
Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects

Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects

1982

"The money our fathers were accustomed to" : banks and political culture in Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1800-1850

Carroll Van West
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

West, Carroll Van, "The money our fathers were accustomed to" : banks and political culture in Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1800-1850" (1982). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539623728. <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-0wgw-fe66>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted you will find a target note listing the pages in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.
5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.

University
Microfilms
International

300 N. ZEEB RD., ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

West, Carroll Van

"THE MONEY OUR FATHERS WERE ACCUSTOMED TO": BANKS AND
POLITICAL CULTURE IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE, 1800-1850

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

PH.D. . 1982

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

"The Money Our Fathers Were Accustomed To:"
Banks and Political Culture in Rutherford County, Tennessee,
1800-1850

A Dissertation

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

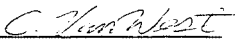
by
Carroll Van West

1982

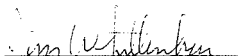
APPROVAL SHEET

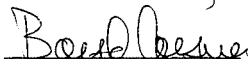
This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

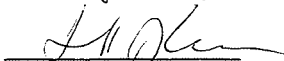
Doctor of Philosophy

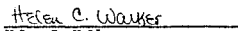

Carroll Van West

Approved, May 1982


James P. Whittenburg


Boyd Coyner


Ludwell Johnson


Helen C. Walker

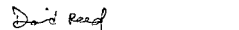

David Reed, Department of Computer Science

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF MAPS	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
PREFACE	2
CHAPTER I. A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY	5
CHAPTER II. EARLY SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY	27
CHAPTER III. THE NEW POLITICS MAKES ITS APPEARANCE	56
CHAPTER IV. THE MATURING OF A TWO PARTY SYSTEM IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY	91
CHAPTER V. CONSTRUCTING A WHIG STRONGHOLD	120
CHAPTER VI. THE WHIGS AND DEMOCRATS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY	169
CHAPTER VII. 1800-1850: THE BEGINNING OF A MODERN RUTHERFORD COUNTY--A SPECULATIVE CONCLUSION	204
BIBLIOGRAPHY	233
VITA	245

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Professor James P. Whittenburg, under whose guidance this investigation was conducted, for his patient guidance and criticism throughout the dissertation. The author is also indebted to the other members of the dissertation committee, Boyd Coyner, Edward Crapol, Ludwell Johnson, and Cam Walker, for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript.

Special thanks must go to Earnie Johns, Gene Sloan, and the late Homer Pittard of the Rutherford County Historical Society who were very kind in sharing their knowledge of the county's early history and the available historical resources. The author owes his heaviest debts to two very special people: Mike West, an outstanding Rutherford County journalist, who first introduced the writer to this subject, and my best of friends, Mary Sara Hoffschwelle, for her conceptual and textual criticism throughout the dissertation.

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I.1. Test of McCormick's Closeness of Outcome/High Turnout Hypothesis	12
I.2. Test By Categorization of McCormick's Hypothesis	13
I.3. Voter. Participation, Rutherford County Elections, 1835-1845	14
I.4. Rutherford County Elections, 1835-1845: Test of McCormick's Hypothesis	15
II.1.. Church Membership, Rutherford County	36
III.1. 1835 State and Congressional Elections, Rutherford County	74
III.2. 1836 Presidential Election, Rutherford County	82
III.3. 1837 State and Congressional Elections, Rutherford County	85
IV.1. 1839 State and Congressional Elections, Rutherford County	103
IV.2. Rutherford County District Returns, 1839 Gubernatorial Contest	105
V.1. Rutherford County District Returns, 1840 Election	133
V.2. 1841 State and Congressional Elections, Rutherford County	143
V.3. 1843 Gubernatorial Election, Rutherford County	150
V.4. 1844 Presidential Election, Rutherford County	156
VI.1. Wealth Measurements in Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties, 1836, 1839, and 1841	172
VI.2. Number and Value of Town Lots and Carriages, 1841, in Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties	173

VI.3.	Tendency of Party Activists to Live in the County Seat	178
VI.4.	Comparative Value of Land in Rutherford County . . .	180
VI.5.	Land Ownership of Whig Party Activists	182
VI.6.	Land Ownership of Democratic Party Activists	183
VI.7.	Slave Ownership of Whig Party Activists	185
VI.8.	Slave Ownership of Democratic Party Activists . . .	186
VI.9.	Increase of Wealth, 1836-1949: Democratic and Whig Party Activists of Rutherford County	188
VI.10.	Occupational Tendencies of Democratic Party	191
VI.11.	Occupational Tendencies of Whig Party	192
VI.12.	Age of Democratic Activists	195
VI.13.	Age of Whig Party Activists	196
VII.1.	Political Activists Who Served as Bank Directors, Nashville, Tennessee, 1835-1842	223

LIST OF MAPS

Map	Page
II.1. Physiographic Regions of Rutherford County	28
II.2. Waterways in Rutherford County	29
II.3. 1819 Survey of Rutherford County	33
II.4. Expansion of Town Limits of Murfreesborough, 1817- 1925	34
IV.1. Whig/Democratic Voting Strength By District, 1839 Elections	107
IV.2. Distribution of Democrat Votes, 1839 Elections . . .	108
IV.3. Distribution of Whig Votes, 1839 Elections	109
V.1. Whig/Democratic Voting Strength By District, 1840 Election	135
V.2. Distribution of Democrat Votes, 1840 Election	136
V.3. Distribution of Whig Votes, 1840 Election	137
VI.1. Distribution of Whig Party Leadership	176
VI.2. Distribution of Democratic Party Leadership	177

ABSTRACT

The creation of a new political culture, comprised of the Democratic and Whig parties, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, resulted from a community division over the desirability of both political and economic change. Before the early 1830s, Rutherford had been a Democratic party stronghold. But when, in light of the community's own economic stagnation, those who doubted the Democrats' wisdom in opposing a national bank joined John Bell and Hugh Lawson White's political revolt in 1835, a new way of politics soon appeared in Rutherford County. The Depression of 1837, which severely rocked Rutherford Countians, turned more "true" Jackson men toward the ranks of the opposition. Once the financial policies of the Jackson and Van Buren administrations were discredited, a consistent majority of Rutherford Countians became loyal members of the Whig party. Parties, therefore, had crystallized by 1839. Despite Democratic efforts at regaining the state capital for Rutherford County and maintaining the traditional character of the community, most Rutherford Countians opted for the Whig view of the world, even if that meant significant economic changes would occur.

The Whigs and Democrats of Rutherford County were different men. A majority of Whigs lived in the Garden of the community, while most Democrats lived in the Barrens. Whigs, therefore, were wealthier men. They also held different occupations, with one-fourth of the Whig party leaders engaged in commerce and/or manufacturing.

Quite possibly, the author suggests, the concept of modernization is a good explanation of the changes that Rutherford Countians experienced from 1800 to 1850. They did construct a recognizably modern political system and the issue of modern finance—the fate of the central banking system of Nicholas Biddle's Bank of the United States—was the major issue undermining the county's Democratic consensus.

"THE MONEY OUR FATHERS WERE ACCUSTOMED TO:"
BANKS AND POLITICAL CULTURE IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE,
1800-1850

PREFACE

This dissertation concerns the evolution of the second party system in a rural Southern county and the effect of the construction of two competitive parties on everyday community life. The setting is the heart of Middle Tennessee, Rutherford County, during America's "middle period;" the focus is on the interrelationships between the community's social structure, economic system, and future goals and the creation of a new party system in Rutherford. The dissertation emphasizes the cleavage of the Democratic coalition of Andrew Jackson into the Democratic and Whig parties, but this study also tells the story of a community in conflict—a clash engendered by rising commercialism, community instability, and ambitious politicians.

The significance of this investigation lies in the fact that while one reads much about Andrew Jackson and his coalition in Tennessee, one knows nothing about the average Whig or Democratic political activist in the Middle Tennessee region. By concentrating on a single county, one located at the state's geographic center, during the years of party formation, one can discover the social, economic, and political dynamics that created the Whig and Democratic parties. This dissertation is among the first to direct attention toward the part of the South that nurtured Andrew Jackson and his brand of democracy.

The second party system evolved in Rutherford County because differing opinions on the leading economic issues of the day shattered the Democratic consensus among the county's politicians. In 1833-1834, factionalism among the county's Democrats began over the personal and political rivalry between two United States Congressmen, James K. Polk and John Bell. The leading families of Rutherford County became intensely involved in this contest because Polk and Bell had been local attorneys and had married local women, but both sides tried to keep the rivalry from destroying community harmony. The actual creation of a Whig party occurred after the 1836 presidential campaign; yet, there was more to the cleavage than clashing elites. The divergent concepts of the Whig and Democratic parties on the county's economic future meant that the politics of Rutherford County would never be the same after the 1830s. At its inception, Rutherford voters were Jeffersonian in politics; then they joined the ranks of Andrew Jackson. But by the early 1840s, the Whigs had gained the voters' loyalty with a grip so tight that it took Reconstruction to bring the Democrats back to power.

Chapter one is a bibliographical introduction to the subject. The second chapter describes the early economic and political development of Rutherford County and explains what kind of society it was on the eve of the party formation period. Chapters three through five describe the behavior of politicians and the issues that motivated them to create a two party system during the years 1834 to 1840, and then shows how a community in Jackson's own backyard became a Whig stronghold by 1844. Chapter six is a quantitative-based

investigation of the type of man who filled the ranks of the Whigs and Democrats in Rutherford County and compares those men to their counterparts in neighboring Middle Tennessee counties. The final chapter is a speculative suggestion that the social science concept of modernization might be one way of analyzing the development of the second party system in Rutherford County.

The author cited all quotes in this study as they were in the original texts, unless otherwise noted. Original spellings and punctuations have been kept.

Chapter I

A Bibliographical Essay

The maturation of Rutherford County's politics into a highly competitive, two-party political culture was part of a nationwide transformation in the political system that many historians have described and analyzed. Traditionally, they have dubbed this era the "Age of Jackson," the time of the creation of the second American party system. The historical literature on the middle period offers a pat explanation as to what caused the emergence of the county's second political culture: different opinions about the national issues of the day, sectionalism, and the power politics of Washington created the Democratic and Whig parties. These national parties then merely grafted themselves onto the landscape of America. But could purely national concerns have touched the life the average man of Rutherford County so deeply that nearly everyone voted in the 1841 state elections or the 1844 presidential canvass?

Well over a generation ago, Thomas Cochran warned scholars of the inherent dangers of a "'presidential synthesis'" of the past.¹ Cochran believed that too many historians concentrated on this or that administration and gave far too much emphasis to national political debates. Yet his admonition has had little effect. Scholars still describe America's political maturation during the middle years

as the "age of Jackson," "Jacksonian America," or merely "Jacksonian democracy."

There are alternatives to this repetition of trite phrases. In 1852, Karl Marx offered a most perceptive comment on American society in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. America, Marx believed, was a conservative form of bourgeois society in which "the classes already exist, but have not yet acquired permanent character, are in constant flux and reflux, constantly changing their elements and yielding them up to one another."² Viewing the country from this perspective could provide a solid foundation for understanding America's political culture, but most middle period scholars have chosen not to follow Marx's formula. Instead they have pursued the intellectual theme that Alexis de Tocqueville and Thomas Hart Benton introduced in Jackson's times, that of one man and his heroic fight for democracy. Ever since, middle period historiography has been clouded by nineteenth-century partisanship and mired in the quicksand of presidential synthesis.³

Frederick Jackson Turner's portrait of frontier America firmly rooted Andrew Jackson in the center of our picture of the middle years. Turner contended that "Old Hickory" personified the characteristics of western democracy and that Jackson had led a basic transformation in the American government. Henceforth, politics would be more democratic and less aristocratic. The image of Jackson, frontier democrat, received little challenge; few doubted that the phrase "Jacksonian democracy" was an apt one for middle period studies.⁴ Even a study of the origins of the Whig party concluded that

Jacksonian democracy had not only dominated government, but also shaped the character of its opposition.⁵ Those who studied separate states recognized that class differences affected political activity and Thomas Abernethy even claimed that Jackson was a frontier aristocrat, but no one suggested that Jackson's democracy did not dominate American society.⁶

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s Age of Jackson interpreted Jackson's democracy for a cold war generation.⁷ He found that the essence of Jacksonian democracy lay in the class antagonisms of the urban north-east--a struggle between the business aristocracy and the people so that freedom could prosper in a liberal democratic society. Schlesinger changed the western wear of Turner's Jackson for the clothes of the eastern workingman and, taken together, the two defined the democratic Jackson--an image which historians of all persuasions have debated vigorously ever since. But whatever the verdict, the phrase "Jacksonian democracy" played the central role in the debate. For many scholars what Jackson did while President explained the creation of the second party system. Since Schlesinger, scholars have created a closed debate that does little to explain those times.

Critics of Turner and Schlesinger have been numerous and persistent. Richard Hofstadter believed that Jackson did not champion the lower classes so much as he pursued the construction of a laissez-faire capitalist state where frontier aristocrats like himself could compete with eastern business interests. This ideal of a competitive marketplace was the goal of the new Democratic party.⁸ Hofstadter's thesis rapidly gained popularity, especially with economic historians.

Bray Hammond applied the "entrepreneurial" thesis to Jackson's activities during the Bank War, then concluded that Jackson was not a commoner but a common liberal capitalist and that his followers were not ideologues but political hypocrites. A flurry of books soon lent support to the Hofstadter-Hammond hypothesis, but by the 1960s the entrepreneurial Jackson was under attack by numerous banking studies.⁹ John M. McFaul's Politics of Jacksonian Finance re-emphasized the economic portrait of Jackson which Turner and Schlesinger earlier had advocated. McFaul felt that the Jacksonians were not demagogues or hypocrites when they attacked the Bank of the United States. Their political motivation was sincere. McFaul suggested that the Hofstadter-Hammond thesis be abandoned.¹⁰

Economic motivation was not the only thing that interested historians about Andrew Jackson—the ideas of his time were also important. Yet intellectual historians were also unable to look beyond the imposing visage of Old Hickory. For these scholars, Jackson was the "symbol for an age," the guiding light for those of the "Jacksonian persuasion" who, by advocating a laissez-faire philosophy, paradoxically paved the way for the destruction of their professed agrarian ideal.¹¹ Traditional political historians during the 1950s continued the partisan war over the period as they pictured the "Old Hero" as either ignorant, naive servant of those around him or a passive instrument for party reformers who desired to create a strong and unified Democratic party.¹²

In the nineteen sixties, the academic dialogue over antebellum America changed its tone. The "ethnocultural" thesis of Lee Benson

and his students added a decidedly dissonant chord to the heretofore harmonious chorus about those times. Neither sectionalism nor economic classes, Benson asserted, played a decisive role in the middle period's political culture. His interpretation stressed that the seeds of an age of egalitarianism were contained in one's ethnocultural background. Through this ethnocultural prism, Benson saw mid-nineteenth century America as a world in which one's economic status had little, if anything, to do with one's cultural makeup and identity. Religion and ethnic origin were the most important factors. Other ethnocultural historians extended this social analysis of political behavior from New York to Michigan and Illinois, concluding that Jacksonian democracy had more to do with resistance to traditional "Yankee" values than with any class struggle. The ethnocultural thesis was a significant departure from the writings of Turner, Schlesinger, and Hofstadter. Benson demonstrated that a sociopolitical methodology could uncover new questions and answers; yet his thesis seemed applicable only to areas which had significant ethnic diversity.¹³

Benson's most important legacy has been his quantitative methodology. This type of inquiry became the analytical foundation for many middle period scholars during the 1960s. Unfortunately, quantitative scholars like Richard McCormick, Edward Pessen, Douglas Miller, and Donald Cole have not advanced our understanding of the era's political life much beyond the point to which Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. carried it.

Pessen and Miller refuted Schlesinger's notion that Jacksonian

democracy was an urban, northeastern, democratic revolution. According to Miller, the aristocracy of New York increased its power during those years, and he suggested that the least appropriate way of studying the age of Jackson was through its rhetoric.¹⁴ Pessen's early studies contradicted Schlesinger's assertion that organized labor was consistently Jacksonian.¹⁵ After exploring the elites of five major urban areas, Pessen further argued that Schlesinger had written not a history, but a mythology: the age of Jackson was actually "an age of materialism and opportunism, reckless speculation and erratic growth, unabashed vulgarity, and a politic, seeming-deference to the common man by uncommon men who actually ran things."¹⁶ Thus, a social and economic elite based on inherited wealth and social status dominated America during the middle period--there was neither Jacksonian democracy nor an age of egalitarianism.¹⁷ Yet Schlesinger's Jackson (and part of Turner's too) found support in Donald Cole's study of New Hampshire politics which reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Jacksonian democracy concept.¹⁸ Like the others, Cole used quantitative evidence to buttress his case, but it was not until the studies of Thomas B. Alexander and Joel H. Silbey that historians employed sophisticated quantitative methods to study middle period politics. Alexander analyzed the roll call votes of the House of Representatives and discovered that sectional interests influenced a congressman's voting behavior to a far greater degree than his party affiliation. Using similar methodology, Silbey reached the opposite conclusion--that party, not sectionalism, was the dominant influence behind a congressman's vote.¹⁹

While their studies showed the promise of the computer as an analytical tool, Alexander and Silbey both used the new methods to address old questions. Their contrasting conclusions from the same evidence and by the same methods should remind scholars that history, even with computers, is not a science. While American historians often accept on faith quantified evidence, troubling questions can be raised about a number of computer-based middle period studies. Richard P. McCormick's widely accepted thesis of the emergence of the second party system is a case in point. McCormick hypothesized that the Whig and Democratic parties did not emerge from congressional divisions, new popular attitudes, or the remnants of the first party system; rather the presidential campaigns from 1824 to 1840 created the parties. Competitive parties, he surmised, formed at different times in different regions depending on the length of time it took an area to embrace one presidential candidate or the other. By 1840, a fully functioning party system was in place—a system which allowed national parties to exist by controlling regional biases and differences.²⁰

Central to McCormick's thesis were his statistical tables listing the increasing competitiveness of the presidential elections and the expanding voter turnout in the period.²¹ From these tables he concluded that there was a positive correlation between the closeness of an election and voter turnout. From the close elections and high turnouts in the 1840 and 1844 presidential races he developed a simple hypothesis that identified the existence of the second party system: when a region had both close elections and high

TABLE I.1

TEST OF MCCORMICK'S CLOSENESS OF OUTCOME/HIGH TURNOUT HYPOTHESIS

<u>Election</u>	<u>Pearson's R</u>	<u>Relationship?</u>
1828	-.56763	moderately strong
1832	-.69733	strong
1836	-.35464	weak
1840	-.37495	weak
1844	-.37398	weak

n=25 states. SPSS scattergram test.

NOTE: Without specifically naming McCormick or citing his work, Thomas B. Alexander suggested this test in "Some Natural Limits of Quantification in History," unpublished paper presented to the 37th Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Houston, Texas, November 1971.

TABLE I.2
 TEST BY CATERGORIZATION OF MCCORMICK'S HYPOTHESIS

<u>Election</u>	<u>Gamma</u>	<u>Relationship?</u>
1828	-.83929	very strong
1832	-.83193	very strong
1836	-.58273	moderately strong
1840	-.42857	moderately weak
1844	-.34426	weak

n=25 states. SFSS crosstabulation nine-cell table.

TABLE I.3
 VOTER PARTICIPATION, RUTHERFORD COUNTY ELECTIONS, 1835-1845

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Votes Cast</u>	<u>Turnout (%)</u>	<u>Closeness of Margin Difference (%)</u>
1835	2810	92.7	30.6
1836	2178	71.8	7.8
1837	2514	82.9	49.6
1839	2973	87.6	3.2
1840	2810	82.8	13.4
1841	3346	98.6	2.2
1843	2953	87.1	7.4
1844	3230	95.2	7.2
1845	3056	90.1	4.6

SOURCES: The number of qualified voters in 1837 and 1839 were 3032 and 3392 respectively. Nashville Union, Jan. 1, 1840. For elections 1835-1837, the author used the 1837 figure; for all other elections, he adopted the 1839 figure. Thus, the percentage turnout from 1840 to 1845 is probably listed as higher than the actual number who did participate in those elections. The total votes cast was based on those who voted in the governor's race. Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 11, 1835, Aug. 7, 1841, Aug. 11, 1843, and Nov. 11, 1844; Nashville Republican, Nov. 12, 1836 and Aug. 8, 1837; Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840; Jonesborough Whig and Independent Journal, Sept. 10, 1845.

TABLE I.4
 RUTHERFORD COUNTY ELECTIONS, 1835-1845: TEST OF MCCORMICK'S
 HYPOTHESIS

<u>No. of Elections Analyzed</u>	<u>Pearson's R</u>	<u>Relationship?</u>
nine	-.18169	no
eight (eliminating 1837)	-.01223	no
seven (eliminating 1835 and 1837)	-.51545	yes

n=9elections. SPSS scattergram test.

turnouts, two competitive parties must be present. While his tables at first glance supported his conclusions, his hypothesis does not stand up to more rigorous quantitative testing. After analyzing his data as cited, one found little correlation between closeness of election and voter turnout (see Table I.1). Actually, his thesis was statistically correct for the two elections, 1828 and 1832, which he admitted had little to do with an organized, two-party system, but not for the key elections of 1836, 1840, and 1844 when organized parties did battle with each other.

McCormick's ideas about the creation of the second party system cannot be rejected out of hand. Categorizing the measurements into a low, middle, and high range shows a positive correlation for his pivotal elections of 1836 and 1840 (see Table I.2). Furthermore, applying the electoral activity in Rutherford County from 1835 to 1845 to the thesis reveals an even greater trend (but remember that such a test changes McCormick's level of measurement from states to elections within one county). After eliminating the two campaigns in Rutherford that did not involve fully organized parties (see Tables I.3 and I.4), Rutherford County offered positive support for the McCormick thesis.

How a man expressed himself at the polls generally involved more than a simple preference for one candidate over another. To suggest otherwise is misleading. The problems of Richard McCormick's thesis remind us that historians should retain a healthy skepticism about quantitative inquiry. Quantitative historians, for the most part, have failed to address or create new historical questions and have

concentrated on analyzing aggregate, not individual, behavior.

But statistical evidence can be utilized fruitfully if scholars place those records of individual behavior into a holistic framework which combines the methodologies of the "new social" and the "new political" history. Only then can middle period historians break away from the old debates of traditional historiography. One of the first American historians to adopt some of these concepts was Frank L. Owsley.

Three decades ago, Owsley's Plain Folk of the Old South revealed that the old stereotypes were wrong: rural Southern culture was mostly middle-class, complex, and diversified. Owsley based his story on "counting evidence" such as tax lists and manuscript census reports because he believed that through analyzing "plain folk" the tale of a past people could be fully told. Owsley let the actions of the inarticulate speak for themselves.²³ A decade passed before others took up his banner.²⁴ Yet those who followed Owsley took their cue from American colonial studies²⁵ and the "new urban" history,²⁶ rather than Owsley's work. They dropped his aggregate statistical methodology in favor of an individual mode of analysis. This new social history opened up the middle period dialogue on the inarticulate; on its heels came the new political history. New issues came to the fore: population mobility, urban rioting, working-class movements, and increasing state paternalism. These concerns indicated that scholars had begun to realize that the presidential synthesis of the middle period had seriously distorted our interpretation of antebellum America.²⁷

Today new methodologies and modes of analysis have stripped away layers of myth that have veiled the middle period, in the process resurrecting interpretations that once had been discredited. For example, the current picture of the slave South--the peculiar institution as a way of life--does not differ greatly from earlier portraits. Today historians realize that, despite the power of the white society, blacks created a thriving Afro-American culture marked by stable family networks, class relationships, and an enriching community life.²⁸

Community studies of mid-nineteenth century America have also opened the doors to a richer appreciation of the dynamics of antebellum society. From studies of Lowell and Lynn, Massachusetts; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Kingston, Rochester, and Rockdale, New York; and Newark, New Jersey, a complex mosaic has appeared. The Industrial Revolution propelled change throughout society. As America's working class expanded, many men adopted a proletarian mentality, but class cleavage and a rising capitalist spirit did not necessarily destroy community values. As a matter of fact, a different sense of community evolved as many groups formed separate enclaves within their towns in order to protect their character and social status from the intrusion of capitalism and immigration. These northern communities did survive and maintain their own identities.²⁹ People dominated politics, not the other way around. Most communities were like Kingston, New York where national political issues only mattered "when Kingston began to experience those economic and social changes that altered the substance of government in the nation as a whole,

and when Kingston acquired the machinery to carry into politics the local manifestations of economic and social change."³⁰ According to these studies, the family, emerging industrial capitalism, millennial Christianity, assimilation, and growing class consciousness influenced middle period America more than did Andrew Jackson.

Often, however, the community studies failed to deal adequately with a town's political culture. For any holistic synthesis of a society, its politics must be understood. The period's scholarship must integrate political and social history.³¹ J. Mills Thornton adopted a social and political approach to analyze antebellum Alabama, but created only a restatement of the old Jacksonian democracy theses of Turner, Schlesinger, and Fessen. Thornton, like Richard H. Brown before him, concluded that southern Jacksonianism was true Jacksonian democracy. On the other hand, Harry L. Watson recently focused on how the creation of the Whig party undermined social stability in Cumberland County, North Carolina. Watson's Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict studied the effect of the second party system on Southern society, but his analysis still relied on the concept of Jacksonian democracy.³² Thus, not only is a social and political methodology a necessity, but the historians who use it must move away from the usual preconceptions about the middle period. Already there are signs that some writers are trying to grapple with that society as it reflected its own culture.³³ While it is difficult to produce an integrated history of a society and of a culture, French historians offer perhaps the best model in the Annales school of total history. Ferdinand Braudel and Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie have

shown that through total history (a combination of history, other social sciences, and even the natural sciences) past cultures can be recreated with a high degree of accuracy.³⁴ It is precisely this type of approach that antebellum scholarship lacks, but there are some American historians too who would endorse the concept of total history.

A quarter of a century ago, two American historians predicted that their profession would have to change directions. Frank Owsley thought Clio's future would be secure once scholars began to explore the resources of county archives and census lists, for then Americans would be able to demythologize their past. His contemporary, David M. Potter, asserted that the emerging social sciences offered a lesson: that together with history the sciences "can help to explain the nature of the actors in the historical drama."³⁵ While colonial historians expand the social and political methodology, too many antebellum interpreters loyally carry on the closed Turner-Schlesinger-Hofstadter-Pessen debate.³⁶

Some scholars are aware of the promise of social and political analyses. Edward Pessen chided himself and his co-workers for being too busy counting heads and counting votes--the "characteristics of the actors"--rather than addressing larger truths by measuring the "consequences of action." But Pessen argued for a reorientation merely to enlarge the dialogue on Jacksonian politics, not to alter its direction.³⁷ While recognizing that the new political history had confined itself to the framework of Jacksonian democracy, Joel Silbey hoped that, once students placed their political inquiry within a community setting, new historical questions would be uncovered. This

suggestion became the centerpiece of Ronald Formisano's 1976 review essay on Jacksonian politics. Arguing that social and political history must be integrated, Formisano believed that as the study of Jacksonian politics became more interdisciplinary middle period scholars would discover that "the comparative analysis of communities offers one of the best ways to sort out conflicting hypotheses."³⁸ Unfortunately, Formisano, like Pessen, perceived the new community inquiry as simply a more accurate method of testing the concept of Jacksonian democracy.

This study concerns Rutherford County, Tennessee, from 1800 to 1850. Its focus is on that community's development of a second political culture.³⁹ The whole of Rutherford County's antebellum past cannot be recaptured on these pages, but the author hopes to show that the ancestors of today's Rutherford Countians were more than Jacksonian democrats.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

1. Thomas C. Cochran, "'The Presidential Synthesis' in American History," American Historical Review, LIII (July 1948), 748-59.
2. Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (Chicago, 1913), 21-22.
3. Thomas H. Benton, Thirty Years' View (New York, 1875), I, 111-12; Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Phillips Bradley, ed., (New York, 1945), I, 199-232.
4. Frederick J. Turner, "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," Atlantic Monthly, XCI (Jan., 1903), 86-89, 95-96.
5. E. Malcom Carroll, Origins of the Whig Party (Durham, 1925); William McDonald, Jacksonian Democracy, 1829-1837 (New York, 1906); Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South, 1830-1861 (Washington, 1913); Carl R. Fish, The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850 (New York, 1927).
6. Henry R. Mueller, The Whig Party in Pennsylvania (New York, 1922); Thomas P. Abernethy, From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee: A Study in Frontier Democracy (Memphis, 1955 [1932]).
7. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston, 1945).
8. Richard Hofstadter, "Andrew Jackson and the Rise of Liberal Capitalism," The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It (New York, 1948), 45-67; ibid., The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840 (Berkeley, 1969).
9. Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton, 1957). Hammond's analysis owed much to Ralph C. H. Catterall, The Second Bank of the United States (Chicago, 1903).

10. John M. McFaul, The Politics of Jacksonian Finance (Ithaca, 1972); Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Bank War: A Study in the Growth of Presidential Power (New York, 1967); Jean A. Wilburn, Biddle's Bank: The Crucial Years (New York, 1967); Peter Temin, The Jacksonian Economy (New York, 1969); James R. Sharp, The Jacksonians versus the Banks: Politics in the States after the Panic of 1837 (New York, 1970); William G. Shade, Banks or No Banks: The Money Issue in Western Politics, 1832-1865 (Detroit, 1972).
11. John W. Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York, 1955); Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (Stanford, 1957).
12. Glyndon G. Van Dusen, The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1845 (New York, 1959); Robert V. Remini, Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party (New York, 1959).
13. Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1961); Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton, 1971); Shade, Banks or No Banks. But as Paul E. Johnson recently argued, "It seems unwise to treat religion and class as separate and competing categories of explanation. The problem is not to discover which exerted greater independent influence over behavior, but to define how they made each other in history." Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York, 1978), 135.
14. Douglas T. Miller, Jacksonian Aristocracy: Class and Democracy in New York, 1830-1860 (New York, 1967); *ibid.*, The Birth of Modern America, 1820-1850 (New York, 1970).
15. Edward Pessen, Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement (Albany, 1967).
16. Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics (Homewood, Ill., 1969), 351.
17. Edward Pessen, Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War (Lexington, Mass., 1973); *ibid.*, "Who Rules America?: Power and Politics in the Democratic Era, 1825-1975," Prologue, IX (Spring 1977), 5-26; *ibid.*, "Who Has the Power in the Democratic Capitalist Community? Reflections on Antebellum New York City," New York History, LVIII (April 1977), 129-55.
18. Donald B. Cole, Jacksonian Democracy in New Hampshire, 1800-1851 (Cambridge, 1970).

19. Thomas B. Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength (Nashville, 1967); Joel H. Silbey, The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852 (Pittsburgh, 1967); Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York, 1970).
20. Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill, 1966).
21. Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review, LXXV (Jan., 1960), 288-301.
22. Ibid., 292, 300.
23. Frank L. Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge, 1949).
24. For example, see: Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Eloomington, 1957).
25. Charles S. Grant, Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent (New York, 1961); Darret B. Rutman, Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649 (New York, 1965); Jackson T. Main, The Social Structure of Revolutionary America (New York, 1965).
26. Sam B. Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth (Philadelphia, 1968); Peter R. Knights, The Plain People of Boston: A Study in City Growth (New York, 1971).
27. David Grimsted, "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," American Historical Review, LXXVII (April 1972), 361-97; David Montgomery, "The Shuttle and the Cross: Weavers and Artisans in the Kensington Riots of 1844," Edward Pessen, ed., The Many-Faceted Jacksonian Era (Westport, 1977), 114-51; Leonard P. Curry, "Urbanization and Urbanism in the Old South: A Comparative View," ibid., 82-97; David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston, 1971).
28. Eugene D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York, 1967); ibid., Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1974); John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York, 1972); Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, 1976).
29. Alan Dawley, Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn (Cambridge, 1976); Kathleen N. Conzen, Immigrant

- Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accomodation and Community in a Frontier City (Cambridge, 1976); Stuart M. Blumin, The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth Century American Community (Chicago, 1976); Anthony F. C. Wallace, Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution (New York, 1978); Susan E. Hirsch, Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860 (Philadelphia, 1978); Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826 to 1860 (New York, 1979).
30. Blumin, Urban Threshold, 140-41.
31. Richard L. McCormick, "Ethno-Cultural Interpretations of Nineteenth Century American Voting Behavior," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXIX (June 1974), 352-54.
32. J. Mills Thornton, III, Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge, 1978); Richard H. Brown, "The Missouri Crisis, Slavery, and the Politics of Jacksonianism," Pessen, Many-Faceted Era, 178-91; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina (Baton Rouge, 1981).
33. For example, W. J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Tradition: An American Tradition (New York, 1979).
34. Emmanuel L. Ladurie, Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error (New York, 1979); Ferdinand Braudel, Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800 (New York, 1967).
35. Owsley, Plain Folk, 7; David M. Potter, People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character (Chicago, 1954), xx-xxi.
36. Especially consider: Richard R. Beeman, "The New Social History and the Search for 'Community' in Colonial America," American Quarterly, XXIX (Fall 1977), 422-33.
37. Edward Pessen, "Jacksonian Quantification: On Asking the Right Questions," Herbert J. Bass, ed., The State of American History (Chicago, 1970), 362-72.
38. Joel H. Silbey, ed., Political Ideology and Voting Behavior in the Age of Jackson (Englewood Cliffs, 1973), 181-82; Ronald P. Formisano, "Toward a Reorientation of Jacksonian Politics: A Review of the Literature, 1959-1975," Journal of American History, LXIII (June 1976), 52, 42, 57, 64.

39. The author adopted Darret B. Rutman's definition of a community study. A community study is "simply the people of any particular locale, the pattern of their associations among themselves and with others beyond the locale, and over time, the changes in that pattern." Darret B. Rutman, "Community Study," Historical Methods, XIII (Winter 1980), 31. He also adopted Donald J. Devine's definition of political culture: "the political aspect of a society . . . a historical system of widespread, fundamental, behavioral, political values . . . classified into subsystems of identity, symbol, rule, and belief." Cited in Ronald P. Formisano, "Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789-1840," American Political Science Review, LXVIII (June 1974), 487.

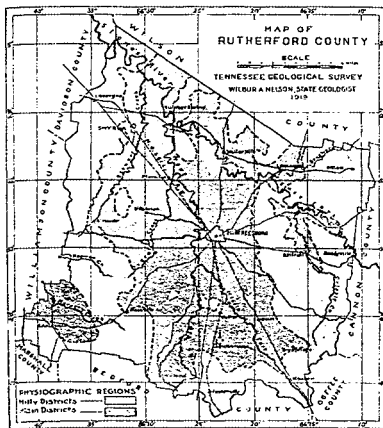
CHAPTER II

Early Society and Politics in Rutherford County

There are three "grand divisions" in Tennessee: East, Middle, and West. These geographical regions are divided by the Appalachian mountain range and the Tennessee River. Rutherford County is not only the geographic center of the state, but part of the central basin of Middle Tennessee, often called the "Garden of Tennessee." Yet the southern and eastern edges of the county are extremely hilly, even mountainous. This is the beginning of the Highland Rim, a place of limestone and shale outcroppings usually described as the "Barrens of Tennessee."¹ As the pioneers settled the county, these two geographic regions demanded two types of agrarian life within one community: a planter's life, concentrating on cotton, tobacco, and other staple crops in the plains and, in the hills, a small farmer's life of diversified crops and herds (see Map II.1). Life in the "Garden" was very different from life in the "Barrens," and during the 1830s, these differences in one's way of life helped to create profound divisions among Rutherford Countians.²

Those who settled first in Rutherford ignored the hills and mountains of the southeast. They chose the bountiful Garden. If one aspired to be a planter, however, there was another necessity besides fertile land--a way to transport the crops to the outside world.

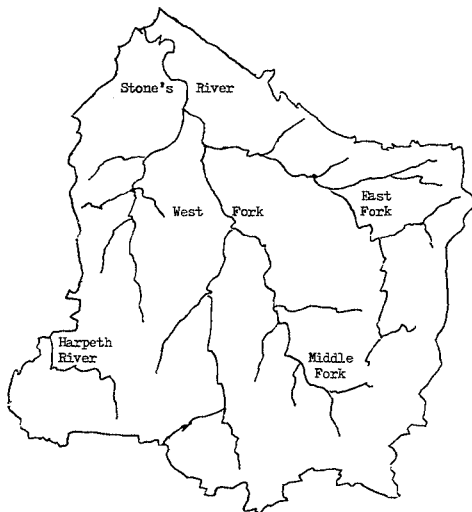
MAP II.1
 PHYSIOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY



Map of Rutherford County, showing Physiographic Regions.

SOURCE: J. J. Galloway, Geology and Natural Resources of Rutherford County, Tennessee (Nashville, 1919), 11.

MAP II.2
WATERWAYS IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY



SOURCE: 1978 Map of Rutherford County, Linebaugh Public Library,
Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Fortunately, Stone's River bestowed upon Rutherford County a river system whose upper half connected the county by flatboat to the Cumberland River, providing a route to New Orleans and the world marketplace beyond (see Map II,2). Cotton would flourish in northern Rutherford, but it would not appear in the Barrens because of the terrain and limited access to the Stone's River waterway.³

Before the whites arrived in the last years of the eighteenth century, the Cherokee and Chickasaw nations had long appreciated the bounty of Rutherford's land and water. For the Indians, the place was a hunting territory shared by both tribes, but by the late eighteenth century Black Fox, a Cherokee, had constructed an Indian trading center at a salt lick near the west fork of the Stone's River.⁴ The first whites chose not to live near this patch of tamed land--the waterway was too shallow and narrow for flatboats. Rather, they decided to dwell where the Stone's River split into its east and west forks. In time this initial settlement came to be called Jefferson, after the current president.⁵

Rutherford County was no longer an untamed wilderness. It became Tennessee's twenty-fourth county in 1804. The rapidly growing towns of Nashville and Columbia surrounded the initial settlement at Jefferson. It would still take, however, a particular brand of "pioneer" to live in Rutherford. The Indian wars had ended only a decade before, and more land had to be cleared before extensive agriculture could be practiced. Over thirty years ago, the historian Frank Owsley suggested that the hunter, the herdsman, and the small farmer first had to tame southern land before the planter could

survive and prosper. Rutherford County was not an exception to this rule.⁶

in 1804, Jefferson, as the preeminent settlement in the area, became the first seat of government in Rutherford County. It was the only trade town, an important stop in the region's flatboat traffic. The land surrounding the village was among the most fertile in Middle Tennessee. Jefferson's early investors reasonably believed that this village had a bright future. Indian trails were the only roads for miles around, and they were inadequate for commercial traffic. The river was the only means of transportation, and Jefferson stood at the apex of this communication network. Surveyors measured some one hundred and fifty town lots, and once placed on the market, the lots sold quickly. For ten years, after the completion of the county courthouse in 1806, Jefferson prospered as a commercial center.⁷

Only a decade later, however, Jefferson began to slip steadily into oblivion, the victim of demographic and economic shifts. By 1811, Jefferson was no longer the demographic heart of the county, and those who lived nearer the middle of Rutherford's Garden wanted the county's political center nearer to their homes. One of them, Charles Ready, offered his land in the Barrens for a new county seat; another, Thomas Rucker, wanted to sell some prime basin acreage in south Rutherford; and William Lytle offered to barter the center of the county—rich land just east of the Stone's River west fork. As a local historian aptly said, "naturally there arose a bitter and determined struggle among several localities to secure the seat of

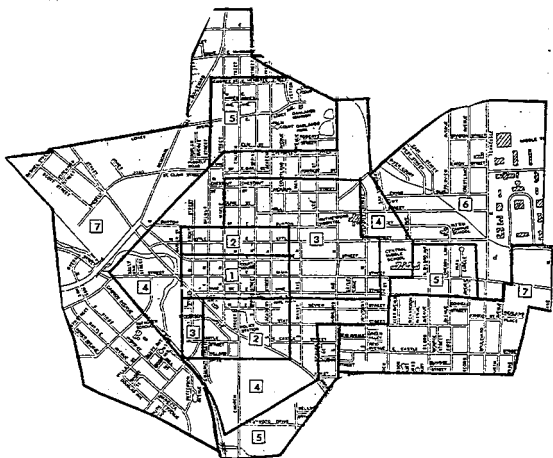
justice, as it was realized what a distinctive benefit it would be to the successful community."⁸ Of the three bids, Ready's and Lytle's had the most advantages. "Readyville" offered a gateway to the Highland Rim and the proprietor's own successful water mill. Lytle's land presented a waterway to the Cumberland (Lytle's Creek) and a place centrally located in the county. Lytle won, plying the county commissioners with sumptuous entertainment (Ready and Rucker tried this too) and a bribe of sixty free acres if he was given a prime town lot in return. Thus the seat of government in Rutherford settled at the center of the county, the region, and the state. At first Rutherford Countians called the town Cannonsburgh and later Murfreesborough, after Lytle's friend, Hardee Murfree.⁹

As the competition for the county seat indicated, many separate "neighborhoods" which closely matched the geographical and economic divisions of the region composed the community of Rutherford County. The centers of the principal neighborhoods were the major villages of the Barrens (Fosterville, Big Spring, and Readyville), those of the Gardens (Jefferson and Milton), and the most important of all, the new town of Murfreesborough.

After the sale of town lots in 1812, Murfreesborough grew steadily. In 1812 Joel Dyer moved his tavern business and Marmen Spence his dry goods store from Jefferson to Murfreesborough. A cotton and tobacco warehouse soon stood on Main Street; a newspaper began publication in 1814, and the town's Mt. Moriah Mason's Lodge received its charter in 1817. A year later, all tree stumps were removed from the streets and one resident built a brick house. Even the town's

MAP II.4

EXPANSION OF TOWN LIMITS OF MURFREESBOROUGH, 1817-1925

Legend

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| (1) 1817 | (3) 1850 | (5) 1903 | (7) 1925 |
| (2) 1837 | (4) 1879 | (6) 1915 | |

SOURCE: Annexations of Murfreesboro (Barnesville, Ga., 1976).

first municipal service—a well—was under construction. As the town's size increased, so too did its appeal to the state government. Since the town was at the state's geographic center and obviously enjoying consistent economic expansion, Middle Tennessee lawmakers argued, it was only logical that the state government move from Knoxville in East Tennessee to Murfreesborough. The citizens of Rutherford did not disagree. In 1819, the state legislature, in deference to the expanding demographic strength of the Middle Tennessee region, voted to move the capital to Murfreesborough.¹⁰

During Murfreesborough's reign as the state capital (1819-1826), the community of Rutherford County enjoyed its greatest prominence. The general assembly met at the newly constructed courthouse until it was destroyed by fire in 1822, after which the legislature held its sessions at the Presbyterian church. Along with community prestige, the legislators, clerks, and executive officers also brought a new economic order to the community. Taverns and lawyers abounded. Government patronage laid prosperity at the doors of many: George A. Sublett became the state printer and David Wendal the unofficial state quartermaster. The county's population grew to over 26,000 by 1830, with 800 of those living within the corporate limits of Murfreesborough (see Map II.4). But during these same years, Nashville enjoyed a phenomenal rate of growth. By 1825, it was the major city in Tennessee, and when the Bank of the United States finally located a branch office in the state in 1826, the bank was placed in Nashville. Murfreesborough's location no longer seemed so important, and in 1827 the capital moved to Nashville. Despite this loss, Murfreesborough

TABLE II.1
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Church</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Males</u>	<u>Black Females</u>
Salem Methodist, 1812-45	36	36	0	0
Hopewell Methodist, 1832-33	54	55	0	0
Rock Spring C. of Christ, 1820	42	48	10	20
First Baptist Church, 1843-44	9	10	0	0
First Presbyterian, 1812-45	361	486	0	0

SOURCES: Lucia S. Muse, ed., Salem Methodist Church, Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1812-1975 (Nashville, 1976); Mrs. Robert V. Gwynne, Sr., "Rock Spring Church of Christ," Rutherford County Historical Society Publications, No. 3 (Summer 1974), 70-78; Laura L. W. Coffey, "Records of Hopewell Church, 1832-1833," ibid., No. 7 (Summer 1976), 22-72; Personal Church Records of First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro; Mary B. Tankersley, comp., First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Roster Of Members, 1812 to 1846 (Murfreesboro, 1977).

continued its economic momentum, and by 1833 its population was over 1000. Its service as the state capital transformed Murfreesborough into the county's commercial and political center; its power now matched its geographical location. Jefferson was no longer a competitor. By 1833 it was merely a post town at the forks of the Stone's River.¹¹

During its term as state capital, Murfreesborough evolved into a commercial center. A professional and mercantile elite emerged which led the town to unexpected, but not undesirable, accomplishments. Farmers and planters did not have to be so self-reliant as in the past. Merchants could supply them with some necessities. The simple days of Jefferson had disappeared. Rutherford County was no longer a place of isolated farms and plantations, and an inter-dependence between the town and the countryside soon developed.

Those who lived in Rutherford were mostly descendants of Englishmen, although a contingent of Scots-Irish and a few descendants of Huguenots spread themselves across the countryside. Many of the county's first settlers had originally moved to Middle Tennessee via the "Great Valley." Some came from Virginia, others from western Pennsylvania, and still more arrived through western North Carolina and East Tennessee. There would not be major ethnic differences in Rutherford County until the 1850s when a sizeable contingent of Germans settled in Murfreesborough. But if the ethnic mixture was homogeneous, religious faiths varied.¹² The Baptists organized the first church: the Republican Grove and Mount Pleasant churches were formed in 1800, and by 1822 there were twenty-two Baptist congregations in the county. These churches formed only in rural Rutherford

and touched only rural people. There was not a Baptist meeting place in Jefferson and would not be one in Murfreesborough until 1843.¹³

Out of a schism within the Baptist Association arising from the teachings of Alexander Campbell came the Church of Christ, like the Baptists a rural evangelical movement. Neither faith had an intricate theology; the major requirement for membership was belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God. At least in the Rock Springs Church of Christ, neither race nor servitude was a barrier to membership (see Table II.1). The Rock Springs Church (1820) is the earliest known "Campbellite" congregation, and not until 1859 was there a Church of Christ building in Murfreesborough. The Methodists founded a Murfreesborough church in 1820 (perhaps the capital brought in an influx of Methodists) and by the 1830s the town had two ministers at different locations each Sunday. The services of all three evangelical sects, however, were much alike, noted for their emotional outbursts, frenzied conversions, shrieking, and a general lack of decorum.¹⁴

The largest and most influential church in the county, the First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesborough, was a paragon of decorum when compared to the evangelicals. The evangelical element of the Presbyterian had formed its own church, Cumberland Presbyterian, during the Great Revivals, but the Murfreesborough church for many years strongly objected to the emotionalism of the camp meetings used by other churches to convert the sinner. But as the evangelical sects began to make inroads on the membership of the First Presbyterian, the church's leaders decided that a "toned-down

evangelism" would be permissible and First Presbyterian sponsored its first camp meeting in the late 1820s.¹⁵ While other churches formed in the county before coming to the county seat, the Murfreesborough congregation was the first Presbyterian church in the county. Since it was located in the county's political and commercial center, the First Presbyterian Church, as Rutherford's most recent historian has remarked, "has long been identified with many of the county's leading families. Especially this was true in the pre-Civil War day."¹⁶ Presbyterians, compared to evangelicals, tended to be merchants, lawyers, and manufacturers rather than planters or farmers although they had their share of the latter too. Their church, much more structured in its theology and services than that of the evangelicals, valued order and stability. A report about an 1831 Presbyterian meeting at McKnight's camp ground stressed that "order was the prevailing characteristic, it seemed that the power of God and his presence were felt and recognized by all."¹⁷

The First Presbyterian Church was an almost perfect reflection of the county's elite. Two types of people belonged to both the church and the elite: the "founders" who first brought property and wealth to Rutherford and created Jefferson and Murfreesborough, and the "upstarts," people of new wealth who made their fortunes in service capacities (lawyers, merchants, printers, tavern keepers) during and after Murfreesborough's term as state capital. This dichotomy between the "founders" and "upstarts" adds another layer of potential conflict within the county to those contrasting patterns of life found among the people of the Garden and Barrens, and

those of differing religions.

During the first generation of settlement, Rutherford County was an agrarian community. Mercantile wealth was limited to a very few, and nearly all of these men lived in the two towns. Once Murfreesborough became the state capital, the infusion of capital from the state government resulted in the town's rapid rise to economic predominance; Murfreesborough's commercial capacity expanded to serve better the members of the state government. With this development, the county's rural population could rely on store goods from Murfreesborough if they wished; the totally self-sufficient, isolated farm or plantation became rare. The county underwent this commercial development without any discernible discontent from the farming section. In other words, there was a consensus that the economic growth of the 1820s had been desirable.¹⁸

In the 1830s, expanding commercialism began to require greater financial complexity. By 1834 there was even the faint beginning of an industrial base—a cotton factory employing approximately one dozen men. There was no unanimity of opinion among county residents on the desirability of Murfreesborough's rapid expansion and the stagnation afflicting the rest of the county. There had been little growth outside the county seat since the late 1820s. The 1830 population totaled 25,134. By 1840 the county's population had decreased to 24,280, clearly a no-growth period even after eliminating the population loss caused by the formation of Cannon County from part of Rutherford in 1835.¹⁹ By contrast, Murfreesborough had passed through a readjustment period, changing its economic system

to a broader, commercially-based one and had prospered. In 1830 the town's population was 786; three years later it was over one thousand. A 1833 state survey recognized the self-sufficiency the town's economic system had developed after the capital left the county. It listed Murfreesborough's attributes as:

- 10 to 12 stores
- 10 lawyers
- 6 carpenters
- 5 cabinet makers, 5 shoemakers
- 4 doctors, 4 tailors, 4 blacksmiths, 4 bricklayers
- 3 saddlers, 3 hatters
- 2 tanners, 2 taverns, 2 cotton gins
- 1 gunsmith, 1 painter, 1 silversmith

The town also had a grist mill, a carding machine, and by 1834 its own cotton factory whose introduction, the local newspaper believed, "should be greeted by us as the forerunner of general prosperity."²⁰

By 1834, Murfreesborough had a market mentality very different from that of the rest of the county. Not all cotton had to be sent to faraway New Orleans. Now some could be processed and readied for sale within the town's boundaries. Unlike Jefferson, Murfreesborough did not tie its prosperity solely to the river system and distant markets; instead it began in 1831 an ambitious turnpike construction project which aimed for the development of a regional market. A macadamized road connecting Murfreesborough with Nashville and Shelbyville (Bedford County) was begun in 1831, and within five years residents made plans for one road to Manchester (Coffee County) and

another to Nashville. In 1834, the town even considered linking Murfreesborough to Columbia by sixty miles of railroad. Clearly town leaders understood that a powerful financial engine would be needed to continue this process of change--one capable of producing a sustained infusion of capital.²¹

Rutherford County leaders were well acquainted with one financial engine in particular, the state bank of Tennessee. The Bank of Nashville received the first state bank charter in 1807, and for the next twenty-five years the Tennessee political climate had been generally favorable for banking ventures. In 1811 the Bank of Tennessee opened branches in Nashville, Jonesborough, Clarksville, and Columbia. Under the able leadership of Hugh Lawson White, the Bank of Tennessee prospered until 1828, when it closed after White resigned its presidency to become a member of the United States Senate. In 1814 Felix Grundy, representative from Davidson County and the Middle Tennessee region, urged the House of Representatives to adopt a new national banking system. With the chartering of the Second Bank of the United States in 1817, Grundy and several other future Jackson men, including William Carroll, attempted to push through the Tennessee general assembly a bill to charter a branch of the new national bank.²² A majority in the assembly decided to retain the state bank system, however, and approved a fifty-thousand dollar annual tax on any such branch of the national bank, thus effectively killing any chance that one could be located in Tennessee at that time. In conjunction with its action on the national bank, the assembly established ten additional branches of

the Bank of Tennessee to be scattered throughout the state, and in 1820 chartered a second Bank of Tennessee, headquartered in Nashville. Even though in 1819, the United States Supreme Court ruled in McCullough v. Maryland that the states had no power to tax the national bank, that decision did not change the minds of Tennessee legislators. The Bank of the United States would not be chartered in Tennessee for another seven years.²³

By the mid-1820s, Tennessee's collection of state banks had encountered serious economic problems, and most branch banks had failed. Therefore, the political drive for a branch of the Bank of the United States gained momentum. In the 1826-27 legislative session, the state lawmakers repealed the fifty-thousand dollar tax on banks not originally chartered by the state, and soon thereafter a branch of the Bank of the United States opened in Nashville.²⁴

The national bank certainly could supply the needs of McMurfreesborough's commercial and industrial expansion, but it also represented a drastic alteration in the prevailing economic system. The state banking system had been decentralized and based upon the principle of hard currency. Those banks had limited their operations to the discounting of notes and the purchase of bills of exchange, services designed primarily to assist the planter and the merchant who served him. The potential for large capital ventures was severely limited, if not altogether impossible. While the national banking system offered a great expansion of credit, it demanded in return central control from Philadelphia, a sounder currency, and support for speculative ventures.²⁵

While nearly everyone in Tennessee in general and Rutherford County in particular could support the state bank as a mere adjunct to an agrarian society, there was no agreement about the merits of the new national bank. Men whose futures depended upon the non-agricultural sector of the economy naturally welcomed the new financial system and generally accepted the entailed trade-offs. Many other men--primarily those whose future was as deeply rooted in the Middle Tennessee soil as was their past--viewed the national bank as a direct threat to their way of life. For the first time since the creation of the county there was an issue so divisive that the original political culture could not contain it. In the end, the divergent interests helped to produce a new system of politics in Rutherford County, one that quickly replaced the community's original political culture.

This first political system began its development in 1790. That May, the Washington administration appointed William Blount as governor for the territory which North Carolina had ceded to the United States. Blount, a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and considered to be a "federalist" of good standing, was a member of the North Carolina ruling elite and a prosperous land speculator who owned thousands of acres in Tennessee. As governor, Blount was a political pragmatist. Well aware that his selection had not pleased the mountain people of East Tennessee, Blount quickly struck a shaky but viable political understanding with John Sevier, the wildly popular Indian fighter. The goals on which these two men agreed defined the issues of Tennessee politics for the rest

of the century: 1) a tough Indian policy leading to the expulsion of Indians from the rest of the territory and 2) achieving statehood as soon as possible. The statehood issue was of particular importance since joining the union would raise land values as a result of the pressure of an expanding population. Statehood would also allow Blount to attain high governmental office (United States Senate) while at the same time the popular Sevier could be elected governor. With both men sharing similar political goals, political preference, once statehood was a reality, was merely a matter of selecting the personality one liked best. Blount and Sevier were the founders of Tennessee; political support for them was the natural response of a people accustomed to the deferential politics of the colonial and much of the revolutionary eras.²⁶

The statehood question also served to ally the pioneers of Tennessee with the Democratic-Republican party of Thomas Jefferson because, during the 1796 congressional debates concerning Tennessee's admission to the union, federalists strongly opposed Tennessee statehood. There were few men in Tennessee who voted against Thomas Jefferson that year, and his party afterwards. The designation, "federalist," became a strong political epithet.

Before applying for statehood, Tennesseans drafted a constitution—a document that defined the institutional structure of Tennessee's first political culture. The governor and all members of the two-house general assembly would stand for election every two years. While any white adult could vote in these state elections, his influence on local politics was small. The general assembly

would select each county's justices-of-the-peace, and these magistrates, sitting as the county court, would appoint the sheriff, trustee, and all other local officials.²⁷ Therefore, by 1796 the basic outline of Tennessee's political culture for the next forty years was clear. First, political preference would be based on personalities, rather than issues because there was no crucial political question which divided Tennesseans. Second, there was a secure consensus on the major issues the government should address. Third, there would be only one party—the Democratic-Republican—but that party would soon split into two greedy and ambitious factions. Fourth, voters had no choice in selecting their local rulers and were expected to defer to the wishes of the state leadership that controlled the general assembly. The fathers of Tennessee especially received voter loyalty. Sevier, for example, remained in high office until his death in 1815. Election day turnouts, even with universal manhood suffrage, remained low until the mid-1830s. Tennessee's first political institutions might have been more progressive than others, but they were far removed from the second American party system.²⁸

After statehood, the factionalism inherent in Tennessee politics solidified. Sevier was popular, but Blount was better organized and was able to compete with the East Tennessean by bringing such men as Andrew Jackson of Nashville into his fold, thus taking advantage of the expanding population of Middle Tennessee. After Blount died in 1800, Jackson emerged as the leader of Middle Tennessee politicians. He soon found himself embroiled in a major feud with John Sevier.²⁹

Conflict first appeared in Tennessee politics when Jackson's military ambitions clashed with those of Sevier. The Constitution of 1796 prohibited Sevier from serving more than three consecutive terms as governor. Therefore, in 1802, Sevier and Jackson locked horns in an election for the position of Major General of the state militia. When Governor Archibald Roane cast a tie-breaking vote in favor of Jackson, Sevier and his East Tennesseans were outraged. Shortly thereafter, Sevier chastised Jackson in the streets of Knoxville for his bigamous marriage to Rachel Donelson Robards. Jackson immediately challenged Sevier to a duel, but such a meeting on the field of honor never took place. Instead, Jackson's popularity was damaged, and for most of the next ten years the East Tennessee faction of the Democratic-Republican party dominated state politics.³⁰

Only a year after Jackson's fall from grace, the state legislature created Rutherford County. The assembly named its primary political leaders (William Lytle, Thomas Rucker, Charles Ready, Joel Childress, and Hardee Murfree) to important local positions. Those who controlled much of the county's land also controlled its government. In fact, each of the county's justices was from Rutherford's founding elite and was a strong supporter of the old Blount faction. As Rutherford County quickly rose in population, so did the rest of the region, and by the War of 1812, Middle Tennessee surpassed the East in both wealth and in numbers. The war and that demographic shift brought about significant changes in the ways of Tennessee politics.³¹

Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans on January 8, 1815, not

only made "Old Hickory" a hero of Tennessee, it transformed him into a national hero virtually overnight. With Sevier's death that year, no one in the state could eclipse the popularity of Andrew Jackson. Jackson's arrival as a national hero, coinciding as it did with the demographic shift from east to west, made Middle Tennessee the politically dominant region of the state until the Civil War. For those who wished to play a role in state politics, a connection with Jackson became a virtual prerequisite, especially once this victory at New Orleans earned him an appointment as a major general in the United States Army, a position with considerable patronage power.³²

By the 1820s, the old Blount faction controlled the state. In 1821, voters chose William Carroll, Jackson's second-in-command at New Orleans, as governor. Once he and Old Hickory had patched up old differences, factionalism temporarily disappeared and a coalition of politicians, devoted to the political cause of Andrew Jackson, ran Tennessee with little opposition. Between 1821 and 1835, Carroll was governor for twelve years (usually he had no opponents) and for the other two-year term, Tennesseans chose another loyal Jackson man, Sam Houston.³³ But as Charles G. Sellers has demonstrated, these Jackson men had "feet of clay." They promoted Old Hickory not so much because they believed the General would make a good president but because these Middle Tennesseans knew that, with Jackson in the White House, their own ambitions in Tennessee might be achieved.³⁴ To strengthen his presidential bid in 1824, the assembly nominated Jackson for the United States Senate. His opponent was one of the remaining members of the Sevier faction, John Williams. After a

dramatic late night dash from the Hermitage to Murfreesborough, Jackson appeared before the general assembly and won the contest. A few months later, the general assembly nominated the Old Hero for the presidency.³⁵

Throughout the 1824 presidential campaign, Jackson's managers promised the American public that his candidacy pledged to reverse the "dangerous trends of the modern age" while restoring "the cherished values of old." Such pledges were unnecessary to convince Tennesseans to support their native son, but nationwide the Jackson candidacy had a surprising appeal. After the near-victory in the 1824 presidential campaign, Tennessee politicians understood the fascination that the name Andrew Jackson held for voters throughout the country. Only a handful rejected a place on the Jackson bandwagon; Tennesseans began to insist that the "corrupt bargain of 1824" between John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay must be avenged in 1828.³⁶

Among the most prominent in the halls of Congress who demanded revenge were two Tennessee congressmen, James Knox Polk and John Bell of Maury and Davidson counties respectively. Both, however, shared close ties to Rutherford County for they had earlier practiced law there when Murfreesborough was the state capital, and each had married a Murfreesborough woman. Sarah Louisa Dickinson, the granddaughter of Colonel Hardee Murfree, had wed Bell in 1818. The connection boosted the young state legislator's ambitions for when Bell married into the Dickinson clan, he joined Murfreesborough's second wealthiest family--and one, as a result of connections with the Murfree family, closely allied to William Lytle, the town's

patriarch (if one man can be designated as such). Bell was a member of the county's burgeoning planter-merchant ranks. Even after Sally Dickinson Bell's death in 1832 and Bell's subsequent remarriage to the widow of one of Nashville's most prominent bankers, the Davidson County congressman always received consistent support from the powerful Dickinson-Lytle family network. One of Sally Dickinson's school friends, Sarah Childress, had married an ambitious clerk of the general assembly, James K. Polk, in 1822. Thus, the Maury Countian also joined one of the county's founding families—one which already included more than its share of the county's professionals. Sarah's brother, John W. Childress, was a lawyer who achieved local political success as county attorney general. Another of the Childress women, Susan, had married William R. Rucker, a young Murfreesborough doctor. James Polk was a part of Rutherford's professional-planter social ranks. Yet with the consensus behind Jackson's presidential candidacy, the differences between Polk's and Bell's Rutherford in-laws caused no antagonism between the two politicians nor did they lead to hard feelings among the families. Andrew Jackson was the hero of all Rutherford Countians, and his coalition was in complete charge of Tennessee politics.³⁷

Rutherford County was no exception to the general tenor of state politics. It had been Jeffersonian in its early years; now it was a Jackson stronghold. The thirteenth anniversary of General Jackson's New Orleans victory offers a good example of this unanimity. The festival of Jan. 8, 1828, was an unusually long affair. The party began at daybreak and did not end until midnight. Anyone who was

"anybody" was present at the public celebration in Murfreesborough, the county seat: William and Samuel Rucker, Walter Keeble, Samuel H. Laughlin, William Ledbetter, George A. Sublett, and John W. Childress were just some of the county's elite attending the festivities. At the evening banquet all offered toasts to Andrew Jackson because it was the Old Hero who enjoyed on that day "the proud triumph of having saved the 'beauty and booty' of a city." They were proud of this son of Tennessee and confident that "Old Hickory" would win the upcoming presidential race. Naturally, they tossed barbs at Jackson's antagonists, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams' "two Ebonys." This was a patriotic gathering. When John W. Childress raised his glass in a toast to the Star Spangled Banner--"tis the pride of our eyes; may it wave forever"--his audience cheered wildly. Everyone knew that the Old Hero had never allowed the flag to falter or droop at New Orleans. The county elite unanimously admired Jackson and his cause, and Rutherford County itself was a calm and harmonious place. Throughout the day, as the town paper noted, "from the gay virgin in her teens, to the sober matron and grave justice, peace, joy, harmony, and good will seemed to pervade every bosom."³⁸

But by the time the second term of Jackson's presidency neared its completion six years later, the "harmony and good will" of the county's political ways had become strained. The consensus on a Jackson presidency was no longer relevant after the Old Hero announced that he would not be a candidate in 1836. Factionalism again appeared in Tennessee when the divergent interests of the county, and of the

state in general, could no longer rally around Old Hickory. With the economic questions of the early 1830s eroding the Jackson consensus in Rutherford, a two-party political system emerged, thus providing voters a new framework within which they could express their now divergent points of view. Ronald Formisano has written that the early republic's political culture, as it neared the 1830s, was in a transitional phase "between traditional forms and mass party politics, having some features of both."³⁹ Such was surely the case in Rutherford County. Political demonstrations were not uncommon during the Jackson administration, but the politicians still expected Rutherford Countians to follow the wishes of the "father" of Democracy, and hero of Tennessee. Those days, however, were about to change.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert E. Corlew, et al., Tennessee: A Short History (Knoxville, 1969), 10.
2. J. J. Galloway, Geology and Natural Resources of Rutherford County, Tennessee (Nashville, 1919), 11; U. S. Geological Survey: Map of Tennessee (Washington, 1973); Map of Rutherford County (Philadelphia, 1878).
3. 1878 Map of Rutherford.
4. Mike West, "Black Fox," Accent Magazine, Murfreesboro Daily News Journal, Oct. 17, 1976, 3-6.
5. Carlton C. Sims, ed., A History of Rutherford County (Murfreesboro, 1947), 10-18.
6. Ibid., 18-20; Owsley, Plain Folk, 7-10.
7. Sims, Rutherford, 62; C. C. Henderson, The Story of Murfreesboro (Murfreesboro, 1929), 15-16.
8. Henderson, Murfreesboro, 27.
9. Ibid., 27-30; Sims, Rutherford, 19-21. The original spelling of the town was Murfreesborough. After the war, this was shortened to Murfreesboro.
10. Westin L. Goodspeed, et al., eds., History of Tennessee (Nashville, 1886), 827; Mason Lodges in Rutherford County, Files of Rutherford County Historical Society; Sims, Rutherford, 19-21.
11. Goodspeed, Tennessee, 828; Henderson, Murfreesboro, 41-51; Sims, Rutherford County, 39; Eastin Morris, The Tennessee Gazetteer (Nashville, 1874), 80.
12. Ethnic homogeneity was also a fact of life in neighboring Davidson County. Burton W. Folsom, III, "The Politics of Elites: Prominence and Party in Davidson County, Tennessee, 1835-1861,"

Journal of Southern History, XXXIX(Aug., 1973), 378; Sims, Rutherford, 11-20, 175-77; John D. Barnhart, Valley of Democracy; The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818 (Bloomington, 1953), 20-33, 106-120; Personal Files, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

13. Sias, Rutherford, 175-77.
14. Ibid., 178-80, 182-85.
15. Ibid., 180.
16. Ibid., 195.
17. Tankersley, First Presbyterian Roster; Personal Files, First Methodist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Quotes from Sims, Rutherford, 180.
18. Goodspeed, Tennessee, 820; Sims, Rutherford, 212-13.
19. Ibid., 32-33; Morris, Tennessee Gazette, 80.
20. Ibid., 107; Murfreesborough Central Monitor, July 12, 1834.
21. Ibid.; Goodspeed, Tennessee, 816-17.
22. Claude A. Campbell, "Branch Banking in Tennessee Prior to the Civil War," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, XI(1939), 35-36; Corlew, Tennessee, 141-42; Abernethy, From Frontier to Plantation, ch. 10 and 14; Joseph Parks, Felix Grundy (Baton Rouge, 1944), 216-17; Charles G. Sellers, "Banking and Politics in Jackson's Tennessee, 1817-1827," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLI(June 1954), 62-74.
23. Campbell, "Branch Banking," 36-39; Joseph Parks, John Bell of Tennessee (Baton Rouge, 1950), 10-11; Goodspeed, Tennessee, 331-32; McCullough v. Maryland, 4 Wheat. 316 (1819).
24. Campbell, "Branch Banking," 37-39; Corlew, Tennessee, 142.
25. Claude A. Campbell, "Banking and Finance in Tennessee during the Depression of 1837," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, IX(1937), 20.
26. Corlew, Tennessee, 99, 106; J. G. M. Ramsay, Annals of Tennessee (Charleston, 1853), 541-600.
27. Corlew, Tennessee, 108-11, 127; Paul Bergeron, Paths of the Past (Knoxville, 1979), 25.
28. Formisano, "Deferential-Participant," 473-87; McCormick,

- Second American Party System, 223-28; Jackson T. Main, The Sovereign States, 1775-1783 (New York, 1973), 448-54.
29. Corlew, Tennessee, 127, 131; William H. Masterson, William Blount (Baton Rouge, 1964), ch. 10 and 11.
30. Albert V. Goodpasture, "Genesis of the Jackson-Sevier Feud," American Historical Magazine, V (April 1900), 115-23; Corlew, Tennessee, 131-34; Carl Driver, John Sevier: Pioneer of the old Southwest (Chapel Hill, 1932), ch. 7-11; John S. Bassett, The Life of Andrew Jackson (New York, 1911), 55-59.
31. Driver, Sevier, ch. 11; Corlew, Tennessee, 136; Sims, Rutherford, 27-28.
32. Bassett, Jackson, 109-232; Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821 (New York, 1977), 206-98; Corlew, Tennessee, 137-39.
33. Bassett, Jackson, 67-68; Corlew, Tennessee, 142, 163.
34. Charles G. Sellers, "Jackson Men with Feet of Clay," American Historical Review, LXII (April 1957), 537-51.
35. Bassett, Jackson, 322-71; Bergeron, Paths, 36; Corlew, Tennessee, 166-67.
36. The Letters of Wyoming to the People of the United States (Philadelphia, 1824), 14-15.
37. Corlew, Tennessee, 167-68; Dickinson Family Bible, Private Collection, Murfreesboro; Parks, Bell, 11-14; Charles G. Sellers, James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843 (Princeton, 1957), 67-81; Herbert Weaver, et al., eds., Correspondence of James K. Polk (Nashville, 1969-), II, 21n.
38. Murfreesborough National Vidette, Jan. 10, 1828.
39. Formisano, "Deferential-Participant," 473.

CHAPTER III
THE NEW POLITICS MAKES ITS APPEARANCE

In late July, 1838, William Scott Haynes, editor of the Democratic Murfreesborough Weekly Times, urged James K. Polk to leave Congress and run for governor in Tennessee in 1839. Haynes felt that, in this time of trouble, a Polk candidacy was the only way Democratic principles could be saved. By the first of August, Polk had confided to his Rutherford brothers-in-law that he would throw his hat into the ring, and he announced his candidacy in Murfreesborough later that month. On August 30, Rutherford Countians came to the largest Democratic demonstration yet held in the county seat, one full of festivities and laced with traditional appeal. Polk's speech, designed to uncover the "Federalist" heresies of Henry Clay and his Whig supporters, reminded the audience of two thousand that, as in 1825 and the time of the "Corrupt Bargain," he was fighting Henry Clay for the sake of democracy. Polk denounced the idea of a national bank as a Tory evil imported from England. Following a remarkable feast (the crowd consumed forty sheep, six beeves, and 300 pounds of ham), Polk accepted a call to run for governor in 1839, but only after former governor William Carroll had declined the same offer. Carefully planned and orchestrated, the party leaders designed the day's affairs to ensure that the voters understood that

they endorsed James K. Polk as the party's undisputed leader and that he deserved their unquestioned allegiance.¹

In response to the closing toasts, there were the usual hurrahs for Jackson, the flag, and Tennessee. But this Democratic party was quite different from the one that once ruled the county, and some of the toasts spoke of this new spirit. John C. Freeman said, "The proud sons of Tennessee will ever defend and support the freedom purchased by our forefathers." John W. Childress then told why the Democrats had to defend the Revolution. "Modern whiggery," he laughed, was a mixture of "Federalism, Bankism, and Abolitionism." And when candidate Polk saluted those present, he revealed his dream for Rutherford's future. The Democracy would "sternly rebuke," he said, "the attempt now making by selfish and ambitious men to transfer them to the Federal ranks." Such was the spirit of the new Democratic party of Rutherford County.²

A month later, Rutherford's Whigs responded to the Democratic challenge. William Lytle and others pleaded with leading Whig members throughout the state to attend a Murfreesborough gathering to counter "the various great and powerful influences" that their rivals now had on their side. The Whig banquet was not a solemn affair; rather it was one of parades and music that brought out a large crowd. Before an audience of 3500 to 4000, John Bell spoke for four hours after Ephriam Foster of Nashville spent two hours praising the notion of a national bank. John Bell did not come to be declared the leader of the party, but he did want to praise Whig principles, hoping they would take root and grow in Rutherford

County.³

Shortly after his Murfreesborough announcement, Polk wrote to Andrew Jackson to report that, with his candidacy, there would be "a complete political revolution in Rutherford." What Polk did not realize was that this revolution was already taking place.⁴

I

Men of considerable national reputation provided the catalyst for the ensuing political upheaval. James K. Polk and John Bell were, until 1833, among Jackson's closest lieutenants in Washington. During that year John Bell's silence in the debates surrounding the fate of the Bank of the United States and later during the uproar about the removal of the federal government's desposits from that bank raised suspicions among Democrats that Bell was not a loyal administration supporter. Even though Bell voted against the recharter of the Bank of the United States in the summer of 1832, skepticism about his devotion to party principles increased. When in 1833 he deliberately avoided voting on a resolution stating that the government's desposits were safe in the Bank of the United States, most Democrats openly doubted the Nashvillian's loyalty. On the other hand, Polk remained a "loyal" Democrat. He voted consistently with the administration and, more important to Jackson, gave a number of polemical speeches to Congress defending the financial policies of the administration. By the close of the twenty-second Congress, Polk was Jackson's most trusted legislator, but the President considered John Bell, the representative from his home.

district, as a marginal Democrat at best.⁵

When the next Congress met in the spring of 1834, President Jackson plucked Andrew Stevenson of Georgia from his chair as Speaker of the House of Representatives and appointed him United States Minister to England. That vacancy in the House eventually created many headaches for Jackson once both Bell and Polk decided they wanted to be Speaker. They staged a furious battle to occupy the chair. Bell thought his intellectual gifts enough of a recommendation; Polk ran on his party loyalty. In May, Jackson invited both congressmen to the White House where he tried to strong-arm Bell into acquiescing to Polk's election. Surprisingly, Bell, rebuffing the President, refused to withdraw confident that a temporary fusion of anti-Polk Democrats and pro-Bank congressmen could elect him. Balloting began once Stevenson submitted his resignation on June 2, 1834. Bell's confidence was warranted; he emerged the winner and among others, John Quincy Adams, escorted him to the Speaker's chair. Greatly embittered by his defeat, Polk vowed to destroy Bell's Tennessee power base by presenting Bell's "courting" of opposition votes as a desertion of principle and party. Yet, Bell was hardly a man who would take lightly Polk's meddling in his home district. Thus, a contest between these two very ambitious politicians became a political war and, when Congress adjourned at the end of June, their enmity spread quickly through the political elite of Rutherford County.⁶

No other county was affected as much as Rutherford because these new political strains weakened the community's political consensus.

While the Bell-Polk squabble was distant and not very important to most, it did divide the ranks of the elite, whose unanimity had until then lent some stability to the social order. The family networks of Bell and Polk extended too far for the rivalry to be meaningless. Once these family connections began to battle, complete political war would not be far behind.⁷

Word reached Murfreesborough on June 28 that Bell had been elected as Speaker of the House of Representatives; within days of his return to Nashville, his brother-in-law David Dickinson (who was also the United States Congressman for the eighth district), William Iytle, and others asked Bell to come to Murfreesborough where he could have a fair chance to explain at a public dinner why he allowed John Quincy Adams to escort him to the Speaker's chair. Bell declined the invitation, publicly denying every allegation of disloyalty and opposition electioneering. But allegations that Bell had gone over to the ranks of the detested Adams and Clay were not quelled, and naturally, the Polk faction continued to stroke the flames of controversy. On August 6, 1834, United States Senator Felix Grundy (who had disliked Bell since the Nashville attorney had defeated him for Congress in 1827) came to Murfreesborough, ostensibly to give a speech against the Bank of the United States. Grundy not only gave the Bank a "funeral dirge," but hinted broadly that Bell and Dickinson supported both the Bank and a policy of soft-currency.⁸ As for himself and other loyal Democrats, Grundy remarked that "we would enjoy in jingling [in] our pockets the money our fathers were accustomed to."⁹ The Senator spoke to those in the county who

feared centralized banking, to traditional men who favored a hard-currency financial policy. These same men would be consistent supporters of the causes of Grundy and James K. Polk from this summer day to Polk's election to the White House in 1844.

Realizing the damage that would occur in Grundy's words went unchallenged, David Dickinson rose and rebutted the Senator, asserting that he and his brother-in-law remained loyal to the administration. The local merchants and manufacturers who supported the notion of a federal bank but understood that Bell and Dickinson were walking a political tightrope in Washington trying to balance their own commercial leanings with the demands of party unity favored the words of the Murfreesborough congressman. In a letter to the editor of the Murfreesborough Central Monitor, a "Citizen of Rutherford" supported Dickinson, charging that Grundy was unfair. "God forbid," the citizen said of Grundy's desire for "filling our pockets with the money of our fathers. I trust we shall never have a currency which shall raise the price of a horse to \$25,000, which was not uncommon with our ancestors."¹⁰ On the other hand, Polk's followers decried "little Davy's" effort at rebuttal as "the lamest speech . . . ever heard from any man."¹¹

Bell supporters considered Grundy's Murfreesborough appearance a thinly disguised attack.¹² Once Grundy left, the "whole hive was in an uproar" because they believed that Polk and Grundy had launched a systematic attack on John Bell's local political image. In this alleged plot the first victim in Rutherford County was to

be Dickinson; next would come Bell himself. These anxieties about political rivalries running rampant were too emotional to be a result solely of family jealousies. Part of the reaction resulted from the connections most voters made between Bell, his brother-in-law, and the national bank's future survival. At the very least, the "Citizen of Rutherford" supported a more flexible financial system and realized that if Democrats like Polk could eliminate Bell and Dickinson from Congress, or even discredit their ideas in the community, every economic debate would be clouded by the call for the "money our fathers were accustomed to." Because they did not believe that true economic growth could occur with a hard-currency financial system, Bell's family and his supporters were certain that a plot was afoot to destroy Bell. That would be a disaster, they thought, because Polk's faction unwisely opposed necessary economic change.¹³

Over the next two months, Bell's faction in Murfreesborough took on the difficult task of shoring up the Bell-Dickinson image in the community. One method was to downplay and rebut Grundy's address. For example, a public but unsigned letter in the local newspaper laughed at Grundy for wasting his time in the county seat. The voters of the county did not need an address about national financial policy to remain "orthodox" on the subject. Yet argument through the newspapers, especially when the editor of the Central Monitor was Edwin Keeble, son of the wealthiest planter in the county, was not very successful. In a reply to the unknown correspondent, Keeble curtly told the community: "Mr. Bell must

either be against a national bank or against General Jackson; there is no alternative, the President will admit him amongst the number of his friends, upon no other terms."¹⁴ In order to get their side of the story before the county, the Bell faction agreed that the Nashville congressman must make a personal appearance. Since Murfreesborough was usually crowded when the circuit court met, the faction set the date for Bell's speech to coincide with the opening session in October. Bell, however, had to have a pretext; public electioneering was unseemly, at least by the old rules. In Murfreesborough, that posed no difficulty--he would come to town to visit his family where the people would call upon him to give an address.¹⁵

On the night of October 7, 1834, a full courthouse eagerly awaited the Speaker's address, and Bell disappointed no one with what began as a passionate defense of himself and ended as a flaming tirade against the Democratic leadership of Tennessee. His argument emphasized two points: that Jackson's no-bank and hard currency policy was just an "experiment" which he would support unless it failed (Bell hinted that he thought failure was imminent) and that he won the Speakership because his talents and support for the administration made him the best man in the eyes of Congress. These were words that cut both ways. Bell's admission that Congress had the constitutional power to charter a bank and his assertion that paper currency was probably a necessity pleased some in the audience who were aware of the potential of those financial changes, but upset those who feared a centralized bank. When Bell indirectly

condemned the personal motives and politics of James K. Polk, their anger boiled over.¹⁶

Warning to the moment, Bell claimed that only his talent and influence had provided the major administration measures with clear sailing through Congress, and he had supported and worked for these causes solely out of party loyalty, not because he saw any particular wisdom in their design. This backhanded slap at the paternal way Jackson ran the party raised a few eyebrows. William Brady, a Murfreesborough attorney, opined that if Bell "would so speak of the Chief Magistrate," no one was safe from criticism. Already treading on shaky ground, Bell would not leave well enough alone; he blurted out that he did not want the currency of the fathers and said that "great clamor about such a circulating medium was a humbug, a trick by politicians"--a charge that directly touched Jackson.¹⁷ Moreover, Bell's allegation indicted a good many of those present. The Speaker had slipped; he made public his growing distaste for the party's principles. Many men in this county had no use for someone who so openly rejected the politics of the past. If such criticism within the ranks was not muted, Rutherford's Democratic consensus could not survive.

Writing to Polk a few days afterward, William Rucker reported that Bell's "speech was the most intemperate and ill advised defence that I ever heard," and Rucker quickly added, "I am confident that he will lose a good many friends in consequence of his abuse of you & especially of Genl Jackson." The man Dickinson had defeated for Congress the previous year, William Brady, gave a

similar report. Bell "evidenced the most consummate arrogance at one moment and cringing servility at another . . . the Speaker made an indiscriminate slaughter of all his enemies." Rutherford Countians were not used to this style of partisan politics. They had always been loyal Jackson men, and the spectacle of the Speaker of the House of Representatives publicly rebuking the President's chief lieutenant in that same body bothered them. No doubt what upset Rucker, Brady, and the others most was Bell's underlying theme: not only was the financial scheme of Jackson a "humbug," but so too was the President's leadership of the Democratic party. Daniel Graham spoke of Bell as one would an unruly child: "Did he not say Humbug of Jacksons metallic experiment . . . who can excuse the insolence?"¹⁸

The speech so irritated Brady that he sent Old Hickory a detailed letter to explain that Bell "spoke in derision of the idea of Gold and silver ever becoming the circulating medium of the country. Pronounced it all a Humbug and [said] he had never tricked the people with such fallacies." Remembering that Bell had refused his advice not to seek the Speaker's chair and still angry about Bell's silence during the deposits debates, Jackson considered Brady's letter carefully and then decided that this report of disloyalty could not be ignored. On the letter's cover, Jackson wrote his own congressman out of the Democratic party: "Mr Bells speech at Murfreesborough . . . shews Mr Bell is incapable of the truth."¹⁹ Yet Old Hickory had little need for an untrustworthy lieutenant.¹⁹ Yet

in Rutherford County it was not the Nashvillian's purported inconsistency that caused Bell and his brother-in-law problems. Rather, their woes resulted from two impressions Bell's speech had left with politically-active Rutherford Countians: that Bell had called Polk an ambitious, glory-seeking politician and that he and Dickinson thought that financial development by means of a centralized banking system was the wave of the future. The first impression was the dominant one in the fall of 1833; consequently, the disintegration of the old political system began with a division within the elite ranks of Murfreesborough into pro-Polk and pro-Bell groups. Factionalism had replaced the Democratic consensus.

Political harmony in Rutherford County did not return when Bell's October blast subsided. Democrats there continued to urge Polk to come to Murfreesborough and challenge the Speaker's heresies, but Polk thought that the time was not yet ripe. His faction, however, eagerly published Bell's Murfreesborough speech, confident that once other Democrats saw the facts, they too would realize the Nashvillian's insolence. But, with a single brilliant political maneuver in December, Bell suddenly reversed his fortunes not only in Rutherford County but throughout Tennessee. After calling together most of the Tennessee congressional delegation for a secret meeting, Bell convinced his fellow representatives to nominate Hugh Lawson White, Tennessee's senior United States Senator, for President. In this operation, Bell tied his political fortune to the name of the most popular Tennessean outside of Andrew

Jackson.²⁰

As a symbol for his political principles, Bell probably could have found no better man than Hugh Lawson White. By refusing to acquiesce to Jackson's own presidential choice, Martin Van Buren of New York, Bell's support for and White's acceptance of the presidential nomination opened a gaping hole in the state's Democratic consensus. For those tired of always having to demonstrate their loyalty to Jackson, White's candidacy had an irresistible appeal--how could you be accused of being anti-Jackson when you backed a close friend of the Old Hero? Many Tennesseans, furthermore, naturally preferred one of their own to an outsider from New York. But more importantly, White's bandwagon was good camouflage for those who wanted to try new roads to economic prosperity yet realized that open support for the national bank, if one remained within the Democratic fold, was political suicide. White's past service as president of the Bank of Tennessee was part of the public record. Since most Tennesseans, however, were better acquainted with the Judge's services to the state and friendship with Andrew Jackson than his economic ideas, a vote for White was considered a vote for Tennessee. But with Bell standing squarely behind the Judge, the reality was something else. Bell's economic platform had been clearly stated in Mumfreesborough that fall; selecting White meant that Tennesseans were inadvertently supporting new political and economic paths. Bell could not have chosen a better ally to break the Democratic consensus in Tennessee.

Over the next two years, politics in Rutherford County began to break away from its traditional mold. The Polk-Bell rivalry became an undisguised war centered on the presidential candidacy of Hugh White. The state elections of 1835 and the national election of 1836 would demonstrate that the political unanimity which had provided the glue for the community of Rutherford County had seriously deteriorated.

Yet, factional politics were not the only force unsettling affairs in Rutherford County. On September 6, 1834, the Murfreesborough Central Monitor published the unratified draft of the new state constitution. The 1834 constitution proposed a significant changes in the institutional features of the county's political culture. It called for popular election of county officials where before the state legislature had chosen life-tenure members of the county courts who then appointed sheriffs, trustees, and other officials. Now each voter in the county had a voice in local government. The constitution also eliminated land ownership as a qualification for officeholding. Rutherford Countians also took note of the constitution's command that the 1843 state legislature select a permanent location for Tennessee's capital: perhaps Murfreesborough would be that place. Furthermore, land was to be taxed according to its value—a provision aimed at eliminating the "tax break" owners of town lots had received since 1796 and raising the taxes that planters owed the state.²¹

These fundamental changes facilitated the rise of a new political culture in Rutherford County in a number of ways. With

the choice of county officials now in the hands of the voters, what the office seeker stood for and whom he represented became much more important. Party labels enabled voters to recognize quickly the stands each had taken. Popular election of county officers further weakened deference to the old political elite, and at the same time, opened up the political process to the ambitions of more men. Since life appointments had been eliminated, local politics became a very active field, and interest on that level spurred political involvement in state and federal elections.

A few months after the ratification of the 1834 constitution, an outbreak of cholera rocked Rutherford County, seriously disrupting the state elections of that year. Throughout the spring isolated cases had appeared in several Middle Tennessee localities. But not until the summer months, in fact during the most heated period of the 1835 state elections, did the disease reach Murfreesborough, where it spread with unmatched ferocity. At the end of the first week of July there had been fifty cases of cholera with twenty-four deaths. After another week, six more had died. Although the disease was confined to Murfreesborough and Jefferson, almost forty were dead by election time, including William Brady, the Polk-Van Buren candidate for the United States Congress.²²

Daniel Graham of Rutherford County reported the news of Brady's death to Samuel Laughlin, a former Murfreesborough lawyer who was now the editor of the Nashville Union. Laughlin then informed James K. Polk that "Brady's death (we could better spare a better man) is a heavy loss to us." Laughlin predicted that the White

candidate would be elected.²³

The vote to ratify the constitution and the cholera outbreak had made this campaign quite different from anything that Rutherford Countians had ever experienced and the issues raised in the 1835 campaign further served to exacerbate political tensions in Rutherford County. The 1835 election is interesting because it clearly indicates that the political way of life in the county was in transition. The good old days of the pro-Jackson one party political culture were receding; yet some of the old traditional ways still existed. And neither side had really decided upon a consistent platform to sell to the public. But, of course, it was due to this fluctuating political situation, along with the many issues thrown at the public, that the politics of that year so unnerved the community.

For example, the lists of those attending pro-White meetings indicates the transitional nature of politics in Rutherford at that time. In April 1835, Rutherford Countians held their first public meeting about White's presidential nomination in Mumfreesborough. Of the twenty-six listed as officers or members of a pro-White campaign committee, six later became Democratic party activists and three of these six became part of the Democratic party's leadership core: David B. Molloy, a 1844 presidential elector, George Thompson, party leader at Jefferson, and Henderson Yoakum, the county's leading Democratic activist, member of the general assembly from 1839 to 1841, 1840 presidential elector, and chairman of the Democratic state convention in 1843.²⁴

As long as political unanimity had a chance of survival, the cause of Hugh Lawson White would receive support from traditional men in Rutherford County. Five years later, Yoakum explained his and his fellow Democrats' actions in 1835:

from 1796 till the close of 1834 the State . . . had been sailing with a prosperous gale, in that old republican ship, of revolutionary mould, in which the crew had unanimously confided. But at the latter period, a new ship was got up, and the report having gone abroad that she was made of the best white oak, and was to be commanded by some of the ablest and best sailors of the democratic party, the crew of the old vessel, for the most part, were induced to sign the ship's papers and embark in it. They were told by some, it is true, that she was bound for some sinister port; yet, being assured by the commander, until they were sailing for a Republican port, they were satisfied.²⁵

Many partisans, however, did not look so favorably upon the April resolutions of the White faction. Many Democrats believed that only those who strictly adhered to the policies of Jackson and Polk could be men of high political and moral principles. The Polk faction in Rutherford believed that stability could be restored only through the destruction of the overzealous ambition of Bell and his followers. "Tennessee may be deceived and imposed upon," by the political hopes of John Bell, Granville S. Crockett of Murfreesborough told Congressman Polk, "but I am unwilling to believe that such deception can be long practiced upon her." Daniel Graham remarked that "Mr. Bell had several objects in view, either of which would in his estimation, justify him in sacrificing Judge White." One objective was the restoration of a national banking system. Polk, naturally, concluded that another object was his downfall and he asserted that if "war is forced upon me . . . I am prepared to meet

it . . . and maintain firmly the ground I have taken." His words soon filtered through the ranks of the Democrats in the county, where they discovered that Polk was correct; it was a "war to the knife."²⁶

Supporting someone like John Bell, with his financial views and questionable loyalty to the Democratic party, was incomprehensible to a man such as William Rucker. He believed that the people had erred politically because they ignored the advice of their old political leaders. He simply could not fathom why the people "are not willing to be convinced that they have been imposed upon but obstinately persist in their errors. They are not willing to have it understood that they have been foolish." In other words, they did not demonstrate the proper deference toward the traditional leadership. Hence, Democrats such as William Rucker argued for years afterwards that once Democrats lifted this veil from the voters' eyes, the Democratic party would recapture its power.²⁷

Yet this rationale was faulty. Many people sincerely believed that some type of economic change and a more open political process was a necessity—even if that meant a centralized banking system and an end to Democratic consensus in Rutherford County. Refusing to take such concerns seriously, however, Democrats persistently carried out a naive strategy of merely exposing Bell and White as frauds, confident that afterwards everything in local politics would return to normal. In 1835-36, they perceived the White agitation as an aberration and failed to react pragmatically to the emergence of a proto-Whig opposition party.

Both factions lacked ideological cohesiveness in 1835 as can

be seen in the editorial emphasis of the pro-White newspaper, the Murfreesborough Central Periscope. Calling itself an "independent" newspaper, its editorial policy did its best to straddle the economic issues of the day. For example, the paper took the positions of being both anti-monopoly and pro-railroad. The paper stated that it favored a strict construction of the Constitution; therefore, it was anti-tariff and strongly against "Banking monopolies." The paper also took an editorial stance against internal improvements, but the editor backed a proposed Murfreesborough-to-Mississippi River railroad project and believed that if that proposal proved impractical, the town should support the Nashville-New Orleans railroad project. The Central Periscope backed White's claims to the presidency because it considered the Judge to be a loyal Democrat. Thus, the paper was not independent in the political sense. Because of its support for larger commercial markets and its anti-bank stand, however, the Central Periscope exhibited clearly the confusion within the community about economic expansion that existed at that time.²⁸

With politics in Rutherford County in such a transitional stage, it is difficult to analyze the results of that summer's elections with any great degree of certainty. Table III.1 indicates that the pro-White faction carried almost every contest that year. But was a pro-White vote cast as an act of loyalty to a son of Tennessee or did the outcome indicate that voters preferred a more open political process over Jackson's leadership of the party?

The controversial candidacy of William Carroll, the six-term

TABLE III.1
1835 STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Race</u>	<u>Contestants</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
Governor	N. Cannon	White	1820	64.8
	W. Carroll	Democrat	961	34.2
	W. Humphreys	Democrat	29	2.0
U. S. Congress	A. P. Maury	White	1637	51.7
	R. Jetton	Democrat	1530	48.3
State Senate	W. Ledbetter	White	1277	46.1
	A. P. Gowen	Democrat	1052	38.1
	H. Taft	Democrat	436	15.8
State House (vote for two)	C. Crockett	Democrat	1658	29.7
	G. Ready	White	1483	26.5
	H. Norman	White	793	14.2
	R. Weakley	Democrat	328	5.9
	others	Democrat	308	5.3

SOURCE: Nashville Republican, Aug. 11, 1835

incumbent governor who claimed that the new state constitution made him eligible for a heretofore unconstitutional seventh term, further clouds the issue. Carroll argued that the 1834 constitution had wiped the slate clean and, accepting this argument, the party leadership ran the governor in 1835. But did Rutherford Countians vote for a member of the old Sevier faction, Newton Cannon, because this Middle Tennessean supported White's presidential nomination or because they believed Carroll's candidacy was illegal?²⁹

The evidence is not clear, but the political cause of Hugh Lawson White was a deviation from the traditional Democratic consensus in Rutherford County—and obviously that had heightened political sensibilities in the community. Turnout for the elections was very high (92.7%). White's support in 1835 was probably a manifestation of voter dissatisfaction with Van Buren and Democratic policies in general. Rutherford Countians also realized that politically the White faction did some things differently. They had an active party organ in the Central Periscope; public rallies had been held; and White men did not compete against each other in any election. Compared to the Democrats, such discipline was a real departure. For example, two Democrats ran for the one State Senate seat while four candidates who aligned themselves with the administration vied for the two lower house chairs. Neither did the Democrats organize public rallies nor a political press.

The final dissolution of the communal assumptions of Rutherford County politics began during the first months of the winter of 1835-36 when both sides actively pursued the creation of

a partisan society. The 1835 state election brought pro-White factions to power throughout Tennessee and White's followers won majority control of the state legislature. When Charles Ready and William Ledbetter, the faction's representatives from Rutherford County, arrived in Nashville, they became embroiled in discussions over the fate of pro-White politics in the state. They agreed with the proto-Whig leadership that if it was necessary to gerrymander the entire state in order for their cause to gain victory, they must do it. They urged the creation of a new county in Middle Tennessee that would take away from Rutherford County its strongly Democratic Barrens districts. Ledbetter and Ready sought a physical dismantling of the county because it was in their direct political interest. Van Buren strength was based in the Barrens (see Table V.1). Since the districts to be eliminated from Rutherford were heavily Democratic, taking them out of the county removed the threat of any future Democratic revolt while at the same time eliminating a large body of people opposed to substantial economic changes. The general assembly approved this gerrymandering proposal. It named the new county Cannon, after the pro-White governor, Newton Cannon-- a name that so galled the inhabitants that they changed the name of the county seat from Danville to Woodbury, in honor of the Jackson cabinet member Levi Woodbury. Ironically, however, the creation of Cannon County had a delayed effect, for not until after the 1840 census did those districts vote separately from Rutherford County.³⁰

Another disrupting factor in the 1836 campaign was that the

proto-Whigs challenged some of the age-old tenets of Rutherford's political culture. They particularly rejected as undemocratic the principle that since Jackson had chosen Van Buren, the people should follow his wishes. They thought "it was amusing" to hear one Democratic orator give "a speech of great length, in which the name of Van Buren was mentioned barely once. The cry was Jackson!" The opposition laughed at this expression of unquestioned loyalty to the Democratic party, considering such rhetoric to be ridiculous.³¹

Rutherford Democrats did not sit idly on the political sidelines. A week after the election of 1835, a pro-Van Buren newspaper, the Murfreesborough Central Monitor, printed its first edition. There was only one reason for the revival of this old Democratic paper: to boost Martin Van Buren for the presidency. Its support for the Little Magician had a simple appeal, one that grasped the allegiance of the county's traditional Democratic constituency. Van Buren should be elected because "General Jackson wishes him elected."³² The party's leaders realized that Van Buren's background could hardly match the appeal of Judge White in Tennessee. Therefore, they conducted Van Buren's candidacy as if it were a referendum on the reputation of President Andrew Jackson. The Old Hero wanted the Little Magician; so despite Van Buren's New York origins, these Tennesseans were asked to defer to the President's wishes. It was the White faction's rejection of deference to the dictates of the Democratic party that outraged many traditional Democrats in Rutherford County. That rejection was a significant break with

the politics of the past.³³

The Central Monitor received support from Democrats throughout the region. James Polk wrote Francis Blair, editor of the Washington Globe, urging cooperation with Edwin A. Keeble, editor of the Central Monitor. Located "in an important part of the state," Polk believed that the paper "cannot fail to be useful to us." Yet within two months, the newspaper stopped its presses, and Keeble sold what was left to his pro-White competitor at the Central Pariscope. There was now only one paper in the county: the Monitor, which by mid-November, according to the Nashville press, was "perfectly White." Keeble's Central Monitor failed, John Childress believed, because there were several "neighborhoods of wealthy Van Buren men where not a single copy of the Monitor was taken."³⁴

Although Keeble's newspaper was not a success, its appearance was a sign of how desperately some men wanted a partisan paper. They thought that the paper's failure was an unqualified disaster. Despite his failure, however, some Democrats wanted to reward Keeble's efforts. Childress and Polk tried to secure a government position in West Tennessee for the young editor during the winter of 1835-36.³⁵

Setting up a partisan newspaper was an indication that Democratic leaders in Rutherford County understood that the old one-party consensus in the community had weakened. The leadership in Murfreesborough acknowledged that the party's strength was concentrated in certain parts of the county. About the time that the Monitor raised the flag of Hugh White, Polk's brother-in-law reported that "I observed in conversing with people about the Court

House, that a large share of those living in the Hills at a distance from town are with us." Cultivating "the men living remote from town and town influence," offered hope of regaining lost political momentum, and Polk's victory over Bell in December for the Speaker's chair in Washington raised Democratic expectations for the future even higher. Dr. Rucker concluded that "the people . . . are beginning to see things in their proper light." In fact, a "little exertion and some talents" could carry the county for Van Buren.³⁶

Traditional Democrats had refused to acquiesce to White's nomination; they remained true to Andrew Jackson. Yet in demonstrating that loyalty, Rutherford Democrats had done their part in creating an increasingly factious community—something no one really wanted in 1835 and 1836. The party took such an uncompromising stand against White, however, not so much because he had defied Jackson's wishes, but because of the politician who stood behind the Judge's campaign. That is a crucial point in understanding the party's activities from 1835 forward. John Bell and his principles were the real enemy. William R. Rucker clearly made this point during the winter of 1835. Bell, the Doctor alleged, wanted to form a pro-bank coalition; indeed he had already

laid the foundation of one (in his late marriage to a widow of one of Nashville's leading financiers). At any rate he is strongly allied to the Clay faction and has demonstrated that he is not only in favour of the Bank but was strongly inclined to have a Bank however unseemly the banking establishment might be.

Democrats in Rutherford County professed an unending faith to Jacksonian principles and an unyielding hatred of John Bell and his

financial principles.³⁷

Less than a month before election day, the White faction of the county held the only major public demonstration of the campaign in Murfreesborough. But this dinner, which attracted about 800 people, was quite different from those that had often celebrated the various campaigns of Andrew Jackson--this was an anti-Jackson meeting. Judge White, John Bell, and the Nashville attorney Ballie Peyton each addressed the crowd, speaking unfavorably of Van Buren and the administration's financial policies. This pro-White spectacle brought to the surface the worst passions of some traditional Democrats. John Childress reported to his brother-in-law that Edmund Rucker arrived in Murfreesborough the morning of the White dinner, "'armed in panoply & cased in Steel' for the purpose of chastising the Honl. John Bell, but was dissuaded from it by Dr. Rucker. The fact is known only to one or two and it is desired that it should not be made public." The Democrats' fear of publicity was justified. Rutherford Countians were not ready to accept political violence, no matter how "dangerous" the chosen victim might be.³⁸

Partisan consciousness awoke in Rutherford County during the 1835-36 elections; the first steps toward a divided community had been taken. A completely partisan community, however, had yet to be created. Voter turnout fell by twenty percent from 1835 (see Table I,3). White's Tennessee background and his prior connection to Jackson, along with an uncertainty among voters on how to express best one's party loyalty, clouded most discussions of the

issues; economic questions played only a secondary role. Since the campaign never crystallized as a clash of different ideological platforms, it is not surprising that the white males of Rutherford refused to rush to the polls in 1836 as they would in following elections (see Table III.2).

The presidential campaign of 1836 marked a departure in Rutherford's politics. The Folk-Bell rivalry, White's candidacy, and doubts about the "money our fathers enjoyed" had combined to fracture the unity of Rutherford's traditional Democratic political culture. Nevertheless, there was a serious effort on the part of all concerned to retain social harmony. Most people, it seems, tried to rationalize the White-Van Buren fight as merely intraparty bickering; only some were prepared to renounce their Democratic heritage. After Van Buren's election was a certainty, the Murfreesborough Monitor sounded a conciliatory note. "The strife of antagonistic parties madly contending for victory," it said,

no longer disturbs the repose of the political heavens . . . We acknowledge to its fullest extent the principle, 'that the majority should govern,' and however much we may regret that we have been unsuccessful, we shall yield with all cheerfulness that ought to characterize a minority, and wish not that the administration . . . be embarrassed by frivolous opposition, but that concert of action and unanimity of feeling may pervade every department of government.

A desire to maintain political unity still existed. But while the county was promised harmony, cooperation, and unanimity, the economic questions that had been raised over the last few years remained to be resolved. During the next two years, Rutherford Countians discovered that little of their past could be salvaged.³⁹

TABLE III.2
1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
Hugh Lawson White	White	1178	53.9
Martin Van Buren	Democrat	1008	46.1

SOURCE: Nashville Republican, Nov. 12, 1836.

II

In 1837, an economic depression began to turn the political world of Rutherford Countians upside down. Murfreesborough enjoyed an economic boom (a drug store, a grocery store, and a large carriage factory opened that year), but with staple prices dropping, rural Rutherford was in ruins. New Orleans cotton brokers had paid fifteen cents a pound in 1835; in 1837 they offered only nine cents a pound. Democratic financial policies bore the blame for the sudden downturn.⁴⁰

During the middle of the summer, Dr. Rucker reported on the effects of the depression on county politics to James K. Polk.

"Politics," he lamented,

is as unsettled in this County as the waves of the sea. The failure of the Banks to pay specie, although a Whig measure and although it was mainly produced by them for the purpose of coercing the government to recharter a United States Bank and with a view of injuring the republican party, yet they have been very droit in attributing all our present difficulties & embarrassments to the measures of the last & the present administration of the general government and have induced a good many of our party to believe it because, as they think, their pecuniary interests are affected by it.

By mid-year every Democratic candidate supported the idea of some type of bank and paper currency. No one wanted the hard money of their fathers jingling in their pockets. In correspondence about the congressional race, a Rutherford Democrat told James Polk that the town's "merchants & those under their influence are all bitterly opposed to Crocket & in favor of Maury [respectively, the Democratic and Whig congressional candidates]. But Crocket says from the towns

he does not expect much support but that his prospects are very flattering in the county & especially through the hills." Still the Democrats felt compelled to come out in favor of some sort of bank. Before the summer of 1837, Rutherford's Democracy had steadfastly disapproved any banking scheme, but the depression of 1837 changed the minds of many on the question of banking in Rutherford County. Democrats still opposed the national bank, but they admitted that a new state bank was a possibility.⁴¹

The question of whether or not banks should become part of the landscape of Rutherford County dominated the 1837 state elections. Democrats statewide nominated one of their more traditional partisans for governor, Robert Armstrong, the Nashville postmaster who was a very close friend of Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and John Bell. Armstrong hardly mounted any campaign, believing that if he deserved the post the people would elect him. Democratic activity in Rutherford County throughout the spring and summer was virtually non-existent. With the county mired in the depression, Armstrong failed to provide the charismatic leadership needed to divert attention away from the economic problems of the Van Buren administration. The primary tactic of the Democrats was to use the federal frank to send documents to most households in the community, but even in that, Childress complained, "our friends have been very remiss." The pro-White incumbent, Newton Cannon, however, was on top of the issues which concerned Rutherford Countians. Cannon supported the creation of a new state bank and, in 1837, people voted their pocketbooks. The proto-Whigs swept every election

TABLE III.3
1837 STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Race</u>	<u>Contestants</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Vote</u>
Governor	N. Cannon	White	1880	74.8
	R. Armstrong	Democrat	634	25.2
U. S. Congress	A. Maury	White	1097 ^a	42.4
	G. Crockett	Democrat	1488	57.6
State Senate	W. Ledbetter	White	1491	59.0
	E. Keeble	Democrat	1034	41.0
State House	A. Hoover	White	1399	28.1
	J. Fletcher	Democrat	1315	26.4
	L. Wade	White	1275	25.6
	J. Laughlin	Democrat	986	19.8

^aMaury failed to carry Rutherford but he did win the eighth district congressional race.

SOURCE: Nashville Republican, Aug. 8, 1837.

August (see Table III.3).⁴²

The Depression of 1837 brought to the surface the major issue that divided Rutherford's traditional political culture into one comprised of two competing parties. Events over the next two years would help to crystallize that division into a new, more modern political system. For a third of a century the politics of the Democratic-Republican party and the Jackson coalition had served Rutherford Countians very well indeed. This original political culture had sustained factionalism and feuds without major damage. Much more important, it had been flexible enough to accommodate the tensions between the several constituencies into which the county naturally divided. One might live in the Garden or the Barrens, in Jefferson or Murfreesborough; belong to the Presbyterian church or follow a more evangelical religion; be an "upstart" or claim "founder" lineage—and still subscribe to the tenets and follow the leaders of the Democratic party. But after 1837, it was impossible for all men in Rutherford County to join together under the Democratic umbrella.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW POLITICS MAKES ITS APPEARANCE

1. William S. Haynes, July 26, 1838 and William R. Rucker, Aug. 9, 1838 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 513, 527; Nashville Union, Sept. 3 and 5, 1838.
2. Nashville Union, Sept. 19, 1838.
3. Ibid., Oct. 5, 1838; William R. Rucker to Polk, Aug. 9, 1838, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 527; William A. Iytle, George A. Sublett, et al. to William B. Campbell, Sept. 4, 1838, David Campbell Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Nashville Republican Banner, Sept. 7, 29, Oct. 11, 1838; Nashville Whig, Sept. 28, 1838.
4. Polk to Andrew Jackson, Sept. 2, 1838, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 527.
5. Albert V. Goodpasture, "John Bell's Political Revolt and His Vauxhall Garden Speech," Tennessee Historical Magazine, II(Dec., 1916), 254-55; Parks, Bell, 11-13; Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 67-81, 238-39; Powell Moore, "The Political Background of the Revolt against Jackson in Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, No. 4(Jan., 1932), 58.
6. Parks, Bell, 66-75; Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 240-44; William G. Childress to Polk, June 6, 1834, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 429-30. William G. Childress was a first cousin of Polk's wife. Powell Moore, "James K. Polk: Tennessee Politician," Journal of Southern History, XVIII (Nov., 1951), 494-95.
7. See above, Chapter II, pp. 49-50.
8. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, June 28 and Sept. 6, 1834; John W. Childress, Aug. 2, 1834 and Robert M. Burton, Aug. 27, 1834 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 443, 461.
9. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Sept. 6, 1834.
10. Ibid.

11. John W. Childress, Aug. 19, 1834 and William Brady, Oct. 13, 1834 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 452, 526.
12. John W. Childress to Polk, Aug. 24, 1834, ibid., 459-60.
13. William Brady to Polk, Oct. 13, 1834, ibid., 525-26.
14. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Sept. 6, 1834.
15. Jonathan Currin, et al. to John Bell, Oct. 6, 1834 and John Bell to Jonathan Currin, et al., Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Oct. 18, 1834.
16. Ibid., Oct. 11, 1834; John W. Childress, Oct. 7, 1834 and William Brady, Oct. 13, 1834 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 518, 525-27.
17. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Oct. 11, 1834; William Brady to Polk, Oct. 13, 1834, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 527.
18. William R. Rucker, Oct. 12, 1834, William Brady, Oct. 13, 1834, and Daniel Graham, Jan. 2, 1835 to Polk, ibid., 522, 526-27, III, 8.
19. William Brady to Jackson, Oct. 13, 1834, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress.
20. William R. Rucker, Oct. 12, 1834, William Brady, Oct. 13, 1834, Nov. 29, 1834, and Dec. 26, 1834, John W. Childress, Dec. 20, 1834, Daniel Graham, Jan. 2, 1835, and William R. Rucker, Jan. 5, 1835 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 523, 527, 561, 583-83, 606, III, 8, 12-14; Polk to William R. Rucker, Oct. 16, 1834, ibid., II, 531-32; Moore, "Revolt against Jackson," 337-39; Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 13, 1839.
21. Corlew, Tennessee, 174-76; Nashville Republican, March 19, 1835; Nashville Union, Jan. 1, 1840.
22. Nashville Union, June, 17, 24, 26, July 1, 3, 24, 27, 1834; Nashville Republican, July 9, 14, 25, 1834.
23. Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Aug. 6, 1835, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, III, 257.
24. Nashville Republican, April 11, 1835.
25. Nashville Union, Jan. 17, 1840.
26. Daniel Graham, Jan. 29, 1835 and Granville S. Crockett, Jan. 26, 1836 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, III, 72,

- 460; Polk to Cave Johnson, March 30, March 31, and April 19, 1835, ibid., 138-41, 147-48, 161.
27. William R. Rucker, April 27, 1835 and Andrew Jackson, May 2, 1835 to Polk, ibid., 168, 190-91
28. Nashville Union, June 3, 5, 8, 10, 1835; Nashville Republican, June 6, 1835.
29. Corlew, Tennessee, 185.
30. Sterling S. Brown, History of Woodbury and Cannon County, Tennessee (Manchester, Tenn., 1936), 17-21.
31. Nashville Republican, April 16, 1836; also see, ibid., Sept. 24, 1836.
32. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Aug. 19, 1835.
33. Nashville Republican, Aug. 15, Nov. 19, and Dec. 5, 1835.
34. Samuel H. Laughlin, Aug. 21, 1835 and John W. Childress, Nov. 2, 1835 to Polk, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, III, 271, 351; Polk to Francis P. Blair, Oct. 3, 1835, ibid., 316-17.
35. John W. Childress and Edwin A. Keeble to Polk, Jan. 27, 1836, ibid., 461-62.
36. William R. Rucker, Nov. 20, 1835, Jan. 17, 1836, and March 29, 1836 and John W. Childress, Nov. 22, 1835 to Polk, ibid., 367-68, 443, 562, 372-73, 392n; Polk to William R. Rucker, Feb. 22, 1836, ibid., 512.
37. William R. Rucker to Polk, Nov. 20, 1835, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, III, 368, emphasis in original.
38. John W. Childress, Oct. 10, 1836 and William R. Rucker, Oct. 11, 1836 to Polk, ibid., 758-61.
39. Nashville Republican, Dec. 10, 1836.
40. Nashville Union, Feb. 9 and May 5, 1837; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 6, 1838; Henderson, Murfreesboro, 102-3; Goodspeed, Tennessee, 828; Stanley J. Folmsbee, "The Turnpike Phase of Tennessee's Internal Improvement System of 1836-1838," Journal of Southern History, III(Nov., 1937), 453-77; Temin, Jacksonian Economy, 113-47; Stuart Bruchey, ed., Cotton and Growth of the American Economy: 1790-1860 (New York, 1967), 30; Douglas G. North, Growth and Welfare in the American Past (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 182.

41. William R. Rucker, June 30, 1837 and John H. Dew, June 28, 1837 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 164-65.
42. Nashville Union, Feb. 11, 1837; John W. Childress, Feb. 17, 1837 and William R. Rucker, April 22, 1837 and Aug. 4, 1837 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 65, 99, 197.

CHAPTER IV

THE MATURING OF A TWO PARTY SYSTEM IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Throughout the winter of 1837-38, the economic picture remained bleak in Rutherford County. The bad times even touched the residents of Murfreesborough; the Washington Cotton Factory, so heralded just a few years earlier, failed despite an infusion of capital and a new \$25,000 engine. However, when the Whig-dominated general assembly approved the creation of a new Bank of Tennessee, headquartered in Nashville, the citizens of Murfreesborough hoped that recovery was near. But the bank bill which passed that January was a compromise. The Democrats had done their best to keep the bank from the control of a "monied elite." While it had a thirty-year charter, the state was the sole stockholder and the governor would nominate the bank's directors every two years and the general assembly would confirm these nominations. Clearly, the directorships were patronage plums. The party in power would control the bank. But the most important stipulation dealt directly with the traditional concern about banks and economic change. By law, this state bank was kept under the watchful eye of agrarian capitalists: at least one-third of the directors had to be in some other occupation besides manufacturing and merchandizing. This one-third, of course, would have no real power, but the stipulation gave the Whigs a

counter to the charge that the bank and its branches were mere tools of the speculator and the manufacturer.¹

That spring, the Whig faction in Rutherford County lobbied for a branch bank for Murfreesborough. It began a new newspaper organ, the Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, in part to constantly remind the voters who was to blame for the current calamity and in part to encourage community support for banking. For example, a Telegraph column in April stressed that things were getting worse every day because of the "destruction of the U. S. Bank," reminding everyone that with such a financial institution, Rutherford Countians would enjoy a "national, sound, uniform currency." A Telegraph article in late April on the currency stressed that Democratic financial experiments had left everyone in a "poor state" and, a week later, a column entitled "What Is To Be Done?" wondered if Rutherford Countians should support Henry Clay for president in order to get out of the current "financial disaster." But when the government announced the branch locations in May, Murfreesborough was not on the list. Betrayal! cried out those whose diligent efforts during the past summer had convinced so many that banks were a necessity. Convinced that Murfreesborough had been passed over to weaken its claims to the state capital, the proto-Whigs angrily called a public meeting to protest this injustice. At that assembly, exclusively attended by future Whigs save for two Democrats undoubtedly there to gather political intelligence, Rutherford Countians approved bitter resolutions, alleging that the bank sites had been selected according to "clearly sectional and personal views; to the promotion

of the few, to the injury of the many."²

As long as the depression lasted, economic questions would dominate political debates in the county—and would spawn the development of a partisan consciousness that enabled the people of Rutherford County to identify with either one faction or the other. The development of this partisan consciousness finally broke the last strands of one-party Democratic unanimity in the county, leaving in its wake a functioning two-party political culture and a hopelessly shattered community of Rutherford County. As a matter of fact, the two parties often seemed to have become armed camps.

The political violence which occurred in Rutherford County from 1837 to 1839 demonstrates the dissolution of the community's original political culture. There had been violence between Tennessee politicians before the late 1820s, but since the creation of the Jackson consensus among the state's politicians, politically-motivated duels and violence had not occurred. There had been one case of threatened violence against John Bell in 1835, yet the threat never materialized. A political leader would not condone that type of action. But in the last years of the 1830s, not only did they look the other way when men raised their fists in anger, they often encouraged partisans to strike down the heretics.

In an early 1837 column in the Nashville Union, John R. Laughlin, a Democratic candidate for the general assembly and son of the Nashville Union's first editor, charged that the White-Whigs of Rutherford County were infected with "'uppyism'" which he defined as "a young upstart, who tries to act the man, and assumes the airs

of a gentleman, before he is either . . . or qualified to fill the character of either."³ Democrat Laughlin taunted the Whigs in his father's former newspaper:

Stop, rash Monkey, stop and think,
 Before you higher go
 For if you venture to the brink
 You'll show your shame below.⁴

Immediately following the appearance of Laughlin's column, William Sneed, editor of the Whig's Murfreesborough newspaper, assaulted young Laughlin with a cane in the streets of Murfreesborough. Laughlin, however, disarmed his assailant and pulling Sneed by the hair into the mud, beat him until some Whigs came to the editor's rescue and pushed Laughlin away. In his campaign for the Tennessee legislature, the problems of the young Democrat intensified. He had to face the constant barrage of a hired heckler who followed him throughout the county. That August, Laughlin lost by a wide margin (see Table III.3). A month later, Laughlin was salving his campaign wounds with the bottle and the horse races at Bradley's track, just outside of Murfreesborough. His Whig heckler appeared and seizing the advantage, attacked Laughlin with a knife. Within days, John Laughlin was dead.⁵

Some Democrats saw Laughlin's murder as an assassination not just of Laughlin, but of his Democratic political ideals. One wrote that the opposition believed that if one was "an administration man," one, of course, "did not deserve to live." These "petty politicians and tools of party" had to be stopped. Democrats felt that the murder indicated how desperate the Whigs were to fulfill their

ambitions. When the heckler-murderer was freed (he pleaded self-defense), the Democrats' worst fears had been confirmed. The fate of John Laughlin was to them a sign of things to come.⁶

The violence did not end with the murder of John Laughlin. A second incident occurred shortly after the 1839 James Polk-Newton Cannon gubernatorial debate in Murfreesborough. In a Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph editorial, Elijah King impugned the character of Edwin A. Keeble. As Doctor Rucker told his sister-in-law, "Mr. Keeble went immediately in search of him and chastised him most handsomely with a small hickory stick." The symbolism of the hickory stick (Andrew Jackson) striking down the heretic was apparent to everyone involved: the fight involved more than a personal feud; it involved a fight between two political parties.⁷

Consequently, Whig revenge struck the Polk family network within weeks of the King-Keeble fight. At the urging of local Whigs, the "town bully" assaulted William Rucker on the streets of Murfreesborough, but "greatly to the surprise of everyone," Rucker was "in a fair way to give the fellow a sound drubbing when they were separated."⁸ Violent encounters such as these heightened the candidates' emotions as they toured the county. Often, debates became actual rather than verbal slugfests. John W. Childress wrote in May 1839 that "I presume this state of things will cease however when two or three more of them [the Whigs] are flogged."⁹

The resort to physical violence was an index of the intensity of the partisanship that emerged in Rutherford County in the closing years of the 1830s. A second indicator was each party's repeated

use of the term "Federalism" to describe its opponents. In middle-period America, to call someone a Federalist or a Tory implied that the person was anti-revolutionary, and thus anti-American. The allegation was not really a new one in the rhetoric of Tennessee politics. The phrase is liberally sprinkled throughout the political letters of Andrew Jackson and in some of the congressional speeches of James K. Polk.¹⁰ For example, William G. Childress, the Democratic congressional candidate in Rutherford's district, asked James K. Polk in early 1837:

Is it possible that time is to come or is near at hand when Republican Tennessee is to act in concert & to fight side by side with the Federalists, the abolitionists, nullifiers & the old Bank party & against the pure and undefiled republican, denying those principles that has ever been her principle characteristic? I hope & trust in God not, and to avert that turn & day I am willing to make bare my bosom to the enemy. I am willing to spill my blood in defense of those doctrines and principles which was purchased with the blood of the conscript fathers of the revolution.¹¹

But Rutherford's Democrats did not adopt such rhetoric until Laughlin's death. His obituary described Laughlin as "the first victim of the relentless spirit of Tennessee federalism,"¹² and from that time forward, the allegation of "Federalism" became a standard feature of Democratic rhetoric in Rutherford County.

The war of words intensified that fall. Colonel Ephraim Foster, an attorney and important Whig from Davidson County, caused quite an outcry by denigrating Thomas Jefferson when he addressed a large Whig gathering in Murfreesborough in September 1838. After he stepped from the stage, the Nashvillian remarked to those around him that "you know that Mr. Jefferson was as great a demagogue as any man

of his time."¹³ As the former Murfreesborough lawyer, Samuel H. Laughlin, told James K. Polk, "The people in great numbers were disgusted." By means of the party press, Foster's words became common knowledge throughout the region. Criticism of Polk, Grundy, and other Democratic party leaders grated on the ears of agrarians within the county, but could be tolerated. Criticism of the founder of the old Democracy could never be condoned. The Democrats of Rutherford County considered Foster's remarks evidence of a Whig conspiracy to "blast [Jefferson's] deserved fame by undermining the great principles of liberty which he did so much to establish." Despite heated denials and Whig allegations that the county's Democratic paper was a disreputable "Tory" press, the Democrats presented Foster's words as proof of the Whig conspiracy to overthrow republicanism.¹⁴

The historian David Brion Davis has asserted that in the middle period "to a striking degree, Americans when they backed a new coalition of interests sought to make it legitimate by picturing their opponents as heirs of the British and Tories--as an un-American elite." One of the most common ways of accomplishing this, Davis explained, was to link one's opponents to the old Federalist party, especially to the Hartford Convention of 1814. Davis' analysis provides an accurate assessment of events in Rutherford County. The Hartford Convention epithet was particularly powerful there, especially among old Jackson men. They knew how the Old Hero felt about that gathering. In a letter widely published in 1824, Jackson remarked that had he been the military commander in New England in

in 1814, "if it had been the last act of my life, I should have hung up the three principle leaders These kind of men altho called Federalists, are really monarchists, and traitors to the constituted Government."¹⁵

The justification for building an organized political system was evident to every Democrat: Whigs were subversives, and it was up to the Democracy to defend America's revolutionary heritage. In Rutherford County, Democrats were older than their rivals. In fact, five of the party's activists were revolutionary war pensioners while no Whig activist had served in the war. The Democracy felt that its lineage--Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, and Jackson, the hero of New Orleans--gave it peculiar responsibilities. They were the guardians of the revolutionary heritage against the ambitions of Federalism and Toryism. Henderson Yoakum remarked in 1840 that while "ambition was a good quality," the Whigs had so "perverted it to the attainment of dishonorable ends" that it was now a "nuisance."¹⁶ The county's Democratic newspaper simply asked: "Will you be sold to these old Federalists against who you have battled so nobly? Awake one and all, and rebuke this insidious scheme."¹⁷

Whigs in Rutherford County reacted indignantly to the charge of Federalism. Gentlemen did not care to have their ambitions described as "dishonorable." Consequently, they staged a two-pronged counterattack to check the controversy generated by Ephraim Foster's remarks about Thomas Jefferson. First, they asserted that those comments were off-the-record and were not designed to tarnish the

character of Jefferson. Second, the Whigs charged that not only were the Democrats Federalists, but that they were abolitionists as well. As a matter of fact, the forthcoming gubernatorial contest between James K. Polk and Newton Cannon was a war between "the Federal Abolitionists of the North and the Republican Slave holders of the South." Both parties justified their position in the emerging two party system by tying themselves to the cause of the Revolution.¹⁸ The Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph stated this simply in March 1838; the paper's editor boasted that "Tennessee is a Whig state--she has taken a fearless stand upon the doctrines of '76, from which she will not be shaken."¹⁹

During the eighteen months, the final dissolution of the original political culture had taken place. Political polarization began with the John Bell-James Polk feud, expanded during the 1836 presidential campaign between Hugh White and Martin Van Buren, and gained a necessary ideological component with the bank issue during the 1837-38 depression. The introduction of political violence and rhetoric which harkened back to the Revolution were the final, and most obvious, signs of disintegration. When the Whigs castigated the name and administration of Andrew Jackson during that summer's gubernatorial campaign, the days of one party Democratic unanimity in Rutherford County were gone forever.

The political polarization between Whigs and Democrats in Rutherford County came into focus for the average voter during the Polk-Cannon gubernatorial debates, a series of statewide encounters between James Polk and Newton Cannon which began in Murfreesborough

on April 11, 1839. The speeches both men gave that day illustrate the ideology of the parties in the county. The contrast between the two must have been perfectly clear to everyone.

Before two hundred and fifty men and women in the courthouse and another one thousand surrounding the building, Polk stood first and gave a two and a half hour address that almost completely recited the platform of the county's Democracy. He called Henry Clay a "second Hamilton" and concluded that Clay's followers must be Federalists as well. Henry Clay had opposed Jackson during his administration and, as party to the "Corrupt Bargain of 1824," had deliberately subverted the will of the people. Clay, therefore, had forfeited his claims to America's revolutionary heritage. Even though he was running for a state office, Polk told the crowd that this campaign turned on national issues because the goal of the party was to complete the work of Andrew Jackson by ending the financial power of banks in the county. Polk suggested that if he were elected governor, there would be no banks in Rutherford County.²⁰

Governor Cannon's reply was a vicious attack on paternalism and deference within the Democratic party. He thus became the first major Whig to assault verbally the heretofore irreproachable figure of Andrew Jackson in Rutherford County. "I believe I have always been a Democrat," said Cannon. Yet, he disagreed with Jackson's financial policy for Old Hickory's "tinkering" (through the adoption of the "Specie Circular") had ruined the currency. The governor also resented the fact that Jackson had chosen Polk to

oppose him in this campaign. Polk had never demonstrated any independence, and his association with the Old Hero did not impress Cannon. The Whig remarked simply: "I never clung to the skirts of Jackson's coat, or, when danger approached jumped into his pocket." Cannon stressed that he was the true independent candidate in this contest; he even bragged that he had been an enemy of Jackson for many years. As he finished his speech, Cannon delivered one last blow by asserting that "General Jackson was a tyrant by nature and education. He had witnessed his movements on many occasions--seen his various plans of operations, when he had his clans about him--and he always would have his clans, but no man in them . . . who would not be his tool and his slave." Cannon told the voters that choosing Polk was a vote for slavery, but they could vote for freedom simply by selecting Whig candidates.²¹

Town politics exploded after these words. One townsman could not believe that Cannon had impugned the virtue of "the avenger and protector of the South against savage barbarity." Another claimed that no one should listen to the governor since in the War of 1812 he had been a "DESERTER and should be shot." In his rebuttal, Polk said that if Cannon was right, Hugh Lawson White had been a slave of Jackson's as well. Old Hickory was shocked by Cannon's "temerity to make this wanton attack upon me."²² Cannon's remarks polarized many men who had yet to make a choice between the two parties.

The campaign that followed the Murfreesborough debate was a bitter one. Epithets continued to fly freely throughout the community, especially after the Tennessee Telegraph hired the noted

satirist James R. Hallam to write its editorials. For example, one Telegraph column charged that there were "living witnesses" who would swear that Henderson Yoakum, the Democratic candidate for the State Senate, had once burned Andrew Jackson in effigy. Yoakum, of course, denied the allegation as "utterly false." Yet, despite Hallam's best efforts, Rutherford Whigs were unable to counteract the ill effects of Cannon's Murfreesborough speech. One voter who had supported White in 1836 publicly announced his intention to vote for Polk because Cannon opposed the measures of Andrew Jackson and he claimed that almost all of his neighbors backed Polk for the same reason. Of course, the anger of traditional Democrats over Cannon's address knew no bounds; they considered the remarks as anti-Jackson and, therefore, anti-paternal. After visiting the Old Hero at the Hermitage, Thomas Hogan, the new editor of the Democratic Murfreesborough Weekly Times, reported that

to hear him denounced as a 'despot by nature and education, recognizing no man as his friend who would not be his tool,' is enough to pain and disgust any one with the politics and politicians which require or sanction such an unhallowed invasion of private life and the sacred retirement of an eminent patriot.

Even when the Whig press claimed that it had no personal quarrel with either Jefferson or Jackson, the Democrats haughtily replied that, if they revered these men so much, the Whigs should follow the principles of both men, especially those on banking and finance. Democrats in Rutherford County once again took the offensive on the economic problems facing Rutherford Countians. The Murfreesborough Weekly Times admitted that its opponents were "peculiarly skillful"

TABLE IV.1

1839 STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Race</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
Governor	J. Polk	Democrat	1749	51.6
	N. Cannon	Whig	1643	48.4
U. S. Congress	W. Childress	Democrat	1704	51.0
	M. Gentry	Whig	1639	49.0
State Senate	H. Yoakum	Democrat	1693	51.2
	C. Ready	Whig	1615	48.8
State House	J. Fletcher	Democrat	1698	25.7
	J. Smith	Democrat	1666	25.2
	H. Norman	Whig	1632	24.7
	J. Gooch	Whig	1615	24.4

SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Aug. 5, 1839; Nashville Union, Aug. 5, 1839.

at producing "pecuniary distress among the people and turn it to profit." But events over the last few months, the Weekly Times concluded, would open the people's eyes to the Whigs' financial deceptions.²³

As Table IV.1 indicates, the voters in Rutherford County knew that the 1839 gubernatorial election involved a true political choice. They came to the polls on election day in record numbers and voted the Rutherford Democracy back to power (see Table I.3 and Table IV.1). Andrew Jackson sent Polk his congratulations for returning "old Democratic Tennessee to the republican fold," and predicted to the governor-elect that not for one hundred years would Tennessee "permit herself to be duped into her late false position by such jesuitical hypocrites and apostates as Bell White and Co."²⁴

A rare surviving list of the precinct voting results for the 1839 gubernatorial campaign indicates where the strength of each party lay in Rutherford County. As Table IV.2 shows, Cannon's remarks at Murfreesborough and the record of his administration sat well with most in the county outside of the Barrens; indeed, if not for the five Cannon County districts that voted with Rutherford's precincts, James Polk would have failed to carry his wife's home county. Actually, Polk had not carried Rutherford; nevertheless, his official victory did break the earlier Whig hegemony in the county.

Maps IV.1 and 2 further delineate the geographical breakdown of Democratic and Whig votes in the 1839 elections. Comparing Map III.1 to maps in the second chapter which explained the county's

TABLE IV.2

RUTHERFORD COUNTY DISTRICT RETURNS, 1839 GUBERNATORIAL CONTEST

<u>District</u>	<u>Polk</u>	<u>Cannon</u>	<u>%Polk</u>	<u>%Cannon</u>
1. Sanders	40	60	40.0	60.0
2. Burnet's	78	82	48.8	51.2
3. Hart Spring	54	47	53.5	46.5
4. Mechanicsville	78	83	48.4	51.6
5. Fall Creek	24	98	19.7	81.3
6. Jefferson	48	123	28.1	71.9
7. Wilkerson Crossroads	70	47	59.8	40.2
8. Murfree's	40	52	43.5	56.4
9. Sulpher Spring	10	49	17.0	83.0
10. Armstrong	6	22	21.4	78.6
11. Bairfield's	40	40	50.0	50.0
12. Salem	62	20	75.6	24.4
13. Murfreesborough	155	239	39.3	60.7
14. Middleton	63	107	37.0	63.0
15. Valley	9	69	11.5	88.5
16. Milton	62	71	46.6	53.4
17. McKnight's	50	38	56.8	43.2
18. Fox Camp	32	11	74.4	25.6
19. Tennison's	57	46	55.3	44.7

6 .

20. Fosterville	82	25	76.6	23.4
21. Bushnell Creek	38	54	41.3	58.7
22. Raleigh	13	64	16.9	83.1
23. Youree's	71	36	66.4	33.6
24. Big Spring	149	36	80.5	19.5
25. Millersburg	<u>107</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>87.0</u>	<u>13.0</u>
Totals: Rutherford	1438	1535	48.4	51.6


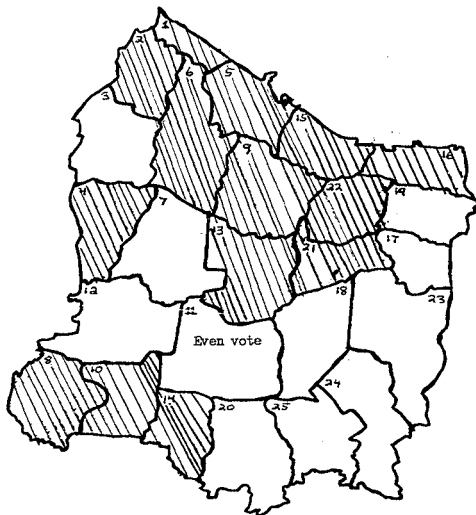

Cannon County Districts

District	<u>Polk</u>	<u>Cannon</u>	<u>%Polk</u>	<u>%Cannon</u>
1. Nichols'	62	39	61.4	38.6
2. Alexanders'	62	14	81.6	19.4
3. Browns'	44	31	58.7	42.3
4. Williams'	23	10	69.7	30.3
5. Pattons'	<u>120</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>89.5</u>	<u>10.5</u>
Totals: Cannon	311	104	74.9	25.1

SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840.

MAP IV.1

WHIG/DEMOCRATIC VOTING STRENGTH BY DISTRICT, 1839 ELECTIONS

Legend: Districts that voted Whig: Districts that voted Democratic: 

MAP IV.2

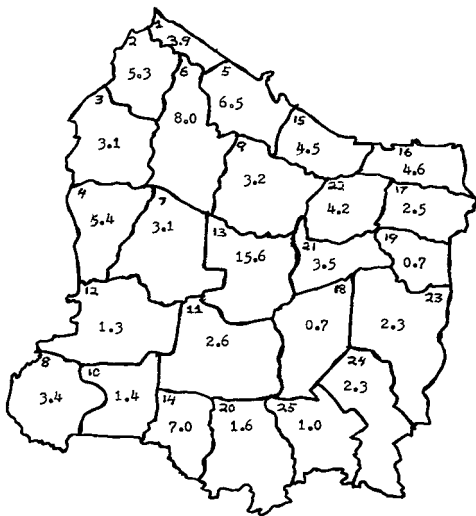
DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOCRAT VOTES, 1839 ELECTIONS
(in percentages)



SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840; author's own compilations.

MAP IV.3

DISTRIBUTION OF WHIG VOTES, 1839 ELECTIONS
(in percentages)



SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840; author's own compilations.

geographical features shows how much the Whig voting strength was concentrated in areas of good farmland, towns, and easily accessible waterways. Already the districts containing the primary commercial towns of the county (Jefferson in district six and Murfreesborough in district thirteen) were Whig strongholds (see Map IV. 3). On the other hand, those of the hills and mountains clearly tended to be Democratic; after all, it had been the mountain men of Cannon County who provided the margin of victory for the Democrats that summer (see Map IV.2). The issues of the 1839 elections had produced a clear split in the community between the people of the Garden and those of the Barrens--and that chasm would grow wider as both sides frantically pursued additional support in the 1840 presidential campaign.

The Whig reaction to the 1839 election results was much different than that of the opposition in the county's last hotly contested campaign in 1836. Embittered by the severity of their defeat, Rutherford Whigs pledged to deny Martin Van Buren any political support from their county. No longer was there a pretense about the necessity of an unified society: "The party lines are now distinctly drawn." This, the Tennessee Telegraph said, made it proper "to have an efficient organization in each county." The Whigs proposed that the party build in each county a "vigilance committee" composed of twenty-five subcommittees from every civil district of the county in order to watch "the movements of the enemy" and to diffuse "political intelligence among the people." The Whig message

was clear: Van Buren's party and economic policies had to be crushed.²⁵

Naturally, the Democrats believed that their rivals' novel organization techniques represented more than a desire for greater efficiency and representation. The Democracy called a public meeting in order to, as the announcement said, "resist a system of espionage, and party control about to be established over the good people of this county." As John Childress informed Polk, the party leaders hoped to convince the community that the Whig committees were "to be overseer of the people . . . selected from the wealthy with the view of operating by means of their money upon poor & dependent people." Democrats denounced the committee idea as "a system of party tactics, inimical to the freedom of the elective franchise," because the committees had no purpose but "to operate, or drill, or manage the people so that their votes may be obtained for Clay" in 1840.²⁶ The very idea insulted the Democrats' faith in individualism. When the Democracy of Nashville suggested to Rutherford partisans that they should fight fire with fire and organize themselves in a similar fashion, the Murfreesborough Weekly Times, for the moment, rebuked this suggestion, saying not "as the Whigs do, neighbor."²⁷ But within months, the party broadened its organizational base in a frantic effort to keep pace with the Whigs.

When the Whigs discovered that Democratic propaganda had subverted their organizational scheme, they opened the political war on new fronts. One reason for the vigilance committee proposal had been an alleged concern over fraudulent voting in the past election,

frauds, according to one Whig from Murfreesborough, that would "astonish the world." The Whigs hinted that they had wanted to keep this scandal within the community, but when the Democrats reacted so unfairly to the notion of vigilance committees, it was obvious that something had to be done about fraudulent voting. Therefore, the Whigs explained, there was no alternative but to expose the irregularities to the entire state. One hundred Whigs presented a resolution of protest to the general assembly, demanding an investigation of the 1839 elections. Having lost an election, the Whigs were prepared to label their antagonists as cheats and frauds. There are few better indicators of how completely the traditional community of Rutherford County had deteriorated than this petition.²⁸

After the presentation of the resolution of protest to the legislature, newly-elected Democratic State Senator Henderson Yoakum defended his party, pledging to cooperate with any investigation and promising to resign if the Whig allegations were true. But even though Yoakum presented a cool facade, the Democrat was appalled that the Whigs had stooped to such a petty ploy. Sarcastically, he said that "he could not for a moment suppose that the whigs of Rutherford had ten times the honesty of the democrats." Corruption could be found in both parties. Yoakum, in the Senate, and James Fletcher and James Smith, in the House, blistered the ears of their colleagues with fervid rebuttals. Fletcher said that the entire matter had been agitated by a few Whig party leaders in Murfreesborough who wished to assail the virtue of farmers in the mountain districts of Millersburg and Big Spring. After the ineffectual testimony of

a delegation of Rutherford Whigs before the Committee of Elections in Nashville, the Whigs gave up their drive for a criminal investigation and electoral reform. Soon thereafter, the controversy died, but the Whig initiative in political organization did not end.²⁹ In February 1840, one hundred and twenty-five party members attended a district convention in Nashville, where the Rutherford men had the distinct honor of witnessing their own William Ledbetter elected chairman, pro-tem.³⁰

The polarization of Rutherford's voters into two separate political parties during the 1839 state campaigns also meant that the Democrats rushed to organize themselves for the upcoming presidential contest, despite their victory in August. The party had first exercised its federal patronage clout in December, 1838, when local Democrats persuaded the Van Buren administration to remove David Wendal, a Whig merchant and manufacturer, from the postmastership at Murfreesborough and replace him with a "true" Democrat, David B. Molloy.³¹ This obvious political appointment aroused much controversy in the town. Since the town's beginning, Wendal had been one of its leading citizens. When he was removed for purely political reasons, the Whigs charged the Democrats with hypocrisy. The Nashville Republican-Banner asserted that if, as the Democrats claimed, aptitude and reputation mattered more than partisanship, then Wendal should have kept his position.³² Such criticism did not deter the Democrats; in 1840, they boldly engineered the removal of Charles Ready, Sr., one of the county's founders whose son was a major Whig leader, from the position of postmaster at Readyville.

A local Democratic farmer, George Brandon, replaced the elder Ready.³³

As an answer to the Whigs' proposed vigilance committees, Rutherford Democrats also strengthened their party organization. In late 1839, Democrats statewide created a state committee and Dr. William Rucker, Moses Ridely, and James O. Moore were the county's representatives. Soon thereafter, Governor Polk appointed Edwin Keeble as an executive aide. Expanded organization within the lower levels of the party's hierarchy soon matched these statewide initiatives. By the end of January, news that the party would hold a mass meeting at Murfreesborough in order to select county delegates for a state Democratic convention had spread throughout the community. After that gathering, almost two hundred delegates travelled to Nashville and helped to choose the party's electoral candidates for the 1840 presidential campaign.³⁴

These Democrats were the first in the county to meet with their political brothers from neighboring counties in a convention setting. These conventions marked a new stage in the maturation of the Democratic party; more important, they marked a sharp break with the elitist politics of the past because they allowed a broader voter participation in the party's activities. Rutherford Democrats asserted that the forthcoming election gave the party an opportunity to secure the community from "the aspiring designs of the moneyed power," and they altered their tactics and strategy so that they could fight the Whigs on an equal basis. By the end of 1840, the party had created a civil district network of committees, and by the first of the new year, a county convention had selected its

candidates for the general assembly.³⁵

In his study of the formation of the second party system, Richard McCormick hypothesized that by 1840 organized, competitive political parties had emerged in Tennessee. McCormick also believed that the presidential contest of that year acted as the primary catalyst to this crystallization of a new party system.³⁶ While the Whig and Democratic parties of Rutherford County had certainly matured into a second party system by 1840, McCormick's explanation for that emergence is wide of the mark. The presidential contest played only a secondary role. From 1834 to 1839, local issues such as political feuds and the desirability of banks, had played a pivotal role in dividing the county's original one party political culture into a highly competitive two party system.

As a new decade dawned, the voters of Rutherford County would be participating in a political culture more like ours of today than that of their fathers.³⁷ Three characteristics marked this new method of politics. First, there was its partisan nature. While the region had witnessed fierce factional contests for many years, the campaigns of the new politics used no-holds-barred tactics. Compare Bell's Murfreesborough speech of October 1834 and its veiled references to Jackson with Governor Cannon's remarks at the April 1839 debate with James K. Polk. William Rucker had described the former as "most intemperate" but the latter so inflamed Rutherford Democrats that one partisan thought Cannon should be shot. From 1839 onward there would be warring parties in Rutherford County, not just competitive factions. A second trait of the new politics

was that it was issue-based rather than personality-based. As loyalty to the party and its platform became more important, the power of deference to the social and economic elite of the community decreased. In 1840, one of the preeminent founders of the county, Charles Ready, Sr., was removed from his postmastership. Ready's position in the community, by 1840, no longer offset his political preference. On the national level each party would have its symbolic head--Clay, Van Buren, Harrison--nevertheless, no personality such as Jackson dominated Tennessee politics after the early 1830s. Even James K. Polk would be unable to recreate the Democratic consensus in Rutherford County. Finally, the new political culture was broad-based, more "democratic" in its inclusion of the community's white males. Voter turnout was consistently high from 1839 to 1845. This mass participation in the electoral machinery was a significant departure from the old style of politics. Furthermore, each party broadened its organizational base by means of the county and district convention. Common men would play a part in the politics of the next decade (see Table I.3).

The creation of two parties of contrasting ideologies demolished the political unity of Rutherford Countians and completely shattered their old communal assumptions. By 1840, the events of the past few years entrenched a new political culture in the society and, for the next four years, that way of politics served as the foundation for a political war over the economic and political future of Rutherford County.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

1. Sims, Rutherford, 212; Campbell, "Banking and Depression of 1837," 26.
2. First quote from Nashville Republican Banner, April 27, 1838; second quote from Nashville Whig, April 20 and 27, 1838; third quote from Nashville Republican Banner, June 6, 1838; the two Democrats were John W. Childress and William Scott Haynes; Nashville Union, June 8, 1838; Campbell, "Branch Banking," 41-43.
3. Nashville Union, Jan. 12, 1837.
4. Ibid.
5. William R. Rucker to Polk, Jan. 20, 1837 and Sept. 20, 1837, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, IV, 41, 246-47.
6. Nashville Union, Sept. 21, 1837; David B. Molloy to Polk, Sept. 25, 1837, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, IV, 251.
7. William R. Rucker to Sarah Childress Polk, May 10, 1839, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
8. John W. Childress to Sarah Childress Polk, May 27, 1839, ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. For Jackson on Federalism, see: Jackson to James Polk, May 3, 1835, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, III, 183; Jackson to Felix Grundy, Oct. 5, 1835 and to James Buchanan, Dec. 26, 1837, John S. Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (Washington, 1931), V, 371-72, 523. The major Democratic organ in Middle Tennessee, the Nashville Union, defined federalism as Toryism and Federalists as "ambitious demagogues, many of them disappointed office-seekers." Nashville Union, Feb. 13, 1839.
11. William G. Childress to Polk, Jan. 10, 1837, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, IV, 23.
12. Nashville Union, Sept. 21, 1837.

13. Nashville Union, Nov. 26, 1838; Nashville Whig, Nov. 14, 1838.
14. Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Sept. 28, 1838, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 570; Nashville Union, Nov. 14, 1838; Nashville Whig, Nov. 14, 1838.
15. David B. Davis, "Uncle Oedipus and Ante Bellum," New York Review of Books, XXVI (Oct. 25, 1979), 26; see also, George B. Forgie, Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age (New York, 1979), ch. 2; Jackson's letter is cited in Niles Weekly Register, May 7, 1824.
16. Nashville Union, Jan. 17, 1840.
17. Ibid., June 19, 1839.
18. Nashville Whig, Oct. 26, 1838.
19. Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, March 14, 1838.
20. Nashville Union, April 12 and 15, 1839; Nashville Republican Banner, April 13, 1839.
21. Ibid., April 16, 1839; Nashville Whig, April 19, 1839.
22. Nashville Union, April 19, 1839; Nashville Republican Banner, May 8, 1839; Jackson to Amos Kendall, April 19, 1839, Jackson Papers.
23. First two quotes from Nashville Union, June 19, 1839; ibid., June 14, 1839; third quote from ibid., May 3, 1839; ibid., July 17, 1839; Nashville Whig, April 12, 1839; fourth quote from Nashville Republican Banner, May 8, 1839.
24. Jackson to Polk, Aug. 13, 1839, Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, VI, 8.
25. Nashville Whig, Aug. 12, 1839.
26. Nashville Union, Sept. 4, 20, and Oct. 9, 1839; Nashville Republican Banner, Sept. 27, 1839; John W. Childress to Polk, Aug. 21, 1839, Polk Papers.
27. Nashville Union, Sept. 18, 1839.
28. Nashville Whig, Aug. 12, Sept. 4, Nov. 18, and Nov. 27, 1839; Nashville Republican Banner, Sept. 27 and Nov. 21, 1839.
29. Nashville Union, Nov. 20, 27, Dec. 2 and Dec. 4, 1839, Jan. 1 and Jan. 3, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, Nov. 21, 1839; Nashville Whig, Jan. 6, 1840.

30. Nashville Whig, Feb. 3, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 29, 1840.
31. Nashville Whig, Dec. 24, 1838; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 18, 1839; Nashville Union, Feb. 13, 1839.
32. Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 18, 1839.
33. Ibid., May 18, 1840.
34. Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Aug. 10, 1839, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 183; John W. Childress to Polk, Sept. 9, 1839, Polk Papers; Nashville Union, Jan. 10, 22, and 29, 1840.
35. Nashville Union, Jan. 29 and Feb. 10, 1840 and Jan. 18 and March 18, 1841; Nashville Whig, March 17, 1841; Polk to A. O. P. Nicholson, Nov. 8, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 578; Robert M. Burton to Polk, March 9, 1841, ibid., 652.
36. McCormick, Second Party System, 107.
37. Gordon Wood, "Looking for Heroes," New York Review of Books, XXIX(Feb. 18, 1982), 3.

CHAPTER V
CONSTRUCTING A WHIG STRONGHOLD

The presidential contest of 1840 was the first election in Rutherford County involving two fully organized political parties. With the county still suffering from the recent depression, local Democrats were wary of their chances for victory that fall despite James Polk's recent gubernatorial success. In April, William Rucker wrote his brother-in-law that in his opinion Rutherford would soon be "in the particular keeping of the Whigs" because they were "determined to do all they can to get a majority."¹ The doctor proved to have a gift for prophecy.

From 1840 to 1843, the Whig party of Rutherford County rebounded from its defeat in the 1839 state elections to gain political control of the county. Indeed by 1844, its grip had tightened so that, even with James K. Polk as the Democratic standard bearer, their opponents could not win that year's presidential contest. The Whigs gained control because of the Democrats' blunder regarding the state capital issue and their failure to develop viable alternatives to the Whig-supported national bank proposal. The Whigs' own rapid adoption of popular politics and greater organizational ability, along with a period of consistent economic growth within the county seat, also helped to solidify the Whigs' position. The

campaigns of the early 1840s not only were notable Whig victories but also served notice that the voters of Rutherford County had rejected forever the old ways of politics.

I.

So many bitter partisan allegations and so much bombastic rhetoric filled that fall's campaign that it seemed as if both parties wished to begin a class war. Concern focused during the winter of 1839-40 on one question—who was to blame for the failure to move the state capital to Murfreesborough? From 1840 to 1843 that issue dominated the political and economic debate in the community. The removal issue had cropped up periodically ever since the Constitutional Convention of 1834 had mandated that by 1843 the state legislature must select a permanent capital. Locating the seat of government in Murfreesborough appealed to members of both parties, although for different reasons—differences that depended upon whether or not one thought that banks should play a part in the county's economic growth.

The Democracy believed that if the capital could be restored to Murfreesborough the lost agrarian-based prosperity and harmony of the 1820s would also return, and in the bargain, state government would be freed from the corrupting grasp of Nashville. Whigs, on the other hand, saw the opportunities of the capital in a different light. They assumed that the location of the state government in Murfreesborough would guarantee the placement of a bank in Rutherford County.

Experience, however, had taught Whig leaders that all was not lost if the capital stayed in Nashville. The evolution of the local economic system would continue even if there were no new bank in Rutherford County. Major economic transformations were already occurring in Murfreesborough, though not in the county as a whole. The town's first industrial ventures had been successful and these businesses employed almost one hundred men.² In the fall of 1841, Whig businessmen opened a new drug store and a private high school in Murfreesborough while another party member, John G. Bostick, began to plan the construction of the town's first hotel.³ The pulse of life had begun to change in the Garden of Rutherford County. The economic expansion of the past few years had brought prosperity and for the moment, the mechanics of the community were consistently voting for the Whigs. As Samuel H. Laughlin warned Governor Polk during the 1840 campaign, the "strong mechanical interest" in Murfreesborough "is against us."⁴

But the Whigs feared that economic expansion would slow unless a new banking system was approved. The Whigs demonstrated their apprehension in the summer of 1841 when President John Tyler (although a Whig party member, Tyler was a states rights Democrat in principle) vetoed a Whig-sponsored national banking bill. Few doubted that banking legislation on the federal level was dead as long as the Virginian was President. This turn of events outraged the Whigs. They hanged Tyler in effigy in the town square of Murfreesborough and redoubled their pro-bank efforts. The Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph simply said: "As the Whigs of

the Revolution fought better, and with more success, after Arnold betrayed them, so will the Whigs of this day fight better, and with more success, now that they have been betrayed by Tyler."⁵

The issue of the permanent site for the state capital became the primary question in the 1840 presidential campaign in Rutherford County as soon as Tennessee voters elected James K. Polk as governor in August, 1839. Later that month, the Rutherford Democracy initiated a propaganda campaign in favor of Murfreesborough's claims to the capital. And John Childress bluntly informed his brother-in-law that the county's Democrats believed that since Rutherford had given him crucial support that summer, the Governor should, in return, help Murfreesborough become the capital. Shortly thereafter, the party's newspaper boldly predicted that the next general assembly would move the state government to Murfreesborough. When the legislature began its winter session, it seemed that some political deal had been made, for on January 31, 1840, the legislature resolved that Murfreesborough would be the next meeting place for the general assembly. The Democrats were overjoyed; the legislature's action strengthened Murfreesborough's chances of becoming the permanent state capital. So encouraged were they that the county's legislative delegation tried to push through the general assembly a resolution that would have immediately moved the state bureaucracy and executive branch to the town. Then, suddenly, the legislature reversed itself and resolved to continue meeting in Nashville. For an explanation of the reversal, all eyes looked toward the Governor.⁶

When Polk heard of the resolutions to move the state

government to Rutherford County immediately, he passed the word to his friends that such a move would be inconvenient and impractical. Nevertheless, Rutherford's Democracy would not compromise; it wanted all of the state government in Murfreesborough without any delay. That refusal to compromise destroyed the coalition of Democrats which had supported the temporary removal of the state government to Murfreesborough, and the legislature rescinded the original resolution. Never again would the general assembly consider a home other than Nashville. Loco foco Democrats from the rural areas of Tennessee had supported the move to Rutherford County because of its geographic location and because its agrarian character meant much to anti-bank Democrats, but the legislature elected to follow the wishes of Governor Polk. Rutherford Democrats were too eager. The Governor reacted negatively; the state party followed his lead.⁷

This sudden turn-of-events caught the Democrats of Rutherford County off-balance. They were outraged that the man they had so ardently supported in the last campaign had betrayed them. Quite aware of the fury his decision had caused, the governor coached John Childress as to the proper explanation to give to his Rutherford allies. Polk told his brother-in-law to deny the allegation that the governor had taken an active role in either the passage or failure of the resolution; instead Childress was to remind the party members that Polk had "endeavoured to abstain . . . from interfering in the business properly belonging to the legislature and in relation to the seat of Government [Polk] was particularly cautious." The governor wanted his position of this subject to appear passive;

Childress could say that Polk would obey the will of the legislature, whatever that might be. But even armed with this explanation, Polk's chief lieutenants in Rutherford County convinced few that the governor was not a traitor to the party.⁸

As the legislature and the governor thrashed out the removal issue in Nashville, Rutherford Whigs remained quiet. Though they, too, wanted the capital, they certainly did not wish for their rivals all the glory. Since the 1839 state elections had all but eliminated their party's influence in state councils, the Whigs had no alternative but to wait patiently for an opportunity. The failure of the Democrats to win the capital for Murfreesborough gave them that opening.⁹ It soon became a standard feature of Whig speeches to claim that Polk's "political friends" had preferred to see the capital remain in Nashville, "rather than Col. Polk and the officers of state be compelled with the requirements of the law, and remove forthwith to Murfreesborough." Democrats denied those allegations as "destitute of foundation in fact," and the Murfreesborough Weekly Times alleged that the Whig press in Nashville was trying to dupe the people of Rutherford into believing that Polk favored Nashville as the capital while at the same time telling the voters in Davidson County that he supported Murfreesborough's claims. Many, however, ignored these Democratic counter-charges. Polk was effectively discredited.¹⁰

These allegations dealt the Democrats a severe blow in Rutherford County. Some prominent Democrats deserted the party. Those who stayed tended to be die-hard agrarian capitalists,

bidding good riddance to their past colleagues who believed the Whigs' explanations. For example, Democrat John G. Bostick, a town merchant, who invested heavily in Murfreesborough real estate in the hope of constructing a hotel for the future legislators, joined the Whigs. William G. Roulhac, who remained in the Democratic fold, wrote of that defection: "Oh! Patriotism, Oh! Consistency, Oh! Morality, Oh! Decency, Oh! Religion, whether hast thou flown."¹¹ The removal issue seriously undermined the Democratic party's efforts in the 1840 presidential election in Rutherford County because Polk was the party's figurehead--and the man who Andrew Jackson had hand-picked to rally the Tennessee Democracy to the cause of Martin Van Buren. After the events of early 1840, Polk's popularity in Rutherford County was never again as high as it had been in 1839.

Almost as much as the capital issue, the role of banks in the community was fiercely disputed in 1840. Local Democrats urged Polk to remove any state bank officers who might be working for the Whig cause in the county. One former state assembly candidate begged the governor to select any Rutherford Democrat as the county's representative for the Bedford County branch bank since the current Rutherford director was Lewis Jetton "who knows as much about financial matters as a hog does about the 25th day of December" and, anyway, Jetton's "appointment was made to answer the ends of the Whig leaders about Murfreesboro", who would move heaven and earth to get a majority" that fall. Democrats strongly supported Van Buren's financial policies. In a summer speech at the county courthouse, Henderson Yoakum, the party's electoral candidate, demanded proof that the Bank's

destruction had caused financial havoc. Yoakum recollected that when the federal government removed its money from the national bank in the early 1830s, cotton prices rose; consequently he supported the Independent Treasury proposal of the Van Buren administration. Edwin A. Keeble charged in August that Rutherford Whigs were political hypocrites for supporting banks when they had once abhorred them. But Keeble talked about bygone days when there had been a community consensus about most issues facing Rutherford Countians. Those times had disappeared long ago.¹²

Rutherford Whigs not only used the bank issue to their advantage in the controversy over the location of the state capital but they constantly reminded the voters of the failures of Jackson's and Van Buren's economic policies while hinting that William Henry Harrison, their presidential nominee, represented a break from those experiments and favored new capitalistic ventures. The political symbol for the type of economic structure the Whigs of Rutherford County preferred had been Henry Clay. He would have been their first choice for the presidential slot in 1840. As early as 1838, the Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph announced its support for the Kentuckian, remarking that "we would think almost three-fourths of our acquaintances are friendly to Mr. Clay." But Harrison was the candidate and the party loyally backed him since the westerner opposed the financial policies of the Van Buren administration. In a Murfreesborough debate, David Dickinson claimed that because of the Democrats "the price of produce had fallen—the currency had become deranged, and the only safety could be found in a resort to

the United States Bank." Two months later, William Ledbetter repeated Dickinson's allegations at the courthouse, indicting Van Buren for "tinkering with the currency." When James K. Polk turned down a request from the Jefferson "Tippecanoe Club" to debate John Bell at a Whig gathering, the Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph had a ready explanation for the governor's decision. Polk feared such a challenge because the governor had "the ability and ingenuity to speak well and argue well--but not to sustain his lame and halting course, against a Whig speaker armed with the truth." And to the Whigs that truth was that the Van Buren administration was a disaster and that new economic programs had to be adopted to pull the county out of its depression.¹³

Another issue in the campaign involved the qualifications and "principles" of William Henry Harrison, the Whig presidential nominee. For example, two Democratic party leaders, Edwin A. Keeble and Henderson Yoakum, often stressed the danger of Harrison's vagueness on the issues. Keeble constantly canvassed the community, debating anyone who cared to face him and hammering at Harrison's vague principles. According to the Murfreesborough attorney, voters in the county should not choose a man with undeserved military laurels. Yoakum, another Democratic tower of strength, engaged the Whig David Dickinson in a series of debates held throughout the congressional district. Yoakum also consistently emphasized Harrison's lack of public principles and his "Federalist" background.¹⁴

The Whigs took to the stump to defend their candidate. David Dickinson, the Whig electoral candidate in Rutherford's congressional

district, followed the example of Governor Cannon's 1839 re-election campaign when he compared Jackson's and William Henry Harrison's military records in the War of 1812 and then concluded "that the former when compared with the latter dwindled into utter insignificance."¹⁵ The Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph maintained that Polk, while governor, had attempted "to set the country against the towns," a tactic which it denounced as "one of the lowest steps of demagoguism."¹⁶ Later in the fall, Yoakum and Dickinson agreed to write to their candidates for their views on the issues. While the answers both men received were mostly uninformative, the letters ended the controversy about Harrison's "principles." As Dickinson told Harrison, the letter enabled the Whigs to put "down the charge that you were desirous of concealing your sentiments."¹⁷

Throughout the contest, both parties urged that the community increase its political participation. According to a report by Democrat Henry Trott, a former state assembly candidate, Whig political activists distributed a special political pamphlet, the Spirit of '76, to almost every household in the Cannon County electoral districts. The editor of the Tennessee Telegraph flooded districts which had been strongly Democratic in the past election with free copies of his paper in hopes that some people would "read the Telegraph occasionally" and vote the Whig ticket that fall.¹⁸ Even women were encouraged to participate in the parties' various public demonstrations and dinners.¹⁹ Whig speakers also crisscrossed the area from the first days of spring until election day in November. All together, ten different Whig speakers, most of whom had

statewide or even national reputations, gave twenty-two major addresses in the county.²⁰

Rutherford Whigs also participated in large numbers in the major political event held in the state that summer: the Whig Southwestern Convention at Nashville. This convention featured a major address by Henry Clay. Of the ten thousand who heard Clay in Nashville, almost one thousand came from Rutherford County.²¹ Those who attended the convention came because of party loyalty; it had been uncertain until the last moment whether or not any national Whig leader would address the gathering. These large meetings of the party faithful reinforced their sense of shared interests and political consciousness. Whigs also held smaller demonstrations in the county throughout the election. They were loud and boisterous, with boys and blacks doing most of the whooping and hollering. One Democrat told his father that about all that stood behind the Whig cause were "flags with barrels of hard cider emblematic of their party principles with this typical inscription Tip, Tyler, & the Tariff."²² Their loud demonstrations, especially those on Sundays, caused Democrats much anguish. Judging by their behavior, the Whigs really did not care if their "uproarious singing and hurraing at night" disturbed the town, or the services of the Methodist Church, as long as it upset their opponents.²³ And it always did that. Andrew Jackson cried out in disgust that the Whigs' Southwestern Convention had "desecrate[d] the sabbath." During the next presidential contest, Rutherford Democrats complained even more about Whig tactics, asserting that their opponents were too loud and boisterous while their own

political meetings were not composed of "irregular, confused mass and reckless partisans, infuriated with artificial stimulants."²⁴

Rutherford Democrats never matched their rivals' campaign tactics. They failed to recruit regional party speakers who could excite the masses in the county. A. O. P. Nicholson, the Maury County attorney, was an exception. Moses G. Reeves of Murfreesborough thought that Nicholson's July speech in the county seat "was decidedly the best and was listened to with more attention than any other that has been made in the county by any body." But some Democratic debaters did more to hinder than help the cause, as in the case of the mayor of Nashville whose rambling, boring speech disgusted many Democrats when he spoke in Murfreesborough that summer.²⁵ Furthermore, Democrat public dinners and demonstrations did not generate as much excitement as those of the Whigs. Mostly, they were dignified affairs, reminiscent of the political celebrations of the past. For example, at a staid dinner at Weakley's Spring in the northern part of the county in 1840, over two thousand partisans heard the likes of former governor William Carroll, Colonel David Craighead of Nashville, and Henry Watterson of Bedford County blast the "factious paraphernalia of whigism into shreds and tatters with biting sarcasm and withering ridicule." Moreover, Andrew Jackson paraded himself before them. For most Democrats, the appearance of the party's figurehead that day must have had, as Old Hickory opined, "a good effect."²⁶ But traditional political techniques no longer excited Rutherford Countians. As one Democrat warned Polk, "in the absence of something real & tangible there is a danger that some of our fellow citizens

will be led astray by the deafening shouts of log cabins, hard cider & gourds.²⁷

When election day arrived, many Democrats just did not go to the polls, but the Whigs turned out in large numbers. As Table V.1 compared to Table IV.2 shows, the total Whig vote in 1840 was only fifteen votes higher than in 1839. But since the Democrats failed to generate much enthusiasm for the party's standard bearer, the Democratic vote in Rutherford County had decreased by almost 18 per cent within a year's time.²⁸

Maps V.1-3 indicate the districts where Democratic strength had eroded. In 1839, the Democracy had carried four districts which lay between the the Garden and Barrens of the county, but in November, the only districts the party won, except for the heavily-Methodist district twelve, lay in Rutherford's hills and mountains. The hard times of the last three years had turned the rest of the community against the party's cause. The bungled capital removal had hurt, but the election was also a referendum on Van Buren and Democratic financial policies. Rutherford County voters rejected those too.

In 1840, the community emerged from the election more politicized than ever before. The Whigs had built a more efficient political machine than the Democrats, who were stuck with a presidential nominee blamed for the recent national economic difficulties. Voter turnout was higher in 1840 (83 percent) than in 1836 (72 percent), but when the two political parties turned to battle over state and local supremacy almost every adult white man in Rutherford County would state his political preference.²⁹

TABLE V.1
 RUTHERFORD COUNTY DISTRICT RETURNS, 1840 ELECTION

<u>District</u>	<u>Van Buren</u>	<u>Harrison</u>	<u>%Van Buren</u>	<u>%Harrison</u>
1. Sanders	38	56	40.4	59.6
2. Hart Spring	65	82	44.2	55.8
3. Burnet's	78	81	49.1	50.9
4. Mechanicsville	68	73	48.2	51.8
5. Fall Creek	21	30	41.2	58.8
6. Jefferson	24	88	21.4	78.6
7. Wilkerson Crossroads	52	71	42.3	57.7
8. Murfree's	35	52	40.2	59.8
9. Sulpher Spring	7	49	12.5	87.5
10. Armstrong	6	31	16.2	83.8
11. Bairfields	35	73	32.4	67.6
12. Salem	64	28	69.6	30.4
13. Murfreesborough	94	167	36.0	64.0
14. Middleton	51	85	37.5	62.5
15. Valley	14	74	15.9	84.1
16. Milton	51	61	45.5	54.5
17. McKnight's	41	41	50.0	50.0
18. Fox Camp	13	62	17.3	82.7
19. Tennison's	52	43	54.7	45.3

20. Fosterville	66	54	55.0	45.0
21. Bushnell Creek	65	52	55.5	44.5
22. Raleigh	4	95	4.0	96.0
23. Youree's	116	44	72.5	27.5
24. Big Spring	111	27	80.4	19.6
25. Millersburg	<u>89</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>74.2</u>	<u>25.8</u>
Totals: Rutherford	1260	1550	43.3	56.7


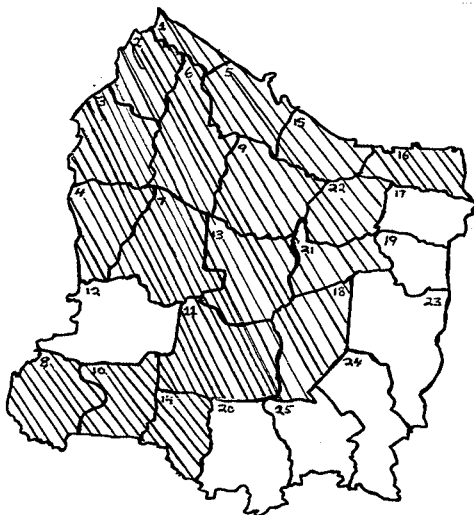

Cannon County Districts

1. Nichols'	28	46	37.8	62.2
2. Alexander's	50	14	78.1	21.9
3. Brown's	43	34	55.8	44.2
4. Williams'	23	25	47.0	52.1
5. Pattons'	<u>80</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>77.7</u>	<u>22.3</u>
Totals: Cannon	224	147	60.4	39.6

SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840.

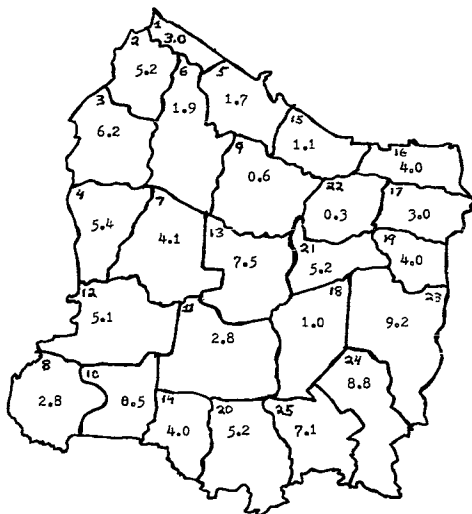
MAP V.1

WHIG/DEMOCRATIC VOTING STRENGTH BY DISTRICT, 1840 ELECTION

Legend: Districts that voted Whig: Districts that voted Democratic: 

MAP V.2

DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOCRAT VOTES, 1840 ELECTION
(in percentages)



SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840; author's own compilations.

MAP V.3

DISTRIBUTION OF WHIG VOTES, 1840 ELECTION
(in percentages)



SOURCE: Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840; author's own compilations.

II

The capital question remained the major issue of the 1841 gubernatorial campaign. The Whig victory in 1840 convinced party members that Polk could be defeated easily that summer, and Rutherford Whigs knew who should slay the Democratic lion--the Governor's former nemesis, David Dickinson. The choice of the Murfreesborough attorney was hardly a surprise; he had done yeoman service for the party during the 1840 presidential election. More important, the ideas of Dickinson and his brother-in-law John Bell embodied the Whig party line. Dickinson represented banks and prosperity; in 1849, four years after his death, the value of his town property still was higher than that of any other Rutherford Countian.³⁰

There were two reasons why the party thought that Whigs statewide could be persuaded to accept Dickinson as the gubernatorial nominee. First, John Bell favored Dickinson's candidacy. Second, the first statewide Whig convention, a meeting that would nominate the gubernatorial candidate, would hold its sessions in Murfreesborough in February.³¹

The Whigs met in convention early that month. As the two hundred and fifty delegates from forty counties in the state gathered in the town, the party's leaders canvassed them, trying to determine the extent of support for Dickinson. Discovering that Dickinson had little chance of being nominated without splitting the party, Charles Ready moved that Dickinson's name be withdrawn from consideration. A grateful convention accepted the motion and nominated James C. Jones from Wilson County.³²

Undoubtedly, the failure to gain the gubernatorial nomination for Dickinson upset many Rutherford Countians because they had been confident that, with their man as the candidate, the Democrats would be soundly defeated that summer. But at the time, Jones' nomination hurt local Whigs because it gave the Democrats a chance to stir up trouble. Doing its utmost to turn Dickinson's unsuccessful race for the nomination to their own political advantage, the Democratic Weekly Times introduced a new editorial emphasis as soon as the convention adjourned, one that stressed that now there should be a community consensus behind Governor Polk's re-election because "he prefers the good of the whole state to the aggrandizement of the money jobbers about Nashville." Of course, according to the Democratic newspaper, it had been those same "money jobbers" who had arranged Jones' nomination so that the capital would not move away from their influence. The Weekly Times asserted that Jones received the party's nod over Dickinson because the Lebanon attorney was "a man who will use his influence for the concentration of the money power " and "the political power" at Nashville--"this was the cause of Mr. Dickinson's evident defeat, and consequent withdrawal."³³ The paper's editors gladly accepted the moral mission of moving the state capital "away from the influence of mercantile and banking influences."³⁴

Rutherford's Democracy demonstrated a heretofore unseen sense of political acumen in this attempt to use the capital question against its opponent. Jones should be defeated, the Democrats argued, because he voted against making Murfreesborough the temporary capital

in the last general assembly. The Democrats rarely brought up the party's standard platform in 1841, concentrating instead on the single issue of the state capital. The Whigs understood that such an alteration in their rivals' tactics constituted, as the Republican Banner said, "the groundwork of an attempt to revolutionize the politics" of Rutherford, an attempt which every party member had to be ready to combat. A few days after the publication of the anti-Jones editorials by the Weekly Times, the county's Whigs convinced James Jones to come to Murfreesborough, before the beginning of his formal debates with Polk, and rebut the Democratic offensive.³⁵

Although the Rutherford Whigs certainly had their hopes dashed at the convention, they did not forget their larger goals. The evidence strongly suggests that Rutherford Whigs struck a deal at the convention: Dickinson would withdraw his candidacy in exchange for a pledge by the party's nominee to support Murfreesborough as the permanent state capital. Ten days after the convention, James C. Jones came to town and fulfilled his side of the bargain. At the courthouse, he indirectly pledged not to block the county's claims on the state government.³⁶

In a speech in which Jones also carefully enunciated his economic platform--support for "a sound National Bank" and the "status quo" in state internal improvements--the Whig nominee promised "all those who heard him, that, if he should be elected Governor of Tennessee, and the Legislature should remove the seat of Government to any point in the state, he would not express a regret, nor ask to remain a moment in Nashville, but would cheerfully pack up a bag

and baggage and go along with it."³⁷ In other words, the Whig pledged not to be like Folk in 1840, and implied that had he been governor in 1840, the capital would already be in Rutherford County. That implication revived an earlier impression: Polk had betrayed the party and the county.

Additional factors also influenced the voters in that summer's election. Through the Whig state convention, those who lived in the county seat received a taste of what the town would be like if it became the state capital. Business naturally boomed while the politicians were there. However, the presence of the conventioners upset some townspeople. For example, the Methodists of the town briskly rejected the Whigs' offer to hold the convention in their meetinghouse. Consequently, the convention made its home at the First Presbyterian Church, which did not please some of the congregation. Mrs. Joel Childress told the Reverend Mr. Eagleton that "she would never feel at home in her own church again."³⁸

The 1841 elections also gave the Whigs their first chance to use presidential patronage. Shortly after Harrison's inauguration, David Wendal regained his postmaster position in Murfreesborough, and Charles Ready, Jr. was named postmaster at Readyville. Beyond those removals, however, the Tyler administration played little or no role in the campaign. Rutherford Whigs also raised a large sum of money to enable the Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph to hire "a first rate editor" and print and distribute extra copies of the paper free of charge. By the middle of the winter, Democrats were complaining that the Whig press reached "every fireside." But as

as the Whigs increased their partisan efforts, they also increased community disharmony. That the wealthy merchant David Wendal replaced the Methodist preacher, Gerald T. Henderson, as Murfreesborough's postmaster outraged evangelicals. Sarah Childress Polk told her husband, that because of Henderson's removal, "The Whigs will lose some votes where ever the towns have no influence. There is a good deal of excitement in the little place about the removal." But the Whigs could take pleasure in seeing Wendal resume the position that he deserved.³⁹

In 1841, fewer demonstrations, debates, or vitriolic speeches rocked Rutherford County than a year earlier. But this quiet did not indicate a lack of interest on the part of the people; 98 percent of the voting population participated that August. There were few speeches and demonstrations because early in the campaign the issues that divided the two parties were clearly placed before the voters. The statewide gubernatorial debates between Folk and Jones, which eventually entertained thousands of Tennesseans, began that year in Murfreesborough. The people of Rutherford County had only to hear those two speeches to know what future each party envisioned for the community.⁴⁰

Governor Folk's speech boosted the enthusiasm of his followers. Despite his position in the state government, he did not touch on state issues. Rather, he spoke of his past association with the county, the "Federalists" in Washington, and his support for Jackson's and Van Buren's economic policies. He consistently stressed his devotion to principle. After taking the podium, "Lean Jimmy" Jones

TABLE V.2

1841 STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Race</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
Governor	J. Jones	Whig	1711	51.1
	J. Polk	Democrat	1635	48.9
U. S. Congress ^a	M. Gentry	Whig	1413	62.1
	T. Hogan	Democrat	861	37.9
State Senate	W. Ledbetter	Whig	1707	51.5
	H. Yoakum	Democrat	1606	48.5
State House	H. Burton	Whig	1729	25.6
	H. Norman	Whig	1721	25.5
	J. Fletcher	Democrat	1667	24.7
	E. Keeble	Democrat	1624	24.1

^aSpecial election held in May, 1841.

SOURCES: Nashville Union, May 17, 1841; Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 7, 1841.

asserted that Harrison was no Federalist but a famous military hero; moreover, the challenger laughed at the Democrat's consistency. He had heard of a case in Wilson County where "some witness had been examined in court and stated that a certain horse was seventeen feet high. 'Seventeen high,' said the Judge?" According to Jones, the witness replied, "'Did I say seventeen feet? Well, if I said it, I stick to it; he was seventeen feet high.'" Jones and his audience burst out laughing at the virtue of consistency.⁴¹

Disconcerted by his rival's jokes, Polk admitted that Jones "was a promising young man; but . . . as for his being Governor that's all a notion." Polk was the incumbent and Old Hickory's ally. In Rutherford's old political system, the governor would have had little to worry about; Jones' candidacy would truly have been only "a notion." But in 1841, Rutherford County was no longer a Democratic county. Jones crushed Polk that August (see Table V.1) and the Whigs swept every state election, re-establishing their dominance. The upper-hand in the new two party system belonged to the Whigs.⁴²

III

Democratic political power continued to diminish over the next two years. When Martin Van Buren visited Tennessee in April and May of 1842, he did not, despite the pleadings of county Democrats, come to Murfreesborough. "He has many very warm friends here," Henderson Yoakum reminded James Polk, "if he [would] come and show that he is like other men--would have many more. Some very foolish prejudices might be removed." But state leaders probably felt that

a visit would be a waste of the former President's time.⁴³ Furthermore, that fall the legislature, securely under Whig control, began to redistrict the state's congressional districts to conform to the 1840 census. In an effort to bolster strong party regions, the Democratic leadership in Nashville considered sacrificing Rutherford to the Whigs by acquiescing to a plan where Rutherford County would be placed in a new congressional district with Wilson and Williamson counties. Yoakum begged the state leadership to reconsider:

I hope that the galantry with which we have fought, in times past, will win for us, at the hands of our friends, a better fate. And you can readily see also, that the fall of Rutherford, which had hitherto been the barrier against Nashville federalism, will open the way to the subversion of democracy in all the counties south & east.

That warning persuaded Polk to speak up for Rutherford Democrats.

"I know the difficulties attending the subject," he told Sam Laughlin, "but still hope that she [Rutherford] may be saved . . . The central position of that county makes it more important that we should preserve our strength there, than in any other county in the state."

But this plea was ignored and the county became part of the Wilson-Williamson district. Rutherford Whigs were estatic about the change, which probably guaranteed David Dickinson's election to the congress in 1843. Local Democrats felt betrayed and humiliated, but they blamed the politicians at Nashville for their predicament, remaining loyal to the cause of the party. "We fight for the good doctrines still," Henderson Yoakum told Polk, "they are our doctrines, we cherish them and hope to live to see their triumph in every part of the county."⁴⁴

The ongoing controversy involving the "Immortal Thirteen"--a group of Democrats in the State Senate who refused to compromise with the Whigs on the election of Tennessee's U. S. Senators, thus leaving the state without a representative in Washington--also gave local Democrats a black eye throughout the summer of 1842. The stubbornness of the Thirteen, incidentally led by Samuel H. Laughlin, stiffened the back of many a Democrat, but left the party wide open to the charge that Democratic principles were based on party needs and were not grounded in the best interests of the state.⁴⁵

Despite the setback of the previous year, however, Democratic hopes for a lasting victory in its battle with the Whigs were never higher than during the 1843 election campaign. The prospect of the state government moving to Rutherford County served the interests of both parties to such an extent that the Democrats began a rumor alleging that a Whig-Democrat compromise legislative ticket for that summer's election was to be constructed so that no matter which party won control of the general assembly, Rutherford Countians could exercise some influence on the decision about the state capital site. But such a compromise ticket would also take away one of the primary Whig weapons against James K. Polk, the Democratic gubernatorial nominee. Obviously, Rutherford Whigs believed that their best chances for the future lay with their party's continued ascendancy. John Childress' prediction that the Whigs' "party feelings will in all probability overcome their sense of interest" was correct. The proposed compromise ticket never materialized.⁴⁶ Within a month, David Gurwin, the Democrats' assembly candidate in 1843, published

a broadside asserting that even if the party won control of the state legislature, "of what advantage will it be to us, if WE are represented by Whigs?" He urged Rutherford Countians to vote Democratic so that "a common end, of equal importance to both Whigs and Democrats," could be achieved. Whig politicians, of course, argued their case in the same vein.⁴⁷

Once the compromise had been rejected, Rutherford's Democrats concentrated most of their attention on the issue of the state capital. In the winter of 1842, Henderson Yoakum reminded Polk, "The seat of government will be a serious question with us. Yet we will not be foolish about it." Yoakum did not want the capital question to destroy party unity. According to the Murfreesborough lawyer, the goal of the party was first to remove the capital away from "the commercial influence" and second, to place it in a central geographical location. To the Rutherford party leader, Murfreesborough was the obvious solution. Yoakum's feelings were widespread throughout the party. One Rutherford correspondent of the Nashville Union remarked that the state government needed to be "free from the money corrupting and mob-controlling influences of a large commercial city." Three weeks later, Yoakum confidentially told the former governor that the party intended to send letters to both gubernatorial candidates asking for their preferences for the state capital. He further informed Polk that Rutherford's Democracy planned to publish a petition in favor of the county's claims, and the Murfreesborough lawyer flatly warned Polk that if he planned to carry the county in 1843, he must state publicly that he favored placing the capital

near the center of the territory and population of the state.⁴⁸

About a month later, the party's petition appeared in the Nashville newspapers. It offered two primary reasons why the capital should be restored to Rutherford County. First, the capital should be placed in Murfreesborough because the town sat at the center of the state. Second, if the capital returned to Murfreesborough, the good old days of the general assembly, when sessions were short and state expenditures were low, would reappear. That past, in other words, could be recreated. The resolution explained that since the government had left Rutherford County, so many charters had been granted by the legislature that corporations and monopolies operated freely in the state. Moreover, because the community was one of "agricultural people" and not brokers, extravagance in government would disappear once the capital was restored to Murfreesborough. Both of these points rested on the assumption that the behavior of lawmakers reflected the character of the population where the legislative sessions were held. "If they abound in wealth, extravagance, trade and speculation," the petitioners asserted, "the law-maker in mingling with them soon catches the tone, becomes social, desires to please, forgets his constituents, their economy and poverty, and votes for charters, appropriations and schemes utterly foreign to his views when he first took his seat."⁴⁹ In Murfreesborough, so Democrats thought, lawmakers would not be transformed; they could remain virtuous.

For weeks after the release of the petition, the Democratic press constantly blasted the Whigs for their failure to secure the

capital for the county during Jones' first term as governor, but this negative approach to the issue failed to help the party. It only served as a reminder of Polk's own failures in early 1840. The Democrats were also unable to take advantage of a brief factional split among their opponents. The division occurred when both David Dickinson and William Ledbetter announced a desire to be the party's congressional nominee. Dickinson received the nod from the state leadership, and despite some angry allegations, the breach between Dickinson and Ledbetter was mended and party unity restored.⁵⁰

By the summer, one cocky party man bragged, "The Whigs here are as firm to their principles as the anvil to the beaten stroke," concluding that without a doubt all Whig "candidates will come out ahead, without any difficulty."⁵¹ No doubt, his confidence reflected the party's skillful use of the capital issue. Playing a cagey game, Rutherford Whigs reminded the electorate late in the contest that Polk and the Democrats had voted to move the capital to Murfreesborough in 1840, then suddenly rescinded the resolution. Why should they be trusted to place the government in the county now? Even if, on the election's eve, the Nashville Union told the county that the stories alleging that Polk interferred in the 1840 resolutions were "utterly unfounded," the voters remembered the Democrats' problems of that year and decided not to trust Polk and his followers.⁵² In the county at that time, none of the policies that voters identified with James Polk were an effective counter to the campaign rhetoric of the Whigs. The Columbian lawyer received a decisive defeat that August (see Table V.3).

TABLE V.3
1843 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
James Jones	Whig	1586	53.7
James K. Folk	Democrat	1367	46.3

SOURCE: Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 11, 1843.

The 1843 election, in which the Whigs won every contest, demonstrated that Rutherford County had become a Whig stronghold. Their rivals had been unable to shake off the twin albatrosses that the candacies of James K. Polk (the capital recission of 1840) and Martin Van Buren (his administration's economic failures from 1837 to 1840) had placed around their necks. Nor did the Democrats have any new economic answers to offer the voters of Rutherford County while the national bank remained a major part of the local Whig platform.

IV

During the spring of 1844, the question of the annexation of the Republic of Texas reverberated throughout the halls of Congress, and that issue revived Democratic hopes in Rutherford County more than any event of the past months. Acquiring Texas for the Union was an old dream for many Tennesseans. Of course, Sam Houston, the former Democratic governor, was the president of the republic, and other Tennessee Democrats had played a role in the formation of the independent Texas state.⁵³ But in the summer of 1844, this vision received a startling setback. Martin Van Buren, still the party's logical presidential nominee, released a statement that, despite its vague and careful wording, clearly indicated that he did not support the immediate annexation of Texas. Rutherford's Democracy was thunderstruck. Henderson Yoakum wrote Polk to demand that either the party or Van Buren clarify the Democratic position on Texas. In Rutherford County, Van Buren's letter cost him all the popular support the Little Magician had garnered when he visited Middle

Tennessee in 1842. "We are all free Democrats," Yoakum reported, but he reminded Polk that "so also are we friends to the South."⁵⁴

The acquisition of Texas would have completed some of the Jackson administration's unfinished business—and would be in the interest of Southern agrarian capitalists. Ten years earlier, support for Texas would have been unanimous throughout Rutherford County. But those days had passed, and the partisan split on the question of the Texas annexation is one of the best indicators that a new and quite different political culture was part of Rutherford County.

Rutherford Whigs exacerbated the Democratic dilemma over Texas by making political hay out of Van Buren's remarks. While Henry Clay also opposed the immediate annexation of Texas, that did not bother local Whigs. Instead, the party held a large rally in May to confirm the presidential slate. Reminding the large crowd gathered in Murfreesborough that the Democratic and Whig struggle must continue because Democratic "doctrines and measures [are] incompatible with our prosperity, and safety, and the preservation of our institutions," the day's main speaker, John Bell, further claimed that the corrupt bargain of 1824 had never happened and that Clay's vision of the future was the one Rutherford Countians should endorse. In a closing address, Gustavus A. Henry defended the Whig policies of tariffs and banking, all the time maintaining that "the mischievous principles of modern democracy must be opposed." Then, to show the party's disregard of the Texas issue, the Whigs of Rutherford County unanimously resolved that they could only support Texas annexation when it could "be done without violating our national faith, and

endangering the union."⁵⁵

But the election of 1844 was turned upside down when the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore named a surprise nominee: James K. Polk of Tennessee. Polk naturally supported the annexation of Texas and Oregon. Thus not only did the Rutherford Democrats have a platform to offer the country, more important, they had a candidate who was almost a native son. Celebrating the startling news in Murfreesborough, Democrats hanged a raccoon at a mass meeting, and this symbol of the Whig party was "placed in a fine walnut coffin, carried to the grave, followed by a considerable procession, and buried with all the honours of whiggery."⁵⁶ Many Democrats believed that Polk's nomination assured them of victory that November.⁵⁷

Throughout the campaign, Democratic rhetoric did not emphasize Polk's close ties to the community as much as his support for westward expansion and his opposition to banking. A public letter addressed to Jackson elicited a vigorous endorsement from the Old Hero for Polk and Texas. Annexation, Jackson said, was a necessity since "our Union is not safe as long as Great Britain can be encouraged in her designs upon these territories." A party meeting in the Barrens district of Big Spring resolved that "we are for annexation; and those who are against it can join the Mexicans or the British, as may suit their taste." Three thousand people, including six hundred women, attended that gathering.⁵⁸ Despite such passionate appeals, however, Rutherford Whigs continued to hold the allegiance of the voters.

The key to Whig success was the party's stress on the economic ideas and programs of Henry Clay. Furthermore, Whigs continued to scathe their opponents for constantly attempting to campaign on the coattails of former President Andrew Jackson. During a 1844 Murfreesborough meeting, W. L. Murfree said he respected General Jackson, but then laughed at how the "Locofocos thought Jackson's fame [was] negotiable" even though "they had already transferred it once."⁵⁹ But of more value to the party was its efficient organization and its willingness to use new political tactics and symbols. Rutherford Whigs were always united. When told to "explain your principles to your democratic neighbors" so to "disabuse their minds," they did so.⁶⁰ County conventions became yearly events, and party meetings were held monthly in Murfreesborough, except during the worst months of winter.⁶¹ During the 1844 presidential campaign, the Whigs developed "Clay Clubs" in every civil district and organized armed "military companies" to march and parade in their public demonstrations. These units always took great pride in their precision. The party's symbols were neither the flag nor Jackson, but raccoons, log cabins, and precision-marching soldiers, all of which were to serve as a reminder that Whigs too had ties to the past—that they were old revolutionaries, struggling "to bring back the pure days of the Republic."⁶²

The Whigs' symbolism often mocked the traditionalism of their opponents. Martial parades were held on Sundays, exciting both the young men and free blacks of the community. By appealing to the younger half of the county through demonstrations and singing clubs,

the party gained a distinct advantage over the Democrats. Thousands attended the party's rallies—places where they usually heard the heroes of the party described as rags-to-riches men. The party's goals in 1844, as they evolved in the Whig press, were clearly different from those of the Democrats. Whigs favored a protective tariff, a bank, and industrialization. In this community, such pledges were welcome.

Just how much Whig ideology the community accepted can be measured by how irrationally their opponents reacted to the Whig symbols and rhetoric. Democrats deplored the military companies. After a parade by the volunteer companies in Murfreesborough, one Democrat angrily remarked that he was "not willing to submit to such another visitation, without being equally prepared to resent and resist violence." Another believed that the military demonstrators were a conspiracy between the "gentry" and "boys . . . to insult and menace their political opponents." Most Democrats felt that the Whigs' public celebrations and meetings were "a triple blow" against "the flag, the constitution, and the religion of the country."⁶³

But even with the Texas issue and the candidacy of a near-native son, Rutherford's Democracy fared no better than November than it had during the last two state elections (see Table V.4). The Democrats ran a campaign based on "measures, not men" and the Whigs of Rutherford County decisively defeated them.

Why did these years witness the decline of Democratic political power in Rutherford County? The party's fall from dominance had

TABLE V.4
1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, RUTHERFORD COUNTY

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%Votes</u>
Henry Clay	Whig	1730	53.6
James K. Polk	Democrat	1500	46.4

Source: Nashville Republican Banner, Nov. 11, 1844.

been so swift and so decisive that one wonders if even Jackson could have won an election in the county. The answer cannot be totally accounted for by the failure of the party to capture the imagination of the voters through the state capital or the Texas annexation issues. Those two failures were merely symptomatic of the party leadership's failure to grasp the dynamics of the new political culture and to use the two party system to its advantage. But the failures did prove that the party's complete reliance upon the appeal of agrarian capitalism, to the exclusion of all other economic alternatives, was a great handicap.

In a 1843 letter to the editors of the Tennessee Agriculturalist, William G. Roulhac outlined the Democratic party's ideology. Roulhac believed that America must remain a nation of farmers, not manufacturers. Industrialism in particular was useless in the South because of the competition it faced from foreign imports and cheap northern labor. He was confident that most Americans could enjoy greater prosperity in an agrarian-commercial world than under a modern capitalist way of life. Here in Rutherford County, he added,

a laboring man can make on a little farm a decent support for his family, make cotton or tobacco, ship abroad and pocket from one to two hundred dollars . . . And in whatever country this is so, it is weak, if not wicked, to persuade persons to change their occupation. Again, a community situated as ours is, (i. e. on farms mostly) is free and independent, and provides the best citizens of this or of any other government, because among other reasons, they are less liable to corruption.⁶⁴

Democratic stump speeches still echoed the themes of an older day. For example, in a debate with Dr. James Richardson in 1843, Captain James S. Smith told a group of farmers that they should elect

him to the general assembly because "their interest was his interest" since "he was raising a family of children amongst them; who were to share alike the results of his measures." The party's newspaper that year was the Jeffersonian--and the philosophy of its namesake heavily influenced the editorial content of this newspaper. For instance, in early May, the Jeffersonian satirized the notion that a national bank and soft currency were necessities. What was needed, the editor said, was a financial institution that neither dabbled in politics nor did more than merely facilitate trade exchanges. A bank that went beyond the agrarian-commercial economic sphere, in other words, did not benefit everyone. Only a decentralized bank of such limited power could be "the people's servant and not their master." This editorial echoed Jeffersonian fears about financial development that many in the county's Democracy shared. That winter, one of Rutherford's first settlers, Hugh Robinson of Bradyville, testified that he had

watched the system for fifty years--and have found that it brought one expansion and contraction after another, enriching the few and impoverishing the many It was not the intention of the makers of our constitution, that such a system of monopolies should ever be established in our country. . . . I do not expect to live very long but hope to see before I die, a return of the good old Jackson times. ⁶⁵

Precisely because it was a way to flout the party's traditionalism, the Democrats adopted the Star Spangled Banner as its symbol in 1844. According to one Democrat, that banner was "the flag democracy should display" since their opponents had "discarded their country's flag, and strive to alter the constitution--while we stick to the flag and constitution of our fathers." Indeed, the party's

platform for the 1844 campaign emphasized that the Whigs were Federalists and Tories, and at times compared the politics of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay to those of Lord North during the American Revolution. Whiggery's "distinguishing characteristic," in the opinion of Rutherford Democrats, was its "assumption that the mass of the people have not virtue nor intelligence sufficient for self-government." Therefore, the upcoming election was one between "WEALTH and PRIVILEGE" and "NATURAL RIGHTS." The Whigs favored class legislation and corporate monopolies; Democrats stood for individual freedom. Hence, before the Texas issue came to dominate the county's politics, the Democrats often couched their rhetoric in the language of class conflict.⁶⁶ But none of the Democratic strategies worked. Democratic tactics, as a matter of fact, were so ineffective that Clay defeated Polk in 1844 by a wider margin than ever before (see Table V.4).⁶⁷ Doubtless, the Democrats' persistent stand against change was the major reason Rutherford County became a Whig community.

By 1845, the community of Rutherford County had been transformed by ten years of partisan strife. James K. Polk's final failure to carry the county in 1844 stood as a sign of the times. Modern politics meant that when men voted for either Henry Clay or James Polk, family connections or a Tennessee birthright meant little. What mattered was party principle.

V

At first glance, James Polk's decisive defeat in the 1844 presidential campaign, in the county where he had many personal ties,

might be unexpected. Yet, considering the power of the Whig political machine, Polk's past failures, and the weakness of deferential politics in the community, the real surprise would have been a Clay defeat. After the fall of 1845, once the Democrats had once again failed to win even one state election during that summer, the years of party strife began to fade away. Polk's defeat in November 1844 had proved that the Democratic party of the past—the one which had held high the banner of Andrew Jackson and traditional America—was all but dead. Henderson Yoakum described to the president-elect the wreckage that the new way of politics had made of the community of Rutherford County:

the elections here was attended with some of the richest scenes you ever witnessed. There was kidnapping enough on both sides to put half the county in the penitentiary. I hope never again to witness the like. Indeed I am fully persuaded this county cannot stand another such campaign, and I am sure no one can judge of the policy decided upon, ⁶⁸ when the balance of power is determined by barter and sale.

Having spent "ten years here in almost fruitless controversy," Yoakum chose to "go away from strife" and seek his fortune in Texas. As Yoakum departed the scene, so did many other party leaders from both sides. David Dickinson died in 1845; a year later, the Democratic leader Granville Crockett died. By the close of the decade the Democracy's figureheads, Jackson and Polk, and the Whigs' Henry Clay, were also dead. The passing of the old guard loosened the albatross of tradition that had hung around the necks of Rutherford Democrats. Moreover, a new generation of the elite emerged, one nurtured in a newer world. Therefore, from 1845 to 1848, the heretofore conflicting world views of Rutherford's Whigs and Democrats

began to merge into a new single outlook on life. By the decade's close, there was a new consensus in the community: railroads would bring peace and prosperity to Rutherford County.

In 1847, public stock in the Nashville-Chattanooga railroad went on sale, and Rutherford Countians purchased 1,975 shares in the venture, accounting for almost twelve percent of the stockholders' voting power. Significantly, an almost equal number of Democrats and Whigs invested in the project. Once construction was completed, the railroad passed through the entire county, entering at the third district, passing through Murfreesborough (completely bypassing Jefferson), and exiting at Postersville. For the first time, a comprehensive transportation network united the Barrens and the Garden of the county.⁶⁹

The construction of the railroad, however, accomplished much more than uniting the various geographical regions of the county. It symbolized the new economic way of life upon which the now-united community had embarked. The railroad meant that the economic needs of the farmer in Postersville were no longer so different from those of the merchant living in Murfreesborough. The outcome of the last elections told the politicians that the people knew what they wanted and that they realized that economic change would continue. The railroad was a step in that direction. Furthermore, the consensus about the railroad allowed Rutherford Countians to regain the sense of harmony and good will that it had last enjoyed in the 1820s and early 1830s. It had taken a generation, but the editors of Murfreesborough's newspapers could once again say what their

predecessor had said in 1828: "peace, joy, harmony and good will [seem] to pervade every bosom."⁷⁰

Rutherford Countians fulfilled the Whigs' dream during the 1850s. In 1852, businessmen established the Exchange Bank in Murfreesborough, and it did a thriving business until financial mismanagement caused its failure in 1858. But its closing did not deter Rutherford Countians in the least; the next year, John W. Childress and William Ledbetter, respectively the former Democrat and Whig party leaders, began new careers as the president and cashier of the Planters Bank. Banking had arrived in Murfreesborough and won acceptance by Whig and Democrat alike.⁷¹

The decade was also a time of economic growth in Rutherford County. In 1850, Murfreesborough doubled its territorial size. Five years later, W. S. Huggins opened the Rio Mills, a large four-story brick factory in the town. The construction of the first gas works in Murfreesborough began two years later. In 1854, the Spence family's Cedar Bucket Factory began production. By the winter of 1856, the Rutherford Telegraph claimed that business was good and according to the "weekly gossip," everyone in the county appeared "to be driving a good business."⁷²

The railroad brought potential peace and economic prosperity, but in the 1860s when it carried the Army of Cumberland toward Atlanta, it brought destruction. The community became one of the major battlefields of the Civil War. Construction of the gas works stopped; the doors of the bank closed; both sides ravaged the Cedar Bucket Factory and the Rio Mills. Then from December 31, 1862, to January

3, 1863, the battle of Stones River raged just outside of Murfreesborough. Over one hundred thousand soldiers were there; over twenty thousand were either killed or wounded. The Confederates were unable to defend the town and on January 4, General William S. Rosecrans and the federal army entered Murfreesborough. The county was occupied until the end of the war; in fact, it served as a staging ground for the later invasion of Georgia.⁷³

The Civil War left Rutherford County poverty stricken, but the answers that the leaders of the community proposed to restore Rutherford's economic prosperity had changed little since the 1840s. One Murfreesborough resident remarked in 1867:

The Future prosperity of Murfreesborough must depend upon the industry, skill, taste, and active use of the capital of its citizens. In proportion as these instrumentalities are employed and encouraged, in the same proportion will our city flourish and take its proper ranks as the first interior city of the State. It is true that a fertile, prosperous surrounding country is a great feeder to the growth of towns and cities, and greatly aids to establish commercial centers. But we must not rely alone on this support to give growth to our city. We must look to enterprise, to the building up of manufacturers, and otherwise affording employment to mechanical skill and industry. Is there not unemployed capital in our midst that could find profitable investment in cotton and woolen manufactories? Will not our moneyed men look into the profits of such investments, and their corresponding influence on the value of property and the growth and prosperity of our city?⁷⁴

The Whig party was dead, but their ideas lived on in Rutherford County, Tennessee.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

1. William R. Rucker to Polk, April 10, 1840, Polk Papers.
2. Sims, Rutherford, 213-14; 1840 Census, Rutherford County.
3. Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, Oct. 23, 1841.
4. Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Aug. 3, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 527.
5. Nashville Whig, Aug. 30 and Sept. 16, 1841.
6. Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 27, 1839; Nashville Union, Jan. 31, 1840
7. Ibid., Feb. 3, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, Feb. 5, 1840; Polk to John W. Childress, Feb. 4, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 383-84.
8. Ibid.
9. Nashville Union, March 4 and April 9, 1840.
10. Nashville Republican Banner, March 20, 1840; Nashville Union, March 4 and April 9, 1840.
11. William G. Roulhac to Francis L. Roulhac, June 15, 1840, Private Collection, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
12. Henry Trott to Polk, June 12, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 487-88; Nashville Union, June 15 and Aug. 10, 1840.
13. First quote from Nashville Whig, June 8, 1838; second quote from Nashville Union, June 15, 1840; third quote from ibid., Aug. 10, 1840; fourth quote from Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, Sept. 12, 1840; G. W. Nance, et. al. to Polk, Sept. 5, 1840, Polk Papers; Nashville Republican Banner, Sept. 11, 1840.
14. John W. Childress, Jan. 27, 1839, Samuel H. Laughlin, Feb.

- 15, 1839, and Henderson Yoakum, July 23, 1840 to Polk, Polk Papers; John W. Childress to Sarah C. Polk, June 15, 1839, ibid.; John W. Childress to Polk, May 18, 1839, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 127; Nashville Union, June 14, 1839, May 21, 28, June 15, 25, Aug. 10, and Oct. 8, 1840; Nashville Whig, July 24, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, Sept. 23, 1840.
15. Nashville Union, April 9, 1840.
16. Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 5, 1840.
17. Ibid.
18. Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, May 2, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, March 18 and 23, 1840; Henry Trott to Polk, June 12, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 487-88; William R. Rucker to Polk, April 10, 1840, Polk Papers.
19. Nashville Republican Banner, July 22, 1839.
20. Nashville Union, March 16, April 9, May 28, June 15, 25, and Aug. 10, 1840; Nashville Whig, Feb. 19, July 24, Aug. 17 and 19, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, March 6, April 9, Aug. 22, Sept. 23, and Oct. 29, 1840; Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, Sept. 12, 1840; Sarah Childress Polk to Polk, July 11, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 511-12.
21. Nashville Whig, July 15, Aug. 17, and 19, 1840.
22. William G. Roulhac to Francis L. Roulhac, June 15, 1840, Private Collection, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
23. Nashville Union, Nov. 12, 1840.
24. Andrew Jackson to Francis P. Blair, Sept. 26, 1840, Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, VI, 78; Nashville Whig, June 22, 1844.
25. Nashville Republican Banner, July 11 and Aug. 22, 1840; Nashville Union, Jan. 17, July 30, and Oct. 19, 1840; David B. Molloy, Aug. 21, 1840 and William R. Rucker, April 10, 1840 to Polk, Polk Papers; Moses G. Reeves to Polk, July 29, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 522.
26. Nashville Union, Sept. 17, 1840; Murfreesborough Weekly Times, Sept. 19, 1840; Jackson to Amos Kendall, Sept. 23, 1840, Jackson Papers.
27. Henry Trott to Polk, June 12, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 487-88.
28. Nashville Whig, Nov. 6, 1840.

29. See Table I.3.
30. Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, Nov. 21, 1840; Nashville Republican Banner, Dec. 12, 1840; 1849 Tax List, Rutherford County.
31. Parks, Bell, 173, 201-2; Sellers, Polk, 430, 472.
32. John Bell to T. A. R. Nelson, Nov. 8 and Dec. 21, 1840, T. A. R. Nelson Papers, McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 7, March 3, 4, 5, and 24, 1841; John W. Childress to Polk, March 15, 1841, Polk Papers; Ray G. Osborne, "Political Career of James C. Jones, 1840-1857," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, VII(Sept., 1948), 195-207.
33. Nashville Whig, March 17, 1841; Nashville Union, March 18, 1841.
34. Murfreesborough Weekly Times, March 27, 1841.
35. Nashville Republican Banner, March 24, 1841; John W. Childress to Polk, March 15, 1841, Polk Papers.
36. Ibid.
37. Nashville Whig, March 17, 1841.
38. Joanna Rucker to Sarah Childress Polk, March 9, 1841, Polk Papers.
39. Nashville Whig, June 23, 1841; Nashville Union, Jan. 18, June 24, and July 1, 1841; Nashville Republican Banner, June 26, 1841; Sarah Childress Polk to Polk, June 25, 1841, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 702-3.
40. For turnout, see Table I.3.
41. Nashville Republican Banner, March 30, 1841; Nashville Union, March 29, 1841.
42. Ibid.
43. Henderson Yoakum to Polk, May 6, 1842, Polk Papers.
44. First quote from Henderson Yoakum to Polk, Oct. 8, 1842, ibid.; second quote from Polk to Samuel H. Laughlin, Oct. 19, 1842, Joseph H. Parks, ed., "Letters of James K. Polk to Samuel H. Laughlin, 1835-1844," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, No. 18(1946), 161; third quote from Henderson Yoakum to Polk, Dec. 22, 1842, Polk Papers;

- Nashville Whig, Nov. 15, 1842; Nashville Union, Feb. 24, July 1 and 8, 1842.
45. Paul Bergeron, "The Election of 1843: A Whig Triumph in Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXII (June 1963), 135.
 46. John W. Childress to Polk, Dec. 26, 1842, Polk Papers.
 47. Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 25, 1843.
 48. Nashville Union, Dec. 20 and 23, 1842; Henderson Yoakum to Polk, Dec. 22, 1842 and Jan. 12, 1843, Polk Papers.
 49. Nashville Union, Feb. 21, 1843.
 50. Henderson Yoakum and John W. Childress to Polk, April 3, 1843, Polk Papers; Nashville Republican Banner, April 5 and 12, 1843; Meredith P. Gentry to William B. Campbell, April 23, 1843, St. Sioussat Collection, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.
 51. Nashville Republican Banner, June 30, 1843.
 52. Nashville Union, Aug. 1 and 4, 1843; Henderson Yoakum to Polk, May 5, 1843, Polk Papers.
 53. Corlew, Tennessee, 110.
 54. Van Deusen, Jacksonian Era, 182-84; Henderson Yoakum to Polk, May 13, 1844, Polk Papers.
 55. Nashville Republican Banner, May 15 and 20, 1844.
 56. Nashville Union, June 22, 1844.
 57. Ibid.
 58. Andrew Jackson to Moses G. Reeves, et. al., June 15, 1844, Nashville Union, June 18, 1844; ibid., July 11 and 27, 1844.
 59. George R. Foage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill, 1936), 123-38; Nashville Republican Banner, April 19, 1844.
 60. Nashville Whig, Aug. 15, 1843.
 61. Nashville Republican Banner, April 5 and 12, 1843.
 62. Nashville Whig, March 23, April 29, May 16, and Aug. 27, 1844.

63. Nashville Union, May 23, 1844; Nashville Whig, May 25, 1844.
64. William G. Roulhac to the editors of the Tennessee Agriculturalist, Nashville Union, Sept. 19, 1843.
65. Murfreesborough Jeffersonian, June 10, 1843; Nashville Union, March 10, 1843.
66. Henderson Yoakum, March 7, 1844 and John W. Childress, March 14, 1844 to Polk, Polk Papers; Nashville Union, Nov. 11, 1843, March 14, 16, and 21, 1844.
67. The vote difference was 76 votes in 1841, 219 in 1843, and 230 in 1844. Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 7, 1840, Aug. 7, 1841, Aug. 11, 1843, and Nov. 11, 1844.
68. Henderson Yoakum to Polk, Nov. 6, 1844, Polk Papers; Files, Rutherford County Historical Society.
69. There were 36 Whig activists who were investors compared to 34 Democrats. Thomas N. Johns, Sr., "The Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad Through Rutherford County, 1845-1872," Rutherford County Historical Society Publications, No. 6 (Spring 1975), 5-9.
70. Murfreesborough National Vidette, Jan. 10, 1828.
71. Henderson, Murfreesboro, 106.
72. Sims, Rutherford, 214-15, 223; Rutherford Telegraph, Dec. 6, 1856.
73. Henderson, Murfreesboro, 106; Sims, Rutherford, 214; James L. McDonough, Stones River--Bloody Winter in Tennessee (Knoxville, 1981).
74. Murfreesborough Freedom's Watchman, Oct. 16, 1867.

CHAPTER VI

THE WHIGS AND DEMOCRATS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Over three generations ago, at the end of the Progressive era, the Tennessee historian Samuel G. Heiskell commented that while his day believed it had seen "some hot politics," in no way did those politics compare with the time of the creation of the Whig and Democratic parties. If the facts of the story had been stated correctly, Heiskell said, "practical insanity" must have reigned throughout the country and "especially in Tennessee."¹ The previous four chapters detailing the reactions of Rutherford County voters to the formation of the second party system support Heiskell's judgment. Politics in Rutherford were often violent and seemingly irrational.

But merely tracing the development of a new party system does not fully explain why "practical insanity" often ruled Rutherford County during these years. There is a more complete answer in the roles played by everyday politicians. In trying to decide what factors influenced party preference in the 1840s, few historians have analyzed the "two-step flow of communications" within the voting populace.² This term, borrowed from political scientists, means that among factors which influence voting behavior, casual contacts between politically active citizens and their friends and

acquaintances are much more important than speeches given by the candidates or the editorials of the partisan presses. The "first step" takes place when major party leaders educate the local activist about the party's platform by means of correspondence, newspapers, or speeches. The "second step" takes place when the local politician passes this information on to his friends and neighbors at, perhaps, a church supper, a crossroads store, or a barn raising. Understanding the background of these political activists, their occupation, religious preferences, wealth, and age, begins to explain why some men became Whigs and why some remained Democrats when two parties formed in Rutherford County.

The political activists are not impossible to identify. For this study of Rutherford County Whigs and Democrats, the author perused the Nashville and Murfreesborough newspapers from 1838 to 1844, in hopes that some of the activists in the county could be found. There was much evidence to be analyzed. In 1840 and 1843, the Democrats held state nominating conventions; the Whigs gathered at similar meetings in 1841 and 1843. For each of these conventions, local party members selected large slates of delegates at the county level--and the parties duly reported the names of these delegates in their newspapers in Nashville. The author heavily relied on these state convention delegates for the names of politically-active Rutherford Countians, but he also expanded the list with the names of those who publicly supported Whig or Democratic resolutions. These names indicate who played that vital community role of disseminating political ideology to the common voter of the middle period.³

This study follows the "collective biography" methodology. To discover what a typical Whig or Democrat in Rutherford County was like at the time of party formation, one must link a large sample of local activists to existing county tax lists, newspapers, and the 1840 census, for bits of biographical information on each man. This methodology is not new to middle period historians. Edward Pessen, and more recently Burton W. Folsom, III and J. Mills Thornton, III, among others, have used the technique to explain the traits of Whigs and Democrats.⁴ Their approach, however, concentrated almost exclusively on state legislators and other holders of high public office. The author analyzed the local county-level political activist, the ordinary man who through his everyday contacts within the community probably influenced more voters than even the most virulent speech in Congress. The sample for Rutherford totaled 209 Democrats and 129 Whigs. Each of these men held at least one party post from 1838 through 1844, and most in the sample held at least two party positions. Whig and Democratic party workers in the neighboring counties of Davidson, Maury, and Wilson provide ready comparisons with the Rutherford men.⁵

To ensure that the activists of Rutherford County were not atypical, the author compared them to other politicians from the neighboring counties of Davidson (143 Whigs and 125 Democrats), Maury (54 Whigs and 120 Democrats), and Wilson (120 Whigs and 172 Democrats). Throughout the years of confrontation between the Democratic and Whig parties, the preferences of voters in these three counties were consistent. Despite close elections and frenzied party

TABLE VI.1

WEALTH MEASUREMENTS IN DAVIDSON, MAURY, RUTHERFORD, AND WILSON
COUNTIES, 1836, 1839, and 1841

	Davidson	Maury	Rutherford
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1836	\$10,906,993	\$6,840,647	\$5,499,296
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1839	\$10,576,702	\$6,948,615	\$5,594,287
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1841	\$9,841,628	\$6,927,100	\$5,509,916
	Wilson		
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1836	\$3,787,506		
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1839	\$4,153,506		
Value of land, town lots, slaves, and carriages, 1841	\$4,177,486		

SOURCE: Nashville Union, Jan. 1, 1840 and Oct. 13, 1841.

TABLE VI.2

NUMBER AND VALUE OF TOWN LOTS AND CARRIAGES, 1841, IN DAVIDSON,
MAURY, RUTHERFORD, AND WILSON COUNTIES

	Davidson	Maury	Rutherford	Wilson
N of carriages	170	94	62	10
Value of carriages	\$50,507	\$33,484	\$22,260	\$3,225
N of Town Lots	913	422	199	170
Value of Town Lots	\$2,718,521	\$506,364	\$211,238	\$156,489

SOURCE: Nashville Union, Oct. 13, 1841

competition, the Whig party won the majority of contests in Davidson County. In Wilson, the Whigs dominated totally, handily defeating any Democratic opposition. But Maury County was a Democratic stronghold, home of James K. Polk, the leader of the Tennessee Democracy. In their economic development, both Davidson, home of Nashville, and Maury Counties had larger county seats and higher levels of wealth than Rutherford County. But Wilson County, due to its rocky terrain, was not as wealthy. Tables VI. 1 and 2 further illuminate the economic differences between the four counties. Taxable property in Davidson County was worth almost double of that in Rutherford. And Maury County property was worth nearly \$1.5 million more than property in Rutherford, almost matching the difference in value found between Rutherford and Wilson counties (see Table VI.1). Moreover, according to Table VI.2, the towns of Davidson and Maury were much more developed than those of Rutherford. While more people in Rutherford County owned town lots than in Wilson, both were dwarfed by the number of town lot owners in Maury and especially Davidson County. Therefore, taken as a group, the four counties provide a political, geographical, and economic sample of Middle Tennessee. Each of the forthcoming tables in this chapter compares the politicians of Rutherford County to their counterparts in Middle Tennessee.

From the collective picture of the two groups, it is clear that Rutherford County, at the time of party formation, was a society composed of several social ranks. Both Whigs and Democrats came from all points on the socio-economic spectrum. It was also a rural, agrarian county in 1840, with 91 percent of the households

engaged in agriculture, and 8 percent in commerce and manufacturing. Only a handful were professionals. Whigs and Democrats in Rutherford County, however, were different men.⁶

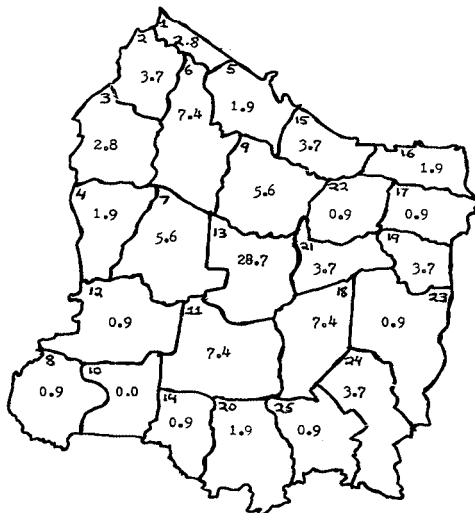
Maps VI.1-2 indicate that most Whigs lived in the Garden of the community while most Democrats lived in the Barrens. As is evident in Map VI.1, almost two-thirds of the Whig party activists lived in the county basin⁷ while one in eight lived in those districts lying at the foothills of the Highland Rim.⁸ Even more so than the party as a whole, Whig activists came from the fertile areas of Rutherford. The party's leadership especially located itself in the thirteenth district of Murfreesborough. This geographical distribution is not surprising: the activists were usually members of the social and economic elite.

Furthermore, the Whigs of Rutherford tended to make their homes along, or near, the Stone's River and its major tributaries. Three-fourths of the Whig partisans had easy access to this transportation network; overall, nearly two-thirds of the county's Whigs could count upon the river system as an outlet for their commercial and/or agricultural production.⁹ Wherever the river system did not reach, men usually did not favor Whig principles. Thus, those who expressed a Whig political preference enjoyed both benefits of the land of Rutherford County--its fertile Garden and its river. Only a few Whigs were mountain frontiersmen.

Whigs were also town dwellers, although not to the same degree as their counterparts in neighboring Davidson and Wilson counties (see Table VI.3). Experiences in Murfreesborough naturally differed

MAP VI.1

DISTRIBUTION OF WHIG PARTY LEADERSHIP
(in percentages)



MAP VI.2

DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP
(in percentages)

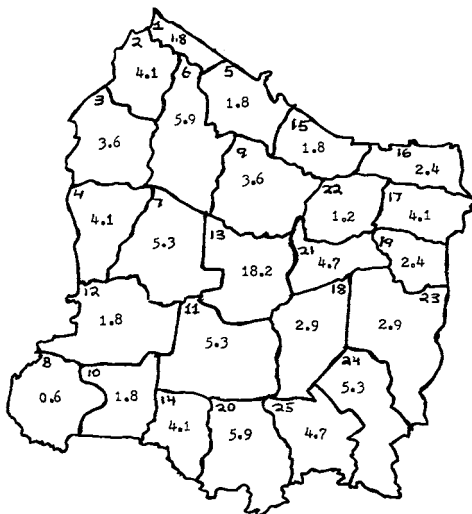
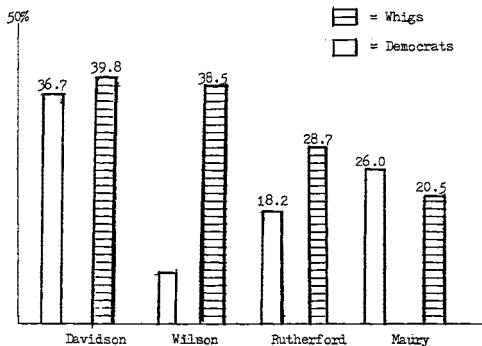


TABLE VI.3
TENDENCY OF PARTY ACTIVISTS TO LIVE IN THE COUNTY SEAT



Sample size:

Davidson: Democrats, n = 104; Whigs, n = 123

Maury: Democrats, n = 100; Whigs, n = 39

Rutherford: Democrats, n = 170; Whigs, n = 108

Wilson: Democrats, n = 102; Whigs, n = 83

from those in rural Rutherford. The tavern, the store, and in the 1830s the factory became part of one's daily landscape.

Because they lived outside of the Garden, most Democrats knew little besides agrarian capitalism. Map VI.2 and Table VI.4 show that party strength tended to be concentrated in the poorer districts of the county. Cedar glades and limestone outcroppings often composed the land. This area was not prime farm land. Yet, nearly one half of the party's activists were from the Garden,¹⁰ while only about one out of three came from the foothills of the Highland Rim.¹¹ Even though more Whig than Democratic activists lived in the county's basin, the tendency of the Democratic party workers to settle in the Garden, compared to the concentration of Democratic voter strength (see Maps IV.1 and V.1) in the Barrens, cannot be ignored. Activists were men who lived on the county's better land and enjoyed a higher social and economic level than the representative Democratic voter.

John W. Childress was right when he told James K. Polk that those far from town influence were Democratic.¹² According to Table VI.3, Democrats were not town people. Fewer than one in five lived in Murfreesborough, and only a few resided in Jefferson. The many Democrats who lived on the outer fringes of Rutherford rarely encountered townlife. They interacted with the merchant and the tavernkeeper infrequently, perhaps only during seasonal events like market days or for political rallies. Their experiences were governed by the monotonous beat of the agrarian life.¹³

Where the Democrats and Whigs of Rutherford County made their

TABLE VI.4
 COMPARATIVE VALUE OF LAND IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY
 (average dollar value per acre)¹

	<u>Garden Districts</u> ²	<u>Barrens Districts</u> ³
1836 Tax List	\$9.88 ⁴	\$5.03
1849 Tax List	\$11.80	\$6.49

¹Average dollar value per acre was computed by dividing the total value of the land in the Garden or the Barrens districts by the total acreage in each region.

²Defined as Districts 6, 7, 9, 11, 18, and 21. District 13 (which included Murfreesborough) is excluded since the town lots greatly magnified the value of land per acre. For example, the value of the 1849 tax list with District 13 included was \$15.16.

³Defined as Districts 14, 17, 19-20, 23-25.

⁴Mean values are given; median values could not be calculated because the tax records did not record a dollar value per acre.

homes was a major reason why the two groups looked at life--and politics--differently. Since the Whigs tended to occupy the more prosperous land of the community, one could reasonably expect that indices of wealth would demonstrate a sizeable variance between the average Democratic and Whig activist and Tables VI.5 and VI.6 indicate that Whigs, as a group, were richer men than their Democratic counterparts. Many Whigs were wealthy landowners, but simply to define the Whigs as Rutherford County's planter class would be an error. Although there are more large landowners among their numbers than among the Democrats, these men were different from most Whigs.¹⁴ Nearly the same number of Whig activists owned no land as those who owned a thousand or more acres.¹⁵ These non-landowners were not paupers, but men who endorsed the Whig dream of the future. They were mechanics and laborers who planned to earn their keep in the new jobs that the community's economic expansion had created. As Samuel Laughlin told James Polk, the "strong mechanical interest" was Whiggish.¹⁶ Table VI.5 also shows that the bulk of the party activists lived on middle-sized farms (100-500 acres). While almost 10 percent of these partisans possessed a town lot in Murfreesborough, half owned land elsewhere in the county. The wealth of the Whig party was not based solely in the town.¹⁷ It was a group, however, whose social and economic rank often was bound up in the land.

The representative Democratic activist in the county owned a farm of about three hundred acres--land usually worth about ten dollars an acre (see Tables VI.4 and VI.6). Among his party cohorts from the region, a Rutherford Democrat was a large landowner, but

TABLE VI.5
 LAND OWNERSHIP OF WHIG PARTY ACTIVISTS
 (in percentages)

<u>County</u>	<u>Owned no land</u>	<u>Owned only town lots</u>	<u>Less than 100 acres</u>	<u>100-500 acres</u>	<u>500-999 acres</u>
Davidson (n = 117)	19.7	27.3	3.4	31.6	12.8
Maury (n = 45)	15.6	17.8	2.2	40.0	22.2
Rutherford (n = 85)	10.6	5.9	8.2	54.1	9.4
Wilson (n = 83)	14.4	16.9	10.8	37.3	18.0
		<u>More than 1000 acres</u>			
Davidson	5.1				
Maury	2.2				
Rutherford	11.8				
Wilson	2.5				

SOURCE: 1839 Tax List, Davidson County; 1840 Tax List, Maury County;
 1836 Tax List, Rutherford County; 1842 Tax List, Wilson County

even though his farm was usually larger than even those of wealthy Democrats in Davidson and Maury counties, the typical activist was not a plantation owner. Neither was he a wealthy man. With his farm situated in the Barrens, the party's activist discovered that his neighboring Democratic co-workers, while poorer in acreage, were richer in substance. The average acre of Democratic-owned land in Davidson County was worth almost three hundred percent, and in Maury County over fifty percent, more than that of a Rutherford County activist. He might be a sizeable land owner, but he was not actually wealthy.¹⁸

Slaves, along with land, were a primary source of a man's wealth in the middle period. In Rutherford County, Whigs tended to own more slaves; but of course, men of the Garden needed their dozen or so blacks to remain competitive in the marketplace.¹⁹ Yet a sizeable number of the Whig activists in the county did not have a large number of blacks. According to Table VI.7, well over one half of the Whigs owned ten or fewer slaves with about one-third of that number possessing five or fewer blacks. But their political rivals within the community owned a smaller number of slaves (see Table VI.8). One out of four Democrats owned no blacks at all, and well over half owned no more than five slaves. Once again these tendencies among Rutherford Democrats differed from those shown among Democrats in Maury and Davidson counties. With slaves and land as a measurement of wealth, Rutherford Democrats were not only poorer than the Whigs but less prosperous than their Democratic brothers elsewhere (see Table VI.8).

TABLE VI.7
 SLAVE OWNERSHIP OF WHIG PARTY ACTIVISTS
 (in percentages)

<u>County</u>	<u>Zero</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>11-19</u>	<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>Over 50</u>
Davidson (n = 99)	5.0	32.3	23.2	28.3	10.9	2.0	0.0	2.0
Maury (n = 36)	5.6	16.7	30.6	16.7	11.2	11.2	5.6	2.8
Rutherford (n = 86)	5.8	31.4	18.6	24.4	6.9	8.1	4.7	0.0
Wilson (n = 73)	19.2	35.6	24.7	13.7	2.7	1.4	0.0	2.7

SOURCE: 1840 Census for Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

TABLE VI.8
 SLAVE OWNERSHIP OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY ACTIVISTS
 (in percentages)

<u>County</u>	<u>Zero</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>11-19</u>	<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>Over 50</u>
Davidson (n = 75)	8.0	30.7	17.3	16.0	8.0	6.7	2.7	10.7
Maury (n = 96)	16.7	31.2	13.5	17.7	8.3	4.2	5.2	3.1
Rutherford (n = 158)	23.4	27.8	14.6	18.4	10.2	4.4	1.9	1.3
Wilson (n = 105)	40.0	32.4	14.3	6.7	3.8	1.9	0.9	0.0

SOURCE: 1840 Census for Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

A third index of social and economic status is estate value. No surviving evidence lists an individual's full estate value. For Rutherford County, there are two tax lists which roughly cover the period of party formation--1836 and 1849. These lists indicate what tax a person paid on his property for a given year. By using this tax information as a substitute for total estate value, one can determine the relative standing of the taxpayer in the community and discover which party tended to have the greater fortune. Such a substitution is valid because those who had the most valuable taxable property paid the highest taxes.

In 1836, the median property tax that a Whig party activist paid was \$6.23; the Democrat's median tax was just twenty-five cents less, \$5.98. But by 1849 there was a significant difference between the activists for the two parties. The median tax was \$14.15 for Whigs, and \$10.50 for Democrats. Although during the years of party formation, Whigs did enjoy greater prosperity than their rivals, the variance in the tax paid by Whigs and Democrats in 1849 also reflected changes in Tennessee's tax laws since 1836: by the 1840s the state no longer levied taxes solely on land, slaves, and carriages. It was in the newly taxed area of personal property that the Whigs' true riches lay.²⁰

An examination of the variables of land, slaves, and property taxes reveals that the Democrats of Rutherford County were poorer than the Whigs. The Whigs even owned more carriages.²¹ This difference in economic status between the two parties increased during the years of party formation. Table VI.9 demonstrates why Rutherford

TABLE VI.9

INCREASE OF WEALTH, 1836-1849: DEMOCRATIC AND WHIG PARTY ACTIVISTS
OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY
(median values in parenthesis)¹

Category	1836		1849	
	Democrats	Whigs	Democrats	Whigs
Mean Acres Owned	326.4 (267.0)	384.1 (264.0)	423.7 (292.0)	557.6 (359.5)
Mean Value Per Acre ²	\$9.60	\$14.00	\$10.80	\$14.89
Mean Slaves Owned	4.5 (4.0)	5.9 (4.0)	7.1 (6.0)	11.5 (7.5)
Mean Value Per Slave ³	\$654.47	\$634.73	\$451.46	\$448.29
Mean Estate Tax	\$9.28 (\$5.98)	\$11.92 (\$6.23)	\$14.36 (\$10.50)	\$25.02 (\$14.15)
% Assessed Only a Full Tax or Less	10.6	12.9	4.6	6.7

¹Only those found in both tax lists have been analyzed. Whigs, n = 50; Democrats, n = 83.

²No value per acre is listed in the tax records; thus only mean values can be calculated.

³No value per individual slave is listed in the tax records; thus only mean values can be calculated.

SOURCE: 1836 and 1849 Tax Lists, Rutherford County

Democrats believed by the 1840s that their struggles involved more than political advantage. The increasing variance in the wealth of each party proved to most Democrats that undoubtedly they were fighting a war between "WEALTH and PRIVILEGE" and "NATURAL RIGHTS."²² Members of both parties expanded their fortunes from 1836 to 1849, but Whig relative wealth increased at a greater rate—with the key indicator being the more than 100 percent increase in the median estate taxes Whigs paid in 1849 compared to 1836. Moreover, Whigs increased their slave holdings by almost 100 percent (93.6%) while Democratic slave ownership increased at only half that rate (55.8%). Whigs also expanded their hand holdings by 45 percent compared to the Democrats' 30 percent. Throughout these years, the Whigs had assumed that economic change within the society would return the county to the prosperity of the past. For Rutherford Whigs, those days did return.²³

Clearly there were distinct economic differences between the Democrats and Whigs. What this variation meant is more difficult to say. The lower economic status of the Democrats helps to explain why they struggled to preserve agrarianism. Because of the consensus about the commercial development of the county, Democrats did make economic gains during these years. It is also clear, however, that their prior economic experiences left Democrats ill-equipped to accept any economic expansion beyond that achieved by the early 1830s. Living in the hills where the land was of poor quality and isolated from the transportation network of the Stone's River, these Democrats did well if they met their immediate needs. Hard money had

a particular meaning to these men. They had a strong work ethic, based on a simple faith: that if one worked hard and saved enough, his status could evolve from that of a small landowner with a few slaves to that of a small planter with more slaves. The rising farmer, like his predecessors, could become part of the world agricultural market and die a wealthy man, leaving each of his sons a chance to prosper in the next generation.

Rutherford Whigs thought that vision of the future was too limited. They discovered that modernizing their agricultural practices was not sufficient to stimulate economic growth. Whigs, therefore, explored a new road to prosperity, one that pointed toward a more diversified economic world. The Whigs pursued economic change so passionately because it promised a way to maintain their newly acquired social status; after all, they were the "upstarts" of Rutherford County.²⁴

Tables VI.10-11 show the occupations of the party activists. The county's Democrats were overwhelmingly agrarian: more than 70 percent of the partisans made their living from the land, compared to about 40 percent of the Democrats in Davidson County. Moreover, the Democrats refused to dabble in the more modern capitalistic ventures associated with commerce and manufacturing. An examination of three key indicators--the occupational categories of commerce, manufacturing, and commerce/manufacturing--reveals that only one of ten Democrats in the county was employed in those fields, compared to 30 percent in Davidson County, 22 percent in Maury County, and 14 percent in Wilson County. Democrats in Rutherford County were

TABLE VI.10
 OCCUPATIONAL TENDENCIES OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY
 (in percentages)

	Davidson (n = 80)	Maury (n = 99)	Rutherford (n = 168)	Wilson (n = 109)
Farmer	18.7	41.4	56.6	66.9
Planter ¹	21.3	15.1	10.7	4.6
Commerce	10.0	14.1	4.2	2.8
Manufacturing	20.0	8.1	4.2	11.0
Lawyer	10.0	8.1	2.9	9.2
Doctor	7.5	5.1	4.8	1.8
Agriculture/ Manufacturing	3.8	2.0	7.1	3.7
Agriculture/ Commerce	2.5	0.0	1.8	0.0
Manufacturing/ Commerce	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0
Editor	3.7	4.0	1.8	0.0

¹A planter is defined as having more than twenty slaves and as having an agricultural occupation.

SOURCE: 1840 Census of Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

TABLE VI.11
 OCCUPATIONAL TENDENCIES OF WHIG PARTY
 (in percentages)

	<u>Davidson</u>	<u>Maury</u>	<u>Rutherford</u>	<u>Wilson</u>
Farmer	33.0	28.9	46.2	54.5
Planter ¹	10.7	22.2	11.8	5.2
Commerce	10.7	11.1	13.9	1.3
Manufacturing	9.7	8.9	7.6	7.8
Lawyer	22.3	22.2	4.3	6.5
Doctor	5.8	6.7	5.4	12.9
Agriculture/ Manufacturing	5.8	0.0	2.1	3.9
Agriculture/ Commerce	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.6
Manufacturing/ Commerce	1.9	0.0	2.1	1.3

¹A planter is defined as having more than twenty slaves and as having an agricultural occupation.

n = 103 (Davidson); 45 (Maury); 93 (Rutherford); 77 (Wilson)

SOURCE: 1840 Census of Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

farmers who were preoccupied with the idea of individual competition. They were farmers who prized their independence and who retained their self-esteem. As William G. Roulhac said, they were the "agricultural people" Jefferson had so often praised, totally ill-suited for industrialism.²⁵

The Whigs, on the other hand, were far more varied in their occupations. According to Table VI.11, while almost sixty percent were engaged in farming on either a small or a plantation scale, few were doctors and lawyers. Rutherford Whigs, for the most part, were not professionals--a marked difference from their counterparts in Maury and Davidson counties where almost 25 percent of the party's activists were professionals. One quarter of Rutherford Whigs were engaged in commerce and/or manufacturing, however, and it is simple to understand why the party supported economic change.²⁶ Many of the values of an agrarian society, such as localism, fatalism, and particularly the timelessness of the traditional way of life were of little interest to them. These industrial and commercial Whigs, proportionately a larger group than in Nashville, were well aware of the potential of economic change, and they believed that the adoption of more flexible financial methods could spur the county to prosperity. They desired a "national, sound and uniform" currency, but not a money supply controlled by a decentralized banking system.²⁷

The religious preferences of Rutherford Whigs followed trends earlier noted in other Southern states: Whigs usually were members of older, orthodox sects. In Rutherford, they were overwhelmingly

of the Presbyterian faith, and rejected the evangelical sects, especially those most fervent evangelicals, the Baptists and Church of Christ. No doubt, this Presbyterian tint reflected their greater wealth.²⁸

Most Democrats belonged to the evangelical sects of the county. Almost one-third of the party's workers were Methodists, while another third were Baptists and members of the Church of Christ.²⁹ The experiences one encountered at these evangelical meetings differed sharply from the typical religious message a Whig might receive each Sunday at the First Presbyterian Church. The camp meetings of the evangelicals emphasized individual freedom: you had the power within yourself to be saved; you were free to express your conversion in any way you desired, and everyone had control over his or her own salvation and destiny. For these people, evangelistic theology re-inforced old notions of individualism. A major component of the Democratic world view can be found in the evangelicals' faith.

Age is one last way of contrasting the Democrats and Whigs of Rutherford County. Table VI.12 compared the age of Democratic political activists in Rutherford County to their fellow Democrats in the region. According to this table, fifteen percent of the Democratic partisans in Rutherford were over sixty years old--some were even in their eighties. Even though both parties were roughly equal in the number of partisans under the age of forty (and could be thus termed "youthful"), the Democrats preferred to act upon the advice of the community's oldest fathers. It would be natural to find that the county's elderly would be drawn to the party that espoused

TABLE VI.12
AGE OF DEMOCRATIC ACTIVISTS
(in percentages)

	<u>AGE</u>						
	<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>50-59</u>	<u>60-69</u>	<u>70-79</u>	<u>80-89</u>
Davidson (n = 78)	12.8	21.8	35.9	19.2	7.7	2.6	0.0
Maury (n = 95)	13.7	30.5	27.4	17.9	8.4	2.1	0.0
Rutherford (n = 160)	13.8	31.9	22.5	16.9	10.0	2.5	2.5
Wilson (n = 109)	22.9	29.4	19.3	22.0	3.7	1.8	0.9

SOURCE: 1840 Census of Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

TABLE VI.13
AGE OF WHIG PARTY ACTIVISTS
(in percentages)

	<u>AGE</u>					
	<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>50-59</u>	<u>60-69</u>	<u>70-79</u>
Davidson (n = 100)	12.0	26.0	26.0	28.0	7.0	1.0
Maury (n = 35)	28.6	25.7	20.0	5.7	14.3	5.7
Rutherford (n = 86)	18.6	32.6	27.9	11.2	5.8	3.5
Wilson (n = 74)	18.9	32.4	27.0	13.5	6.8	1.3

SOURCE: 1840 Census of Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties

traditional values. The Democrats in Rutherford, to an even greater degree than their colleagues in neighboring counties, had a large number of the county's founders among their ranks, and every third Democratic activist was over the age of fifty. Furthermore, the number of fathers and sons within the party's ranks indicates that it was also a paternalistic party. It was only natural that a party which looked backward included men of the past among its members.³⁰

The Whig party, on the other hand, was not chained to the past. They were youthful (see Table VI.13). With nearly a majority of the party's workers under the age of forty, the answers that the Whigs thought would restore economic growth were not only a result of the new social and economic forces, but also a result of new ideas and leadership from the second generation of Rutherford's elite.

If there was one factor which determined membership in the Democratic party it was where one lived in the county. Out of the Barrens of Rutherford County came men who aspired to be planters. They adopted agrarian capitalism because it was the way their fathers had existed, because of where they settled and how the environment of the Barrens shaped their patterns of living and because of their evangelical faith. They believed in that society because their way of life offered few alternatives to this tradition.

Just taking one typical Democrat, in this case John Pruett of the mountainous twenty-fifth district, gives some flesh-and-bones to the dry numbers of this chapter. Pruett, a delegate to the two state Democratic conventions who owned five slaves and 520 acres in the Barrens of southwest Rutherford, was a sixty year-old farmer.

Even though he owned a large tract of land, it was worth only \$5 an acre. His complete estate was taxed at \$5.98. While by no means a poor man, nor was Pruett a politician with silk stockings.

Democrats such as John Pruett believed that financial and industrial development could destroy the county's rural innocence because of what those two evils had done to Davidson County. The "genius of monopoly" now made its "favorite home" in Nashville. They did not trust economic change because few Democrats had ever become involved with its machinery. For Rutherford Democrats, banks and factories went hand-in-hand with vice and corruption. Party members also feared that change would undermine democracy. "Let every man make what he honestly can of his money and means," the party newspaper said in 1843, "but let not the law step in and give him privileges above the rest of his countrymen."³¹

Democrats were Jeffersonians with a vengeance. They considered unchecked financial growth a potential threat to the social order. They believed that the future of the county could be served by maintaining the agrarian world that had nurtured them. Democrats were self-assured, independent farmers, poorer than their antagonists and afraid of the prospects before them, but unwilling to accept economic change.³²

David Mitchell, a Whig committee man who lived in Rutherford's Garden, was a typical Whig activist of Rutherford County. Mitchell was a Presbyterian whose property was taxed in 1836 at \$7.20. He owned four slaves and only 194 acres of land, but this was land worth as much as those 520 acres of John Pruett. Mitchell was a young man,

around the age of thirty, but he dreamed of greater status, signing his name David Mitchell, Esq.

Compared to others in the community, Whigs such as David Mitchell envisioned a novel world. They believed that a diversified economic system could solve Rutherford's economic illness. If the county remained agrarian, economic progress would be quite slow. The Whigs presumed that only by rejecting the traditional economic scheme of things could change occur. At least, this is what they accomplished in the political sphere. To achieve a future of stability and prosperity, Whigs in Rutherford County felt they needed a world that planters and farmers did not dominate, a world in which bankers, manufacturers, farmers, and planters all played important roles.

Moreover, since nearly every white man participated in the heated campaigns of the day, it was obvious to the Whigs that political competition promoted democracy within the county. They maintained that tomorrow's economic thrust would not corrupt the country's democratic traditions nor the Jeffersonian dream. Despite its numerous workshops and small factories, the county had retained its virtue. Its workers were not paupers. One out of eight Whig activists in the county were almost without taxable property, but they did not rebel against their fate. Like their employers, they too wanted a new economic world.³³

At the time of party formation, the Whigs and Democrats of Rutherford County were different men. To a significant degree, these differences influenced political events in Rutherford County throughout the time of party conflict.

CHAPTER VI

THE WHIGS AND DEMOCRATS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY

1. Samuel C. Heiskell, Andrew Jackson and Early Tennessee History (Nashville, 1918-21), II, 195.
2. Paul Lazarfield, et al., The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign (New York, 1948), 151-57; J. Mills Thornton has put this model to good use; see his Politics and Power, 156.
3. For the state convention slates of 1840 and 1841, for example, see Nashville Union, Feb. 12, 1840 and Nashville Whig, March 10, 1841.
4. Pessen, Jacksonian America; *ibid.*, Riches, Class, and Power; Folsom, "Politics of Elites," 359-78; Thornton, Politics and Power; Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties; Frank M. Lowrey, "Tennessee Voters During the Second Two-Party System, 1836-1860: A Study in Voter Constancy and in Socio-Economic and Demographic Distinctions," Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, 1973; John M. Rozett, "The Social Bases of Party Conflict in the Age of Jackson: Individual Voting Behavior in Greene County, Illinois, 1838-1848," Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974.
5. See Rutman, "Community Study," 29-41 for more on the prosopographical methodology.
6. 1840 Census, Rutherford County. N of households was 8290. N of agricultural households was 7563. N of commerce and manufacturing households was 662 while n of professionals was 65.
7. Districts 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, 21 comprised the basin. Activists from this area comprised 65.8% of the Whig total.
8. Districts 14, 17, 19-20, 23-25 made up this area. Activists from these districts totaled 12.9%.
9. 75.2% of the Whig party activists lived along the rivers and creeks of Rutherford while measuring by voting strength, 61.6% of the Whigs lived nearby this system.

10. Districts 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, 21 comprised the basin. 45.9% of the activists came from this area.
11. Districts 14, 17, 19-20, 23-25 comprised this area. 29.4% of the party activists came from these districts.
12. John W. Childress to Folk, Nov. 22, 1835, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, III. 372-73.
13. James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815 (Lexington, Mass., 1973), 194-96.
14. The mean land holdings of Whig party activists were: 241.9 acres in Davidson County (n = 117), 334.1 acres in Maury County (n = 45), 349.7 acres in Rutherford County (n = 85), and 280.0 acres in Wilson County (n = 80). The median calculations for the four counties were: 97.0 acres in Davidson, 211.0 in Maury, 264.0 in Rutherford, and 198.5 in Wilson. The Davidson County acreage is artificially low since 27.3% of Whig land owners possessed only town lots and for comparative purposes, that fact should be kept in mind. 1839 Tax List, Davidson County; 1840 Tax List, Maury County; 1836 Tax List, Rutherford County; 1842 Tax List, Wilson County.
15. 10.6% of Whig activists in 1836 owned no land; by 1849 this percentage had decreased to 6.7%. In 1836, 11.8% of the Whig leaders had more than 1000 acres, but by 1849, this had decreased to 8.4%.
16. Samuel H. Laughlin to Folk, Aug. 3, 1840, Weaver, Folk Correspondence, V, 527.
17. The 1836 tax list has 9.4% of the Whigs owning a town lot. But only 5.9% of the Whigs had only town lots for their landed property.
18. The mean land holdings of Democratic party activists were: 297.3 acres in Davidson County (n = 90), 244.4 acres in Maury County (n = 101), 298.1 acres in Rutherford County (n = 142), and 228.3 acres in Wilson County (n = 100). The median calculations for the four counties were: 90.5 acres in Davidson, 135.0 acres in Maury, 250.0 acres in Rutherford, and 170.0 acres in Wilson. The Davidson County acreage is artificially low because a high percentage of Davidson Democrats were only town lot owners. The mean value per acre of Democratic-owned land was \$27.79 in Davidson, \$14.52 in Maury, \$9.60 in Rutherford, and \$7.17 in Wilson. 1839 Tax List, Davidson County; 1840 Tax List, Maury County; 1836 Tax List, Rutherford County; 1842 Tax List, Wilson County.
19. The mean slave ownership of Whig party activists were:

...

- 12.2 slaves in Davidson County (n = 99), 15.9 slaves in Maury County (n = 36), 12.3 slaves in Rutherford County (n = 86), and 7.9 slaves in Wilson County (n = 73). The median calculations for the four counties were: 8.0 slaves in Davidson, 10.0 slaves in Maury, 8.0 slaves in Rutherford, and 5.5 slaves in Wilson. The mean slave holdings of Democratic party activists were: 18.0 slaves in Davidson County (n = 75), 12.2 slaves in Maury County (n = 96), 9.8 slaves in Rutherford County (n = 158), and 4.9 slaves in Wilson County (n = 105). The median calculations for the four counties were: 8.0 in Davidson, 6.0 in Maury, 5.0 in Rutherford, and 2.0 in Wilson. 1840 Census for Davidson, Maury, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties.
20. Tax Lists of 1836 and 1849, Rutherford County. 1836, Whigs, n = 85; Democrats, n = 142; 1849, Whigs, n = 60; Democrats, n = 108.
 21. The 1836 Tax List had 10.6% of the Whigs (n = 85) and 6.3% of the Democrats (n = 142) as possessing carriages.
 22. Nashville Union, Nov. 11, 1843.
 23. Tax Lists of 1836 and 1849, Rutherford County.
 24. Nashville Republican Banner, May 15 and 20, 1844.
 25. Nashville Union, Sept. 19, 1843.
 26. Henry H. Simms, The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840 (Richmond, 1929), 164-65; Arthur W. Thompson, Jacksonian Democracy on the Florida Frontier (Jacksonville, 1961), 23-41; Max R. Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review, XLVII (April 1970), 129; Thornton, Politics and Power, 40-41.
 27. Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, March 14, 1838.
 28. The religious affiliations of the Whigs of Rutherford County (n = 35) were: 77.1% Presbyterian, 11.4% Methodist, 8.6% Baptist, and 2.9% Church of Christ. Coffey, "Hopewell Church," 22-72; Gwynne, "Rock Spring," 70-78; Muse, Salem Methodist; Tankersley, Roster of First Presbyterian; Homer Pittard, Pillar and Ground (Murfreesboro, 1968), 8-23. For other Whigs in the South see: Thomas B. Alexander, et. al., "Who Were the Alabama Whigs?" Alabama Review, XVI (Jan., 1963), 16-19; Gene W. Boyett, "Quantitative Differences between the Arkansas Whig and Democratic Parties, 1836-1850," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXXIV (Autumn 1975), 224-25; Folsom, "Politics of Elites," 370.

29. The religious affiliations of the Democrats of Rutherford County (n = 40) were: 37.5% Presbyterian, 32.5% Methodist, 10.0% Baptist, and 20.0% Church of Christ. Coffey, "Hopewell Church," 22-72; Gwynne, "Rock Spring," 70-78; Muse, Salem Methodist; Tankersley, Roster of First Presbyterian; Pittard, Pillar and Ground, 8-23.
30. There were 15 father-son combinations within the ranks of the Democratic activists. See Richard D. Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life (New York, 1976), 9-12, 122-23, 152.
31. Nashville Union, Feb. 21, 1843.
32. Ibid., Nov. 11, 1843.
33. For confirmation of this idea of Whig ideology from an intellectual approach, see: Daniel W. Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago, 1979), 31, 101, and the chapter on Alexander Stephens of Georgia.

CHAPTER VII

1800-1850: THE BEGINNING OF A MODERN RUTHERFORD COUNTY—A SPECULATIVE CONCLUSION

Christmas 1980 came early to the people of Rutherford County. That November, the Nissan Corporation of Japan announced its intention to build its first American automotive assembly plant, along with its American corporate headquarters, in Rutherford County. The Japanese had bestowed a gift of one thousand well-paying jobs upon this rural Southern county. A few days later, the state's Republican governor, Lamar Alexander, came to the community to bask in his administration's triumph. But at a public meeting, Alexander faced much skepticism about the Datsun factory. One of the first questions struck at the heart of the matter: would Rutherford County become another Detroit? Governor Alexander first said no and, then carefully explained his answer.¹

The governor understood that many rural Tennesseans equated industrialism with corruption and vice and that for many decades the region had rejected industrialization. Alexander noted the irony that at approximately the same time Nissan decided to move to Rutherford, Vanderbilt University was sponsoring a symposium on the classic statement of Southern anti-industrialism, I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition, written by the famous group of Southern writers known as the "fugitives"—one of whom was

a native of Rutherford County, Andrew Nelson Lytle. In I'll Take My Stand, Lytle had warned the community a half century earlier to avoid "industrialism like a pizen snake."² For many generations, Rutherford Countians had followed his advice; the governor felt that had been a mistake. He believed in the value of industrialism because of his family's experiences over three generations with the Alcoa Aluminum Corporation in Anderson County, Tennessee. Prosperity did not undermine that community; the fugitive writers were wrong. Industrialization had brought to Maryville one of the best school systems in the state, good streets, a strong business community, and fine race relations. The same things, according to Alexander, would happen in Rutherford County. The governor believed that industrialization would not corrupt, but rather strengthen the community.³ As Alexander said afterwards, the decline of Southern hospitality and family life could not be blamed on Southern industrialization. He reminded all Tennesseans that "conversation and intact family life come more easily when parents have one good job instead of two bad ones that keep them absent from another and still poor. Even hospitality is encouraged by those who can afford to have others to dinner."⁴

In December 1980, Mayor Sam Ridley of Smyrna, Tennessee, when asked about the impact the proposed Nissan automotive factory would have on the community of Rutherford County, said

If we are wise, we can still have a rural atmosphere. I don't think it will be a little Detroit. Many people will be here. There will be more homes. But many people will still live on the farm. By that I mean they will live on five acres of land or so in the outlying areas. We'll still

have individualism. We will have our pie and a little ice cream on top.⁵

This dissertation describes a time when Rutherford Countians first debated whether or not to remain an agrarian community. As the author gathered the information for a general history of Rutherford County and the surrounding area, the social, economic, and political changes which occurred in Rutherford County from 1830 to 1850 fascinated him. Obviously, their ancestors shared some of the concerns of today's Rutherford Countians. Throughout the past six chapters, the author analyzed the social and economic change that Rutherford Countians passed through during the middle period of American history. Clearly during these years the traditional agrarian community that Rutherford had once been evolved into something quite new and different.

Political life in this southern county underwent drastic change. Politicians no longer denigrated Henry Clay as a slave of John Quincy Adams. A hero's mantle had replaced that earlier demeaning portrait. For some Rutherford Countians, Clay even served as a substitute for Old Glory. A main actor in the "corrupt bargain of 1824," the Kentuckian had gained in popularity to such an amazing extent that in the 1844 presidential contest he carried Rutherford County easily over James K. Polk, a man who was almost a native son of the community. Since nine out of ten voters consistently stated a preference for either the Whigs or the Democrats, the issues involved in the campaigns must have mattered to the electorate. But what were these issues and why did they inflame the community of Rutherford County?

In arguably the best account of the rise of the Whig and Democratic parties in Tennessee, Thomas Abernethy concluded that the towns of the state were usually Whig, while the backcountry tended to be Democratic. Thus, the party conflicts of the 1830s and 1840s in Tennessee were "clearly a case of commercialism against agrarianism."⁶ But this study of Rutherford County proves that such a conclusion is too sweeping. The outcry over the Nissan plant of today and a similar reaction one hundred and fifty years earlier to a new banking system are strikingly similar. The author suggests that Rutherford Countians saw both as no mere economic developments, as evolutionary steps in the capitalistic system, but as significant breaks with the county's agrarian tradition. This chapter will speculate whether or not the concept of modernization explains the genesis of a two party system in Rutherford County better than the commercialism versus agrarianism interpretation.

I

The adoption of the term "modernization" rather than the phrase "economic development" might be puzzling. Merely to state that the explanatory power of modernization is much greater than that of economic development does little to quiet doubts. Thus, to explore the origins of the term and to analyze its possible use in this study will be beneficial.

Modernization comes to us courtesy of the social sciences. While historians often speak of the economic development of a nation, sociologists, political scientists, and economists speak of the

modernization of a society. It not only addresses economic alterations but related changes in the political and social spheres of life. The term's lineage can be traced to the work of Max Weber and his disciple Talcott Parsons and the profound influences these two scholars have had on the American social sciences.

Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905) is rightly considered among the classics of sociology. His comparative methodology along with his insistence that capitalism was a primary factor behind the modernization of western civilization found great favor among America's academics. Furthermore, Weber's many theories offered a socio-economic alternative to the perceived threat of Marxism-Leninism emerging from the Soviet Union. His analyses of history and the process of change greatly influenced the post-World War II generation of social scientists. Weberianism, although originally influenced by Marx's writings, rejected most of Marxism's basic assumptions. Marx stressed that ideology and social values were a result of the material structure of society, especially socio-economic forces. Weber, however, believed that the ideological values of a society shaped a society's economic and political institutions. Moreover, while the dialectic of Marx strove to solve the "contradictions" of society, Weber argued that such an analysis was ahistorical; modernization described the real historical process because societies were constantly evolving from a gesellschaft social arrangement to a gemeinschaft community. Therefore, Weber perceived the modern societies of the West as the natural outcome of history.?

In a 1946 essay, Weber's English translator, Talcott Parsons, argued that the Weberian alternative was the best hope for the future revitalization of Japan. To avoid both radical and reactionary revolution, Parsons asserted, Japan had to continue on its course of modernization. Any deviation from the status quo could open the door to instability, dictatorship, and barbarism. It seemed obvious to Weber and Parsons that only those nations that had passed through the long process of modernization could remain stable, and it seemed equally clear to most American social scientists of the mid-twentieth century that the best chance that the newly liberated nations of the Third World had to retain stability was to eschew Marxism-Leninism in favor of the true historical process of modernization. Simply put, many American scholars assumed that since modernization had "worked" in the United States, certainly it could "work" in South America, Africa, and the Middle East. As John W. Dower recently concluded, alternatives other than those based on modernity were seen to be "unrealistic, because what was, was 'what had to be.'" To the proponents of the modernity theory, radicalism "was anti-historical, because resolution of contradictions ran against the natural course of historical modernization. And it was self-defeating, for it could only pave the way for a new form of oppression."⁸

Thus, in the era of the American Century, modernization became the theory by which the world could be restabilized. W. W. Rostow discussed the economic ramifications of modernization in The Process of Economic Growth (1952) and hypothesized that there were five

stages of economic modernization—steps up the ladder of progress that any nation could achieve so long as it became more Western in its cultural outlook and material structure. Once the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union centered on "the battle for the Third World" at the end of the 1950s, westerners could argue that modernization, on the western example, brought faster and more profitable socio-economic changes than any model of Soviet-inspired socialism. Friedrich Tonnies' Community and Association (1955) and Talcott Parsons' Structure and Process in Modern Societies (1959) brought together the various elements of the modernization theory that had been discussed for the past decade and developed these analyses into a systematic methodology. Modernization, to most social scientists, was no longer a vague concept but a reliable theory that could overwhelm communism in the battle for the Third World.⁹

The 1960s, in the opinion of American scholars, opened the door for "the Age of the New Nation." As the editors of the popular "Modernization of Traditional Societies Series" remarked in 1966, "the compulsive emergence of the colonies into independence and their subsequent struggle to join the ranks of the prosperous, powerful, and peaceful is the most remarkable revolution of our time."¹⁰ Library bookcases were soon filled with monographs explaining this "revolution." From the Middle East to the Far East to Africa and to the Americas, specific case studies demonstrated how influential Western models had been in the socio-economic development of the Third World.¹¹ Furthermore, by the middle of the decade, social

scientists and historians had a number of different theories of the modernization process from which to choose. One of the most popular definitions was one formulated by Myron Weiner in the introduction to Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth. Weiner emphasized that if a generic definition of modernization was to be achieved, its basis must be grounded in the character of individuals and not the character of the society; Weiner did not want his definition to be culturally biased. Thus, a proper definition really did not define modernization; instead it described the modern mentality that people must have before they could evolve beyond a traditional world view. Weiner described these modern attitudes as

'a disposition to accept new ideas and try new methods; a readiness to express opinions; a time sense that makes men more interested in the present and future than in the past; a better sense of punctuality; a greater concern for planning, organization, and efficiency; a tendency to see the world as calculable; and, finally, a belief in distributive justice.'¹²

Once the social scientists' understanding of modernization crystallized around the transformation of traditional to modern mentalities, models of such a transfer quickly materialized. For example, in a 1970 essay on the theories of modernization, Francis Botchway hypothesized that in a time of political and social change, there are always two opposing forces pulling at the attitudes of individuals. One acts as a catalyst for modernization because it awakens the consciousness of people to the advantages of change; the other acts as an inhibiting force since it reminds people of the benefits of tradition. Botchway assigned the following five characteristics to each of these forces:

Pro-modernization

- 1) awareness of new opportunities
- 2) generation tension
- 3) prophetic pronouncements; moral indignation
- 4) emotional mass movement
- 5) proponents of change; the modernizing elites

Pro-traditionalism

- 1) fear of the unknown
- 2) generation-to-generation perpetuity
- 3) preservation of the existing order of society
- 4) retention of traditional authority and acceptance of traditional institutions
- 5) protectors of the old order; traditional leaders

Botchway's model was based on an assumption that has supported most definitions of modernization: in a modernizing society, there will always be a mixture of modern and traditional characteristics until some day in the future when almost everyone accepts the proposition that change is desirable. This transformation in mentality is crucial.¹³

Once the theorists of modernization agreed on a mentality-based definition, they discovered that a number of historians and social scientists were vehemently rejecting the concept. Modernization, according to Samuel P. Huntington, was too vague and imprecise to be an useful analytical tool.¹⁴ In an introduction to the work of E. H. Norman, John W. Dower articulated a second criticism.¹⁵ He asserted that modernization was another example of western cultural arrogance; cries for modernity were attempts to impose bourgeois western ethics on nations with totally different cultural traditions. According to Dower, modernization buttressed the status quo in many developing countries at the expense of the welfare of the rest of the societies.

Social scientists admitted that such criticism had some merit. Cyril Black attempted to answer the oft-mentioned allegation of vagueness by asserting that modernization involved both the development of new attitudes and new technology.¹⁶ But the charge that western intellectuals had urged newly independent nations to modernize so that those countries would become part of the capitalist, rather than the socialist, sphere was not answered so easily. One perceptive scholar noted in 1975 that the current understanding of modernization "essentially met the needs of United States policy in Asia, for it permits tactical ('constructive') criticism of American actions, but provides little basis for fundamental reconsideration" of that policy--"to say nothing about incentive for a more cynical appraisal of capitalism and the actual motivations of American involvement abroad."¹⁷ Modernization, John Dower concluded, has been transformed into an intellectual weapon which basically maintained that the United States was the "most genuinely revolutionary nation in the world today" and the most sensible model for Third World countries to emulate.¹⁸

It was not until the 1970s that American historians borrowed the concept of modernization to explain historical behavior. Seymour M. Lipset's The First New Nation (1963) was a sociologist's attempt to demonstrate that America had been the first Third World nation, but scholars did not widely adopt Lipset's comparative approach until the 1970s. Colonial historians were among the first to use the concept. Other American scholars utilized the theory to explore the roots of modern America. Raimondo Luraghi's

1972 essay stressed the colonial relationship between the North and the South and the South's persistent traditional agrarian mentality as primary factors behind the Civil War. Eric Foner's 1974 review article on recent scholarship concerning the causes of the Civil War also concluded that the theory of modernization opened up promising new directions of investigation. Richard D. Brown's Modernization (1976) was the decade's outstanding example of an American scholar using the modernity model to investigate the early socio-economic development of the United States. Brown hypothesized that the evolution of a modern mentality from the traditional world view of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the primary catalyst behind the transformation of American life from 1600 to 1865.¹⁹

By 1980, however, even Eric Foner seemed ready to dismiss the modernization model as a mere fad among historians. Vagueness and conceptual ethnocentrism remain the major indictments against the concept—why, then, may the term be used to describe social and economic change in this study of middle period Rutherford County? First, while modernization is not applicable to nations with cultural traditions outside those of the western capitalist countries, the concept can help to uncover the development of a capitalist community like Rutherford County. Second, as Eric Foner has pointed out,

the modernization model does have two great virtues. First, it enables us to see that what happened in nineteenth-century America was not a unique or local occurrence, but a process which had deep affinities

with events in many other areas of the world. Secondly, it demands that political historians place their work in the largest context of the development of American society.²⁰

Modernization allows us to understand that the forces of change in Rutherford County in the 1830s and 1840s are related to those of the 1980s.

Taking Rutherford County as a case study of the early modernization of American society could allow one to understand better the forces that so disturb that same community today. By applying the model to the evidence of the first six chapters, one can understand just who were the Whigs and who were the Democrats of Rutherford County. The county underwent three different stages of modernity during the middle period. One was political--the evolution of the second party system which has remained the foundation of our political way of life. The other two were economic in nature. Commercial modernization had begun decades before; by the 1830s it was generally accepted within the society. In this study, the author defined the term as the development and perpetuation of an agrarian, capitalist marketplace which was national in scope and which featured commercially-developed cities and towns that could serve the needs of the surrounding populace. Totally self-sufficient farms and plantations were rare in such a system. The second phase of the county's economic modernization involved modern finance. Modern finance has been defined as a monetary institution which had a centralized banking system with flexible currency that is primarily concerned with speculative banking practices and currency regulation.

Before 1826, the Tennessee banking system merely facilitated trade and exchanges and directed itself to the needs of the agrarian capitalist. But people had doubts about the Bank of the United States when it arrived in Nashville in 1827.

As economic historians such as Bray Hammond and Ralph Catterall have pointed out, Nicholas Biddle, after assuming the presidency of the Second Bank of the United States in 1823, took steps to make the national bank a true central banking system, one which tightly regulated the state and private banks. Its power was such that the national bank, under Biddle's direction, regulated the currency as the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Bank do today. Biddle's system of discounting bank notes provided a growing economy with an adequate, but controlled, line of credit. The Democrats' cry for hard money was designed to impede this expansion of credit, and of speculation. But as historians have stressed, Biddle acted as "a modern central banker" and the conflict he had with the Democrats was basically the result of too many men being "unfamiliar with modern ideas." In other words, Biddle's bank was ahead of its time; centralized banking would not be widely accepted until after the Civil War.²¹

In Rutherford County, modern banking, represented by the Second Bank of the United States, became the decisive economic issue during the time of party formation.

III

In the Rutherford County of the 1830s, modern economic values

touched almost everyone. Southerners had stopped being simple agrarians when they began to produce and sell a marketable surplus; in Rutherford that day arrived once the county fathers founded the town of Jefferson at the forks of the Stone's River—a ready transportation network which drained the Garden of the county. Within a few years, Jefferson had two trade good stores and a first phase in the commercial modernization of the community had been completed.²²

After the county commissioners placed the county seat at Murfreesborough in 1812, commercial growth remained concentrated in Rutherford's Garden. By 1820, there was a cotton and a tobacco warehouse on Murfreesborough's main street, and the town also had a public well, an established newspaper, and three stores.²³ This commercial growth, however impressive, could not match the boom years of the 1820s, when Murfreesborough served as the state capital. The business of government increased the demand for commercial services and local entrepreneurs responded to the challenge. By 1833, the town had ten to twelve stores, five cabinetmakers and five shoemakers, two taverns and two cotton gins, along with a grist mill and a carding machine. Moreover, Murfreesborough's population had reached one thousand; the town was the center of an agrarian-commercial economic system.²⁴

In 1834 the town's economic institutions expanded for the first time beyond the agrarian-commercial sphere. In order that the planters of the region might process their crops locally, a cotton factory was built. That was an early sign that it would be difficult to limit economic change at the commercial level. Whether a

a commercially modernized economic system would, in time, encourage further economic change became a concern for some Rutherford Countians.²⁵

For the rest of the decade the agrarian-commercial market in Rutherford County continued to expand. A number of turnpikes connected the county to other markets throughout Middle Tennessee. Construction of railroads became a possibility. New stores appeared in Murfreesborough; a carriage factory employing a large group of men was added in 1837. In a short time, the legal boundaries of the town had doubled and while the rest of the county suffered from the depression of 1837 to 1841 (see Tables VI. 1 and 2), the people of Murfreesborough enjoyed prosperity.²⁶

One would have been hard pressed to find someone in Rutherford County who did not think that the development of an agricultural market, along with a parallel development in commercial services which could alleviate the burden of household manufactures from the farmer (the value of household manufactures in Rutherford reached its peak in 1840, declining steadily thereafter), was not a welcome economic change. There is no evidence to suggest that there was ever a community division over the commercial modernization of the period. In 1836, sixteen delegates from the county, almost equally divided between Democrats and future Whigs, attended a state internal improvements convention in Nashville where the men discussed how best to improve Tennessee's internal market connections.²⁷ Eleven years later when Rutherford Countians invested in the Nashville-Chattanooga railroad project, an equal number of Whigs and Democrats

bought stock.²⁸

After economic stagnation appeared in the county in the early 1830s, however, other economic alternatives began to be discussed. The economic debate in Rutherford County during the years of party formation never centered on whether or not economic modernization was for the best. Clearly, commercial growth was desirable. Instead, the major question that evolved in the 1830s was simple: could the people of Rutherford County accept economic expansion beyond the agrarian-commercial sphere? In answering this query, Rutherford Countians focused their attention on the role of banks in the economic system.

Their concerns centered around the issues of currency and the future of the Bank of the United States. Most accepted traditional financial practices. The politicians debated whether or not a powerful centralized banking system which was empowered to establish a de facto national currency and allowed to speculate and encourage investment was preferable to a financial system that operated banks primarily to facilitate agricultural markets. In other words, would a modern financial institution like the Bank of the United States guarantee future economic prosperity or would it become a monster with enough financial power to destroy any capitalist who defied its power? Clearly, some Rutherford Countians never trusted the Second Bank of the United States; others, however, wanted to give Mr. Biddle's institution a chance.

On the surface, it might seem surprising that such financial issues mattered so much to local politicians. Until the 1830s, the

history of banking in Tennessee had been a calm one, and banks had invariably been Democratic-sponsored measures in this one-party state. But financial power in the state remained decentralized and the primary services "performed by the banks were the discounting of notes and the purchasing of bills of exchange" which allowed farmers and merchants to borrow money and to sell their crops in New Orleans. Since this type of financial institution aided the agrarian-capitalist, and because its decentralized nature meant that it was not considered an economic threat, it received consistent support from Rutherford Countians. But true Jackson men always cast suspicious eyes toward the Bank of the United States because it was a direct threat, once Biddle assumed its presidency, to the traditional financial ways of the Tennessee banks. Those suspicions turned to hatred once the Bank opposed Jackson's monetary experiments of the 1830s, such as the Specie Circular. Its centralized power, its opposition to "hard money," and its ability to control the currency combined to make the Bank a financial institution quite unlike those Rutherford Countians had experienced. As economic historians have stressed, too many men in middle period America were not prepared for such modern financial practices. Democrats in Rutherford County agreed with Jackson; centralized banking had to be crushed.²⁹

After United States Senator Felix Grundy implied that John Bell and David Dickinson were among those who opposed "the money our fathers were accustomed to" in a Murfreesborough address during the summer of 1834, modern finance became a divisive issue in Rutherford County politics. Grundy alleged that John Bell and his

Murfreesborough brother-in-law favored the rechartering of a national bank and opposed Jackson's financial experiments. Those words intensified the emotional feud then raging between James K. Polk and John Bell and began to polarize the county's political leadership. The genesis of Rutherford's Whig Party can be traced to these times. Those who agreed with Bell and Dickinson that a national bank was constitutional believed that the hue and cry in favor of a "hard" money currency and a decentralized banking system was extremely unwise. They believed that old financial methods would not continue community prosperity.³⁰

On the other hand, Democrats who aligned themselves with the Polk faction assumed that Bell's deviation from Democratic principles was a sign that his greed had eclipsed his political loyalty. Loyal Jackson men perceived Bell and his followers as unprincipled men who had rather see the society destroyed than let their ambitions stay unfulfilled. After Bell emerged in early 1835 as the leader of a political faction touting Hugh Lawson White for the presidency, Democrats concluded that Bell designed White's candidacy as a cover for his ambitions and his support of the Bank. William Rucker, a Democratic leader, said in disgust that Bell wanted a national bank, no matter how "unseemly" it might be.³¹

During the depression of 1837, the issue of banking policy became the dominant political question. Voters blamed the traditional financial policies of the Democratic party for the sudden bad times, and with the Democrats' experiments discredited, more Rutherford Countians listened to the Whigs' different economic position.

During that summer's state elections, county opinion swung decidedly in favor of at least the re-institution of a decentralized banking system on the state level. Opinions changed too because many felt that their early fears about the destruction of the national bank--that it would lead to economic chaos--had come true. Those men concluded that a new national bank had to be created. In the winter of 1838, the Whig-dominated general assembly created a new Bank of Tennessee.³²

By the time of the emotional campaigns of 1839-1841, voters understood the division between Whigs and Democrats on the issue of banking. James K. Polk, a man whom Jackson had wanted to give a medal for the role he played in the downfall of the Bank of the United States, was the Democratic gubernatorial nominee. Moreover, the elite of the county realized which side controlled the Nashville banking system (see Table VII.1).

Judging from the Whig electoral victories from 1840 to 1844, however, a majority of Rutherford Countians trusted the Whigs, more so than the Democrats, on the banking issue. Even the mechanics and artisans of Murfreesborough were strong Whig supporters.³³ Only the traditional agrarian capitalists of the community believed the Democratic allegation that the state government had to be saved from "the money-corrupting and mob-controlling influences" of Nashville.³⁴ The Democratic party called its newspaper in 1843 the Jeffersonian, and its editor preached the Jeffersonian attitude toward banking. The newspaper satirized the notion that a national bank and soft currency were necessities. What was needed, the paper said, was a

TABLE VII.1
 POLITICAL ACTIVISTS WHO SERVED AS BANK DIRECTORS, NASHVILLE,
 TENNESSEE, 1835-1842

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Years Surveyed</u>	<u>Whigs</u>	<u>Democrats</u>
Union Bank	1835, 1839, 1842	13	6
Planters Bank	1835-37, 1839	5	1
Bank of the United States	1835	6	2
Bank of Tennessee	1838, 1840	13	7
Yetman, Woods, and Co.	1835	2	0
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Totals:		39	16

SOURCES: Nashville Union, June 1 and Dec. 9, 1835, March 15, 1836, March 18 and May 16, 1837, Jan. 27 and May 28, 1838, Jan. 1 and March 6, 1839, Jan. 29 and May 4, 1840, Jan. 12, 1842; Nashville Whig, Jan. 29, 1842.

financial institution that neither dabbled in politics nor did more than facilitate trade exchanges. A bank that went beyond the agrarian-commercial economic sphere, in other words, did not benefit everyone; only a decentralized bank could be "the people's servant and not their master."³⁵

In the 1844 presidential contest, the Democrats tried their best to portray the economic issues as being between "WEALTH and PRIVILEGE" and "NATURAL RIGHTS." But the voters of Rutherford County did not listen. The Depression of 1837-1841 tarnished Democratic economic policies. When the Democrats refused to change their economic principles, even after the depression, more and more Jackson men in Rutherford County turned to the Whig party.³⁶

Not until the 1850s would Rutherford Democrats join with their opponents to create a new economic consensus. During that decade, Rutherford businessmen built large factories (the Rio Mills and the Cedar Bucket Factory); several German immigrants arrived; and capitalists created a local bank in 1852 and again in 1859. The officers of the Planters Bank demonstrate that the elite of Rutherford County now accepted economic change--the president was John W. Childress and the cashier, William Ledbetter.³⁷

The economic debates of the 1830s and 1840s shattered the original political culture of Rutherford County. In 1828, it had been a place where "harmony and good will" resided in "every bosom." However, in less than a generation one's political beliefs, at least in the case of John Laughlin, meant the difference between life and death. For the first three decades of Rutherford County's

existence, it had a one-party political culture which closely identified with the ambitions of Andrew Jackson. It had been Jeffersonian; now its loyalty lay with Andrew Jackson. This traditional political culture was based on a consensus among the politically powerful on every major socio-economic issue. But the question of whether or not economic modernization could be expanded beyond the agrarian-commercial sphere was too divisive; a political system which required near unanimity could not answer it.³⁸

Therefore, once the traditional political culture of Rutherford proved incapable of allowing a full debate on the ramifications of the Democratic anti-bank policy, a new style of politics quietly began to emerge. Rutherford Countians developed their first modern institution--the highly competitive two party political system of Whigs and Democrats.

The first serious opposition in Rutherford to the county's Democratic unanimity appeared in the aftermath of the national bank debate of 1834. Felix Grundy's Murfreesborough speech, along with James Folk's posturing, drove John Bell and David Dickinson to the conclusion that they were the objects of a deliberate conspiracy to drive them from politics. Jackson's patronage had always been inconsistent and if the Democratic leadership could not be convinced of the wisdom of a new financial policy, then Bell and his followers felt that little choice remained but to begin their own faction. In December 1834, the faction chose Hugh Lawson White as their 1836 presidential nominee. White was the ideal candidate because he was

an old hero of Tennessee. Many Democrats supported White for President. White was a transitional candidate between the old and new political culture. His image could draw Democratic votes, but his bank background and anti-Van Buren candidacy made him attractive to those who favored a break with Jackson's policies.³⁹

But those who backed Bell and White soon discovered that factionalism within the Democratic party could not provide a sturdy platform from which the issues that mattered so much to them could be debated. What they needed was a two-party system in which an open political debate could occur--and that meant that the Democratic coalition which had ruled Tennessee politics over the past decade had to be destroyed. It was the gubernatorial campaign between James Polk and Newton Cannon in 1839 which polarized completely the political elite of Rutherford County, because in this contest, Cannon, then others, publicly castigated the name of Andrew Jackson. When the voters of Rutherford County supported Cannon over one of their ex-sons that summer, even though the incumbent governor had asserted that "General Jackson was a tyrant by nature and education," there could be no doubts that a new political day had dawned.⁴⁰ Outbreaks of politically-motivated violence became commonplace once again in Tennessee. Moreover, politicians on both sides roamed the county charging that their opponents were Federalists and Tories, thus legitimizing their partisanship by claiming that they were protecting America's revolutionary heritage. The Democrats especially tried to portray themselves as protectors of the revolution; they saw their rivals' political ambitions as being those of spoiled

children. Whigs were throwing tantrums because society did not give them the social and political prominence that they selfishly desired and did not deserve.⁴¹

By 1840, the old political culture had been shattered. Men of such reputation as Dr. William Rucker could be attacked on the streets of Murfreesborough solely for their political beliefs. Others, like two of Rutherford's founding citizens, David Wendal and Charles Ready, Sr., discovered that their postmaster positions could be taken away if they left the Democratic party. Loyalty to Jackson was immaterial; even with Old Hickory's strong endorsement, James K. Polk could not carry Rutherford County in any election, even against Henry Clay in 1844. Two grounds for consensus among the elite existed: that slavery must continue and that a two party political system was a necessity.⁴²

Therefore by the 1840s, the county's first modern institution-- a fully organized, competitive two party system--was functioning. In its structure, it differed only slightly from the two party system of today. The Whig and Democratic parties, because of their different ideas about the community's future, excited the voters. Extremely high levels of voter turnout (see Table I.3) indicate how they invigorated the county politically.

A culture which encouraged more participation in the electoral process replaced the elitist politics of the old system. The various state and regional conventions held in 1840 to choose party nominees brought many men of "middlin'" means, and some even poorer than that, into the political councils of Rutherford County. Just

six years before, the voters could not select even their local officials. The convention forms of party management became a permanent trait of modern politics. While the elite still made most of the decisions, the voice of the average white man could be heard at the party councils. Furthermore, the political modernization accomplished by such organizational initiatives had not damaged the society. Rather it had increased the democratic potential of the political culture. Democrats had faithfully believed that modernization would turn their world into chaos. The Whigs had proved that it would not.⁴³

CHAPTER VII

FOOTNOTES

1. Murfreesboro Press, Nov. 20, 1980.
2. Donald Davidson, et al., I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition (New York, 1930), 234.
3. Murfreesboro Press, Nov. 20, 1980.
4. Nashville Tennessean, Dec. 21, 1980.
5. Newport News Daily Press, Dec. 26, 1980.
6. Abernethy, From Frontier to Plantation, 303.
7. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York, 1958).
8. Talcott Parsons, "Population and Social Structure," Douglas G. Harding, ed., Japan's Prospect (Cambridge, 1946), 87-114; John W. Dower, ed., Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman (New York, 1973), 64.
9. W. W. Rostow, The Process of Economic Growth (New York, 1952); Friedrich Tönnies, Community and Association (London, 1955); Talcott Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies (New York, 1959).
10. S. N. Eisenstadt, Modernization: Protest and Change (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), iii. Wilbert E. Moore and Neil J. Smelser were the editors of the series.
11. Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941 (Stanford, 1961); Robert L. Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 (Princeton, 1966); Marius B. Jensen, ed., Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization (Princeton, 1965); Willard A. Beiling, Modernization and African Labor (New York, 1966); Henry Wells, The Modernization of Puerto Rico (Cambridge, 1969).
12. Myron Weiner, ed., Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth

- (New York, 1966), 4; also see Cyril E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization (New York, 1966).
13. Francis A. Botchway, ed., Modernization: Economic and Political Transformation of Society (Berkeley, 1970), 2.
 14. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics," Comparative Politics, III(April 1971), 283-322.
 15. Dower, Origins of the Modern Japanese, 48-64.
 16. Cyril E. Black, ed., Comparative Modernization (New York, 1976), 1-8.
 17. Dower, Origins of the Modern Japanese, 64.
 18. Ibid., 62.
 19. Seymour M. Lipset, The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective (New York, 1963); Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution," Journal of Social History, VI(Summer 1973), 403-39; Michael Zuckerman, "The Fabrication of Identity in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., XXXIV (April 1977), 183-214; Raimondo Luraghi, "The Civil War and the Modernization of American Society: Social Structure and Industrial Revolution in the Old South before and during the War," Civil War History, XVIII(Sept., 1972), 230-50; Brown, Modernization; Eric Foner, Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War (New York, 1980), 15-33.
 20. Foner, Politics and Ideology, 7, 22.
 21. Temin, Jacksonian Economy, 57-58; Hammond, Banks and Politics, 277, 310, 346; ibid., "Jackson, Biddle, and the Bank of the United States," Journal of Economic History, VII(May 1947), 1-10; Lester V. Chandler, The Economics of Money and Banking (New York, 1964), 144, 179-80; Catterall, Second Bank, 107; for a different point of view see Temin, Jacksonian Economy, 48-58.
 22. Goodspeed, Tennessee, 827.
 23. Ibid., 828; Henderson, Murfreesboro, 41-51; Sims, Rutherford, 39; Morris, Tennessee Gazetteer, 80.
 24. Ibid., 107; Murfreesborough Central Monitor, July 12, 1834; also see E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present, No. 38(December 1967), 56-97.

25. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, July 12, 1834.
26. Ibid.; Nashville Union, Feb. 9 and May 5, 1837; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 6, 1838; Henderson, Murfreesboro, 102-3; Goodspeed, Tennessee, 816-17, 828.
27. Ibid.
28. There were 36 Whig activists who were investors, compared to 34 Democrats. Johns, "Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad," 5-9.
29. Campbell, "Branch Banking," 35-36; Corlew, Tennessee, 141-42; Abernethy, From Frontier to Plantation, ch. 10 and 14; Campbell, "Banking and Finance," 20; Nashville Union, Aug. 8, 1837.
30. Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Sept. 6, 1834; William Brady to Polk, Oct. 13, 1834, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 525-26.
31. William R. Rucker, Oct. 12, 1834, Jan. 5, and Nov. 4, 1834, 20, 1835; William Brady, Oct. 13, Nov. 29, and Dec. 26, 1834, John W. Childress, Dec. 20, 1834, and Daniel Graham, Jan. 2, 1835 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 523, 527, 561, 583-84, 606, III, 8, 12-14, 368; Polk to William R. Rucker, Oct. 16, 1834, ibid., II, 531-32; Nashville Republican Banner, Aug. 13, 1834.
32. William R. Rucker to Polk, June 30, 1837; Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 165-66; Campbell, "Banking and Finance," 26.
33. Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Aug. 3, 1840, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, V, 527.
34. Nashville Union, Dec. 20 and 23, 1842; Henderson Yoakum to Polk, Dec. 22, 1842 and Jan. 12, 1843, Polk Papers.
35. Murfreesborough Jeffersonian, June 10, 1843.
36. Henderson Yoakum, March 7, 1844 and John W. Childress, March 14, 1844 to Polk, Polk Papers; Nashville Union, Nov. 11, 1843, March 14, 16, and 21, 1844.
37. Henderson, Murfreesboro, 106; Sims, Rutherford, 214-15, 223.
38. Murfreesborough National Vidette, Jan. 10, 1828; Formisano, "Deferential-Participant," 480-87.

39. Parks, Bell, 66-75; Sellers, Polk; Jacksonian, 240-44; Murfreesborough Central Monitor, Sept. 6, 1834; William R. Rucker, Oct. 12, 1834 and William Brady, Oct. 13, 1834 to Polk, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, II, 523, 527.
40. Nashville Republican Banner, April 16, 1839; Nashville Whig, April 19, 1839.
41. William R. Rucker, May 10, 1839 and John W. Childress, May 27, 1839 to Sarah Childress Polk, Polk Papers; Nashville Union, Nov. 14 and 26, 1838 and June 19, 1839; Nashville Whig, Nov. 14, 1838; Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, Sept. 28, 1838, Weaver, Polk Correspondence, IV, 570.
42. John W. Childress to Sarah Childress Polk, May 27, 1839, Polk Papers; Nashville Whig, Dec. 24, 1838; Nashville Republican Banner, Jan. 18, 1839 and May 18, 1840; Nashville Union, Feb. 13, 1839.
43. Nashville Union, Sept. 4, 20, and Oct. 9, 1839; John W. Childress to Polk, August 21, 1839 and April 6, 1843, Polk Papers; Nashville Whig, Aug. 15, 1843; Nashville Republican Banner, April 5. and 12, 1843 and April 19, 1844.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I: Primary Sources

A: Unpublished Letters

Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

David Campbell Papers.

Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Andrew Jackson Papers.

James K. Polk Papers.

McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

T. A. R. Nelson Papers.

Private Collection, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

William G. Roulhac Papers.

Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

St. George Sisousat Collection.

B: Unpublished Government Records

National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Manuscript Census of 1840, Davidson County, Tennessee.

Manuscript Census of 1840, Maury County, Tennessee.

Manuscript Census of 1840, Rutherford County, Tennessee.

Manuscript Census of 1840, Wilson County, Tennessee.

Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

Marriage Records of 1790-1849, Davidson County, Tennessee.
 Marriage Records of 1835-1845, Maury County, Tennessee.
 Marriage Records of 1838-1845, Rutherford County, Tennessee.
 Marriage Records of 1802-1840, Wilson County, Tennessee.
 Tax List of 1839, Davidson County, Tennessee.
 Tax List of 1840, Maury County, Tennessee.
 Tax List of 1836, Rutherford County, Tennessee.
 Tax List of 1849, Rutherford County, Tennessee.
 Tax List of 1842, Wilson County, Tennessee.

C: Unpublished Private Records

Dickinson Family Bible, Private Collection, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
 Files of First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
 Files of First Methodist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
 Files of Rutherford County Historical Society, Murfreesboro,
 Tennessee.

D: NEWSPAPERS

Murfreesboro Press, 1980.
 Murfreesborough Central Monitor, 1834-1835.
 Murfreesborough Freedom's Watchman, 1867.
 Murfreesborough Jeffersonian, 1843.
 Murfreesborough Monitor, 1835-1837.
 Murfreesborough Tennessee Telegraph, 1838-1845.
 Murfreesborough Weekly Times, 1837-1843.
 Nashville Republican, 1833-38.
 Nashville Republican Banner, 1838-1845.

Nashville Union, 1833-1845.

Nashville Tennessean, 1980.

Nashville Whig, 1838-1845.

Newport News Daily Press, 1980.

Niles Weekly Register, 1824.

Rutherford Telegraph, 1856.

E: Published Letters

Bassett, John S., ed. Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. 6 vols. Washington, 1931-33.

Graf, Leroy P. and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson. 5 vols to date, Knoxville, 1967---.

Rarks, Joseph H., ed. "Letters of James K. Polk to Samuel H. Laughlin, 1835-1844." East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, No. 18(1946), 147-67.

Sioussat, St. George, ed. "Letters of John Bell to William B. Campbell, 1838-1857." Tennessee Historical Magazine, III(Sept., 1917), 202-27.

Weaver, Herbert, et al., eds. Correspondence of James K. Polk. 5 vols to date, Nashville, 1969---.

II: Secondary Sources

A: Tennessee-related Publications

Campbell, Claude A. "Banking and Finance in Tennessee during the Depression of 1837." East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, IX(1937), 19-30.

Campbell, Claude A. "Branch Banking in Tennessee Prior to the Civil War." East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, XI(1939), 34-46.

Coffey, Laura L. W. "Records of Hopewell Church, 1832-1833." Rutherford County Historical Society Publications, No. 7 (Summer 1976), 22-72.

Corlew, Robert E., et al. Tennessee: A Short History. Knoxville, 1969.

- Bergeron, Paul H. "The Election of 1843: A Whig Triumph in Tennessee." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXII(June 1963), 123-36.
- Bergeron, Paul H. Paths of the Past. Knoxville, 1979.
- Brown, Sterling S. History of Woodbury and Cannon County, Tennessee. Manchester, Tenn., 1936.
- Burt, Jesse C. Nashville, Its Life and Times. Nashville, 1959.
- Century Review, 1805-1905, Maury County, Tennessee. Columbia, 1905.
- Clayton, W. W. History of Davidson County, Tennessee. Philadelphia, 1880.
- Davidson, Donald, et al. I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition. New York, 1930.
- Driver, Carl. John Sevier: Pioneer of the Old Southwest. Chapel Hill, 1932.
- Folmsbee, Stanley J. "The Turnpike Phase of Tennessee's Internal Improvement System of 1836-1838." Journal of Southern History, III(Nov., 1937), 453-77.
- Folson, Burton W., III. "The Politics of Elites: Prominence and Party in Davidson County, Tennessee, 1835-1861." Journal of Southern History, XXXIX(Aug., 1973), 359-78.
- Galloway, J. J. Geology and Natural Resources of Rutherford County, Tennessee. Nashville, 1919.
- Garrett, Jill K. Maury County, Tennessee Newspapers. Columbia, 1965.
- Goodpasture, Albert V. "Genesis of the Jackson-Sevier Feud." American Historical Magazine, V(April 1900), 115-23.
- Goodpasture, Albert V. "John Bell's Political Revolt and His Vauxhall Garden Speech." Tennessee Historical Magazine, II (Dec., 1916), 254-63.
- Goodspeed, Westin L., et al., eds. History of Tennessee. Nashville, 1886.
- Gresham, L. Paul. "The Public Career of Hugh Lawson White." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, III(Dec., 1944), 291-318.
- Gwynne, Mrs. Robert W. "Rock Spring Church of Christ." Rutherford County Historical Society Publications, No. 3(Summer 1974), 70-78.
- Heiskell, Samuel G. Andrew Jackson and East Tennessee History.

- Nashville, 1918-21.
- Henderson, C. C. The Story of Murfreesboro. Murfreesboro, 1929.
- Johns, Thomas N., Sr. "The Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad Through Rutherford County, 1845-1872." Rutherford County Historical Society Publications, No. 6(Spring 1975), 1-26.
- McDonough, James L. Stones River--Bloody Winter in Tennessee. Knoxville, 1981.
- McBride, Robert M. and Dan H. Robison. Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly. 2 vols. Nashville, 1975.
- Masterson, William H. William Blount. Baton Rouge, 1964.
- Merritt, Dixon, ed. The History of Wilson County. Lebanon, 1961.
- Mooney, Chase C. Slavery in Tennessee. Bloomington, 1957.
- Moore, Powell. "The Revolt Against Jackson in Tennessee, 1835-1836." Journal of Southern History, II(Aug., 1936), 335-59.
- Moore, Powell. "The Political Background of the Revolt Against Jackson in Tennessee." East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, No. 4(Jan., 1932), 45-66.
- Morris, Eastin. The Tennessee Gazetteer. Nashville, 1834.
- Muse, Lucia S., comp. Salem Methodist Church, Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1812-1975. Nashville, 1976.
- Osborne, Ray G. "Political Career of James C. Jones, 1840-1857." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, VII(Sept., 1948), 195-228.
- Parks, Joseph H. Felix Grundy. Baton Rouge, 1944.
- Parks, Joseph H. John Bell of Tennessee. Baton Rouge, 1950.
- Parks, Norman L. "The Career of John Bell as Congressman from Tennessee, 1827-1841." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, I (Sept., 1942), 229-49.
- Pittard, Homer. Pillar and Ground. Murfreesboro, 1968.
- Ramsay, J. G. M. Annals of Tennessee. Charleston, 1853.
- Sellers, Charles G. "Banking and Politics in Jackson's Tennessee, 1817-1827." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLI(June 1954), 62-74.
- Sellers, Charles G. James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843. Princeton, 1957.

- Sims, Carlton C., ed. A History of Rutherford County. Murfreesboro, 1947.
- Smith, Frank H. History of Maury County, Tennessee. Columbia, 1969.
- Tankersley, Mary B., comp. First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Roster of Members, 1812-1846. Murfreesboro, 1977.
- Turner, William B. History of Maury County, Tennessee. Nashville, 1935.
- West, Mips. "Black Fox." Murfreesboro Daily News Journal, Oct. 17, 1976, 3-6.
- Wooldridge, John. History of Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville, 1890.

B: Articles on the Middle Period

- Alexander, Thomas B., et al. "Who Were the Alabama Whigs?" Alabama Review, XVI(Jan., 1963), 5-19.
- Beeman, Richard R. "The New Social History and the Search for 'Community' in Colonial America." American Quarterly, XXIX (Fall 1977), 422-43.
- Boyett, Gene W. "Quantitative Differences between the Arkansas Whig and Democratic Parties, 1836-1850." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXXIV(Autumn 1975), 214-26.
- Cochran, Thomas C. "The 'Presidential Synthesis' in American History." American Historical Review, LIII(July 1948), 748-59.
- Davis, David B. "Uncle Oedipus and Ante Bellum." New York Review of Books, XXVI(Oct. 25, 1979), 23-26.
- Formisano, Ronald P. "Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789-1840." American Political Science Review, LXVIII(June 1974), 473-87.
- Formisano, Ronald P. "Toward a Reorientation of Jacksonian Politics: A Review of the Literature, 1959-1975." Journal of American History, LXIII(June 1976), 42-65.
- Grimsted, David. "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting." American Historical Review, LXXVII(April 1972), 361-97.
- Hammond, Bray. "Jackson, Biddle, and the Bank of the United States." Journal of Economic History, VII(May 1947), 1-10.
- McCormick, Richard L. "Ethno-Cultural Interpretations of Nineteenth Century American Voting Behavior." Political Science Quarterly.

- LXXXIX(June 1974), 351-78.
- McCormick, Richard P. "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics." American Historical Review, LXV(Jan., 1960), 288-301.
- Pessen, Edward. "Jacksonian Quantification: On Asking the Right Questions." Herbert J. Bass, ed. The State of American History. Chicago, 1970, 362-72.
- Pessen, Edward. "Who Has the Power in the Democratic Capitalist Community? Reflections on Antebellum New York City." New York History, LVIII(April 1977), 129-55.
- Pessen, Edward. "Who Rules America? Power and Politics in the Democratic Era, 1825-1975." Prologue, IX(Spring 1977), 5-26.
- Rutman, Darret B. "Community Study." Historical Methods, XIII (Winter 1980), 29-41.
- Sellers, Charles G. "Who Were the Southern Whigs? American Historical Review, LIX(Jan., 1954), 335-46.
- Thompson, Edward P. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." Past and Present, No. 38(Dec., 1967), 56-97.
- Turner, Frederick J. "Contributions of the West to American Democracy." Atlantic Monthly, XCI(Jan., 1903), 86-89, 95-96.
- Williams, Max R. "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal." North Carolina Historical Review, XLVII(April 1970), 115-29.
- Wood, Gordon. "Looking for Heroes." New York Review of Books, XXIX (Feb. 18, 1982), 3-6.

C: Books on the Middle Period

- Abernethy, Thomas P. From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee: A Study in Frontier Democracy. Memphis, 1955.
- Alexander, Thomas B. Sectional Stress and Party Strength. Nashville, 1967.
- Barnhart, John D. Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818. Bloomington, 1953.
- Benson, Lee. The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York As A Test Case. Princeton, 1961.
- Benton, Thomas H. Thirty Years' View. New York, 1875.

- Blassingame, John W. The Slave Community; Plantation Life in the Antebellum South. New York, 1972.
- Blumin, Stuart. The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth-Century American Community. Chicago, 1976.
- Brown, Richard D. Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865. New York, 1976.
- Carroll, E. Malcolm. Origins of the Whig Party. Durham, 1925.
- Catterall, Ralph C. H. The Second Bank of the United States. Chicago, 1903.
- Cole, Arthur C. The Whig Party in the South, 1830-1861. Washington, 1913.
- Cole, Donald B. Jacksonian Democracy in New Hampshire, 1800-1851. Cambridge, 1970.
- Conzen, Kathleen N. Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City. Cambridge, 1976.
- Dawley, Alan. Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn. Cambridge, 1976.
- de Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. Phillips Bradley, ed. New York, 1945.
- Doherty, Herbert J. The Whigs of Florida, 1845-54. Gainesville, 1959.
- Dublin, Thomas. Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860. New York, 1979.
- Fish, Carl R. The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850. New York, 1927.
- Foner, Eric. Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War. New York, 1980.
- Forge, George B. Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age. New York, 1979.
- Formisano, Ronald P. The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861. Princeton, 1971.
- Genovese, Eugene D. The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South. New York, 1967.
- Genovese, Eugene D. Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made. New York, 1974.

- Gutman, Herbert G. The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925. New York, 1976.
- Hammond, Bray. Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War. Princeton, 1957.
- Henretta, James A. The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815. Lexington, 1973.
- Hirsch, Susan E. Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860. Philadelphia, 1978.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It. New York, 1948.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840.
- Howe, Daniel W. The Political Culture of the American Whigs. Chicago, 1979.
- Johnson, Paul E. A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837. New York, 1978.
- Knights, Peter R. The Plain People of Boston: A Study in City Growth. New York, 1971.
- Lazarfield, Paul, et al. The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign. New York, 1948.
- McCormick, Richard P. The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era. Chapel Hill, 1966.
- McDonald, William. Jacksonian Democracy, 1829-1837. New York, 1906.
- McFaul, John M. The Politics of Jacksonian Finance. Ithaca, 1972.
- Main, Jackson T. The Sovereign States, 1775-1783. New York, 1973.
- Marx, Karl. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Chicago, 1913.
- Meyers, Marvin. The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief. Stanford, 1957.
- Miller, Douglas T. The Birth of Modern America, 1820-1850. New York, 1970.
- Miller, Douglas T. Jacksonian Aristocracy: Class and Democracy in New York, 1830-1860. New York, 1967.
- Mueller, Henry R. The Whig Party in Pennsylvania. New York, 1922.

- North, Douglass C. Growth and Welfare in the American Past. Englewood Cliffs, 1966.
- Owsley, Frank L. Plain Folk of the Old South. Baton Rouge, 1949.
- Pessen, Edward. Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics. Homewood, Ill., 1969.
- Pessen, Edward, ed. The Many-Faceted Jacksonian Era. Westport, 1977.
- Pessen, Edward. Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement. Albany, 1967.
- Pessen, Edward. Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War. Lexington, 1973.
- Poage, George R. Henry Clay and the Whig Party. Chapel Hill, 1936.
- Potter, David M. People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character. Chicago, 1954.
- Remini, Robert V. Andrew Jackson and the Bank War: A Study in the Growth of Presidential Power. New York, 1967.
- Remini, Robert V. Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party. New York, 1959.
- Richards, Leonard L. "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America. New York, 1970.
- Rorabaugh, W. J. The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition. New York, 1979.
- Rothman, David. The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic. Boston, 1971.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. The Age of Jackson. Boston, 1945.
- Shade, William G. Banks or No Banks: The Money Issue in Western Politics, 1832-1865. Detroit, 1972.
- Silbey, Joel H. Political Ideology and Voting Behavior in the Age of Jackson. Englewood Cliffs, 1973.
- Silbey, Joel H. The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852. Pittsburgh, 1967.
- Sinms, Henry H. The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840. Richmond, 1929.
- Sharp, James R. The Jacksonians Versus the Banks: Politics in the States after the Panic of 1837. New York, 1970.

- Temin, Peter. The Jacksonian Economy. New York, 1969,
- Thompson, Arthur W. Jacksonian Democracy on the Florida Frontier. Gainesville, 1961.
- Thornton, J. Mills, III. Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1806-1860. Baton Rouge, 1978.
- Van Dusen, Glyndon G. The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848. New York, 1959.
- Wallace, Anthony F. C. Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution. New York, 1978.
- Ward, John W. Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age. New York, 1955.
- Warner, Sam B. The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth. Philadelphia, 1968.
- Watson, Harry L. Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina. Baton Rouge, 1981.
- Wilburn, Jean A. Biddle's Bank: The Crucial Years. New York, 1967.

D: Dissertations on the Middle Period

- Lowrey, Frank M. "Tennessee Voters During the Second Two-Party System, 1836-1860: A Study in Voter Constancy and in Socio-Economic and Demographic Distinctions." Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, 1973.
- Rozett, John M. "The Social Bases of Party Conflict in the Age of Jackson: Individual Voting Behavior in Greene County, Illinois, 1838-1848." Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974.

E: Modernization Scholarship

- Banani, Amin. The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941. Stanford, 1961.
- Beling, Willard A. Modernization and African Labor. New York, 1966.
- Black, Cyril E. Comparative Modernization. New York, 1976.
- Black, Cyril E. The Dynamics of Modernization. New York, 1966.
- Botchway, Francis A., ed. Modernization: Economic and Political Transformation of Society. Berkeley, 1970.

- Dower, John W., ed. Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman. New York, 1973.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. Modernization: Protest and Change. Englewood Cliffs, 1966.
- Harding, Douglas G., ed. Japan's Prospect. Cambridge, 1946.
- Huntington, Samuel P. "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics." Comparative Politics, III(April 1971), 283-322.
- Jensen, Marius B., ed. Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization. Princeton, 1965.
- Lockridge, Kenneth A. "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution." Journal of Social History, VI(Summer 1973), 403-39.
- Lipset, Seymour M. The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective. New York, 1973.
- Luraghi, Raimondo. "The Civil War and the Modernization of American Society: Social Structure and Industrial Revolution in the Old South before and during the War." Civil War History, XVIII(Sept., 1972), 230-50.
- Parson, Talcott. Structure and Process in Modern Societies. New York, 1959.
- Rostow, W. W. The Process of Economic Growth. New York, 1952.
- Tignor, Robert L. Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914. Princeton, 1966.
- Tonnies, Friedrich. Community and Association. London, 1955.
- Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. New York, 1958.
- Weiner, Myron, ed. Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth. New York, 1966.
- Wells, Henry. The Modernization of Puerto Rico. Cambridge, 1969.
- Zuckerman, Michael. "The Fabrication of Identity in Early America." William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., XXXIV(April 1977), 183-214.

VITA

Carroll Van West

Born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, January 29, 1955. Graduated from Riverdale High School, Rutherford County, Tennessee, May 1973, B. A., Middle Tennessee State University, 1977, M. A. in American history, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1978.

In September 1978, the author entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant in the Department of History.