Ohio is justly famous as the birthplace of a remarkable string of presidents of the United States. These Ohio-born presidents all came to office during the turbulent decades of industrialization in the United States between the end of the Civil War and 1920. That line of Ohio presidents includes:

- Ulysses Grant, Republican elected in 1868
- Rutherford Hayes, Republican elected in 1876
- James Garfield, Republican elected in 1880
- Benjamin Harrison, Republican elected in 1888
- William McKinley, Republican elected in 1896
- William Howard Taft, Republican elected in 1908
- Warren Harding, Republican elected in 1920.

Even if we acknowledge that Grant and Harrison, though born in Ohio, put down political roots elsewhere, we see that five presidents from Hayes to Harding were not only born in Ohio but also rose to political prominence in that state between 1876 and 1920.

Most historians find these presidents forgettable, and, taken individually, they fail to measure up against the nation’s best statesmen. Even William McKinley, who launched the United States as an imperial power with the Spanish-American War, has generally been viewed by historians as controlled by Ohio industrialist and Republican organizer Mark Hanna. So what does this line of presidents tell us about Ohio’s place in the world in 1903, the year of its centennial of statehood? This chapter addresses that question by exploring the civil society that lay behind the state’s national political prominence.
Chapter 4

Ohio was in many ways the best example of the American model of a relatively weak state and relatively strong civil society. The latter sustained Ohio’s national political ascendancy during the industrializing decades between 1876 and 1920. Different groups in Ohio’s civil society sought common ground across class and ethnic differences that became more prominent during industrialization. Because gender was a fundamental principle of organization in civil society, men and women participated differently in Ohio’s political culture. Thus I examine how groups of men and groups of women sought to create common ground across class and ethnic differences. Throughout the chapter I will chart the relationship between Ohio’s political culture and that of the larger world of the industrializing West. Ohio’s prominence in presidential politics was partly due to its power as a populous “swing” state whose voters were equally divided between Democrats and Republicans; Republicans nominated Ohioans as a way of winning the state’s electoral votes. Yet while this competition between the two major parties may have enlivened Ohio’s politics, it does not explain the robust civil society that sustained the state’s political institutions. For such explanations we need to turn elsewhere—to labor history, social history, the history of political reform, and women’s history.

Ohio’s national political ascendancy between 1876 and 1920 occurred at the same time that the nation was rapidly industrializing and organized labor was emerging as a force in American public life. Historians have paid more attention to organized labor itself than to the response of other groups to organized labor, but that response helps us see how groups in civil society, including organized labor itself, resolved some of the largest moral questions of their day. Although the industrialization processes that transformed Ohio were similar to those altering Europe and North America in the late nineteenth century, local groups that shaped the state’s civil society responded in ways not always found elsewhere, especially in their capacity to create common ground between different social groups. This common ground made it possible for Ohio to move relatively peacefully through a process that elsewhere in the United States was marked by violence and bloodshed.

At the time of the centennial of Ohio statehood in 1903, industrialization posed serious challenges throughout the western world. Migrations of people and capital across national borders accelerated as machines replaced artisans in the production of goods. Cities and smokestacks displaced pastures and trees. Enormous mansions for a few contrasted grotesquely with acres of squalid tenements. Public health facilities were nonexistent or overwhelmed; cities lacked drinkable water. Industrial injuries killed family breadwinners and maimed inexperienced child laborers. Wages fell beneath
the level required to support life. In these and other ways, economic changes exceeded the ability of established social and political institutions to solve problems generated by those changes.

Focusing on what they called “the Social Question” and “the Labor Question,” governments and groups in civil society tried to meet these challenges. Labor partisans in England and socialists in Germany pressured governments to regulate factories and provide social services. As early as 1889 Germany enacted an old-age social insurance program, acknowledging that those disabled from work by age and invalidity had a well-grounded claim to care from the state. In the United States equivalent federal legislation was not passed until the Social Security Act of 1935. The earlier date of the adoption of social security in Germany and its late date in the United States highlight the relatively strong power of the central government within German political culture and its relative weakness in American political culture. Yet while the German model of a relatively strong state provided more social protection for workers, it coexisted with a restricted civil society: until 1890 German governments prohibited the German Socialist Party (soon thereafter the nation’s largest political party) from holding political meetings.
In the United States, state governments often took the lead in passing reforms for the working class, but only years after the Europeans. Once states began to pursue social welfare legislation, legislators often looked to Europe. In 1914, for example, Ohio put into effect a workman’s compensation law modeled directly on the German plan of industrial insurance. One of the framers of Ohio’s system called it “the most concrete illustration of the adaptation of the German plan” in the United States. The American model of a relatively weak state provided less protection for workers, but coexisted with a robust civil society in which grassroots movements gained access to political power. Therefore, in the United States civil society became just as important as the state in solving the social problems generated by industrialization.

Ohio’s robust political culture can in part be explained by the state’s geographic centrality in the nation’s industrializing process during the decades around 1900. Ohio was no backwater. As early as 1850 the state was at the center of transportation routes from east to west and north to south. Its network of railroads, canals, roads, rivers, and ports made the state a thoroughfare for the passage of people and goods in the mid-nineteenth century. This commercial development gave Ohio a head start in the nation’s industrialization from 1870 to 1920. During those decades nine Ohio cities grew to more than 50,000 inhabitants as Ohio became one of the most industrialized states in the Union. U.S. Census data chart the growth of those nine cities. Particularly pertinent to the development of Ohio’s civil society was the rapid growth of Columbus and Cleveland.

Columbus grew from a population of more than 50,000 in 1880 to more than 237,000 in 1920, increasing by 70 percent in the 1880s and more than 40 percent in each of the two following decades. This dramatic expansion included a mixture of foreign-born immigrants and migrants from the American countryside. Even though Cleveland was already three times larger than Columbus in 1880, it grew at the same dramatic rate, becoming Ohio’s largest city by 1900. Columbus’s mixed economy of small businesses and relatively light manufacturing attracted fewer immigrants from eastern and southern Europe than did Cleveland, where the city’s heavy industries of oil refineries and steel mills absorbed a steady cascade of immigrants.

Other rapidly growing cities, such as Akron, Canton, Dayton, Springfield, Toledo, and Youngstown, show the pervasiveness of industrialization in Ohio. Dayton grew exponentially on the pattern of Cleveland, though Dayton started and remained smaller. Benefiting from its location
on the railroad, the city became a technological center in the 1880s with John Patterson’s National Cash Register Company, complemented in 1910 by Charles Kettering’s Dayton Engineering Laboratories, and, after the important historical intervention of Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1903, the Dayton-Wright Airplane Company and Wright Field. No wonder, then, that in 1900 residents of Dayton filed more patents per capita than any other city in the United States.\(^8\) Cincinnati, which, thanks to the influx of German immigrants in the 1840s and 50s, was the state’s largest city in 1880, grew at a much slower pace thereafter, and was surpassed by Cleveland in the 1890s.

When Ohio joined the union in 1803, it was part of a preindustrial world in which local social relations were shaped to a considerable degree by values held in common. These values were reinforced by religious, political, and social institutions. For example, most states still used tax money to support a state-established church; political rights were limited to those males who held property; and custom regulated the terms on which artisans were employed. In this context the economic marketplace was only one part of a larger moral economy that represented the welfare of the whole society. For example, it was no accident that arguments about slavery in the 1850s became moral arguments over whether that system was compatible with Christianity. The moral economy was just as strong as the commercial economy.\(^9\)

After 1870 this vision of a socially regulated moral economy was eroded by marketplace values that equated the welfare of the whole with that of the individual. In this context states ceased supporting churches with tax money, political rights were extended universally to white men regardless of their property holdings, and the terms of employment were unregulated. Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (published in 1776) first articulated this new world view, which a century later was known by the French anti-mercantilist term *laissez-faire* (or “let it be”). Yet this new moral economy, which imagined individuals in worlds of their own making, left many questions unanswered about what members of a democracy owed one another and how that responsibility should be exercised.

Those questions were dramatized by the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, which marked the transition from pastures to smokestacks throughout the United States. By looking at the strike nationally and then in Ohio, we can appreciate the vitality of civil society in Ohio during this first eruption of widespread industrial violence. The Great Railroad Strike had all the elements of the dark side of emerging modern America: unrelenting economic depression; desperate working people unable to feed their families; large corporations accountable to no one but their investors; and, perhaps most
ominously, the violent repression of the strike by state militia units backed up by federal troops.10

Railroads, the vanguard of industrialization in the United States, occupied center stage in this drama. In the 1860s and 70s railroads had forged a national market, connecting east and west, north and south in a network that employed more workers than any other industry and itself constituted an important market for iron, steel, coal, and other industries. Railroads produced great wealth for a few, but the contraction of the industry in the economic depression that began in 1873 steadily impoverished hundreds of thousands of railroad workers and their families in the 1870s. By 1877 unemployment in the industry remained widespread and underemployment meant that many jobs were not full time. Wages were cut beneath the level needed to maintain life.11

The strike began in the summer of 1877 in Baltimore when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad announced its second wage cut of the year and protesting workers refused to let trains move until the cut was restored. Sympathy strikes spread along the railroads in every direction, from city to city, drawing in workers from other industries. In many cities businessmen, alienated by the railroads’ monopolistic power, sided with the strikers. In St. Louis a general strike stopped the city for nearly a week. President Rutherford B. Hayes (former governor of Ohio) appeased railroad executives by making federal troops available to governors to put down what had become a nationwide rebellion. Justified as necessary to keep the federal mails moving, in mid-July 1877, U.S. Army troops equipped with Gatling guns traveled from city to city on railroad cars recently wrested from the control of striking workers.

Federal troops and state militias assaulted unarmed crowds of strikers and strike supporters. In Baltimore the state militia fired into a crowd of two thousand unarmed men, women, and children, killing ten and wounding many others. In Pittsburgh militiamen killed twenty men, women, and children. From the outskirts of Pittsburgh angry miners and steel workers broke into a gun factory, armed themselves, and attacked the troops who retreated into a railroad roundhouse. A bloody street battle ensued the next day as the troops fought for their lives to escape the avenging throng. Militia also fired on crowds in Chicago, where, as in other major cities, angry strikers destroyed railroad tracks and buildings worth millions of dollars. In all, about one hundred lives were lost.12

What about Ohio? Did the president’s authorization of federal troops reflect the intensity of class warfare in Ohio? Or did another pattern prevail there? In Ohio the strike was centered in Newark, east of Columbus. Four divisions of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad intersected there and it was a
central location for the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad. The Newark railroad yards covered ten acres, providing employment for more than a thousand men in “depots, supply houses, round houses, one of which is among the largest in the West, and very large machine and repair shops.”

Although many of the strike’s ingredients in Newark resembled those in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Chicago, the outcome there was quite different. No violence occurred. Why not? Historian Brian Linn, who has written about the strike in Newark, credits moderation on all sides—the deliberate effort to avoid violence by the governor, the attorney general, the state militia, and the strikers themselves. Yet Linn’s evidence from newspaper accounts of the strike invites another interpretation—that strikers and militiamen avoided violence by creating common ground through their shared participation in civil society and popular culture. We can follow events through the newspapers of Ohio towns that sent militia units to Newark since they closely covered the interaction of strikers and militia.

After three hundred strikers seized control of the Newark yards on July 18, railroad officials demanded that the governor mobilize the National Guard to protect railroad property and non-striking workers, who, managers said, wanted to work. (Meanwhile, strikers prudently sequestered only commercial freight cars and permitted mail cars to proceed through the city.) On July 21 the governor traveled to Newark with four Guard companies from Springfield, Mount Vernon, Circleville, and Zanesville, totaling 170 men with more modern weapons than other Ohio Guardsmen. Yet when the strikers held their ground and militiamen found it difficult to move among the stranded freight cars, the outnumbered Springfield soldiers, according to the Dayton Daily Journal, were rumored to have put down their guns and challenged their opponents to a game of baseball.

The next day the governor brought in seven more companies from Cincinnati and Dayton, bringing the Guard total to 530. Mutual threats between strikers and militiamen stopped short of violence. One striker’s diary said that “the soldiers made a charge at the railroad boys but they stood firm and dared them to touch them.” This standoff became the basis for a larger settlement. Strikers agreed to leave the yards, and militia commanders agreed they would not try to use non-striking workers to move the trains. Both sides claimed victory.

During the next week militia, striking workers, and townspeople peacefully interacted in Newark’s public space. Local people cheered the militia as they marched through the town, expressing their appreciation of the guardsmen’s decision not to try to move the trains. Soldiers entertained the populace “with baseball games, drilling demonstrations, singing, and plays.” Families of strikers offered food to the guardsmen, and the soldiers
politely admired Newark’s “belles.” The head of Cincinnati’s regiment wired
the governor, “Send us home; we are not needed here.” Everyone went
home except the Springfield regiment, which, according to newspaper
reports, “organized a glee club, staged a ‘very natural can-can,’” and played
more baseball. A week later, after the strike had been broken in other
cities, Guard units were sent to Newark in greater numbers, and, meeting
no resistance, peacefully ended the strike by protecting workers who put the
trains back in motion.

Although the possibility of violence hung over events in Newark and
newspapers dramatized its potential, that outcome remained unrealized. On
the contrary, from the time the trains stopped in Newark on July 18, till
August 3 when they began to run again, newspapers reported on the cam-
araderie between militia and strikers. A typical story was that carried by the
Springfield Daily Republic at the height of the strike on Monday, July 23:
“There is the most friendly feeling between the citizen soldiers and the
 strikers, and there does not seem to be a likelihood that these pleasant rela-
tions will be disturbed.” Many papers reported “that the troops fraternize
with the strikers and refuse to fire upon them.”

How can we account for this “friendly feeling” and fraternizing? The
recently popularized game of baseball helped, but newspaper coverage in
cities that sent militia to Newark—Columbus, Circleville, Dayton,
Springfield, and Zanesville—shows us that the social fabric held in Newark
because values associated with civil society were stronger than those associ-
ated with either side of the “railroad war.” Men with guns from neighbor-
ing Ohio cities did not fire their weapons at the people of Newark because
militia and strikers created a common ground where they expressed their
differences nonviolently.

To achieve this outcome, leadership at the state level mattered; the gov-
ernor ordered militia commanders to exercise “discretion and judgment,”
and the state attorney general “refused to enlist the aid of private companies
offering to ‘put down this infamous riot and insurrection.’” Regimental
leadership must also have been important in maintaining the soldiers’ dis-
ciplined good spirits. But underlying a desire among all participants to
avoid violence was a shared culture in which militia and strikers prized their
commonality over their differences, a civil society in which strikers and
militia saw themselves as fellow citizens. A Dayton paper expressed that
sentiment well, writing, “it is a most serious thing for militia to fire upon
their fellow citizens organized as disturbers of the peace under exaspera-
tions for which even the severest of us have pity.”

“Civil society” has become an important concept for historians of the
Progressive era because it refers to those sectors of society between the state
and the economy, which in the Progressive era devised a new moral economy consistent with the new commercial economy. One good definition of “civil society” is that offered by the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University:

Civil society refers to that sphere of voluntary associations and informal networks in which individuals and groups engage in activities of public consequence. It is distinguished from the public activities of government because it is voluntary, and from the private activities of markets because it seeks common ground and public goods. For democratic societies, it provides an essential link between citizens and the state. Its fundamental appeal since its origin in the Scottish Enlightenment is its attempt to synthesize public and private good.

The term “common ground” calls our attention to the sites where people from different social locations meet and try to overcome their differences. In times of profound transformation like the Progressive era, these sites were not routinized, so innovations like those of the Ohio National Guard at Newark become all the more significant. The baseball diamond and other public space became literally as well as symbolically “common ground.” This definition of civil society helps us see that when militia members fraternized with strikers, they stopped representing the state and began to represent civil society. They became a voluntary association trying to synthesize public and private good. This description of their actions might seem grander than their intentions, but it seems safe to assume that many members of the militia decided that their own private good and the larger public good was better served by baseball than by guns. The 1877 strike began an evolution, however slow and halting, from the violence that marked the strikes in the early 1870s toward something new. In the previous chapter, Eric Foner described the fear that many Ohioans articulated in the first half of the 1870s: foreign revolutionaries controlled Ohio workers and planned to turn Ohio’s urban centers into smoldering cauldrons of class conflict. The strengthening of Ohio’s civil society held that fear at bay even if it never conquered it altogether. Although the problems that underlay the Strike of 1877 were common in the western world, and although Ohioans had often associated labor militancy with foreign radicalism, Ohio’s robust civil society created common ground where citizens interacted to create more democratic alternatives to the status quo.

Newspapers help us see that the “civil” identity of the militia members was rooted in their identity as members of their home community. They were known by and accountable to that community. One story in the
Circleville Union Herald named each and every member of the Circleville Guard along with his most characteristic behavior. That long list began:

J. S. Anderson is the biggest eater, D. L. Peters is the epicure. W. H. Pinnix does the most grunting. C. E. Moeller is the best singer, W. C. Doubleday has the stiffest neck, O. F. Thompson writes the most letters, S. F. Boyles is continually borrowing a lead pencil. Noah Davenport is the first to hear the call to “grub,” Adam Kraft is always looking for something, Frank Hirt takes it easy, Jared Lerch is in hot water lest someone will take his blanket, Albert Schwarz dreams the sweetest dreams. Chas Easton don’t know what to do with himself, R. D. Lannum smokes the most cigars.

Ohio militia members were not anonymous automatons. They were specific individuals who could be held accountable for their actions.

Militia members were also held accountable by the other groups to which they belonged, including their workplace, their churches, baseball clubs, and temperance groups. The Springfield Daily Republic described the town’s militia as “boys” who “left their work in the various stores, offices and shops of the city.” Some expressed their hometown affiliations while in Newark. Twenty-four members of the Circleville Guards attended Newark’s Episcopal Church in full dress uniform on Sunday evening and sang Gospel hymns after returning to their quarters. Baseball created fictive communities in many hometowns and, judging by the amount of baseball that militia units played in Newark, team spirit was an important civic value for many militia members. Springfield called itself Champion City, a name inspired by the city’s baseball team, nicknamed the C.C.’s. During the “railroad war” the Springfield team lost to the Pittsburgh Alleghenies, where, the writer speculated, “the heavy striking at Pittsburg just now had some effect.” Called the Champion City Guard, the Springfield militia lived up to their name by challenging other Guard units and perhaps even the strikers themselves to a game of ball. The Circleville paper proudly reported that their Guard “scooped the other ‘sojers’ playing ball.”

One of the most important civil identities that Ohio militia members shared with strikers was their mutual affiliation with the 1870s temperance movement. Almost every story about the strikers emphasized their sobriety. Before the militia arrived, the Columbus Evening Dispatch noted, strikers themselves were enforcing order in the Newark railroad yards. “A couple of men in an intoxicated condition came into the yards, but were instantly thrown out, the strikers not allowing anything of the kind.” The Daily
Ohio State Journal, another Columbus paper, agreed: “A more orderly set of men than those engaged in this strike at this point it would be difficult to find. They are temperate in their language, so far as we have observed—are not disposed to rowdiness, and temperate to abstemiousness, so far as the use of liquors is concerned.” Papers also observed that at a public meeting of strikers at the height of the stoppage “the tone of the speakers was temperate to a degree that gave general satisfaction.”

Labor historians have recently noted the importance of the temperance movement in railroad brotherhoods between 1870 and 1910. In 1874 The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers urged members to use their leisure time “to acquire a more thorough knowledge of our business” as a means of gaining public “sympathy and support in our efforts to obtain a fair remuneration for the service rendered.” In an industry in which men’s lives often depended upon quick responses by co-workers, sobriety also saved lives. Historian Paul Taillon found that the brotherhoods actively enforced temperance and respectability among their members and fought an ongoing battle against intemperate drinking and inappropriate behavior. Thus when union leaders at Newark enforced sobriety in the yards during the strike, their actions were consistent with their reputations as temperance men.

Newspapers covering the Newark strike also noted a temperate spirit among the militia; one characterized them as “retiring, courteous gentlemen.” The largest guard contingent at Newark hailed from Springfield, and although the temperance movement was strong throughout Ohio, Springfield was its center. During the strike Springfield papers described almost nightly temperance rallies in the Champion City, which presumably were attended by family members of militia “boys.” The audience at one Springfield temperance meeting applauded when a speaker told them that “The strikers at Newark pledged each other to drink no liquors while the contest lasted.”

Temperance was a “big tent” movement, literally and figuratively. Springfield’s Murphy League sponsored temperance speakers with Irish names and invited “men and women of all nationalities and colors” to its meetings. In this context the movement urged strikers and management to find common ground. As the Springfield Daily Republic noted at the height of the strike,

From many a pulpit—in Springfield and other cities—fervid and earnest petitions were offered up to Almighty God that He would interfere to calm the passions of men and that He would put it into the hearts of all
interested or engaged in this conflict—the railway managers and the strikers alike—to take right action! To all these prayers there were hearty amens and excited, partisan discussion, but all should do what they can to promote harmony and friendly feeling.

Ohio’s robust civil society, greatly augmented by the temperance movement in the 1870s, fostered the spread of civic values that informed the interaction of militiamen and strikers at Newark during the “railroad war” and avoided the violence that characterized the strike in many American cities. Later, during years of profound transition around 1903, forces within Ohio’s civil society emerged to value commonality over difference and to hold government and the economy accountable to the larger society of which they were a part. These patterns were strikingly evident in two of the best known local leaders during the Progressive era—clergyman Washington Gladden and businessman Tom Johnson.

Thanks to Jacob Dorn’s magisterial biography of Washington Gladden, we know how Gladden used his pulpit at the First Congregational Church in Columbus from 1882 to 1914 to become the “father” of the Social Gospel movement in American Protestantism. Theologically he sacralized daily life as the site where religion was tested to see whether it was genuine. Politically he spoke out against trends that eroded the common ground that citizens shared. Socially he created a dialogue with others to seek shared solutions to social problems. Throughout his career Gladden expanded the common ground that people could share despite their differences—businessmen and workers, African-Americans and whites, women and men.

Gladden’s theology first appeared in his 1877 publication, The Christian Way: Whither It Leads and How to Go On, which called for the extension of Christian values into everyday life. This book launched his leadership in the Social Gospel movement, which historians have described as people stepping “outside the churches to intersect the political, social, and economic forces of changing America.” Conscious of the connections between his own work and the antebellum antislavery movement, Gladden wrote in his Working People and Their Employers (1876), “Now that slavery is out of the way, the questions that concern the welfare of our free laborers are coming forward. . . . They are not only questions of economy, they are in a large sense moral questions; nay, they touch the very marrow of that religion of good-will of which Christ was the founder.” By sacralizing everyday life Gladden and others made modern economic, social, and political forces rel-
evant to their ministry. For him public space was sacred space, and munici-
pal government a sacred undertaking: City Hall was the place where “all the
civic organizations and agencies for the preservation of the peace and the
promotion of public welfare . . . have their headquarters . . . its functions are
just as religious as the functions of the church.”

Because his church stood across the street from the state Capitol, Gladden’s congregation included a sizable number of state legislators. Perhaps for this reason he ventured further into politics than most ministers, serving on the Columbus City Council and using his pulpit to advocate legislation that curbed the power of private monopolies that had grown wealthy by overpricing commodities that average people had to buy. To combat these profiteers Gladden called for public ownership of streetcar lines, electricity, and other utilities. He urged parishioners and other allies to become more politically active and to reclaim control of municipal government. Gladden’s crusade was depicted in a 1905 cartoon that characterized him as a crusader assaulting a fortress.

Gladden went beyond good government to call for social justice in a variety of forms. At a time when the lynching of African Americans in the South was tolerated by most northerners as a custom for punishing criminals, his 1903 sermon, “Murder as an Epidemic,” condemned lynching. That year he spoke at the “Eighth Annual Conference on the Negro,” organized by W. E. B. Du Bois at Atlanta University, met Du Bois, and read his pathbreaking *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in which Du Bois called for full political rights for African Americans and rejected Booker T. Washington’s efforts to advance black economic progress without advancing black political rights.

Deeply affected by Du Bois, Gladden wrote in 1903, “The health, the peace, the vigor of our national life are involved in the destiny of this race.” As president of the American Missionary Association, a group that had helped found Atlanta University and other black colleges during Reconstruction, Gladden declared that the nation faced a choice between elevating African Americans to full citizenship or reducing them to serfdom. Both processes were underway, he said, but the Christian doctrine of brotherhood was on the side of full citizenship. Responding to Gladden’s address, African Americans at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Columbus “passed a resolution of gratitude.” Printed in *American Magazine*, Gladden’s address placed him in the ranks of the nation’s most progressive leaders on the race question.

Gladden also went beyond good government when he called for a “more equitable distribution of wealth.” In 1906 he addressed the New York State Conference of Religion on “The Relations of Moral Teachers to Predatory
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Wealth.” His 1909 Recollections denounced the growing inequalities of wealth in the Gilded Age as unchristian:

In a society in which the Christian law was recognized as the practical rule, there could be no such enormous accumulations in the hands of individuals as those which have been heaped up on the last twenty-five years. Such swollen fortunes are the symptoms of social disease; they have the same relation to social health that hydrocephalus or elephantiasis has to the health of the individual, and to all sound moral vision they are not less repulsive.48

The more Gladden took on the social problems of his day the more popular he became. Membership in his church rose from under five hundred in 1883, to nine hundred in 1902 and over 1200 in 1914. How did he succeed in selling his aggressive reform agenda to his Columbus congregation?

Gladden’s social justice agenda appealed to some but not all his congregation, which included the city’s elite—businessmen, other professionals, and educators. As Jacob Dorn has noted, many of them were searching for answers to pressing social, political, and economic questions, but did not agree among themselves about the answers. Dorn found that in 1902 about one in four of Ohio State University’s faculty members attended Gladden’s church, an astonishingly high proportion, and many university students attended regularly even though they were not members, including Arthur M. Schlesinger, who later became a distinguished historian of American cities. Representing a different spectrum of opinion within the congregation were leaders of the Columbus Board of Trade—almost half of the presidents of the board before 1902, and many of its directors. Gladden himself was an active member of the Columbus Board of Trade. Other congregants included bankers, owners or directors of Ohio mines and railroads, and “the owner of the largest mining equipment company in the country.”49

Gladden did not try to bring all these people with him. Instead, he created common ground with a Sunday evening group, which was attended primarily by men, only about one-third of whom were regular members of his congregation. On Sunday morning Gladden spoke about salvation and religious matters, but his Sunday evening sermons discussed the lives of such exemplary men as Henry Ward Beecher; works of recent social criticism, such as Upton’s Sinclair’s The Jungle (1906); or current events such as social conditions in Europe or famine in India.

This self-selected group of supporters gave Gladden a forum to test his ideas and share solutions for contemporary social, economic, and political
Cleveland’s Mayor Tom Johnson created common ground on the most contested site in urban life—streetcar lines. Because streetcars carried people into and out of the nation’s burgeoning cities from the outlying districts where most of them lived, urban dwellers relied on them to get to work. Streetcars were as important to working people as their jobs, since without them they could not remain employed. Wage-earning people cared passionately about how much of their income went to streetcar fares, whether a streetcar strike might prevent them from working, and (as we will see) the routes that streetcar lines followed.

Streetcar line franchises were so profitable that they attracted businessmen whose wealth was already well-established in banking, shipping, mining, and steel mills. In many ways these franchises were the equivalent of today’s military contracts—just as lucrative, just as heavily politicized, and just as capable of distorting public policy. How did Tom Johnson turn streetcar franchises into common ground? He came to city government on the basis of his success as a streetcar line owner. What made his story different from those before him was that rather than bribing city officials to get his streetcar franchises, he earned his honestly by offering improved streetcar routes and by charging the lowest rather than the highest fare possible.

When Johnson came to Cleveland in 1879, streetcar franchises were dominated by Mark Hanna. Hanna had entered the business from the top as one of Ohio’s wealthiest and most powerful businessmen, who had already grown rich as a shipper and broker moving Great Lakes ore deposits to Ohio’s steel mills through the port of Cleveland. Muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens, the nation’s foremost authority on municipal corruption and author of *Shame of the Cities* (1904), described Hanna’s quest for streetcar profits as quixotic. In a 1905 article Steffens wrote:

[Hanna] had largely of the earth, and of the waters under the earth; he had reached out far beyond Cleveland and Ohio for possessions, into
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Minnesota and New York, Michigan and Pennsylvania, and his hands were full. But he had no street railway. Of course he got one.

Steffens explained:

And that’s how Hanna happened to go into politics. . . . Mr. Hanna did not want to go into politics. He had to. It was necessary to his [streetcar] business that he should, and it was for the sake of his business that he did.

To Steffens the results were clear:

As a business-man in politics, he corrupted politics. Mr. Hanna boodled. He degraded the Municipal Legislature of Cleveland. I don’t say he did it alone. I don’t say he started it. I don’t say he wanted to do that. All Mr. Hanna wanted was that horse-car line, and then some extensions, and then some more franchises. But these he did want, these and other valuable privileges. Since he wanted them, he must have them, and since the business way to get a thing is to go and pay for it and get it, Mr. Hanna went and got his privileges. He bought and paid for them.50

Steffens described government in Cleveland in the 1880s and 90s as “government by the public utility companies.” The head of Cleveland’s government resided not in city hall but in Hanna’s West Side Company, and those who did business with the city knew to go there rather than to city hall.

The city’s elite tolerated Hanna’s rule. Steffens deftly characterized their involvement:

[Hanna’s] was not a very bad government, not in the Tammany sense. There was not much Police blackmail, for example; it was financial, respectable corruption that prevailed, and “good citizens” do not resent that so much. It is quiet, it is convenient; it is theirs; it is the System. Hanna’s government of Cleveland was a government of the people by politicians hired to represent the privileged class. 51

But after Hanna installed William McKinley in the White House and himself in the U.S. Senate in 1897, his control of Cleveland weakened and created opportunities for Tom Johnson.

Johnson’s economic base in Cleveland rested on his innovation as a streetcar businessman who succeeded in providing people with longer rides for lower fares—primarily by developing lines that ran across the city and
helped people move about during the day, not just (as Hanna's did) for commuters in the morning and evening to move between suburbs and the city's center. Hanna's system required people to pay two fares if they wanted to ride within the city as well as into the city. Johnson's reconfiguration of the space that streetcars traversed was not accidental. For him streetcars were more than a cash cow; he cared about how streetcars actually worked (as his thirty patents related to the industry demonstrated), and how streetcars served the needs of the people who used them.\(^{52}\)

Although historians have characterized Johnson as the origin of the idea that streetcars should carry people through and within the city as well as into and out of it, a recent dissertation by Robert Bionaz has shown that well before Johnson's innovation working people had petitioned the city for just such lines. Thus Johnson's real innovation was to listen to those petitions and to make common ground with the petitioners. His respect for working people arose from his reading of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1880) in 1883, four years after his arrival in Cleveland. In a series of influential books written in New York in the 1880s, George argued that property was socially created and should be taxed to restore unearned profits to the public good. Strong as George's influence was in the United States, it was even stronger in England, where, Sidney Webb wrote in 1889, "the present English popular Socialist movement may be said to date entirely from the circulation here of Progress and Poverty."\(^{53}\) In 1885 Johnson visited the economic theorist and asked, "Can a man help who can just make money?" George urged him to enter politics, sealing a friendship that persisted until George's death in 1897. In 1886 Johnson sent a copy of George's new book, *Protection, or Free Trade*, to "every minister and lawyer in Cleveland."\(^{54}\)

When Johnson ran for mayor in 1901, his strongest support came from working-class wards with high numbers of immigrants from Central Europe. They made common ground with him.\(^{55}\) After his election Johnson became what Lincoln Steffens called "the best mayor of the best-governed city in the United States."\(^{56}\) His national prominence came from exemplifying the best that local politics could achieve. Mark Hanna called him a "socialist-anarchist-nihilist," but Steffens saw him as a respectable businessman who made good government a hobby. "When some men go in for yachting, or the Senate, and give money to charity and churches, colleges and libraries, Tom Johnson gave himself and his money to politics, to municipal reform as the mayor of Cleveland."\(^{57}\) Johnson's reform of city government was effective in part because he came from within the streetcar system of politics and knew where the bodies were buried. He knew why the city's water system was polluted, why the schools were inadequate, and the
tax valuations unfair. His hands were not completely clean; yet his alliance with average people created common ground that improved the lives of all of Cleveland’s citizens.

This chapter has discussed only men. It might seem complete without women—except for one thing. We do not really know why so many leaders in Ohio and elsewhere succeeded in constructing common ground during the tumultuous decades around 1900. Common ground was needed, but that does not explain why it emerged. It was needed in the 1850s when the nation threatened to dissolve over the expansion of slavery, and it didn’t develop then, so why should it have appeared during the Progressive era?

One important answer to that question is the massive entrance of middle-class women into civil society in the decades between 1870 and 1910, which enormously increased the sheer number of people active in civil society and greatly expanded the number who were seeking common ground—creating groups, generating goals, and making individuals accountable to the communities in which they lived. By their numbers and by their deeds middle-class women rendered public life more expressive of grassroots needs, more responsive to social problems, and more democratic in its embrace of new groups. These women revitalized public life, politicizing personal themes through the Temperance Movement, applying the Social Gospel to everyday life through the Social Settlement Movement, and (through the Woman Suffrage Movement) giving new meanings to the right to vote.

American women’s access to colleges and universities profoundly shaped their access to public life. Education enabled middle-class women to surmount traditional barriers to their participation in public life because it gave them the tools to innovate in a context that greatly needed and ample rewarded innovation. The industrial revolution, the rapid growth of cities, and an unprecedented flow of immigrants from diverse origins required new ways of generating and communicating information, and new ways of organizing social institutions. Educated women, lacking the civil, political, and economic power of men, created new forms of public discourse, new social movements, and new institutions that matched the needs of their home. German, French, and English universities did not admit women in significant numbers until after 1900. In the United States, Oberlin began the experiment in co-education during the 1830s. That experiment succeeded, and, by 1903, the culture that created co-education also found a central role for women in Ohio’s reform movements.58
As we look again at our three vignettes of Ohio history in Newark, Columbus, and Cleveland, we find women acting in ways that help us understand the success of efforts to create common ground in those cities. In Springfield in the early 1870s women made temperance into one of the most inclusive social movements in American history. In Columbus around the time of the Ohio Centennial, women’s voluntarism put the Social Gospel into civic practice. And when Tom Johnson was mayor of Cleveland, two Ohio towns—Warren and Wilberforce—served as national centers for the woman suffrage movement. By including women in our story we understand more fully how women were expanding the boundaries of civil society to create more common ground for all Americans.

One of the best examples of women’s transformative agency within American civil society between 1870 and 1920 was the temperance crusade launched by “Mother Stewart” in Springfield, Ohio in 1872. Although the organizing genius of Frances Willard so dominated the WCTU after she resigned as dean of women at Northwestern University and became WCTU president in 1879 that historians have overlooked the Springfield origins of the women’s temperance movement, Eliza Stewart was the movement’s chief progenitor during the “crusade” that reconfigured public life in Ohio towns in the depression winter of 1873–74. Born in Piketon, Ohio in 1816, and educated at seminaries in Granville and Marietta, Stewart became a teacher. She married in 1848 and ten years later gave her first temperance lecture in Pomeroy, Ohio. During the Civil War she collected and carried supplies to Ohio soldiers in the South, earning the name “Mother Stewart.” Settling with her family in Springfield in 1866, she founded Springfield’s first women’s suffrage association in 1867 and was named its president. As the first woman to deliver a temperance speech in Springfield in January 1872, she launched a crusade that became known throughout the western world.

The significance of the women’s temperance crusade in Ohio can be measured by the international attention it received. First noticed in national periodicals like Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly in 1874, the movement’s popularity was widely reported in Europe, including in the Italian L’Illustrazione popolare (see next page). Many Europeans first learned about Ohio from coverage of the praying bands of women that stormed saloons throughout the state. And no wonder. Women in Ohio were doing what American women had not heretofore done as women—engaging in massive direct-action tactics. A few members of the American Female Moral Reform Society had picketed brothels in New York City in the 1830s, but their numbers were small. The Ohio crusade, by contrast, drew
“Ohio women picket a saloon.” In May 1874, this image appeared in a weekly newspaper in Milan, Italy’s largest industrial city. L’Illustrazione popolare sold in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Britain, Spain, and Egypt—all countries (like the United States) with many Italian immigrants. The Ohio ladies, having asked in vain for the saloon keepers to close, are holding a prayer meeting outside. The image originally appeared in “The Ohio Whiskey Bar,” one of a series of images on “The New Crusade” in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly, February 21, 1874, 392. Courtesy, Kathryn Kish Sklar.
some 32,000 women into the streets. Based on contemporary newspaper reports, one historian estimates that Ohio women participated in over three hundred “crusades” in almost two hundred places. Of the total number of about 54,000 women involved in the 1873–74 Crusade in thirty-one states and territories, more than 60 percent were from Ohio.\textsuperscript{61} Women’s dramatic street marches overturned contemporary views that limited respectable women to gatherings in their homes or churches. They marked the moment when women set a new model of respectable behavior that risked public censure, even violence.\textsuperscript{62} The distinctive entry of Ohio women into public life through the Temperance Movement can be seen in the envious response of a British temperance worker who wrote in 1883, “We have had no wonderful crusade in England—no such baptism of power and liberty.”\textsuperscript{63}

Although images in European newspapers emphasized the hostility of skeptical men toward the praying women, most Ohio newspapers supported the crusade. Stewart later credited C. M. Nichols, editor of the \textit{Springfield Daily Republic}, as “the originator of the Crusade.” Her “warm friend and advisor,” after her 1872 speech, “came to me and suggested that I ask the ladies of the audience to pledge themselves to hunt up the drunkards’ wives and encourage them to prosecute the rum-sellers under the Adair law, for selling to their husbands, and to stand by them in doing so.”\textsuperscript{64} Nichols was referring to an 1854 state law, amended in 1870, which permitted a wife or mother to sue liquor sellers for damages caused by a sale of liquor to her husband or son.\textsuperscript{65} Nichols told Stewart that “a case under the Adair law is being tried right now in Justice Miller’s court” and urged her to “Get some of your ladies and go in.” Although she failed to get other women to accompany her, Stewart did attend the trial and Judge Miller asked her to address the jury on behalf of the plaintiff. She did so, she later wrote, “because I knew I could speak for her as no man could.”\textsuperscript{66} In this court case and in the social movement she commenced that year, Stewart created common ground between respectable women like herself and women whose drunkard husbands had made them poor. She championed women who knew “wretchedness, woe, misery, privation, neglect, want, pinching poverty, and disgrace for her and her children.”\textsuperscript{67} A wide range of men buttressed this cross-class alliance among women. When Mother Stewart and other townswomen took over a saloon in 1874, the \textit{Springfield Daily Republic} reported the presence of a thousand male supporters.

\textit{[A] great crowd of men and boys, of all classes, extending across the sidewalk and into the street, regarded the proceedings, and the reporter is of the opinion that it was not alone owing to the presence of the police that}
good order was maintained. At prayer time, nearly every head was uncovered, and as the women started to leave, a way was cleared for them. A crowd, estimated at a thousand people falling in at the rear . . .

Stewart remembered that when the saloon proprietor told her to leave his front steps, she began to retreat, but “a hundred voices from the crowd cried out, ‘Stay where you are!’ ‘You have good backing!’ ‘Don’t you move.’” The chief of police “sprang up the steps and seized the man by the arm, thrust him back into his saloon, followed him in and explained to him that the people were in sympathy with and would protect the Crusaders, and that a hand laid on Mother Stewart would be the signal for razing his place to the ground.”

With popular support like this, we can well understand how Eliza Stewart was successful in encouraging women to take unprecedented public actions—demonstrating in streets, praying in saloons, and testifying in court. Weekly meetings in neighboring Ohio towns carried the movement outward from Springfield. In December 1873, Stewart organized at Osborn the first Woman’s Temperance League. In January 1874 she became president of a similar league in Springfield; in April she founded a county union, and in June a state union. At the Cleveland meeting that founded the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in November 1874, she chaired the resolutions committee. In 1879 Stewart chaired the Committee on Southern Work, which organized African American as well as white unions.

Like the women’s temperance movement, Stewart became an international phenomenon. In 1876 she lectured widely in Great Britain and helped form the British Women’s Temperance Association and the Scottish Christian Union. In London in 1895, at the third convention of the World’s WCTU, she delivered the meeting’s first speech. While the WCTU grew as a national force in the United States and as a world force abroad, Ohio had more unions than any other state—208 by 1890. That year 125 secular newspapers in Ohio regularly ran columns that described the activities of local unions.

In villages and cities across the United States the WCTU created common ground among middle-class women, both white and African American, about a social agenda that provided social services for poor families. For example, in Cleveland, the Central Friendly Inn in 1885 offered cheap food and lodging for men, women, and children, a dispensary for babies, public baths, a gymnasium and playground. In this way Cleveland’s middle-class women created common ground with the city’s working poor.

By 1890 nationwide the WCTU was strong and rich, with 150,000
dues-paying members and many state-wide unions. The “Women’s Temple,” a skyscraper hotel and office building for women that the WCTU constructed in downtown Chicago, strongly asserted women’s presence in American civic life. The WCTU’s motto, “do everything,” meant that it encouraged women’s public activism on a wide range of issues, which it organized into “departments,” such as “prison reform” and poverty. By 1890 twenty-five of its thirty-nine departments had little or nothing to do with temperance.\textsuperscript{72}

Beginning in 1890 a whole new scale of women’s activism emerged and the WCTU was supplanted by dozens of more secular women’s organizations, such as the General Federation of Women’s Clubs and a multitude of women’s suffrage organizations. Around that time the social settlement movement replaced the WCTU as the vanguard of women’s reform activism.

Women members of Washington Gladden’s church reflected that vanguard in 1905 when they formed a social settlement that maintained “a kindergarten, library and reading room, district nursing service, domestic science classes, music and dramatic clubs, and gymnastic activities.”\textsuperscript{73} This group quickly became the most important social settlement in Columbus.\textsuperscript{74} Social settlements were a crucially important means by which middle-class Americans built civic ties with working-class people during the decades around 1900. The first American settlement was founded in New York in 1886 by Stanton Coit, a native of Columbus, and a friend of Gladden. The settlement movement began with the founding of Toynbee Hall in the slums of East London in 1884, an institution that sought to give young men at Oxford and Cambridge universities an opportunity to learn first-hand about the effects of industrialization and urbanization. The model launched by Toynbee Hall became a huge international success. American settlements grew in number from six in 1891 to seventy-four in 1897, to over one hundred in 1900 and four hundred by 1910. In the United States, as in Columbus (although not in England or Europe), women dominated the social settlement movement. Settlements gave the daughters of women who had participated in the temperance movement an opportunity to make new and meaningful contributions to their communities. At the time of the Ohio centennial, middle-class women lived and worked in social settlements in many if not most of the nation’s slum neighborhoods.
Like the temperance and social settlement movements, the woman suffrage movement was international in scale and significance. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, founded in 1902 at the initiative of Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, had by the end of 1920 affiliated societies in thirty countries throughout the world, with headquarters in London. Like the temperance movement, woman suffrage gained grassroots support in Ohio in ways that established the state’s national leadership. Two women exemplify that leadership—Harriet Taylor Upton in Warren (near Youngstown) and Hallie Quinn Brown in Wilberforce (near Dayton).

Born in 1853, Harriet Taylor Upton grew up in Warren, Ohio. Her father was a lawyer and circuit court judge, and after graduating from high school, she gained a legal education accompanying him on his court rounds. As a member of the WCTU, her knowledge of legal culture and her familiarity with women’s circumstances throughout the county led to her election as secretary of the Trumbull County WCTU in the 1870s. After her father was elected to Congress to fill the seat vacated by James Garfield when the latter became president, Harriet accompanied him to Washington in 1880. Because he was a widower during his thirteen years as a Congressman, Harriet accompanied him on the round of social calls that greased the wheels of Washington’s political culture, developing a close and easy acquaintance with national Republican leaders. In 1884 she married George Upton, a close associate of her father, who later became his law partner. Living in Warren when Congress was not in session, but in Washington, D.C. when Congress met, she joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in Washington, D.C., in 1890, and formed a close friendship with Susan B. Anthony. In 1894 (thanks to Anthony’s endorsement) she was elected treasurer of NAWSA, a position she held until 1910. For Anthony, Upton was not only a skilled politician who knew how to advance the suffrage movement among the nation’s political leaders, she represented the movement’s appeal to respectable middle-class women. At a time when Anthony and other suffrage leaders wanted to develop that appeal and discard the movement’s reputation as a band of zealots, Harriet Taylor Upton was heaven-sent. The fact that she came from an Ohio town was an important part of Upton’s national power. Her personal style was described as one in which “courage and keen perception were united with a sense of humor, salty, and at the same time benign, which made her speeches sparkle with good feeling.”

In 1903 Harriet Upton moved the headquarters of the NAWSA to the County Courthouse in Warren, Ohio. As her voluminous correspondence with Susan B. Anthony shows, she was a superb fund-raiser and expert press
agent for NAWSA. Anthony would tell her where and when various suffrage speakers were appearing throughout the nation and Upton would be sure that local newspapers carried the story. Between 1902 and 1910 Upton edited Progress, a monthly suffrage paper that became the official publication of the national association. Each issue devoted many columns to lists of local events sponsored by suffrage organizations throughout the nation.

Except for a couple of years around 1910, Harriet Taylor Upton served as president of the Ohio Woman Suffrage Association from 1899 to 1920. She organized the annual state suffrage conventions, directed two unsuccessful state suffrage referendum campaigns (in 1912 and 1914), led the 1916 campaign that secured municipal suffrage for Ohio women, and finally managed the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment by the Ohio Legislature in 1920. True to the vitality of her local roots, during most of this time she also served on the Warren Board of Education.

Yet while Harriet Upton represents the centrality of Ohio in the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the way NAWSA created common ground from that center across the United States, NAWSA did not generate common ground with African American women. Shaped by the imperatives of Jim Crow segregation, the disenfranchisement of black men in the South, and the prominence of the South as a voting bloc in Congress, the woman suffrage movement in the United States was in actuality two movements, one white and one African American. Each sought to create common ground between men and women, but within, not across racial lines.

Ohio-based leadership was also conspicuous among nationally prominent African American women. Hallie Quinn Brown of Wilberforce achieved international renown as a temperance speaker in the 1890s, when she lectured throughout England and Scotland. In 1895 she helped form the first British Chautauqua in North Wales and was elected to membership of the Royal Geographical Society in Edinburgh. Like Mother Stewart, she spoke at the Third Biennial Convention of the World’s WCTU, and she attended the 1899 International Congress of Women in London as a delegate from the United States. She twice appeared before Queen Victoria.

From her home base in Wilberforce, Brown energetically and effectively shaped the entry of black women into American political culture. Born around 1845 to former slaves, Hallie Quinn Brown began to prepare for a life of public service when her parents moved to Wilberforce so she and her brother could attend Wilberforce College, the first private black college in the United States. After graduating in 1873, she taught school in Mississippi and South Carolina. Returning to Ohio in 1887, she taught in Dayton public schools and organized night schools for adult southern
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migrants for four years. After a brief appointment as Lady Principal at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, she became professor of elocution at Wilberforce College in 1893.80

In April 1892 Hallie Brown achieved national notice with a circular she sent to the Board of Lady Managers, who were planning women’s participation in the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. When The Freeman of Indianapolis reprinted her circular, they hailed her as a “distinguished race woman.”81 Styled as a letter to board members, her circular pointed to the lack of common ground between “colored people” and the board as symptomatic of race relations in the United States: “[I]t is known that the intercourse between the two races, particularly in the Southern States, is so limited that the interchange of ideas is hardly seriously considered.” In a speech at the Chicago World’s Fair she called for common ground: “God speed the day when the white American woman, strengthened by her wealth, her social position, and her years of superior training, may clasp hands with the less fortunate black women of America, and both unite in declaring that ‘God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.’”82 Immediately after the fair, Brown helped create the Colored Woman’s League of Washington, D.C., a forerunner of the National Association of Colored Women, founded in Washington in 1896.

After her sojourn in Britain, Brown returned to Wilberforce in 1900 and began a second career that combined teaching elocution with the organization of black women’s clubs. From 1905 to 1912 she was president of the Ohio Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, and from 1920 to 1924 she served as president of the National Association of Colored Women. She also founded a social settlement in Wilberforce, the Neighborhood Club. As vice president of the Ohio Council of Republican Women in 1920, Brown criticized the party for failing to oppose lynching and the Council did not endorse the Republican Party in 1920. Historian Melanie Gustafson noted that Brown spoke at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland and directed the party’s efforts to organize African American women through the new National League of Republican Colored Women, which adopted the slogan, “We are in politics to stay and we shall be a stay in politics.”83

Thus beginning with the WCTU in the 1870s and continuing into the 1920s, Ohio women—white and black—exercised remarkable leadership in their communities, their state, their nation, and their world. Women constituted a parallel “civil society” universe that may not be visible when historians look at men’s participation in civil society; but, like the dark matter
of our own physical universe, it may account for the creative way in which civil society coalesced during the stressful decades of industrialization that followed the Civil War.

These vignettes of Ohio men and women leaders during the Progressive era show us how participants in what we have called “civil society” created common ground across the social, economic, and political differences that separated citizens into groups based on class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Although much of this activity was undertaken by groups of women and men acting separately, and within those divisions by groups separated by race or ethnicity or class, together they strengthened the social fabric of democracy and confronted the challenges posed by industrialization, immigration, urbanization, and segregation.

Did government value the property rights of corporations above the lives of working people? Yes. Were the needs of immigrants and working people ignored by the well-to-do? Yes. Did the city’s rapid development breed corruption? Yes. Was American society racially segregated? Yes. Were women excluded from full participation in public life? Yes. But those antidemocratic trends were constantly countered by citizens who used public space to build a more inclusive society. And Ohioans did more than their share of that important work. Part of an industrializing and urbanizing, and an ethnically and racially diverse world, Ohioans around 1903 made distinctive contributions to the ways that citizens built common ground where individuals and groups demonstrated their accountability to one another and to the larger world of which they were a part.

NOTES

1. The author gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance that others have given to this essay. Halle Lewis provided world-class research assistance. Jacob Dorn guided my research on Washington Gladden. Nancy Garner reminded me about the importance of Eliza Stewart. Daniel J. Lerner enriched the essay’s excursion into sports history. William Christian provided me with a copy of the illustration from L’Illustrazione Popolare. Tom Dublin offered helpful comments on early drafts. William Russell Coil improved the essay’s global scope.

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5. For more on this comparison between the U.S. and Germany, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, Anja Schulter, and Susan Strasser, eds., *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany: A Dialogue in Documents, 1885–1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1–79.


7. Historian Herbert Gutman examined the presence of immigrants in Cleveland’s iron and steel industry in 1880, finding that almost all workers were immigrants or the children of immigrants. The same was true of Youngstown as early as 1880 and of Ohio’s mining counties. See his essay, “Class Composition and the Development of the American Working Class, 1840–1890,” in Ira Berlin, ed., *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 384.


10. Robert Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1959) remains the most complete account of the 1877 strike.

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July, 1877, Legislative Document No. 29 (Harrisburg: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1878), 46.
12. This description of the strike in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Chicago is drawn from coverage in Ohio newspapers cited below.
17. “Memorandum Taken From the Diary of Frank Dennis, Engineer, at Newark Division,” quoted in Linn, “Pretty Scaly Times,” 172.
19. Ibid., 178.
20. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. This definition of civil society is available at www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/civil/faq.htm.
31. Ibid.
33. Taillon, “What We Want.”
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42. *Ohio State Journal*, April 9, 1905.


56. Steffens, “Ohio,” 302
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57. Ibid., 307.
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67. Ibid., 39.

68. Ibid., 174.

69. Ibid., 175.


74. Ibid., 100.

75. See “Harriet Taylor Upton,” in *Notable American Women*.


77. The Upton-Anthony correspondence is available on *The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Ann Gordon editor, microfilm edition, 9.

78. *Progress*, published quarterly at Warren, Ohio, by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, is available on microfilm.


"New London Facets." The abstract style chosen by Lloyd R. Ney for his mural in 1940 at New London (Ohio) was quite rare for post office art, but it captures the vibrancy of Main Street life as Ohioans headed into World War II. That vibrancy would not survive the 1950s. The original is oil on canvas, 5 3/4 x 14 ft. Courtesy, The Ohio Historical Society, AV 48, box 1, folder 16.