The Tiger: The Rise And Fall Of Tammany Hall

Oliver E Allen

The Society of Saint Tammany, born in the 1780s, became a machine that dominated New York City politics for
"In every instance in which Costello made his desires known to the Hall, Carmine voted to go along," wrote Oliver E. Allen in his 1993 book, "The Tiger: The Rise and Fall of Tammany Hall." In reply to questions by journalists, Mr. De Sapio admitted to having met Mr. Costello a number of times but insisted that politics was never discussed. "It was for a good cause. I attend many dinners." Asked if Mr. Costello had any influence in Tammany Hall, Mr. De Sapio snapped back: "Decidedly not." But two years later, the United States Senate committee headed by Mr. Kefauver and investigating organized crime called Mr. Costello as its star witness. His Tammany Tiger first appeared in Harper's Weekly on Nov. 11, 1871, on the eve of municipal elections that swept William M. "Boss" Tweed and his Democrats from power. Mr. Tweed, foreman of New York's Big Six Fire Company, wore equipment marked with a tiger's head. Elected a senator but later sent to prison for corruption, he wielded plenty of power at Tammany Hall. The powerful Democratic political machine began in the 1790s and lasted through the 1960s. In a 1974 book written by Nast's grandson, Thomas Nast St. Hill, the author noted, "The symbol followed Tammany Hall was the name given to the Democratic political machine that dominated New York City politics from the mayoral victory of Fernando Wood in 1854 through the election of Fiorello LaGuardia in 1934. The eighty-year period between those two elections marks the time in which Tammany was the city's driving political force, but its origins actually date to the late eighteenth century and its fall from power was not truly complete until the early 1960s. The Tammany Society of New York City was founded in 1786 as a fraternal organization whose primary activities were social. By 1798, h