

“Inside of the Family Circle”:

Irish and African American Interracial Marriage in New York City’s Eighth Ward, 1870

Virginia Ferris¹

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
23	McLean, Susan	28	f	W	Domestic			100	Ireland	/	/									1
24	Wilson, Mary	39	f	B	Laundress			200	New York											2
	— Sarah	19	f	B	at home				New York											3
	— Charles	17	m	B	Master saloon				New York											4
	— Amelia	10	f	B					New York					/	/	/				5
25	Brown, William	42	m	B	Labourer			200	Virginia											6
	— John	21	m	B	Steward				Virginia											7
	— Susan	31	f	B	Laundress				New York											8
	— Susan	13	f	B					New York					/						9
26	Smith, William	45	m	B	Public Writor			300	Delaware											10
	— Margaret	32	f	W	Keeping house				Ireland	/	/		/	/						11
	— Mary A.	12	f	B					New York					/	/					12
	— Catherine	8	f	B					New York					/	/					13
	— Alice	5	f	B					New York					/						14
	— George	1	f	B					New York											15
	— William	7	m	W					New York											16
27	Thomas, Martha	40	f	W	Laundress			200	Ireland	/	/									17
	— George	17	m	W	Writor in saloon				New York											18
	— Mary	12	f	W					New York					/						19
28	Nelson, Andrew	26	m	B	Porter in store			100	Virginia											20
	— Anthony	4	m	W					New York					/						21
	— Bullard, Sarah	36	f	B	Laundress				Ireland	/	/		/	/						22
29	Subis, Charles	32	m	B	Porter in store			500	Delaware											23
	— Catherine	30	f	W	Laundress				England	/	/		/	/						24
30	Williams, Ellen	35	f	W	Steamboat Cook			200	Virginia											25
	— Taylor, Walter	42	m	W	Porter in store				New York											26
	— Tydock, Page	30	m	W	Porter in store				New York											27
31	Studer, John	38	m	W	Brick Driver			300	New York											28
	— Elizabeth	28	f	W	Keeping house				New Jersey											29
32	Brown, Edaminia	45	f	B	Laundress			100	Virginia					/	/					30
	— Lyons, Jennie	31	f	W	Dress Maker				New York											31
	— Peterson, Albert	7	m	B					New York											32

This census page is taken from the 1870 Census (1st Enumeration), New York County, Ward 8, 4th E.D., page 4. Note column 6 and the entries W, B, and M for race.

The handwritten designations "white," "black," and "mulatto" on the 1870 United States Federal Census schedule reveal the racial architecture of nineteenth-century American society. Following the patterns of three letters — W, B, and M — in census records for Manhattan's Eighth Ward, one begins to map a story that complicates widely accepted accounts of relations between Irish and African Americans in New York City. Popular representations at the time bound these two peoples in relationships defined either through conflict and violence or through illicit forms of entertainment and sexuality, anchoring the Irish and African American encounter as a central motif in enduring images of the urban slum and its problem underclass.

The census for Manhattan's Eighth Ward — an area that was perceived, according to contemporary accounts, as a predominantly African American neighborhood — reveals a community made up of native-born Americans, both black and white, freed slaves, and a diverse population of immigrants from Europe, Africa, Egypt, and the West Indies. Among these are Irish and African American residents living together as neighbors and, in some cases, as families. This close proximity, and a unique and significant pattern of intermarriage between immigrant Irish women and African American men within the Eighth Ward in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and the Draft Riots, indicates the possibility of a much greater level of interracial stability and intimacy than has been presumed in discourses about Irish and black relations during this period in New York and, indeed, in the United States.²

In the historical literature, a narrative that largely privileges evidence of conflict between men has created a simplified picture of interracial relations, one that overlooks the experience of women, and more broadly dismisses the ways in which gender and class informed the experiences of race as it was constructed on many different social levels. Indeed, understandings of both Irish *and* African American history are left significantly incomplete without deeper exploration of Irish and African American residential patterns and intermarriage, cooperation, and intimacy.

Few have looked at the full context and significance of the Irish and African American relationship in nineteenth-century New York. Graham Hodges pointed to the presence in 1860 of eleven interracial couples living in the predominantly Irish neighborhood of the Sixth Ward, home of the notorious Five Points.³ Of

these eleven couples, six were unions between Irish wives and black husbands.⁴ According to Hodges, these couples “thrived” in the antebellum Sixth Ward, and while this evidence is “not significant numerically,” it in fact holds “great symbolic importance,” as “Irish men and women, from a people not known for intermarriage, wedded African Americans and defied the racist conventions of their times to build genuine relationships and at times families.”⁵ In 1870, eighty Irish-African American families lived in New York City’s Eighth Ward, thirty of whom were concentrated in its Fourth Election District (4th E.D.).⁶ The sheer number of mixed race couples in the Eighth Ward, just seven years after the Draft Riots, and during a period of increasing scrutiny of interracial social and sexual “amalgamation,” suggests a significantly different direction that some Irish immigrants, particularly women, may have taken in their encounter with African Americans in New York.

Without question, many Irish immigrants did participate in the prevailing racial ideology of white supremacy in the nineteenth century and contributed to the oppression of African Americans in multiple ways, through discrimination and at times violence.⁷ However, many other Irish immigrants lived peacefully with African Americans, and in the case of dozens of Irish women in New York City’s Eighth Ward, forged homes and families with their black neighbors. Records of interracial families like those living in the Eighth Ward reveal communities of Irish and African Americans that were based on integration and intimacy, rather than exclusion and ethnically defensive violence.



Writing in the 1930s, Leo Hirsch noted that by 1860 Manhattan’s African American population — which numbered 12,574 — was “fairly even throughout the city,” with the exception of higher numbers in the Fifth and Eighth Wards.⁸ Manhattan’s Eighth Ward stretched east from the waterfront of the Hudson River to Broadway, bordered on the south by Canal Street and on the north by Houston Street. It included the neighborhoods that are currently known as SoHo and the southern-most regions of Greenwich Village. Working-class Irish immigrants and African Americans — the “ever encroaching poorer classes” — had begun to move to the Eighth Ward in the 1850s, “starting at the southeastern edge of the Village,” introducing “the first major change in the district.”⁹ Significantly, as late

as 1875 the Eighth Ward remained home for 5,313 natives of Ireland (2.7% of Manhattan's entire Irish-born but 16% of the Eighth ward's total population).¹⁰ The black population in the Eighth Ward increased gradually into the 1880s (when the Village became known as "Little Africa"), moving north toward Washington Square, where many black and Irish residents worked as servants and waiters in the homes and businesses of wealthy New Yorkers.¹¹

Census data for all interracial Irish-African American families living in the Eighth Ward in 1870 accounts for 273 individuals in 80 households. Thirty of these households (126 individuals) were concentrated in the 4th E.D. — which lay just south of Spring Street, moving toward Canal Street, and between Sullivan and Wooster Streets — while the remaining fifty (147 individuals) were scattered throughout Election Districts 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, and 23. While the census taker did not list residents' relationship to one another, families could be identified in apartments where black or mulatto men lived with Irish-born women and shared the same last name, usually with children bearing the same name. Households of single Irish mothers with mulatto children were also classified as a family and as evidence of interracial unions.¹²

An excess population of both black males and Irish females may have contributed to the pattern of interracial unions in the 4th E.D. There are significantly more Irish-born women (378) than Irish-born men (243); although gender is balanced for African Americans, if broken down by the census designations "B" and "M," then black men (219) outnumber black women (180). Of the 30 interracial families living in this part of New York City's Eighth Ward, eighteen were raising predominantly mulatto children, giving the impression of mature Irish-African American relationships.¹³

As two of the poorest groups in New York at this time, recent Irish immigrants and free blacks made their homes in some of the shabbiest neighborhoods of the city. While the close proximity of Irish and black residents could breed conflict, it was in these working class, racially integrated communities that greater tolerance and harmony could also be found, and indeed where interracial marriages often took place.¹⁴ Leslie Harris pointed out that the predominantly Irish and African American neighborhood of the Five Points was "saved from destruction [during the Draft Riots of 1863] through interracial cooperation."¹⁵ In his examination of the Sixth Ward, Hodges noted that, among working class Irish and black neighbors, "shared experiences surmounted racial differences and people were

identified more by work than ethnicity.”¹⁶ According to Hodges’ interpretation of these relationships, Irish and African American residents of the Eighth Ward, who lived and worked together as neighbors, roommates, and at times families, may have experienced “race” in a far different way than commonly described by many contemporary historians.

Seneca Village presents another example. A group of largely black New Yorkers formed a settlement in the 1820s, shortly preceding universal emancipation in New York State in 1827, on an undeveloped section north of the city that would later become Central Park.¹⁷ The majority of Seneca Village residents were African Americans, representing approximately two-thirds of the community, while the rest were mostly Irish immigrants.¹⁸ These black and immigrant settlers were mainly poor laborers, but they owned the plots of land where they built homes and constructed a self-made community with one school, three churches, and five cemeteries over the course of the village’s history.¹⁹ Columbia University’s pioneering research on the area found that “this diverse community lived in peace, attending the All Angels’ [Episcopal] Church together and sharing the services of one [Irish] midwife,” with “at least one account of an interracial marriage” between black and white immigrant residents.²⁰

Despite such cooperative, peaceful communities that developed between Irish and black residents in the poorer sections of nineteenth-century Manhattan, popular images of these neighborhoods and their inhabitants painted a different picture. Charles Dickens’ famous account of the Five Points in his *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) serves as the source for much of the sensationalist imagery and motifs exhausted in future representations of the urban slum. Of the Five Points, Dickens wrote, “all that is loathsome, drooping, and decayed is here.”²¹ He described the slum as a “world of vice and misery” in which the Irish lived in close quarters with African American and mulatto residents of “ruined houses” and “hideous tenements.”²² Dickens’ portrait included many “cramped hutches full of sleeping negroes” with “heaps of negro women” hidden under piles of rags on the floor, portraying them as objects within the physical landscape of the slum.²³ Similarly, the missionary Benjamin Barlow encountered an Irish-African American couple in his visit to the Five Points in 1861: “In a corner of the room, from under ‘a long pile of rags ... an Irish woman lifts her tangled mop of a head ... “Look here, gentlemen, look at this little codfish”; and with this she lifts out from beneath the rags a diminutive mulatto child of a few weeks old,

to the great delight of Sambo, who reveals all his ivory."²⁴ Barlow lamented the fate of the child, who would have "rum its first medicine, theft its first lesson, a prison its first house, and the Potter's Field its final resting place."²⁵ Through popular representations such as these, Irish and African American identities were constructed in a marginal cultural space outside the realm of mainstream white society.

The domestic world of poor Irish immigrants and African Americans was written into the discourse of reformers and travel writers as a central concern, or source of entertainment, in neighborhoods like the Five Points. Nineteenth-century depictions of the urban slum by writers such as Dickens and George Foster contributed to a "sunshine and shadows" narrative that sensationalized the urban slum in popular culture and described its physical and moral decay in contrast to the glamour and progress of wealthier districts. Writers fixated on the intermingling of Irish and African Americans in New York as an example of the corruption and degradation of modern urban life. Popular images of social and sexual contact between Irish and African Americans reflected the belief that "amalgamation reinforced the degeneracy of the Irish... [and] threatened blacks' attempts to achieve moral equality."²⁶ Such depictions served as a foil against which the rest of respectable white society defined itself.

In 1855, Five Points was one of several neighborhoods in Manhattan where "the poorest and most dissolute people" lived in overcrowded tenements.²⁷ The *New York Daily Times* argued that these "ulcer-spots" developed through a process of physical and moral corruption that originated in the living conditions of the poor. One of the other named "ulcer-spots" of the city was located on Laurens Street, along what was known as "Rotten Row," where many of the Irish and African American families of the Eighth Ward resided. In 1857 No. 40 Laurens Street was described as "a most disgusting den; the stinking odor which arises from the shockingly filthy yards is almost stifling."²⁸ Another report from this period declared the buildings on Laurens Street were the "worse specimens of tenant houses ... to be found in the City of New-York."²⁹ The buildings featured decayed wood, dark stairwells on the verge of collapse, and plaster falling from the walls in fourteen of the houses along Laurens Street. No. 38 Laurens Street, where five Irish-African American families lived in 1870,³⁰ was distinguished in the report from its neighbors; their dwellings are said to be "in very bad order, but after having been through 'Rotten-row' they seemed quite respectable."³¹

The reporter noted that most of the other buildings along Laurens Street were in similar condition. Accounts such as this reflect popular perceptions of the Eighth Ward, and particularly “Rotten Row,” as a squalid tenement district similar to descriptions of the Five Points.

Representations of the conditions of both the Five Points and Rotten Row especially focused on the mixing of blacks and whites. The *New York Daily Times* described the apparent ease with which white and black residents existed together along Laurens Street in 1856, where “there were those who seemed living in comparative comfort, who had established no offensive distinction between the white race and the black,” and reported with a note of surprise that many of these mixed-race couples were “apparently happy.”³² The article gives a detailed account of No. 25 Laurens Street, a building that is noted for being a residence where “the largest number of white and black men and women were found living together as husband and wife.”³³ At least two Irish and African American families, Francis and Mary Thomas, and George and Margaret Morris, lived in this building in 1870.³⁴ George Morris was a black caterer from Virginia, with a personal estate value listed at \$2,000 on the census, significantly more than most other Irish-black families, who averaged \$200 per household. He lived with his Irish wife, Margaret, their two daughters, Mary and Margaret, and their twenty-year-old son William, who was a bookkeeper. The Morrises represent a clear departure from the popular understanding of the area as a den of poverty, crime, and disease. Their example demonstrates the possibility for interracial families to achieve a level of stability that allowed them to raise their children and accumulate wealth during a period when these arrangements were far from accepted.

However, the *Times* account in 1856 privileged a more conventional narrative of such “amalgamation.” One of the unnamed interracial families at No. 25 Laurens Street is described as “a large athletic negro, holding a mulatto child, while his wife, a sickly-looking white woman, was feeding another of their offspring in another part of the room. The children seemed healthy and strong, and their black father and white mother took equal pride in showing them to advantage.”³⁵ This depiction of the physical appearance of the family fits broader cultural discourses concerning the stability and survivability of interracial unions. While it is noted that the African American father and “mulatto” children appear “healthy and strong,” the remark upon the “sickly-looking” white mother emerges from a common presumption that white women in interracial marriages



"WOULD YOU MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER TO A NIGGER?"
 Rev. Dr. CHASE (to the Bride). "Do you promise to love, honor, and obey—?"
 THE BRIDE. "Yes? If"

This July 11, 1868 Harper's Weekly illustration challenging the nomination of Samuel Chase (depicted as the preacher) as the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party in 1868 represents the complex political, racial, and ethnic prejudices of the nation. Chase was an abolitionist who supported suffrage for black males. Cartoonist Thomas Nast fuels popular fears with the suggestion that civil rights for African Americans would inevitably lead to miscegenation. He clearly draws the Irish into the controversy by interpreting the bride with the simian features characteristic of all his Irish characters. The cartoon is entitled, "Would You Marry Your Daughter to a Nigger?" Provided courtesy HarpWeek.

were of the worst class, both physically and morally. In the popular image of these families, and indeed in broader discourses surrounding "amalgamation" in newspaper accounts, is also the presence of children of different shades of skin color within the same household. In another apartment in No. 25 Laurens Street, a black woman is described as having "four children of various shades," and it appears that "the black, and two of the mulatto children seemed healthy, but the one nearly white was feeble and idiotic."³⁶ Here again, the presence of whiter

skin, either as the parent or as a “feeble and idiotic” child of mixed black and white parentage, is depicted as a degraded state of physical or mental well-being.

Such deeply held views — that interracial intimacy, or amalgamation, was strictly unnatural and morally reprehensible — were shared across the vast political divide of Civil War-era New York, positioning the Irish and African American families of the Eighth Ward as key participants in what was seen as a major social problem of the times.³⁷ Importantly, popular attitudes articulated in contemporary New York newspapers reflected only the perceptions of the portion of society who read them, and do not indicate how those attitudes may have impacted the Irish immigrant women living in the Eighth Ward, many of whom could not read or write.³⁸ As Kevin Kenny pointed out, the popularization of “racial imagery and language” to describe the Irish in nineteenth-century America cannot provide insight into the nature of Irish immigrants’ experience of race or perception of themselves, as many of these immigrants did not view or engage with these images.³⁹ The number of interracial marriages among immigrant Irish women in the Eighth Ward suggests that the circulation of negative images did not stand as a deterrent in marrying across the color line.



As a part of a diverse immigrant population, the complexity of Irish women’s immigration to America must also be taken into account. Kerby Miller, David Doyle, and Patricia Kelleher concluded that “no single model or interpretation can apply to all female emigrants from Ireland,” arguing that “the ultimate determinants of gender roles and relationships are sexual divisions of labor, which in turn vary greatly among different socio-economic classes and cultures.”⁴⁰ Hasia Diner, Janet Nolan, and Margaret Lynch-Brennan have made crucial contributions to a growing literature on the history of Irish women in America, and demonstrate how Irish women’s experiences of immigration differed from men’s. Nevertheless, the ramifications of exogamous marriage, especially those with racial implications, have been almost completely left out of Irish-American historiography.

Martha Hodes acknowledged that “the few white women who married black men in the nineteenth-century North tended to be poor — and, for that matter, Irish,” and, by virtue of their gender and class, have been left in the margins of

history.⁴¹ Timothy Meagher concurred that Irish women were more likely to wed African American men than other white women, both native-born and immigrant.⁴² John Kuo Wei Tchen explored Irish-Chinese intermarriage in nineteenth-century New York, and argued that "being a working-class Irish woman was about the lowest position one could hold," and therefore a single Irish woman could "gain social standing" in nineteenth-century American society through marriage, even if it were to an ethnic "other."⁴³ Many questions remain regarding these interracial families and the ways in which contemporary ideologies shaped their experiences.

Hodes also emphasized that "the scrutiny of day-to-day lives demonstrates not only the mutability of race but also, and with equal force, the abiding power of race in local settings. Neither malleability nor instability, then, necessarily diminishes the potency of race to circumscribe people's daily lives."⁴⁴ This understanding of race as part of ongoing social interactions on a quotidian, domestic level is crucial. It is in this respect that both Irish and African American histories must be interrogated. Through this conceptual framework, the interracial families of the Eighth Ward provide evidence of the nuanced relationships that developed between Irish and African Americans in nineteenth-century New York emerging from regular, local encounters in a diverse racial and ethnic setting.

During the violence and chaos of the 1863 Draft Riots, how did these relationships operate? An 1869 *New York Times* article reporting on the condition of blacks in New York attributed the violence exclusively to Irish immigrants, describing the events of July 1863 as a "riotous uprising of the Irish against the colored people at the time of the draft."⁴⁵ The writer asserted that the Irish were to blame for a "gradual emigration" of the black population in New York, as African Americans fled the city "for fear of future ill-treatment."⁴⁶ George Templeton Strong wrote that "the atrocities these Celtic devils perpetuated can hardly be paralleled in the history of human cruelty," and described the "low Irish women" of the city as "stalwart young vixens and withered old hags... all cursing the 'bloody draft' and egging on their men to mischief."⁴⁷ While many Irish immigrants, men and women alike, were involved in these infamous days of racial violence, they were not alone in their actions, nor are they representative. Recent research in the indictment records of the New York County District Attorney showed that while the Irish constituted the majority of the rioters, they were joined by German, Belgian, British, and Canadian immigrants, in proportions reflecting the ethnic makeup of working-class white immigrants in New York.⁴⁸

Significantly, *Harper's Weekly* — known for its nativist, anti-Irish sentiment — printed an editorial in defense of the Irish who resisted the violence of the riots, acknowledging examples of Irish efforts to keep the peace:

It must be remembered ... that in many wards of the city, the Irish were during the late riot staunch friends of law and order; that Irishmen helped to rescue the colored orphans in the asylum from the hands of the rioters; that a large proportion of the police, who behaved throughout the riot with the most exemplary gallantry, are Irishmen; that the Roman Catholic priesthood to a man used their influence on the side of the law; and that perhaps the most scathing rebuke administered the riot was written by an Irishman - James T. Brady. It is important that this riot should teach us something more useful than a Revival of Know-Nothing prejudice.⁴⁹

Likewise, a Report of the Committee of Merchants, provides evidence of cooperation between African American women and their Irish neighbors to protect black families from the attacks, including the account of a black woman, referred to as “Mrs. W.,” who hid in the home of an Irish family in the Thirteenth Ward:

Mrs. W., an old lady from Cannon street, says that she, her husband, and ten or a dozen others were concealed in a white neighbor's house for two days. This white family not only had the heroism to protect these poor people, but the humanity to feed them, and the discretion at the proper time to get a police force to escort them to the station-house. Their benefactors are Irish Catholics.⁵⁰

White women in interracial relationships were targets during the Draft Riots, often if they were seen with biracial children. The Report of the Committee of Merchants noted that “some four or five white women, wives of colored men,” sought relief after having been “severely dealt with by the mob.”⁵¹ One woman, referred to as “Mrs. C.,” was identified as Irish, and was reportedly “so persecuted and shunned by everyone, that when she called for aid, she was nearly insane.”⁵² Another white woman, Ann Derrickson, was beaten to death while shielding her

black son, Alfred, from a group of rioters that included at least two Irish men, James Best and William Cruise.⁵³

Given the nature of the Draft Riots, it is significant to note that some Irish-African American families kept their homes in the Eighth Ward.⁵⁴ The Carrs and the Smiths were neighbors in a predominantly black residential area of the Eighth Ward, according to the census in 1860 and in 1870.⁵⁵ John and Bridget Carr lived in the same building as two other Irish-black couples, Joseph and Mary Fraser and Garrett and Margaret Morris; next door, William and Margaret Smith lived in a building with another interracial couple, James and Anna Spencer.⁵⁶ Each of these couples had young children; the black husbands all worked as waiters and coachmen. The years following the riots show a residential shift in the city's African American population north to the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Twentieth Wards, after many blacks faced threats, violence, the deaths of family members, lost homes to arson, or were forced out by white landlords, under pressure from rioters to evict black tenants.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the presence of the Carrs and the Smiths in 1870 indicates a level of social and economic stability that allowed some families to remain in the same neighborhood during this tumultuous time.

This section of Manhattan was also home to a rich array of local institutions and community leaders that contradict images of the area as a den of crime, poverty, and disease. The New York branch of the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company opened on August 13, 1866, on the corner of Bleecker and Laurens Streets, serving an African American population.⁵⁸ Laurens Street was the home of Colored Grammar School No. 2, the second school constructed in Manhattan for black children.⁵⁹ The school was described as "one of the most flourishing for colored children in the country" in 1870, with a reported attendance of 300 students.⁶⁰ Reverend William F. Butler, minister of the Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, nearby on Bleecker and West 10th Street, was recognized as leader of the most prominent black church in New York in 1869, with a "deep interest in negro education," who advocated equal rights for African Americans in sermons regularly printed in the *New York Times*.⁶¹

St. Joseph's, a well-established, largely Irish parish on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Washington Place, also served many of the residents of the Eighth Ward.⁶² In 1870 the pastor of St. Joseph's was Fr. Thomas Farrell, an unorthodox figure in New York's Catholic community during this period who had emigrated from Ireland in 1840. He served the Famine Irish in the Lower East Side Catholic

parishes of St. Brigid's and St. Mary's before becoming pastor of St. Joseph's in 1857, where he remained until his death in 1880.⁶³ According to Thomas Shelley, Farrell was a vocal "spokesman for liberal Catholicism" and "one of the few Catholic abolitionists in a city where Irish Catholics were notorious for their hostility to African Americans."⁶⁴ Indeed, he "expressed such open sympathy for the emancipated black population" that Fr. Farrell was accused of "negrophily" by the Bishop of Richmond, John McGill.⁶⁵ Farrell's will allocated \$5,000 toward the construction of the first black Catholic church in New York, explaining:

I believe that the white people of the United States have inflicted grievous wrong on the colored people of African descent, and I believe that Catholics have shamefully neglected to perform their duties toward them. I wish, then, as a white citizen of these United States and a Catholic to make what reparation I can for that wrong and that neglect.⁶⁶

He stipulated that if the funds were not used for this purpose within three years, the money should go to the Colored Orphan Asylum, a non-Catholic institution targeted during the Draft Riots of 1863.⁶⁷ In 1883, his money helped to build the Church of St. Benedict the Moor on Bleecker Street, several blocks south of St. Joseph's.⁶⁸



Irish women in the Eighth Ward showed a great amount of flexibility in marrying men from a diverse range of origins, choosing both black and white spouses from England, Scotland, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Cuba, Africa, the West Indies, and American-born men, including twelve African American men from southern states. Irish men revealed a much stronger tendency toward endogamous marriage: the instances of out-marriage among men born in Ireland fit a more narrow range of origins, with wives from England, Canada, New York or New Jersey. It is significant to note that of all exogamous marriages among Irish women in the 4th E.D., they were as likely to marry African American husbands as to marry other white, non-Irish spouses.

According to one of the tenants of No. 25 Laurens Street, where several of

the Irish-African American families resided, "the black men in the house were mostly waiters in hotels or on board steamboats; and that the white women — their wives, were of those who had been assistants in the hotels with them."⁶⁹ This account, reported secondhand, hints at the relationship origins for some white working-class women and black men in interracial unions in New York City during this period. It also makes visible the pairing of white women with black men, in contrast to that of white men with black women, in the popular representation of interracial sexuality in America.

African immigrant John Hall worked as a waiter in 1870 and lived with his wife Jane, an Irish immigrant, and their two-year-old son Tulabi in the 4th E.D. Ten years earlier, in 1860, the census recorded John Hall living in Niagara, New York, where he worked and boarded as a hotel waiter.⁷⁰ The hotel staff shared living quarters and consisted almost exclusively of black men working as waiters and Irish women working as domestic servants, in addition to one Scottish and several black women.⁷¹ John Hall was the only African immigrant, with most of his co-residents coming from Canada and others from Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maine. All the black males were listed as literate, while most of the Irish women were listed as illiterate. The shared domestic space for black and white immigrant staff in this Niagara hotel underscores the role of class and labor in shaping varied experiences of race among immigrant Irish women. Such proximity suggests another context in which interracial relationships may have developed.

Like John Hall, the vast majority of the African American husbands of Irish wives in the Eighth Ward sample worked as waiters.⁷² Wages for New York City waiters — twenty percent of whom were black in 1855 — were about \$18 a month in 1853 when the biracial Waiters' Protective Union Society was formed.⁷³ According to a 1912 study of historic black occupations in New York, "most of the smaller hotels" between 1820 and 1860 "had colored waiters. The Metropolitan had about 60 or 70; other hostelries like the Stuyvesant House, the Earls, the Clifford, and a number of restaurants employed colored waiters."⁷⁴ Part of the Eighth Ward also overlapped with "New York's first exclusive, large-scale sex district," located between Bowery, Canal, Laurens, and Houston Streets from 1850 into the early 1870s.⁷⁵ Timothy Gilfoyle said this prostitution district was "characterized by recent, well-built housing and few low-income residents."⁷⁶ Mike Wallace and Edwin Burrows described the Eighth Ward brothels as "stylish

affairs,” at the “top of the commercial sex chain,” that were “noted for attractive women, luxurious furniture, fine liquor, and black servants.”⁷⁷

Benjamin Sturges worked as a waiter and lived with his Irish immigrant wife Mary and their son Robert at No. 38 Laurens Street in 1870. The building was occupied by three other Irish-African American families, and one Irish widow with a mulatto child.⁷⁸ Ten years earlier, in 1860, Benjamin was recorded as a waiter boarding in a hotel with other single, black male waiters (ages eighteen to thirty-seven) in Manhattan’s Third Ward, which stretched west of City Hall towards the Hudson River.⁷⁹ These men lived next to several Irish families who worked as servants and janitors. Such working-class Irish and black neighbors confirm patterns documented for the Sixth Ward as well as Seneca Village, and suggest yet another means of regular contact between these groups. In these spaces of daily interaction, Irish women and their black neighbors sometimes developed relationships that defied the racial conventions of the time. Among the thirty Irish-African American families in the 4th E.D. of the Eighth Ward in 1870, couples were usually in their early twenties to thirties. Husbands were older than their wives; the average age of an African American husband was thirty-nine years old, their Irish wife approximately thirty years old. In only three cases, Irish wives were two to three years older than their husbands. In many more cases husbands were significantly older than their wives, by twenty to twenty-seven years.⁸⁰ Slightly more than half of the Irish-African American households in the 4th E.D. had young children, with an average age of eight years old.⁸¹

There were also single Irish women living in predominantly African American residential blocks in this neighborhood. Anne Burns, a native of Ireland and presumably a widow, was listed as a single mother of three white children born in New York, ranging from five months to eight years old. She was unable to read or write, and her occupation was listed as “Keeping House.”⁸² With the exception of three German immigrants, and one Irish-African American couple, Levi and Mary Blackburn, Anne Burns’ block was entirely African American.⁸³ Her neighbor, Levi Blackburn, was a black minister, an occupation with a distinct status in the community. We cannot know if Anne Burns knew Mary Blackburn, Levi’s Irish-born wife, prior to settling in the Eighth Ward but the presence of a poor and illiterate widow with three children in a community of financially stable black, German, and interracial Irish-African American families suggests that women like Anne Burns could find a secure home in the Eighth Ward.

Another single Irish woman, Rose Brown, worked as a washerwoman and lived as a boarder with a black couple, Joseph and Rachel Moore, and two other single black boarders, Jane Kennedy and Louise Munday, all originating from New York and New Jersey.⁸⁴ Rose Brown lived in a building made up exclusively of African American and interracial families, including four that were Irish-African American.⁸⁵ Similarly, single Irish immigrants Jane Dill and Jane Sanford lived in neighboring buildings populated by black and interracial families, including six of the Irish-African American households.⁸⁶ These examples in the 4th E.D. begin to highlight how Irish women were integrated into the African American community.

Among the fifteen Irish men who married outside of the Irish population in the 4th E.D., most married American-born white women, nearly all from New York. Only one example exists of a marriage between an Irish man and a non-white woman in the entire Eighth Ward, in the case of Irish immigrant John Smith and his mulatto wife Hannah, born in Canada.⁸⁷ The couple, both of whom were literate, lived with their two young, mulatto sons, three-year-old Mitchel and one-month-old Alexander. Their eldest child was born in Canada but the infant in New York, indicating relatively recent migration to the city. The family lived in a building of mostly German immigrants, with no other Irish or black residents, suggesting the possibility that Irish men in interracial marriages encountered a different set of attitudes or social conditions. Hannah Smith kept house while John worked as a porter in a store; they had \$200 in personal estate value. The Smiths present an exception to the conventional marriage pattern among Eighth Ward Irish men, but also provide important evidence that these exceptions to the rule could, and in fact did, exist.



Considering the degree to which the idea of interracial marriage and sexuality was universally marginalized in American society during the nineteenth century, the evidence from Manhattan's Eighth Ward in 1870 also calls into question the assumed role that the Irish held in promoting established American white racial hierarchies. Gender and sexuality were at the core of arguments about race in the nineteenth-century United States, and marriages and families that crossed racial lines were problematic.⁸⁸ In the intimate, domestic world of the home, parenting, and children, creating a state-recognized union with someone outside of one's

own race stood as the greatest threat to white supremacy and was the cause of much anxiety because it proved the “natural” separation of races irrelevant.⁸⁹ Such transgression of the color line was viewed as abhorrent, certainly more than casual, illicit sexual interactions between the races.⁹⁰

Popular discourses surrounding the perceived threat of miscegenation following the Civil War centered on the fear of black men marrying white women, often framed by white men who warned against African Americans taking their wives and daughters, either by force or through consensual unions. As the “carriers of their race” in the ideology of white supremacy, white womanhood was vulnerable and in need of protection. Those who crossed the color line by marrying black men were the targets of special venom, as they were accused of violating the integrity of both their race and gender. “In tandem came the idea that African ancestry corrupted purity, not only of ‘blood,’ but also of virtue,” undermining prevailing notions of women as the gatekeepers of undiluted race and morals.⁹¹

In the national census, the label “white” was “predicated on purity: the absence of any African ancestry whatsoever.”⁹² Within this definition, white women were under greater scrutiny because they “were capable of degrading the race in a way that white men were not.”⁹³ Hodes wrote that “marriages between white women and men of color were troublesome particularly because they entailed — under a system in which whiteness conferred the absence of fractional ancestry — the assignment of mothers and their children to different racial categories.”⁹⁴ White men were not as visibly implicated in the transmission of race. The child of a white woman and black man would be clearly marked as “mulatto,” while biracial children of white men and black women “would be classified as Negro, like its mother, and, more likely than not, disappear into a black community.”⁹⁵

White women who married black men and produced biracial children were blamed for “contributing to the pollution and dilution, indeed the contamination, of the white race.”⁹⁶ One New York observer in 1869 wrote that:

In the course of my wanderings through the negro quarters, I was particularly struck with the fact that, whereas I found numerous cases of white women living with colored men ... I did not find a single instance of a white man living with a colored woman; and strange to say, in all the cases of miscegenation which I met with,

the women seemed to have picked out the lowest and most brutal-looking men that they could possibly find.⁹⁷

Another commentator noted that "the most careless observer who walks down Broadway, can hardly fail to observe the appearance on a vast number of faces of the well-known brownish tinge. Let that tinge once become general, and then 'farewell, a long farewell to all our whiteness!'"⁹⁸ Junius Browne's observations of the Five Points from the same period noted, "One rarely sees a genuine black man or woman in the quarters; mulattoes and quadroons have supplied their place."⁹⁹ These authors illustrate an increasing fixation on the visible perception of race, and represent a larger current of white anxiety over the potential loss of racial purity, and therein white male authority, as a result of the coupling of white women with black men especially after emancipation.

An examination of the United States census racial categories during this period of great change in the mid and late nineteenth century reveals the highly contested, socially constructed nature of race in America.¹⁰⁰ The census both legitimized and established the authority of racial categories; at the same time, the frequency with which those categories were changed demonstrates their ambiguity in terms of actual identity, whether racial, or in the case of the Eighth Ward's mixed population, ethnic. In 1850, for the first time in U.S. history, the census form included the category of "mulatto" as a possible description for an individual's "color," reflecting a "reliance on perception rather than any truly measurable feature," to define racial identity.¹⁰¹ The 1850 census was divided into two separate schedules, for free people and for slaves, and included different racial categories for each.¹⁰² Free people were identified as either "white," "black," or "mulatto," while slaves were "black" or "mulatto."¹⁰³ The marker of "mulatto" recorded evidence of sex across the color line, in an official act of the government to label offspring of those unions as separate from "white" America by providing increasingly narrowed categories of racial identity.

In 1870 the census taker was required to record "color" for all individuals. In previous years entries lacking a racial designation were assumed to mean "white." However, in the years immediately following Emancipation, the census bureau's directives reflected a new urgency to locate racial specification: "It must not be assumed that, where nothing is written in this column, 'White' is to be understood."¹⁰⁴ For New York City's Eighth Ward in the 1870 census, the

label of “white” was applied primarily to people born in America, Europe, and Canada, while “black” and “mulatto” individuals originated predominantly from America, as well as from Canada, Africa, and the West Indies. However, some inconsistencies in racial labels begin to suggest nuances in how race was defined according to country of origin. Dozens of examples list European immigrants as “black” or “mulatto.” Twenty-seven year old Caroline Wilson, the only immigrant from Holland in the Fourth Election District, was marked as black.¹⁰⁵ Eighth Ward residents from Cuba were a racially diverse population, with one Cuban immigrant listed as black, three as mulatto, and two as white.¹⁰⁶ Of the eighteen French immigrants recorded in the district, five were marked as mulatto and the rest as white.¹⁰⁷ These individuals no doubt reflect the legacy of Dutch, French, and Spanish colonies in, and trading relationships with, the West Indies.

Examples also exist of Irish-born women who were marked as “black” or “mulatto.” Mary Strong, a laundress and wife of John, an African American waiter from North Carolina, was listed as a “black” Irish immigrant.¹⁰⁸ Louisa Roberts, the wife of George, a black laborer from Maryland, presents another case of a woman from Ireland who was marked as “black.”¹⁰⁹ Since Ireland did not have a colonial history that easily accounts for the birth of a black child on its soil in the nineteenth century, these examples can be attributed to simple human error on the part of the census taker, but their presence raises questions about the objectivity of the census taker and perhaps speaks volumes about the social acceptability of interracial unions, particularly the union of white women with black men. Further, one could ask why these women were so easily dismissed as non-white, in a census whose purpose was ultimately to privilege the white count. Whether the label reflects an error or a subjective decision made on the part of the census taker, these examples illustrate that race was not determined by national origin in the official record, reflecting a high degree of ambiguity in defining race among immigrants in New York in 1870.

The children of Irish-black families also present examples of questionable racial categorization. In nearly all instances, the children of Irish women and African American men in the Eighth Ward were marked as “mulatto.” In other cases it is shown that the children are either white or black, suggesting the possibility of blended families with children from previous marriages. In certain cases, however, it appears that the children of Irish and black parents were marked as something other than mulatto. For example, William Blair, the two-year-old

son of twenty-four-year-old Johanna Blair and her forty-one-year-old husband Charles, was marked as "white."¹¹⁰ It is possible that William was born of a white father two years prior to Johanna's marriage with Charles, but it is also possible that William was misidentified on the census. Similarly, the Blairs' neighbors in the Fifth Election District, James and Catharine Gregory, were marked as an interracial couple whose son George was white.¹¹¹ The range of racial identities evident in the children of Irish and African American parents raises questions on multiple levels, given such subjective visual assessments made by the census taker.



Irish and African Americans lived as neighbors, spouses, and parents in a shared space in Manhattan's Eighth Ward, especially around Laurens Street. Evidence of eighty interracial Irish-African American families living within a predominantly black residential community, and integrated with other Irish and European immigrant families, introduces issues that have not been adequately explored in the study of American social history. These stories demand further investigation, as milieus like New York's Eighth Ward in 1870 begin to deepen our understanding of the complex histories of ethnic and racial identity in America.

As the lives of immigrant Irish women and African American men intersected and led to the creation of a network of families in the Eighth Ward, their experiences invariably diverged from the dominant racial discourses of the period. Contemporary historians have yet to fully account for how these families fit into the broader narratives of race, gender, ethnicity, and thus identity in America. Future research must interrogate the implications of these interracial communities and the directions they took over time. The mulatto children of families in the Eighth Ward tell a story of how the Irish became integrated into the African American community in ways that have been rendered invisible. Tracing the trajectories of these Irish-African American children and their descendants through the years following 1870 would allow for an even broader and more nuanced understanding of the history of the Irish in America. Their legacy may shed light on the processes by which the census labels of "white," "black," and "mulatto" complicated identities in the shifting social landscape as America entered the twentieth century. They stand as a powerful reminder of the role that race played in Irish American history. ♦

Endnotes:

- ¹This essay was edited for publication in the *American Journal of Irish Studies* by Marion R. Casey, who also directed Ms. Ferris's MA thesis, completed at New York University in 2010. It was inspired by the unpublished research of the late Daniel J. Cassidy, whose papers are in the Archives of Irish America. Ms. Ferris took the title of this essay from a June 26, 1869 *New York Tribune* article on "The Education of the Freedmen": "Since the destruction of Slavery... and since the late slaves have owned themselves and have had control of their families, and to some extent have been able to protect them, illegitimacy and amalgamation have mostly ceased inside of the family circle among the freedmen and freedwomen, showing beyond dispute that the whites have sought social equality with the negro, and not the negro with the whites."
- ²J. J. Lee, introduction to *Making the Irish American*, eds. J. J. Lee and Marion R. Casey (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 35.
- ³Graham Hodges, "Desirable Companions and Lovers: Irish and African Americans in the Sixth Ward, 1830–1870," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 123.
- ⁴Hodges, "Desirable Companions and Lovers," 124.
- ⁵Hodges, "Desirable Companions and Lovers," 123–125.
- ⁶While the census did not list the specific addresses for most of the families in question, of those that can be identified, most lived on or near Laurens Street, today's West Broadway (south of Houston Street).
- ⁷Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1974); Timothy J. Meagher, *Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
- ⁸Leo Hirsch, "The Free Negro in New York," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Oct., 1931): 439; Paul Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disturbances in Post-Revolutionary New York City, 1763–1834* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 160–161; Ira Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 36.
- ⁹*The WPA Guide to New York City: the Federal Writers' Project Guide to 1930s New York* (Pantheon Books, 1939), 126.
- ¹⁰The Eighth Ward's total population dropped slightly from 34,052 in 1855 to 32,465 in 1875. Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825–1863* (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), 193; Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 552.
- ¹¹Thomas J. Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics: St. Joseph's Church and the Evolution of an Urban Faith Community, 1829–2002* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 125; Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 854; Hugh O'Rourke, *Irish Immigrant Involvement in Collective Violence in New York from 1845 to 1875* (PhD: City University of New York, 2001), 104–110, 186–187.
- ¹²There were two separate census enumerations in 1870 (the first was recorded between June 11 and July 6, 1870; the second was recorded on July 11, 1870). The total number of individuals

recorded for the Eighth Ward, including duplicates, is 332 in 94 families. When the 14 families and 59 individuals recorded twice are removed from this total, the 80 interracial Irish-black families and 273 individuals remaining reflect a more accurate count. Posing yet another challenge, the census takers for the first enumeration of the Eighth Ward did not record the street addresses of any residences. Buildings, or "dwelling-houses," were listed numerically in the order that they were visited, and individual residences (or households) were numbered within each building. The second enumeration did in fact list street addresses for each building, but these typically did not distinguish individual residences within buildings. However, based on the addresses that were recorded for a select group of interracial families in the Fourth Election District, it is possible to identify a cluster of interracial Irish-African American households in the Eighth Ward, particularly within a group of neighboring buildings along Laurens Street. In cases where records of the Irish-African American families were duplicated, it is possible to locate them on Laurens Street, as well as on Sullivan, Clark, and Grand Streets, which placed them in the area outlined as the Fourth Election District according to the 1869 definitions. *New York Times*, "More About the Census," Sep. 8, 1870. As noted on dates recorded on census forms. Ancestry.com. *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2003. Original data: 1870. New York County Board of Supervisors, *Maps of Wards and District Divisions of the County of New York: Showing the Election Districts as Arranged August 1, 1869* (New York: The New York Printing Company, Printers for the County, 1869); New York County Board of Supervisors, *Maps of Wards and District Divisions of the County of New York: Showing the Election Districts as Arranged September 10, 1870* (New York: The New York Printing Company, Printers for the County, 1870).

- ¹³ Eighteen of the thirty interracial families in the 4th E.D. of the Eighth Ward in 1870 were raising children, sixteen of whom were listed as mulatto and two as black.
- ¹⁴ Graham Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613–1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 209, 235.
- ¹⁵ Leslie Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 207.
- ¹⁶ Hodges, "Desirable Companions and Lovers," 112.
- ¹⁷ Seneca Village was located in what is currently the area between West 82nd and West 87th Streets, near Central Park West. Columbia University Seneca Village Project, "History of the Community," Columbia University, http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/seneca_village/htm/history.htm.
- ¹⁸ Columbia University Seneca Village Project.
- ¹⁹ Columbia University Seneca Village Project.
- ²⁰ The community had reached an estimated 250 to 300 people by the 1850s, when the government of the City of New York claimed the property through eminent domain, evicted the residents, and leveled their homes and institutions to build Central Park. Mapping the African American Past, "Seneca Village," Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning, <http://maap.columbia.edu/place/32.html>; Antoinette Mullins, "A Village Vanished: Seneca Village," *Harlem Live*, <http://www.harlemlive.org/community/parks/senecavillage/seneca.html>.
- ²¹ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1842), 40.
- ²² Dickens, *American Notes*, 40.
- ²³ Dickens, *American Notes*, 40.
- ²⁴ Benjamin Barlow, as quoted by Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 260.

- ²⁵ Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 260.
- ²⁶ Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 248.
- ²⁷ "The Ulcers of the City," *New York Daily Times*, June 2, 1855.
- ²⁸ "Condition of the City," *New York Daily Times*, June 2, 1857.
- ²⁹ "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³⁰ John and Margaret Evans, ages 35 and 40 (District 18, p. 11); Washington and Mary Sims, ages 39 and 37 (District 18, p. 12); Benjamin and Mary Sturges, ages 35 and 30 (District 18, p. 12); Charles and Josephine Blair, ages 40 and 22 (District 18, p. 12); and widow Rosa Brown (District 18, p. 12). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ³¹ "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³² "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³³ "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³⁴ George and Margaret Morris, ages 44 and 43 (District 17, p. 41); and Francis and Mary Thomas, ages 27 and 28 (District 17, p. 41). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ³⁵ "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³⁶ "Tenant Houses — Practical Amalgamation," *New York Daily Times*, March 31, 1856.
- ³⁷ Leo Hirsch points to the fact that New York City was home to a higher number of mulatto residents than the rest of the United States in 1850, when a ratio of 29.17 mulattoes per 100 blacks lived in New York City as opposed to an average of 12.55 mulattoes per 100 blacks living in the wider United States population. Hirsch, 416; Werner Sollors, introduction to *Interracialism*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2000), 3; Martha Hodes, "The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A Transnational Family Story," *The American Historical Review* 108:1 (2003), <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/108.1/ah0103000084.html>; Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 48; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 247–248; Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 555.
- ³⁸ Among households where the census taker recorded the literacy of its inhabitants, 41% of Irish wives and 33% of black husbands were unable to read or write. These households represent 77% of the total sample of interracial Irish-African American families in the Eighth Ward. For the remaining 23%, ability to read and write was not recorded.
- ³⁹ Kevin Kenny, "Race, Violence, and Anti-Irish Sentiment in the Nineteenth Century," in Lee and Casey, *Making the Irish American*, 376.
- ⁴⁰ Kerby A. Miller, David N. Doyle, and Patricia Kelleher, "'For Love and Liberty': Irish Women, Migration and Domesticity in Ireland and America, 1815–1920," in *Irish Women and Irish Migration*, ed. Patrick O'Sullivan (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 44.
- ⁴¹ Martha Hodes, *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2006), 182.
- ⁴² Meagher, *Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, 228.
- ⁴³ John Kuo Wei Tchen, "Quimbo Appo's Fear of Fenians: Chinese-Irish-Anglo Relations in New York City," in Bayor and Meagher, *The New York Irish*, 138.
- ⁴⁴ Hodes, "The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A Transnational Family Story."
- ⁴⁵ "The Dusky Race — Condition of the Colored Population of New York," *New York Times*, March 2, 1869.
- ⁴⁶ "The Dusky Race — Condition of the Colored Population of New York," *New York Times*, March

2, 1869.

- ⁴⁷ George Templeton Strong, as quoted by Burrows and Wallace, 890, and by Edwin K. Spann, "Union Green," Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 205.
- ⁴⁸ Kate Feighery, "'An Insurrection of the Criminal Element': The Demographics of the Draft Riots" (paper prepared in graduate seminar of Prof. Marion R. Casey, New York University, New York, May 2009), 12.
- ⁴⁹ *Harper's Weekly* editorial as cited in Frederick Binder and David Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 73.
- ⁵⁰ Committee of Merchants for the Relief of Colored People, *Report of the Committee of Merchants for the Relief of Colored People, Suffering from the Late Riots in the City of New York* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 2005), <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AJA2257.0001.001>, originally published in New York: G.A. Whitehorne, printer (1863), 26.
- ⁵¹ Committee of Merchants, 26.
- ⁵² Committee of Merchants, 26.
- ⁵³ Jane Dabel, *From Her Own Labor: African-American Laboring Women in New York City, 1827–1977*. (PhD, University of California Los Angeles, 2000), 130; Cook, *The Armies of the Streets*, 134, 214; Report of the Committee of Merchants, 18.
- ⁵⁴ The African American population in Manhattan fell from over 12,000 in 1860 to under ten thousand by 1865. Seth Scheiner, *Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 221; Hirsch, 452–453; Virtual New York City, "Draft Riots: Aftermath," City University of New York, http://www.vny.cuny.edu/draftriots/Aftermath/aftermath_set.html.
- ⁵⁵ John and Bridget Carr, ages 34 and 27 (District 2, p. 98); William and Margaret Smith, ages 30 and 22 (District 2, p. 98). Ancestry.com. *1860 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2003. Original data: 1860.
- ⁵⁶ Joseph and Mary Fraser, ages 32 and 25 (District 2, p. 98); John and Bridget Carr, ages 34 and 27 (District 2, p. 98); Garrett and Margaret Morris, ages 33 and 33 (District 2, p. 98); James and Sarah Smith, ages 50 and 39 (District 2, p. 98); and William and Margaret Smith, ages 30 and 22 (District 2, p. 98). Ancestry.com. *1860 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2003. Original data: 1860.
- ⁵⁷ The Report of the Committee of Merchants states that a woman referred to as "Mrs. T." was refused reentry to her home on Third Street because her white landlord, "had been threatened with the halter because he hired his houses to colored people." Committee of Merchants, 25.
- ⁵⁸ "Freedmen's Bank," *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1866.
- ⁵⁹ The first school for African American children in Manhattan was built in 1835 on Mulberry Street. United States Office of Education, "History of Schools for the Colored Population," in *The American Negro: His History and Literature*, ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1969), 366.
- ⁶⁰ The Colored Grammar School No. 2 was opened in 1836. Katz, 366; "Among the Best of Colored Schools," *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1870.
- ⁶¹ "The Dusky Race — Condition of the Colored Population of New York," *New York Times*, March 2, 1869; "Among the Best of Colored Schools," *New York Times*.

- ⁶² Thomas Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics: St. Joseph's Church and the Evolution of an Urban Faith Community, 1829–2002* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 284.
- ⁶³ “Miscellaneous City News — Burial of Father Farrell,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1880.
- ⁶⁴ Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics*, 73, 94.
- ⁶⁵ Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics*, 73.
- ⁶⁶ “The Rev. Thomas Farrell’s Will,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1880.
- ⁶⁷ Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics*, 127.
- ⁶⁸ Shelley, *Greenwich Village Catholics*, 96, 123.
- ⁶⁹ William and Mimi Owens, ages 22 and 26 (District 17, p. 41); George and Margaret Morris, ages 44 and 43 (District 17, p. 41); and Thomas and Mary Francis, ages 28 and 27 (District 17, p. 41). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870. *New York Daily Times*, “Tenant Houses.”
- ⁷⁰ John Hall, age 29 (Niagara, NY, p. 62). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1860.
- ⁷¹ Dwelling-place number 446 was identified as “Hotel” in the 1860 census for Niagara, New York (Niagara, NY, pp. 61-63). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1860.
- ⁷² Seven hotels were located along Broadway, on the Eighth Ward’s eastern border. Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), Map VII, 121. Other men’s professions fit a range of skilled and unskilled work, including one laborer, one shoemaker, two carpenters, an organ grinder, and a minister.
- ⁷³ This wage was nearly half of what an unskilled white laborer could make, at roughly \$1 per day. Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, Table 27, 215; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 242.
- ⁷⁴ The Metropolitan Hotel was on the northeast corner of Broadway and Prince Street. George E. Haynes, *The Negro at Work in New York City: A Study in Economic Progress* (New York: Columbia University, 1912), 503. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, Map VII, 121.
- ⁷⁵ Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 119.
- ⁷⁶ Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 120.
- ⁷⁷ Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 804–805.
- ⁷⁸ John and Margaret Evans, ages 35 and 40 (District 18, p. 11); Washington and Mary Sims, ages 39 and 37 (District 18, p. 12); Benjamin and Mary Sturges, ages 35 and 30 (District 18, p. 12); Charles and Josephine Blair, ages 41 and 22 (District 18, p. 12); and Rosa Brown, age 36 (District 18, p. 12). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ⁷⁹ Benji Sturges, age 27 (Third Ward, p. 3). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1860.
- ⁸⁰ Anne Webster, age 40 (District 4, p. 6); Elsie Barton, age 30 (District 4, p. 9); Jane Hall, age 33 (District 4, p. 21); Nathaniel and Anne Johnson, ages 50 and 24 (District 4, p. 5); James and Sarah Smith, ages 70 and 50 (District 4, p. 6); John and Mary Butler, ages 50 and 28 (District 4, p. 21); Henry and Mary Seely, ages 51 and 24 (District 4, p. 21). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ⁸¹ Fifty-one percent of households recorded in the census contained children. Statistic includes children in households of Irish-African American married couples as well as single or widowed Irish mothers of mulatto children.
- ⁸² Anne Burns, age 30 (District 4, p. 54). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ⁸³ District 4, p. 54. Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870. Anne Burns’s household is among one of only two apartments in this section not shown as having any value of personal estate. The other black families, as well as the Blackburns, all showed evidence of at least one resident in each apartment with personal estate valued at \$100–\$300. Levi and Mary Blackburn, ages 45 and 30, held \$200 in

personal estate value (District 4, p. 54). Richard Tildenberg, age 23, was a German grocer living in the Burns family's building, holding \$1,000 in personal estate value (District 4, p. 54). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

⁸⁴ Rose Brown, age 35 (District 4, p. 6); Joseph and Rachel Moore, ages 35 and 39 (District 4, p. 6); Jane Kennedy, age 23 (District 4, p. 6); and Louis Munday, age 14 (District 4, p. 6). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

⁸⁵ James and Sarah Smith, ages 70 and 50 (District 4, p. 6); James and Margaret Jones, ages 29 and 26 (District 4, p. 6); Charles and Matilda Smith, ages 39 and 28 (District 4, p. 6); and Jeremiah and Anne Webster, ages 38 and 40 (District 4, p. 6). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

⁸⁶ Jane Dill, age 30 (District 4, p. 5); and Jane Sanford, age 30 (District 4, p. 5). Thomas and Julia Bostwick, ages 40 and 22 (District 4, p. 5); Nathaniel and Annie Johnson, ages 50 and 24 (District 4, p. 5); Jacob and Catherine Wright, ages 30 and 26 (District 4, p. 5); Thomas and Margaret Green, ages 23 and 22 (District 4, p. 5); John and Alice Bittal, ages 39 and 25 (District 4, p. 5); and David and Mary Bowles, ages 50 and 32 (District 4, p. 5). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

⁸⁷ John and Hannah Smith, ages 44 and 24 (District 4, p. 33). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

⁸⁸ The conventionally private, domestic issues of marriage, sexuality, and family occupied a central position in national political discourses on slavery, citizenship, and racial identity: "Sex between those deemed worthy of citizenship and those deemed unworthy spurred white anxieties about the corruption of Anglo-Saxonism, which in turn circled back to uphold convictions about inclusion and exclusion in the nation-state." Martha Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 265.

⁸⁹ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 241.

⁹⁰ Sollors, 3.

⁹¹ Hodes, *The Sea Captain's Wife*, 183.

⁹² Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 248.

⁹³ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 256.

⁹⁴ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 256.

⁹⁵ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 256.

⁹⁶ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 256.

⁹⁷ "The Dusky Race — Condition of the Colored Population of New York," *New York Times*, March 2, 1869.

⁹⁸ "What Are We Coming To, and When Shall We Reach It?" *New York Times*, "March 26, 1864.

⁹⁹ Junius Henri Browne, *The Great Metropolis: A Mirror of New York* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Company, 1869), 277.

¹⁰⁰ While the census was considered to be an objective collection of population data for "the purposes of taxation and representation," it is also a historical artifact filled with changing "inventions and interpretations." Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 243.

¹⁰¹ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 244.

¹⁰² Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 244.

¹⁰³ Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 244.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions," 244.

¹⁰⁵ Caroline Wilson, age 27 (District 4, p. 98). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.

- ¹⁰⁶ Peter Roche, age 28 (District 4, p. 9); Charles Augustus, age 29 District 4, p. 11); Willis Barnes, age 37 (District 4, p. 67); Jonas Harrington, age 20 (District 4, p. 67); J. Bonchiardor, age 43 (District 4, p. 63); Phillip Sanchez, 26 (District 4, p. 72). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ¹⁰⁷ Garrett Keristead, age 65 (District 4, p. 6); Jane Fontaine, age 38, and her two children Augustine, 12, and Alexander, 9 (District 4, p. 8); Antoinette Osborne, age 35 (District 4, p. 16). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ¹⁰⁸ John and Mary Strong, ages 28 and 25 (District 5, p. 4). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ¹⁰⁹ George and Louisa Roberts, ages 45 and 40 (District 8, p. 69). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ¹¹⁰ Charles and Johanna Blair, ages 41 and 24, and son William Blair, age 2 (District 5, p. 5). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.
- ¹¹¹ James and Catharine Gregory, ages 40 and 25, and son George Gregory, age 4 (District 5, p. 33). Ancestry.com. Original data: 1870.