

Popery, Patronage, and Popular Sovereignty: A Historiographical Overview of the Democratic Party in the 1850s

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On April 30, 1860, fifty southern delegates to the Democratic national convention stormed out of Institute Hall in Charleston, South Carolina in order to protest their party's unwillingness to endorse a federal code protecting slavery in the territories. Several weeks later in Baltimore during a second attempt to approve a presidential ticket and party platform for the national election, fifty-five other delegates from mostly southern states joined the walkout. The defectors quickly called their own convention and nominated a slave code supporter, John C. Breckenridge, to run against Stephen A. Douglas, the American Democracy's northern presidential candidate. The party's sectional split made Lincoln's victory and the South's subsequent secession *faits accomplis*.ⁱ

The lion's share of contemporary historians accepts the fracture of the Democratic Party in the 1850s as a major impetus for the bloodbath of the 1860s. What is less clear, however, is why the party's machinery broke down when it did. From its inception in the late 1820s until the Civil War, the party of Jackson displayed remarkable national unity in the face of increasing sectional antagonisms and maintained control of the federal government with few exceptions. Five out of seven presidents during this period were Democrats and Democratic majorities controlled both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court for more than two decades.ⁱⁱ So why did a political party that enjoyed a virtual monopoly on federal power and the confidence of so many American voters with disparate interests suddenly collapse upon itself in 1860? A definitive answer promises not only a clearer understanding of mid-nineteenth century politics, but more importantly, insight into the root causes of the Civil War.

Roy Nichols' tome, *The Disruption of American Democracy*, remains the first and only comprehensive study of the collapse of the Democratic Party in the 1850s. Written at a time when social conflicts were de-emphasized in American historical narratives, Nichols attributed the Democratic implosion of the mid-nineteenth century (and therefore the sectional conflict) to the "hyperemotionalism" and narrow local interests of the party leadership at a particular moment on the timeline.ⁱⁱⁱ Southerners, wrote the author, "moved by pride, self-interest, [and] a sense of honor and fear, rushed to action" when it became clear that their hold on the Democratic Party, and thus the federal government, was slipping as a result of national economic and social change. The party as a whole proved incapable of including elected officials who placed parochial concerns ahead of national interests and resorted to increasingly radical rhetoric in order to win elections. Nichols also framed the Republican response to the South's intransigence as another example of an exaggerated and unnecessary overreaction stemming from a lack of party organization.^{iv} Key to the author's thesis then is that the bloody conflict of the early 1860s might have been avoided if cooler heads had prevailed in the Democratic Party in the late 1850s.

The most recent study of the Southern Democracy supports Nichols' argument. Wallace Hettle contends that the party's egalitarian founding principles were replaced by planter-class elitism upon Jackson's death and that the new aristocratic leadership ignored the real needs of its less affluent constituents. Instead, southern Democrats resorted to racial fear-mongering to shore up their political base and retain power. Hettle argues that "equal participation in a system characterized by inequalities is not possible" and that the antebellum South was a white man's democracy in name only.^v Although it relies almost exclusively on the experiences of five prominent antebellum southern Democrats—John C. Rutherford, Joseph Brown, Frances Pickens, Jeremiah Clemens, and Jefferson Davis—Hettle's argument is persuasive. After all, one need not look any further than South Carolina to find the gross inequities that were an integral part of antebellum southern political life.

But Hettle, like Nichols, underestimates the Democratic constituency's impact on party doctrine and the attitudes and behavior of its elected officials. By the late 1820s, America had blossomed into a more democratic society as the number of voters increased with the repeal of property and religious qualifications.^{vi} Rather than defer to the political acumen of their social betters as their fathers had in previous decades, the new generation of voters drove government policy. Few politicians in the antebellum era could completely ignore the demands of *menu peuple* white males and hope to stay in power for very long. This was especially true in the South where an individual's level of success was in large part measured by the number of slaves he owned. Whites at every socioeconomic level of southern society were committed to the "peculiar institution" and they insisted that their elected officials' rhetoric and voting records reflect this core value.

As William Cooper has shown, both Whigs and Democrats worked tirelessly from the 1830s forward to convince the southern electorate that theirs was the only party safe on the slavery question: "For southern Whigs the contest with the northerners involved the quintessence of the party arrangement; they had to set party policy on slavery-related issues. Without that control they as politicians lay at the mercy of the southern Democrats."^{vii} By 1852, says the author, northern Whigs stubbornly refused to acquiesce to their southern counterparts on slavery issues while Democrats were able to smooth over similar internal squabbles through an endorsement of the Compromise of 1850 and a strong desire to recapture the White House.^{viii} The northern wing of the party became a political liability to southern Whigs, in part due to Democratic demagoguery, which ruined their chances in both regional and national elections. The collapse of a unified opposition sewed up the Democracy's hegemony until the 1860 split.

Just as Cooper's study exposes the limits of applying Nichols' "repressible conflict" thesis to the southern Democracy, it also helps explain why northern Democrats in the 1850s were able to stay connected with their national party and weather the same political storms that ruined the Whigs. Robert Johannsen's

biography of Stephen Douglas provides similar insight. Few northern politicians in the antebellum period enjoyed as much political clout and national prominence as the “Little Giant,” whose dogmatic faith in *vox populi* rule, a strong Democratic Party, and Manifest Destiny meant that he could endorse popular sovereignty as the answer to the territorial slavery question without sacrificing personal or party principles.^{ix}

During the Congressional debates over the Omnibus and Kansas-Nebraska bills, the Illinois senator proved he valued the development of the west and party unity above slavery issues by cutting deals with southern colleagues to win votes.^x Unlike southern Democrats who were forced to operate in a slavery-first political universe, Douglas was not terribly concerned with the fate of the peculiar institution and if his successful re-election campaigns and well-received public comments on the sanctity of popular sovereignty are any indication of popular opinion at the time, neither were a significant portion of his Illinois constituents. Johns Hopkins historian William Freehling agrees and writes, “Douglas cared little about whether slaves entered [Kansas] or any territory.” Instead, he argues, the senator from Illinois “cared passionately about opening the whole West for white settlement.”^{xi} Cooper’s observation that southern voters’ wishes determined the policies their elected officials pursued with regards to slavery means that the same was likely true for northern voters. Douglas’ manipulation of southern congressional votes and touting of a popular rule solution to the slavery question shows the opening of western lands took precedence in a state that absorbed just under 700,000 mostly native-born whites between 1830 and 1850.^{xii}

None of this should suggest, however, that northern voters as a whole were unconcerned with the issue of slavery. As Johanssen points out, the public backlash against the repeal of the old 36°30′ line during the Kansas-Nebraska Act controversy surprised Douglas and temporarily cost the Democrats political power in a number of northern states, including Illinois. But by 1856, Douglas was once again firmly in control of the Illinois party after stumping the state’s southern and central counties “defending popular sovereignty, attacking

the Know-Nothings, and urging the Democracy to unite for the coming political struggles.” The same year, Democrats posted electoral gains in five northern states and maintained control of the White House. How did a party which spearheaded passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act retain the confidence of a northern electorate that was supposedly moving left on slavery issues by 1854?^{xiii}

One answer which requires further exploration has emerged in recent years from Gerald Wolff. Through a sophisticated statistical analysis of Congressional voting patterns during the Kansas-Nebraska debate, Wolff has concluded that “the spirit of traditional party loyalty” drove a number of moderate northern Democrats to vote for a bill they knew was unpopular in their home districts.^{xiv} Furthermore, says the author, northern Democratic opposition to the bill was not exclusively over the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. In the case of the New York Democracy, lasting bitterness over Pierce’s indiscriminate patronage policy compelled the Empire state’s representatives to take a stand against a bill the president favored.^{xv} Johanssen describes similar dissatisfaction over the president’s use of the spoils system in Illinois and elsewhere.^{xvi}

Wolff’s keen observations on Kansas-Nebraska invite further research on the role patronage played in keeping northern Democrats connected with their national party during the tumultuous 1850’s. The current historiography does not address this important issue in sufficient detail even though it is entirely possible that the desire for national political spoils by members of the party that created the system may have convinced many northern Democrats to remain quiet on slavery issues.^{xvii} The payoff for their silence came in the form of southern allegiance to the national party and therefore Democratic control of federal perks. Nichols mentions the critical importance of Post Office appointments in ensuring party unity: “[It] was such a vital part of the Democratic machine that demoralization, through death and the failure of appropriations so near a national campaign, was nothing short of a catastrophe.”^{xviii} In addition, he briefly discusses how Congressmen from all areas of the country routinely tussled with one another over “various building projects”, “forts”, and

“customhouses” for their home districts.^{xix} During an era of frequent recessions, many northern voters likely viewed party patronage as their only means of economic security.

Wolff’s findings also lend credence to the idea that most northwestern Democrats were more concerned with organizing western territories and maintaining party ties than restricting slavery. His examination of votes on the Kansas-Nebraska Act shows that more than seventy-five percent of all Senators from northwestern states were either moderate or “very much in favor of the bill.”^{xx} In the House, over eighty percent of all northern Democrats voted for the bill while a “much higher percentage of Northwestern Democrats appeared in the pro category than those from the Northeast.”^{xxi} Having considered the potential for a negative backlash from their home districts, a majority of northern Democrats determined that their political careers were not at stake over the Kansas issue and voted in favor of the bill. What concerned them more was the loss of party patronage and prestige that might result from openly challenging Pierce and the Democratic leadership.

In her analysis of nineteenth century political culture, Jean Baker demonstrates how party ties were even more important than religious beliefs to many northerners.^{xxii} She argues that the Democratic Party played a developmental role similar to the one performed by schools and families in creating antebellum Americans’ sense of self-identity and purpose. Different factions provided input on various issues to the party’s leaders, who in turn produced national policy their base could rally behind. As long as the individual Democrat believed the party took the proper stance on the one or two issues most important to him, he was willing to let the larger organization shape his views on any number of other matters. In contrast to Hettle’s belief that the southern Democracy was little more than an oligarchy, Baker believes northern Democratic leaders’ public comments reflected the views of their constituents: “Thus, party leaders shaped and articulated inchoate mass sentiments but did not create them.” She also shows how nineteenth-century Americans paid closer attention to political

issues than modern voters. Election turnouts were higher in part, she says, because the voting base was smaller and more culturally homogeneous.^{xxiii}

Baker's observations explain a great deal about the political motives of the northern Democracy during the antebellum period. Northern Democrats viewed their party as more than just an organization through which candidates were elected to office; it was a part of a shared cultural heritage that told them who they were as citizens. In their eyes, as immigration, slavery, westward expansion, and economic changes broke the country into various factions, the Democratic Party and its national platform served as a cultural adhesive that held the republican experiment together. The prevalence of such views among northern Democrats would go a long way towards explaining why they were reluctant to abandon their party even after it adopted a noxious policy on the extension of slavery in the 1850s. To them, party loyalty was akin to national patriotism. Without it, the country would fall apart.

Joel Silbey also emphasizes the importance of party loyalty in nineteenth century politics in *The Partisan Imperative*. He argues that most voters of the period and their politicians placed local concerns and party loyalty above sectional antagonisms.^{xxiv} Furthermore, the author believes that cultural tensions between Catholic immigrants and native-born Protestant whites in the north—rather than sectional divides over slavery—were largely responsible for the collapse of the Second Party System in the 1850s: “Undergirding what was happening was the basic substance fueling antebellum political warfare—the persistent importance of ethnocultural conflict in America and its deep penetration onto the political scene in this part of the nineteenth century.”^{xxv}

Silbey makes a good point. The swell in German and Irish Catholic immigration during the 1840s and 50s created resentment among many native-born Protestants and led to the formation of the Know Nothing Party in 1854. Moreover, it seems logical that the Democratic losses at the polls during the same period can be

attributed at least in part to this nativist backlash, especially since the American Democracy actively recruited foreign-born voters. Douglas certainly placed part of the blame for Democratic defeats in Illinois on the Know Nothings.^{xxvi} Also, historian John Coleman argues that nativist resentment was precisely why Democrats lost the 1854 congressional and gubernatorial races in Pennsylvania: “While many Pennsylvania voters were undoubtedly opposed to the extension of slavery and voted accordingly, the election returns reflected, primarily, their much greater hostility to foreigners and Catholics.”^{xxvii} The author contends that attempts made by the Keystone state’s Whig Party to use the Kansas issue against their Democratic opponents were largely unsuccessful. Fear of Roman Catholic influence was at a fever pitch statewide in 1854 and voters responded accordingly at the polls. The author cites riots in Pittsburgh during the same period over the arrival of Archbishop Gaetano Bedini, papal nuncio, as partial proof.^{xxviii}

Although Coleman’s views on the relationship between Pennsylvania’s Whig and Know Nothing parties are convincing and lend credence to Silbey’s thesis, some of his other arguments concerning the Pennsylvania Democracy are less persuasive. For instance, the author contends that the Democrats who voted against their party during the 1854 elections did so out of frustration over issues related to immigration and Catholicism rather than the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Even David Wilmot’s Free-Soil Democratic district, he says, supported the nativist agenda.^{xxix} But why would northern Democrats—a group that held partisanship in such high esteem, as Silbey rightly observes—suddenly decide in 1854 to turn against the immigrant voters they had depended on for so long to keep their party in power? Furthermore, David Wilmot’s constituents had known about his opposition to the extension of slavery since 1846 and repeatedly showed their approval of his views by sending him back to Washington.^{xxx} It seems highly unlikely that the voters of a Free-Soil Democratic district would be more concerned with immigration issues than territorial slavery shortly after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Both Silbey and Coleman underestimate the relevance of the slavery issue in shaping a large portion of the northern electorate's political views. As Tyler Anbinder has shown, many of those who joined the Know Nothing ranks were simply looking for a new anti-slavery party after the collapse of the Whigs. Once the Know Nothings adopted a national platform endorsing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, their membership numbers declined precipitously.^{xxxii} Coleman even admits that during the American Party state convention in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1855, "anti-slavery Americans were firmly in control."^{xxxiii} This is not to suggest that nativist sentiment was irrelevant. Catholicism and intemperance were indeed immediate threats to northern voters focused on local issues, but so was slavery—especially after national legislation allowed for its introduction into their section of the country.

Silbey's views echo those espoused by Michael Holt in *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*. Holt also blames the dissolution of the two-party system on northern ethnocultural conflict: "Prohibitionism, nativism, and anti-Catholicism produced the voter realignment in which the Whigs disappeared and new parties emerged in the North."^{xxxiiii} Like Silbey, though, Holt places too much emphasis on Catholic-Protestant animosity in explaining the Whig Party's collapse in the 1850s. Lee Benson's statistical study of the New York Democracy shows that ethnocultural ties had been the main determinate of voting patterns in the Empire state long before the emergence of the Know Nothing Party. He reveals that ninety-five percent of Irish Catholics, for example, voted the Democratic ticket during the 1844 elections. In contrast, ninety percent of New York immigrants from Scotland—a predominately Protestant country—voted for Whigs during the same period.^{xxxv} These numbers suggest that more than just ethnic or religious tension caused the Whig Party to fall apart when it did. When one factors in the southern Whigs' animosity towards William Seward and Zachary Taylor over their stand against extending slavery into New Mexico, it becomes clear that the Holt/Silbey interpretation is overly simplistic.^{xxxvi} Northern Whigs, unlike northern Democrats, refused to compromise with the southern wing of their party on the

slavery issue. As a result, southern Whigs found it increasingly difficult to attract new supporters and became easy targets for Democrats.

Events in Ohio in 1854 offer further proof that slavery was a priority to a large number, but certainly not all, of northern Democrats. Buckeye Senator Salmon Chase was one of the few northwestern Democrats to argue strongly against passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in Congress. In his biography of Chase, Frederick Blue shows how the senator's differences with his party over the extension of slavery led him to organize a voting bloc of "Free Democrats" and anti-slavery Whigs that helped defeat Democratic candidates during Ohio's 1854 elections.^{xxxvi} Chase eventually abandoned the Democracy completely and founded the state's Republican Party.^{xxxvii}

Blue acknowledges the rise of Know Nothingism as a contributing factor to Democratic losses in the 1854 Ohio elections (interestingly, he mentions a riot in Cincinnati over Archbishop Gaetano Bedini's visit similar to the one Coleman describes), but believes stopping the spread of slavery came first in most voters' minds: "Chase and his followers felt confident that antislavery sentiment in Ohio was stronger than nativism. Although the two movements did have some common goals, the antislavery tradition was older and appealed to a stronger fear—that of southern power in Congress." As a result, says the author, Chase and his anti-slavery crusaders were able to completely ignore nativist demands by 1855.^{xxxviii}

Blue's study makes clear that after 1854, Democrats who opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise were ostracized by their party. The American Democracy's stand on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill sent a strong message to voters on where the party stood on the territorial slavery question. Some members were unable to reconcile their personal beliefs with party doctrine and left to join Republican ranks. But the fact that the American Democracy remained united and fielded nationally-appealing candidates until 1860 reveals just how low slavery was on the northern party's list of priorities. Many northern Democrats were undoubtedly

opposed to slavery in principle, but believed the panacea of popular sovereignty would save them from getting drawn into a potentially self-destructive debate over the desirability of its extension. Squatter sovereignty not only jibed with the party's strong belief in majority rule, but also meant that slavery would most likely remain where it was thanks to a dominant northern population.

For a long time their strategy worked. Unlike northern "Conscience" Whigs, most northern Democrats took a libertarian approach to issues such as temperance, religion, and slavery. From its inception, the party had been opposed to using the federal government to cure social ills. Also, Democrats proved the party could appeal to moderates. William Freehling believes the success of the Democracy in the 1850s rested largely on "an American political party's indispensable function: to find the middle of the road."^{xxxix} Anti-slavery Whigs, Know Nothings, and early Republicans all operated on the fringes of the political spectrum. But as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Fugitive Slave law, the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the caning of Charles Sumner, and *Dred Scott* shifted the political boundaries on slavery in the 1850s, the American Democracy's sectional unity came under increasing strain. Issues other than slavery were able to keep it intact temporarily. The northwestern Democracy needed southern votes to open up new territories and thwart Whig tariff schemes while Northeastern urban political machines relied on similar backing to maintain an uninterrupted flow of patronage from Washington. Only after the Lecompton Constitution sacrificed popular sovereignty on the altar of slavery did northern Democrats—representing the views of their constituents—finally decide to separate from the southern wing of the party. The 1860 split in Charleston over a federal slave code adds further credence to this notion.

Although the limits of their studies are clear, Silbey and Holt deserve commendation for bringing ethnocultural issues to the forefront of the discussion on antebellum politics. Their arguments call for a statistical breakdown of Democrats along cultural and religious lines to determine how important such issues

were in keeping the party intact. Similar views on alcohol, evangelical Christianity, race, and women's roles may have contributed more significantly to the political alliance between southern slaveholders and northern immigrants than the current historiography would suggest. This seems especially relevant when one considers the demographic makeup of the well-known reform movements of the early nineteenth century. Mainly religious, native-born northern whites, the reformers were committed to a variety of different causes including abolitionism, Sabbatarianism, women's rights, and temperance. Their radical brand of political and social activism alienated a large portion of the national electorate in both sections and gave northern and southern Democrats a common enemy to fight at the polls.^{xl} But once the events of the 1850s moved the anti-slavery cause into the political mainstream, however, southern Democrats were unable to distinguish between different segments of the northern public.

Nichols believes Protestantism produced the black and white moral universe that made many northerners unwilling to compromise on slavery and other issues: "The most significant characteristic of the Protestant attitude was a consciousness of the evil nature of sin. Man was either saved or damned. Sin must be fought."^{xli} Under this line of reasoning, evangelical Protestants viewed political parties only as weapons to be used in the fight against sins such as slavery. Once a party ceased to serve this primary function, they quickly abandoned it. Salmon Chase, for instance, changed parties several times during his career over the slavery issue.^{xlii} Many Democrats, on the other hand, viewed party doctrine itself as sacred.^{xliii}

It also might prove useful to break down the northern electorate along urban and rural lines to determine whether the community values associated with each ever influenced voter behavior more than ethnocultural attachments. Jean Baker touches upon these issues, but does not provide enough hard data to back her conclusions. For instance, she believes that "urban-dwelling immigrants from Germany and Ireland" and "rural Midwesterners from the South" were the only groups of northerners to consistently vote for Democratic

candidates during the 1850s.^{xliv} But when Robert Johanssen describes the Germans in Illinois as “among the more outspoken critics of the Kansas-Nebraska Act”, one cannot help but wonder how many of them lived in urban areas.^{xlv} Nichols himself lists “metropolitanism” as a core ideology of the northern non-Democratic electorate.^{xlvi}

Finally, the influence of northern Democratic political rhetoric on southern views of the Republican Party is a subject that requires further analysis by scholars. Most of the studies under scrutiny here include brief descriptions of how northern Democrats throughout the mid-nineteenth century resorted to increasingly inflammatory descriptions of their political opponents in order to win votes. Nichols describes, for example, how during the presidential election of 1856, the Democratic press labeled Frémont a “dangerous radical” and warned the public against electing any “Black Republican.”^{xlvii} Coleman mentions that Pennsylvania newspapers reprinted a speech in Philadelphia during the same period which called for the defeat of “Negro-worshippers” and “wooly heads.”^{xlviii} Blue shows that after he became a Republican, Salmon Chase was described by the *Ohio Statesman*—a Democratic rag—as “an undisguised abolitionist” who “believed in the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the states and territories.”^{xlix} Jean Baker’s study references a drawing of a racially-mixed group printed in *The Indianapolis Daily Sentinel* which included the caption “Look at this picture. Elect Lincoln and the Black Republican ticket and you will have Negro Equality.”¹ While the effect of such blatant race-baiting on northern public opinion should be obvious (and can be measured by exploring the racial attitudes of northern Democratic voters as Baker has), it remains unclear what impact the same rhetoric may have had on the southern Democracy. Southern Democrats viewed Republicans as abolitionists who, if elected, would use the power of the federal government to turn the southern social pyramid on its apex. In fact, they were so convinced of the threat posed by Republicans to their “peculiar institution”, that they left the Union immediately after Lincoln’s election to protect it. How much of the southern view of the Republican

Party grew out of northern Democrats' portrayals of their political opponents during the elections of the 1850s? After all, northern Democrats worked and lived alongside Republicans and, in southerners' eyes, understood who they were better than anyone. A southerner unsure about Republican radicalism only needed to read northern Democratic descriptions during any given campaign season to find confirmation of his worst fears. This may in part explain the existence of the "hyperemotionalism" Nichols describes.^{li}

It is clear, then, that a new study of the northern Democracy is needed to bring the current historiography of nineteenth century politics up to date. Even though Nichols' book was written over fifty years ago, it remains the only comprehensive analysis of this important topic. A modern narrative which incorporates the use of statistics, political science, and sociology is required to shed light on the reasons behind the dissolution of the American Democracy and, as a result, the root causes of the Civil War. Patronage, ethnocultural attachments, westward expansion, party loyalty, and racism all helped keep northern Democrats from abandoning their national party during the 1850s. In addition, popular sovereignty became the final solution to the slavery question that had lingered since the Revolution and eventually, a test of party loyalty. Only when southern Democrats proved that they valued the extension of slavery over majority rule did northerners turn against them. Once secession was an accomplished fact, a large number of northern Democrats rallied around the Union cause. Stephen Douglas, for instance, received a hero's welcome in Chicago after he announced his support for the federal government and willingness to fight against his old political allies.^{liii} Others went on to become "Copperheads" and endorsed a policy of Confederate appeasement. Part of the reason for this war-time Democratic split may be found in the party's antebellum divisions. Northern Democrats who depended on trade ties with the South or feared competition from free black laborers traditionally felt as connected to their party as those who harbored moral objections to slavery but believed popular sovereignty was the *suprema lex*. Both groups worked together to defeat Whigs and Republicans—whom they viewed as

abolitionists that wanted to impose minority rule—but once the South made clear its intention to use central authority to override popular democracy, the alliance fell apart. One group volunteered for military service while the other stayed home to preach anti-war messages.

Finally, what is also missing from the current historiography is a detailed study on the relationship between northern voters and their leadership similar to the one Wallace Hettle recently produced on the antebellum South. Hettle's argument may contain some flaws, but it raises a host of interesting questions about the limits of popular democracy in the antebellum north. Northern society was substantially more democratic than a place like South Carolina, but how often did northern leaders act independently of the will of their constituents? Even in the egalitarian north, individual men controlled a disproportionate amount of power, political clout, and prestige. Martin Van Buren, for example, controlled the Albany Regency for nearly twenty years.^{liii} It remains to be seen if similar situations were prevalent in other northern states.

ⁱ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 215-34; James West Davidson, et. al., *Nation of Nations: A Concise Narrative of the American Republic* (Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999), 401-02.

ⁱⁱ Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 19.

ⁱⁱⁱ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 333-35; Roy F. Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy* (New York: Collier Books, 1948), 502.

^{iv} Nichols, 504-06.

^v Wallace Hettle, *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and Civil War* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 4-10.

^{vi} Raymond M. Hyser and J. Chris Arndt, *Voices of the American Past: Documents in U.S. History, Vol. 1* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995), 125; Davidson, 271-75.

^{vii} William J. Cooper, *The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), xi-xv, 279.

^{viii} *Ibid*, 317-321.

^{ix} Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), vii-ix.

^x *Ibid*, 283-303, 397-404.

^{xi} William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 546.

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- ^{xii} <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>
- ^{xiii} Johanssen, 447-62, 477-82.
- ^{xiv} Gerald W. Wolff, *The Kansas-Nebraska Bill: Party, Section, and Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Revisionist Press, 1977), 65, 97.
- ^{xv} *Ibid*, 76.
- ^{xvi} Johanssen, 387-88.
- ^{xvii} A renowned expert on the Jackson presidency wrote “[The Jackson] administration certainly established the spoils system in national politics.” Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), 47.
- ^{xviii} Nichols, 246.
- ^{xix} *Ibid*, 190.
- ^{xx} Wolff, 149.
- ^{xxi} *Ibid*, 58.
- ^{xxii} Baker, 269.
- ^{xxiii} *Ibid*, 23.
- ^{xxiv} Joel H. Silbey, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), xiv-xv.
- ^{xxv} *Ibid*, xvii.
- ^{xxvi} Johanssen, 482.
- ^{xxvii} John F. Coleman, *The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy, 1848-1860* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1975), 77.
- ^{xxviii} *Ibid*, 65.
- ^{xxix} *Ibid*, 74-77.
- ^{xxx} Davidson, 366.
- ^{xxxi} Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 277-78.
- ^{xxxii} Coleman, 82.
- ^{xxxiii} Michael Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 11.
- ^{xxxiv} Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 185.
- ^{xxxv} For example, Cooper reprints part of an 1849 letter from prominent southern Whig Alexander Stephens to John Crittenden in which the future vice-President of the Confederacy exclaims, “I [shall] hold no connection with a party that did not disconnect itself from those aggressive abolition movements.” Cooper, 282.
- ^{xxxvi} Frederick J. Blue, *Salmon P. Chase: A Life in Politics* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1987), 93-97.
- ^{xxxvii} *Ibid*, 100.
- ^{xxxviii} *Ibid*, 99, 101.
- ^{xxxix} Freehling, 562.
- ^{xl} See Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.)
- ^{xli} Nichols, 35.
- ^{xlii} Blue, x.
- ^{xliiii} Baker, 269.
- ^{xliv} *Ibid*, 325.

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- xlv Johanssen, 450.
xlvi Nichols, 44.
xlvii Ibid, 56.
xlviii Coleman, 92.
xlix Blue, 116.
^l Baker, 255.
^{li} Nichols, 502.
^{lii} Johanssen, 867.
^{liii} Benson, 65.