

# Tammany Hall: From the Sidewalks of New York to the New Deal



Tammany men: and "Silent" Charlie Murphy and Al Smith, 1916. (Library of Congress)

Robert M. Wesser  
4-15-2021

In February 1932, New York Governor Franklin Roosevelt delivered a radio address chastising the faltering Hoover administration for abandoning “the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.” At the time, this simple idea coming from the privileged, upstate protestant politician caused quite a turmoil, even among Roosevelt’s fellow Democrats.<sup>1</sup> Since when did Hudson Valley patricians know or care about America’s “forgotten man”? Such talk might have been expected from nineteenth century rough and tumble New York Irish politicians scrambling to enfranchise bedraggled immigrants “fresh off the boat.” After all, aside from Tammany Hall, the millions of immigrants pouring into New York City during the decades leading up to Roosevelt’s 1932 radio address had been generally spurned by the city’s political establishment, and certainly by the patrician class. But by the Spring of 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, already well on his way to becoming his party’s nominee for president, was thoroughly confident that a renewed Democratic party had emerged capable of engineering the type of sweeping federal government reforms and legislation vital to the interests of millions of suffering Americans who had been abandoned by their government during the Great Depression.

Of course, Roosevelt’s political career had been based in New York State and, as improbable as it may have initially seemed, had also been tightly integrated with the most powerful urban political machine in the United States, Tammany Hall. The immigrant-based New York City Democracy and its Tammany Hall controllers had gone through an incredible one-hundred year evolution from being a Manhattan-based anti-Catholic, anti-Federalist “republican” nativist society to something entirely different by the beginning of the twentieth century. As this report will demonstrate, that remarkable transition was achieved through the work of some of the Hall’s

---

<sup>1</sup> Terry Golway, *Frank and Al* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2018), 243.

leading individuals, men like William “Boss” Tweed, “silent” Charlie Murphy, and Al Smith. Although all were very different in many respects, each of these men shared a common passion: that tending to the welfare of New York City’s teeming, impoverished immigrants and its underprivileged working classes was the pathway both to political power and to a more just and inclusive American Democracy.

### **Society of Saint Tammany**

Established in 1786 and officially founded in 1792, the Society of Saint Tammany was originally organized as an eighteenth-century “everyman’s” service club, named after the famous native American peacemaker Chief Tamanend.<sup>2</sup> Members included workmen and artisans, but also prominent citizens of the time. The Society proudly saw itself as a counter pole to some of the more “aristocratic” and primogeniture-based organizations of the day like the Society of Cincinnati.<sup>3</sup> As Irish and German immigrants began to arrive into New York City in larger numbers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Tammany became overtly anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic, limiting its elected officers to American-born individuals only. As political issues of the day intensified, the Tammany Society became increasingly anti-Federalist, orienting more to Jeffersonian Republicanism. In 1793, Tammany sponsored major events for the celebrated Citizen Genet in New York City and by 1794 had moved to force any remaining pro-Federalists out of the Society because of their support for the Washington administration’s quelling of the Whiskey Rebellion.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Allen, *The Tiger: The Rise and Fall of Tammany Hall* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993), 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, 10-11.

Tammany's first big entrance into electoral politics came with Aaron Burr's 1800 campaign to take over the New York State legislature in the attempt to determine the outcome of that year's presidential election. To the amazement of many, under Burr's direction Tammany was able to win elections based on gathering meticulous profiles of city voters, thoroughly canvassing them, and even carting wagons full of German immigrant voters to the polls in New York's seventh ward.<sup>5</sup> These unprecedented tactics, known to many as "Burrism," were to become the trademark of Tammany's rise to political power in New York City. By the time that Tammany Hall came under the control of Martin Van Buren and the "Albany Regency" in the 1820s, Tammanyites successfully campaigned for amending the New York State constitution to expand suffrage to most white males over twenty-one, as well as to ensure that lower offices like sheriff became elected positions. This, combined with large-scale voter fraud and intimidation conducted by the Tammany men, became instrumental in a winning New York City for Andrew Jackson in 1827 by a more than comfortable majority.<sup>6</sup> Importantly, this marked the beginning of the Hall's initially cynical enfranchisement of Irish and other immigrants as a means of expanding their power base in the newly formed Democratic party organized in 1828, although there would be no Catholic "Boss" of Tammany Hall for another three decades.

### **The Gangs of New York**

Arguably, it was the period following the election of Andrew Jackson through the Civil War when Tammany gained its sordid reputation as a gang of rapacious thieves wielding illiterate immigrant mobs to try to maintain a stranglehold over New York City politics. For it was in those years that notorious gang leaders like Tammany's Isaiah Rynders and Mike Walsh

---

<sup>5</sup> Allen, 14-16.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, 23, 31-35.

and his “Spartan Association” provoked violent outbursts of the city’s immigrant working poor, like the Astor Place Riot of 1849 and the earlier Bread Riots of 1837. “Gangs of New York” thugs based in the notorious Five Points slums were also employed by Tammany as foot soldiers to secure favorable electoral results for the machine “by any means necessary.” Well-to-do New Yorkers were horrified by the saloon-based political corruption of Tammanyites like the “Forty Thieves,” whose control of the New York City Council seemed to allow them to pillage public funds with impunity.<sup>7</sup> Many would also blame Tammany’s explicitly anti-abolitionist, pro-slavery views for racial violence, typified by Tammany-backed copperhead New York Governor Horatio Seymour’s dubious role in the Draft Riots of 1863. This even led one prominent New Yorker to label the predominantly Irish anti-draft rioters as “agents of Jefferson Davis.”<sup>8</sup>

It is important, however, to identify the historical environment surrounding these affairs. First, the population of New York City saw a *six-fold increase* from 1820-1860 due to immigration. By 1860, almost one half the of the entire population of the city was foreign born, with the majority of those being from Ireland, followed by Germany.<sup>9</sup> Since a large portion of New York’s working population found employment in the Southern cotton-dependent textile industry, it becomes clear why ultra-pragmatic Tammany politicians would be so supportive of the Confederate cause. This also partially explains the virulent anti-black racism among the masses of working immigrants in the city who were more than happy to maintain the institution of slavery as long as it appeared to keep the wheels of industry grinding forward. Also, in the eyes of many poor Irish working men, any increase of free blacks into New York City was seen as a threat to their already scant employment. Mayor Fernando Wood (initially backed by the

---

<sup>7</sup> Allen, 55-62.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Robb Ellis, *The Epic of New York City* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005), 297-99.

<sup>9</sup> Tyler Anbinder, *City of Dreams* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2017), 188.

Tammany base) even attempted to have New York City secede from the Union in 1861 and become a “free state” aligned politically and economically with the CSA. Lurking behind Woods’ election to two mayoral terms was the growing Know Nothing party which had strong support from many of the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic nativist movements throughout the city.<sup>10</sup> In an almost surreal way, all of these factors came together in a horrifying five days of murderous depravity which was the New York City Draft Riots of 1863 which would see thousands of casualties and deaths.<sup>11</sup>

### **William Tweed**

But along with the rough and tumble politics of nineteenth century New York City, Tammanyites and New York Democracy politicians were also expanding their unique practice of tending to the welfare of their immigrant political base to maintain continued support. As Irish and other immigrants increasingly became Tammany operators themselves, this tradition took on an increasingly less cynical character than its “Burrists” originators. Stories of Tammany district leaders repeatedly coming to the aid of poor constituents by providing coal in winter or covering late rent payments and the like has become legend. With the arrival of William “Boss” Tweed into the center of Tammany politics, this informal social welfare system started to evolve beyond that of the district leaders’ politically motivated charity to include actual legislation aimed at effecting real social change.

Tweed had shrewdly built his own political base within Tammany Hall to challenge Fernando Wood’s Mozart Hall Democracy as well as replace some old Tammany hacks like Isaiah Rynders. Tweed was also able to restore confidence among the Hall’s Irish and German

---

<sup>10</sup> Ellis, 281-82.

<sup>11</sup> Ellis, 301-16.

immigrant voters (who had been abandoned by Fernando Wood and his Know Nothing supporters) by ensuring that Tammany saw its first Roman Catholic Grand Sachem in 1861. By 1863, Tweed was thus able to unify Tammany Hall, drive Wood out of the mayoralty, and become the head of Tammany's General Committee as well as chairman of the New York County Democratic General Committee.<sup>12</sup> The disproportionate attention given to the doings of "the Ring" around William Tweed and the subsequent legal prosecutions and media campaign against them has unfortunately eclipsed the more important political progress that Tweed made toward advancing the welfare of the city and his constituents. This imbalance has prompted historian Leo Hershkowitz to assert that "never has so much nonsense been written about an individual" than that of the corruption tales of "Boss" Tweed. Hershkowitz further asserts that the real tragedy was that Tweed was prevented from creating a strong, political force in the advancement of actual democracy.<sup>13</sup>

But perhaps most overlooked in this regard is Tweed's four years in the New York State Senate. In Albany, the Tammany boss was able to successfully engineer the passing of a new charter for New York City, allowing more efficient and effective home rule for the city. Importantly, Tweed not only had the entire power of Tammany Hall behind him in support of the charter, but also created unlikely alliances with prestigious reform groups like the Citizens Association and the Union League. While in the senate, Tweed continuously pushed for legislation to provide government assisted solutions to social welfare problems concerning education, homelessness, and poverty. He also sponsored an array of bills to improve the conditions of life in New York City including a plan to overhaul the City's bustling streets and

---

<sup>12</sup> Allen, 87-92.

<sup>13</sup> Leo Hershkowitz, *Tweed's New York, Another Look* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday. 1977), xvi-xvii.

intersections, establishing libraries and hospitals, and allowing the incorporation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Stock exchange. In short, Tweed's legislative career was that of a "champion of municipal advancement" rarely seen from other members of the New York State Senate past or present.<sup>14</sup>

After the unprecedented combined media and legal assault on Tweed personally, he was effectively removed from all political and social influence, with his conviction being engineered as much by the press as by the actual prosecution.<sup>15</sup> A mere glance at some of Thomas Nast's anti-Irish, anti-Catholic, anti-Tweed cartoons during the time of the prosecution in the fall of 1871 readily demonstrates the complete animus to the Tammany politician by influential tabloids like *Harper's Weekly*. [see Figure 1] After Tweed's demise, it would take three more decades before Tammany Hall and the New York Democracy would renew such a sustained effort to promote and legislate the welfare of its traditional immigrant constituencies and the progress of their city.

---

<sup>14</sup> Hershkowitz, 138-40, 152-55.

<sup>15</sup> Hershkowitz, xviii-xix.



Figure 1



**“Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg.”**  
Note the simian-appearing Irishman. Thomas Nast, *Harper’s Weekly*, November 18, 1871.



**“What are you laughing at? To the victor belong the spoils.”**  
A typical caricature of Tweed by Thomas Nast, *Harper’s Weekly*, November 25, 1871.

## “Silent” Charlie Murphy

Although Tammany continued to care for (in the words of Tammany Boss Richard Croker) “the hundreds of thousands of foreigners dumped into our city,”<sup>16</sup> the reputation of the Hall became increasingly tarnished in the Gilded Age as it relied on unhealthy alliances with gamblers, prostitution rings and an unabashedly corrupt police department that become more of an enforcer of crime than a protector of citizens. As reformers and progressive Republicans promoted investigations like the Lexow committee into the massive web of Tammany-related corruption and crime, the Hall was clearly in need of a makeover to re-establish its reputation as

<sup>16</sup> Allen, 194.

being more than simply a den of money-grubbing thieves.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, a new generation of Tammany democrats would need to be created in the Progressive Era to carry on the better side of the Hall's tradition of caring for New York's teeming immigrant population. This important task would fall on the shoulders of an Irish Catholic saloon keeper from Manhattan's East Side "Gas House" district named Charles Francis Murphy.

Murphy had been one of the few Tammany district leaders who would have nothing of the bribery and shenanigans associated with Tammany's alliance with New York City's illicit underworld. To Murphy, crime and immorality were synonymous, and after all, how could Tammany Hall make any claims to being an upright responsible institution if engaged in such activities? Murphy was convinced that Tammany needed to completely sever its ties to prostitution, gambling and similar activities in order to remain a viable political entity in the twentieth century. When he became the boss of Tammany Hall in 1902, the reticent "Silent" Charlie Murphy completely reorganized the Hall's hierarchy and eliminated its criminal associations, especially in places like the notorious West Side "Tenderloin" district.<sup>18</sup> This is not to paint Murphy as some angelic do-gooder completely detached from the spoils and patronage system that had become the stock and trade of Tammany's political operations—he just never appeared to indulge in any of it personally. Instead, Murphy left such "honest graft" to, in his words, "straight organization men" like George Washington Plunkett, whose strategy was to avoid "blackmailin' gamblers, saloon keepers [and] disorderly people." That said, Plunkett

---

<sup>17</sup> Ellis, 430-35.

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Joan Weiss. *Charles Francis Murphy, 1858-1924: Respectability and Responsibility in Tammany Politics* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1968), 18, 27-28.

spelled out a simple formula for the art of honest graph: “I seen my opportunities and I took ‘em.”<sup>19</sup>

Most importantly, Murphy deliberately sought to recruit a new generation of political leaders to “make Tammany respectable.” In Murphy’s own words, the new Tammany recruits must be able to “develop their talent, to keep free from demoralizing influences, to speak their minds, do what was right and develop character and a reputation which would . . . reflect favorably upon the organization.”<sup>20</sup> Two of these men were a Fourth Ward Irishman named Alfred Emmanuel Smith and Robert F. Wagner, a German immigrant from Manhattan’s upper East Side Yorkville neighborhood. Smith had been weened through the tutelage of Tammany’s lower East Side lieutenant Tom Foley who, like many of the Hall’s district leaders, served as faithful scouts for Charlie Murphy ever on the lookout for fresh recruits to the growing Tammany political machine. True to Murphy’s idea of a new image of Tammany, Foley was also sincerely motivated by a desire to honestly serve his constituents and saw such potential in the young Al Smith.<sup>21</sup>

### **Al Smith**

By 1910, Murphy had become the undisputed boss of New York City democratic politics, skillfully out maneuvering independents, progressives, and the burgeoning socialist movement. That year, Tammany democrats enjoyed an electoral sweep throughout New York City and State, winning not only the governorship and mayoralty but also the majority in both houses of

---

<sup>19</sup> William Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York: *New York Evening Post*, 1905), 2, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/power/text7/plunkitt.pdf> .

<sup>20</sup> Weiss, 74, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Finan, *Alfred E. Smith: The Happy Warrior* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 188.

the New York State Legislature. Representing the “old neighborhood” of Manhattan’s lower East Side Second Assembly District, Al Smith had by then become a master of New York State politics and legislation. Joining Smith in the legislature was newly elected state Senator Robert F. Wagner, who roomed with Smith when the two were in Albany. As the 1911 legislature went into session, Charlie Murphy moved swiftly to ensure that both of his New York City Tammany men were placed in top positions in Albany, Smith as the assembly majority leader and Wagner as President *pro tem* of the senate.<sup>22</sup>

With the Smith-Wagner duo in Albany, the years between 1911-1918 proved to be the most productive period to date for positive legislative initiatives on behalf of New York’s ill-treated immigrant workforce. Importantly, the immigration profile of New York City had drastically changed by 1910, with Italians and Russian and Eastern European Jews now constituting over forty percent of the city’s foreign-born population, while the Irish-born fell to less than fifteen percent.<sup>23</sup> By 1914, there were well over one and a quarter million Jewish immigrants in New York City, most of whom were employed in some facet of the garment industry. It is worth noting that by 1910, the old neighborhoods in Manhattan’s lower East Side Fourth Ward were no longer inhabited by a majority of Irish and Germans, but by Jewish immigrants.<sup>24</sup> Many of these Jewish immigrants had also gained extensive political organizing experience under oppressive conditions in places like Czarist Russia, and quickly emerged as the leadership of the unions fighting to improve the miserable conditions of New York’s garment sector workers.<sup>25</sup> This became a very real political force that Tammany had to deal with,

---

<sup>22</sup> Robert F. Wesser, “Al Smith, Tammany Hall, and the Transformation of Democratic Politics in New York, 1903-1918,” paper presented to Seminar on New York City and State History, Albany, NY, 1989, 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> Anbinder, 444.

<sup>24</sup> Anbinder, 355.

<sup>25</sup> Melvyn Dubofsky, *When Workers Organize* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968). 16-17.

especially in the form of the needle trades-based Socialist party which made major electoral gains from 1910-1916.<sup>26</sup> Many settlement-based reformers like Francis Perkins also intersected this ferment, especially when events came to a head with the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire of March 1911.<sup>27</sup>

In Albany, Smith had already had cordial encounters with settlement reformer Francis Perkins when fire ripped through the top floors of the Washington Place Triangle garment factory killing 146 people who were either trapped inside the locked factory with no means of escape or were killed by jumping to their deaths onto the street below. At a mass meeting attended by labor organizations, socialists, reformers, settlement activists and others, a Committee of Safety was established to pressure action by the New York State government to redress the injustices.<sup>28</sup> However, unlike many of the private investigative commissions set up by reform governors in the past, Smith (in whose district the fire had occurred) fought vigorously to have a Factory Investigating Commission (F.I.C.) established under the auspices of the New York State Legislature. Smith argued that unlike a “blue ribbon” commission of the “finest” people of New York, one within the legislature “will do something about it.” Conveniently, Al Smith was named as the commission’s vice chairman, his friend Senator Robert Wagner the chairman, and Francis Perkins the chief investigator.<sup>29</sup> Working directly with a multitude of reform organizations who had otherwise been traditionally hostile to Tammanyites like Al Smith and Charlie Murphy, the F.I.C. held hearings, conducted investigations, and in four months “put on the statute books more legislation for the benefit of labor than any Legislature for the past

---

<sup>26</sup> Dubofsky, 365-68.

<sup>27</sup> Dubofsky, 23-24.

<sup>28</sup> Wesser, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Golway, 58-59.

twenty years.”<sup>30</sup> Never before had so many “good government” reformers of the Progressive Era actually worked together with Tammany politicians to launch such a magnitude of legislative action on behalf of the forgotten men and women among New York’s predominantly immigrant working population.<sup>31</sup> Many would later claim that this unprecedented activity was the origin of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal some two decades later.<sup>32</sup>

Al Smith’s successful campaign for New York governor in 1918 was another important inflection point in the process of building a more powerful and viable New York Democracy. Unlike past Democratic party machine campaigns, Smith decided to organize his gubernatorial campaign outside of the direct control of either Tammany Hall or the Democratic State Committee. Instead, he set up an independent campaign committee in order to include the broadest constituency possible. Smith’s Independent Citizen’s Committee included prominent businessmen, labor activists, reformers and even a Women’s Division to pull in the newly enfranchised women voters of 1918. Reflecting the times, prominent Jewish leaders were also part of the campaign committee, which proved extremely important in securing a large vote for Smith in New York City Jewish strongholds.<sup>33</sup> This should not be construed that Smith had in any way abandoned Tammany or his mentor Charlie Murphy. He and Bob Wagner still enjoyed regular participation in Murphy’s legendary strategy sessions either at Delmonico’s in Manhattan or at establishments near Smith and Murphy’s Long Island summer homes.<sup>34</sup> What Smith did understand, however, was that the expansion of the base of the New York Democracy in such a changing and dynamic situation was vital to his own and Tammany Hall’s future success.

---

<sup>30</sup> Weiss, 83.

<sup>31</sup> Wesser, 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis, 494.

<sup>33</sup> Wesser, 23-25.

<sup>34</sup> Weiss, 78.

## The Happy Warrior and FDR

When Franklin Roosevelt was first elected to the New York State senate in the 1910 Democratic party electoral sweep, Tammany's "Big Tim" Sullivan said that the best thing that could be done with a Roosevelt was to "take him down and drop him off the dock."<sup>35</sup> Such was the view of the Tammany regulars of upstate patrician reformers, especially one with the same name as the progressive "bull moose" former president. At the time, Roosevelt certainly did nothing to abate the sentiment, claiming that Tammany and its boss Charlie Murphy "must like the noxious weed, be plucked out root and branch."<sup>36</sup> Although Roosevelt's ill-fated attempt to run an insurgent campaign against Murphy and the Tammanyites in 1914 landed him flat on his face,<sup>37</sup> he was shrewd enough to recognize the importance of the political achievements of Al Smith and his supporters. Roosevelt never worked directly with Smith or Wagner during the Factory Investigating Commission days but he clearly seemed to have sensed the import of what was happening, or, as Frances Perkins would later describe it: "the miracle is that he understood it secondhand and...these ideas penetrated into his personality by a kind of intellectual and spiritual osmosis."<sup>38</sup>

In 1918, Roosevelt wrote to Smith that "very few men ...have served with a record of painstaking and intelligent interest in the public good as yours."<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, FDR campaigned vigorously for Al Smith in his narrow electoral victory for New York governor that same year. Roosevelt would go on to issue an open letter in 1922 imploring Smith to run again for governor:

---

<sup>35</sup> Golway, 43.

<sup>36</sup> Finan, 238.

<sup>37</sup> Golway, 74-75.

<sup>38</sup> Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 26.

<sup>39</sup> Golway, 82.

You ...have shown a true understanding of the needs of the average American man, woman and child ...Your attitude has been one of belief in progress, and you have not opposed measures of relief and improvement merely because they were new. In other words, you have been essentially human, for it is human to want to better conditions and seek new things.”<sup>40</sup>

The pair would also come together again in 1924 at another important inflection point in the development of a more viable *national* Democratic Party. After his temporary leave from politics while recovering from polio, Roosevelt reentered the fray that summer at the Democratic National Convention in New York City. In his famous speech nominating Al Smith for president, FDR described Smith as the “‘Happy Warrior’ of the political battlefield” and, after citing each of Smith’s political achievements, sang out the chorus: “That is progressive!”<sup>41</sup> Importantly, Roosevelt teamed up with Smith and Tammany in the battle over the role of the Ku Klux Klan in the Democratic party, a battle which would extend the convention into a two week brawl which at times required police intervention to quell the violence. In the end, it was the unlikely alliance of the patrician progressive and the Tammany-bred street-wise politician which would defeat the nomination of any candidate backed by the Klan. As one delegate put it: “An electric fixture minus the bulb would be Smith without Roosevelt.”<sup>42</sup>

### **A Winning Combination**

By 1924, it was clear that the Democratic party was headed in a new direction. At the 1928 Democratic National Convention, Roosevelt would again rise to the podium to nominate Al

---

<sup>40</sup> Golway, 124.

<sup>41</sup> Franklin Roosevelt, “Speech Nominating Smith,” June 26, 1924.  
[http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/\\_resources/images/msf/msf00252](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msf00252).

<sup>42</sup> Golway, 161-170.



Smith, this time for president of the United States. That same year, FDR would go on to win the New York governorship on a platform that was essentially based on continuing what Al Smith had done in his six years in Albany. Although Smith's 1928 campaign for president was an electoral disaster, the new alliance of fair-minded progressive Democrats like Franklin Roosevelt with the big city Tammany-inspired political machines proved to be a force capable of winning the vote for Al Smith in all of America's twelve largest cities, a feat never before accomplished.<sup>43</sup>

But both men would also make sure to distance themselves from the sordid reputation of Tammany Hall. Smith's tactic of creating an independent political base had worked to such a degree that the *Atlantic Monthly* defended its endorsement of him for president in 1928 by claiming that "He has emancipated himself from the failings of Tammany, but not from its sources of vitality."<sup>44</sup> For similar reasons, Franklin Roosevelt moved to distance himself from Smith while campaigning for the 1932 Democratic nomination for president for fear of alienating Southern and Western Democrats who might see the candidate as tarnished with the Tammany brush, simply by association with Al Smith and his support for the repeal of prohibition.<sup>45</sup> Although Smith became increasingly hostile to FDR during and after 1932, still when the Democrat from Hyde Park went to the White House after his landslide victory in November 1932, he took with him some of Al Smith's old friends and allies from "the sidewalks of New York" as key leaders who would forge the coming New Deal programs and legislation. These included New York City Tammany men Ed Flynn and James Farley, Factory Investigating Commission investigator Frances Perkins, and of course Smith's old Albany partner and

---

<sup>43</sup> Golway, 214.

<sup>44</sup> "Al Smith and Tammany Hall," *The New Republic*, October 10, 1923, 188-91.

<sup>45</sup> Finan, 256-57.

roommate Robert Wagner, whose re-election to the U.S. Senate that year would ensure his leading role in legislating many of FDR's New Deal programs.

Tammany Hall would never again see the glory days of Charlie Murphy and the New York Democracy of the first three decades of the twentieth century. Part of the reason for this was that with the New Deal, an invigorated federal government had replaced the social welfare net once provided exclusively by the Tammany political machine and others like it in cities across America. Looked at another way, with FDR's election in 1932, the best side of Tammany Hall—its long-standing tradition of enfranchising New York City's "huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—had been successfully transformed into a *national* political principle which would be applied to all of the "forgotten" men and women throughout the nation, and for the good of the nation as a whole.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Oliver. *The Tiger: The Rise and Fall of Tammany Hall*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993.
- Anbinder, Tyler. *City of Dreams*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2017.
- Dubofsky, Melvyn. "Success and failure of socialism in New York city 1900-1918: A case study." *Labor History*, 1968-09-01, Vol.9 (3), p.361-375.
- Dubofsky, Melvyn. *When Workers Organize*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968.
- Ellis, Edward Robb. *The Epic of New York City*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005.
- Finan, Christopher. *Alfred E. Smith: The Happy Warrior*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2002.
- Golway, Terry. *Frank and Al*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018.
- Hershkowitz, Leo. *Tweed's New York, Another Look*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977.
- Perkins, Frances. *The Roosevelt I Knew*. New York: Viking Press, 1946.
- Riordon, William. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*. New York: *New York Evening Post*, 1905.  
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/power/text7/plunkitt.pdf> .
- Weiss, Nancy Joan. *Charles Francis Murphy, 1858-1924: Respectability and Responsibility in Tammany Politics*. Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1968.
- Wesser, Robert F. "Al Smith, Tammany Hall, and the Transformation of Democratic Politics in New York, 1903-1918." Paper presented to Seminar on New York City and State History, Albany, NY, 1989.