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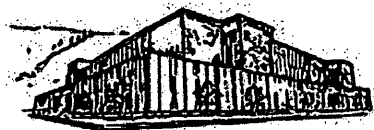
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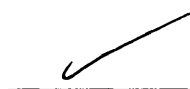
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Pennsylvania Politics, 1854-1860

by

Oliver Pflug

B. A. Pennsylvania State University, 2000

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

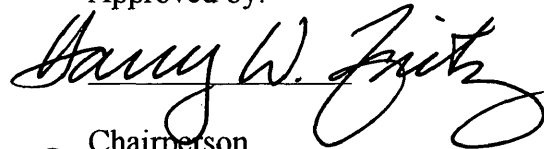
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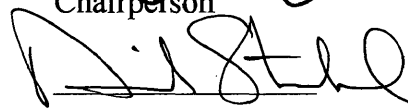
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Pennsylvania Politics, 1854-1860

Director: Harry W. Fritz 

Based heavily on the use of personal correspondence, newspapers, and political platforms, the following study covers the triumph of the Republican party in Pennsylvania between 1854 and 1860. As the failures of competing political organizations were fundamental to the success of the Republican party, the breakup of the Whig party, the rise and fall of the Know Nothing movement, and the disruption of the Democratic party also figure prominently.

Between 1856 and 1860 the Pennsylvania Republican party increased the expanse of its political precepts yet strengthened its centrifugal cohesion. Devotion to Free Labor principles, and a commitment to stopping the slave power were central principles of the party. The Democratic and American parties meanwhile, failed to maintain such a cohesive commitment to a core ideal. Throughout the era, the problems of the intensifying sectional schism--specifically the future of slavery--played a predominate role in political rhetoric and ideology. Though a combination of principles both economic and social also drew voters to the Republican party, the fundament commitment to antislavery precepts remained a central feature of the party in Pennsylvania. The victory of Lincoln in 1860 placed Pennsylvania firmly within the camp of northern sectionalism.

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INTRODUCTION

Readers will quickly notice that the following study is heavily influenced by the looming prospect of the American Civil War. Knowledge that the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 ultimately produced the bloodiest conflict in American history could not be ignored. Furthermore, any examination of antebellum Pennsylvania politics must confront the reality that the Keystone State provided the final margin of victory for Lincoln. However, mid nineteenth-century Pennsylvanians had no way of foreseeing such an outcome. Although sectional issues, especially the debate over the future of slavery, were prevalent in politics during the years before the war, they were not the be all and end all. Voters confronted a host of political issues that had little to do with slavery throughout the 1850's. Immigration, temperance, taxes, railroads, and religion were all hotly debated political items right up to the firing on Fort Sumter. Many recent historians have argued that state and local issues were more likely to bring a voter to the polls or keep him at home during these years.

Though this study in no way seeks to repudiate the works that have so illuminated the depth and nuance of antebellum politics, its most lasting

contribution may be to entrench the notion that antislavery rhetoric did indeed matter to the final triumph of Lincoln. That conclusion could not be denied as I examined rolls of newspaper microfilm and shifted through crumbling old letters. It was actually surprising to encounter the volume of antislavery and anti-southern propaganda that jumped out of Keystone Republican editorials, letters, platforms, and speeches. During the 1860 Presidential election the Republican newspaper of the state capital of Harrisburg printed more editorials on slavery than all but one topic; a trait shared by most Republican papers throughout the state.¹ Only the most conservative Republicans tried to keep slavery in the shadows, and even they occasionally took positions that no southerner would publicly support. Pennsylvania's other major parties also dealt extensively with slavery politics if often defensively. The slavery question was an inescapable feature of antebellum Pennsylvania politics.

Newspaper editorials, political correspondence and speeches, and party platforms have provided the bulk of primary sources for this study. Critical observers will note the lack of legislative roll-call analysis and voter regression estimates in this study. Though I fully adhere to the importance of these tools, the primary goal of the project was to discuss the development of party ideology and rhetoric as presented to the public. No statewide survey of Pennsylvania's antebellum politics has yet addressed these critical themes satisfactorily. A full-length regression analysis is needed for Pennsylvania--and perhaps a future

¹ Survey of Harrisburg *Telegraph*, June through October 1860. The most common editorials were general attacks on the Democratic gubernatorial candidate. Sixteen articles dealt with issues related to slavery, twenty-four attacked the candidate. The next most common topic was the tariff with ten articles. Of papers surveyed only Philadelphia's *North American* broke the trend. Praising the moderation of Abraham Lincoln was the top priority of the *North American*.

edition of this study will include one--but the following provides valuable and necessary background for future work.

CHAPTER 1

The Keystone of the Union

Pennsylvania Politics: Motivation and Heritage

The presses in the sleepy little village of Gettysburg, soon to be immortalized in American history, teemed with revolutionary political rhetoric during the summer and autumn of 1860. Recalling the perils and patriotism of an earlier era, the town's Republican mouthpiece, the *Adams Sentinel*, called on all men who "desire to restore the Government to the purity of the Founder's Republic," to pledge their votes that year to Abraham Lincoln and the rest of the national, state, and local Republican ticket. Those in "favor of adequate protection [for] the languishing Industrial Interests of the country---who are opposed to extending the blightingening {sic} curse of Slavery to the Free Territories of the Union," and who wished to save the West for "White Freemen," were duty-bound to expel the shameful Democratic administration from office. Such inflammatory anti-southern and antislavery rhetoric would have won scant support in Gettysburg, or the state as a whole, just a few years earlier. Many Pennsylvanians proudly proclaimed that their state stood in the middle of the two sections both literally and politically. Antislavery radicalism traditionally was not quite as

strong in Pennsylvania as it was in New England or New York. Abolitionists were denied access to a Philadelphia meetinghouse in early 1861, for fear they would provoke a riot. The Free Soil party had not been popular in the state in 1848 or 1852. James Buchanan, the sitting President and a resident of Lancaster, was highly sympathetic to the fears that southerners expressed over the growth of the antislavery movement. Pennsylvania had rejected Republican radicalism in 1856 by awarding a landslide victory to her favorite son; many felt the same was possible four years later. In 1860 however, the *Adams Sentinel* and the Republicans of Gettysburg had no place for reactionary policies or quiet submissiveness to southern braggadocio. The “supremacy of the Constitution” could crush any of the “conspiracies and threats of Secessionists and Disunionists.” If such talk could win converts in Gettysburg, which lay just miles from slave-holding Maryland, then perhaps the old Keystone State was no longer in the middle of the nation. The open demand for a revolutionary change in slavery policy across the state in 1860 indicates that Pennsylvania had become more like its northern neighbors than many of its residents would willingly admit.

While antebellum political parties approached each election as if the very survival of the republic depended upon the correct result, the excitement of 1860 was quite different. An unknown number of Gettysburg’s citizens took an oath in the Republican Wide Awake organization, pledging, “to resist by all Constitutional means [slavery’s] further extension.” The paramilitary character of the Wide Awakes, who marched through Gettysburg nightly by torchlight and drilled with various weapons in support of their candidates, was quite ominous for

the future of the American Union. What were Pennsylvania's southern neighbors to think of such matters?²

Between 1856 and 1860 the Republican party won over the majority of the tiny town's voters, even though they had never shown such a proclivity for antislavery politics. On November 7, 1860, Abraham Lincoln received 259 of Gettysburg's 484 votes, a large increase over the 1856 Republican candidate's total. Adams County gave Lincoln an eighty-vote margin over the Democratic ticket. By 1860 the vote in Adams resembled the counties of Massachusetts more than Carroll County Maryland, which bordered it to the south. Carroll County gave Lincoln only 59 votes, Democrats received 2,000 votes, while Constitutional Union nominee John Bell won the county with 2,295. Only twelve years earlier the vote in Carroll County and Adams County had been quite similar. Whig Zachary Taylor had won both counties in relatively close races. The situation in 1860 was drastically different.³ The goal of this study is to account for this change.

The partisan rhetoric of Gettysburg's Republican newspaper editors and Wide Awake leaders cannot fully explain the turnaround in Adams County, or the state as a whole. The seemingly high-minded principles of Republicanism, especially opposition to the extension of slavery, have rightfully been emphasized in most studies of Civil War era politics. These principles were central to the establishment of the party's identity throughout Pennsylvania, and will indeed be

² The principles of Republicanism, which headed all announcements of public People's party--as the Republican party was known--gatherings, can be found in all summer and autumn editions of the Adams *Sentinel*. The Wide Awake constitution appears in the October 9, 1860 issue. The military nature of the Wide Awakes receives revealing coverage in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 13, 1860.

³ Borough and township returns for Adams County are in the November 14th issue. All county Presidential returns are taken from Walter Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1896* (Baltimore, 1955).

stressed in this study. But they cannot entirely explain why people voted for or against the Republican party. Attempting to discover the reasoning of even a negligible percentage of the state's electorate would be an exhaustively futile undertaking; nonetheless, it is clear that countless voters made their decisions to vote for or against the antebellum Republican party for less idealistic reasons. The various issues associated with slavery were not decisive for every voter. One declared that he had helped elect the man whom he derisively referred to in 1864 as "Leancorn" simply because, "he had wanted change."⁴ In antebellum Pennsylvania making the decision to vote for a party, whatever its principles or its platform, could come down to the crudest of all motivations.

In January 1857, Keystone Republicans were surprisingly confident that they could elect their man to the available U. S. Senate seat, despite their five-vote minority in the joint state assembly. Democrats, meanwhile, were panicking. Divided over the dictation of their senatorial nomination by President James Buchanan, they secretly feared that Republicans could defeat them with a not so secret weapon. That weapon was Simon Cameron, a man with many friends and deep pockets. Democratic fears were justified. For with the help of three Democrats who bolted the party, Cameron was elected Senator amid much clamor. In many ways Cameron, who would come to dominate Pennsylvania's Republican party, embodied the state on the eve of the Civil War.⁵

⁴ Isaac Metzler quoted in Arnold M. Shankman, *The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement, 1861- 1865* (Cranbury, New Jersey, 1980), 186.

⁵ The coverage of the 1857 Senatorial election is based on many secondary sources, including Edwin Bradley, *Simon Cameron: Lincoln's Secretary of War* (Philadelphia, 1966) and Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania, I* (Philadelphia, 1905). Bradley's work is the best and most thorough work on Cameron. Bradley gives Cameron's career a much more positive spin,

By 1857 Simon Cameron had already earned a reputation as an unscrupulous political schemer. Yet Cameron had also earned widespread respect and devotion from his followers and friends. Possessing the needed skills of any machine politician, Cameron used all his virtues and vices to gain control of the Republican party in Pennsylvania. Those who fell victim to Cameron's power almost to a man despised him, but those who earned his confidence could hardly say they had a truer friend. Born into poverty and orphaned at a young age, the tale of Cameron's rise to power could probably top any Horatio Alger success story. By the 1850's he was a wealthy ironmaster and held investments in various Pennsylvania industries and companies. The political empire that was in place by his second trip to the Senate--he had also served as a Democrat in the late 1840's--would last into the twentieth century. In many ways the personal success of Simon Cameron and the political success of the Republican party in Pennsylvania were linked. Pennsylvania had no leader comparable to William Henry Seward, or Salmon Portland Chase. When Lincoln selected a representative from Pennsylvania for his cabinet he chose Cameron, not Thaddeus Stevens, a vocal critic of slavery who also felt he deserved a cabinet position. Just as he had done so often in Pennsylvania, Cameron earned Lincoln's trust, despite his stormy short-lived stint as Secretary of War. When Lincoln's electoral fortunes looked dim during the summer of 1864, he turned to Cameron to work his magic once again in Pennsylvania. And as he had done so often, Cameron came through. Even Alexander K. McClure, one of his political competitors readily saw the

especially compared to the treatment he has received from many historians including Allan Nevins and James McPherson.

skills of Cameron. “He was far-seeing,” McClure admitted in his memoirs, “knew the precise value of men, would commend influences by the most circuitous methods, and was tireless in managing his organization.”⁶

Cameron’s 1857 election to the Senate resulted both from his adeptness as a political manager of his own flock and his notorious ability to influence those men whom he considered potential supporters. For whatever reason, Cameron was able to get three Democrats to risk their reputations and even their physical safety to vote him into the Senate. After meeting with Cameron at his Harrisburg hotel room, William Lebo, Samuel Manear, and G. A. Wagonseller declared their votes for Cameron. It was immediately alleged that the three had been bribed, and that may very well be the case, but there had been clear dissension in Democratic ranks leading up to the election. John W. Forney, whom Buchanan had practically demanded be elected, was an even more divisive character than Cameron. Secretly, many Democrats felt his selection was a mistake; others openly admitted that they would not vote for him.⁷

As the election approached Republicans knew that they might be able to count on Cameron’s legendary connections to turn the tide. Even former foe Thaddeus Stevens felt that Cameron was the right man in 1857. “I have every reason to believe,” he wrote E. D. Gazzam “that he can get enough of his old friends to elect him.” The late-night meeting the day before the election between Cameron and the three men merely provided the guarantee that these votes were

⁶ McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 436.

⁷ G. R. Barrett to William Bigler, January 14, 1857, Bigler Papers, HSP.

coming. It only took one ballot to achieve Cameron's victory--and that might have been his only chance--but the stunning result would not soon be forgotten.⁸

The three 'traitors' were quickly read out of the Democratic party. No hotel in Harrisburg would grant them a room for the remainder of the legislative session. Their political careers were over; only Lebo continued to serve in the Cameron army after 1857. The vitriolic criticism announced by Democratic journals and politicians on Cameron was scathing, hardly letting up for weeks. William Bigler, who occupied Pennsylvania's other Senate seat, called for a Congressional investigation of the election. However, to the outrage of most Democrats, Cameron was able to take his seat that autumn. The Senate Judiciary Committee could not find sufficient evidence to launch an investigation. Pennsylvania Republicans had won their first major victory.

Although it seems obvious that the motivations of those who attended the various Republican rallies mentioned in the *Adams Sentinel*, and the three Democrats who gave their votes to Cameron were not the same, both methods produced the same result, a victory that outraged Democrats. "Whether we view the result as an act of justice to you," explained one of the many congratulations offered to Cameron that January, "[or] the repudiation of Forney-the rejection of Presidential dictation-the endorsement of sound Americanism, or the expression of hostility to the extension of slavery, it cannot but be highly gratifying to every lover of our institutions."⁹ Simply put, the accomplishment of Cameron's victory

⁸ Stevens quoted in Bradley, *Cameron*, 116; Also see *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 14, 1857; P. Hamman, November 18, 1856, J. Madeia, November 28, among many others, to Cameron, Cameron papers, DCHS.

⁹ Stephen Miller to Cameron, January 13, Cameron papers, DCHS.

encompassed a diverse array of political doctrines and interests. The same could be said of the other major Republican victories that followed. Yet despite its diversity, the Pennsylvania Republican party was able to achieve a cohesion cemented by a core devotion to a section-wide principle. Even if not all Pennsylvanians voted for the party because of this core belief, it cannot be forgotten that the opposition to the spread of slavery and its political agenda was what held the Republican coalition together in Pennsylvania.

Using a multitude of methods, and making a wide range of promises, denials, and attacks, the Pennsylvania Republican party was able in a relatively short five-year period, to win over the votes of a majority of the state's electorate. Its eventual victory outraged Democrats who saw their defeat as the end of Pennsylvania's position as a sensible bulwark between two extremes. In many ways the downtrodden Democrats were right. By 1860 it was hard to make the argument that Pennsylvania was still the Keystone of the Union. Instead, it had firmly placed itself along side of its northern neighbors. The history of Pennsylvania before the 1850's had shown few signs that this development was inevitable. Pennsylvania's path to the crisis of 1860 was in many ways unique--and in some ways unforeseen--but it shared with its peers the ultimate outcome of that change.

I

Pennsylvania was second only to New York State as the political and economic powerhouse of the Union during the 1850's.¹⁰ Although the power and

¹⁰ The most recent general history of Pennsylvania is: Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, *A History of Pennsylvania* (New York, 1973).

influence of the Middle Atlantic states was shrinking, as Midwestern states like Illinois began to assert their economic and political power, Pennsylvania still remained the second most significant state in the Union on the eve of the Civil War.¹¹ As sectional tensions intensified, the politics of the Keystone State became even more crucial. Pennsylvania possessed twenty-seven electoral votes in 1860, a number large enough to attract close attention from national political leaders and organizers throughout the antebellum era. Securing the state's Presidential vote was critically important to the election of most antebellum Presidents. By 1860, the outcome of the Presidential contest in Pennsylvania was critical to the survival of the Union itself.

Situated in the middle of the original thirteen colonies, Pennsylvania had earned its sobriquet the 'Keystone State' as a result of its ties with both of the country's main sections. Lacking the evangelical tradition of New England and sharing much of the same ethnic and cultural heritage as parts of the South, Pennsylvania arguably resembled Virginia more than Massachusetts at the nation's birth. Although the southern-born population of Pennsylvania had declined considerably by the 1850's, the state had once been the destination of many southern emigrants. In 1860 Pennsylvania still contained a number of former Maryland and Virginia residents in southwestern counties of Fayette, Washington, and Greene. Philadelphia also housed a number of southern-born residents. One prominent Philadelphian, General Robert Patterson, who was the first in a long line of northern generals to fail in the Shenandoah Valley during the

¹¹ Pennsylvania is technically a commonwealth, but I will forego using this term.

Civil War, owned a large number of slaves in the South. The city's University of Pennsylvania Medical College yearly graduated more southern doctors than all of the South's few medical schools combined. An undetermined number of Pennsylvanians, most with southern family ties, fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. However, these examples emerge as little more than anomalies when Pennsylvania is compared with its northern and southern neighbors.

Pennsylvania was clearly a northern state by 1860. In 1780 the Keystone State passed the nation's first abolition law. Although at least 6,000 slaves had once been held in Pennsylvania, there were none by the 1830's. The state's population of free blacks though remained relatively high, topping 50,000 before the Civil War. Some Pennsylvania blacks were escaped southern slaves, but most had been legally manumitted or were the descendants of freedmen.

In 1850 the state's total population stood at 2,311,786. By 1860 it numbered 2,906,370, far surpassing any southern state. Over 400,000 of her residents had been born abroad, mostly in Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. Germans, virtually unknown in the South, resided mainly in the rural southeast. The largest concentration of Irish was in Philadelphia, although their numbers were high in several eastern counties, especially Luzerne and Schuylkill. Many of the state's northern tier inhabitants had moved there from New England

or New York. The New England and Yankee population easily trumped that of southerners by the Civil War.¹²

Pennsylvania's urban communities easily outclassed southern counterparts. Philadelphia was a world-class city with some 400,000 living in its environs by 1850, trailing only New York as the most populous city in the nation. Growth during the 1850's was rapid, expanding the city's population to 565,529 on the eve of the war. Philadelphia was easily the most powerful community in the state, containing most of its financial and business interests. Reading, in neighboring Berks County, contained over 20,000 inhabitants, while Lancaster nearly approached that total. Although Pennsylvania's population was heavily concentrated in the southeastern party of the state, smaller cities also dotted the western section. Pittsburgh, the west's main city, had experienced stagnant growth during the 1850's, but its industrial sector was on the verge of explosion. In 1860 50,000 made Pittsburgh home, while nearly 30,000 lived in neighboring Allegheny City.

The rapid development of its industrial sector and the expansive reach of its transportation facilities further distinguished Pennsylvania from the South. Although the majority of the state's residents dwelled in rural areas and made their living through agriculture, the rise of manufacturing was quite evident by 1860. Although beaten to the punch by New York, Pennsylvania developed a canal system nearly its equal by the 1830's. Railroad building began in earnest

¹² Pennsylvania's foreign-born population made up a smaller percentage of the population than in Massachusetts or New York. *Population of the United States in 1860*, Joseph C. G. Kennedy, superintendent of census (Washington, 1864).

during the 1840's. By 1860 2,598 miles of rails crossed the state. However, Pennsylvania was fiercely divided over their management, especially the selfish monopolization of benefits by Philadelphia interests. As the sectional controversy was raging, railroad politics attracted even more attention in several western locales.

While over 200,000 Keystone residents worked in some way with agriculture, the industrial sector was expanding rapidly. More than 130,000 men toiled as nondescript laborers, while slightly fewer than 4,000 men were employed in the iron industry, mostly in Allegheny County. Berks, Chester, Centre, Huntingdon, Lancaster, and Mifflin Counties also boasted iron establishments. Glass works employed smaller numbers of people in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The lumber industry was strong in the still heavily wooded north. 18,000 toiled in the coalfields of eastern Pennsylvania, especially in Schuylkill County. Philadelphia was mostly a manufacturing and mercantile city, where the manufacture of cotton goods was a leading source of income. Pennsylvania was also home to 4,500 lawyers and just under 20,000 clerks. The diversity of the state's economy and workforce influenced the pattern of the state's politics during the antebellum years, mandating an inclusive and progressive system of government, and guaranteeing that a wide array of politicians and political ideas would find a constituency.

II

The democratic principles of the Keystone State were of crucial importance to its character and political history. Pennsylvania's 1790 constitution

very nearly established universal white manhood suffrage decades ahead of other states. As the state grew, its physical and ethno-cultural makeup contributed to the solidification of its allegiance to democracy and compounded its importance to the new nation. With its large open expanse to the west and wealth of resources, Pennsylvania developed a culture, which enhanced the democratic heritage that the state was imbued with after the Revolution. Suspicion of central authority, distrust of concentrated financial powers, and a sense of personal independence, were traits shared by many rural Pennsylvanians. These principles would deeply affect the political history of the state right down to the eve of the Civil War.

Pennsylvania was a stronghold of Jeffersonian Democracy. Outside of Philadelphia and Lancaster the Federalist party lost most of its following after the 1800 election. However, as was the case in most states, voter turnout remained light despite the lack of constitutional restrictions. Turnout in Presidential elections remained at around thirty-three percent until 1828. However, the universal democratic movement and the development of popular parties with recognizable political philosophies vastly increased participation in politics.

These principles are clearly revealed in Pennsylvania's 1838 constitution, which governed the state until 1874. The constitution set Pennsylvania's state and congressional elections for the second Tuesday in October. Every year a new set of legislators would be chosen, while a third of the state senate would be up for election. One hundred legislators and thirty-one senators would assemble every January to start a new legislative session that generally ran until April. Every three years a governor would be selected. In the event of his death while in office,

a new election would be held the following October. Shortly, seats on the state supreme court also became elective. Various other state offices were open for election, though the governor did have considerable appointive powers. Universal white manhood suffrage was the fundamental precept of the document.¹³

Andrew Jackson's democratic crusade proved quite popular in the Keystone State. The first national party convention, designed to avoid the backroom wheeling and dealing associated with professional politics during the 1810's and 20's, was held in Harrisburg in 1824. There, in truly democratic fashion, Jackson received the people's nomination. In November of that year Jackson won an easy victory in that state, although he lost the election after the U. S. House selected John Quincy Adams. Four years later, Jackson again defeated Adams in Pennsylvania, this time by a two-to-one margin amidst a much larger turnout.

Despite the rise of the Democratic party, devotion to personalities and cliques remained politically important well into the 1840's. The Calhoun-wing of the Democratic party had a strong following under Samuel Ingham, an early member of Jackson's cabinet, but it lost favor after Martin Van Buren's influence began to trump that of Calhoun. James Buchanan, Henry Baldwin, and George M Dallas helped rebuild the party around Van Buren who easily defeated William H. Harrison in 1836. Although often divided by both personal and policy

¹³ *The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as Amended by the Convention of 1837-38* (Chambersburg, 1839).

differences, the Democratic Party remained quite strong in the state until sectional rifts shook the party on the eve of the Civil War.¹⁴

The opposition to the Democratic party in Pennsylvania was slow to develop and in many ways unique to the state. Jackson's attack against Philadelphia's Bank of the United States began the process of forming a cohesive opposition. Old Hickory's objection to federal improvements projects and support of free trade, which many Keystone businessmen argued would snuff out local industries, also fueled the opposition. It was Masonry though, that caused Jackson's party the most problems during the 1830's. The Anti-Masonic party was initially stronger than the Whig party, capturing the governor's mansion while Democrats squabbled among themselves in 1835. However, the rule of Anti-Masonry proved short-lived as the party disgraced itself during an electoral dispute in 1838. Most Anti-Masons, including Thaddeus Stevens, eventually became Whigs. The principles of Anti-Masonry, especially the distrust of secretive organizations, persisted among former adherents and influenced the Keystone Whig party.

The panic of 1837 undercut the disunited appeal of Anti-Masonry and helped launch the growth of the Whig party. However, Pennsylvania's Whig party never produced leaders that matched state's Democrats. Nor did they measure up to Whig leadership in New York, Massachusetts or even Ohio. Perhaps the most notable Whigs were Senator James Cooper and onetime Democrat William F. Johnston, the only Whig to serve as governor. Cooper and Johnston represented

¹⁴ Pennsylvania politics from Monroe to Jackson are covered aptly by: Philip S. Klein, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1817-1832: A Game Without Rules* (Philadelphia, 1940).

different factions of the party, with Cooper being the more conservative of the two. Whig Presidential candidates won Pennsylvania twice--1840 and 1848--and in 1844 the party came up painfully short. In Pennsylvania, like most northern states, the majority of Republicans cut their political teeth as Whigs. Thaddeus Stevens, Andrew G. Curtin, Alexander K. McClure, and Russell Errett were the most prominent.

1848 was the high tide of Pennsylvania's Whig party. That year the party triumphantly elected Zachary Taylor, sent William F. Johnston to the state house, and elected the majority of its congressmen. However, the seeds of the party's downfall had been planted in Pennsylvania. Taylor's attempt to form his own independent party through patronage offended Whigs affiliated with James Cooper's conservative wing of the party. Furthermore, Taylor's opposition to the compromise measures of Henry Clay, which Governor Johnston also opposed, further divided the party. Johnston's opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act and the subsequent Christiana Riot of 1851 may have cost him reelection. A number of conservative Whigs defected from Johnston, and in October 1851 he lost to William Bigler by 8,500 votes.¹⁵ Disagreement over slavery though was not the main reason why the Whig party dissolved in Pennsylvania. The most serious threat, unbeknownst to many Whigs at the time, was the development of nativism.

Protestant outrage at the increasing Catholic presence in the state helped cause a bloody riot in Philadelphia during 1844. The Native American party,

¹⁵ Johnston's vote in the northern and western sections of the state, where he gained control of the small Free Soil contingent improved on his 1848 total. Although Johnston won 10,000 new votes, Bigler drew 18,000 more than his Democratic predecessor. Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York, 1999), 664-67.

which attempted to impose a twenty-one year waiting period for an immigrant to become a voting citizen, won a small, though influential, number of converts in Philadelphia. Various other locales suffered occasional outbreaks of anti-Catholic or anti-immigrant violence and politics during the 1830's and 1840's. Many Whigs, who were suspicious and jealous of the Democrat's near monopoly on the immigrant vote tended to support the nativist cause. Yet, most were unwilling to leave their beloved party as long as it made local concessions to nativists. The Native American party remained insignificant, as long as Whigs maintained their fealty to nativism. When the Whig party tried to disassociate itself from nativism during the 1852 Presidential campaign in a vain attempt to attract some of the quickly growing immigrant population, many nativists spurned them. Their decision not to support General Scott, the Whigs' Presidential nominee, helped cause his defeat.¹⁶ Two years later the Whig party would pay the ultimate price for again alienating nativists. However, during the early 1850's not all Whigs were willing to admit that nativism would remain a crucial issue. Some leaders wanted to reform the party on a sectional basis and attack the increasingly dough-faced policy of the Democratic party. The revival of sectional tensions through the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, gave many Whigs hope that in 1854 the party could be reborn as an antislavery party. Although such a party would eventually triumph in Pennsylvania, it would take six years for it to meet with complete success.

¹⁶ Scott's weakness on nativism will be further discussed in the next chapter. The most notable effect of this weakness was the 6,000 vote drop off of the Whig vote in Philadelphia County--where nativism was strongest--between 1848 and 1852.

CHAPTER 2

“Our Party Has Been Made to Bare the Sin of Catholicism”

Pennsylvania and the Destruction of the Second Party System, 1854-1855

On May 3, 1854 the Pittsburgh *Gazette* declared, “THE WHIG PARTY OF THE NORTH is, this day, stronger than at any former period.” The passage’s author William Larimer, a staunchly antislavery Whig, was convinced that the Kansas-Nebraska Act would revitalize his struggling party. Although Whigs had tasted defeat in Pennsylvania for five straight years, all the while suffering the same fate throughout most of the North, many northern Whigs felt quite confident during the early months of 1854.¹⁷ Rallies throughout Pennsylvania excoriated the Democratic submission to the autocratic demands of the slave-holding South, apparently portending a coming reversal of electoral trends. As spring emerged throughout the Keystone State in 1854, it appeared that the Whig party might also have a new life after a long cold winter.

Larimer originally expressed his confidence in a letter to his party rival James Pollock, shortly after the close of Whigs’ March state nominating convention. Pollock had defeated Larimer in the race for the gubernatorial

¹⁷ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, May 3, 1854. Quoted Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party* 836.

nomination. Larimer sent his letter on March 24th. At that moment Democrats in Washington appeared to be embarking on a suicidal path, reopening the wounds of sectionalism by way of Stephen Douglas's mad Kansas-Nebraska bill. Larimer, who had once been a supporter of the Free Soil party, shared the confidence of many antislavery Whig leaders during the early months of 1854. Kansas-Nebraska was apparently just what the down-and-out party needed. Purged of doughfaces like Daniel Webster, the northern Whig party could now apparently claim to be the true defenders of northern antislavery principles. The apostasy of Democrats would not stand as long a vigilant Whig party stood firm. The *Pittsburgh Gazette*, one of the Whig party's staunchest antislavery papers, used William Larimer's words to assure readers that an anti-Nebraska position would bring victory in October. "Occupying as she now does, the true Republican ground, the policy of the opposition is making her a *unit*, and is doing more to render her *invincible* than all those efforts of her most astute political tacticians could accomplish." Whigs like Larimer and *Gazette* editors D. N. White and Russell Errett worked into the early summer to strengthen the antislavery credentials of the party. Worried Democrats appeared vulnerable. Twelve Keystone Democrats, including Senator Richard Brodhead, voted for Kansas-Nebraska, but not all of the state's Democrats agreed with the act. Summertime correspondents of Governor William Bigler--who had been re-nominated by Democrats in March--expressed concern that his apparent decision to quietly side with Douglas and the Pierce administration would cause defection and defeat. However, even as William Larimer's letter was published, new political winds

were blowing that would make his spring confidence appear nothing but ridiculous in the aftermath of fall elections. Indeed, by June even Larimer had for all intents left the party he had declared invincible just weeks earlier. As many Whig leaders were attempting to capitalize on the Kansas-Nebraska backlash, they failed to fully address the issue that would carry most fall elections across the North. That failure would destroy the Whig party and plunge Pennsylvania politics into disarray for years.¹⁸

II

Nativism arguably had a stronger tradition in Pennsylvania than in any other northern state. Embittered by the growing numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants, groups pledged to limit their influence upon society and politics first appeared in the 1830's. Nativism was particularly pungent in Philadelphia and surrounding areas where the majority of Catholics lived. Most anti-Catholic voters there and throughout the North supported the Whig party during the era of the second party system. Nativist partisans often provided critical votes that helped Whigs obtain victories during the 1840's. Political nativism began to play a crucial role in state Whig politics during the Taylor Administration. Taylor secured leading patronage positions for Philadelphia nativists, which angered some of the state's older, more conservative Whigs like Senator James Cooper. The growing strength of the nativist movement exacerbated tensions existing

¹⁸ Most of the information for the 1854 election is based on two excellent secondary sources, Holt's wonderful *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party* and William E Gienapp, "Nebraska, Nativism, and Rum: The Failure of Fusion in Pennsylvania, 1854," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, hereafter *PMHB*, 109 (October, 1985), 425-71. Holt is extremely informative on Pennsylvania's nativist tradition.

within the state Whig party. The rivalry between more conservative Whigs like Cooper and those who tended to be both supporters of nativism and opponents of appeasing the South on slavery matters disturbed the unity of the party during the Taylor years.

1852 was a crucial year for Whig/nativist relations in Pennsylvania. The campaign of Winfield Scott openly courted Irish immigrants to the dismay of nativists, and the party was badly defeated. Meanwhile, the increasing political prominence of Catholics coupled with the visit of the Papal envoy during 1853 increased the draw of nativism. The appointment of James Campbell, a Catholic, as state attorney general by Governor Bigler and then as Postmaster General by President Franklin Pierce was particularly outrageous to Keystone nativists. The perceived cultural threat of Catholics also motivated nativists. Pittsburgh Catholic leaders outraged many Protestants in that city when they attacked the public school system for encouraging Bible reading. Moral reformers across the state often criticized the propensity of Catholics to indulge in excessive liquor consumption, especially during the Sabbath. Whigs usually cited such cultural 'outrages' when they criticized Catholic power. Indeed, during the early months of 1854 Pennsylvania Whigs linked their outrage over Kansas-Nebraska with their traditional commitment to Protestant values.¹⁹ However, the perception that obtaining the entire anti-Nebraska vote would be the key to victory caused Whigs

¹⁹ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, March 20. The Party platform specifically cited Whig's Protestant heritage. Interestingly, one nativist paper had no problem with Jews; apparently they were not a problem because they were not under the control of a transnational despot like the Pope, Harrisburg *Herald*, June 27, 1855. For good examples of Whig attacks on Catholics see Pottsville *Miner's Journal*, December 31, 1853, March 18, and April 8.

to largely ignore nativism during the prime campaign season. Whigs were not blind to the power of nativism; they just took it for granted in 1854.

It is not easy to castigate Whig leaders for their apparently myopic decision to de-emphasize nativism during the 1854 campaign. While many Whigs were confident that Douglas's bill would be *the* issue which they could use to revitalize their party, the small Free Soil party was not ready to let Whigs steal their issue without due compensation. Responding quickly and with greater vindictiveness towards Democratic offenders, Free Soil leaders undercut the Whig position that they were the stoutest critics of Kansas-Nebraska. While the Pennsylvania state Whig convention in March had denounced the introduction of the hated bill, the meeting came before its passage and thus did not demand its *repeal*. Free Soilers quickly capitalized. Pennsylvania Whigs incurred the wrath of dissatisfied Free Soilers who pointed to Keystone Whig's traditionally tepid opposition to slavery. The Washington *National Era*, the leading Free Soil paper declared, "Pennsylvania Whiggery is simply old fageyism."²⁰ Thus Whigs would have to prove they were worthy of the Free Soil vote. Confident Free Soilers provided the critical balance for victory in October, Whigs struck bargains that in hindsight killed their party. Because they were scared Free Soilers would nominate the supposedly popular David Wilmot for governor, thus robbing them of an otherwise easy victory, many Whig leaders focused all their energies on appeasing him and his relatively small cadre of followers. Most Democratic Free Soilers were uncomfortable with Whig ties to nativism. Consequently, many antislavery Whigs played down nativism and other traditional Whig causes.

²⁰Holt, *Whig Party*, 882.

Pittsburgh Whigs like Larimer and Russell Errett were especially eager to dump all non-slavery issues. "We are not so wedded to the Whig organization or the name as to refuse to enter any better organization for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of slavery," declared Errett's *Gazette*.²¹ Candidate Pollock responded with an open letter in July strongly objecting to the repeal of the Missouri compromise and declaring that Congress had no right to establish slavery in the territories, which Kansas-Nebraska had apparently mandated. Allegheny County Whigs took the additional steps of nominating a Free Soiler for one of the county's legislative seats and passing strong antislavery resolutions. One declared, "in view of the dangers of the crisis--a crisis overriding all former party distinctions--we hereby pledge ourselves to the camp of Freedom--we inscribe Free Men to Free Labor and Free Lands upon our banner, and enlist for the whole war."²² The re-emphasis of antislavery was not limited to Pittsburgh. Eastern journals also stepped up their attacks on Kansas-Nebraska. The state committee address issued during a July meeting in Harrisburg was much stronger in its denunciation of southern outrages than the March state platform.

There were some signs that the strategy of concentrating on Nebraska was working for Whigs. Although Wilmot never seriously considered running, Free Soilers had nominated a candidate for governor in May. After Pollock released his strong anti-slavery letter however, Free Soilers withdrew him. Wilmot also decided that he would permanently leave the Democratic party and gave his support to Pollock. The election cycle beginning in March was producing defeats

²¹Pittsburgh *Gazette*, April 19. Quoted in Holt, *Whig Party*, 882.

²²*Ibid.* 883

for Democrats throughout the North. Pennsylvania Democrats often blamed Kansas-Nebraska as they suffered defeats in summer municipal elections.²³ Yet those elections revealed that nativism would be far more detrimental to Democratic fortunes in 1854. As Michael F. Holt explains, Pennsylvania's Whigs had placed all their eggs in one basket, thus when the electorate decided that a different issue was paramount, the result was disastrous. Taking for granted their support and underestimating their strength, Whigs lost the nativist vote to a new movement which did not trust the party of Winfield Scott and his Irish brogue to protect them from the encroachment of the 'Catholic menace.'²⁴

III

Protest movements across the state expressed disdain for both parties; several independent nominees appeared during the summer pledging to limit the influence of both immigrants and liquor in the Keystone State. A "queer temperance party" nominated candidates for office in Erie County and also appeared in York and Schuylkill Counties. Maine Law candidates appeared sparingly across the state, while pressure for prohibition led the legislature to prepare a referendum to be voted on in October that would consider a ban on liquor sales.²⁵ Nativism though, proved to be the most crucial issue throughout

²³ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's* (New York, 1992). Anbinder contends that Kansas-Nebraska crucial to the electoral misfortunes of Democrats, but Holt's conflicting opinion that slavery mattered but little in results of October especially, seems to bear more scrutiny. William Gienapp tends to take a similar position.

²⁴ During an impromptu speech before the election of 1852, Scott had responded to the presence of some Irishmen in his audience that he 'loved to hear that old Irish brogue.' Such pandering cost him dearly.

²⁵ *Erie Observer*, May 13, 1854; The referendum, if passed, would recommend that the legislature pass a law banning the sale of spirits. See Asa E. Martin, "The Temperance Movement in Pennsylvania Prior to the Civil War," *PMHB*, 49 (July, 1925), 219-223.

the state during 1854. The evidence came in as early as May when several municipal elections were held. Whig Robert T. Conrad, who was also a member of a secret nativist order soon to be dubbed the “Know Nothings,” routed local Democratic party boss Richard Vaux in Philadelphia’s mayoral election. Know Nothings triumphed with shocking regularity throughout the southeast. Democrats keenly blamed the organization they often euphemistically dubbed ‘Sam’ for their defeats. “At the bottom of this is a deep-seated religious question--prejudice if you please, which nothing can withstand. Our party is made to bare the sin of *catholicism* [sic],” declared one astute Democrat.²⁶ Governor Bigler began to receive many worried notes. “In my opinion this [defeat in Philadelphia] is a direct result of Campbell-ism,” noted one Democrat in reference to the notorious Catholic Postmaster General. “If you are not alarmed, you must have very strong nerves,” he concluded.²⁷

October’s results proved to be quite humiliating for Democrats. However the elections did not provide Whigs with the revitalizing victory William Larimer and others had gleefully predicted either. James Pollock won with the highest percentage of the vote obtained by any Whig ever in Pennsylvania. However, he was the only Whig to win a statewide race. Democrats overwhelming reelected Jeremiah S. Black to the state supreme court, while a Know Nothing, Henry Mott, won the seat on the state canal commission. The prohibition referendum failed by a few thousand votes.

²⁶ E. A. Pennington to William Bigler, June 8, 1854, Bigler papers, HSP. Also quoted in Anbinder, 54.

²⁷ William E. Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York, 1987), 101.

The incredibly schizophrenic returns resulted from the Know Nothing pledge to vote for the candidate--usually a lodge member--who most fit their criteria regardless of party. Pollock had apparently joined a Know Nothing lodge during the summer, while Mott received both Democratic and nativist support because his Whig opponent had been born in Scotland. The supreme court race conveniently revealed the true strength of the Know Nothing movement and spelled the doom of the Whig party. Know Nothings pledged to vote for a third-party nativist who subsequently received thirty-three percent of the vote, while Black won with forty-five percent, and the Whig candidate earned a pathetic twenty-one. Black drew nearly the same number of votes as Bigler who lost the gubernatorial election.²⁸ Seemingly out of nowhere a new organization had turned keystone politics upside down.

While Democrats were solidly beaten, the Whig party was virtually obliterated in Pennsylvania. Fifteen of Pennsylvania's new congressmen ran as Whigs, but twelve were Know Nothings. Know Nothings clearly backed four anti-Nebraska Democrats who triumphed--two of them independent of regular Democratic support--and elected the nativist Jacob Broom in Philadelphia. Broom was the Presidential nominee of the independent Native American party in 1852. Seventeen of Pennsylvania's twenty-five Congressional seats belonged to Know Nothings of one sort or another. Across the state, disgruntled Whigs and

²⁸The full returns were: Governor; Pollock 204,008, Bigler 167,001, a Native American nominee received 1,503. Canal Commissioner; Mott 274,074, the Scottish Whig received 83,331. Supreme Court Justice; Black 167,010, the Whig, Smyser 78,571, and Baird, a Know Nothing, 120,576. The referendum failed 158,342 to 163,150 southeastern Know Nothings who did not support prohibition were apparently the difference.

Democrats as well as first time voters left their parties to back Know Nothing candidates.

Decisions made in local Know Nothings lodges to back a candidate for office were not clearly documented, but they seem to have considered several interrelated issues. Alexander K. McClure alleged that Know Nothings had approached his friend, Whig state Chairman Andrew G. Curtin, pledging to support Pollock in return for patronage. Although Pollock apparently appointed some of the alleged bargainers, his reputation as a strident Protestant moralizer was likely much more important than any promise of jobs. Democrat Bigler meanwhile was strongly associated with Catholics and was known as somewhat of a heavy drinker. Although William Gienapp estimates that more Pennsylvania Democrats left their party for the Know Nothings than in any other northern state, Whigs had clearly been hurt the most by Sam's rise.

Anti-Nebraska pledges provided Whigs with virtually nothing across Pennsylvania. Although those who voted for Know Nothing candidates were usually critics of Kansas-Nebraska, Whig attempts to capitalize on that dissatisfaction had obviously failed miserably. Nativism broke the strained ties that held the Whig party together. Factionalism was always a problem for the party, but the strength of the Know Nothing movement allowed disgruntled groups to obtain the fruits of election victories denied by party regulars. The notoriously antislavery Whig Thaddeus Stevens helped back a Know Nothing who unseated his anti-Nebraska replacement in Lancaster's Congressional

district. Stevens was upset that he had been spurned in 1852 and had no qualms turning against the regular Whig party.²⁹

Philadelphia's lone Whig Congressman Joseph R. Chandler, who had voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, lost his fight to be re-nominated because Know Nothings controlled the district Whig convention. Chandler was a Catholic. Outraged regular Whigs then fatally split the party by running Chandler and other anti-nativists in local elections. The regular nominee, Job Tyson, picked up the support of Know Nothings and thus easily triumphed as Chandler finished a distant third. The Philadelphia *North American* concluded that the nativist issue was "more potent and pervasive in its influence, perhaps, than any or all others combined." Philadelphia had once been a stronghold of Whiggery, but after 1854 Whigs were rare even in the City of Brotherly Love.³⁰

Even in the western part of the state, traditionally the strongest antislavery quarter, Know Nothings dealt a deathblow to Whigs. The Democratic Pittsburgh *Post* clearly discerned that the fall elections would be a referendum on Know Nothingism not Kansas-Nebraska. The Allegheny Free Soiler who appeared on the Whig's county legislative ticket came in last place. However, all five Know Nothing nominees won assembly seats. Many of Pittsburgh's antislavery leaders were outraged with the results. Subsequently, they spurned both the new Know

²⁹ Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South* (New York, 1959). Regrettably Brodie fails to cover Stevens's conduct during this election.

³⁰ Philadelphia *North American*, October 11. Quoted in Gienapp, *Origins*, 147; Frank Gerrity, "The Disruption of Philadelphia Whigocracy: Joseph R. Chandler, Anti-Catholicism, and the Congressional Election of 1854," *PMHB* 111 (1987), 161-94.

Nothing coalition and the rump of the Whig party. Pittsburgh Whigs fused with Democrats to defeat Know Nothings during spring municipal elections.³¹

Pennsylvania's Know Nothing leadership was composed of 'second tier' politicians, most of whom were former Whigs. Michael Holt notes that Pittsburgh's "Know Nothing leaders were young men who generally came from the middle or lower classes."³² State legislators' incomes were noticeably less than those of their Whig and Democratic counterparts. And, while Whigs always attracted the support of wealthy merchants and factory owners, especially in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Know Nothings claimed virtually no wealthy businessmen. Know Nothings sent an inordinate amount of Protestant clergymen to the legislature--to the disgust of some Democratic journals-- and apparently attracted considerably fewer farmers than Democrats or even Whigs. While some historians have argued that inadequate leadership contributed to the eventual downfall of the Know Nothings, a stronger argument contends that sectional pressures and continued friction among former Democrats and Whigs within the new coalition were more critical to the downfall of the movement.³³

Know Nothings controlled Pennsylvania's government after the 1854 elections. It was not clear however that they could unite as a political force that was capable of achieving anything. Nor was it clear that they could establish themselves as the leading independent anti-Democratic party. Establishing a

³¹ For an excellent coverage of Pittsburgh politics during the era upon which much of my coverage of that city is based see, Michael F. Holt. *Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh, 1848-1860* (1969, reprint ed., Pittsburgh, 1990).

³² Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 155.

³³ Anbinder, 131-33.

government, filling offices, electing a Senator, and passing positive legislation that followed the principles that had elected them, proved much harder for Know Nothings in 1855 than winning office in 1854.

IV

The Know Nothing coalition in Pennsylvania, and indeed throughout the country, immediately faced a myriad of problems. Democrats had learned after 1852 how quickly the fortunes of success could breed discontent and fracture even the most established political parties. Know Nothings, who now preferred to be called the American party, faced a daunting task as they attempted to coalesce the disparate masses that had elected them in 1854 into a coherent political party. Pennsylvania's Know Nothing contingent included former Whigs, Democrats, Free Soilers, Native Americans, as well as prohibitionists and antiparty men. Their divergent views of what should be the priorities of the new party created great confusion and disagreement within the state Know Nothing coalition during 1855. However, the intrastate squabbles among Know Nothings pale in comparison to the nation-wide struggle to define the character of the American party. While Democrats regrouped to face a new opponent whom they quite possibly hated more than they ever hated Whigs, Keystone Know Nothings had to cope with the problems associated with the attempt to create a new national party. That difficult process, coupled with developments in other northern states, would

challenge their claim to the title of Pennsylvania's leading anti-Democratic party.³⁴

Although the elections of 1854 seem to have turned on nativist outrage throughout the nation, the question of how to approach the increasingly divisive slavery question quickly divided the Know Nothing coalition and muted the nativist issue. Conservatives like former President Millard Fillmore quickly determined to use the breakup of the Whig party and the rise of the Know Nothings to build a national anti-sectional party. Those Know Nothings who opposed the Fillmore faction of the Whig party during the 1850's, like Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson and Maine congressman Israel Washburn, hoped to forge a northern antislavery party. At the same time, many, though not all, Know Nothing-Democrats drifted back to their former allegiance. While some Know Nothing leaders were able to manipulate the party to their liking in a particular state, the attempt to create a national American party in 1855 was an unmitigated disaster.

With eyes focused on the 1856 Presidential race, ambitious politicians caused great strife within what had essentially been a populist movement. Many of those who had been attracted by the antiparty pronouncements of the Know Nothings were turned off by the machinations of those who took hold of the movement. A majority of first time voters who were attracted to the Know Nothings in 1854 quickly resumed their disinterest in voting after their movement

³⁴ I will use the term "American party" when referring specifically to the party that attempted to consolidate the Know Nothing uprising, but will continue to refer to members as "Know Nothings."

was taken over by the dreaded wire-pulling politicians. While the tensions between national leadership and local interests undermined the strength of the Know Nothing movement throughout much of the North, the situation in Pennsylvania was particularly detrimental to the long-term health of the new American party. While the potential for the Know Nothing coalition to gather strength in the state still existed, the external pressure to define the coalition with regards to slavery--which was not essential to the growth of the party in Pennsylvania--aborted the American party before it could take root in the Keystone State. Although the American party and nativism remained popular in 1855 and afterwards, its viability as a national party was severely eroded by the search for an acceptable national platform. Due to the need to keep the state within the political mainstream, even the most devoted Keystone nativists were forced to abandon the American party when it was destroyed upon the rocks of sectionalism. Thus, the sectional pressures that fatally wounded the Know Nothing movement nationwide made its continued existence in Pennsylvania, where its strictures had been quite popular, virtually pointless.³⁵ However, divisions in the new coalition appeared in Pennsylvania even before the sectional rift became apparent.

V

The disunity of the American party in Pennsylvania revealed itself as soon as the legislature met in January 1855. The most important order of business was the election of a new Senator to replace the conservative Whig, James Cooper.

³⁵ Again, to argue that antislavery was not essential to the 1854 Know Nothing victory is not to say that Pennsylvania Know Nothings were proslavery or even conservatives in sectional matters.

Know Nothings claimed 91 of the joint assembly's 133 seats, but they had no clear choice for Senator.³⁶ A mere eight men resolutely attended the straight Whig caucus, but they nonetheless determined to run a candidate. Democrats, who also had little chance for success, united on Charles Buckalew. While Cooper tried in vain to obtain the votes of former Whig legislators who made up the vast majority of the Know Nothings, former Democratic Senator Simon Cameron emerged as the frontrunner for the seat. Cameron, who had been a critic of the Catholic influence upon the state's Democratic party, had tepidly supported William Bigler in 1854. Behind the scenes he had also been a key proponent of the pro-Nebraska platform at that year's state Democratic convention. Like many other ambitious politicians, including Thaddeus Stevens, Cameron joined a Know Nothing lodge after the election, expressing his availability to the American party. Others who attracted interest for the American nomination included former Whig governor William F. Johnston, David Wilmot, and Andrew Gregg Curtin, a leading member of the Pollock administration.³⁷

The American caucus, which met on February 9, 1855, could not escape the lingering effects of old partisan battles. Many former Whigs could not swallow Cameron, while ex-Democrats, to a man, stuck to him. One noted, "democratic (Know Nothings) . . . will not consent to Whigify so strongly their

³⁶ C. Maxwell Myers "The Rise of the Republican Party in Pennsylvania, 1854-1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1940), 50, lists 17 Democrats, 15 Whigs, and 1 Native American in the state senate; 48 Whigs, 24 "regular" Democrats, 14 Nativist or Anti-Nebraska Democrats, and 3 Free-Soilers.

³⁷ Tyler Anbinder asserts that Cameron's weakness as an antislavery candidate was critical to his eventual defeat. I disagree. His coverage of the Senate race can be found in *Nativism and Slavery*, 150-55; For the involvement of Cameron in supporting the Kansas-Nebraska act see Gienapp, *Origins*, 172; The fullest coverage of Cameron in 1855 is found in Erwin S. Bradley, *Simon Cameron*, 95-105.

party after having *so* secretly elected a Whig Governor!” Four secret ballots could not produce a winner, with Cameron leading and Curtin trailing. On the fifth try Cameron obtained 46 votes, apparently giving him a one-vote majority. However, the total vote numbered 92, with the phantom vote providing the margin. Outraged Cameron opponents stormed out of the meeting and renounced his nomination. All of the bolters were former Whigs or Free Soilers and it may have been one of them who planted the extra vote to defame Cameron whom they could easily pin the corruption tag on.³⁸

Those who remained in the American caucus supported Cameron when the joint assembly met a few days later, but he consistently fell about eight votes short of a majority. However, those Know Nothings who bolted from the caucus could not agree on a new candidate, nor could they fuse with holdout Whigs and Democrats. Balloting went on for two weeks without a nominee before the assembly adjourned, then resumed on the 27th before giving up the search as hopeless. Both pro and anti Cameron Know Nothings vilified each other for breaking up the coalition. A new Senator would not be selected until after a new legislature was elected in the fall. Cameron and Curtin, who had lately been one of Cameron’s most vocal critics, became lifelong enemies. More importantly,

³⁸ W. F. Caplan to Simon Cameron, Anbinder, 150-51. Some of Cameron’s opponents were outraged at the adoption of a secret ballot, which they charged would not allow them to determine who might be affected by Cameron’s dollars. Their outrage as his nomination, whatever the legitimacy of their claims--and I tend to doubt the totality of Cameron’s corruption --can be summed up by the following line in the Harrisburg *Telegraph*, February 21, “Ask us not to support a nomination brought about, as we, believe, by the concentrated and cohesive power of public plunder, and the superadded elements of shameless and wholesale private bribery.” Quoted in Bradley, 97. Clearly not all Know Nothings believed the charges against Cameron, as he obtained votes in the joint assembly from men who did not vote for him before his most vocal critics bolted the American caucus.

with fall elections again looming Pennsylvania's American party had suffered a humiliating setback.³⁹

VI

Further divisions within the American party emerged as 1855 dragged on. Although the temperance referendum had narrowly failed in October 1854, Know Nothings turned most of their legislative attention to the liquor question. The sale of liquor on Sundays was outlawed and liquor license fees were tripled, now costing applicants \$1,000. The most notorious bill banned the sale of liquor in quantities less than a quart. Democrats particularly vilified the "Jug law" because it discriminated against small-time operators. Know Nothings also received opposition from within their ranks especially in the southeastern part of the state where numerous Germans, who opposed temperance, resided. One Philadelphia newspaper declared that Know Nothing support for temperance had been "the supremest insanity."⁴⁰

After its final adjournment the Pittsburgh *Gazette* declared that the legislature had been a "blot on the good name of the people of Pa." However, the problems of the American party were hardly limited to the divisive temperance question, or even to feuding party leaders; the situation for the party outside of the state was much worse. An attempt to form a conservative anti-sectional Know Nothings party crumbled at Philadelphia during June. Many northerners who attended the convention were outraged at the adoption of Section Twelve of the American party platform, which declared the current slavery laws--including the

³⁹ The origins of the Cameron/Curtin feud are aptly discussed in Bradley, while the coverage by McClure in *Old Time Notes* is also thorough, if colored by McClure's lifelong support for Curtin.

⁴⁰ Philadelphia *Times* quoted in Arbinder, 182.

hated Kansas-Nebraska Act--final. While statewide reaction revealed that Pennsylvanians were not yet prepared to renounce the American party, their almost unilateral condemnation of Section Twelve was quick and harsh. "To ask the members of the [Know Nothing] order in the Northern States," declared the *Harrisburg Herald*, "to maintain the existing laws on the subject of *slavery* as a *final* and conclusive settlement of that subject, in spirit and in substance is an insult to a wronged and injured people." Even Democrats realized that developments in Philadelphia would disrupt the American party. "There are thousands in the new party," declared the *Pittsburgh Post*, "throughout the state with whom the anti-slavery sentiment is stronger than all other political purposes, and they will leave the ranks of the [Know Nothings] for more congenial fellowship of the anti-slavery party, which is to be rendered more attractive under the ill-fitting name of *Republican*."⁴¹ The Republican party, which had formed in Michigan and Wisconsin the previous year, made its first appearance in Pennsylvania during 1855, trying to capitalize on the disgust with the Philadelphia platform. Keystone Know Nothings however, were not quite ready to surrender their power to another organization.

VII

While Republicans in states like Massachusetts and Ohio used the strength of their state's old Free Soil parties to pry some Know Nothings away from the American party after the Philadelphia convention, Pennsylvania lacked such a core group of antislavery politicians who could entice such a split. David Wilmot

⁴¹ *Harrisburg Herald*, June 22; *Pittsburgh Post*, August 6, quoted in Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 160 (misdated August 4).

received very few votes during the senatorial race while Thaddeus Stevens covertly worked against the frontrunner, Simon Cameron, because as he told an ally, "I did not think him true to freedom."⁴² If a strong Republican party was to be established in the state, Free Soilers would have to work with Know Nothings--as well as with holdout Whigs--to build a new coalition. Antislavery elements would also have to have the strength to force some Know Nothings away from the American party and into a Republican party that would compete with both Democrats and the Americans. In New York, Ohio, and Massachusetts Republicans ran strong tickets against American party nominees, winning in the Buckeye State where Salmon P. Chase was elected governor. Pennsylvania though, possessed no strong antislavery leader who could compare with Chase, or New York's William H. Seward, or Massachusetts's Henry Wilson and Charles Francis Adams. In Pennsylvania, thanks to radical domination and Know Nothings interference, the Republican party did not get off the ground in 1855.

The Pittsburgh *Gazette*, which had so gleefully predicted an antislavery Whig victory in 1854, led the call for a Republican party. Editors Russell Errett and D. N. White proposed that Pennsylvania follow the example of Ohio and form its own antislavery party. Eventually, with the help of David Wilmot and Ohio Republican leaders, a convention to form a Keystone Republican party was set for Pittsburgh on September 5, 1855. The convention's platform denounced the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and declared that "FREEDOM IS NATIONAL AND SLAVERY SECTIONAL." The antislavery zeal of the

⁴² Stevens to E. D. Gazzam, December 4, 1856, McPherson papers, LC. Also quoted in Anbinder, 155.

platform carried over to the nomination of Passmore Williamson--an abolitionist presently incarcerated for a violation of the Fugitive Slave Act--for canal commissioner, the only statewide race that fall. Alexander McClure, an attendee who still clung to the Whig party, decried Williamson's nomination as a mistake. "A torch applied to a powder magazine could not have been more explosive," he later stated.⁴³

VIII

Pennsylvania's 1855 elections would only select a canal commissioner, a new legislature, and a third of the state senate. However, due to the uniqueness of the political situation, five candidates would compete for the almost totally symbolic canal commission seat.⁴⁴ A few Whigs still determined to keep their party alive, although their sparsely attended September 11th convention consisted of disenchanted men without followers who lied "awake at night to decide whether they most hated Know Nothingism or Democracy." Their nominee for canal commissioner, the last Whig to participate in a statewide race, ultimately received fewer than 2,300 votes. Democrats meanwhile, determined to win back their power so they could take the still vacant Senate seat. Despite their losses in 1854, Keystone Democrats were reinvigorated by their outrageous defeat at the hands of an upstart group of bigots. Their apparently harmonious convention nominated Arnold Plumer for canal commissioner. "The sober second thought of the people will soon dispel the mists of prejudice by which they have been surrounded and vindicate that party and its principles, which to-day stands forth

⁴³ McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 237-38.

⁴⁴ The state Main Line canal was in the process of being sold to one of the states leading railroads.

the confirmed defender of the *constitution and the civil and religious* rights of all men in this land,” declared Erie’s Democratic newspaper. “Thousands of honest Whigs, who have no sympathy with Know Nothingism or Abolitionism,” opined Gettysburg’s Democratic organ, “will desert those leaders who have hastily betrayed them, and will vote with the Democratic party.”⁴⁵

Although troubled by the Philadelphia breakup and the rise of the Republican party across the North, Know Nothings declared their movement to be anything but dead. Sensing the potential of the new party to damage their control of the anti-Democratic vote, Know Nothings attempted to smother the Pennsylvania Republican party in its infancy. Covertly controlling the party’s central committee, which was created in the immediate aftermath of the September Republican convention, Know Nothings eroded the party from the inside. The subverted Republican committee mandated a new convention in order to fuse with the American party; uncommitted Whigs were also invited. Meeting in late September, the fusion convention had the support of Simon Cameron, Thaddeus Stevens, Governor James Pollock, and most anti-Democratic leaders. The original American party nominee was replaced with Thomas Nicholson, a member of the Pollock administration who falsely claimed that he was not a Know Nothing in order to garner support from those who opposed that order. The Republican and Whig nominees were also formally withdrawn. However, Republicans who were disgusted with the infiltration of their state committee and rightly doubted Nicholson’s claim of independence, refused to give up

⁴⁵ Erie *Observer*, October 21, 1854; Gettysburg *Republican Complier*, October 8, 1855.

Williamson. This small group of radicals, who mostly resided in western Pennsylvania, cast the first Republican ballots in state history.⁴⁶

As the election approached American party editors turned their wrath towards holdout Republicans--whom they justifiably alleged were attempting to destroy the nativist movement--with just as much vigor as they defamed Catholics. Pittsburgh's Know Nothing journal asked, "Does not everyone in voting the Republican ticket, vote foreignism as well as antislavery while the supporters of the American nominations in this country are placed on record as voting just as strongly antislavery, yet expressing themselves at the same time favorably to salutary changes in the naturalization laws?" After the election the Harrisburg *Herald* dejectedly explained: "We have never had a doubt that the Republican party was organized solely to defeat Americans and not to advance anti-slavery."⁴⁷

The results of the October election were mixed at best for fusion supporters. The Democratic canal commission candidate, Arnold Plummer, won election with 161,281 votes, slightly less than half of the total vote. Nicholson received slightly fewer than 150,000 votes, with forty-six percent of the vote. Republicans, meanwhile, could not capitalize on dissension within the American party that the infamous Section Twelve caused. Williamson received only 7,226 votes. Although he had formally been withdrawn in September--a predicament that no doubt reducing his potential vote--his 2.6 percent of the vote was nowhere

⁴⁶ Gienapp, *Origins*, 211-12; Myers, "Republican Party," 62-71.

⁴⁷ Pittsburgh *Dispatch*, quoted in Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 165; Harrisburg *Herald*, October 12, 1855.

near the total for Republicans who competed against American party nominees in other northern states during 1855.⁴⁸

Democrats were thrilled at the result. “‘Sam’ has retreated to his caverns . . . ‘Sambo’ too, with all the inspiration of mad fanaticism, has proved powerless to save his midnight brethren,” declared the *Erie Observer*. Although Democrats grouped ‘Sam’ and ‘Sambo’ together, many Know Nothings and Republicans saw them as competing, perhaps mortal, entities. “‘Sambo apparently don’t like Sam,” declared a leading Know Nothing organ. In 1855 they had clearly not cooperated in the Keystone State.⁴⁹

Although Know Nothings could boast that they had quashed the Republicans in Pennsylvania, they had suffered across the board defeats. While Nicholson’s forty-six percent improved on the thirty-three percent of the vote that the Know Nothings state supreme court candidate received in a three-way race in 1854, it fell well short of the fifty-five percent that James Pollock--who combined the Know Nothings and Whig vote--received. In addition to the canal commission victory, Democrats recaptured the legislature. In January they easily elected William Bigler to the Senate seat that Know Nothings had been incapable of securing the previous February.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The total vote for canal commissioner, available in most October papers was: Plummer (Democrat) 161,281; Nicholson (Fusion) 149,745; Williamson (Republican) 7,226; Cleaver (Native American) 4,056; Henderson (Whig) 2,293; Martin (American) 678. Although the Whig, Republican, and American candidates were withdrawn at the September 27th fusion convention, ballots had been distributed beforehand and there was no way to stop those stubborn, or courageous, enough who wanted to vote for them.

⁴⁹ *Erie Observer*, October 13; *Harrisburg Herald*, October 12.

⁵⁰ The total vote for Nicholson was thirty thousand more than the 1854 supreme court nominee, but some 54,000 less than Pollock’s total. The total for Plumer, on the other hand was only 6,000 less than that of William Bigler.

Republican leaders were generally despondent over the situation in Pennsylvania. “The short and the long of it,” wrote Pittsburgh’s Russell Errett to Salmon Chase, “is that, as things now are, I have no hope of Pennsylvania. I cannot see how all parties can co-operate here without a sacrifice of principle or a loss of votes sufficient to ensure defeat.”⁵¹ As the Presidential election of 1856 approached there was little hope that Republicans could mount a serious campaign in the Keystone State no matter whom they nominated. Likewise, with their party on the ropes in many states only one year after their amazing victories--and completely in a shambles as a national unit--Know Nothings also feared the worst. Although elated by their victory the Democratic party was not ready to declare the 1856 campaign over. Democrats knew that Pennsylvania, which looked like a potential lock at the end of 1855, would nonetheless be critical if they were to save the Union by electing their man and defeating sectionalism and bigotry. They would take no chances.

⁵¹ Russell Errett quoted in Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 213.

CHAPTER 3

“It Will Be the Rainbow of Peace”

The Election of James Buchanan, 1856

Pennsylvania played a critical role in the elections of 1856. Many observers could agree with the *Philadelphian* who opined: “As goes Pennsylvania, so goes the nation.” As southerners steadfastly insisted, the fate of the Union was at stake during the tumultuous contest; to the great relief of thousands, Pennsylvania helped provide the crucial victory that Democrats insisted would quiet sectional rumblings. Pennsylvanians presented a record vote to their own James Buchanan, proving to his partisans that the state still was the key to the unity of the nation. Yet Buchanan’s majority was not as natural or overwhelming as it may have seemed. Several circumstances that helped secure Buchanan’s victory would not be applicable four years later.⁵²

In early 1856 the Republican party secured its first great victory. The election of Nathaniel P. Banks as Speaker of the House further split the American party, which had already had a bad year, and helped launch the Republican party towards dominance in the North. In February Republicans held their first national

⁵² Samual Peassor[?] to James Buchanan, May 29, Buchanan papers, HSP.

meeting in Pittsburgh, where the party organized to prepare a run for President. However, the party faced long odds in Pennsylvania. "The opposition to Democracy was not coherent, but was floating around promiscuously as old line Whigs, antislavery Democrats, Know Nothings and Republicans," remembered Alexander K. McClure. At the time of the Pittsburgh meeting there existed virtually no party structure in the state, and almost no resident of the populous southeastern part of the state, including Philadelphia, claimed to be a Republican. However, the political situation was hardly set in stone as 1856 opened. Although the Republican party appeared stillborn after its first Pennsylvania campaign, an abrupt intensification of sectional tensions during the winter and spring won the party countless new devotees.⁵³

I

The eruption of violence in Kansas--allegedly the direct consequence of dough-faced Democratic policy--added considerable fodder to the editorial arsenals of Republican spokesmen across the North. Violent rogues, mostly from Missouri, with the whole-hearted support of powerful southern slaveholders, invaded the territory in order to intimidate any who would oppose their intents. The South's power structure had apparently determined that the fertile fields of Kansas would be infected with the plague of slavery, violently if need be. Although northern Douglas Democrats had pleaded that fearing the possible spread of the peculiar institution onto the Great Plains was unreasonable due to the region's dry climate, the so-called invasion of Kansas convinced many northerners that no natural obstacle would stop the spread of slavery. Bleeding

⁵³ Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 245.

Kansas was a golden campaign issue for the burgeoning Republican party. Instead of the rather hypothetical arguments over the possibilities of the Kansas-Nebraska Act that dominated the political debate in 1854 and '55, Republicans could point to actual physical assaults upon freedom. With the opening of the physical struggle for Kansas, Pennsylvania's Republican party secured a critical base of supporters.

For the third consecutive year, the Pittsburgh *Gazette* was at the forefront of Pennsylvania's political antislavery movement. The principles of the new party, which were laid down at the Pittsburgh meeting, filled the pages of the *Gazette* in early 1856. One of the three platforms of the Pittsburgh meeting declared: "we feel it our imperative and solemn duty not only to protest against this dangerous and arrogant assumption of power and perversion of the spirit and intentions of our Constitutional framers, but resist to the utmost of our abilities those high-handed acts of injustice, tyranny, and oppression of our rulers, who . . . are endeavoring to crush out the spirit of liberty in the Free State settlers in Kansas and elsewhere." Enacting a political program that would protect the Kansas and Nebraska territories from the encroachment of slavery was the central concern of the Republican party. "We will support by every lawful means our brethren in Kansas in their constitutional and manly resistance to the usurped authority of their lawless invader," the *Gazette* declared in March.⁵⁴

The violence in Kansas, and the apparent culpability of the Democratic Pierce administration in the attempt to spread slavery, disgusted many

⁵⁴ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, March 21, March 23. All newspapers and correspondence cited in this chapter are from 1856 unless otherwise noted.

Pennsylvanians who had resisted the formation of a Republican party only the year before. During the early spring of 1856 the ranks of the new party swelled to include such notable politicians as Simon Cameron, Thaddeus Stevens, Andrew G. Curtin, and Galusha Grow among others. But the greatest breakthrough for the Republican party occurred during May when two virtually unprecedented incidents stunned the nation.⁵⁵

On May 21, a party of proslavery Missourians raided the settlement of Lawrence Kansas, destroying property and harassing local opponents of slavery. Before reports of the raid reached the East, the news of the near fatal beating of Senator Charles Sumner by a South Carolina Representative named Brooks, outraged many northerners who had never supported Sumner's radical antislavery positions. "It ill becomes any man," the nonpartisan Philadelphia *Public Ledger* declared, "who respects the laws of the country, to lead his countenance to such outrages as that perpetrated by Mr. Brooks." These dual offenses, which splashed across the pages of northern newspapers at virtually the same time, helped convince many Pennsylvanians that civil liberties were under assault from a brutish, undemocratic power that dwelled in their midst. "The brutal outrage on Senator Sumner," opined a nativist paper, "and the pro-slavery ruffians of Kansas, have made in the North a hundred free-soilers, where yesterday there existed one."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Although Cameron apparently joined the Republicans sometime before the national contention, his shrewd silence left many correspondents guessing over whom he would support for President well into the summer. L. Rightmyer to Simon Cameron, January 24, June 13, Charles Kelly to Cameron, June 16, Levi Reynolds to Cameron, June 30, Cameron papers, DCHS.

⁵⁶ Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, July 17; Pottsville, *Miner's Journal*, May 31, June 7 (quotation), also quoted in Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 214; The Erie *Observer*, May 31, placed most of the blame for Sumner's beating on his offensive speech.

Civil War scholars have long recognized the importance of Bleeding Kansas and the attack on Senator Sumner to the quick rise of the Republican party in 1856. The events of May helped cement a theory in many northern minds that became one of the Republican party's core arguments. The slave power doctrine achieved unprecedented validity during 1856. According to its testaments, southerners, who were determined to enforce their view of labor throughout the nation, dominated the national government with the help of northern Democratic dupes, and were systematically attempting to ensure that the whole of the United States would be turned into a slaveholding empire. None of the allegedly proslavery bills recently passed by Congress could compare to the May outrages as an illustration of the extralegal ways in which southerners were attempting to ensure slavery's future.

The slave power argument was ever-present in Pennsylvania Republican propaganda. Party founder David Wilmot clearly evoked this theory shortly after attending the Pittsburgh organizing meeting. "The slave-holders constituting less than one in fifty of the free population of the country, control all the functions of the General Government," he declared. Even the *North American*, Philadelphia's conservative Republican paper, could insist that the South wanted to make "slavery as wide as the national domain and as lasting as any mere human institution on earth." Harrisburg's new Republican paper wished to attract men to the party if only to battle the slave power. "A time has arrived in this country when all true patriots, all sound, conservative politicians, and all moral and religious men should stand shoulder to shoulder in opposition to the aggressions

of the slave-holders aided by Northern demagogues.” The increasing impudence of the South indicated that the North was losing the struggle for the soul of the nation. If a Senator could be nearly beaten to death to the applause of southerners, what line would not be crossed in order to serve the appetite of the slave power?⁵⁷

Northern Republicans could not accept the triumph of the slave power for many reasons. Most insisted that the slave power was in direct opposition to the principles of American democracy and republicanism. Wilmot explained that, “slavery assails those fundamental truths declared to be self evident in the Declaration of Independence.” The extralegal violence that the South had apparently resorted to in order to perpetrate slavery outraged many persons across the North. The South was additionally accused of openly assaulting the freedom of speech, brutally oppressing any local attempt to question its institutions. Many Republican leaders though felt that the slave power’s greatest threat was its attack on the northern labor system. An important aspect of Republican rhetoric involved convincing workingmen that stopping the slave power would benefit their welfare.⁵⁸

Pennsylvania Republicans constantly evoked Free Labor principles. Republican leadership constantly attacked southerners who ridiculed northern workingmen and called them wage slaves. Former Democrat William Kelley declared that southerners “think it a great deal better that capital should own labor

⁵⁷ Wilmot quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 28; *Harrisburg Daily Telegraph* October 7; *Philadelphia North American*, October 14, quoted William E. Gienapp, *Origins*, 364.

⁵⁸ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 20; David Wilmot quoted in Charles B. Going, *David Wilmot: Free Soiler* (New York, 1924), 481. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford, 1970), is the best source on the Free Labor views of the Republican party.

than hire it! Pray, will you not go and sell yourselves my fellow citizens.”

Democrats had traditionally attracted the majority of the urban vote, where most laborers resided, but Republicans felt that they were now vulnerable. “The Buchanier Party of the North,” claimed the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, “is fast subsiding not only into the use of the southern slang about the workingman of the free states, but into the convention so frankly avowed in the South, that workingmen ought to be slaves.” Republicans generally also insisted that Free Labor could benefit the South as well. “In the great contest for Free Labor,” insisted the *Gazette*, “they have as much at stake as we [the North] have.”⁵⁹

Although slavery was at the forefront of the sectional debate, the fate of the slave troubled only a minority of Republicans. Few Pennsylvania newspapers openly dwelled on the fate of those most clearly affected by the slavery debate. While overt racism was only occasionally expressed in most Republican sheets, attitudes towards African Americans were rarely unprejudiced. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* was one of Pennsylvania’s more radical papers, but it was not willing to make the plight of the slave a priority. “We do not suppose that any honest Republican desires to oppress the colored race or to inflict upon them further injustice, but we trust they would prefer to lighten their heavy burden. But the present contest is one which effects the colored race indirectly and remotely.” Republicans were concerned with winning elections. Egalitarianism was not popular in 1850’s Pennsylvania.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Kelley quoted in William Dusinger *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1861-65* (Philadelphia 1974), 34; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 13, 18, February 23.

⁶⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 17.

Keystone Republicans also had to address continuing religious bigotry. Much of the Republican campaign in early 1856 concentrated on capturing former Know Nothings who were increasingly disgusted with the dough-faced slant of the American party. "There is an earnest desire, prevailing men of all parties to have union on some terms," declared the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in March. Most Republicans insisted that nativism had ceased to be the cause of the moment. The *Gazette* declared that Millard Fillmore--the leading aspirant for the American Presidential nomination, who had spent much of 1855 in Europe--was out of touch with the current political climate. "Had he been in the United States instead of on the balmy shores of the Mediterranean during the past six months, he would have seen and felt that the time for ignoring the question of slavery is past." The American party had already lost supporters after the 1855 Philadelphia convention and House speaker election; the nomination of Fillmore made the party more vulnerable to defections.⁶¹

In March 1856 Pennsylvania's Republicans took a giant stride towards capitalizing on the disruption of the American party. Members of both parties agreed to hold a joint nominating convention to form a "Union" ticket. Those attending the Union meeting at Harrisburg agreed that only one opposition ticket would be in the field, thus giving both groups a much better chance to defeat Democrats whom they both disliked. Combining antislavery rhetoric, which keyed on Kansas outrages, and nativism, the convention nominated three men for the statewide offices at stake for October. A conservative Whig was nominated

⁶¹ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 28, June 16. The problems of the American party will be covered in the next section.

for canal commissioner, a former Democrat for surveyor general, and a member of the American party for auditor general. Although some Republicans were disappointed with the favors given to nativists, the Union convention seemed to bode well for the possibility of unified Presidential ticket for November.⁶²

The national Republican convention, as agreed upon after February's Pittsburgh meeting, convened June 17th in Philadelphia. Although Pennsylvania Republicans were optimistic that the party could win the state's Presidential electors, there was little consensus that a sure winner could be found among the aspirants for the party nomination. Many Pennsylvanians favored Supreme Court Justice John McLean, an Ohioan who maintained only a minimal adherence to Republican principles. McLean was the favorite of Thaddeus Stevens and several of Pennsylvania's eighty-one delegates. However, most Republicans did not consider him a serious candidate. At the same time, few Keystone Republicans backed William H. Seward or Salmon P. Chase, two of the leading candidates.⁶³

After adopting a strong antislavery platform, the Philadelphia convention nominated John C. Fremont, a famous western explorer with little political experience, as the party's first presidential candidate. New Jersey Congressman William Dayton received the Vice-Presidential nomination, although many conventioners felt that William Johnston, the nominee of the breakaway North American convention, should have been chosen. Despite the somewhat surprising nominations, Pennsylvania's leading Republican newspapers responded positively

⁶² John F. Coleman, *The Disruption of The Pennsylvania Democracy, 1848-1860* (Harrisburg, 1975), 89-90; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 26.

⁶³ E. Joy Morris to John M. Clayton, May 11, Clayton Papers, LC; Thomas Allen to Thaddeus Stevens, June 4, Stevens papers, LC.

to the convention. Confidence resonated from leading journals. The Harrisburg *Telegraph* insisted that Fremont's election would "be a barrier against the encroachments of the slave-holding power, [success] will give a large and fertile territory to the freedmen of the North."⁶⁴

The Fremont nomination however, was met with some apprehension in Pennsylvania. It seemed clear that winning support in conservative Philadelphia would be difficult. "There is no doubt that McLean would have been a popular nominee in this city and that Fremont is just now devoid at that strength so far as [Philadelphia] is concerned."⁶⁵ Although Pennsylvania Republicans still had a considerable task before them if they wanted to secure the full opposition vote, the difficulty of their quest was eased by the continued disintegration of the American party.

II

At the moment when the Republican party was forming in Pittsburgh, the American party was again coming apart--if not dying--across the state in Philadelphia. At a time when sectional tensions continued to rise, the American party was still hoping to ignore sectional problems as it limped into its national convention. Amazingly, the party had yet to come to an agreement on how to address the Kansas-Nebraska Act. When the party did try to take some kind of stand on pressing sectional questions, it tended to assume southern views. Across the North, including Pennsylvania, the American party was increasingly subject to Republican ridicule. After the division over section twelve of the 1855 platform,

⁶⁴ Harrisburg *Telegraph*, October 7; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 21; For the Republican platform see, Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, June 18.

⁶⁵ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 21.

and the victory of Nathaniel Banks in the Speaker's race, Republicans felt that many northern Americans would simply surrender to the younger party. After February 1856, it seemed that this scenario was quite possible.

Few observers felt that American party could survive its February national nominating convention intact. Some convention attendees felt that the party was too divided to even risk a nominee so early in the year. But most party members felt that dissolving the convention would only meet with disaster. "If we should dissolve [illegible] without nominating, the American party must become subservient to the Black Republican party," fretted one supporter. The fears over the cohesion of the party proved quite valid as it again split.⁶⁶

Only two men had a chance at the nomination as the convention opened on Washington's birthday: former President Milliard Fillmore, and New York businessman George Law. To the disgust of many of the founders of the Know Nothings movement, and those who wished to include some antislavery principles in the party--most of whom favored Law--Fillmore received the nomination for President. Many within the old Know Nothing movement regretted the new conservative neo-Whig makeup of the American party, which the Fillmore nomination seemed to indicate. But those most upset by Fillmore's victory were northerners who despised Fillmore's role in the passage of the Compromise of 1850.⁶⁷ "We infer," concluded the *Pittsburgh Gazette* upon hearing of the nomination, "that Northern Doughfacism and Slavery have

⁶⁶ G. P. James to John M. Clayton, [no date, but dispatched from Philadelphia, 1856] Clayton papers, LC.

⁶⁷ Andrew Jackson Donelson, a nephew of Old Hickory, was chosen for the Vice Presidential slot. A sparsely attended Louisville, Kentucky convention of holdout Whigs also nominated Fillmore.

triumphed over the Anti-Slavery sentiment in the American party.” Even Democratic papers saw the nomination as a “southern triumph.”⁶⁸

The breakup commenced even before the nominating process began. A large number of northern delegates left the convention rather than see Fillmore receive the nomination. Calling themselves North Americans, the seceding delegates condemned the American platform for not opposing the Missouri Compromise repeal and called for their own nominating convention in June. Many interested observers believed that fusion between the bolters and Republicans would occur easily, but North Americans wanted assurance that they could retain their nativist identity and receive due compensation from Republicans if they were to support their candidate in November. The failure to secure a smooth union between the two groups caused the opposition much grief in Pennsylvania.⁶⁹

The North American convention met shortly before the Republican convention opened its doors. Agreements between Republican and North American leaders led to the nominations of Nathaniel P. Banks and William F. Johnston. As was apparently stipulated, Banks withdrew after Republicans nominated Fremont, but most North Americans thought that Republicans would drop William Dayton and accept Johnston as their Vice-Presidential candidate. The refusal to support the former Pennsylvania governor upset many who hoped to secure a relatively painless fusion between the two groups. But many Republican party leaders outside of Pennsylvania felt that they could not afford to

⁶⁸ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 25; *Gettysburg Republican Compiler*, March 3.

⁶⁹ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 23, 26, 28; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 238-40.

be so closely linked with the nativist movement and they rejected accepting Johnston. Republicans counted on receiving a large number of German immigrants in key western states, but many Keystone voters were disappointed by the failure of Republicans to show more deference to the nativist movement.⁷⁰

Meanwhile the fortunes of the American party continued to decline. Amid allegations of gross mismanagement over the course of their two-year reign in government, the party suffered defeat in Philadelphia's city election where Richard Vaux recaptured the mayor's office. Americans also performed poorly in New England's spring state elections.⁷¹ Nativism though retained a powerful interest in Pennsylvania that could prove costly if the national Republican party tried to distance itself too much. The anti-Catholic dogma of the Know Nothings was noticeable in many Pennsylvania Republican sheets. Editorials often combined anti-southern rhetoric with anti-Catholicism. "The elements of the Slave Power in this State," complained the Harrisburg *Telegraph*, "comprise the entire Catholic vote." Pennsylvania Republicans quickly learned to dislike Democrats for attracting the great majority of the Catholic and immigrant vote, consistently condemning the "thoughtless" fealty of Catholics. Moderate nativists could feel confident that some of their concerns would be addressed even if their original party dissolved.⁷² But many former-Pennsylvania Know Nothings were unconvinced by the actions of Republican leadership during 1856. The failure of

⁷⁰Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 19, 23, July 2; On the Vice Presidency controversy, T. Weed to Simon Cameron, November 12, Cameron papers, LC; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 244; Gienapp, *Origins*, *passim*.

⁷¹ The result in Philadelphia was: Vaux-D, 29,534 Moore-A, 25,445. No Republican candidate competed. For New England's Elections see Gienapp, *Origins*, 273-278.

⁷² Harrisburg *Telegraph*, October 25. The Philadelphia *North American* also had strong tinges of nativism.

the Republican party to attract a larger percentage of support from former Know Nothings cost them the election in 1856.

Both Democrats and Republicans hoped to receive votes from the disintegrating American party.⁷³ Yet both parties also felt compelled to ridicule those Americans who choose to side with their enemies. The Democratic *Pennsylvanian* was quite torn in what attitude to adopt. Although the paper felt that the alliance between nativists and Republicans would not last, it was still disgusted to see the two groups working together declaring: “the bargain . . . between certain false Fillmore men, who profess to be for Fillmore, and are anxious only to get themselves into place at the expense of national principles, and the straight out Fremont leaders, is evidently a mere rope of sand, and will be blown into the air in a very short time.”⁷⁴ Democrats were often placed in an awkward position as they saw the American party break up. They hoped to secure disillusioned members, but felt compelled to ridicule Republicans for seeking nativist support and often criticized those Americans who chose to side with Fremont as sellouts. The same *Pennsylvanian*, which seemed so upset at Americans who sold out Fillmore, could also insist that, “the object of the Fillmore leaders in Pennsylvania is to assist the Abolitionists to elect their State ticket in October.”⁷⁵

⁷³ Harrisburg *Telegraph*, October 11; For Democrats: Pittsburgh *Post*, November 1; George A. Crawford to William Bigler, August 9, Bigler papers, HSP; Benjamin Parke to James Buchanan, August 7, Buchanan papers, HSP.

⁷⁴ *Pennsylvanian* quoted Pittsburgh *Post*, September 17.

⁷⁵ *Pennsylvanian* quoted, Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, July 28. Jeremiah Sullivan Black was an especially harsh critic of Know Nothings even though other Democrats pleaded for their support. J. S. Black to James Buchanan, July 12, Buchanan papers, HSP; The Union-loving Fillmore often earned personal praise from Democrats see: Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, October 6.

Despite moments of schizophrenia when dealing with the American party, Democrats were wholly attuned to the seriousness of their position. As they saw one mortal enemy slip into premature decline another was threatening the very existence of the Union they loved so much. Pennsylvania Democrats entered 1856 much stronger than the national organization. Consequently, many eyes turned to the old Keystone State for rescue. In March 1856 the Pennsylvania Democratic state convention recommended that the national party nominate James Buchanan for President. His experience, his integrity, his conservatism, and his availability all combined to make him the front-runner to rescue the Union from the dual demons of American party nativism and Black-Republican abolitionism.

III

Although Franklin Pierce still had support for a second term in the South and among some New Englanders, his troubled Presidency had earned him few devoted supporters in Pennsylvania. The old bachelor of Wheatland seemed to be the answer. “A refusal to nominate you,” insisted a Somerset Democrat, “would as certainly bring defeat to us in Pennsylvania.”⁷⁶ Buchanan had a long record of national service and was generally well respected in most political circles. Unlike Stephen A. Douglas, another leading contender for the nomination, no direct link could be made between Buchanan and the Kansas trouble. Others felt that the sixty-five year old simply deserved a term as President for all his years of service.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Isaac Hansas to James Buchanan, May 5, Buchanan papers, HSP. “Wheatland” was the name of Buchanan’s Lancaster home.

⁷⁷ Philip S. Klein, *James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1962).

Although Democrats opened the year with apparently little to fear from the underdeveloped Republican party, the rise of sectional tensions worried many in Pennsylvania including Buchanan: “We shall, I firmly believe triumph in the conflict and save the Union,” he assured Virginia’s Henry Wise, “but . . . we shall have a more bitter fight in front than we have ever yet encountered.”⁷⁸ The Kansas turmoil was a serious problem for many Democrats, but party rhetoric focused on questioning the validity of Republican complaints. “We know not, when receiving Kansas news,” stated the usually nonpartisan Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, “whether we are getting real facts or only the exaggerated distortions of every crazy partisan.” After the ‘sack’ of Lawrence the Erie *Observer* scoffed, “the abolitionists wish these rumors true, because they make capital for their party.”⁷⁹

Pennsylvania’s Democrats had to respond to Republican’s Free Labor arguments as well as the Kansas troubles. “Workingmen,” declared the Pittsburgh *Post*, “be not blinded to your own home interests by a senseless and lying clamor about a remote territory that will be a free State, and peaceably too, if the abolitionists let it alone.” Northern Democrats were continually embarrassed by comments coming from their southern brethren. Few were willing to defend southerners’ more outrageous acts. However, Democrats would not sit quietly and let Republicans agitate the slavery question. Many felt that

⁷⁸ James Buchanan quoted, Myers, *Republican Party*, 113.

⁷⁹ Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, May 26; Erie *Observer*, May 31; Also see, B. W. Lacey to William Bigler, August 19; W. Hutter to James Buchanan, June 9, and William Bigler to Buchanan, June 28, Buchanan papers, HSP.

Republicans opened themselves up to racist attacks when they criticized the institution.⁸⁰

Even if slavery was not popular in the Keystone State, Republican antislavery commitments could still be a political liability with the state's racist electorate. Racism was at the core of many Democratic attacks on the Republicans. The *Pennsylvanian*, based in Philadelphia, was arguably the most virulently racist Democratic organ in the state. "If free niggers are so elevated by the mere nomination of Fremont," it stated in October, "their overbearing insolence would be insufferable if there was any probability of his being elected. White people would hardly be allowed to trespass upon the street by these odoriferous Republicans." The *Pittsburgh Post*, which was more restrained in its racism than most Democratic organs nonetheless relied on it. "There is no disguising now the fact that the one practical element of the Black Republican party is to abolish slavery and elevate the negro race to an equal social and political condition with the white race," it declared shortly before the election.⁸¹

While Democrats nobly defended Catholics and European immigrants constantly, they could find few good things to say about African Americans be they slave or free.⁸² "Know Nothings and abolitionists—what a hideous amalgamation of treasons!" declared Jeremiah S. Black. Racism was a devoutly held belief for many Pennsylvanians, and Philadelphia was arguably the most

⁸⁰ *Pittsburgh Post*, October 16 (quotation), September 15.

⁸¹ *Pennsylvanian*, October 11, quoted in William Dusinger, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856-1865*, 28; *Pittsburgh Post*, October 16; James Buchanan to William Bigler, August 19, Bigler papers, HSP; For attacks on slavery from a Democratic pastor see *Gettysburg Republican Compiler*, January 14.

⁸² For one of the numerous examples of Democratic hatred of nativism see: *Gettysburg Republican Compiler*, February 4.

racist place in the North. The *Dispatch*, one of the city's nonpartisan papers, succinctly summed up its opinions: "it would be beneficial for the country if the whole black population could be removed from the soil to some other clime." Such attitudes help explain the power of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania, but racism was hardly the only weapon the party held.⁸³

The Democratic national convention completed its business relatively smoothly. Meeting in Cincinnati during the early days of June the convention preformed the party a considerable service by presenting a unified front. Even with the turmoil of the Pierce administration Democrats faced nowhere near the contentiousness that would plague them four years later. To the great delight of many in Pennsylvania, James Buchanan received the nomination. "I give Fremont all possible credit," admitted leading Pittsburgh Democrat William Wilkins, "but I have no idea of placing him over such a man as Mr. Buchanan."⁸⁴

Republicans were understandably less impressed with the nomination. "Buchanan is an Old Fogey of the worst kind," declared the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, "but the battle will be fought on the great question of the day, on the issues between Freedom and Slavery."⁸⁵ Slavery remained at the center of Republican attacks upon Democrats. Even if Pennsylvania did not maintain the antislavery passions of states like Massachusetts and Ohio, Republicans still used the campaign against the spread of slavery as the base of their arguments. What were

⁸³ J. S. Black to James Buchanan, August 11, Buchanan papers, HSP; *Dispatch*, May 25, quoted, Dusinger, *Civil War Issues*, 44-45. James Buchanan was not a demagogue; his racism could hardly be compared to that of Stephen Douglas.

⁸⁴ *Pittsburgh Post*, June 10, August 29 (quotation); W. McLean, to William Bigler, June 28, Bigler papers, HSP.

⁸⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 9.

perceived as the proslavery planks of the Cincinnati platform where constantly attacked. One placard at a Pittsburgh Republican rally reportedly read: “Wanted 1000 Niggers for Wheatland. A plank from the Cincinnati platform.”

Pennsylvania Democrats however, constantly defended their party’s policies in Kansas, insisting that their party was not determined to expand slavery. “That Mr. Buchanan is in favor of extending slavery every one {sic} knows to be a falsehood,” insisted the Pittsburgh *Post*. “No man could assert a greater falsehood than to say that the Democracy of the Free States are in favor of Slavery in any shape or form,” declared Franklin County’s Democratic paper.⁸⁶

The campaign of 1856 would take on revolutionary qualities in Pennsylvania. All parties did their best to alert voters to the seriousness of the political situation, frequently harkening back to the days when the nation struggled for its independence to make their point. Both Americans and Democrats cloaked themselves in the flag and insisted they could save the Union from radicalism. But it was Republicans who seemed to evoke the most stirring portraits of the Revolution. “Politically, we are now as much in a state of revolution as our fathers were in 1776,” declared the Pittsburgh *Gazette*. “Freemen of Beaver County,” cried the Beaver *Argus*, “[the] words of Jefferson now appeal to you. Fremont is their representative—the representative of freedom. Buchanan is the representative of their opposite—the representative of

⁸⁶ Rally reported on by Pittsburgh *Gazette*, September 18; Pittsburgh *Post*, July 28; Chambersburg *Valley Spirit*, quoted Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, September 15.

slavery.” Sectional tensions had created a very sharp atmosphere in the Keystone State. But Pennsylvanians still wanted a peaceful solution in 1856.⁸⁷

IV

In addition to the threatening section tensions, the Presidential campaign was also quite vigorous due to the highly fluid nature of party membership. Unlike the years before 1852 and after 1860, the chances that a voter would switch parties were high in 1856. For Republicans, and Americans dissatisfied with the nomination of Fillmore, the major struggle of the campaign was forming a unified Presidential ticket. At the outset of the year Republicans seemed to be operating from a disadvantage. A state committee that was more concerned with nativism than antislavery handicapped the party severely. But by the summer even William Jessup, who had helped undermine the party the year before, was ready to admit that the slavery question should be at the forefront of any unified opposition party. The reports after the first attempt to unify the anti-Democratic forces in the state were largely positive. The *Gazette* declared that the March 26 Harrisburg Union convention proved that although the opposition in Pennsylvania was divided, “a large majority of the freemen of this State are agreed upon the momentous issues forced upon the country by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.” Editor D. N. White, who had hesitated in his support for fusion with former Know Nothings, was pleased that Republican principles apparently

⁸⁷ Beaver *Argus*, October 17; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, July 4. The Gettysburg *Star and Banner* claimed Fremont sought, “to restore the National policy which Washington and his compeers inaugurated.” Quoted Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, September 22.

would find their way into the platform of the state's opposition party, even if it would not be officially referred to as the Republican party.⁸⁸

Although the American party's support had dissipated considerably across the North, the party still retained a considerable and critical number of resilient supporters throughout Pennsylvania. Many observers felt that their votes would account for the difference at the polls. But even if the votes of former Know Nothings could provide the margin of victory in October, there was no guarantee that they would back Fremont in the far more important November election. Simon Cameron declared we must "convince the people that Fremont can be elected and that Fillmore, as is the truth, has not the shadow of a chance." Some former backers of Fillmore were convinced; Republicans newspapers constantly printed the names of papers or notable persons who made the switch. The proslavery aggressions of the South were the most consistent reason for the change that papers cited. The Gettysburg *Star and Banner* explained as it announced its switch to Fremont that the, "fixed purpose of the Southern politicians to convert the National Government into an engine for the furtherance of the purposes of Slavery propagandists, can no longer be doubted."⁸⁹

However, not all Fillmore men could be convinced. For as Alexander McClure later stated, "a large proportion of the Know Nothings of the North were strongly conservative on the slavery question." Correspondents consistently pressed Simon Cameron, who had many connections with old Know Nothings, to

⁸⁸ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, March 29; Stephen Mills to Simon Cameron, August 8, Cameron papers DCHS.

⁸⁹ Simon Cameron to Edwin Morgan, and Gettysburg *Star and Banner*, June 27 both quoted in Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 239, 227; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, July 17.

do what he could to play down the influence of Republicanism and create a unified Presidential ticket. "It would fully commit all the conservative Americans," pleaded one such correspondent, "many of whom will not support a ticket selected by the Republicans alone." No unified Presidential ballot existed despite the presence of a united state ticket. Consequently, pessimism began to set in on the Republican side. Pennsylvania Democrats on the other hand were confident that such holdouts would be enough to hand them victory.⁹⁰

A core group of Fillmore supporters refused to form a unified Presidential ticket. These men usually despised the antislavery radicalism of the Republican party. Some of the leaders of the Fillmore group even secretly worked with Democratic chairman John W. Forney to assure Republican defeat. Even more outrageously, elements within the American party attempted to 'slander' John C. Fremont by claiming that he was a Catholic. Pennsylvania Republicans devoted scores of editorials and were forced to spend valuable campaign funds to account for this poisonous accusation. "I do not see that anything can be said with regard to Col. Fremont's religion that has not already been said," an exasperated Horace Greeley explained to Simon Cameron. Some Republicans countered these accusations by pointing out that a Catholic convent educated Fillmore's daughter and that he had had a positive meeting with the Pope while visiting Rome.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Alexander K. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 245-46; Stephen Mills to Simon Cameron, August 28, Cameron papers, DCHS; Nimrod Strickland August 11, to Bigler, John Velt to Bigler, August 2, John C. Evans, September 7, to Bigler, Bigler papers, HSP.

⁹¹ Horace Greeley to Simon Cameron, September 15, Cameron Papers, LC; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, July 21, September 6. A Catholic priest married Fremont and his wife Jessis, but he remained a Protestant.

Most Republicans were outraged by the obstructionism of the Fillmore men. “The feud is now pretty bitter between the Fillmore and Fremont men,” noted Democratic Congressman J. Glancey Jones. But some Republicans would later admit that much of the blame for the schism rested with their state’s own party forces. “I do not know to what extent the straight ticket will injure us,” admitted Stevens. “Our fatal mistake was delaying to form our ticket until it is too late to smash the Sanderson Party,” he stated in reference to the straight-Fillmore leader.⁹²

In addition to the difficulty attracting former Know Nothings, Keystone Republicans also had to deal with Democratic accusations that they were Union-threatening radicals.⁹³ Most Republicans insisted that the Union faced no real threat from southern loudmouths. “As to treats of disunion and serration,” stated the *Philadelphia North American*, “they are simply nonsense. The South cannot exist without the North.” The *North American* insisted that if the South were to secede, the North would have to be called upon to rescue it from slave insurrections.⁹⁴

Both the Republican and Democratic camps exulted over their success in winning converts during the 1856 campaign. Democrats took particular pride in announcing the conversion of former Whigs to the Jacksonian standard. The most notable Pennsylvania Whigs who agree to support Buchanan were William B. Reed, John Randall, Joseph R. Chandler, and the Ingersoll family of

⁹² J. G. Jones to James Buchanan, July 20. Buchanan papers, HSP; Thaddeus Stevens to E. D. Gazzam, August 24, McPherson papers, LC.

⁹³ *Pittsburgh Post*, July 19; James Buchanan to William Bigler, August 19, Bigler papers, HSP; John W. Forney to Henry Wise, July 8, Forney papers, LC.

⁹⁴ *Philadelphia North American*, August 11, quoted in Dusinger, *Civil War Issues*, 38.

Philadelphia.⁹⁵ Democrats also claimed to have secured the votes of former Know Nothings, some of who may have left the Democratic party temporarily in 1854. Vying for the support of former Whigs was almost as important as the attempts to gain the vote of former American party supporters. The Whig vote may have been a decisive factor in the Democratic victory, especially in the southeastern part of the state. Most former Whigs though, either aligned with the Republicans, or left the electorate.⁹⁶

While former Whigs made up the majority of the Pennsylvania Republican party, a sizable minority were ex-Democrats. Along with the former Free Soilers David Wilmot and Congressman Galusha Grow, Simon Cameron, John M. Read of Philadelphia, James K. Moorhead of Allegheny County, and former Treasury Secretary Samuel Ingham, came out in favor of Fremont.⁹⁷ The biggest recruiting victories for Republicans however, came in the form of mass support from the state's northern and western districts. Political observers, Democratic and Republican, predicted well before balloting began that Republicanism would win a majority in places like Pittsburgh, Erie, and Towanda. We must have some "help or we will sink," pleaded one Potter County Democrat. "The people of Western Pennsylvania are against you," insisted the Pittsburgh *Gazette*, "You cannot rally them to the Filibuster, Nigger-Driving, Slavery-Extending, Ten-

⁹⁵ Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, July 21, August 18.

⁹⁶ Harrisburg *Telegraph*, October 24; Isaac Hansas to James Buchanan, May 25, Buchanan papers, HSP. The Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 16, thought it was "absurd" that Whigs would vote for their old enemy Buchanan.

⁹⁷ Myers, *Republican Party*, 111; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, October 13.

cents-a-day Standard.”⁹⁸ Overwhelming support in the north and west pleased many Republicans. But these successes were not enough to win the state.

Pennsylvania Democrats had one giant advantage over Republicans. Their organizing capabilities, especially the ability to raise money to support speakers and distribute propaganda, were far superior to those of the newly-organized Republican party. The skill of John W. Forney in managing the Democratic campaign was critical in the minds of many contemporary and historical observers. Although Republicans operated from a great disadvantage because they had to start virtually from scratch in organizing party machinery, their level of disorganization was hard to account for. Quarreling persisted between former Whigs and Democrats, especially between Simon Cameron, who was also the leading private financier for the party, and the ex-Whig state chairman. The shortcomings of the state’s Republican committee had forced Cameron to become more personally and financially involved. This was the beginning of Cameron’s influence upon Pennsylvania’s Republican party, which he would eventually run. But the effects of his leadership in 1856 were questionable.⁹⁹

Out-of-state Republicans, who eventually had to assist their Keystone State brethren, were highly disappointed with the party’s organization. One leading party functionary expressed his disgust shortly before the election: “if we

⁹⁸ D.W. James to William Bigler, August 18, (quotation), P. McCormic to Bigler, August 20, Bigler papers, HSP; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 11 (quotation), July 14; John W. Forney to Buchanan, July 20, George W. Bacon to Buchanan, August 4, Christopher Ward to Buchanan September 10, Buchanan papers, HSP; J. Pones to Simon Cameron, September 15, Cameron papers, DCHS. Buchanan had long been accused of stating that workers could survive on ten cents a day.

⁹⁹ T. Weed to Simon Cameron, August 16, Simon Cameron, to T. Weed, November 9, Cameron papers, LC; Compare to: Nimrod Strickland, August 11, and A. Stahler, August 13, to William Bigler, Bigler papers, HSP; John W. Forney, September 10, and 26 to James Buchanan, Buchanan papers, HSP; Gienapp, *Origins*, 400.

hope to carry Pa we must literally lift & carry it.” The highly pessimistic Thaddeus Stevens could simply add that, “the State is worse managed this campaign than I ever knew it.” Despite the tremendous strides that the party had made in less than a years time, few Pennsylvania Republicans seriously believed that victory would greet them at the polls.¹⁰⁰

V

The October result was surprisingly close. Some Republican journals even declared that the Union ticket had prevailed, but they eventually had to admit a heart-wrenchingly close defeat. The three Democratic candidates defeated their Union ticket opponents by an average 212,700 to 209,400 tally. Democrats retained a six-vote majority in the state legislature and a three-vote majority in the joint assembly. Fifteen Democrats won seats in Congress while ten opposition candidates won election. As expected, Republicans had made little progress in Philadelphia. The one opposition man to win election to Congress, E. Joy Morris, had little tolerance for Republicanism, while the only real Republican to run in Philadelphia, William Kelly, received only 2,457 votes out of the 17,500 cast in his district.¹⁰¹

The statewide Union ticket vote improved on the Fusion vote in the off year election of 1855 by 60,000 and was even 8,000 higher than the combined Whig and Know Nothing vote that James Pollock received in 1854. Democrats

¹⁰⁰ William B. Reed to James Buchanan, October 11, Buchanan papers, HSP; Henry B. Stanton and Thaddeus Stevens, quoted Gienapp, *Origins*, 397, 398; Myers, *Republican Party*, 127.

¹⁰¹ The full results were: Canal Commission, Scott-D, 212,925 Cochran-U, 210,172; Auditor Gen., Fry-D, 212,925 Phelps-U, 209,261; Surveyor Gen., Rowe-D, 212,623 Laporte-U, 208,888. Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, October 18; William Gienapp estimates turnout at 72.7 percent, *Origins*, 401. Newspapers were not clear on the legislative majorities, but the voting for Senator in 1857 indicates these numbers.

though, drew 50,000 more votes than they received in 1855 and 45,000 more than two years previous. Several Republicans declared that Democrats had only obtained victory through fraud, alleging that a large number of illegal ballots were cast in Philadelphia; accusations that Democrats steadfastly refuted.¹⁰²

After the October defeat, Keystone Republicans attempted a mad scramble, trying to get all Fillmore voters to switch to Fremont. Even though Fillmore no longer even had a chance to throw the vote into the U.S. House, his staunchest supporters in Pennsylvania would not agree to the withdrawal of his ticket. But an agreement was reached with some elements of the Fillmore group and a joint electoral ticket was formed in late October. Twenty-six electors would be shared by the two parties, with the name of either Fillmore or Fremont rounding out the ticket. If this ticket won the state, the candidate with the most ballots headed with his name would win twenty-six electoral votes. However, most leaders of the state's American party, including John Sanderson, would not support the fusion movement. And so, a straight Fillmore ticket remained available. The 26,303 men who cast ballots for the straight Fillmore ballot very nearly provided the margin of victory for Democrat James Buchanan.

Buchanan triumphed over the fusion opposition ticket 230,101 to 203,288. While fewer than 150,000 voters supported Fremont over Fillmore on the fusion ticket, he would have won Pennsylvania's electoral votes under the terms of the October agreement if 30,000 more votes had gone to the dual ticket. Republicans quite reasonably cited the stubbornness of the straight Fillmore men for their

¹⁰² Harrisburg *Telegraph*, October 16; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, October 18; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, October 20; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 292.

defeat. “What was the effect of the straight out ticket? To help BUCHANAN!,” concluded the Harrisburg *Telegraph*. The disagreement over the party’s Vice-Presidential choice was also cited in election postmortems. Others cited the popularity of native son James Buchanan.¹⁰³

The closeness of the result in October and November belied the weakness of the Republican party in Pennsylvania. Although it had performed very strongly in the extreme western and northern sections of the state, the party was woefully underrepresented in several populous eastern and central counties. Buchanan received 30,000 more votes than Fremont in Philadelphia County alone. Millard Fillmore had considerably more supporters than Fremont in several southeastern counties. In York County Fremont was outpolled by the combined Fillmore vote by nearly 4,000. Fremont received less than thirty-three percent of the vote in thirty-three of Pennsylvania’s sixty-four counties including highly populated Philadelphia, Berks, Dauphin, and Schuylkill.

Despite their relatively poor showing, Pennsylvania Republicans held out great hope. “The campaign which concluded on the 4th of November in the temporary defeat of the great Republican party,” insisted the Pittsburgh *Gazette*, “disclosed nevertheless, such strength in various portions of the Republic, as is an excellent omen for the future.” Democrats also had great hopes for the future. Many pointed to both the October and November victories and the relative calm that had descended upon Kansas; mostly the result, they claimed, of another Pennsylvania Democrat John W. Geary. However, their predictions of a future

¹⁰³ Harrisburg *Telegraph*, November 6 (quotation), October 20. T. Weed to Simon Cameron, November 12, Cameron papers, LC. The total vote in Pennsylvania was: Buchanan, 230,700 50.1% Fremont, 147,510 32.0% Fillmore-fusion, 55,838 12.1% Fillmore-straight, 26,338 5.7%.

blessed by serenity seem tragically ironic. “The Inauguration of James Buchanan,” declared Gettysburg’s Democratic paper, “will form a new era in the history of the country. It will be the rainbow of peace to the nation and tend to strengthen and consolidate the bonds of the Union, and add to the glory and perpetuity of the Republic.” James Buchanan’s administration would not meet these expectations. Nowhere would his party pay a higher price for that failure than in the Keystone State.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 6, 1857; *Beaver Argus*, November 12.

CHAPTER 4

“You Know How Sensitive Our People Are About Slavery”

The Chaos of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party, 1857-1859

If the Republican party hoped to capture the presidency in 1860 winning in Pennsylvania was a virtual necessity. To achieve majority status in the Keystone State Republicans would have to absorb the greater part of the nativist and conservative Fillmore vote. Nativist principles and the American party were still formidable at the end of 1856. “We believe,” declared the Harrisburg *Herald* that “more than two-thirds in this State, who voted with the Republicans at the late election, on the grounds of expediency, are soundly American at heart.” It was clear to all but their most strident believers however, that the American party itself was mortally weakened after Fillmore’s defeat. One key question remained. Could enough of these nativists and conservatives accept the principally antislavery Republican party to swing the Keystone State away from Democracy?¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Harrisburg *Herald*, November 25, 1856. All primary sources in this section are from 1857 until otherwise noted.

In many ways, the solution to this quandary lay not with the Republicans themselves, but with their rivals. The four years of turmoil that ravaged Democrats after the election of Buchanan helped the Republican cause immensely. The American problem also resolved itself. After 1857 the Republican party was finally free from American competition for anti-Democratic votes. While many Fillmore voters never accepted Republican hegemony, the death of the American party only benefited the Republican alliance. The agonies of the Democratic party proved even more profitable. Eventually, the coalition that presented James Buchanan with an unprecedented vote in 1856 proved untenable. Slavery continued to splinter Democracy. Patronage squabbles and policy differences intensified long-welling internal fissures, and a lack of cohesive party policy on banking, railroads, and tariffs left Keystone Democrats unprepared for economic crisis. Voters deserted en masse; some to the sidelines, others to the Republicans. Ultimately, the years between 1856 and 1860 are best described as a period of Democratic and American failure.

I

The Republican party achieved its first major victory in Pennsylvania early in 1857. Even though his elevation was somewhat tainted by charges of bribery, the election of Simon Cameron to the U. S. Senate was a tremendous boost to the heretofore struggling party. At the same time, the failure of Democrats to hold their legislative majority during the electoral struggle harkened ill tidings for the future of the state party. The factional squabbling, which the Senatorial election exposed, would continue to plague the Pennsylvania

Democratic party throughout James Buchanan's presidency, consistently providing Republicans with an opportunity for victory. The internal decomposition--even if it was minor compared to other northern states--of the Keystone Democratic party was essential to Republican triumphs after 1856.

The humiliating setback to the control of his own party was a dark omen for James Buchanan. As the chief political officer in the nation Buchanan was tasked with addressing the nearly all-consuming desire for patronage. While cabinet officers filled the majority of patronage slots, Buchanan personally controlled the selections for Pennsylvania's key positions. As he embarked upon his arduous task Buchanan not only had to be careful not to neglect or outrage any of the various cliques within the Keystone Democracy--as he was obligated to keep the party as cohesive as possible--but he also had to make sure his selections did not offend his powerful southern supporters. Finding a worthy reward for John W. Forney proved to be Buchanan's most troubling task. Although he had been a valuable campaign manager in 1856, Forney had acquired many personal enemies in Pennsylvania and across the South. Thus Buchanan decided he could not have Forney in his cabinet nor could he edit the official national administration newspaper. Finally, Buchanan decided he would champion Forney for Pennsylvania's soon to be open Senatorial seat.¹⁰⁶

Richard Brodhead, who had little support for a second term, was due to exit the Senate in March.¹⁰⁷ Pennsylvania's Democratic leadership reportedly

¹⁰⁶ John F. Coleman, *The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 103-105; Philip Klein, *James Buchanan*, 264-66; Robert Tyler to James Buchanan, January 23, 1857, Philip G. Auchampaugh, *Robert Tyler: Southern Rights Champion, 1847-1866* (Duluth, 1934), 74-75.

¹⁰⁷ G. W. Childs to William Bigler, January 3, Bigler papers, HSP.

desired to replace him with former congressman Henry D. Foster of Westmoreland County. However, after failing to obtain a place in the cabinet, Forney decided that he would accept elevation to the Senate. Begrudgingly, the Democratic legislative caucus approved his nomination in early January. In the interim, Simon Cameron had secured the unified backing of Republicans and remaining American legislators. Rumors were now flying that he could secure at least three Democratic votes, which would overturn their slim majority.¹⁰⁸

As revealed in the first chapter, Cameron did indeed receive the necessary three votes, thus securing his election. Democrats howled with acerbic incredulity at Cameron's "treachery," but much of the blame clearly rested upon their own party.¹⁰⁹ Eleven Democrats failed to heed the dictation of Buchanan and voted against Forney. Some western legislators were apparently upset that the Philadelphia resident Forney would replace Brodhead, who lived in New Jersey bordering Northampton County. Both of the Democratic candidates who received dissenting votes hailed from the western end of the state.¹¹⁰ Yet it seems that the unpopularity of Forney, along with the deft management of opposition forces by Cameron, were the leading causes of the stunning upset.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ P. Hamman to Cameron, November 18, 1856, J. Madeia to Cameron, November 28, 1856, and J. ? [West Chester], to Cameron, December 12, 1856, Cameron papers, DCHS; J. Kirkpatrick, to Cameron, November 22, 1856, Joseph Wilkens, to Cameron, December 12, Cameron papers, LC; For apprehension on Forney's candidacy see: G. R. Barrett to William Bigler, January 5, Bigler papers, HSP; John W. Forney to James Buchanan, January 10, 11, 13, Buchanan papers, HSP.

¹⁰⁹ *Pittsburgh Post*, January 14, 15, 16, 17; *Gettysburg Republican Compiler*, January 26; H. M. North to William Bigler, January 15, Bigler papers HSP.

¹¹⁰ The full result was: Cameron 67 votes, Forney 58, Henry Foster 7, William Wilkins 1.

¹¹¹ W. L. Hallowell to Simon Cameron, January 15, E. Kitchen, to Cameron, January 21, among many others, Cameron papers, DCHS; P. Martin to Cameron, January 13, George Lean, to Cameron, January 20, Cameron papers, LC. As a sop to his patronage needs, Forney eventually obtained the editorship of the *Philadelphia Press*: J. W. Forney to Jeremiah S. Black, July 5, Black papers, LC.

The Senatorial election was hardly the only grief that the new president would suffer during 1857. The “rainbow of peace” never materialized in the wake of the stormy Pierce administration. The corrosive forces of Buchanan’s administration took time to mature though. The Dred Scott decision outraged many Pennsylvanians, but it does not seem to have been as effective as the Kansas troubles of 1856 in mobilizing Republicans. Kansas itself seemed to offer no new issues in 1857. “The Kansas question, thank Heaven, will soon be put to rest,” assured the *Pittsburgh Post* in September.¹¹² James Buchanan’s first year in office provided much controversy, but it would not produce the political convulsions that would plague his second year.

II

Pennsylvania’s gubernatorial contest was arguably the most critical election of 1857. Yet, the race failed to arouse the interest or turnout of the preceding year’s presidential election, ultimately providing little more than the groundwork for future campaigns. While the Democratic party was able to lay aside its traumatic January Senate defeat and cruise to victory, Republicans instead focused on strengthening their political base. Winning--admittedly a tall order in light of the party’s shortcomings in 1856--was not their foremost goal. Keystone Republicans instead used the governor’s campaign to establish the ideological dominance of antislavery within the state’s anti-administration coalition.

Although the final margin of their defeat was disturbing, most Pennsylvania Republicans concluded in the wake of the election that they had

¹¹²*Pittsburgh Post*, September 12. For Dred Scott: *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 7, and 26.

accomplished their broadest mission: independent nativism was finally crushed. Although a considerable number of American party holdouts refused to accept Republican hegemony within the anti-Democratic coalition for 1857, the gubernatorial election proved that their party was finished in Pennsylvania. Even if Republicans would have to yield some minor concessions in future elections in order to attract the most pliable American holdouts, they would be negotiating from a position of considerable strength after 1857. The Americans who objected to Republicanism too much to ever join its ranks, generally drifted out of the electorate after 1857.¹¹³

Although the failure to unite on John W. Forney for the Senatorial election suggested that Keystone Democrats were vulnerable to dissension, the party's state convention passed harmoniously. William F. Packer, a well-respected veteran of state politics, received the gubernatorial nomination.¹¹⁴ The opposition 'Union' convention was considerably more contentious as Republicans endeavored to dominate a coalition that still seemed too conservative to some antislavery men. Although the nominations for the two lesser state offices went to Americans, David Wilmot's selection for the governorship offended many conservatives and nativists within the 'Union' coalition. Wilmot, a former Free Soil Democrat from Bradford County, had never openly joined the Know Nothing movement, instead moving directly into the Republican party. Combined with a

¹¹³ Coleman, 106-09; Alexander McClure, *Old Time Notes* I, 300; Charles Going, *David Wilmot*, 496-514. Voters would also choose a canal commissioner and a state supreme court justice in October, as well as a new legislature and a third of the state senate. Many Democrats also looked forward to the death of the American party. See: D. Weyands to Jeremiah S. Black, September 28, Black papers, LC.

¹¹⁴ Erie *Observer*, March 7;

party platform that was heavy on antislavery and light on nativist issues, was Wilmot's acceptance letter, which virtually ignored all issues not germane to the slavery question. In the letter he tersely quipped that: "I have not time to speak of the other topics." Wilmot was a brazen choice for a party that was not yet united.¹¹⁵

It was all too much for those in the anti-Democratic alliance who had not fully accepted Republicanism, most of whom had voted for Fillmore in 1856. Disaffected American-coalitionists sent Wilmot a public questionnaire and attempted to have him affirm his nativist credentials. Although he complied, and convinced some hesitant Americans, Wilmot remained too radical and too unconvincingly nativist for many Pennsylvanians. American leadership now decided that they should select a gubernatorial nominee of their own.¹¹⁶ Isaac Hazlehurst, a Philadelphia American who had opposed the unified Fremont/Fillmore presidential ticket, was nominated to oppose Wilmot and Packer. This refusal by a core group of Americans to submit to Republican obstinacy virtually guaranteed that Wilmot would meet defeat. However, despite the high probability of defeat, Wilmot firmly believed that no further concessions should be made to the equally stubborn Americans. Most Pennsylvania Republicans seemed to agree.¹¹⁷

To no one's surprise Wilmot's campaign relied heavily on antislavery rhetoric. "Let the freemen of the North," he declared in his acceptance letter,

¹¹⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 4, April 22.

¹¹⁶ Wilmot's letter is printed in full: *Pittsburgh Gazette*, April 22; For the questionnaire and Wilmot's response see: Going, 732-33.

¹¹⁷ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 6; Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 261-62; David Wilmot to Lemuel Todd, August 8, James McPherson papers, LC; *Pottsville Miners' Journal*, July 4.

“announce in language firm and unmistakable their purpose to resist the spread of slavery.” The now portly Wilmot toured the state with uncharacteristic vigor, but he seemed to add little to the political dialogue that had not already been debated in the bygone presidential race. Wilmot challenged Packer to join him in a series of public debates--a strategy that Abraham Lincoln would turn to in 1858--but sensing that it would serve him no advantage, Packer declined.¹¹⁸

Democrats concentrated on attacking Wilmot’s antislavery passions, all the while benefiting from the relative calm in Kansas. “Why even now,” scoffed Senator William Bigler, “Mr. Wilmot and his party will not say that they will be content with the decision of the people, and admit Kansas as a State unless that decision be against slavery.” Wilmot seemed to want to discuss nothing other than slavery. “We doubt,” declared the *Observer* after Wilmot’s stop in Erie, “there is one man in one thousand in the county that can call to mind a single thought, outside of the negro question, that he impressed upon the popular mind.” “He can be supported only as an Abolition agitator,” agreed Gettysburg’s Democratic organ.¹¹⁹ In spite of the admitted organizational goal of the election year, many Republicans became frustrated with Wilmot’s candidacy. Funding problems again plagued the party, forcing Simon Cameron to foot much of the campaign bill for a second time.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Wilmot quoted Pittsburgh *Gazette*, May 5; William Packer to William Bigler, August 8, Bigler papers, HSP.

¹¹⁹ Erie *Observer*, September 19; Bigler quoted Pittsburgh *Post*, September 12; Gettysburg *Republican Compiler*, April 6.

¹²⁰ A. B. Anderson to Simon Cameron, September 29, David Wilmot to Cameron, October 8, Cameron papers, LC.

The gubernatorial race seemed outright boring to many casual observers. Even partisan leaders expressed frustration at the lack of contestable issues aside from the eternal slavery question. “The old issues which formerly entered into campaigns and made them interesting,” opined the *Pittsburgh Post*, “such as the tariff, banks, distribution of the proceeds of public lands, etc., are not now heard of... every other question swallowed by the one idea of slavery.” As autumn summoned the election many Pennsylvanians were more concerned with a worsening economic situation than a sterile governor’s election. “The financial troubles,” admitted the *Philadelphia North American*, “are of too engrossing a nature to leave room for much of public interest.” The *North American*, which had supported Fremont in 1856, did not even bother to mention the election until the last days of the campaign, a trait that was shared by many papers.¹²¹

Democrats never seriously doubted that victory would be theirs.¹²² In an election that drew only about the same number of voters as the 1851 gubernatorial election seven years earlier, Packer easily defeated Wilmot. Packer obtained 188,846 votes, Wilmot 146,139, and the American Hazlehurst 28,168. The average margin of victory in the four statewide races--which Democrats swept--was 16,000 votes. In perhaps a backlash from the election of Cameron to the Senate, Democrats rolled up an uncontested majority in the legislative house and senate.¹²³

¹²¹ *Pittsburgh Post*, August 31; *Philadelphia North American*, October 9 quoted in Stamp, *American in 1857*, 247; William Dusenberre, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia*, 66; John M Kirkpatrick to Simon Cameron, August 24, Cameron papers, LC; Adams *Sentinel*, October 9; Pottsville *Miners’ Journal*, July 4.

¹²² C. R. Buckalew, to Jeremiah S. Black, August 28, William Bigler, to Black, August 26, R. Greenhaus to Black, September 5, George M. Lauman, to Black, September 6, Black papers, LC.

¹²³ Adams *Sentinel*, October 19.

The voting pattern was largely the same as the previous year's presidential race, with Republicans winning big in the northern and western sections of the state while performing poorly in the east. The greatest source of embarrassment was in Philadelphia, where Hazlehurst outpolled Wilmot. Although Wilmot attracted more votes than Fremont in several eastern counties, he distantly trailed in nearly all of them. Democratic turnout though was also down significantly from 1856. Although confidence in victory may explain some of the drop off, it also seems that former Whigs, who had helped to swell Buchanan's vote, were hesitant to become full-fledged Democrats.

Most Pennsylvania Republicans though seemed satisfied that they had gained the result that they desired. "Such a defeat may have been needed to consolidate the party in the state," admitted future congressman Edward McPherson. Alexander McClure deemed the campaign "all that the Republican's leaders had hoped for. It practically eliminated the American organization as a political factor in the state." Even David Wilmot saw a bright future. "We have the material for a triumphant party in the state," he insisted. "Whenever it can be cordially combined in one organization, and this cannot much longer be prevented."¹²⁴

In October 1857 though, the Republican party still remained a distinct minority in Pennsylvania. Some Democrats even claimed that the party would disappear in light of three years of seeming failure.¹²⁵ Before the year elapsed however, a renewal of the Kansas controversy, and the deepening fiscal crisis

¹²⁴ Edward McPherson to Simon Cameron, October 15, Cameron papers, LC; McClure, *Old Time Notes* I, 304; Wilmot quoted Stamp, 250.

¹²⁵ *Pittsburgh Post*, October 17; *Erie Observer*, October 24.

opened new opportunities for Republican growth. Just as they finally obtained dominance within Pennsylvania's opposition coalition, fresh proslavery outrages in Kansas and continuing economic peril at home, propelled Republicans into power. Coupled with the expansion of state party doctrine to address both economic and local problems, the success of 1858 laid the foundation for the future domination of the Pennsylvania Republican party.

III

1857 was a difficult electoral year for Republicans throughout the North: Pennsylvania hosting only their most lopsided defeat. Salmon P. Chase barely held on to the governor's office in neighboring Ohio, while the party suffered a shocking loss in New York. 1858 though would be a different story. Another round of Kansas turmoil fuelled by dough-faced Democratic cupidity helped reinvigorate Republicans, and so outraged many northern Democrats that a considerable number either switched their allegiances or refused to vote in the fall elections. Pennsylvania's October elections were a startling reversal from the past three years of Democratic triumph.

The Lecompton controversy revolved around James Buchanan's decision to accept the result of Kansas's proslavery constitutional convention, which had assembled despite the boycott of free-soil settlers. Much to the dismay of Republicans, the proslavery Lecompton constitution stood before Congress in early 1858. "Should Congress... not refuse to admit the bogus State," cried the *Pottsville Miners' Journal*, "a tempest will arise unparalleled in the history of the

United States.”¹²⁶ Initially however, Pennsylvania Democrats seemed little more than irritated that Republicans were again trying to benefit from the well-traveled Kansas battleground. “The petty negro issues upon which the Kansas troubles are based,” moaned the now Democratic Harrisburg *Herald*, “have for more than ten years been forced upon the attention of the country by fanatics and demagogues, for selfish and unpatriotic purposes.” Many other Pennsylvania Democrats simply accepted the position of the national leadership and supported the admittance of Kansas as a slave state. Senator William Bigler swallowed some of his personal disapproval of Buchanan and became one the strongest northern supporters of Lecompton. New Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black and the majority of Pennsylvania Democratic leaders also agreed to support the administration.¹²⁷

But dissatisfaction with the administration’s Kansas policy began to surface in some Democratic newspapers and correspondence. “You know how sensitive our people are about slavery,” warned one correspondent of Senator Bigler. “I sincerely hope some plan will be carried through that will allay the prevailing alarm.” The questionable circumstances of Lecompton’s adoption made many Keystone Democrats balk at supporting another slave state. Yet most upsetting was the attempt of the administration to dictate congressional policy; an outrage that Illinois’s Stephen Douglas also refused to accept. “At this time, a

¹²⁶ Pottsville *Miners’ Journal*, November 22, 1857; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, January 8, 1858.

¹²⁷ Harrisburg *Herald*, February 9, 1858; Erie *Observer*, July 17; Lecompton supporters seemed considerably more numerous in my survey of Democratic correspondence see: B. Crawford to William Bigler, December 19, T. Livenford to Bigler, December 21, N. Strickland to Bigler, March 3, 1858. W. F. Boone to J. S. Black, February 8, John L Dawson to Black, April 4, Black papers, LC; James Buchanan to Robert Tyler, February 15, Auchampaugh, *Robert Tyler*, 232; Hereafter all years in this section are 1858, until otherwise noted.

large majority of Democrats here [agree] with Douglas and Walker,” warned a cadre of Indiana County Democrats.¹²⁸

A Douglas faction appeared in Pennsylvania soon after he spilt with the administration as a consequence of the English Bill. To hardly anyone’s surprise, John W. Forney led the new Democratic opposition.¹²⁹ Forney had been a headache while a party insider in early 1857, but his agitation from the fringes of the Democratic party would be a persistent thorn in the side for the rest of Buchanan’s term. Governor Packer also moved towards opposition to Lecompton, but he, unlike Forney tried to hold the Keystone Democracy together.¹³⁰

As Buchanan and Bigler pressed their fellow Democrats to fall in line, the resentment against the national administration--first evidenced in the Cameron election--began to intensify. The overt support of extreme southern positions outraged anti-Lecompton Democrats. The Harrisburg *Herald* asked if Buchanan’s ‘official’ state organ, the *Pennsylvanian*, would denounce all “who oppose some of the measures recommended by him? Or will it boldly take the ground it really maintains, and insist that northern Senators must blindly follow the lead of the President, while southern Senators may think for themselves?”¹³¹

Sensing they had a golden campaign issue, Pennsylvania Republicans let forth their sharpest anti-administration attacks yet. “The Policy of Mr. Buchanan’s

¹²⁸ T. J. Keenan, to William Bigler January 6, J. Alexander Fulton to Bigler, January 29; Joseph Thousou ? Et. All to William Bigler, December 12, 1857, Bigler papers, HSP. Walker was the Pennsylvania-born territorial governor of Kansas who came to oppose Buchanan; Jacob Crassell to Jeremiah S. Black, February 1, W. A. Smith to Black, February 26, Black papers, LC.

¹²⁹ J. W. Forney to Simon Cameron, May 25, Cameron papers, LC; J. W. Forney to Henry Wise, May 25, Forney papers, LC.

¹³⁰ On Packer see: F. W. Hughes to William Bigler, March 7, Thomas C. MacDowell to Bigler, March 23, Bigler papers, HSP.

¹³¹ Harrisburg *Herald*, February 22.

Administration upon this subject,” declared congressional nominee Edward McPherson “was probably the most flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of American Liberty known to our history.” Conservatives--who had so far been hesitant to embrace Republicanism--also railed against Lecompton. “Not one in a thousand of the people cares much whether [Kansas] be a slave state or a free state!” exclaimed Philadelphia businessman Sidney G. Fisher. “But millions do care whether slavery is to be forced upon it against the wishes of the people.” Finally Philadelphians seemed ready to accept the fundamental faiths of Republican antislavery positions. The *North American* could testify that “the Kansas business... [had driven] thousands on thousands of intelligent and upright men into the ranks of the Republicans.”¹³²

In March 1858 the Democratic state nominating convention endorsed Buchanan’s course, adopting a pro-Lecompton report by a vote of 109-21 that also fiercely defended popular sovereignty. Although a minority of the convention put forward a stern anti-Lecompton resolution, it appears that no more than a quarter of Keystone Democrats openly opposed the administration’s handling of Kansas. Although such dissent could critically impair the electoral fortunes of Democrats, party leadership was still confident that the disturbance would be minor. In an apparent sign of harmony, both Governor Packer and Administration leaders received praise in the platform. To further quell the dissent, the state

¹³² McPherson quoted Adams *Sentinel*, August 30; Fisher quoted Philadelphia *North American*, February 24, 1858, also in William Dusinger, *Civil War issues in Philadelphia*, 76; *North American*, August 2, September 4.

supreme court nomination was granted to an opponent of Lecompton. However, the damage to Democratic cohesion had already been done.¹³³

IV

The Lecompton controversy was not the only political landmine to injure Keystone Democrats in 1858. Democratic weakness on industrial protection, which had once benefited Whigs, reemerged as a partisan issue. Congressional tariff policy had faded from importance in Pennsylvania after the California Gold Rush and the breakup of the Whig party, but in 1858 Philadelphia economist Henry C. Carey and Senator Simon Cameron helped bring it back into prominence. Using the tumult of the Panic of 1857, which was especially detrimental to the state's mining, manufacturing, and iron interests, many Republican leaders and newspapers added calls for a protective tariff to the party's banners.¹³⁴

“Co-equal in importance and interest with the Kansas question, is the subject of protection,” insisted the Pottsville *Miners' Journal*. “The Free Labor of the Country,” explained Edward McPherson, “needs, deserves, and must have Protection.” Philadelphia's leading Republican newspaper was particularly vehement in its demands for protection. The *North American* felt “the foremost practical question in the next Congress [will] be the enactment of such a tariff as will save the interests of Pennsylvania from destruction.” Editor Morton McMichael's paper continued to espouse the Whig economic policies that seemed to have disappeared from political debate after the breakdown of the second party

¹³³Harrisburg *Herald*, March 3; Jeremiah S. Black to William A Porter, February 2, Black papers, LC.

¹³⁴Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 202-03.

system. Demands for protection spread throughout much of industrializing Pennsylvania, winning strong support from most Republican leaders. Simon Cameron tirelessly called for higher tariffs in the Senate and implored voters to send pro-tariff men to Congress. “In place of gentlemen who sneer when we talk of protecting, they must send men here who know something of the usefulness of the laboring men.”¹³⁵ Although many Pennsylvania Democrats claimed to support higher tariffs--with their congressional votes usually supporting those claims--the Republican adoption of the protectionist cause troubled not a few Keystone Democrats.¹³⁶

Protection would remain a Pennsylvania Republican standard for years to come. Although the importance of the tariff to the Republican victories of 1858 and 1860 has been considerably inflated by several historians, the demand for protection no doubt deepened the disadvantages suffered by Democrats as a result of the economic downturn, and helped win over a few old protectionist Whigs who balked at antislavery politics in key eastern counties. Simon Cameron especially received many letters from men who claimed that they did not care about slavery or hated blacks, who nonetheless supported his campaign for higher tariffs.¹³⁷ Protection however, was often combined with nativist and antislavery appeals. Nor did the Lecompton controversy or other Buchanan scandals disappear from the editorial pages. Stopping the spread of slavery and dismantling

¹³⁵Pottsville *Miners' Journal*, May 5; McPherson quoted Adams *Sentinel*, August 30; Philadelphia *North American*, August 2; Cameron quoted Crippen, *Simon Cameron*, 184; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 16; James Davis to Simon Cameron, July 31, Cameron papers, DCHS; John W. O'Neile to Cameron, May 13, Cameron papers, LC.

¹³⁶Louis Reeser ? to William Bigler, May 10, G. W. Scranton to Bigler 5-18, Bigler papers, HSP; J. W. Forney to Henry Wise, May 25, Forney papers, LC.

¹³⁷W. D. Lewis to Cameron, May 22, Cameron papers, LC; James Davis to Cameron, July 31, G. R. Shaw to Cameron, February 2, 1860, Cameron papers, DCSH.

the hated slave power remained a fundamental principle of the Pennsylvania Republican party.¹³⁸

Pennsylvania politics were hardly limited to national issues during 1858. For the first time Keystone Republicans profited from local politics, forming a more effective and coherent program than Democrats in several instances. Even more important, Pennsylvania Democrats failed to cultivate state and local issues that could divert attention from their troubling national situation. The inability of Democrats to agree on a response to the Panic of 1857 in either the state legislature or on the campaign trail was crippling when combined with the Lecompton disorder. Bruce Collins, who has completed the fullest study of the Pennsylvania's 1858 elections, has concluded that the inability of Democrats to maintain a cohesive state economic policy--especially on banking reform--was even more detrimental than Lecompton or the Republican adoption of the tariff; with no positive policies to project, Democrats could hardly expect to escape the negative ramifications of economic distress and internal party turmoil.¹³⁹

The sale of the state Main Line canal garnered almost as much political attention as Lecompton and the tariff during 1858, but Democrats could not harness it as a great campaign issue. Pennsylvania's canal system, which never came close to the economic profitability of the Erie canal, had long been a source of patronage and corruption. By the mid 1850's though, its continuing operation

¹³⁸ Philadelphia *North American*, September 27.

¹³⁹ Bruce Collins, "The Democrat's Loss of Pennsylvania in 1858," *PMHB*, v. 59 (October, 1985), 499-536; At their nominating convention Democrats added a plank on banking reform, meekly declaring: "we particularly recommend such a revision of the system of Banking, as may prevent in the future the troubles and difficulties that the people of the State have lately encountered." Harrisburg *Herald*, March 6; G. W. Scranton to William Bigler, May 18, Bigler papers, HSP.

was largely unnecessary. The state desired to sell the canal system, but few acceptable buyers approached. Finally, the Main Line was unloaded to the Pennsylvania Railroad, which obtained questionable tax breaks to sweeten the deal. By 1858 the rest of the canal system was sold to a competing railroad. Some Democrats tried to attack the sale to the Pennsylvania, but they could not maintain party cohesion to either block the transfer in the legislature or make it a campaign issue in either 1857 or 1858.¹⁴⁰ Most Republicans gave hearty support to the sale, seemingly suffering little backlash.¹⁴¹

Dissatisfaction with the development of Pennsylvania's railroads also attracted political attention in the 1850's. In few places was disgust with railroads more apparent than in Pittsburgh.¹⁴² Fears were prevalent that Pittsburgh would be reduced to unimportance by a diversion of the state's key line. But it was the obstinacy of railroads that seemed to hold the public hostile to their demands that galled Pittsburghers the most. When one such ill-managed and unfinished road forced Allegheny County government to raise property taxes in 1857 the revolt began. County Democrats in turn came out against the new taxes. Although they had established themselves as the majority party in Allegheny County,

¹⁴⁰ Collins, "Democrats' Loss," 508; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I 223; Jeremiah S. Black was particularly outraged by the sale of the canal system, launching a lawsuit that eventually outraged many of his Democratic colleagues. J. S. Black to Samuel J. Randall, June 30, and November 15, Black papers, LC.

¹⁴¹ Pittsburgh Republicans were more hesitant in approving the sale. In 1857 the *Gazette* commented: "we are convinced that the Pennsylvania Road ought not to have been permitted to buy it." June 27, 1857, also June 17, 1858.

¹⁴² My coverage of the railroad issue in Pittsburgh is based entirely on Michael Holt's excellent *Forging a Majority*, especially pages 228-36 and 245-53.

Republicans suffered when they failed to counter the new Democratic tactic. David Wilmot's vote was little more than half of Fremont's tally in 1856.¹⁴³

By 1858 however, Pittsburgh Republicans were ready to meet the challenge. Democrats again tried to exploit anti-tax feelings, recruiting the leading anti-tax Republican to run for one of Allegheny County's congressional seats. Republicans though led a much more assertive campaign than they had in 1857, pounding the hypocrisy of Democrats for assailing railroads that they had helped create. Democratic hands were proved to be hardly spotless in Pittsburgh's railroad debacle. At the same time, the strong calls for repudiating the taxes upset some Democrats, especially the editor of the Pittsburgh *Post* William Barr. It all guaranteed that strong Republican majorities would return to Pittsburgh and Allegheny County in 1858.¹⁴⁴ To their unquestioned advantage, Pennsylvania Republicans now tackled state and local issues with much greater cohesiveness than they had in the past two election years. Democrats could claim no such unity; defeat now stared them in the face.

V

As it often did, Philadelphia's May mayoral election forecast October's results. For the first time since 1854, the anti-Democratic candidate was able to triumph. Alexander Henry, a former Whig who embraced nativism and mildly antislavery Republican principles, defeated Richard Vaux, the well-respected

¹⁴³ Pittsburgh *Gazette* March 9, June 5, 11, 12, 20, September 9, 17, 21, 1857; While Fremont won over 13,000 votes, Wilmot obtained only 7,687, which was also less than the totals for James Pollock in 1854, and William F. Johnston in 1851 and 1848.

¹⁴⁴ Pittsburgh *Gazette* September 9, 1857, September 3, 9, 7, 20, 1858; For criticism from Democrats for the anti-tax movement see the *Post* July 21, August 19, 20, 24, September 4, 13; Holt, 253-255.

Democratic incumbent. The victory was further significant because it proved that Americans and Republicans could unite in the locality where it was most needed. Henry's vote easily surpassed the paltry totals previously obtained by Philadelphia Republicans. He received almost 10,000 more votes than the combined tally of Wilmot and Hazlehurst the previous October. Although their conclusions are questionable, Republicans and Democrats alike cited the Lecompton controversy as a key reason for the upset. Regardless, the victory delighted Republicans who were preparing to cement the union of Pennsylvania's opposition forces at June's state nominating convention.¹⁴⁵

After deciding in early spring to delay the nomination of their state ticket, Republicans who surveyed the chaos in Democratic ranks and the successful combination with Americans in Philadelphia, could easily conclude that they had made the correct decision. A former Know Nothing garnered the soon to be defunct canal commission nomination, while Philadelphian John M. Read, a former Free Soil Democrat, headed the ticket as the state supreme court nominee. The platform embraced both the standard antislavery and nativist planks, and added calls for the protection of American industry. At the behest of Philadelphia *North American* editor Morton McMichael, the opposition would run under the moniker of the 'People's party,' which was supposedly more inviting to former Americans than 'Republican.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ The mayoral vote was: Henry-R 33,771; Vaux-D 29,068; Pottsville *Miners' Journal*, May 8; B. H. Brewster to James Buchanan, May 7, Buchanan papers, HSP; Robert Tyler to Henry Wise, May 5, Auchampaugh, 238. Tyler, the state Democratic chairman, believed that national issues played no part in the election. Tyler was the Virginia-born son of former president John Tyler.

¹⁴⁶ Coleman, 115-16; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, July 17; Pittsburgh *Post*, July 16.

The most critical races of 1858 were for Pennsylvania's twenty-five congressional seats. Separate district or county conventions chose the nominees for both parties; often the selections reflected local concerns or electoral composition more than national legislative issues. Key opposition congressmen E. Joy Morris of Philadelphia, Galusha Grow from David Wilmot's district, and John Covode of Westmoreland County, were re-nominated; Democrats re-nominated eleven incumbents, running new candidates in three other districts that they held. Select new Republican/People's nominees however, proved to be highly significant. These candidates demonstrated how the party had grown since previous elections, and helped draw critical votes in a number of key districts.

Some opposition nominees were familiar names, having previously served in various political positions as Whigs, Americans or Democrats. Candidates were often selected to highlight Republican support for protective tariffs and economic development. George W. Scranton, a former Whig, and a Democrat for the past four years, was one of the leading industrialists of northeast Pennsylvania. Midway through 1858, Scranton left the Democratic party--citing his concurrence with the emerging pro-tariff policy of the opposition--and accepted the congressional nomination for the twelfth district, which was centered in Luzerne County. John Schwartz, a sixty-five year old iron manufacture and former Democrat, was called upon in heavily Democratic Berks County. Manufacturers and businessmen ran in at five other districts on the People's party ticket. Democrats boasted considerably fewer pillars of the economic community. Yet vigorously antislavery politicians were not absent from Republican tickets.

Thaddeus Stevens and Edward McPherson, who both vehemently attacked the Lecompton 'fraud,' were chosen to run in the southeastern ninth and seventeenth districts.¹⁴⁷

Few could argue with the wisdom of their nominations or the expansion of the Republican platform. The extent of the People's/Republican victory in October was stunning. The *Pennsylvanian* declared the race a "complete prostration of the Democracy in the old Keystone." The statewide races were decided by a margin of more than 20,000 votes, with Read winning his seat on the supreme court 198,117 to 171,130. More importantly, twenty-one People's party congressional candidates were victorious. Only two pro-administration Democrats were returned to office: four term Philadelphian Thomas Florence and William Dimmick from the northeastern thirteenth district. Two Democratic opponents of Lecompton, William Montgomery, and John Hickman--who soon joined the Republicans--also returned to Washington. Perhaps the most shocking People's/Republican victory occurred in Berks County, which encompassed the eighth district. There, Johan Schwartz unseated Buchanan floor leader J. Glancy Jones. According to the Republican who finished Jones's un-expired term, both support for protection and racist antislavery reaction to Lecompton had transformed the usually pro-Democratic Berks voters into opposition men. "They hate negroes, and have no affection for slavery," concluded William Keim.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Collins, "Democrat's Loss," 522-27; Congressional Biographical Dictionary, *bioguide.congress.gov*.

¹⁴⁸ *Pennsylvanian* quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 13; Keim quoted in Collins, "Democrat's Loss," 522.

Most Keystone Republicans stressed both the Lecompton disturbance and the economic downturn in post-election commentaries. “The hard times caused by the free trade policy of the democracy,” affirmed the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, “have had a great part in arousing the people to the assertion of their power and rights.” The *North American* concluded that Pennsylvania had “been ‘redeemed’ from the despotism of sectional and tyrannical managers.” The “shameful conduct” of the Democratic party had been repudiated elated party newcomer Sidney George Fisher. The election “shows that there is a healthful and sound moral sentiment left among the people.”¹⁴⁹

Democratic explanations for the defeat varied. “The Kansas humbug,” insisted the *Erie Observer*, “has had no effect upon the Democracy of Erie County. It has not divided us as in counties east of the mountains.” A Fayette County Democrat could counter: “the election has resulted disastrously as was clearly foreshadowed by the course of the Anti-Lecompton Democrats.” The *Pittsburgh Post* meanwhile bemoaned the attempt to turn the Allegheny Democracy into an anti-tax movement. In light of it all, few Pennsylvania Democrats could deny that their party was badly divided. Many Democratic voters had responded by simply withdrawing their support from the party ticket.¹⁵⁰

An investigation of Pennsylvania’s congressional races reveals that the election of 1858 was not so much a People’s/Republican triumph as a Democratic

¹⁴⁹*Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 16; *Philadelphia North American*, October 12, 13 [quotation]; *Adams Sentinel*, September 20; *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher Covering the Years 1834-1871*, ed. Nicholas B. Wainwright, (Philadelphia, 1967), 308.

¹⁵⁰ *Erie Observer*, October 23; J. B. Sian to William Bigler, October 18, Bigler papers, HSP; *Pittsburgh Post*, October 13.

defeat. “We have met the enemy and we are theirs,” grumbled President Buchanan.¹⁵¹ Republicans did expand on their totals from the previous two elections, obviously winning over a sizable number of former Fillmore voters. Yet they seem to have gained few Democrats, and exceeded the ‘Union’ vote in 1856’s congressional races in only a few districts. Most districts actually saw a drop-off in the opposition vote between 1856 and ’58. Significant gains were made in the fourth and fifth districts, which bordered Philadelphia. While former Democrats George Scranton and John Schwartz also vastly improved on the previous opposition totals, scoring tremendous upsets.

Democrats though lost voters in every single district. Incumbents in the third, fourth, fifth, and seventeenth districts lost more than a quarter of their 1856 supporters, all meeting defeat. Five other Democratic seats passed into the hands of the People’s party coalition. In Schuylkill County William Dewart drew 4,000 fewer votes than he had two years earlier. Dewart was undercut by an anti-Lecompton challenger who provided the margin of defeat in a three-way race. But his eleventh district was the only one where such a challenge played in so directly to an administration defeat. An anti-Lecompton Democrat failed to alter the race in Thomas Florence’s first district, while John Hickman brushed off both a pro-Lecompton Democrat and a People’s party challenger. In Butler and Allegheny Counties’ twenty-second district the former Republican anti-tax candidate drew a dismal thirty-nine percent.¹⁵² Although the crisis of 1856--with the possibility of secession looming--helped draw an artificially high Democratic vote in both

¹⁵¹ Buchanan quoted in Crippen, *Simon Cameron*, 190.

¹⁵² The best source for congressional elections is: *The Congressional Quarterly Guide to US Elections*, 4th edition, John L. Moore et. all editors, (Washington DC, 2001)

October and November, the drop-off in 1858 bore an eerie resemblance to the recent demise of the Whig party. Hardly a comforting thought to say the least.

It was once standard to anoint the reappearance of the tariff as the end-all cause of the 1858 turnaround.¹⁵³ But this conclusion can hardly be sustained anymore. Multiple causes contributed to the all-important decline in Democratic votes in Pennsylvania. Clearly Lecompton was one reason while the Republican adoption of the tariff was another. Additionally, state and local issues failed to unite the party and could not serve as a distraction from the noticeably floundering Buchanan administration. Republicans had obviously been the beneficiaries of the disorder. They now held a majority of Pennsylvania's elected offices, having finally absorbed a critical amount of former Fillmore voters. It was not guaranteed that they could hold that coalition though. The American party had served as a tragic example between 1854 and '56. Pennsylvania Democrats still had an opportunity to return to their position. A large number of voters sat out the 1858 election, many of them Democratic.¹⁵⁴ If Democrats could somehow heal their divisions or reawaken the spirit of '56 their cause was far from hopeless. The possibility of recreating the crisis-induced swelling of the Democratic vote--as had happened in 1856--still existed. That possibility though was a tall order.

The fissures in Pennsylvanian's Democratic party only widened in 1859; although only minor state offices--along with state house and senate seats--were being contested in the year's elections, many politicians were already preparing for

¹⁵³ See especially John Coleman, *Disruption of Democracy*, and also C. M. Myers, "The Rise of the Republican Party in Pennsylvania," as well as works by Allan Nevins and Roy Nichols.

¹⁵⁴ Turnout is estimated at only 60.8% for 1858's elections. William E. Gienapp, "Politics Seems to Enter into Everything," *Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860* Stephen E. Maizlish and John Kushama ed. (College Station, Texas, 1983), 19.

the next year's presidential election. A failure to heal party schisms could harm any chance at victory in that all-important election. While Keystone Democrats spent much of 1859 trying to address the convulsions created within their party by the Lecompton disaster, Republicans could enjoy their first year as the majority party, all the while keeping up a constant attack on the floundering Buchanan administration. In October they would cruise to their first predicted victory. However, in that same month abolitionist crusader John Brown descended out of Pennsylvania and into infamy, engendering the toughest test yet to antislavery political power in the state. His raid raised the specter of civil war, outraging most of Pennsylvania's population, and again raising doubts about the future of the Republican party.

VI

In March 1859 Pennsylvania's Democratic party set about smashing its anti-Lecompton dissent. Spurred on by both James Buchanan and William Bigler, strongly pro-administration resolutions were passed; Buchanan's course on Lecompton was sustained. The biggest loser in the convention was governor William Packer, who was practically read out of the party. "He refused to meet with WILMOT upon the everlasting negro question," complained the *Erie Observer*, "but the moment he was elected he commenced agitating that very question himself. The sooner we get rid of all disorganizers the better for the purity of the party."¹⁵⁵ Dissent would no longer be tolerated. John W. Forney continued to curse his former patron from his Philadelphia *Press* editor's office,

¹⁵⁵ *Erie Observer*, March 26; *Harrisburg Patriot and Union*, March 24, 25, 1859; *Pittsburgh Post*, March 19, 23; the *Post* was much more supportive of governor Packer. All newspapers and correspondence for the rest of this chapter, unless otherwise noted, are from 1859.

but it was clear that the Buchanan/Bigler faction of the party now dominated Keystone Democracy.¹⁵⁶ Republicans convened again as the People's party, presenting perhaps their strongest platform yet. Although former American party men continued to find places in the coalition, antislavery rhetoric and mild Whig economic planks now dominated party ideology.¹⁵⁷

The season's political campaign did not attract much attention or enthusiasm. Once again Democrats failed to cultivate state or local issues that could take away from their troubling national record.¹⁵⁸ Although turnout was light, the People's/Republican victory was still impressive. Both state candidates won by more than 20,000 votes, while the coalition gained control of the state senate--winning ten of eleven contested seats--and increased its majority in the legislative assembly. In the aftermath of the election Pennsylvania Republicans seemed most concerned with launching the Presidential campaign of their favorite: Simon Cameron.¹⁵⁹

Before Republicans could start celebrating their imminent Presidential victory though, they faced a horrifying predicament. After making his final preparations in Chambersburg Pennsylvania, abolitionist John Brown led his small group of devoted followers on a crusade against slavery, storming the Harper's Ferry arsenal on October 16, 1859. Brown's raid represented all that the

¹⁵⁶ A sparsely attended anti-Lecompton convention made no nominations and did not recommend leaving the Democratic party. Congressman John Hickman was the most prominent attendee. *Pittsburgh Post*, April 16; *Erie Observer*, April 23.

¹⁵⁷ *Adams Sentinel*, June 13. The *Pittsburgh Post* still attacked Republican nativism: "The Know Nothing Republicanism has been concealed, but it exists strong and proscriptive as ever." May 14.

¹⁵⁸ *Harrisburg Patriot and Union*, January 12.

¹⁵⁹ The full result was: Auditor General: Cochran-R 181,835 Wright-D 164,544; Surveyor General: Keim-R 182,227 Row-D 163,877. For a Cameron recommendation see: *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 18.

South feared about northern abolitionist agitation. Although Republicans were, almost to a man, not abolitionists--indeed Pennsylvania Republicans often pointed with pride to abolitionist criticism of their policies--southerners and most northern Democrats did not take care to delineate between their antislavery doctrine and abolitionism. In the aftermath of Brown's raid most Pennsylvania Democrats tried to blame Republican antislavery agitation for the attack. "The teachings of their leaders have been the cause of the outbreak at Harper's Ferry," insisted the *Pittsburgh Post*. "Brown was no more insane than hundreds of others who are leaders of the Republican party," declared the *Erie Observer*. "If these friends of the Negro should at last produce a dissolution of the Union or a civil war," the *Harrisburg Patriot and Union* assured, "the Democracy will be loudly able to declare the whiteness of its hands from the stain of complacency."¹⁶⁰

Although Republicans all demanded that Brown's actions should be punished, many newspapers brazenly asserted that his raid was in large part the fault of the South. Franklin County's Republican press blamed southern ruffians for turning Brown into a murderer. There was little sympathy with southern attacks on Republicanism. The *Philadelphia North American* simply felt that "Virginians should quiet themselves." Brown's execution especially offended the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, which charged: "the execution of the old man at Charlestown yesterday was a plain admission on the party of Slavery that they dare not spare a brave man's life, and that magnanimity is impossible to a system based on wrong

¹⁶⁰*Pittsburgh Post*, October 25; *Erie Observer*, October 29; *Harrisburg Patriot and Union*, October 13. The *Post* dared to express some admiration for Brown, admitting after his execution: "Although his courage, sincerity, and disinterestedness may be conceded, all honest and just men must condemn his acts." *Post*, December 3.

and upheld by violence.” Republicans sincerely believed that they were not radicals; it was the South that was now dominated by radicals. “We have no sympathy with fanatics, whether they are John Brown and his confederate traitors... or the plotters of disunion in the legislative halls of Charleston S.C.” assured the Harrisburg *Telegraph*.¹⁶¹

Democrats now seemed to have a national event that could be used to their advantage. A belief developed that Democrats would have won the elections of 1859 if they had been held after Brown’s raid. Democrats did in fact make gains in New England’s spring elections, quite possibly benefiting from the Harper’s Ferry outrage. But Brown’s raid would only be a temporary setback for Republicans. More importantly, it could not heal the schisms in the Democracy. The attack on Harper’s Ferry may well have made them worse. Southern Democratic demands on their northern partners in 1860--somewhat prompted by Brown’s raid--threw the party into chaos. Pennsylvania’s Democratic party arguably suffered more turmoil than any other as a result of the ensuing spilt. The chaotic state of the Democratic party, helped Pennsylvania Republicans secure a surprisingly large and historically critical victory. 1860 marked the end of the Keystone State.

¹⁶¹Franklin *Repository and Transcript*, October 26; Philadelphia *North American*, October 21; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, December 3; Harrisburg *Telegraph* February 24, 1860; Adams *Sentinel*, December 6.

CHAPTER 5

“We Will Seal the Doom of Southern Tyranny, Over White Men at Least”

The End of the Keystone State: The Elections of 1860

The Pittsburgh *Gazette*, like most politicized newspapers, was wont to make grand declarations. In early 1860 editor Russell Errett assured readers that “No party ever organized in this country, not even excepting the good old Whig party, could boast purer principles or more legitimate or patriotic objects than the Republican party.” His words, though pure propaganda, nonetheless reveal the sense of legitimacy that the Pennsylvania Republican party now held. Errett, an erstwhile Whig, could not escape the reality that new principles had triumphed. Whiggery was dead, but Republicanism was vibrant and attractive.¹⁶²

By 1860 the Pennsylvania Republican party was a united and diverse organization; appealing to a wide range of political interests, yet devoted to set of fundamental principles that it shared with parties in its sister states. Capturing the governor’s office and securing the state’s crucial electoral votes for the party’s Presidential candidate now seemed well within reach. Holding together the coalition of 1858 and picking up a few of the traditionally apathetic voters who

¹⁶² Pittsburgh *Gazette*, February 22.

only turned out for Presidential contests would likely be enough to hold off the stumbling Democratic party. In sharp contrast to Republicans, Keystone Democrats were burdened with a party in national chaos. As the year progressed, conditions only worsened.

Pennsylvania's 1860 elections turned on the inability of the Democratic party to present a unified conservative alternative to Republicanism. Instead, the disunited state of Democracy, combined with the radical pronouncements that emanated from southern party leaders, convinced many Pennsylvanians that the Republican party was a moderating and conservative force. Consequently, the great moderate, Abraham Lincoln, rolled up a vote that trumped even James Buchanan's 1856 total. Lincoln's conservatism though would not assuage the South. Indeed, despite protestations of conservatism, Pennsylvania's Republican party would not forgo the fundamental principle that had formed the party in the aftermath of Kansas-Nebraska, opposition to slavery. The contextual radicalism of opposing the spread of slavery never disappeared from Keystone Republicanism. This principle was fundamental to party identity. In 1860 Pennsylvania joined with its sister northern states in rejecting the course of sectional conciliation as heretofore practiced by native son James Buchanan and his predecessors. The result was civil war.

I

By 1860 Pennsylvania's Democratic party stood in an unenviable position. James Buchanan, who had been counted on to save the Union, was now the target of unrelenting criticism. Andrew Jackson's "place is now filled by an old

federalist, who cares more for the interests of southern slaveholders than for the welfare of his native state,” jeered the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. That Republicans now claimed to adhere to the principles of the Union-saving Democratic founder Jackson, was a humiliating prospect. With southern Democrats continuing to threaten secession Republicans seemed to have a better claim to Jackson. At times in 1860 it appeared as if John C. Calhoun, and not Jackson had won the struggle for Democracy.¹⁶³

The situation within the state party was far from harmonious. Both the sitting governor William Packer and John W. Forney, the powerful campaign chairman from 1856, now sulked on the fringes of the party. Of even greater concern was the sense of alienation that festered among party loyalists. Turnout had fallen off by a disquieting amount in 1858, while opposition totals had largely held steady or increased. Reinvigorating and reuniting the party’s base in time for the Presidential election was a must.

Hopes appeared bleak as Democrats assembled in Reading for the party’s state nominating convention. In addition to formulating a platform and naming a gubernatorial candidate, Presidential electors needed to be selected. It was also possible that the convention would recommend a Presidential nominee. To its credit, the convention passed off relatively smoothly. Recent disagreements appeared to be largely resolved. Even Governor Packer garnered support for his state policies. The platform repudiated the right of Congress to exclude slavery

¹⁶³ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 23, 1860. Republicans often claimed Andrew Jackson as a hero; amazingly former Whig papers, like the *Gazette*, evoked Jackson just as much as other sheets. “No man is more imbued with the sprit of resolution and determination of Andrew Jackson than Abraham Lincoln,” insisted the *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 25, 1860. Hereafter all dates for this section are 1860.

from the territories, but maintained a commitment to the Cincinnati platform. Support for a protective tariff was also reaffirmed. Former congressman Henry D. Foster received the governor's nomination to almost universal acclamation. Finally, the convention named a slate of electors, but made no recommendation for the Presidency. Ominously, the platform pledged to "accept the nomination of the Charleston convention."¹⁶⁴

The Charleston convention, which opened April 23, proved to be a disaster for the Democratic party. After failing to obtain their desired platform, a group of radical southerners walked out of the convention. The remaining rump assembly could not secure the necessary votes to nominate the favorite 'moderate,' Stephen A. Douglas. Instead, the convention dissolved without a nominee, as the delegates agreed to reassemble in Baltimore during June. Most Pennsylvania Democrats were shocked and disgusted by the breakup. "Our Democratic brethren of the South are permitting their action to be governed by a spirit of sectionalism," wailed the *Pittsburgh Post*. "The Democratic party at the North have heretofore stood by the Constitutional rights of the South," complained the vociferously pro-Buchanan *Erie Observer*. In editor B. F. Sloan's view, the Cincinnati platform of 1856 should have been adequate. "Everything looks bad," moaned President Buchanan, "not only for the party, but for the country."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴Pittsburgh *Post*, March 5, 6; *Erie Observer*, March 3; Coleman, *Disruption of Democracy*, 123-25.

¹⁶⁵Pittsburgh *Post*, April 30; *Erie Observer*, May 5; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 5; Buchanan to Robert Tyler, June 13, Auchampaugh, *Robert Tyler*, 300.

The Baltimore convention did not produce a healthier result. Radicals again showed up and then bolted the convention--among them twelve Pennsylvanians--eventually nominating Vice President John C. Breckinridge on a slave code/states' rights platform. The Baltimore holdouts settled on Douglas. Subsequently both candidates claimed to be the legitimate nominee of the Democratic party, a development that divided party leadership in several states. Pennsylvania Democrats were particularly torn over who deserved their support. "The extra ordinary movements at Baltimore," worried a Crawford County Democrat, "have created here, as elsewhere, great excitement among our friends." Lancaster's Democratic organ bluntly concluded, "disaster and defeat stares us in the face."¹⁶⁶

Although most northern Democratic state organizations quickly decided that Douglas was the official nominee, Pennsylvania's Democracy faced a different situation. The personal influence of President Buchanan upon state party leadership likely guaranteed that Douglas would not obtain an official blessing from the central committee. Although Buchanan eventually admitted that he would vote for Breckinridge, his public pronouncement that "every Democrat is at perfect liberty to vote as he thinks proper," more aptly typified the counterproductive lack of leadership that had plagued his Presidency. The refusal of Buchanan and his lieutenants to admit that Douglas was the favored candidate of Pennsylvania Democrats only fueled party infighting. Instead, a lack of stern

¹⁶⁶ J. E. McFarland to William Bigler, June 28, Bigler papers, HSP; Lancaster *Intelligencer* quoted Harrisburg *Telegraph*, June 29; Chambersburg *Valley Spirit*, June 27; Pittsburgh *Post*, June 25.

national leadership helped plunge local organizations into chaos, a condition best revealed by the lack of a unified voice from leading Democratic newspapers.¹⁶⁷

Editors sometimes supported Douglas, sometimes Breckinridge, or more often tried to avoid choosing sides. If a county's paper selected one candidate, opponents would start an opposing paper to champion the other. From the fringes of the party, John Forney's Philadelphia *Press* provided the fiercest opposition to Breckinridge. A typical Forney harangue read: "NO TRUE FRIEND of DOUGLAS in Pennsylvania, or elsewhere, can touch an electoral ticket which contains upon it the single name of a Breckinridge Disunionist."¹⁶⁸ Most pro-Douglas organs were less acerbic than the *Press*, usually claiming only that they preferred the Little Giant, while often failing to place his name officially within their banner. But passions were running high. The campaign was going to be malicious, even within the Democratic party itself.¹⁶⁹

II

The situation for Pennsylvania's Republican party had changed dramatically since its first Presidential campaign. "Our party is now consolidated by four years active and ardent service in the field," commented the Pittsburgh *Gazette*.¹⁷⁰ Old and new Democratic outrages combined to keep Republicans

¹⁶⁷ Buchanan quoted in Klein, *James Buchanan*, 348; Buchanan's two top Keystone allies, Jeremiah S. Black and William Bigler apparently were quiet Breckinridge supporters. See: A. Whitaker to William Bigler, July 31, Bigler papers, HSP; Robert P. ? to Jeremiah S. Black, September 28, Black papers, LC.

¹⁶⁸ *Press* quoted Pittsburgh *Gazette*, July 11.

¹⁶⁹ The Pittsburgh *Post* and Chambersburg *Valley Spirit* gave mild support to Douglas. The *Press* and the Harrisburg *State Sentinel* were the most avid Douglas sheets. Pro-Breckinridge papers included, the Reading *Gazette*, Columbia *Democrat*, Norristown *Register*, Philadelphia *Argus*, and the *Pennsylvanian*, as listed in Harrisburg *Telegraph*, June 30. The *Valley Spirit* later switched to Breckinridge.

¹⁷⁰ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, May 28.

animated and united. Democrats, with solid southern support, had blocked an increase in the tariff and a homestead bill during spring's congressional session. Both measures had received ardent support within Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the corruption of Buchanan's administration--though limited by later standards--was proving to be worse than any other in history. Westmoreland County Republican congressman John Covode led the investigation of Buchanan in the House. His investigation claimed to have exposed an unprecedented amount of executive waste. "The details of the extravagance of the national administration are hideous," concluded Simon Cameron. With Buchanan and company to kick around, Keystone Republicans never ran out of campaign fodder.¹⁷¹

Adversity though did not completely evade the Republican party. Pennsylvania Republicans faced their own internal disorder during 1860, as personal rivalries threatened to divide the party. The intensifying feud between two of the party's leading men, Simon Cameron and Andrew G. Curtin, came center stage during 1860. According to most accounts, the feud was born out of the struggle to elect a Senator in 1855. During that race Curtin, a former Whig, and Cameron, a former Democrat, both endeavored to capture the support of the American party, but the newly-formed movement could not agree on either man and no candidate won election. Both men blamed the other for the failure and made accusations of bribery. For the next five years the feud festered as Cameron's role in the Keystone Republican party steadily increased.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Cameron quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 22.

¹⁷² For the origins of the feud see: Bradley, *Cameron* 96-105, and McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, *passim*.

Now Cameron was attempting to gain a complete stranglehold on the party. Already favored to receive the official Presidential recommendation of the state nominating convention, Cameron hoped to control state-level leadership, including the pending gubernatorial nominee.¹⁷³ Curtin and his allies were horrified at the prospect. In turn they hoped to combine with enough non-committed People's party backers to keep Cameron from achieving his goal of controlling the 1860 campaign.

Try as he might, Cameron could not dictate the results of the People's party convention. Cameron's favorites went down to defeat as Curtin received the gubernatorial nomination. To satisfy the Cameron group, their boss was tabbed as the state's favorite for the Presidency, although few politicians believed that his questionable background would allow him to be nominated. Meanwhile, the platform again committed to halting the spread of slavery, but it also claimed to "hail the people of the south as brothers, in whose prosperity we rejoice."¹⁷⁴

Curtin's allies also obtained the leadership of the all-important state central committee, meaning they would control the financing and management of the campaign. Curtin's closest advisor Alexander McClure was named committee chairman. McClure had run up against Cameron in 1859 when he was defeated in the race for state assembly speaker through Cameron's interference. Having McClure in charge of finances, which he had so recently controlled was a direct threat to Cameron's leadership. Throughout the summer Cameron's allies bitterly

¹⁷³ A. Reeder to Cameron, January 4, Russell Errett to Cameron, January 8, David Taggart to Cameron, January 10, Cameron papers, LC.

¹⁷⁴ Harrisburg *Telegraph*, February 24; J. R. Hendrickson to Simon Cameron, February 28, Cameron papers, DCHS; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, February 24, 25.

attacked McClure's handling of the campaign. "Unless McClure is forced out of his position," complained Pittsburgh *Gazette* editor and Cameron lieutenant Russell Errett, "Curtin cannot be elected."¹⁷⁵

Cameron's supporters planned to unseat McClure at a July meeting of the campaign committee, but a night of excessive drinking forced many Cameron men to miss an early morning session that subsequently allowed McClure to remain in place. Eventually, the squabbling caught the attention of national leadership in Springfield. Lincoln in turn sent an advisor to Pennsylvania to determine if McClure, or perhaps Cameron, was derailing the campaign. Cameron was apparently able to convince Lincoln that he had the campaign under control, though no action was taken against McClure. Ultimately, the effects of the feud on the party's electoral fortunes appear to have been minimal. To the eternal fortune of the Republican party, the Curtin/Cameron row did not interfere with the strength of its platform or its ideological appeals.¹⁷⁶

III

Spring's key municipal elections mostly went Republican, though their closeness in several locales was a cause for concern. Although Philadelphia's mayoral election returned moderate Republican Alexander Henry to office, his majority was down from 1858, heightening Republican concern that conservatives might desert them if the party's Presidential nominee proved too radical. Even the

¹⁷⁵ Errett quoted in William H. Russell, "Alexander K. McClure and the People's party in the Campaign of 1860," *PMHB*, 28 (October, 1961), 340; Errett to Cameron, June 23, Cameron to Alexander McClure, August 1, J. P. Sanderson to Cameron, October 1, Cameron papers, LC; On the 1859 speaker's race see: McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 346-49.

¹⁷⁶ Simon Cameron to Abraham Lincoln, August 1, Cameron papers, LC; The problems of the feud during 1860 are covered in Bradley, *Cameron*, 154-57, and Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 81-85; the only public comment on the internal problems of the Republican campaign that I came across was in the Harrisburg *Telegraph*, August 6.

ardently Republican Pittsburgh *Gazette* worried that conservative concerns would not be heard. “If we are to succeed in carrying Pennsylvania this fall,” it warned, “some attention must be paid to this call, which is numerous not only in Philadelphia, but throughout the eastern part of the state.” The impending Republican national convention would have to account for the concerns of Pennsylvania. “Chicago must understand that conservatism is necessary,” remarked the Philadelphia *North American*. Because of these fears the leading Republican contender for the Presidential nomination, William H. Seward, garnered stiff resistance from Pennsylvania leadership. “Great and talented as is Wm H. Seward,” warned the Adams *Sentinel*, “we fear his nomination would bring defeat.” Instead, a number of Keystone Republicans backed the most conservative candidate that they could, with Missouri’s Edward Bates and Ohio’s John McLean receiving support. Even radical Thaddeus Stevens backed McLean, whom almost nobody else favored.¹⁷⁷

Chicago took care to mollify Pennsylvania. Although Simon Cameron was the first choice for most Keystone conventioners, the nomination of Abraham Lincoln proved acceptable to all of Pennsylvania’s factions. Lincoln’s record as a moderate, as well as the inclusive nature of the party’s platform won widespread aplomb. “We believe that Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin are conservative enough for every useful purpose,” concluded the *North American*. Even though the tariff plank was not very specific, its mere inclusion brought Pennsylvania’s delegation to euphoria. Spirits were quite high amongst

¹⁷⁷Pittsburgh *Gazette* May 5; Philadelphia *North American*, May 11; Adams *Sentinel*, May 14; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, May 12; Seward’s life-long opposition to nativism also hurt his chances in Pennsylvania. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, I, 399.

Republican ranks; some could feel the impending revolution in the air. Shortly after the close of the convention the Westmoreland Country People's party resolved that by the election of Lincoln "we will seal the doom of southern tyranny, over white men at least."¹⁷⁸

IV

Lincoln was not the only 'conservative' candidate to enter the Presidential field. Although it was hardly warranted, the nomination of John Bell by a cadre of aging Whigs created an amount of apprehension, especially in Philadelphia Republican circles. Democrats meanwhile, were confident that they could secure the votes of the mostly ex-Whig Bell patrons. William Bigler wrote President Buchanan with a great deal of wishful thinking "if we can get the Bell men to cooperate . . . Lincoln will lose the state." Although New York's Democratic party formed a joint Presidential ticket with Bell's supporters, no such agreement could be reached in Pennsylvania. Ultimately the Constitutional Union party made no state nominations, although the party's lone newspaper eventually supported Foster for governor. However, excluding Philadelphians, most Republicans came to view the Bell movement as a non-entity, which it indeed was.¹⁷⁹

In Pennsylvania the Republican campaign rested on a combination of progressive economic planks and opposition to the aggressively proslavery policies of the Democratic administration. The party's principles were according

¹⁷⁸ Philadelphia *North American*, May 28; Westmoreland Country resolutions quoted Pittsburgh *Gazette*, June 19; For general convention commentary see: Adams *Sentinel*, May 28; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, May 19, 21; Wainwright, *Diary of Sidney George Fisher*, 353.

¹⁷⁹ William Bigler to James Buchanan, August 13, Buchanan papers, HSP; Philadelphia *North American*, July 14, 27; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, May 12, August 22.

to the *Harrisburg Telegraph* “free territory for free labor, protection for home industry, and homes for the homeless.” The *Pittsburgh Gazette* expressed the dual nature of the Republican party in a comparison of the gubernatorial candidates: “Curtin represents national ideas-and is the advocate of freedom for the territories and protection of American industry. Foster represents a Southern policy for the country, prominent among which are the nationality of Slavery and Free Trade.”¹⁸⁰

The tariff issue again played a prominent role in the Republican campaign. “It is our nigger,” quipped Simon Cameron to an amused Congress. National Republican leadership was well aware of the intensifying demands of Pennsylvanians for a protective tariff. But just in case they might need a reminder, key editors stepped up their demands on the eve of the national convention. The *North American* demanded that Chicago pay “due respect to the interests of American labor.” Although disappointed that their favorite candidate had not been nominated, Pennsylvania’s staunchest protectionists were apparently happy with the nomination of Lincoln and the adoption of a pro-tariff platform.¹⁸¹

In response Democrats challenged the national record of the Republican party on the tariff, especially questioning Lincoln’s commitment to protection. “Mr. Lincoln is held up as the friend of protective policy,” observed Henry Foster, “yet you cannot find a vote he ever gave, or a speech he ever made, wherein he favored the doctrine of protection at all.” The *Pennsylvanian* asked, “if Mr.

¹⁸⁰ *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 13 (quotation), August 22, October 5, 8, 16; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 5.

¹⁸¹ Cameron quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 24; *Philadelphia North American*, May 11; Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 68-69.

Lincoln is a Protective Tariff man, where in the evidence of it?" Democrats had a legitimate case. In Congress Pennsylvania Democrats had supported the Morrill Tariff Bill. William Bigler was one of only two Democratic Senators to vote for its passage, while Henry Foster had traveled to Washington to try and lobby for additional Democratic support. Centre County's Democratic sheet took notice claiming, while "Foster is at Washington advocating the passage of the tariff bill and the interests of the white people of Pennsylvania, Curtin is stumping it in Pennsylvania in behalf of niggerism and the nigger."¹⁸²

While numerous historians have concluded that Democratic efforts to neutralize the tariff in 1860 were crucially ineffective, some contemporary Keystone Republicans insisted that demands for higher tariffs were not vital to their successes. Alexander McClure reported to Lincoln that "the tariff is regarded as of no greater importance than slavery aggression: and in the [northern section of Pennsylvania] the tariff is but tolerated, and the greatness of Freedom overshadows all others." In Pittsburgh, historian Michael Holt argues that the tariff hardly registered on the political radar. Economically, Pittsburgh iron manufactures may have actually benefited from lower tariffs. Across the state the political draw of the tariff may have very well played itself out by 1860. The panic of 1857 had proved to be short lived. By 1860 most displaced industrial workers were again active in the workforce.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Foster quoted *Erie Observer*, June 10; *Pennsylvanian* quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 7; Bellefonte *Watchman* quoted *Harrisburg Telegraph*, June 15; *Erie Observer*, June 10; William Bigler's support of the Morrill Tariff drew widespread aplomb from Keystone Democrats. See: J. Lawrence Getty to Bigler, June 21, John M. Marcy to Bigler, June 21, S. S. Halderman to Bigler, June 28, Bigler papers, HSP.

¹⁸³ McClure quoted in William Russell, "Alexander K. McClure," 33. McClure did speak out against Democratic claims that they were in favor of higher tariffs proclaiming: "Henry D. Foster

In addition to the crusade for a protective tariff, Pennsylvania Republicans now consistently championed ‘progressive’ initiatives geared at dispersing northern free labor principles. Representative Galusha Grow was the leading proponent of a homestead bill. Allegheny County congressman James K. Moorhead insisted that spreading industry to the South would guarantee sectional harmony. “Let us spread and diffuse manufacturing skill throughout the states North and South,” he declared on the floor of the House, “and we will soon find that sectional disunion will disappear.”¹⁸⁴

Nativism though was one issue that refused to disappear from the political landscape. The People’s party state platform protested the importation of foreign paupers and criminals, and criticized the prevalence of naturalization frauds at the ballot box. Meanwhile, Douglas’s Catholic wife made him an easy target for nativists. The most strident nativists warned that a Douglas Presidency would be bound to the wishes of Rome. “If the Pope adopts a bad cause,” insisted the *Harrisburg Telegraph*, “the Catholic is bound to sustain that cause.” The consistent support that Catholics gave to Democrats continued to gall Republicans. “The whole power of the Catholic Church is thrown into this contest . . . against free principles and in favor of locofocosim,” howled the *Pittsburgh Gazette*.¹⁸⁵ By 1860 however, nativism cultivated far from universal acceptance among Pennsylvania Republicans. Most newspapers insisted that Republicanism

is the deadly foe of protection!” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 29; Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 277-79.

¹⁸⁴ Moorhead quoted in, “Western Pennsylvania and the Morrill Tariff,” *WPHM*, 6 (April 1923), 113; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 21, June 25, 27; *Philadelphia North American*, May 23.

¹⁸⁵ *Harrisburg Telegraph*, June 14 (quotation), July 27; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, April 13. Nativism was particularly strong in the *Gazette* during 1860; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, 421-22; For Democratic attacks on Republican nativism see: *Chambersburg Valley Spirit*, October 31, *Pittsburgh Post*, October 9.

had nothing to do with Know Nothingism and some even took to attacking Democrats for their treatment of Catholics.¹⁸⁶

Although local and state issues did occasionally surface during 1860, none seem to have factored greatly into the final result of the campaign. In Philadelphia Republicans praised the work of mayor Henry in improving the city's waterworks and parks in sharp contrast to his do-nothing Democratic predecessor. Railroad relief bills won praise from Harrisburg Republicans, while Pittsburgh's Republican party seemed to now be the champion of the anti-tax movement. Thomas Williams, who had bolted the party in 1858 over the tax issue, returned to the fold. Democratic attempts to capitalize on western resentment against eastern Pennsylvania railroad companies in Erie and Franklin Counties do not seem to have had much benefit. Though local issues most likely played a crucial role in bringing some voters to the polls, national issues predominated platforms, newspapers, and political correspondence during 1860.¹⁸⁷

In Pennsylvania the sectional crisis was never far from the general political discussion. "While I deprecate, as much as any man, all unnecessary agitation of the slavery question," a former Democrat told a Harrisburg audience, "I cannot close my eyes against the influence of that question." Northumberland County's Republican convention summed up the principles of the state party in one resolution. It read: "We condemn the niggardly course of the so-called

¹⁸⁶ *Adams Sentinel*, September 5, 12, 19; *Philadelphia North American*, September 28; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 10. A local Pittsburgh Republican convention went as far as to state: "our people, whether native or foreign by birth may depend upon us to advocate their right to secure this country as a market for the product of their skill and labor against foreign competition." *Gazette*, March 9.

¹⁸⁷ *Philadelphia North American*, April 19; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, April 4, October 4, Holt, *Forging a Majority*, 275; *Erie Observer*, October 20, *Chambersburg Valley Spirit*, July 25.

Democratic party on all the great measures of the day. Their course in favor of free trade; extension of slavery over territory now free; their sympathy in favor of a censor, as now practiced in the South over the press opinions and free speech of the people.” The undemocratic principles of the slave power could no longer be tolerated in Pennsylvania. “It is time for the Northern people to consider well how far the south have a ‘right’ to infringe on the prosperity of free labor,” demanded the *Harrisburg Telegraph*.¹⁸⁸

Attacking the pro-slavery ties of the Democratic party remained the most effective negative tactic employed by Keystone Republicans. “The extension of negro slavery into the territories of the United States has become a settled policy of the Democratic party,” proclaimed former Democrat John Hickman. “Millions of scores of fertile lands . . . are filched from our industrial classes . . . to be turned into barren wastes by those who have already blasted more than one half of our soil as with an avalanche of fire.” Yet Hickman’s remarks reveal the subtleties of the antislavery campaign. It was not the fate of the slave that resonated most among Pennsylvania Republican converts, but the future of the nation.¹⁸⁹

Republican attitudes about race had changed little since the Fremont campaign. The Philadelphia *North American* maintained an extremely negative impression of blacks remarking, “they are, unquestionably at present of a type far inferior to ours in the scale of humanity, and will require many ages of culture and development to raise them to our level.” “We fight the battle of Free White American Labor,” insisted the *Harrisburg Telegraph*. Southerners were warned to

¹⁸⁸ William Dock quoted *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 27; Northumberland resolution quoted *Telegraph*, June 20; *Telegraph*, August 13.

¹⁸⁹ Hickman quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, July 30.

“keep your negroes at home.” Even the muted concern that some Republicans expressed for slaves angered some Pennsylvanians. A correspondent of Simon Cameron complained of radical Republicans who “think more of the nigger than they do the poor white man.” Although Keystone Republicans never allowed slavery and the sectional problem to disappear from public discussion, they were almost always careful to portray them as conservative or racist causes. “I am not asking you to liberate the slaves,” insisted future Senator Edgar Cowan, “it is the poor white men we want to liberate first.” Although Cowan and other Pennsylvania Republicans did not claim to support slavery like some Democrats did, white men always came first.¹⁹⁰

As the campaign progressed conservatism seemed to be the order of the day. Philadelphia and Harrisburg Republican leaders in particular claimed that their party represented conservative views. More importantly, enough Pennsylvanians had convinced themselves that the Republican party was conservative to place it on the threshold of victory. “The Republican party, should it triumph,” wrote diarist Sidney George Fisher “will do nothing to injure the rights and interests of the South.” Almost no southerner could agree with this conclusion. For, in spite of the protests of noninterference and the outbursts of racism, the revolution had indeed come to Pennsylvania. The demand that the spread of slavery be halted in denial of Dred Scott was radical. “Of course slavery

¹⁹⁰ Philadelphia *North American*, August 31; Harrisburg *Telegraph*, June 18; G. R. Shaw to Cameron, February 2, Cameron papers, DCHS; Cowan quoted in, Joseph Wolstoncraft, “Western Pennsylvania and the Election of 1860,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 6 (January, 1923), 31; William Bigler overtly supported slavery in a letter to Pittsburgh’s David Lynch, Bigler to Lynch, December 23, 1856, Bigler papers, HSP; Meanwhile, racism remained very pungent in almost all Democratic newspapers. See especially, Chambersburg *Valley Spirit*, July 25, Pittsburgh *Post*, November 5.

is an evil to be endured where it exists by law,” reminded the *Harrisburg Telegraph* early in 1860, “but [it should] be resisted where it has no legal existence, and can have none until it be legalized by the people of a sovereign state.” “We have permitted a miserable, sectional minority too long to override and insult the majority,” concluded Franklin County’s Republican organ. Such pronouncements as these, and not the assurances of Sidney Fisher or Philadelphia’s conservative *North American* caught the attention of southerners.¹⁹¹

V

As the Republican party built upon its new found respectability, Democrats continued to come apart, virtually guaranteeing Lincoln’s victory. The struggle to decide which Democratic Presidential nominee was running in Pennsylvania was never quite resolved. Throughout the campaign solid evidence existed that most Keystone Democrats favored Douglas. Western Pennsylvanians in particular tended to favored Douglas. “There is but one Democratic candidate in the field” protested the Greensburg *Argus*, “and that is Stephen A. Douglas.” Such devotion impeded both attempts at unity and the growth of the pro-Breckinridge faction. Although Breckinridge men were numerous, and enjoyed the quiet support of the administration, an outright choice of the Vice President by the state committee would have alienated thousands of Democratic voters, most likely ending the still reasonable hopes that October’s state race could be won. “Would we then sacrifice all because there exists a difference of opinion on the

¹⁹¹ Wainwright, *Diary of Sidney George Foster*, 355; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, January 30; *Franklin Repository and Transcript*, August 8; However even the *Pittsburgh Gazette* insisted that the Republican party represented conservative issues. May 21, June 26.

subject of the presidency?” asked Franklin County’s Democratic organ. “We must learn to tolerate this difference.”¹⁹²

Forming a joint electoral ticket that welcomed supporters of both candidates was the only hope, but some Douglas men could not accept any such recognition of the southern bolters. Douglas himself made no effort to secure a fusion, instead he impeded it. The Little Giant included Pennsylvania in his unprecedented speaking tour, attacking Breckinridge wherever he stopped. The *Erie Observer*, which had usually been critical of Douglas since his break with Buchanan, approved of little in the speech that he delivered during a driving Erie hailstorm. “If demagogues would leave us alone,” concluded the *Observer* “we would give a good account of ourselves in October and November.”¹⁹³

If only the party could hold together for the governor’s race there might be hope. Henry Foster tried to leave the presidential race out of his gubernatorial campaign. Foster, who was a distant cousin of Breckinridge, never publicly revealed who had his support. “The question is sometimes asked,” explained Bucks County’s Democratic organ “is Foster a Douglas or a Breckinridge man? We answer that outside of the Presidential question, there is no such distraction in the Democratic party.” Democrats could hardly deny though that the Presidential question was a giant distraction.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *Argus* quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, July 11; *Chambersburg Valley Spirit*, August 22. Franklin County’s Democratic organization officially backed Douglas, the *Valley Spirit* though aligned with Breckinridge during September.

¹⁹³ *Erie Observer*, September 29; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 8. Republicans took great pleasure at Douglas’s decision to attack Breckinridge.

¹⁹⁴ Doylestown *Democrat* quoted *Pittsburgh Post*, August 10.

The state campaign committee met twice before the October election in an attempt to resolve the Presidential question. While a July Philadelphia gathering accomplished little, an August meeting in the tiny mountain town of Cresson was able to produce a compromise fusion ticket. Under the agreement Democratic voters could stipulate their preferred candidate, but the man who had the best chance of winning would get Pennsylvania's electoral votes in the event of the ticket's triumph. Breckinridge men and moderate Douglas supporters seemed satisfied, but not every Democrat agreed to support the Cresson compromise. Shortly after the fusion ticket appeared, a group of Douglas backers produced their own ticket that only included the Little Giant.¹⁹⁵ Increasingly it all seemed pointless; the Presidential squabble had already noticeably sapped party strength. On the eve of state elections all but the most resolute Democrats could see the handwriting on the wall. An Indiana County Democrat bluntly asserted, "if we are defeated in October, it will be our own fault."¹⁹⁶

VI

October did indeed bring defeat for the Democratic party. Andrew G. Curtin defeated Foster by over 30,000 votes. Curtin drew an incredible 100,000 more votes than David Wilmot in 1857, earning the support of more than 260,000 Pennsylvanians. Foster's vote was nearly equal to James Buchanan's total four years earlier, but accounting for the growth of the electorate, Democratic turnout had dropped considerably. In addition to losing the governorship, Democrats

¹⁹⁵ Henry M. Philips to James Buchanan, July 13, Buchanan papers, HSP; For the Cresson meeting see: *Pittsburgh Post*, August 10, 11; Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, 80-81; Thomas MacDowell to William Bigler, August 10, Bigler papers, HSP.

¹⁹⁶ J. Coulter to William Bigler, August 4, Bigler papers, HSP.

dropped 71 out of 100 assembly seat races and ten of twelve state senate contests. The overwhelming Republican majority was thus able to retire Senator Bigler in early 1861. Congressional contests provided a relative bright spot, as the party won six seats, defeating two incumbents.¹⁹⁷

Nonetheless, Democratic spirits were crushed. Pittsburgh's Democratic organ laid the blame on the sitting President. "As poor old Mr. Buchanan has been accused of all the crimes in the calendar, we may as well make the last entry and place to his credit the destruction of the Democratic party." John W. Forney conquered: "Who is responsible [for the defeat]?" he asked in the *Philadelphia Press*. The answer was a resounding "James Buchanan!" The *Pittsburgh Post* was so crushed by the defeat of Foster that it pondered dissolving. Yet the most upsetting prospect was the now imminent election of Lincoln.¹⁹⁸

Immediately following the defeat the Democratic central committee scrambled to form yet another unified electoral ticket. What became known as the Reading ticket would make no distinction between Douglas and Breckinridge. If the ticket should somehow triumph, the state's electoral votes would go to the candidate who had the best chance of winning election. With his near sweep of the South, that would have meant Breckinridge. Yet few people seriously believed there was any chance that Lincoln would not win easily. Adding to the nearly insurmountable obstacles that faced Keystone Democrats, some Douglas backers

¹⁹⁷Coleman, 140; The full vote was: Curtin-R 262,353, Foster-D 230,239. Henry Longnecker and Benjamin Junkin went down to defeat in the normally Democratic seventh and sixteenth districts. Berks County's eighth district also passed back into Democratic control.

¹⁹⁸ *Pittsburgh Post*, October 11 (quotation), 12, 15; *Press* quoted *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 12.

still refused to agree to the compromise and instead continued to circulate a straight Douglas ticket.¹⁹⁹

In an anticlimactic result Lincoln crushed his combined opposition and secured the Presidency. Lincoln actually drew an even-higher vote than Curtin, while the Reading ticket lost 50,000 Foster voters. The straight Douglas ticket drew only about 16,500 votes, more than half of which came from Philadelphia. Bell won 7,000 votes in Philadelphia, but drew insignificant support elsewhere. Lincoln had made tremendous gains over Fremont in the southeastern section of Pennsylvania, while his vote in the north and west was similar to Fremont's. Continuing a trend that would be a near constant during the era of the third party system, Democrats obtained the vast majority of immigrant and Catholic voters. Turnout was estimated at 75.2 percent.²⁰⁰

The magnitude of the victory quickly resonated with Republicans. "The great North has for the first time in the political history of the country vindicated its honor, and has shown that it despises the threats of traitors as readily as it condemns their dangerous principles." These words of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* reveal that the election of Lincoln meant more than just a simple changing of the guard. The Republican triumph was a victory of ideology and principle. It was a refutation of the dough-faced Buchanan and his cronies. "'Honest Old Abe' and

¹⁹⁹ *Pittsburgh Post*, October 10.

²⁰⁰ The Presidential vote was: Lincoln-R 268,030, Reading Ticket-D 178,871, Douglas Straight 16,765, Bell-CU 12,770; Turnout from Gienapp, "Politics Seems to Enter into Everything," 19. The governor's race produced a turnout of 77.7 percent.

correct principles have crushed our opponents,” concluded a Gettysburg Republican.²⁰¹

Post-election commentaries however did not always agree on the causes of the Republican triumph. The strength of the antislavery vote was often debated. The Philadelphia *North American* felt “slavery was not the dominating idea of the Presidential contest.” While many Republicans claimed the tariff to be their most effective weapon, doubters existed in both parties.²⁰² Philadelphia’s leading Republican paper even saw the election as a referendum on Whiggery. “The old Whig sprit yet lives, and it is roused . . . against the same corrupt and insidious enemy.” Attempting to determine what issues entered the minds of voters more, seems an impossible goal. As it were, the lack of a uniform postscript to the election has perpetuated an unproductive argument over the motives of the electorate of 1860.²⁰³

Regardless of the motivations of the individual voter, the implications of the Republican victory were revolutionary. “Fifteen states are without a President,” grimly reported the Chambersburg *Valley Spirit*. The rise of the Republican party had introduced an element of northern militancy into Pennsylvania. While the strength of the Republican pseudo-militia group the Wide Awakes may have been innocent, the explicit rejection of the recent course of the national government was not so innocuous. As the first steps towards secession were undertaken Pittsburgh’s leading Republican paper stood resolute.

²⁰¹ Pittsburgh *Gazette*, November 8; Robert L. Harper to Thaddeus Stevens, November 9, Stevens papers, LC.

²⁰² Philadelphia *North American*, November 7; William L. Hirst to James Buchanan, October 12, Buchanan papers, HSP.

²⁰³ Philadelphia *North American*, October 2; See also Franklin *Repository*, November 14.

“The election of Lincoln, will we venture to predict, lay the ghost of disunion; but if it should not, there will be power enough in the general government when he is inaugurated, to crush out any insane attempt at rebellion.” Pennsylvania had made its decision.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴Chambersburg *Valley Spirit*, November, 14; Pittsburgh *Gazette*, October 23.

CONCLUSION

“The North can never consent to the universal dominion of Slavery in this nation and nothing less will satisfy the South.” In this way Alexander K. McClure grimly summed up the secession crisis in mid-December 1860. Yet McClure, along with most Pennsylvania Republicans, were not ready to accept any of the pending compromises that promised to sooth the South, but would most likely wreck the Republican party. If we compromise, he concluded, “our present victory would be fruitless.” Most Keystone Republicans agreed with McClure and refused to support any of the reactionary measures that attempted to assuage the South during the winter of 1860-61. Once war began Pennsylvania Republicans gave nearly unbroken support to the military effort.²⁰⁵

Although they had usually supported the various compromise measures, most Keystone Democrats backed the war effort in the aftermath of Fort Sumter. But the war only intensified the divisions within the party. By 1863 the copperhead/peace faction of the party predominated. Pennsylvania’s Democratic party included some of the most reactionary antiwar activists in the North. They came perilously close to controlling government. Yet when military victory

²⁰⁵ McClure to James McPherson, December 14, McPherson papers, LC.

eventually came, the record of opposition seriously hurt Democrats. After 1865 Democratic victories in Pennsylvania were few and far between.

Despite suffering a setback in the 1862 congressional election and losing control of the legislative assembly for two years, the Republican party--which continued to run under the moniker of People's or Union party--for the most part maintained its power during the Civil War. Andrew G. Curtin secured a narrow reelection in 1863 and provided able leadership throughout the War. Simon Cameron served a stormy tenure as Secretary of War--David Wilmot replaced him in the Senate--and then labored as Minister to Russia, before returning to Pennsylvania to help in Lincoln's reelection in 1864. Ultimately, Cameron secured firm control over Pennsylvania's Republican party. Curtin lost his feud with Cameron and was eventually forced out of the party. By then the sectional issues that ignited the Civil War had faded from the headlines, however, the Republican party now dominated Pennsylvania politics.²⁰⁶

Between 1854 and 1860 the second party system came to an end in Pennsylvania and the third party system was born. A myriad of forces combined to terminate the old condition and create the new pattern of politics. Nativism, temperance, slavery, and voter apathy, helped destroy the Whig party and destabilize the Democratic party. Over the course of two years two separate national organizations struggled to create a new anti-Democratic party. Democrats, on the other hand, sought to reestablish their base and secure alienated

²⁰⁶ For coverage of wartime politics see: Erwin S. Bradley, *Triumph of Militant Republicanism*, and Arnold M. Shankman, *The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement*.

former Whigs. At first the Know Nothing movement and the American party were more successful than Free Soilers and Republicans in forming an opposition party. However, the American party was torn asunder by its transformation from a nativist/antiparty organization to a national conservative anti-Democratic party. Although the original precepts of Know Nothingism remained vibrant, the American party proved a stagnant ephemeral force. Though initially burdened by the state's lack of a stridently antislavery electorate, the Republican party eventually benefited both from American party erosion and Democratic blundering. The intensification of the sectional crisis brought the Republican party instant credibility.

Yet, Republican victory came relatively late to Pennsylvania. The strength of the Fillmore movement in southeastern and central Pennsylvania, combined with the inflated performance of the Democratic party under state-favorite James Buchanan, resulted in a lop-sided defeat in 1856. The party's first gubernatorial race the next year served only to establish the party as the uncontested opposition to seemingly entrenched Democracy. However, the almost perpetual tumult of the 1850's left Democrat's hold on power tenuous at best. Economic malaise, placid leadership, and dough-faced submission to increasingly outrageous southern demands marred the Buchanan Presidency. Meanwhile, Republicans had finally crushed their conservative/nativist competitors and secured a more coherent response to local and state issues. Republicans--reinvented in the guise of the People's party--additionally expanded into economics, grabbing hold of the protectionist cause. The expansion of the Republican identity helped produce just

enough new converts in 1858 to overwhelm a now stammering Democratic party. The drop in party turnout between 1856 and 1858 resulted in the worst defeat in Keystone Democratic history. The unity of '56 would never quite return.

Although Democrats regrouped admirably by 1860, the bitter national breakup of the party that year all but guaranteed defeat. In a surprising reversal of 1856, the Republican Presidential candidate crushed a divided selection of opponents. While the Pennsylvania Republican party maintained an unwavering opposition to the spread of slavery, it insisted that such a position was conservative. The well-chosen slate of officers combined with the inclusive nature of the new party platform convinced many Pennsylvanians that the South would accept Republican victory. Yet the party's own rhetoric belied such reasoning. As Alexander McClure observed, the North would not stand to see slavery thrive, but the South could accept nothing less. In 1860 Pennsylvania, wittingly or not, chose its side. Thus a tradition of looking both ways, of refuting radicalism, and serving as a bulwark of Unionism came to an end. The means were varied compared to other northern states, but the result was the same.

Antebellum politics encompassed a wide array of ideologies and interests. An incredible range of passions and prejudices motivated the electorate and drove them to the polls. Some voters were moved by self-interested economics; others sought to produce an imposition of their own values on others, while many voted only to 'throw the rascals out.' It is impossible to know for sure why a majority of Pennsylvanians voted for the Republican party in 1860. Yet party ideology does

give us some basic insights. The words of politicians and editors and the principles of official platforms mattered much more during the Civil War era than in today's cynical world. The vast majority of antebellum political historians continue to insist that voters followed their party because they believed in its principles. Although religious and ethnic groups tended to stay loyal to certain parties, their loyalty was heavily tied to the supportive ideology of that party. Catholics supported Democrats because of their commitment to religious freedom in the face of opposition bigotry. Evangelical reformers tended to support Whigs and later Republicans, because they shared many of the same goals. Thus, ideology remains central.

During the 1850's the majority of the electorate of Gettysburg switched its allegiance from the Whig party to the Republican party. In the process they broke with their Maryland neighbors. Though possessing virtually identical economies and harboring a very similar population, the two communities had one major difference, their willingness to accept the fundamentally antislavery Republican party. Though the personal feelings of Gettysburg voters will never be fully known, the ideology of their party of choice is undeniable. Support of a progressive tariff, or agreement with railroad legislation, perhaps even anti-Catholic prejudice, may have been the primary motivators during those critical elections of October and November 1860, but the resulting blow against the slave power and the Union proved more lasting.

APPENDIX

Electoral Returns by County

<u>1854 Supreme Court Election</u>		Black-D 167,010 Smyser-W 78,571		Baird-KN 120,576	
Adams	1,952 914	1,343	Allegheny	5,351 4,313	5,705
Armstrong	1,932 783	1,663	Beaver	1,460 1,107	1,290
Bedford	2,053 1,228	836	Berks	8,256 2,474	2,794
Blair	1,445 487	2,205	Bradford	2,701 2,014	1,885
Bucks	5,148 2,818	2,366	Butler	2,374 1,656	1,189
Cambria	1,705 761	810	Carbon	1,229 231	784
Centre	2,133 349	2,341	Chester	4,564 3,726	2,670
Clarion	2,183 95	1,981	Clearfield	1,391 382	900
Clinton	948 305	1,182	Columbia	2,147 1,660	966
Crawford	2,609 1,663	1,744	Cumberland	2,651 1,401	2,018
Dauphin	2,292 missing	2,553	Delaware	1,581 1,379	886
Elk	344 11	373	Erie	2,389 1,494	1,694
Fayette	2,354 73	3,377	Franklin	2,761 1,457	2,144

Fulton	877 308	387	Greene	1,972 204	1,325
Huntingdon	1,416 585	1,997	Indiana	1,223 1,356	1,140
Jefferson	945 120	1,497	Juniata	1,176 814	359
Lancaster	4,738 5,676	5,564	Lawrence	996 1,566	902
Lebanon	1,590 1,401	1,209	Lehigh	3,092 1,725	1,251
Luzerne	4,297 1,030	3,572	Lycoming	2,274 260	2,440
McKean	469 284	30	Mercer	2,513 1,514	851
Mifflin	1,292 641	940	Monroe	1,894 213	223
Montgomery	5,530 3,140	1,954	Montour	948 295	388
Northampton	3,758 679	2,241	Northumberland	2,185 806	945
Perry	1,464 143	1,893	Philadelphia	25,446 5,872	22,104
Pike	631 88	51	Potter	538 460	214
Schuylkill	5,377 896	3,451	Somerset	1,451 1,406	1,118
Sullivan	407 114	169	Susquehanna	2,133 1,069	1,308
Tioga	1,402 782	1,474	Union	1,842 2,010	707
Venango	1,413 285	1,259	Warren	1,048 722	543
Washington	3,509 1,931	2,322	Wayne	1,769 515	709

Westmoreland	3,297	2,433	Wyoming	857	765
	1,096			237	
York	4,612	4,044			
	731	,			

<u>1855 Canal Commission Election</u>			Plummer-D 161,281	Williamson-R 7,226	
			Nicholson-A 149,745	Misc. 6,383	
Adams	1,784 1,679	0	Allegheny	6,740 5,877	2,357
Armstrong	1,633 2,148	121	Beaver	1,334 1,107	581
Bedford	1,667 1,791	0	Berks	6,948 3,264	0
Blair	1,465 2,392	1	Bradford	2,476 4,173	0
Bucks	5,328 4,123	0	Butler	2,182 2,582	120
Cambria	2,063 1,437	0	Carbon	1,187 519	0
Centre	1,851 2,033	0	Chester	4,460 4,668	0
Clarion	2,154 1,508	5	Clearfield	1,409 1,018	4
Clinton	934 996	10	Columbia	1,635 984	0
Crawford	2,015 2,091	791	Cumberland	2,399 2,660	0
Dauphin	2,292 3,021	1	Delaware	1,581 1,379	12
Elk	350 236	14	Erie	1,698 2,113	471
Fayette	2,620 2,312	12	Franklin	2,411 2,860	0
Fulton	822 609	0	Greene	1,997 1,393	0
Huntingdon	1,194 1,920	5	Indiana	667 2,315	586
Jefferson	1,089 1,043	0	Juniata	837 1,023	0

Lancaster	5,099 5,301	0	Lawrence	864 1,197	635
Lebanon	1,865 2,256	0	Lehigh	3,394 2,633	0
Luzerne	3,957 3,571	0	Lycoming	2,266 2,034	1
McKean	265 455	0	Mercer	1,635 1,808	563
Mifflin	1,310 1,382	0	Monroe	1,327 531	3
Montgomery	5,207 3,573	4	Montour	920 438	0
Northampton	3,738 2,443	0	Northumberland	1,983 1,041	1
Perry	1,332 1,539	0	Philadelphia	28,384 25,770	20
Pike	614 64	8	Potter	436 634	0
Schuylkill	5,012 1,775	0 2,082	Snyder	819 1,090	0
Somerset	1,481 2,050	0	Sullivan	347 292	0
Susquehanna	1,579 2,164	0	Tioga	1,381 1,723	166
Union	793 1,500	0	Venango	1,501 1,468	57
Warren	717 958	122	Washington	3,182 3,214	173
Wayne	1,594 1,420	0	Westmoreland	3,547 3,200	45
Wyoming	529 794	0	York	4,349 4,138	

1856 Congressional Elections

I		XII		XXIII	
Florence-D	9,495	J. Montgomery-D	10,442	Stewart-U	8,552
Knight-U	7,275	Smith-U	7,657	Cunningham-D	5,467
II		XII		XXIV	
Morris-U	6,411	Dimmick-D	11,235	Gillis-D	9,785
Marshall-D	6,018	Dimk-U	5,065	Myers-U	9,114
III		XIV		XXV	
Landy-D	7,933	Grow-U	13,325	Dick-U	8,944
Millward-U	6,753	Sheward-D	5,361	McFadden-D	4,215
IV		XV			
Phillips-D	9,279	White-D	9,980		
Forts-A	6,560	Irwin-U	9,450		
Kelley-R	2,457				
V		XVI			
O. Jones-D	9,674	Ahl-D	11,191		
Mulvany-U	7,961	Todd-U	9,670		
VI		XVII			
Hickman-D	8,024	Reilly-D	10,224		
Bowen-U	7,851	Pumroy-U	9,715		
VII		XVIII			
Chapman-D	10,321	Eddie-U	8,792		
Bradshaw-U	8,789	Pershing-D	8,508		
VIII		XIX			
J. Jones-D	9,951	Covode-U	10,409		
Yoder-U	3,947	McKinely-D	8,724		
IX		XX			
Edwards-U	10,001	Montgomery-D	10,256		
Heister-D	8,320	Knight-U	9,411		
X		XXI			
Kunkel-U	9,227	Ritchie-U	7,647		
Eyer-D	7,360	McCams	5,944		
XI		XXII			
Dewart-D	8,959	Purviance-U	6,840		
Campbell-U	6,418	Gibson-D	4,854		

<u>1856 Presidential Election</u>		Buchanan-D	230,700	Fillmore-A	55,838-26,338
		Fremont-R	147,510		
Adams	2,837 1,120	24-1,225	Allegheny	9,062 13,671	898-608
Armstrong	2,680 3,076	75-113	Beaver	1,905 2,658	183-103
Bedford	2,458 306	152-1,784	Berks	11,272 1,037	304-3,282
Blair	2,080 445	667-1,853	Bradford	2,314 6,933	71-30
Bucks	6,517 4,682	316-419	Butler	2,648 3,401	67-14
Cambria	2,987 804	107-867	Carbon	1,868 692	156-309
Centre	2,895 390	552-1,400	Chester	6,333 6,308	828-620
Clarion	2,760 788	6-944	Clearfield	1,678 756	93-550
Clinton	1,485 618	34-648	Columbia	2,888 1,139	6-214
Crawford	3,891 5,360	41-4	Cumberland	3,437 1,472	14-1,565
Dauphin	3,093 1,614	106-2,330	Delaware	2,005 1,000	791-319
Elk	676 265	7-45	Erie	2,584 5,157	252-37
Fayette	3,554 2,889	45-1,228	Franklin	3,469 2,336	16-1,327
Fulton	970 149	6-561	Greene	2,447 1,321	14-272
Huntingdon	2,164 926	737-908	Indiana	1,762 2,625	32-218
Jefferson	1,463 1,163	32-683	Juniata	1,565 480	160-597

Lancaster	8,781 6,608	977-3,616	Lawrence	1,220 3,067	86-11
Lebanon	2,393 2,348	41-648	Lehigh	4,428 2,237	21-91
Luzerne	6,791 4,850	563-305	Lycoming	3,824 934	70-1,700
McKean	526 812	40-7	Mercer	2,899 3,686	103-16
Mifflin	1,491 216	61-989	Monroe	2,276 560	12-67
Montgomery	7,134 2,846	1,778-492	Montour	1,271 666	11-138
Northampton	5,260 1,168	1,994-644	Northumberland	3,059 566	244-1,090
Perry	2,135 521	657-750	Philadelphia	38,222 7,892	11,860-12,218
Pike	862 270	5-10	Potter	667 1,264	2-4
Schuylkill	7,035 2,188	367-2,315	Snyder	1,265 943	49-1,404
Somerset	1,763 1,458	1-1,404	Sullivan	538 309	5-33
Susquehanna	2,548 3,861	43-8	Tioga	1,368 4,541	20-7
Union	1,092 1,429	15-171	Venango	2,157 2,041	7-65
Warren	1,231 2,091	47-2	Washington	4,288 4,237	128-137
Wayne	2,259 2,059	113-69	Westmoreland	5,172 4,202	66-283
Wyoming	1,171 1,138	57-17	York	6,879 512	1,001-3,300

<u>1857 Governorship Race</u>		Packer Wilmot		188,887 146,136	Hazlehurst 28,132
Adams	2,363 1,900	59	Allegheny	6,610 7,687	856
Armstrong	2,409 2,106	111	Beaver	1,557 1,999	0
Bedford	2,338 1,568	398	Berks	8,722 2,750	874
Blair	1,819 1,450	569	Bradford	2,082 5,642	6
Bucks	5,747 4,801	101	Butler	2,361 2,831	47
Cambria	2,379 1,042	165	Carbon	1,557 672	153
Centre	2,663 2,145	35	Chester	5,388 5,269	524
Clarion	2,132 987	23	Clearfield	1,459 725	235
Clinton	1,464 1,083	18	Columbia	1,464 1,144	30
Crawford	2,576 3,514	2	Cumberland	3,078 2,466	58
Dauphin	3,109 2,656	600	Delaware	1,598 1,614	609
Elk	502 276	3	Erie	1,995 3,305	143
Fayette	3,104 2,520	80	Forest	65 75	0
Franklin	3,186 3,058	91	Fulton	817 570	9
Greene	2,034 1,000	8	Huntingdon	1,749 1,678	248
Indiana	1,438 2,650	26	Jefferson	1,268 1,125	54

Juniata	1,108 1,035	20	Lancaster	6,486 7,698	1,236
Lawrence	993 1,992	64	Lebanon	1,990 2,664	182
Lehigh	3,805 2,957	9	Luzerne	5,268 3,536	214
Lycoming	2,872 1,701	348	McKean	496 565	7
Mercer	2,539 2,928	49	Mifflin	1,532 1,217	104
Monroe	2,254 504	5	Montgomery	5,448 2,608	1,386
Montour	1,080 568	71	Northampton	4,097 1,111	1,010
Northumberland	2,821 974	490	Perry	1,965 1,564	161
Philadelphia	27,749 10,001	14,405	Pike	758 190	12
Potter	495 957	4	Schuylkill	5,950 3,097	581
Snyder	999 989	81	Somerset	1,741 2,277	5
Sullivan	494 265	0	Susquehanna	2,419 3,224	9
Tioga	1,193 3,234	0	Union	971 1,275	16
Venango	1,900 1,790	2	Warren	899 1,368	9
Washington	3,752 3,614	142	Wayne	1,992 1,691	49
Westmoreland	4,361 3,448	27	Wyoming	1,226 995	12
York	5,314 1,778	1,332			

1858 Congressional District Returns

I		XII		XXIV	
Florence-D	6,823	Scranton-P	10,023	Hall-P	8,905
Ryan-P	6,492	McRenolds-D	6,186	Gillis-D	8,111
Nebg-AL	2,442				
II		XII		XXV	
Morris-P	5,653	Dimmick-D	8,009	Babbitt-P	6,306
Martin-D	4,030	Shoemaker-P	6,566	Marshall-D	4,113
III		XIV			
Verree-P	6,977	Grow-P	11,165		
Landy-D	5,834	Parkhurst-D	3,359		
IV		XV			
Millward-P	9,749	Hale-P	9,238		
Phillips-D	6,451	White-D	7,349		
V		XVI			
Wood-P	9,701	Junkin-P	8,655		
O. Jones-D	7,209	Fisher-D	8,600		
VI		XVII			
Hickman-AL	6,786	McPherson-P	9,348		
Manley-D	5,185	Reilly-D	9,081		
Broomall-P	4,676	XVIII			
VII		Blair-P	9,114		
Longnecker-P	8,324	Pershing-D	6,679		
Roberts-D	8,076	XIX			
VIII		Covode-P	9,257		
Schwartz-P	7,321	Foster-D	8,165		
J. Jones-D	7,302	XX			
IX		Montgomery-AL	9,254		
Stevens-P	9,513	Knight-D	5,798		
Hopkins-D	6,341	XXI			
X		Moorhead-P	6,539		
Killinger-P	8,897	Burke-D	4,879		
Weidle-D	5,589	XXII			
XI		McKnight-P	5,438		
Campbell-P	7,153	Williams-AT	3,903		
Dewart-D	4,387	Birmingham-D	502		
Cake-AL	3,614				

<u>1859 Auditor General Election</u>		Wright-D	164,544
		Cochran-R	181,835
Adams	2,538 2,529	Allegheny	4,720 7,934
Armstrong	1,943 2,282	Beaver	1,131 1,756
Bedford	2,147 2,011	Berks	7,444 6,251
Blair	1,449 2,600	Bradford	1,639 3,743
Bucks	5,159 5,172	Butler	1,514 2,075
Cambria	1,868 1,593	Carbon	1,640 1,491
Centre	2,233 2,446	Chester	4,044 5,066
Clarion	1,216 532	Clearfield	1,448 1,129
Clinton	1,600 1,226	Columbia	1,782 1,005
Crawford	2,141 2,766	Cumberland	3,224 2,921
Dauphin	2,217 3,331	Delaware	1,280 2,097
Elk	411 317	Erie	1,119 2,325
Fayette	2,824 2,676	Forest	30 37
Franklin	3,267 3,692	Fulton	851 716
Greene	1,596 785	Huntingdon	1,774 2,264
Indiana	827 1,922	Jefferson	851 1,071

Juniata	1,309 1,223	Lancaster	3,433 7,602
Lawrence	526 1,351	Lebanon	1,280 2,451
Lehigh	3,856 2,613	Luzerne	5,936 5,071
Lycoming	2,949 2,599	McKean	587 600
Mercer	2,225 2,770	Mifflin	1,439 1,372
Monroe	1,777 409	Montgomery	5,056 4,535
Montour	1,154 602	Northampton	4,077 2,797
Northumberland	2,159 1,602	Perry	2,052 2,070
Philadelphia	26,366 29,525	Pike	721 135
Potter	502 948	Schuylkill	4,534 4,879
Snyder	737 1,286	Somerset	1,190 2,187
Sullivan	525 324	Susquehanna	2,091 2,807
Tioga	1,042 1,940	Union	840 1,363
Venango	1,837 2,622	Warren	757 1,139
Washington	3,390 3,745	Wayne	1,949 1,609
Westmoreland	4,163 3,803	Wyoming	945 751
York	5,203 4,983		

<u>1860 Governor's Election</u>		Foster-D	230,239
		Curtin-R	262,353
Adams	2,849 2,773	Allegheny	9,190 15,879
Armstrong	2,698 3,744	Beaver	1,715 2,682
Bedford	2,561 2,469	Berks	10,318 6,833
Blair	2,172 3,051	Bradford	2,328 6,664
Bucks	6,330 6,383	Butler	2,548 3,526
Cambria	2,583 2,177	Carbon	1,930 1,722
Centre	2,824 3,165	Chester	5,913 7,540
Clarion	2,297 1,795	Clearfield	2,040 1,756
Clinton	1,703 1,750	Columbia	2,586 1,848
Crawford	3,187 5,277	Cumberland	3,716 3,625
Dauphin	3,302 4,555	Delaware	1,996 3,183
Elk	633 421	Erie	2,469 6,813
Fayette	3,556 3,382	Forest	69 129
Franklin	3,379 4,053	Fulton	851 716
Greene	2,669 1,529	Huntingdon	2,114 3,070
Indiana	1,886 3,672	Jefferson	1,493 1,886

Juniata	1,465 1,503	Lancaster	7,153 13,012
Lawrence	959 2,645	Lebanon	2,234 3,847
Lehigh	4,566 4,166	Luzerne	6,916 6,682
Lycoming	3,034 3,615	McKean	706 1,048
Mercer	2,794 3,624	Mifflin	1,490 1,723
Monroe	2,163 822	Montgomery	7,392 5,812
Montour	1,220 983	Northampton	5,249 3,507
Northumberland	2,955 2,429	Perry	2,128 2,416
Philadelphia	42,119 40,233	Pike	843 324
Potter	615 1,410	Schuylkill	7,067 7,301
Snyder	1,134 1,704	Somerset	1,372 2,977
Sullivan	543 394	Susquehanna	2,456 4,110
Tioga	1,331 4,147	Union	1,019 1,820
Venango	2,142 2,581	Warren	1,172 2,112
Washington	4,206 4,768	Wayne	2,537 2,610
Westmoreland	5,276 4,830	Wyoming	1,336 1,192
York	6,665 5,322		

<u>1860 Presidential Election</u>		Reading-D Lincoln-R	178,871 268,030	Douglas Bell	16,765 12,776
Adams	2,644 2,724	36 38	Allegheny	6,725 16,725	523 570
Armstrong	1,621 2,824	5 50	Beaver	1,621 2,842	4 58
Bedford	2,224 2,505	14 86	Berks *	8,846 6,709	420 130
Blair	1,275 3,050	239 397	Bradford	2,188 7,091	9 22
Bucks	5,174 6,443	487 95	Butler	2,332 3,646	13 22
Cambria	1,643 2,277	110 124	Carbon	1,301 1,758	369 21
Centre	2,423 3,021	26 16	Chester	5,008 7,771	263 202
Clarion	2,078 1,829	0 12	Clearfield	1,836 1,702	0 23
Clinton	1,244 1,736	72 0	Columbia	2,366 1,873	86 14
Crawford	2,961 5,779	62 22	Cumberland	3,183 3,593	26 147
Dauphin	2,392 4,531	195 169	Delaware	1,500 3,181	195 169
Elk	523 407	0 0	Erie	2,531 6,160	17 90
Fayette	3,308 3,454	24 147	Forest	47 107	0 0
Franklin	2,515 4,151	622 76	Fulton	911 788	1 49
Greene	2,665 1,614	26 17	Huntingdon	1,622 3,089	55 22
Indiana	1,347 3,910	0 22	Jefferson	1,134 1,704	6 5

Juniata	1,147	1	Lancaster	5,135	728
	1,494	62		13,352	446
Lawrence	788	16	Lebanon	1,917	10
	2,937	31		3,868	103
Lehigh	4,094	145	Luzerne	6,803	0
	4,170	52		7,300	0
Lycoming	2,402	187	McKean	591	0
	3,494	91		1,077	2
Mercer	2,546	2	Mifflin	1,189	83
	3,855	49		1,701	36
Monroe	1,262	291	Montgomery	5,590	509
	844	0		5,826	690
Montour	786	311	Northampton	4,597	115
	1,043	4		3,839	171
Northumberland	2,306	97	Perry	1,743	8
	2,422	72		2,371	38
Philadelphia	21,619	9,274	Pike	831	0
	39,223	7,131		381	1
Potter	521	0	Schuylkill	4,968	422
	1,545	0		7,568	139
Snyder	910	60	Somerset	1,175	1
	1,678	5		3,218	10
Sullivan	497	0	Susquehanna	2,548	2
	429	1		4,470	6
Tioga	1,278	11	Union	812	28
	4,754	9		1,824	6
Venango	1,932	6	Warren	1,087	4
	2,680	6		2,284	0
Washington	3,975	8	Wayne	2,618	0
	4,724	91		2,857	2
Westmoreland	4,796	13	Wyoming	1,237	8
	4,887	13		1,286	0
York	5,497	562			
	5,128	574			

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Pennsylvania Counties in 1860

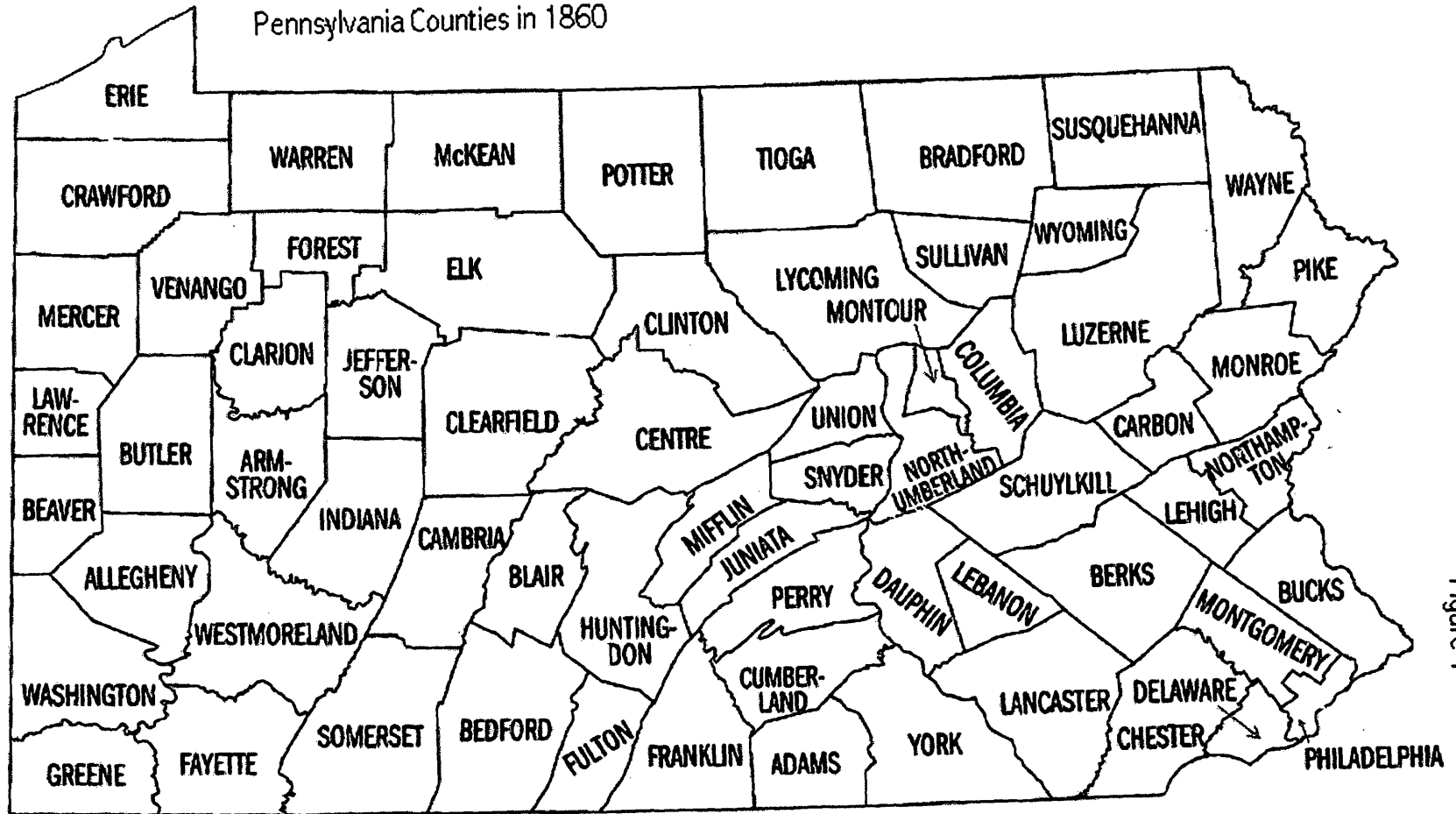
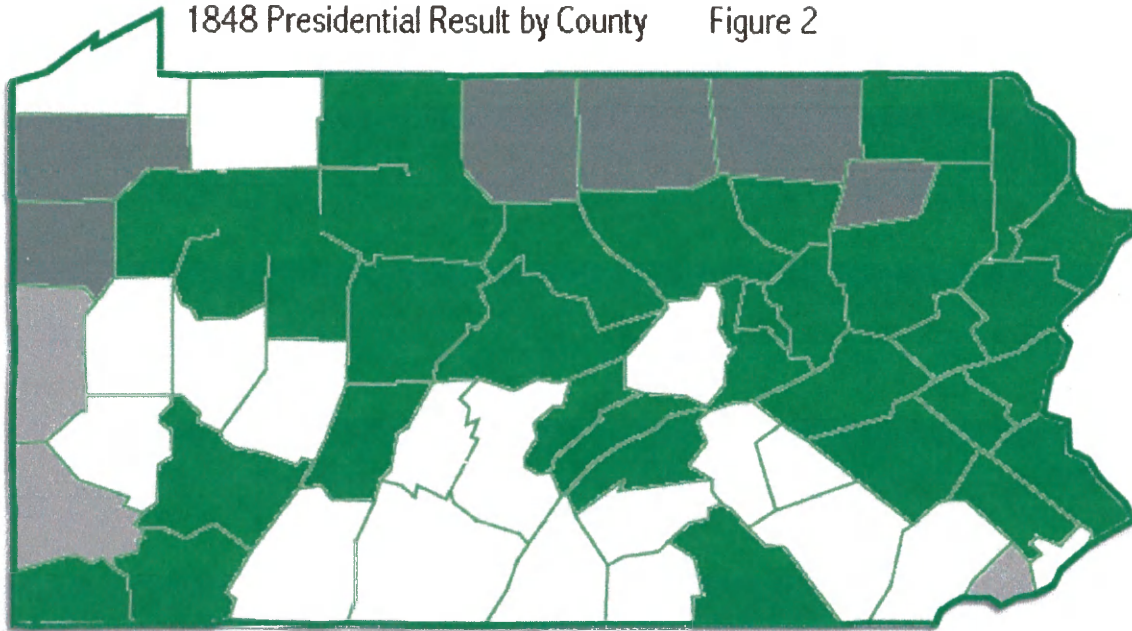


Figure 1

1848 Presidential Result by County Figure 2



Whig Majority
Taylor



Democratic Majority
Cass



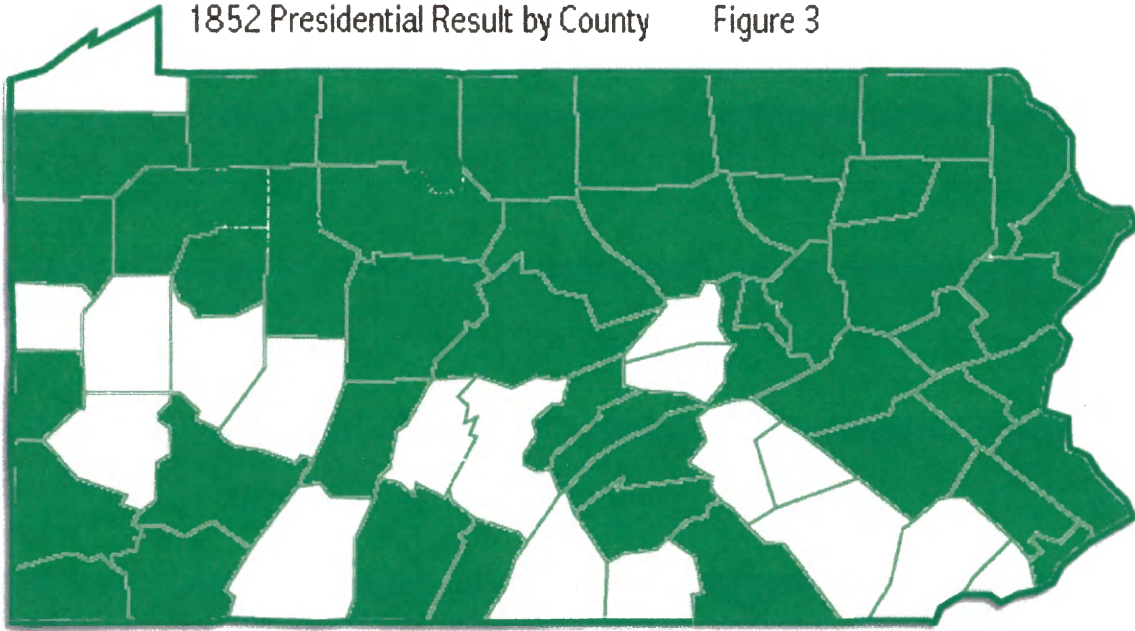
Whig Plurality



Democratic Plurality



1852 Presidential Result by County Figure 3



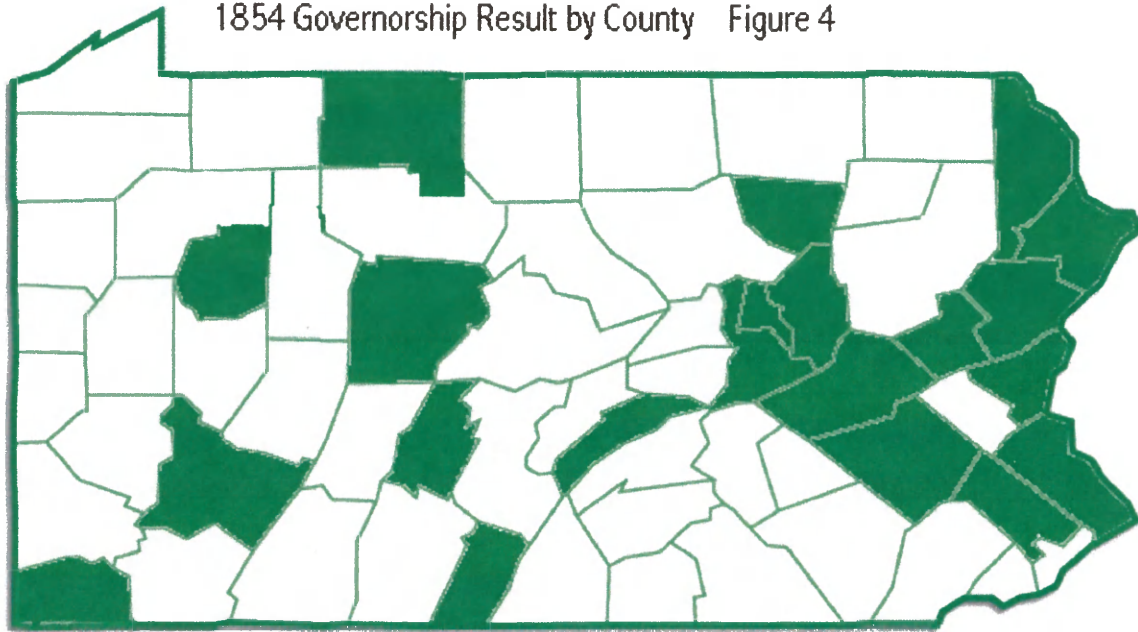
Whig Majority
Scott



Democratic Majority
Pierce



1854 Governorship Result by County Figure 4



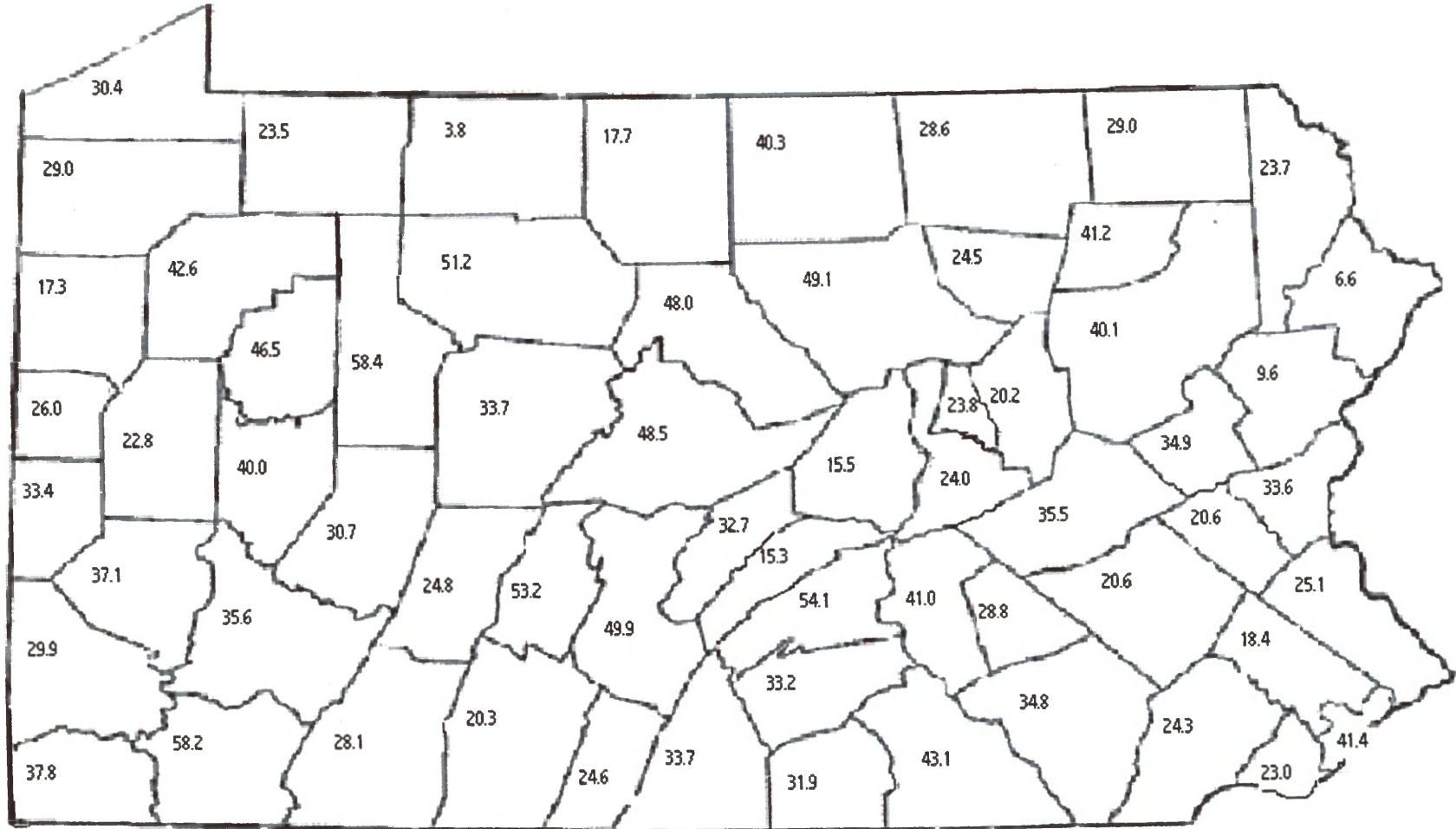
Whig Majority
Pollock



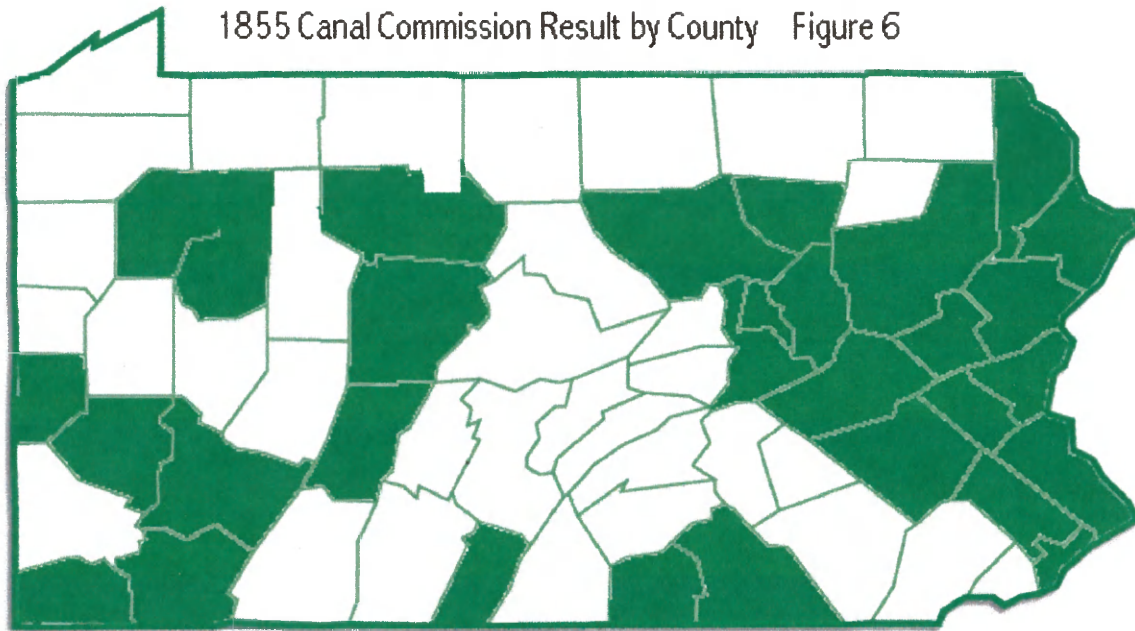
Democratic Majority
Bigler



1854 State Supreme Court Race: Native American Percentage by County Figure 5



1855 Canal Commission Result by County Figure 6



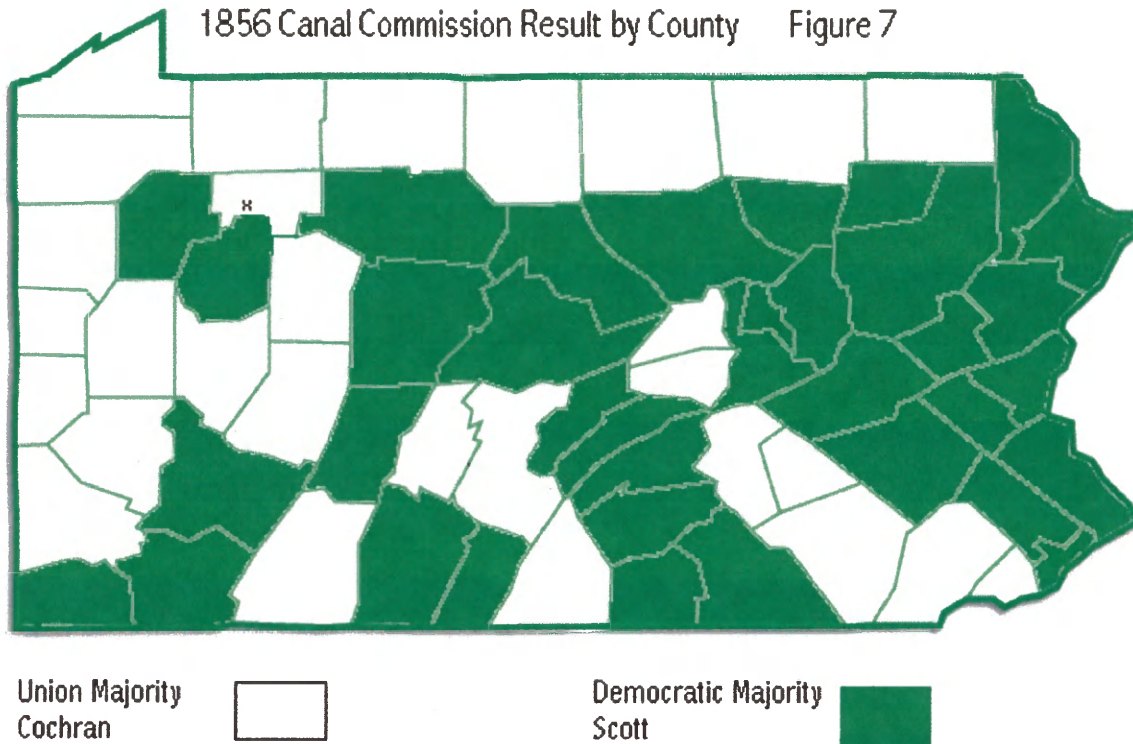
American
Majority/Plurality
Nicholson



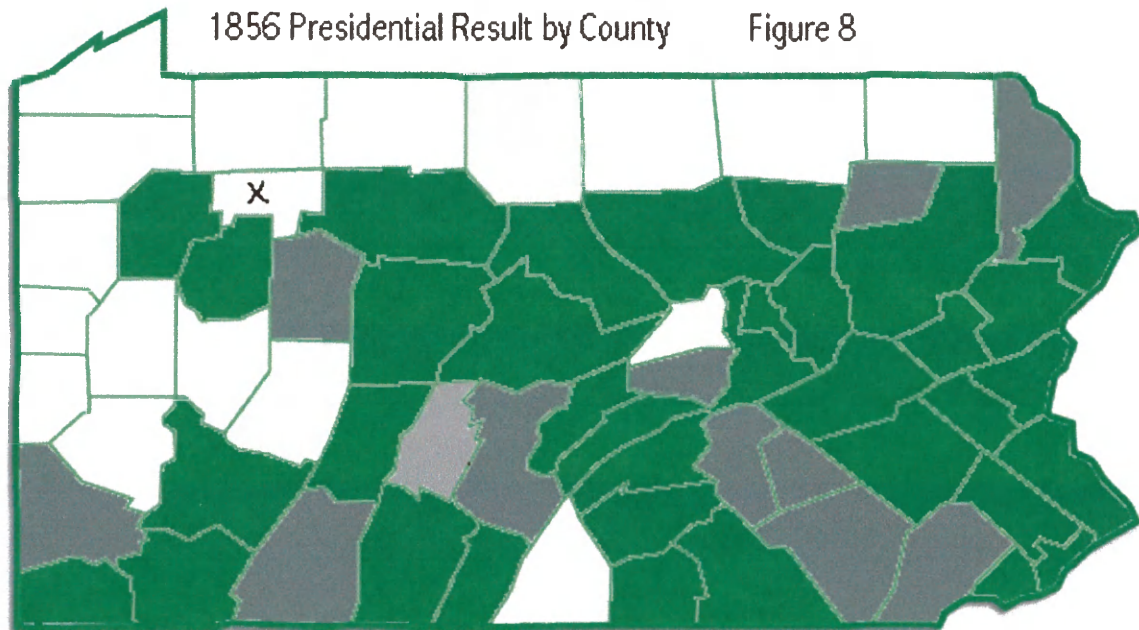
Democratic Majority/
Plurality
Plummer



1856 Canal Commission Result by County Figure 7



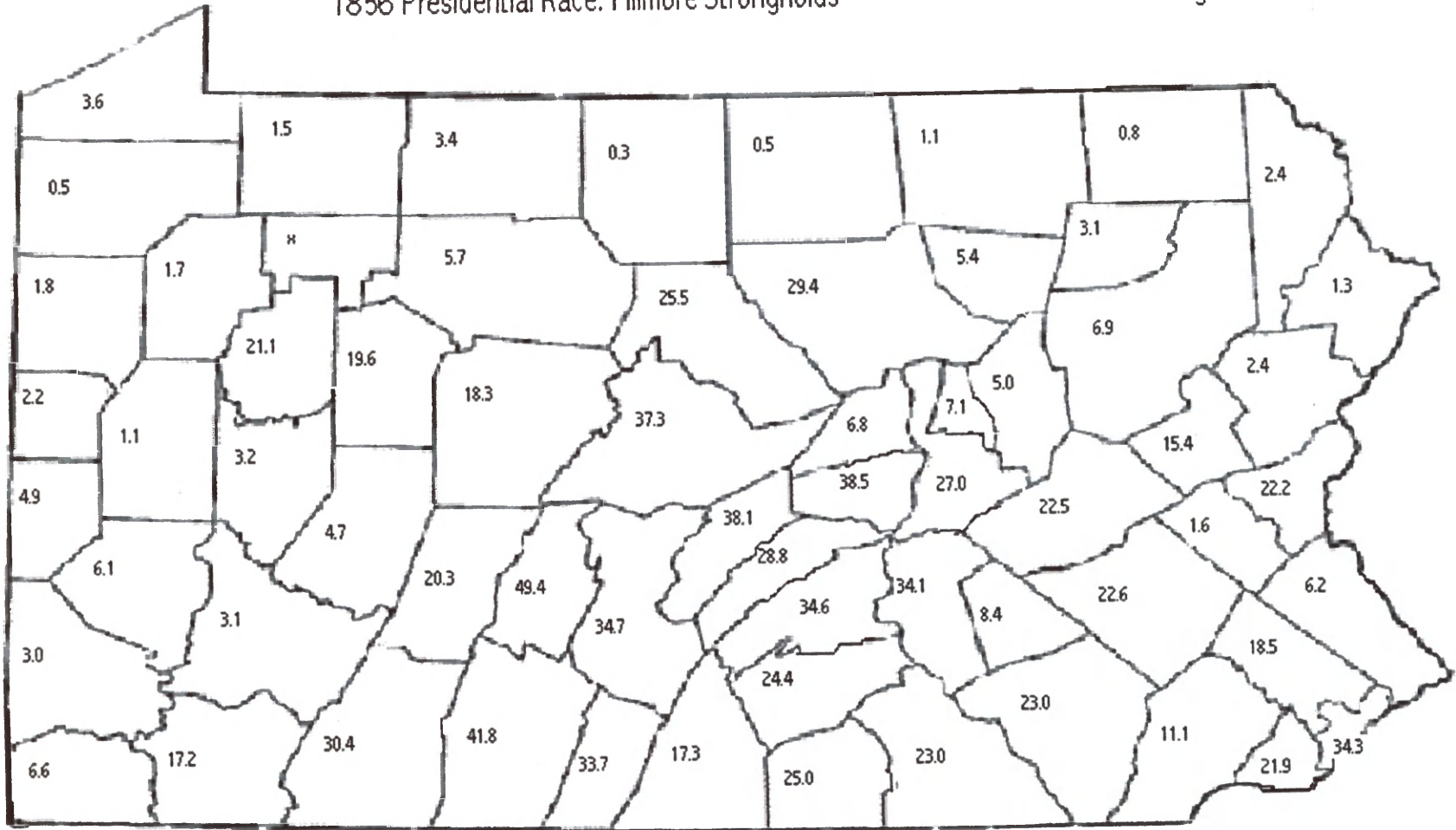
1856 Presidential Result by County Figure 8



Republican Maj. Fremont		Democratic Maj. Buchanan	
Democratic Plur.		American Plur. Fillmore	

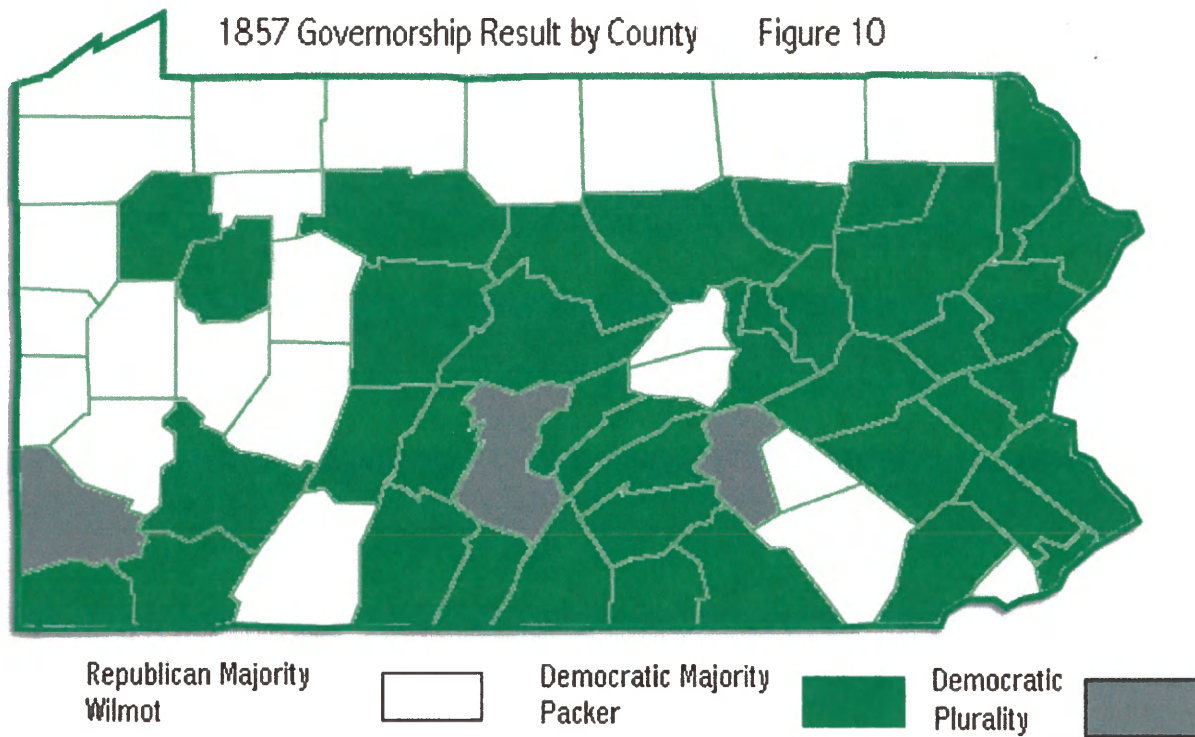
1856 Presidential Race: Fillmore Strongholds

Figure 9

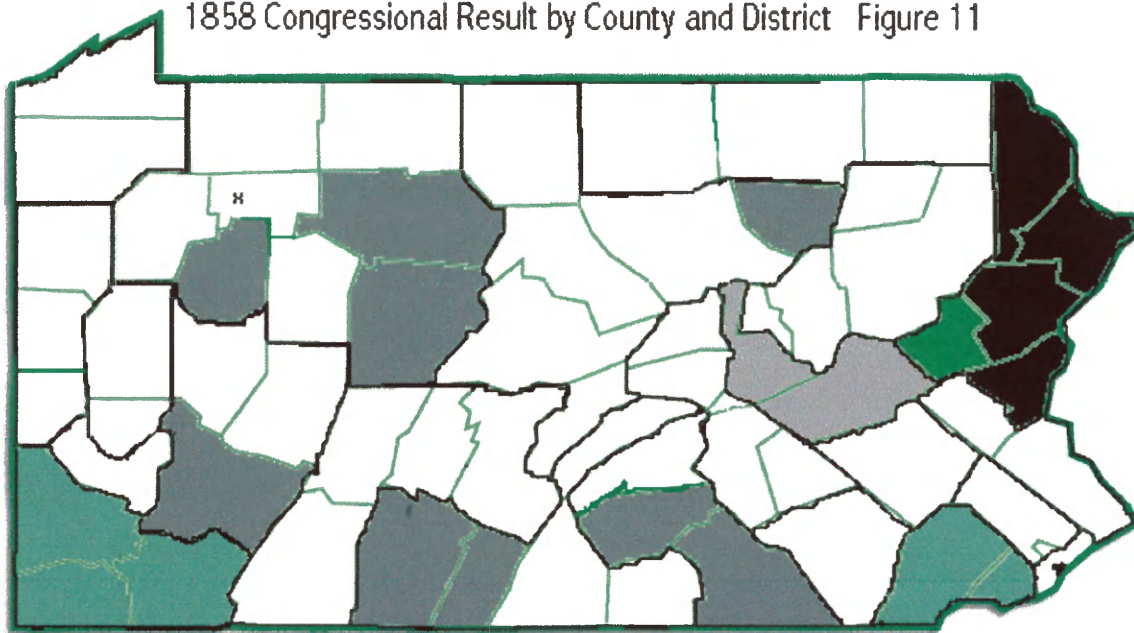


Combined Fillmore Vote

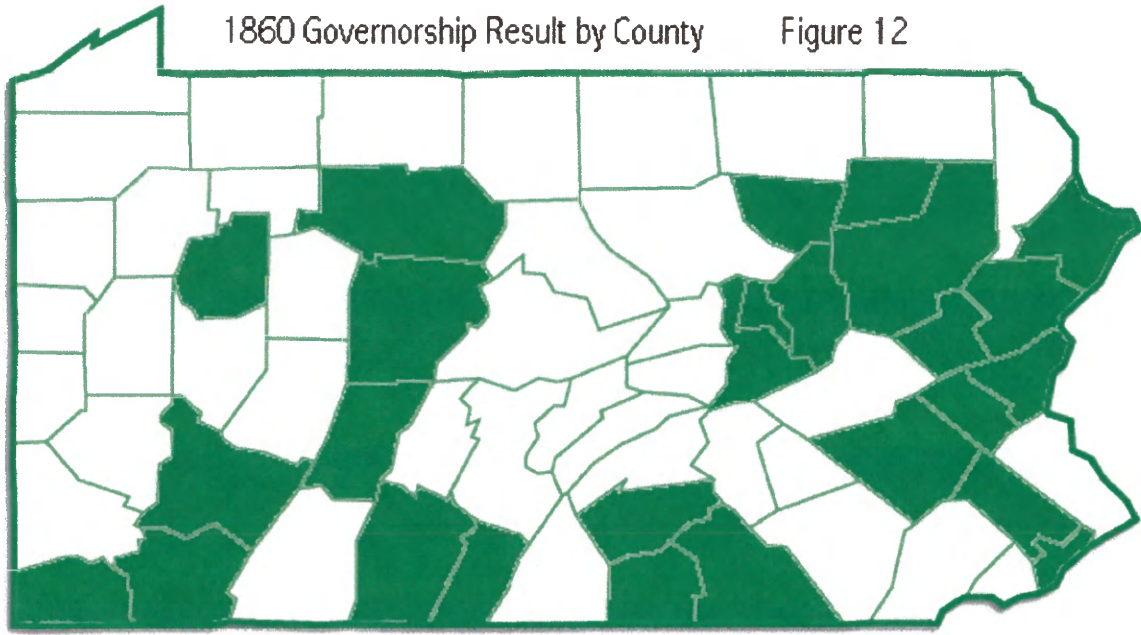
1857 Governorship Result by County Figure 10



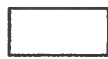
1858 Congressional Result by County and District Figure 11



1860 Governorship Result by County Figure 12



People's/Republican Majority
Curtin



Democratic Majority
Foster



1860 Presidential Result by County

Figure 13

