, good Unitarians and good renaissance-style patrons, devoted both time and money to promoting Brooklyn's cultural institutions and other worthy causes. But their vast resources and those of their fellow very wealthy citizens set them far apart from the vast majority of Brooklynites who had no hope of ever making the 1871 list. Great wealth and a growing awareness of it, which had been promoted by all the publicity over tax assessments in the press, had the effect of making Brooklyn's elite that much more self-consciously elite. It also fostered what might be called multiple elites that gave rise to competition for status among the wealthy. Typically competition showed itself in the repeated controversies over seating privileges at the Philharmonic concerts among attendees who could afford tickets but did not want certain of their peers to receive preferential access to the best seats. Such consciousness and subtle competition over status recalls Alexis de Tocqueville's acute observation more than a generation earlier on the "paradox of equality," namely that democratic institutions spur a great passion for equality which can never be achieved and thus tend to exacerbate feelings of envy.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 July 1871, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: An Annotated Text Backgrounds Interpretations*, ed. Isaac Krimnick (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 1: 13. Ticket polices sparked controversy in the cities of Northern England undergoing their own bourgeois cultural uplifts, Simon Gunn, *The public culture of the Victorian middle class: ritual and authority and the English industrial city, 1840–1914* (Manchester; New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2000), 142–43.



Rather than couching their aims in terms of what was good for the whole city as in the past, in the postwar gilded era, wealthy Brooklynites became more overt about protecting their privileges. A series of pocket parks had been proposed for city-owned lots in the Heights, originally conceived as places where people could take an evening stroll and enjoy the views of Manhattan, and at the same time keep the end of Montague Street free of riff-raff. But many neighbors objected on the opposite grounds that such public spaces would be magnets drawing undesirable people into their neighborhoods.<sup>88</sup> The Heights sparked resentments from other Brooklynites. When residents of the Heights opposed a rail line through “that sacred spot,” a member of the Common Council, himself a long-time Brooklyn resident, in a letter to the editor, wondered aloud whether the gentlemen residing in the Heights should not have it walled in “so as to prevent all contact with the outside barbarians.”<sup>89</sup> In his view it was high time residents there awoke to realize that “money and mutual admiration” should not control the interests of the city of Brooklyn as a whole. Brooklyn’s renaissance patrons, who for the most part resided in the Heights, saw their usual claims to have acted in the best interests of their city in promoting so many cultural and educational institutions, albeit located in the Heights, now turned against them.

But it is not always easy to distinguish among elitisms expressed by the wealthy themselves; the envy and curiosity regarding one’s betters fueled by press accounts of tax returns and the social activities of the well-known; and the growing public impatience with the ingrained privileges and hidebound opinions of Brooklyn’s aging renaissance patrons and their peers. An example of the latter had already reached the public eye in 1864 when the *Eagle* characterized the operational structure of the Academy of Music to be divided between the conservative drones on the executive committee and the worker bees on the subcommittees.<sup>90</sup> In fact, the same people got elected year after year to the Academy’s board. In 1865, twenty of the original 1859 members remained on the board. Over the first decade only forty-three men had ever served on the twenty-five-member board. The eleven who had been added

<sup>88</sup> BE, 23 March 1865, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 February 1864, 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 February 1864, 2.

during that decade replaced original members who could no longer serve because of ill-health or death. All eleven added members were familiar patrons of other leading Brooklyn cultural societies.<sup>91</sup> Most of them resided in the Heights. It is also worth noting that after the war the *Eagle's* usual tag for Luther Wyman had become the "courtly" Wyman.<sup>92</sup>

Robert Ludham coined the phrase "units of social removal" to describe degrees of social separation in urban society, even within elites. In that regard mid- to late nineteenth-century Brooklyn was not unlike the social and residential patterns of Italian Renaissance cities back in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, where local neighborhoods or *piazze* might have the very wealthy and less wealthy living in close proximity; but the markers of distinction such as an imposing urban palace, elegant personal attire, and prominent associates, constituted the units of social removal that kept near neighbors socially distant from one another. In the case of postwar Brooklyn moving into the Gilded Age, wealth, particularly new wealth, did not by itself confer high status. Most of Brooklyn's elite were "new men" in the sense that very few, such as Henry E. Pierrepont, could boast long-established family connections in Brooklyn, either from its English or Dutch past. So many of them had immigrated from elsewhere, notably from New England, to make their fortunes. Elite status came measured not so much by one's street address as by commercial and social affinities and length of association. Luther Wyman was hardly among the wealthiest of Brooklyn's elite, but he was extremely well connected through his commercial and cultural networks, and he enjoyed a spotless reputation. His courtly, affable demeanor, generous hospitality, and reputation as a man of good will, tireless energy, and effective action, certainly earned him the "Esquire" (Esq.) after his name and positioned him squarely within elite circles as cultural patron, member of prominent societies, and someone elected or appointed to numerous boards.

Not surprisingly, we find Wyman among the founding members of Brooklyn's most exclusive men's club, the Brooklyn Club, established in April 1865 in the days after Appomattox. Gentlemen's clubs trace their

<sup>91</sup> The Academy of Music's annual reports listed the directors, which lists the *Eagle* also printed.

<sup>92</sup> E.g., BE, 14 November 1865, 2; 22 January 1866, 2; 27 February 1866, 2; 10 December 1866, 2 etc.

roots back to eighteenth-century London, first attractive among aristocrats, and in the nineteenth century increasingly to upper bourgeoisie.<sup>93</sup> The Union Club, New York's first men's club, had been founded in 1836, but the Brooklyn Club was the first in that city to have similar aspirations as a retreat for local merchant princes, politicians, military officers, and select members of the clergy. Quickly it became known simply as "The Club," a subtle assertion of its primacy of place in Brooklyn male society.<sup>94</sup> The club's stated "business and object shall be to promote social intercourse among the members thereof, and to provide for them a pleasant place of common resort for entertainment and improvement."<sup>95</sup> Wyman may well have remembered the statements published so many years prior in Troy, advertising his Troy Bathing House, as a "pleasant and agreeable place of resort."

The founding members hatched the idea for an exclusive men's club while meeting in the directors' room at the Academy of Music. But apparently the Academy, site of so many of Brooklyn's select society events in the past, no longer offered a sufficiently restricted gathering place for Brooklyn's finest, who now needed a more private venue for their entertainments. Membership came by invitation from the directors only to a select three hundred, whom the *Eagle* compared in jest to the Spartan king Leonidas' stalwart Three Hundred and to Tennyson's double that

<sup>93</sup> On the importance of British men's clubs as surrogate homes in a rapidly changing world, see Amy Milne-Smith, "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 4 (1 October 2006): 796–818, and her expanded study, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>94</sup> BE, 29 November 1865, 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 February 1870; Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh* (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867), 3: 925, on the founding, list of directors, and a description of the club's interior with its supper rooms, card rooms, private rooms, and added at the back, a billiard room with skylight. Two years earlier, members of the Excelsior Base Ball club had founded the Union Club for card games etc. that met initially in members' homes.

number in his “The Charge of the Light Brigade.”<sup>96</sup> Drinking in moderation was permitted, but no gambling. The club located itself in a brownstone former school at the corner of Pierrepont and Clinton Streets, a block from the Academy of Music. It held its gala opening with music, dancing, and the requisite supper catered by Delmonico’s. For decoration, John DeGrauw of the old Horticultural Society had donated two huge bouquets he had arranged himself.<sup>97</sup> The club became “very popular and powerful as a social feature” in Brooklyn, and the winter receptions the Club hosted for members and their lady friends became the “flutter and the pride of the best circles.”<sup>98</sup> The Club represented the new bastion for old civility and old sociocultural and commercial networks in operation. The 1871–72 treasurer’s report that fell into the hands of the *Eagle*, showed income and expenditures totaling nearly \$28,000, the largest expenditures being for wine, liquors, and cigars.<sup>99</sup>

In the 1850s and early 1860s newspapers frequently reported on important social and cultural events with lists of prominent attendees and general descriptions of the beautifully clad ladies at the promenade concerts or Philharmonic Society events. In the late 1860s and 1870s, social reporting of this ilk certainly continued, but the rituals of social inclusion and exclusion played out much more dramatically, whether at the already mentioned DeGrauw anniversary celebration, or the Club’s private reception for General Grant following his appearance at the Twenty-Third Regiment’s grand reception at the Academy of Music. The Club had hosted a sumptuous banquet seating forty gentlemen in honor of a local army general over which Luther Wyman presided with his usual “grace and tact.”<sup>100</sup> The most telling instance of such enacted elitism, however,

<sup>96</sup> BE, 2 February 1870. Stiles says two hundred, *History of Brooklyn*, 3: 925. Two black balls automatically eliminated a candidate. Clergymen and army and navy officers could join without paying the \$100 initiation fee and \$50 annual dues. In that sense of inclusion of non-dues paying members among military and clergy, Club members would have argued theirs was an “open elite.”

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 November 1865, 2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 February 1870, 4; For an account of one of the ladies’ receptions, *ibid.*, 18 December 1867, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 March 1872, 4.

<sup>100</sup> General Woodward, *ibid.*, 5 April 1869, 2.

occurred in February 1870, on the occasion of the visit of Queen Victoria's son, Prince Arthur, age nineteen and in training with the Canadian military, who was en route to Washington, DC, to meet President Grant.

The Brooklyn Club proposed to give one of its winter ladies' receptions in his honor. Elegance, sumptuousness, and gentility defined the event. They decorated the club within an inch of its rafters. Flowers and British and American flags "intertwined in temporary union" trimmed doorways and archways. Evergreens trailed along banisters "shot with groups of camellias and roses." For added grandeur, the best paintings loaned from the collections of E. S. Mills, A. A. Low, S. B. Chittenden, and H. E. Pierrepont, literally plastered the walls with "scenes pastoral, scenes domestic, scenes historical, scenes dramatic, scenes comical, landscapes, sunrises, sunsets, mountain views, lake views, sea view, portraits, pencilings," and so forth, including a full-length photo portrait of the Prince and Princess of Wales and of Prince Arthur. Even the ordinary lamp post on the sidewalk had been replaced with a pyramid of gas jets inside individual glass casings, and the entranceway carpeted under a white canvas awning supported on iron pillars with huge pots filled with evergreens on the sides. Two full bands were stationed in the reception rooms to entertain the guests. For its curious, uninvited readers, *The Eagle* described the Club's transformation: "What yesterday was bare floor and bare walls, where upholsters and cleaners, curtain-hangers and plumbers were busy, is to-night as elaborate a scene of completed adornment as if it had been borne from the land of dreams by the hands of genii." Luther Wyman, then Club vice-president and head of the reception committee, that "experienced and elegantly tactical . . . well-known gentleman," managed the affair down to its smallest details. Only Club members could get tickets, priced at \$20 each, which admitted the member and two ladies.

Easily the top social event of the season, the Prince Arthur Reception, so the *Eagle* proclaimed in banner headlines all in caps, was all about "FASHION, BEAUTY, WEALTH, WORTH AND BIRTH COLLIDING."<sup>101</sup> Tongue in check, the editor spouted that the event was really all about American "republican hospitality, and nothing . . . to an overpowering sense of any extraordinary importance arising out of the person and presence of incarnate Royalty." The event was also about showing off Brooklyn wealth and elegance which, despite the American flags incorporated in the decorations, assumed a

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1870, 4.

predictable aura of haute bourgeoisie aping European nobility in lavishness. The press accounts puffed Brooklyn pride, but of a different sort than in earlier years that had stressed community and independence of New York City. Here Brooklyn pride resided in its display of wealth and refined taste, symbolically vested in the female body. There followed lengthy, detailed descriptions of “Brooklyn beauty clothed upon with Paris prescriptions” in whose “principal toilettes powdered heads were legion . . . the diamond power predominating [and] laces were legion.” Comparisons with New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans showed that Brooklyn’s beauties surpassed them all. “A Brooklyn lady is just enough bucolic to be natural, steadfast, honest and true, and sufficiently urbane to be polished, direct, artistic, and elegant.” Surely an apt characterization of the city’s idealized view of itself, Brooklyn’s beauties were not as “stately and simulated” as New York’s, as “dowdy” as Philadelphia’s, or as bespectacled as Boston’s.<sup>102</sup>

On the designated evening itself, around four hundred of the curious uninvited waited patiently outside the Club in the bitter cold hoping for a glimpse of the royal prince. They amused themselves commenting on the lucky guests as they descended from their carriages in full evening attire. Finally, about 10:30 p.m. the cortege carrying the prince, his entourage, and hosts pulled up to discharge “its titled and untitled freight.” Out stepped the British prince, a very boyish young man with a peaches and cream complexion, slight frame, and small, delicate features, more a slender princeling than the magnificent, manly prince many had probably fantasized. In the reception line he greeted everyone “with grave and stiff courtesy,” without a smile or hint of pleasure. As etiquette demanded, he opened the dancing in a cotillion with Mrs. Chittenden, danced three more numbers, then advanced to the supper table which Delmonico’s had sumptuously catered. Prince Arthur and his retinue departed, leaving the Brooklyn guests to entertain themselves by themselves into the wee hours.<sup>103</sup>

The denouement occurred afterward. The next day the Club generously allowed the public inside to admire the reception decorations. According to Luther Wyman, from 10:00 a.m. until dark, “a perfect army of people thronged the Club Rooms. Having been invited, and being citizens of Brooklyn, no guard or let was put upon their

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 February 1870, 2.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

movements.” A sad mistake, for when Club members straggled in that evening they were greeted by a scene of utter destruction:

They were surprised beyond expression and indignant beyond composure to find that the visitors had about literally cleaned out all the wreaths, all the buds, and all the various combinations of floral ornaments . . . . The Club House, after the departure of this unmannerly crowd, looked more as if it had been sacked, than visited. The club only feel too grateful that they did not take off all the pictures while they were in progress of burglary. They did eat up entirely all there was left on the table including everything that had been left on the plates of the guests. To this there is no complaint made as it was intended to distribute the cold morsels among the poor, but at the larceny of the flowers, especially of those which were planted and which were worth hundreds of dollars to their owners, the Club is not unreasonably enraged.<sup>104</sup>

In retrospect, the Club should have posted guards to restrain the crowd. But an even more important lesson had become clear. The destruction of their decorations, reminiscent of the floral plundering at the Horticultural Society’s exhibitions, was proof to the members, if any were needed, that the “units of social removal” keeping those with educated and refined tastes apart from the riff-raff in the general public, seemed to them not only desirable, but natural.

The success of the Prince Arthur Reception must have whetted appetites for additional exclusive social events that underscored the lessons of keeping social distance. Less than three weeks after that signature event another elegant affair, also trumpeted as THE social event of the season, took place at the Academy of Music. A committee of forty-two gentlemen, many of them members of the Brooklyn Club, set about organizing on an English model, the “Subscription Assembly” reception and ball in honor of their ladies. The *Eagle* reported the affair was “on a purely private and exceptionally elegant scale . . . a select party of Brooklyn’s best citizens,” whose impulses were “wholly social,” that is, not charitable in support of some worthy cause.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1870, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Such familiar names as E. S. Mills, L. B. Wyman, J. O. Low, and H. E. Pierpont served on the select committee on subscriptions, *ibid.*, 23 February 1870, 4.

Over three hundred guests participated and two hundred bouquets, supplied by Misters DeGrauw and Marsters from their private greenhouses, awaited the ladies upon their arrival. As at the Prince Arthur Reception, ornamentation, flowers, music, dancing, and an elegant supper formed the evening's agenda. The stairway to the ballroom had been carpeted and decorated with greens and flowers; the ballroom had been transformed with imported plants and shrubs, sofas, and S-shaped tete-à-tete chairs interspersed with long pier glasses allowing the beautiful people to admire themselves as they whirled about the floor. The *Eagle* caught the essence: "a Public Room turned to a Private Parlor." Fewer women powdered their hair this time, but their dresses were of the latest style in two colors, of "finest materials and hues of the most delicate." More than half of Brooklyn's main patrons counted among the gentlemen on the organizing committee and many of the rest were in attendance. No tickets were sold, for the gentlemen sponsors subscribed all the necessary sums to pay for the event themselves.<sup>106</sup>

Brooklyn's best citizens so enjoyed themselves that they organized similar subscription assembly balls in three successive years through 1873, prior to the great Panic. The Panic that fall must have dampened interest in such entertainments afterward. Wyman's Brooklyn Club colleagues and other well-placed gentlemen served on the organizing committees for each of the events. Always featured were flowers of rare growth and fragrance, and decorations that transformed the Academy's Assembly Room from a public hall into a private space as though someone's elegant drawing room.<sup>107</sup> The events stressed intimacy, privacy, and exclusivity. In 1871, the evening's novelty was the presence of a "live countess, of undoubted authenticity, who very sensibly did not disdain to mingle with her Republican sisters, many of whom equaled her in brilliancy of attire."<sup>108</sup> At the 1873 ball the German band played until after the supper when guests rose from their tables to resume dancing. The musicians had not been offered a refreshments break, and when Wyman turned to thank them, he reputedly slipped on a piece of orange peel. In completing his turn, he noticed that every musician was sucking on an orange that one of their number had pilfered from the priceless hothouse trees placed nearby

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1873, 2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 January 1871, 3.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



as decoration, an act reminiscent of the decorations looted from the Brooklyn Cub after the Prince Arthur Reception. This time, however, or so the *Eagle* claimed, the petty thieves in the band “actually had the cheek to find fault because the oranges were sour!”<sup>109</sup>

The subscription assembly balls emerged at the time when balls of a more public nature were apparently “ignored by the elite of metropolitan society,” which forced the “fair belles of fashionable circles” to rely upon the visits of foreign princes or occasions when “Charity invoked Fashion’s aid” for an elegant evening of dancing and socializing. Since such special occasions occurred more infrequently, the idea of the *soirée dansante* by subscription enjoyed great success for a number of years. By this time any pretenses of a community-building, democratic ethos, or charitable purpose, once so strong during Brooklyn’s early renaissance and war years had mostly evaporated among her leading citizens. Those happy cruises that the old Sacred Music Society had taken in musical fellowship up Long Island Sound to Connecticut with dinner laid for them in a local tavern disappeared as well. By contrast, in the 1870s we find Brooklyn’s finest out on the water in a very different fashion. A group of private citizens, among the “most distinguished and influential,” chartered a boat from the Fulton Ferry Company to steam around the harbor so that those on board with their ladies could better view the regatta of the New York Yacht Club. Sport sailing was regarded then as an aristocratic sport, and the New York Yacht Club boasted among its members private ownership of no fewer than thirty-five schooners, sixteen sloops, and four steam yachts.<sup>110</sup> Another example came in 1873 when members of the Brooklyn Club took a day excursion by steamboat to Stonington, Connecticut, perhaps to enjoy some fresh local scallops. One gossip spoofed them as a dangerous gang intent upon attending a prize fight; another declared them to be “genial and stately fellows” for whom “His Grace Bishop [Luther] Wyman (of the diocese of Gowanus),” who filled his glass to the brim with nothing but ice water, “delivered an impressive grace” at their shipboard dinner.<sup>111</sup> Private events for and by a congenial but exclusive set predominated in the new gilded era.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 January 1873, 4; 25 January 1873, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Wyman, Low, Chittenden, Pierrepont, and other notables were among them, *ibid.*, 23 June 1871, 4.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 July 1873, 2; 23 July 1873, 2.

Postwar Brooklyn had changed both its physical and social complexion. The problems associated with waves of new immigrants, poverty, and disease proliferated, despite ongoing efforts to mitigate their impact. The tight-knit community on the Heights, which in the past had sponsored Brooklyn's renaissance and done so much for war relief, entered the Gilded Age with its pride intact but now pulled more into itself. The elite presented a more self-conscious and exclusive façade toward their neighbors. Prestige and privilege, if not always great wealth, as in Luther Wyman's case, became their marks of distinction, especially once tax returns and estimated wealth became objects of public scrutiny in the press. More self-focused, the elite seemed less dedicated to promoting Brooklyn pride or to sponsoring cultural projects to benefit the community at large. After the war, the Brooklyn Renaissance, at least in its foundational, community-building, and construction phases, now largely and successfully completed, seemed headed toward rocky shoals in the new Gilded Age.

## Impact on the Arts

In the dawning Gilded Age as polite society in Brooklyn became by choice more standoffish and less inclusive, the changing social milieu presented new challenges to the city's arts culture. This chapter explores how Brooklyn's signature renaissance societies adjusted to the social, political, and financial pressures that plagued urban centers in this period, pressures which strengthened some but weakened others. As we know, by the end of the Civil War, the old Horticultural Society had already failed. The brilliant success and wide appeal of the new Brooklyn Art Association stood in sharp contrast to it. The Academy of Music, sometimes reluctantly, accepted new venues, whereas the Philharmonic Society experienced the most difficulty in adjusting to the changing times. It received the brunt of criticism about old fogyism and needed change, and it wobbled financially more than once.

The Brooklyn Art Association had had its earliest beginnings as the Art Social, that casual gathering of artists, of which Brooklyn boasted a fair number, and a few friends. Under the leadership of Régis Gignoux, well-known Hudson River School landscape painter, the informal get-togethers grew beyond active artists to include art enthusiasts, dabblers, and collectors. Men, but especially women, took a lively interest both as artists and art owners who loaned artworks for local exhibitions. The group successfully brought together artists and aficionados and had appreciation of art as its prime focus. Once formalized into the Brooklyn Art Association (1864) and membership restricted, it quickly became the new

darling of Brooklyn high society. Planning to fund and construct its own building adjacent to the Academy of Music had been delayed by the war, but eagerly resumed once peace had been restored.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the Association's semiannual exhibitions at the Academy of Music enjoyed tremendous success, and invitations to its gala openings were highly coveted. The Association had received positive publicity from its exhibition at the Sanitary Fair, and a select public continued to flock to its events. The *Eagle* described one of the Association's receptions as an "Immense Gathering of the Wealth and Taste of Brooklyn—the Crème de la Crème *en masse*."

The oxymoron of an *en masse* elite captured one of the challenges faced by the Art Association and Brooklyn's renaissance societies more generally. Apart from limiting its membership upon incorporation to a manageable two hundred artists and art lovers, the Art Association demonstrated no pretensions of marked exclusivity the way a social group such as the Brooklyn Club did. The Club's directors managed the membership list and used blackballing to exclude undesirable nominees. A snooty art club would have had little appeal to its artist members. It would hardly have served their interests which were to educate the public in art appreciation, to get their own works better known, to encourage commissions, and to sell paintings. The Art Association needed to satisfy both egalitarian and elitist tendencies within its membership. To accommodate the former, it smartly scheduled days and times when its exhibitions would be free and open to the general public. The executive committee proudly proclaimed to Association members and all the "friends of art in Brooklyn" that their city was the "first to establish free exhibitions of pictures and works of Art in this country," the beginning of a long tradition still alive in many cities and art circles today.<sup>2</sup>

The gala exhibition openings, however, constituted a very different matter. By invitation only, they appealed to the affluent and well-connected connoisseurs. Reception committee members for these events read like a social register. When published in the *Eagle*, names of the women's committees were usually printed above the men's, perhaps in

<sup>1</sup> The Mercantile Library was in the same situation, lacking still \$123,000 before construction of its building across from The Academy of Music could begin, *ibid.*, 16 April 1866, 2.

<sup>2</sup> BMA, BAA Minutes, 26 April 1869.

recognition of the avid interest Brooklyn's ladies took in art appreciation as well as the opportunity opening receptions gave for select social gatherings. After all, many of those affluent and refined ladies had received instruction in drawing and painting de rigueur as part of the curriculum in proper nineteenth-century girls' schools. Ability to paint and draw recommended young gentlemen as well. The Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute offered art classes, where Luther Wyman's namesake, Luther Jr., probably learned to paint. He exhibited a selection of his landscapes at several Art Association exhibitions, though not to sell.<sup>3</sup> In 1869 Luther Wyman loaned the fine oil portrait that noted artist Matthew Wilson had painted of him (Fig. 7.1).<sup>4</sup> What better way for Association members to see and be seen than to have their own likenesses on display!

Even before the dedication of its elegant new building in 1872, the Art Association had found ways to navigate the sometimes opposing social currents in Brooklyn. It employed the savvy strategy of welcoming into its semiannual exhibitions select works by amateur artists, not just new paintings by working artists and those loaned from members' private collections.<sup>5</sup> The Association's 1865 receptions featured nearly two hundred new paintings, a quarter again as many as on display the previous year. Many of those painted on order, such as Gignoux's *Among the Alps*, were seen by their owners for the first time at an opening reception. It had been commissioned by Brooklyn patron Edward J. Lowber, whose donation of wine had caused such an uproar at the Sanitary Fair.<sup>6</sup> In singling out Lowber's particularly fine painting, the *Eagle* listed his name before that of the artist, not an unusual practice at the time. According to the Association's report, during 1864, the last full year of the Civil War and a very profitable for certain wealthy Brooklynites such as Lowber, local artists had been besieged with commissions.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Exhibition Lists, 1867 Spring Exhibition, n. 124 "Sporting at Nahant"; 1867 Fall Exhibition, n. 172 "Sunrise near Salem harbor"; 1868 Spring Exhibition, n. 103 "Sunset, Point of Rocks, Swampscott; and 1869 Spring Exhibition, n. 1 "Sunset on the Hudson near West Point."

<sup>4</sup> BMA, BAA Exhibition Lists, 1869 Spring Exhibition, n. 196.

<sup>5</sup> In the 1870s, works by students at the Packer and Polytechnic schools were included, e.g. in the Winter Exhibition of 1873.

<sup>6</sup> BE, 22 March 1865, 2; 21 December 1865, 2. Whether this is the same painting as Gignoux's *Sunrise in the Alps*, currently in a private collection, remains unclear.

The Art Association, perhaps better than any of Brooklyn's other cultural societies, embodied the Italian Renaissance ideal of the well-rounded individual, reminiscent of polymath Leonardo da Vinci or of Leon Battista Alberti's literary self-portrait describing his many and diverse talents, artistic, intellectual, literary, and physical.<sup>7</sup> As noted earlier, William Roscoe of Liverpool, an accomplished poet, artist, and collector as well as lawyer and businessman had self-consciously sought to emulate those qualities that he so admired in the merchant patrons of Florence. Similarly, among those qualities, appreciation of historical and contemporary fine art, especially the landscapes of the Hudson River School by Régis Gignoux and others, would have been expected of mid-century haut bourgeois Brooklynites with cultivated tastes of both sexes. Several of Brooklyn's premier patrons, such as Ethelbert S. Mills, President of the Brooklyn Trust Company and subsequent president of the Art Association, prided themselves on their private collections of paintings and sculptures, some acquired abroad, but others purchased locally. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher stood among Brooklyn's noted art lovers.

In contrast to the Art Association, the Horticultural Society, as mentioned previously, fared poorly during the war years. Ironically it had had the most potential to preserve within its membership the vitality that could come from a social mix of high society promoters, hired gardeners, and commercial horticulturalists. During the war, the Society experienced financial problems and declining attendance at its floral exhibitions.<sup>8</sup> Despite the efforts of its president John DeGrauw to keep it afloat, it had folded in late 1864, a victim of changing priorities in wartime. In April 1865, within days of the surrender at Appomattox, a group of DeGrauw's friends, remnants of the Society, gathered to honor him with speeches in appreciation for his unstinting service as Society president and for his generous support of destitute families of Brooklyn soldiers. DeGrauw, a descendant of early Dutch émigrés to New Amsterdam and old Brooklyn,

<sup>7</sup> "His genius was so versatile that you might almost judge all the fine arts to be his . . . thus showing by example that men can do anything with themselves if they will," translated from the Italian as "Self-portrait of a Universal Man," in James Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1953), 480–92.

<sup>8</sup> According to DeGrauw, the last exhibition had cost \$1,500 and only six hundred persons had attended out of a Brooklyn population of over 300,000, BE, 14 April 1865, 2.

was a long-time Brooklyn resident from before incorporation in 1834. Over the years, he had accumulated considerable social capital through his business, cultural, political, and philanthropic activities, which merited special recognition in polite social circles, as discussed in [Chapter 3](#). By way of a tangible token of their esteem, his friends gifted him a beautiful monogrammed chased silver service with sterling pitcher, four drinking goblets, and a salver. Luther Wyman made the presentation to his long-time friend. The two men had collaborated closely to unite music with flowers in those remarkable floral promenade concerts back in the late 1850s. DeGrauw boasted that they had made Brooklyn the Chiswick of America, a reference to the Renaissance Palladian-style country house and gardens the Third Earl of Burlington had built in the eighteenth century in West London, inspired by his tours of Italian villas and grounds.

In their exchange of formal remarks, Wyman and DeGrauw gave voice to the gentlemanly courtesy and reciprocal appreciation, appropriately grounded in history, so typical of their social cohort of Brooklyn patrons and do-gooders, who had been nurtured in the well-networked associative culture of the antebellum years. Wyman honored his friend's "exalted patriotism and noble heart," and praised, "music and flowers, twin sisters of the sublime and beautiful . . . akin to godliness. In the cultivation of both, you and I have worked hand in hand . . . . When Apollo struck the lyre he awakened a spirit of music in classic Greece which infused itself into the hearts of mankind to distant generations; and Pomona and Flora . . . awakened among the devotees of horticulture the cultivation of the fruits and flowers of the earth."<sup>9</sup> In his equally flowery response, DeGrauw spoke of his personal gratitude that the Society should have selected Wyman, "one of its most active members, as well as one of its most patriotic and benevolent citizens," to make the presentation. He continued, "My desires have never extended beyond doing my duty in a cause in which I have always felt a most deep and abiding interest," for which the gift of silver would serve as "testimony, the appreciation of which will always be most dear to me." DeGrauw put into words the civic value the combined arts bestowed on Brooklyn: "We have our public institutions of a literary and philanthropic character. Our philharmonic dispensing the sublimity of sweet sound; our art association displaying the most brilliant works of genius. We had a Horticultural Society; all three

<sup>9</sup> [Ibid.](#), 14 April 1865, 2.

the sisters of art, but one has fallen, and her place is vacant, but . . . may our remaining sisters . . . reach a far more exalted position, and always have reason to rejoice that they have added unflagging laurels to the character of our city.”<sup>10</sup> The goals of Brooklyn’s renaissance had found eloquent expression in retrospect at the time one of its early signature societies had expired.

After the war, the Academy of Music found itself in a different situation from either the Horticultural Society or the thriving Art Association. Each of those societies had found focus in one of the associated fine arts. By contrast, the Academy of Music, despite its name, had become Brooklyn’s public meeting house that hosted all manner of entertainments and exhibitions, not just Philharmonic concerts and other musical events. Though constructed with private funds, it had transformed into Brooklyn’s premier “public” institution, a kind of cultural town hall and a physical symbol of the city itself. The Sanitary Fair had confirmed its role as Brooklyn’s preferred space for large public gatherings, whether they be lectures, strong man shows, rallies in support of soldiers fighting for the Union, church meetings, art exhibitions, or exclusive Subscription Assembly balls. Early on, it will be remembered, the conservatives among the board of directors had lost the battles over keeping drama and alcohol out, thus confirming by default that the Academy of Music should be available for many diverse and not just strictly highbrow gatherings. Thanks to the Sanitary Fair and the drama decision, the Academy had been pushed to democratize. The Academy’s openness therefore made it easier for its directors to navigate the social changes occurring after the war on the threshold of the Gilded Age, but that openness did not insulate it from uncomfortable situations.

The first big post-war challenge the directors faced involved the highly sensitive “negro question.” The Union had won the war, but racism persisted, and social equality among the races in 1865 remained but a distant dream. In an attempt to enliven its flagging lecture series, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) had invited as featured speaker the famous Frederick Douglass, former slave and charismatic orator against the evils of slavery. The YMCA anticipated a big draw, and Douglass inquired if the Academy of Music could host the event. At first the directors refused the request on grounds that a lecture

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



for Douglass' own financial benefit did not fit the profile of usual Academy events. The *Eagle* leapt on the occasion to poke fun at the immensely respectable body of gentlemen, a number of them abolitionist Republicans among the Academy's directors, whose "dull and decorous" deliberations had been suddenly "enlivened by the introduction of the irrepressible negro question." Douglass appealed to Luther Wyman in his capacity as director in charge of programming and assured him all proceeds would go to the YMCA. Under those conditions, Wyman recommended Douglass have the house.<sup>11</sup> But one board member strongly objected and requested the directors discuss the matter further. The majority voted to grant permission, eleven to six. A further two opponents abstained, and one man promptly resigned from the board. No one ever questioned Douglass' shining intelligence or oratorical abilities to hold an audience spellbound. Rather, those opposed claimed crass material grounds, namely that if Douglass were allowed to occupy the stage, then it would be absurd to deny "sable" skinned folks the right to enter the house as regular members of the audience and even to mingle with Brooklyn's "best society" at the Philharmonic concerts. They feared that the prospect of equal rights and racial mixing at the Academy of Music would offend many white folks, who would stop attending Academy events and thus lower its revenues and injure stockholders. Elitism, this time mixed with racism, had reared its head again.

The *Eagle* fantasized about the day "when the courtly Wyman would lead to the favored place some portly specimen of the daughters of Africa whose richer blood . . . [is said, will] warm the frigid veins of a coming race of variegated 'Yankees'."<sup>12</sup> Over at Hooley's Opera House several weeks earlier, someone had sneaked in, a heavily veiled, "most respectable colored lady." When a number of white folks expressed their displeasure and threatened to leave, the management had reluctantly escorted the lady outside. At Douglass' lecture several African-Americans were spotted

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 November 1865, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, in a separate article. Politely, the *Eagle* did not name the member who resigned, but the minutes of the January 1866 board meeting indicate that Mr. E. G. Lowber had retired from the board and been replaced by Henry Sanger, another among Brooklyn's group of active patrons, *ibid.*, 13 January 1866, 2. Lowber, however, seems to have remained engaged in Brooklyn cultural affairs, notably with the opera.

in the audience, and two respected ministers of Brooklyn churches were seated on stage. Douglass spoke on the lessons to be learned from Lincoln's assassination and began his remarks by scolding those who had opposed his speaking at the Academy as shameful and mean-spirited for a city Brooklyn's size.<sup>13</sup> Any Copperheads and Hunkers in the audience that night received their comeuppance.

On a less controversial note, the Academy of Music enjoyed great success hosting Italian opera, which the Brooklyn public welcomed with open arms. Italian opera appealed uniquely to a combination of visual, aural, emotional, and intellectual sensibilities by bringing together a blend of music, poetry, and drama that thrilled its audiences. The opera became the Academy's mainstay in terms of receipts, surpassing the Philharmonic concerts in ticket sales. Opera subscriptions for the 1866 winter season reached more than double the minimum number needed to guarantee the season, securing in advance not only that expenses would be covered but that the season would turn a healthy profit.<sup>14</sup> The following season, six operas were planned. The burning of the New York Academy of Music in May further enhanced the fortunes of opera in Brooklyn, for managers and artists alike paid more attention to the Brooklyn season and were willing to stage elaborate productions of Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Verdi operas, giving usually more than one performance a week.<sup>15</sup>

The Academy of Music's annual report showed rentals of the house had grown by fifty percent over the previous year, from 123 to 183 nights, with thirty-nine for opera, sixty-nine for drama, and fifty for concerts. Lectures and exhibitions rounded out the total. Income increased by over \$11,000, partly due to the addition of fourteen more operas.<sup>16</sup> The following season continued strong, and the *Eagle* noted that a signature performance of Mozart's popular *Don Giovanni* had attracted a particularly brilliant audience with "surging seas of silks and satins, and the billows of broadcloth which poured into every nook and corner of the vast building," such that the curtain was delayed because of the crowds packed into standing-room-only spaces.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 January 1866, 2; 22 January 1866, 2; 30 January 1866, 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1866, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 November 1866, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 January 1867, 2. Profit for the year amounted to over \$8,600.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 March 1867, 2.

That night Luther Wyman accomplished an amazing “floral feat.” He had on hand two magnificent baskets of flowers to present to the female leads. But three prima donnas sang in *Don Giovanni*. Wyman presented the baskets to two of the stars in the green room and then a short time later gave a very similar looking basket to the third star when she came out at the other side of the stage, “which made it alright, and got Papa Wyman out of the fix.”<sup>18</sup> The opera audiences in particular seemed to lend themselves to satire, especially members of the older elite. The *Eagle* gave a caricature of “those festive old cocks in the Directors’ Box [who] shout and clasp and cry out ‘bravo,’ and demand an encore . . . . And brother Wyman split his gloves, and brother Lowber shouted ‘brava,’ and Senator Pierson opened his eyes with ecstasy and his mouth with *da capos* and the eloquent Jenks hurrahed like a school boy, and all the dead-heads clapped their hands like the hill of the Scripture, and the artist Gignoux called aloud in the extremity of his joy ‘this is good—oh yes, that is very good.’”<sup>19</sup> Old fogies or not, the Academy of Music kept afloat. In 1870 as the Academy neared its tenth anniversary, it had recovered from losses from the previous Black Friday panic year and reported receipts totaling \$29,000, or \$5,000 over expenses.<sup>20</sup>

In view of the Art Association’s new edifice rising next door in the vacant lot that the Sanitary Fair had used temporarily, the Academy of Music’s directors entertained making a modest physical expansion in the small space between the two buildings. They planned to fashion an additional street entrance and stairway leading up to the Directors’ Rooms to enhance separate rentals of those spaces. They envisioned a corridor on the upper floor connecting the Academy and the Art Association buildings. These additions would facilitate the joint use of both structures for exhibitions and receptions. In a good Renaissance fashion, music and art would thus become inseparable.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 March 1867, 2. The *Eagle* took such delight in reporting Wyman’s sleight of hand, that it reprinted the article two weeks later, 15 April.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 May 1867, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 January 1870, 2. Receipts from opera and drama each brought in \$4,800; concerts \$4,200; lectures \$1,900; exhibitions \$2,500; meetings including Temperance and women’s rights gatherings, \$2,400.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, BE, 14 January 1870, 2.

The modest expansion reflected a brief surge of postwar optimism and prosperity. In the midst of the Academy's improving finances and restored future as Brooklyn's prime entertainment center, an interesting crosscurrent emerged in the musical world that seemed like a nostalgic throwback to former years when the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society and the Mendelssohn Society had flourished in the 1840s and early 1850s. In 1866, plans were afoot to found a new oratorio choral society by uniting two smaller existing societies. During the war, performances of sacred music had received scant attention in the press. They had been overshadowed by enthusiasm for the Philharmonic concerts, opera, and the Academy's more secular and war-themed entertainments. The *New York Times* attributed this new interest in reviving sacred choral music in the City of Churches to the installation of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's new organ in Plymouth Church. Brooklyn boasted a large number of premier voices and "plenty of good old-fashioned directors—such as Judge Greenwood, Mr. Luther B. Wyman, and so on—to manage them."<sup>22</sup> Brooklyn's new Choral Union was founded for the performance of those grand old oratorios. Wyman had been invited to be president, but he declined and ex-Judge Greenwood stepped forward. Robert Raymond, long-time member of the Philharmonic and Academy of Music boards, served as vice-president. The first performance was to be Handel's *Messiah*.<sup>23</sup> On invitation from the Academy, the following year the Choral Union gave several performances of Haydn's *Creation* and a number of concerts for charity, one in aid of the Society for Friendless Women and Children with a selection of operatic pieces to the accompaniment of Dodsworth's orchestra.<sup>24</sup> Ironically, the Philharmonic Society, the plans for which had been laid under Wyman's leadership while he was president of the old Brooklyn Sacred Music Society in the 1850s, does not seem to have collaborated with the new Choral Union. In fact, in the midst of these changing times and changing tastes, even retrospective tastes, the Philharmonic Society's situation had grown perilous. The

<sup>22</sup> NYT, 22 January 1866, 4.

<sup>23</sup> BE, 4 December 1866, 2. The Harmonic Society and Oratorio Society joined forces.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 January 1869, 2; *The Independent... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic*: . . . , 14 April 1870, 22: 1115 (via APS Online).

*Eagle*, quick to sniff out problems, kept its quill sharpened, ready to pen new criticisms of the Academy of Music and especially of its Philharmonic parent.

### THE PHILHARMONIC'S PRECARIOUS PREDICAMENT

After the war, the Philharmonic Society, Brooklyn's premier musical organization, entered a downward spiral and stood on much shakier ground than either the Art Association or the Academy of Music. Although its programming remained strong, and it continued to attract a solid core of subscribers, audiences at its concerts, and hence receipts, shrank year after year. Lack of support threatened its very existence. Long-time president Luther Wyman and his fellow directors faced a series of social, musical, and financial hurdles. On the one hand, the obstacles they faced revealed a new impatience among subscribers over the prickly, divisive seating controversy; and on the other, looming financial problems. The one reflected social tensions among the music-loving public; the other resulted from Brooklyn's economic perils and the proliferation of other entertainment choices that harmed Philharmonic ticket sales. A series of internal disputes played themselves out in the press and cast the Society in an unflattering light that, in turn, compounded its problems.

The Philharmonic was one of the oldest and most distinguished of Brooklyn's renaissance foundations. For a decade it had attracted the best of Brooklyn society as well as serious music lovers to its concerts. Its long tradition meant that many of the directors such as Luther Wyman, A. Cooke Hull, Robert R. Raymond, Edwin Plimpton, and others, all Brooklyn patrons, had remained on the Society's board from the beginning and were slow to admit new, younger men. For the directors, as for many of the subscribers, the Philharmonic concerts were a social as well as musical experience. The demands of the social side of the Society did not always harmonize with what the professional musicians, who subscribed at a much-reduced price, felt accorded with their vision of what it would take to make the Philharmonic and Brooklyn into a *bona fide* music mecca. The musicians voiced their criticisms, and at the same time, the businessmen among the directors, ever sensitive to the Society's uncertain, shrinking finances, felt constrained in how much they could increase the size of the orchestra or experiment with new offerings. Both groups felt the pressure of an increasingly apathetic public whose support kept sliding downward. These issues and their complex interrelationships unfolded over several years.

On the pesky seating problem that had earlier inflamed such jealousy over alleged special privileges, it will be remembered that the Philharmonic board had decided to charge extra for reserve seating. But already in 1865 irate letters to the *Eagle* complained equally about this extra fee and about the alternative of having general admission and a horrible crush at the door. “Cannot Mr. Wyman and his confreres see the nonsense (to use no stronger word) of compelling us, after doors are opened of the necessity to either stand or pay the extra price to get even a single seat?”<sup>25</sup> Dr. Hull, Society treasurer, endured over four hundred complaints about the dangerously crowded conditions around the entrance.

Three suggested remedies emerged each with their outspoken advocates. The first recommended the Philharmonic follow the example of Paris and London and erect a railing at the door to discipline the crowd into entering single file. Wyman feared that on popular nights, such a railing would have to extend all the way to Fulton Street! The second proposal advocated a return to the original “old Democratic plan” of no reserved seats that made every spot available on a first-come, first-served basis. There was scant support on the board for that much democracy in seating arrangements, and which would not alleviate crowding at the entrance. The third plan called for seats to be assigned via lottery, a procedure the Italian Opera Company had tried successfully.<sup>26</sup> For the Philharmonic’s “Lyric Lottery,” directors summoned the Third District’s draft wheel out of retirement to scramble numbered cards, one for each subscriber. The pretty daughter of the Academy’s janitor would draw the cards from the wheel. When asked if, like Justice, she was blind, she retorted “no, not blind, but I don’t cheat.” The experiment proved a near disaster. She picked out the first few cards, and Luther Wyman, serving as crier, called out the initial winners. Suddenly the little door in the draft wheel burst open, spewing its contents. The cards had to be redeposited, the drawing resumed. The process lasted until nearly midnight!<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> BE, 19 January 1865, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1865, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 February 1865, 2. Upon Wyman’s recommendation, and approved by the gathering, Edward Lowber, who had done so much to help with the opera season was permitted first pick of seats, for which he selected four of the best balcony seats. Max Maretzek, manager of the Italian Opera Company, allowed an additional three seats be allotted to the press.

Complaints regarding the Philharmonic's handling of its seating problem never let up. After the lottery mishaps, the board bowed to pressure from the dress circle crowd and announced a new plan. For fifty cents each, season ticket holders would be permitted the number of seats equal to the number of their subscriptions. These tickets could be picked up at the box office in the days preceding the performance. No tickets for reserved seats would be sold to nonsubscribers, and no more tickets than seats in the house would be offered.<sup>28</sup> This new scheme reserved the whole house. It had solved the problem of the mad crush as the doors opened, but it also discouraged attendance by excluding nonsubscribers. More than before, the new scheme made the Philharmonic an increasingly elite preserve, open only to season ticket holders.<sup>29</sup>

The Philharmonic's experiment to limit seating in the whole house to subscribers' advance purchase proved calamitous, for it sparked even more open resentment and fresh accusations of elitism. In 1867, under pressure from negative public criticism, the directors abandoned their new plan and opened the house again. The *New York Times* and the *Eagle*, which had followed the matter closely, both approved.<sup>30</sup> The *Times* had called it "absurd" to withhold tickets for individual concerts from the public. Once public access to the Philharmonic concerts had been restored, the seats, aisles and balconies at the Academy again filled to capacity, only now, some "silks and satins and costly head gear for once had to ascend to the regions usually occupied by the 'gods'."<sup>31</sup> There was no satisfying everyone, and the press continued its pointed criticisms of the Philharmonic's directors.

The old Philharmonic could do nothing right any more. The first concert in 1866 had featured Mozart's *Symphony in D Major*, a piano concerto, selections from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 September 1865, 2; also BMA, BPS Minutes, 5 September 1865, 212–14.

<sup>29</sup> BE, 22 January 1866, 2. Meanwhile, the Italian Opera Company held another lottery for reserved seating in its new season, this time without incident. Before the drawing commenced, Wyman recommended that John DeGrauw receive first pick in recognition of all the effort he had contributed, which suggestion was greeted with hearty applause.

<sup>30</sup> NYT, 22 January 1866, 4; BE, 22 January 1866, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

his beloved *Wedding March*. The “courtly” Wyman introduced an up-and-coming local soprano, who sang Agate’s prayerful aria from Act 3 of Weber’s *Der Freischütz*. The *Times*, much snobbier than the *Eagle* about “sweet church voices,” panned the young lady’s performance and cautioned the Philharmonic to avoid any other than the best professional voices or risk throwing away its and the Academy of Music’s hard-won reputation simply “for the sake of the cheap applause that follows the encouragement of talent simply because it is of home growth.”<sup>32</sup>

With attendance restored thanks to greater public access, at least for the time being, the Philharmonic Society did not have to please the New York music critics. However, a more serious problem soon emerged. By the close of season, attendance had again dropped precipitously, the audience appreciative, but small.<sup>33</sup> The Society had not met its expenses and found itself \$1,000 in the hole, hardly a propitious sign, especially when accompanied by bad reviews in the press.<sup>34</sup> The *Times* declared the season’s concerts to have been good, but overall lackluster, duplicating too much the programs of the New York Philharmonic, given that the conductor and many musicians performed for both societies. It complained, “There was nothing new, nothing indicative of progress or independence” at Brooklyn’s Philharmonic.<sup>35</sup> The specter of old fogysism loomed large.

Public interest in the Philharmonic and its programming flagged. Perhaps the Society was losing its audience to the many other entertainment venues that had sprung up in Brooklyn since the war. In part because of financial constraints, the Philharmonic’s programs lay in disarray. Some soloists had not been engaged until after the second rehearsal, and featured talents did not always show up for scheduled rehearsals which only added to the public’s disaffection.<sup>36</sup> At the end of a less than successful season, both Luther Wyman and Charles Congdon, officers, board members, and stockholders since the Society began in 1857, offered their resignations, but were refused. Wyman still received the highest number of votes for president.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* Well-known Richard Hoffman was the pianist.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 March 1866, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1866, 2.

<sup>35</sup> NYT, 12 July 1866, 5.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. BE, 30 March 1865, 2; 5 March 1866, 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 May 1866, 2.



What could be done to restore the fortunes of the Philharmonic and the confidence of its audience? Over the summer, the board decided on important changes. To attract more concertgoers it reduced the price of subscriptions by one dollar and came up with a new compromise scheme for the vexatious seating issue. Previously, some subscribers had grumbled as “too democratic” when the whole house had open seating, causing crowding at the door. Others complained again as “too aristocratic” when the whole house was reserved. The new compromise plan reserved seating only in the dress circle and threw the rest of the house open.<sup>38</sup> Another big change involved the conductor. The directors hired the exciting young and less expensive Theodore Thomas for the 1866–67 season. Thomas made his debut at the first rehearsal to grand success. Even the *Times* gushed auguries that with the “new and energetic” Thomas on the podium, it predicted “a season of unexampled brilliance and interest.”<sup>39</sup> But that first afternoon rehearsal was less than satisfactory for the audience, including the *Eagle*’s music critic. Giggling young ladies, present because it was fashionable, not because they cared particularly about music had irritated the critic. One well-attired young lady kept fiddling with the decorations on the lady’s hat in front of her to the amusement of a dozen of her snickering peers.<sup>40</sup> The rehearsal annoyed the audience more generally, for Thomas did not run through the whole program, but kept halting the musicians to practice again and again this or that phrasing until he was satisfied. Wyman sensed the restlessness in the audience and “hat and cane in hand” and “in all his paternal glory,”<sup>41</sup> strode upon the stage and interrupted the rehearsal, to inquire if the glare was bothering the musicians and rearranged the curtain to shut out those “troublesome rays.”<sup>42</sup> The situation had called for another Wyman face-saving intervention, but all the season’s innovations did not ward off the Philharmonic’s problems or its hectoring critics.

The situation only worsened once the musicians raised their disgruntled voices. By year’s end people grumbled openly about the Philharmonic

<sup>38</sup> NYT, 14 July 1866, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* He replaced Carl Bergmann on the podium.

<sup>40</sup> BE, 4 October 1866, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 September 1866, 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 October 1866, 2.

Society going downhill and what should be done. One self-styled “Musicus,” sympathetic to the musicians, blamed the Society’s directors that “the management of our Philharmonic society has been most unsatisfactory.” Ostensibly established to further musical culture in Brooklyn, instead, he complained the board had catered “to the vanity of certain would-be-patrons of classic music, who itched for the accompanying éclat,” but lacked “aesthetic understandings that in Germany, at least, were considered to be a *sine qua non* to lasting success.” By measure of European standards, Brooklyn was wanting; for a serious philharmonic society was no place for fashionable dilettantism. It had been entrusted to “undertake a line of public duty,” and when it came up short, was rightly the target of public criticism. He harkened back to the old ideal of music’s civilizing mission, only now he redirected the ideal against the Philharmonic itself for having failed it. On behalf of musicians and music lovers alike, he called for “radical reform” in the management or “its dissolution and formation of a new Philharmonic.”<sup>43</sup> These criticisms, also voiced by others, show a curious mix of sentiment—resentment, on the one hand, against creeping elitism as exemplified in the recent scheme reserving all seats for subscribers only; and on the other, a nostalgic idealization of the Philharmonic as integral part of that old civilizing duty to elevate and educate the wider Brooklyn public in the finer aesthetics of classical music. Back in the 1850s the two urges, the elitist and the educative and elevating, had coexisted in relative harmony, but in the late 1860s and early 1870s they stood at odds.

Caught between conflicting democratic and aristocratic elements in its outlook, the Philharmonic Society, unlike the Art Association and the Academy of Music, had not navigated successfully between those two forces creeping into Brooklyn’s social fabric. The Philharmonic lost both public support and financial resources, much like the situation that had driven the old Horticultural Society into extinction. During intermission at the final concert of the 1866–67 season, Luther Wyman came to the curtain and announced that at the upcoming annual members’ meeting would be up for vote whether the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society “shall suspend operations,” and he resign as president.<sup>44</sup> The unexplained

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1866, 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 April 1867, 2.

puzzle in the middle of it all remained the fact that there had been no discernible decline in the knowledge or love of music in Brooklyn and that the quality of the concerts in the Philharmonic series, “so efficiently presided over by Mr. Wyman,” had not deteriorated.<sup>45</sup> So why, then, was the Philharmonic losing its audience?

The members’ meeting had an unusually large attendance. In the past, few special meetings of members had been called outside the regular annual meeting, attended mainly by the board. Those meetings had given the Society the appearance of a “closed corporation,” since the board members usually re-elected themselves.<sup>46</sup> The occasion of this special gathering permitted a thorough airing both of the Philharmonic’s distinguished history of contributions to Brooklyn, and to various opinions as to why the Society had declined. Certain facts were indisputable. Whereas in the previous several years, more than 1,400 annual subscriptions had been in force, this last season over half of the invitations to subscribe had been rejected, such that the Society had only half its usual operating funds. Without hugely successful ticket sales, the Society would consume its entire accumulated reserve and likely end another season in debt. Concerts cost money. For example, in the early years, performances at the Brooklyn Athenaeum with rehearsals had run less than \$800 each. At the Academy, with the cost of conductor, musicians, soloists, advertisements, and rental of the house, each concert now averaged upward of \$2,000, exceeding even the cost of an elaborate opera.<sup>47</sup>

What could be done to keep the Philharmonic alive? Once again, the aristocratic versus democratic divide reared its head at the meeting. Board member and president of the Brooklyn Trust Company, E. S. Mills, blamed the seating controversy for the drop in subscriptions and attendance. It had been a terrible mistake to reserve seating in the whole house, which policy the public had greeted with distaste. “It looked a little [too] aristocratic,” especially since its founders had not wanted to make the Philharmonic Society “an aristocratic affair but to make it democratic, and to cultivate a taste for music on the part of the people of

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 April 1867, 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Brooklyn.”<sup>48</sup> When it instituted only reserved seating, the board had acted precipitously and caved in to pressure by certain ladies and gentlemen who did not want to queue up early along with other concertgoers. Mills favored lowering admission prices as much as possible and reserving seats only in the dress circle. Ferdinand Ulrich, a professor of music, board member, and music snob, voiced criticisms remarkably similar to those by the pseudonymous “Musicus,” this time pitting the needs of musical culture against the practices of those of its patrons engaged in commerce. For him, commerce and culture were not collaborative companions, but enemies. He blamed the Society’s troubles on the board members who had adopted a wrong platform which explained the “unprosperous and unpopular state of affairs” in the Society and which went against the *vox populi*, “our master of all.” Furthermore, “You had laid the temple of the Muses on the same foundation as that on which you govern and build up your mercantile establishments! You put Pegasus before the plough instead of putting him before the chariot of Apollo . . . Well then, gentleman [*sic*], your reserved seats, your high prices of subscription, the spirit of exclusiveness, [are] not in harmony with the noble cause, your privileges granted to some and not to others, and last not least, the secondary position you gave to the active members, the performing artists, who in reality, are the creators of the sublime treat you enjoy.”<sup>49</sup> Less heated but similar opinions followed, particularly the common opinion that presently “the Society did not belong to anybody but the Board of Directors.”<sup>50</sup> After more discussion about proper pricing of subscriptions and the seating issue, the board lowered season tickets to seven dollars; fixed the discounted rate for professional musicians at five dollars; and decided that reserved seats would cost an additional fifty cents.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* In addition, he argued that if a select number of gentlemen would step forward and each guarantee maybe ten subscriptions, the Society would have some secure operating revenue in advance. Isaac Frothingham, another long-time board member, Unitarian, and president of the Nassau Bank, suggested cutting the number of concerts and preparatory rehearsals. Fellow Unitarian Edwin Plimpton, New York carpet merchant, favored returning to the democratic principle, “Low prices, and a crowd.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

Miraculously, the next season had been saved, but another, embarrassing problem emerged, this time at the Academy of Music, but it affected the Philharmonic's reputation as well. The once despised drama had become a mainstay in Academy rent receipts, but it also attracted ticket speculators, who bought up seats and held them for later sale at inflated prices. Gordon L. Ford, one of the Academy directors and wealthy stockholder, who also sat on the boards of the Philharmonic and Art Association, had six stockholders' tickets. He was caught renting his season tickets to a known scalper for resale. When two young men, obviously not stockholders, presented a pair of Ford's tickets at the stockholders' entrance to the Academy, the tickets were confiscated. The speculator sued unsuccessfully to get them back. He lost his case, but Ford gained for himself an unflattering reputation for "close financing."<sup>52</sup> For a wealthy lawyer, journalist, abolitionist, co-founder of the *Brooklyn Union*, soon-to be manager of the *New York Tribune*, former railroad president, noted collector of books and Americana, as well as Brooklyn patron, such well-publicized behavior besmirched not only his standing among his peers, but also the reputation of Brooklyn's elite in general.<sup>53</sup> If even upstanding patrons advanced their own personal financial interests above those of the societies they helped direct, could that old renaissance community feeling survive?

The Philharmonic Society's directors worked furiously to revive their prestige from former, brighter days, both in gathering subscriptions and by designing some eye-catching special features.<sup>54</sup> When the new season opened, the *Eagle* stood ready with its sharpened quill to spoof the grand gesture by the directors to present an elegant baton to their new conductor, Theodore Thomas. The paper published an imaginary ditty featuring Conductor Thomas flipping over backward to land before President Wyman and several directors to receive his new "sabre."<sup>55</sup> The baton was indeed elegant, mounted in 18-carat gold with a fancy engraving on behalf of the directors and inscribed on a gold band with the names of the composers from the previous season.<sup>56</sup> It had been copied from the

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 July 1867, 3.

<sup>53</sup> See his obituary, *NYT*, 15 November 1891, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *BE*, 8 October 1867, 2; 7 Nov 1867, 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, November 1867, 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1867, 2.

baton used by the late Louis-Antoine Jullien, famous European conductor for many years in London, who had toured the US with his orchestra in the 1850s. The presentation of Thomas' new baton had been advertised in the concert program. Unfortunately, the extravagant gesture, so appropriate to Gilded Age thinking, had the unintended effect of reinforcing the aristocratic image of the Philharmonic and also of cheapening its public face, for according to the *Eagle*, the presentation "savored too much of Barnum and too little of Beethoven."<sup>57</sup>

The minutes of the Philharmonic Society remain silent regarding whether public flourishes, such as the gold-plated baton, formed part of a purposeful strategy to re-engage its audience. The board also tried another tactic. In a show of good will, the Society sponsored an unusual number of benefit concerts honoring noted musicians and stage artists. The one for Brooklyn diva Mrs. Marie Abbott, who was assisted by famous British soprano Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa, filled the Academy of Music with the "better class of our citizens" and was judged to be a great social success. The divas received a resounding ovation, and Luther Wyman stepped forward with flowers for each lady, "in his accustomed manner evoking at once the sympathy and the applause of the audience." The *Eagle* judged that such graceful acts of courtesy in a material fashion secured the success of such occasions, and "Mr. Wyman understands the art to perfection."<sup>58</sup> After the concert, a group of society ladies pushed forward to obtain information not about the music or the singing, but about Parepa-Rosa's magnificent gown of white silk worked with gold lace, deemed one of the most elaborate and expensive costumes ever seen on the Academy's stage. Fortunately for the music lovers in the audience, the scarcely remarked artistic elements of the evening were also first-class. Next, a group of Brooklyn patrons organized a complimentary benefit concert for Max Maretzek, the popular conductor of the Italian Opera Company that had been performing so successfully at the Academy of Music. Wyman chaired the event for which Maretzek conducted portions of Verdi's *Ernani*. At the suggestion that part of the house be reserved for

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1867, 2; 11 November 1867, 2. Easily recognizable for his portly presence and flamboyant waistcoats, Jullien had promoted popular promenade concerts in England. He and later Thomas were among the first nineteenth-century celebrity conductors to achieve star status.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 November 1867, 2; 26 November 1867, 2.

Academy stockholders and those willing to pay a higher price, Maretzek immediately objected that “such a plan would not answer as Americans did not like such distinctions,” for the inequalities they implied simply rubbed people the wrong way. Sensitivities over preferential seating refused to go away.<sup>59</sup>

The final Philharmonic concert of the 1867–68 season, a brilliant reprise of its 1861 opening at the Academy of Music featured Spohr’s martial *Symphony in F Major*, played to a house “packed from footlight to roof, and the circles fairly lashed with beauty.” Brooklyn’s elite turned out in full force. The Philharmonic had stuck to its plan of reserving just the dress circle. Still, the *Eagle* leveled biting remarks at those in that superior precinct who delayed their entrance until after the concert began and then elbowed their way through the standing crowds and attentive music lovers alike, all to make their own splashy entrance.<sup>60</sup> Those haughty pretensions, however, hardly compared to the shock at the announcement that this was probably the last concert the Philharmonic Society would ever give. At least the Society was going out in a “blaze of glory” with a “grand good concert,” not a “miserable fizzle.” The occasion sparked a flood of nostalgia, especially for its president:

From time on the right hand stage box has been reserved for the President of the society and his family. I don’t think a Philharmonic concert would be said to have passed off successfully without the genial countenance of Philharmonic Wyman in that box. He fairly beams upon the audience, and the audience beams back again. Who but he could so gracefully lead to the front the painted prima donna—who so generously pat the kidded glove of encouragement as the P.P.D. [painted prima donna] aforesaid retired? The Philharmonic without Philharmonic Wyman would be as naught.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 March 1868, 2; 31 March, 2. The sponsors included Luther Wyman, E. S. Mills, J. DeGrauw, and R. R. Raymond. Another sponsor, Henry R. Pierson, president of the City Railroad Company, agreed with Maretzek that the “democratic principle of charging one price” for all seats was preferable. The organizers reached a compromise to sell all reserved seats at \$2, with actual seat selections to be subsequently auctioned. To increase receipts, an appeal went out to stockholders to relinquish their right to free admission and instead purchase tickets for the performance.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 April 1868, 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

Was Brooklyn about to lose another of its signature cultural institutions, victim of internal dissent, failing finances, steadily disaffecting audiences, and lack of popular appeal? Had Brooklyn's social elite lost the necessary sense of cohesive community consciousness when it came to their willingness to sustain one of Brooklyn's signature cultural associations?

Never ones to give up, the newly elected Philharmonic board under still president Luther Wyman, declared its desire to continue. The *Eagle* helped by announcing: "It is with much pleasure that we are enabled to state that this society, which has already done so much for the social, aesthetic, and material interests of Brooklyn—so far from having finished its work, as some have supposed, it is preparing to enter upon a new and higher field of usefulness."<sup>62</sup> The board wanted to attract an audience with a grand show by enlarging the orchestra to one hundred musicians and elevate even further the level of its performances, in that "spirit of enterprize [*sic*]<sup>63</sup>—so much in accordance with the demand of the times." Easier said than accomplished. Such a scheme was a noble and costlier aspiration, and the road toward it one filled with perspiration and disappointment.<sup>64</sup>

The fundamental problem for the Philharmonic remained its diminishing subscriptions, despite the heroic efforts of the board and local newspapers to drum up support. They printed ads over President Wyman's name, begging the "musical public" to come forward and subscribe, but, instead of a flood of subscriptions came a cascade of criticisms to the point that the *Eagle* felt it had to defend the Society and the good faith of its directors. Although interest in the Society had been waning and people had complained about the management and its various seating schemes, still the Philharmonic had given excellent concerts, better than the

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 June 1868, 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 July 1868, 2. The first setback came with the death of Dr. A. Cooke Hull, long-time friend, energetic officer of the Society, and superb supporter of any cause that bettered his beloved Brooklyn. The memorial statement gave Hull high praise for his contributions and usefulness, zeal, good work, sympathy, and support for any plan to elevate and improve fellow citizens; he was someone who left behind a bright example of public spirit and philanthropy. Words to this effect were also entered into the minutes of the Philharmonic Society, BMA, BPS minutes, 6 July 1868, 281.



New York Philharmonic and had arranged for the best musical talent available.<sup>65</sup> The editor reminded readers of Brooklyn's considerable debt to the Philharmonic Society, "for the development of musical taste in the community, and the building of the Academy of Music is to be credited to the society, the members of which inaugurated the enterprise."<sup>66</sup> Certainly by 1868 Brooklyn offered many more types of entertainment with opera, drama, and other concerts, many of them better suited to popular tastes than the Philharmonic's classical menu, but that did not adequately explain why a sufficient number of subscribers could not be obtained to keep the Society on its feet, for it will be a "discredit to the musical taste of Brooklyn to let it die for the want of a few subscriptions." But despite all the personal solicitations by members of the board, newspaper ads, and articles, subscriptions lagged. With fewer than four hundred subscriptions and less than \$300 on hand, reluctantly, the board voted to suspend concerts in 1868–69.<sup>67</sup> Saddened at the news, the *Eagle* wrote with its usual dry irony tinged with nostalgia:

There was so much style among the audience. Then the thrill when Papa Wyman led the prima donna to the footlights, picked up her bouquets, and bowed to the audience like an aged cherubim. Then the rehearsals, when you heard between the bars of music all the gossip of the young ladies seminaries on the Heights... It is too bad the public wouldn't subscribe... I am afraid that Brooklyn is degenerating, the Horticultural Society has gone up, the Philharmonic Society has caved in, and we have nothing left but the Art Association and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> BE, 23 September 1868, 3. They needed at least five hundred advance subscriptions before they could organize a concert season. The previous year a similar direct appeal had brought in the requisite number.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> BMA, BPS minutes, 13 October 1868, 285–87. Maurice Edward in *How Music Grew in Brooklyn: A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 18 speculated that part of the reason may have been Theodore Thomas' absence on tour, but the BPS Minutes do not support that interpretation.

<sup>68</sup> BE, 24 October 1868, 2.

Brooklyn missed its Philharmonic season, and in early 1869, the *Eagle* moaned again, “The Brooklyn Philharmonic Society once a brilliant success, for various reasons passed into a state of suspension.”<sup>69</sup> As if on cue, the indefatigable Luther Wyman summoned the board to a series of special meetings at his home to explore whether to plan a concert series the coming year.<sup>70</sup>

They redoubled efforts to advertise their now twelfth season, printed 2,000 cards listing the concert schedule for distribution, and arranged for more frequent ads in the local papers. In front of Chandler Brothers music store on Montague Street, they placed a neat sign “Office of the Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn” for the processing of subscription orders and tickets.<sup>71</sup> To combat its former uppity image, the Society now had a much more public face and seemed willing to cater to a diverse audience to keep its revenues up. Subscriptions no longer had to be managed exclusively through the directors or sales of single tickets, if available, at the Academy of Music on performance day.<sup>72</sup> Finally, the happy announcement came that over 750 subscribers had pledged themselves, which meant the season could go on.<sup>73</sup> In reviews of the new season, the *Eagle* concluded that the Philharmonic had won back its audience and regained its place in Brooklyn society, “The Academy

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1869, 2.

<sup>70</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 20 April 1869, 288. At the annual members’ meeting in May, Wyman announced their resolve to hold a season of five concerts and fifteen rehearsals for the price of eight dollars, with Carl Bergmann directing. He also claimed to have already procured fifty subscriptions, and he would pledge himself personally for fifty more, *ibid.*, 289–92; BE, 5 May 1869, 2. Strengthened by the infusion of some new members on its board, the Society remained hopeful. Wyman redoubled his personal efforts and worked with the conductor to attract the most accomplished artists, especially soloists from Europe, and they agreed on a sixty-person orchestra, *ibid.*, 15 January 1870, 2.

<sup>71</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 7 September 1869, 293–95; BE, 11 September 1869, 4.

<sup>72</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 21 September 1869, 296–97. Copious thanks went to Luther Wyman their “worthy President for his unwearied efforts on behalf of the society. The labour has mainly fallen upon his shoulders and has been cheerfully and conscientiously performed.”

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 297; *ibid.*, 7 December 1869, 306. The board congratulated itself on the brilliant and successful opening of the season, “showing as it does, that our society has a strong hold on the hearts of our citizens.”

wore the old-time look—such as it wore in the years of the society's greatest success."<sup>74</sup> Even the audience at rehearsals behaved itself with no more “buzzers and chatterers.” At the end of the season, President Wyman reported that the affairs of the Society were again in the black.<sup>75</sup> Somehow the Society had managed to survive through those dark days immediately following the Black Friday crash on Wall Street.

Did the music and excellence of the performances rescue the Philharmonic, or rather the renewed willingness of Brooklyn society to support it? As one critic observed, attendance had been excellent, many, but not all the performances excellent, and the organization prospering, “fashion having kindly taken it in hand and done what a genuine love of art seems unable to do.”<sup>76</sup> Social fashion or music regardless, the board pledged itself to proceed at once with plans for yet another Philharmonic season.<sup>77</sup>

The reconstituted Philharmonic, however, stood on wobbly legs, odd victim of its own interim success and ambition. Enthusiasm reigned on the board but not necessarily among the public. The press did its part to promote the cause, applauding the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society as superior to the New York Philharmonic in its greater variety of offerings and superior vocal features. To entice subscriptions, the old plan came back to increase the orchestra to one hundred musicians if they could get sufficient subscriptions at eight dollars each. The *Eagle* contributed to the “musical bullying operation” by appealing to Brooklyn pride and its reputation of support for the arts, especially music.<sup>78</sup> The season itself, however, did not get off to a propitious start. Rehearsals seemed ragged, and the Academy of Music was beginning to show its age when the heating system failed to warm adequately either stage or audience.<sup>79</sup> At rehearsal for the December concert, a celebrated tenor sang poorly, and the loudest applause he received seemed to come only from Mr. Wyman's box.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> BE, 4 November 1869, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 May 1870, 4.

<sup>76</sup> *The Independent*, 14 April 1870, 22, 1115.

<sup>77</sup> BE, 25 May 1870, 4.

<sup>78</sup> “The Brooklyn public claims high consideration for its patronage of art. Its musical pretensions are specially positive,” *ibid.*, 15 September 1870, 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1870, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Carlo Lefranc, *ibid.*, 9 December 1870, 3.

By season's end it became apparent the Philharmonic had, once again, lost its audience. Only nine board members were present at the meeting to assess the situation. At the annual shareholders' meeting, the chairman of the board, roundly chastised Brooklynites for their apathy. Artistically the season had been successful and the novel vocalisms introduced met the highest standards, "yet the utter indifference evinced toward our society by a large majority of our citizens has really amounted to an ignoring of all our efforts in the cause of musical culture."<sup>81</sup> What could be done, if anything, to arouse a sense of indignation at the "injustice" the citizens of Brooklyn had ladled upon the Philharmonic Society when it had "in so large a measure advocated the interests of art in our city"? Appeals to that old sense of pride in Brooklyn as a mecca for the arts and of the elevating function the Philharmonic's good music offered fell upon deaf ears. Expenses had again exceeded receipts, and in order to have a next season, the Society needed at least eight hundred committed subscribers.<sup>82</sup>

Classical music seemed to be losing its appeal. Even the Brooklyn elite apparently felt no obligation to support the Philharmonic as it once had during the renaissance years before the Civil War. Apathetic Brooklynites again came in for their share of criticism, "It's all very fine to talk of cultivating the musical taste of our people. But you can't cultivate very much in a soil which fertilizes itself with flash neckties, flash papers, and flash women."<sup>83</sup> The board saw no other alternative than to suspend again.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> William Poole, *ibid.*, 16 May 1871, 2.

<sup>82</sup> He continued, "and how important it is to the cause of musical culture and refinement, particularly among our young people, that they [Brooklynites] should give us a generous and encouraging support," *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> It was not just the Philharmonic, for even the summer concerts organized and financed out of pocket by bandleader Luciano Conterno at the Rink on Clermont Avenue had been losing money for two years; *ibid.*, 19 August 1871, 2. To help Mr. Conterno, Luther Wyman and other musically inclined patrons organized a benefit concert for him; *ibid.*, 5 September 1873, 1. Simon Gunn noticed a similar decline in interest in classical music in provincial England toward the end of the nineteenth century, *The public culture of the Victorian middle class: ritual and authority and the English industrial city, 1840–1914*, (Manchester; New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2000), 153–56.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 September 1871, 2. At its September 30 meeting, the board recommended cancelling the season for lack of funds, BMA, BPS Minutes, 340.

The *Eagle* reported rumors of the Philharmonic's failure, and Brooklyn's music lovers would be left "picking up such musical crumbs as fall from New York's table."<sup>85</sup>

The decision to suspend met with protest from musicians, music lovers, and the *Eagle*, which suggested a last-ditch effort to raise the necessary subscriptions. President Wyman called a special meeting of all those interested in music and in supporting local arts institutions to get "full and frank expression from the people."<sup>86</sup> Letters to the editor flew back and forth, some lashing out at the disgraceful public indifference shown the Philharmonic; others with stinging criticism of the current management and strong recommendations that Wyman and the Old Guard step down, "Let some younger men have a chance.... You want young blood" rather than the same old attempts to "galvanize a corpse."

The special meeting was poorly attended, but it gave the directors opportunity to explain the financial plight of the Society to the press, reassert their good faith and tireless efforts, and dispute the irritating comments about "old fossils." The directors had spent out of pocket for ads and circulars and printed more handsome programs than the New York Philharmonic, but to little effect. Those efforts had secured only fifty new subscribers. They had tried to cut expenses but ran into labor problems. The musicians' trade union charged Brooklyn twenty-one dollars a head compared to sixteen dollars in New York, because they considered Brooklyn's numerous rehearsals to be equivalent to extra concerts. The board had countered with an offer of eighteen dollars, but to no avail.<sup>87</sup> They thought to reduce the orchestra to fifty musicians, but the conductor objected. Such a small group would be a mere concert, hardly a philharmonic orchestra. With an insufficient number of subscribers, the Society simply could not go on, and the directors were not eager to toss in several hundred dollars each for the "privilege" of giving concerts in Brooklyn.

In a leap of faith, the board resolved to make one last desperate appeal for subscribers to come forward and asked the press for a blitz of

<sup>85</sup> BE, 15 September 1871, 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 26 September 1871, 341–44.

advertising.<sup>88</sup> Encouraged by expressions of renewed support from the public and the press, Wyman announced that the concerts would proceed, while acknowledging he was taking a personal and pecuniary risk. The *Eagle* hoped that in the event of failure that friends would come to his rescue. “Good for Luther. Like his namesake his movements are reformatory . . . without our Philharmonic concerts we should be playing second fiddle to New York, which would be a base vile thing to do.”<sup>89</sup> Bundled together, Luther Wyman, invocations to the original sixteenth-century Protestant reformer Martin Luther, and Brooklyn pride came to the Philharmonic’s rescue.

The Philharmonic Society’s rocky times brought into high relief the basic divides over the role of refined culture in Brooklyn society and how tastes were changing as the century progressed. The clamor for and against the Philharmonic Society did not subside. Critics continued to see the management and its offerings as outmoded. On the other side, supporters such as Henry R. Pierson, a former Brooklyn alderman, state senator, and railroad executive, expressed nothing but praise. Writing from the more panoramic vantage point of Albany, he was acutely aware how much Brooklyn’s renaissance patrons had contributed to the city and its pride.

Mr. Wyman has led his noble assistants with a zeal and fidelity that entitle him not only to the thanks, but cordial support of all good people. I am proud of Brooklyn. Her institutions are so well founded, so generously supported, that they mark her as one of the most charming and best regulated cities in the land. Your Park, Your Academy of Music, Art Association, Historical Society, public libraries and schools are the distinguishing marks that ever make your people proud of their home and sorry to leave it. By all means continue your Philharmonic. It has given a tone to society always sweet and pure, and elevating, at once the charm of youth, and the solace of mature years.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Wyman reviewed the history of the Society, its rise, progress and decline and showed how over the last five years, its expenses had steadily increased and revenues decreased. Currently the directors had succeeded in getting only five hundred actual subscriptions and two hundred pledges, whereas 1,000 were needed to go forward, BE, 5 October 1871, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1871, 4.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1871, 7.

His remarks encapsulated the cultural collective that comprised Brooklyn's renaissance. The question remained, however, with a Philharmonic season hastily cobbled together, how would it fare, and could the Society hang on?

The concerts received tepid reviews, judged well below the Philharmonic's expected standards.<sup>91</sup> As though to soften the disappointment, sympathizers and friends on the board arranged a special tribute to the Society's long-serving president, for his herculean efforts to keep the Society afloat, but perhaps also in sympathy over the unwarranted financial embarrassment he had experienced from the invasion into the ill-fated Nickel Plating Company by Tweed's Tammany cronies that had dissolved his investment.<sup>92</sup> At the February concert they distributed a brief biography and etched likeness of Luther Wyman. The written sketch concluded with the following Renaissance-style encomium, reminding Brooklynites of his many contributions organizing regiments during the Civil War and in relief efforts at the Sanitary Fair in addition to his musical leadership: "He has, in every position, shown himself to be an unselfish, public-spirited citizen. To his exertions, we may add, are our citizens indebted not only for the Philharmonic Society, but for the Academy of Music. May our 'Grandfather Whitehead's' shadow never be less."<sup>93</sup>

Wyman received another flattering tribute from the Brooklyn Club, a celebratory farewell dinner on the eve of his departure for Liverpool for a much-deserved European vacation.<sup>94</sup> The *Eagle*, speaking this time for all

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 January 1872, 2; 13 February 1872, 11.

<sup>92</sup> See above.

<sup>93</sup> BE, 13 February 1872, 11. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate a copy of the pamphlet. The *Eagle* quoted from it extensively, but oddly the text was not included in the surviving minutes of the Philharmonic Society. An article about Wyman in the 1 June 1875 issue of *The Aldine* reproduced an engraved likeness of Wyman, quite different in pose from Matthew Wilson's oil portrait, *The Aldine*, *The Art Journal of America*, 1 June 1875: 8.18, 359.

<sup>94</sup> Wyman was accompanied by his wife and youngest daughter Ida, an aspiring pianist. Ida studied at the Brooklyn Musical Academy and in 1872 performed in public in at least two concerts, one a "Grand concert" at Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church and again in a concert given at the Twelfth Street Reformed Church, BE 6 February 1872; 1 May 1872, 2. She married Henry Loomis Nelson, later editor of *Harper's Weekly*, 14 October 1873, *ibid.*, 15 October 1873, 3; 16 October 1873, 4; NYT, 23 December 1894, 21.

of Brooklyn, expressed equal good will and appreciation for Wyman's many contributions to Brooklyn's cultural life:

He is an old citizen, and has been also an active and useful one. He has been a leader in local musical enterprises. The various societies which have promoted a taste for good music, and provided opportunities for hearing it, have always had the intelligent and earnest co-operation of Mr. Wyman. He was among the foremost of the builders of the Academy—an establishment which, while designed specially for musical uses, has been for many purposes a valuable social force. For a dozen years of Philharmonic concerts and rehearsals the public is mainly indebted to him, and in that considerable part of a lifetime a generation of Brooklynites may be said to have gained its musical growth, as it were, under the eye of the President. Although music is his specialty Mr. Wyman has been energetic in many things making for the city's good. For these and other reasons the city wishes him a pleasant voyage and a safe return.<sup>95</sup>

The generous praise and recognition that rained down on him all at once, one suspects, are best seen against the background of the Philharmonic's struggles and the economic adversity that had come his way.

Thanks to the renewed combined efforts of the Philharmonic board, the membership, and, ironically, the press, the Society had ended its tough, almost cancelled season on a high note with a comfortable cushion in the bank!<sup>96</sup> They could definitely afford to plan a new concert series for 1872–73. Ever on the lookout for talent, while in London, Luther Wyman had engaged American soprano Clara Louise Kellogg to perform at the first concert.<sup>97</sup> The *Eagle* hoped attending performances of the renowned London Philharmonic would inspire Wyman with new ideas to improve Brooklyn's orchestra.<sup>98</sup> He returned home “more Philharmonically vigorous than ever,” amiably scolding music lovers for their apathy, urging folks to subscribe, and as inducement, bandying about his vision of that

<sup>95</sup> BE, 14 June 1872, 4.

<sup>96</sup> BE, 21 May 1872, 3.

<sup>97</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 17 September 1872, 355.

<sup>98</sup> Ideas such as how to improve the “wretched brass section” and perhaps introduce a piccolo player, BE, 31 July 1872, 4.



enlarged one hundred-person orchestra.<sup>99</sup> On the eve of the new season, The *Eagle* waxed eloquent about the Philharmonic's long history of public service to Brooklyn and devoted a special paragraph laced with nostalgia in praise of the Society's aging president: "How faithful he has discharged the duties of the position will be attested by scores of *prime donne* he has conducted to the footlights . . . . The courtly grace with which the official act is performed has become proverbial, and it is hardly surprising that ladies who have been the object of the knightly courtesy have been known to sing for the Society gratuitously . . . . Nobody knows better than Mr. Wyman how to cover a failure or bridge a disappointment . . . . He has stood by the Society in its dark as well as its prosperous days, and has consistently aimed to keep it well up to its high standard."<sup>100</sup> But in troubled times the Philharmonic needed more than nostalgic sentiment and its president's *savoir faire*.

To sustain interest and stay in step with changing times, the Society innovated. The orchestra began to perform dynamic new music which gained it a reputation for being adventurous and *avant-garde* and drew wider attention among music critics in the New York and London papers. For example, in February 1873, Brooklyn-born composer George F. Bristow debuted his *Arcadian Symphony*, written especially for the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Bristow had received great acclaim as one of the few Americans who had "broken through the almost impregnable German orchestral lines" in classical composition.<sup>101</sup> But despite Bristow's success, by the end of the season, the Philharmonic slumped again. With a hundred

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 October 1872, 3.

<sup>100</sup> It began, "Everybody who knows the Philharmonic knows Mr. Wyman, at least by sight and voice . . . [and] how much he has done to assure its prosperity. With a lifelong inclination musicward, he has performed good service in the making of music. In town and country choirs he knew how to draw the facile bow of the resonant viol, and to assume intelligent vocal leadership in the songs of the sanctuary. His most valuable musical activity . . . [has been] in measure for the promotion of popular musical taste. He has given time, labor, patience, and money to all sorts of musical societies, choral, harmonic and Philharmonic. His "noblest offspring," like Time's "is his last"—the Philharmonic. He is its first and only President," *ibid.*, 29 November 1872, 3.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 November 1872, 3; on the performance, *ibid.*, 16 January 1873, 3; 10 February 1873, 3; Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn*, 12.

fewer subscribers than the previous year, the old struggle to obtain sufficient subscriptions amid criticisms of dead wood management and dead-beat musicians must have seemed like endless toil to the board and especially to Luther Wyman. He and they must have felt much like Sisyphus, faced with rolling that boulder uphill once again. Wyman offered his resignation, but instead was re-elected president yet again. At a convivial dinner for the board that one of the original directors and long-time patrons hosted, he remarked, "I felt up to a few nights ago that I could not have been induced to retain my position another year, simply because I am 'played out.' I have been with the society since its organization, and the younger men who are coming in now ought to have the work fall on their shoulders. . . . [But] I am in for it another year, [applause] and I shall do all the work that lies in my power, with the rest of you."<sup>102</sup> Apparently, the pressure of the social in addition to the musical aspect of the organization convinced Wyman to struggle on.

He could not have anticipated the almost immediate blast of criticism unleashed at the board and him personally. Even though a number of new, younger directors had been elected, critics still pounded out the theme of outmoded leadership, repetitive musical tastes, and a board that acted like a closed shop that rang of "Tammany tactics." One critic claimed, the "public is tired of this namby-pamby way of conducting the affairs of the Society" and the "lazy ruts" in the orchestra.<sup>103</sup> The board members were mere figureheads, "whose greatest labor consists in cracking a bottle of champagne with the prima donna in the green room . . . . Now I intend no discredit to Mr. Wyman . . . [but] the head of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society should be a sharp, energetic man, with younger blood in his veins than Mr. Wyman has," preferably, a musician himself, open to more new as well as older music. Another critic attacked the social aspect of the Society, which impeded its musical mission: "Is, then, the poor old Philharmonic to die? Is there not money enough and musical taste and energy enough . . . to raise it from its couch of ease and luxurious decay? . . . This public, in its music going, is more social and personal, in fact, than it is musical." A third lambasted the "sleepy directors and inactive members" such that the real cause of the Society's problems lay

<sup>102</sup> Drygoods merchant Lyman Burnham hosted, BE, 20 May 1873, 4.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 May 1873, 2.

in the directors who have been “gradually going to sleep until a state of profound slumber has supervened.”<sup>104</sup> From another came: “The whole machine is of dead wood. Part reform will be worthless; we want radical reformation throughout.” More letters poured in, a few in defense of Wyman’s current management, “The Brooklyn Philharmonic has produced more new music than the New York [Philharmonic], and more fresh compositions.” The problem was not with the music or the conductor, but with the musicians who were performing poorly.<sup>105</sup> Opinion also divided on the new conductor Theodore Thomas. Some found attractive his energy and reputed discipline of his musicians; others felt that the two years he had conducted for the Society had not worked out.<sup>106</sup> Wyman again offered to resign, but the board re-elected him and voted unanimously to rehire Theodore Thomas for the whole season.<sup>107</sup>

Over the years, quite remarkably, the Society had stayed a very stormy course as a volunteer organization. It survived in part because of its recognized social as well as musical value; in part because of the business expertise of many of its patrons, commercial men themselves, who kept a close eye on finances and knew when to fold and when to plunge ahead with a new season. But its foundation kept weakening. The convoluted story of the trials and tribulations of the Philharmonic Society in its first

<sup>104</sup> “One thing is certain: unless the society’s President does wake up to the musical needs of the present, its mission will not be accomplished,” *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 May 1873, 2, 4; 26 May 1873, 2.

<sup>106</sup> One writer pointed out that Thomas traveled with his orchestra in the winter and hiring him again would cost more than Brooklynites seemed willing to pay, *ibid.*, 23 May 1873, 2; 26 May 1873, 2.

<sup>107</sup> At the annual members’ meeting in May 1873, Wyman felt like he had to address the criticisms by those letter writers, especially the calls for his resignation. He fully concurred that having had the “honor and pleasure of being the President of the organization since its beginning . . . it struck him that the time had now come when there ought to be a change.” But another member rejoined that there was not “anybody in the organization that favored anybody else for that position other than Luther B. Wyman [applause], and if he would not take the office willingly, then it should be forced upon him.” The board also negotiated a package deal with the young celebrity conductor for \$8,000, inclusive of conductor, orchestra, and instrumental soloists for the upcoming season, *ibid.*, 27 May 1873, 2; BMA, BPS Minutes, 26 May 1873, 365.

sixteen years testify to the extraordinarily difficult task of sustaining a complex, expensive organization with volunteer labor, especially when so many of its most avid promoters were themselves advancing in age. Luther Wyman, the Society's only president since its founding in 1857 had already reached age sixty-nine when he resumed the presidency in 1873.

Unlike the Academy of Music, with its variety of entertainments and wider public to help its bottom line, or the newer Art Association which was cresting a huge wave of fashion and popularity, the old Philharmonic struggled to stay afloat. It had been founded before the Civil War, at a time of optimism and ambition to expand Brooklyn's musical offerings beyond sacred oratorios. The Society had envisioned and built the Academy of Music by drawing upon Brooklyn's renaissance spirit of commitment to civic duty and cultural enterprise, all led by the city's commercial and professional elite. But the Philharmonic Society's history of public controversy and unchanging leadership smacked of unsavory elitism. By the early 1870s, in the dawning Gilded Age, Brooklyn had changed its face, for the Civil War had altered Brooklyn and shifted the place its cultural societies occupied in the fabric of the city. By then the Philharmonic Society appeared less flexible than either the Academy of Music or the Art Association, its programs less flashy and less fashionable. It continued to hang on, but it and none of Brooklyn's other cultural societies could have anticipated the new challenges that lay just ahead when Wall Street panicked in September 1873, shaking Brooklyn's patrons and their arts associations to the core.

## A Fading Renaissance

The declining phase in Brooklyn's renaissance belongs to the period beginning with the great Panic of 1873 and stretches toward the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 and eventually to the consolidation with New York in 1898 that terminated the city's independence. This phase witnessed the weakening of Brooklyn's proud civic spirit as the trust-based culture of the old commercial elite shrank into the greater self-absorption characteristic of the Gilded Age. Civil War had shaken and transformed the arts and their patrons. The Panic of 1873 proved in some respects more traumatic than the war by being so sudden and unexpected. The financial crisis swept fortunes away and revealed that some of the city's leading patrons had become mired in Tammany Hall-style corruption.

In addition, over this period, members of Brooklyn's founding generation of renaissance patrons were fading away. They were either dead or elderly, many of their accomplishments as cultural entrepreneurs soon forgotten. Three-quarters had been born before 1820 and fourteen, barely a third, of Brooklyn's forty-odd leading patrons from the Civil War era survived past 1890. Our exemplar, Luther Wyman died already in 1879, after four long years of partial paralysis from a debilitating stroke. Those few who survived into the following decade to reflect upon their generation's memories of Brooklyn's cultural past, often got their facts wrong or slanted their accounts. In many ways, what they forgot became a more powerful ledger of the city's history than the written records that survived them.

## PRELUDE TO PANIC

The shock of the 1873 Panic must have seemed all the greater since in the years immediately preceding it, with the exception of the struggling Philharmonic Society, Brooklyn's arts scene seemed to have surmounted many of its postwar challenges and stabilized. It enjoyed a brief Indian summer with the dazzling accomplishments of the Art Association and with plans afoot for several new foundations. Two new groups added themselves to Brooklyn's growing pantheon of cultural societies, one an elite amateur theater society, the other a long-awaited botanical society and garden that could fill some of the void left by the collapse of the old Brooklyn Horticultural Society.

The Amaranth Society emerged among Brooklyn's elite in reaction to what members perceived to be increasingly undignified dramatic offerings at local theaters. Successor to the parlor entertainments popular during the Civil War, the Amaranth Society became frequent users of the Academy of Music. Sometimes they combined their performances with a *soirée dansante* and reception, all exclusive events by invitation only. No tickets were sold to the public unless for a performance supporting charity.<sup>1</sup> Although not a professional troupe, the Society fostered talent, including the well-regarded actress Fanny Foster, who subsequently joined Wallack's top-ranked theater troupe in New York.<sup>2</sup>

In 1872, plant enthusiasts tried to establish the American Exotic and Botanic Garden. Organizers met in the directors' room at the Academy of Music to plan a winter garden consisting of more than five acres of glass houses to be capitalized at \$100,000. All manner of plants and flowers could be cultivated year-round in the garden, from which they hoped a botanical school would soon emerge.<sup>3</sup> Sadly the botanical garden did not

<sup>1</sup> BE, 19 January 1872, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 January 1873, 1. Brooklynites offered her a testimonial performance, and soon Wallack's whole comedy troupe was invited to perform at the Academy. Some five hundred signatures accompanied the invitation, BE, 21 May 1873, 3. At her testimonial Fanny appeared in the leading role of Lady Gay Spanker in Irish playwright Dion Boucicault's popular comedy *London Assurance*, *ibid.*, 28 January 1873, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 March 1872, 4. Luther Wyman was among the organizers.

reach full fruition due to the financial Panic of 1873, which undermined many potential subscribers' ability or willingness to participate.

In the same years as these new initiatives and while the Philharmonic Society wrestled publicly with its dilemmas, the Art Association enjoyed unparalleled success and few hitches. Everyone waited impatiently for the completion of its new building adjacent to the Academy. The prospect of its own space meant more exhibitions, the opening of a design wing for art classes, and a study gallery filled with plaster casts of ancient marbles and portrait busts. But the process of fundraising and construction dragged. After the Sanitary Fair, the Art Association had purchased the empty lots next to the Academy, but subscriptions slowed and rising construction costs forced further delays in the opening until 1872.

Even without its own building, in 1867 the *Eagle* affirmed that the public considered the Art Association a “pet” and “popular association,” especially the “fair dames” who were in a “quiver of delight” at the prospect of each exhibition. That the gallery doors were open with free public access to exhibitions added to the association’s popularity and egalitarian appeal.<sup>4</sup> Even though the newspaper dutifully described the “tide of fashion” and the “beautiful faces, enveloped by gorgeous apparel, and comforted with charming pictures,” the sort of comment pleasing to the society set and the curious, the *Eagle* also remarked: “The Art Association deserves credit for bringing together in a pleasant and enjoyable way the people of our city, of breaking down to a certain extent the absurd barriers raised by both church and fashion, between men and women, who when brought together find that after all there are people in the city quite as pleasant, quite as agreeable, quite as well informed as themselves.”<sup>5</sup> The *Eagle* was not sure to which of the directors belonged credit for the egalitarian impulse, President Gignoux, or prominent members of its board, or perhaps, it suggested, “the Washingtonian Wyman.”

The Brooklyn Academy of Design (1865) constituted a major component in the Art Association’s democratic reputation. Founded by a group of local artists to promote art appreciation and give free instruction in painting and sculpture, it combined American subject matter with training in traditional styles and techniques of Renaissance

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 November 1867, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 November 1867, 2.

old masters. Subject matter featured portraits, still life, and landscape painting.<sup>6</sup> The instructors, all practicing artists, had been trained in Europe or had studied with those who had, and they took great pride in fostering an appreciation and taste for European art as transformed in their adopted city.<sup>7</sup> The Art Association took the Academy of Design under its wing, even arranging classroom space on the third floor of the Low Building until the Association's new quarters were completed.<sup>8</sup> In a large well-ventilated room some fifty feet long, two hundred models hung along one wall for use by the beginning classes. Opposite these, stood ten life-size figures, of classical gods and portrait busts of Lincoln, Ben Franklin, and others, plus smaller groups of casts, which the next level of instruction, the Antique School, used. The Academy of Design boasted one of the best collections of classical casts of any design school in the nation.<sup>9</sup> In workshop tradition reaching back to the Italian Renaissance, art students learned first by copying the work of old masters and their pupils. Only once they could copy with fidelity, could they advance to the next level, painting and sculpting from life.

The incorporation of the Academy of Design together with its active artists teaching classes for free, meant that the trustees of the Art Association maintained closer contact with practicing artists than the Philharmonic Board had managed to do with its querulous musicians. The Art Association took great pride in fostering “‘centres of vital contact,’ where the art producer and the art lover may meet each other. . . . A building is rising from its foundations which proposes free exhibitions, and an Academy of Design is in motion which gives free instruction.”<sup>10</sup> Brooklynites felt they were placed ahead of other cities in support for art, and “if we can show that among our half million of people there is a sufficient number to welcome artists and to buy their works, we shall attract other artists to add to our resources of pleasure and fame.”<sup>11</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Artists associated with the Academy of Design included founder and portraitist Rufus Wright, painters Alonzo Chappel, Conrad Wise Chapman, J. B. Whitaker, Samuel E. Wilmarth, and Henry Baerer, sculptor, *ibid.*, 23 November 1870, 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November 1870, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1869, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November 1870, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



Art Association envisioned Brooklyn as a mecca for the visual arts that would attract growing numbers of working artists to settle there amidst throngs of wealthy art lovers to patronize them.

The Association's spring and fall exhibitions continued to be both society and public events. High society members of the Art Association decked themselves out to be seen and to mingle at the opening receptions. In the days following gala openings, the exhibitions would be thrown open to the public who came by the thousands to view the works on display. The Association struck a neat balance between catering to the needs of its high society sponsors and maintaining its reputation as a popular institution.

All the same, despite the Association's success and popularity, change was afoot. In 1869, Régis Gignoux, president of the society, decided to bid Brooklyn good-bye after nearly thirty years and return to his native France. His departure occasioned a grand society reception at the Academy of Music. With new upholstery ordered and 550 yards of fresh carpeting laid, the Academy's Assembly Room was transformed into a well-appointed drawing room complete with sofas, *tete-à-tetes*, loungers, and three immense chandeliers overhead. In the center of the orchestra area the committee on arrangements placed enormous letters spelling "ART" in flowers, probably from John DeGrauw's greenhouses. They spared no expense for an elegant supper, with tureens of fried, stewed, and pickled oysters, platters of game, and spreads of fruit, with strawberries the size of apples, and ice cream as cold as the North Pole.<sup>12</sup> The guests included a long list of "our best known citizens," the ladies decked out in laces and diamonds, the egalitarian spirit of the Association having been conveniently set aside for the evening. Speeches by new president Ethelbert S. Mills and prominent clergy rehearsed the history of the Art Association and Gignoux's leading role in bringing art into the public eye. That more than 20,000 persons had attended the Association's most recent public exhibition occasioned particular pride.<sup>13</sup>

The Association continued to gain reputation, and members eagerly awaited its new building. The Mercantile Library had opened across from the Academy of Music in 1869, but it took three more years before the

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 May 1869, 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Art Association's edifice was ready for occupancy, thus rounding out Brooklyn's renaissance arts district on Montague Street. In honor of the opening in 1872, the Association planned a particularly ambitious exhibition divided into two departments. The first contained a chronological display of historical paintings for which Yale College loaned almost the entire John Trumbull Collection of his American Revolution paintings. Highlights included four original portraits of George Washington, two of them full-length likenesses, Trumbull's own and Gilbert Stuart's portrait loaned by the Pierpont family that had featured so prominently at the Sanitary Fair.<sup>14</sup> The second department exhibited modern works by Brooklyn-based and foreign artists hung salon-style around the walls. The whole Academy of Music stood open for the occasion. Parquet flooring covered the orchestra pit for extra space; an elaborate floral temple graced center stage; and two bands were on hand to serenade the crowd.<sup>15</sup> In the years since the Art Association had incorporated in 1864, it had hosted two dozen exhibitions at the Academy of Music, to which an estimated 500,000 people had flocked.<sup>16</sup> Even more than the Philharmonic Society and despite its relative newness among Brooklyn's renaissance foundations, the Art Association had exposed a broad public to painting and sculpture through its free exhibitions and classes, consolidated a community of art lovers, and boosted Brooklyn's reputation as a magnet for the arts.

Despite its noteworthy success, the Art Association, like the Philharmonic, had little immunity from stressful events of the day. Members received a terrible shock in July 1873 with the death of its president Ethelbert S. Mills, a suspected suicide. Before the actual dimensions of his Brooklyn Trust Company's financial troubles became known or the extent of Mills' own financial embarrassments laid bare, his friends, especially those in the Art Association, heaped him with praise. His "energy and faith" had made the new art building possible; he had remained a steadfast supporter when subscriptions lagged; he had always wanted a permanent free gallery of art for Brooklyn; and it had been his inspiration to have the chronological exhibition of history paintings at the

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 March 1872, 2. The music program had probably been arranged by Luther Wyman, member of the reception committee.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 July 1873, 2.

opening of the new building the previous year. In fact, some saw the building itself as “a monumental pile in his memory.”<sup>17</sup> He held sincere egalitarian sympathies, for it will be remembered that as a Philharmonic Board member he had repeatedly spoken in favor of lower ticket prices to attract a broader public.

The afternoon before his death, Mills had been at his office, “as active, as urbane, as energetic and as well as usual.”<sup>18</sup> His wife and two of his three sons were away at the time, and he had gone to Coney Island to spend the evening with the family of his friend, Gordon L. Ford. Ford, noted patron and collector of Americana, it will be remembered, had been discovered renting out his Academy of Music stockholders’ tickets to a scalper. Mills had risen early the following morning to swim. His body washed up on the beach several hours later.<sup>19</sup> Mills’ family and circle of friends, who prided themselves for uprightness and honor and who considered face-saving a necessity in the case of financial “embarrassment,” spared no efforts to represent Mills’ death as a tragic accident. Also, as long as his death was considered accidental rather than a suicide, his \$20,000 life insurance policy would pay out to his widow.<sup>20</sup> The day of the funeral, the Brooklyn Club published its recognition of Mills as a kind of renaissance man, and “one of its most honored and warmly cherished members.” He was a “lover of art and its efficient and liberal patron; the promoter and reliance of our literary, charitable and benevolent institutions; a cultivated, educated, refined and courteous gentleman, an energetic, enlightened, public spirited citizen; a wise, earnest, generous and faithful friend.”<sup>21</sup> From the Academy of Music came praise for his kindness and courtesy, and his broad views always aimed toward improving his community, “How much the City of Brooklyn owes to him for his enterprise, liberality and energy in fostering and establishing those arts which refine character and elevate and add to true individual and social culture.”<sup>22</sup> Reverend Chadwick’s funeral sermon was published,

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 July 1873, 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 July 1873, 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; also 16, 17 July 1873, 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1873, 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 July 1873, 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

and counted among Mills' pallbearers could be found fellow Brooklyn patrons, including a local judge.<sup>23</sup>

In the days and weeks following Mills' funeral on 18 July, the sordid details of his and the Brooklyn Trust Company's defalcations slowly came to light. At first few could believe that Mills, only fifty-seven and in his prime, respected lawyer, well-connected upstanding member of the Second Unitarian church, president of the Art Association, board member of the Academy of Music and the Philharmonic, founding member of the Brooklyn Club and Historical Society, one of the most culturally active of Brooklyn's citizen patrons, married to Abiel A. and Josiah O. Low's sister, could have fallen to such depths of posthumous disgrace. Only later when the Panic of 1873 struck in September could his friends comprehend the full extent of his financial embarrassment, his failed efforts to recover losses in his real estate speculations, misappropriations of Trust Company funds, and the graft that had gone undetected between the Trust Company and City Hall.

Up until this time, Brooklyn's old established elite, the patrons of its renaissance foundations, had been relatively untouched by the sullied politics and financial chicanery linked to Jay Gould and Boss Tweed's Tammany associates. Luther Wyman had been badly stung in the Nickel Plating Company scandal, but through no fault of his own other than inattention and ill-placed trust in the appointed manager, who turned out

<sup>23</sup> Mills had been a prominent lawyer, Unitarian, and husband of A. A. Low's sister Ellen. He served as president of the Brooklyn Trust Company, president of the Art Association, and sat on the boards of the Philharmonic Society and the Academy of Music. A founder of the Brooklyn Club, his associates eulogized him as "one of its most honored and warmly cherished members. A lover of art and its efficient and liberal patron; the promoter and reliance of our literary, charitable and benevolent institutions; a cultivated, educated, refined and courteous gentleman, an energetic, enlightened, public spirited citizen; a wise, earnest, generous and faithful friend," *ibid.*, 18 July 1873, 4. He was buried in the Low family tomb in Greenwood Cemetery. His connections with Brooklyn's wealthiest family were through marriage but also through his sister Martha who married Josiah Low, Abiel's brother. In a special resolution, the Philharmonic Society had praised "his unflagging energy and public spirit, his uniform courtesy and kindness, his fearless advocacy of whatever he deemed true and right, the invariable cheerfulness and good fellowship which made his presence always welcome," BMA, BPS Minutes 18 July 1873, 366-67; BE 19 July 1873, 2.

to be a Tammany associate. Not until 1873 with Mills' demise and the Panic just weeks later did the seamy underside of political and financial collusion that had infected New York and spread into Brooklyn become openly exposed in the press.

The Brooklyn Trust Company had been incorporated in 1866 to take advantage of Brooklyn's rapid growth following the Civil War. Mills had wanted to found a bank associated with the progress of the city, for which he had received encouragement from his wealthy in-laws and family members, from which nucleus of support others had been attracted to invest. Even artist Gignoux and his wife, who knew Mills through the Art Association, counted among the stockholders.<sup>24</sup> Backers wanted Mills to be the bank's president, and so "the place was made by him and for him."<sup>25</sup> The company prospered and enticed well over \$2 million in deposits, almost half from the City of Brooklyn itself, from which Mills and his cronies borrowed liberally.<sup>26</sup>

When Mills' death became known, the board of trustees, many of them his friends as well as business associates, quickly met to assess the situation, salvage what they could, and appoint as temporary president one of the Trust's largest depositors.<sup>27</sup> Upon investigation, they discovered not only had Mills vastly overdrawn his personal account, but he had purchased \$300,000 of worthless railroad bonds with company funds, which together had burned a half million dollar hole in the Trust Company's capital stock for which the stockholders were now responsible.<sup>28</sup> There remained on deposit in the Trust Company \$450,000 of city monies and over one hundred court-ordered escrowed funds, among them the account tied to Wyman's case against the conniving manager of the Nickel Plating Company, still dragging its way through the courts.<sup>29</sup>

The Trust Company's secretary had countersigned all of Mills' unauthorized checks, his excuse being that he could hardly refuse the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 July 1873, 4; 21 July 1873, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1873, 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1873, 3, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Chauncey, president of the Mechanics Bank, *ibid.*, 16 July 1873, 4; 19 July 1873, 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

president of the company. Mills had been using the money and other borrowed funds to cover losses from his speculative real estate investments. He had tried too late to take advantage of the building boom around Prospect Park. The expensive, heavily mortgaged homes he had constructed on speculation had failed to rent, leaving him overdrawn. Over the previous six months, he had borrowed monies at high interest to cover his losses, something apparently well known among local builders and speculators, but not made public.

The directors of the Brooklyn Trust temporarily suspended payments to prevent a run on the bank, but more bad news continued to ooze out. The company secretary, M. T. Rodman, had also dipped into the till to the tune of \$34,000. Since Rodman also worked as deputy treasurer of Brooklyn, he provided the link between the Trust Company and City Hall. Rodman and City treasurer, Courtland Sprague, had regularly misappropriated over \$200,000 in city funds. Sprague even used purloined monies to purchase his home in Brooklyn Heights.<sup>30</sup> In exchange for immunity, Rodman turned state's evidence and revealed that he, Sprague, and Mills had been collaborating since 1869 to siphon funds from the treasury.<sup>31</sup> But Mills and Rodman were not the only ones borrowing monies illegally from the Brooklyn Trust Company. Prominent members of the board had been taking unauthorized loans, for which, however, they had presented solid securities and repaid. The Brooklyn Trust Company under its friendly president had been a handy piggy bank for a number of prominent Brooklyn patrons, among them A. A. Low and Brothers Company for \$100,000; Seymour Husted, president of the Dime Savings Bank and prominent investor in railroads, gas companies, and insurance, and early director of the New York Bridge Company, for \$200,000; and former judge Alexander McCue, \$40,000.<sup>32</sup> A. A. Low's departure for Europe aroused suspicions,

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 September 1873, 3. On the political side of the scandal, that also involved Hugh McLaughlin, boss of the city's Democratic machine, see Harold Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898: A Political History* (New York, NY: Columbia university press, 1944), 67–69, as well as the four-part blog at <http://www.brownstoner.com/blog/2014/03/walkabout-the-great-defalcation-part-one/> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>31</sup> Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn*, 68

<sup>32</sup> BE, 17 September 1873, 4.

although his brother claimed he left not to avoid the financial scandal, but to repair his failing health.<sup>33</sup> One wonders if these gentlemen had needed quick cash to cover shortfalls consequent on the financial upset of Black Friday in 1869.

These late revelations of unauthorized loans to board members, published the eve before the Panic broke out on Wall Street, 18 September, hardly look like a coincidence. The whole Mills case and the prominent commercial and political men caught up in it, constituted Brooklyn's own Panic of 1873, and, in hindsight, had already revealed the massive collusion in weakening financial structures that sooner or later were bound to crumble, whether in the Trust Company's offices at the corner of Court and Joralemon Streets in Brooklyn, just yards from City Hall, or in New York on Wall Street.

The press in both Brooklyn and New York lambasted the Brooklyn Trust Company and most particularly its indolent directors for not maintaining proper oversight of company affairs in their fiduciary trust. That some of the directors, among Brooklyn's most prominent citizens, had been board members, small stockholders but very big borrowers, added to the shame, especially since the Trust Company had a rule, albeit unenforced, that no one could overdraw his account by more than \$1,000. The *Eagle* also criticized the city's treasurer for depositing so much public money in the one institution.<sup>34</sup> According to a dissenting director, Demus Barnes, who claimed to have called for an investigation of two large, improperly secured loans, he had been unable to muster a quorum on the board. Supposedly, none of the directors suspected Mills of being other than entirely honest, despite the rumors over the previous months that Trust Company funds were not in sound condition. Barnes suspected that at least some of the directors knew more than they admitted, for it was hard to believe that "any body of five or ten business men should not some of them have known of the transactions of the officers of the bank."<sup>35</sup> In many people's eyes the board members' proclaimed ignorance of Mills' transgressions amounted to dereliction of duty, if not outright collusion.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 July 1873, 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1873, 3.

Initially, the directors of the Trust Company and the local press predictably had downplayed any wrongdoing to minimize negative repercussions and avoid a run on the bank. Later, the *Eagle* claimed it had known about the defalcation the day of Mills' death, but "felt constrained not to tell" in the hope that the actual situation might be less grievous once Mills' affairs and those of the company became known. Euphemisms proliferated, from steady denials that Mills' death had been anything other than a tragic accident, to cloaking his fraud in terms such as "overdrawn accounts," Mills' "embarrassment," his "reversed reputation." There followed assertions that because the board members were themselves such solid and extremely wealthy citizens that all would be mended and any losses covered, thus avoiding any odor of scandal or bankruptcy.<sup>36</sup> At a meeting of Trust Company stockholders at the Academy of Music, Simeon Chittenden made a plea replete with nautical references about saving the company ship from a breaking surf, which required all stockholders, like sailors on a ship, to pull together, restore the capital of the company, and resume business.<sup>37</sup>

Too much sticking together by an inbred commercial class lay at the root of the problem according to the *New York Commercial Advertiser*:

It is the old story over again. A corporation is established for monetary manufacturing, or other purposes. Its projectors name as the Board of directors a company of gentlemen whose reputation for probity, capacity and wealth is above suspicion. These gentlemen choose one of their own number to occupy the place of President; and, having so chosen, they leave the entire management of the affairs of the corporation in his hands—asking no question, requiring no investigations, careless of the interests confided to their charge by stockholders and depositors and apparently amazed when a sudden revelation . . . shows that their wealthy and respectable chief officer is a bankrupt and but little better than a thief.<sup>38</sup>

On a much smaller scale, Luther Wyman's experience with the Nickel Plating Company had had similar roots, mired in misplaced trust and inattentiveness. The old mercantile ethic based on mutual trust and a

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 July 1873, 4; 21 July 1873, 2, 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 Aug 1873, 4; 7 August 1873, 2.

<sup>38</sup> As quoted *ibid.*, 22 July 1873, 4.



sense of probity common among the more senior generation of merchants, who were also the backbone of Brooklyn's renaissance, was obviously vulnerable to those businessmen willing to deceive family, friends, and associates in order to hide their speculations and losses that stretched well beyond their means to cover.

The much more widespread panic that hit Wall Street and the nation on 18 September 1873 had been triggered by the overextension and collapse of Jay Cooke's bank and compounded on Wall Street by speculators such as Jay Gould, who sought profit from others' collapse. Cooke had made a fortune during and following the Civil War selling government and railroad bonds. The closing of his bank sparked failures nationwide. Like an earthquake, it rocked Wall Street investors on both sides of the East River and grimed the moral reputation of the business community in general. One conservative New York banker, writing in the *Journal of Commerce*, blamed the whole Panic on Brooklyn, on the general "*loss of confidence*" (italics his) that resulted from the defalcation in the Brooklyn Trust Company.<sup>39</sup> The events surrounding the 1873 Panic had revealed for all to see the rotten wood that often lay behind the shiny façade of Gilded Age society.

What had happened to the old New England Puritan ethic of trust and honesty among merchants such as Thomas Wren Ward, Jonathan Goodhue, Joshua Bates, the Baring Brothers, Charles H. Marshall, and Luther Wyman in the packet business, who had built up the transatlantic commercial networks between Europe and America that had been crucial for the development of the young nation? Apparently it had decayed from within at the hands of men such as Ethelbert S. Mills, who, however, was a small-time operator compared to ruthless stock manipulators across the river like Jay Gould. The latter had honed his business strategies during the speculative economic climate of wartime and had become accustomed to invest recklessly, profit, and crash, heedlessly bringing down hundreds of small companies and small investors in panics.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Austin Baldwin, quoted, *ibid.* 22 September 1873, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Recent treatments of the Panic include Scott Nelson, *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 163ff, and Nicolas Barreyre, "The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 04 (October 2011): 403–23.

The Mills scandal, followed by the Wall Street Panic, delivered a hard blow to Brooklyn pride. Mills' friends had hastened to his defense that what he had borrowed he intended to repay. The *Eagle* rushed to defend, as upstanding citizens of Brooklyn, the company's directors whom the New York papers had lambasted over the scandal.<sup>41</sup> The *Eagle* blamed the *Tribune* under Jay Gould's editorial influence for its relentless coverage of the Trust Company affair and its attacks on the directors in order, it claimed, purposefully to foment panic.<sup>42</sup> The *Evening Post* had characterized Mills as a gambler who succumbed to temptation, but The *Evening Mail* decried the loss of "moral incentive to trustworthiness" that should now require the directors of the Trust Company to be liable for prosecution: "these very respectable and utterly careless and untrustworthy gentlemen who are doing much more just now than the outlaw at the bottom of the heap to undermine all the foundations of business morality and the whole commercial organization of the country."<sup>43</sup> The *Eagle* countered that the New York papers had as their object to cause a financial panic in Brooklyn over the Trust Company's troubles, which it now minimized as a "delinquency" and a "temporary embarrassment." It complained that the New York papers had assaulted the "civic pride of our leading citizens . . . [who] have no interest apart from Brooklyn, and their first civic duty is to their city . . . . On all sides to-day there is determination on the part of Brooklyn men to do by our city what the patriot should do by his country, 'Stand by her, right or wrong; when right we will defend her, when wrong we will right her.'"<sup>44</sup> The paper rebutted criticisms further by saying that in Brooklyn, unlike most cities (here, read New York), her capitalists were not separated from or indifferent to the rest of the citizenry, for "genuine Brooklynites consolidate as one man."<sup>45</sup> Thus, in this odd turn of events, Brooklyn pride and sense of civic solidarity that had been built up so carefully and lovingly during its renaissance years before and during the Civil War, were now being called upon as a shield to protect some of its most distinguished citizens, commercial men and patrons, whose hands

<sup>41</sup> BE, 22 July 1873, 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 September 1873, 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1873, 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 July 1873, 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 August 1873, 2.

had been caught in the till and who had grossly neglected their oversight responsibilities.

The Mills case and its wider repercussions engaged an important question regarding the impulses behind Brooklyn's renaissance and its devolution in the Gilded Age with which Brooklynites had to come to terms. Should men such as Josiah Low, ex-Judge Alexander McCue, Henry Pierrepont, Daniel Chauncey, Alexander Moss White, and Seymour Husted, all wealthy men among the *crème* of Brooklyn's commercial corps, who had contributed so much to the city and its cultural development, be denounced for their role in the scandal? Had their laxity in superintending the officers of the Trust Company so undermined Brooklyn's pride and reputation that they and men like them deserved public shame? The kind of closed corporation that had characterized the Trust's board of directors was no different from the organizational structure of Brooklyn's leading cultural institutions, all incorporated under New York law, with stockholders and boards to oversee the work of officers and executive committees. The boards of institutions such as the Art Association, Academy of Music, and the Philharmonic Society were larded with Brooklyn's leading merchant patrons. As already noted, they kept re-electing themselves year after year and fostered the appearance of a kind of inbred cultural cronyism that had become a subject of repeated criticism by those demanding change.

Brooklyn ministers who addressed the moral issues raised by the Panic from their pulpits gave variations on a common theme. Without naming names, several preachers stressed how the evils of temptation and greed can overcome businessmen too anxious to make large fortunes without honest effort. Others preached against the dishonesty of speculators who brought ruin to innocent people. Rev. Talmage of the Tabernacle delivered his post-Panic sermon to a packed house at the Academy of Music. He took as theme a message of commiseration from Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." He pointed to the difference between the failure of honest men and those dishonesties recently observed in Brooklyn which had brought "infamous notoriety" upon the whole city. Yet, he noted, "Some of the best men in the land have faltered—men whose hands have blessed every great charity." They fell to temptation, speculated beyond their means, and "put the attainment of money above the value of the soul, forgetting that money "cannot satisfy a man's soul . . . [or] unlock the gate of Heaven." On a softer note he acknowledged the advantages of possessing a great deal of money, if honestly gotten and then employed to useful

ends.<sup>46</sup> At a prayer meeting prior to the Sunday sermon, the good reverend had spoken in defense of Jay Cooke as that honest man who had met with disaster, especially since, despite his large fortune, he had always maintained his Christian devotion and used his wealth for charitable ends.<sup>47</sup> The fickleness of fortune, temptation, greed, and the instability of wealth in uncertain times remained appropriate themes for the 1870s Gilded Age.

Jay Cooke's failure had been likened to a thunderclap on a clear day, and the Panic to a Vesuvius-like eruption,<sup>48</sup> but the Brooklyn Trust Company affair and the Panic were not the only sensations of the early 1870s that worked to undermine people's confidence in the broader social order. New York boss William Tweed had been arrested in 1871 for fraud and corruption and was finally convicted on 255 counts in November 1873.<sup>49</sup> His arrest and exposure had shaken even the New York Bridge Company.<sup>50</sup> In Brooklyn, a scandal of another sort had been unfolding over the same period. The city's most renowned preacher, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, had been in and out of court on charges of adultery leveled by parishioner Theodore Tilton. When his accuser failed to get a conviction in criminal court, he pressed civil charges even after the church had ordered a thorough investigation of Beecher and his church affairs. Though never convicted, Beecher's reputation and Brooklyn's pulpits in general emerged besmirched. Hardly a day went by when the Brooklyn, New York, and national presses did not devote column space to the unfolding scandal. The *Eagle* described it as a "species of vivisection," regarding which everyone in Brooklyn had been interviewed, "From the venerable Luther Wyman to the famous linen merchants Journeys and Burnham . . . from the Rev. Dr. Porteous to the blind man at the ferry."<sup>51</sup> Even the clergy were not immune to public scandal in the Gilded Age, especially at the hands of an eager investigative, watch-dog press, precursor to the yellow journalism of the 1890s.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 22 September 1873, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 20 September 1873, 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 Sep 1873, 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 Nov 1873, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Raymond Schroth, *The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper, 1841–1955* (Greenwood Press, 1974), 78.

<sup>51</sup> BE, 25 July 1874, 2.

## THE ARTS AFFLICTED

The question remained whether the renaissance cultural bonds forged and institutionalized in Brooklyn over the previous decades were strong enough to withstand the centrifugal forces of corruption, cronyism, and panic weakening the civic fabric and public trust. The disorders of 1873 affected the Brooklyn arts in both direct and indirect ways. They cast a lingering pall over Brooklyn's cultural life that threatened what had hitherto been a sometimes scrappy but overall comfortable relationship between supportive patrons and active artists and musicians. The first impulse had been to carry on as usual. A large photography exhibit took place the week after the Panic struck and featured among other works a series of crayon portrait sketches of prominent Brooklynites, among them several noted Brooklyn preachers as well as Luther Wyman.<sup>52</sup> But when the time came for the Art Association's fall exhibition and reception in November, the usual crowd was not buying art, which led the *Eagle* to lament that more of Brooklyn's wealthy citizens were not supporting the work of local artists, some of whom were already leaving the city for greener pastures elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> Brooklyn was in danger of losing its renaissance standing:

The reputation Brooklyn bears for culture is very great in the country. Its Philharmonic Society claims the attention of the music world. Its vocal societies, its organists and its church choirs are favorably known throughout the land. Its art school, serves as a model for all in the United States. Its pulpit is celebrated more than that of any city. Strange to say, however the last to appreciate this are the residents of the city themselves.... The indifference shown to the artists of Brooklyn to-day by the rich men of Brooklyn is disgraceful to the city.<sup>54</sup>

A further blow to the Art Association arrived the following summer when collector and patron, Demus Barnes, ex-Congressman, Brooklyn Trust Company director, Art Association trustee, and long-time Trustee of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, threatened to remove a painting he had presented at the opening of the Association's new building

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 September 1873, 4.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 November 1873, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

in 1872. Everyone assumed that the *Annunciation* by Dutch romantic painter Petrus Van Schendel was Barnes' gift to inaugurate the much-touted free public art gallery in Brooklyn. In his presentation speech, Barnes had stressed public spiritedness and how it was the "duty of every citizen to strive to make our city as attractive as New York, and our Park and public buildings are a step in the right direction. We must provide places for the masses and not build up an aristocracy." In accepting the painting, then Association president E. S. Mills had commended Barnes, as the "first contributor to a permanent free gallery of art in our city." Others present had the same understanding that Barnes had gifted the painting to the Association. But now he announced his intent to remove it and send it to the upcoming Chicago Exposition where it would likely be sold.<sup>55</sup> One suspects Barnes' motivation may not have been a lack of public spirit, but temporary financial exigency, for it had been noted *en passante* around the time the Brooklyn Trust Company's defalcation came to light that Barnes had liquidated his financial interest in the *New York Tribune*.<sup>56</sup> Either way, the effect was the same; the Art Association had lost a prize painting.

In the aftermath of the Panic the situation at the Academy of Music and in the Philharmonic Society were not much better. The summer opera season at the Academy had failed. The *Eagle* wondered why: "Have all the efforts of Father Wyman, with his Philharmonic Society, to educate young Brooklyn to a becoming appreciation of the sweet art, failed? Or is it, that money is tight and the price of opera seats very high?"<sup>57</sup> The editor opted for the latter explanation, noting that many recent entertainments at the Academy had received poor public support. Reduction in people's disposable income post-Panic could not explain everything. Other problems persisted as well. The Academy's management fell out of step with the times and ticket prices remained high. The *Eagle* complained about the unjust custom of admitting "your thousand and one stockholders as deadheads," who paid nothing for their tickets, which meant that the manager had to have a packed house to turn any profit. "Reform these abuses . . . and your grand house may yet be prevented from degenerating into a public hall."<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 August 1874, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1873, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 October 1873, 4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

The Academy of Music was indeed degenerating, but in a different sense. After thirteen years of heavy use, it showed its age and badly needed redecorating and general repair. To some it had already appeared shop-worn back in 1866 at the time of General Grant's reception.<sup>59</sup> Board members recommended redecorating the whole house to brighten it, but that would have cost \$25,000. Money was short, so the committee chose a more limited campaign. They added wainscoting all around and had the walls repainted a lighter color.

Out of the blue, the sensationalist *New York World* lambasted Luther Wyman and other members of the executive committee for ruining the building with their poor taste. Under the emboldened headline in large type, "L. B. WYMAN ASSAILED," the *Eagle* reported Wyman's response that he and the others had just wanted to give the interior a lighter feel. Bad cracks had been discovered in the auditorium which required considerable carpentry and replastering, which left little money to redecorate.<sup>60</sup> Leopold Eidlitz, the architect of the building, who had been consulted only cursorily on any changes to the interior, chimed in with his criticisms. He blamed the Academy directors, or at least its newer members, "who have a violent and perfectly ignorant antipathy not only to whatever is good but to whatever makes a serious attempt to be good in art." Eidlitz had also designed the New York Corn Exchange building which, he claimed, had been spoiled in the same way by ill-advised redecoration, only worse than Brooklyn's Academy of Music. The *World* published an even stronger denunciation of the executive committee, "those respectable and prosperous vandals," who had no refined taste in art and who did not know enough about architecture as art to consult Eidlitz before making alterations. The artists and the businessmen, those presumptuous philistines, who sat on the governing boards of Brooklyn's cultural institutions, increasingly did not see eye to eye.<sup>61</sup> Back in the Italian Renaissance, artists and architects had first developed a sense of individual style and professionalism. It is conceivable in nineteenth-century Brooklyn, which had made itself so welcoming to the creative arts, that practitioners of art felt sufficiently emboldened professionally to

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 February 1866, 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 December 1873, 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 January 1874, 4.

express their modern opinions quite pointedly, namely that they, not the merchant patrons, should be the arbiters of taste and be the authorities on what constituted good art.

The Academy of Music ended 1873 in debt.<sup>62</sup> Obvious money concerns fueled the rumor that after the fire at the Tabernacle, Rev. Talmage had been using the Academy for free for his Sunday services. The record had to be set straight in print, that the church had been paying rent and actually contributed to Academy finances since the building normally stood empty on Sundays. The Tabernacle finally moved into its new church in late 1873, and the arrival of its new organ occasioned a splendid organ and choral concert with standing room only. Luther Wyman penned a cordial open letter requesting the Tabernacle repeat the concert to complement their “grand, sublime, beautiful” new church.<sup>63</sup> When the Brooklyn Handel and Haydn Choral Society requested use of the new church for its concerts with accompanying endorsements from two dozen notables, including Wyman, the Tabernacle’s answer came back: No. Since the Academy of Music had graciously allowed Rev. Talmage to hold services there, they would never lease the new church in any way that might conflict with the interests of the Academy, a considerate *quid pro quo* gesture on the part of the church.<sup>64</sup> Soon, however, the directors began discussions perhaps to outfit the Academy with its own majestic organ, so that it could host on a grander scale the choral and organ concerts usually given in churches.<sup>65</sup> In 1875, the Handel and Hayden Society gave performances of the *Messiah* at the Academy of Music with full orchestra and noted soloists.<sup>66</sup> Sacred music was making a comeback in a way that helped pay the Academy’s bills.

The Philharmonic Society completed its 1873–74 season intact, despite a number of disappointing, seemingly disrespectful soloists. One soprano either sang poorly or did not show up for some rehearsals. She claimed illness, which necessitated “Father Wyman” coming on stage to present

<sup>62</sup> It expended over \$49,000 and had income barely over \$40,000, *ibid.*, 10 January 1874, 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 February 1874, 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 November 1874, 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 December 1875, 1.



her excuses to a smoldering audience. While too ill to sing at the Wednesday rehearsal in Brooklyn, she apparently sang beautifully that same evening in New York and throughout the whole weekend, “pretty severe work for an invalid,” which report led to calls to cancel her contract.<sup>67</sup> A tenor, veteran of many Brooklyn performances, refused to sing at rehearsal, claiming it was a concert. At the Saturday evening performance, the audience hissed him outright, but, when he sang very beautifully, they encored him repeatedly.<sup>68</sup>

Apart from those problem soloists who disrespected their Brooklyn engagements, the Philharmonic Society seemed to have emerged from its earlier doldrums. Subscriptions and attendance at its performances held steady for two years. Perhaps the Society had found its appropriate niche among those refined and wealthy Brooklyn music lovers who avoided the theater by choice and found in the Philharmonic concerts something in between an opera and an oratorio as well as a fashionable social occasion.<sup>69</sup> Concertgoers also liked the hardworking young conductor Theodore Thomas, who had met everyone’s expectations, to such an extent that the directors arranged a testimonial concert in appreciation.<sup>70</sup> For the 1874–75 season the board obtained the requisite 1,200 subscriptions, but they still needed to tighten the Society’s belt via a series of reforms which partly reverted to past, very unpopular seating procedures. They limited season ticket subscribers to 1,200 and expanded reserved seating at an extra charge into the balcony. They also took the bold step of eliminating courtesy discounts for music professionals because of widespread abuse. At some performances up to half the audience had claimed professional status to obtain the discount. Noted was the “especial meanness of ladies in the matter of these petty frauds.”<sup>71</sup> Others gained admission to individual concerts at reduced rates by borrowing subscribers’ memberships certificates. In the moral climate of the 1870s, such petty cheating hardly seems surprising when even respectable society ladies were doing it.

<sup>67</sup> Mme. Di Murska, *ibid.*, 14 April 1874, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Mr. Brignoli, *ibid.*, 13 April 1874, 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1874, 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 April 1874, 2

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1874, 4.

In order to satisfy and keep its audience, the Philharmonic Society had learned to innovate and spectaculate, whether in presenting an elegant baton to its conductor, or taking a calculated risk to enlarge the orchestra and decorate the stage with a profusion of flowers for each concert, reminiscent of the old floral promenade concerts of the 1850s.<sup>72</sup> Even though these extras ran up costs, the gamble paid off, and the Society ended the season with money in the treasury, quite a change from previous years.<sup>73</sup> After a protracted uphill struggle, the Philharmonic had, at last, reached its long-desired level of success and stability.

The troubling issues that plagued Brooklyn's leading families penetrated its arts associations and played themselves out in the press. Embarrassments, however, did not inhibit the post-Panic social whirl that formed part of the gauzy fabric of pretense covering Brooklyn's fashionable society during the Gilded Age. First came the winter Grand Charity Ball in 1874 in support of the Homeopathic Hospital. The organizers spared no effort to host a splendid affair at the Academy of Music, "to make amends for last year's dereliction."<sup>74</sup> The boxes cost \$200 each and first-row seats in the proscenium ran at twelve dollars.<sup>75</sup> The elaborate floral decorations placed throughout the Academy under John DeGrauw's supervision had cost \$1,500. Luther Wyman opened the ball to the music of Conterno's seventy-piece band. By evening's end, nearly \$6,000 had been raised for the hospital.<sup>76</sup> The *Eagle* noted that at these charity events, the "elite of Brooklyn can meet and feel that they are on equal footing with all present, and it gives a splendid opportunity for the display of dress and diamonds."<sup>77</sup> Divisions among the elite were gracefully set aside on such occasions.

Brooklyn high society showed the New York world it could flash and spend with the best. When the Lord Mayor of Dublin arrived for a visit and no official reception had been planned, on very short notice a group of

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 May 1874, 4.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, \$8,000, in fact.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 January 1873, 4; 11 February 1874, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 January 1874, 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 February 1874, 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 January 1875, 3.

gentlemen led by Luther Wyman met hastily at the Academy of Music to plan a sumptuous banquet catered by Delmonico's to honor him and the visiting international Irish rifle team.<sup>78</sup> Soon thereafter, the Art Association, its new building now joined at the hip, as it were, with the Academy, held its twenty-ninth reception, with over 4,000 in attendance. Here the broader ranks of Brooklyn's "open" elite mingled with the city's best-known citizens, the Chittendens, Pierreponts, Stranahans, Hustedes, Bensons, Fords, Wymans, and so on, in what the press described as "a dazzle of light, a crush of fashion, a sheen of beauty, a wealth of art, [and] a community of the gems of society."<sup>79</sup> Brooklyn's elite was on the rebound with a kind of vengeance mixed with yearning for the better days in the past.

If the charity ball seemed an elegant and fitting way to emerge from the mental cocoon of the Panic, the lady organizers of the Lady Washington Tea Party outdid themselves by recreating an eighteenth-century ambience at the Academy of Music in which costumed attendees strolled to music among bowers of flowers and statuary. The event recalled the flavor of the Old New England Kitchen at the Sanitary Fair with its staged tableaux of life in pilgrim days. This time, from the Academy ceiling they hung a huge depiction of General Washington and his army crossing the Delaware in their small boats, perhaps Emmanuel Leutze's famous painting.<sup>80</sup> Streamers led from the corners of the frame down to the edges of the boxes. Thirteen costumed ladies and assistants presided over thirteen tea tables, elegantly outfitted in damask, silver, and china, each representative of one of the original thirteen states. Afterward, commemorative Washington china cups and saucers manufactured for the occasion could be purchased as mementos for a dollar. The great, closely guarded secret to be divulged only that evening was who had been chosen to impersonate George and Martha Washington. That "sterling townsman . . . the faultless representative of the Father of his Country" Luther Wyman, once again, received the signal honor of playing Washington. He and his Martha seated

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 September 1874, 6.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 December 1874, 4.

<sup>80</sup> In 1874 Leutze's painting, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was in private hands.

themselves to welcome their guests in two high-backed chairs, relics of the Continental Congress, on loan for the occasion from the nation's capital. "Mr. and Mrs. Washington" led the grand procession accompanied by prominent Brooklynites dressed as a Revolutionary War era phalanx, decked out in 1778 court-style knee breeches, silver buckled shoes, dove-tailed velvet coats, and tricorne hats with feathers, which they had borrowed from the Putnam Phalanx, the private commemorative militia in Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>81</sup> Such fancy events, replete with nostalgia for the hazy, by-gone days of the country's courageous infancy, set in high relief Brooklyn's own elite, which had also seen better days. Later, following his death in 1879, writers remarked that in appearance and carriage "Father Wyman" of Brooklyn really did resemble Washington, father of his country. What better evidence of how deeply Wyman had penetrated Brooklyn's self-identity than when a group of society ladies organized an evening of burlesque entertainment at the Athenaeum. The parody of the Philharmonic concerts was the highlight of the program, for the man impersonating Luther Wyman, complete with silvery beard and locks, brought down the house in convulsions of hearty laughter.<sup>82</sup>

If the Art Association had received a sudden blow at the death of its president Ethelbert S. Mills, imagine the jolt the Philharmonic Society experienced at the news that its long-time, much loved president Luther Wyman had been felled by a massive stroke and apoplexy in April 1875 right before the season's last Philharmonic concert. How strange that his box at the Academy of Music stood empty after so many years of faithful attendance and of escorting the prima donnas onto the stage, him dapper in evening attire and cane, with his strikingly tall, erect posture, wavy white hair, prominent chin, and well-trimmed mutton chops.<sup>83</sup> Prognosis for illness of such severity offered little hope for full recovery. A month later he was able to take a carriage ride in Prospect Park, an encouraging sign, but noticeably enfeebled and with a mind that wandered, he could no longer attend to Philharmonic business and had

<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Henry Sage played Mrs. Washington, BE, 25 November 1874, 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 November 1874, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Wyman had been stricken senseless as he prepared to leave home for church. That night he suffered attacks of severe vomiting that increased pressure on his brain and weakness, *ibid.*, 13 April 1875, 4; 16 April 1875, 4.

to resign as treasurer of the New England Society, a position he had held for more than twenty years.<sup>84</sup>

Empathetic well wishes and official resolutions from his various associations poured in from all directions. The *Eagle* even adopted a softer, kindlier tone in its treatment of the Philharmonic Society, as though in recognition of Wyman's unflagging dedication and selfless service to the Society and to the Brooklyn he loved. The Philharmonic Society had struggled to sustain itself for fifteen of the last seventeen seasons. The editor praised the Society and its president for successfully inculcating a taste for the music of the greatest composers, for establishing a society that fostered the "growing national love of music," and for encouraging native-born musicians in perfecting their art.<sup>85</sup> The old civilizing rhetoric as such had faded, but not the kowtowing to the standards of refined taste that the older cultures of Europe set for America. The *Eagle* claimed that American people, though fond of music, were not yet a "musical people," because their matter-of-factness, attention to the business of every day, and the energy and enterprise it required, presented a "barrier to the progress of esthetic culture." Those aesthetics remained yet in embryo and awaited the "fostering care of some parent institution to develop it to maturity." Through its transatlantic connections, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society under Luther Wyman's leadership held out the promise of progress, and, formidable hurdles notwithstanding, had been moving in that direction step by step.<sup>86</sup> Despite Wyman's obvious incapacity to serve, loyalty and affection led the Philharmonic directors to reelect him president for another year, as indeed they would do for the further four years of his invalidism until his death in 1879.

In its June 1875 issue, the New York arts monthly, *The Aldine*, published a lengthy appreciation of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and its stricken president. The article acknowledged the success of Brooklyn's renaissance in how the city had moved from being a dormitory for New York to asserting its own individuality that it had manifested "especially in the direction of aesthetic culture." Its Art Association,

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 May 1875, 4; 11 August 1875, 2; *Annual Report of the New England Society in the City of New York*, vols. 66–67: 87–88. He had been a member since 1838 and treasurer since 1854.

<sup>85</sup> BE, 19 April 1875, 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Mercantile Library, and Historical Society were quite the equal of New York's, "while its Philharmonic Society is unquestionably the most successful, musically as well as financially, of any in the country," deserving to "inspire emulation elsewhere."<sup>87</sup> The last part of *The Aldine's* article read almost like an obituary that praised Wyman's lifetime of accomplishments, from his beginnings in Woburn, Massachusetts, the move to Boston as a clerk and being featured soloist in its Handel and Haydn Society; his transfer to Troy and then Manhattan for his employment with Troy Towboat and then the Black Ball Line of ocean packets; his fifteen years with the New York and Brooklyn Sacred Music Societies, with service as president of both; his family's move to Brooklyn where he directed music at the Church of the Saviour; his uninterrupted tenure as president of the Philharmonic Society and whose energies were primarily responsible for the erection of the Academy of Music; his accident at the building site that nearly cost him his life; his activities organizing regiments during the Civil War; his contribution to the Sanitary Fair and patriotic concerts for charity; and his many undertakings of a social and benevolent character, incessantly at work helping others. The article ended with the fitting epithetic statement that Luther Wyman "has done a great deal more for the world than the world has ever done for him."<sup>88</sup>

The previous few years leading up to his stroke had been particularly trying for Wyman. It is hard to say what hit him hardest, attending to the grueling business and financial worries of the Philharmonic Society and the Academy of Music in the midst of biting criticism directed at him for being too old and out of step with the times; the death of his son and namesake Luther Jr. in 1871; weathering the losses in the Nickel Plating Company scandal that Tweed's Tammany associates had brought him, right at the time when the Black Ball Line was shrinking to almost nothing; or, the loss of his friend and fellow patron E. S. Mills in the midst of scandal, and the further financial uncertainties the Panic of 1873 had visited upon him. His newest affliction in the form of the paralytic stroke may have granted some relief from the heavy burdens of responsibility he had shouldered for so many years. The stroke may also have given friends the opportunity to honor and help him.

<sup>87</sup> *The Aldine*: 7, 18 (1875), 359.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition to the many resolutions of sorrow and gestures of support mixed with honor streaming his way, his associates kept re-electing him to their boards, although he was no longer able to participate actively. He attended one Philharmonic Society board meeting for the last time in 1876,<sup>89</sup> the Brooklyn Dispensary re-elected him trustee in 1876 and for 1877, as did the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute in 1877. The Brooklyn Club awarded him the status of sole honorary member, which exempted him from any dues, which by then he could ill afford.<sup>90</sup> The Philharmonic Society stuck by him, delivering flowers to his bedside and awarding him a testimonial of \$1,000 that must have alleviated temporarily his family's financial need.<sup>91</sup> Composer Jerome Hopkins proposed a complimentary concert in Wyman's honor. He wanted to perform his new biblical opera *Samuel* as a testimonial.<sup>92</sup> Neither the Wyman family nor the Philharmonic directors favored the proposal, which looked more like a testimonial to Hopkins himself, since he expected certain Brooklynites to underwrite the performance, pay for the chorus and the cost of renting the Academy of Music.<sup>93</sup> No longer able to afford the handsome house on Joralemon Street, the Wyman family moved away from the Heights to more modest, likely rented quarters in newly developed Stuyvesant Heights off Atlantic Avenue. After Wyman's death, his Joralemon Street home was foreclosed and auctioned for debt by his Black Ball Line business associate, Charles H. Marshall, Jr.<sup>94</sup>

As if incapacitating affliction and severely reduced economic circumstances were not enough for the Wymans to manage in this troubled Gilded Age, it came to light that during Luther's *in absentia* presidency, the treasurer of the Philharmonic Society had made off with nearly all of

<sup>89</sup> BPS minutes, vol. 2, unnumbered, entry for 5 September 1876; BE, 9 June 1879, 3. He remained its nominal president until his death, *ibid.*, 25 May 1875, 4; 5 October 1877, 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 January 1877, 3.

<sup>91</sup> BMA, BPS minutes, I, 399–401.

<sup>92</sup> BE, 25 May 1877, 3; 27 May 1877, 3; 10 June 1877, 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Jun 1880, 2. Perhaps Marshall had provided the family with financial assistance.

the Society's savings, some \$7,000 which he had supposedly invested for the Society at a high rate of interest in his own paper business. In reality the funds disappeared when his New York Paper Barrel Company went bankrupt.<sup>95</sup> The Philharmonic board tried inappropriately to obscure the loss, perhaps hoping to protect its and its treasurer's reputations, but to no avail. The culprit, J. C. Beale, like E. S. Mills before him, was a highly respected Brooklyn citizen, member of the Brooklyn Club, contributor to the committee on books, publications, and printing at the Sanitary Fair, a director of the Brooklyn Life Insurance Company, and long-term resident of the Heights.<sup>96</sup> Like Mills, he had enjoyed the total trust of the Philharmonic Society's directors.<sup>97</sup> In another Gilded Age instance of an ill-stared elite's seamier side, Beale's misfortune in business had spilled over into the arts. When his business had gone under, it had taken the Philharmonic Society's money with it.

To add further embarrassment to the family, Wyman's third son Cecil was called to testify shortly before his father's death, in a corruption scandal in the Brooklyn Water Works, whose repair budget had ballooned by a factor of ten in just one month during an election year. Cecil, who normally worked as a druggist, had been among the bevy of political sinecurists the commissioners hired supposedly to inspect water cocks for the city. Stricken from the court record, but recorded in the *Eagle's* report, had been Cecil's affirmative answer to a question posed by the defense counsel, "Well, your father was paralyzed and you were in great need?"<sup>98</sup> During the trial, a hack journalist, thought to be in the hire of one of the accused commissioners, had been caught with his ear plastered to the fan light in the jury room!<sup>99</sup> Such was life in the 1870s.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 April 1878, 4.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1864, 2; 10 March 1864, 2; 9 August 1864, 2; 27 February 1866, 2; 20 May 1867, 1; 8 March 1872, 2; 10 April 1878, 4; 7 June 1878, 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Repair charges skyrocketed from \$800 to over \$8,000, *ibid.*, 8 May 1879, 4; 15 May 1879, 4; 7 May 1879, 4; 8 May 1879, 4.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1879, 2.



## BROOKLYN'S BRIDGE TO THE PAST AND FUTURE

Oddly, the reinvigorated social flurry of 1874 combined wistfulness for the past stirred into daring plans for the future that would forever alter Brooklyn's sense of itself and its relationship with Manhattan. By 1874, the Brooklyn Bridge was well underway. Since at least 1857, the same year the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society was founded, the project had been actively discussed with designer engineer John Roebling.<sup>100</sup> It had survived Roebling's tragic death and the crippling of his son and successor Washington Roebling from the bends in 1872. It had withstood setbacks and delays from Tweed corruption scandals and the Panic. In 1874, the massive caissons on both sides of the East River neared completion, and soon the steel cabling could be woven, and construction of the roadway begun. The bridge represented the last big civic project largely undertaken by Brooklynites for Brooklynites that embodied the old can-do, entrepreneurial spirit drawn from the city's pre-war renaissance years. The bridge had been embraced and pursued by the same commercial men who had inspired Brooklyn's cultural renaissance and whose businesses lay in Manhattan and their homes in Brooklyn. Yet the bridge was more than a local civic project, for it would inevitably draw Brooklyn closer into New York's urban orbit. The old pipe dream of bridging the East River had become a feasible vision back in 1857 when Roebling presented his detailed plans of the bridge for discussion.<sup>101</sup> Delayed by the war, in 1867 the state legislature incorporated the private New York Bridge Company with a capital stock of \$3 million. Like the Philharmonic Society, Academy of Music, Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic, the Art Association, and Mercantile Library, and all of Brooklyn's major cultural associations, here was another enterprise to be managed by a private corporation and funded through the sale of stock. The municipalities of Brooklyn and New York only joined in after the fact, when Brooklyn's Common Council agreed to subscribe up to \$3 million, which all but guaranteed the bridge's completion, and for its part, subsequently, New York committed half as much again (Fig. 10.1).<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1857, 2.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1857, 2.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 January 1867, 2; NYT, 22 December 1868, 10; BE, 23 December 1868, 2; 20 February 1869, 2; 24 February 1869, 2.



**Fig. 10.1** Currier & Ives lithograph entitled: “The great East River suspension bridge: connecting the cities of New York & Brooklyn from New York looking southeast, 1877” (imagined). Photo Researchers, Inc / Alamy Stock Photo

With the Brooklyn Bridge already a rising physical reality, looking to the future, some of those same Brooklyn commercial “magnates,” led by S. B. Chittenden and J. S. T. Stranahan, began hatching an even bolder plan—one that would relinquish Brooklyn’s hard-won independent identity from New York. They now proposed the political union of the two cities into a single greater entity to be called the City of New York. Although actual unification did not take place until 1898, the plan to consolidate New York and Brooklyn, including the five towns of Kings County, was under active discussion in Brooklyn already in 1873, and in early 1874 promoters formed the Municipal Union Society to organize and advance their plan.<sup>103</sup> Once Brooklyn had organized behind the idea, they felt New York would soon follow suit.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> BE, 13 February 1874, 2; 20 February 1874, 2; 26 February 1874, 2.

<sup>104</sup> Luther Wyman moved the adoption of the by-laws at the Municipal Union Society’s second meeting at the Academy of Music and was among the signatories

What were their motives? As Chittenden had remarked before the New York Chamber of Commerce in May 1873 just months before the Panic, his home in Brooklyn and business in Manhattan were but a half mile apart, and for thirty years he had been the loyal subject of two municipalities, making him half New Yorker and half Brooklynite. He paid taxes but had no vote in New York to help determine its future. Some, such as A. A. Low, felt that New York was on the wane and its commercial future at risk because of its overcrowded conditions and lack of space on Manhattan Island to expand.<sup>105</sup> Compared to other great world cities such as London, New York was fairly bursting at the seams with nowhere to grow but across the river in Brooklyn.<sup>106</sup> Looking to the future, supporters argued that the connectivity Brooklyn's new bridge would bring, would inevitably lead to political consolidation. The creation of a greater New York City would not only provide the metropolis room to expand, but constituted the best way to save greater New York and all its combined mercantile interests from losing its premier status to Philadelphia or to the new Western cities that were developing exponentially, cities that had not been as seriously wounded as New York in the Panic. At the annual dinner of the New England Society, in his response to a toast offered to the City of Brooklyn, the mayor remarked that the New Englanders of Brooklyn had a twin vision. On the one hand, they offered to "our sister, New York," via the "hands of iron and hooks of steel" embedded in the Brooklyn Bridge, the facilities and room to escape the crowds and hordes of Manhattan. On the other, and more importantly, they wanted to transform a united greater New York into a "grand city of the world," a global hub.<sup>107</sup> Once again, those Brooklynites, many of old New England stock, such as Luther Wyman, A. A. and Josiah Low, Simeon Chittenden, J. S. T. Stranahan, and others, were thinking big, envisioning a future and the means to make it a reality.

But what about Brooklyn's proud, independent civic identity so many years in the making? None of the reports from the Municipal Union

of a petition asking the state legislature to pass an act permitting the question of consolidation to be put before the voters, *ibid.*, 20 February 1874, 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 May 1873, 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 December 1874, 2.

Society make mention of Brooklyn losing its identity or becoming subsumed under greater New York. Rather their new vision showed the two cities uniting as sisters for their combined greater good. These commercial men, Renaissance-style merchant patrons, who had earlier envisioned building civic identity and a sense of community in Brooklyn via the cultural associations they patronized, now saw themselves leading the way toward a majestic cosmopolitan future, a kind of civic identity writ globally. They had realized their earlier dream for Brooklyn and had withstood the ravages of war, corruption, and panic. Now, they had a new, grander transatlantic and global idea. Perhaps the confidence behind their vision of a consolidated New York, leader among the great cosmopolitan, commercial centers of the world, lay in those renaissance years during which in large measure they had succeeded in binding commerce, culture, and community, and in giving birth to Brooklyn's renaissance.

### NEARLY FORGOTTEN LEGACY

After four long years of stroke-induced paralysis, the last year bedridden, Luther B. Wyman found final release from his suffering on 27 July 1879. Out of loyalty and respect his friends in the Philharmonic and other societies continued to keep him on their boards, but his extended illness and incapacity had removed him from an active life and from the public eye.<sup>108</sup> At news of his death, ships lowered their flags to half-mast along the East and lower Hudson Rivers, as did the Brooklyn Academy of Music.<sup>109</sup> A large crowd of his friends and admirers filled the Church of the Saviour to pay final respects at his funeral 30 July. His old friend, retired pastor Rev. Dr. Frederick Farley eulogized him from the pulpit below which reposed his casket surrounded with sprays of roses, lilies, and exotic flowers. A quartet of professionals sang exquisitely in a fitting farewell to such a long-time lover and promoter of music. Farley spoke of having known Luther for over forty years "in prosperity and in sorrow." He remarked upon his sterling character, generous nature, kindness of heart and sincerity, and his readiness to do an act of kindness to the point of sometimes being taken advantage of. The pallbearers, chosen from

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 June 1879, 3; 19 June 1879, 2. Though incapacitated, the Brooklyn Dispensary re-elected him trustee in December 1876, *ibid.*, 29 December 1876, 4.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 July 1879, 2.

among his friends and fellow Brooklyn patrons, escorted the casket out of the church to its final resting place on Vista Hill, the Unitarian plot in Green-wood Cemetery, overlooking the waters of Gowanus Bay to New York Harbor, where under his supervision for over four decades so many packet ships had sailed to and from Liverpool.<sup>110</sup>

The *Eagle* devoted two lengthy articles to his obituary and an appreciation of his numerous contributions to the social and artistic development of Brooklyn and to so many “liberalizing enterprises” there. In its retrospective, the paper caught the essence of Wyman’s contributions at the very center of Brooklyn’s renaissance, ever promoting and encouraging its flowering:

To his love for music and the ardor with which he cultivated it, must be referred the movement which ultimated in the construction of the Academy of Music, an enterprise that became in its turn prolific of other undertakings designed to make Brooklyn a home to be proud of. Mr. Wyman was the father of the Philharmonic Society, to which every citizen who has learned to delight in the compositions of the great composers is under much obligation. That society made the building of the Academy inevitable. The man who organized the society was the leading spirit in procuring for it a fitting house to perform in. It would be interesting to show how the design of the men who built the Academy gave way to broader purposes until they found themselves identified with the higher class of theatrical entertainments; with the chief balls and festive gatherings of the city; and with the art education of the people. In the soil of the Philharmonic, and under the roof of the Academy, the seed germinated which has blossomed into the Academy of Design, the Mercantile Library, the Historical Society (in its larger proportions), the Brooklyn Club, and, we believe, Prospect Park . . . [And] the Academy became what Mr. Wyman designed it to be, the great social and artistic centre of Brooklyn. It would be foolish to say that Mr. Wyman foresaw what his first modest musical enterprise would lead to. Like most men who build well he builded better than he knew. His merit lay in endeavoring to bring about that which he perceived to be desirable, and in modestly but persistently following up the lines that flowed in the direction of new undertakings. It is no small thing to be able to say truly of any man that his life broadened and sweetened the life of a great city. This can be

<sup>110</sup> His remains joined those of his first wife Cecilia Warren, his second son and namesake Luther, Jr. and a male infant probably stillborn, buried in 1861, *ibid.*, 30 July 1879, 4.

said truly of Mr. Wyman. He had a gentle mind, gentle manners, and, that key to all gentility, a generous heart. It is painful to reflect that one so long engaged in efforts to make others happy by making them better, should have had the last few years of his life clouded by pecuniary misfortune, and the last year of his life rendered a burden by physical prostration.<sup>111</sup>

The *Eagle's* obituary traced the major stepping stones of his life. Ironically, no mention was made of his early tenure as proprietor of the Troy Bathing House, in which, in his willingness to spare no pains to make it “at all times a pleasant and agreeable place of resort,” lay the seeds of all his contributions to his beloved Brooklyn.

The obituary concluded with the statement: “His long, busy and useful life made a mark on affairs in this city that will never be effaced, and the influence he exerted was always in the direction of whatever is pure and ennobling and for the advancement of the best interests of mankind.” Wyman and his like-minded peers had demonstrated, whether in the arts world or Civil War support activities, the full meaning of the old liberal, enlightened civilizing mission that morally obligated the merchant class toward the general betterment and advancement of society. Although an ocean and a generation separated them, Wyman’s contributions to Brooklyn life resembled in spirit and motivation what William Roscoe had achieved for Liverpool, and what Roscoe had emphasized in Renaissance Florence in his biography of Lorenzo de’ Medici as patron of the arts. In their different times and places all three patrons had firmly subscribed to the notion that fostering culture and education was the best way to ennoble and elevate a city in its own eyes and in the eyes of others. If in his unassuming ways, Wyman had “builded better than he knew,” it was because he held steadfastly to those ideals. Both Roscoe and Wyman had earned the special affection of their fellow citizens, Roscoe as the Lorenzo de’ Medici of Liverpool, Wyman as “papa” of the Philharmonic and Brooklyn. Brooklyn with its rapid growth and ever-evolving relationship with Manhattan never earned a sobriquet like Liverpool had as the Florence of Northern England, but it had, like Liverpool, and Florence before it, acquired in its renaissance years, before consolidation with New York City, a strong sense of its own civic identity as a vibrant cultural center.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 July 1879, 2.

At the time of Wyman's death in straightened circumstances, when his will was read, it listed personal possessions of great sentimental value from his more prosperous earlier years.<sup>112</sup> To his eldest son Benjamin Franklin, Wyman he left the prized silver tankard that had belonged to his grandfather Benjamin, dating from Boston's pre-Revolutionary days, crafted from coin silver in the 1760s by Benjamin Burt and vended by John Hancock. The tankard eventually found its way into the Clearwater Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>113</sup> To his daughter Helen, Wyman gave his cherished silver pitcher and salver the Church of the Saviour had presented him so many years before. To his son Cecil he bequeathed his diamond stick pin, and to his youngest Leon his gold mosaic vest buttons and gold sleeve buttons, gifts from his old friend Charles H. Marshall. To daughter Ida, the musician, he left his Chickerings Grand Pianoforte. The rest of his remaining possessions and household effects went to his widow Frances. These included his oil portrait by Matthew Wilson, his elegant five-piece 1842 Gelston and Ladd silver service, and illustrated Harper's Bible, gift from the Brooklyn Sacred Music Society. At Frances' death in 1901 these items passed on to her heirs.<sup>114</sup> Luther Wyman's handsome oil portrait together with a pastel of young Ida hung for years on loan in San Francisco's Legion of Honor museum. Their owner, Luther Wyman's great granddaughter, died without issue. She willed the Wyman collection to a distant relation, descendant of Luther Wyman's older brother Justus, who had settled in the Alabama Territory back in 1818. Entering the twenty-first century, no

<sup>112</sup> Surrogate's Court Kings County, NY, Will of Luther B. Wyman, probated 22 November 1879, Will 82, 66. In July 1877 he had written and signed the will in his neat hand.

<sup>113</sup> Melissa Dearing Jack Hurt, *Alabama Bound: Family Sketches of a Long Line of Storytellers: The Jacks, Morgans, Wymans, Boyntons, Martins, Hunters, and Dearings* (Atlanta, GA: M. D. J. Hurt, 1988), 134–35. The tankard, part of the Clearwater bequest, accession # 33.120.504, on view in Gallery 774, is now attributed to Benjamin Burt with John Hancock as the retailer. Benjamin Wyman's name is inscribed on the handle.

<sup>114</sup> From Ida the trove passed to her only surviving daughter, Madelon (Madge), and finally to her daughter Elinor Fortiss Fisk, who died in San Francisco in the 1970s. The collection passed to Julia Ellen Meriam (d. 2001) and then to the author.

one knew any longer who Luther Wyman had been or what he had done to merit the handsome portrait and silver, other than that he might have been a sea captain, judging from the 1842 engraving on the silver service from the captains of the Old Line of Liverpool packets. The author, curious to uncover the story behind Luther Wyman's trove, scoured archives on both sides of the Atlantic and in the course of research uncovered the story of Brooklyn's remarkable cultural flowering in the 1850s and 1860s, which for a variety of reasons had slipped, like Luther Wyman, from Brooklyn's active historical and civic awareness.

### POWER OF FORGETTING

Memory plays a creative role in the historical process by sifting and molding what will be included in the narratives passed down through later generations. Its flip side, forgetting, plays perhaps an even more determinative role in what falls out of historical accounts.<sup>115</sup> The case of Luther Wyman and Brooklyn's renaissance in the Atlantic World, makes fascinating focus for understanding this process of historical amnesia. Over the last century, both Wyman and Brooklyn's cultural flowering have been largely forgotten, and it has required considerable archival detective work to reconstruct and evaluate their importance in the mid nineteenth-century world. As historian Sir John Keegan observed in his biography of Winston Churchill, "how easily gallant deeds were lost to sight without publicity."<sup>116</sup> And as Dr. David Skinner remarked back in 1892 at the prospect of Montague Street losing its arts personality as it converted to a high-priced banking and commercial area, "the march of progress is no respecter of sentiment."<sup>117</sup> Comparison between Luther Wyman and William Roscoe proves instructive. In Roscoe's case, even though, like Wyman, he died in reduced economic circumstances, his business failure was actually a boon to Liverpool. Although forced by debt to sell his Allerton estate, his art collection and library of Renaissance manuscripts survived; his paintings became the core of the city's Walker Art Gallery.

<sup>115</sup> On the power of forgetting, see Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1 (2008), 59–71, and elaborated in his book, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>116</sup> John Keegan, *Winston Churchill* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 2002), 39.

<sup>117</sup> BE, 10 April 1892, 9.



His books and manuscripts and vast personal correspondence formed the centerpiece of Liverpool's Brown Library and archive. Roscoe also had an aspiring litterateur son, Henry, who wrote a two-volume biography of his father,<sup>118</sup> which, together with Roscoe's own widely read and translated biographies of the Medici, and the Medici family's own well-recorded place in Italian Renaissance history, kept his name and role as Liverpool's premier patron from falling into obscurity.

Luther Wyman had no filial biographer, or even a diary that we know of that might have survived him. His personal modesty worked against securing him enduring renown. At the complimentary supper the directors of the Philharmonic Society hosted in his honor in 1862 following the construction and conclusion of the Academy of Music's first successful year, Wyman had insisted, "I am opposed to being made a 'Lion' of in any shape or form, especially on so small a consideration as the services I have rendered our Society."<sup>119</sup> Yet, as the *Aldine* remarked in 1875 following his debilitating stroke, "he had been incessantly at work helping others, and has done a great deal more for the world than the world has ever done for him."<sup>120</sup> Above all, Wyman's community spirit made him a doer of deeds, not a boaster about them.

Why had this remarkable man's useful life that the *Eagle* declared had made such an enduring mark on Brooklyn "never to be effaced," in fact, faded from view, and rather quickly at that? A number of external factors conspired to send his deeds and those of his fellow Brooklyn patrons into relative obscurity. On the broadest level, in contrast to England which had a long tradition of cherishing and preserving its history, Americans in the late nineteenth century, perched on the brink of the new Progressive Era, were characteristically restless and forward looking. They were not particularly attached to recent local histories, but nostalgic, if at all, for the more remote founding days of the Revolutionary War of the sort sentimentalized by the Old New England Kitchen at the Brooklyn Sanitary Fair or Brooklyn's distant past as a little Dutch village and scene of George Washington's wartime exploits against the British Redcoats. In the late

<sup>118</sup> Henry Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe*, 2 vols. (Boston, MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1833).

<sup>119</sup> BMA, BPS Minutes, 1: 102–3.

<sup>120</sup> *The Aldine*, 1 June 1875, 7, 18.

nineteenth century, Americans seemed to pride themselves on individual accomplishment and innovation, what was newest and pointed to the future, rather than to the recent past which they were busy surpassing. In fact, in 1881, even long-time Brooklyn resident and Wyman friend, John DeGrauw had commented that the “most important improvements that have been made in the city are of recent date, and can scarcely be considered to have become matters of history.”<sup>121</sup> Memories, uneven like a washboard, flowed and gradually faded, especially when unaccompanied by any concerted efforts to preserve them.

John DeGrauw’s reflections featured in three articles about old Brooklyn. DeGrauw, born in 1797, had lived most of his eighty-four years in Brooklyn, which gave him the perspective of longevity regarding the city’s growth from a tiny village surrounded by farmland in the early nineteenth century. In his youth, the steam ferries on the East River stopped service in the evening, and anyone who wanted to return home past 9:00 p.m. had to hire a rowboat.<sup>122</sup> He recalled that Henry Street, site of Wyman’s early residence in Brooklyn, had only been platted around 1820, and the Joralemon farm, located around Joralemon Street, Wyman’s later home in the Heights, had only been developed in about 1840. Those were the days when construction of City Hall had been delayed by the Crash of 1837 and its footprint reduced in size. DeGrauw had pleasant memories from the pre-Civil War years when he had served as president of the Horticultural Society and had collaborated with the Philharmonic Society in the floral promenade concerts of the late 1850s. He expressed high esteem for Wyman and the Philharmonic Society, who had done so much “to increase the general taste for music” and whose concerts were of the “highest character and displayed the taste of a highly cultivated science.”<sup>123</sup>

Veterans of the Civil War remembered Wyman differently. In 1887 about seventy veterans of the old Forty-Eighth Regiment of Brooklyn volunteers attended their twenty-sixth annual reunion. They gathered

<sup>121</sup> BE, 24 April 1881, 1.

<sup>122</sup> He had been a fireman for more than twenty years, president of the old New York Fire Department, secretary of the early Tammany Hall General Committee, assessor of the Third Ward and Assemblyman, but had been retired from politics for more than forty years, *ibid.*, 24 April 1881, 2.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 May 1881, 1.

outside City Hall and took the streetcar to “old Camp Wyman” at Fort Hamilton, from whence they adjourned for dinner and speeches, but no mention of Wyman himself was recorded.<sup>124</sup> However, in 1892 Judge Church published a Christmas Day retrospective on Fort Hamilton, then the end point of a new line of electric street cars that ran from Fulton Ferry. Church recalled that the locality was named Camp Wyman in honor of Luther B. Wyman, “one of Brooklyn’s most patriotic citizens.”<sup>125</sup> It seems Wyman’s two personae as patron of culture and patron of patriots had been effectively sundered.

By the 1880s, little heed was given to the more traditional collaborative efforts promoting the common good such as those behind Brooklyn’s renaissance. Even Brooklyn’s Historical Society, late in founding during the Civil War, though dedicated to preserving Brooklyn’s history, reflected Gilded Age individualistic perspectives more than the corporative ethos of the pre-Civil War years when Brooklyn’s leading merchants had busily founded cultural societies and schools as privately financed corporations. After the Civil War, Henry Stiles, secretary of the Historical Society and a physician by profession, published his massive three-volume history of Brooklyn. Nostalgia for the past was directed to the pre-nineteenth century olden days of Brooklyn’s humble beginnings as a Dutch village, subject of his entire first volume.<sup>126</sup> In the remaining volumes he chronicled important events in the city and its growth into the third largest city in the nation, but like DeGrauw did not have sufficient historical distance from his own times to appreciate the significance of how Brooklyn’s cultural profile constituted one of its most important defining characteristics, rather than its Revolutionary past or then current progressive business environment.

In his companion tome on Kings County, published in 1884, Stiles devoted much of the volume to personal profiles of prominent living Brooklynites. In the chapter on “The Progress of the Drama, Opera, Music and Art in Brooklyn,” Luther Wyman received only brief mention

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 September 1887, 6.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 December 1892, 5.

<sup>126</sup> Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh*, 3 vols. (Brooklyn, NY: by subscription, 1867), facsimile reprint by Heritage Books, 2007.

in a sketch of his life drawn from his obituary. Oddly, the sketch was presented in miniature type, as though squeezed in as an afterthought, or footnote, in the section on the Philharmonic Society. Absent was a handsome lithograph or the full-page treatment afforded Stiles' contemporaries. He had entrusted the chapter on the progress of the arts to Gabriel Harrison, member of the Historical Society and former manager of the Park Theater, whose own biographical sketch and handsome portrait etching occupied eight double-columned pages.<sup>127</sup> Harrison had begun the arts chapter with the statement, "There are few cities in any part of the civilized world where the Drama had a longer or harder struggle to obtain a foothold than in the city of Brooklyn."<sup>128</sup> No wonder he omitted any discussion of the founding directors of the Academy of Music, who back in 1861 had been slow to accept dramatic performances there. Harrison gave scant treatment even to the Academy and did not include an engraving of its familiar façade, preferring instead to represent the arts in Brooklyn with a view of the newer Art Association building.

Stiles' massive volume on Kings County contained well over five hundred portrait sketches of notable Brooklynites, businessmen, educators, preachers, and the like, all contemporaries. Henry Ward Beecher, still alive at the time of publication, was included, as was A. A. Low, whose son Seth served as mayor of Brooklyn before becoming president of Columbia University and mayor of New York City. By the mid-1880s, many of Brooklyn's select renaissance patrons had passed on. Such familiar figures as Dr. A. Cooke Hull, John DeGrauw, E. S. Mills, Abraham Baylis, John Bullard, Edward Lowber, Charles Marvin, and Edwin Plimpton were no longer living. A few of Wyman's patron peers survived into the 1890s and fewer still into the new century, but they were for the most part omitted from Stiles' histories. Political rather than cultural history, the latter not yet a recognized historical field, found favor in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, a trend still reflected in the 1940s when Harold Coffin

<sup>127</sup> Henry Stiles, L. P. (Linus Pierpont) Brockett, and L. B. (Lucien Brock) Proctor, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y., from 1683 to 1884* (New York, NY: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 1134.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 1107.

Syrett, wrote his *The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898, A Political History*, which, like Stiles, gave scant mention of any of Brooklyn’s cultural boosters. By the time David W. McCullough wrote his very readable *Brooklyn . . . and how it got that way* (1984), no arts associations appeared as urban cornerstones, and even the Academy of Music had been reduced to a passing reference as location of the Sanitary Fair.<sup>129</sup> Carol Lopate’s brief *Education and Culture in Brooklyn. A History of Ten Institutions* (1979), part of a National Endowment for the Humanities project on the rediscovery of Brooklyn, came closest to an appreciation of Brooklyn’s cultural awakening as a civic endeavor. Lopate gave brief sketches *in seriatim* of some of the city’s important cultural associations, but her thrust aimed toward twentieth-century developments. Even more recently, Maurice Edwards’s *How Music Grew in Brooklyn. A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra* (2006) in its brief introductory sketch of the nineteenth-century orchestra, as his title indicates, focused almost exclusively on the orchestra and its conductors and not on the Philharmonic Society or its founders and supporters. Luther Wyman, its original ideator and first and only president for more than twenty years received no mention whatsoever, nor did any of the other Philharmonic Society founders and board members.<sup>130</sup>

Even the *Brooklyn Eagle*, faithful chronicler of life in the city for so many decades, unwittingly hastened the amnesic process. Its editorial attention tilted appropriately toward current events in a restless era when Brooklyn and

<sup>129</sup> David McCullough, Jim Kalett, and Thomas Wolfe, *Brooklyn—and How It Got That Way*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1984), 35. More recently Robert Furman and Brian Merlis, contributor, published an overview of Brooklyn Heights covering the last three centuries. Their nostalgic ramble through the Heights traces its fortunes via its buildings and associated personalities, *Brooklyn Heights: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of America’s First Suburb* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015).

<sup>130</sup> Edwards apparently confused the Philharmonic Society with directors of the Academy of Music, for as founders of the former he listed A. A. Low, Isaac Frothingham, S. B. Chittenden, and Henry E. Pierrepont, “the elite of the elite” of Brooklyn, none of whom, however, were among the original founders or officers of the Philharmonic Society, but they did sit on the board of the Academy of Music at various times, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn. A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 11.

New York were absorbing massive waves of new immigrants, who provided labor for booming industrial era business and manufacturing, but had little or no connection with the pre-Civil War city. To highlight the rapidity of urban change, the newspaper periodically published retrospective articles and interviews with select elderly citizens invited to recall events from the city's past.<sup>131</sup> In 1887 appeared a series of articles featuring interviews with Gabriel Harrison, the contributor to Stiles' history, and another with elderly Edward A. Wier, former carpenter by trade and manager of Gothic Hall, "an early rough and tumble theater," who, like Harrison, was a drama enthusiast.<sup>132</sup> As in the Stiles volume, Harrison trumpeted drama over music, and neither the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society nor Luther Wyman received any mention as originators of the planning, funding, and building that brought the Academy of Music into existence. Rather, he insinuated unfairly that when the directors realized there were an insufficient number of balls and concerts to make the Academy "pay the directors," they reluctantly rented out the house for dramatic performances.<sup>133</sup> By 1887, in old age, Harrison may well have forgotten the generous complimentary benefit given him at the initiative of Academy of Music directors such as A. Cooke Hull and Luther Wyman. They had praised Harrison in print for his efforts to establish good drama in Brooklyn, which had "led to personal and pecuniary sacrifices on his part which should by some means be repaid."<sup>134</sup> Kindness is easily overlooked in retrospect.

Edward Wier's memory edited the past even more dramatically. His interview by the *Eagle* resulted in such uncorroborated statements as, "For over a quarter of a century the names of Edward A. Wier and the Academy of Music have been synonyms. Mr. Wier is known as the father of Brooklyn's chief playhouse, not only for the reason that he has been connected with the building since its erection, but for the lively interest he has always taken in its welfare."<sup>135</sup> Wier, the father of the Academy of

<sup>131</sup> Also remarked by Schroth, *The Eagle and Brooklyn*, 87.

<sup>132</sup> The articles appeared in BE, 2 January 1887, 11; 6 May 1887 1; 25 September 1887, 4.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 September 1887, 4. The statement is inaccurate, for the directors served gratis.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1864, 2.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 May 1887, 1.

Music? Could he or the editor have confused him with Luther Wyman or the Academy of Music with some smaller theater? Maybe Wier had been a small stockholder in the Academy, but no record exists of him ever serving on the board of directors, participating in members' meetings, or receiving mention in the copious coverage the *Eagle* always gave Academy activities since its inception.

Personal memories in old age can be all a jumble, and once printed, have more staying power than perhaps they deserve. In addition to the inaccuracies in those articles, other more significant structural factors colluded in overwriting or obscuring Brooklyn's renaissance past. The transformation of Montague Street from an arts into a business district played a determinative role in obfuscating Brooklyn's renaissance from view. Back in the early 1870s, the Academy of Music, the Mercantile Library, and Art Association buildings had anchored the block between Court and Clinton Streets as Brooklyn's central arts space. The three handsome neo-Gothic buildings occupied the same physical place that the great Sanitary Fair had carved out during the Civil War. But a stone's throw apart, next to and opposite one another, they had physically defined Brooklyn's cultural hub. As late as 1894 the *Eagle* recognized its import, as part of the "tendency on the part of the inhabitants of any goodly city to localize their conception of the city itself. In this way, all who have lived in Brooklyn during the past generation would naturally focus their thought on the Academy of Music as the center, both of the social and civic life of their city."<sup>136</sup> The article also recognized that the Academy of Music had been erected not for profit but rather to enhance the "culture and public spirit" of Brooklyn, making it the city's forum. Like Dr. Skinner's statements mentioned earlier that progress was no friend of sentiment, the article, defensive in tone, had appeared at a time when there had been talk of selling and relocating the Academy of Music. Property values and taxes on Montague Street had increased as more and more commercial interests moved in. Still, respecters of sentiment in 1894, the Academy's directors delayed any action.

Buildings and monuments usually outlive their founders, but in Brooklyn's case, by the early twentieth century, the Montague Street cultural district had followed its ideators into relative obscurity. In 1903 flames engulfed the Academy of Music and all the archived records of its

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 August 1894, 8.

founding and early history. Businesses snapped up the property, and the Academy severed its physical ties with Brooklyn Heights and moved uptown into new quarters on Lafayette Street, designed appropriately in an Italianate Renaissance style. By then the Art Association and the Mercantile Library spaces had also been repurposed and were eventually demolished to make room for more banks and insurance firms.

Salvation for the combined arts came from an unexpected quarter, the old Brooklyn Institute, which over the previous decades, with the development of the Montague Street area, had struggled financially and languished in its old Washington Street location. The Institute's own building burned in 1890, which spurred its plans to relocate away from the downtown area to Prospect Park. Now subsidized with municipal funds, the grand new McKim, Mead, and White building that today houses the Brooklyn Museum of Art was built for it, the initial wing opening in 1897. By then, in part for monetary reasons, the Art Association and the Philharmonic Society had united with the Institute, forming the new combined Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (1895) that envisioned itself as a collective center for the fine arts and sciences.<sup>137</sup> After it burned down in 1903, the Academy of Music followed suit and sought protection under the Institute's umbrella. The old Mercantile Library merged into the new Brooklyn Public Library system, whose expansion Carnegie and municipal funds supported. It eventually moved into its new edifice at the edge of Prospect Park next to the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and a novel Children's Museum, also under the aegis of the Institute joined the new cultural complex on the park's rim.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the Brooklyn Institute, bolstered by municipal funds, coordinated much of Brooklyn's refined cultural life. The City of New York, with its greater resources and deeper pockets, had become the new patron of culture in Brooklyn. The original cultural societies that had begun more than a generation earlier as

<sup>137</sup> Carol Lopate and Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program), *Education and Culture in Brooklyn: A History of Ten Institutions* ([Brooklyn], NY: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979), 36–37. The Philharmonic Society had experienced difficult times following popular conductor Theodore Thomas' departure to Chicago and for a period when the Boston Symphony became the Philharmonic's orchestra, Edwards, *How Music Grew in Brooklyn*, 27–29.



privately funded corporations had been mostly absorbed under this larger municipal framework. The old merchant patrons of Brooklyn, whose altruism and perseverance had brought the Philharmonic Society, Academy of Music, Mercantile Library, and Art Association into existence using private resources, faded from public recognition, even as their renaissance legacy of patronage of the arts and education became absorbed into a new urban perspective that fine arts endeavors and institutions merited public support to encourage their survival.

Only the Long Island Historical Society (1863) remained in the Heights as a reminder of Brooklyn's early renaissance and Civil War-era cultural associations that had once grouped there. In 1881, the Historical Society moved its extensive library and archives of old Brooklyn history into its landmark George B. Post building on Pierrepont Street, and since renamed itself the Brooklyn Historical Society (1985). By the twentieth century, culture had become a civic endeavor belonging to the people. The new mentality built upon the previous endeavors of citizens such as Luther Wyman in Brooklyn's renaissance years, who had been so instrumental in creating their city's proud civic identity around the arts, but whose legacy was largely forgotten.

The opening of the Brooklyn Bridge (1883) and consolidation with New York (1898) spread the final obfuscating fog over Brooklyn's renaissance, its mentors, and its memory. The inauguration of the bridge in 1883 had been welcomed with grand celebration at both the Academy of Music and the Brooklyn Club. The bridge quickly became Brooklyn's new symbol of progress and pride leading into the future. Almost forty years before consolidation became a reality, members of the Brooklyn Club, many of whom had their businesses in Manhattan, had joined the Municipal Union Society in support of both the bridge and the two cities' eventual political union. But, as could be expected, both the bridge and consolidation eroded Brooklyn's civic separateness, which had been built up over the previous generation as such an important pillar of its identity. A few lamented the loss of independence as Brooklyn was drawn tightly into New York's magnetic orbit, but most agreed that the future lay in a consolidated megalopolis.

The previous few chapters have focused heavily on the cultural history of Brooklyn in its process of urbanizing and how it drew upon European models for its remarkable Renaissance and aftermath. Those chapters dealt more sparingly with connections to the larger Atlantic World in which Brooklyn remained deeply imbedded. The dissolution of the Black Ball

Line and Luther Wyman's associations with it marked the end of his career as an Atlantic shipping merchant, but did not represent any shrinkage in Brooklyn's international profile, which, after the disruptions of civil war, sprang to life with renewed vigor. American flag ships may have declined in relative number, but Brooklyn's refurbished and expanded docks welcomed foreign vessels crammed with immigrants, whose labor would fuel Brooklyn's rising reputation as a manufacturing center. Already by 1881, estimates indicated that Brooklyn's wharves handled half of all the cargo being loaded and unloaded in the whole Port of New York, making it a serious rival to Manhattan as the Western world's largest seaport city.<sup>138</sup> Together the two cities would become an unparalleled economic powerhouse. In 1881 the Brooklyn Bridge was just two years from completion, and even then the most boastful of Brooklyn's boosters recognized that Brooklyn's consolidation with New York was its future destiny. They envisioned that the East River waterway that divided the two cities would soon be spanned by several, not just one massive bridge, and the combined cities would become like London, whose bridges united both sides of the intervening Thames.<sup>139</sup>

The very concept of renaissance as a cultural flowering contains within it an organic premonition of its own fading. After Consolidation with New York City, memories waned of Brooklyn's nineteenth-century independence and how, in the process of urbanizing, its new cultural societies had provided the locus of its proud civic identity. For over forty years, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, true to its ideators' vision, served as the city's social, cultural, and wartime forum. Union with Manhattan meant Brooklyn's political independence was forever gone, but scintillas of its renaissance cultural heritage remained in its enduring sense of itself as long having been a fine arts-friendly community, surely the most important legacy that Luther Wyman and his like-minded patron peers could have bequeathed their beloved Brooklyn. They had made their city, like Wyman's long-ago Troy Bathing House, into a most "pleasant and agreeable place of resort" that had successfully joined commerce, culture, and community.

<sup>138</sup> BE, 24 April 1881, 1.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

## APPENDIX

*Principal patrons of fine arts and letters in Brooklyn in the mid-nineteenth century, who served on the boards of at least two of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn Art Association, and Prospect Park Commission*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Residence(s)</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Business Address</i>
Baylis, Abraham B.	47 Middagah; 106 Livingston	Broker NYC	56 Merchants' Exchange NYC
Benson, Arthur W.	104 Willow	Pres. Brooklyn Gaslight Co.	136 Remsen Bklyn
Bullard, John	176 Washington; 65 Pierrepont	Leather merchant NYC	14 Ferry St. NYC
Burnham, Lyman S.	62 Bergan; 135 Schermerhorn	Drygoods Brooklyn	144 Atlantic Bklyn
Chittenden, Simeon B.	18 Pierrepont	Drygoods NYC; US Congress	350 Broadway NYC
Congdon, Charles	49 Willow; 87 Remsen	Commission merchant NYC	28 Cliff NYC
De Grauw, John	219 Clinton at Amity	Commission merchant NYC; NY Legislature	69 Washington, NYC
Ford, Gordon L.	120 Columbia	Lawyer NYC; Railroad Pres., Publisher Brooklyn Union	8 Pine, NYC
Frothingham, Isaac H.	94 Remsen	Pres. Nassau Bank and Union Bank NYC	8 Court St. Bklyn
Greenwood, John	21 Clinton	Lawyer and judge, Bklyn	Post Office Bldg Bklyn
Hatch, Walter T.	77 Clark	Drygoods, banker NYC	292 Broadway NYC
How, James	83 Willow	Paint manufacturer NYC	Front at Bridge Bklyn
Hull, A. Cooke	60 Clinton	Physician, Bklyn	105 Joralemon Bklyn
Husted, Seymour L.	Clinton corner Myrtle	Distiller NYC; Pres. Dime Savings Brooklyn; first pres. Brooklyn City Railroad	Franklin Ave nr. Flushing

*(continued)*

(continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Residence(s)</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Business Address</i>
Husted, William H.	Clinton corner Myrtle	Pres. distillery NYC; a director Brooklyn City Railroad	Franklin Ave nr. Flushing
Lambert, Edward A.	Clinton near Gates	Commission broker; Stationer NYC; ex-mayor Bklyn	119 William NYC
Low, Abiel Abbott	3 Pierrepont Pl.	shipping merchant NYC	31 Burling Slip NYC
Low, Josiah O.	40 Concord; 30 Remsen	Shipping merchant NYC	31 Burling Slip NYC
Lowber, Edward J.	Classon near De Kalb	Grocer, distiller NYC; alderman; water commissioner, Bklyn	56 Broad NYC
Martin, John T.	28 Pierrepont	Clothier NYC; Railroads, banks, trusts, real estate	12 Merchant Exchange NYC
Marvin, Charles R.	8 Schermerhorn	Broker NYC; railroads	Exchange Pl. NYC
Massey, Marcellus	65 Livingston; 100 Joralemon	Drygoods NYC; Southern lumber; Railroads	Pierrepont House Bklyn
McCue, Alexander	122 Pacific; 219 Raymond	Lawyer and judge city court; Assistant Treasurer for NYC	9 Court St. Bklyn
McKenzie, J. D.	49 Pierrepont	Tea merchant NYC	90 Front St. NYC
McLean, Samuel	Remsen near Henry	Drygoods NYC; storage	Grand St. NYC
Mills, Ethelbert	100 Montague	Lawyer; Pres. Bklyn Trust Co.	74 Wall St. NYC
Newell, Willard M.	113 Jay; Clinton near De Kalb	Shoe merchant NYC; insurance	13 Murray NYC
Plimpton, Edwin D.	3 Carroll Park	Carpet merchant NYC; Citizens Gas Co. director	51 Chambers NYC

Raymond, Robert R.	101 Henry	Professor Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute	Livingston St. Bklyn
Sand, Christian H.	22 Remsen	Merchant NYC	11 S. William NYC
Sanger, Henry	57 Pierpont	Fancy goods importer	105 Chambers NYC
Sheldon, Henry K.	76 Clark	Hardware and tea merchant	16 Warren NYC
Sloan, Samuel	133 Joralemon	Commission merchant; Pres. Hudson River Railroad et al.; NY Senate	68 Warren NYC
Smith, Bryan H.	55 Pierpont	Drygoods commission merchant NYC	18 Vessey NYC
Stephenson, George S.	86 Remsen	Commission Merchant NYC	49 South St. NYC
Stranahan, J. S. T.	333 Henry; 226 Union	Pres. Atlantic Dock Co.	1 N. Pier Atlantic Dock, Bklyn
Thomas, George F., Jr.	70 Hicks; 309 Dean	Editor NYC	346 Broadway NYC
Townsend, Charles A.	101 Remsen	Merchant NYC; Pres. South Brooklyn Savings	22 John St. NYC
White, Alexander M.	2 Pierpont Pl.	Fur merchant NYC; financier	63 Broadway NYC
Whitehouse, Edward	54 Remsen	Banker, broker NYC	38 William St. NYC
Worthington, Henry R.	54 State	Hydraulic works engineer NYC; inventor	28 Broadway NYC
Wyman, Luther B.	7 Prospect; 110 Henry; 131 Joralemon	Shipping and commission merchant NYC	38 Burling Slip NYC

## WORKS CITED

- Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. "Planning the Black Ball." *The Log of Mystic Seaport* 18, no. 4 (1966): 96–100.
- Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. *Square-Riggers on Schedule: The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports*. Hamden, CT.: Archon Books, 1965.
- Albion, Robert Greenhalgh., and Jennie Barnes Pope *The Rise of New York Port [1815–1860]*. New York and London: C. Scribner's Sons, Ltd, 1939.
- American Broad­sides and Ephemera*, Series I: 1749–1900. [electronic resource] 2005, Readex, Naples, Fl. Last accessed October 2, 2016.
- American Council of Learned Societies and Mangum Weeks. *Dictionary of American Biography*. Vol. 17. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1928.
- Annual\_report\_brooklyn\_prospect\_park\_comm\_1861.pdf. Last accessed October 2, 2016. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/3985annual\\_report\\_brooklyn\\_prospect\\_park\\_comm\\_1861.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/3985annual_report_brooklyn_prospect_park_comm_1861.pdf).
- Barnum Museum Archive – Past Perspectives. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu/archive/disastrous-fire-new-york-times-july-14>.
- Barnum, P. T. *The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself*. New York: Redfield, 1855.
- Barrett, I. J. "Cultures of Pro-Slavery: The Political Defence of the Slave Trade in Britain c. 1787 to 1807." PhD. Diss., King's College, University of London, 2009.
- Barrett, Walter. *The Old Merchants of New York City. Series 1–5*. 5 vols. New York: Carleton, 1870.
- Barreyre, Nicolas. "The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 04 (October 2011): 403–423.

- Bartlett, Kenneth. *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1992.
- Baum, Marlyn V. "The Brooklyn Academy of Music: A Case Study of the Rebirth of an Urban Cultural Center." PhD diss., CUNY, 1986.
- Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.
- Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Beckert, Sven. "Propertied of a Different Kind: Bourgeoisie and Lower Middle Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States." In *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class* edited by J. Bledstein Burton and Robert D. Johnston, 285–295. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Belchem, John. *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character & History*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006.
- Bender, Thomas. *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
- Bernstein, Peter. *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation*. 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005.
- Bogardus, John, and Robert H. Moore. *Spreading the Risks: Insuring the American Experience*. 1st ed. Chevy Chase, MD: Posterity Press, 2003.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Forms of Capital* (1986). Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>.
- Borsay, Peter. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Bradley, Jyll. *Mr. Roscoe's Garden*. Liverpool: Distributed in Canada, Mexico and the USA by University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Bramhall, Frank J. *The Military Souvenir: A Portrait Gallery of Our Military and Naval Heroes*. New York: J. C. Butter, 1863. <http://galenet.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&CY107731028&srcht=a&ste=14&locID=edmo69826>.
- Brazendale, David, and William. Moss. *The First Liverpool Guide Book by William Moss, 1797*. Lancaster: Palatine Books, 2007.
- Brett, Vanessa, and Sotheby's (Firm). *The Sotheby's Directory of Silver, 1600–1940*. London: Distributed in the USA by Harper & Row, 1986.
- Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission (1864), Executive Committee. *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair [Electronic Resource]*: 22 February 1864. Brooklyn, NY: "The Union" Steam Presses, 1864.
- Brooklyn City Directory, 1862*. J. Lain and Co, 1862.

- Brooklyn City Directories [microform]*. New York: New York Public Library, 1952.
- Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance. Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program), and Margaret Webb Latimer *Brooklyn Almanac: Illustrations, Facts, Figures, People, Buildings, Books*. Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1984.
- “Brooklyn Museum: About: The Museum’s Building.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/about/building.php>.
- “Brooklyn Museum: Healing the Wounds of War: The Brooklyn Sanitary Fair of 1864.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/sanitary\\_fair/#](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/sanitary_fair/#).
- Brooklyn Philharmonic Society. “New York Art Resources Consortium, Brooklyn Museum of Art” [http://library.brooklynmuseum.org/search~\\$5?/aBrooklyn+Institute+of+Arts+and+Sciences./abrooklyn+institute+of+arts+and+sciences/-3,-1,0,B/browse](http://library.brooklynmuseum.org/search~$5?/aBrooklyn+Institute+of+Arts+and+Sciences./abrooklyn+institute+of+arts+and+sciences/-3,-1,0,B/browse).
- Brooklyn Savings Bank. *Old Brooklyn Heights, 1827–1927: To Commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Brooklyn Savings Bank*. [Place of publication not identified]: J.C. Powers, 1927.
- Brown, John Howard. *Lamb’s Biographical Dictionary of the United States*. Boston, MA: James H. Lamb Company, 1900–03.
- Bullard, Melissa Meriam. *Filippo Strozzi and the Medici: Favor and Finance in Sixteenth-Century Florence and Rome*. Reissue edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Bullard, Melissa Meriam. “Possessing Antiquity: Agency and Sociability in Building Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Gem Collection.” In *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance. Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*, edited by Christopher S. Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens, 85–111. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*. Translated by Samuel G. Middlemore. London: C.K. Paul & Co, 1878.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Letters of Jacob Burckhardt* Selected. edited and translated by Alexander Dru. Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001.
- Burrows, Edwin, and Mike Wallace *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Burt, Benjamin, and Wyman Tankard, c. 1766, Bequest of Alphonso T. Clearwater, 1933, Accession number 33.120.504, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection?ft=Wyman+tankard#!?q=Wyman%20tankard&sortBy=Relevance&sortOrder=asc&offset=0&perPage=20&pageSize=0>.
- Butler, William Allen. *Memorial of Charles H. Marshall*. New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1867. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&CY101343399&srchpt=a&ste=14&locID=new64731>.



- “Census of 1860 Population-Effect on the Representation of the Free and Slave States.” *The New York Times*, 5 April 1860, sec. News. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/1860/04/05/news/census-1860-population-effect-representation-free-slave-states.html>.
- Chandler, George. *William Roscoe of Liverpool*. London: Batsford, 1953.
- Chapman, J. *The American Drawing Book: A Manual for the Amateur, and Basis of Study for the Professional Artist: Especially Adapted to the Use of Public and Private Schools, as Well as Home Instruction*. New York: J.S. Redfield, 1858.
- Cone, John, Thomas G. Kaufman, and William R. Moran *Adelina Patti: Queen of Hearts*. Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993.
- Cypress Hills Cemetery. “History.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://cypresshillscemetery.org/timeline-2/history/#>.
- Davis, Charles G. *American Sailing Ships: Their Plans and History*. New York: Dover Publications, 1984.
- De Roover, Florence. “Early Examples of Marine Insurance.” *Journal of Economic History* 5, no. 2 (1945): 172–200.
- Del Valle, Cezar. *The Brooklyn Theatre Index*. Brooklyn, NY: Theatre Talks, LLC, 2010.
- Dewey, Orville. *Autobiography and Letters of Orville Dewey, D.D.* Ed Mary E. Dewey. Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1883.
- Dewey, Orville. *The Old World and the New, Or, A Journal of Reflections and Observations Made on a Tour in Europe*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836.
- Dietrich, Richard Farr. *British Drama: 1890 to 1950: A Critical History*. Boston, MA: Twayne, 1989.
- Druett, Joan. *Hen Frigates: Wives of Merchant Captains Under Sail*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Du Ponceau, Peter. *A Discourse on the Necessity and the Means of Making Our National Literature Independent of that of Great Britain: Delivered before the Members of the Pennsylvania Library of Foreign Literature and Science, on Saturday, Feb. 15, 1834*. Philadelphia, PA: E. G. Dorsey, 1834.
- Dunbaugh, Edwin, and William duBarry Thomas. *William H. Webb, Shipbuilder*. Glen Cove, NY: Webb Institute of Naval Architecture, 1989.
- Edwards, Maurice. *How Music Grew in Brooklyn: A Biography of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Emison, Patricia. *The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Erskine, John, James Huneker, Henry Edward Krehbiel, and Howard Shanet. *Early Histories of the New York Philharmonic*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1979.
- Etzioni, Amitai. *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*. 1st ed. New York: Crown Publishers, 1993.
- Farrell, Betty. *Elite Families: Class and Power in Nineteenth-Century Boston*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

- Field, Peter. *The Crisis of the Standing Order: Clerical Intellectuals and Cultural Authority in Massachusetts, 1780–1833*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.
- Findlen, Paula. *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- Findlen, Paula. “The 2012 Josephine Waters Bennett Lecture: The Eighteenth-Century Invention of the Renaissance: Lessons from the Uffizi.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (1 March 2013): 1–34.
- First Quarter Century of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute*. June 16th 1880. Brooklyn, NY: Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, 1880.
- Fletcher, Stella. *Roscoe and Italy: The Reception of Italian Renaissance History and Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012.
- Flint, Kate. *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Foreman, Amanda. *A World on Fire: Britain’s Crucial Role in the American Civil War*. 1st US ed. New York: Random House, 2010.
- Furman, Robert, and Brian Merlis (Contributor). *Brooklyn Heights: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of America’s First Suburb*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015.
- Giesberg, Judith. *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women’s Politics in Transition*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2000.
- Gilje, Paul. *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Goodhue, Jonathan. *Notes of Events*. Goodhue Ms: Collection. NYSL, n.d.
- Gossman, Lionel. *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Graham Home for Old Ladies Annual Reports and Publications, 1852–1958, Brooklyn Historical Society. Last accessed October 2, 2016. <http://brooklynhistory.org/library/wp/graham-home-for-old-ladies-annual-reports-and-publications-1852-1958/>.
- Gunn, Simon. *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840–1914*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Haggerty, Sheryllynne. *The British-Atlantic Trading Community, 1760–1810 Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods*. Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2006.
- Hale, J. *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in Its History and Art*. 4th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.
- Hidy, Ralph W. “Credit Rating before Dun and Bradstreet.” *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 13, no. 6 (1 December 1939): 81–88.
- Hidy, Ralph W. *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance; English Merchant Bankers at Work, 1763–1861*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949.

- “History – New York Infantry (Part 2).” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.civilwararchive.com/Unreght/unnyinf2.htm#27>.
- Hitchcock, H. *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*. New York, NY: Grove’s Dictionaries of Music, 1986.
- Holliday, Kathryn. *Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2008.
- Hoogenboom, Olive. *The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, One Hundred Fifty Years: A History*. Brooklyn, NY: The Church, 1987.
- Hurt, Melissa, and Dearing Jack. *Alabama Bound: Family Sketches of a Long Line of Storytellers: The Jacks, Morgans, Wymans, Boyntons, Martins, Hunters, and Dearings*. Atlanta, GA: M. D. J. Hurt, 1988.
- Hyde, Francis E. *Liverpool and the Mersey. An Economic History of a Port 1700–1970*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971.
- Irving, Washington. *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* Afterword by Perry Miller. New York; Scarborough; London: New American Library; The New English Library, 1961.
- Jack, Belinda. *The Woman Reader*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Jackson, Kenneth T., and John B. Manbeck. *The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Jefferson, Thomas, Albert Ellery Bergh, Richard Holland Johnston, Andrew A. Lipscomb, and Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Memorial ed. Containing his Autobiography, Notes on Virginia, Parliamentary Manual, Official Papers, Messages and Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private, Now Collected and Published in their Entirety for the First Time, Including all of the Original Manuscripts, Deposited in the Department of State and Published in 1853 by Order of the Joint Committee of Congress; With Numerous Illustrations and a Comprehensive Analytical Index*. Andrew A. Lipscomb. Vol. 15. Washington, DC: Issued Under the Auspices of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1903.
- Johnson, H. *Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston*. Boston, MA: B. Humphries, 1965.
- Johnson, Rossiter, and John Howard Brown. *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co, 1968.
- Journal of the American Geographical and Statistical Society*, “Front Material 1” – No Title. New York, United States: For the Society, January 1859. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://proquest.com> <http://proquest.com/docview/125732290/>.
- Kasson, John. *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1978.
- Kastendieck, Miles Merwin. *The Story of Poly*. [Wilmington, DL]: H. Matthews and Company, 1940.

- Keegan, John. *Winston Churchill*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2002.
- Kemble, Fanny. *Journal* [Aug. 1, 1832 to July 17, 1833]. 2 vols. Philadelphia, PA: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1835.
- Klauser, Karl, John Knowles Paine, and Theodore Thomas. *Famous Composers and Their Works*. Boston, MA: Millet Co., c. 1891.
- Knight, J. B. "The Last Years of Sail." In *Maritime History*. Vol. 2, *The Eighteenth century and the Classic Age of Sail* Ed John B. Hattendorf, 257–274. Malabar, FL: Kreiger Pub. Co, 1997.
- Kornfeld, Eve. *Creating an American Culture, 1775–1800: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2001.
- Kring, Walter. *Liberals Among the Orthodox: Unitarian Beginnings in New York City, 1819–1839*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1974.
- Lancaster, Clay, Edmund Vincent Gillon, and Aldo P Magi. *Old Brooklyn Heights: New York's First Suburb Including Detailed Analyses of 619 Century-Old Houses*. 2nd ed. with a suppl. of new photos by Edmund V. Gillon, Jr. New York: Dover Publications, 1979.
- Lee, W. *Commerce and Culture [electronic Resource]: Nineteenth-Century Business Elites*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.
- Leiter, Samuel L. "The Legitimate Theatre in Brooklyn, 1861–1898." PhD diss., NYU, 1968.
- Liverpool Customs Bills of Entry (1820–1939)*. Microform Academic Publishers, 2002. <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/archive/sheet/6>.
- Livingston, E. A. *Brooklyn and the Civil War*. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012.
- Lloyd, K. M. R. "Peace, Politics and Philanthropy: Henry Brougham, William Roscoe and America 1808–1868." PhD diss., Oxford, 1996.
- Longfellow, Henry. *Outre-Mer, a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea*. Rev. ed. Boston, MA: Houghton, 1866.
- Longworth's American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory*. New York: Thomas Longworth, n.d. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008925998/Home>.
- Lopate, Carol, and Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program) *Education and Culture in Brooklyn: A History of Ten Institutions*. [Brooklyn], NY: Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979.
- Lytton, Edward. *Richelieu*. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1994.
- Macdonough, Rodney. *The Macdonough-Hackstaff Ancestry*. Boston, MA: Press of S. Usher, 1901.
- Macnaughton, Donald A. *Roscoe of Liverpool: His Life, Writings and Treasures: 1753–1831*. Birkenhead: Countywise, 1996.
- Matson, Cathy. *Merchants & Empire: Trading in Colonial New York*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990.

- Mayer, Henry. "Suspension Bridge Grand March." Last accessed 2 October 2016. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/26178>.
- McCullough, David *The Great Bridge*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.
- McCullough, David *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris*. 1st Simon & Schuster hardcover ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.
- McCullough, David, Jim Kalett, and Thomas Wolfe *Brooklyn – and How It Got That Way*. 1st ed. New York: Dial Press, 1984.
- McKay, Richard C. *South Street: A Maritime History of New York*. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1934.
- McKinsey, Kristan, Museum of the City of New York, Gerald W. R. Ward, and Deborah Dependahl Waters. *Elegant Plate: Three Centuries of Precious Metals in New York City*. 1st ed. New York: Museum of the City of New York, 2000.
- Meacham, Jon. *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2008.
- Melville, Herman. *Redburn: His First Voyage: Being the Sailor-Boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service*. Modern Library pbk. ed. New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Ment, David, Brooklyn Rediscovery (Program), David Framberger, and Anthony Robins. *Building Blocks of Brooklyn: A Study of Urban Growth*. Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979.
- Merseyside Maritime Museum, Dawn Littler, and H. Threlfall. *Guide to the Records of Merseyside Maritime Museum: Volume II*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1999.
- Milburn, William. *Ten Years of Preacher-Life: Chapters from an Autobiography*. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1859.
- Milne, Graeme. *Trade and Traders in Mid-Victorian Liverpool: Mercantile Business and the Making of a World Port*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.
- Milne-Smith, Amy. "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914." *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 4 (1 October 2006): 796–818.
- Milne-Smith, Amy. "Club Talk: Gossip, Masculinity and Oral Communities in Late Nineteenth-Century London." *Gender & History* 21, no. 1 (2009): 86–106.
- Milne-Smith, Amy. *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Milton, David. *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network*. 1st ed. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003.
- Morris, George, and H. B. Wallace. *Poems by George P. Morris [electronic Resource]: With a Memoir of the Author*. 4th ed. New York: (Savage & McCrea), 1860.

- “Music.: The Philharmonic Society of Brooklyn.” *The Aldine, the Art Journal of America* (1874–1879), June 1, 1875. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/docview/124835572/abstract/5E9208A0C5A0419FPQ/9?accountid=14244>.
- Neal, F. “Liverpool Shipping in the Early Nineteenth Century.” In *Liverpool and Merseyside. Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and Its Hinterland*. Ed. J. R. Harris, 147–181. New York: A. M. Kelley, 1969.
- Neal, Zachary. *The Connected City: How Networks Are Shaping the Modern Metropolis*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Nelson, Scott. *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America’s Financial Disasters*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
- New England Society in the City of New York. “Annual Report of the New England Society in the City of New York.” 1931.
- New York Philharmonic. “Overview.” accessed 27 December 2014. <http://nyphil.org/history/main/overview>.
- Nichols, James Moses. *Perry’s Saints, Or, The Fighting Parson’s Regiment in the War of the Rebellion*. Boston: D. Lothrop, 1886.
- O’Malley, John. *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450–1521*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979.
- Owen, Thomas McAdory. ed. *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, v.3, 1898–1899*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Printed for the Society, 1899.
- “Palmer List of Merchant Vessels.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.oocities.org/mppraetorius/main-com1.htm>.
- Palmieri, Matteo. *Libro Della Vita Civile [electronic Resource]*. Firenze: Per li heredi di Philippo di Giunta, 1529.
- Parisi, Barbara, and Robert Singer. *The History of Brooklyn’s Three Major Performing Arts Institutions*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003.
- Pessen, Edward. *Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1973.
- Pocock, J. G. A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. 2nd pbk. ed. with a New Afterword. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Porter L. Fortune, Jr, Franklin T. Lambert, and Joseph P. Ward. *Britain and the American South: From Colonialism to Rock and Roll*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003.
- Power, Tyrone. *Impressions of America; During the Years 1833, 1834, and 1835*. Philadelphia, PA: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1836.
- Putnam, A. P. *Unitarianism in Brooklyn: A Sermon Preached by A.P. Putnam, in the Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, N.Y.* Brooklyn, NY: Rome Brothers, 1869.

- Quincy, Josiah. *The History of the Boston Athenæum: With Biographical Notices of Its Deceased Founders*. Cambridge: Metcalf and Co., 1851.
- Quincy, Josiah. *Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy Jun. of Massachusetts* [electronic Resource]. Boston, MA: Cummings, Hilliard, 1825.
- Quondam, Amedeo. *Tre inglesi, l'Italia, il Rinascimento: sondaggi sulla tradizione di un rapporto culturale e affettivo*. Napoli: Liguori, 2006.
- "Report of the Woman's Relief Association of the City of Brooklyn . . . Auxiliary to the United States Sanitary Commission" Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://memory.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2012/20120911004re/20120911004re.pdf>.
- Roberts, Oliver Ayer. *History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts Now Called the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts: 1637–1888*. Vol. 3. Boston, MA: Mudge, 1898.
- Roland, Alex et al. *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600–2000*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008.
- Roscoe, Henry. *The Life of William Roscoe*. 2 vols. Boston, MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1833.
- Roscoe, William. *Monandrian Plants of the Order Scitamineae: Chiefly Drawn from Living Specimens in the Botanic Garden at Liverpool. Arranged According to the System of Linnaeus. With Descriptions and Observations*. Liverpool: Printed by G. Smith, 1828.
- Ross, James, and McLaughlin, Mary. *The Portable Renaissance Reader*. New York: Viking Press, 1953.
- Ryan, Mary. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Sandage, Scott. *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Sarah, Stanton, and Martin Banham. *Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Schroth, Raymond. *The Eagle and Brooklyn: A Community Newspaper, 1841–1955*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974.
- Schwartz, Vanessa H. "Walter Benjamin for Historians." *American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001): 1721–1743.
- Sewall, Samuel, Charles Chauncy Sewall, and Samuel Thompson. *The History of Woburn, Middlesex County, Mass. from the Grant of Its Territory to Charlestown, in 1640, to the Year 1860*. Boston, MA: Wiggin and Lunt, 1868.
- Sharples, Joseph, and John Stonard. *Built on Commerce: Liverpool's Central Business District*. Swindon: English Heritage, 2008.
- Shaw, George Thomas, and W. Forshaw Wilson. *History of the Athenæum, Liverpool, 1798–1898*. Liverpool: Printed for the Committee of the Athenæum by Rockliff Bros, 1898.

- Silliman, Benjamin. *A Journal of Travels in England, Holland and Scotland, and of Two Passages over the Atlantic, in the Years of 1805 and 1806: With Considerable Additions, Principally from the Original Manuscripts of the Author*. 3rd ed. New Haven, CT: Printed and published by S. Converse, 1820.
- “Soldier Details – The Civil War (U.S. National Park Service).” Accessed 28 December 2014. <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=C11A50E1-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>.
- Spann, Edward. *Gotham at War: New York City, 1860–1865*. Wilmington, DL: SR Books, 2002.
- Spann, Edward. *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840–1857*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Stiles, Henry Reed, L. P. Brockett, and L. B. Proctor. *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y., from 1683 to 1884*. New York: W. W. Munsell & Co, 1884.
- Stiles, Henry Reed. *A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh*. 3 vols. Brooklyn: by subscription, 1867–1870.
- Story, R. “Class and Culture in Boston: The Athenaeum, 1807–1860.” *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1975): 178–199.
- Strong, George. *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.
- Syrett, Harold. *The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898: A Political History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.
- Syson, Luke, and Dora Thornton. *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy*. London: British Museum Press, 2001.
- Theatre Talks*. Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://theatretalks.wordpress.com/>.
- The Stranger in Liverpool*. 5th Edit. Liverpool: Kayeme, 1816.
- Thomson, James. *Sophonisba*. Cambridge [England]: Chadwyck-Healey, 1994.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America: An Annotated Text, Backgrounds Interpretations*. Ed Isaac Kramnick. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Trollope, Frances. *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. London: Whittaker, Treacher, & Co.; New-York, Reprinted for the booksellers, 1832.
- Troy Directory*. Troy: J. Disturnell, 1829.
- Tucker, Luther. *The Horticulturist, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*. [electronic Resource]. Published by Luther Tucker, 1862. <http://archive.org/details/horticulturista08tuckgoog>.
- Tuckerman, Joseph. *The Principles and Results of the Ministry at Large in Boston* [electronic Resource]. Boston, MA: I. R. Butts, 1838.
- Twain, Mark, and Charles Dudley Warner. *The Gilded Age, A Tale of Today*. Hartford, Conn: American Pub. Co, 1873.
- Verplanck, G. C. “Verplanck’s Discourse before the Historical Society of New York.” *North American Review* 8, no. 23 (1819): 414–446.



- “Walkabout: The Great Defalcation, Part One. Brownstoner.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.brownstoner.com/blog/2014/03/walkabout-the-great-defalcation-part-one/>.
- Walker, Wendy. *The Social Vision of Alfred T. White*. Brooklyn, NY: Proteotypes, 2009.
- Wakefield, Priscilla. *An Introduction to Botany: In a Series of Familiar Letters*. Boston, MA: J. Belcher, and J.W. Burditt and Co, 1811.
- Wheaton, Henry, and New-York Athenæum. *An Address Pronounced at the Opening of the New-York Athenæum*, December 14, 1824 [electronic Resource]. 2nd ed. New-York: J. W. Palmer and Co., printers to the Athenæum, 1825.
- Whitman, Zachariah. *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company [electronic Resource]: (Revised and Enlarged) from Its Formation in 1637 and Charter in 1638, to the Present Time: Comprising the Biographies of the Distinguished Civil, Literary, Religious and Military Men of the Colony, Province and Commonwealth*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: J.H. Eastburn, printer, 1842.
- Wiley, Bell. *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*. Updated ed. with a foreword by James I. Robertson, Jr. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2008.
- Williams, Cynthia. *Hospitality and the Transatlantic Imagination, 1815–1835*. First edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Williams, David M. “Bulk Passenger Freight Trades, 1750–1870.” In *Merchants and Mariners: Selected Maritime Writings of David M. Williams*. Compiled by Lars U. Scholl, 185–207. Research in Maritime History 18. St. John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2000a.
- Williams, David M. “Liverpool Merchants and the Cotton Trade 1820–1850.” In *Liverpool and Merseyside. Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and Its Hinterland*. Ed J. R. Harris, 182–211. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969.
- Williams, David M. “Shipping of the North Atlantic Cotton Trade in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.” In *Merchants and Mariners: Selected Maritime Writings of David M. Williams*. Compiled by J. R. Harris, 53–79. St. John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2000b.
- Wilson, Arline. *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.
- Wolff, Katherine. *Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenæum*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009.
- Wright, S. J. *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350–1750*. London: Hutchinson, 1988.
- “Wyman Genealogy.” Last accessed 2 October 2016. <http://www.wyman.org/>.
- Ziegler, Philip. *The Sixth Great Power: A History of One of the Greatest of All Banking Families, the House of Barings, 1762–1929*. 1st American ed. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1988.

# INDEX

## A

- A. A. Low and Brothers  
Company, 386
- Abbott, Marie, diva, 362, 424
- Abolitionism, 147, 238, 275
- Alabama Territory, 10, 53, 119,  
148, 411
- Albert Edward and Alexandra of  
Denmark, Prince and Princess of  
Wales, 337
- Alberti, Leon Battista, 346
- Albion, Robert G, 22, 23, 63, 64–66,  
68–69, 73, 76–79, 84–85
- Aldine, The*, 371, 401, 402, 413
- Allerton Hall, 26, 28, 412
- American Anti-Slavery Society, 122
- American Bible Society, 122
- American Exotic and Botanic  
Garden, 378
- American Free Trade League, 314
- American Geographical and Statistical  
Society, 150
- American Institute, 250
- American Revolution (War of  
Independence), 20, 32, 52,  
382, 416
- American Seaman's Friend  
Society, 122
- American Temperance Union, 122
- Anderson, John Henry,  
magician, 222
- Angely, Louis  
*Craft and Simplicity*, 234
- Anthony, Mrs. Edward, 291
- Appomattox, 306, 334, 346
- Arthur, Prince, later Duke of  
Connaught and  
Strathearn, 337–338  
Prince Arthur Reception (*see under*  
Brooklyn Club)
- Artists' Association (opera  
company), 219–220,  
224–225, 255
- Astor, William B, 148, 151, 330
- Atlantic Dock Company, 268
- Atlantic World Connections, 2–6,  
16–22, 28, 46–99, 148,  
163–166, 295, 313, 422  
commercial networks, 6, 7, 12, 13,  
15, 23, 43–99, 104, 114, 129,  
150, 295, 305, 315, 389 (*see also*  
Packet shipping)
- cotton trade, 63–65, 69, 71, 80, 313
- decline in American shipping, 316
- Immigrant traffic, 70, 132, 313,  
315–316

- Atlantic World Connections (*cont.*)  
 New York/Liverpool  
   connection, 49, 60–72, 81–85  
   risk management, 50, 77–85,  
     88–91, 217  
   sail and steam, 12, 69–70, 84,  
     94–95, 304, 313–314 (*see*  
     *under* Packet shipping)  
 transatlantic telegraph 1858, 12,  
   70, 86
- B**
- Baerer, Henry, sculptor, 380  
 Baily, Bernard, 6  
 Baltimore, 11, 41, 63, 102, 111, 243,  
   286, 338  
 Bandman, Daniel, 265  
 Barbauld, Anna Letitia, 21  
 Baring, Tom, 82  
 Baring Brothers and Company  
   liverpool and packet business, 24,  
     69, 71, 73, 79, 80–85, 89, 99,  
     313, 389  
   London, 17, 24, 69, 70, 71,  
     73, 75, 78, 80–81, 91, 115,  
     89, 389  
   US agents, 54 (*see* T. W. Ward;  
     J. Goodhue)  
 Barnes, Demus, 387, 393–394  
 Barnum, Phineas T., 67, 136, 144,  
   213, 233, 296, 328, 362  
 Iranistan estate, 136, 190, 198 (*See*  
   *also* Great American Museum)  
 Barton, William  
   *Elements of Botany*, 37  
 Bartow, E. J., 139  
 Bateman, Kate J., 265  
 Bates, Joshua, 17, 24, 69, 74, 75, 76,  
   80–82, 85, 89, 91, 93, 115,  
   214, 389  
 Battle of Brooklyn, 196
- Baylis, Abraham, 240, 241, 312,  
   317, 416  
 Beale, J. C., 404  
 Beecher, Henry Ward, Rev., 130, 134,  
   143, 146, 148, 182, 218, 227,  
   249, 270, 274, 278, 279, 281,  
   293, 309, 311, 324, 332, 346,  
   352, 392, 416  
 Beethoven, Ludwig von, 362  
   *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, 131  
   *Eroica* (Symphony #3), 162  
   *Fifth and Sixth Symphony*, 185  
   *Pastoral* (Symphony #6), 337  
 Beckert, Sven, 14  
 Belden, William, 317  
 Bellini, Vincenzo, 206  
 Bellows, Henry Whitney, 278  
 Benjamin, Walter, 42  
 Benson, Arthur W., 149, 202,  
   235, 240  
 Benson, Robert, 33  
 Berard, J. Charles, 243  
 Bergmann, Carl, Philharmonic  
   conductor, 185, 357, 366  
 Bierwirth, Leopold, 160  
 Black Ball Line (formerly Old Line  
   of Liverpool packet ships), viii, 5,  
   12–13, 17, 22–24, 33, 38,  
   49–50, 62–85, 95–99,  
   112, 136–138, 150, 153,  
   273, 402  
   *Brittania*, 82, 84  
   *Columbus*, 79, 80  
   *England*, 17  
   *Europe*, 66, 67, 84  
   fortunes of, 70, 94–95, 132, 164,  
     313, 402, 422  
   *Isaac Webb*, 313  
   *Manhattan*, 11, 51, 79, 147  
   *Montezuma*, 25  
   *Orpheus*, 79  
   *South America*, 83, 85

- William F. Storer*, 79, 80  
*Yorkshire*, 84
- Black Friday, *see under* Financial crises
- Blake, Alexander V., 243
- Blossom, Benjamin, 97–99,  
 114–115, 148
- Blois de Boulogne, 189
- Booth, Edwin, 233
- Boston, 7, 21, 40, 102, 338, 402  
 Academy of Music, 191  
 Athenaeum, 15, 38, 39, 54, 102  
 Economic prospects, 54, 78, 82  
 Faneuil Hall, 210  
 Handel and Haydn Society, 53,  
 104, 121, 154, 402  
 Sanitary Fair, 211  
 Symphony, 154
- Boucicault, Dion  
*London Assurance*, 237, 378  
*The Octoroon*, 237
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 41
- Bradbury, William B., 134
- Bramhall, Frank, Col., 275
- Bridgeport, Connecticut, 136, 144,  
 190, 271
- Brignoli, Pasquale, 242, 397
- Bristow, George Frederick  
*Arcadian Symphony*, 373  
*Praise to God*, 223
- Broadway Tabernacle Church, 121,  
 124, 127, 139
- Bronson, Enos, 33
- Bronson and Chauncey Press, 33  
 Lorenzo Press, 33
- Brooklyn  
 arts friendly, 1, 5, 7, 211–212, 259,  
 302, 367, 381–382,  
 410, 422  
 Board of Aldermen, 218, 241, 244  
 City Hall, 135, 150, 179, 188–189,  
 210, 212, 218, 248, 251, 272,  
 384, 387, 414–415  
 civic identity and pride, 2–3, 7,  
 12–13, 16, 19, 21, 42, 45–47,  
 101, 108–109, 165, 179, 189,  
 203, 249, 267, 279, 300–301,  
 317, 321, 325, 338, 342, 367,  
 370, 377, 390–391, 408, 410,  
 421–422  
 Civil War relief activities, 209, 253,  
 265–268, 271, 273, 274,  
 277–278, 291, 301, 303,  
 307–308, 343 (*see also under*  
 Brooklyn and Long Island  
 Santuary Fair)  
 Common Council, 138, 149, 187,  
 206, 323, 333, 405  
 consolidation with New York  
 1898, 2–5, 45, 316–317, 377,  
 407–408, 410, 421–422  
 docks, 316, 422  
 Eastern District, 187, 188–189, 323  
 incorporation as city 1834, 50, 106,  
 276, 347  
 principal patrons, 45, 137, 151,  
 158, 194, 234, 265, 303–304,  
 310–312, 326, 328, 332–334,  
 340, 346, 361, 370, 376, 384,  
 391, 413, 416, 424–425  
 rivalry and separation from  
 Manhattan, 2, 21, 103, 107, 149,  
 159, 176, 204, 216, 220, 275,  
 279, 299–300, 317, 321, 327,  
 338, 394, 401–402, 405, 421  
 sanitary conditions, 320, 324  
 South Brooklyn (Southern  
 District), 107, 172, 188, 208,  
 288, 323  
 War Commission, 244  
 Water Works, 59, 187, 404  
 wealthy, 144, 146, 151, 178, 191,  
 305, 333, 345, 393, 397
- Brooklyn Academy  
 of Design, 379, 380

- Brooklyn Academy of Music, 4, 17, 43–46, 95, 100, 106, 108, 125, 138, 149, 152, 175, 218, 251, 310, 312, 318–321, 327, 339, 343, 370, 381, 383, 391, 408, 421
- and Civil War, 209–210, 223, 238, 249, 265, 268–274
- and Frederick Douglass, 348–350
- as center and symbol of Brooklyn's Renaissance, 2, 131, 158–159, 174–175, 201, 209, 215, 252, 288, 291, 302, 348, 351, 382, 409, 419, 422
- construction, 2, 100, 110, 138, 145, 193, 197, 201, 218, 304
- dispute over drama, 217, 226–231, 234–238, 261, 285, 303, 312, 348, 416, 418
- fire and relocation, 419–420
- interior, 199–200
- Italian opera, 219, 350 (*see also* The Artists' Association)
- opening, 138, 144, 202–208, 217, 220, 223, 229, 377, 421
- re-decoration, 395
- seating controversies, 204, 217, 219, 229, 231, 243, 261, 305, 353–354, 359, 360, 363
- See also* Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair
- Brooklyn Amaranth Society, 378
- Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair, 11, 108, 152, 154, 174, 211, 253, 268, 272, 276–302, 303, 310, 325, 348, 404, 419
- alcohol and raffling  
controversy, 284–285, 303–304, 310, 348
- Artists' Album, 285–286
- Calico Ball, 300
- Drum-Beat*, 291
- Hall of Manufactures, 291, 297, 299
- inception, 216, 419
- Knickerbocker Hall, 290
- monetary success, 285, 299–300
- Museum of Arts, Relics and Curiosities, 291, 295
- old new England kitchen, 11, 291, 294, 296–298, 399, 413
- opening, 1, 138, 144, 220, 377, 421
- plan, 207, 283, 309, 406
- and US Sanitary Commission, 277
- Wyman's autograph album, 292–295
- Brooklyn Apprentices Library, 106, 124, 125, 134, 165
- Brooklyn Armory, 239, 308
- Brooklyn Art Association and School of Design, 18, 43–44, 104, 108, 126, 149, 174, 209, 211–213, 221–222, 253–259, 284, 286, 290, 299, 304, 310, 318, 329, 343–346, 351, 370, 379–382, 393–394, 399, 401, 409, 416, 420–421
- free exhibitions, 344
- Brooklyn Art Social (*see* Brooklyn Art Association)
- Brooklyn Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, 240
- Brooklyn Athenaeum, 17, 44, 108, 125–127, 144, 151, 152, 153, 172, 174, 209–210, 234, 287, 307, 359
- Brooklyn Baseball League, 18
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 420
- Brooklyn Bridge, 44, 311, 316, 319–321, 377, 405–408, 406, 407, 421, 422
- New York Bridge Company, 319, 386, 392, 405
- Brooklyn Charity Hospital, 18

- Brooklyn Children's Museum, 420  
 Brooklyn Choral Society, 265, 396  
 Brooklyn Choral Union, 352  
 Brooklyn City Guard, 195  
 Brooklyn City Railroad  
   Company, 247, 287  
 Brooklyn Civil War relief efforts, 104,  
   238–302, 310  
 Brooklyn Club, 305, 310, 334–335,  
   341, 344, 371, 383, 384, 403,  
   404, 409, 421  
   General Grant Reception, 308, 336  
   Prince Arthur Reception, 337–341  
 Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic  
   Institute (1855), 18, 100, 103,  
   108, 144–146, 148, 152, 159,  
   165, 166, 204, 249, 258, 268,  
   272, 307, 322–324, 345, 403  
 Brooklyn Collegiate Institution for  
   young ladies, 103  
*Brooklyn Daily Union*, 275, 313, 313  
 Brooklyn Dime Savings Bank, 151, 194  
 Brooklyn Dispensary, 151, 274,  
   326, 403  
*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 121, 138, 305,  
   310, 320  
   as Brooklyn booster, 107–108, 131,  
   139, 149, 155, 165, 176, 210,  
   220, 254, 302, 418  
   in civil war, 13, 17, 41, 149, 154,  
   167, 213, 215, 226, 236, 269,  
   271, 273, 274, 277, 291, 301,  
   307, 308  
   as forum, 234, 302  
*Brooklyn Daily Union*, 275,  
   312–313, 361  
 Brooklyn Dispensary, 151, 326  
 Brooklyn Female Academy, 108, 144  
 Brooklyn Female Employment Society  
   (also referred to as the Female  
   Unemployment Society), 154,  
   267, 272, 274, 278, 280, 300  
 Brooklyn Fire Department, 143  
   fireman's ball, 323  
   fireman's widows and orphans, 221,  
   250  
 Brooklyn Free Trade  
   League, 314–315  
 Brooklyn Handel and Haydn  
   Society, 396, 402  
 Brooklyn Heights, 2, 4, 11, 14, 42,  
   46, 54, 95, 96, 96, 105, 135,  
   147, 158, 170, 177, 180–182,  
   188, 189, 212, 234, 271, 288,  
   304–305, 324, 333, 342, 389,  
   403, 404, 420  
 Brooklyn Historical Society (formerly  
   Long Island Historical  
   Society), 1, 2, 17–18, 108, 126,  
   149, 253, 258, 275–277, 304,  
   310, 312, 370, 409, 415, 421  
 Brooklyn Home for Destitute  
   Children, 166, 326  
 Brooklyn Homeopathic Maternity  
   Hospital, 326, 398  
 Brooklyn Horticultural Society, 18,  
   44, 108, 126, 149, 166–174,  
   188, 201, 259–265, 287, 336,  
   343, 346, 358, 378, 414  
 Brooklyn Industrial School  
   Association, 166, 325  
 Brooklyn Institute (later Brooklyn  
   Institute of Arts and  
   Sciences), 17, 108, 124, 126,  
   130, 134, 135, 145, 210, 254,  
   420–422  
 Brooklyn Life Insurance  
   Company, 404  
 Brooklyn Lyceum, 124  
 Brooklyn Mercantile Library, 17, 46,  
   104, 108, 149, 165–166,  
   209–213, 223, 254, 291, 304,  
   312, 381, 402, 409, 419–420  
 Brooklyn Museum of Art, 138, 420

- Brooklyn Musical Academy, 371  
 Brooklyn Navy Yard, 244, 299  
 Brooklyn Orphan Asylum, 326  
 Brooklyn Patriotic Relief Association  
 (later Home Trust of the Trustees  
 of Brooklyn; see also Brooklyn  
 War Fund Committee),  
 240–241, 268  
 Brooklyn Patriotic Subscription  
 Ball, 272, 274  
 Brooklyn Philharmonic Society  
 (1857), 17, 100, 107, 108, 126,  
 131, 136, 138, 149, 152, 154,  
 193–194, 201–205, 219, 258,  
 265–266, 287, 310, 319, 336,  
 349, 402, 414, 418,  
 420–421  
 beginnings, 154–155  
 financial situation difficulties and  
 struggles, 44, 162, 170, 186,  
 245, 310, 343, 353, 356, 358,  
 377–378, 394, 394,  
 402–403  
 floral promenade  
 concerts, 165–174, 214, 254,  
 347, 398, 414  
 seating issues (*see under* Brooklyn  
 Academy of Music)  
 Brooklyn Protestant Orphans  
 Asylum, 106, 120, 278  
 Brooklyn Public Library, 420  
 Brooklyn regiments in the Civil War  
 Thirteenth, 239, 243, 246  
 Fourteenth, 239, 241, 246, 249,  
 264, 269  
 Twenty-third, 270, 308, 336  
 Twenty-eighth, 244, 246  
 Forty-seventh, 247  
 Forty-eighth, 244–249, 292,  
 306, 414  
 Seventieth, 239  
 Ninetieth, 272, 307  
 Brooklyn Relief Guard, 241  
 Brooklyn Sacred Music Society, 108,  
 111, 130–137, 138,  
 140, 143–145, 159,  
 223, 341, 352,  
 402, 411  
 Brooklyn Savings Bank, 217  
 Brooklyn Society for the  
 Relief of Unemployed  
 Women, 18  
 Brooklyn Society for Friendless  
 Women and Children, 352  
 Brooklyn Soldiers' Home  
 Association, 273–274  
 Brooklyn Tabernacle Church, 121,  
 190, 326–327, 396  
 Brooklyn Temperance Union, 18,  
 106, 324–325  
 Brooklyn Trust Company, 310, 318,  
 329, 346, 359, 382, 384–387,  
 389, 394  
 Brooklyn War Fund Committee, 18,  
 108, 244, 247, 268–276,  
 279–282, 307, 312,  
 322–323  
 Brough, William F., 225  
 Brower, J. H., 126  
 Brown, H. R., 273  
 Brown, W. and J. and Company  
 (later Brown and Shipley), 71  
 Bryant, William Cullen, 116, 194,  
 249, 293  
 Bryant and Stratton Chain of Business  
 Schools, 249  
 Buckminster, Joseph Stevens, 38  
 Bullard, John, 416–417  
 Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, 307  
*Richelieu*, 307  
 Burckhardt, Jacob, 4  
 Burdell, Robert H., 241  
 Burnham, Lyman S., 242, 392  
 Burt, Benjamin, 411

## C

- Calcutta Botanic Garden, 76  
 Calyo, Hannibal, 200, 203  
*Campanilismo*, 21, 38,  
 189, 302  
 Camp Wyman, *see* Fort. Hamilton  
 Carnegie library, 420  
 Carpenter, Blanche, 271  
 Cary, William H., 114–115, 128, 267  
 Centemeri, Pietro, 242  
 Central Dutch Church, 120, 126  
 Chadwick, John White, Rev., 383  
 Chandler Brothers Music Store, 366  
 Channing, William Ellery, 113–115  
 Channing, William Henry, 115  
 Chapin, E. H., 221  
 Chapman, Conrad Wise, 380  
 Chapman, John Gadsby, 254  
 Chappel, Alonzo, 380  
 Charleston, 53, 63, 102,  
 200, 217, 338  
 Charter Oak, Hartford,  
 Connecticut, 293, 295  
 Chauncey, Daniel, 33, 385, 391  
 Chicago  
 Exposition, 394  
 fire, 327–328  
 sanitary fair, 295  
 Chiswick, estate of the Third Earl  
 of Burlington, 347  
 Chittenden, Simeon B., 148, 178,  
 181, 184, 191–192, 202, 205,  
 226–229, 235, 240, 250,  
 269–270, 274–275, 284, 286,  
 291, 295, 303, 311–312, 316,  
 317, 330–331, 337, 338, 388,  
 399, 406–407, 417  
*Christian Inquirer*, 112, 115  
 Christmas, Charles, 241  
 Church, Charles W., Judge, 121  
 Church of the Messiah, 110, 112, 113,  
 115, 116  
 Church of the Pilgrims, 130, 240  
 Church of the Saviour, 77, 92, 95,  
 110–111, 114, 116–120, 125,  
 129, 132, 133, 141, 159, 160,  
 175, 198, 233, 240, 241, 268,  
 271, 277, 281, 282, 325, 402,  
 408, 411  
 Samaritan Society, 106, 268, 325  
 Cincinnati, 103  
 sanitary fair, 277, 300, 320  
 suspension bridge, 322  
 Citizens' Reform Committee of One  
 Hundred (formerly Committee  
 of Seventy-five), 317  
 Civilizing ethos, 3, 6, 21, 43, 104,  
 139, 305, 316, 358, 401, 410  
 Civil War, 2–4, 7, 11, 12, 17, 44–45,  
 70, 94, 101, 105, 147, 153, 209,  
 215–217, 226, 238–252, 259,  
 298, 306, 343, 389, 419  
 and income tax, 329–331  
 Gettysburg Campaign, 270, 308  
*See also* Brooklyn Civil War relief  
 activities; Brooklyn regiments  
 Claffin, Horace B., 329–330  
 Clarke, William, 24  
 Clinton, Henry, 1, 126, 190, 277,  
 290, 295, 301, 308, 311, 318,  
 336, 419  
 Coan, William B., Colonel, 306  
 Cobb, Nathan, 79, 85  
 Coit, William, 320  
 Colson, Mme., 219  
 Coney Island, 45, 216, 383  
 Confederacy  
 CSS *Alabama*, 313  
 CSS *Florida*, 313  
 CSS *Tacony*, 313  
 Congdon, Charles, 276, 356  
 Congregational Singing, 119,  
 140–143  
 Congress Water, 10, 56, 132



Connolly, Richard, 317  
 Conterno, Luciano and his band, 368, 398  
 Coney Island, 45  
 Cooke, Jay, 389, 392  
 Cooper, Peter, 116, 146, 148, 317  
 Cooper Institute (later Cooper Union), 145, 249, 258, 317  
 Cornell, Peter, 241  
 Cotton trade, *see under* Atlantic World Connections  
 Cropper, Benson and Company, 23, 73  
 Croton Aqueduct, 123, 127  
 Currie, Dr. James, 28  
 Cyprus Hills Cemetery, 247, 308

## D

Darwin, Charles, 169  
 Decoration Day, 309  
 De Cordova, R. J., 271  
*The Soldier*, 271  
 De Ferussac, Alice Thorn, Countess, 242  
 DeGrauw, John, 168–169, 207, 259, 264, 308, 312, 336, 340, 346–347, 363, 381, 398, 414–416  
 Delmonico's, 93, 308, 316, 336, 338, 399  
 Democrats, 148, 178, 218, 302, 305, 386  
   Barnburners, 147  
   Copperheads, 218, 350  
   Hunkers, Hards, and Softs, 147–148, 350  
   National and Union wings, 238–239  
 Dewey, Orville, Rev., 113, 115, 122  
*The Old World and the New*, 113  
 Dickinson, Henry H., 243

Di Murska, Mme., soprano, 397  
 Dodsworth's band and orchestra, 127, 153, 226, 248, 264, 287, 299, 352  
 Donizetti, Gaetano, 186, 206  
*Linda*, 162  
*Lucia di Lammermoor*, 219  
*Lucrezia Borgia*, 200  
 Doubleday, Abner, 243  
 Douglass, Frederick, 183, 348, 349–350  
   Speech at the Academy of Music, 348–350  
 Dow, Josiah, 117  
 Draft 1863 and riots, 147, 253, 267–271, 283  
 Dred Scott Decision, 146  
 Dublin, Lord Mayor of, 398  
 Dudley, Charles, 323  
 Du Ponceau, Peter Stephen, 16  
 Duryea, Hiram, General, 139  
 Duryea family and maizena, 290

E

Edwards, Maurice, 417  
*How Music Grew in Brooklyn*, 417  
 Eidlitz, Leopold, 190–191, 198, 395  
 Eisfeld, Theodore, 162, 185, 186, 218, 265  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 293  
*Ode*, 293  
 Emison, Patricia, 15  
 Emmons, William “Pop”, 123  
 Erie Canal, 9, 12, 53–54, 60, 61, 64, 123  
 Erie Railroad Company, 328  
 European and Transatlantic cultural influence in America, 102–103, 338–339, 358, 371, 380, 401, 421  
*See also under* Roscoe

Everett, Edward, 152, 183,  
223, 293  
Excelsior Baseball Club, 328

## F

Falconer, John, 285  
Farley, Frederick Augustus, Rev.  
Dr., 114–117, 119, 141, 160,  
178, 240, 241, 249, 271, 274,  
277, 281, 282, 286, 287, 299,  
301, 307, 408–409  
Feltus, Reverend Henry James  
Ferri, Gaetano, 219  
Financial Panics  
Black Friday 1869, 306, 351,  
367, 387  
of 1828, 78  
of 1837, 69, 414  
of 1857, 162–164  
of 1873, 158, 306, 310, 340,  
376–396, 399, 402, 406  
Fish, Hamilton, 148  
Fisk, Elinor Fortiss, 411  
Florence, 7, 16, 17, 19–20, 21, 39, 45,  
77, 100, 101, 102, 223, 328,  
346, 410  
Foote, Andrew H., Commodore, 244  
Ford, Gordon L., 276, 312, 361,  
383, 399  
Fort Greene, 239, 309  
Fort Hamilton  
Camp Wyman, 245–247, 415  
Fort Pulaski, 248  
Fort Sumter, 148, 217, 224–225,  
239–243  
Foster, Fanny, 378  
Franklin, Benjamin, 114, 288, 300,  
380, 411  
Frothingham  
Henry R., 243

Isaac H., 119, 145, 237, 240, 241,  
243, 250, 317, 360, 417  
James H., 250, 299  
Fulton Ferry Company, 341

## G

Gair, Samuel, 80, 82  
Gazzaniga-Malaspina, Marietta, 186  
Gelston and Ladd silversmiths, 411  
George IV, King, 135  
Giesberg, Judith, 281  
Gignoux, Régis François, 173, 255,  
258, 285, 329, 343, 351, 379,  
381, 385  
*Among the Alps*, 345  
*Niagara*, 243  
Gilbert, Felix, 6  
Gilded Age, 4, 7, 44, 305, 323, 329,  
334, 342, 343, 348, 362, 376,  
377, 389, 391, 392, 398, 403,  
404, 415, 416  
and elitism, 303, 305, 326,  
328–344, 349, 355, 358–362,  
376, 401  
Goodhue, Henry, 84  
Goodhue, Jonathan, 24, 38, 50, 62,  
64, 69, 73, 74, 75, 78, 80–85, 88,  
90, 107, 111, 114, 115, 116, 389  
Goodhue, William, 84  
Gothic Hall, 126, 241, 418  
Gough, John B., 225  
Gould, Jay, 317, 384, 389–390  
Graham, Augustus, 114, 124, 125,  
127, 175  
Graham, John Bell, 223  
Graham Institute for the Relief of  
Respectable Aged and Indigent  
Females (also known as Graham  
Old Ladies Home), 152, 223,  
280

Grand Army of the Republic  
(G.A.R.), 309  
Grand Charity Ball, 398  
Grand Patriotic Subscription Ball, 272  
Grant, Ulysses S., General and U.S.  
President, 308, 336, 337  
Gray, William, 74–75  
Great American Museum, 213, 219,  
222, 225  
*See also* P. T. Barnum  
Greeley, Horace, 116  
Green-wood Cemetery, 129, 167,  
308, 409  
Greenwood, Francis W. P., Rev., of  
Boston, hymnal, 117  
Greenwood, John, Judge, 114, 120,  
125, 128, 130, 137, 159, 160,  
178–180, 188, 192–193, 202,  
225, 307, 311, 352, 424  
Griffith, Walter S., 312

## H

Habermas, Jürgen, 42  
Hale family, 115  
Francis Ann, *see under* Wyman,  
Frances Ann Hale  
Hall, George, 241  
Hamlin, Hannibal, 296  
Hancock, John, 52, 411  
Handel, George Frideric  
*Messiah*, 56, 105, 112, 121, 127,  
128, 131, 133, 136, 352, 396  
*Multitude of Angels*, 121  
*Samson*, 131  
Hanseatic League, 86, 87  
*Harper's Weekly*, 288, 371  
Harrison, Gabriel, 233–234, 416, 418  
Hart, Philip, Jr., 60, 61  
Hatch, Walter, 317, 424  
Harvard College, 54

Haydn, Joseph  
*Creation*, 105, 133, 136, 352  
Hinkley, Isabella, 224, 242, 250  
Hoffman, Richard, 356  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 293  
Home Life Insurance Company, 151,  
194, 250  
Hooley's Minstrels, 287  
Hooley's Opera House, 349  
Hopkins, Jerome  
*Samuel*, 403  
Horn, Charles Edward, 140  
*Christmas Bells, A tale of Holy  
Tide*, 127  
*Oratorio of the Remission of Sin*, 121  
How, James, 146, 241, 424  
Howland, George S., 139  
Hudson River School, 173, 343, 346  
Hull, A. Cooke, Dr., 137, 153, 178,  
179, 202, 225, 276, 310, 324,  
353, 354, 364, 416, 418, 424  
Husted, Seymour, 386, 391, 399, 424  
Husted, William H., 424  
Hutchinson, John B., 287

## I

Immigrants, 1, 7, 13–14, 95, 99,  
147, 189, 304, 313, 315–316,  
342, 418, 422  
Inskip, John S. Rev., 241  
Iranistan, P. T. Barnum estate, 136,  
190, 198  
Irish Potato Famine, 13  
Irving, Washington  
portrait of Roscoe, 29–31, 39, 109  
*Sketch-Book*, 29, 32, 109  
Italian Opera Company, 219,  
354, 362  
Italian Renaissance  
business practices (*see also onore*)

patronage practices, 4, 88  
*studia humanitatis*, 144  
 Italy, travel to, 17  
 Ives, Julius, 128  
 Ives' Music School, 128

## J

Jackson, Andrew, 88  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 114  
   his bust of Roscoe, 35–37  
   model for University of  
     Virginia, 37–38, 102  
 Jenks, Grenville Tudor, 351  
 St. John, Mrs. A. R., 319, 320, 405  
 John Trumbull Collection of American  
   Revolution Paintings, Yale  
   University, 382  
*Journal of Commerce*, 319, 389  
*Journal of Sacred Music*, 119  
 Journeys and Burnham, 392  
 Jullien, Louis Antoine, 362

## K

Kansas-Nebraska Act, 146  
 Keegan, John  
   *Winston Churchill*, 412  
 Kellogg, Clara Louise, 242, 372  
 Kimble, Fanny, 67  
 King, Matthew Peter  
   *Oratorio of the Intercession*, 131  
 King, William Starr, 116  
 Knaebel, S.  
   *Clipper Waltz*, 195  
 Kossuth, Lajos, 149, 296

## L

Ladies' Southern Family Relief  
   Association of Brooklyn, 307

Lady Washington Tea Party, 399–400  
 Lafayette, Marquis de, 33, 213,  
   295, 420  
 Lafever, Minard, 117, 144, 198  
 Lambert, Edward A., 194, 240,  
   250, 424  
 Lamson, Charles, 74  
 Lawrence, John W., 73  
 Lefranc, Carlo, 367  
 Legion of Honor Museum, San  
   Francisco, 411  
 Leonardo da Vinci, 346  
 Leonidas, 335, 346, 411  
 Leutze, Emmanuel  
   *George Washington Crossing the  
   Delaware*, 399  
 Liberalism, 43, 147  
 Lincoln, Abraham, 147, 177, 196,  
   218, 220, 238, 240, 256, 262,  
   267, 272–273, 293, 307, 309,  
   323, 350, 380  
   Monument in Grand Army  
     Plaza, 272–273  
 Lincoln, Mary Todd, 220  
 Lincoln-Douglas debates, 177  
 Lind, Jenny, 67, 136, 195  
 Linnaeus, Carl, 76  
 Liverpool  
   and American visitors, 22, 25–30  
   Athenaeum, 15, 20, 24–27, 26,  
     37–38, 102, 126  
   and Atlantic trade, 5, 17, 20, 22,  
     49–99  
   Botanical Garden, 20, 26, 37, 39,  
     169  
   Brown Library, 413  
   as cultural example, 3, 21, 29, 43,  
     100, 139, 143, 160  
   as the Florence of Northern  
     England, 21, 100, 410  
   Liverpool's Renaissance (*see under*  
     Renaissance)

- Liverpool (*cont.*)  
 Lyceum, 20, 26–27, 38, 214  
 Railway bridge, 321  
 Royal Liverpool Institution, 20, 31, 36–38, 102, 125, 160  
 Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society, 29, 139, 160  
*Stranger in Liverpool*, 26–28  
 Walker Art Gallery, 412  
 wet docks, 67, 71, 315
- Loewe, Carl, 127, 130, 131, 140  
*Seven Sleepers*, 127, 130, 131
- London Crystal Palace Exhibition 1851, 76, 214, 290, 295
- London Philharmonic Orchestra, 372
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth  
*Excelsior*, 293  
*Ode*, 293  
*Outre-Mer*, 109
- Longfellow, Samuel, Rev., 116, 126, 325
- Lopate, Carol, 320, 417, 420
- Lowber, A. H., 192
- Lowber, Edward J., 284–285, 345, 349, 351, 354, 416, 424
- Low family, 54, 96, 115, 147, 232, 260
- Abiel Abbott (A. A.), 54, 114, 117, 120, 128, 137, 151, 178–181, 186, 192, 194, 196, 197, 202, 235, 250, 275, 282, 284, 290, 295, 305, 311–312, 316, 317, 328, 330–331, 337, 384, 386, 407, 416, 424
- Josiah O., 54, 114, 305, 315, 331–332, 339, 384, 391, 407, 424
- Seth (father of A. A. and Josiah), 76, 117
- Seth (son of A. A.), 416
- Ludham, Robert, 334
- Luqueer, Nicholas, 241
- Luther, Martin, 370
- M**
- Mallory, William Henry., 93, 144, 271
- Mansion House, 245
- Maretzek, Max, 354, 362–363
- Marshall  
 Benjamin, 65, 73, 78  
 Charles H., 62, 68–70, 74, 78–79, 82–88, 90, 93, 95, 112, 115, 148, 273, 313, 389, 411  
 Charles H., Jr., 68, 70, 74, 403  
 Edward, Capt., 84  
 packet captains, 79, 85
- Martin, John T., 145, 332, 424
- Martineau, James, 115
- Marvin, Charles, 416, 424
- Massachusetts Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, 53
- Massachusetts Bay Colony, 51
- Massey, Marcellus, 237, 424
- Maury, James, American consul in Liverpool, 27
- Mauss, Marcel, 93
- Mayer, Henry  
*Suspension Bridge Grand March*, 320
- Mayflower*, 295
- McCue, Alexander, Judge, 184, 323, 386, 391, 424
- McCullough, David M., 253, 320, 417  
*Brooklyn ... And How it Got that Way*, 417
- McKenzie, John, 283, 326, 327, 424
- McKim, Mead, and White, architects, 88, 420

- McLaughlin, Hugh, Democratic Party boss, 386
- McLean, Samuel, 317, 424
- Mease, Edward, 25
- Medici family of Florence, 6, 19–20, 30, 39, 102–103, 413
- Lorenzo de' (the Magnificent), 15, 20, 28, 45
- Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici), 15, 28–29
- Melville, Herman
- Redburn*, 27, 214
- Memory and amnesia, 412
- Mendelssohn, 185
- Elijah*, 131, 136, 162
- Midsummer Night's Dream*, 355
- Psalm 42*, 130, 132
- Recollections of Scotland*, 218
- Wedding March*, 356
- Mendelssohn Society, 130, 133, 159, 352
- Mercadante, Saverio
- Il Giuramento*, 220, 227
- Merchant princes/patrons, 3, 4, 6, 14–16, 40, 45, 54, 94, 102, 114, 137, 151, 334, 346, 396, 408, 421
- See also* Brooklyn principal patrons and Italian Renaissance
- Meriam, Julia Ellen Powers, 411
- Mexican War, 135, 244
- Meyerbeer, Giacomo, 206, 350
- Schiller Marsch*, 206
- Milburn, William Henry, 182, 221
- Military Garden, 179
- Miller, William C. & Sons, 313
- Mills, Ethelbert S., 310, 318, 329, 337, 339, 346, 359–360, 381–391, 394, 400, 402, 404, 416, 424
- Milton, John, 123
- Minturn, Robert, 148
- Missouri Compromise, 151
- Molyneux, Charles, Earl of Sefton, 139
- Monument Association of the City of Brooklyn, 308
- Montague Street as arts hub, 157, 190–191, 209–210, 301, 318, 382, 412, 419–420
- Morris, George P., 124, 127
- Cantata of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 124
- The Croton Ode*, 123, 127
- Rock of the Pilgrims*, 124
- The Union Right or Wrong*, 242
- Mowry, James, 33
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 206
- Don Giovanni*, 350–351
- Requiem*, 130
- Symphony in D Major*, 355
- Municipal Union Society, 406, 407, 408, 421
- Murphey, Henry Cruise, Senator, 128
- N**
- National Geographic Society, 150
- Nelson, Henry Loomis, 371
- Networking and associational culture, 72–84, 328–329, 334–336, 347 (*see also* under Atlantic World Connections)
- Neukomm, Sigismund, 131, 140
- David and Goliath*, 131
- Newell, Willard M., 160, 243
- New England diaspora, 10–11, 51–54, 95–96
- New England Society of Brooklyn, 11, 100, 128, 191
- New England Society of New York, 11, 93, 99, 124, 128, 150, 242, 250, 407
- New Orleans, 93, 272, 297, 338

New York City (also Manhattan), **6, 20**  
 Academy of Music, **2, 153, 191, 204, 350**  
 Athenaeum, **102, 112**  
 Central Park, **187, 189, 309, 321**  
 Chamber of Commerce, **152, 312, 315, 321, 407**  
 Dock system, **315–316**  
 Draft Riots (1863), **147, 283**  
 Fire of 1835, **116**  
 uptown migration, **107, 189, 212**  
 New York Bridge Company, **319, 386, 392, 405**  
*New York Commercial Advertiser*, **388**  
 New York Corn Exchange, **395**  
*New York Evening Mail*, **390**  
*New York Evening Mirror*, **123**  
*New York Evening Post*, **390**  
*New York Herald*, **163, 198, 200, 217, 220**  
 New York Historical Society, **68, 102**  
 New York Life Insurance Company, **88, 194, 250, 404**  
 New York Paper Barrel Company, **404**  
 New York Philharmonic Society, **107, 121, 140, 160, 161, 186, 356, 367, 375**  
 New York Sacred Music Society, **107, 111, 120, 123, 125, 127–130, 135, 145, 154, 223**  
 New York Tabernacle Church, **121, 190**  
*New York Times*, **98, 132, 198, 200, 201, 204, 317, 352, 355**  
*New York World*, **395, 398**  
 New York Yacht Club, **341**  
 Newell, Willard M., **425**  
 Nickel Plating Company, **317, 332, 371, 384, 385, 388, 402**  
 Northall, Julia, **133, 135**

**O**

Old Dutch Church, **130**  
 Olmstead, Frederick Law, **83**  
*Onore* and reputation, **90**  
 Orangemen riots, **324**

**P**

Packer, Harriet Putnam, **144, 290, 291**  
 Packer Collegiate Institute for Girls, Brooklyn(1854), **18, 108, 144, 150, 153, 165, 258, 271, 290**  
 Packet shipping, **22–24, 64–85, 94, 108, 132, 313, 409**  
 competition from steamships, **84, 108, 132, 313**  
*See also* Atlantic World/Commerce and Black Ball Line  
 Palmieri, Matteo, **18–19**  
 Parepa-Rosa, Euphrosyne, **362**  
 Park Theater, Brooklyn, **212, 233, 416**  
 Patti, Adelina, **195**  
 Pattison, Elias, **60–61**  
 Paxton, Joseph, **295**  
 Pearson, Charles H., **135**  
 Perit, Peletiah, **84**  
 Perry, James H, Col., **244–247**  
 Philadelphia, **7, 20, 40, 102, 338, 407**  
 Academy of Music, **191, 220–221, 225–226, 262–263**  
 Athenaeum, **17, 43–44, 108, 125, 149, 151–152, 157, 158, 159, 165, 166, 172–173, 174, 178, 181, 202, 209, 201, 216, 229, 232, 251, 400**  
 Linnaean Society, **38**  
 Phillips, Miss, **219**  
 Phoenix Fire Insurance Company, **239**

Pierrepont family, 212, 289,  
382, 399  
Henry E., 96, 148, 152, 178, 232,  
237, 240, 250, 311–312, 318,  
334, 337, 340, 391, 417  
Hezekiah, 105  
Pierrepont House, 151  
Pierson, Henry R., 351, 363  
Plimpton, Edward, 353, 417, 427  
Plymouth Church, 130, 133, 135,  
147, 195, 202, 218,  
352, 371  
Pocock, John  
*Machiavellian Moment*, 16  
Poole, William, 243  
Porteous, Rev. Dr., 392  
Portland, Maine fire, 327  
Port of New York, 4, 12, 20, 50,  
63–65, 105  
dock system, 315–316  
Post, George B., 2, 421  
Power, Tyrone, 66, 67  
Priestley, Joseph, 24, 112–113, 123  
Promenade Concerts, 44, 153, 164,  
166–167, 169–172, 174, 201,  
214, 254, 259, 260, 263, 279,  
336, 347, 398, 414  
Prospect Park (on Prospect Hill), 158,  
187–190, 260, 308, 311, 318,  
322–323, 370, 386, 394, 400,  
409, 420  
Park Commissioners, 190, 321, 323  
Purton, Mathias, 76  
Putnam Phalanx of Hartford,  
Connecticut, 293, 400  
Putnam, Robert, 12  
Pyne and Harrison Opera Troupe, 154

**Q**  
Quincy, Josiah, 15, 38, 39

**R**  
Railroads  
City Railroad Company, 247, 363  
Delaware, Lackawanna and Western  
Line, 93  
Erie Railroad Company, 328  
Hudson River Railroad, 93  
New Haven and New London  
Railroad Company, 312  
Rarey, John Solomon, 221, 227,  
229, 231  
Rathbone, Hodgson and  
Company, 23, 24, 73, 85  
Rathbone, William, 23, 24, 85  
Rathbone, John, 23  
Raymond, Robert, 159, 159, 178,  
179, 183, 202, 241, 242, 243,  
352, 353, 363, 427  
Red Star Line, 68, 99  
Reform Acts of 1832, 81  
Rembrandt, 292  
Remsen family, 212  
Renaissances  
Brooklyn, 2–5, 9–10, 12–14, 16,  
21, 40–47, 49–51, 54, 62, 71,  
82, 94, 98, 99, 101–155, 159,  
164, 166–167, 183, 201, 208,  
209, 215, 217, 252, 259, 265,  
267, 276, 300–303, 305–306,  
310, 315, 317, 319, 329,  
333, 342, 344, 348, 353,  
368, 370, 376, 377, 382,  
389–391, 393, 401, 406, 408,  
409, 412–413, 415, 419,  
421–422  
Italian, 3–7, 15, 17–21, 25, 28, 32,  
36, 39–40, 43, 46, 49–50, 57,  
73, 79, 85–86, 88, 103, 103,  
110, 111, 113, 144, 151, 173,  
189, 213, 223, 334, 346, 380,  
395, 413



Renaissances (*cont.*)

- Liverpool, 5, 7, 15–21, 25, 36–40, 43, 49, 50, 62, 65, 71, 77, 98, 101–102, 139, 158, 169, 346  
parallel, 9–47, 49  
patronage (*see under* Merchant princes/patrons)
- Republican Party, 147, 178, 196, 218, 238, 275, 302, 312, 349
- Revolutionary War, 143, 195, 295, 308, 400, 413
- Richards, William M., 192
- Richardson, Samuel and Thomas, 51
- Ridgewood, New York, 187, 188, 188
- Rodman, M. T., Deputy Treasurer of Brooklyn, 386
- Roebing, John A., 319–320, 405
- Roebing, Washington, 320, 405
- Romberg, Andrew, 130  
*Song of the Bell*, 133
- Roscoea* (plant), 76
- Roscoe* (ship), 23, 40
- Roscoe, Henry, 32, 76, 115, 413
- Roscoe, William (1753–1831)  
Abolitionist, 30, 32  
correspondence, 22  
hospitality, 22, 29–32, 75  
influence in America, 15–16, 19–40, 45, 49–50, 62, 72–73, 100, 101–102, 114, 413  
and Liverpool's Renaissance, 16–21, 25, 37, 40, 43, 49, 50, 62, 65, 71, 77, 100, 101–102, 139, 169, 346  
as the Lorenzo de' Medici of Liverpool, 20, 31, 410  
and prison reform, 33  
Medici biographies, 15, 19, 28, 33, 36–37, 40, 413  
Unitarian dissenter, 75, 112–113
- Rossini, Gioacchino, 350  
*Cinderella*, 225

*Moses in Egypt*, 224*William Tell*, 206

- Rothschilds, 71, 78
- Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 135
- Russell and Company (Canton), 76, 77
- Russell, John, 139
- Ryan, J. J., 243
- Ryan, Mary, 42

## S

- Sacred Music, 53, 55, 56, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 119–125, 127, 129–138, 140–143, 145, 154, 159, 166, 222, 223, 229, 233, 265, 341, 352, 396, 402, 411
- Sage, Mrs. Henry, 83, 400
- Samaritan Society, *see* Church of the Saviour
- Sand, Charles H., 192, 425
- Sands, Nathaniel, 317
- Sanger, Henry, 317, 349, 425
- Schenck, Jonathan, 241
- Schreiber, Louis, 162, 186
- Schubert, Franz, 185  
*Ave Maria*, 162
- Second Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, 126, 325, 384
- Sewall, Henry, 51, 52, 117
- Seward, William H., 148, 196, 296
- Shakespeare, William, 122, 123, 151, 226, 236, 248, 265, 296
- Sheldon, Henry K., 243, 265, 425
- Sherwell, Robert, 175
- Sigourney, Lydia Huntley, 293  
*Fall of the Charter Oak at Hartford, Connecticut*, 293
- Silliman, Benjamin, 25, 27–29, 149
- Skinner, David, Dr., 412, 419

- Sloan, Samuel, 95, 96, 137, 150, 151, 153, 180, 186, 192, 235, 237, 241, 243, 250, 315, 425
- Smith, Bryan H., 425
- Smith, Cyrus P., 128, 145, 149
- Society for the Relief of Unemployed Women, 18
- Sophr, Louis, 185  
*The Last Judgment*, 140  
*Symphony No. 4 in F major*, 363
- Sozzini, Lelio, 113
- Sparks, Jared, 111
- Spears, Charles, 134
- Sprague, Courtland, 386–387
- Standish, Miles, 295
- Staples, Nahor, 325
- Steamships, *see under* Packet shipping
- Stephenson, George S., 240, 243, 312, 425
- Stiles, Henry R., 5, 50, 106, 111, 138, 144, 165, 166, 267, 269, 270, 272, 273, 275, 278, 335, 336, 415, 416, 417, 418  
*History of the City of Brooklyn*, 5, 50, 106, 165, 267, 275, 335, 415
- Storrs, Richard Salter, Rev. Dr., 130, 178, 240, 249, 269, 292, 307
- Stranahan, Mrs. James S. T., 145, 149, 168, 170, 181, 187, 194, 196, 241, 250, 260, 268, 279, 281, 307, 308, 316, 322, 323, 399, 406, 407, 425  
*Stranger in Liverpool*, 26, 27, 28
- Strickland, William, 248, 274
- Stringham, Silas, Commodore, 245
- Strong, E., Mrs., 124
- Stuart, Gilbert, 247, 290, 382
- Stuyvesant Heights, 318, 403
- Subscription Assembly balls, 340–342, 348
- Susini, Agostino, 242
- Swallowtail Line, 23, 68
- Syrett, Harold Coffin, 317, 386, 417  
*The City of Brooklyn, 1865–1898, a Political History*, 317, 386, 417
- T
- Talmage, Thomas Dewitt, Rev. Dr., 327, 391, 396
- Tammany Hall, 148, 317, 371, 374, 377, 385, 402, 414
- Tappan, Lewis, 90
- Taylor, Zachery, President, 135
- Taylor Mansion, 290, 291, 295
- Tecumseh, Chief, 296
- Temperance Movement, 324
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 335  
*Charge of the Light Brigade*, 336
- Thacker, George, 114
- Thomas, George F., Jr., 425
- Thomas, Theodore, 196, 357, 361, 365, 375, 397, 420
- Thompson, Jeremiah, 24, 33, 51, 62, 65–66, 72, 73, 75, 78, 89
- Tilton, Theodore, 392
- Tocqueville, Alexis de, 332  
*Democracy in America*, 332
- Tom Thumb, 67, 213
- Tontine's Coffee House, 25
- Toomey, G. F., 192
- Townsend, Charles H., 160, 192, 242, 243, 276, 425
- Trollope, Fanny, 102–103  
*Manners of the Americans*, 102, 103
- Troy, NY  
Handel and Haydn Society, 55  
sidecut to Erie Canal, 9, 12, 53, 60, 61

Troy, NY (*cont.*)

- Troy Bathing House and  
Washington Garden, 9, 18,  
43–44, 51, 56–61, 96, 106,  
132, 233, 301, 335, 410, 422
- Troy Budget*, 10, 55, 56, 58–60,  
109, 110, 142
- Troy Sentinel*, 58
- Troy Towboat Company, 12,  
59–62, 66, 79, 96, 110, 402

## Twain, Mark (Samuel Clemens), 323

- The Gilded Age: A Tale of  
Today*, 323

Tweed, William “Boss”, 148,  
316–319, 371, 384, 392,  
402, 405

## U

- Ulrich, Ferdinand, 360
- Underground Railroad, 146
- Underwood, Jacob, 139
- Union Club, New York, 335
- Unitarianism and Unitarians
  - in America, 11, 24, 75, 102,  
110–116, 282
  - in Brooklyn, 76, 77, 96, 97, 110,  
116–120, 124, 159, 194, 267,  
281, 325, 331
  - in commerce, 23, 114–115
  - in Liverpool, 23, 75, 115
  - See also* Church of the Saviour;  
Brooklyn
- US Sanitary Commission, 11,  
215–216, 266–267, 273,  
277–282, 288, 298, 301,  
304, 307

## V

- Vail, Henry F., 243
- Van Anden, Isaac, 107, 147, 148,  
204, 229

- Van Buren, Martin, 75
- Vandyke, A. B., 243
- Van Schendel, Petrus, 393  
*Annunciation*, 393
- Vaux, Calvert, 83, 189, 321
- Verdi, Giuseppe, 186, 206, 350  
*Ernani*, 362  
*La Traviata*, 227
- Victoria, Queen, 295, 337
- Viele, Egbert, 189

## W

- Wallack’s Theater and troupe, 237,  
378
- War of 1812, 20, 62, 63
- War of Independence (*see* American  
Revolution)
- Ward, Samuel, 136
- Ward, Thomas Wren, 24, 38, 54, 69,  
72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 81,  
82, 83, 87, 88, 90, 115,  
136, 389
- Wardian cases, 169, 261
- Warner, Charles Dudley, 323
- Washington, George, 53, 224,  
250–251, 279, 290, 295, 299,  
308, 382, 399, 413  
portraits of, 290, 382
- Washington, Martha, 295, 399
- Waterlow, Sydney H., 96
- Waugh, Samuel Bell, 221
- Weber, Carl Maria von, 162, 206, 356  
*Der Freischütz*, 206, 356
- Webster, Daniel, 150
- Webster, Noah, 15, 75
- Weeksville, 147
- Weir, Edward A., 418–419
- Wheaton, Henry, 102, 113
- Whig Party, 147, 148, 178, 204
- Whitehouse, Edward, 160, 179,  
243, 427

- White, Alexander Moss, 95, 148,  
232, 241, 318, 326,  
391, 427
- White, Alfred Tredway, 44, 325
- White, Theodore, 114
- Whitman, Walt, 107
- Whittaker, John Bernard, 254,  
255, 380
- Williamsburgh, annexed to Brooklyn  
(1854), 108, 151, 222
- Willits, A. A., 269
- Wilmarth, Samuel E., 380
- Wilson, Matthew, 256, 257, 345,  
372, 411
- Windship, George B., 225
- Woburn, Massachusetts, 51, 52, 402
- Woman's Relief Association of the City  
of Brooklyn, 108, 268, 277–282,  
299, 307
- Wood, Fernando, 238
- Woodhull, Albert, 96
- Woodward, Orpheus S., General, 336
- Worthington, Henry R., 243, 315,  
427
- Wright, Isaac, 65, 73, 78
- Wright, Rufus, 380
- Wyman, Benjamin III  
(1706–1774), 52
- Wyman, Benjamin IV (1767–  
1836), 52
- Wyman, Benjamin, music professor  
(1792–1863), 10, 53, 119, 242  
*Cantata of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 124  
*Daniel*, 131, 150–151
- Wyman, Benjamin Franklin (1832–  
1907), 61, 119, 270, 300,  
307, 411
- Wyman, Cecil (1847–1895), 129,  
404, 411
- Wyman, Cecilia Augusta Warren  
(d. 1847), 55, 129, 409  
*Sweet Poetry*, 124
- Wyman family, early history, 51–52,  
61, 403  
brothers Francis and John from  
Westmill, Herfordshire, 51–52
- Wyman, Frances Ann Hale  
(1825–1901), 129, 132, 207,  
312, 326, 371, 411
- Wyman, Hannah Boynton  
(b. 1791), 52
- Wyman, Helen Cobb  
(c. 1838–1911), 91, 116, 145,  
153, 271, 411
- Wyman, Ida Frances (b. 1851 or  
1852), 132, 256, 371, 411–412
- Wyman, Justus (1798–1855), 10,  
52–53, 119, 148, 412
- Wyman, Justus E., 119
- Wyman, Leon Hale.  
(c. 1856–1920), 93, 132, 411
- Wyman, Luther Boynton  
(1804–1879), 324, 362,  
392, 427  
and Black Ball Line, 49, 54, 71, 74,  
79, 81, 88, 91, 95–100, 106,  
108, 132, 138, 149–150, 153,  
164, 313, 332, 421  
and Brooklyn Academy of  
Music, 10, 153, 178–184,  
192–193, 195–198, 202–203,  
224–225, 226–233, 349,  
395–396, 400, 402,  
409, 413  
and Church of the Messiah, 13, 112,  
114, 119–120, 129, 141  
and Church of the Saviour, 129  
and Civil War relief  
efforts, 240–249, 269,  
272–274, 286–287, 292–295,  
299–300, 307–308, 371,  
402, 410  
as exemplar, 4, 12, 40, 45, 109,  
150, 306, 377

Wyman, Luther Boynton (1804–1879) (*cont.*)  
 decline and death, 52, 306, 317–318, 330, 377, 400, 402–404, 408–411, 422  
 early years, 10, 12, 51–62, 104, 150, 402  
 and Forty-Eighth Regiment of New York Volunteers, 244–249, 292, 306, 415  
 Forgotten legacy, 408–418  
 founder and President Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, 10, 100, 160, 161, 186, 193, 195, 203, 232, 242–243, 251, 266, 347, 353–376, 396, 400–403, 409, 413–414, 416–418  
 as George Washington comparison, 53, 286, 379, 399–400  
 member of various associations and boards, 13, 18, 45, 108, 152–153, 166, 188, 194, 250, 264, 312, 316, 325, 326, 334, 341, 379, 399, 401, 405, 408  
 and New York New England Society, 150, 242, 292, 401  
 and Nickel Plating Company scandal, 317–318, 332, 384, 402

“Papa” of Brooklyn, 10, 63, 329, 351, 394, 396, 410  
 portrait by Matthew Wilson, vii, ix, 256–257, 345, 371, 411  
 President, Brooklyn Sacred Music Society, 129, 132–133, 137, 145, 159, 352  
 President, New York Sacred Music Society, 111, 123, 127, 129  
 and Troy Bathing House (*see under* Troy)  
 and Troy Towboat Company (*see under* Troy)  
 wealth, 332–334, 336  
 Wyman, Luther Boynton, Jr. (c. 1843–1871), 9, 129, 153, 257, 270, 307, 345, 402, 409  
 Wyman, Madelon, 411  
 Wyman Tankard, 52, 411

## Y

Yale College, 128  
 Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), 225, 348–349

## Z

Zundel, John, 120, 133, 135