The Making of a National Upper Class

Philadelphia Gentlemen

With a new introduction by the author

E. Digby Baltzell

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Introduction to the Transaction Edition

PHILADELPHIA GENTLEMEN, begun as a Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University in 1946, was published as a book in 1958. It covered the Protestant era in the history of American leadership that was coming to an end in 1940, on the eve of the Second World War. The second paperback edition, published in 1971, included an Afterword that showed how the American upper class as a whole had changed since 1940. The changes outlined in that Afterword, which has been retained here, are as salient today as they were then, perhaps even more so. In this new Preface, I show how *Philadelphia Gentlemen* marked the beginning of a theoretical orientation toward class authority and leadership in America that has informed my work ever since; and secondly, I point out some important changes in Philadelphia's leadership structure in the almost half-century since 1940.

The Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in August 1945. As I had enough points to get out of the navy almost immediately, I was able to enroll in the Ph.D. program in sociology at Columbia University in September. In that academic year, I read Max Weber and Alexis de Tocqueville for the first time. In December I bought Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in a handsomely boxed, two-volume set that had just been published by Alfred A. Knopf. No book has ever influenced me more than the second volume of this classic. Although Marx was endlessly quoted and referred to, Tocqueville's name was never mentioned in class during my two years of graduate study, except once by a visiting lecturer from the New School for Social Research who noted in the course of his lecture that Tocqueville's *Ancient Regime* was one of the finest books ever written in political science and sociology. This was before the paperback revolution, but after more than a year's search, I found a copy at Blackwell's bookstore in Oxford; I shall return to the *Ancient Regime* in a moment. In the meantime, in the early summer of 1946, I bought and read a just published copy of *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.

The great value of the writings of Tocqueville and Weber is that they abound with what Robert K. Merton has called theoretical insights of the middle range. And it is just such theoretical insights that stimulate and

guide us in asking pertinent questions, and ordering relevant facts, about any social structure. At any rate, it was Weber's famous essay, "Class, Status, Party," chapter 7 in the Gerth and Mills collection, that first stimulated me to ask questions about class, status, and authority, which I have continued to do (in the style, I like to think, of Cézanne's endless paintings of his beloved mountain outside Aix, in Provence) for more than four decades since that summer of 1946 when I began to write a dissertation that eventually became *Philadelphia Gentlemen*.

Stratification theory, as developed in Weber's famous essay, involved two logically distinct aspects, a hierarchy of class situations on the one hand and a hierarchy of status situations on the other. Classes are not communities but consist of individuals with similar life chances or economic positions in the market. In time, and especially over the generations, hierarchies of classes tend to produce communities of families that often "stand in sharp opposition to pretensions of sheer property" or the market. The key to Weber's understanding of status groups is to be found in the following paragraphs:

> In contrast to classes, status groups are normally communities. They are...determined by specific, positive or negative, social estimations of *honor*.... Status honor need not necessarily be linked with class situation. On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.
>
> Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently do with very tangible consequences.... The "equality" of status among American "gentlemen," for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by different functions of "business," it would be considered strictly repugnant—if even the richest "chief," while playing billiards or cards in his club in the evening, would not treat his "clerk" as in every sense fully his equal in birthright. It would be repugnant if the American "chief" would bestow upon his "clerk" the condescending "benevolence" marking a distinction of "position" which the German "chief" can never dissever from his attitude.

I had been born and raised among a privileged class of families in Philadelphia that almost exactly epitomized Weber's description of a status group just quoted. My friends, in the schoolroom, on the playing fields, at dancing classes and summer resorts were the sons and daughters of both very wealthy and powerful, as well as less wealthy and powerless, bankers, businessmen, lawyers, and physicians. Within the class or status group, however, there existed a very real democratic spirit where all were treated on their individual merits. In my circle of sports-loving friends at least, it was considered effeminate to mention such things as the social position or lineage of one's friends or acquaintances; as a matter of fact, I learned the economic history of many of my friends' extended families for the first time

while researching and writing *Philadelphia Gentlemen.* It was no wonder, then, that I was frankly shocked at the invidious comparisons and snobberies, articulated as social science, which I found in the Columbia classrooms as well as in such studies as the Lynds' two Middletown books or Lloyd Warner's Yankee City Series both of which I read during that first year in Fayerweather Hall, at Columbia. Perhaps there is some truth in the waggish view that snobs and racists are merely amateurs (without Ph.D.s) who speak like professional sociologists.

Most writers on the upper class tend to stress the enviable style of life of the leisure classes enjoying their leisure. On the other hand, my central focus in *Philadelphia Gentlemen* and other writings has always been on the relationship between the upper class and the leadership structure of any society; I am more interested in the careers of such socialites as Franklin Roosevelt, Averell Harriman, or Henry Stimson than in the essentially boring lives of the likes of Ward McAlister, Harry Lehr, or Mrs. Astor. As Theodore Roosevelt put it, "Personally, the life of the Four Hundred, in its typical form, strikes me as being as flat as stale champagne.... I suppose young girls and even young men naturally like a year or two of such a life as the Four Hundred lead; and it has its pretty, attractive, and not unwholesome sides. But I do not think that anyone can permanently lead his or her life amid such surroundings save at the cost of degeneration in character." Roosevelt, as with a minority of similarly minded, American gentlemen since his day, was interested in being part of a governing, rather than a merely privileged, class. The next to last chapter of *Philadelphia Gentlemen,* entitled "A Primary Group of Prestige and Power," for example, sums up the essence of my view of class authority, in both that book and all I have written since: It showed how a small group of secure aristocrats dominated the economic and cultural life of the city in 1940.

At any rate, in that summer of 1946, I almost immediately saw that the *Social Register,* a listing of some five thousand conjugal family units of similar social honor in the city of Philadelphia in 1940, would make an ideal index of what I came to call the city's upper class; these families formed a class *community* with a consciousness of kind, or sense of *gemeinschaft* solidarity, unlike any other status level in the city. That is, in any large city, it is only at the upper-class level that this kind of solidarity holds. There are middle and lower classes (plural), in other words, but *only one upper class.* Moreover, as the subtitle of *Philadelphia Gentlemen* (The Making of a National Upper Class) suggests, this class solidarity and consciousness of kind extended not only across many neighborhoods in and around Philadelphia but also to similar neighborhoods in other metropolitan areas across

the nation, especially along the Eastern seaboard. As of 1940, for instance, a Philadelphia debutante had a far greater chance of marrying within *Social Register* circles in New York, Boston, and Baltimore, or even San Francisco, than she would of marrying someone outside her class in Philadelphia. Finally, upper-class families in 1940 were very conscious of being patriarchal and historical, consanguine units.

While the *Social Register* proved to be an excellent index of upper-class status in Philadelphia in 1940, I also needed an index of high functional achievement and leadership. Somehow or other, I came up with the idea of using *Who's Who,* and I still possess a well-thumbed and beaten-up copy of *Who's Who in America,* volume 21, 1940–1941, which I bought at Leary's, once the city's most famous secondhand bookstore, in the summer of 1946. *Who's Who* lists successful individuals in America regardless of race, creed, or social origins. Using the geographical index, I found there were 770 men and women listed from Philadelphia that year; matching that list with the 1940 *Social Register,* I found that 226, or 29 percent, of the elite (770) were drawn from the upper class. The dominant banking and business leaders in the city, moreover, were far more likely to be drawn from the upper class than were members of less powerful occupations such as artists, writers, or professors.

To recapitulate: Theoretical advances in any science, I should suppose, are made by redefining old concepts and using them in new ways. I use the concept upper class to stand for Weber's communal status group of high honor; this class community of extended families stands at the top of what I call the *social class system;* my *elite concept,* on the other hand, stands for a statistical or conceptual group of *individuals* similarly ranked at the top of the division of labor or what I call the *functional class system* (Weber's "class" as against "status" hierarchy). Actually, there are many functional elites, such as the Forbes 400, top executives of the Fortune 500 corporations, those listed in Dun and Bradstreet, members of the ABA, the AMA, and so forth. There is, on the contrary, only *one* upper class, which, for example, would include the four senior partners of Ballard, Spahr, Andrews, and Ingersoll, one of Philadelphia's leading law firms in 1940, as well as such members of Andrews's famous Harvard class of 1910 as Thomas Sterns Eliot, of St. Louis; Hamilton Fish, of New York; George

Peabody Gardner, of Boston; and John Silas Reed, a first-family Oregonian, who lies buried in Lenin's tomb in Moscow.°

Finally, it is not new concepts themselves that are important but the relationships between them—in our case the relationships between various elites and the upper class. In Philadelphia in 1940, in other words, *Philadelphia Gentlemen* had shown that the elite or elites were open yet still dominated by powerful members of the upper class. At the same time the upper class also had been relatively open during the first four decades of the twentieth century; see, for example, table 15, page 167, where, of the 226 members of the upper class in 1940, only 73 belonged to families who were listed in the *Social Register* in 1900. In other words, class authority in 1940 was characteristic of American leadership, which was still largely composed of white Protestants. And *Philadelphia Gentlemen* closed on the following note:

> One more question remains to be raised even if it cannot be answered: What is the future function of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Protestant upper class in an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous democracy? In many ways, this is the most important question of all. As Joseph Patrick Kennedy, Boston millionaire and American Ambassador to the Court of St. James under Roosevelt, once put it: "How long does our family have to be here before we are called Americans rather than Irish-Americans?" As has been shown throughout this volume, the American upper class has been from the beginning open to new men of talent and power and their families. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, upper-class status appears to be limited primarily to families of colonial and northern European stock and Protestant affiliations. Glancing back to the turn of the century, when a flood of immigrants came to these shores from southern and eastern Europe, to say nothing of the Irish Catholics who came earlier, one wonders if this American democracy has not produced somewhat of a caste situation at the upper-class level. Or are the talented and powerful descendants of these newer immigrants going to be assimilated into some future upper-class way of life and social organization?

It was this question that led to my second study of class authority and leadership: *The Protestant Establishment, Aristocracy & Caste in America*, published in 1964. This study was inspired by Tocqueville's classic analysis of the Old Regime and the French Revolution, which showed how violent revolution came to France because the nobility degenerated into a caste when it refused to assimilate new men of power and affluence—the bourgeoisie. The British upper class, on the other hand, absorbed new businessmen, avoided revolution, and remained a ruling class or aris-

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°John Reed's widow married a member of a prominent, upper-class Philadelphia family, William C. Bullitt, who had been sent by Roosevelt to be our first ambassador to the U.S.S.R. in 1933 and was serving as our French ambassador in 1940.

tocracy. In other words, the French nobility retained its privileges at the expense of power and authority, while the British shared its privileges precisely in order to rule.

"We in America," I wrote at the beginning of *The Protestant Establishment,* "have followed in the British rather than the French tradition. And we have remained a relatively free and stable society largely because we have maintained a balance between the liberal democratic and the authoritative aristocratic social processes. On the other hand, there is a crisis in American leadership in the last half of the twentieth century that is partly due, I think, to the declining authority of an establishment which is now based on an increasingly caste-like White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant (WASP) upper class."

The Protestant Establishment, then, was an historical and sociological analysis of forces of caste and aristocracy in American leadership in the years between the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy.

"An aristocracy in all its vigour," wrote Tocqueville in his *Ancient Regime,* "not only carries on the affairs of a country, but directs public opinion, gives a tone to literature, and the stamp of authority to ideas." My third book, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia: Two Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Class Authority and Leadership,* sought to show how the Puritan patricians of Boston, for almost three centuries after the city's founding in 1630, fulfilled Tocqueville's definition of a "vigorous" aristocracy, while the Quaker-turned-Episcopal members of Philadelphia's upper class did not. Following Max Weber's classic, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* I tried to show how the differences between these two branches of the American upper class were to be found in the differences between the hierarchical and elitist, Puritan-Congregational ethic and the egalitarian, antielitist ethic of Quakerism.

Finally, it must be emphasized here that all three of my studies of class authority in America have been informed by the spirit of Tocqueville, whose aristocratic family was deeply rooted in the Ancient Regime and the soil of Normandy. They have, on the other hand, little intellectual sympathy with the spirit of Marxism, founded by a deracinated German Jew, writing in the British Museum. Thus I wrote on the first page of *Philadelphia Gentlemen,*

> Leadership and some form of stratification are inherent in all human social organization.... Only in that delightful land of *Oz* are there more generals than privates and surely Alice might have found a "classless society", like unwet water, only in *Wonderland.*

Although scientific realism is deified in our time, modern social theory, from Rousseau through Marx to the present, betrays, nevertheless, a utopian tendency to measure the good society, often equated with democracy, in terms of such sociological monstrosities as "majority leadership" or the "classless society."

In summary, while Tocqueville and I have tried to understand how modern Western democracies can be held together in our atomizing and secular age without succumbing to the totalitarian temptation, Marx and his followers (both manifest and latent) have focused their energies on analyzing (and encouraging) the social forces of revolution and societal disintegration. But as Tocqueville foresaw over a century and a half ago, totalitarians have usually followed revolutionaries. Thus Marx once wrote in *Das Kapital* that "the more a ruling class is able to *assimilate* the most prominent men of the dominated classes, the more *stable* and *dangerous* its rule" [my emphasis]. Following Tocqueville, I would consider such a *stable* ruling class *desirable* rather than dangerous.

I now turn to the changes in Philadelphia's leadership in the almost half-century after 1940. In analyzing the growth of an upper-class way of life in metropolitan America, and especially in describing the social patina of proper Philadelphia," I wrote in chapter 14 (page 364) "there is a danger that we lose sight of the main function of an upper class: the perpetuation of its power in the world of affairs, whether in the bank, the factory, or in the halls of the legislature. Whenever an upper-class way of life becomes an end in itself, rather than a means for consolidating its power and influence, that upper class has outlived its function." Today, in contrast to 1940, the upper-class way of life in the city tends more and more to be an end in itself rather than a means to authority and power.

In 1940, as the pages of this book clearly show, Philadelphia gentlemen tended to dominate the cultural and economic life of the city. Their authority was derived from their control of the banking community. Thus the presidents of most of the leading commercial banks, as well as the vast majority of their directors, were members of families listed in the 1940 *Social Register*. When local newspapers published the financial statements of these banks in January each year, for instance, directors and officers were listed by name; and the names—Hopkinson, Ingersoll, Morris, and so forth—were old family names prominent in the city's history since colonial times. And these names were known to the local citizenry, not only through long historical traditions, but also through "Society" columns in local newspapers, which limited themselves to reporting the social life of members of the upper class. Today, when the society column has largely been

replaced by the gossip column, the financial figures are still published each year, but the banking officers and directors are no longer merely listed by name. Instead, names are now followed by bureaucratic titles, such as vice-president, president, or chairman of various companies in the city. These men are known and placed in the social structure, in other words, not by their class position but by their functional rank in various bureaucracies. Fewer and fewer of these banking leaders, moreover, are now drawn from *Social Register* families in the city and its suburbs.

Upper-class authority in 1940 was at its strongest in the investment banking house of Drexel & Company, the local branch of the Morgan interests in New York, and it was manifest in the leadership at the Pennsylvania Railroad and at the University of Pennsylvania. The chief figure at Drexel was Edward Hopkinson, Jr., whose family had been prominent in the city since colonial times, one ancestor having been a founder of the American Philosophical Society and another, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. Hopkinson and Thomas S. Gates, president of the University of Pennsylvania, were the two most influential men in the city. Before taking the presidency of the university, Gates had been the senior partner of the Morgan and Drexel interests in the city. Likewise the president and a majority of the officers and directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad were members of the city's upper class, which has dominated the railroad ever since its founding in the 1830s.

Drexel & Company was eventually absorbed after World War II by a presently notorious Wall Street firm, Drexel Burnam Lambert, Inc. (the Drexel name was retained largely for its historical value). In the meantime, the Pennsylvania Railroad merged with the New York Central to become the Penn Central Railroad. Not long after consolidation, it went through a kind of Proper Philadelphia "Watergate" or bankruptcy scandal and is today no longer a privately controlled railroad or financed by Drexel people. For its part, the University of Pennsylvania has become more of a national than a local institution over the last three decades. In 1940, most of its students were commuters, while today most of them live in dormitories on campus. And the leadership has changed. The great builder of the modern university in the 1960s was Gaylord P. Harnwell, neither a native of Philadelphia nor a Penn graduate; his successor, Martin Meyerson, was also an outsider, as is President Sheldon Hackney today. Members of the board of trustees, moreover, are no longer Philadelphia gentlemen as in 1940; nor are they natives or residents of the city to anywhere near the same extent. The board

is now nationally representative, its members standing for functional prominence rather than local class prestige.

In 1940, as I showed in *Philadelphia Gentlemen,* members of the city's upper class dominated not only investment and commercial banking but also a whole series of cultural institutions, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the famous Philadelphia Orchestra. This is notably less true today; each year, for instance, one of the city's main social events is a ball given to raise money for the orchestra. The ball is now definitely an elite rather than a class affair, those in attendance representing functional rank and affluence far more than class or family prestige. A class, of course, is largely a matter of family, whereas an elite is largely a matter of individual achievement.

Hardly any of the leading members of Philadelphia's first families in 1940 were divorced. The annual Assembly balls, moreover, fostered family solidarity, since no invitation was issued to anyone who had been divorced and remarried, no matter how prominent that person's family position. Sometime in the 1960s, however, this ban on divorced persons was lifted (and the size of the ball almost doubled in one year). Patriarchal Proper Philadelphia, in accord with the emancipation of women, is now a thing of the past, and the class it represented is, too.

Anyone, finally, with a sense of history knows that all ages have their troubles and these give rise to feelings of loss compared with some supposedly more settled era. Sensitive souls since the time of Cicero and Caesar have always resented the decline in the number of "gentlemen of the Old School." The continuing value of *Philadelphia Gentlemen,* I should like to think, is not that it gives us a picture of the current social structure of the city nor that it promotes nostalgia; rather it enables us to understand present leadership in terms of past history. As Abraham Lincoln once put it, if we are lost in the woods, we begin to find our way be retracing where we have been.

Preface to the First Edition

THIS IS A STUDY of an American business aristocracy, of colonial stock and Protestant affiliations, and centered in the older metropolitan areas along the Eastern Seaboard. Although primarily a Proper Philadelphia story, with ancient roots in the city's golden age at the close of the eighteenth century, it is also an analysis of how fabulously wealthy, nineteenth-century family founders, in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, supported various exclusive institutions which produced, in the course of the twentieth century, a national, upper-class way of life.

In this book, I have had to cope with the problem of combining the materials of economic and social history with the methods and point of view of sociology. The sociologist should always be scrupulously careful to protect the anonymity of the subjects of his investigations. However, as most of the people discussed in these pages are, or will be, historical figures of some repute, this has proved undesirable if not impossible. There is, for example, no point in protecting the anonymity of George Gordon Meade, The Proper Philadelphian who commanded the Union armies at the Battle of Gettysburg. But since it is not the function of social science to repeat gossip, I have limited myself almost entirely to sources previously published and discussed individual idiosyncrasies only when they illuminate the analysis of institutions, which are but the shadows of men both living and dead. At all events, in an age blessed with an institutional determinism—partly the result of our propensity for submerging the individual in scientific abstractions—it is a pleasure to present a study of institutions which concrete persons have created, preserved, and given tone to.

I have had to wander from sociology into both American and local Philadelphia history. For their patient reading of this historical material, I am especially indebted to Edwin Wolf II, curator of The Library Company of Philadelphia, and Nicholas B. Wainwright, Research Librarian of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Needless to say, any faults in fact or interpretation are my own.

I should like to thank Dr. Martin P. Chworowsky, Director of the A. M. Greenfield Center for Human Relations, for his confidence in my work and for providing me with an invaluable grant-in-aid which allowed me to take half-time off from my teaching duties in the spring of 1956.

To my good friends, Joan Younger Dickinson, Milton M. Gordon and Michael Lalli for their critical judgment of style and content, to Eleanor Freisn for her patience with the typewriter, to Fred Gruenberger for his deft translations of association tables from IBM cards, and to Martha Gordon for her cartography, go my thanks and appreciation.

For broadening my sociological point of view with a deeper appreciation of American civilization, I am grateful to Robert E. Spiller. A continuing association which began with his seminar in American Civilization in the Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives at the University of Pennsylvania in the Spring of 1954 has been an invaluable inspiration to me.

Finally, I owe my interest in the fascinating study of human society to two great teachers: the late Carl Kelsey of the University of Pennsylvania, and Robert K. Merton of Columbia. All who have studied under Professor Merton will appreciate my large debt to him.

Above all, I should like to thank Robert S. Lynd, without whose constant faith and encouragement at critical periods in my early academic career, this book would never have been completed.

Ithan, Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA GENTLEMEN

CHAPTER I

Introduction

> But the fact is that not only property, but the two institutions of property and social stratification are in the same position of moral ambiguity. Both are necessary instruments of justice and order, and yet both are fruitful of injustice. Both have, no less than government, grown up organically in traditional civilizations in the sense that they were unconscious adaptations to the needs of justice and order. The revolts against both of them by both the radical Christians and the radical secular idealists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tended to be indiscriminate.
>
> REINHOLD NIEBUHR

LEADERSHIP and some form of stratification are inherent in all human social organization. From the time of Plato's utopian *Republic*, and his pupil Aristotle's more realistic *Politics*, the "few" and the "many," the "rulers" and the "ruled," and the "Classes" and the "masses" have been staple terms in the language of social thought. Only in that delightful land of *Oz* are there more generals than privates, and surely Alice might have found a "classless society," like un-wet water, only in *Wonderland*. Yet perhaps man has always dreamed of a golden age, free of the inevitable inequalities of all historical class situations:

> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the Gentleman?

Although scientific realism is deified in our time, modern social theory, from Rousseau through Marx to the present, betrays, nevertheless, a utopian tendency to measure the good society, often equated with democracy, in terms of such sociological monstrosities as "majority leadership" or the "classless society." Robert Michels, for instance, in his well-known study of European labor movements, comes to the pessimistic conclusion that democracy is impossible because of what he calls the "iron law of oligarchy."[1] While Michels is certainly right about the inevitability of "minority

leadership," his conclusion, which assumes, falsely, the alternatives, oligarchy *or* democracy, leads only to confusion.

Granted, all complex societies—aristocratic, democratic, or totalitarian—are oligarchical in that the few rule the many. A less utopian, more empirical test of democracy is whether the inevitable "minority of leaders," or oligarchy, is both *accountable* to the rest of the population and drawn from *all social levels* and not solely from the ranks of a few privileged families. Parliamentary representation, the two-party system, and universal suffrage, for example, are important, if imperfect, means of securing accountability; the inheritance tax, the abolition of entail and primogeniture, and universal free education are all designed to mitigate the advantages of birth and to foster social mobility in an open class, rather than a classless society.[2]

In modern America, virtue and social mobility have become synonymous. Our vices are often perverted virtues, however, and too much social mobility, especially at the elite level, perhaps may weaken the traditional means of checking the power of leaders. If power and authority are the bricks and mortar of all social structures, an upper class, based on inherited wealth and position, is but the organic institutionalization of power and authority within a traditional circle of privileged families. The revolutionary vanguard and party elites in modern dictatorships, or "Café Society" in this age of lonely crowds and mass communications, are but other, and perhaps more mechanical, ways of organizing the consciousness of kind and primary group solidarity of a privileged leadership. Although "Café Society" or the party elite may certainly be more *democratic* in their criteria for membership in the inner circle, perhaps an hereditary upper class may prove to be a more effective mediating group in institutionalizing the *accountability* of authority. After more than a century of concentrated attack on the evils of hereditary wealth and property, the problem of the accountability of power in an atomistic mass society has arisen to challenge the assumptions of the Western intellectual world. Certainly the liberal tradition, firmly grounded in the eighteenth century intellectual's mistrust of all established institutions, has too often failed to realize that both the democratic and aristocratic social processes are, like Siamese twins, indivisibly bound together in all healthy societies. Such patrician traditions of leadership and accomplishment provided by the Roosevelt, Adams,

Lowell, or Taft families have undoubtedly enriched the egalitarian soil of American life.

This is the study of an hereditary upper class, based on business wealth and power, which has grown up in Philadelphia during the two hundred or more years since the city's founding by that eccentric Quaker aristocrat, William Penn, in 1682. It is not our intention to attack the evils of hereditary wealth and the long-established family traditions in Philadelphia. We are concerned with an historical analysis of the structure and function of upper-class institutions. While assuming the desirability of established institutions which create an upper class consciousness-of-kind and more or less primary group solidarity, we shall nevertheless often refer to the abuses of privilege and the all too human frailties which inevitably prevent the proper functioning of such institutions. Finally, in many ways, this is an analysis of the adequacy of American institutions in fostering, among the rich and the powerful, a sense of *noblesse oblige,* an old sociological concept which seems to have found no place in the literature of contemporary American social science.

Philadelphia has been chosen as the central focus of this analysis of American upper class institutions for several reasons: First, there was the need to study the problem of social stratification in a large metropolitan area. During the nineteen thirties and forties, American sociologists, with elaborate staffs trained in interviewing techniques, the filling out of schedules, and the operation of IBM machines, made numerous, painstaking investigations of the social systems in the small community.[3] Very little systematic research, however, has been done on the metropolitan class structure. Philadelphia, a major American city since colonial times, not only provides a particularly good laboratory for studying the structure of well-established, urban institutions; it also is a convenient starting point for an analysis of the development of a national upper class in America which cuts across local boundaries to include fashionable families in all the older urban centers from San Francisco to New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. A description of the development of this national, metropolitan upper class will be an important task of this book. Secondly, Philadelphia provides an excellent example of a business aristocracy which has too often placed the desire for material comfort and security above the duties of political and intellectual leadership. While this is an

all too common characteristic of modern commercial upper classes in general, both in Europe and America, the gradual withdrawal of the Philadelphia gentleman away from public service and into the counting house is a concrete illustration of a secular trend in this country which began with the rise of great fortunes after the Civil War.

The Elite and the Upper Class. A systematic treatment of social stratification usually has to arrive at some specific number of class levels. It is important to realize, however, that one divides a community into as many class levels as one must for the purposes at hand. Class levels are logical concepts to be used for analytical purposes: to fail to realize this and to "discover" in any community three, six, or nine classes is to run the risk of reification (the taking as real that which is only conceptual).[4]

For the purposes of this book, then, we shall act *as if* there were two aspects of high class position, an *elite* and an *upper class.* The *elite* concept refers to those *individuals* who are the most successful and stand at the top of the *functional* class hierarchy. These individuals are leaders in their chosen occupations or professions; they are the final-decision-makers in the political, economic or military spheres as well as leaders in the law, engineering, medicine, education, religion and the arts. Regardless of social origin or family position, whether Negro, Gentile or Jew, all successful and productive men and women are included within our elite concept.

In any stable social structure, certain elite members and their families will quite naturally over the years tend to associate with one another in various primary group situations and thereby develop a consciousness-of-kind and distinctive style of life. From Middletown to Moscow, this is a universal social process. In their second study of Middletown, for instance, the Lynds found that "around the families of the now grown-up sons and sons-in-law of the X clan, with their model farms, fine houses, riding clubs, and airplanes, has developed a younger set that is somewhat more coherent, exclusive, and self-consciously upper class."[5] Similarly, in Moscow, Barrington Moore, Jr., finds "evidence of a cultural separation of the new holders of high status from the masses of the population. In their leisure time the intelligentsia mingle more with one another than with the uneducated. It requires no great insight to perceive that a Soviet executive or scientist would find

the company of other executives and scientists more congenial than that of a peasant or manual laborer. In this way different habits of speech, manners, and dress are built up and transmitted from one generation to the next. In addition, the tendency for families of similar social station to live near each other in the same community leads to the choice of marriage partners from families with approximately the same background. All these forces are at work in the Soviet Union, and it is safe to predict that they will eventually result in the emergence of a class system resembling in many ways that in the United States. . . ."[6]

"Twenty years ago," the English expert on the Russians, Edward Hallett Carr, wrote in 1951, "a school was started in the Kremlin in Moscow for children of high party and Soviet officials. Nobody supposes that its function was to enable these children to start equal with other Russian children."[7]

The *upper class* concept, then, refers to a group of *families,* whose members are descendants of successful individuals (elite members) of one, two, three or more generations ago. These families are at the top of the *social class* hierarchy; they are brought up together, are friends, and are intermarried one with another; and, finally, they maintain a distinctive style of life and a kind of primary group solidarity which sets them apart from the rest of the population. As Dixon Wecter put it: "A group of families with a common background and racial origin becomes cohesive, and fortifies itself by the joint sharing of sports and social activities, by friendship and intermarriage. Rough and piratical grandfathers had seized their real estate, laid out their railroads, and provided for their trust funds. The second and third generation, relieved from the counting house and shop, now begin to travel, buy books and pictures, learn about horses and wine, and cultivate the art of charm."[8]

Although this book will be concerned primarily with an analysis of the growth and development of an American metropolitan upper class, we shall constantly stress the relationship between an upper-class way of life and the present and past accomplishment of the elite individuals who, in the long run, make this way of life possible. C. Wright Mills has stressed the importance of tracing the relationship between the upper class and the elite in the following passage: "Are the intermarriage chances, the flow of prestige, influenced by what happens in banks? What is the distribution of

legal skill, by family, by firm? Are there overlaps between the boards of banks, the elders of churches, and the prestige of ministers? Are 'social circles' and religious affiliations subtly interwoven with financial interests?"[9] It is to be hoped that these questions asked by Mills will be partially answered in this book.

Who's Who and the *Social Register*: Elite and Upper-Class Indices

Who's Who in America, a listing of brief biographies of leading individuals in contemporary American life, and the *Social Register,* a listing of families of high social class position, will be used as indices respectively of an elite and upper class.[10] In 1940 separate volumes of the *Social Register* were issued for each of twelve large metropolitan areas in this country: New York, Chicago, Cincinnati-Dayton, Buffalo, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Of the approximately 12,000 residents of these twelve cities who were listed in *Who's Who* in that year, about one-fourth were also listed in the *Social Register.* In other words, the members of the upper classes had considerable influence on the elite in these cities.

Chapter II will discuss the rise of a national upper class in America during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and how the *Social Register* was founded in response to the need for a formal listing of this new, inter-city plutocracy. The chapters which follow will be concerned primarily with the historical development and contemporary structure of the Philadelphia upper class and its influence in the local elite in 1940. The nature of this contemporary relationship between the elite and the upper class will be based on an analysis of the brief biographies of the 770 Philadelphians who were listed in the 1940 *Who's Who.* Of these 770 members of the city's elite, 226, or 29 per cent, were also members of the local upper class. Their *Who's Who* biographies show how the members of the upper class (the 226 listed in the *Social Register*) differed significantly, in occupation, place of residence, religious affiliation, education, and club membership, from the rest of the elite (the 544 not listed in the *Social Register*) who were drawn from a wide variety of social class and ethnic backgrounds.

Proper Philadelphia Institutions. After first establishing the nature of upper-class leadership in the Philadelphia business and banking community in 1940, we will devote the major part of this study to an intensive analysis of how the small, Proper Philadelphia world was set off from the rest of the community by a common historical tradition and institutional structure which, over the years, nourished the growth of a distinctive style of life and value system. (For convenience and variety, "Proper Philadelphia" as well as "Proper New York, Boston, or San Francisco" will be used interchangeably with the term "upper class.") In large part, this analysis will consist of an historical discussion of upper-class institutions: the family, the neighborhood, the church, the private school and university, and the social club.

The tap root of any upper class, that which nourishes each contemporary generation with a sense of tradition and historical continuity, is a small group of families whose members were born to that class, and whose ancestors have been 'to the manor born' for several generations. This institutional analysis, then, will begin with the history of when and how the founders of some sixty Proper Philadelphia families first rose to positions of wealth and power. We shall show how these family founders, a majority of whom were included in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (a convenient index of an historical elite), came to the fore in Philadelphia's cultural and economic life during three fairly distinct historical periods. First, there were the eighteenth-century merchants and statesmen who produced Proper Philadelphia's Golden Age; these first family founders were followed by the pre-Civil War founders of family manufacturing firms and investment banking houses; and, finally, there were the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century entrepreneurs who founded newer, and often fabulously wealthy, family lines.

On the whole, the 'old' family clans were founded before the Civil War. Even in 1940, those of more recent wealth were still considered 'new.'[11] Continuity in change, however, is the mark of a healthy society. The descendants of these family founders, whether they were East India merchants, colonial statesmen, pioneering manufacturers, railroad executives, coal barons, or traction tycoons, have intermarried and been assimilated into the fairly homogeneous subcultural world of Proper Philadelphia. In addition to piling up great fortunes and founding family dynasties,

these men also established various upper-class institutions which, in turn, structured this process of assimilation by providing ways and means for the old and new rich to play and learn and worship together. They built up the fashionable Victorian neighborhood around Rittenhouse Square after the Civil War, and then moved their families out to such secluded suburbs as Chestnut Hill, which was planned and developed almost single-handedly by one large landowner, and the Main Line, an early suburban preserve for Pennsylvania Railroad executives. While most of them were originally Quakers, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and even Baptists, they soon built fashionable Episcopal churches around the Square and out in the suburbs, where the vast majority of their more genteel descendants were to worship eventually. They founded local private schools for their children, and also the University of Pennsylvania which played an important role in preparing their descendants for useful careers in law and medicine. And, of course, they had their exclusive clubs; election to membership was the final mark of entrance into the brotherhood of Proper Philadelphia.

In the course of the twentieth century, as transportation improved and the national corporation serving a national market became the norm, the New England Episcopalian boarding schools and the more fashionable Eastern universities began to educate an inter-city and national upper class. These fashionable family-surrogates taught the sons of the new and old rich, whether from Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, or San Francisco, the subtle nuances of an upper-class way of life. After World War I, the old school tie, or the "Ivy Leaf" and "Porcellian Pig," became totem symbols of pedigreed associational status recognized all over America (at least within upper-class circles). Wherever possible, then, we shall stress the fact that Proper Philadelphia is part of a *national* upper class with a similar way of life, institutional structure, and value system.

Leadership, and the exercise and retention of power within a small and hereditary group of families, is the ultimate end and justification for an upper-class way of life. For this reason, anecdotes about the charming idiosyncrasies of Proper Philadelphia will be avoided in favor of institutional analysis.[12] Nor will the behavior patterns of the leisured classes enjoying their leisure

along the Main Line be discussed in any detail. Too often, social criticism of the privileged classes has treated the member of the *Social Register* as superficial "socialites," irresponsibly outside the main stream of American life. Although this view may reinforce a hypocritical definition of democracy, it is nevertheless bad sociology; and it is not borne out in the Philadelphia *Social Register,* which listed, with certain ethnic exceptions, almost all the most powerful bankers and businessmen in the city in 1940.

Even more disturbing are the sophisticated critics of American society who reinforce this popular view of the 'leisure classes.' The highly entertaining, if often inaccurate, writings of the late Thorstein Veblen, for instance, inadvertently played down the facts of power by their very emphasis on the conspicuously consuming leisure-time activities of America's new plutocracy at the turn of the century.[13] Even the serious sociology of W. Lloyd Warner, in stressing the fact that the old family leaders in *Yankee City* were looked up to because they "knew how to act" or possessed an inherited good taste in furniture, may have confused a by-product with the basis of privilege.[14]

Perhaps Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, in *The Gold Coast and the Slum,* has succeeded in reinforcing the popular stereotype of the "socialite" more successfully than most serious sociologists.[15] In this early sociological classic, one of the few references to the *Social Register* in the literature of sociology occurs in the following paragraph:

> The "social game" is a constant competition among those who are "in" for distinction and pre-eminence; a constant struggle upon the part of those who are not "in" to break into the circles of those who are in. Perhaps as good a criterion as there is of social position, which is the goal in the "social game," is the *Social Register,* a thin blue book which one can own only by virtue of having one's name in, containing a complete list of Chicago's socially acceptable, with their universities, their clubs, their marriages, their connections, and their deaths. To have one's name in the *Social Register* "one must not be 'employed' [sic!]; one must make application; and one must be above reproach."[16]

Some people of course have always played the "social game," and they have not always, or only, been members of the upper class. But few of the Proper Philadelphians who built up family fortunes have had either the time or the inclination to play the game; nor, for the most part, have their socially secure descendants. Moreover, exclusive private schools, neighborhoods, and social

clubs are not necessarily frivolous aspects of the "social game" but, rather, an important means of consolidating a continuity of particular and partial power in the serious world of affairs. Even that ubiquitous upper-class rite of passage—the debutante ritual—serves the latent function of containing family wealth and power within a small select circle; the democratic whims of romantic love often play havoc with class solidarity.

Recent American social science has suffered from an unfortunate "time-provincialism": sociology without history and psychology without biography has become the norm. Throughout our discussion of the development of Proper Philadelphia institutions, the changing economic and social conditions upon which they were ultimately based will be emphasized constantly. We shall show, first of all, how Penn's city was ruled by a small Quaker oligarchy during most of the eighteenth century, and how these devout Quaker grandees founded several prolific family lines which have continued to produce important leaders in the city for over two centuries. Eventually, however, the Indian Wars, the general increase in wealth, and the ideas of the Enlightenment, which infected so many scions of good Quaker families during their quest for education abroad, all combined to produce a new Anglican gentry during Philadelphia's Golden Age —the years following the Revolutionary War. Federalist and Anglican Proper Philadelphia was at that time the host to the New World's most sophisticated and talented leaders. A class of gentlemen, steeped in the classics as well as the political theory of Locke and Rousseau, reluctantly had taken the lead in rebellion against the British Empire, and subsequently wrote the new nation's constitution after lengthy deliberation on Philadelphia's Independence Square.

After the War of 1812, a new bourgeois ethic entered the genteel drawing rooms around Washington and Independence Squares; Proper Philadelphia was busy assimilating the pioneers of America's soon-to-be-predominant business class. These were the days of the founding of family firms, both in manufacturing and banking; the consolidation of coal-mining interests; and the founding of such Proper Philadelphia institutions as the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Philadelphia Club. By the close of the Civil War, these

new businessmen had replaced the merchant-statesmen as typical Proper Philadelphians.

The half-century following the Civil War, of course, produced a fabulous plutocracy whose handsome mansions surrounded Rittenhouse Square. Although the "Protestant ethic" still spurred on the *parvenu*, Proper Philadelphia increasingly preferred the richness of the Anglican ritual, and, in many subtle ways, a rigid code of drawing-room manners gradually replaced the more ancient moral values. The capitalist-entrepreneur still dominated the family firm as well as the patriarchal household. As the century waned, however, the fashionable investment bankers were busy creating a corporate concentration which would, of course, eventually spell the end of the family firm and all it meant to family power and sense of responsibility.

The period between the two world wars marked the final stage of this upper class history. The advent of the income tax, and the federal centralization accelerated by World War I, paved the way for the final triumph of an inter-city aristocracy based on affiliation with fashionable boarding schools, universities and clubs rather than prominent family position alone. These economic trends paralleled the social and sexual revolution of the twenties: the emancipation of women, the decline of male and parental authority, combined with the final destruction of the "Protestant ethic" all served to weaken the power of the family.

The steady stream of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who came to America between 1880 and 1918 were to eventually change the traditional ethnic composition of the elite; and especially the predominantly Anglo-Saxon upper-class position of leadership. As the descendants of these new immigrants would not, however, materially change the ethnic composition of American leadership until after World War II, this is another reason for focusing this study on the pre-war era.

There were other signs of change in the air by 1940; even though most of them waited for the close of World War II to assert themselves. This was, of course, the period of the gradual retreat of the *entrepreneur* in favor of the large corporation *employee;* the investment banker began to lose power and prestige as the large corporations, large insurance companies, and the federal government began to invade the money market; at the same time public relations, invented by that proper Princetonian, Ivy Lee, became the newest rage; clean-cut young men from fash-

ionable universities went into advertising rather than Wall Street. The bank account and the trust fund, life blood of an upper class, were replaced by the expense account and elaborate corporation retirement plans. It was the beginning of the new corporate feudalism and atomistic society of rank (cradle-to-the-grave security for those who play the game); local ties and family prestige were to be replaced eventually by the coat of arms of the "company man," that new aristocratic nomad who would move from suburb to suburb, in city after city, especially in the early years of his marriage when, in a previous age, he would have been busy establishing himself in some local community.

Philadelphia has been going through a cultural, civic and political renaissance since the end of World War II. Perhaps this is one of the best reasons for concentrating on the pre-war period—when conservative gentlemen-bankers and businessmen were still in control of the city. Fashionable Philadelphians are still powerful today in many areas, and leadership in the new reform movements includes many Proper Philadelphians, but the new social forces asserting themselves in the city must eventually result in a new balance of power between the traditional upper class and other centers of influence. In the exciting decade of reform since the war, life in Philadelphia has changed, but it is still too soon for any objective assessment of the changes.

All this suggests that 1940, the eve of America's entry into the Second World War to save democracy, may definitely have marked the end of another era in the history of Proper Philadelphia. While the era may, in fact, have ended in 1929, in our rapidly changing society the top echelons of any elite usually remain in command beyond the historical period in which they made their way to the top. It must be borne in mind that the Philadelphians listed in *Who's Who* in 1940 made their way, on the whole, before, or just immediately after, World War I. The 1930's were indeed a new era on the national political scene, but in Philadelphia, the same business leaders remained at the helm all through the Depression. A depression usually consolidates the power of those in control at its beginning; modern war, on the other hand, is productive of new elites and new family founders. Thus, with the exception of a few references to the present for historical contrast, we shall center our discussion on Proper Philadelphia prior to World War II.

CHAPTER II

The American Metropolitan Upper Class and the Elite

> Unlimited political democracy in America, for instance, does not prevent the growth of a raw plutocracy, or even an aristocratic prestige group, which is slowly emerging. The growth of this "aristocracy" is culturally and historically as important as that of plutocracy, even though it usually goes unnoticed.
>
> MAX WEBER

THE history of Western Civilization has been, in many ways, the story of the rise and fall of great metropolitan centers: Athens and Rome in the ancient world, Constantinople in the age of transition, Paris, along with Naples, Venice, and Milan in the Renaissance, London in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and, finally, New York in the twentieth, each in its day, marked the center of pomp and power in the western world over a span of twenty-five centuries. And in each city, at the zenith of its power, an aristocracy of wealth or an upper class emerged. The last years of the Republic in Rome, when the Senate was an aristocracy of wealth, and the "Gilded Age" in America when the Senate was known as the "Millionaires' Club" may be similar sociological periods.

In the same vein, American history is partly reflected in the rise of different cities to positions of affluence and power: Salem and Newport rose to prominence along with the merchant shipper of the eighteenth century. Atlanta, Charleston, Richmond, New Orleans, and Mobile were centers of affluence in those chivalrous days just before the Civil War when the planter aristocracy dominated the United States Senate. Within the last few decades, Los Angeles and Detroit manifest a modern opulence as they supply the demands of a mass culture for movement and entertainment. Not the least indicative of the trend of our times is the growth of the nation's capital as the result of the shift in power from Wall Street to the government bureaucracy.

In any complex civilization, social and economic power tends to gravitate toward the large metropolis; and centralization is especially characteristic of modern American society where the national corporation, mass producing for a nationwide market, has steadily absorbed or replaced the local firm. In their excellent sociological analysis of the first successful labor strike in *Yankee City's* long history, which occurred in 1935, Warner and Lunt carefully document this modern pattern of centralization:

> Big City capitalism had superseded small town capitalism in the vertical structure of corporate enterprise which had extended on beyond Yankee City to the great metropolis. At the time of the strike the local men, although born and reared in Yankee City, were little more than the factory managers for the Big City capitalists since they occupied inferior positions in this vastly extended vertical structure. They were not in a position to take leadership; they were not in a position of great power where they were free to make the decisions which always characterized the lives of Choate, Weatherby, and Pierce.[1]

Choate, Weatherby, and Pierce, highly respected, upper-class leaders in a departed era of local autonomy and local pride, "had long since taken up their residence in the Elm Hill Cemetery" in *Yankee City*. By 1930 the local shoe factory was owned and controlled by a New York corporation which operated a number of factories as well as a chain of 110 shoe stores in 56 cities: "even the name of Yankee City is not known to those whose financial power often controls decisions of the utmost importance for the town."[2]

All over America, as the members of small town elites become less and less important in each decade of the twentieth century, the more enterprising (and socially ambitious) members of the local upper classes moved to the large city. Many descendants of former coal barons in Scranton, Hazelton, or Wilkes-Barre lived along Philadelphia's Main Line in 1940.

At the same time that the large cities were absorbing members of many small town elites and upper classes, a national, inter-city, metropolitan upper class was becoming a reality in America: for the first time, in the last part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the New England boarding schools and the fashionable eastern universities provided the sons of the new and old rich from many cities with a common experience and set of subcultural standards.

The purpose of this chapter then, is to show how the *Social Register* became an index of this new, inter-city upper class which

emerged in the last part of the nineteenth century in America; and how, in certain of the older metropolitan areas in 1940, the members of this new upper class were, in turn, also members of the contemporary elite, those listed in *Who's Who in America*. In other words, this chapter will serve to place the more detailed study of the upper class and the elite in Philadelphia within a national, rather than local, context, both historically and structurally.

The Social Register: A National Upper-Class Index

Human society is an historical process wherein each generation sifts to the top particular individual types—warriors, prophets, priests, merchants, bankers, or bureaucrats—whose talents are needed in any given period; these individuals, in turn, and within limits, make the decisions which shape the course of history. Thus Brooks Adams saw the history of England as partly reflected in the circulation of elites, wherein the feudal warrior, whose power lay in men and spears, was replaced during the Reformation by the large landowners who ruled England from the time of Henry VIII to the Revolution of 1688; the rising merchant adventurers who finally won their rights in 1688 were soon replaced by the manufacturing men such as Watt and Boulton whose talents led them to power after the Industrial Revolution. And, finally, from the time of the defeat of that symbol of martial power on the hill at Waterloo, both the manufacturing and landowning elites were dominated by, and often in debt to, the money power of Lombard Street.[3] The English upper class, often called an aristocracy, centers in a group of families who are descendants of those successful individuals of the remote and recent past, and is of course alloyed with those new men with a talent for power in the modern bureaucratic period.

As in England, America has produced a procession of successful men who have risen to positions of wealth and power, and whose children and grandchildren have been brought up in a more or less money-insulated world, often called polite society. In each generation, however, the old-money world has remained aloof from the larger and more opulent world of the newly rich.

All families are equally old. Thousands of Americans apparently boast of the sacred blood of *Mayflower* passengers, and all of us go back to Adam and Eve! In the limited social class sense, "old families" are those whose ancestors were affluent in an earlier day than their "new family" emulators. Within America's Eastern upper class, for example, the "old families" are certainly not *Mayflower* descendants; rather they are the descendants of eighteenth and early nineteenth century merchants and manufacturers. Inherited wealth is always and everywhere the basis of gentility. "All through Boston history," writes Cleveland Amory, "when a family loses its financial stability, it has a way of beginning to disappear."[4]

After the Civil War, America's eastern seaboard, provincial and familial aristocracies were eventually replaced by an exclusive and competitive associational plutocracy, rooted in the "Gilded Age" and continuing to the present day. As with so much else in American life, the 1880's witnessed a turning point in the structure of the upper class. Edith Wharton portrays this transitional period in three novels—*The Age of Innocence, The House of Mirth,* and *The Custom of the Country*. The first novel, which opens "on a January evening in the early seventies," presents a small, intimate, and formal "Society" which is soon to surrender to the assault of the *parvenu* described in the other two novels.

After 1880, New York became the center of upper-class social life in America. For one thing, new fortunes of undreamed-of proportions were founded in this period. According to Charles A. Beard, while there were only three millionaires in the United States in 1861, thirty-six years later there were at least thirty-eight hundred.[5] From all parts of the American continent, barons of drygoods, utilities, coal, oil, and railroads moved their wives and families to the great metropolis, built ostentatious Victorian mansions, entertained on the grand scale, and, where possible, moved into "Society." Even their literary hero, Mark Twain, a self-made man from Missouri, was "a candidate for gentility."[6]

At first there was the usual resistance to accepting these new rich families. But "by one process or another amalgamation was affected and new varnish softened by the must of age. As the landed gentlemen of England had on various occasions saved their houses from decay by discreet jointures with mercantile families, so many of the established families in Boston, New

York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore escaped the humiliation of poverty by judicious selections from the onrushing plutocracy."[7]

In the year 1887, amidst this incredible "Gilded Age," the *Social Register* was copyrighted by the Social Register Association; the first volume appeared for New York City in 1888.[8] There were less than two thousand families listed in this "record of society, comprising an accurate and careful list of its members, with their addresses, many of the maiden names of the married women, the club addresses of the men, officers of the leading clubs and social organizations, opera box holders, and other useful social information."[9] America's associational aristocracy was born with the advent of the *Social Register*. "Here at last," wrote Dixon Wecter, in his *Saga of American Society,* "unencumbered with advertisements of dressmakers and wine merchants, enhanced by large, clear type and a pleasant binding of orange and black—which if anything suggested the colors of America's most elegant university—was a convenient listing of one's friends and potential friends. It was an immediate triumph."[10]

The New York *Social Register* was soon followed by volumes for Boston and Philadelphia in 1890, Baltimore in 1892, Chicago in 1893, Washington, D.C. in 1900, St. Louis and Buffalo in 1903, Pittsburgh in 1904, San Francisco in 1906, and Cleveland and Cincinnati-Dayton in 1910. Volumes for all these twelve cities have been issued yearly down to the present and in substantially the same form as the original New York *Social Register*. Other volumes were issued for Providence, R.I. (1905-1926), Minneapolis-St. Paul (1907-1927), Seattle-Portland (1914-1921), Pasadena-Los Angeles (1914-1926), Detroit (1918-1927), and Richmond-Charleston-Savannah-Atlanta (1905-1927) but were discontinued because of lack of interest.[11]

It is interesting that the *Social Register* is privately owned and lists social status, as it were, for a profit. The *Social Register* is issued annually in November and is sent to all families listed within its pages. The annual charge for a subscription ranges from five to ten dollars per city volume. Potential members must make application and include written references from present members; the only exceptions are to be found in Washington, D.C., where the President, the Vice-President, the Supreme Court, the cabinet, various members of the diplomatic corps, and all United States Senators (not Representatives) are listed automatically. This last

point is indicative of stratification in a bureaucratic social structure where, like the military services, social class follows functional position; the senator, like the naval officer, is automatically a "gentleman."[12]

What is the relationship between the families listed in the *Social Register* and the captains of industry and finance who came to power in the "Gilded Age"? In his *Lords of Creation,* Frederick Lewis Allen shows how ten ideal-typical examples of the American financial elite at the turn of the century alloyed their gold with the American upper classes. Of interest here is the fact that, of these ten men—J. Pierpont Morgan, George F. Baker, James Stillman, Edward H. Harriman, John D. Rockefeller, William Rockefeller, Henry Huddlestone Rogers, William K. Vanderbilt, James R. Keen, and Jacob H. Schiff—all save the last were listed in the *Social Register* as of 1905. Allen notes that the exclusion of Schiff was "presumably due to the fact that he was a Jew, and the Jews constituted a group somewhat apart; the fashionable clubs were almost exclusively gentile; and the *Social Register* was virtually a gentile register."[13] As it illustrates the dynamics of upper-class formation in America, it is of interest to observe that Jacob Schiff's grandson, who married George F. Baker's granddaughter, was listed in both the *Social Register* and *Who's Who* as of 1940.

Ferdinand Lundberg's *America's 60 Families* is a study of America's wealthiest families, the majority of whose fortunes were made between the Civil War and World War I.[14] Of these sixty consanguine family units, well over three-fourths have traceable descendants (the same given and surnames as the family founder) who are listed in the 1940 *Social Register.* These descendants are married one with another as well as with those of less spectacular wealth but higher social position: in the twentieth century, for instance, "blood" has been nicely alloyed with "gold" as Biddles, Roosevelts, and Peabodys have married Du Ponts, Dukes, or Fields.

Finally, Gustavus Myers' *History of the Great American Fortunes* is a useful volume for validating the *Social Register* as an index of an American upper class.[15] This well-known book is a study of the men who amassed great fortunes in America from colonial times to the present (1936). The names of these wealthy family-founders (taken from the index of Myers' book) have been carefully checked against the names of the families listed in the twelve *Social Registers* in 1940. Table 1 is a listing of the famous

family-founders in Myers' book whose descendants are listed in the contemporary *Social Register.*

The distinguished historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, once facetiously remarked that he attached great significance to the fact that the founding of the Brookline Country Club, in a Boston suburb, in 1882, coincided with the closing of the frontier in America. Certainly, the closing of the frontier (1890), the formation of the United States Steel Company (1901), the founding of Groton School (1884), the opening of the new "millionaires' country club" at Tuxedo Park, New York (1885), the rule of Mrs. Astor and Ward McAlister (1880's and 1890's), the Bradley Martin ball (at the cost of $369,200 in 1897), and the first issue of the *Social Register* (1888) were important, and interdependent, variables in a social situation which foreshadowed a centralized America in the middle twentieth century.

A centralized elite and upper class quite naturally follows from a centralized economy. From the beginning, provincial aristocracies of birth and breeding have been characteristic of all the older eastern cities in America. The *Social Register,* on the other hand, was born in an age of centralization and lists a new, associational, inter-city, aristocracy. For the first time, upper-class associations other than the family played an important role in socializing the young. The New England boarding school and the fashionable Eastern university became upper-class surrogate families on almost a national scale. J. P. Morgan, the symbol of economic centralization in America, for example, joined his contemporaries as trustees and benefactors of these exclusive educational associations, where they all, in turn, sent their sons to be educated together. Of the eighty-seven family-founders listed in Table 1, no less than sixty-five had one or more descendants who had attended either Groton, St. Mark's, or St. Paul's schools in the period between 1890 and 1940.

Groton, which opened its doors in 1884 with the elder Morgan as an original trustee, was founded by Endicott Peabody, whose ancestors were great Salem merchants.[16] In the twentieth century its role as an upper-class family-surrogate on almost a national (and international) scale is indicated by the fact that its 192 boarding students in 1940 were residents of fifteen states, the District of Columbia, Bermuda, Brazil, China, England, Hungary, Ireland, and Venezuela.[17]

Table 1—Deceased Elite Individuals in American Economic Life with Descendants who Are Listed in the 1940 Social Register; the Names Are Taken from the Index of History of the Great American Fortunes, by Gustavus Myers

Deceased-Elite Individual	*Period When Wealth Was Acquired*	*Occupation: Or the Way in Which Wealth Was Acquired**
Elite Individuals with Descendants Listed in the Philadelphia *Social Register* in 1940		
Baer, George F.	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Biddle, Nicholas	18th-19th Century	Finance
Cassatt, A. J.	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Cope, Thomas Pym	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Dolan, Thomas	Late 19th Century	Utilities
Drexel, Anthony	Late 19th Century	Finance
DuPont, Coleman	20th Century	Chemistry
Elkins, William L.	Late 19th Century	Utilities
Hopkins, Johns	Early 19th Century	Railroads
Knox, Philander	Late 19th Century	Law
Penrose, Boies	20th Century	Politics
Ridgway, Jacob	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Scott, Thomas	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Wanamaker, John	Late 19th Century	Merchant
Widener, P. A. B.	Late 19th Century	Utilities
Elite Individuals with Descendants Listed in the Boston *Social Register* in 1940		
Adams, Charles F	Late 19th Century	Railroads†
Aldrich, Nelson	Late 19th Century	Finance
Ames, Oakes	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Brooks, Peter C.	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Cabot, George	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Derby, Elias	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Peabody, Joseph	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Perkins, Thomas	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Thorndike, Israel	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Elite Individuals with Descendants Listed in the Chicago *Social Register* in 1940		
Armour, J. Ogden	Late 19th Century	Manufacturing
Field, Marshall	Late 19th Century	Merchant
Leiter, Marshall	Late 19th Century	Merchant
McCormick, Cyrus	Late 19th Century	Manufacturing
Palmer, Potter	Late 19th Century	Merchant
Patterson, Joseph M.	Late 19th Century	Publisher
Elite Individuals with Descendants Listed in the New York *Social Register* in 1940		
Astor, J. J.	Early 19th Century	Furs, Land
Baker, George F.	Late 19th Century	Finance
Beekman, Henry	18th-19th Century	Land
Belmont, August	Late 19th Century	Finance, Utilities

Table 1 (Continued)

Deceased-Elite Individual	*Period When Wealth Was Acquired*	*Occupation: Or the Way in Which Wealth Was Acquired**
Blair, John I.	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Brevoort, Henry	18th-19th Century	Land
Brown, Alexander	Late 19th Century	Finance
Carnegie, Andrew	Late 19th Century	Manufacturing
Choate, Joseph	Late 19th Century	Law
Clews, Henry	Late 19th Century	Finance
Cravath, Paul D.	Late 19th Century	Law
Cromwell, W. Nelson	Late 19th Century	Law
Dodge, Cleveland	Late 19th Century	Copper
Duke, James B.	20th Century	Cigarettes
Flagler, H. M.	Late 19th Century	Oil
Ford, Henry	20th Century	Autos
Goelet, Peter	18th Century	Land
Gould, Jay	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Griswold family	18th-19th Century	Merchants
Harriman, E. H.	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Havemeyer, H. O.	Late 19th Century	Sugar
Hill, J. J.	Late 19th Century	Railroads
James, D. Willis	Late 19th Century	Copper
Ledyard, L. Cass	Late 19th Century	Law
Lee, Ivy	20th Century	Public Relations
Livingston, Robert	18th Century	Land
Lorillard, Pierre	Early 19th Century	Snuff, Land
Morgan, J. P.	Late 19th Century	Finance
Payne, O. H.	Late 19th Century	Oil
Perkins, George	Late 19th Century	Finance, Insurance
Phelps, John T.	Late 19th Century	Copper
Phillips, Adolphus	18th-19th Century	Merchant
Rhinelander, William C.	18th-19th Century	Land
Rockefeller, John D.	Late 19th Century	Oil
Rogers, H. H.	Late 19th Century	Oil, Finance
Roosevelt, James	18th-19th Century	Land
Ryan, T. Fortune	Late 19th Century	Utilities
Schermerhorn, Peter	18th Century	Land
Schiff, Jacob	Late 19th Century	Finance
Schley, Grant B.	Late 19th Century	Finance
Schuyler, Peter	18th-19th Century	Land
Stettinius, Edward	Late 19th Century	Matches, Finance
Stillman, James	Late 19th Century	Finance
Stokes, Thomas	Late 19th Century	Copper
Taylor, Moses	Early 19th Century	Railroads, Finance
Vanderbilt, Cornelius	Early 19th Century	Shipping, Railroads
Van Rensselaer, K.	18th Century	Land
Villard, Henry	Late 19th Century	Railroads
Whitney, William C.	Late 19th Century	Utilities

Table 1 (Continued)

Deceased-Elite Individual	*Period When Wealth Was Acquired*	*Occupation: Or the Way in Which Wealth Was Acquired**
Elite Individuals with Descendants Listed in the Baltimore, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, or Washington *Social Registers* in 1940		
Crocker, Charles	Early 19th Century	Railroads
Elkins, Stephen B.	Late 19th Century	Land
Frick, Henry Clay	Late 19th Century	Manufacturing
Garrett, John W.	Early 19th Century	Railroads
Longworth, Nicholas	18th-19th Century	Land
Mellon, Andrew	20th Century	Finance, Manufacturing
Mills, D. O.	Early 19th Century	Finance
Pulitzer, Joseph	Late 19th Century	Publisher

* The occupations listed are of necessity limited to the principal field of endeavor. There was much overlapping. While "land" is listed for only a few individuals, almost all of the great fortunes in this country profited from the ownership of urban real estate. Finally, several lawyers and politicians are listed because these men were prominent in their day and were listed in the index of Myers' book.

† While Charles Francis Adams (Jr.) was a prominent railroad executive, he was a man of inherited wealth. When Charles Francis Adams I, the father of Henry, Charles, and Brooks, married the daughter of Peter Chardon Brooks, one of Boston's first millionaire merchants, the Adams family became wealthy for the first time.

These boarding schools not only bring together the sons of the "old" and "new" rich from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to be socialized in one homogeneous atmosphere (the school family); they also serve to drain off the sons of the local, small-town upper classes all over America. Thus in *Yankee City* a young lady of the "upper upper" class, according to an observer in the Warner team, confessed that she could not find a suitable marriage mate because "all the young men have left."[18] She goes on to describe how her brother, a graduate of St. Paul's and Harvard, had recently taken a job in a large New York law firm and was engaged to marry a New York girl, "a sister of one of his classmates at St. Paul's."[19]

In the middle of the twentieth century, symbols of membership in exclusive associations have replaced the family *arms* of an earlier day. The school, or college club, "tie" or "hatband" is now, as we have said, a status symbol recognized within the upper classes in all cities. Although it has received little attention from sociologists, this change to a uniform national upper-class structure, which of course parallels the well-documented trend towards a centralized economy, will be emphasized throughout the rest of this book.

Who's Who in America: A National Elite Index

Who's Who is a nationally recognized listing of the brief biographies of the leading men and women in contemporary American life. As such it is a perfectly democratic index of high functional class position and has wide prestige. This elite index is a listing of individuals of national rather than local prestige: in 1940, for example, three artists and one clergyman were the only ones listed in *Who's Who* from Newburyport, Massachusetts (*Yankee City*), while two members of the Ball family and ten others composed the entire listing from Muncie, Indiana (*Middletown*).[20]

As an upper class is intimately connected with history, the validity of the *Social Register* as an upper-class index depends on the relationship of its members with past elites. But an elite has no group existence or history—only individual members have a past; elite members are making history while some of their heirs will become members of some future upper class. Thus the validity of an elite index such as *Who's Who* depends on the reputation of the volume and the careful and objective methods used in selecting those who are included each year. *Who's Who* has been published by the A. N. Marquis Company since 1897; today some fifteen researchers examine over 200,000 persons before selecting approximately 30,000 to be included within each volume; the publishers have a long-standing reputation for their integrity in not including any person attempting to bribe or flatter his way into this exclusive index; "not a single sketch in this book has been paid for—and none can be paid for."[21]

In response to a standard form sent to all those persons chosen to be included in the current issue, each completed biography in *Who's Who* lists the following information: name, occupation, date and place of birth, full name of both parents, education and degrees, marital status—including name of spouse, date of marriage, and the full names of any children—occupational career, military experience, directorships and trusteeships, honorary societies and associational memberships, fraternal organizations, reli-

gious and political affiliation, club memberships, publications, and finally, home and business addresses.

No index is perfect, nor any sociological classification as homogeneous as might be desired. As an elite index, *Who's Who* has certain weaknesses: in the first place, it is too heavily weighted with educators and churchmen in contrast to the organizing elites of business, government, and labor (only labor leaders on the national scene are likely to be listed in *Who's Who*); secondly, in the distribution of power in any large, urban community, one must always remain aware of the social power exercised by those persons, e.g., the political "boss," who are not strictly "respectable." *Who's Who* gives no clue to the extent of this power in America. And, finally, certain individuals are listed in *Who's Who* more because of their prestige and prominence than because of any real achievement in a functional sense.

Whatever its inadequacies, however, *Who's Who* is a universally recognized index of an American elite and as such, contains accurate information about a class of people which the social scientist would be unable to secure on his own. People in this category, as a rule, do not have either the time or the inclination to supply such data solely for the purposes of sociological analysis. Moreover, this index, the product of year-in and year-out research in many communities in America, may be used to compare (1) different types of communities, as well as (2) the same community at two different periods.

One of the important differences between *Who's Who* and the *Social Register* is the way in which new members are added from time to time. In the first place, new families are added to the *Social Register* as a result of their making a formal application to the Social Register Association in New York City. In other words, a family having personal and more or less intimate social relations (in business, church, school, club, or neighborhood activities) with the various members of certain families who are listed in the *Social Register* reaches a point where inclusion seems expedient. Someone already listed in the *Social Register,* presumably a friend of the new family, obtains an application blank which is filled out by the new family (usually by the wife) and returned to the Social Register Association in New York along with several endorsements by present Register members as to the social acceptability of the

new family. There will be a nominal fee. The next issue of the *Social Register,* including all pertinent information on the new family, will arrive the following November. The new family might be listed somewhat as follows:

Doe, Mr. and Mrs. J. Furness III (Mary D. Bradford)		R, RC, ME, Y'15
	Miss Mary Bradford—at Vassar	
	Mr. John F. IV—at Yale	Phone 1235
Juniors	Miss Sarah—at Foxcroft	"Boxwood"
	Mr. Bradford—at St. Paul's	Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Insight into the structure and values of the American upper classes may be obtained by a perusal of the family listings in any contemporary volume of the *Social Register.* The ideal-typical Mr. Doe of Philadelphia, for example, belongs to three clubs, the Rittenhouse (R), the Racquet (RC), and the Merion Cricket (ME). He graduated from Yale in 1915, is educating his children at fashionable boarding schools, and lives on the Main Line. The familistic values of this upper class are indicated by the use of family given names (Bradford, the son), the use of "III" or "IV" as a mark of family continuity, and the listing of the maiden name of the wife. The patriarchal nature of the upper-class family is shown by the fact that the college attended by the wife (if any) is *never* listed in the *Social Register.*

Upper-class membership is a family affair, and grows out of subjective, primary group relationships, but elite individuals are chosen on the more objective basis of individual achievement. One does not apply for membership in *Who's Who,* nor is there even a nominal charge for being included. The following standards have been established by the publishers for inclusion within this elite index

> Except for names which are included in *Who's Who in America* for one or more of the arbitrary reasons designated below, the aim is to include the names, not necessarily of the best, but rather of the best known, men and women in all lines of useful and reputable achievement—names much in the public eye, not locally, but generally. The standards of admission divide the eligible into two classes: (1) those selected on account of special prominence in creditable lines of effort, making them the subjects of extensive interest, inquiry or discussion; and (2) those included arbitrarily on account of official position—civil, military, naval, religious, or educational.[22]

Who's Who in America and the *Social Register*— Elite and Upper-Class Indices and the Relationship between Them

It is important to be clearly aware of the fact that any index used in the social sciences is only a convenient tool which is constructed to approximate any given concept one desires to use for the purpose of abstract analysis. For example, just as the "intelligence quotient"—which can be measured—is only an approximation of that which we call "intelligence"—which cannot be measured—so *Who's Who* and the *Social Register* are nothing more nor less than the best available indices of an elite and an upper class. By their very nature, constructed indices are simplifications; nonetheless they are essential tools in scientific analysis. In other words, we are only too well aware of the fact that there are individuals and families listed in the *Social Register* who are not "really" upper-class members and those not listed who obviously are; similarly, there are individuals who are leaders in their occupational fields who are not listed in *Who's Who* and, in turn, some of those listed are not "really" of elite status. For the purposes of this book, however, it will be assumed that *Who's Who* lists an elite, and the *Social Register* an upper class, in certain large metropolitan areas in America.

The twelve metropolitan areas in the United States with *Social Registers* in 1940 are shown in Table 2: column 1 shows the number of conjugal family units listed in the *Social Register* in each city, and column 2 shows the proportion of those listed in *Who's Who* in each city who are also listed in the *Social Register*. The concentration of power and talent in these cities is indicated by the fact that, while their populations make up only approximately 20 per cent of the total population of the United States, 40 per cent of all those listed in *Who's Who* in the country reside in these twelve metropolitan areas. Furthermore, it is certainly plausible to assume that the elite members in these cities have a more pervasive influence on the American social structure as a whole than the 60 per cent who are listed in *Who's Who* from the rest of the country.

In 1940, there were approximately 38,000 conjugal family units