

MARY ANN CLAWSON

# Constructing Brotherhood

*Class, Gender, and Fraternalism*



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## CONSTRUCTING BROTHERHOOD



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*CLASS, GENDER, AND  
FRATERNALISM*



MARY ANN CLAWSON

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## CONSTRUCTING BROTHERHOOD



## INTRODUCTION

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### Fraternalism as a Social Form

IN seventeenth-century France, journeymen began to form *compagnonnages*, or journeymen's associations. Through these organizations, they attempted to defend their collective interests against the masters and to provide food, lodging, and guidance for one another as they traveled the country searching for work. In the *compagnonnage's* elaborate initiation rite the young journeyman symbolically entered a new kin group by renouncing his name of origin and being "baptized" with a new name, known only to his fellow *compagnons*.



Eighteenth-century British society saw the emergence of Freemasonry as an institutional force. Beginning in the seventeenth century, English and Scottish gentlemen had sought admission into the lodges of practicing stone masons, and from this peculiar practice grew the Masonic system, distinguished by its remarkable combination of social prestige and class diversity. At a time when differences of rank were almost universally accepted as basic to the social order, gentlemen and even nobles joined with merchants and craftsmen in a rite of leveling that ended in their symbolic *elevation* to the idealized status of Master Mason.



In 1881, in Belleville, Illinois, union activist miners joined forces with a fiercely anti-union attorney and mine owner to establish the Garfield Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. The Pythians were a fraternal order, a kind of social organization that enjoyed an overwhelming popularity in this era; of fifty-five organizations and voluntary associations listed in the

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Belleville City Directory of 1884, thirty-five were local branches of national fraternal organizations. During this same period, hundreds of thousands of American workers became members of the nation's largest labor organization, the Knights of Labor, while many thousands of farmers joined first the Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) then the Farmers' Alliance.



By the end of the nineteenth century, fraternal agents were organizing lodges for a living, paid on commission, like traveling salesmen, to sell the product of lodge membership. In 1915 one such agent, William J. Simmons, came up with a particularly vivid theme for a new order: a recreation of the Ku Klux Klan as a membership organization. The fact that its founder's idea took on a political life of its own should not obscure its origins as one variation of a tried-and-true money-making scheme. In the 1920s, not long after the hapless Simmons had his inspiration, James J. Davis, Supreme Dictator of the Loyal Order of Moose, demonstrated the fraternal order's economic potential by selling his interest in the order for over half a million dollars.

WHAT unites these historically varied associations is the fact that all of them were organized fraternally, brought into being by ritual and based upon the social metaphor of brotherhood. From that seemingly uncomplicated observation derives the subject of this book: the significance of fraternalism, especially Masonic or quasi-Masonic fraternalism, as an unexamined theme in the social and cultural experience of Western Europe, Britain, and the United States. Two points are basic to my argument.

First, fraternalism is an identifiable social and cultural form. It may be defined in terms of four characteristics—a “corporate” idiom, ritual, proprietorship, and masculinity—that appear with remarkable consistency in the guilds, journeymen's societies, and confraternities of late medieval and early modern Europe, the Masonic lodges of eighteenth-

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century Britain, and the trade unions and fraternal social organizations of nineteenth-century America.

Second, the persistent use of the fraternal form as a mode of organization has been an unrecognized social fact. To the great majority of historians who have even noticed it, the presence of fraternal association has been as uninteresting as it was insignificant. Indeed, the fraternal aspect of any given organization or movement, taken in isolation, can seem trivial, but when we consider the range of organizations that made use of fraternal identity, it is remarkable that it has gone unexplored for so long.

Over centuries of European and American history, fraternalism exerted a persistent appeal, forming the basis for guilds, workers' organizations, political societies, and social groups. For the most part, these organizations have been treated separately and without regard to their fraternal character—the guild as an economic institution, the confraternity in religious terms, the Knights of Labor as a union or political organization. In each case scholars have tended to strip away the epiphenomenal fraternal “trappings” so as to concentrate on the religious, economic, or political “core,” which is then seen as the only meaningful part of the institution. This lack of awareness is most pronounced in the study of nineteenth-century American society, where a Masonic type of fraternalism served as the organizational model for trade unions, agricultural societies, nativist organizations, and political movements of every conceivable ideological stripe, as well as for literally hundreds of social organizations.

What is amazing is that even the best and most authoritative of recent historians of social movements have written the history of these organizations without attempting to address their fraternal character. In his book on the Farmers' Alliance, for example, Lawrence Goodwyn emphasizes the importance of a movement culture without considering the heritage of fraternalism as a component of that culture.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One indication of this is that the terms ritual, secrecy, brotherhood, lodge,



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Leon Fink's study of the Knights of Labor acknowledges that the Knights were organized as a fraternal order, pointing to the linkages between membership in social orders like the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Pythians and participation in the Knights and their opponents. But Fink makes no attempt to *comprehend* the character of the fraternalism that was so much a part of the social and cultural environment of Gilded Age communities.<sup>2</sup>

Late-nineteenth-century American fraternal institutions, like their predecessors, articulated a vision of unity and brotherhood among men of disparate social statuses. But their ability to do this, given the social context in which they flourished, is both fascinating and problematic. The period from the mid-1870s to the 1890s was one of "prolonged,

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or fraternal and its variants do not even appear in the index. Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1983). Several scholars have made important contributions to a conceptualization of fraternalism, including Natalie Zemon Davis, John Gillis, William H. Sewell, Jr., Sean Wilentz, and especially E. J. Hobsbawm in his remarkable essay on secret societies and quasi-Masonic brotherhoods in *Primitive Rebels* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965).

In addition, note the distinction between "fraternity" as a political ideal and "fraternalism" as an institutionalized and historically specific mode of association. Wilson Carey McWilliams's *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1973) is the definitive treatment of the former. I share with McWilliams a common recognition that (a) the fraternal relation, grounded in the model of kinship, represents a form of masculine solidarity, and that (b) it contains and expresses hierarchical as well as egalitarian assumptions about human relations. But these insights are not as central to the development of McWilliams's argument as to mine.

McWilliams's goal is to trace the theme of fraternity in the history of American political discourse, and thus to consider whether it represents a desirable and feasible political ideal. My purposes are more delimited and historicized: to conceptualize fraternalism as a form of association, depict its institutionalization in American culture through the medium of Freemasonry, and explore the social and cultural significance of Masonic fraternalism in the articulation of class and gender relations in the nineteenth-century United States.

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intense, bitter, and spreading class conflict," a period in which, David Montgomery argues, the working class achieved a plane of "moral universality."<sup>3</sup> Yet it also witnessed the growth of fraternal orders as organizations that attracted a multiclass membership of massive and steadily increasing proportions. In 1900, for example, the two largest organizations, the Masons and Odd Fellows, had one million members each, and at least four others had over 500,000 members, drawn from a total adult male population of 21.9 million. At the most straightforward level, fraternal orders are important because of the large number of people who were members. In a more determinative sense, the fraternal order, like any other structure comprising a set of institutionalized relationships, represents a resource—of organization, of coordination and of the potential capacity to mobilize for desired ends.

Here the concept of resource is key—the idea, advanced by social movement theorists such as Charles Tilly, Anthony Oberschall, and Jo Freeman, that the types and levels of resources available to a constituency group are crucial in explaining its ability to mobilize. Similarity in people's life experiences or structural location is one necessary basis for a social movement, but cannot by itself explain either emergence or success. If a group lacks appropriate means and opportunities, it will be unable to engage in effective collective action no matter how compelling the grievances it experiences. Successful social movements typically draw upon a variety of resources, but of these, resource mobilization theorists identify the character and extent of pre-existing social networks as one of the key variables affecting the emergence of movements and shaping their actions.

At the most basic level, social networks allow for communication, a prerequisite for even the most "spontaneous" of activities. As Freeman has written, "Masses alone do not form movements, however discontented they may be . . . If

<sup>3</sup> David Montgomery, "Labor and the Republic in Industrial America: 1860–1920," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 111 (April–June, 1980): p. 204.

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they are not linked in some manner . . . the protest does not become generalized but remains a local irritant or dissolves completely. If a movement is to spread rapidly, the communication network must already exist.”<sup>4</sup> Communication, however, is but a first step. Movements operate at an advantage when they can make use of already existing structures of action instead of having to build from scratch. The trust and confidence developed through informal acquaintance can facilitate cooperative activity while the more formal structures of ongoing social institutions can provide the resources of leadership and expertise.

The associational life of a protest or interest group is thus crucial to its ability to mobilize. The civil rights movement, for example, was made possible by the social networks created by the black colleges and the black church, and thus already in place.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, feminist scholars identify same-sex association as a key variable affecting the relative position of men and women. Men typically have access to extensive social networks outside the family, which privilege them vis-à-vis their female relatives. The extent of women’s networks varies, and with this women’s autonomy and well-being; the societies that most closely approach sexual egalitarianism seem to be those in which women possess forms of organization outside the family and paralleling those of men.<sup>6</sup> Viewed from such a perspective, the significance of fraternalism becomes clearer.

But it is not enough to recognize that the fraternal order

<sup>4</sup> Jo Freeman, “Origins of Social Movements,” in Jo Freeman, ed., *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 10–13; Aldon D. Morris, in *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984), extensively documents the role of the black church in the civil rights movement.

<sup>6</sup> Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, “Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview,” in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1974); Peggy Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

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is a resource, a potential contribution to a group's capacity to organize and mobilize itself. We must ask: who is mobilized? who is included, who is excluded, and on what basis do they understand themselves to be a group? Resource mobilization theory has tended to take as its object of study, and thus to assume, pre-existing collectivities with relatively fixed identities. It then asks: how will this group be mobilized? what are the institutional contingencies that make collective action more or less likely? under what circumstances will blacks organize to resist racism, workers form unions, women demand the vote? Such a perspective assumes that the identity and self-understanding of the group is given, preordained. It fails to examine "the constitution of the collectivity itself"; it fails to recognize that "the historical production of social categories" is in itself problematic and in need of analysis.<sup>7</sup>

The growing literature on class formation was the first to undertake such an analysis: first, through the development of a body of historical work that takes class formation as its implicit subject (beginning with E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*), and second, through more explicit attempts to theorize the bases of class formation. All these accounts emphasize that the emergence of class is a historically variable process as dependent for its emergence on the political economy, culture, and organizational structure of particular societies as it is on the abstract logic of the accumulation process. We may then ask, in a nonteleological fashion, how people responded to the transformations brought about by capitalist development. Under what circumstances does class emerge, in Ira Katznelson's words, "as a way of organizing, thinking about, and acting

<sup>7</sup> Craig Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 144; Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," *Theory and Society* 14:5 (1985): p. 552.

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on society"?<sup>8</sup> And, what was the relationship of class to alternative principles of collective identity and action such as race, ethnicity, and, particularly important to this work, gender?

Gender relations are equally the product of historical processes, comparable though not precisely parallel to those of class formation. On the one hand, it is undeniably the case that all societies structure and conceptualize social relations around gender, a fundamental principle of human organization. Thus there is no question whether gender will emerge as a social category. Nonetheless gender, like class, constitutes a system of institutionalized power relations, a terrain of struggle, and an interpretive framework for the construction of social life. In each aspect, it is historically variable, its character in any given society the product of complex interactions between and among men and women struggling to make use of the political, economic, and cultural resources available to them.<sup>9</sup>

In principle, class and gender exist as separate bases of oppression and thus as alternative points of personal and collective interest around which solidarity might be constructed. In practice the relationship is far more complex, as gender, class, and other modes of domination interact to create historically specific social and cultural systems. Identification based upon class, gender, race, and ethnicity may appear as a set of discrete alternatives; but more commonly, the density of historical experience intertwines them in intricate and consequential ways. It is this process that inter-

<sup>8</sup> Ira Katznelson, "Working-Class Formation: Constructing Cases and Comparisons," in Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation: 19th Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 3. In general, see this volume for a systematic and comparative attempt to conceptualize class formation.

<sup>9</sup> Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss's "Boundaries, Negotiations, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations," *Social Problems* 32:4 (April, 1985), is an excellent statement of this perspective on gender. See also Carri-  
gan et al., "Sociology of Masculinity."

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ests me: I seek to understand both class and gender as socially constructed and contested identities that interact with one other. Fraternalism offers a privileged point of access into this issue because it allows us to ask, in historically specific terms, how the kinds of organizations that nineteenth-century American men belonged to affected class mobilization and gender identity.

First, fraternal orders were organizations, and thus social resources. The question then arises: to whom did the resource of fraternal organization belong and to what uses could it be put? That is, what social categories were being validated, and what denied? Because the fraternal order as an institution is so centrally “about” social bonding, the question of whom fraternal organizations include and whom they exclude, what groups they help to unite and what groups they help to isolate, becomes especially significant.

Typically, fraternal forms of association have reached across boundaries, tending to unite men from a relatively wide social, economic, or religious spectrum. At the same time, fraternalism bases itself on a principle of exclusion, from which it derives much of its power. This seeming contradiction highlights the fact that the fraternal order cannot be understood as simply a random assemblage of people. Rather, it was a cultural and associational form with an implicit content, a guiding logic. If the fraternal order was a potential resource for social action, it was by no means a neutral resource. All social action is symbolic and reflexive. But fraternalism, as an institution explicitly defined by ritual, especially demands to be analyzed as a historically-shaped symbolic form. Its significance resides not only in the social networks it created, reinforced, or displayed, but in the meanings it articulated, the cultural context it provided for social action.

Several principles orient my analysis of fraternalism as a cultural form. First, cultural constructs—products, events, texts—play a cognitive as well as an interpretive role. The cultural “organization of experience” is not just a retrospec-

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tive making sense of it, but is, in Robert Wuthnow's words, "constitutive of meaningful experience itself." "Reality" and consciousness are themselves socially created through "the selective organization of objects and events into patterns and through the location of objects and events in symbolic frames of reference."<sup>10</sup> That is, cultural constructs shape how we view the world and what we can know. Selectivity is central to this process; every culture is the product of "absence, omission, neglect, and suppression" as well as of "invention and inclusion."<sup>11</sup>

Second, cultural construction is both a consensual and a conflictual process. It rests upon the availability of shared forms of discourse and shared meaning systems, without which communication would be impossible. Still, that discourse, while shared, is not unitary but inflected with the differing perceptions and interests of its participants. Indeed, the power of a cultural product may depend precisely on its ability to engage people at different levels of meaning, to resolve symbolically the contradictory experiences of everyday life.

Third, because of its cognitive significance, culture is a resource and thus both an object and a terrain of struggle. Because the ability to define reality is a form of power, the struggle to define "reality" is a political one. Gramsci's concept of hegemonic structuring best captures both the structural limits and the play of oppositional forces that infuse cultural discourse. In Gramsci's account, the dominant class does structure consciousness, in the sense that it exercises a disproportionate influence over the definition of social reality. Yet, significantly, this "reality" is a contested one, constantly challenged by the experiences, needs, demands, and imputations of subordinate groups. Thus, cultural products, "in their multiplicitous and varied forms, are not only pat-

<sup>10</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *The Consciousness Reformation* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1976), p. 62.

<sup>11</sup> Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 15.

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terned by social forces—they . . . [are] part of the very building and challenging of social relations.”<sup>12</sup>

Within such cultural processes, rituals have a special character. On the one hand, like other forms of communication, ritual is cognitive. Its selective focus “draws people’s attention to certain forms of relationship and activity—and at the same time, therefore, deflects their attention from other forms, since every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing.” It thus defines “as authoritative certain ways of seeing society.”<sup>13</sup> But ritual is analogous to art; it must exert an aesthetic appeal if people are to be drawn to its repetitious reenactment. Like art, ritual can both express and generate sensibilities, styles of feelings, aesthetically satisfying interpretations of social experience. At the same time, ritual is a collective experience that creates social relationships as it creates meaning. The cognitive “truth” of ritual is thus confirmed for its members not simply by its seeming factuality or intellectual consistency, but by the aesthetic power of the images it offers and the character of the social relations that are created and cemented by the ritual experience.<sup>14</sup>

Fraternalism was one of the most widely available and persistently used forms of collective organization in European and American history from the Middle Ages onward. Any explanation of this must take into account its ritual character. Initiations and other ceremonies were dramatic enactments. Like the street parades that Susan Davis writes about, they were “dramas of social relations” in which “performers define who can be a social actor” and thus “what society was or might be.”<sup>15</sup> In the case of Masonic fraternalism, I would argue, the image of one particular social actor, the artisan, dominated the reality-defining drama/discourse of fraternal ritual.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Steven Lukes, “Political Ritual and Social Integration,” *Sociology* 9:2 (May, 1975): p. 301.

<sup>14</sup> Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Davis, *Parades and Power*, p. 6.



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THIS book argues that Masonic fraternalism exerted a special appeal to anyone seeking to establish or reaffirm a symbolic relationship to the figure of the producer-proprietor, especially as it was exemplified by the contradictory figure of the artisan. Masonic fraternalism has often been seen simply as a product of the Enlightenment, an expression of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberalism. But Masonry was not merely liberal, because it contained a critique of individualism and an antidote to it as well as an affirmation of it. This complexity derived from proprietorial, especially artisanal, culture, which, as recent historians have noted, stands in a singularly problematic relationship to an emergent capitalist order.

Masonic fraternalism valorized craft labor and material productivity. In traditional liberal fashion it justified social inequality by presenting it as a system open to talent, a ladder that anyone and everyone could ascend. But it simultaneously recognized the dislocations of capitalist development through its promise of mutual aid. It thus offered the vision of a society in which individual advancement and social solidarity were complementary rather than antagonistic—and attempted to create that society in miniature.

It is important to realize that in offering such a vision, Masonic fraternalism drew upon an additional resource, the fact that the identity of the artisan was a gendered identity of a historically specific type. The individualism that was one of its contradictory components was a characteristic that the natural rights philosophers accorded only to men; at the same time, fraternal mutuality was inspired by a vision of masculine camaraderie derived from the workshop and the tavern. In late nineteenth-century America this collective identity was subject to assault from two directions. Industrial development and the growing assertion of a feminine vision of social and affective life threatened to undermine major institutions of male solidarity, thus making fraternal institutions doubly attractive.

Originating in the corporate bodies of medieval and early

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modern Europe, given a powerful and appealing reinterpretation via the Masonic movement, the fraternal order played an important role in organizing the social and cultural life of American communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was, then, important both for its role in creating and consolidating social ties and for its promotion of particular values, identities, and implicit models of society. This book will argue that through its construction of ties based upon images of masculinity and craftsmanship, the mixed-class, all-male American fraternal order worked to deny the significance of class difference and to offer gender and race as appropriate categories for the organization of collective identity. An understanding of American fraternalism's appeal and influence must be based upon (1) an analysis of its European antecedents and (2) the transformation of those earlier themes in the context of American culture and socioeconomic development.

The lodges of nineteenth- and twentieth-century America were the descendants of an earlier European fraternalism, examined in Chapter One. Guilds, journeymen's societies, religious confraternities, and village youth brotherhoods were all forms of fraternal association, making it one of the most widespread and culturally central modes of organization in late medieval and early modern Europe. In societies where kinship remained the primary basis of solidary relations, fraternal association was effective because it used quasi-kin relations to extend bonds of loyalty and obligation beyond the family, to incorporate people into kin networks, or to create new relations having something of the force of kinship.

Freemasonry was the particular vehicle by which fraternalism entered American society. Chapter Two looks at the Masonic reworking of earlier European fraternal institutions, while Chapter Four outlines the development of an American fraternalism heavily influenced by the Masonic model. Freemasonry involved the transformation of the traditional craft brotherhood into a social and convivial insti-

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tution patronized by men drawn from an unusually wide spectrum of British society—from aristocrats and gentlemen to artisanal masters and even journeymen. The creation of Freemasonry expressed in a particularly vivid way the broader social importance of craft labor, which contributed not just to scientific advance but to commercial and manufactured wealth. By symbolically *becoming* masons, members of the British elite expressed their commitment to the emerging market economy and to the social value of craft labor and material productivity. They identified the craft worker as a heroic figure and valorized the artisanal culture from which he emerged even as they infused it with their own goals and values.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five I develop an argument about the consistency of the relationship between fraternalism and artisanal identity. The two major forms of fraternalism in nineteenth-century America were workplace-based organizations—trade associations and fraternally organized unions and benefit societies—and a social fraternalism based upon Freemasonry. Although they followed separate paths of development, the continuing interplay between the two kinds of organizations reveals their essential kinship. Chapter Three examines the social composition of lodges while Chapter Four traces their history. Fraternal orders were indeed open-class organizations, but their membership was most heavily concentrated among two core groups: skilled workers and proprietors, that is, among the two groups for whom the identity of artisan remained crucial.

In Chapter Five I look at the connection between social fraternalism and its origins in the craft workshop. Outstanding recent work in both European and American social history reveals the central role of artisans in shaping early working-class experience. Economically pressured, their work reorganized and transformed, artisans nonetheless persisted in the sometimes contradictory values of self-improvement, mutuality, fellowship, and pride of craft, values

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that were fostered and sustained by the masculine culture of the workshop.

The fraternal order abstracted those characteristics from their social foundations in the relations of the craft workshop and the community of artisanal workers and presented them as the basis for a larger social solidarity. As the kinds of workplace solidarity that had been available to masters and workers early in the nineteenth century became increasingly untenable, fraternalism, through its re-creation of an idealized artisanal world, could make a special and analogous appeal to the entrepreneurs and skilled workers who formed the largest segment of lodge membership.

If fraternalism was unusually congenial to American society in its approach to class relations, it stood at odds with the culture in another way. In its character as a masculine organization, it not only maintained sexual segregation, it also rejected many of the century's most deeply held convictions about gender, especially the belief in the spiritual role of women and men's dependence upon them. Chapter Six looks at fraternal attitudes toward womanhood, with their origins in an earlier Masonic era, then outlines the orders' attempts to deal with the feminine disapproval and resistance that their practices elicited.

Chapter Seven makes the argument that by the late nineteenth century fraternal orders could no longer be regarded as simple voluntary associations. Instead, they had become entrepreneurial organizations that operated so as to maximize membership growth and financial profit or stability. To this end, most orders employed agents who worked on commission to organize lodges much as a traveling salesman would sell any other product. In this case the chief product distinguishing one order from another was the ritual, a mini-drama that was acted out by the members of each local lodge. The orders altered and revised their rituals periodically in attempts to make them more appealing and thus to improve their competitive position. Through this process, fraternal orders acted as providers of something approach-

## INTRODUCTION

ing mass media entertainment. In their creation and dissemination of ritual dramas, they were marketing a standardized entertainment product that was reproduced socially and organizationally rather than electronically, as radio, films, and records would be. Fraternal rhetoric continued to emphasize the relation of brotherhood, the ideal of a noncontractual mutuality, but fraternal sociability occurred within organizations that were increasingly centralized and entrepreneurial in character.

THIS book should be understood as a project of conceptualization, of advancing a formulation that is necessarily suggestive rather than definitive. I have chosen to focus on social fraternalism in the belief that the fraternal impetus would be most available to scrutiny in those organizations where it was the major *raison d'être*. My hope is that scholars looking at the whole range of fraternally inspired organizations will be motivated to incorporate and refine my formulation, to consider in greater depth how fraternalism's formal qualities interacted with variations in the identities of participants, social and historical context, and organizational goals and resources.

Reworked and transformed by each generation, fraternalism remained available as a cultural resource with a characteristic vocabulary, interactional style, and set of preoccupations. Fraternalism used ritual to create solidarity, to articulate group identity, and to address concerns about class, gender, and other kinds of social difference. As a result, it is a particularly appropriate vehicle for the study of class and gender relations, as well as a social form of intrinsic interest to sociologists and historians.