

DEMOCRACY'S GREAT AWAKENING:  
HOW FINNEY'S RELIGIOUS REVIVAL  
MADE A RIGHT A RESPONSIBILITY AND  
HELPED BUILD A MASS DEMOCRACY

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The United States' political and religious structures underwent profound changes during the Antebellum Era, as powerful movements seized the nation. Historians often credit the growth of mass politics to the Jacksonian Democrats, who built a party system geared towards the common man. The rise of Evangelicalism is generally seen as a product of the Second Great Awakening, when scores of zealous converts arose carrying their fervent cries to eliminate sin and to form a morally pure Christian nation. When looking at the political changes, scholars tend to focus on Jackson and the parties as the driving forces. Meanwhile, the religious and social reform movements are generally seen through a revivalist lens. This study aims to fuse the two developments together, showing how the expanded right to vote left every American Evangelical with the moral and religious responsibility to purify America by participating in the democratic process. Thus the same underlying themes of activism and egalitarianism preached by revivalists came to manifest

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themselves in the party system. Rochester—the site of Charles G. Finney’s greatest revival—demonstrates the ways in which Evangelicals came to shape politics in the North. In their Millennial push for perfection, Evangelists such as Finney (1792–1875) encouraged political involvement, promoted social activism, moralized politics, and created a mass democracy. Finney’s 1830 Rochester Revival—along with contemporaneous revivals throughout the so-called Burned Over District—caused a surge of political activism from 1830 to 1840 in Rochester and the surrounding area, as seen by accounts of intensified political discourse and campaigning in newspapers, diaries and sermons.<sup>1</sup> The trend is also reflected in increased voter turnout and the dynamic, remarkably successful Evangelical campaign for temperance. Finney’s religious revival not only transformed religion, but also had a profound energizing, democratizing and moralizing effect on politics that was felt across the North.

Finney’s arrival in Rochester brought a revival of religious fervor that took hold of Rochester and then swept across the North, bringing with it renewed interest in Christian responsibilities and raised hopes for the approaching Millennium. Rochester was a young city under the pressures of a quickly expanding economy and population, which brought crime, instability, alcoholism, and threatened established society.<sup>2</sup> These fissures carried over into religion, with tense interdenominational relationships that depressed church attendance.<sup>3</sup> Concerned community leaders invited Finney to help their struggling city, and at first he planned to decline in light of its problems. However, upon further reflection he resolved to go, believing he was “needed at Rochester all the more because of these difficulties.”<sup>4</sup> Not overestimating his abilities, he initiated the revival that the leader of the Second Great Awakening, Lyman Beecher (1775–1863), called, “the greatest revival of religion that the world has ever seen.”<sup>5</sup> The first conversions were among the elite, which in turn attracted people from all levels of society, until nearly the whole town was attending church.<sup>6</sup> The high school cancelled classes and businesses closed early so that people could attend church.<sup>7</sup> A Rochester native, Robert Stanton,

later reflected, “You could not go upon the streets, and hear any conversation, except upon religion.”<sup>8</sup> The old denominational conflicts quickly melted away, as churches began to collaborate in their revivalist efforts.<sup>9</sup> Church membership doubled, three new churches were built, and people traveled from up to 100 miles away to hear Finney speak.<sup>10</sup> The amazing success of the Rochester Revival spurred revivals across the North, transforming the Second Great Awakening into a truly national movement.<sup>11</sup> In 1831 alone, church membership in New England grew by a third.<sup>12</sup> Evangelicals across the country, but particularly in the Burned Over District, came to see huge numbers of new converts and disappearing sectarianism as signs of the approaching Millennium, or the second coming of Christ.<sup>13</sup> This was founded in a popular Evangelical belief called Millennialism, which posited that Christ would return after a peaceful thousand-year reign of Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Finney believed that the thousand-year period was culminating in a resurgence of religious excitement. Upon his arrival in Rochester he declared that if Christians mobilized “the Millennium might be brought about in three months.”<sup>15</sup> Under Finney, Rochester, in the course of a few months, went from being sin city to the epicenter of religious fervor and Millennial excitement.

The focus on the Millennium oriented Finney and Evangelicals as a whole towards greater activism as they mobilized to eliminate sin and to build a perfect Christian nation. Conversionism—the idea that anyone can experience spiritual salvation at any time—forms the foundation of Evangelicalism.<sup>16</sup> Finney expanded on this by claiming that man is a moral free agent, and that sin is not constitutional.<sup>17</sup> He believed that through suasion one could induce a person to choose virtue over sin and to seek salvation, thus making salvation a personal responsibility.<sup>18</sup> Although at first criticized for questioning the dominion of God, Finney’s ideas came to be commonly accepted by Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Dutch Reformed, and other smaller Evangelical denominations.<sup>19</sup> Moral agency was the basis for Evangelical activism, as they mobilized to persuade sinners to seek salvation and convert. Efforts to find more converts had always

been part of the church's mission, but spurred by Millennialism, these efforts intensified. The modification to Rochester's Brick Presbyterian Church covenant exemplifies the change. In the 1820s members made the promise to live moral, pious lives.<sup>20</sup> In 1831 the covenant was rewritten to include the promise to "make it the great business of our life to glorify God and build up the Redeemer's Kingdom in this fallen world."<sup>21</sup> The covenant thus goes from being personal and passive to being outward-focused and active, a reflection of how Evangelicals took on the mission of perfecting American society and transforming it into a morally pure Christian republic.

Prompted by his dream for the Millennium and encouraged by the formidable success he had already had in building up religious enthusiasm, Finney tackled temperance reform in Rochester. He invited Theodore Weld (1803–1895), a leading abolitionist, to deliver a speech on temperance on New Year's Eve.<sup>22</sup> Weld gave an impassioned speech that described the evils of drinking and implored anyone touched by the revival to take a pledge to completely renounce alcohol, even ceasing to do business with anyone involved in its sale.<sup>23</sup> For years temperance societies had been working to eliminate alcohol in Rochester with little actual success.<sup>24</sup> However, immediately following Weld's speech several grocers in the audience promised to stop selling alcohol.<sup>25</sup> Over the course of just a handful of days almost every store made a public show of destroying its liquor in the streets to the cheering of townspeople.<sup>26</sup> Within a couple of days, Rochester went from having nearly 100 licensed liquor sellers to having only one or two merchants selling alcohol.<sup>27</sup> Finney and Weld's success in temperance reform stemmed from their ability to wrap the social reform into the religious movement, establishing the temperance pledge as a necessary condition of conversion.<sup>28</sup> Finney was one of the first to successfully meld religious and social reform by transforming activism into a religious duty. In doing so, he cleared the way for Evangelists to spread their calls for greater activism and morality on the societal level. However, Finney and his coreligionists were not satisfied by simply using sermons and reform societies to bring about the Millennium; they had even grander aspirations.

Evangelicals saw in the democratic system an opportunity to bring about even larger reforms, and thus Finney and others began to see politics as part of their activist efforts to move towards the Millennium. By the 1820s universal male suffrage had been granted in almost every state, and in 1828 the Second Party System had begun to emerge with Jackson's creation of the Democratic Party.<sup>29</sup> For Finney, politics offered a place to continue the fight for a Christian republic; as he said, "Politics are a part of the religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to the country as a part of their duty to God."<sup>30</sup> He encouraged people to vote morally, saying that God "will bless or curse this nation" depending on whether or not people elected moral leaders.<sup>31</sup> Finney, as well as most Evangelists, thought that it was inappropriate to advocate for a specific candidate or party on the pulpit. However, some preachers felt no such qualms. Eden Burroughs Foster, a Congregationalist pastor said, "The pulpit should be used as much as the press in shaping public opinion in all great questions of the day." Foster's perspective was far less accepted though than advocating for specific issues such as temperance reform or abolitionism.<sup>32</sup> Yet a preacher's most powerful form of political activism was to push people to be active and conscientious voters.

For Evangelicals, voting was a way of advancing social issues and bringing about the Millennium, so Evangelicals began using the power of the pulpit to frame political involvement as a moral responsibility and a religious duty. According to several Evangelical preachers, not exercising one's right to vote was "unchristian," "criminal neglect," "unpatriotic," and according to Thomas Eddy, a New York Evangelical activist, comparable to saying, "we take no interest in human progress."<sup>33</sup> Finney declared that any Christian who remained neutral in the moral reform movement could not "enjoy the approbation and blessing of God."<sup>34</sup> Rev. James V. Watson went so far as to say that not voting played into the hands of "the Devil and other despots."<sup>35</sup> Watson celebrated democracy because it "sanctifies the citizen and sends him to the ballot-box to glorify God and bless his fellow man." He added, "Christians must do their duty to their Country as their duty their God."<sup>36</sup>

Finney and the other revivalists seem to have been successful in their push for active voting. A careful review of census data, church membership, and election results indicates that voter turnout was significantly higher in places touched by the revival<sup>37</sup> and counties with more Evangelicals.<sup>38</sup> Thus the Evangelicals entered the political sphere, encouraging greater political involvement and pushing for social activism.

Increasingly politics came to reflect Evangelical concerns about morality and the future of society, as moral and social issues became the core issues in elections. In 1834, the Whig Party was established in Rochester as a coalition of previous enemies: Anti-Masons, Masons, Bucktail Democrats, and Sabbatarians.<sup>39</sup> Old rivals became allies, as old political divides—based on class and economic differences—became secondary to religious loyalties and moral concerns.<sup>40</sup> In Rochester the political structure was entirely upended as the annual city elections from 1832 to 1835 came to center around social and moral issues, particularly temperance.<sup>41</sup> Finney was fully aware of the power of his revival, and seems to have encouraged the push into politics, “Indeed by the power of that revival public sentiment has been molded. The public affairs of the city have been, in a great measure in the hands of Christian men...and their public business had been conducted accordingly.”<sup>42</sup> Finney’s statement touches on Evangelicals’ power to implement their agenda, which stemmed from their intense activism and significant population.<sup>43</sup> As a result of a large energized Evangelical base, Evangelical constituencies held great sway over politicians and Evangelicals themselves occupied a disproportionate number of government posts and legislative seats.<sup>44</sup> Hence, as they had done in Rochester, Evangelicals were able to push the national political discussion to address moral and social concerns, as campaigns focused less on the National Bank and internal improvements and increasingly tackled social issues such as slavery, temperance, Sabbath observance, growing Catholicism, and immigration.<sup>45</sup> Thus Evangelicals had a profound effect on altering the party structure and political discussion so that it became a fight over moral and social concerns.

Politics became more intense and polarized, as Evangelicals brought religion and morality into rhetoric and transformed politics into a struggle for the Millennium. Evangelicals tended to see the world in terms of diametrically opposed dualities—heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, sin and virtue—and purely in the context of the Millennium—everything was either moving towards or away from the coming of Christ.<sup>46</sup> Thus politics became more antagonistic and polarized, since each party saw itself as the ultimate soldier for good and the Millennium.<sup>47</sup> Parties framed elections as a choice between heaven and hell with campaign ads like, “Come aid in your country’s salvation, / And vote for the patriot Clay.”<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, it was natural to call opponents “false Christs,” “political sinners,” and the “devil.”<sup>49</sup> The moralization of politics and the resulting polarization of parties made politics almost militaristic and compromise difficult. People were unwilling to compromise their morals, out of fear of jeopardizing their place in heaven and the likelihood of the Millennium. When Rochester’s Democrat-controlled City Council asked the Whig Mayor for a procedural signature on new liquor licenses he resigned saying, “I dare not retain the public station which exposes me to this unhappy dilemma.”<sup>50</sup> Compromise between the Whigs and Democrats on the temperance issue was not even a remote possibility; each time the Council shifted there was a massive recall or reissue of liquor licenses.<sup>51</sup> After the Whig victory in the 1834 Rochester City Elections, a Democrat sneeringly said, “The work of *regeneration* had commenced—a war of extermination against *Barber poles* and *tavern signs*.”<sup>52</sup> This passage reflects the increasing tendency to see politics through a militaristic lens, but it also shows how powerfully religion had penetrated the political sphere, since the revival is seen as directly linked to the Whig victory. As politics became a fight over morality and quite literally the soul of the country, the tone of politics came to reflect the intensely moralized Evangelical framework.

Politicians in New York State quickly adapted to growing religious fervor and the moral polarization of politics by crafting rhetoric that spoke directly to the people’s religious and moral

concerns in an exciting, accessible manner. Politicians worked to deliver speeches that captivated audiences with biblical references and that drew in voters' attention by framing elections as battles between good and evil.<sup>53</sup> Party platforms underwent even more radical changes to reflect the new atmosphere. The New York Democratic Party platform published in 1828 in newspapers across the state exemplifies the old non-religious political system. The platform is a bland recounting of the motions passed and delegates chosen at the state convention. In its discussion of the presidential election, it focuses largely on byzantine foreign relations issues.<sup>54</sup> It dedicates a very short section to discussing the gubernatorial selection, saying only that Throop was chosen because he was a loyal Democrat, an experienced judge, and because the Western section of the state deserved to have a candidate from their region.<sup>55</sup> To say the least it is an uninspiring endorsement. It stands in stark contrast to the riveting New York State Whig platform of 1834. The Whigs compare the Democrats to the tyrannical British Empire and say, "Relying on the justice of their cause and the aid of Heaven, they fought and triumphed—so shall we." With the grace of God it claims that Whigs, or the "friends of Freedom" are being "called upon to buckle on their armor" to fight the Democrats who have no "moral sense."<sup>56</sup> The rhetoric and tone of the developing mass democracy had come to reflect the Evangelical focus on morality and salvation, and soon party managers were also tapping into revivalist methods for reaching a mass audience.

The religious revival even came to define electioneering methods, as politicians worked to achieve the same mass appeal that Evangelicals had. Revivalists had been remarkably successful in communicating their message across the nation, largely by following the "New Measures" Finney designed to incite religious excitement and to achieve more conversions.<sup>57</sup> One of Finney's biggest suggestions was to make sermons more exciting and comprehensible; as he said, "the impassioned utterance of a common exhorter" could move an audience more than "splendid exhibitions of rhetoric."<sup>58</sup> He said that to deliver a good sermon extemporaneous speaking was a must, because it made speeches exciting by



allowing the speaker to be more engaging and responsive to the audience.<sup>59</sup> He also suggested using parables from the everyday life of farmers, mechanics and housewives, while also referring to the audience as “you.”<sup>60</sup> Party managers were eager to mirror the Evangelicals’ success with the “common man,” and thus imitated these proven revivalist methods by delivering impassioned, informal stump speeches that spoke to the common man’s concerns.<sup>61</sup> Parties also upped the number of political events, and borrowed heavily from revivalist meetings. The revivalist tactic of rotating speakers at protracted meetings to maintain interest became a staple of political events.<sup>62</sup> Even more notably parties organized political camp meetings, which they often held on the same sites as the ones used for revivalist camp meetings.<sup>63</sup> At these events they held prayers, and then spent the day listening to “political preaching” and “political hymns” such as “Come, cheer up, ye Whigs! For most holy’s your cause.”<sup>64</sup> Events like these and impassioned rhetoric that drew from Evangelicalism managed to vastly increase political enthusiasm and activism, as Evangelicals revolutionized the system of mass democracy.

Evangelicals were largely successful in translating their religious enthusiasm and organizing skills to the political realm, since they were able to frame political activism as a responsibility to God. They tunneled their energy into the Whig Party. The party was highly moralistic—even religious—and social reform oriented, which was largely in line with the Evangelicals’ Millennial mission.<sup>65</sup> Voter registration records show that in New York, and especially Rochester, the Whig Party was the party of Evangelicals.<sup>66</sup> Evangelicals were such a formidable political force for New York Whigs that Democrats such as James Gordon Bennett (1795–1872), editor of the *New York Herald*, frequently lamented their influence, “There is a union between religion and politics in all this region of the country.... This is religion like the Jesuits!”<sup>67</sup> Evangelicals managed to spread their message and to mobilize for causes through sermons and congregations, as well as the popular Evangelist newspapers. Papers such as the *New York Evangelist* served as the sole source of news for many Americans, hence for many

people politics came only through an Evangelical lens.<sup>68</sup> However, preachers' power to influence their congregations cannot be overstated; one Whig said in reference to the presidential campaign of 1840, "In each county we will have a sufficient number of local preachers, to make war upon the heathern [sic], & carry the glad tidings of our political salvation to every corner."<sup>69</sup> The Evangelical churches were a resource for the Whig Party, and in turn the party was the church's political instrument for instituting social reform.<sup>70</sup> Even more importantly, the party was the rallying point for Evangelical political energy, as they enthusiastically entered and furthered the increasingly democratic, robust political system.

Evangelicals were able to affect this profound influence on politics because of the incredible might of revivalists like Finney. Shortly after Finney's arrival in Rochester the *Rochester Observer* noted, "We have never known a revival more general...the student, the mechanic, the professional man, and the politician—those who were seeking for, and those who were in the possession of office and worldly honors, have been arrested by the Spirit of God, and a new song has been put into their mouths."<sup>71</sup> It was a prophetic observation. Politicians along with people from every part of society were swept up into the energy of the revival and brought under its influence. However, their spirited movement only had success because of the expanded right to vote. Politics in Rochester, New York State and across the nation experienced a surge in energy and enthusiasm as the Evangelicals infused it with their moral imperatives that drove mass participation and built a framework that allowed millions of Americans to be actively involved in their nation's conduct. Evangelicalism provided the impetus for change with its Millennial push for a moral society, but the Jacksonian Democrats provided the vehicle: the ballot box. Ironically then, it was the expansion of voting rights by the Democrats—that Whigs had so ardently opposed—which carried millions of religious Whigs into politics to determine the future of their nation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clarity, the Rochester Revival is the revival that Finney led from September 1830 to March 1831. Finney went on to preach in countless other towns, most notably Buffalo, NY, Boston and Providence, but no revival before or after had an effect as rapid and powerful as the one in Rochester. The Rochester Revival was the beginning of the most powerful surge in religious fervor during the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840s). It resulted in mass conversions and growing religious energy throughout New York and the Northeast. The region in which it was strongest, Central and Western New York, was termed the Burned-over District, supposedly because revivals had so successfully made every person convert that no more could be found.

<sup>2</sup> Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950) pp. 79–80.

<sup>3</sup> Charles G. Finney, *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney: The Complete Restored Text* ed. Garth Rosell and Richard A. G Dupuis (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1989) pp. 299–301.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>6</sup> Keith Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792–1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987) pp. 199–202.

<sup>7</sup> Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 311–313.

<sup>8</sup> Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* rev. ed. (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2004) p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>10</sup> In fact so many people were attending church that one of them (the First Presbyterian Church) actually collapsed under the weight. See Hardman, p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> Up to this point the Second Great Awakening had been a disparate movement that cropped up in local communities. It did not reach many communities until after the Rochester Revival. See Hardman, p. 209.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>13</sup> Cross, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, p. 109.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Carwadine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 321.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>19</sup> Cross, pp. 27–28.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, pp. 110–111.

<sup>21</sup> It also interesting to note that at the same time the covenant was changed, Sunday schools were also undergoing a change to their methods. Sunday Schools before the 1830s forced students to memorize the Bible. After the Revival, Sunday Schools began to pick out one Bible verse a week to study. The change reflects the push to move towards greater personal responsibility, and reflects the acceptance of Finney's free moral agent idea. See Johnson, pp. 110–111.

<sup>22</sup> Hardman, p. 203.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, pp. 113–114.

<sup>24</sup> Hardman, p. 203.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205. It is also worth mentioning that aside from the religious and social change, there was also a rapid decline in crime, which actually continued for years afterwards. The District Attorney who had lived through the revival did a study of criminal records many years later and concluded, "Crime has *decreased* two thirds and the population has *increased* two thirds. This is the wonderful influence that that revival had upon the community." See Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 318.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, p. 114.

<sup>29</sup> Carwadine, pp. 6–7.

<sup>30</sup> Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835) p. 282.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>32</sup> Leonard Bacon artfully articulated the delicate divide between what is and is not appropriate, "the minister... may urge temperance, but not the claims of the Prohibition party...liberty, but not the claims of the Republican party." See Carwadine, p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Finney, *Lectures*, p. 288.

<sup>35</sup> Carwadine, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Based on an analysis of Census Records and Election Results.

Works cited: Roger Sherman Skinner, *The New York State Register* 1830 ed. (New York, NY: Roger Sherman Skinner, 1830) pp. 54, 61; U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1830 (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004), <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>; Croswell, Van Benthuyzen, and Bert, "Official Returns of the Electoral Vote of New York," *Albany Argus* (Albany, NY), November 23, 1832, Vol. 20, No. 2070, p. 3; Edwin Williams, *The New York Annual Register* 1831 ed. (New York, NY: Edwin Williams, 1831) pp. 40–51.

<sup>38</sup> Based on analysis of Census Records and Election Results. Documents analyzed: New York State Department of State, Census of the State of New York, 1855 (Albany, NY: Charles Van Benthuyzen, 1857) pp. 445–477; New York Tribune, *Tribune Almanac for the Years 1838 to 1868* (New York: New York Tribune, 1868) p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> The Whigs, descended from the National Republicans, had always been the party of bigger government and business, while the Democratic-Republicans, the party of Jefferson, had supported a government that intervened little in peoples' lives. They clashed over economic issues and the role of government, but as the parties realigned along moral issues, the parties broke up and the following factions and third parties found themselves in the Whig Party: The Anti-Masonic Party was a highly moralistic party opposed to the Masons who the party saw as undemocratic, corrupt and immoral. While they were a national party they were strongest in Upstate New York where there was widespread opposition to Masons. The Masons were and are a secret society with strong ties to New York State. Many of their members held high positions in New York state government. The Bucktail Democrats were the section of the Democratic-Republican Party strongly opposed to large spending on internal improvements. They were associated with Tammany Hall and Martin Van Buren. Finally, the Sabbatarians were an intensely religious group focused on protecting the Sabbath by prohibiting all business on Sunday and even requiring church attendance. Johnson, p. 128.

<sup>40</sup> In Rochester, politics divided clearly between church members and non-church members. The Whig Party became the religious party, and the Democratic Party the non-religious party. A closer look at the differing factions that found themselves in the new Whig Party demonstrates this nicely.

The pious Anti-Masons and Sabbatarians were the natural ancestors of the Whig Party, and thus went almost exclusively to it, but there was a schism within Bucktails and Masons between church members and non-church members. Most of the Bucktails and Masons who had been church members went to the Whig Party, and those who were not went to the Democratic Party. See Johnson, p. 129.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 130–132.

<sup>42</sup> Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 318–319.

<sup>43</sup> Estimates of the number of evangelicals in the U.S. vary greatly. They range from as low as 40 percent to as high as 80 percent, but considering the large number of church attendees who regularly attended but were not actually members it is not unreasonable to put the number around 60 percent. See Carwadine, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 40–41.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Johnson, pp. 131–132.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 130–132.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>53</sup> It became common during this period to use biblical language in politics, as a way of intensifying and polarizing elections. Whigs said Harrison was “Heaven’s agent” and Clay was “in form a man...[but] LOOKED A GOD” as “the *redeemer* of the country.” Free Soilers presented Van Buren in 1848 “as a sort of political divinity, whose political resurrection has been vouchsafed as a providential boon to rescue the country from peril.” A Free Soiler in 1848 said, “that God Almighty was the leader of the free soil party, and that the Devil was the leader of the two opposing parties.” Democratic candidate for governor in New Jersey, George F. Fort, thought that the “powers of hell” had been let loose against him and that “the *devil* himself” had an interest in his defeat. See Carwadine, p. 51, 53.

<sup>54</sup> William Coleman, “Address of the Herkimer Convention,” *New York Evening Post* [New York, NY] (September 30, 1828) p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Chandler Starr, *An Address Delivered at the Whig Convention* (New York: T. Snowden, 1834) p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Cross, p. 173.

<sup>58</sup> Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 90.

<sup>59</sup> Finney, *Lectures*, pp. 206–209.

<sup>60</sup> Cross, p. 174.

<sup>61</sup> Carwadine, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Party organizers occasionally went to absurdly great lengths to directly, or at least cosmetically, imitate revivalist practices as a means of attracting voters and keeping party members loyal. Party organizers compared their “reclaiming committees” (groups designed to bring defectors back to the party) to revivalists trying to reclaim sinners, saying that the glory of a church getting a convert was nothing compared to the joy of a party getting back a defector. Joining a party was often seen as a political “conversion.” Occasionally they even had mock baptisms and communion services. There is one story of a group of Democrats who “baptized” a new member “in the name of Andrew JACKSON, the Father! James K. POLK, the Son! And TEXAS, the Holy Ghost!!!” Some rallies were “mock communions,” at which they distributed whiskey, cider and corn bread as “sacraments.” See Carwadine, pp. 52–53.

<sup>65</sup> Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) p. 251.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, p. 135.

<sup>68</sup> Carwadine, pp. 38–39.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>70</sup> Benson, p. 246.

<sup>71</sup> Noah C. Saxton, “The Revival,” *New York Evangelist* [New York, NY] (November 27, 1830) Vol. 1, Issue 35, p. 1, reprint from *Rochester Observer*.

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This is the New York Democratic Party Platform of 1828, which was used to research the effects of the Revival of 1830–1831 on the political parties' focuses and rhetoric. The document reveals that before the Revival, parties were not focusing on moral and social concerns, and were not using language to speak to the common man.

Croswell, Van Benthuyzen, and Bert. "Official Returns of the Electoral Vote of New York." *Albany Argus* (Albany, NY), November 23, 1832, Vol. 20, No. 2070.

This document provided the election results of the presidential election of 1828 and 1832. The data was used in the quantitative analysis of the relationship between the proximity to Rochester's revival and turnout; the proximity to Rochester's revival and Republican leaning; and Republican leaning and turnout.

Finney, Charles G. *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* 2nd ed. New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835.

Finney effectively wrote a guidebook for a revivalist. This book provides powerful insights into Finney's perspective on Evangelicalism and his methods for revivals. This was particularly useful for establishing Finney's belief that activism was an important part of revivals.

Finney, Charles G. *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney: The Complete Restored Text*. Edited by Garth Rosell and Richard A. G Dupuis, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989.

The comprehensive memoirs of Finney focus entirely on his religious work. The chapter where he discusses Rochester provides useful information about how the Rochester Revival occurred, while also giving a first-hand account of how Finney experienced the Revival.



New York State Department of State. *Census of the State of New York, 1855*. Albany, NY: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1857.

The 1855 census provided data on the New York State population, particularly of use was the section on the religious affiliation of New York State citizens. This was used in the quantitative analysis of the power of religion in politics.

New York Tribune. *Tribune Almanac for the Years 1838 to 1868*. New York: New York Tribune, 1868.

This issue of the Tribune provided election data for the Gubernatorial election of 1854. This was used in the quantitative analysis of the relationship between evangelical church membership and voting tendency.

Saxton, Noah C. "The Revival." *New York Evangelist*, November 27, 1830, Vol. 1, Issue 35.

*The New York Evangelist* was a very powerful primary source for finding information about the progress of the revival in the Burned-Over district. This particular article discusses the Rochester Revival, and was a useful firsthand account about the phenomenal vigor of the revival, and its power to influence all parts of life, including politics.

Skinner, Roger Sherman. *The New York State Register* 1830 ed., New York, NY: Roger Sherman Skinner, 1830.

This source provided election data for the Gubernatorial election of 1828. It was used in the quantitative analysis of the relationship between turnout and the proximity to Rochester.

Starr, Chandler. *An Address Delivered at the Whig Convention*. New York: T. Snowden, 1834.

This is the New York Whig Party Platform of 1834, which was used to research the effects of the Revival of 1830–1831 on the political parties' focuses and rhetoric. The document reveals that after the Revival, parties, particularly the Whigs, were tackling social and moral issues, and were using language that aimed to speak to and energize the common man.

U.S. Census Bureau. *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1830*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>.

The 1830 Census provided data on the New York State population in 1830. This was the population data used in every quantitative analysis of the elections of 1828, 1830 and 1832.

Williams, Edwin. *The New York Annual Register 1831* ed. New York: Edwin Williams, 1831.

This issue provided the election results of the Gubernatorial election of 1830. This was used in the quantitative analysis of the relationship between the proximity to Rochester's revival and voter turnout, as well the relationship between voter turnout and anti-masonic leaning

#### Secondary Sources:

Benson, Lee. *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961.

This was a comprehensive study of the electoral politics of New York State. It provided useful information about the power of factors such as religious affiliation and identity politics in antebellum politics, thus supporting my argument by downplaying the power of economics in politics.

Carwadine, Richard. *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

Carwadine's book is one of the only complete studies of the relationship between Evangelicalism and politics. This was a crucial source, providing an enormous amount of background information about antebellum politics and religion, as well as information about how evangelicalism influenced politics.

Cross, Whitney R. *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950.

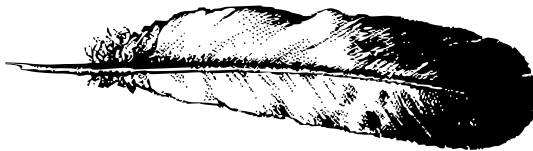
Cross provided an enormous amount of information about the drive and power behind the revivals that swept across the Burned-Over district. It was particularly useful for the discussion of Millennialism, which Cross portrayed as the main driving force behind the revival.

Hardman, Keith. *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792–1875: Revivalist and Reformer*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987.

This source provided a large amount of information about the connection between Finney's revivalism and his activism. It was vital for discussing how Finney was able to incorporate activism into his revival, particularly for information about the temperance movement in Rochester.

Johnson, Paul E. *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837*, rev. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.

This is the only comprehensive history of the Rochester Revival. The source provided useful background information. It also had a lot of information about the underlying effects and trends of the revival, explaining why the revival had the power it did and how the city was shaped and transformed by Finney's revival. The source was also useful for describing the millennialism and social reform movements that gripped Rochester as a result of Finney's revival.



Indeed, the whole [state] senate experience was a political education for Roosevelt. He learned quickly from old Albany hands like Smith and Wagner, from newspapermen, lobbyists, and state officials. He mastered knacks of the political trade: how to avoid taking a stand on issues and becoming involved in destructive local squabbles, how to deal with local party leaders, how to handle patronage without making an undue number of enemies, how to attract publicity, how to answer importunate letters. Above all, he learned the lesson that democratic politicians must learn: that the political battle is not a simple, two-sided contest between opposing parties, or between right and wrong, or between regulars and irregulars, but, as in the Sheehan episode, a many-sided struggle that moved over broad sectors and touched many interests. A simple farm bill, for example, involved not merely individual farmers but county agricultural societies, canneries, university professors, merchants, railroads, and government officials, and divisions over policy might occur not merely between such groups but within them.

James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*  
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1956, p. 43