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As 19th century immigrants arrived in New York City, they were assisted by Tammany Hall. But Tammany Hall was no longer run by noble-minded people.

Organized in 1789, the Society of Saint Tammany (initially created for patriotic and social purposes) had become wedded to New York City politics. Using a blend of charity and patronage, Tammany members initially helped displaced persons to find jobs and a place to live. They also helped foreigners become U.S. citizens.

During the Civil War, however - after William March Tweed became leader of the Tammany Club (in 1860) and chairman of the New York County Democratic Party - Tammany Hall was marred by graft and corruption. Between 1865 and 1871, crooked politicians swindled an estimated \$75 million (that's approximately \$816,588,890 in today's dollars) from New York City.

As Tammany Hall degenerated into a power-hungry greed machine, its members looked to local gangs as "enforcers." Intent on having their favored candidates win elections, Tammany politicians dispatched gang members to polling places.

Even though they intimidated tenement dwellers from places like "Rag Picker's Corner" and "Bottle Alley" to vote for Tammany-backed candidates, gang members were neither arrested nor prosecuted.

Boss Tweed and his minions were not the only politicians who used local gangs to bully the poor of New York. The Native American political party was aligned with gangs from The Bowery. Gangs from Five Points were aligned with Tammany Hall.

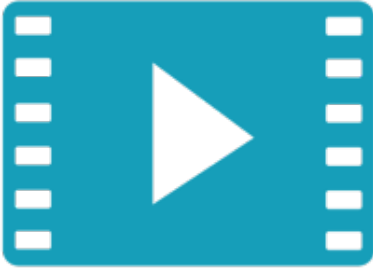
It was inevitable that clashes between the gangs would turn deadly.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/GANGS-AND-TAMMANY-HALL-Gangs-of-New-York)

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## William Tweed - Boss of Tammany Hall

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