The Louisiana Whig Party.

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THE LOUISIANA WHIG PARTY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

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ABSTRACT

The Louisiana Whig party was an integral part of the national party which evolved from the National Republican party in 1834. Like its predecessor the Whig party advocated the protective tariff, the bank of the United States, and internal improvements at federal expense. Louisiana sugar planters needed tariff protection for their industry; the low-lying geographic condition made water control and other improvements a necessity; and New Orleans' leadership in trade and commerce made banking and money critical issues. Jacksonian opposition to these programs led to the Whig cry of executive usurpation. The Whig party controlled Louisiana government until 1842 when the Democratic party first gained control of the governor's office, which it retained until Reconstruction. The Whigs had grown weak because of the lingering depression started by the Panic of 1837, which included numerous New Orleans bank failures, and the suspension of specie payment; the increased number of small farmers in north and southwest Louisiana who were always Jacksonian Democrats; and the defection of John Tyler.

Henry Clay played an important role in the Louisiana Whig party, but he was unable to receive a majority of Louisiana's popular votes when he sought the presidency. William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor, the only elected Whig presidents, were able to carry the state's electoral votes.
In 1845 the Democrats changed the Constitution of 1812 in order to broaden the electoral franchise, make more government officials elective officers, and prevent direct aid by the state to corporations. The new constitution further strengthened the Democratic party, yet, until 1852 the Whigs frequently elected majorities to the state legislature, and to send party members to Congress.

The election of Zachary Taylor led to renewed hopes among Louisiana's Whigs, but he soon disappointed them. The Compromise of 1850 served to dramatize the sectional split within the national party that threatened its existence. In the state the Whig party favored preservation of the Union, but it was unwilling to join a Union party movement started in Georgia.

As a last effort to regain power the Louisiana Whigs championed successfully a new constitution in 1852. With aid from the Democrats they wrote provisions that permitted aid by the state to corporations, particularly railroad companies and banks; provided for an elective judiciary; and the total population basis for legislative apportionment. When the new constitution was accepted by the voters the Whigs were split into country and city factions by the new basis of apportionment. The Whigs were further weakened by the national sectional strife; and particularly were the Louisiana Whigs disappointed by the presidential nomination of Winfield Scott in preference to Millard Fillmore. After the election of 1852 the Whig party in Louisiana collapsed. Many Whigs drifted into
the Know Nothing Party, and others joined the Democrats.

At all times the Whigs offered a more positive political program than did their opponents. Whig economic philosophy seemed much more stable than the uncertainty of the Democrats. By 1852 the state's Democrats apparently adopted Whig policies as their own. Since leaders in both parties were seemingly equal in wealth and education, it is difficult to accept the belief that the Whig party in Louisiana was a class party.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF LOUISIANA POLITICS

"It appears to me fellow citizens, that a new party is collecting scattered forces of an old one, and raising new recruits...," William S. Hamilton noted, while seeking election to Congress from Louisiana's Florida parishes in 1822.¹ The Federalist party had long before broken down, and during the administration of James Monroe the nation was in a sort of political void, as though waiting for an issue, or a man, that would again create the two-party system. The issues, and the man, appeared as a result of the disputed election of 1824. When James Monroe retired from the presidency, his place was sought by four men, all of whom claimed membership in the same political party. The House of Representatives chose John Quincy Adams, and he, together with his Secretary of State, Henry Clay, advocated the National Program, which formed the basis of the National Republican party. Firmly determined to win the presidency in 1828, Andrew Jackson immediately began to organize the Democratic party, in opposition to the National Republicans, and the "Age of Jackson" began.²

¹The St. Francisville Asylum and Feliciana Advertiser, May 29, 1822. Hereafter cited as the St. Francisville Asylum.

²Joseph G. Tregle, Jr., "Louisiana in the Age of Jackson, A Study in Ego Politics" (unpublished PH.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1953), copy in the author's possession. This is an excellent source of information to 1834.
Louisiana was not much concerned with national issues until after this election, partly because its bitter racial controversy overshadowed all other political considerations. Therefore it is instructive to study the local social, economic, and thus political questions before attempting a study of the Whig party itself.

When Louisiana entered the union as a territory in 1803, it attracted thousands of protestant Americans, who came to make the most of the economic opportunities the old French-Spanish colony seemed to offer. As an illustration, one young man sent by his father from Rhode Island to collect a debt in Louisiana completed his task and decided to remain. He explained to his parent: "... this is the most promising country for a young man in my circumstances or for anyone that has a living to get in this world."

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5. Collins Family Papers, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University, letter from Andrew Collins to his father, January 10, 1819.
The "Americans" were greeted with bitter resentment by the French Creole population. The inhabitants of New Orleans, by 1822, were in a state "... but little short of civil war." They were divided into two political camps, the American and the Creole, and political candidates undoubtedly played upon the fears and prejudices of both. American candidates and French candidates, opposed each other for governor and other political offices, and all local issues turned upon the racial origin question. A letter, signed "Bayou Tunica," which appeared during the gubernatorial election of 1824, explains the situation as follows:

The population of Louisiana is a very motley and heterogeneous kind, consisting of inhabitants from every country. The native population bear a numerical proportion to the general mass of one to three; the emigrant Americans amount to about one third, and the foreign French, Scotch, Irish, English and German, constitute another third. Each class or tribe has notions, prejudices and opinions peculiar to itself; each also has pretensions to honor and views of ambition to realize. The administration of our present Governor has both wise and independent, and yet what a spirit of opposition has manifested itself to this course! Amid the contending claims and conflicting interests of a population divided as ours is, into three parts, it would be proper that a candidate from the native class of the community should be taken—They are the indigenous plants of the soil. They have grown up with the present institutions of the country. At the present time there is nothing more devoutly to be wished than the re-establishment of peace and harmony among us. I am well convinced that this object cannot be secured by the election of an American candidate.

6St. Francisville Asylum, June 26, 1824.
7The New Orleans Weekly Louisiana Gazette, July 10, 1825.
8St. Francisville Asylum, June 26, 1824.
Several years later, after the election of Creole Governor Alexander B. Roman, a leader of the American faction wrote, "Devil take the creoles.... Louisiana will be French and nothing but French for twenty years. I think the American population at the mercy of the French."

A number of less important issues, politically, attended the attempt of the commercial interests of New Orleans to enlarge their trade relations with the new republics of Latin America. Louisiana's legislature presented a memorial to Congress in 1820, seeking protection against pirates who operated in the Gulf of Mexico. The Secretary of War was asked to increase the size of the military establishment within the state and to strengthen old fortifications while building new ones. Edward Livingston, during the session of the eighteenth Congress, sought the construction of a light-house off the island of Dry Tortugas, which would guide mariners using the Atlantic sea lanes en route to New Orleans.

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11 Alexandria Louisiana Herald, February 18, 1820.

12 Ibid., April 22, 1820.

13 St. Francisville Journal, February 5, 1824.
Another, and seemingly irksome issue, was the mail service within the state. Handicapped by inferior roads, frequently made worse by rain, numerous lakes, bayous, rivers, and marshes, the federal service was the target of constant attack by Louisiana's citizens. Efforts to remedy its defects were apparently futile, for it remained a source of irritation throughout the period of this study. In 1822, Senator Henry Johnson asked the congressional committee on the post office and post roads to inquire about the frequent failure of the mails between New Orleans and other cities. He felt that covered carriages should be employed to carry the mails, because riders were swimming their mounts across streams at great risk to their cargoes. Later in the same year he apologized to his constituents because a bill relative to the improvement of mail service had been postponed in Congress. William L. Brent, seeking reelection to Congress in 1822, assured the people in his district that he had done everything possible to rectify the many irregularities in their mail service.

Louisiana's Constitution of 1812 became a political issue as the state's population increased, and there arose a

14 St. Francisville Asylum, April 3, 1822.
15 Alexandria Herald, July 6, 1822.
16 Ibid., June 9, 1824.
growing demand for its change in New Orleans, north and southwest Louisiana; strongholds of the small farmer and the landless class, which always supported Jackson. According to its provisions the governor had to be an American citizen, at least thirty-five years of age, resident in the state for six years, and the owner of property amounting in value to at least five thousand dollars. His term was four years, and succession in office was prohibited. In theory he was elected at a joint session of the legislature, where the choice was limited to one of the two candidates who had received the highest popular vote in the state election.¹⁷ This prerogative was never invoked by the legislature, and the candidate receiving the largest number of votes was chosen as long as the constitution was in effect.

The executive was invested with the power to enforce the laws, command the state militia, and veto legislative acts; but in addition, he had broad appointive powers. He appointed the Attorney-General, Secretary of State, all judges, sheriffs, justices of the peace, and other officers provided for in the constitution whose selection was left unspecified.¹⁸ Since many of these officials served for life, the appointive power was not only an important factor

¹⁸Ibid., Article III, section 9, p. 502.
in the patronage system, but also in the creation of a hierarchy of public office-holders.

Qualifications for state Senators were a minimum age of twenty-seven, four years residence in the state and one in the district, and possession of landed property evaluated at one thousand dollars. Members of the House of Representatives were required to be at least twenty-one years old, residents in the state for two years and in the county for one, and in possession of landed property worth five hundred dollars. Suffrage was limited to the adult free white male citizen, who had resided for one year in the county and whose name was enrolled on the tax list during the six months preceding an election.

Provision was made for a supreme court, with three to five justices, having appellate jurisdiction in civil cases involving a minimum of three hundred dollars. Each year regular sessions of the court met in New Orleans from November through July, and then moved west for hearings in Opelousas and Alexandria for the ensuing three months.

"The state shall be divided in fourteen senatorial districts, which shall forever remain indivisible."
Shortly after the adoption of the constitution three additional senatorial districts were created, when the Florida parishes joined the state. This brought the total to seventeen, and so it remained until 1845. Senators served four year terms, and each district sent one or more to the legislature. Representation in the lower house was provided on the basis of thirteen counties, a term then synonymous with parish. A census of the qualified electors, every four years, would determine the number of representatives each county could send to the legislature. Total membership could never exceed fifty.

Elections were held every two years to choose a complete House of Representatives and one half of the Senate. They began on the first Monday in July and continued through the succeeding two days. Louisiana's three representatives to the national House of Representatives were elected at the same time. The time chosen for elections and other devices such as the "perpetual" creation of senatorial districts are believed to have been efforts of the Creole population to prevent American control of the government. The humid July

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26 Tregle, op. cit., p. 89.
weather was known to be the worst time in the state for yellow fever and other diseases, and the Americans, not acclimated to these dangers, frequently left the state for northern pleasure resorts. Representation in both branches of the legislature was far from being equal, and the inequalities favored the southern part of the state, where the French population was most heavily concentrated.  

United States Senators were chosen by joint ballot of the general assembly, on the second Monday of the January preceding expiration of the incumbent's term. If a vacancy occurred while the legislature was not in session, the governor could fill it by appointment; otherwise the legislature would choose the replacement within eight days after receipt of the information. The legislature also chose the state's electoral voters, at least until after the disputed presidential election of 1824. 

Amendment of the constitution was, as experience proved, nearly impossible. The legislature during the first twenty days of a session might pass a measure listing specific 

27Asseff, op. cit., p. 136.
28Bullard and Curry, op. cit., p. 378.
changes to be made in the constitution, if a convention were held. The measure was then rejected or accepted at the next election by the voters. If the voters approved the proposal, then the legislature might vote to submit the question a second time to them. If the voters approved this second time, then the legislature was bound to call a constitutional convention to amend the organic law. Needless to say, the constitution remained unchanged until it was replaced by the Constitution of 1845.

Local government was based on parish divisions, with the police jury empowered to regulate slaves, build and repair bridges, dikes and levees, establish ferries, police taverns, levy taxes for public works, and to appoint a constable. Their qualifications were identical to those applied to the members of the lower house of the legislature.

Seven inferior judicial districts were provided for, and the judge in these districts had the final decision in criminal cases, since appeal to the higher court was impossible except in civil cases. His decision was also final in appeals from the courts of the justices of the peace and the parish judges, if the case involved less than three hundred dollars.

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32 Ibid., pp. 182-183.
The justices of the peace tried minor cases and maintained the peace of the community. Parish judges tried civil cases involving less than three hundred dollars, minor criminal cases, and all crimes committed by slaves.

This constitution probably did favor the planters of south Louisiana at the expense of New Orleans and the frontier. However, it was modeled largely on the Kentucky constitution, and most of its "aristocratic" features were found in other state constitutions of the time. It remained the organic law of the state for thirty-three years, and thus it lagged behind other state constitutions that were changed during this time to meet the growing demands of the people for broader, more responsive state governments.

The public domain in Louisiana was one of its most vexing problems, and Governor Thomas B. Robertson devoted most of his message to the legislature in 1824 to the many difficulties attendant upon this important issue. He said that many private land claims were not adjusted, including the Spanish land grants, and the public lands had not been put

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up for sale. Louisiana had more square miles of territory than almost any state in the union, but its potential strength was thwarted by the federal land policy. At one time Robertson was Louisiana's only member of the national House of Representatives, when Ohio, too, had only one; while Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri, and Alabama had none. Since that time he continued, millions of acres of land had been opened for sale in those states, and with immigration thus encouraged, a change "... commensurate with this great impulse, has taken place." In comparison Louisiana's condition was deplorable, "... after years of connection with the Union, a mere debatable land."

Blame for this condition was placed at the door of the federal government:

Here our great land-holder is not only an absentee, a non-resident, but turning his key, as well as his back on his possessions, exempts them from all taxation, declares them tabooed, sacred as the ark of the covenant, and denounces heavy pains and penalties on all whom by their sanctity is not sufficiently respected--whilst they stand a nuisance in our way, poisoning the sources of our prosperity, and impeding our every step toward that greatness to which we are invited by our otherwise enviable and unequal advantages.36

The Louisiana Purchase Treaty had given to the national government ownership of all land not held by private title, and congress shortly thereafter passed a registration law which required all land titles in the state to be registered.37

36Louisiana House Journal, 6 leg., 2 sess., pp. 9-11.
Undoubtedly a number of citizens either were ignorant of the law or simply did not bother to comply with its requirements. Thousands of acres in the Maison Rouge and Bastrop land grant areas of the Ouachita district were subject to dispute. Although the claimants under these grants were challenged by the federal government, they pressed their claims for many years before a final settlement could be reached. Many Louisiana's citizens had purchased their land from owners who held original title from the Maison Rouge and Bastrop grants, and they could only hope for some solution in their favor.38

Louisiana's congressmen were constantly working for a solution to this vexing question, and one possibility was pre-emption. In 1822 Henry Johnson introduced such a bill:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Represent­atives of the United States of America in Congress assembled—that every person and the legal representatives of every person, who has actually inhabited and cultivated a tract of land lying in that part of Louisiana which composed the later territory of Orleans, which tract is not rightfully claimed by any other person, and shall not have removed from said state, shall be entitled to the right of pre-emption.39

The bill was not acted upon during that session of Congress.40

39Ibid., St. Francisville Asylum, February 20, 1822.
40Alexandria Herald, July 6, 1822.
In 1824 Louisiana's congressmen worked together for a settlement of the land claims, but, according to William L. Brent, nothing was settled that year. Thomas Butler, in Congress three years prior to 1827, played an important role in settling some of the private land claims presented by Louisiana citizens. While running for governor in 1824, Senator Johnson was recommended to the voters as "... having done much towards the final adjustment of the land claims of the state of Louisiana."

During the debate on the Foote Resolution, designed to restrict the sale of public land, Edward Livingston opposed the move. In his rebuttal he dwelled on the tax burden placed on the state by the federal government's policy:

The State whose interests I advocate and partly represent, has suffered too much from the delay in the sale of the public lands already, not to render this proposition of restraining them still farther, a fatal one to her interest, with a population of 160,000 inhabitants, to bear all the charges of the government; her increase has been checked for 25 years; during which, according to the natural course of things, that population ought to have been doubled at least. The lands of the United States, amounting to 31,000,000 are not only exempt from taxes, but the inhabitants are forced, if they wish to keep up a communication between themselves in some of the settlements, and to protect their property from inundation, to make roads, bridges, and embankments on public lands. A law to restrict the sales of public lands to those already surveyed, would be equivalent to a law to

\[41\text{Ibid., June 9, 1824}\]
\[42\text{Baton Rouge Gazette, November 3, 1827.}\]
\[43\text{Alexandria Herald, September 17, 1823.}\]
stop them altogether, for, although of the 31,000,000 of acres owned by the United States, 2,700,000 have been surveyed, yet not a tenth part will ever sell, it is a morass of pine barrens. 44

Livingston's land figures were very nearly exact. The total original amount of land held by the central government was 31,463,040 acres. Some 5,000,000 acres had been needed to satisfy private land claims under the French, Spanish, and English governments. By act of Congress, the state had received 46,000 acres to establish a seminary of learning. By 1828 it had sold 73,982 acres of the land gift received for the promotion of public education. As late as June 30, 1828, the national government still controlled some 25,364,197 acres, after the claims above had been settled. 45

In 1828 Louisiana's legislature drafted a memorial to Congress, with the governor's approval, which summed up the many difficulties involved in the federal land policy. It complained that when the state had entered the Union and surrendered its public lands, federal ownership would continue no longer than was necessary to sell all that might be demanded. Though fifteen years had passed since 1812, more than half of the public domain was still unsurveyed. After complaining of the tax burden, covered in Livingston's speech, the memorial added a number of suggestions to Congress:

44 Washington National Intelligencer, January 19, 1830.
should extend pre-emption rights to actual settlers, reduce the price of land, refer all Spanish land claims to the courts, and provide for the necessary surveys.

Walter H. Overton, in the United States House of Representatives, suggested that the Committee on Public Lands inquire into the expediency of granting to actual settlers within the state, "... who have not heretofore availed themselves of any law making donations three hundred and twenty five acres of land each."

In 1830 Armand Beauvais, then acting-governor, suggested that the legislature "... renew your exertions to obtain the share to which we are entitled in the proceeds of the sales of the public lands in this state; and also to endeavor to obtain from congress a donation of those lands within the limits of Louisiana which remain unused." These exertions had some result, for Beauvais' successor, A. B. Roman, reported in 1830 that Louisiana's share in the proceeds from the sale of public lands was $40,000; he requested that the money be used; "... to form the basis of a permanent fund for internal improvements." In 1806

46 Louisiana House Journal, 7 leg., 2 sess., pp. 46-47.
47 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 27, 1830.
48 Louisiana Senate Journal, 9 leg., 2 sess., p. 6.
49 Ibid., 10 leg., 3 sess., p. 6.
the public lands in the southwestern part of the Louisiana Purchase were placed on the market, subject to the reservation of section sixteen for the use of public schools. Louisiana received five per cent of the funds collected from the sale of the public domain within its borders. Other states with public land faced the same difficulties, but not until 1830 was anything done to alleviate the problem. A pre-emption law passed Congress during that year and Louisiana's land question was partially solved.51

Internal improvements was one of the state's most persistent problems, as the people attempted to implement their needs with the aid of both state and national governments. Improvements in the methods of transportation and communication, so vital to commerce, agriculture, and mail service, attracted a great deal of attention where there was a constant need for public works of every description.52 Canals, roads, bridges, ferries, drainage ditches, and levees were needed in a state which contained so much water. Clearing the obstructions in rivers, especially the Red River,


51Ibid., p. 78.

52John C. L. Andreassen, "Internal Improvements in Louisiana, 1824-1837," LHQ, XXX (1947), 14-17.
took years of work and thousands of dollars. Louisiana leaders hoped to solve this problem, in part, through the construction of railroads, but the "Railroad Fever" came to a halting climax in the economic crisis of 1837, when, for all practical purposes, it ended, not to be renewed until the decade of the 1850's. Prior to 1850 twenty five railroads were chartered by the state legislature, but nearly all failed.

George Mcduffie of South Carolina, speaking in the House of Representatives, embraced the view of Henry Clay when he asked Congress to appropriate money for the improvements he thought necessary to provide the commercial ties of the Union.

It is my deliberate opinion that, if the entire commercial supplies of the western states should be permanently derived through the port of New Orleans, and no commercial intercourse should subsist between them and the Atlantic States it would be impossible for all the power of parchments and political organization to hold this union together for half a century longer.

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55 Richmond (Virginia) Enquirer, March 2, 1824.
Voters in the 1824 state elections were admonished to vote only for candidates who favored public works, improvements, bridges, and roads. The victor in the gubernatorial election that year, Henry Johnson, stressed the need for internal improvements in his message to the legislature, December 13, 1824. After noting the friendly disposition of the national administration to such policies, he said:

This feeling has been manifested on a late occasion by the President, in expression of his determination to cause a survey to be made from Washington City to New Orleans, with the view of opening a national road. The importance of such improvements is palpable. They form new bonds of strength between the central government and the remote sections of the body politic. By shortening the route they facilitate the transportation of mail and military stores, and encourage internal commerce. The internal improvements of which our state is particularly susceptible, is a consideration of high importance. A small annual appropriation might be employed to singular advantage in opening roads, and canals, and in removing obstructions from some of the water courses, connecting its different sections.

Acting upon the suggestions of Johnson, a legislative committee recommended the creation of a Board of Internal Improvements, which came into being in 1826. Realizing the need for improvements in transportation and communication, the board made surveys and annual reports to the legislature.

56 Alexandria Herald, June 2, 1824.
57 Louisiana Senate Journal, 7 leg., 1 sess., p. 33.
58 St. Francisville Asylum, December 25, 1824.
As an inducement to attract subscribers, the Opelousas Gazette, just starting publication, promised to keep its readers informed on internal improvements. In Congress Henry Gurley sought a grant of land amounting to 500,000 acres, to be used for the construction of a canal linking the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. Canal projects were numerous, but despite the ease with which they might have been constructed in a state with so many natural waterways, few were completed.

On the national level the question of internal improvements was an all absorbing one, natural in a nation expanding rapidly westward. Henry Clay made it a part of his National Program, and it would remain an issue under that name throughout the existence of the National Republican and Whig parties. It might be well to note here that all political factions were interested in improvements for their states, but in the manner of providing those improvements there was a sharp political division. Southerners generally opposed federal aid to the states for public works, because they expected federal intervention would follow; and in the Jeffersonian tradition they were forever jealously guarding

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60 Opelousas Gazette, quoted in Baton Rouge Gazette, March 17, 1827.
61 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 28, 1829.
the prerogatives of the states against the central power. In 1830, however, the National Intelligencer reported that of the twenty four states in the Union, only four opposed internal improvements.  

Henry Clay delivered a speech in Columbus, Ohio, in which he showed the connection in his program between internal improvements and the tariff. Surplus revenues from the tariff would be used for the construction of internal improvements.

The only National Republican President, John Q. Adams, was such a strong advocate of the system that in his first message to Congress in December, 1825, he made recommendations that surpassed even those of Clay.

Pierre Derbigny, in his inaugural address to the Louisiana legislature, approved the policy of his predecessor, Johnson, on improvements for Louisiana. After Derbigny’s death, his successor, Jacques Dupre, also stressed the necessity of internal improvements.

The gubernatorial election of 1824 was preceded by a contest among five candidates. The American hopefuls were

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63 Washington National Intelligencer, January 12, 1830.
64 Philadelphia National Gazette, August 17, 1830.
66 Baton Rouge Gazette, December 27, 1828.
67 Ibid., December 15, 1831.
Philemon Thomas, Thomas Butler, and Henry Johnson; the Creole population was divided between two candidates, Jacques Villere and Bernard Marigny. The election was a victory for Henry Johnson, who received most of the American vote, leaving Thomas and Butler far behind, and enough of the French vote to give him a substantial lead. During the campaign his opponents charged him with violation of his word, because he had been sent to the national Senate with the understanding that he would not seek the gubernatorial position. He had also used his influence in Washington to support Adams, despite the belief that the state supported either Clay or Jackson in the approaching presidential contest.

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New Orleans Weekly Picayune, November 22, 1847.


73. Louisiana Senate Journal, 7 leg., 1 sess., p. 3.

74. New Orleans Courier, March 4, 1824.

75. Ibid., March 5, 1824.
A Virginian by birth, Johnson served as clerk of the superior court of Orleans Territory, then went to the bench as a district judge in 1811. In the same year he was a delegate to the constitutional convention which wrote the Constitution of 1812. He practiced law in Donaldsonville and was elected by the legislature to fill the vacancy created by the death of William C. C. Claiborne.  

Three governors preceded Johnson in that office. Claiborne, who had served nine years as Louisiana's territorial governor, became its first elective governor in 1812. When his term ended, he was elected to the national Senate, but due to illness he was never able to take his seat. Jacques Villere was the state's second governor, the first to represent the French population. He was succeeded in 1820 by Thomas Bolling Robertson, another Virginian. When his term ended and the legislature met to choose his successor, he resigned to accept an appointment as judge of the United States district court.

In the congressional elections, which took place in July, the same month as the state election, Edward Livingston

76 Chambers, op. cit., p. 579.
of the first congressional district and Henry Gurley of the second were unopposed. Gurley was born in New England, where he pursued classical studies before entering Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He remained there from 1805 to 1808, studied law, and went to Baton Rouge, where he was admitted to the bar and practiced.

The third congressional district was the scene of a heated contest between William L. Brent, and Henry Adams Bullard, in which the latter was defeated. Brent was born in Port Tobacco, Maryland, February 20, 1784, where he studied and practiced law before going to Louisiana in 1809. President Madison appointed him deputy attorney general for the western district in the Orleans Territory, in which capacity he served before his election to Congress for the first time in 1822. The defeated candidate, Henry Adams Bullard, was born in Pepperell, Massachusetts, the son of Congregational ministers on both sides of the family. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1807, and began studying for the master's degree, although he didn't formally receive it until 1836. He studied law in Philadelphia, where he availed himself of the opportunity to learn several languages.

81St. Francisville Asylum, July 10, 1824.
83Alexandria Herald, June 23, 30, 1824.
84Biographical Directory of Congress, op. cit., p. 734.
He took part in the Texas revolutionary movement of 1812, and then settled in Natchitoches the following year. There he practiced law, acquired extensive land holdings, and in 1819 was appointed district judge to replace Josiah S. Johnston, who had gone to Congress. Bullard represented Natchitoches in the state legislature in 1820, moved to Alexandria three years later, and sought a congressional seat in 1824. The three congressional districts which these men represented were composed of the following counties: the first was made up of the Counties of Orleans, German Coast, Acadia, and Lafourche; the second was formed by those of Iberville, Pointe Coupee, and Feliciana; and the third includee Attakapas, Opelousas, Rapides, Natchitoches, Ouachita, and Concordia. The first district was dominated by New Orleans, the second was generally the Florida parishes district, and the third was the western district.

The presidential campaign of 1824 was the first to attract the interest of Louisiana voters to national issues; previously they were concerned primarily with local issues and personalities. Political affiliation with national parties not only came as a result of this election, but also played a minor role in the election itself. This was in


86 Curry and Bullard, op. cit., pp. 584-587.
keeping with the national pattern, since the disputed election would be the focal point for the organization of the Jacksonian democracy. Of the four aspirants for the office, Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson attracted the largest followings in the state; Adams had many followers in the Florida parishes, and William H. Crawford was the weakest candidate.

One voter was peeved because, after noting Jackson's vote in the Senate on the Tariff of 1819, he said, "I am sorry to say there is scarcely a shadow of difference to be discovered between the views of General Jackson and that of Mr. Clay." Jackson's actions after his victory at the Battle of New Orleans became an issue in the campaign, when the National Republicans met in Baton Rouge to censure him for his arbitrary treatment of the citizens. He made a number of enemies by insulting Louisiana's governor, imprisoning Judge Dominick Hall, and intimating that the state's legislature contained a number of traitors willing to surrender the city to the enemy. On the other hand, he had obviously made many friends in the state for defending the city against the British army, whose motto on the eve of battle was "Beauty and Booty." During the campaign one commentator noted:

87St. Francisville Asylum, June 26, 1824.
88Fortier, op. cit., I, Chapter VII.
"The partizans of General Jackson seem to partake of his disposition and feelings—One desires to write his vote in blood; another wishes to make domestic carpeting of the skins of his enemies; and a third in a public address to the intelligent citizens of New Orleans, denounces the General's opponents as enemies of the country!"90

Henry Clay's National Program earned him many political followers in Louisiana. In addition, he had close personal contacts in the state. Josiah S. Johnston and Dr. William Newton Mercer, of New Orleans, were close personal friends. One daughter was married to Martin Duralde, a political leader of the French portion of the population; another daughter was married to John Erwin, a Louisiana slave trader.

Adams was supported for the presidency on the basis of his opposition to sectional bias, because he was a friend of "... the whole and not a part of the United States." His choice as president would "... encourage the labour of the South, as well as extend a fostering hand to the manufacturing and other interests of our country."91 The fact that most of his support came from the Florida parishes probably alienated him from the Louisiana French, who were already hostile because they believed he had opposed the Louisiana Purchase Treaty.92

90 St. Francisville Asylum, July 24, 1824.
91 Ibid., July 25, 1824.
92 Ibid., April 17, 1824.
The Louisiana legislature, which would ballot for the presidential electors, was thought to have been predominantly in favor of Clay. Despite this, when the body convened and proceeded to vote, it split the state's five electoral votes: three for Jackson, and two for Adams. Nationally, Clay was fourth in the field of four candidates, and since only three of the candidates with the largest number of votes would be presented to the House of Representatives, where the choice would be made, Clay was no longer a contender. Crawford was eliminated by illness, and thus the election became a choice between Adams and Jackson. When the House met to make the decision, Louisiana was represented by Henry Gurley, Edward Livingston, and William Brent. Shortly after the balloting was over, the latter announced in a letter to his constituents, "I have only time to say to you that Mr. Adams is this moment elected President of the United States." The letter further explained: "Gen. Jackson could not have been elected under any circumstances." He and Gurley voted for Adams, while Livingston favored Jackson.

93 Ibid., July 31, 1824.
94 Louisiana House Journal, 7 leg., 1 sess., p. 8.
95 St. Francisville Asylum, April 2, 1825. letter dated February 9, 1825.
Shortly after the election, the "Corrupt Bargain" charge found its way to Louisiana, as it did to the rest of the country, to plague Clay for the remaining years of his long political career. After Clay had been honored with numerous receptions and banquets; one Louisiana resident wondered, "If the people of the west are satisfied with the conduct of Mr. Clay and the election of Mr. Adams, why need his friends assert, reassert, and swear that such is the fact?"

The 1826 congressional elections resulted in the re-election of William L. Brent, who defeated John Brownson. The incumbent representing the second district, Henry H. Gurley, who, like Brent, had opposed Jackson, won a contest with William S. Hamilton. The latter spoke against the Panama Mission, and said of President Adams; "He seems too intent upon executive competency; too much pleased with the fancy that power is liberty; ...." Edward Livingston defeated his opponent Peter E. Foucher in the first district, in a contest marked by voter indifference.

97 St. Francisville Asylum, February 26, 1825.
98 St. Francisville Journal, September 24, 1825.
99 New Orleans Gazette, November 7, 1826.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., May 25, 1826.
102 New Orleans Gazette, November 7, 1826.
103 Ibid., July 1, 1826.
Two years later Louisiana was the scene of many political contests, for in addition to the presidential elections, gubernatorial, congressional, and legislative elections were held. The three incumbent representatives sought re-election to congress. Brent was opposed by Charles T. Scott and Walter Overton. The latter, a pro-Jackson candidate won, largely because of the continued absence of Brent from the state. Gurley defeated Lafayette Saunders by thirty two votes, and Edward Douglas White defeated Livingston by a majority of over six hundred votes. Thus the National Republicans had carried the first and second congressional districts, but had lost the western district to a Jackson supporter.

The presidential campaign apparently started as soon as the House had chosen Adams president, in the spring of 1825. The Alexandria Louisiana Messenger lost a number of subscriptions because it had opposed Jackson and continued to support the Adams administration. Jonathan Roberts, in a letter published in the St. Francisville Journal, deplored the fact that Jackson's candidacy was being pressed

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104 New Orleans Argus, July 11, 1828.
105 Ibid.
107 Alexandria (Louisiana) Messenger, November 24, 1826.
upon the people of the state, "... between whom and him there is not the remotest congeniality of feeling."\(^{108}\)

The same newspaper carried a circular signed by Jacob Holgate and Henry Horn, charging that the election of Adams violated the people's will. It continued; "... Louisiana, whose soil had been shielded by the transcendent Heroism of Jackson, from the barbarous pursuits of 'beauty and booty,' abused by two of her representatives, turned upon her preserver, and against the will of her citizens, pierced him with the fang of unparalleled ingratitude."\(^{109}\)

Those who supported Adams were accused of being "Jackals" whose only interest was to acquire public office.\(^ {110}\)

At the invitation of the state legislature, controlled by the anti-Jackson men, the Democratic leader visited New Orleans during the first month of the election year. This visit undoubtedly gave a boost to his chances of success within the state and enhanced Livingston's efforts to obtain the electoral vote for the general. Livingston is given credit for being one of the first to foresee the possibilities of Jackson's popularity in presidential politics.\(^ {112}\)

\(^{108}\) St. Francisville Journal, August 31, 1826.

\(^{109}\) Ibid.

\(^{110}\) Baton Rouge Gazette, March 27, 1827.

\(^{111}\) New Orleans Bee, January 22, 1828.

The National Republican legislature reluctantly agreed to extend the invitation for the Battle of New Orleans celebrations, for fear that not to do so, once the visit was suggested, would only increase the general's popularity. The candidate was received with warm hearted hospitality at the scene of his victory in the War of 1812. Yet, in Washington, the welcome was the occasion for the president to confide to his diary the following bitter comment:

In the Legislature of Louisiana, last spring, some of his partisans got up a resolution inviting him to attend in person the anniversary celebrations of the 8th of January at New Orleans. He caught eagerly at this bait, and went with a numerous train of attendants from Nashville to New Orleans, in the dead of winter, to exhibit himself in pompous pageantry. His reception was equivocal, with a laborious effort of magnificence, and mortifying indications of ill will and disgust among the people. Deputations were sent from various other states, from meetings of his devotees, to meet him at the celebration, and five or six of his addresses of fulsome adulation were delivered to him, to which he returned answers of cold and high-wrought rhetorician eloquence. These answers were all written by Harry Lee, who has become an intimate of the family and attended him to New Orleans.113

William S. Hamilton, busily campaigning for Jackson in the Floridas, was informed that Adams would be elected, by a correspondent who was elated at the defeat in Congress of the "Charleston Rebels" over the Tariff of 1828 and nullification issues. A Charleston correspondent, who believed the


South would be ruined by the tariff within five years, told Hamilton that the election "... of our common friend Genl. Jackson is now considered certain and nothing but an act of God can prevent it." Hamilton was later rewarded for his efforts when the victorious Jackson appointed him surveyor general of the district south of the Tennessee, but he refused the appointment.

On November 5, 1827, a convention met in Baton Rouge to choose electors who would support Clay. They were James Villere, Charles Bushnell, Andre LeBlanc, Neuville Declouet, and Benjamin Norris. The split electoral vote of 1824 had led to the passage, the following year, of a law which provided that electoral voters would be chosen in the popular elections, rather than by the state legislature. The Clay supporters were probably both surprised and chargrined when their favorite did not run, but they undoubtedly supported Adams in preference to Jackson. The Adams supporters professed confidence in the outcome of the election, but their hopes were dashed in Louisiana as in the nation.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{letter from A.A. Payne to William S. Hamilton, September 26, 1828.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{letter from E. W. Ripley to William S. Hamilton, September 7, 1829.}\]
\[\text{Baton Rouge, Gazette, November 10, 1827.}\]
\[\text{Alonzo Snyder Papers, LSU Archives, letter from Alvarez Fish to Jacob Bieller, May 15, 1828.}\]
Louisiana gave Jackson fifty-three per cent of its popular vote, most of it from the Interior, the Floridas, and North Louisiana,\(^{119}\) where Jackson would always have the greatest strength in the state. The National Republicans carried only twelve parishes, located in the sugar producing section. New Orleans gave Jackson the same majority as did the state. The Jackson electors, John B. Plauche, Thomas W. Scott, Trasimond Landry, Placide Bossier, and Alexander Mouton were scheduled to meet in New Orleans on the third day of December to cast their votes for Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun.

In Louisiana the advent of Jackson to the presidency was not marked by overwhelming political success. The National Republicans had won two of the three congressional races, retained control over the state legislature,\(^{121}\) and allowed Jackson only a small margin of victory. Yet, for the Democrats the election of their chief was sufficient cause for elation. Isaac L. Baker commented: "Did not our old coursers make a glorious race of it? Our Yankees and Monarchist Frenchmen look rather blue at." He closed his comments on the election by saying: "Louisiana ... has come out of the ashes against the orders of her lords and rulers."\(^{122}\)

\(^{119}\) Perry Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), p. 35.

\(^{120}\) New Orleans Argus, July 29, 1828.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., July 28, 1828.

\(^{122}\) Hamilton Papers, letter from Isaac L. Baker to William S. Hamilton, September 6, 1828.
Shortly after the election, rumors began to fly that Governor Johnson was attempting to thwart Louisiana's popular vote by swinging the electoral vote to Adams.\textsuperscript{123}

What possibly did happen is fully explained in a letter by John R. Dunn of Natchitoches, who admitted he had no proof of his statements:

> From what I can learn the thing was actually attempted, and Governor Johnson himself was at the head of this business, as I am informed. I understand that a few days previous, to the meeting of the electors, he sent for one of them, and told him that he had something of great importance to communicate. That he had received a letter from ex-President Monroe, stating that Mr. Smith of South Carolina would be supported in Virginia, and other states, in preference to Mr. Calhoun as Vice President, and requesting him to influence the electors in this state to vote for Mr. Smith if possible.\textsuperscript{124}

Despite the attempt to divert the state's electoral vote, Calhoun was elected with Jackson, by an electoral vote of 178 to 83, as predicted in the National Gazette.\textsuperscript{125}

After Thomas Butler had written to the General, informing him of Louisiana's vote, the President-elect replied:

> "The result of the electoral returns, as far as heard from, is a triumphant of the virtue of the people over the corrupting influences of the executive patronage wielded in every way and shape, to destroy the morals of the people."\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., letter from Isaac L. Baker to William S. Hamilton, August 10, 1828.

\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., letter from Isaac L. Baker to William S. Hamilton, January 3, 1829.

\textsuperscript{125}Philadelphia National Gazette, December 2, 1828.

\textsuperscript{126}Butler Papers, LSU Archives, letter from Andrew Jackson to Thomas Butler, November 23, 1828. Hereafter cited as Butler Papers.
Henry Clay began to attack the new President even before the month of his inauguration ended. In a speech made at a Washington dinner held in his honor, he said:

I deprecated the election of the present President of the United States, because I believe he had neither the temper, the experience, nor the attainments requisite to discharge the complicated and arduous duties of Chief Magistrate. I deprecated it still more, because his elevation, I believe would be the result exclusively of admiration and gratitude for military service, without regard to indispensable civil qualifications.127

Earlier, Jackson had written that he was well aware that the term "Military Chieftain" was being used by Clay against him, and he made the point that "Mr. Clay never yet has risked himself for his country, sacrificed his repose, or made an effort to repel an invading foe...."128

General Philemon Thomas announced his intention to be a candidate for governor early in 1827, the first of five candidates to do so.129 Bernard Marigny, no doubt still suffering from his defeat in 1824,130 Pierre Derbigny,131 and Henry M. Thibodaux of the Lafourche area soon entered

127 Philadelphia National Gazette, March 14, 1829.
129 New Orleans, Louisiana Advertiser, November 5, 1827.
130 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 2, 1827.
131 Ibid., May 31, 1828.
the campaign, as did Thomas Butler. Thibodaux made no serious attempt at campaigning and soon dropped out of the race, leaving the field narrowed down to four. The issues were the administration of Adams, his nationalist program, and the tariff.

The victor was Pierre Auguste Boursigay Derbigny, who received over three thousand votes. He was a Frenchman of noble birth who fled the terrors of the French Revolution and journeyed to Santo Domingo first, then to various sections of the United States, before settling in New Orleans. He served twice as secretary of state and as a member of the Supreme Court before his election. Within two years he died, the result of a carriage accident in Gretna. The constitution provided that the president of the senate would succeed the governor in such a contingency. Thus Armand Beauvais became Louisiana's chief executive, at least until the senate met in the home of Valery Blanchard at Donaldsonville, in January, 1830, and elected presiding officers. It chose Jacques Dupre, who, by virtue of his new title, president of the senate, claimed to be the new governor, as was provided in the constitution. Armand Beauvais, who claimed to be the governor under the same pro-

132 Butler Papers, letter from John H. Harper to Thomas Butler, June 24, 1828.
133 New Orleans Argus, November 22, 1828.
135 New Orleans Bee, October 8, 1829.
vision, protested; a series of futile debates ensued, which led to the decision that an election would be held in July\textsuperscript{136} to select a four-year term governor. It seemed the only way out of the \textit{empasse}.

Once again there were four candidates in the race, clearly demonstrating the lack of political organization and the inability of either the Jackson Democrats or the National Republicans to support one candidate or to prevent party members from running against one another. Andre Bienvenue Roman, Arnaud Beauvais, William S. Hamilton, and David Randall were the candidates. The first two were Clay supporters and the last were Democrats.

From Plaquemines, Hamilton received little encouragement, because his views on the tariff question were not understood, even though a supporter offered to publish a hand bill clarifying Hamilton's position at the polls when they opened.\textsuperscript{138} A convention scheduled to be held in Baton Rouge on May 2, 1830, to get support for him was a dismal failure.\textsuperscript{139} His major appeal seemed to have been that he was an American candidate.\textsuperscript{140} Hamilton was told, "... all the

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Louisiana Senate Journal}, 10 leg., 1 sess., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Niles Weekly Register}, XXXVIII, 165.
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Washington National Intelligencer}, February 6, 1830.
\textsuperscript{139} Hamilton Papers, letter from W. M. James to William S. Hamilton, June 25, 1830.
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}, letter from W. Winters to William S. Hamilton, May 2, 1830.
Jackson men I saw with the exception of Thomas and one or two others, will support you, and I conversed with a number of the Adams men, who say they will support you in preference to any Frenchman."

Alexander Roman received a majority of the total vote, the first time this had happened in a gubernatorial election. His vote was 8,630, while Hamilton, his nearest competitor, received only 2,730. Randall, the Jackson candidate from Natchitoches, received 465 votes, three of them from Orleans; Beauvais was the favorite of 1,475 voters. Charles A. Bullard was puzzled at the outcome. He conceded that Roman would receive the Creole vote in his district, but noted that though Roman had voted in the legislature against giving Jackson a sword, he then had become a Jackson elector, and now Roman was elected as a supporter of the National Republican program. The presence of Clay in New Orleans was said to have "... affected the unanimity and perfect understanding in this party which resulted in the election of Mr. Roman." A member of a Clay audience was then describing

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141 Ibid., letter from S. W. Wikoff to William S. Hamilton, May 5, 1830.
142 Ibid., letter from A. M. Scott to William S. Hamilton, June 4, 1830.
143 Louisiana House Journal, 10 leg., 1 sess., p. 7.
144 Hamilton Papers, letter from Charles A. Bullard to William S. Hamilton, June 11, 1830.
145 Ibid., letter from Barry F. Linton to William S. Hamilton, September 1, 1830.
the National Republican leader to Hamilton, and the "disgust" he felt at seeing admirers "practically cringing to catch the smile of a would be president."\(^{146}\)

In Ouachita, election "excitement ran high," when in a state legislative contest "Morgan beat Moorehouse eleven votes. And that by the box on the Mississippi being opened and votes for Moorehouse taken out and others put in. Upon which Moorehouse contested the election."\(^{147}\) When Ferdinand Morgan refused a challenge, Moorehouse, the pro-Jackson man, called him a coward; a scuffle ensued, and Morgan was killed.

In the congressional elections of the same year, Philemon Thomas defeated both Lafayette Saunders and Elizah H. Ripley. Thomas took the place of Gurley, who had resigned. Henry Adams Bullard defeated Pierre A. Rost in the western district, and Edward D. White was unopposed.\(^{148}\)

The elections of 1830 were thought to have been a triumph for the followers of Clay. The governor and all three of the representatives to Congress were advocates of the national system. Furthermore, "... from the complexion of the legislature, of the re-election of Mr. J. S. Johnston, the distinguished senator from that state...." not a doubt existed, at least in the minds of some northern newspapermen.\(^{149}\)

\(^{146}\)Ibid., letter from James M. Bradford to William S. Hamilton, September 7, 1830.

\(^{147}\)Ibid., letter from L. A. McWilliams to William S. Hamilton, September 1, 1830.

\(^{148}\)Niles Weekly Register, XXXVIII, 418.

\(^{149}\)Washington National Intelligencer, August 11, 1830.
On January 12, 1829, Edward Livingston had been elected by the legislature to the Senate of the United States, to replace Dominick Bouligny. Bouligny returned to New Orleans and announced his intention to run for mayor against the incumbent, Denis Prieur, but he withdrew before the election was held. Prieur, a supporter of Jackson, won the only victory for the Democrats in 1830. When Livingston arrived from Louisiana, one Senator was Josiah Stoddard Johnston, whose term expired early in 1831. The Democrats seemed to think they had little chance to place their man in the Senate. The results of the election bear out this conviction, for John B. Dawson was defeated on the first ballot by Johnston, who was referred to as the "Henry Clay of Louisiana." The Jacksonians had suffered yet another defeat in Louisiana, which they blamed on their opposition to the Tariff of Abominations and believed "That result should have told differently had Jackson done his duty."

151 New Orleans Argus, April 6, 1830.
152 Hamilton Papers, letter from E. W. Taylor to William S. Hamilton, October 13, 1830.
153 Louisiana House Journal, 10 leg., 1 sess., p. 18.
154 New Orleans Bee, January 13, 1831.
Several months after the election of Senator Johnston, Edward Livingston was appointed Jackson's Secretary of State, and Governor Roman called a special session of the legislature to fill the vacancy. George A. Waggaman was elected, thus giving both seats in the upper chamber to the National Republicans. The new senator was born in Cambridge, Maryland in 1790, where he was instructed by private tutors before his study of law. He was admitted to the Maryland bar in 1811. He moved to Baton Rouge in 1813 and practiced law there until the Battle of New Orleans, when he served under Andrew Jackson. He served as judge of the third judicial district, attorney general, and assistant judge of the criminal court in New Orleans. He maintained broad sugar interests in addition to his legal practice and public service.

Governor Andre Bienvenue Roman, only in office several months when he called for the special election of a senator, was born March 5, 1795, the son of a wealthy sugar planter who was also noted as a cattle raiser in the Opelousas area. Young Roman attended St. Mary's College in Baltimore, from which he graduated in 1815. He returned to Louisiana,

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156 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 8, 1831.
158 New Orleans Bee, November 15, 1832.
160 Fortier, op. cit., III, 217.
married, and established his permanent residence on the west bank of the Mississippi River, in St. James Parish, on a sugar plantation owned by his father. In 1818, when only twenty three years old, he was elected to the general assembly, where he served as speaker for four years. After serving as parish judge from 1826 to 1828, he reassumed his former position as speaker in the state legislature, which he held the year of his election as governor. He was a National Republican, a personal friend of Clay, and a supporter of internal improvements, the tariff, the Bank of the United States, and every aspect of the party's program. During his administration a threat to all national aspirations occurred in the form of Nat Turner's Rebellion. Roman asked the legislature for protective legislation, and that body responded with an act designed to curb the importation of unruly slaves into Louisiana.

Meanwhile the campaign for the presidential election of 1832 had begun. "The public has not yet recovered from the disease of Jacksonianism, but I think it is convalescent," Henry Clay thus wrote to John B. Harrison; he


added, "It does not seem to be settled whether Jackson will be run again, for the Presidency." In the following year, 1831, he again confided, "At home too our prospects, gloomy enough when you left us, have become bright and cheery. I think there is now every reason to hope that we shall get rid of mad and incompetent rulers by the regular action of our free systems." This letter, for "your private eyes only," is a lengthy discussion of the tariff, surplus revenues in the treasury, and internal improvements, all issues which Clay hoped would raise him to the presidency.

John B. Harrison was a young Virginian then touring Europe, before returning to the United States and a permanent position. Clay advised him to settle in Columbus, Cincinnati, Louisville, or New Orleans. He seemed to prefer the latter because "Business is immense at N. Orleans, and it is rapidly increasing, and must inevitably increase." Clay also opined, "New Orleans has the air, manners, language and fashions of an European Continental city. Society upon the whole is very good, and you may have any sort, gay or grave, American, Creole, or foreign, learned or unlearned, commercial or professional,


164 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to J. B. Harrison, July 24, 1831.
black, white, yellow, or red." 165

Clay said he had been guaranteed $18,000 a year if he would settle in New Orleans and practice law. His enthusiasm for the city must have intrigued young Harrison, for in 1831 he arrived there with a letter of introduction from S. P. Chase to Edward D. White. 166 He then asked Clay to arrange a business partnership for him with a "Mr. Eustis," through Alexander Porter, but Clay advised that Eustis and Porter were enemies. Clay agreed with Harrison that "You appreciate justly the character of the population of N.O. It is especially a place of business, and all are intently in the pursuit of wealth." 167

Clay visited the Louisiana capital in January, 1831, and a favorable political climate warmed his presidential aspirations. 168 He had been prominently mentioned as the candidate who would run in 1832, whether he was nominated by a convention or not. 169 "It is time fellow citizens

165 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to J. B. Harrison, September 11, 1831.

166 Ibid., letter from S. P. Chase to Edward D. White, November 14, 1831. Chase commented on the politics of the day: "What a savouring dish of politics old Father Time is cooking for the Nation!"

167 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to J. B. Harrison, September 15, 1832.


169 Ibid., December 28, 1830.
that we come to a pause, and solemnly reflect upon our situation. The Tariff has been declared to be unconstitutional by more than one State: Internal Improvement has been denounced in the same manner; and worst of all, the authority of the Judiciary is set at naught—all under the banner of 'Liberty and Reform.'

A member of the state legislature, Dr. A. E. McConnel of East Baton Rouge Parish, renounced the Democrats and spoke against Jackson at Hewlitt's Coffee House in New Orleans. It was reported from Franklin, a sugar district town that always voted against Jackson that "All are disgusted. Many still retain their prejudices against Mr. Clay, but none will vote for Mr. Calhoun." This attitude was the result of Calhoun's "...sentiments relative to the tariff." Jackson was charged with corruption, and the label, "Anti-Christian Party" was applied to his followers.

Henry Bullard and Josiah Johnston attended the National Republican convention, held in Baltimore in December, 1831. Clay's nomination for the presidency was ratified in New Orleans, "At a meeting of a large number of the Members of

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170 Ibid., January 4, 1831.
171 Baton Rouge Gazette, September 17, October 27, 1831.
173 New Orleans Bee, February 15, 1831.
the Legislature...." John Moore of St. Landry presided, resolutions favoring Clay's candidacy were passed, and electors were chosen. They were Martin Duralde, Clay's son-in-law for the first district; Robert McCausland of West Feliciana, for the second district; Andre LeBlanc, third district, from Assumption parish; Jacques Dupre of St. Landry for the fourth district; and Henry Bry of Ouachita, for the fifth district.

Another ratification meeting took place in Opelousas, at which Henry Bullard was nominated for re-election to Congress. The resolutions passed at this meeting strongly supported the American System and approved the votes of Senators Johnston and Waggaman to reject the nomination of Martin Van Buren as Minister to England. In New Orleans, Dominic Bouligny also presided over a meeting which approved the rejection of Van Buren. From Washington Senator Johnston wrote, "The parties have taken their stand...upon the tariff."

The Democrats supported their candidate or denounced the opposition with the terms "Hero, Conqueror, Democracy,

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175 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 14, 1832.
177 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 24, 1832.
178 Butler Papers, LSU Archives, letter from J. S. Johnston to Thomas Butler, March 12, 1832.
in one hand, Federalism, Aristocracy, Corruption, Bank-Master, Hydra, Coalition, etc., in the other.\textsuperscript{179} Andrew Jackson was charged with violation of the constitution, and his followers with maintaining "official pageantry," which they "...richly gild, and then devoutly worship, in order to keep the ideal in vogue...."\textsuperscript{180} Voters who might cast their ballot for Jackson were asked, "Do you wish to derange the whole currency of the country: to abstract from commerce its active capital; to ruin the sugar-growers, and bankrupt the manufacturers of every description?"\textsuperscript{181} The administration's Spoils System was roundly criticized, along with Jackson's usurpation of congressional powers.\textsuperscript{182} Jackson, whose veto of the bank bill was "... subversive of the fundamental principle of a Democratic Republic...," had stripped Congress of almost half of its powers and the Senate more than half of its.\textsuperscript{183} The constitutionality of the Bank of the United States was upheld against Jackson's attack.\textsuperscript{184} The issues in the

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Washington National Intelligencer}, November 8, 1832.
\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Philadelphia National Gazette}, March 26, 1831.
\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Washington National Intelligencer}, November 9, 1831.
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Ibid.}, August 2, 1831.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Ibid.}, August 30, 1832.
\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Ibid.}, January 16, 1832.
election were overwhelming to George Blair, who wrote, "The politics of the day at Washington have become so crowded that it is really difficult for a plain man to know his latitude and longitude...." 185

The Anti-Masonic party added to an already crowded election the nomination of William Wirt for president. 186 His election, in some quarters, was preferable to that of General Jackson, and his answer to the nomination contained nothing offensive to anyone not an Anti-Mason. 187 This issue did not play an important role in the Louisiana elections.

Because the election was held during the cholera scourge in New Orleans, the vote was less than it had been four years before. 188 Despite the tremendous effort to swing the state to Clay, he received only 2,528 votes to Jackson's 4,049. 189 The pattern of Louisiana's vote was very much like that of 1828, except that Jackson's proportion was much larger. 190 Referring to Jackson as the

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185 Hamilton Papers, letter from George Blair to William S. Hamilton, May 23, 1832.
186 Philadelphia National Gazette, October 1, 1831.
187 Ibid., October 27, 1832.
188 New Orleans Bee, November 3, 28, 1832.
190 Howard, op. cit., p. 57.
"aged hickory or decaying elm," the National Gazette repeated its old campaign charges and lamented: "God save the Supreme Court, the Sound Currency, the Federal Constitution, the Union, and the Republican polity."

A Louisiana sugar planter, whose crop was bad, thought the election a "... lesson for ambitious and unprincipled demagogues." A rumor was circulated that Clay's friends "... seem not anxious that he should become again a candidate for the presidency."

Louisiana's congressional elections, held in July, had been seen as a portent by the Republicans, heralding a presidential victory for Clay in November. All three of Louisiana's National Republican representatives were re-elected. Henry Bullard defeated the young Alexander Mouton, Edward D. White was again without an opponent, and General Philemon Thomas easily defeated several Jackson candidates. In what could almost be considered a true-to-form election year, Louisianians had voted for a Democratic president and elected all of their representatives from the opposition party. Andrew Jackson's immense popularity was undoubtedly

\[\text{\textsuperscript{191} Philadelphia National Gazette, November 15, 1832.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{192} Butler Papers, letter from E. M. Butler to Thomas Butler, December 2, 1832.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{193} Webster Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, letter from Dr. Edward N. Bryan to Dr. E. J. Davis, April 1, 1833. Hereafter cited as Webster Papers.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{194} Niles Weekly Register, XLVII, 403.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{195} New Orleans Bee, July 12, 1832.}\]
the major cause of the matter of switching votes.

Josiah Stoddard Johnston, Louisiana's stalwart National Republican Senator, was killed in an explosion on board the steamboat "Lioness." His physician father had settled in Kentucky while Josiah was a young boy. After attending school in New Haven, Kentucky, Josiah went to Lexington, Kentucky, where he graduated from Transylvania University in 1802. He studied law and settled in Rapides Parish, where his brother, John H. Johnston, was to become a parish judge and judge of the sixth judicial district. It was Josiah Johnston who secured the appointment of Albert Sidney Johnston to West Point. Edward Douglas White, then campaigning for governor, was almost killed in the same explosion, and Henry Clay, grieving over Johnston's death, believed White dead also. On the thirteenth of December, 1833, the Louisiana legislature elected Alexander Porter to fill the vacancy.

196 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 3, 1833.
197 Webster Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Daniel Webster, June 17, 1833. Baton Rouge Gazette, August 3, 1833.
Henry A. Bullard resigned his seat in the national House of Representatives to accept an appointment by Governor Roman as judge of the Supreme Court. In a special election held in the third congressional district to replace him, Rice Garland, an anti-Jackson candidate, was elected. The new congressman was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, in about 1795. He studied and practiced law there until moving to Opelousas in 1820, where he continued his practice. He took his seat on April 28, 1834, and served continuously until 1840. He resigned to become a supreme court judge, as had his congressional predecessor.

The election of Rice Garland early in 1834, the year in which the Whig party emerged, signaled the future success the new party would enjoy in the state. Jacksonian democracy had not been an unrivaled success in Louisiana, and the National Republicans, while losing the presidential vote to Jackson, had won a majority of the congressional seats.

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200 *Niles Weekly Register*, XLV, 335.
CHAPTER II

GENESIS OF THE LOUISIANA WHIG PARTY

Two leading political issues in Louisiana played the largest role in creating the state's Whig party: the tariff and the Bank of the United States. "No state is, really, so much interested in the principles of the 'American System' as Louisiana, as we have often times said, and endeavored to show...."  

Henry Clay's American System with its emphasis on the protective tariff, internal improvements, and the Bank of the United States had many adherents in the state. Clay had outlined his program as early as 1816 and completed it while serving his last term in the House of Representatives, in his speech of March 30 and 31, 1824. The speech which was one of the best cases for a protective system ever made in the United States, became the classic argument for the policy of protection.  

The first tariff act, that of 1789, had placed a tariff duty on sugar for revenue purposes only. Subsequent tariffs, 

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1 Niles Weekly Register, XXXVIII, 157.
until 1816, were not strongly protective in nature, so far as Louisiana sugar was concerned, but from that time to the present, "... it was to be the policy of the state to insist, that the duty was indispensable to the domestic industry...." 4

When the tariff of 1816 was being debated in Congress, Robertson of Louisiana protested that the levy on foreign sugar was too low and denied that great fortunes were being made in its production. 5 He also expressed the hope that the duty on claret would be low, in order to save his people from the whiskey of Kentucky; Clay regretted that the people of Louisiana had the poor taste to prefer bad claret to good whiskey. 6

In 1820 an attempt to pass a high protective tariff failed in the Senate by one vote, but four years later the protectionists were successful in increasing all duties considerably and in 1828 "... the protective movement reached its highest point." 7 By 1829 the state, "... had definitely committed herself to the culture of sugar cane as her principle staple," 8 and the "... National

6Ibid., p. 147.
7Taussig, op. cit., p. 24.
8Tregle, "Louisiana and the Tariff," p. 56. 
Republicans of Louisiana considered the continuation of a protective tariff as the imperative duty of the Federal government."^{9}

The Tariff of Abominations had become law despite the fact that it was proposed with the expectation that it would end in defeat and with the intention of embarrassing John Q. Adams, a strong advocate of the protective system.\textsuperscript{10} The Louisiana congressional delegation had not supported this tariff, because it was obnoxious to the South, yet it favored its protective principles and was unwilling to make any revision of the existing schedules.\textsuperscript{11}

Principles argued during the debate on the Tariff of Abominations obviously played an important role in Louisiana's presidential election. Sugar-producing sections gave Adams overwhelming majorities, while Jackson received majorities only in the north Louisiana regions where cotton was the staple product; only one of the state's non-sugar parishes gave Adams a majority.\textsuperscript{12}

It is not surprising, therefore, that Andrew Jackson

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10}Bemis, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 89-90.
  \item \textsuperscript{11}\textit{Register of Debates in Congress}, 20 cong., 1 sess., pp. 786, 2471. \textit{Niles Weekly Register}, XXXII, 241, 295.
  \item \textsuperscript{12}Tregle, "Louisiana and the Tariff," p. 51.
\end{itemize}
alarmed Louisiana's sugar planters when, in his first annual message to Congress, he suggested modifications of the existing tariff. The month following Jackson's message, January, 1830, Governor Arnaud Beauvais warned the state legislature that reduction of the recent tariff was under consideration, and noted, "... these apprehensions have violently alarmed those of our citizens who have invested in this branch of agriculture." When Jackson's Secretary of the Treasury, Samuel D. Ingham, was instructed by the House of Representatives to compile information on the sugar industry, John Slidell warned Louisianians that this move was made with no friendly feeling to the sugar interests of the state.

In 1830 a legislative committee was appointed to draft a memorial to Congress, in protest of a possible reduction of the sugar duty. The legislature also passed a series of resolutions in reply to those of Vermont and Mississippi. Vermont had approved the Tariff of 1828, upholding both its protective principles and its constitutionality. Mississippi's legislature had denounced the tariff for being unconstitutional,

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16 *Louisiana House Journal*, 10 leg., 1 sess., p. 141.
evoking from Louisiana a sharp rebuke. Sugar planters might have been comforted by the knowledge that Jackson expressed his belief in the constitutionality of the tariff, during an interview with Alexander Barrow.

The gubernatorial election of 1830, held during the height of the tariff controversy, resulted in the election of a National Republican governor and filled all three vacant congressional seats with devotees of the same political principles. These newly elected officials were all supporters of the protective policy.

The new governor, Roman, urged the legislature to send another memorial to Congress protesting a change in the existing tariff. In addition, he asked for the creation of a state agricultural society "... to enable us to surmount the obstacles which impede the march of our industry." Promoted by their fear of an economic loss, the planters continued their efforts to prevent any reduction in the duty until the Act of 1832. When Henry Clay visited Louisiana in 1831 to escape the bitter cold of the northern winter he reported, "Upon my arrival, I found a great and general

17 *Niles Weekly Register*, XXXVIII, 157.
19 *Niles Weekly Register*, XXXVIII, 418.
20 *Louisiana House Journal*, 10 leg., 1 sess., p. 3.
alarm pervading it, in respect to the attack meditated on the tariff...."\textsuperscript{22} He saw in the tariff debate a threat to his American System and wondered, "If, as I have supposed and believed, the inhabitants of all North and East of the James River, and all West of the mountains, including Louisiana, are deeply interested in the preservation of the system, would they be reconciled to its overthrow?\textsuperscript{23}

In their defense of the protective principle, Louisianians not only revived the arguments used in supporting the Tariff of 1816,\textsuperscript{24} but added a few innovations. Louisiana's consumption of the products from other states entitled her to this protection, they argued; and a native sugar industry would prevent Americans from being dependent upon uncertain foreign suppliers. Sugar plantations employed slaves purchased from other southern states, and with the high demand for slaves there was a corresponding high price. If the tariff were reduced, sugar production would certainly drop, the demand for slaves would decrease, and slave property would decline in value.\textsuperscript{25} Another clever argument, obviously designed to get southern support for the tariff,\textsuperscript{22,23,24,25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22}Washington \textit{National Intelligencer}, March 15, 1831.
\item \textsuperscript{23}Ibid., March 3, 1832.
\item \textsuperscript{24}J. Carlyle Sitterson, \textit{Sugar Country--The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950} (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), p. 175.
\item \textsuperscript{25}Baton Rouge \textit{Gazette}, April 7, 1831.
\end{itemize}
was the effect a halt in sugar production would have on cotton prices. Without a protective tariff, sugar planters would invest their land, labor, and capital in cotton production. Louisiana cotton, added to an already over-supplied market, would force the price down.

Irate planters were eventually forced into the position of defending themselves against the charge that they were monopolists making huge profits, protected by the federal government. Their voluminous response to this charge contained numerous arguments, including the one that growing sugar was a risky business, since the crop was subject to floods, frosts, freezes, insects, and other threats of nature. They also said that sugar required a large investment in land, slaves, and machinery, so large indeed, that many years might pass before the investor realized a return on his capital. It was reported that a yearly profit of $6,427 was realized from an investment of $87,704 in sugar culture, an earning of approximately seven and one-half per-cent. However, a poor crop, for whatever reason, offset the average earnings, and made this figure seem higher than it actually was. A congressional committee

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26 Ibid., March 26, 1831.
27 New Orleans Bee, February 28, 1831.
28 Ibid., December 20, 1830.
29 Niles Weekly Register, XXXIX, 271-273.
studying the production and consumption of sugar reported, "... the sugar planters of Louisiana are at this moment indebted to the extent probably of one third of their entire estates and slaves, and are paying an interest of 8 to 10 per-cent on loans that can only be extinguished from the avails of their future crops."30

Louisiana's congressmen were active in their defense of the state's industry throughout the agitation. Representative Henry W. Gurley sent an inquiry to Louisiana's sugar producers as soon as he learned that Jackson favored a reduction of the tariff. His purpose was to acquire information he might use in defending the principle of protection.31 Henry A. Bullard, a cotton planter of the third congressional district, strongly supported the sugar planter's point of view.32 It was Senator Josiah S. Johnston who undertook the task of replying to Secretary Ingham's unfavorable report on the sugar industry.33 Congressman Edward D. White wondered, while defending the system, why it should be destroyed after proving itself so successful.34

The final vote on the Tariff of 1832 was taken in June.

30Baton Rouge Gazette, March 3, 1832.
31Niles Weekly Register, XXXVII, 164.
32Register of Debates in Congress, 22 cong., 1 sess., pp. 3590-3591.
33New Orleans Bee, February 4, 1831.
34Register of Debates in Congress, 21 cong., 2 sess., p. 464.
Louisiana was then represented in the house by Philemon Thomas, Henry A. Bullard, and Edward D. White; and in the senate by Josiah S. Johnston and George A. Waggaman, who had replaced Edward Livingston when the latter became a member of Jackson's cabinet. Philemon Thomas voted for the bill, while Bullard and White opposed it.35 Their reasons will be discussed in connection with the election of 1834, when they were called upon to defend their position. The two senators voted for the bill.36 Despite the fact that the tariff forced a reduction in the duty on sugar, there seems to have been little resentment against it, since Louisiana leaders, in both political camps, considered it a necessary compromise.37

South Carolina's nullifiers had a more violent reaction to the act; when they captured a majority of the seats in the state legislature, Governor James Hamilton issued a call for the legislature to convene on October 22, 1832.38 The legislature made the necessary provisions for a state convention which met November 19 and gave popular expression to the nullifiers' anti-tariff beliefs. The legislature

36Ibid., p. 1219.
37Tregle, "Louisiana and the Tariff," p. 89.
which met immediately after the convention adjourned, proceeded to enact legislation required to make effective the ordinance of nullification passed by the convention. The nullifiers would now have a chance to test their doctrine. The reaction of the president was decisive. He had been warned by Joel R. Poinsett, a leader of the Union party in Charleston: "... you must be prepared to hear very shortly of a State Convention and an act of Nullification." The president replied in his usual blunt fashions: nullification, he said "... leads directly to civil war and bloodshed and deserves the execration of every friend of the country."

Jackson's message to Congress on December 4, 1832, did little to allay the great excitement pervading the country. Its general tone was hardly aggressive: nothing was said of forceful resistance to nullification. While Jackson was delivering the message to Congress, Edward Livingston was preparing the president's proclamation of December 10, 1832,

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39 Ibid., p. 218.
41 John Specner Basset, (ed.), Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1929), IV, 481.
42 Ibid., p. 493.
44 Register of Debates in Congress, 22 cong., 2 sess., p. 8.
45 Hatcher, op. cit., p. 384.
which "... blasted the theoretical foundation of nullification, and was wonderfully popular outside of South Carolina."

It had a marked effect in Louisiana. The state "... favors the tariff; reprobates nullification; has not troubled herself with the metaphysics of States Rights and cherishes thorough loyalty to the present Union." Meetings were held in Baton Rouge and New Orleans to express the popular will in opposition to nullification. All political factions within the state joined in opposition to the doctrine, but many men must have sympathized with Alexander Barrow who wrote the following in a letter to William S. Hamilton. "I am no nullifier as you know, but all my sympathies are with theirs; and as the nullifiers are contending against laws which are unconstitutional, unjust, oppressive, and ruinous to the South, I never will consent to see them put down by military force, and before I would take part in a crusade by the yankees to put South Carolina to the sword, I would be hung for treason."

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48 *Baton Rouge Gazette*, January 5, 26, 1833.
50 *New Orleans Courier*, January 3, 29, 1833.
In his annual message, Governor Roman told the legislature "We cannot be persuaded...that there is any justice in giving to one single state the power of judging and deciding exclusively by herself questions which all other states have equally the right to decide and determine; that one state has in fact the right to govern all the rest whenever it may please her to assemble a convention which may declare a law unconstitutional." The report of a legislative committee, appointed to investigate this portion of the governor's message, fully agreed with the governor on nullification, as the following excerpt will show:

Louisiana would ... say--halt, whilst yet you may--Tis folly, tis madness, to engage in a conflict, when triumph would be perdition, defeat disgrace. You invoke the constitution as your justification, by implication, and abrogate its enactments, by ordinances; justify resistance by oppression, sanctify oppression by law; ... inculcate peace whilst you declare war.53

In New Orleans, the young newspaperman J. B. Harrison, who had not attended an earlier anti-nullification meeting,54 was admonished to make himself known to the people of New Orleans by attending such assemblies and attacking nullification.55

52Louisiana House Journal, 11 leg., 1 sess., p. 4.
53Ibid., p. 42.
54Harrison Papers, Library of Congress, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, February 18, 1833.
55Ibid., letter from Howell to Harrison, March 24, 1833.
In the spring of 1833 it was necessary to change the tariff. The Louisiana delegation, unchanged since the vote on the controversial issue, gave complete support to the compromise, despite the fact that it also slightly lowered the duty on sugar.\textsuperscript{56} Shortly after voting for the measure, Philemon Thomas addressed a letter to his constituents in Louisiana's second congressional district, which included the following remarks: "The session was short,... but long enough to prove, that unless something was done with the Tariff of 1832, something might arise to be deprecated by every lover of his country. It appeared a modification of the Tariff was the only means of preventing a dissolution of the Union."\textsuperscript{57}

While Clay was adroitly maneuvering the measure through Congress, Nicholas Biddle was anxiously awaiting the outcome. "The fact is that for forty-eight hours your friends held in their breath with anxiety till they saw you fairly across the chasm...."\textsuperscript{58} Ex-President James Madison wrote a long letter of congratulations to Clay saying, "I need not repeat what is said by all on the ability and advantages with which the subject was handled. It has certainly had the

\textsuperscript{56}Tregle, "Louisiana and the Tariff," p. 103.
\textsuperscript{57}Baton Rouge Gazette, March 6, 1833.
\textsuperscript{58}Clay Papers, Library of Congress, letter from Nicholas Biddle to Henry Clay, February 28, 1833.
effect of an anodyne on the feverish excitement under which
the public mind was laboring."\(^{59}\)

Excitement had not died down in South Carolina, despite
the attempts of Clay to conciliate opinion there. Joel R.
Poinsett wrote to Daniel Webster, "There is no doubt that
Mr. Calhoun and his followers are using every exertion to
keep up the excitement in and out of the state. It is only
by agitating, that they can preserve the power they have
gained at home, and they will build their hopes of future
influence on the same foundation."\(^{60}\) The bank issue would
share the same excited attention of Louisiana's voters in
the election of 1834.

Andrew Jackson's personal animosity toward banks led,
in 1832, to his veto message, which accompanied his rejec-
tion of a bill to extend the charter of the Second Bank of
the United States. When the Senate passed this bill only
three southern votes were cast for it, and two of these
belonged to the Louisiana members.\(^{61}\) The veto of the bank
charter became the most important single issue during the
presidential campaign of 1832; it also had a great deal of

\(^{59}\) Ibid., letter from James Madison to Henry Clay,
April 2, 1833.

\(^{60}\) Webster Papers, Library of Congress, letter from
Joel R. Poinsett to Daniel Webster, May 24, 1833.

\(^{61}\) Ralph C. H. Caterall, The Second Bank of the
United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903),
II, 235.
influence on the outcome of Louisiana's gubernatorial election in 1834. Following his veto, Jackson, after finding a cooperative Secretary of the Treasury, Roger B. Taney, started the process of removal of deposits. "The great specific mission of Jacksonian Democracy was the war against the Monster Bank."  

Much earlier the New Orleans Bee had mildly suggested the re-charter of the bank. New Orleans, the financial capital of the West and Southwest, was the location of a branch bank of the United States, established at the same time that the Bank of Louisiana opened its doors in January, 1805. During the presidential campaign of 1828, news came to Jackson that the banking interests in New Orleans were actively opposing his election. Nicholas Biddle, anxious to dispel these rumors, dispatched one director and a cashier from the branch bank there to assure Jackson they were not true. Apparently Jackson was convinced by this maneuver that Biddle's men were guiltless.  

When the question of rechartering the bank came to

63 New Orleans Bee, January 18, 1831.
65 Caterall, op. cit., pp. 171-188.
the attention of Congress some believed that it was not a political question; even the friends of Jackson were its supporters. The Louisiana Legislature, by a large majority, passed a resolution instructing the state's congressmen to exert every effort for the bank's recharter. This action was believed to be the expression of the entire business community of New Orleans and the people of the state generally. Louisiana's memorial was just one among the many that flooded Washington; from merchants, banks, and whole communities they came, seeking re-charter of the bank. "Never has there been a more imposing, authentic, and extensive expression of public opinion in favor of any legislative measure." Senator Johnston of Louisiana defended the bank against the charges of Thomas Hart Benton, saying: "Is it possible that any man who understands the principles of banking can suppose such an institution unsafe; either for the stockholders or the People of the Country?" Nevertheless Jackson vetoed the bill. His message was commented upon by the National Intelligencer as follows: "It is difficult to conceive of greater errors on the

67 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 10, 1832.
Ibid.
69 Philadelphia National Gazette, February 11, 1832.
70 Washington National Intelligencer, April 26, 1832.
subject of banking and political economy than pervade the whole of it." 71 After the attacks on the message began, rumors were circulated that the press was subsidized by Nicholas Biddle. The National Intelligencer editors, in debt to the bank, said that the paper's relationship with the bank was "truly a business transaction." 72 Louisiana's venerable representative, Philemon Thomas, reported to his constituents that he supported the bank from the conviction of its usefulness, "... both to the ends and objects of Government, and to the commercial enterprize of the individuals." 73

Clay was privately informed of a "nefarious scheme" to withdraw the deposits from the Bank of the United States and place them in state banks, on the condition that "certain individuals" receive $3,000,000 in loans to be invested in western lands. According to the information, a depression would result, the U. S. Bank would be destroyed, and, when the depression was at its lowest point, another national bank would be created and the land investors would reap their rewards in the form of increased land values. 74

71 Ibid., August 25, 1832.
72 Ibid., April 24, 1832.
73 Baton Rouge Gazette, May 5, 1832.
74 Clay Papers, letter from W. A. Bradley to Henry Clay, October 16, 1832.
At least that part of the report to Clay on the withdrawal of deposits was true.

When the removal was begun, two New Orleans banks, the Union Bank and the Commercial Bank, were chosen as depositories for federal funds. For months after this action, hardly a day passed without Clay, Webster, or some other Whig leader presenting memorials addressed to Congress, recounting the distress of the people caused by the removal. In New Orleans, John B. Harrison received the news from Virginia that "The removal of deposits is the all absorbing topic here...." The city was the scene of a large public meeting of the traders and merchants at the Planters Hotel on Canal Street. With S. W. Oakley presiding, the assembled throng passed a series of resolutions stating that the removal of deposits had reduced New Orleans from a state of prosperity to one of "misery and distress." The price of staples in the Mississippi Valley had decreased, confidence was impaired, and a national bank was "absolutely necessary" to secure a sound and uniform currency.

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75 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 30, 1833.
77 Harrison Papers, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, January 12, 1834.
78 New Orleans Advertiser, March 3, 1834.
80 New Orleans Advertiser, February 27, 1834.
President Jackson had taken a course which no king in a constitutional monarchy would dare to take. In the Senate, where the Whigs were organizing against the Tories, George Waggaman entered a memorial from New Orleans passed at a meeting attended by Jackson and anti-Jackson men, in which the economic distress of the nation was blamed upon the executive branch of the government. Alexander Porter spoke at length upon the distress caused at New Orleans, the "Mart of the West," and prophesized an economic depression in that section if New Orleans continued to suffer. Edward D. White, within months after being elected Governor of Louisiana, also presented a memorial to the house of representatives. Roger B. Taney, for his share in the "experiment" was roundly denounced as one of the most "... mischievous and perverse offenders against the constitution and the national weal, that ever took part in our public affairs."

Democrats promised a rapid return of the country's former prosperity, but some Whigs continued to talk about

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81 Philadelphia National Gazette, April 4, 1834.
82 Washington National Intelligencer, March 21, 1834.
84 Niles Weekly Register, XLVI, 152. Baton Rouge Gazette, May 31, 1834.
85 Philadelphia National Gazette, May 13, 1834.
a gloomy economic future and called upon their fellows to forget petty issues and unite to overthrow "Jacksonism." Bank opponents charged that its activities were monopolistic, despotic, and about to subvert the government and annihilate liberty. They also argued that since the favors of the bank were reserved only for its political supporters, it thus encouraged corruption in government.

It was hoped that Daniel Webster could solve the problem of the bank and deposits, "... which the distressed condition of the country renders everyday more necessary." John Henderson of Woodville, Mississippi, told Webster that Congress had lost its powers and that he saw no recourse but to resign "... to General Jackson the reigns of absolute despotism." Henderson, who compared Jackson to Napoleon, had little doubt that the powers given the "... Consularship will be grasped at and awarded to Genl. Jackson before five years elapse." Later, after Jackson had protested being censured by the Senate and Webster had spoken on the matter,

86 Ibid., September 6, 1834.
87 Washington National Intelligencer, September 4, 1834.
88 New Orleans Bee, August 18, 1834.
89 Ibid., March 3, 1834.
91 Webster Papers, letter from George C. Washington to Daniel Webster, January 24, 1834.
92 Ibid., letter from John Henderson to Daniel Webster, January 8, 1834.
Henderson wrote that he fully agreed with the senator's "unanswerable arguments." 93

It was reported in New Orleans that business was very dull, confidence gone, and credit impaired during the spring of 1834. 94 By May of that year the economic depression was becoming "worse and worse." 95 H. Leavenworth of Alexandria, Louisiana, blamed the crisis on the bank, reporting that it had, "... completely prostrated the enterprise of the Planters in this part of the country," and made it necessary for them to depend on the merchants of New Orleans to carry on their business. 96

Louisiana's newly elected Alexander Porter wrote to Harrison from Washington that state elections prior to 1834 "... never were so important." Yet he felt that apathy prevailed among the state's National Republicans despite the fact that they had an excellent issue in the affair of Martin Gordon. 97 Harrison was being considered

93 Ibid., letter from John Henderson to Daniel Webster, June 13, 1834.


95 Niles Weekly Register, XLVI, 204.


97 Harrison Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. B. Harrison, June 9, 1834.
as an agent for the Colonization Society\footnote{Ibid., letter from R. R. Gurley to J. B. Harrison, April 30, 1833.} and apparently had travelled to Boston for an interview.\footnote{Ibid., letter from George Ticknor to J. B. Harrison, June 8, 1833.}

Martin Gordon was a leader of the Jackson party in Louisiana,\footnote{New Orleans Bee, August 30, 1833.} whom the president had appointed Collector of the Port of New Orleans. His re-appointment by Jackson to the same post was rejected by the Senate.\footnote{Washington National Intelligencer, July 12, 1834.} In his place Jackson appointed his son, despite the fact that he was not yet twenty-one years old. The Senate's rejection of this "beardless youth" was thought to have been a lesson for office holders, and was pointed to as yet another illustration of the lack of propriety and fitness which characterized the appointments of the administration.\footnote{Register of Debates in Congress, 23 cong., 1 sess., p. 1187.}

Senators Porter and Waggaman supported Clay in his battles with the administration.\footnote{Niles Weekly Register, XLV, 291.} The latter presented the memorial of the Bank of New Orleans to Congress concerning the continuance of the Bank of the United States.\footnote{Register of Debates in Congress, 23 cong., 1 sess., p. 1187.}
Both Porter and Waggaman supported Clay on the censure resolutions, and in his challenge of Roger B. Taney for his removal of deposits, they agreed with the National Gazette, which stated, "In what despotic government has there been more pernicious financial maladministration."106 It was reported that 114,000 memorials had been drawn up praying for the restoration of the removed deposits, and 875 of these had been presented in the Senate.107

It was during the excitement of these issues—the tariff, nullification, and the removal of deposits—that the gubernatorial election was held. During the spring and fall elections, the Whig party emerged from the decaying remains of the National Republican party. Edward Douglas White, in Congress during most of the time prior to the election, was opposed by Denis Prieur and John B. Dawson. Prieur was believed to be a threat to the Democrats, because he might split that party's vote, and a clever scheme was devised to force him to withdraw. He was seeking re-election as mayor at the same time that he campaigned for governor, but the municipal election took place in April, three months before the state elections. The Democrats entered a contestant opposing Prieur's candidacy for mayor,

106 Philadelphia National Gazette, April 12, 1834.
107 New Orleans Mercantile Advertiser, May 15, 1834.
John Holland; then Prieur withdrew from the gubernatorial race and Holland withdrew from the mayorality contest. Thus in the final campaign months there were only two contestants, one a Jackson Democrat and the other, who started the race as a National Republican, won a Whig party victory.

John Barrow Dawson, the Democrat candidate for governor, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1800. He moved to West Feliciana Parish and became a successful planter, representing his parish in the lower house of the state legislature, before becoming a parish judge. He was a general in the state militia and a recognized leader of the Democrat party. He had apparently inherited some wealth, but he was accused of dissipating it and receiving nothing in return, since he was "notoriously uneducated." He was opposed to the Bank of the United States, internal improvements, and a supporter of the South Carolina nullifiers. His accusers said he was a friend and a tool of the "Custom House Gang" in New Orleans, led by Martin Gordon. This charge was

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109 New Orleans Bee, April 17, 1834.
111 Baton Rouge Gazette, May 3, 1834, quoting New Orleans Advertiser.
112 New Orleans Advertiser, May 13, 1834.
113 New Orleans Bee, August 30, 1833, May 10, 1834.
made when the National Republicans were demanding the removal of Gordon. He was friendly with a swindler and a coward, and he travelled extensively throughout the state falsely telling the French that he was able to speak their language. Supposedly his neighbors supported his candidacy for governor just to get him out of the vicinity, so low was their opinion of his character. He was neglecting his judicial duties, and he should not "... go galloping about the state electioneering." Dawson's defense was that he was not burdened with parochial duties at the time, and he counter-charged that White had deserted his post in Congress. Although he was a Jackson supporter, he was said to have had no opinions of his own, largely because of his ignorance. Since he had no opinions of his own, the National Republicans hoped that the state would "... not be prostrated at the footstool of Andrew Jackson, in the person of John Barrow Dawson."

114 New Orleans Advertiser, May 13, 1834.
115 Baton Rouge Gazette, June 7, 1834.
116 New Orleans Bee, May 10, 1834.
117 New Orleans Advertiser, May 1, 1834.
118 New Orleans Mercantile Advertiser, May 16, 1834.
119 Ibid., May 20, 1834.
120 Ibid., May 21, 1834.
Edward Douglas White announced his candidacy for governor in July, 1832, two years before the election was to take place and just several days after winning another term in Congress. He was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in March, 1795. When White was thirteen years old, his father moved to Louisiana and settled on Bayou Lafourche. He studied law in the office of Alexander Porter at Donaldsonville, and served as criminal judge in New Orleans for three years until 1828. He then retired to the Lafourche sugar plantation, and announced his candidacy for Congress that year. He defeated Edward Livingston by a majority of six votes, and was unopposed in two subsequent elections for the same position. Long residence in the area, coupled with sympathy for the native French and constant work in Congress for the interests of his constituents, created for him a large, devoted following.

Alexander Porter believed White to be the choice of a majority of Louisiana's voters, partly because they were suffering from an act "... of gratuitous folly in their ruler." This was a reference to the bank issue, which strengthened the Republicans, and if they lost it would be due to laziness. White was charged with being completely

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121 New Orleans Bee, July 12, 1832.
123 Harrison Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. B. Harrison, February 18, 1834.
under the influence of Porter, an aristocrat, who supposedly cared little about the problems of the lesser classes. It was even rumored that Porter wrote White's speeches, but this was denied as "nonsense."

His record as a congressman, which showed he had worked for the interests of the planters in such matters as land claims and public land, was used to support his candidacy. He could leave Congress and campaign in Louisiana, but he preferred to remain and perform his duties as representative from the first congressional district. If he were elected the voters were assured they need not fear the influence of the "Custom House Coterie."

Louisiana's "bank party" was another factor supposedly dominating White in the campaign. Undoubtedly White favored the Bank, while Whigs seeking an extension of that institution's life supported him. They were charged with being the aristocracy; the Democrats, on the other hand, championed the cause of the lower classes, seeking to protect them from exploitation through the bank. One reporter after attending a Whig meeting at Bishop's restaurant, wrote that, instead of denouncing Dawson, the speakers

124 New Orleans Bee, July 1, 1834.
125 New Orleans Mercantile Advertiser, May 17, 1834.
126 New Orleans Argus, July 3, 1834.
127 New Orleans Bee, April 24, 1834. Baton Rouge Gazette, May 21, 1834.
denounced Jackson and his bank policy. The editor of the same newspaper believed, "All that are careless of our liberties, all that are willing to bow down and groan under the golden calf shout for White! The heads of the Whig party--the aristocracy--the Silk Stocking Club--will wield a golden sceptre o'er your head...." During the spring months of the campaign a bill for the incorporation of the Citizen's Bank was considered in the legislature. In order to defeat it, eighteen members of the legislature absented themselves during the voting. Furthermore, several members who voted favorably on the bill were stockholders.

On the day of the election the Bee contained the following comment: "To vote for the Bank and E. D. White, is to consent to become the willing panderers to a powerful and aristocratic money institution, which is in every mode and shape it can find feasible, endeavoring to deprive you of your constitutional independence." The Democrats accused White of having stabbed the state's sugar industry in the back when he voted for the Compromise Tariff of 1833, lowering the duties on sugar. His defense was that the nation was then on the verge of

129 New Orleans Bee, July 7, 1834.
130 Ibid., January 29, April 22, 1834.
civil war, and that to avoid this abhorrent event he had voted for a gradual reduction of the tariff. The Irish vote, said White's opponents, was controlled by the aristocrat Alexander Porter, because he was an Irishman; but neither could expect much from White. Dawson on the other hand would "... never desert the interests of the country to truckle to political combinations which may be foreign to its prosperity."132

Jackson was roundly denounced as a demagogue, and his administration as "unholy," and "iniquitous,"133 both during and after the gubernatorial campaign. It was early in the election year that Jackson's supporters were referred to as Tories, and his opponents as Whigs. A vote for White was a vote for American rights, in opposition to the tyranny of one man and ambitious demagogues. His party favored the protective tariff, internal improvements, the bank, and a sound currency "... acceptable throughout the Union."135

The people were said to be enraged at Jackson's actions regarding the bank: "The Union cannot be preserved in the

131 New Orleans Argus, May 10, 1834.
133 New Orleans Emporium, November 6, 1834.
134 New Orleans Argus, April 26, 1834.
spirit by which the administration is directed." Jackson was compared to Caesar, and the people were called upon to decide whether he was to be their king or their servant.

White routed the Democrat John Dawson. He received nearly sixty per cent of the popular vote, most of it in the sugar parishes and the city of New Orleans. The northern and western parishes, home of the small farmer and cotton planter, supported Dawson strongly; but the Whigs were not to be denied. This election was the "FIRST WHIG TRIUMPH AT THE POLLS." Despite "... immense sums of money expended by the Tories...," the Whigs had "... put a veto on the mad career of President Jackson...," and sealed "... with the seal of their just reprobation his abuse of power and his usurpation!" "We have met the enemy and most nobly vanquished them," reported the Louisiana Advertiser. New Orleans had supported the friends of Jackson since he was first a candidate for President, but in this election his party's candidates were defeated.

136 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 5, 1834.
137 Ibid., May 17, 1834.
138 Howard, op. cit., p. 40.
139 New Orleans Advertiser, July 17, 1834.
140 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 26, 1834.
141 Washington National Intelligencer, July 29, 1834.
142 Ibid., July 28, 1834.
"You may put it down as certain, that the Jackson Party is dead in Louisiana." The official count was 6,973 votes for White and 4,149 votes for Dawson. The legislature would be controlled by a majority of Whigs. In addition the party also won all three congressional seats.

In New Orleans, when the votes had been counted, a band in attendance struck up "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and the successful candidates were serenaded until after midnight. A few days later a "Grand Whig Festival Celebration" was held. The opposition finally conceded; "It is pretty well ascertained that the Clay-and-Bank Parties have succeeded in electing their humble servant, E. D. White governor of Louisiana." As more returns came in from the country districts and it was clear that Jackson's party had lost even the third congressional district, it was noted, "Our not being accustomed to disasters of this sort renders them peculiarly unpleasant."

In the congressional elections Henry Johnson opposed Charles Gayarre and Thomas C. Nicholls in the first district.

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143 Ibid., July 31, 1834.
144 Louisiana House Journal, 12 leg., 1 sess., pp. 10-11.
145 New Orleans Advertiser, July 18, 1834.
146 New Orleans Daily News, July 14, 1834.
147 New Orleans Courier, July 16, 1834.
It was felt that Johnson, the ex-governor who was well known to the voting public, would have little difficulty being elected. There were four candidates in the second district: the incumbent, General E. W. Ripley; Dr. Thomas W. Chinn; James M. Bradford; and Clark Woodruff. Chinn, a planter, favored the preservation of the rights of the states according to the letter and spirit of the constitution, but he also opposed nullification and secession. He favored the tariff for the protection of domestic industry, and believed such laws were constitutional.

General Ripley favored the tariff, but was hostile to the Bank of the United States. Bradford was the obvious Jackson supporter, who opposed the protective tariff, advocated States Rights, and opposed internal improvements. Clark Woodruff, a judge in the eighth judicial district, was sound in his knowledge of law, but his political views were "... unknown to the public." Ripley won the contest, and at various times in his political career he was claimed by both parties.

Rice Garland, who had recently won the special election

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148 New Orleans Bee, July 12, 1834. New Orleans Advertiser, June 24, 1834.
149 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 5, 1834.
150 Ibid., May 3, 1834.
151 Ibid., July 12, 1834.
in the third district to replace Henry Bullard, for the second time defeated Joseph Walker. True to the predictions, Henry Johnson won in the first district, by a large majority. The newly created Whig party had triumphed with a clean sweep of the state's elections. The governor, a majority of the state legislature, and all three men elected to Congress were members of that party. Until 1842 the Whigs would control politics in Louisiana, despite strong opposition from the Democratic party. Thereafter the party died a lingering death that lasted more than ten years.

Clay had knowledge of the Whig victory in Louisiana when he wrote his friend William Newton Mercer, the New Orleans doctor, to inform him of another Whig victory in the Kentucky legislature. From Alabama, Daniel Webster heard the encouraging news of the Whig success in "neighboring states," and was urged to visit the South in order to strengthen his chances for the presidency in 1836.

Michael Chevalier, a French visitor, noted, "On both sides preparations are making with the greatest activity; both parties have chosen their texts." It was no longer a

152 Washington National Intelligencer, July 30, 1834.
153 Mercer Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, letter from Henry Clay to William N. Mercer, August 13, 1834.
154 Webster Papers, letter from E. D. Gazzam to Daniel Webster, September 20, 1834.
question about the Bank of the United States; but American liberties, obtained through the blood of the fathers, were at stake, and a daring soldier, surrounded by a group of obedient spoils seekers, had dared to tamper with American rights. 156

The Baton Rouge Gazette charged that Martin Van Buren had done nothing but "hitch himself to the car of the present Executive...." And should he become president, "... by the mere reflected popularity of Gen. Jackson ... we shall seek in vain for a cause to rescue the country from the imputation of ignorance and corruption." 157

Shortly before the Louisiana Whig triumph in 1834, a Louisiana cotton planter, who had recently sold his sugar plantation for one third its cost, wrote Daniel Webster, whom he seemed to admire very much. He warned Webster to divorce himself from Calhoun and Clay, if he wished to be president:

I come now to a single point. Messers Clay and Calhoun after twenty years of the bitterest political warfare have formed a coalition to break down General Jackson--They cannot do it. He may occasionally err, but the great principles he has pursued will triumph. They are both reckless men, who will sacrifice the best interests of posterity for ages to come, for that bubble, the presidency. They never can succeed, nor never ought to succeed. And if you will indulge one who has been an attentive observer to tell you what he thinks, I believe you are doomed to share their fate if you do not shake them off. 158

156 Ibid.

157 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 18, 1834.

158 Webster Papers, letter from William Smith to Daniel Webster, February 9, 1834.
While the presidential lines were being drawn for the contest in 1836, Louisiana's new Whig governor Edward D. White was confronted with grave problems. One of these concerned the Texas revolution, which excited a great deal of attention in Louisiana. Enlistments in the Texas army became so numerous and recruiting activities so obvious that the Governor was forced to act. On November 13, 1835, he issued a proclamation reminding the citizens of Louisiana that the United States was at peace with Mexico, and he ordered that enlistments cease. That this proclamation had any effect upon the efforts of Louisianians to help the Texas rebels is very doubtful. White grappled with the usual financial problems of a state, denounced the abolitionists, and sought a remedy to the continuing land problem.

The gravest issue which faced his administration was the panic and depression of 1837. Although Jackson and the Democrats had attacked the bank and slowly destroyed it, they offered no substitute for its functions in banking and finance. But before the panic began, the election of 1836 witnessed the succession of Martin Van Buren to the presidency, with the blessings of Andrew Jackson.

160 Ramke, op. cit., p. 278.
The Democratic nominating convention met at Baltimore May 20, 1835. Under the influence of Jackson it proceeded to ballot for its presidential choice. Its activities showed how American institutions may be "warped" and "perverted." It was charged that the delegates did not represent more than a fifth of the independent voters of the nation. It was "essentially a congregation of office holders, banded together by the strong instinct of self-preservation, and office-hunters, allured to the quarry by the scent of game." The nomination of Martin Van Buren at Baltimore was seconded by a state convention held in the Methodist church, at Baton Rouge, on May 2, 1836. Speaking in both French and English, Bernard Marigny, who presided at the meeting, denounced the Whig party and praised Jackson. He attacked the bank and internal improvements, but apparently spent little time enumerating the virtues of the candidate himself. The electors chosen, in the order of the districts they represented were John B. Plauche, T. W. Scott, Trasimond Landry, Alexander Mouton, and Pierre E. Bossier.

That summer a visitor to New Orleans noted, "The French business excites a deep interest here, among the trading

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161 Philadelphia National Gazette, May 21, 1835.
163 New Orleans Bee, May 10, 1836.
164 Ibid.
class, but the stand taken by the Presdt. is approved by
a large majority of the city...."¹⁶⁵ After this reference
to Jackson's stand on the unsettled French claims, the
writer continued, "... here are many who are compelled to
truckle to the maps of wealth...." He continued, "The
planting people are no newspaper readers. They are too
much absorbed in seeking money in large sums to pay a
casual regard to political details, and believe false­
hooods with an easy ignorance far beyond my conception
until I came amongst them." The visitor noted, "Poindexter
is here, and down effectually. His party shrinks from his
fellowship now he is out of power. I mean men who have
anything of independent and self respect remaining." When
Poindexter left New Orleans he was heard to threaten to
shoot President Jackson wherever he saw him if the latter
didn't give him satisfaction. Several witnesses said
Poindexter talked to the naval Lieutenant Lawrence, shortly
before he attacked the President.¹⁶⁶ The Louisiana ex­
congressman, William L. Brent, who became the counsel of
Lawrence, appealed for an objective investigation into the
matter and regretted any attempt to "prejudice the public
mind in the case."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵Donelson Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts
Division, letter from Judge Cathorne to A. J. Donelson,
July 11, 1836.
¹⁶⁶Niles Weekly Register, XLVIII, 33.
¹⁶⁷Ibid.
After the nomination of Van Buren, the Whigs began the clumsy process of nominating three presidential candidates as "favorite sons." A national nominating convention was not held; the choices were made usually in state legislatures or in private caucus. As one Whig said, "I concur with Mr. Clay, that in the actual state of things, it is well, and perhaps better that there should be as many competitors in the field against Mr. Van Buren as can be brought out with a hope of getting a single state—the actual state of things is one which I deplore as desperately evil." 168 A Louisiana writer who described himself as "a powerless individual without connections," wrote Clay that his candidacy and that of Calhoun were "impracticable." Clay was then told to limit his efforts "to the defeat of Van." The astute writer noted, "There is a strong probability of a rupture betwixt Van and R. M. Johnson. The suspicions of the latter are awakened; nurse them and you may produce a schism that will destroy the little Dutchman, and without some such plan you are assuredly beaten." 169 Eventually three Whig candidates were placed in the lists against Van Buren—an admission of the party's weak position. Daniel Webster, William Henry Harrison, and Hugh L. White became the sectional hopes of the party's plan to throw

168 Clay Papers, letter from B. W. Leigh to Frances T. Brooke, August 16, 1835.

169 Ibid., letter from Amicus to Henry Clay, September 10, 1835.
the election into the house of representatives. 170

In Louisiana a Whig state convention was held at
Donaldsonville, in which Hugh L. White and John Tyler
were endorsed for the presidency and vice presidency re-
spectively. There was little enthusiasm. The electors
chosen were A. Hoa, Alexander Barrow, Aristide Landry,
Jacques Dupre, and Francoise Gaienne. 171 The following
questions asked of a Louisiana Whig indicates the party's
awkward position. "Are you in favor of Harrison? Yes.
Are you in favor of White? Yes. Are you in favor of
Granger for Vice-President? Yes. Are you also in favor
of Tyler for Vice-President? Yes." 172

White's running mate, John Tyler, was labeled a nulli-
fier by the Democrats, but it was noted that there were
few nullifiers in Louisiana. 173 Hugh White was charged
with being opposed to all that the Whig party supported:
internal improvements, the sale of Louisiana's public
lands, the sugar tariff, and opposition to nullification. 174
White was an apostate who was "... now under the banner of
opposition trying to destroy the measures he once supported." 175

170 New Orleans Courier, October 10, 1836.
171 New Orleans Bee, May 6, 1836.
172 Ibid., August 1, 1836.
173 Ibid., October 22, 27, 1836.
174 New Orleans Courier, September 16, 1836.
175 New Orleans Bee, October 27, 1836. New Orleans
Courier, October 23, 1836.
He was merely a tool of the Whigs used to gather Southern votes for their party. 176

William Harrison, although he did not receive much attention in the New Orleans newspapers, was important enough to be denounced as an abolitionist. 177 He had voted in the Ohio legislature for a law allowing sheriffs of that state to hire out prisoners; thus he was the "man-Selling" candidate, advocating the "SALE OF FREE WHITE MEN INTO BONDAGE." 178 Van Buren was also charged with being an abolitionist. 179 The New Orleans _Bee_ carried a statement attributed to Van Buren in which he emphatically denied being opposed to slavery and said in effect that he was opposed to any attempt to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. 180 Although he was a member of the Dutch Reformed church, Van Buren was said to be a Catholic in Louisiana. 181 In the last full month before the election, a Democratic meeting was held in New Orleans, at which a number of resolutions were passed. One said that the election of Van Buren would protect the property

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176 *New Orleans Bee*, October 14, 1836.
177 *New Orleans Courier*, October 15, 1836.
178 *Ibid*.
180 *New Orleans Bee*, October 27, 1836.
181 *New Orleans Courier*, October 29, 1836.
of the state's citizens, since he had pledged himself to resist all legislation of congress on the subject of slavery.

It was frankly admitted that the Whigs had to oppose in Jackson "... a high degree of personal popularity combined with the most unscrupulous use of power." Even though Van Buren was the candidate, the opponent was still the old general. In lieu of a platform, the National Gazette presented a series of Whig proposals as follows:

It is proposed by the Whigs to substitute a system of republican administration for a reign of prerogative, and to elect a president who shall execute the functions of his office for the good of the community instead of the emolument of a cabal. It is proposed to substitute independence for sychophancy, subveriency and man-worship; to derange and break up a domineering and exclusive party, and to restore to each branch of the government its due weight in the formation of laws, and its due respect in the eyes of the people. Finally, it is proposed to restore the purity of election, the proper tenure and sanction of public office, and the legitimate application of the public wealth to the public weal.

Jackson was charged, along with the party which he led, with appealing to the people's popular prejudice to aid him in overriding any law which he opposed.

One of the great mischiefs which the present dynasty has brought upon the nation, has grown out of its reckless contempt for the stability

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182 Ibid., November 2, 1836.
183 Philadelphia National Gazette, August 16, 1836.
184 Ibid.
and security of property. To answer temporary ends its organ has never scrupled to overlook; not only the great objects of the trading community, but the interest of every American citizen whose prosperity depended upon the permanency and regularity of the operations of business. From the beginning, the interposition of the slightest obstacle to any favourite measure, by the national legislature, has been answered by direct and inflammatory appeals to the constituency, attacked by perverted statements and slanderous imputations. The intervention of the people has been invoked in turn against every measure which contradicted the will of the President.

In another section this lengthy editorial in the National Gazette continues:

With the widespread derangement of the currency consequent upon the President's invertebrate antipathies, and the accompanying denunciation of all property-holders—and the last as well as the greatest—as aristocrats and traitors, a feverish discontent has overspread the whole community of operatives, and they have been forced into irregular and dangerous combinations. The increased price of labour and food, and the depreciation of the value of money, have mutually acted and reacted upon each other. The relations of business have been deranged, the pursuits of sober industry have given way before stock-gaming and enormous speculation. An uneasy itch to acquire wealth has fretted one class of citizens, while a morbid jealousy and suspicion has haunted another with visions of undefined natural rights and unreasonable labour; the laws have sunk in public estimation, and the power and vitality of the constitution itself has become a topic of scorn and distrust. The Bank of the United States has been destroyed, and every local legislature is rushing in with its devices to fill the vacancy created by its destruction. An administration intent upon a single end and blinded by passion could not foresee this necessary result of its efforts until it was too late. Then they attempted to stop the gap with a handful of gold, and they now have the impudence to pretend before the people that this river of paper which twenty-six states are vying with each other to pour out, can be damned by Senator Benton's armful of bullion.185

185 Ibid., August 20, 1836.
This editorial partly explains the alarm and opposition of the Whigs to the election of Van Buren, and incidentally describes the causes of the Panic of 1837. The lack of unity which characterized the Whig party in this election was scored as wasteful, but praised as the only means of defeating Van Buren.

On the eve of the election District Judge Henry Boyce of Alexandria was holding court in Avoyelles Parish, a position which afforded, "... good opportunity of seeing what is going on." He believed a large majority of the parish people favored the White ticket, and requested that 400 or 500 handbills be sent to him by the first steam boat to be distributed in Alexandria.

When the election took place, beginning on Monday, November seventh and continuing through Wednesday, the ninth, Louisiana's voters favored Van Buren by a majority of 225 votes. White carried New Orleans by a majority of ten votes, and all of the sugar parishes in South Louisiana, except the third congressional district gave Van Buren its overwhelming support.

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186 Ibid., September 8, 1836.
188 Harrison Papers, letter from Henry Boyce to J. B. Harrison, October 27, 1836.
189 Niles Weekly Register, LI, 1.
190 New Orleans Bee, November 15, 1836.
The comments of Henry Clay, in a letter concerning the appointment by Jackson of Alcee Labranche as Charge des Affaires to Texas, show what a gloomy future the Whigs faced after Van Buren's inauguration.

You ask if I can communicate any consolation to you for the future as to public affairs. I lament to say not much. Hopes are entertained, and with some probability that there will be a majority in the H. of R. at the next session, against the administration, and if there was more concert, and a union as to the ultimate object, among the opposition there would be better prospects. I think there is a tendency to union among them, but it is not yet produced. Mr. Calhoun now, as heretofore, stands in the way. The city has been filled with strangers. The crowd from N. York has been as great as it was from Scotland, when James ascended the throne in England.191

Within weeks after the letter was written, the Panic of 1837, followed by several years of depression, brightened the Whig future considerably.

On the eve of the depression the banking capital of New Orleans exceeded that of New York.192 In 1835 the exports of New York were evaluated at $30,345,264, and those of New Orleans at $36,270,823.193 In his annual message to the legislature in 1836, Governor White spoke in glowing terms of the prosperity enjoyed by the state.194

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191 Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Frances T. Brooke, March 7, 1837.
192 Caldwell, op. cit., p. 32.
193 New Orleans Bee, September 26, 1836.
194 Ibid., January 5, 1836.
Yet, during the same year it was reported that there was a "... very great stagnation in business of every kind," and "... there was more reason to apprehend a continuance of the present, or even a worse state of things ..." in the future. One month later the same journal said, "... depression, before noticed, continues." In August, the third month, "... dullness continues to predominate in every department of business." The sugar crop of 1834-35 was 110,000 hogsheads; in 1835-36 it dropped to 36,000, but rose to 75,000 in 1836-37. During the first two years of the depression there were no returns on sugar production. This would indicate, in part, that there was a business recession in Louisiana several months before the panic began in the spring of 1837.

During Governor White's administration, a number of banks were chartered with the state pledged to support them with its credit. They were designed to replace the defunct Bank of the United States. In his message to the legislature in January, 1837, the governor said that never had that assembly met under such favorable circumstances. He described the soundness of the state's financial position, which was enhanced by a gift of $44,000 from the national

195 New Orleans Price Current, June 4, 1836.
196 Ibid., July 2, 1836.
197 Ibid., August 20, 1836.
government, the state's share in the proceeds from the sale of public lands. Before the end of the year, the governor was forced to call a special session of the legislature. In his speech to that session, he said that never had the members met under such critical circumstances; he then described in detail the financial crisis that had struck the state and the nation.

The state's banking institutions, like the Citizen's Bank of New Orleans, were investigated by legislative committees. The depression had forced them to close their doors and to suspend specie payment. "They have fallen, probably to rise no more, and in their fall have carried hundreds of smaller houses with them," said the Daily Picayune; "The wild dream of monopolists and speculators, thank God, are destined never to be realized." On the matter of speculation, the Baton Rouge Gazette said that the people of New Orleans were so completely infected with the mania of purchasing land that they would purchase lots on the moon, if it were subdivided.

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199 New Orleans Bee, January 4, 1837.
200 Louisiana House Journal, 13 leg., 2 sess., p. 2.
201 Edward Rawle Papers, Howard Tilton Library, Tulane University, letter from E. R. Rawle to Francis P. Corbin, February 7, 1836.
202 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 26, 1838.
203 Ibid., March 26, 1838.
204 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 1, 1837.
"The embarrassed state of money affairs continues to have a powerful influence in commercial transactions in our market; business of every condition is in languishing condition." 205 "The pressure of the money market continues. Several heavy failures have occurred within the last two days, one house for the enormous sum of six millions of dollars! Forced sales of cotton are an everyday occurrence and the price is falling." 206 The general trend in business and banking failures continued in April, 207 until "Now they come upon us in platoons. Within the last eight and forty hours, we have been informed that some six or eight houses have gone, whose combined liabilities amount to over twenty-four millions of dollars!" 208 Through all of April and the first days of May the situation worsened. 209

Finally, when suspension of specie was announced on May 14, 1837, by the leading city banks, a "tremendous run" was made upon all of them. 210 The Second Municipality Council in New Orleans was forced to issue paper money called "shinplasters," which would be redeemable as soon as the banks

205 New Orleans Price Current, April 1, 1837.
206 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 8, 1837.
207 Ibid., April 13, 1837.
208 Ibid., April 14, 1837.
209 Ibid., April 16, 18, 25, 30, and May 12, 1837.
210 Ibid., May 14, 1837.
resumed payment in coin.\textsuperscript{211} Business continued to decline during May. When asked to call a special session of the legislature, Governor White at first refused to do so.\textsuperscript{213} One of the banks took up the practice of drawing black lines on its bills across the words "on demand."\textsuperscript{214}

Alexander Porter blamed the depression on the "experiments" of the President, and discussed the need for another Bank of the United States, which was still opposed by the Democrats, "... tho' in their hearts they wish one...."\textsuperscript{215} According to a good Democrat, who had always opposed banks politically and now opposed them on the basis of "expediency," the depression was the fault of the banks.\textsuperscript{216}

The state banks were "... arraigned before the country, charged with baseness, treachery, perfidy, and fraud; baseness in misappropriating their funds and abusing their privileges; perfidy in violation of their engagements; and fraud in robbing the poor of their hard earnings by means

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{211} Ibid., May 18, 1837.
\item \textsuperscript{212} Ibid., May 24, 27, 1837.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Ibid., May 18, 1837.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Ibid., June 18, 1837.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Crittenden Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, July 2, 1837.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Butler Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University.
\end{itemize}
of irredeemable paper." Business and the monetary system of the country were "most deplorably deranged...."

In Louisiana the Democrats attacked the banks and apparently every other institution, attempting to avoid the onus of blame which the public placed upon them and their president. They "would overthrow ... all the banking institutions of our state, and after that would assail every reputable individual who possessed a second coat in his wardrobe." "The great and abiding cry of the locofocos is against chartered institutions--all their writings are interlaced with denunciations against Corporations. They are extremely sensitive of the banks, etc." The Picayune stated that Democratic newspapers in New Orleans were "tools" of that party, "... trying to tear away and destroy all that man holds dear." In the defense of the state's banking institutions, corporations were defended in a series of letters signed "Junius." Van Buren was ridiculed in the most vicious fashion, as the following excerpt will indicate:

217 Washington Madisonian, August 30, 1837.
218 Ibid., September 2, 1837.
219 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 2, 1837.
220 Ibid., September 20, 1837.
221 Ibid., September 26, 1837.
222 Ibid., September 28, 1837.
The President of the United States, and commander-in-chief of all the soldiers in pursuit of Oceola in Florida is said to exceed all his predecessors in the magnificence of his dinners, suppers, and ball displays. Dutch musicians played the 'Shades of Kinderhook' at the first levee of his royal highness. How princely the Washington folks are! Perish credit—break merchants—starve families—starve poor man—no matter—we, your officers, will live well. A most righteous government have we, and the conduct of our rulers is in most perfect harmony and unison with the great principles of locofocoism and levelling society.223.

Under these trying conditions Governor White finally called the special session of the legislature. The committees appointed to investigate the banks made a series of reports, which became the basis of a bill passed by the legislature providing strict control of the state's banks.224 After strenuous opposition to the bill by the business community in New Orleans, the Governor vetoed it. In his veto message he defended the banks and said their only crime was suspension of specie payment, which he called "a public inconvenience."225 The legislature tried to revive the legislation, but, "It died like Julius Caesar, in the midst of the greatness of the Republic."226 A political rally was held, with Randall Hunt the chairman, in which the legislature's bills were denounced as unconsti-

223 Ibid., September 23, 1837.
224 Ramke, op. cit., p. 312.
225 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, March 5, 1838.
226 Ibid., March 12, 1838.
tutional, oppressive, anti-republican, and impolitic. A vote of thanks was given to Governor White for his veto. The bank question would be the leading political issue in the gubernatorial election of 1838, and an unsolved problem for many years.

Meanwhile a series of state and congressional elections had weakened the original success of the Whig party in Louisiana. On January 12, 1835, the legislature chose a successor to George A. Waggaman, whose senate term expired in March. Charles Gayarre was chosen on the third ballot, even though he was a Democrat and the Whigs had a majority in the legislature. Because of ill health, Gayarre resigned the senate in December, 1835, and spent the next eight years in Europe. It was rumored that Judge Francoise Xavier Martin would be appointed to replace Gayarre, but instead the legislature elected Robert Carter Nicholas. The new senator was a Democrat, but he seemed to be friendly with the state administration. He was born in Hanover County, Virginia, in 1793. At the

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229 Harrison Papers, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, December 24, 1835.
end of the War of 1812 he had attained the rank of Major; he attended the College of William and Mary in 1816, and 1817. By 1820 he had moved to Louisiana and become a sugar planter in Terrebonne Parish. After his six-year term in the national Senate, he served in the state senate from 1843 to 1846, when he resigned.231 The election of Nicholas was an occasion for William Cabel Rives to write Van Buren, "I congratulate you most cordially on the accretion to the Republican Phalanx in the Senate which Louisiana and Mississippi have just given us."232 William Howell in Virginia expressed surprise at Nicholas' election by the legislature: "... from them we expected some sort of a whig--creole or quartre-un--this divides the Senate equally, 24 to 24."233 This same correspondent was urging young Harrison to make himself known to the democracy, "... not by a report to be read at a meeting--you must, at the first meeting, make a speech to the people, to the rabble, something to make everybody, high and low, talk about you...."234 When Harrison talked about leaving the

233Harrison Papers, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, October 16, 1836.
234Ibid., letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, July 21, 1836.
newspaper he worked for in New Orleans, his Virginia friend said salary was the smallest of considerations; the important reason was that the paper afforded Harrison an opportunity to make himself known.\textsuperscript{235}

The staunch Louisiana Whig, Alexander Porter, who opposed the expunging resolution designed to clear the record of Jackson's being censured,\textsuperscript{236} resigned his Senate seat on November 12, 1836.\textsuperscript{237} His place was taken by Alexander Mouton, when he was chosen on the fifth ballot by a Democratic controlled legislature.\textsuperscript{238} The Democrats had returned a majority of their party to the legislature after the state elections in July, 1836.\textsuperscript{239} In the same election, Henry Johnson and Rice Garland, both Whigs, had been re-elected to Congress. The incumbent from the second district, Ripley, who seemed to definitely be a Democrat, was also re-elected.\textsuperscript{240}

The four years following the bank controversy had been

\textsuperscript{235}Ibid., letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, October 16, 1836.
\textsuperscript{237}New Orleans Courier, October 25, 1836.
\textsuperscript{238}New Orleans Bee, January 11, 1837.
\textsuperscript{239}Ibid., July 18, 1836.
\textsuperscript{240}Ibid., July 20, 1836.
critical ones for the Whig party. They had witnessed the emergence of the party from the old National Republican foundation; and the issue had been largely the bank, with internal improvements, and the protective tariff playing important roles. The terms "tory" and "whig" had come into use during the state campaigns of 1834, when "King" Andrew's party was termed the tory party; the opposition naturally assumed the title of Whig. The Whig press was probably responsible for this terminology, adopted in the hope of creating popular prejudice against Jackson, just as King George I had become the popular villain in the American Revolution. The new party claimed it was the natural descendant of the Jeffersonian party, but, though its members liked to employ the term republican, in actual fact its antecedents were Hamiltonian. Its policies were national rather than sectional, but it abandoned the name National Republican probably because of that party's lack of success and because the name might alienate Southerners.

The popular issue used as a rallying point for all Whigs was executive usurpation, but actually the less sensational bank issue was the main reason for the formation of the party. Whig leaders understood completely the economic benefits given to the business community by the conservative Bank of the United States and predicted economic chaos if it were abolished. Their worst fears were realized and predictions fulfilled when the panic began in the spring of 1837.
In Louisiana the initial success of the party, encouraging to Whig endeavor in other states, was lessened by the state elections two years later, when the Democrats gained a majority in the state legislature. But in congressional elections held at the same time, all three incumbents, two Whigs and a Democrat, were re-elected. Van Buren was given a bare majority by the state in the election held the same year; and had the Whigs settled upon one candidate, possibly the majority would have gone to him. With a Whig governor and a Whig legislature, the Democrat Charles Gayarre was elected to the senate, and when he resigned within a year, another Democrat, Nicholas, replaced him. This was more understandable than the election of Gayarre, because Nicholas was chosen by a Democrat legislature. The same legislature then replaced Alexander Porter, who had resigned, with the rising young Democrat, Alexander Mouton.

With such mixed success, it is obvious that neither party could claim undisputed control of the state. The largely Whig business community of New Orleans was offset by the working class; and the Whig sugar planters of South Louisiana were offset by the growing numbers of cotton planters and farmers of North Louisiana.
Despite the adverse economic conditions under which the state elections of 1838 were held, the Whigs successfully elected their candidate to the governor's chair. The banks had not resumed specie payment before the elections were held in July, and money was still in a state of ruinous depreciation. Repudiation was resorted to in Mississippi, a state with which New Orleans did considerable business, and "languor" existed in the market for all merchandise except cotton and tobacco. Business appeared to be in the same condition as it had been for many months.

When such conditions prevail the officials in power are usually blamed, along with the party which they represent. However such was not the case in 1838, when Andre Bienvenue Roman was elected as Whig Governor. He had previously served one term, which ended in 1834, and the legislature passed a resolution thanking him for this administration. He was opposed by Denis Prieur, long-

1 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, April 28, 1838.
2 New Orleans Price Current, May 19, 1838.
3 Ibid., May 26, 1838.
4 Burge, op. cit., pp. 48-54.
5 New Orleans Bee, June 7, 1838.
time Mayor of New Orleans, whose supporters claimed that Roman was really a Democrat playing a trick on the Whig party. The Whigs were said to have nominated him solely because of his Creole birth, which would mean more votes.

Roman advocated public education, internal improvements, and a protective tariff, but he avoided the national bank issue. His opponents said the bank was the only rallying point for the Whigs, since every other national issue was kept out of the campaign. The Whigs obviously favored a national bank, but preferred not to make it an issue in this state campaign. Instead they emphasized the benefits given to the state by the first administration of Roman and promised that there would be more if he were elected a second time.

When the Democratic state convention met at the Merchant's Exchange in New Orleans, the party had a number of candidates, including John R. Grymes, John B. Dawson, and Joseph L. Walker; but Denis Prieur won the nomination. There were complaints that the convention represented only fourteen rural parishes and that Prieur was not the choice

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6 Ibid., June 5, 1838.
7 Ibid., May 26, 1838.
8 Ibid., June 19, 1838.
9 New Orleans Courier, July 16, 1838.
10 Ibid., January 17, 29, 1838.
of the "country." He was not known in the state outside of the sound of "bow bells," and his only interests were identified with the "aristocratical money-worshipers" of New Orleans, whose "power of bank facilities" was "hanging like an incubus" over the planting interest in the state.  

During the campaign the supporters of Prieur were found to be apathetic and unenthusiastic about their candidate. Prieur had served under Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, which naturally enhanced his political position. 

The congressional campaign, especially the contest between Governor White and John Slidell, seemed to excite more attention than the gubernatorial election. Henry Johnson apparently stepped aside to allow White to seek election from the first district. Johnson then sought the Whig nomination for governor, but at the last minute his candidacy was withdrawn in favor of Roman. 

John Slidell was presented to the voters of the first district as a friend to equal rights and an enemy of abuses in banking. It was admitted that Governor White was a

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11 St. Francisville Chronicle, February 12, 1838.
12 Ibid., February 10, 1838.
13 New Orleans Bee, June 30, 1838.
14 Ibid., June 8, 1838.
15 Harrison Papers, letter from William H. Howell to J. B. Harrison, June 3, 1838.
good and popular man, and hard to beat as a candidate for Congress, but if he could be defeated Slidell was the man to do it. 17 When White vetoed the bill which would give the legislature control over the state's banks, the main issue of the campaign was born. He had become the political puppet of the "bank clique." 18 His party sought to "... create an oligarchy based on perpetual wealth." 19 The voters of the Lafourche Interior, White's home district, were so disgusted with the veto that they would support Slidell. 20 The bill had originally been introduced by a whig member of the legislature, Albert Hoa, because of the calamities bank abuses had brought to the state. 21 The right of the legislature to pass such legislation was defended; 22 but after the Whigs were reported getting up a petition asking that the governor veto the bill, he exercised his privilege and rejected it. He was reported to have been in favor of the bill, but in order to keep the backing of the Whig party—and thus be elected to Congress—he had to veto it. 23

17 Ibid., March 1, 1838.
18 Ibid., March 26, 1838.
19 Ibid., April 18, 1838.
20 Ibid., June 9, 1838.
21 Ibid., May 2, 1838.
22 Ibid., January 16, 1838.
23 Ibid., June 2, 1838.
John Slidell tried to draw a connection between the abolitionists and the national bank, but he was attacked by the Whigs for his trouble.\(^{24}\) The Whig party was thus a union between the abolitionists and those who favored the party's principles.\(^{25}\) Despite such attacks as Slidell's and the deplorable economic condition of the state, White was elected to Congress.

In the third district Rice Garland, who emphasized his efforts to settle all claims and to obtain better mail service,\(^{26}\) was unopposed for re-election. The second district witnessed a contest between Thomas W. Chinn and Eleazar Ripley, the incumbent.

The first day of the election was, "... a continued series of exciting scenes."\(^{27}\) When the votes were counted, it was announced that "The locofocos made their death-struggle, and have 'died in the last-ditch'."\(^{28}\) Prieur, for ten years the mayor of New Orleans, received a majority of eight in the city, but all the other Whig candidates, including those for the state legislature, received strong majorities. White was elected with a majority of twelve

\(^{24}\) Ibid., February 28, 1838.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., April 30, 1838.

\(^{26}\) New Orleans Weekly Picayune, August 20, 1838.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., July 3, 1838.

\(^{28}\) Washington National Intelligencer, July 17, 1838.
hundred votes in the first district; Chinn defeated Ripley in the second district; and needless to say, Garland, with no opponent, was elected.  

Outside of New Orleans Roman gained an easy victory over Prieur. Also the Whigs won a majority of the seats in the legislature. The state had supposedly pronounced itself against the election of Van Buren. When the state legislature met, in accordance with the constitution, it went through the formality of selecting Roman the new governor. John B. Harrison, who had written newspaper articles under the name "Gayosos," advocating the candidacy of Henry Johnson in preference to Roman, was told that he would probably not profit from the election.  

When the state legislature met, Governor Roman, in his inaugural message, stressed public education and internal improvements. He appointed Henry A. Bullard Secretary of State, Stephen Mazureau Attorney General, and Persifor F. Smith Adjutant and Inspector General. The legislature  

29 New Orleans Advertiser, July 14, 20, 1838.  
30 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, July 16, 1838.  
32 Harrison Papers, letter from William H. Howell to J. B. Harrison, July 26, 1838.  
34 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 7, 1839.
chose Mr. St. Romes, Democrat editor of the New Orleans Courier, as the state printer, and allowed John T. Preston of Jefferson Parish to take his seat after it had been contested by his opponent. The committee investigating his election issued a report signed by Thomas H. Lewis, in which it was stated that on the eve of the election numerous associations were formed by people of Jefferson and Orleans parishes. The purpose of these associations was to purchase a single quarter-section of land from the federal government, and thus the members would qualify to vote in the election.

Another investigation was made by a legislative committee into the list of twelve charges brought against Felix Bosworth, the Carroll Parish judge, who issued false certificates of mortgages to enable "persons" to vote. Charles M. Conrad, Whig, was chairman of the committee which recommended that the judge "be either impeached or removed from office,...." This affair was destined to drag on for many months before it was finally settled.

Before the legislature met, the banks in New Orleans announced the resumption of specie payment, on Christmas

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35Ibid., January 10, 1839.
37Ibid., p. 25.
38Ibid., pp. 80-83.
Eve in 1838, two weeks before the time originally agreed upon. The skin-lasters issued by the First and Third Municipalities were called in, but the resumption of specie and the restoration of a uniform currency apparently excited little appreciation in New Orleans. Perhaps the citizenry was skeptical; if so its doubts were realized when once again specie payment was suspended. Business remained so poor throughout 1839 that it was the main topic of Governor Roman's annual message to the legislature. He blamed the economic depression on Jackson's refusal to renew the charter of the United States Bank; and Clay said he had traced "... with a pencil of light, the causes of the present intense distress and embarrassment." The economic slump continued through the early months of 1840, adversely affecting real estate values, as well as every other aspect of the state's

40 New Orleans Price Current, December 29, 1838.
41 Niles Weekly Register, LVII, 154.
42 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 9, April 3, 1839.
43 Louisiana House Journal, 14 leg., 2 sess., pp. 2-4.
44 Clay Papers, letter from D. Bouligny to Henry Clay, January 19, 1840.
46 Niles Weekly Register, LVIII, 136.
economy. It was the depression however, which almost assured the Whigs of a presidential victory in 1840.

When Daniel Webster was nominated in a New York state convention for the presidency, a Charlestonian wrote that the interests of the South were ignored, for Webster, "... has never acted with the South." He said that if Webster were the Whig candidate the South would be thrown into the "arms" of Van Buren. The action of the New York Convention was premature, and undoubtedly the Whigs wanted one candidate in the election of 1840, in order to avoid splitting their strength as they had in 1836. From Virginia John B. Harrison heard that "Unanimity is gradually settling upon Mr. Clay...."

A Whig convention held at the City Exchange in New Orleans nominated Henry Clay in 1838, and passed a resolution stating, "... it is expedient for the Whigs of the United States to hold a national nominating convention—to nominate and support one candidate for the presidency of the United States." Alexander Porter, without being consulted, was appointed a delegate to attend the national convention. He "rejoiced" that Clay's chances of success

47 Clay Papers, letter from Charles W. Bryan to Henry Clay, July 14, 1837.
48 Harrison Papers, letter from William H. Howell to J. B. Harrison, November 13, 1837.
49 St. Francisville Chronicle, February 10, 1838.
grew "... better and better every day." John B. Harrison sent his Virginia correspondent a copy of his address to a New Orleans Clay meeting. Clay received favorable reports from Louisiana on the chances of Whig success, but he seemed slightly dejected at the well organized effort of the Democrats.

Prior to the Whig nominating convention, a meeting of the Whig leaders was held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to promote party unity. After this meeting, held in September, 1839, Clay's chances of nomination seemed slim, for it was believed that he could not get the votes of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and probably New York, "... whilst Harrison can get them all." "You may rely upon it, Harrison is the only man, who can effectually oppose little Matty...."

When the convention met at Harrisburg on December 4, 1839, William Henry Harrison was nominated, with only one Whig delegate from Louisiana. Alexander Porter, authorized

50 Crittenden Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, March 9, 1838.
51 Harrison Papers, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, March 20, 1838.
52 Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Frances T. Brooke, April 2, 1839.
53 Harrison Papers, letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, October 24, 1839.
54 Ibid., letter from William W. Howell to J. B. Harrison, November 18, 1839.
to cast the Arkansas vote, was unable to attend. George Mason Graham, of Rapides Parish, did attend, but he was not allowed to cast the proxy vote of Arkansas. When Harrison was nominated on the second ballot, he said it was "... to the greater chargrin, disappointment, and mortification of no one, than myself...." Alexander Porter was bitterly disappointed at the nomination of Harrison in preference to Clay. Clay admirably covered his disappointment; he wrote to a Louisianian, "If the nomination of Harrison produced surprise, honor and good faith imposed upon me the duty of acquiescing in and supporting it; ...."  

Shortly after the Whig convention nominated Harrison, Andrew Jackson visited New Orleans to attend the celebration of his victory in defense of the city. His visit was said to have been "... a political move, got up to subserve Van Buren and his party." There was opposition by the Whigs against the visit, but the General's reception was "... one of which the aged veteran should feel proud."

56 Crittenden Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, December 18, 1839.
57 Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to N. Bouligny, January 19, 1839.
58 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 8, 1840.
59 Ibid., January 9, 1840.
A gentleman from New Orleans reported that for the Whigs the "... signs of the time are auspicious indeed..." after noting that a democratic meeting was a "palpable failure." Although the Harrisburg convention had not promulgated a platform, the political doctrines of Harrison were expressed in a letter he wrote:

1. The executive should disclaim all control over the public moneys.
2. He should never attempt to influence elections.
3. The exercise of the veto power should be limited.
4. Removals from office should not be arbitrary.
5. The President should never use the influence of his office for a purely party matter.
6. The executive department should not be made the Source of legislation.

The doctrines of Van Buren were just the opposite of those of Harrison, claimed William C. Rives of Virginia, who published Harrison's letter and "unhesitatingly" gave his support. A Whig state convention in New Orleans, pledged the party's support to Harrison. It also chose the electors for the five electoral districts. In order, they were, William DeBuys, Joseph Bernard, Leroy Barras, Jacques Dupre, and Seth Lewis.

The Democrats nominated Van Buren to oppose Harrison, although they probably realized that the depression weakened

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60 Washington National Intelligencer, February 26, 1840.
61 Niles Weekly Register, LVIII, 10.
62 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 14, 1840.
his chances for re-election. The party was unable to choose a vice-presidential candidate. The platform opposed internal improvements at federal expense, the protective tariff, the Bank of the United States, and assumption of state debts; it favored a strict interpretation of the constitution.63

Meanwhile the Whigs continued their frenzied political activity. Eight hundred persons attended a Whig barbecue in Rapides Parish.64 Alexander Porter spoke to a Whig meeting in St. Martinville, and read a letter from Clay predicting the election of Harrison.65 Tippecanoe Clubs were organized in every town and parish of the state. The New Orleans club elected Balie Peyton, Alexander C. Bullit, J. Hise, John B. Duncan, Christian Roselius, H. B. Eggleston, and H. E. Lawrence as delegates to attend the Whig convention held in Nashville in August.66 Numerous delegates were chosen to attend the young Whigs convention at Baltimore,67 and the proceedings were minutely reported in New Orleans newspapers.68

63 Ibid., May 23, 1840.
64 Ibid., May 9, 1840.
65 New Orleans Advertiser, May 11, 1840.
66 Ibid.
67 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 14, 1840.
68 New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 22, 1840.
While "thousands" applauded, a large log cabin was constructed in New Orleans, and one witness reported the following account:

Such a rattling, hoisting, clanging, nailing, drinking, banging, whacking, pounding, notching, working, eating, raising, foisting, log-rolling, shouting, lifting, huzzaing, chopping, perspiring, and exciting time we have seldom seen.69

When the cabin was erected, a new song, composed by Signor Cioffi and dedicated to the Louisiana Whigs, was played by the band.70 Tippecanoe breastpins, made in the shape of log cabins and barrels of cider, were placed on sale.71 Several days after they appeared in the store of Whittemore and Young, at the corner of Chartres and Canal Streets, it was reported they were selling "very rapidly."72 Sargent S. Prentiss spoke to a Whig gathering "under the dome" at the St. Charles Theatre, and Stephen Etienne Mazareau addressed the throng in French. "Upon the stage were arranged the venerable and respected whig leaders of New Orleans, presenting a picture not unlike that of the Declaration of Independence."73 Large numbers of persons were unable to find even standing room.74

69 Ibid., June 14, 1840.
70 Ibid., June 13, 1840.
71 Ibid., June 23, 1840.
72 Ibid., June 26, 1840.
73 Ibid., June 23, 1840.
74 Baton Rouge Gazette, June 25, 1840.
In an address to the independent voters of Louisiana, the Bee, now a Whig organ, denounced the Democrats for corruption and extravagance which had brought the nation to economic ruin; it also denied that Harrison was an abolitionist. It had become almost normal for both parties to charge that the opposition candidates were opposed to slavery, and earlier the charge against Harrison had been denied.

Prior to the presidential election William Freret, a Whig, was elected mayor of New Orleans; and the Whigs were largely victorious in the congressional elections which took place in July. General Eleazar Ripley, the incumbent from the second district died from a "derangement of the nervous system." His place in Congress was taken by Thomas W. Chinn, but he did not run for re-election in 1840, partly because he did not like service in Washington, and possibly because he had voted to receive abolition petitions in Congress. The Whigs replaced him with Thomas Gibbs Morgan, who was opposed by the ex-gubernatorial candidate John B. Dawson. Dawson won by a close margin of

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75 New Orleans Bee, June 17, 1840.
76 Ibid., June 11, 1840.
77 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 4, 5, 1840.
78 Ibid., March 13, 1839. Washington Madisonian, August 30, 1839.
79 Baton Rouge Gazette, June 27, 1840.
13 votes. Possibly the influenced vote at False River made the difference.

In the first district Edward D. White was re-elected by a strong majority, in a contest against Gilbert Leonard. Rice Garland, the incumbent in the third district, resigned his seat to accept a position as associate justice on the state Supreme Court. Judge John Moore, the Whig replacement, defeated Richard Winn in a close contest. The Whigs also won a majority in the legislature on a joint ballot. Another Whig victory was announced when a lady in Baltimore gave birth to triplets, and named them William, Henry, and Harrison. The July elections resulted in two out of three congressional victories and the election of a Whig-dominated legislature; the Whigs believed this was sufficient reason to predict a Whig victory in November. The Whigs "... acted as one great machine, simultaneously

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81 William Taylor Diary, unpublished, LSU Archives, entry for July 6, 1840.
85 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 14, 1840.
86 Ibid., July 17, 1840.
put into motion by the vibration of the Harrison patent pendulum."\textsuperscript{87} The true "Democratic Republican" ticket had won,\textsuperscript{88} despite the fact that the Democrats had fraudulently acquired over two hundred and fifty votes on public land certificates.\textsuperscript{89}

John Moore, the new Louisiana congressman, was born in Berkeley County, Virginia, in 1788. He moved to Franklin, Louisiana, and was a member of the state house of representatives from 1825 to 1834. He moved to New Iberia and became the master of the plantation named the "Shadows"\textsuperscript{90}

The presidential campaign continued in its unique ballyhoo style. Numerous bits of doggerel were written extolling the virtues of Harrison,\textsuperscript{91} who was denounced by General Jackson as lacking "... the qualities which constitute the commander of an army...."\textsuperscript{92} Log cabins were raised in Plaquemine and other urban centers of the state.\textsuperscript{93}

A Whig meeting was held in Baton Rouge on September 28; the previous night the New Orleans delegation had arrived

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., July 9, 1840.
\textsuperscript{88}Washington Madisonian, July 18, 1840.
\textsuperscript{89}New Orleans Bee, July 9, 1840.
\textsuperscript{90}Biographical Directory of Congress, p. 1328.
\textsuperscript{91}Washington National Intelligencer, September 1, 1840.
\textsuperscript{92}Washington Madisonian, August 21, 1840.
\textsuperscript{93}New Orleans Bee, October 12, 1840.
on the steamboat "Daniel Webster." Shortly thereafter the delegation from Iberville arrived with a log cabin on wheels. The meeting was called to order by Thomas Gibbs Morgan, and Philemon Thomas was chosen the president of the convention. Edward Douglas White and Thomas W. Chinn spoke. After the throng enjoyed a barbecue, N. Ogden, Chairman of the resolutions committee, reported.

The administration was denounced for its tendency to destroy the liberties of the people, for its abuse of executive patronage, and for its destruction of the national currency—which led to a nationwide depression. A veteran of the Revolutionary War, William Tabor, of Lafourche Interior, who fought at King's Mountain and at the Battle of Cowpens, sat on the platform next to the president.

Whig meetings continued, and the Tippecanoe Clubs continued their activities until election time. Henry Clay, all but forgotten in the campaigning for Harrison, was assured by James Buchanan that he still commanded respect. In the Crescent City voting on November 3, 4,

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94 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 3, 1840.
95 Niles Weekly Register, LIX, 101.
96 New Orleans Bee, September 12, 16, 24, 1840.
97 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 10, 1840. New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 25, November 4, 1840.
98 Clay Papers, letter from James Buchanan to Henry Clay, September 17, 1840.
and 5 was quiet and orderly. The Whig majority in the city was 933 votes, but in the state, where 18,912 votes were cast, Harrison won a majority of 3,680 votes.

Louisiana's five electoral votes thus were cast for Harrison. Van Buren's corrupt administration was defeated by a "Revolution in public feeling." A number of Jackson Democrats were accused of becoming Whigs, and since this was the first time the Whigs had won the presidency, there was a "general scramble" for office.

The log cabin campaign stimulated a wider participation in politics by appealing to the lowest "... common intellectual denominator." In the last analysis, it seems as though the Whigs had beaten the Democrats by their own political campaign techniques.

Alexander Porter, elated at the Whig victory, wrote a lengthy letter to John J. Crittenden congratulating the

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99 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 4, 5, 6, 1840.
100 Stanwood, The Presidency, op. cit., I, 203.
101 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 28, 1840.
102 Washington Madisonian, November 17, 1840.
103 Alexandria Red River Whig, November 28, 1840.
104 Crittenden Papers, letter from R. H. Chinn to J. J. Crittenden, December 26, 1840.
105 Webster Papers, letter from William Taggard to Daniel Webster, November 24, 1840.
party and comparing the victory to a marriage between the party and power. He expressed the hope that the expunging resolution would be declared "infamous," and spent a large part of the letter discussing the possibilities of amendments to lengthen the naturalization laws, because the "evil must increase." He believed that no man should be allowed to vote until he had resided in the country for fourteen years. Porter was an Irish immigrant, but he believed that the "poorer or more ignorant classes" were falling into the hands of "Demagogues." He wrote, "Such a mass of ignorance and passion thrown all on one side have a most dangerous influence where the parties in the country are nearly balanced." 107 Zachary Taylor expressed his impatience to have Van Buren's administration out of office, and considered the election of Harrison "... a most fortunate change for the nation..." 108

When Congress met, Henry Clay offered a series of resolutions that resembled a Whig party platform. They included the repeal of the sub-treasury system, the creation of a national bank, a tariff revision, and the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of public lands

107 Crittenden Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, January 2, 1841.
108 Ibid., letter from Zachary Taylor to J. J. Crittenden, January 29, 1841.
Clay was accused of acting as the leader of the party. Harrison, shortly after his inauguration, told Clay he was too "impetuous." He said he wanted to rely upon Clay's judgment, but there were many others whom he must consult, and in many instances he had "... to determine adversely to your suggestions ...." Apparently Harrison told Clay in person that he had been represented as "dictating" to the president. Clay denied that this was so, and said he was "mortified" at the suggestion, "... because there is danger of the fears, that I intimated to you at Frankfort, of my enemies poisoning your mind toward me."

Harrison's inaugural had stressed the separation of powers, and almost promised that the executive would not interfere with the legislative branch of government. What might have happened, didn't, because of the death of the President. The new president was said to be "... an upright, downright, straight forward, wholehog,

109 Congressional Globe, 27 cong., 1 sess., pp. 7-22.
111 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to William H. Harrison, March 15, 1841.
113 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 13, 14, 15, 1841.
Jeffersonian, Madisonian, Washingtonian, Harrisonian, eternalonian, states-right-republican, democrat-federalist-whig, and Marshallonian expounder of the Constitution. In a rather hopeful tone it was said that although he belonged to the "straightest section of the strict constructionists," he would not allow constitutional scruples to prevent him from sanctioning a national bank. In his address to the people, really an inaugural speech, he seemed rather non-committal. The Whig leaders, who must have known that he was not really a Whig, probably believed he would follow their legislative lead. Clay was one of those who believed the mild-mannered Virginian would give the party no trouble. But Clay "... mistook courtesy for weakness."

The creation of a national bank was obviously one of the principal aims of the Whigs in Congress. Louisiana's Governor Roman hoped that such would be the case, for he believed it would stabilize the nation's economy. But congressional business progressed slowly, partly because

114 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 8, 1841.
115 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 16, 1841.
118 Louisiana Senate Journal, 15 leg., 1 sess., p. 4.
of John Q. Adams' struggle against the Gag Rule, which Congressman John Moore believed was an attempt to divide the Whig party.\footnote{David Weeks Papers, Archives Department, Louisiana State University, letter from John Moore to Theo Lastrapes, July 8, 1841. Rough copy not sent.} A "gentleman" in Washington wrote that Congress would adjourn without accomplishing anything of great value and that Clay would be blamed for its failure. This was believed to be a part of a scheme to create a "Tyler party."\footnote{New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, July 11, 1841.}

The Sub-Treasury system was repealed, with Alexander Barrow voting for, and Alexander Mouton voting against the measure.\footnote{\textit{Congressional Globe}, 27 cong., 1 sess., pp. 34-35.} The same party alignment prevailed in the house, where Whigs White and Moore voted for the bill, and Dawson voted against it.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 313.} After a great deal of debate Clay's fiscal bank bill was passed in Congress and sent to the President. Again Louisiana's delegation was split along party lines, with Dawson abstaining.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 27 cong., 1 sess., p. 260, 303.} There was speculation as to what Tyler would do with the bill.\footnote{\textit{St. Francisville Chronicle}, August 21, 1834.} Congressman John Moore said that feeling was intense and uncertain, and added, "I fear the consequences of a veto."\footnote{Weeks Papers, letter from John Moore to Gus Doyle, August 12, 1841. Rough draft not sent.}
Then the President vetoed the bill, and it was returned to the Senate. A second bill was passed by a strictly party vote, but it too was vetoed.

Reaction to the vetoes was immediate. The Baton Rouge Gazette printed the first veto message, and commented that all conjecture about what Tyler might do was in vain. Meetings were held by the Whigs in different parts of the country to condemn the president's action. The party was the object of some derision; it was admitted that party matters were likely to be "... mixed up in all sorts of shapes." Despite the President's sensational action, the twenty-seventh Congress had repealed the Sub-Treasury plan, passed the Bankrupt Bill, supplied revenues for the government, the Navy and fortifications, and enacted pre-emption law.

These solid achievements by the Whigs were lost sight of in the veto controversy. The "pernicious consequences"

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126 Congressional Globe, 27 cong., 1 sess., pp. 337-338.
127 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, op. cit., IV, 68-72.
128 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 28, 1841.
129 Washington National Intelligencer, August 28, 1841.
130 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, August 30, 1841.
131 New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 31, 1841.
of the second veto harmed the party a great deal. It was followed by the resignation of every cabinet member except Daniel Webster.

The use of the veto was defended in New Orleans, but the Whigs were censured by John Hueston, editor of the Baton Rouge Gazette, for nominating Tyler in the first place, because they knew then he was not a Whig. Since his political views had been known all along, the veto of the bank should have surprised no one, even though the party might be destroyed as a result of Tyler's opposition.

After Tyler appointed a new cabinet, he wrote to Webster expressing the hope that each member would look upon the other as a friend and brother. "By encouraging such a spirit I shall best consult my own fame and advance the public good."

The "villifiers" of the president were attacked in some quarters, and Webster's retention in the cabinet was seen

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133 Clay Papers, letter from Benjamin Ogle Taylor to Henry Clay, September 6, 1841.
134 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, September 27, 1841.
135 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, September 22, 1841.
136 Baton Rouge Gazette, September 4, 1841.
137 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, October 30, 1841.
138 Ibid., October 2, 9, 31, 1841.
139 Webster Papers, letter from John Tyler to Daniel Webster, October 11, 1841.
140 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, November 3, December 10, 1841.
as proof of the executive's insincerity, since, "... one or the other must be converted." 141

Louisianians must have been bitterly disappointed at the president for his veto of the fiscal bank bills. The state's Whigs undoubtedly wanted a national bank. In his message to the legislature in January, 1841, Governor Roman reported that the condition of the state's banks was sound. 142 The bankruptcy laws introduced in Congress by Webster were supported in Louisiana, where the economy was still weak despite the Governor's assurances to the contrary. Many newspapers throughout the nation had been forced out of business. 143 After tracing the history of the depression the Red River Whig called for the creation of the national bank, "as well as the adjustment of the tariff." 144 In the legislature, Randall Hunt, a Whig, introduced a resolution denouncing repudiation of the state debt because of that action's tendency "... to deprave integrity and to corrupt the morals of the people." The resolution passed the house with only one dissenting vote. 145 Since business in New

141 Ibid., December 17, 1841.
142 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 9, 1841.
143 Niles Weekly Register, LIX, editorial preface to index.
144 Alexandria Red River Whig, February 6, 1841.
Orleans continued to be very dull through the first half of 1841, there was a great deal of public pressure on the banks to resume specie payment. Finally, it was agreed that specie payment would be resumed on November 1, 1842. This meant that another year would pass before specie payments were made, and in the meantime it was said that people were in worse economic straits than in time of war. When the depression continued in December, 1841, it was accompanied by an attack on banks said to have obtained their state charters under corrupt circumstances. There were rumors about the early resumption of specie payments; the bankers were said not to care at all about the working people, since "... their pockets are lined with money."

Governor Roman's annual message to the legislature stated that since most of the banks were in a solvent position, resumption should begin as soon as possible.

146 New Orleans Price Current, July 7, 1841.
147 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, October 13, 21, 26, November 5, 9, 20, 1841.
148 New Orleans Courier, November 29, 1841.
149 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, December 1, 1841.
150 Ibid., December 2, 3, 1841.
151 Ibid., December 9, 1841.
152 Ibid., December 11, 1842.
153 Louisiana Senate Journal, 15 leg., 2 sess., pp. 1-5.
On the day following the Governor’s message W. C. C. Claiborne, president of the Citizen’s Bank, announced with "unaffected pleasure," the resumption of specie payment by that institution. A committee in the senate which investigated the banking situation reported that the date for resumption of all banks should be August 1, 1842.

The uncertainty and confusion continued in January, 1842, and several more business houses failed. A Louisiana planter said, "Three fourths of the banks must break before two months unless relief is offered and where that is to come from no one can pretend to divine." Finally, the legislature acted to relieve conditions as best it could, amid reports that business still suffered greatly from the unstable conditions of the banks.

The legislative act ordered all of the New Orleans banks to resume specie payment. While it affirmed their

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154 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, December 14, 1841.
155 Ibid., December 17, 1841.
156 Ibid., December 29, 1841.
157 Opelousas Gazette, January 22, 1842.
158 Butler Papers, letter from Thomas Butler to his wife Ann, January 16, 1842.
charters, it required them to keep on deposit the full value of their liabilities. One third of this amount would be kept in specie, and two thirds would be kept in paper money. The liquidation of unsound banks was provided for; and to broaden control of the banks, it was stipulated that after November 1, 1842, all banks must have at least fifty stockholders. In addition, the governor was authorized to appoint a three-man commission, called the Board of Currency, authorized to examine the banks and enforce the general provisions of the act. Banks which did not comply with the various rules, would be forced to liquidate.161

Lack of confidence in banking continued, despite the bank bill of the legislature.162 Thomas Butler wrote to his wife Ann that almost half of the New Orleans merchants would stop payment. He concluded his letter by saying, "I never in my life had so gloomy a prospect before me in relation to my own affairs."163 When the banks did open for business several of them refused to honor each other's notes.164 Butler again wrote to his wife:

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162 *New Orleans Price Current*, February 12, 1842.
163 *Butler Papers*, letter from Thomas Butler to his wife Ann, February 20, 1842.
Since I last wrote you the situation of things in this city has become much worse. The paper of the Improvement Exchange and Atchafalaya banks is entirely discreted by the solvent banks as they are called. There is an immense excitement among the people here and should the solvent banks not do something for relief of the community, it may terminate in riotous conduct highly injurious in this city.\textsuperscript{165}

The excitement of which Butler spoke was especially directed against "the Improvement, the Exchange, the Atchafalaya, and the Bank of Orleans."\textsuperscript{166} State Senator Solomon W. Downs said it was all the result of a scheme by interested speculators who wished to profit by creating distrust and doubt.\textsuperscript{167} Thomas Butler's troubles were mounting, as indicated by the following excerpt from another letter to his wife: "I can neither sell sugar nor borrow money and how I am to get along this summer God only knows."\textsuperscript{168}

The Atchafalaya Bank's difficulties were increased when its paying teller disappeared with a large sum of the bank's funds. Then the attorney general applied for a writ of sequestration against the Orleans, Exchange, and Atchafalaya banks, for non-compliance with the recently passed state bank act.\textsuperscript{169} The economic conditions of Louisiana were

\textsuperscript{165}Butler Papers, letter from Thomas Butler to his wife Ann, February 23, 1842.

\textsuperscript{166}New Orleans \underline{Weekly Picayune}, February 24, 1842.

\textsuperscript{167}New Orleans \underline{Daily Picayune}, February 28, 1842.

\textsuperscript{168}Butler Papers, letter from Thomas Butler to his wife Ann, March 2, 1842.—

\textsuperscript{169}New Orleans \underline{Daily Picayune}, March 10, 1842.
passing through a "crisis" which would change the whole commercial organization of the state. 170

The banks had first opened for the exchange of paper notes; on May 20, 1842, they resumed specie payments. As soon as they opened their doors, the exchange notes issued by the municipalities, or district governments in New Orleans, declined in value some twenty-five or thirty per cent. Outraged citizens attacked and plundered four offices of exchange brokers at Canal and Camp Streets, despite the assurances of the mayor. 171 Troops were called out, and the excitement continued. 172 An overdue note on the Gas Bank of New Orleans, signed by the bank's president, Thomas Barrett, was auctioned in the St. Louis Exchange by the sheriff. Its amount was $650,000, and it sold for $7,070. 173 Obviously, the state bank act had not brought stability or prosperity to New Orleans. 174 The city, and thus the state, remained "... without any amelioration in the condition of the currency..." 175 Currency remained in a deranged condition, and the depression in

170Ibid., March 19, 1842.
171Ibid., May 21, 1842.
172Ibid., May 22, 1842.
173New Orleans Weekly Picayune, June 29, 1842.
175New Orleans Price Current, June 16, 1842.
all branches of business had "... no parallel in the commercial history of our city." The absence of adequate currency continued to be blamed for the depression.

The tariff question again became a prominent issue in 1841, when it was urged that Congress revise the existing tariff. Three articles signed "opelousas" appeared in the Morning Advertiser of New Orleans, in which the usual arguments defending the tariff were employed.

In Congress the matter was under discussion in January, 1842, since the Compromise Tariff of 1833 would drop rates to a new low on June 31 of the same year. Louisiana's sugar planters met in convention at Donaldsonville on May 16, 1842. The delegates wrote a lengthy memorial which they sent to Congress, urging the adoption of a protective tariff. Alexander Porter said that the duty on sugar was a matter "of life and death with us in Louisiana." When he wrote, he was wondering if Congress

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176 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 2, 1842.
177 Ibid., October 16, 1842.
178 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, November 4, 5, 10, 23, 1841.
179 St. Francisville Chronicle, November 2, 1841.
180 New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 19, 1842.
181 Crittenden Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, July 6, 1842.
would pass the bill then under consideration. With the support of Louisiana's Whig members the bill did pass, only to be vetoed by President Tyler. Porter denounced the "juggling mountebank" for his veto; the president was charged with being against every principle of the people.

Although Henry Clay got a second tariff bill passed through Congress, it was again vetoed. The President's reasons for the second veto were similar to those he gave for vetoing the first bill, the principal objection being the distribution scheme of Clay. Eventually, the Tariff Act of 1842 was passed by Congress and signed by the president, without the distribution clause attached. It had an immediate effect on business in Louisiana, especially that connected with sugar. Prices rose for sugar, and payment was made in specie and not with paper money.

The bank and the tariff were the important economic issues when the legislature chose a successor to John C.

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184 New Orleans Bee, July 9, 1842.
185 Congressional Globe, 27 cong., 1 sess., pp. 867-868.
186 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, op. cit., IV, 183-189.
187 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 1, 1842.
Nicholas, whose term in the senate was to expire on March 3, 1841. The election took place before Harrison was inaugurated, on January 11, 1841. Philemon Thomas nominated Alexander Barrow, who defeated the incumbent on the first ballot. The new Whig senator was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 21, 1801. He attended the United States Military Academy from 1816 to 1818, studied law and practiced in Nashville. He then moved to Louisiana and engaged in extensive sugar-planting in West Feliciana Parish, where he constructed the elaborate home named Afton Villa. He was described as a large fine-looking man, six feet tall, stout of limb with broad shoulders, and a full chest. He had a florid complexion, light hair, a bold, square forehead and irregular features. Reportedly, he was a very plain and simple man with mild manners, who was firm, but approachable. He had a "liberal" view of public affairs and was not controlled by local or sectional prejudice, although he was one of the largest slaveholders and most extensive planters in the Union. He was a Whig, but he was "... far from being a bigoted partisan." A brother, William R. Barrow,
served in the state house of representatives.  

The following year, on the eve of the gubernatorial election, Senator Alexander Mouton resigned to seek the state's highest post. The Whigs, still in a majority in the legislature, chose Charles M. Conrad to replace him. Charles Magill Conrad was born in Winchester, Virginia, on Christmas Eve in 1804. He moved first to Mississippi, then to Louisiana, where he acquired land in the Teche country. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in New Orleans in 1828. Originally he was a Jackson Democrat, but he became a Whig over the bank issue. He served in the state house of representatives before his election to the Senate, and was a "heavy property holder in the Second Municipality." 

Louisiana's gubernatorial campaign for 1842 started more than two years before the election was held. A Whig state convention met at New Orleans on March 2, 1841, to nominate a candidate. It chose Henry Johnson, who had sought the nomination in 1838. The delegation from

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192 Louisiana Senate Journal, 16 leg., 1 sess., p. 60.
194 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 20, 1841.
Baton Rouge Gazette, March 6, 1841.
195 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 14, 1841.
East Baton Rouge Parish supported the nomination of General Joseph Bernard. When Johnson was nominated, the self-styled Independent Whigs of that parish refused to support him. They charged that the convention did not represent all of Louisiana, since many of the parishes were not represented. Furthermore, Johnson's former administration had included nothing that would recommend his election a second time, especially when there were a number of native Louisianians available for the position. 196

The Democrats, who also met in New Orleans, nominated Alexander Mouton, then in the national Senate. 197 He did not return to the state to campaign until April, 1842. 198 This convention was also criticized for not being representative of the entire state. 199 Another convention was held in New Orleans at the St. Louis Exchange, at which a series of resolutions were passed that constituted the Democrat platform. They stated that Congress had no power to create a national bank, and cited Whig mis-rule and banking "extravagances" as the reasons for the state's large public debt. In addition, the resolutions favored amendment of the constitution to provide for direct e-

196 Ibid., July 10, 11, 1841.
197 Ibid., February 29, 1840.
198 Ibid., April 18, 1842.
199 Ibid., July 3, 1841.
lection of the governor, a shorter term for that officer, and the withdrawal of some of his authority. They spoke in favor of more equal representation in the legislature and the abolishment of the property qualification for voters.

The Democrats charged that Johnson had already served one term as governor, that he was a constant public officeholder, and that he should be retired. In a speech at Clinton, Louisiana, Alexander Mouton denounced the Constitution of 1812 for its inclusion of a property qualification for voting, and advocated the direct election of all state officials.

Henry Johnson said that he favored a constitutional convention, and the extension of the suffrage to every free white male citizen without a property qualification. He had been in the convention which wrote the constitution, and he now claimed he had supported universal manhood suffrage then. The Whigs blamed the Democrats for Louisiana's bank problems; they also passed many resolutions at a large meeting in New Orleans saying in effect that the Whig candidate must be elected to save

\[\text{Ibid., January 22, 1842.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., June 25, 1842.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., June 2, 4, 1842.}\]
the state from financial ruin.  

Both candidates were on extensive speaking tours in the state, but in order to save democracy Alexander Mouton was making the greatest exertion. Because four months prior to the state election, Denis Prieur was elected Democratic mayor of New Orleans, the Whigs had to deny that this was an indication of a Democratic victory for July. On the eve of the election, candidates for all offices were asked a series of questions in a letter signed "The Public." The questioner wanted to know if they favored the protective tariff, the banks, the banking law passed by the legislature, an elective judiciary, and the naturalization laws. When the final tabulation of the votes had been made, it was found that Mouton had received 9,669 votes and Johnson 8,104. The legislature went through the formality of electing Mouton by a vote of sixty to eleven. The reasons for Johnson's defeat were said to have been apathy on the part of the

205 Ibid., July 4, 1842.
206 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 2, 1842.
207 New Orleans Courier, March 15, 1842.
208 New Orleans Bee, April 21, 1842.
209 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 2, 1842.
210 New Orleans Courier, July 29, 1842.
211 Louisiana Senate Journal, 16 leg., 1 sess., p. 8.
Whigs, the fact that Johnson had already served one term, and the grave economic position of the state.

The Democrats were naturally elated at their victory, even though the Whigs maintained a slim majority of the legislature. In the house there were thirty-four Whigs and twenty-six Democrats; while the senate contained nine Whigs and eight Democrats, a majority of nine for the Whigs on a joint ballot. In the congressional elections the three incumbents were re-elected. Edward Douglas White defeated Miles Taylor, the Democrat leader, in the first district; and John Dawson defeated John Buhler, the Whig candidate, in the second district. John Moore of the third district defeated James C. Bryce. Moore had made a favorable impression in Congress by his studious attempt to understand every measure before that body. In summing up the results of the July elections, a New Orleanian reported that even though the Whigs had lost the governor's race, "... Louisiana is as decidedly Whig as she ever was, and when the time comes you will see the Clay

212 New Orleans Bee, July 12, 1842.
214 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 16, 30, 1842.
flag wave in triumph over the entire state."\textsuperscript{217}

In an address to the legislature before he retired from office, Governor Roman noted that the state's financial structure was in a bad "fix," and that Louisianians had "abandoned" themselves to undertakings and speculations far beyond their real strength.\textsuperscript{218} When the new legislature met it elected Felix Garcia President of the Senate, and Charles Derbigny Speaker of the House.\textsuperscript{219} Alexander C. Bullitt, then of the \textit{Bee}, was elected state printer.

Governor Alexander Mouton, the first Democratic Governor of the state, made a lengthy inaugural address in which he showed himself to be a strict constructionist; he also said that though he had voted for the federal bankrupt law while Senator, he realized that the law opened the "floodgates" to fraud and perjury, demoralized the debtor, and wasted the means of the creditor. Like Governor Roman, he also painted a poor picture of the state's economic status; he noted the failure of a number of banks and denounced them in definite terms.\textsuperscript{220} The new governor was born in the Attakapas district town of Lafayette, on November 19, 1804. He pursued classical studies and graduated from

\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Washington National Intelligencer}, July 29, 1842.
\textsuperscript{218} \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, January 4, 1843.
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Ibid.}, January 3, 1843.
\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Ibid.}, January 31, 1843.
Georgetown, before practicing law in Lafayette. He was a member of state house of representatives, where he served as speaker, before replacing Alexander Porter in the senate. After serving in that body for four years, he resigned to campaign for governor in 1842. 221

The new legislature was confronted with the election of a senator to replace Charles M. Conrad, whose term was due to expire in March. Several Democratic leaders sought to delay the election, until a disputed election of New Orleans representatives was settled, but they were defeated. 222 State Senator Isaac E. Morse of Attakapas, who said the Democrats had decided not to nominate a candidate, supported Alexander Porter. The incumbent was opposed because he had objected to reimbursement of Jackson's fine by the legislature. 223 Porter was elected on the first ballot by a vote of forty-five to twenty-two, with, John Slidell receiving five votes. 224

The legislature also faced the difficult task of redistricting the state, since it had been authorized to increase its number of delegates to the house from three

221 Biographical Directory of Congress, p. 1342.
222 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 7, 1843.
223 New Orleans Bee, December 19, 1842.
to four.\textsuperscript{225} When the matter of changing these congressional districts came up in the state legislature, a number of amendments were offered by the Democrats, to change the bill as it was reported out of a Whig dominated committee; but they were "repudiated" in the order in which they were offered.\textsuperscript{226} When the new districts had been agreed upon, there was dissension in the legislature on the question of the time of the election. The original bill provided for the elections to Congress on the first Monday in May. The election date became an issue between the rural and the city delegates. The former, like Wadsworth of Plaquemines, wanted the elections held in July, when the "floating population of speculators," who spent only a part of the year in the state would be absent, in an attempt to avoid the heat and disease of the summer months. The city delegation, which wanted the elections held in July, when the vote there would be large, finally won. At the time of the congressional elections, the voters of the state would also decide whether there would be a constitutional convention. Since New Orleans was supposedly the center of most of the opposition to the convention, it was believed that if July were the election time, the convention question would have a better chance of passing. The July

\textsuperscript{225}\textit{Congressional Globe}, 27 cong., 2 sess., pp. 649-650.

\textsuperscript{226}\textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, January 28, 1843.
elections would be held in the following newly created four congressional districts: the first composed of the first and third municipalities of New Orleans; the second composed of the parishes of Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche Interior, and Terrebonne; the third formed by the parishes of Avoyelles, Catahoula, Carroll, Madison, St. Tammany, Concordia, St. Helena, Livingston, Washington, E. Feliciana, W. Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, and Iberville; the fourth formed by the parishes of St. Mary, St. Martin, Calcasieu, Lafayette, St. Landry, Rapides, Natchitoches, Caddo, Claiborne, Union, Ouachita, and Caldwell. 227

In an effort to further restore confidence in banking and the currency in Louisiana, 228 the legislature promised to reduce the costs of government 229 and to attempt to clear up the bank problems still remaining. 230 During the session George A. Waggaman, the ex-senator, who had served as secretary of state under three governors, died of wounds received in a duel. He was eulogized in the legislature and given a military funeral. 231

227 Ibid., February 2, 1843.
228 Ibid., February 22, 1843.
229 Ibid., February 25, March 14, 30, 1843.
230 Ibid., April 4, 14, 1843.
231 Ibid., March 24, 25, 1843.
When the congressional elections were held in July, 1843, the parties had agreed upon a set of rules which they would follow in order to insure fair play. An old Democrat, William S. Butler, was certain that his party would be victorious. Even he must have been overwhelmed at the results, for the Democrats elected all four congressmen. In the first district, John Slidell defeated the Whig candidate, George K. Rogers; in the second district, Alcee Louis Labranche defeated Edward D. White. John B. Dawson defeated James M. Elam in the third district, and John Moore lost to the Democrat Evariste John Baptiste Bossier in the fourth district. The result was attributed to the apathy of the Whigs, and the fraudulent naturalization of foreigners who were voted en masse by the Democrats.

Before being elected to the state legislature, John Slidell had been defeated three times in his effort to gain political office. Born in New York of a wealthy family, he studied at Columbia University. He practiced

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233Alonzo Snyder Papers, Louisiana State University Department of Archives, letter from William S. Butler to A. Snyder.
235Washington National Intelligencer, July 17, 1843.
236Ibid., July 19, 1843.
law in New Orleans, where he was appointed United States District Attorney by President Jackson; but he resigned in 1830 after serving one year. His sister Jane married Commodore Matthew Perry, of Japanese fame. Slidell later became a leader of the party in Louisiana, and a friend and frequent correspondent with James Buchanan. 237

Alcee Labranche, who was born near New Orleans in 1806, attended the University of Sorrelze in France. Upon his return home he became a sugar planter and was elected to the state house of representatives, where he served as speaker in 1833. He was Charge des Affairs to Texas from 1837 to 1840, when he resigned. 238 Shortly after the election he and John Hueston, editor of the Baton Rouge Gazette, exchanged sharp remarks in the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, and then fought a duel at the "Oaks" with double-barrelled shotguns. Despite all that could be done by three doctors, Hueston died of his wounds. 239 The congressman from the fourth district, Pierre Bossiere, was also a duelist: he had killed a Whig leader in Natchitoches several years before his election. He was born in Natchitoches on March 22, 1797. Little is known about his formal

education, but he was both a sugar and a cotton planter. He had served for ten years in the state senate before his congressional election in 1843. He died on April 24, 1844, shortly after taking office.  

Alexander Porter was forced to resign the Senate because he was too ill to discharge the duties of the office. He died on January 13, 1844, shortly after his resignation. Henry Johnson, the experienced Whig leader and ex-governor, was elected to take his place. This meant that Louisiana's delegation was composed of two Whig Senators and four Democrat members of the House of Representatives.

The Louisiana Whig party was slowly declining: it was never able to elect a governor after it lost to the Democrat's Alexander Mouton in 1842. The party continued to elect congressmen and to place majorities in the state legislature, but its dominance in state politics was slowly weakening after 1842. President John Tyler's refusal to follow the Whig party doctrines, coming so soon after the election of the first Whig President, undoubtedly weakened the party on both the national and the local level.

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241 Crittenden Papers, Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, December 2, 1843.
243 Louisiana Senate Journal, 16 leg., 2 sess., p. 21.
CHAPTER IV

THE END OF WHIG SUPREMACY IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana political strugges in 1843, 1844, and 1845 resulted in decisive defeat for the Whig party. In the July, 1843 elections, the voters had shown they were overwhelmingly in favor of a constitutional convention, which the Democrats sought in order to broaden the electoral franchise. The convention was scheduled for August, 1844, but after a short meeting it was adjourned until January of the following year. In the meantime a general state election for members of Congress, and the state legislature, was held in July, 1844, and this was followed by the presidential election in which Henry Clay was defeated by James K. Polk.

Governor Roman's annual message to the legislature in 1844, congratulated the state's people at having passed the economic crisis created by the banks. He then dwelt on the heavy state indebtedness, and blamed this condition on governmental aid to corporations, such as banks and railroads. In his view all attempts at internal improvements failed, at great cost to the state, and he recommended that such policies should be abandoned in the future. Specifically, he recommended that the state Board of Public Works be abolished.¹

¹New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 3, 1844.

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The Democrats, having won their struggle to call a constitutional convention, apparently wanted to extend the franchise even before the convention was scheduled to meet. There was a movement in the legislature to create a poll tax, not to limit the vote, but to broaden it so as to include every free white male aged twenty-one or over. After the payment of one dollar, annually, every male citizen could vote in all elections. Whigs opposed the bill because it would accomplish one of the purposes of the convention, and thus it was not proper for the legislature to act. A Whig said that the bill would enfranchise a lot of people who could not read and write, and who had no interest in questions of governmental policy. Such "stonebreakers and scavengers" would always be susceptible to a bribe. He argued that the cry of conferring political power on the laboring classes, and the assertion in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are born free and equal," were palpable fallacies. Randall Hunt, another Whig, supported the bill because he said he did believe that all men were created equal, and that the majority should govern. Despite the fact that the bill would have increased the state's revenues by

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2 Ibid., January 23, 24, 1844.
3 Ibid., January 25, 1844.
4 Ibid., January 26, 1844.
$20,000 annually, it was defeated. However, the constitutional convention, when it finally met in January, 1845, did reduce the voting requirements.

The legislature in the spring of 1844 was also concerned with the trial of Judge Elliott of the City Court in Lafayette, a suburb of New Orleans. Randall Hunt presented a memorial to the legislature praying for Elliott's impeachment, on charges that he had issued certificates of naturalization to hundreds of foreigners who had not met the requirements of law. A legislative committee, with Randall Hunt as chairman, heard some forty witnesses against the judge, who was represented by Alexander Walker. Resolutions charging him with gross malfeasance in office and calling for his impeachment were passed in the legislature by a large majority. The senate remained in session after the house adjourned to try Judge Elliott. He was found guilty on four charges that were preferred against him, and removed from his office. Aside from the impeachment proceedings, the labors of the legislature, in the election year, were "rather unprofitable than otherwise,"

5 Ibid., January 13, 1844.
6 Ibid., January 20, 21, 1844.
7 Ibid., March 10, 1844.
8 Ibid., April 7, 1844. Niles National Register, LXVI, 101. New name for Weekly Register changed during this period.
and it supposedly passed bills that more properly pertained to the police juries.  

During the legislative session Albert Hoa, a member of the senate, died after six years in office, and a special election was held to replace him. In the Orleans Parish election, John Slidell's brother Thomas, defeated Christian Roselius, a Whig leader. Shortly before the session ended, a duel was fought between William De Buys, State Treasurer, and a Mr. Richardson. Sharpened foils were used and both men were wounded. New Orleans' municipal elections, held in April, resulted in a landslide for the Democrats. A Democrat mayor, Edgar Montegut, and Democrat candidate in the three municipalities which composed the city, were able to carry the election by large majorities. In the July, 1844, congressional and state legislative elections, the Whigs captured one congressional seat, but did not offer a candidate in either the first or third congressional districts. John Slidell, the incumbent, was elected without opposition in the first district, and John B. Dawson was unopposed in the third district. Bannon G. Thibodaux, Whig, defeated Alcee

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9 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 26, 1844.
10 Ibid., February 16, 1844.
11 Ibid., February 27, 1844.
12 Ibid., March 26, 1844.
Labranche in the second district by over six hundred votes. After a long delay, it was announced that Isaac E. Morse defeated the Whig candidate, Louis Bordelon, in the fourth district.

In the legislative contests, the Whigs retained their majority in joint session. The new state senate, composed of seventeen members, contained eight Whigs, and nine "Locos." The sixty-member house contained a majority of eight Whigs. At the same election, the voters chose delegates to attend the constitutional convention, then scheduled to meet in August. Neither party had a clear majority of delegates, although the account was given as thirty-nine Whigs and thirty-eight "locofocos."

There were a number of protests at the outcome of the elections, made chiefly by the Whigs, who charged the Democrats with fraud. At a mass protest meeting held in the St. Louis Ball Room, the Democrats were the object of bitter Whig resolutions. However, the Democrats countered with the same charge against the Whigs. Specifically,
the Whig poll watchers refused to allow many naturalized citizens to vote, largely because many of them had been naturalized by Judge Elliott. Democrat poll watchers then refused to allow "old citizens" to vote.\textsuperscript{20} Despite all of the charges of fraud, the Whigs were defeated in this pre-presidential election, because of their lack of unity over the questions that would be answered in the constitutional convention. Some Whigs favored extension of the suffrage, and others opposed such measures. In addition, there seems to have been some indifference within the Whig party ranks, possibly the result of John Tyler's term in office.\textsuperscript{21} On the local level, in Madison Parish, where the Whigs elected delegates and legislative members, one Democrat was very angry. His comment was, "... of all the ___ damned rascals the democrats of our parish can take the cakes...to let the whigs bamboozle them till they did not know their _____ from so many holes in the ground."\textsuperscript{22}

Congressman-elect Isaac E. Morse was in the state senate at the time of his election. When he resigned to take his place in Washington, it was necessary to hold

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., July 2, 3, 1844.
\textsuperscript{21}Niles National Register, LXVI, 292.
\textsuperscript{22}Snyder Papers, letter from Sam Bieller to A. Snyder, July 13, 1844.
a special election in Orleans Parish. A. T. Conrad of New Orleans wrote to John Moore asking the latter's help in electing Alexander Decluet, the whig choice in the special election. A Whig convention was held to nominate Decluet, and the delegates present were full of enthusiasm. The election was important because the success of Decluet would give the party a majority of one in the state senate. It was hoped that the Democrat victory of that year would convince the Whigs of the necessity of casting "... off the apathy which has, of late years, paralyzed the natural energies of the Whig Party in this state." In the election, Decluet defeated Antonio E. Mouton, brother of the state's governor, by seventy-six votes. The Whig was victorious, despite the fact that the Governor was "electioneering" for his brother. The victory gave the Whigs a majority in both houses of the legislature.

The newly elected Whig congressman, Bannon Goforth Thibodaux, was born on St. Bridget Plantation near Thibodaux, on December 22, 1812. He attended "country schools," and studied law at Hagerstown, Maryland. He

23 Niles National Register, LXVI, 352.
24 Weeks Papers, letter from A. T. Conrad to John Moore, August 2, 1844.
25 Ibd., letter from William F. Weeks to John Moore, August 18, 1844.
26 Baton Rouge Gazette, September 21, 1844.
practiced law in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, became a sugar planter, and at the same time he was elected to Congress, he was also chosen a delegate to attend the constitutional convention. Isaac Edward Morse, the Democrat elected at the same time, was born in the Attakapas district, on May 22, 1809. He attended schools at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and Norwich, Vermont. He graduated from Harvard in 1829, and then studied law. He practiced in both New Orleans and St. Martinville. He had been a member of the state senate from 1842 until his election to Congress; he was re-elected two successive times, so that he served until March, 1850.

The presidential campaign served as a background for every political event in the state during 1844. Charles M. Conrad was involved in the controversy centering around an attempt to return Jackson's fine, levied in Louisiana after the Battle of New Orleans. In 1842 the issue naturally became entangled in presidential politics. As early as June, 1842, Henry Clay was nominated for the presidency by a New York state convention. There was never any possibility that Tyler would be renominated by

28 Ibid., p. 1339.
29 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 15, 1842.
30 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, July 1, 1842.
the party, for as Alexander Porter wrote, the only question was whether the president was "... a bigger fool, than knave."\(^{31}\)

Clay wrote letters denouncing the abolitionists,\(^ {32}\) and exhorting the Whigs to more "strenuous exertions."\(^ {33}\) From Judge Joseph W. Storey he received a pledge of support and a statement of beliefs that resembled a political platform. The judge wrote:

> I am a Whig, and although I do not pretend to mingle in the common politics of the day, there are great measures upon which I have a decided opinion and which I would not disguise if I could. I am for a National Bank—a protective tariff—a distribution law of the public lands and a permanent Bankrupt law. All of these measures are in my judgment indispensible to the public prosperity and peace of our country. I know no man, who has labored more perseveringly, or with more zeal, ability, and ... devotion than yourself at all times—I, as one, feel grateful to you for these labors; ...\(^ {34}\)

The tone of a Clay letter in the Baton Rouge Gazette was definitely that of a man seeking the presidential nomination. The letter concerned changes the Whig party would make in the national government. It would establish a sound national currency, regulated by the will and authority

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\(^{31}\) Crittenden Papers, letter from Alexander Porter to J. J. Crittenden, July 6, 1842.

\(^{32}\) Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Jacob Gibson, July 25, 1842.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to Charles Crook, July 25, 1842.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., letter from Joseph W. Storey to Henry Clay, September 13, 1842.
of the nation. The Whigs would provide an adequate revenue, with fair protection to American industry. Executive power would be reduced, and proceeds from the sale of public lands would be distributed among the states. In addition, the Whigs would sponsor an amendment to the constitution, limiting the incumbent of the presidential office to one term.  

While Clay was planning a trip to New Orleans, Daniel Webster was elected an honorary member of the Democratic Tyler Club of that city. A New Orleans newspaper named the New Orleans Republican attempted to start a movement among the Democrats to nominate Tyler for election, subject to the decision of a Democratic National Convention. Despite such diversions, Clay's visit to the city was closely followed by the press. He was met in Plaquemine by a committee from the city, and together they proceeded to Alexander Porter's plantation, Oaklawn. After spending several days with Porter, he proceeded to the city, where "... men of all parties talk with enthusiasm of his arrival."

The national Whig leader was entertained at a dinner

35 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 15, 1842.
36 Webster Papers, letter from James W. Graham to Daniel Webster, December 12, 1842.
37 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 16, 1842.
38 Ibid., December 17, 1842.
39 Ibid., December 22, 1842.
given by the New England Society of New Orleans, where such dishes as clam chowder were served. A sugar model of Bunker Hill was placed on the table before Clay, and one observer remarked that this was in questionable taste, since the replica was associated with Clay's rival, Daniel Webster. Possibly Clay had gone to New Orleans to investigate the business difficulties of his son Thomas. While there he wrote, "I have found the state of affairs here not very different from what I expected." At the time it was reported that business was at the "high water mark" of the year. "The levee groans, as it were, with the vastly increasing quantities of western produce and provisions deposited on our shore...."

Sargent S. Prentiss of Mississippi wrote to Clay in New Orleans inviting the latter to stop in Natchez and to visit Jackson, Mississippi, on his return to Kentucky. Clay replied that he would accept the invitation if it were clearly understood that his visit was not political in nature. "I have been so far successful in my endeavor to prevent my voyage assuming the aspect of a political tour...." John Slidell, meanwhile, took note of Tyler's

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40 Ibid., December 24, 1842.
41 Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Thomas Clay, December 23, 1842.
42 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 31, 1842.
43 Clay Papers, letter from Henry Clay to Sargent S. Prentiss, December 29, 1842.
split with the Whigs, and said that it must lead to free communication between the president and "our political friends." He continued, "You may count for Louisiana as a democratic state in the presidential election. She will go for whomever may be nominated by a Democratic convention, on this point there will be no splitting."  

While Clay was in New Orleans, a movement was started toward a national nominating convention, even though it was obvious that most Whigs had settled upon Clay as the candidate. After a visit to the state house, where the legislature warmly greeted him, Clay went to Baton Rouge for a three day visit and was given a saddle by the citizens. After a visit to Mobile, he returned to New Orleans, where a ball was given in his honor by the "leading gentlemen" of the city. Shortly after Clay left New Orleans, President Tyler privately blamed Clay for the dissensions within the party. When it was suggested to the president that he attempt to lead the party, he replied that he had nothing to expect from the Whigs, and that he

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44 Robert J. Walker Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, letter from John Slidell to Robert J. Walker, December 2, 1842.
45 New Orleans Bee, December 27, 1842.
46 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 17, 1843.
47 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 21, 1843.
48 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 1, 1843.
49 Ibid., February 16, 1843.
was "utterly faithless" in any such plan. Daniel Webster, the last Whig in the cabinet, resigned his position, and the resignation was accepted on the same day. Thereafter there was little chance that Tyler might be reconciled with the Whigs, and even less that they would nominate him for the presidency.

While an editorial in the National Intelligencer wondered how the nation might get rid of Tyler, Henry Clay challenged James K. Polk to a public discussion of Clay's conduct in the campaign of 1824. Polk apparently refused to debate with Clay the "corrupt bargain" charges. When Tyler visited New York, George W. Kendall, a correspondent for the Daily Picayune, reported that his reception was "... cold, and lacking that enthusiasm with which our previous Presidents have been greeted here." When Tyler proceeded to Boston the same correspondent wrote, "Yesterday, the weather was damp and dreary and dismal, and the crowd that turned out to escort Mr. Tyler more resembled a

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50 Webster Papers, letter from H. Shaw to Daniel Webster, February 28, 1843.
51 Ibid., letter from Daniel Webster to John Tyler, May 8, 1843.
54 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 25, 1843.
funeral procession than anything else...."55 The Whig press was denouncing Locofoco leaders as "Ignorant demagogues, known only for restless agitation in political pot-houses, political adventurers, without moral character or intellectual elevation...."56 A Clay supporter, John Hueston of the Baton Rouge Gazette carried Clay's name at the head of his paper's columns.57 The editor died shortly thereafter, and a subscription was taken up for the support of his family.58 Clay Clubs were organized in New Orleans during the summer of 1843; their spokesmen said they would guide foreigners, who were Whig sympathizers, toward citizenship.59 Clay was supposedly the overwhelming choice of his party for the nomination, but it was agreed that Webster had many friends in positions of influence who would try to nominate him.60 The Baton Rouge Gazette was purchased by John R. Dufrocs and A. P. Converse; the new owners immediately announced their intention to continue the paper's support of Henry Clay, in order to save the country from the "thraldom" and

55Ibid., June 27, 1843.
56Washington National Intelligencer, June 7, 1843.
57New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 19, 1843.
58Ibid., August 30, 1843.
60New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 6, 1843.
"disgrace" caused by the "... misrule and experiments of the last ten years."

Henry Clay was in Louisiana in January and February of the election year. The house of representatives, including the speaker, Charles Derbigny, visited Governor Mouton and requested that he accompany them in a visit to Clay's residence. The group sought out Mr. Clay "... and interchanged the compliments of the season with that gentleman...." While Clay was in the Crescent City a state Democratic convention was held, with Judge Scott presiding. A vice president and secretary from each of the state senatorial districts were chosen, and plans were made for the approaching presidential contest.

The Whigs of East Baton Rouge Parish also held a convention and nominated Clay for the presidency. Editorials supporting the nomination appeared in New Orleans newspapers, and eight thousand people paraded in his honor. After Clay visited Assumption Parish, the follow-

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61 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 13, 1844.
63 Niles National Register, LXV, 331.
64 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 9, 1844.
65 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 13, 1844.
66 New Orleans Bee, January 16, 1844.
ing comment on his visit was made by Miss Phoebe A. Pike in a letter to her cousin:

Last week honourable Henry Clay was in our Parish; and everybody most was up to their ears in business, and to their knees in mud, especially the whigs. Some gave dinners, and some balls. It must have been delightful, during that beautiful weather. The whigs invited the Democrats to see Mr. Clay and thought they might be so well pleased with him, they would vote for him, but the Democrats said they did not go for any thing but to eat and to drink. 68

After Clay had departed New Orleans and gone to Mobile, the Whigs held a second convention in New Orleans and elected delegates to attend the national convention to be held May 1, in Baltimore. During the two day convention thirty-one delegates were chosen and instructed to vote for Clay. Prominent among the delegates were such Louisiana Whig leaders as Charles M. Conrad, Thomas W. Chinn, Edward D. White, William Taylor, George Mason Graham, Henry Johnson, and Alexander B. Roman. After the convention, the East Baton Rouge delegation was returning home aboard the steamboat "Harry of the West" when it ran aground. 70

It was stated that the election of Henry Clay would set at rest the questions of bank or no bank, tariff or no tariff, and national credit or national repudiation. 71

68 Trowbridge Family Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, letter from Phoebe A. Pike to her cousin, January 14, 1844.
69 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 23, 1844.
70 Baton Rouge Gazette, March 2, 1844.
71 Ibid., March 16, 1844.
But these were not to be the main issues in the campaign. The American Senate was considering annexation of Texas in March, 1844, and the Texans facetiously announced that if ratification was refused, Texas would annex the United States. A preliminary meeting was held to demonstrate the favorable sentiment the people of New Orleans had on the question of annexation. Then the main meeting was held at Banks Arcade—"the most influential" meeting the Daily Picayune editor had ever seen. Speakers who "eloquently" addressed the crowd included Judge Clark Woodruff; Charles Derbigny; Governor Alexander Mouton; Alexander Bullitt, editor of the Bee; and Bernard Marigny. "They speak—we state it without exaggeration—the feelings of nine-tenths of our population." Such expressions of unanimity on the annexation question proved to be very embarrassing to the Whigs.

Two days after the large meeting in New Orleans, Henry Clay's Raleigh Letter appeared in the National Intelligencer. The letter, written in Raleigh, North Carolina, opposed the annexation of Texas. This letter may have been

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72 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 31, 1844.
73 Ibid., April 23, 1844.
74 Ibid., April 24, 1844.
75 Ibid., April 25, 1844.
76 Ibid., April 26, 1844.
77 Washington National Intelligencer, April 27, 1844.
Clay's greatest political blunder. While the people of New Orleans waited "with great anxiety" for a copy of the letter, a large and "enthusiastic" meeting in favor of annexation was held at the St. Louis Exchange. The famous letter was printed in the Daily Picayune on May 5, 1844. On the following day Van Buren's letter, also opposing annexation, was printed:

We have rarely known the city to be thrown into such a state of excitement, as on Saturday last by the letter of Mr. Clay in relation to the Treaty of Annexation. It was the sole, the engrossing theme of conversation in all circles.

The announcement of Henry Clay's nomination by "general acclamation" was made in Washington by means of the "galvanic telegraph of Professor Morse." Louisiana Whigs, who undoubtedly supported the annexation of Texas, now had to adjust their opinions to Clay's opposition to the measure. At a meeting in Baton Rouge, the Whigs passed resolutions stating that nothing in the Raleigh letter might weaken Clay's position as the leading candidate for the presidency. The letter only showed Clay's love of his country and his lofty regard for the honor of the American Union.

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79 Ibid., May 5, 1844.
80 Ibid., May 7, 1844.
82 Baton Rouge Gazette, May 25, 1844.
Clubs were formed in rural sections of the state,\textsuperscript{83} and Texas and anti-Texas ratification meetings were held.\textsuperscript{84} In New Orleans a "Calhoun and Re-Annexation" meeting was held which drew a large crowd, but the Calhoun movement soon died out.\textsuperscript{85} Amidst all the excitement, one Louisiana Whig congressman, Alexander Barrow, then in the Senate where the question was being debated, announced his determined opposition to annexation.\textsuperscript{86} He believed that annexation would be detrimental to the interests of Louisiana.\textsuperscript{87} There was so much consternation among the Whigs over the Raleigh letter that Clay modified his position. In a letter addressed to two men of New Orleans, Clay now said that he had no personal objection if annexation could be accomplished without war with Mexico and dishonor.\textsuperscript{88} As one political opponent noted, "Clay is killing himself by writing on all subjects and even to the editors of the newspapers without being called upon."\textsuperscript{89} After Alfred C. Weeks visited John

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\item \textsuperscript{83} Opelousas St. Landry Whig, September 5, 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{84} New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 18, 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Ibid., May 11, 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Baton Rouge Gazette, June 15, 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{87} New Orleans Bee, February 12, 1845.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Opelousas St. Landry Whig, September 14, 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{89} James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Microfilm copy in Louisiana State University Library; letter from George L. Harris to James K. Polk, September 24, 1844.
\end{itemize}
Y. Mason in Washington, he wrote expressing his misgivings at Clay's chances of success. 90

President Tyler was nominated in a convention that hoped to sweep the country on the basis of Tyler's pro-Texas position. 91 However, he withdrew his candidacy in a letter that defended his record as president. 92 Another candidate, one who remained in the race, was James G. Birney of the Liberty party. Henry Clay's real opponent, however, was James K. Polk, nominated at the Democratic Baltimore convention when it was realized that Van Buren could not get the necessary votes. Polk, the first "dark-horse" candidate in American History, was an ardent Jacksonian and an expansionist. Clay and Van Buren apparently hoped to nullify the Texas question when they published letters expressing their opposition to annexation. But when Van Buren did not receive the nomination, the campaign issue obviously was to be Texas.

Judge Solomon Downs, a leading Democratic leader in Louisiana, said he would hang all who voted against the annexation of Texas. "Texas or disunion--Texas if it should cost millions of money and oceans of blood!" 93 In Baton

90 Weeks Papers, letter from Alfred C. Weeks to William F. Weeks, September 22, 1844.
91 Opelousas Gazette, June 15, 1844.
92 New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 28, 1844.
93 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 31, 1844.
Rouge the Democrats erected a hickory pole one hundred and fifty feet high, topped off by a "... beautifully carved American Gold Eagle." The zeal of that community "... increases with the approach of the coming contest, the great day of conflict." From Washington, Polk was informed that government employees were helping Clay; nevertheless the whig cause was going "down hill." A fellow Tennessean, William Moore, assured Polk that "... the South is safe...." This correspondent had written to Sam Houston:

I say to him, that the U.S. are now reeling like the drunken man, and the Battle now to be fought is of as much importance to us, as was Jacinto, to Texas, and that the Salvation of Texas is identified with the Democracy of the U.S. Give us Houston and Polk, we have nothing to fear, but let the scripture pass into the hands of Clay and darkness will pervade our happy land. But God forbid.

A Democratic party banner was commemorated in the following manner:

This elegant flag in November shall wave
O'er the public remains and political grave
Of one, who has lost, as is usual, the day
Your unfortunate candidate—thrice beaten Clay

Full welcome is Clay to his party's applause,
The shows and the shouts of the Whigs and the hogs,
But democrats deem hearts of "hickory and oak"
More fitting supporters of Dallas and Polk.

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94 Polk Papers, letter from W. P. McGuinsay to James K. Polk, September 27, 1844.
95 Ibid., letter from W. H. Ward to James K. Polk, August 12, 1844.
96 Ibid., letter from William Moore to James K. Polk, September 24, 1844.
97 Ibid., letter from Al Murray to Mrs. A. Muse and Miss A. Chaplain, September, 1844. No specific date.
James Buchanan assured Polk that he would carry the Keystone state, but that the vote might fall off in the city of Philadelphia because of the native American feeling.

Polk was attacked by Louisiana Whigs because he opposed the protective tariff and wanted to allow foreign sugar to enter the union free of duty. New Orleans was the scene of "immense" Whig meetings. A Whig rally was held in Baton Rouge, where people attended from all sections of the state; the size of the crown was estimated to be twelve thousand. The following Clay electors were selected at the convention, in the order of their electoral districts: Jacques Toutant, Zenon Cavalier, George Guion, Lafayette Saunders, Jacques Dupre, and Edward Sparrow. A tragic incident marred the otherwise perfect day. It is described as follows by Phoebe A. Pike:

There was a Whig convention at Baton Rouge last week and there were a great many persons there. Mr. Pugh says that never was such a time known in Louisiana. Everything went on smoothly until they were about to start, when they fired a cannon from the boat, on the shore side, at the same time there was a young man bidding farewell to some of his friends, and the whole load from the cannon went into his side. He was immediately taken to a physician, but died soon after. I was not intimately acquainted with him, but was with his sisters.

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98 Ibid., letter from James Buchanan to James K. Polk, September 23, 1844.
99 Opelousas St. Landry Whig, October 3, 1844.
100 New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 4, 1844.
101 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 12, 1844.
102 Trowbridge Papers, letter from Phoebe A. Pike to her cousin, October 13, 1844.
The slavery question arose during the campaign, and the Whigs charged that the abolitionists had formed a coalition with the Democrats to elect Polk. In Rapides Parish a Democrat, J. Fenwick Brent, assured a friend that if "... the Parishes but do their duty, Louisiana is safe for Democracy by a large majority." He said that "heavy bets" were made in Natchitoches: "... the Democrats have backed the Whigs out to the tune of $10,000 and here the Whigs are beginning to fight shy...."  

When the election was over in Pennsylvania, James Buchanan wrote to Polk that the Keystone state was his. "I shall go to bed and take a glorious rest." Two days later Buchanan said the party in Pennsylvania had never before worked so hard, and that the Whigs had "... poured out their money like water." He said that victory was due to the efforts of the young Democrats, who "... ought not to be forgotten in the distribution of office." In New Orleans during the three days of voting, a Tennessee Democrat "... conversed with Genl. Plauche, Mr. Slidell, Judge Woodruff and others,—they all concur in opinions that Polk

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103 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 19, 1844.
104 Letter in possession of Miss Pearl LeBlanc, Lafayette, Louisiana: from J. Fenwick Brent to R. L. Cade, September 30, 1844.
105 Polk Papers, letter from James Buchanan to James K. Polk, November 2, 1844.
106 Ibid., letter from James Buchanan to James K. Polk, November 4, 1844.
will carry the state by 1000 to 1500 votes, provided Clay leaves the City with less than 1000 majority...."  

John M. Bell of New Orleans reported that it had given Clay a majority of 402 votes, "... less by about 800 than the Whigs claimed and less by 500 than they were betting on." Polk was congratulated for his triumph over the forces of Federalism, Nativism, Abolitionism, and Clayism. A defeat that was final for Whiggery and Clay, "That ambitious man, with his scheming policy and subservient partisans, has ceased to be what he has hitherto been, dangerous to the institutions of his country." Judge Felix Bosworth also sent his congratulations to Polk.

Andrew J. Donelson, yet another Tennessean in New Orleans during the election excitement, was still not sure that Polk had won the election when he wrote to the victor, "But if Clay should be elected what then?" He believed that "... a dark cloud will at once hang over the prospects of all our southern states. Great Britain will forthwith resume her projects for the abolition of slavery...."

107 Ibid., letter from Thomas B. Eastland to R. Armstrong, November 2, 1844.
108 Ibid., letter from John M. Bell to James K. Polk, November 4, 1844.
109 Ibid., letter from H. A. Lyons to James K. Polk, November 5, 1844.
110 Ibid., letter from Felix Bosworth to James K. Polk, November 6, 1844.
111 Ibid., letter from Andrew J. Donelson to James K. Polk, November 6, 1844.
John Claiborne, who had met Polk at Nashville three months before, reported to the latter that he had carried Louisiana. He continued, "The Whigs here are not only disappointed, but furiously enraged; they are loud in their charges of fraud, pipe laying etc., and have brought my humble name prominently forward as one of those engaged in it."\textsuperscript{112} Horace Warren of the Crescent City reported that Clay had carried the city by 414 votes, and gave the returns from several parishes. He noted that after the "sugar country" votes were reported, all of the votes in the cotton parishes "will be for Polk."\textsuperscript{113} Another favorable report was sent to Polk by J. F. H. Claiborne of Natchez, who edited the Free Trader and Vicksburg Sentinel during the campaign, and also wrote articles for the New Orleans Herald and Jeffersonian.\textsuperscript{114}

As the returns from rural parishes continued to come into New Orleans, a democrat reported, "The Whigs themselves give up the state in despair, in the foreshadowings of their defeat in the Union; all the virulence of their denunciations has made way for the preachings of philosophy."\textsuperscript{115} That the outcome of the election was un-

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., letter from John Claiborne to James K. Polk, November 7, 1844.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., letter from Horace Warren to James K. Polk, November 7, 1844.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., letter from J. F. H. Claiborne to James K. Polk, November 11, 1844.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., letter from J. Bayons to James K. Polk, November 10, 1844.
certain as late as November 11 is obvious from the comments in a letter written by James L. McFarlane.

The unexpected and alarming whig majorities in what is termed "the Attakapas country," created apprehension in the minds of the democracy of New Orleans. Until the returns just received, placed the result beyond a doubt. The Attakapas country is an extensive prairie district, and almost every inhabitant is engaged in the raising of stock, and dependent upon the grazing capacities of the soil.

Our unscrupulous and untiring opponents sprung a mine upon us for which we were entirely unprepared,—they stated to the unsuspecting and primitive inhabitants, generally denominated "Acadiens," that Texas being a great Prairie Country; its annexation would completely destroy the stock and grazing business of the "Attakapas," and ruin all its inhabitants.

You may judge Sir of the untoward effects of their artful misrepresentations, when you learn that in the three counties of St. Landry, St. Martin and St. Mary, in which three counties Gov. Mouton received forty eight majority in 1842 (JULY,)—at the late election the whig ticket received eight hundred and eighty four. You may judge Sir that our apprehensions up to this period were not without unreasonable foundations.116

W. S. Puckett of New Orleans, who apparently acted as agent for Polk in the disposition of his cotton crop, congratulated his customer. Unfortunately, "Next in importance to you, is the state of the cotton market and I regret that I cannot make a favorable report." 117 William A. Elmore, Secretary

116 Ibid., letter from James L. McFarlane to James K. Polk, November 11, 1844.
117 Ibid., letter from W. S. Puckett to James K. Polk, November 11, 1844.
to the Democratic Association of Louisiana, finally felt it safe to congratulate the president-elect on his victory, by November 13, 1844.\textsuperscript{118} J. G. Bryce of Alexandria, Louisiana, who had visited for several days the Polk residence in Tennessee, wrote a letter of congratulations, and commented as follows on the Whigs: "In this state the whigs practiced their accustomed frauds and reduced our majority in very many of the parishes but we were enabled to carry the state by a small majority."\textsuperscript{119} Amos Kendall wrote to Polk concerning his plans for appointments, and suggested that no appointments should be made "... without allowing our democracy to confer together...."\textsuperscript{120}

Even Mrs. Polk received a letter of congratulations, from Mrs. E. M. Richardson, an acquaintance of the Polk family, who was "enchanted" at the results of the election.\textsuperscript{121} Doctor William Steed, a New Orleans physician, also sent rather flowery congratulations to the president-elect.\textsuperscript{122}

Louisiana's Whig electors received 12,821 votes, and the Democrats received 13,477: a majority of 656 votes for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., letter from William A. Elmore to James K. Polk, November 13, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., letter from J. G. Boyce to James K. Polk, November 15, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., letter from Amos Kendall to James K. Polk, November 16, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., letter from Mrs. E. M. Richardson to Mrs. James K. Polk, November 16, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., letter from Dr. William Steed to James K. Polk, November 16, 1844.
\end{itemize}
Polk. Since Clay had received a majority of 414 votes in New Orleans, Polk's lead outside the city was only 242 votes. Though Polk's percentage of the national vote was only 50.7, it was sufficient to place him in the chief executive's office.

When the election returns made it clear that Clay had been defeated, his New Orleans friend Dr. William N. Mercer wrote and described the grief of Clay followers in the city. He added, "I have it on the best authority that in the event of your election, there would have been no difficulty in the arrangement of the Texas question...."

Another physician, F. S. Bronson of Georgia, wrote a lengthy letter to Clay, lamenting the latter's defeat by "... the triumvirate, Jackson, Calhoun, and Van Buren." He described Georgia as a "foreign" state, because of the influence of foreign-born Americans in the election; these men, "... beasts I should have said...." were the factor that had defeated Clay. The doctor denounced the foreign vote frauds in Plaquemines Parish, and urged that the Whigs save the country by uniting with the Native American party.

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123 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 29, December 4, 1844.
124 Ibid., November 4, 1844.
126 Clay Papers, letter from Dr. William N. Mercer to Henry Clay, December 7, 1844.
127 Ibid., letter from Dr. F. S. Bronson to Henry Clay, November 20, 1844.
From New York City Epes Sargent wrote, "We have been robbed of our lawful President by the seven thousand fraudulent votes cast for Mr. Polk in this city."\(^{128}\) The New York diarist Phillip Hone, wrote to Clay and also denounced foreign voters. He also said that a man of Clay's calibre could never become President: "The party leaders, the men who make presidents, will never consent to elevate one greatly their superior--they suffer too much by contrast."\(^{129}\) Louisiana's ex-governor A.B. Roman wrote to Clay and expressed his indignation at the outcome of the election. Because of the fraudulent vote in Plaquemines Parish, the governor suggested drastic changes in the naturalization laws. In his opinion, the naturalization laws were creating demagogues as irresponsible "... as that class of people was found to be during the French Revolution." He told Clay, "... you have undoubtedly received a majority of the legal votes of Louisiana...."\(^{130}\)

The total vote of Plaquemines Parish was 290 in 1842, 340 in 1843, and then it jumped to 1,014 in 1844. The total

\(^{128}\) Ibid., letter from Epes Sargent to Henry Clay, November 20, 1844.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., letter from Phillip Hone to Henry Clay, November 28, 1844. Although Hone agreed with Clay's Texas position, he said it was the question on which the presidency would be decided in 1844. Allan Nevins, (ed.), The Diary of Phillip Hone (New York: Dodd, Meade and Company, 1927), II, 701.

\(^{130}\) Clay Papers, letter from A. B. Roman to Henry Clay, December 2, 1844.
population of the parish in 1840 was only 1,351 whites. Polk's majority in the parish was 970 votes, while his majority in the entire state was 684; thus it is no wonder that Clayites were angry at such obviously fraudulent voting. An investigation was launched by the legislature, but nothing concrete could ever be done to remedy the situation. In December, the Democratic electors, T. W. Scott, Trasimond Landry, John B. Plauche, G. Leonard, Solomon W. Downs, and Alexander Mouton cast Louisiana's vote for James Knox Polk. Despite the efforts of the Whigs, the Locofoco candidate had again triumphed.

The Texas question was settled even before the new President was inaugurated, when by joint resolution the state was invited to join the Union, on March 3, 1844. The fear that Texas sugar and cattle industries would undermine those same industries in Louisiana was never realized. Louisianians complacently, and probably happily,

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132 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 4, 1844.
133 Ibid., January 21, 1838. Some wag said this was "... a latin word, derived from the English. Lo is an abbreviation of the English word low. Co is well known as an abbreviation of Company, and fo is frequently used instead of fellow by the corrupt. Join all together, and we have a low company of fellows. This means the rag-tag and bobtail of Shakespeare's time, and in the plain Anglo-Salt River tongue is nothing more nor less than a pack of d---- loafers."
witnessed the annexation of that state.

Dust had hardly settled after the presidential winds of 1844, when the Constitutional Convention met on the second Tuesday of January, in 1845. This meeting was the result of a long struggle by the Democrats of the state, who had repeatedly attacked the Constitution of 1812. As early as 1839, when the Whigs had firm control over the state's government, meetings were held in New Orleans for the purpose of extending the franchise. In the following year the movement received greater momentum, and a constitutional convention was debated in the legislature. Charles M. Conrad, a constant opponent of widening the electoral franchise, opposed not only a convention, but change itself, which he said was "dangerous." In his opinion such a convention would give the vote to "God knows whom." Old Philemon Thomas was another opponent, who admitted that the Constitution of 1812 might contain "evils," but felt that a new constitution might contain even great faults. John Claiborne, a Democrat, favored the convention, to remedy the many weaknesses of the Constitution of 1812 and to institute a poll tax which would bring needed revenues into the state treasury. A Mr. Wadsworth opposed


135 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 2, 1839.

the poll tax and the convention, because both might increase the power of the city in the legislature. He said if he were living in Kentucky or Tennessee, he would favor granting every free white male the vote, but in Louisiana, with its all-absorbing city of New Orleans, the measure would be ruinous. It would destroy the power and influence of the country parishes, and "... tie them neck and heels to New Orleans...."\textsuperscript{137} The measure died in 1840, but was revived in 1841.

When the legislature met in January, 1841, Solomon Weathersby Downs was prepared with a bill providing for a constitutional convention. In support of his bill he denounced the old constitution because its amending process was so cumbersome and because its voter requirements were so narrow. He sought the franchise for every free white male citizen twenty-one years of age and older, without any tax-paying or property-holding qualification. In his opinion more of the states' officers, such as sheriffs, coroners, clerks of court, and judges, should be elected and not appointed. Appointment of judges, he said, "... is creating a privilege of order."\textsuperscript{138} The bill introduced by Downs passed the house by a vote of twenty-eight to eighteen on January 29, 1841; it then went to the senate, where its fate was "doubtful."\textsuperscript{139} However, the bill did

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid., February 8, 1840.
\textsuperscript{139}Baton Rouge Gazette, January 30, 1841.
pass the senate, and Governor Roman signed it on the first day of February. It provided for a popular referendum on the question of holding or not holding a constitutional convention. Prior to the date of the referendum, appeals were made to the disfranchised people to support the movement, and to the voters to support the convention.

The populace was urged to form "Universal Suffrage Clubs" to destroy "... that tyrannical clause in the constitution which prescribes property as the basis of representation." Meetings of the disfranchised voters were held in New Orleans. Opponents to universal manhood suffrage, like Philemon Thomas, were castigated, and the "Holy Cause" to free Louisiana from the "... galling yoke of property bondage..." made rapid progress. When the plebiscite of 1842 was held in July the vote was 13,396 for a constitutional convention, and 4,030 against the proposition. But the Democrats would still have to wait another two years before the convention finally would meet, and another referendum was held in 1843 on the same question,

140 Alexandria Red River Whig, February 6, 1841.
141 New Orleans Morning Advertiser, November 27, 1841.
142 Ibid., December 1, 1841.
143 Ibid., December 22, 1841.
144 Ibid., December 30, 1841.
to meet constitutional requirements.

While Doerr's Rebellion was taking place in Rhode Island, and Charles Dickens was forming an opinion that American Aristocracy was "... an exemplification of the very silliest kind of mock exclusiveness," a second bill providing for a popular vote on a constitutional convention passed the legislature. In the second referendum, the electorate again voiced its strong approval of a convention. The vote in 1843 was 11,229 for, and 2,767 against the proposed convention. In North Louisiana, practically every parish approved the convention by over ninety percent. The people "breached the dikes of Whiggery," and voted for reform of the old constitution.

The legislature passed a bill providing for the convention to meet in Jackson. Delegates to the convention would be chosen in July, 1844, to represent each parish and senatorial district. At the beginning of the year Governor Mouton delivered his message to the legislature, most of

146 Washington National Intelligencer, May 21, 1842.
147 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 20, 1842.
148 Ibid., June 4, 1842.
149 Louisiana Senate Journal, 16 leg., 2 sess., p. 9.
150 Howard, op. cit., p. 46.
151 Shugg, op. cit., pp. 390-406.
152 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 1, 1844.
which was devoted to the bank question. He reported that the Bank Bill, with its Board of Currency provision, was already acting to restrain the expansion of some of the New Orleans institutions. The Louisiana State Bank, the Union Bank of Louisiana, the Mechanic's and Trader's Bank, and the Canal and Banking Company, were all operating within the strict provisions of the law. The governor also blamed the banks for bringing the state to the "... brink of moral degradation and pecuniary bankruptcy..." The stage was being set so that the constitutional convention could completely separate corporations, including banks, from aid by the state. As mentioned before, even before the convention met, the Democrats attempted to enact poll tax legislation, so that non-property-holders and non-tax-payers could vote in the July elections.

The voters chose an almost equal number of Whigs and Democrats as delegates to the convention. The conflicting numbers were given as thirty-nine Whigs and thirty-eight Democrats, and thirty-three Whigs and forty-two Democrats. A student of the convention set the figures at

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153 Louisiana House Journal, 16 leg., 2 sess., pp. 4-5.  
154 Niles National Register, LXV, 342.  
155 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 27, 1844.  
157 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 14, 1844.
thirty-nine Democrats, thirty-six Whigs, one "non-partisan," and one "probable" Democrat. The seventy-seven delegates, seventeen from senatorial districts, and sixty from the parishes, met at Jackson in August. Since accommodations there were unsatisfactory, a decision was soon made to postpone the convention until January, after the presidential election. Then it would re-convene in New Orleans. Before adjournment, a duel was fought between Thomas B. Scott, a delegate from Madison Parish, and William E. Walker. Walker struck Scott with a hickory cane, and in turn was stabbed with a sword cane by Scott. Scott "... died on the spot." Harsh words over the July elections apparently caused the "affray," and Scott was released by the authorities on $2,000 bail. The move to New Orleans was said to be a democratic device to gain time, but Miles Taylor, a Whig, had offered the resolution in the convention.

Shortly before the convention met in New Orleans, Governor Mouton addressed the legislature, and alluded to the annexation of Texas, which he said was favored by a large propor-

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160 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 10, 1844.
161 Ibid., August 31, 1844.
A resolution favoring the annexation of Texas was passed by both houses of the legislature, and the governor was requested to forward a copy to Louisiana's congressmen. The resolution said, "... a majority of the people of Louisiana are in favor of the immediate annexation of Texas."

In Congress Alexander Barrow continued his opposition to the question; yet it was accomplished. Editorialy, the *Daily Picayune* said, "We cannot but rejoice ...." The final vote was said not to have had anything to do with slavery, since the vote was "pretty evenly" divided both in the North and the South, "... as upon any other question of public interest." Twenty-seven Senators voted in favor of annexation: thirteen were from slave states, and fourteen from free states. Twenty-five Senators opposed annexation: fifteen were from the free, and ten, including Alexander Barrow, were from the slave states.

The members of the constitutional convention met at noon, on January 14, 1845, in the ball room of the St. Louis Exchange. Their progress, initially, was reported as a "... snail pace gait...." When the legislature adjourned,

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162 *Louisiana House Journal*, 17 leg., 1 sess., p. 3.
164 Ibid., March 8, 1845.
165 Ibid., March 9, 1845.
166 Ibid., January 14, 1845.
167 Ibid., January 16, 1845.
the convention moved into the State House.

Slowly the issues did emerge, the first being the time for holding the elections. September was suggested by the Democrats as the best time to hold state elections, but Charles M. Conrad bitterly opposed this move. He referred to the people who came to Louisiana, "... and in the summer season fly off to some more congenial clime..." as "birds of passage." They were so much "driftwood" who would control state elections if the time chosen for them was not during the summer. Solomon W. Downs then moved successfully to strike out the suggested change on election time. Eventually November was the month chosen for state elections.

Naturalized citizens were another heated topic of discussion. John Claiborne suggested that they not be allowed to vote until two years after becoming citizens. Pierre Soule said he was "astonished" at this suggestion, since originally all of Louisiana's citizens, in 1803, were naturalized citizens. This section of the constitution was also rejected, by a vote of forty-two to thirty-two.\(^{169}\)

An original section of the constitution of 1845, inserted in the convention, prevented a naturalized citizen from becoming governor. After heated debate, it was struck out by a vote of forty-one to twenty-seven.\(^{170}\)

\(^{168}\) Ibid., January 18, 1845.

\(^{169}\) Ibid., February 7, 1845.

\(^{170}\) Ibid., February 15, 16, 18, 19, 1845.
The members of the convention were involved in a protracted debate on apportionment, which brought to the fore the old country versus the city question, and thus cut across party divisions. The debate started on the suggestion that the federal ratio be used as a basis of determining the number of representatives and senators each electoral unit would be granted.\textsuperscript{171} Eventually the convention broke through the difficulties of apportionment. The ratio agreed upon was to be one member of the house for every 276 voters. This gave Orleans Parish twenty members in eight districts.\textsuperscript{172} Stormy debates were held on the division of the state into senatorial divisions, and for a while it seemed that the convention might be disrupted on this topic alone.\textsuperscript{173} However, the constitution was accepted by the convention vote of fifty-five to fifteen.\textsuperscript{174} The constitution was then submitted to a popular vote in November, and overwhelmingly accepted by the voters. Both the Whigs and Democrats claimed credit for the success of the constitutional vote.\textsuperscript{175} The popular vote was 12,277 for and 1,395 against acceptance of the constitution.\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{171}Ibid., March 2, 15, 16, 1845.
\textsuperscript{172}Ibid., March 18, 1845.
\textsuperscript{173}Ibid., March 9, 25, 27, 29, April 1, 1845.
\textsuperscript{174}New Orleans Bee, May 15, 1845.
\textsuperscript{175}Baton Rouge Gazette, November 8, 1845.
\textsuperscript{176}New Orleans-Daily Picayune, December 2, 1845.
Provisions were made immediately for a general state election to choose a new governor, thirty-two senators, and ninety-eight representatives, who would take office under authorization of the new constitution. Fifty-six percent of the convention members were born outside of Louisiana: of these thirty-two were born in the South, six in the North, and six outside of the United States. Ten Whigs and twelve Democrats in the convention were lawyers; twenty-two Whigs and twenty-one Democrats were planters. One member was a doctor, another a merchant, and several were classified as "employees."

The new constitution abolished all property qualifications for voting and holding public office. All free male white citizens, twenty-one years of age or over, who had resided in the state for two years, were given the privilege of voting. Legislative power was moderately restricted; sheriffs and other local officials were to be elective; a lieutenant governor was provided for, the governor would now be elected directly by the voters, and state support for monopolies, special charters, or incorporated banks was pointedly prohibited. The new constitution represented the Jacksonian trend toward greater participation

177 Niles National Register, LXIX, 256.
179 New Orleans Bee, May 15, 1845, contains Constitution of 1845 in full; Articles 6, 10, 12.
in government by the voters and expressed the Jacksonian antipathy toward banks.

The Whig party lost political ground in Louisiana between 1843 and 1845. After the enactment of the new constitution, its power would continually weaken until its demise. The new instrument of government enfranchised a number of the poorer classes, who undoubtedly became Democrats, and after its enactment there was little chance that the Whig party could regain its former place of superiority in state politics.
CHAPTER V

CONTINUED WHIG REVERSES

The constitutional convention provided that the general state election, for governor and members of both branches of the legislature—officials who would enter office under the new constitution—would be held in January, 1846. The campaign began shortly after the adoption of the constitution in the convention, and the constitution was approved by the voters in November. Thus, the campaign for passage of the constitution and the election campaigns were concurrent issues until November, 1845.

The Whig favorite for the gubernatorial position was William De Buys, subject to a formal nomination in convention. While De Buys's supporters were gathering strength, the Democrats held their convention in Baton Rouge, on July 14, 1845. The delegates chose Isaac Johnson in preference to his opponent General Joseph Walker, by a vote of seventy-one to sixty-one. Johnson's running mate, to fill the newly created office of lieutenant governor, was Trasimond Landry. Alonzo Snyder, a Democratic leader in South Louisiana, was assured that Johnson's election was as certain as

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1Baton Rouge Gazette, June 21, 1845.
2New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 16, 1845.

195
his nomination.³

At the Whig convention, held on July 21, also in Baton Rouge, the pre-convention favorite, William De Buys, was nominated. Despite opposition from Thomas R. Patten, of Carroll Parish, De Buys was the unanimous choice.⁴ All of Louisiana's parishes except nine were represented in the convention, which also selected Edward Sparrow as the candidate for Lieutenant Governor. De Buys, from New Orleans, and Sparrow, from Concordia Parish, endorsed the motto of the Whigs, "... principles and not men."⁵ The Whig nominee's letter of acceptance appeared in the Baton Rouge Gazette on August 2, 1845. In this letter the candidate assured his fellow Whigs that he would exert himself to the utmost to save the state from continued Democratic rule.⁶ The Democrats attacked the Whigs for their support of the tariff, which had caused "vast wealth" to accumulate in a few hands. The campaign was in reality a struggle "... between monopoly and privilege and money on the one hand, and justice, common sense, and the rights of the masses on the other."⁷ The Whig candidates toured the state,

³ Snyder Papers, letter from J. Dunlop to A. Snyder, July 17, 1845.
⁴ New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 23, 1845.
⁵ Baton Rouge Gazette, July 28, 1845.
⁶ Ibid., August 2, 1845.
⁷ Niles National Register, LXIX, p. 139.
speaking in defense of the tariff, and denouncing the Demo-
crats as anti-tariff politicians.

The campaign was marked by both an unresponsive electo-
rate and an absence of the usual personal attacks made on
candidates. "A stranger could scarcely know that he was
in the midst of a campaign...." The first day of the e-
lection was "rainy and tempest" and so many party tickets
were split that no one could tell "... who was who, or
what was what." Isaac Johnson carried New Orleans by a
vote of 3,431 to 3,085. In Baton Rouge, as in New Orleans,
there was a noticeable amount of ticket splitting by voters
who refused to vote a straight party ballot. The final	tabulation of votes showed that Isaac Johnson received
12,629, and William De Buys 10,138. The pattern of voting
followed the lines previously noted, with the Democratic
victor receiving most of his support in north, west, and
central Louisiana, with a majority of 346 votes in New
Orleans.

Governor Isaac Johnson was master of the plantation
named Troy, in West Feliciana Parish, where his influential
family had settled a generation earlier. He was a lawyer
as well as a planter, and he entered politics with his

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8Baton Rouge Gazette, November 15, 1845, and January
17, 1846.
9New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 18, 1846.
10Ibid., January 20, 1846.
11Louisiana House Journal, 1 leg., 1 sess., p. 7.
election to the state house of representatives in 1833. Considered something of a "boy wonder," he opposed South Carolina's nullification stand in that same year; he also showed a definite interest in promoting internal improvements. His law partner was Joseph Johnston until 1839, when young Isaac was appointed judge in the third judicial district. Alexander Mouton appointed Johnson secretary of state, but he resigned to avoid living in New Orleans during the sickly season.

Johnson's predecessor, Alexander Mouton, addressed the legislature for the last time on February 10, 1846. He earnestly hoped that the legislature would devise measures to establish better communications with the interior of the state. Since the state's financial resources were not sufficient for such a project, he hoped that federal aid could be obtained. The governor continued with an explanation of his opposition to state aid for corporations and banks, which he felt should be regulated by the national government. He then noted that the national government was selling its land at one dollar and a quarter per acre, while state land was being sold for three dollars an acre. Since state land was being undersold, he recommended that the legislature reduce the price to one dollar and a quarter per acre. Revenues obtained through such sales could then be used to

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extinguish the state debt.

Governor Johnson's inaugural message opened with a statement on his view of the relationship between the state and federal governments. It would classify the new governor as a member of the strict constructionist school of interpretation. Most of the message was concerned with the creation of a public school system, as authorized by the new constitution. Curiously, the new governor made the admission that, "I am inclined to think that there are few of either party who now contend for free trade in a literal sense."  

While Henry Clay was visiting in New Orleans, the new legislature convened and began the process of putting the new constitution into effect. Felix Garcia served as President Pro Tempore in the senate during the absence of the lieutenant governor. A Democrat was elected speaker of the house, and the New Orleans Delta was chosen as the official organ for state printing. The legislature then faced the responsibility of organizing new judicial districts, whose judges were now to be appointed for six years. It was faced with finding sufficient revenues to support a public school

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13 *Louisiana Senate Journal*, 1 leg., 1 sess., pp. 4-5.
15 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 22, 1846.
16 *Niles National Register*, LXX, 36.
system, and to establish a state university. Another topic for legislation was a law abolishing dueling, as suggested by the new governor in his message. With a possible war against Mexico in mind, the governor had also suggested an investigation into the defenses of the state. A resolution was passed by the legislature directing Louisiana's congressmen to seek an appropriation, which would make possible extensive repairs and expansion of New Orleans' defense works.

Two political opponents claimed the same legislative seat in the house of representatives. Alexander C. Bullit, editor of the Daily Picayune, claimed he had defeated Samuel Locke by a majority of thirty-seven in their Orleans district. Locke, however, protested the election results, and a legislative committee investigated the matter. The committee reported stated that mistakes were made in counting the votes, and doubt was cast upon the validity of both claims to the seat. The committee requested that the governor call a special election to determine which man was the winner, but some other solution was reached, because Bullitt was allowed to take his place.

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17 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 8, 1846.
18 Ibid., February 20, 28, 1846.
19 Ibid., February 10, 1846.
20 Louisiana House Journal, 1 leg., 1 sess., 2nd vol., p. 11.
21 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 12, 1846.
Charles Gayarre resigned his seat in the house of representatives, and a special election was held in the fifth district of New Orleans to replace him. Julius Benit, the Whig candidate, received 294 votes; and his opponent, the Democrat B. J. Fontenot, received 267. The new addition to Whig ranks in the house was a welcome one, but hardly enough to offset the majority enjoyed by the Democrats.

The legislature also considered several bills designed to suppress dueling, a consideration that received editorial support in most of the New Orleans newspapers. One of the most controversial subjects injected into legislative proceedings was that of moving the state's capitol out of New Orleans. Each city in the state had its supporter in the legislature, but the cities which had the most support were Baton Rouge and Donaldsonville. New Orleans legislators opposed moving the capitol, and Miles Taylor of Natchitoches commented that the only reason many members of the legislature had become candidates at all was because it offered the pleasures of city life for two or three months out of the year. No action was taken on re-locating the capitol during this session of the legislature.

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legislature also abolished the law providing imprisonment for debt except in cases of fraud. This culminated a struggle of several years within the legislature to repeal the undesirable law.

Alexander Barrlow's senatorial term expired on March 4, 1846, and the Democratic controlled legislature elected his successor on February 16. Although the Whigs offered no candidate, they generally voted for John R. Grymes. Solomon Downs received seventy-seven votes, Edward Sparrow received one vote, and Grymes received forty-five votes. Downs was born in Montgomery County, Tennessee, in 1801. He attended school at Davidson Academy in Nashville, and graduated from Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1823 with an A.B. degree. Two of his fellow students there were Richard Winn, later a lawyer and successful politician from Rapides Parish, and Judge Felix Bosworth, who was later impeached by the legislature. Downs, who was shot through the lungs in a duel, settled permanently in Ouachita Parish, after practicing law in Bayou Sara. When he was thirty-four years old, he inherited his father's estate in Ouachita: some one thousand acres and fifty-seven slaves, which he

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26 James K. Greer, "Louisiana Politics, 1845-1860," LHQ, XII (1929) first part, 419.


managed to expand. He entered politics as a state senator, then attended the constitutional convention of 1845 and the Democratic national convention in 1844. After his term in the United States Senate, President Franklin Pierce appointed him Customs Collector for the Port of New Orleans. He held this position at the time of his death on August 14, 1854, while in Crab Orchard Springs, Kentucky. Downs was an ardent Democrat who became the leader of the Red River Democracy.  

The continued success of the Democrats after 1845 seems to substantiate the Whig lament made after William De Buys lost the governor's election: "We have lost all hopes of seeing the Whigs in the ascendancy for years to come. They have committed political suicide, and exist no more as a party."  

However, state politics and legislative proceedings were overshadowed in the spring of 1846 by the Mexican War. President Polk delivered a special message to Congress on March 24, 1846, announcing the necessity of increasing the military and naval establishments as a precautionary measure in view of impending foreign troubles. The request was

30 Baton Rouge Gazette, September 5, 1846.
31 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, IV, 426-428.
criticized because it was tardy and the result of pressure on the president.\textsuperscript{32} While the city was showing excitement over the possibility of war with Mexico, A. D. Grossman was elected Whig Mayor of New Orleans.\textsuperscript{33} He threw his full support behind the war effort in the city. After Congress had acted, the president proclaimed a state of war between Mexico and the United States on May 13, 1846.\textsuperscript{34} Clay's fears had been justified. An editorial in the \textit{Daily Picayune} stated:

\begin{quote}
Now that hostilities have actually begun— that blood has been spilled— that the United States territory has been invaded— that the Americans have invested an American Army upon our own soil, and the first blow has been stricken by the enemy, we trust to hear no more prating about magnanimity— no more homilies upon the virtue of forebearance towards a vaunting and imbecile foe.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

The United States had not started the war since its forces were occupying territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, a part of the United States. The Mexican government not only had occupied the disputed territory long before General Zachary Taylor left Corpus Christi, but also engaged in other acts of "exclusive ownership."\textsuperscript{36} Governor Johnson's message to the legislature also blamed the war on Mexico, and explained requisitions of men and supplies.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, April 3, 1846.
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, April 7, 1846.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Richardson, \textit{Messages and Papers of the Presidents}, IV, 470.
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, May 5, 1846.
\item \textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.}, December 12, 1846.
\end{itemize}
made on the state by the central government for use in the war. 37

Louisiana volunteers were met with a large reception when they returned from the war, and Sargent S. Prentiss addressed one such group in terms of glowing praise. 38 One company, the "Rough and Ready" volunteers, commanded by Captain Copeland S. Hunt, left New Orleans for Mexico after an exciting party. 39 During the middle of the war its causes were still being explained, with an air of exasperation at the "obstinancy" of the Mexican government. 40 Expansionists considered the war an opportunity to annex Mexico to the United States: an "... extension of the area of freedom." 41 Requestions for additional volunteers from Louisiana continued as late as December, 1847. 42 President Polk's third annual message to Congress gives a detailed history of United States' claim to territory for which the war had been fought. 43 As the war entered its final phase,

38 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 12, 1847.
39 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 19, 1847.
40 Ibid., November 1, 1847.
41 Ibid., December 11, 1847.
42 Ibid., December 9, 1847.
43 Richardson's Messages and Papers, IV, 532-564.
presidential politics came into such prominence, that they over-shadowed the important results of the war for the United States.

During the war the legislature struggled with the problem of creating a public school system. Charles Gayarre, Secretary of State, reported to the legislature on the "precarious existence" of the parish school system. He said that its "days are numbered" and that it was the legislature's duty to award "... this elusive phantom its death blow..." To replace the defunct parish school system, a number of bills were introduced to create a new "free school" system. Fortunately, this was not a party issue, but the following interesting comment was made on public education editorially. "In no slave state has any system yet succeeded."

The total population of Louisiana was 427,755 in 1847. The white population was 196,391; free persons of color numbered 19,842; and the slave population was 211,483.

On the eve of special elections held in Orleans Parish for two state senators and one representative, Henry Clay, Sargent S. Prentiss, and Governor Isaac Johnson addressed a meeting at the Merchant's Exchange seeking support for a program to relieve suffering in Ireland. Although the

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44 Louisiana Senate Journal, 1 leg., 1 sess., contd., pp. 11-14.
45 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, March 22, 1847.
46 Niles National Register, LXXIII, 476.
47 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 5, 1847.
meeting was described as non-political, the effort of the Whigs there might be construed as an attempt to attract the foreign voters of Orleans Parish to the Whig party. In the elections following the plea for aid to Ireland, the Democrats won all of the seats in the state legislature. The legislature also elected Pierre Soule to replace Senator Alexander Barrow, who died in office with less than two months remaining in his term. Louisiana's twenty-six senators and eighty-seven representatives met in joint session on January 20, 1847. Soule received fifty-nine votes and his nearest competitor, the Whig candidate L. Bordelon, received fifty-two votes.

As the congressional and state campaigns were beginning in the early summer of 1847, Louisiana supporters of General Zachary Taylor were sounding public opinion concerning his chances of a Whig nomination for the presidency. Emile Lasere, Democrat, of the first congressional district, announced himself for re-election. John M. Harmonson, incumbent Democrat of the third district, soon followed Lasere's lead. Bannon G. Thibodaux of the second district, a Whig incumbent, and Isaac E. Morse, the Democrat from the fourth

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48 Ibid., February 12, 1847.
50 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 20, 1847.
51 Niles National Register, LXXII, 228.
congressional district, also announced their intentions to be re-elected. Edward Montegut, Whig, opposed Lasere in the first district, composed of the first and third municipalities of New Orleans. Montegut was a Taylor supporter and promised an inquiring letter-writer that he would do everything possible to get the general elected president.

Thibodaux, the second district Whig, was opposed by an independent candidate who denounced all candidates nominated for Congress by both parties as "... men with neither vigor, intelligence, nor energy of purpose..." The independent, Jacob Barker, was a staunch supporter of Zachary Taylor.

William S. Parham was suggested as a Whig nominee for Congress in the third congressional district, the Baton Rouge area, with the slogan "Taylor, Toleration and Reform." When the Whigs of the third district met in a "Rough and Ready" nominating convention held at Donaldsonville, they were unable to settle upon a candidate. The convention was severely criticized because it did not represent the whole district. Eventually Lafayette Saunders, a supporter of

53 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, November 1, 1847.
54 Ibid.
55 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 14, 1847.
56 Ibid., September 11, 1847.
Taylor, ran in the election against John Harmanson. The fourth district was the scene of a contest between the Whig Alexander Declouet and Isaac E. Morse. When the final tabulations of the votes were made all four incumbents, three Democrats and one Whig, were re-elected.

As a result of the elections for the state legislature, the Whigs would have a majority of two votes on a joint ballot. Fifty-one Whigs and forty-seven Democrats were elected to the lower house, and the senate would contain seventeen Democrats to fifteen Whigs. The narrow majority of the Whigs was a matter of concern: the Baton Rouge Gazette advocated a strict discipline of the Whig party members.

On former occasions, we have seen the mortifying spectacle of a legislature of Louisiana, with a Whig majority, electing a Democratic Senator, in consequence of local feeling or personal preference. It is time that the Whig party of Louisiana should adopt a system of rigid discipline, than has heretofore been practiced in the ranks, and we are glad to perceive a growing disposition to do so, is rapidly showing itself....

When the legislature met in January, 1848, the worst fears of the Gazette editor were realized because Pierre

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57 Ibid., September 25, 1847.
58 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 3, 1847.
Niles National Register, LXXIII, 192, 211.
59 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 16, 17, 1847.
60 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 20, 1847.
Soule was re-elected United States Senator. Organization of the legislature was delayed until all Whig members had arrived; then by a majority of two votes that party elected Preston W. Farrar as Speaker. John Slidell was nominated by John M. Bell of Orleans Parish, and Duncan F. Kenner, Whig, was nominated by Christopher Adams of Iberville Parish. On the first ballot each candidate received sixty-four votes. I. A. Myles, Whig, was absent; another Whig voted for Slidell; and Maunsel White, a Democrat, wasted his vote. On the second ballot the results were the same as on the first. Then the senate withdrew and after some discussion it returned to the meeting and resumed balloting. John M. Bell, who had nominated Slidell, then rose and nominated Soule, who was elected by a vote of sixty-eight to sixty-one. From this period on the two Democrat leaders, Soule and Slidell were destined to be bitter enemies in Louisiana politics. Bell explained his position by saying that in the deadlock two Whigs promised they would vote for Soule, but not for Slidell; so in order to break the deadlock he nominated Soule instead of Slidell on the third ballot. A legislative investigation into the election proceedings resulted in a committee

63 Niles National Register, LXXIII, 355.
64 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 26, 1848.
statement to the effect that there had been no breach of law or parliamentary proceedings. Myles, who was offered four slaves to absent himself from the election, apparently did not accept the bribe; such offers had also been made to other members of the house. 65

Soule's election had taken place amidst the growing excitement over the presidential campaign. As early as February, 1847, meetings were held in New Orleans to commend General Zachary Taylor and his men for gallantry in their conduct during the Mexican War. 66 Whig leaders, like Sargent S. Prentiss, played a prominent role in these meetings. Prentiss moved from Natchez, Mississippi, to New Orleans in September, 1845, after encountering financial difficulties which seemed unsurmountable. Entering law partnership in New Orleans with John Finney, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the Whig cause. He opposed the Mexican War on Whig principles, and agreed with Clay concerning the annexation of Mexico. He was a constant supporter of Taylor's candidacy and employed his considerable oratorical talents to elect the general. 67

In early April, 1847, the New Orleans Bulletin carried the name of Zachary Taylor at the head of the columns, and

65 Ibid., March 8, 1848.
67 Dallas C. Dickey, Sargent S. Prentiss, Whig Orator of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945).
the *Daily Picayune* expressed great surprise.

We noticed with no little surprise yesterday the name of Gen. Zachary Taylor figuring at the head of the Bulletin as a candidate for the presidency, *subject to the decision of a Whig National convention*. This appropriation of Gen. Taylor's name for party purposes we know is without the sanction of that distinguished commander and contrary to his wishes. It is not only against his wishes but it is repugnant to the feelings and views of his peculiar friends; and in this category we include the immediate family of Gen. Taylor and such of his confidential associates as best know his purposes. But apart from the individual wishes of Gen. Taylor and the desires of his peculiar friends in this connection, we do protest against any such absorption of a great name by any political party. More especially do we protest against it whilst he is the great captain of the nation, leading whig and democrat alike to victory and reaping the undivided applause of the whole people.  

A letter from General Taylor appeared in the same newspaper shortly after the above mentioned story. Taylor affirmed the statement of the *Daily Picayune* that his name had been used without his knowledge by newspaper editors and others in connection with the presidency. The letter, addressed to E. G. W. Butler of Iberville Parish, contains assurances that "... I have no aspirations for that or any other civil office...." The editorial comment on Taylor's candidacy was that he should not be the candidate of a party, but of the whole people.  

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68 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 8, 1847.

Daniel Webster planned to visit New Orleans in the early summer of 1847, and G. B. Duncan, a member of the committee of welcome, wrote a letter to Webster insisting that he use his home while in the city. "My house is central and parlours and such as will be everything you can want for the reception of friends." 70 Webster then changed his plans and was unable to visit New Orleans, much to the disappointment of Duncan. "The arrangements have been so extensively made that it would be cruel injustice to have the public disappointed." 71

While General Winfield Scott and Taylor were being compared as soldiers and presidential possibilities, 72 the latter wrote to Henry Clay trying to counteract the rumors that Taylor and Clay were enemies.

I fully agree with you in the necessity for more deliberation in the selection of a candidate for the presidency, and I truly regret that my name should have been used in that relation. It has been permitted with the greatest reluctance on my part, and only from a sense of duty to the country. My repugnance to being a candidate for that exalted office has been frankly and sincerely made known. The importance of harmony and good feeling among the opponents of the present dynasty is, by none appreciated more considerately than by myself, and whatever may be the decision of the party, I shall be studiously guarded

70 Ib., letter from G. B. Duncan to Daniel Webster, May 8, 1847.
71 Ibid., letter from G. B. Duncan to Daniel Webster, May 17, 1847.
72 New Orleans Weekly Picayune, October 25, 1847.
in this particular, and strive to lend my best endeavor to the preservation of unity.\textsuperscript{73}

When he spoke at Lexington, Kentucky, on November 13, 1847, Clay asked that the administration declare its intentions in the war with Mexico. He blamed the war on the annexation of Texas, and the subsequent order of the President to occupy the Rio Grande, without the previous consent and authority of Congress.\textsuperscript{74} To some it seemed that Clay had not "made out his case" that it was an unjust war.\textsuperscript{75} It seemed as though Clay was trying to justify his Raleigh Letter position, made during the campaign of 1844.

During the last month of 1847 Zachary Taylor visited New Orleans as vessels in the harbor flew streamers from their masts, cannon "thundered" and the people cheered. Amidst the excitement New Orleanians took exception to Clay's Lexington speech denouncing the Mexican War.\textsuperscript{76} In Philadelphia, however, Clay addressed a Whig meeting defending his speech at Lexington, and the meeting passed resolutions approving his denunciation of the war.\textsuperscript{77} Taylor left New Orleans and proceeded to his home in Baton Rouge.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{73} Clay Papers, letter from Zachary Taylor to Henry Clay, November 4, 1847.

\textsuperscript{74} New Orleans \textit{Weekly Picayune}, November 29, 1847.

\textsuperscript{75} New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, November 28, 1847.

\textsuperscript{76} New Orleans \textit{Weekly Picayune}, December 6, 1847.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, December 20, 1847.

\textsuperscript{78} Baton Rouge \textit{Gazette}, December 11, 1847.
There he wrote to Clay saying that he was unable to visit Ashland and that his "affairs" at home were "... in any other than a prosperous condition...." \(^{79}\)

When the legislature met, on January 18, 1848, Governor Isaac Johnson delivered his annual message, in which he gave polite notice to General Taylor's role in the war. The governor spoke at length on convict treatment, hospitals for the insane, and the removal of the seat of government to Baton Rouge. He also blamed the war on Mexico, a complete repudiation of Clay's position. \(^{80}\)

Balie Peyton and Albert T. Burnley visited Taylor in Baton Rouge and read him a letter written by John J. Crittenden concerning the societies of the "Original Taylor men" and a pledge Taylor might make promising not to run for a second term. The "old gentleman" replied to the ideas suggested in the letter by saying that he would disregard all societies and make no pledge about the succession. Burnley suggested "... more in jest than seriousness..." that a new press be established in Washington, since the *National Intelligencer* was considered an unfit "organ" for General Taylor's administration. Peyton, Alexander Bullitt, and others agreed that a new administration paper should be founded in the capital.

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\(^{79}\) Clay Papers, letter from Zachary Taylor to Henry Clay, December 25, 1847.

if Taylor were elected. 81

On January 14, 1848, Taylor attended a "splendid dinner party" given in his honor by a wealthy New Orleans Whig, Samuel J. Peters. 82 This party was attended by a friend of John L. Sheafer, who reported to Daniel Webster that Taylor had "... expressed his opinions unreservedly upon political and national topics, some of which I think you should know." The general said that he favored the Whig policies of protection and internal improvement, that vetoes were worse than idle, and that party rancor "should cease." The general admitted that he and the administration had separated as far as was practical, and stated that he favored a boundary between the United States and Mexico along the Rio del Norte and to the Pacific, "... so as to comprehend a portion of upper California...."83

A large Taylor meeting was held in Baton Rouge on February 12, 1848,84 while Taylor was out of the state with his "travelling suite" which included Balie Peyton, Judah

81Crittenden Papers, letter from Albert T. Burnlay to J. J. Crittenden, January 12, 1848.

82Samuel J. Peters, Jr., unpublished diary, Louisiana State University Archives, entry for January 15, 1848.


84Webster Papers, letter from John L. Sheafer to Daniel Webster, January 20, 1848.

84Baton Rouge Gazette, February 12, 1848.
P. Benjamin, and Alexander C. Bullitt, all New Orleans Whigs. A state convention was held in late February at the State House in New Orleans. Preston W. Farrar called the meeting to order and Thomas W. Chinn was elected president. Four delegates chosen to attend the convention declined the honor because they could not support Taylor. In the meeting Samuel Jarvis Peters introduced an amendment designed to insure that any vice presidential candidate chosen by a convention must "... entertain sentiments in harmony with those of our candidate...." The sour experience of the party with John Tyler was not forgotten. At this same meeting six delegates to attend the national nominating convention were chosen. They were Jacques Toutant, Judah P. Benjamin, Robert Carter Nichols, Christopher Adams, John Moore, and Judge Campbell. This convention was later accused of being a pre-arranged affair designed to nominate Taylor as an independent candidate, a convention in which Clay followers were not allowed to express their views. Original Taylor supporters like Samuel Peters and Alexander Bullit were definitely trying to groom Taylor as a candidate of the people, and not of a party, and were thus opposed to a national party nominating convention.

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85 Pointe Coupee Echo, February 24, 1848.
86 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 26, 1848.
87 New Orleans Weekly Delta, November 22, 1848.
88 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 17, 1849.
there was to be a national convention, they hoped it would be a Taylor Convention, and not one affiliated with a political party.

This movement to create a Taylor party and hold a convention on the national level to nominate him was discussed in the Baton Rouge Gazette. At the same time the Whigs held a meeting in the New Orleans Commercial Exchange and nominated Taylor, after briefly discussing Clay's candidacy. \(^{89}\) Slowly the independent Taylor movement lost momentum in Louisiana, and his nomination by a National Whig party convention gained favor. \(^{90}\)

In the meantime Henry Clay's position caused some confusion both to his supporters and those of Taylor's. When it was rumored that Clay would withdraw his candidacy from the Whig National Convention, a New Orleanian wrote to him "... merely to suggest to your consideration, whether you have the right, considering your position in the Whig Party, and your duty to the country to withdraw your name without consulting the party...." \(^{91}\) Clay was informed that a majority of the convention delegates from Louisiana were friendly to him. He knew most of the Louisianians personally, but

\(^{89}\) Baton Rouge Gazette, March 18, 1848.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., April 1, 1848.

\(^{91}\) Clay Papers, letter from A. Pierre to Henry Clay, March 24, 1848.
even with their help in the convention, "... everything depends upon N. York...."

Clay urged Sargent S. Prentiss, previously chosen a delegate, to attend the National Whig Convention in June and listed the reasons why Taylor could not be elected, even if nominated:

I do not pretend to occupy that unbiased position which enables me to form a correct judgment, but unless I am greatly deceived Genl. Taylor cannot be elected, with the advantages of a nomination by the Whig Convention, and here are my reasons. 1. He will obtain very inconsiderable support from the other party, which will generally go for its own candidate. 2. There are good numbers of Whigs that will not vote for him; more I think than to counterbalance any aid which he receives from the other party. 3. I am firmly persuaded that he cannot get the vote of Ohio, and probably lose that of other free states. 4. His no party position (which he cannot now change) will prevent the excitement of that enthusiasm, which would be checked in behalf of any other known Whig— 5. and his numerous letters have created great discontent in the Whig ranks.

On the same day that he wrote Prentiss, Clay penned another letter announcing his decision to allow the convention to decide whether he should be nominated for the presidency.

From Washington, it was reported that Taylor continued to refuse being the pledged candidate of either party, but that he would accept the nomination of either the Democrats

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92 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to James Brooke, April 13, 1848.
93 Ibid., letter from Henry Clay to Sargent S. Prentiss, April 12, 1848.
94 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 22, 1848.
or the Whigs. This stand reportedly created dissatisfaction among northern Whigs, but was well received by the Democrats in both sections. This same Washington correspondent of the Daily Picayune, the "Truth Teller," also reported that despite Clay, Taylor would be supported by the Whigs, since he was the favorite in the South and Southwest.

Clay's announced intention to seek the nomination prompted a committee from New Orleans, headed by Balie Peyton, to visit General Taylor in Baton Rouge. The result of this visit was another Taylor letter, in which the author became more explicit about his political views; he "... takes whig ground, and continues to declare that he is not however an ultra whig, and would not be the President of a party etc." The Baton Rouge Gazette mildly chided Clay for seeking the nomination, and expressed the belief that only Zachary Taylor could win the presidency. Taylor continued to disclaim any political affiliation, even to Clay, whom he told, "... I am no politician...."

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95 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 23, 1848.
96 Ibid., April 25, 1848.
97 Clay Papers, letter from W. C. C. Claiborne to Henry Clay, April 25, 1848.
98 Baton Rouge Gazette, April 29, 1848.
99 Clay Papers, letter from Zachary Taylor to Henry Clay, April 30, 1848.
Clay, who depended upon New York delegates for support, was being actively opposed by Governor William H. Seward. Sylvester Schenck, a delegate to the Whig convention, and a Clay supporter, was visited by Seward before the convention. Seward admitted his hostility to Clay in the 1844 campaign, and urged Schenck not to cast his convention vote for the Kentuckian, since his election "... will be no better for us than if the opposite party should succeed."100

The Democrats nominated Lewis Cass of Michigan for the presidency and William O. Butler of Kentucky for the vice presidency.101 On a rather gloomy, though accurate note, the Daily Crescent of New Orleans noted that the old party machinery, and ideals of both parties were giving way to the slavery question, and "... the South must prepare quietly to submit, or to seek safety in new combinations and modes of action."102 Clay told Dr. John A. Watkins of New Orleans that either he or Taylor would receive the Whig nomination. He also wrote, "The Democratic nominations have been made at Balto, and my opinion is that, among the candidates there proposed, one more vulnerable or weaker

100 Ibid., letter from Sylvester Schenck to Henry Clay, December 24, 1849.
101 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 1, 1848. Baton Rouge Gazette, June 3, 1848.
102 New Orleans Daily Crescent, June 1, 1848.
than Gen'l. Cass could not have been selected." A New Orleans Democrat, Leslie Chase, who had served as an officer in the Mexican War, believed that the Democratic nominations were strong in appeal, although he admitted that if Taylor were nominated, many Louisiana Democrats would desert their party and vote for the war hero.

When the Whig national convention began in Philadelphia on June 10, there was speculation in Louisiana concerning whether Taylor or Clay would receive the nomination. In New Orleans the people were anxiously awaiting news of the nomination, when Taylor received it there was a "... general feeling and gratification...." Louisiana delegates who attended the convention were Balie Peyton, Logan Hunton and A. C. Bullitt. James Fillmore was deemed a strong running mate for Taylor—the only Whig combination that could defeat the Democrats. It was believed that Democrats by the "hundreds of thousands" would vote for

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103 Dr. John A. Watkins Papers, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, letter from Henry Clay to Dr. Watkins, June 2, 1848.
104 Franklin Pierce Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, letter from Leslie Chase to Franklin Pierce, June 11, 1848.
105 Baton Rouge Gazette, June 10, 1848.
107 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 25, 1848.
108 Ibid., June 14, 25, 1848.
Taylor and Fillmore.

In other quarters there was less certainty about the strength of the Whig nominations. Clay was asked by C. S. Morehead to aid the Whig party by endorsing the candidacy of Taylor. Morehead admitted that Clay had a "... just right of complaint..." but that it was overshadowed by the "critical" condition of the party. After another such request was made by a committee of Louisville Whigs, Clay replied in the following letter:

As far as I was personally concerned, I submit to the decision of the late Nat. Convention at Philadelphia. It has relieved me from much painful suspense and anxiety, if I had been nominated, and from great vexation, care and responsibility if I had been subsequently elected. I shall give no continuance or encouragement to any third party movements, if any should be attempted against it, I desire to remain henceforward in undisturbed tranquility and perfect repose. I have been much opportuned, from various quarters, to endorse Genl Taylor as a good whig, who will, if elected, act on whig principles and carry out whig measures. But how can I do that? Can I say that in his hands whig measures will be safe and secure, when he refused to pledge himself to their support? When some of his most active friends say they are obsolete? When he is presented as a no-party candidate?

When General Taylor arrived in New Orleans on the last day of June, he still had not received official notification

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109Baton Rouge Gazette, June 17, 24, 1848.

110Clay Papers, letter from C. S. Morehead to Henry Clay, June 22, 1848.

111Ibid., letter from a committee of Louisville citizens to Henry Clay, June 28, 1848.
of his nomination. A few days prior to his arrival a "large and enthusiastic" Whig meeting had been held in the Crescent City. William De Buys was elected president of the meeting, Randall Hunt and S. S. Prentiss addressed the gathering, and both rockets and cannon were fired in celebration. William O. Butler, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, visited New Orleans after leaving Mexico. The Democrats staged a torchlight parade in Butler's honor. Lighted by the torches, Governor Johnson accompanied Butler in a carriage drawn by six white horses from the St. Charles Hotel to a speaker's platform on Canal Street. Numerous speeches were made in support of the vice presidential nominee.

Rough and Ready Clubs were organized in New Orleans under the direction of Alexander Bullitt. At the organizational meeting the military career of Zachary Taylor was praised as a monument of patriotism and public service. The Whig candidate had still not been informed of his nomination by an official representing the Philadelphia convention. Van Buren's nomination by the "Barnburners"

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112 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 1, 1848.
113 Ibid., June 25, 1848.
114 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 1, 1848.
115 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 2, 1848.
116 Ibid., July 2, 1848.
117 Ibid., July 6, 1848.
for the presidency in New York was the subject of little concern in Louisiana, although it was considered "... a small termination of a once national career." 118

While awaiting official news of his nomination, Taylor supporters held a meeting in Baton Rouge that was "fully attended." Throughout the course of the meeting proceedings were conducted "in the best spirits." It was reported that there, "... was no abuse of candidates, no unguarded expressions, and no appeal to the passions." 119 Finally, on July 14, 1848, Taylor received official notification of his nomination as the Whig candidate for president. 120 This situation might have been avoided had the nomination been made several weeks later, for on July 19, it was announced that telegraph communications between New Orleans and New York, via Montgomery, Alabama, and Augusta, Georgia, had been completed. 121 General Taylor's acceptance letter was published in the Daily Picayune on July 25, although it was dated July 15 and written in Baton Rouge. 122

While the Junior Whigs of Baton Rouge were being organized through the auspices of the Rough and Ready Clubs, and whig ratification meetings were being held in East and

118 Ibid., July 9, 1848.
119 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 9, 1848.
120 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 16, 1848.
Baton Rouge Gazette, July 29, 1848.
121 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 19, 1848.
122 Ibid., July 25, 1848.
West Feliciana Parishes, the Democratic candidate for president was being labeled a "Wilmot Proviso man."\(^{123}\) This meant that Cass was anti-slavery, and no good southerner could possibly vote for him. Despite the excitement that should have attended a Louisiana resident's candidacy for the presidency, Leslie Chase wrote the following comments:

"Everybody in this part of the Union is expressing surprise at the apathy prevailing in regard to politics. One sees no enthusiasm—not even from Gen. Taylor. Indeed if the question shall be compromised it is difficult to see what issues we are to have."\(^{124}\)

The last statement undoubtedly refers to the Wilmot Proviso, and the possibility that it might be compromised in Congress. The Wilmot Proviso was one of the crucial issues in the campaign, and General Taylor was regarded as the "Southern Sentinel" on that question.\(^{125}\) As the supporters of Taylor organized throughout the state, they claimed that the only charge against their candidate was that he would be the head of the nation and not of a party.\(^{126}\)

Taylor wrote one of his many letters on August 14, in which he denied that he owned lands on the Rio Grande and that he had sent $10,000 to the District of Columbia to

\(^{123}\)Ibid., July 22, 28, August 12, 1848.

\(^{124}\)Pierce Papers, letter from Leslie Chase to Franklin Pierce, July 29, 1848.

\(^{125}\)Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 10, 1848.

\(^{126}\)Ibid., August 14, 1848.
purchase slaves. The extract of another letter written by Taylor was carried on the masthead of the Plaquemine Southern Sentinel. It said, "I am a Whig but not an ultra Whig. If elected I would not be the mere President of a party. I would endeavor to be independent of party domination."

Taylor's running mate, James Fillmore, was attacked by the southern Democrats because in 1842 he had aided "Giddings, the abolitionist in his infamous attempt to justify by resolution the mutiny and murder of Virginia slaves on the Creole." Lewis Cass was denounced as a land speculator, embezzler, and an anti-slavery Democrat. The Michigan legislature had elected Cass to the Senate, nominated him for the presidency, and passed anti-slavery resolutions which Cass approved. Cass was said to have been as bitter an enemy to the South as Martin Van Buren. A circular was distributed charging that Fillmore was an abolitionist, a charge that was vehemently denied. Reportedly, a Democratic meeting was embarrassed when asked if Cass was an abolitionist.

The letters of the general continued their appearances

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127 New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 16, 1848.
128 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 17, 1848.
129 Ibid., August 21, 1848.
130 Ibid., August 24, 1848.
131 Ibid., August 31, 1848.
in Louisiana journals. In one letter the general described the conditions under which his name first appeared as a candidate for the presidency.\(^{132}\) He was then in the Valley of the Rio Grande, among Whigs and Democrats who stood by him in the severe trial of war. Under such conditions the general said he could not engage in party politics, even though the members of his command knew he was a Whig in principle, for he did not hide his political sentiments. In another letter he said, "I was nominated by the people in primary assemblies--by Whigs, Democrats and Natives, in separate and mixed meetings."\(^{133}\) The general also wrote that he had accepted the nomination with the understanding that he would "... not be tied down to the political tenets of any one party."\(^{134}\) He was praised by Senator Willie Mangum of South Carolina, and John J. Crittenden of Kentucky as a truly great Whig.\(^{135}\) The campaign was marred by a near-tragedy, when the son and daughter of Taylor were on board the steamboat "Concordia," which blew up at Plaquemine as it was going upriver. Apparently neither person was injured.\(^{136}\)

Lewis Cass was labeled a completely undependable politician. He was for and against annexation of Texas, for and

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\(^{132}\) New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 17, 1848.
\(^{133}\) Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 11, 1848.
\(^{134}\) New Orleans Daily Crescent, September 4, 1848.
\(^{135}\) Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 4, 1848.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., September 8, 1848.
against the Wilmot Proviso, against protection and for protection, and for internal improvements and against internal improvements. Colonel Balie Peyton addressed a Whig barbecue in Plaquemine for three hours, dwelling most of the time on slavery. He charged that Cass was anti-slavery, and in favor of the Wilmot Proviso. Cass supposedly boasted that he was not a slave-owner and that he "detested" slavery. Fillmore was denounced by the abolitionists because he recognized the legality of slavery, and introduced a bill in Congress requiring that the federal government pay the master the value of a runaway slave. With so many factors in their favor, Taylor and Fillmore would win the state's electoral vote by a majority of at least 500 votes.  

Since the Democratic vice presidential aspirant, William O. Butler had a considerable following in Louisiana, the Whigs told these supporters that they could not vote for Butler without voting for Cass the abolitionist. The Democratic party was "... the veto party, the advocates of War and Carnage, the upholders of Monarchial principles in this Republican Government of ours...." Taylor was compared to George Washington, another soldier patriot who was

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137 Ibid., September 11, 1848.
138 Ibid., September 14, 1848.
139 Baton Rouge Gazette, September 23, 1848.
140 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 21, 1848.
also a slave holder. Apparently the general was not an expansionist, since he wrote that he did not favor further annexation of Mexican territory west of the Rio Grande and south of the parallel of thirty-six thirty. He seldom mentioned any political issues, preferring to discuss the military aspects of the Mexican War, as he did in a lengthy speech at Pass Christian, Mississippi.

During the final month of the campaign the excitement in political circles became more intense, as contrasted with the earlier apathy previously noted. Both parties had numerous meetings in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and the smaller communities in the state. In addition to the Rough and Ready Clubs and the Fillmore Rangers, the Whigs also organized the Gimblet Rangers, a group that carried stalks of sugar cane in parades. The Democrats immediately dubbed this group the "Saccharine Suckers." On October 9, the Whigs held a mass meeting at the depot of the Pontchartrain Railroad. It was the largest meeting of the Whigs held up until that time, with half of the persons in attendance unable to get within hearing distance of the speaker's platform. William Hunt and Samuel Flower addressed the meeting.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Crittenden Papers, letter from Truman Smith to J. J. Crittenden, September 23, 1848.}\]

\[\text{Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 25, 1848.}\]

\[\text{New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 6, 1848.}\]

\[\text{New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 6, 1848.}\]

\[\text{New Orleans Weekly Picayune, October 6, 1848.}\]
Because political activity was so intense in New Orleans the leaders of both parties feared that parades might collide head-on; therefore they negotiated a set of rules to prevent fights and keep the peace. 147 Amidst all the excitement, Samuel Peters, Junior, took the time to note in his diary, "General Taylor is daily increasing his popularity. He will be our next president." 148

At a Whig barbecue held at Bachelor's Point in Iberville Parish on October 12, Colonel David Crockett addressed the five hundred persons present. Other barbecues were held at Bayou Sara and Clinton, by both Democrats and Whigs. 149

During a torchlight parade in New Orleans on October 28, a Whig party member standing on the curb cried out for Taylor, drew a gun and fired into the air. A general melee ensued, and all gentlemanly agreements made concerning political activities were forgotten in the heat of street fighting. The affray was denounced as an unfortunate and disgraceful incident. The city was "... on the brink of a volcano..." as the campaign entered into its last week of activity.

"It would take a dozen of men, every one of them as fast as our fastest men, to notice all the political meetings that

147 Ibid., October 19, 1848.
148 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for October 9, 1848.
149 New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 23, 1848.
Baton Rouge Gazette, October 21, 1848.
150 New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 30, 1848.
are nightly held at the present time."\textsuperscript{151} The Democratic organization called the Chalmette Guards carried out a demonstration at Jackson Square.\textsuperscript{152} Whigs held a mass meeting at Tivoli Circle which was attended by many ladies.\textsuperscript{153}

On the first day of the election month Samuel J. Peters, Junior, noted in his diary, "Great excitement about politics, every night there are meetings proceedings etc.--In one week General Zachary Taylor will be President Elect of the United States."\textsuperscript{154}

Zachary Taylor was apparently at ease in the midst of such political excitement. He walked frequently about the streets of Baton Rouge talking familiarly with the citizenry, dressed in a casual manner and wearing "... that same old immense boat-shaped hat sent him by some friends in Tennessee." The general met all steamboats as they arrived to obtain newspapers and his mail, and then "waddled" home with his bundle of papers.\textsuperscript{155}

One last Whig "illuminated procession" was held the night before the election day, which was November 7, 1848. Whigs were assured that both New Orleans and the rural districts of the state would choose Taylor, and the elections proceeded

\textsuperscript{151}\textit{New Orleans Weekly Delta}, October 30, 1848.
\textsuperscript{152}\textit{New Orleans Daily Crescent}, November 2, 1848.
\textsuperscript{153}\textit{Ibid.}, November 3, 1848.
\textsuperscript{154}\textit{S. J. Peters Diary}, November 1, 1848.
\textsuperscript{155}\textit{New Orleans Weekly Delta}, November 6, 1848.
in a quiet, orderly manner.  

Young Samuel Peters made the following daily notations in his diary from November 7 through November 10, inclusive:

Nov 7, 1848 N.O. General Taylor and Millard Fillmore will this day be elected President and Vice President of our glorious Land of Liberty.

Nov 8, 1848 The election passed off rather quietly and the Whigs of course carried the day in this city.

Nov 9, 1848 By telegraph we learn that General Taylor and Millard Fillmore were elected President and Vice President of the United States on the 7th. General Taylor will carry at least twenty states.

Nov. 10, 1848 N.O. Locofocos very scarce. Cocks can't crow. The Whigs have gloriously triumphed. The coons have ascendency. Hurrah for our country.

Zachary Taylor carried Orleans Parish by a majority of 972 votes, and Jefferson Parish, adjacent to Orleans, gave the general a majority of forty-eight votes. By November 9, sufficient votes from rural parishes had been reported and it was certain that the state had cast a majority of its vote for Taylor. Plaquemines Parish, which had cast a fraudulent vote totaling 1,044 in 1844, recorded only 512 votes in the 1848 election. One hundred cannon were

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157 S. J. Peters Diary, entries for November 7, 9, 10, 1848.
158 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 8, 1848.
159 New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 9, 1848.
160 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 9, 1848. Baton Rouge Gazette, November 18, 1848.
fired in Jackson Square to celebrate the Whig victory. Taylor and Fillmore received majorities in twenty-four out of Louisiana's forty-seven parishes, with a total majority of 2,847 out of 33,587 votes. Taylor received 163 electoral votes; Lewis Cass received 127; and Martin Van Buren received six. 161

The President-Elect learned of his victory while in Baton Rouge, and he took a steamboat for his upriver plantation. On the vessel he sat next to a young Democrat who did not know Taylor. The young Democrat remarked that the people must have had a lot of confidence to elect Taylor president without knowing his civil qualifications. The general replied that he was sure the new president would do everything possible to merit the voters' confidence. The young Democrat then remarked that his travelling companion must be a Taylor man. The general replied, "No, not exactly—I did not vote for General Taylor; and my family, especially the old lady, are strongly opposed to his election." 162 After only one day at his home, Taylor went to New Orleans where he was received with a series of cannon salutes before continuing on to the St. Charles Hotel. 163

161 New Orleans Weekly Delta, December 14, 1848.
163 New Orleans Weekly Delta, November 27, 1848.
163 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 29, 1848.
163 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for November 26, 1848.
While rumors were circulating about the state concerning the cabinet appointments Taylor might make, Governor Isaac Johnson called an extra session of the legislature to meet on December 4, 1848. The governor's message to the legislature was concerned solely with the problem of public education. After 1842, and a bill of that year which practically abolished appropriations for education, except for the central and primary schools of New Orleans, the system had nearly collapsed. The legislature of 1846 had attempted to put into effect the new system of public education authorized by the constitution of 1845, but its appropriations were insufficient. The extra session dealt almost exclusively with appropriating money for continuance of the school system. With little delay, perhaps because of the rumor that cholera was spreading in the city, the legislature appropriated $550,000 for the public school system. The legislature ended its session on December 20, 1848, the last time that the legislature was scheduled to meet in New Orleans. The next legislature, under the biennial system provided in the new constitution, was to

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164 Louisiana Senate Journal, extra session, 2 leg. p. 1.


166 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 4, 1848.

167 Ibid., December 14, 17, 19, 1848. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, December 7, 1848.
meet in Baton Rouge in 1850. Shortly after the legislature adjourned, the Board of Health, which had earlier denied that there was a cholera epidemic, now confirmed the rumors.

Disease was not the only cause for concern at the end of the election year. The Wilmot Proviso debate was being waged in Congress with unusual bitterness. President Polk's annual message to Congress in December was praised for its soberness and reason by Southerners opposed to the Free Soil principle. But the Northern "fanatics" were trying to force the South into a "... state of open resistance to the Government." When abolition of the slave trade was suggested for the District of Columbia in a house resolution, an editorial in the Daily Picayune again predicted the dissolution of the Union.

Meanwhile speculation about the possible cabinet appointments Taylor would make continued. Sargent S. Prentiss was prominently mentioned as the possible Attorney-General.

169 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 24, 1848.
170 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, IV, 629-670.
171 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 27, 1848.
172 Ibid., December 30, 1848.
173 New Orleans Weekly Delta, January 1, 1849.
There was a movement in the city to create a petition urging the appointment of Samuel J. Peters as Secretary of the Treasury. His son thought that Peters was going to be appointed Collector of the Port of New Orleans to replace Dennis Prieur, and eventually he was.

The cabinet had still not been appointed as late as February 27, 1849, but there was a belief prevalent that the President would not appoint any ultra-Whig or Democrat. He made no important appointments from among his Louisiana supporters.

Before Taylor went to Washington there was a chance meeting between him and Clay on the steamboat "Princess." Clay did not recognize the general who spoke to him, but Clay followed the general into the social room and the two had a pleasant chat. Clay said, "I congratulate you General, upon your election to the Presidency, and I hope your administration may be as successful and glorious as your military career." A ball was given in New Orleans on January 25, 1849, in honor of General Taylor, who was not present.

Finally the great day arrived; Taylor was inaugurated

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174 Ibid., November 27, 1848.
175 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for January 30, 1849.
176 Ibid., entry for April 19, 1849.
177 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 8, 27, 1849.
179 Ibid., January 29, 1849.
President of the United States, and young Peters wrote in his diary, "Thank God we are no longer under Locofoco rule." However, within five months the young lawyer had changed his mind about Taylor and wrote, "The whole United States was never in a worse condition than they are in this present moment. President Taylor is detested by all."  

180 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for March 5, 1849.  
181 Ibid., entry for August 6, 1849.
CHAPTER VI

WHIG EFFORTS AT GAINING POWER
AND THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

Shortly after Taylor's election, with Whig enthusiasm running high, a number of party leaders were mentioned as possible gubernatorial candidates for the November, 1849, election. Among those mentioned were Bannon G. Thibodaux of Lafourche, the only Whig in Congress, Judah P. Benjamin of New Orleans, a wealthy lawyer and sugar planter,\(^1\) who was destined to be the Confederate Secretary of State, Duncan F. Kenner,\(^2\) recognized leader of Louisiana's country Whigs, and Alexander C. Bullitt of the \textit{Daily Picayune}, who organized the short-lived \textit{Republic} in Washington, D. C., to support the Taylor administration.\(^3\)

Whigs were further encouraged by the success of their ticket in New Orleans' municipal elections, held on April 2, 1849.\(^4\) When the Whigs held their state nomination convention at the Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, they had good reason to believe they would be successful in the state


\(^3\)New Orleans \textit{Weekly Delta}, December 11, 1848.

\(^4\)New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, April 3, 1849.
elections. Delegates at the Baton Rouge convention represented all but four of the state's parishes. John Moore of St. Mary Parish was elected president of the convention, and the following vice presidents were chosen: Thomas Gibbs Morgan, Henry A. Bullard, Thomas Chinn, and Joshua Baker. Chosen as secretaries for the convention were Thomas Bangs Thorpe of Baton Rouge, a well known literary figure, John E. Layet of New Orleans, and Thomas C. Nichols of St. Mary Parish. The convention failed to choose any candidates for Congress in the first and fourth districts; however, Charles M. Conrad was nominated as the candidate in the second congressional district, and Richard Stewart, the "fighting Parson" was nominated for the third district. The convention then proceeded to nominate the candidate for governor, and on the second ballot Alexander Declouet was chosen against his only opponent, Christopher Adams. Duncan F. Kenner was nominated for the office of Lieutenant Governor, and Louis Bordelon was chosen Whig candidate for Auditor.

The Whig delegates were divided into two factions, the old "setfast" Whigs who held tenaciously to their outmoded political principles, and the young Whigs who were more vigorous and practical. The young Whigs sponsored a resolution in the convention calling for the election of the

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state judiciary, and denouncing the Democrats for appointment of corrupt judges. The Democrat Governor Isaac Johnson had appointed practically all of the judges under the reorganization of the state's judiciary provided for in the convention of 1845. Charles M. Conrad led in defeating this resolution in the convention because he did not want to antagonize all of the judges. The issue became an important one in the gubernatorial campaign, with both parties supporting it and claiming the issue as their own.

Among the Democrats there were also a number of popular favorites who might be nominated for governor. They were Trasimond Landry, the Lieutenant Governor, Charles Gayarre, the Secretary of State, and Joseph Walker from western Louisiana. Within the Democratic party there was a division very much like that of the Whig party, between the old Democrats and the young members of the party. Joseph Walker was nominated after assurances were made that he would be true to party principles. He was known to have friends among the Whig ranks, and his predecessor, Johnson, had appointed Whigs to office. The Democrats wanted to prevent an occurrence of this sort if Walker were elected.

Walker's running mate John B. Plauche, was fifty-five

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7Baton Rouge Gazette, May 14, 1849.
8New Orleans Daily Delta, December 10, 1849.
years old, born in New Orleans on February 28, 1789. His father was born in Marseilles, France, and his mother was a native of New Orleans. He served as commander of a battalion of Orleans volunteers in the Battle of New Orleans. He had no real political experience. When Plauche and Walker spoke in Shreveport an observer there thought of them as two "antiquated gentlemen." Walker was a native of New Orleans who had obtained a plantation in Rapides Parish. He served several terms in the state legislature, and had become a wealthy cotton planter, and a firm supporter of Democratic principles. The campaign began slowly because of a critical series of floods in both New Orleans and other areas of the state, caused by heavy rains. The candidates found it difficult to travel about the state because of high water, and many of them were busy trying to protect their land from inundation. Thus the question of levee construction and maintenance was thrust into the state political campaign.

Solomon W. Downs spoke at a political meeting in Monroe on June 23, 1849, and asked the question, "Who is General

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9 New Orleans Weekly Delta, July 9, 1849.
10 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 29, 1849.
12 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 3, 1849.
Declouet?" Downs and Declouet had served together in the state house of representatives and senate, and in the opinion of Downs, Declouet was an ultra-Whig who opposed all reforms, amendment of the constitution, and the extension of the right of suffrage. Downs said these views had prevented Declouet's constituents from choosing him as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1845, and had kept him out of public office since that time.14 Downs, then Democratic United States Senator, had opposed the Wilmot Proviso, and made a minority report on Stephen Douglas' bill for the admission of California.15

The Whigs held a mass meeting in New Orleans to ratify the Baton Rouge nominations of Declouet and Duncan F. Kenner. Declouet, possibly following Taylor's lead, told the audience he had not sought the nomination, but while he was pursuing his quiet avocation as a planter, he had been suddenly called to assume responsibilities to which he was a stranger. He also raised the taunting question, "Who is Alexander Declouet?" and one commentator said he had difficulty answering his own question. Duncan Kenner, candidate for Lieutenant Governor, followed Declouet to the platform and said that the Democrats had made the elective judiciary issue the most important one of the campaign, and that the Democrats were the bitterest foes of the issue.16

14New Orleans Weekly Delta, July 16, 1849.
15New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 24, 1849.
16New Orleans Weekly Delta, June 11, 1849.
The Whigs met again in the Pontchartrain railroad depot on June 14, and a journalist who deemed himself independent, said it was a "tremendous" meeting. The Fillmore Rangers attended in large numbers, and numerous speeches were made by Declouet, Judah P. Benjamin, Louis LeBeau, Edward Sparrow, and Preston W. Farrar.17 A Democratic meeting was held the same night in Carrollton with far less success, even though Joseph Walker was the speaker. Walker was aided in the presentation of the Democratic program by Isaac T. Preston, J. F. H. Claiborne, Charles Diamond, Wyndham Robertson, and John C. Beatty.18

At a Whig meeting again held at the Pontchartrain Railroad depot, Declouet said, "It has been said that the convention passed over our first-rate men, for the purpose of sacrificing a second or a third rate man!" A rumor was circulated around the meeting that the two most eminent men of the party withdrew from the nomination because they knew they could not defeat a Democratic candidate. Edward Sparrow spoke glowingly of Taylor's administration and instructed the Whigs not to disappoint the president.19 J. C. Beaty, a Democrat lawyer from Lafourche, spoke at a meeting and compared the two parties. Beaty said the Democratic party

17 New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 15, 1849.
18 Ibid.
19 New Orleans Weekly Delta, June 18, 1849.
was the party of progress and the Whig party was the party which held back, and preferred present evils to the dangers of reform and experiment. He said the Democratic motto was "go ahead" and the Whig motto was "stability." Even some Whigs shared this view, and in a letter published in the New Orleans *Weekly Delta* a Natchitoches Whig said he opposed the ultra-Whigs, and favored change.

A poorly attended Democratic meeting was held at St. Mary's Market on Tchoupitoulas Street on June 20, 1849. Samuel Locke called the meeting to order and John M. Bell was chosen president. The high tariff was denounced by Joseph Walker, and the gubernatorial candidate plead great fatigue and shortened his speech made in a familiarly off-hand style. Charles M. Conrad defended his support of the Jackson party at a Whig meeting held in Lafayette, the New Orleans suburb. R. N. Ogden, of Baton Rouge, spoke on the recent success of the Whigs in the presidential election, and said that the Democrats had assumed a name to which they were not entitled, since the Whigs were the true Democrats who had always given their sincere sympathies to their fellow man. Ogden also said that Declouet, like Taylor, had been called from his fireside and the pleasures of domestic life.

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by the spontaneous wish of his fellow citizens.\textsuperscript{23}

Declouet was charged with being opposed to universal manhood suffrage, and hostile to naturalized citizens. He vehemently denied these charges, and referred to his vote in the legislature of 1840 when he opposed sending a resolution to Louisiana's congressmen instructing them to revise the naturalization laws.\textsuperscript{24} W. R. Howard, a young lawyer originally from Alabama, and one of the best stump orators in the state, addressed a Democratic meeting and denounced Taylor, Declouet, and Whiggery. He said that the Democrats condemned legislation like protective tariffs because they increased particular trades by taxing all the rest. Howard was not very consistent in his political ideology, since he was a Harrison supporter in 1840, a Tyler man when Harrison died, a Polk supporter in 1844, and a campaigner for Taylor in 1848.\textsuperscript{25}

After a month spent in New Orleans campaigning for governor, Declouet returned home to the Attakapas, western district of Louisiana.\textsuperscript{26} The young Whigs continued an active campaign for his election.\textsuperscript{27} Voters were urged to support

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} New Orleans \textit{Weekly Delta}, June 23, 1849.
\item \textsuperscript{24} New Orleans \textit{Daily Delta}, June 25, 1849.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{26} New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, June 28, 1849.
\item \textsuperscript{27} New Orleans \textit{Weekly Delta}, August 27, 1849.
\end{itemize}
Declouet and Kenner because they would foster industry in Louisiana and improve navigation on its waterways.

The Democrats organized Walker Clubs throughout the state, and the Chalmette Guards in New Orleans. The Democrats of Orleans Parish held a convention and nominated three candidates for the state senate. They chose William Dunbar, Charles F. Daunoz, and Junius Beebe. Dunbar was a native of Virginia, where he studied law before opening his practice in Alexandria, Louisiana. There he was elected to the state legislature as a Whig, a Virginia Whig whose Whiggery was tinctured with the spirit of States' Rigidity. As a Whig he did not denounce the naturalized citizens, whom he considered worthy Americans. He deserted the Whig party before the presidential contest of 1844, in which he was an ardent supporter of Polk and expansionism. Charles Daunoz, described as "easy going", was the member of one of the oldest and largest Creole families in the state. He had served several terms in the state house of representatives. Junius Beebe first went to New Orleans as a mate on a ship. He remained in the city and worked as a towboat captain. Eventually, he became the general manager of an extensive business.

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28 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 5, 1849.
29 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 12, 1849.
30 New Orleans Daily Crescent, September 12, 1849.
31 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 27, 1849.
called the Towboat Company. 32

An Orleans Parish Whig convention nominated three men to oppose the Democratic nominees. They chose Felix Labatut, Cyprien Dufour, and Gaillard Hunt. Labatut was a member of a prominent Creole family, several times member of the state legislature and city council, and an expert in commerce and banking affairs. Cyprien Dufour, a New Orleans lawyer who spoke French and English, had learned law under the direction of the Democratic chieftain Pierre Soule. Theodore Gaillard Hunt was a Whig of the liberal class who favored the extension of popular rights and the curtailment of governmental functions. 33 Theodore Hunt had two well known brothers who were also Whigs. Randell Hunt, who graduated from the College of South Carolina, was known as a learned man. In the state house of representatives he had managed the impeachment proceedings against Judge Elliott. Doctor Thomas Hunt received his medical education in Philadelphia and Paris, and was one of the founders of the Medical College of Louisiana. 34

As the campaign continued the Democrats organized Walker Clubs throughout the state, 35 and the Chalmette Guards in

32 New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 1, 1849.

33 Ibid.


35 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 12, 1849.
New Orleans. A movement to give support to the Memphis Convention called for railroad support, was participated in by leaders of both political parties. Both parties were criticized for conducting a campaign devoid of principles, and carried on solely for the sake of power and the pride of victory.

Both parties held large meetings on October 13, 1849; the Democrats at Bank's Arcade, and the Whigs at Tivoli Circle. The Whigs were called to order by James A. Caldwell, a wealthy public utilities developer. Charles M. Conrad addressed the overflow Whig crowd, in a speech which emphasized the virtues of President Taylor. Simultaneous meetings were again held on October 20, 1849; the Whigs at the Pontchartrain Railroad depot, and the Democrats in Congo Square. The Whigs met again in New Orleans at Terpsichore Hall on October 24, and showed considerable excitement over the approaching election.

On October 29, the Whigs held a barbecue at the planta-

36 New Orleans Daily Crescent, September 12, 1849.
37 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 27, 1849.
New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 8, 1849.
38 New Orleans Daily Delta, October 13, 1849.
39 Ibid., October 14, 1849. New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 14, 1849.
40 New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 21, 1849.
41 Ibid., October 25, 1849.
tion on Gentilly Road belonging to Judge Joachim Bermudez. Six thousand persons were present to hear addresses by Sargent S. Prentiss, Duncan F. Kenner, Balie Peyton, William Christy, Edmund Bermudez, and Isaac N. Marks. Tables groaned under the weight of roast meats and caskets of claret and ale. Several bands played music under hundreds of banners at the event. Unfortunately, a man of either Irish or Italian descent was murdered after the feast, and he was apparently a Democrat. Whigs met again on October 1; this time at the St. Louis Exchange, while the Democrats met on the neutral ground on Canal Street. In the last stages of the campaign the Democrat leaders were denouncing Whigs for supporting the issue of an elective judiciary, mainly because the Democrats said they were the original supporters of this innovation. Large political gatherings were addressed by orators of both parties until the day of the election.

The election was on Monday, November 5, 1849, and it was one of the most active ever witnessed in New Orleans. Voting in the Parish of Orleans was heavier than it had been.

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43 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 1, 1849.
44 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, October 31, 1849.
45 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 3, 4, 1849.
46 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 7, 1849.
in the recent presidential election: exceeding the presi-
dential vote by 272. Taylor's majority in the parish was
972 votes, and in the city it was 1,091. General Walker's
majority in the parish was 252, and in the city the guberna-
torial candidate had a majority of 129 votes. Declouet
carried only one of the three municipalities in New Orleans,
by a majority of 229 votes. Orleans Parish also elected
thirteen Whigs and twelve Democrats to the state house of
representatives, and two Democrats and one Whig to the senate.
Daunoz and Beebe were the Democrat-elect senators, and Cyprian
Dufour was elected as a Whig.\(^47\) Democrats in Orleans Parish
who had voted for Taylor in the presidential election had
now returned to their original political party.

Declouet received large majorities in traditional Whig
strongholds like Lafourche and Attakapas, majorities that
were larger than those given to President Taylor. Declouet
also received strong majorities in St. Mary and St. Landry
Parishes. His gains in these districts were offset by
Walker's strength in the northwestern parishes. As the re-
turns trickled in from distant parishes, it became obvious
that the fourth congressional district was the real battle
ground of the contest. Walker's majorities in the third and
first congressional districts exceeded that of Declouet in

\(^{47}\text{New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 7, 1849.} \\
\text{New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 14, 1849.}\)
the second district by less than two hundred votes. 48

When reporters went to the state house to obtain election returns from the office of the secretary of state, they found them written on the walls in pencil. 49 Final returns showed Joseph Walker was elected governor by a vote of 18,566 to 17,553 for Declouet, a majority of 1,013. John B. Plauche won the office of Lieutenant Governor by a vote of 18,200 to Duncan F. Kenner's vote of 17,778. Louis Bordelon, the Whig candidate for auditor, defeated the Democrat candidate for that office, Zenon Ledoux, by a vote of 17,762 to 17,385. 50 As a result of elections for the legislature, the senate was composed of fourteen Whigs and eighteen Democrats; the house contained fifty-four Whigs and forty-three Democrats; thus the Whigs would have a majority of seven on a joint ballot. 51

The Democrats elected their governor and lieutenant governor, the latter an office of no patronage, and the Whigs elected their auditor, a "fat office" of some patronage; and the state legislature contained a majority of Whigs. 52 It

49 New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 28, 1849.
50 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 24, 1850.
52 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 11, 1849.
was believed that the success of the Democrats was due to the return of the Taylor Democrats to the party, largely because of their disappointment at the manner in which the patronage was distributed. It was hoped that the new governor would not disappoint his party, as Isaac Johnson had done, by appointing Whigs to office. His patronage, including the appointment of two hundred notaries, would be one of the largest ever wielded by an executive in Louisiana.

The congressional elections had been rather quiet, except in the third or Florida district where a vituperative contest had taken place between Richard Stewart, surnamed "Black Dick," and John H. Harmonson, called the "Catahoula Pony" or "Hard-Face Harmonson." Harmonson, the Democratic incumbent, had introduced the Swamp Bill in Congress, calling for the reclamation of Louisiana's swamplands. He was accused of owning one thousand acres of this land and such a project would benefit him. The project was called "Harmonson's Humbug" and the campaign was termed the most vindictive in the annals of party warfare. Harmonson was accused of being opposed to the annexation of Texas, the sugar tariff, an abolitionist, and a liar. His opponent,

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53 Ibid., November 18, 1849.
54 Ibid., December 9, 1849.
55 New Orleans Weekly Delta, September 3, 1849.
Stewart, publicly admitted he could not win the election, but he was determined to fight it out. The two candidates appeared in the Jackson College chapel, a few miles north of Baton Rouge, and when Harmonson said he was too ill to speak, Stewart departed. Then Harmonson proceeded to talk for three hours without interruption. He won the election by approximately three hundred votes. 56

In the first or Plaquemines district, Emile La Sere, the Democrat incumbent, defeated Judge Jackson by 800 votes. Charles M. Conrad, the Whig candidate, defeated J. C. Beatty by over 400 votes in the second or Lafourche district. Isaac Morse, the Democrat incumbent of the fourth district, who had refused to run for governor, 57 won over R. N. Ogden in the fourth or western district. 58 Thus three Democrats and one Whig had been successful in the congressional elections. They were to join Pierre Soule and Solomon W. Downs, Louisiana's Democrat United States Senators.

The new seat of state government was Baton Rouge, some seventy-five miles up the Mississippi River from New Orleans. The records of the government were moved there on December 1, 1849, the last day that New Orleans could remain the capital.

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56 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 5, 12, 19, 26, August 8, 15, 22, 29, October 31, November 14, 1849.
57 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 11, 1849.
When the legislature convened at Baton Rouge for the first time, the outgoing Governor Isaac Johnson delivered his last message. Its text was primarily concerned with the budget and education. Joseph M. Walker took his oath of office as the chief executive of the state on January 28, 1850. His inaugural address contained recommendations for an elective judiciary, improvements for the public school system, a denunciation of the abolitionists, and the suggestion that the state send delegates to attend a convention at Nashville, Tennessee, called by the South to resist northern aggression. There was serious opposition in New Orleans to the Nashville convention, and the opposition gained considerable strength during the early spring of 1850. The message was attacked as a "pompous" paper which seemed unsatisfactory in all respects.

Preston W. Farrar was elected speaker of the house by a vote of fifty-three to forty-three, with some voters crossing party lines. James G. Bryce was elected president pro tempore of the senate; and the legislature jointly chose

59 New Orleans Daily Crescent, December 3, 1849.
62 New Orleans Daily Delta, January 30, 1850.
63 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 30, 1850.
64 New Orleans Daily Delta, January 23, 1850.
65 Ibid., February 3, 1850.
the New Orleans Bee, a Whig journal, as the official organ of the state.

The legislators proposed numerous amendments to the constitution, so numerous indeed that it was suggested that a convention be called to write a new constitution. The Constitution of 1845 was criticized because it contained too many details which should have been left to the legislature, left New Orleans under-represented in the legislature, denied the voters the right to elect important state officials, and made a distinction between native and naturalized citizens. Upon naturalization, a citizen would still have to wait two years in Louisiana to vote, even though he might have resided in the state twenty years prior to his naturalization.

The lower house, with a strong Whig majority, passed a bill providing that the question of a constitutional convention be submitted to a popular vote. The senate, with a Democratic majority, rejected the bill by a majority of ten votes. The Democrats seemed to fear that a new constitution would permit the state to support banks and other corporations, and thus recreate the panic situation of 1837. Various constitutional amendments met the same fate as the proposed call

67 New Orleans Daily Delta, February 15, 1850.
68 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 21, 1850.
69 Ibid., March 8, 1850.
70 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 8, 1850.
for a constitutional convention, that is they were passed in the house and then rejected by the senate, despite the admission by many legislators that a constitutional change was needed.⁷¹ Amending the existing constitution was not sufficient; a new one was desired by leaders in both political parties.⁷²

Opposition to the Nashville Convention continued, and since the legislature was called upon by both governors Isaac Johnson, and Joseph Walker, to send delegates, the question was an important one. It was being debated in Louisiana while the national Congress was seeking the solutions which led to the Compromise of 1850. Sending delegates to the Nashville Convention seemed to some to be a step in the direction of dissolution of the Union.⁷³ The house of representatives asked Governor Walker to state what the purpose of the Nashville Convention was, and he replied that its purpose was to protect Southern interests.⁷⁴ New opposition to the convention was expressed when it was learned that many southern states were not sending delegates to Nashville.⁷⁵ In the senate resolutions were adopted to force the

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⁷¹ New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 19, 1850.
⁷² New Orleans Daily Delta, March 20, 1850.
⁷³ New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 1, 1850.
⁷⁴ New Orleans Daily Delta, February 19, 1850.
⁷⁵ New Orleans Daily Crescent, February 23, 1850.
governor to call the legislature into session if the Wilmot Proviso, or a restriction of slavery were passed by Congress. Cyprien Dufour, and other Whig senators, opposed the resolution with vigor, and also opposed sending delegates to the Nashville convention, included in the Wilmot Proviso resolutions. Louisianians opposed the Nashville convention because it was seen as the "... first step to disunion." This stand was denounced as "false and base," but the legislature refused to send delegates to Nashville, a fact that was attributed to Daniel Webster's Seventh of March speech on the Compromise of 1850.

During the legislative session the speaker of the house, Preston W. Farrar died of cholera. He was born in Lexington, and attended Transylvania University there. He studied law in Kentucky and moved to Woodville, Mississippi. He served as speaker of the house in the Mississippi legislature before suffering financial reverses during the bank failures of 1839. He moved to New Orleans to rebuild his fortunes by practicing law, and was elected to the house under the constitution of 1845. He was forty-four years old when he died, a life-long

76 Louisiana Senate Journal, 3 leg., 1 sess., pp. 29-30.
77 New Orleans Daily Delta, February 22, 1850.
78 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 9, 1850.
80 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 21, April 4, 1850.
Whig, and his body was buried in the New Orleans State House Square.

When faced with the election of a new speaker of the house, the Whigs walked out of the legislature fearing they did not have sufficient strength to elect one of their party. Several Whigs were absent and it was known that at least two would vote for the Democrat Edward W. Moise. The Whigs held a caucus and nominated Joseph W. Walker, of Vermillion Parish. Walker was defeated by the Democrat nominee Moise in a vote of forty-four to forty-one. The Whigs had a majority in the house, but on the roll call ten Whigs and one Democrat were absent; seven of the Whigs were not in Baton Rouge, but three of them were. In the balloting T. C. Scarbrough, of Ouachita, and J. M. Morrow of Claiborne, both Whigs, voted for Moise. The three Whigs who were in Baton Rouge, simply walked out of the legislature when the voting began, and "cooly" returned after it was over. There was "great disgust" among the Whigs at this "treachery." When the legislature adjourned, forced to do

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82 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 15, 1850.


84 New Orleans Weekly Delta, March 15, 1850.
so by the constitutional limit of sixty day sessions, its members were accused of having done not one act "worthy of commendation."\(^{85}\)

Many of the southern delegates to the Nashville convention passed through New Orleans \textit{en route} to their meeting. There were no delegates from Louisiana, and the pretense that the meeting was fully representative of the southern people was abandoned.\(^{86}\) Six of the slaveholding states had no representatives at all in the Nashville convention and only two or three states had given official support to their delegates who attended.\(^{87}\) The convention adjourned on June 12, 1850, after having been in session for six days. An address to the southern people was adopted, but many delegates refused to sanction its promulgation.\(^{88}\) It had no influence on the deliberations of Congress except "... in heightening the pretensions of some ultras."\(^{89}\) Francis Lieber, the German liberal teaching at the College of South Carolina, described the Nashville convention as a "Torchdance" which might end in a "conflagration" of the Union. He wrote to Webster, "The saddest of all things is to see the ruin of your country and to see how it ought to

\(^{85}\) \textit{Plaquemine Southern Sentinel}, March 27, 1850.
\(^{86}\) \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, May 28, 1850.
\(^{87}\) \textit{Ibid.}, June 7, 1850.
\(^{88}\) \textit{New Orleans Daily Crescent}, June 17, 1850.
\(^{89}\) \textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune}, June 21, 1850.
be averted, but to have no power. 90

Before the state legislature adjourned a special election was called to fill the vacancies caused by the resignation of four Democrats from the legislature. Three of them came from the third representative district of New Orleans, the central business district of the city. 91 From that district John C. Larue had been appointed judge of the first district court in New Orleans. 92 James V. Caldwell and T. V. Starke had also resigned as representatives of the third district. William Monagahan had resigned from the first representative district, also in New Orleans. Managahan was replaced by another Democrat, H. B. Kelly, while three Whigs won in the third district. They were Henry A. Bullard, Theodore G. Hunt, and J. W. Price. 93

These elections were held while the state was still mourning the death of President Zachary Taylor. The people of the state were disappointed at Taylor's distribution of the patronage, although he had appointed Samuel J. Peters as Collector of the Port of New Orleans, 94 Balie Peyton as

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90 Webster Papers, letter from Francis Lieber to Daniel Webster, June 6, 1850.
91 New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 16, 1850.
94 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 4, 1849.
Minister to Chile, and Thomas W. Chinn as Charge to Naples, and Ralph King as consul to France. During the controversy over the Wilmot Proviso and other national issues which led to the Compromise of 1850, Taylor did not take a uniquely southern position, and he lost southern support by his vain effort to gain control of the settlement from Congress.

As the stormy debate continued in Congress, it was suggested that Senators should be elected by the people, and not by the state legislatures. Congress was urged to pursue the doctrine of non-intervention with regard to the slavery question. The controversy in Congress was deemed a threat to political parties as well as to the federal Union. Then Henry Clay came forward to play the role of the compromiser for the last time, when he introduced his resolutions that prevented secession for ten years. His resolutions were described as an "amicable arrangement" of all questions growing out of the subject of slavery. Clay was hailed as a non-partisan, not seeking political office, but acting as a patriot and statesman for the whole nation.

95 Ibid., November 14, 1849.
97 New Orleans Daily Crescent, January 7, 1850.
98 Ibid., January 21, 1850.
100 New Orleans Daily Crescent, February 6, 1850.
101 Ibid., February 11, 1850.
102 Ibid., February 16, 1850.
ana's Senator Solomon Downs denounced the resolutions as "no compromise at all." Denator Downs was to change his mind about the compromise, and this was in keeping with an editorial statement in the Daily Picayune, "... Mr. Clay's famous compromise resolutions, which, notwithstanding the outcry at first raised against them by southern members, are gaining ground daily with the people, and are susceptible, by judicious alterations, of healing all dissensions." Henry Stewart Foote's suggestion that a committee of thirteen members be appointed to report a plan of compromise was seen as an "encouraging sign." Extremists on both sides of the issues were denounced as "madmen" hurrying the nation to destruction.

On March 4, 1850, John C. Calhoun made his Senate speech on the compromise, or rather John Y. Mason of Virginia delivered the text for the ill Calhoun. His speech, "... sufficiently shows that the ultraism of his views finds few supporters in the South." Calhoun's speech was also regarded as "... a manifesto tending to the dissolution of the Union."

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103 Ibid., February 22, 25, 1850.
104 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 27, 1850.
106 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 8, 1850.
107 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 9, 1850.
108 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, March 13, 1850.
Daniel Webster then delivered his speech on the 109 Seventh of March. He was supported in New Orleans by 110 thousands who felt they owed him their thanks. The 111 speech "... glows with a true Catholic spirit of American 111 feeling." The enthusiastic reception of Webster's speech indicated, "... the clouds are breaking away, and anon the 112 sun will shine forth in its wonted splendor upon a reconciled and once more happy Union." More praise was bestowed upon Webster, who was no longer considered a local man with sectional bias, but a national statesman. 113

William H. Seward of New York spoke in the Senate against the compromise resolutions, and these "harsh sounds of Free Soil indigation," were not well received in Louisiana. 114 Seward had assumed a position which "... cannot fail to weaken the ties that bind the Union together." 115 John C. Calhoun's death at this critical moment in the great debate was deeply mourned by Louisianians. However, denunciation of Seward

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110 Ibid., March 15, 1850.
111 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 16, 1850.
112 Ibid., March 20, 1850.
113 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, March 27, April 3, 10, May 16, 1850. New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 25, 1850.
114 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 20, 1850.
115 Ibid., March 22, 1850.
116 New Orleans Daily Delta, April 2, 1850. New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 1, 1850. New Orleans Bee, April 1, 1850.
continued in Louisiana journals, and he was considered the leader of the radical abolition faction in the north. 117

Excerpts from the committee of thirteen were printed in the *Daily Picayune*, and the editorial comment was that these suggestions were "excellent." 118 Their reception by the southern press was "... in general, very favorable." 119

Louisiana's Senators took opposite sides on the compromise question. It was reported that they would discharge their duties "... to the South and the Union." 120 Downs had replied to a speech by Soule denouncing the compromise. Downs defended the Fugitive Slave Law and said that he would vote for the compromise because it was the best the South could obtain. 121 The majority of the people of Louisiana were said to be opposed to Soule's position. 122 When a dinner was given in honor of Samuel J. Peters, numerous toasts were drunk with expressions of attachment to the Union. 123 The South was given the choice of accepting the compromise, the presidential plan, or taking up arms and

117 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 14, June 27, 1850.
118 Ibid., May 17, 1850.
119 Ibid., May 19, 1850.
120 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 2, 1850.
121 *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, June 12, 1850.
122 Ibid., June 18, 1850.
On July 1, 1850, Soule proposed an amendment prohibiting territories from passing any law prohibiting or establishing slavery. It was carried in the Senate by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-five.\textsuperscript{125}

On July 9, President Zachary Taylor died. He had been criticized in Louisiana for his "menaces" against Southern congressmen.\textsuperscript{126} An avowed Whig, J. Prescott Hall, had written to Daniel Webster saying that the country, and the party, had little faith in Taylor's cabinet. He also said, "Hence I fear, that the administration is doomed, and the Whig Party doomed with it."\textsuperscript{127} Although his presidential plan for the admittance of California into the Union was not well received in Louisiana, it was motivated by the "purest patriotism." Taylor's death from "bilious cholic" was mourned in Louisiana, where the New Orleans mayor issued a proclamation asking that business be suspended as a mark of respect.\textsuperscript{129} The \textit{Daily Picayune} noted, "Twice this calamity has fallen upon the people of the United States, and both times it has fallen on the persons of eminent soldiers, and

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\item \textsuperscript{124}New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, June 29, 1850.
\item \textsuperscript{125}Ibid., July 17, 1850.
\item \textsuperscript{126}New Orleans \textit{Daily Delta}, March 3, 1850.
\item \textsuperscript{127}Webster Papers, letter from J. Prescott Hall to Daniel Webster, May, 1850. No specific date.
\item \textsuperscript{128}New Orleans \textit{Daily Crescent}, May 11, 1850.
\item \textsuperscript{129}Ibid., July 12, 1850. Plaquemine \textit{Southern Sentinel}, July 13, 1850.
\end{itemize}
both Whigs—the only Whig Presidents elected by the people since the division of parties."\textsuperscript{130} Congressman Charles M. Conrad, who was criticized for opposing the admission of California in the house, \textsuperscript{131} delivered an address to that body on the death of Taylor. \textsuperscript{132}

The Vice President, Millard Fillmore, of New York, became the President of the United States, and issued a message to the national legislature recommending that they do whatever was necessary concerning the "funeral obsequies" for President Taylor. \textsuperscript{133} Fillmore was proclaimed a Whig who would stand fast by his party despite the "... tendency to break up old party associations and to create new combinations." \textsuperscript{134} When it was charged that Fillmore was a foundling raised by a wealthy family, the Whigs strongly denied the statement. \textsuperscript{135} He was attacked by "... Free soilers and abolitionists on one hand and Nullifying Disunionists on the other." \textsuperscript{136} Daniel Webster was advised to take his place "... at the right hand of the President, and be the right arm of his administration...." In this way

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  \item \textsuperscript{130} New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, July 12, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{131} New Orleans \textit{Daily Crescent}, April 11, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} Baton Rouge \textit{Gazette}, August 3, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} Richardson, \textit{Messages and Papers of the Presidents}, V, 64.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} New Orleans \textit{Daily Crescent}, July 15, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Ibid., July 16, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Baton Rouge \textit{Gazette}, August 3, 1850.
\end{itemize}
the Whig party and the nation could be saved. Nathan Sargent also wrote Webster to show his appreciation for what Webster was doing "... to teach us what is our duty to do now, in order to preserve, enjoy, and transmit to our children, the glorious heritage which is ours--ours as Americans, ours as one people--ours as a common property...."

Louisiana Whigs speculated that Randell Hunt might be appointed to Fillmore's cabinet, and it was noted that Louisiana had received only one cabinet appointment in its history, that of Edward Livingston. However, it was Charles M. Conrad, then in Congress, who received the appointment to the cabinet, as Secretary of War. A Whig convention met at Donaldsonville to nominate a candidate to run in an election called to replace Conrad. Despite a division in the convention between the rural and the city delegates, Henry A. Bullard won the nomination over Theodore G. Hunt. The Democrats nominated ex-Governor Henry Johnson, a staunch Whig, to oppose Bullard. This second congressional district

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137 Webster Papers, letter from D. D. Barnard to Daniel Webster, July 11, 1850.
138 Ibid., letter from Nathan Sargent to Daniel Webster, July 18, 1850.
139 New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 25, 1850.
141 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 13, 1850.
race resulted in a victory for Bullard. Congressman J. H. Harmonson died and an election was called in the third district to replace him on November 30, 1850. Christopher Adams refused the Whig nomination, and the Whig convention could not choose a candidate to run in the election. The Democrats nominated Alexander Gordon Penn of Covington, who won the congressional election over Colonel W. R. Steward, a Whig who ran without the endorsement of the party. The election was regarded with little interest by the Whigs of the third district.

Penn was born in Patrick County, Virginia, on May 10, 1799. He moved with his family to Lexington, Kentucky, and in 1821 he moved again to St. Tammany Parish. There he established himself as a sugar planter and was elected to the state house of representatives in 1821. He served as postmaster of New Orleans from 1845 to 1849; was elected to Congress in 1850; re-elected the following year and served until March 3, 1853. He returned to private business until the end of the Civil War, when he moved to the District of Columbia where he died on May 7, 1866.

Meanwhile the controversy over the Compromise of 1850

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142 Baton Rouge Gazette, October 5, December 15, 1850.
143 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 7, 1850.
144 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 23, 1850.
145 Ibid., December 7, 1850.
continued in Louisiana and the nation. It was first reported that the compromise had been defeated, and Senator Downs was denounced for his support of the compromise in Congress. A letter to Downs signed by eleven residents of the area between the Red and Ouachita Rivers in Louisiana, implored the Senator to return home because he did not represent public opinion in the state. The people of the area were described as "American-born citizens of Anglo-Saxon origin" who were emigrants from South Carolina and Georgia. The Senator replied that the opinions expressed in the letter were not those of most people in Louisiana. It was noted that not a single newspaper in Louisiana opposed the compromise. The southern Senators who had helped defeat the compromise were denounced for having "... assumed a responsibility fearful to contemplate." The southern opponents to the compromise were, "... the violent men of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi... declaring that the only remedy consistent with honor and safety for the South is revolution!" Despite southern opposition all of the measures comprising the compromise were passed by September 17, 1850.

147 New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 3, 9, 1850.
148 New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 9, 1850.
149 Ibid., August 10, 1850.
150 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 10, 1850.
151 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 21, 1850.
Senator Pierre Soule then returned to Louisiana where he was serenaded at the St. Louis Exchange in New Orleans. There he defended his anti-compromise position, saying that he had faithfully represented the will of a majority of Louisiana's people. Two days after the meeting a letter from Soule appeared in the Daily Delta denying that he had called Henry Clay a traitor for Clay's support of the compromise. Repercussions from his speech at the St. Louis Exchange continued, and there was "... a very perceptible bubbling and seething of the democratic cauldron in this city." Some Union Democrats were obviously dissatisfied with Soule's opposition to the compromise, but his defenders praised him because he had "... so nobly defended and espoused the cause of the South." The Whigs were reminded that they had some claim to Soule, because without their support in the legislature he could not have been elected Senator. A letter from a "laborer" observed that the controversy centering around Soule could only terminate to the detriment of the Senator.

Downs answered a letter addressed to him by a group of

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152 New Orleans Daily Delta, October 16, 1850.
153 Ibid., October 18, 1850.
154 Ibid., November 3, 1850.
155 Ibid., November 6, 1850.
156 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 8, 1850.
157 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 8, 1850.
Democrats, who wanted to know if he favored dissolution of the Union, secession of the state, and the creation of a confederacy. The Senator answered unhesitatingly, "no."

A meeting was held at Bastrop, in Moorehouse Parish on September 26, to approve Downs' course in the Senate. 158 A Union meeting was held at Banks Arcade on November 12, 1850, which was attended by Democrats and Whigs who supported the compromise. 159 Six hundred Democrats addressed a public letter to Soule defending his course of action. The signers were said to have been chiefly naturalized citizens. 160 Soule published a statement of his political creed as follows:

I mean to remain entrenched within that constitution which I was sworn to support. I am devoutly and unreservedly attached to the Union which it has cemented; a UNION OF SOVERIGNS IN A CONFEDERACY OF EQUALS: and until the State to whom alone I owe allegiance summons me to other duties and to these resolves, by that Union, and no other, am I determined to stand. 161

William W. King published a letter asking Soule, "If you are not a disunionist, pray, sir, tell us what you are." 162

A Louisianian wrote the following comments to his brother:

158 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 9, 1850.
159 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 13, 15, 1850.
160 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 16, 1850.
161 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 20, 1850.
162 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 21, 1850.
Louisiana is sound on the subject of the Union. There is a faction in the state who are dissatisfied with the legislation of the recent sessions of Congress. They endorse and commend the course of Mr. Soule, one of our Senators. Mr. Soule is a Democratic Senator elected by a Whig legislature. He opposed the compromise bills, and since his return from Washington, has made several inflammatory noncommittal speeches. He will not openly avow whether he is in favor of disunion or not. He is a man of good talent and had it not been for his influence in Congress it is quite likely that the compromise would have passed in its omnibus form as framed by the committee of Thirteen.163

When Senator Downs visited New Orleans a number of celebrations and parades were held in his honor. Henry Clay wrote to R. A. Upton of Iberville Parish and thanked him for a copy of resolutions passed at an Iberville Parish Union meeting. Clay said the resolutions, "... breathe a spirit of patriotism, and of loyalty to the Union, highly honorable to Louisiana."164

A large Union meeting was held at the St. Charles Theatre on November 27, 1850.165 Bands played "Yankee Doodle" and "Hail Columbia" to a crowd jammed from "pit to dome." Judah P. Benjamin, Governor Isaac Walker, and Solomon W. Downs were the principal speakers. The crowd was called upon to renew its allegiance to the Union, and Downs predicted that the two political parties would be merged into

163 John C. Tibbetts Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives, letter from H. B. Tibbetts to John C. Tibbetts, about November, 1850.
164 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 23, 1850.
165 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 27, 1850.
one great Union party. But the Whigs were sternly admonished to preserve their organization.

A Southern Rights meeting was held on November 30, at the St. Louis Exchange. Pierre Soule and John Claiborne addressed the crowd on the subject of the constitutional rights of the South. Charles Gayarre was unable to attend, but he published a letter saying that he was sympathetic with the purpose of the meeting.

Division of the state Democratic and Whig parties on the subject of the compromise, was a reflection of division that was occurring within the national organizations. Whigs attended Southern Rights meetings, and Democrats attended Union meetings in Louisiana. It was the Whig party, however, which was unable to withstand the shock of slavery and sectionalism, and was eventually destroyed.

An editorial in the Daily Delta noted that the Whig party was divided into two factions on the eve of Taylor's death. One faction, led by Seward, who had gained the president's confidence and control over New York, opposed the compromise. The other faction favored the compromise offered by Henry Clay. The death of Taylor temporarily healed the division,

166 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 30, 1850. New Orleans Daily Delta, November 28, 29, 1850.
167 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 30, 1850.
168 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 1, 1850.
169 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 6, 1850.
and Fillmore, who had been opposed to Seward and the Free Soilers, was now in a position to throw his presidential prestige behind the compromise. The compromise was believed to be a victory for Fillmore, and his friends were working toward his re-election. The editorial stated, "The object of connecting his name with a great Union party and movement, begins to display itself."\(^{170}\)

Although Fillmore was popular in Louisiana, his official policy with regard to the filibustering expeditions against Cuba, organized in New Orleans, was not. One expedition was suppressed by Taylor in 1849,\(^{171}\) but the adventurers continued their activities in New Orleans. Taylor acted again in May, 1850, to prevent any vessels from leaving New Orleans with the intention of landing armed troops in Cuba. His action was censured, but it was agreed that he was only doing his duty.\(^{172}\) W. S. Scott wrote that the Cuban expedition in May excited a great deal of interest in New Orleans, "... though the press says little about it."\(^{173}\) The diarist, Samuel J. Peters, Jr., wrote the following:

\(^{170}\) Ibid., December 4, 1850.

\(^{171}\) Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, V, 11. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 9, 1850.

\(^{172}\) New Orleans Daily Crescent, May 24, 1850.

\(^{173}\) Snyder Papers, letter from W. S. Scott to Alonzo Snyder, May 9, 1850.
An attempt is now being made to liberate Cuba from the yoke of Spain. Narisco Lopez is at the head of this liberating expedition, which is of course uncountenanced by our government. We would all like to see Cuba free—so would the majority of the Cubans, but let us acquire that island by purchase.174

President Fillmore continued the neutral policy of Taylor with regard to filibustering.175 When the steamer "Pampero" sailed from New Orleans on an expedition to Cuba, President Fillmore dismissed the Collector of the Port of New Orleans, the ex-mayor of New Orleans, James P. Freret. The president was not satisfied that Freret had done everything possible to prevent the vessel from sailing.176 Christopher Adams was appointed to the post, but apparently turned it down because George C. Lawarason of New Orleans ultimately received the appointment.178 Freret was an old Whig who in addition to being Mayor in New Orleans, was also a member of the state legislature, and had opposed the extension of the suffrage in 1844.179 Freret was appointed

174 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for May 6, 1850.
176 Webster Papers, letter from Millard Fillmore to Daniel Webster, September 2, 1851.
177 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 13, 1851.
178 New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 1, 1851.
179 New Orleans Daily Delta, October 17, 1851.
by Taylor after Samuel J. Peters' appointment was not confirmed by the Senate. Fillmore appointed not only Lawrason as Collector, but also W. C. McAlpin as Superintendent of the Mint in New Orleans, and George W. Christy as the Deputy Superintendent of the Mint.  

The filibustering problem continued to be an important one throughout 1851, but more important politically were the compromise and Union questions, related issues around which the state's elections centered. It was with an air of excitement that southerners waited to determine whether or not the Compromise of 1850 would fulfill its expectations. Fillmore's position with regard to the compromise was praised, and thus the Whigs became the party in Louisiana which supported the compromise, while the Democrats were labeled the disunionist party. 

At a meeting of the Iberville Parish Whigs in the courthouse at Plaquemine, some apathy was noted among those who attended. The meeting, called to nominate candidates for state senator, members of the house, and to choose delegates to attend a convention in Baton Rouge to nominate a candidate for Congress in the third district, was, "... not so fully

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180 Ibid., October 19, 1851.
181 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 30, 1851.
182 Carrollton Star, April 19, May 31, 1851.
183 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 27, 1851.
184 Ibid., June 21, 1850.
attended as heretofore...." While praise of the compromise continued, other Whig and Democratic meetings were held on the local level to select candidates and delegates. In a meeting held in St. Mary Parish the Whigs passed resolutions approving of the course of Democratic Senator Downs on the compromise, and denouncing the disunionists. Such resolutions were atypical of those passed in all Whig meetings where nominations were made.

In New Orleans, on the eve of the November elections, torchlight processions were sponsored by both parties. After the election it was noted that the Democrats beat the Whigs "...two to one in all their processions, and yet were badly beaten in the election." Shortly before the election the belief was expressed that party differences were fewer than they had ever been before. The Democrats favored such reforms for the state as could be accomplished under the old constitution. The Whigs wanted reform under a new constitution.

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186 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 13, 1851.
187 *Plaquemine Southern Sentinel*, July 5, 1851.
188 *Carrollton Star*, July 12, 1851. *New Orleans Daily Delta*, September 13, October 6, 1851.
189 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 20, 1851.
190 *New Orleans Daily Delta*, November 5, 1851.
191 *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 2, 1851.
When the results of the election were announced in New Orleans, it was stated that, "The democrats have been completely routed in the election of yesterday."\(^{192}\) In Orleans Parish the Whigs elected state Senators Judah P. Benjamin and James Robb, thirteen members of the state legislature, and the Sheriff, John P. Freret.\(^{193}\) Before returns were complete it was announced that the Whigs had elected thirteen representatives from Orleans Parish, two in Jefferson, one in St. Charles, two in St. James, one in Ascension, three in Assumption, one in Terrebonne, three in Lafourche, one in East Baton Rouge, one in West Baton Rouge, one in Pointe Coupee, one in Iberville, one in St. Tammany, one in St. Helena, one in Madison, one in Catahoula, two in St. Mary, and three in St. Martin.\(^{194}\) When the returns were complete, it was clear that the Whigs and Democrats would each be represented in the state senate by sixteen members. The house would contain fifty-three Whigs and forty-four Democrats. On a joint ballot the Whigs would have a majority of nine.\(^{195}\) Speculation began immediately about possible Whig candidates for the United States Senate. Among the Whigs most prominently mentioned were Duncan F. Kenner, Randall Hunt,

\(^{192}\) New Orleans Daily Delta, November 5, 1851.

\(^{193}\) New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 5, 1851.

\(^{194}\) New Orleans Daily Delta, November 6, 1851.

\(^{195}\) Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 15, 1851.

\(^{195}\) New Orleans Daily Delta, November 16, 23, 1851.
Christopher Adams, Judah P. Benjamin, and Samuel J. Peters. 196

Aside from the compromise question in the state elections, the Whig victory was probably due to that party's continued espousal of the elective judiciary question, and a constitutional convention. The previous legislature had also been severely criticized for passing 120 acts in the last twenty days of its session. That legislature had cost $88,977, approximately $1,500 per day. 197

In the congressional elections of 1851, Emile Lasere, the first congressional district incumbent, declined to run for re-election. The Democrats nominated Louis St. Martin to run in the place of Lasere, and St. Martin opposed the Whig candidate Richard Hagan. 199 St. Martin was a young Creole lawyer from New Orleans. In the second congressional district Theodore G. Hunt, Isaac Marks, Samuel J. Peters, Sr., and Alexander Cuthbert Bullitt declined to seek the nomination and Aristide Landry of Ascension Parish was the favorite. 200 Theodore G. Hunt was a candidate for the nomination, but his brother Thomas Hunt killed J. W. Frost, editor of the New Orleans Daily Crescent, in a duel arising over the Whig

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196 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 29, 1851.
197 Ibid., June 7, 1851.
198 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 26, 1851.
199 New Orleans Daily Delta, August 14, 15, 1851.
200 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 27, 1851.
201 New Orleans Daily Delta, August 10, 1851.
nomination. Ascension Parish Whigs recommended the nomination of J. Aristide Landry at the convention held in Donaldsonville on August 11, 1850, and he received the nomination. There was no organized opposition by the Democrats of the second district to the election of Landry.

The third congressional district race witnessed the Whigs having difficulty finding a candidate to oppose the Democratic incumbent A. G. Penn, who opposed the compromise. Robert L. Waterson declined the Whig nomination for personal reasons. The third district Whigs met again in Baton Rouge on August 30, 1851, and chose R. A. Upton to replace Waterson. Upton promised to uphold the compromise, and he opposed the "fanatics" who sought the dissolution of the Union. In the fourth congressional district the Whigs "... brought out one of their old wheel horses..." Judge John Moore, to oppose the Democratic incumbent Isaac E. Morse. Moore, a Union Whig, was told that he would receive

202 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 11, 1851.
203 Ibid., August 8, 1851.
204 New Orleans Daily Delta, August 13, 1851.
205 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 26, 1851.
206 Ibid., August 16, 1851.
207 Ibid., September 6, 1851.
208 Ibid., September 20, 1851.
209 Ibid., September 27, 1851.
210 New Orleans Daily Delta, August 28, 1851.
a greater vote than his district had ever cast for a congress-
man because the Democrats were tired of Morse, a difficult
"... dose for them to swallow." During the campaign, on
August 21, 1851, there were demonstrations in New Orleans
against the Spanish government, when the Americans learned
that government had executed several Americans captured on
filibustering expeditions. These outbursts had no effect
on the political campaigns then waging because both parties
probably supported such expeditions.

When the election results were in it was seen that the
Democrat Louis St. Martin defeated the Whig Hagan in the first
district. J. Aristied Landry, Whig, was elected in the second
district. Penn, incumbent Democrat of the third district
easily defeated R. A. Upton, and John Moore defeated the Demo-
crat incumbent Isaac Morse. A supporter of Moore said
that there was great excitement in Franklin over the election
results. He talked to Alexander Porter's widow and said,
"I saw Mrs. Porter yesterday and the old judge himself could
not have been more delighted with the great Whig victory."
Another Whig considered Moore's election a "triumph over Disunion."\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{215}Ibid., letter from J. H. Dinkgraal to John Moore, November 28, 1851.
CHAPTER VII

THE LAST WHIG SUCCESS AND
FAILURE IN LOUISIANA

The year 1852 was crowded with three important political issues; the constitutional convention movement, the presidential election, and general state elections. The Whig party won its last important victory in the constitutional movement, and immediately suffered defeat in the presidential campaign and in the state elections.

There had long been a great deal of dissatisfaction with the Constitution of 1845. By 1851 there was a "remarkable degree" of unanimity in favor of a constitutional convention. It was predicted that the legislature of 1852 would debate the convention question, and many hoped that in view of the many unsatisfactory provisions in the Constitution, the legislature would provide for its replacement. Restraints placed by the constitution upon state support of corporations and banks were believed "... not in accordance with popular sentiment." A new system of banking was required as well as state support for railroad corporations. The Whigs also advocated an elective judiciary, and were accused by the Democrats of

1New Orleans Daily Delta, May 9, 1851.
2Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 24, 1851.
3Ibid., June 14, 1851.
political "plagerism," since the Democrats claimed this issue as their own. The Whigs of New Orleans held a "parochial convention" in October, 1851, and adopted a set of resolutions that included support of the following measures: an elective judiciary, a homestead exemption law, and power given to the state to create railroads and banks, and a more perfect system of education. The Constitution of 1845 so severely restricted banking that by 1850 there were only five commercial banks doing business in New Orleans, insufficient to afford adequate banking facilities. Whig advocacy of these measures was admittely a reason for that party's success in the elections of 1851, when numerous Democrats voted for Whig candidates in the state's election. Yet many Democrats were also in favor of revision of the constitution. Isaac T. Preston supported a constitutional convention, and he was labeled a "radical democrat," who had predicted in 1845 that the people of the state would in ten years "rise up against" the constitution of that year. The country Democrats were apparently opposed to a constitutional convention because they

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5. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, October 18, 1851.
8. Ibid., November 6, 1851.
believed its purpose would be to give the city greater representation in the legislature, and to move the capitol back to New Orleans. 9

An integral part of the constitutional movement was a growing demand for more railroads in Louisiana, especially the creation of a trans-atlantic railroad that would originate in New Orleans. Such a project was deemed the most important issue for the people of Louisiana and the entire Mississippi Valley in 1851. 10 The governor was asked to call a special session of the legislature to give support to the Tehauntepec Railroad project, 11 but he refused. A railroad convention met in New Orleans in April, 1851, 12 and the call which went out for delegates to attend the convention was thought a device to awaken the slumbering energies of the people of the state. 13 James Robb, elected president of the railroad convention was a constant supporter of imaginative railroad projects. 14 Judah P. Benjamin visited President Fillmore seeking information about a treaty with Mexico which

9Ibid., November 28, 1851.
10New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 10, 1851.
11Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 16, 1850.
13New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 14, 1851.
would aid the construction of the southern trans-Atlantic route. James Robb expressed the reason for the concern over railroads in a speech made on Halloween night, 1851, "Twenty years ago the whole produce of the Valley of the Alleghany was sent to New Orleans, but a revolution has taken place and their flour and other articles have taken another course...." The "revolution" was an obvious reference to changes in transportation caused by railroad construction, and produce of the upper valley was no longer funneled through New Orleans to the ports of the world, as it had been when the river was the most important mode of transportation. Congressmen, like John Moore were urged to do all in their power to aid construction of the railroads in Louisiana.

When Governor Walker read his message to the legislature in January, 1852, he said that he had refused to call a special session of the legislature to deal with the railroad question because its expense would be too great. In the same message the governor also expressed his opposition to a new constitution, but he did favor new banking laws. An 1851 bill to enlarge the banking privileges of the

15 Webster Papers, letter from Millard Fillmore to Daniel Webster, July 19, 1851.
16 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 1, 1851.
17 Weeks Papers, letter from John C. Brooke to John Moore, April 26, 1852.
18 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 21, 1852.
Citizen's Bank of New Orleans passed the legislature, but was vetoed by the governor.\textsuperscript{20} Despite the governor's opposition, the advantages of state aid to corporations were receiving more popular support.\textsuperscript{21}

The bill calling for a constitutional convention passed the Whig controlled legislature despite Democratic opposition.\textsuperscript{22} A young Democrat and future governor, Robert Wickliffe, expressed the hope that the country Democrats would be given time to organize before the election of delegates would take place.\textsuperscript{23} Another citizen expressed his views as follows:

Our legislature appears busily engaged in undoing all that has been done heretofore, I presume the people of the state will decide on having a new constitution, as they seem to have a passion for making constitutions, fortunately it will be difficult to make a worse. I should vote for a new one with pleasure, if one of the articles should be that the legislature should meet but once in twenty years, and sit but twenty days, a stable government with bad laws is better than frequent changes.\textsuperscript{24}

The convention bill of the legislature provided a popular election for April 12, 1852, to allow the voters the choice of rejecting or accepting the proposed convention. The Whigs were called upon to organize themselves for a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} New Orleans \textit{Daily Delta}, January 24, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., January 25, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{22} New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, February 25, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Snyder Papers, letter from Robert Wickliffe to Alonzo Snyder, February 12, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Weeks Papers, letter from W. L. Harding to John Moore, February 27, 1852.
\end{itemize}
supreme effort in support of the convention. Central Whig committees were organized on both the parish and state levels to turn out the vote in favor of a convention. The constitution of 1845 was condemned because it forbade the organization of internal improvement companies, by limiting the existence of corporations to twenty-five years. On the subject of banks it was said, "Our present constitution absolutely provides for their annihilation." On the day of the election the merchants were urged to vote for the convention because canals and railroads were diverting trade from New Orleans to eastern cities. Banking laws had to be changed to allow for financial expansion and the construction of canals and railroads in Louisiana. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed constitutional convention. In New Orleans the vote was 5,490 in favor of the convention and 171 opposed to the convention. Even though the Whigs took the lead in advocating constitutional revision, it is obvious that the mass of Democratic voters also desired change.

A month after approval of the convention call, the voters went to the polls and chose delegates to attend the

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25 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, March 27, 1852.
26 New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 3, 1852.
27 Ibid., April 12, 1852.
28 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 13, 1852.
New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 13, 1852.
convention. In the election for delegates the Whigs supported men who favored a system of free banks and internal improvements. In the election the Whigs won eighty-five seats, and the Democrats obtained forty-five. It was an "overwhelming" victory for the Whigs.

When the convention met in July the Whigs proceeded to write a constitution that incorporated their most ardent desires. Duncan F. Kenner was elected president, and Judah P. Benjamin seemingly acted as the "whip" for the Whig majority in the convention. The Whigs, by omission, removed all restrictions on corporations, and except for a few mild regulatory measures, allowed the banks freedom to operate. There was little debate on these measures.

The issue which created the most debate and public discussion was the basis of representation in the legislature. The Whigs advocated use of the total population as the basis of representation, a device designed to counteract the growing influence of New Orleans in the general assembly. As the Baton Rouge Gazette explained it, "There existed with

29 New Orleans Daily Crescent, May 1, 1852.
31 New Orleans Daily Crescent, June 16, 1852.
the country a feeling to restrict the city in her representation, and as a compromise, this clause was inserted.\textsuperscript{34}

This issue was described as the rock upon which the convention might split, with the country delegates deserting the convention. To save the convention this embarrassment, the city yielded to the country on two points; the total population basis for representation which was an advantage to the rural parishes with a large number of slaves; and restriction of representation in the senate of any one parish to one-eighth the numerical strength of that body.\textsuperscript{35}

By this last measure, with the senate limited to thirty-two members, New Orleans would have only four senators, no matter what its population might be. The New Orleans population was approximately one-fourth the entire population of the state, and some criticism of the total population basis was heard there.\textsuperscript{36} The system of representation definitely favored the southern rural parishes with large slave populations at the expense of north and northwestern Louisiana where the hill farmers owned few slaves.\textsuperscript{37} Nevertheless, the new system of representation was incorporated in the Constitution of 1852.

\textsuperscript{34}Baton Rouge \textit{Gazette}, August 14, 1852. New Orleans \textit{Daily Crescent}, August 18, 1852.
\textsuperscript{35}New Orleans \textit{Bee}, July 23, August 4, 1852.
\textsuperscript{36}New Orleans \textit{Daily Crescent}, August 16, 1852.
\textsuperscript{37}New Orleans \textit{Daily Delta}, August 8, 1852.
The Constitution of 1852 was generally well received, and its provisions were certainly more "liberal" than the Constitution of 1845. After the convention adjourned on July 31, 1852, the constitution was then submitted to a popular vote at the November presidential election. The measure carried by a vote of 19,286 to 16,004, a majority of 3,282. During the interval between adjournment of the convention and the constitution's adoption at the polls, a protracted campaign was carried out by the Whigs to support its popular acceptance. The new constitution was printed in full in several newspapers. The New Orleans Daily Crescent carried a series of editorials entitled "The New Constitution Vindicated" in which the old constitution was compared to the new one. Most of the opposition was centered on the basis of representation, and this part of the constitution was denounced in meetings at Alexandria, Natchitoches, and Bossier. The opponents to the constitution were said to have been the Democrats, and it was

38 New Orleans Weekly Delta, August 15, 1852.
39 New Orleans Bee, November 24, 1852.
41 New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 1852.
42 New Orleans Bee, September 20, 1852.
43 West Baton Rouge, Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, September 8, 1852.
charged that the total population basis of representation placed the Negroes on an equal basis with the white electorate.

To counteract opposition to the representation basis of the constitution, the Whigs stressed the soundness of the new constitution's power to form corporations and expand banking facilities. When the constitution was adopted on November 2, 1852, it was deemed a Whig victory. Orleans Parish cast 5,065 votes for it, and 3,832 votes against its adoption. Supposedly, the Whigs of Orleans Parish voted for the Democrat President Pierce, and the Democrats, as part of the bargain, voted for the adoption of the constitution. William C. Carr, of Farmerville, Louisiana, reported that adoption of the constitution, with the unpopular total population basis, was "... up-hill business for the Whig Party in North Louisiana."

The new constitution provided that all male white citizens of the United States who were twenty-one years of age or older could vote, if they had been residents of the state for one year, and of the parish where they voted for six

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44 New Orleans Bee, October 30, 1852.
46 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, November 13, 24, 1852.
47 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 6, 1852.
48 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 13, 1852.
months. No distinction was made between a natural and a naturalized citizen. The only age and residence restrictions were those placed on the governor, who had to be twenty-eight years old and a resident of the state for four years. Qualified voters were eligible to serve in both the state senate and the house of representatives. The legislature, elected biennially, was to meet once each year.

Many officials in the state's government and judicial system were made elective. The secretary of state, secretary of the treasury, and the attorney general, were all made elective. District attorneys were to be elected within their respective districts. The members of the supreme court, and the judges of the inferior court system were all made elective. Amending the constitution was relatively simple, since the legislature, by a two-thirds vote, could submit the amendment to a popular vote at the general election following the legislature's action.

The Whigs of Louisiana received the news of the final acceptance of the new constitution at the same time they learned that their presidential candidate, Winnfield Scott, was defeated by Franklin Pierce. This was the last presidential election in which the Whig party played an important role, because it would be destroyed by sectionalist issues which made a national Whig organization impossible. The Compromise of 1850 had brought to a climax the many diverse issues which had created discord within the party for fifteen years. An attempt had been made in 1850 to create a Union
party by bringing together the various elements of both established political parties which supported the compromise. This attempt to rally a Union party in Louisiana was a failure. Alexander H. Stephens and Robert Toombs had started the Union party movement in Georgia, and Henry S. Foote had been one of its advocates in Mississippi. Toombs and Stephens were described as too "exacting" to fraternize with northern Whigs, and too "whiggish" to associate with Democrats. They established a "third estate" whose main principle was isolation from both parties as the best way of protecting the rights of the South. When the Union party won victories in Georgia and Mississippi they were denounced as victories of disunionist Democrats.

With obvious discord tending to destroy the national Whig party, speculation began concerning possible Whig presidential candidates. There was the "... manly old Hal of the West...," and Daniel Webster whose one drawback was his reckless improvidence concerning financial matters; John J. Crittenden who was overshadowed by Clay, and finally President Fillmore.

Webster was prominently mentioned as a candidate for a

49 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 13, 1850, February 21, September 12, 1851.
50 Ibid., November 26, 1851.
51 Ibid., November 28, 1851.
52 Ibid., March 21, 1851.
convention to be called by the Union-Compromise Whigs. He received a formal call to be a candidate in a National Union convention, where he would be nominated with Howell Cobb of Georgia, who would be the vice-presidential candidate. This call was independent of all other party, state, or national conventions, and the convention would completely abandon all sectional issues. The Whigs were gaining new confidence in Webster because his support of the compromise had "... inspired confidence and admiration in the South...." The movement to nominate Webster did not make much progress in Louisiana. Clay resigned from the Senate, however, and publicly stated that he had accepted election to that position only because of the crisis arising out of the acquisition of territory from Mexico. It was believed that Clay was preparing to seek the nomination.

President Fillmore was the decided favorite of the Whigs in Louisiana, and they rejoiced when they learned that he would be a candidate in the national convention. James G. Richardson of Jeanerette wrote, "I am rejoiced to hear that

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53 Ibid., November 30, 1851.
54 Webster Papers, letter unsigned to Daniel Webster, October 20, 1851.
55 New Orleans Daily Delta, December 2, 1851.
57 New Orleans Daily Delta, November 13, 1851.
58 Ibid., February 6, 1852.
Fillmore counts to be a candidate. I travelled considerably last spring and summer and I never heard but one man say Fillmore was the man—and that one was a democrat...."59 Whigs in the Louisiana legislature met prior to adjournment in February, 1852, and decided to call a state presidential nominating convention to be held in Baton Rouge on March 16, 1852. 60 There was little doubt that the convention would nominate Fillmore. 61 One Whig party member wrote to Congressman John Moore and said, "There is I believe but one opinion in our state in regard to the candidate of the Whig Party—viz. that Wm. Fillmore is the man—We want no Platform but his acts during his present term—they are sufficient and satisfactory."62 On the eve of the state nominating convention the Whig Rangers were urged to rally to the support of Fillmore. 63 At approximately the same time the Scott Association was formed in New Orleans to advertise the candidacy of Winnfield Scott.

The Democrats held their state nominating convention before the Whigs met. The Jackson Association, formed by

59 Weeks Papers, letter from James G. Richardson to John Moore, February 18, 1852.
60 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 21, 1852.
61 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, February 28, 1852.
62 Weeks Papers, letter from J. Y. Sandige to John Moore, March 4, 1852.
63 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 6, 1852.
64 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, March 13, 1852.
young Democrats, espoused the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas, and they were aided by young leaders. Older "party chieftans" favored the nomination of a Democratic presidential candidate whose views were not so well known. John Slidell worked vigorously for his old personal friend James Buchanan, but he was opposed by Pierre Soule who favored the nomination of Franklin Pierce. Although Douglas was reportedly the favorite, the Democratic state convention at Baton Rouge nominated Lewis Cass over Douglas by a vote of one hundred and one to seventy-two. In the convention only three of Louisiana's forty-four parishes were unrepresented.

When the Whigs met in Baton Rouge on March 16, 1852, they had the advantage of knowing what candidate the Democrats had chosen in Louisiana. Acting in harmony the Whigs nominated Fillmore for the presidency and John J. Crittenden for the vice-presidency, with no votes of dissent. The Whigs also adopted a platform in the convention which was primarily an endorsement of the proposed constitutional convention. The Whigs also fully supported the Compromise

65 New Orleans Daily Delta, February 5, 1852.
66 New Orleans Weekly Delta, January 9, 1852.
69 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 20, 1852.
of 1850, and indicated that Fillmore was in complete accord with its many provisions. Judge Thomas Curry wrote the following report of the convention:

We held a splendid Whig convention yesterday in this city. It was numerously attended and held in the representatives' hall. Dr. W. Brashear in his 76th year presided. President Fillmore was unanimously nominated as the first choice of Louisiana for the presidency. The nomination was received with acclamation and great enthusiasm. Hon. John J. Crittenden was also nominated as the first choice for vice president in like manner. The convention passed superb resolutions and platform that cannot fail to please the Whigs all over the U. States. Toward the close the Hon. J. P. Benjamin was called for and delivered a most splendid speech.

Despite the enthusiasm for Fillmore, it was known that Scott would probably receive the nomination, and that he had a large following in Louisiana. Mr. E. M. Martin of Opelousas noted, "There is much apathy amongst the whigs. Great numbers of our party refuse absolutely to vote for Scott altho' there seems no disposition to vote for the Democratic nominee." The reasons for Louisiana Whig support for Fillmore are explained in a letter to John Moore.

My reasons for believing that Mr. Fillmore should be the candidate are, as I think, sound reasons. I have no doubt that had Genl. Taylor lived, the compromise would never had received the executive sanction, although it might have been passed by the houses. The success of that great measure, which has had the happy effect of allaying prejudices,

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70 New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 29, 1852.
71 Weeks Papers, letter from Judge Thomas Curry to John Moore, March 17, 1852.
72 Ibid., letter from E. M. Martin to John Moore, April 7, 1852.
of reconciling dissensions, and of repressing unreasonable and sectional demands and reclama-
tions, is due mainly to Mr. Clay, and next, to the weight which the well known opinions of Wm. Fillmore and his cabinet carried with them. It was a Whig measure, and carried through by Whig influence, altho' it would be unjust to deny that many noble-minded Democrats were among its next most active supporters. The President then, by this act, and by his honest and constant policy of carrying into faithful execution the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, has secured the attachment and confidence of the Whigs of the South, and of a large portion of the Southern Democrats also.73

Mr. J. N. Ray stated, "... I think Fillmore stronger than Webster Clay or Scott and if we select a man from a free state Fillmore is our strongest man."74 J. W. Bledsoe of Bossier Parish, who described himself as a life-long Whig, said, "Clay would be my man now, but I suppose his days are past."75

When a Whig congressional caucus, on the eve of the national convention, refused to agree that only a compro-
mise man should be nominated, several members withdrew in protest. Among those who withdrew was Louisiana's Congressman John Moore. He was told, "Your course in withdrawing from the whig caucus is I think very generally approved in this parish. It is thought here that Genl. Scott cannot

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73 Ibid., letter from E. B. Carr to John Moore, April 9, 1852.
74 Ibid., letter from J. N. Ray to John Moore, January 19, 1852.
75 Ibid., letter from J. W. Bledsoe to John Moore, May 3, 1852.
76 New Orleans Daily Crescent, May 7, 1852.
carry a single southern state." Another correspondent said, "I most heartily approve the course pursued by yourself and associates in leaving the Whig caucus." This last correspondent, W. F. Weeks, also expressed deep concern over the fact that Scott's candidacy would re-awaken sectional prejudices. He said, "No whig can have my vote unless he supports the compromise." When Franklin Pierce was nominated by the Democrats, Weeks again wrote his approval of Moore's caucus action. He added the following comments:

The democrats made a capital selection for their candidate for the presidency. It will be another Jas. K. Polk Affair. Nothing is known of this man, he has done nothing good nor ill. If Scott is chosen by the Whigs, farewell to all hope of having a Whig president. He has but few friends in this state. I have already heard many Whigs express a preference for Pierce.

When the Whig national convention met at Baltimore on June 16, 1852, the New Orleans Daily Crescent expressed the hope that unity would prevail in the convention. Louisiana's six Whig delegates worked for the nomination of Fillmore, but to no avail. One observer at the convention wrote "... the division in the Whig Convention might result in withdrawing Mr. Fillmore, Mr. Webster and Genl. Scott." It

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77 Weeks Papers, letter from W. C. Wilson to John Moore, May 12, 1852.
78 Ibid., letter from W. F. Weeks to John Moore, May 13, 1852.
79 New Orleans Daily Crescent, June 17, 1852.
80 New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 2, 1852.
81 Crittenden Papers, letter from J. R. Underwood to J. J. Crittenden, June 19, 1852.
was the hope of this observer, J. R. Underwood, that in such an eventuality John J. Crittenden might receive the nomination. When Scott was nominated the following statement was made: "We are free to say, that, in common with a majority of the whigs of Louisiana, we preferred Millard Fillmore as the whig candidate for the Presidency." The Whig nominee was called an "... insignificant man with a military title...."

The death of Henry Clay in Washington at eleven A.M. on June 29, 1852, was mourned by the people of Louisiana. At the same time, however, the process of trying to get Whig support for Wimfield Scott was begun. The resolutions passed at the national convention were all supported. The Whigs held a mass meeting on Canal Street on July 1, 1852, and those who attended carried banners with such slogans as "Constitution," "Internal Improvements," and "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

But it was to be difficult to sell the Whigs of Louisiana on the idea of supporting Scott. W. L. Parham, a Whig presidential elector, wrote a letter to Isaac N. Marks,

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82 New Orleans Daily Crescent, June 23, 1852.
83 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 26, 1852.
84 Ibid., July 3, 1852. New Orleans Bee, July 1, 1852.
85 New Orleans Daily Crescent, June 30, 1852.
86 New Orleans Bee, July 2, 1852.
Chairman of the Whig Central Committee of New Orleans, and resigned as an elector. He said that it was decided upon prior to the convention not to support Scott, and now that the general had been nominated he saw no reason to change his mind. Another Fillmore supporter, Harry Hill, described as a large slave-holder and a merchant of the highest standing, also announced he would not support Scott. When the telegraph brought the news that Scott was pledged to support the compromise, Hill then changed his mind and announced he was for Scott. When the Union Whigs like Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens announced they would not support Scott, it was noted that the Democrats were "... transported with rapture." Some Whigs were reconciled to Scott's nomination; one of them, William C. Case stated, "General Scott was not the choice of the Whig Party of Louisiana but I believe the whigs are willing to do battle under his flag, he being sound on the compromise and adopting the Resolution of the Southern delegation will give us a fair chance to do good work for him." The Scott Associations of Louisiana went to work for their candidate, and he was declared to be a southerner. Scott was supposedly opposed only by the

87 Ibid., July 3, 1852.
88 Ibid., July 9, 1852.
89 Weeks Papers, letter from William C. Case to John Moore.
90 New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 12, 1852.
91 New Orleans Bee, July 10, 1852.
secessionists and the abolitionists, as well as the Free Soilers, and the obvious inference was that no southern Whig could vote with these elements. Scott's military career was emphasized and compared with that of Pierce, who "... sprained his leg, fell from his horse, fainted and resigned his commission." Whig disaffection for Scott continued and the New Orleans Bee pleaded with Whigs to forget their chargrin at the defeat of Fillmore in the convention. The Democrats were supposedly depending on Whig disappointment with Scott to help them elect Franklin Pierce. Another "Bolter" named Sam C. Reid, Jr., left the Whig party because of his dissatisfaction with Winfield Scott. Another Whig, W. W. Huntington also expressed his dissatisfaction with the Whig nomination and explained his reasons as follows:

Scott is certainly a Whig, and a compromise man, and I will put aside the fact, as far as in me lies, that in nominating him my party has proved unfaithful to principles inasmuch as it has taken the availability of military feeling against the civil services of a man who for twenty years has fought every foot of ground with Locofocoism.

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92 Ibid., July 13, 1852.
93 Ibid., July 15, 1852.
94 Ibid., July 14, 1852.
95 Ibid., July 21, 1852.
96 New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 20, 1852.
97 Baton Rouge Gazette, July 24, 1852.
98 Weeks Papers, letter from William Huntington to John Moore, August 16, 1852.
Thomas W. Watts wrote to Congressman John Moore the following:

There is some difficulty or there is some dissen­sion in the party--exertion must be made to bring them back. I would be glad to hear from you in regard to the prospects. The Democrats are grow­ing at a great rate. And I must acknowledge I feel doubtful, to say the least. 99

Despite disaffection and uncertainty the Whigs continued to emphasize the importance of maintaining the compromise, 100 while the Democratic candidate Pierce was said to be opposed to the fugitive slave law. 101 Pierce's party was also the party that was trying to involve the United States in the "mazes of European politics" by championing the cause of the Hungarian patriot Kossuth. 102 Harvey Hayes, Duncan F. Kenner, and Randall Hunt addressed a Whig barbecue in Baton Rouge on August 2, 1852. 103 The Scott Rangers of New Orleans attended and the crowd was estimated to be from four to five thousand people. 104

When the Democrats held a state ratification meeting in Baton Rouge on July 9, to second the nominations of Franklin

99 Ibid., letter from Thomas W. Watts to John Moore, August 18, 1852.
101 New Orleans Bee, July 24, 1852.
102 Ibid., July 19, 1852.
103 Baton Rouge Gazette, August 3, 1852.
104 New Orleans Bee, August 4, 1852.
Pierce for the presidency, and William R. King for the vice-
Presidency, the meeting was described as a "... rather lame
affair." Pierce was attacked as a man who was unsympa-
thetic to the South; one who was a good American, but not
outstanding. In south Louisiana the Democratic nominee
was accused of being anti-Catholic.

The Whig presidential electors were chosen at a meeting
of the Whig central committee on August 27, 1852. They were
Jacques Toutant, Christian Roselius, Duncan F. Kenner, G. W.
Waterson, Alexander Declouet, and John Ray. At the same
meeting the decision was made to nominate a candidate for
governor and other state officials, at a meeting to be held
on November 11, 1852. Whigs were making preparations for
a state general election to be held in January, 1853, in case
the constitution was ratified in November. As the electors
were being chosen the Whigs were showing some sign of over-
coming their disappointment with Scott. Abner L. H.
Duncan, President of the Scott and Graham Club of East
Baton Rouge Parish, stated that Scott's prospects were grow-
ing stronger every day. Joseph M. Moore, a nephew of
Congressman Moore's, wrote from Opelousas to say that he no

105 New Orleans Daily Crescent, July 9, 1852.
106 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 10, 31, 1852.
107 New Orleans Bee, August 17, 1852.
108 West Baton Rouge Capitilian Vis-A-Vis, September 1,
1852.
109 New Orleans Bee, August 30, 1852.
110 Weeks Papers, letter from Abner L. H. Duncan to
John Moore, September 4, 1852.
longer believed the anti-slavery charges made against Scott. He added, "I am sorry however that others in our community have been unable to satisfy themselves that the charges are unfounded."  

On September 9, it was reported that eight Whig barbecues were being planned in Alexandria, Franklin, Opelousas, Greenburg, Natchitoches, Mandeville, Bossier, and in Claiborne Parish.  

Scott's record as a military hero was pressed upon the reading public. When he was accused of being an abolitionist by the Democrats, his defenders said that in every presidential campaign since 1836 the southern Democrats had accused the Whig candidate of being anti-slavery. Another "Bolter" publicized his defection, this time it was a Democrat who left his old party to join the Whigs because that party was the "liberal" party. Lack of confidence in Scott remained in the minds of Louisiana Whigs, and even the New Orleans Bee, a Whig journal, admitted it was "suspicious" of Scott's views on slavery. However, it hastened to add

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111 Ibid., letter from Joseph M. Moore to John Moore, September 5, 1852.
112 New Orleans Bee, September 9, 1852.
113 Ibid., September 14, 1852. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 11, 1852.
114 New Orleans Bee, September 13, 1852.
115 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 18, 1852.
that this suspicion had been allayed. Henry M. Hyams of Alexandria, Louisiana, exhorted John Moore to take a more active part in the campaign in the following manner:

Join in the active stand the Whigs of the Union (and of the South in particular) are now taking for perpetuation of our institutions our liberties and our property, against the Democratic party in whose success we only see the dire consequences of abolition—agrarianism—intervention and anarchy. After that comes despotism as a choice of evils.

The reference to "intervention" concerns the Hungarian Kossuth, and Whigs in general seemed to be offended by his suggestion that the United States aid Hungary. John N. Ray, a Whig presidential elector, said:

I feel proud that the President and Congress have taken the stand they have, that is not to interfere with the international concern of the European powers. Moral suasion is the only force that our government ought to exercise in favor of the oppressed of other countries.

G. M. Seagraves wrote to Congressman Moore and approved the latter's opposition to Kossuth's doctrine of intervention.

E. B. Carr, a Catholic, denounced the Democrats for taking up Kossuth's cause and denounced the "Slovak Apostle" for heaping "taunts and insults" upon the Catholic Church.

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116 New Orleans Bee, September 23, 1852.
117 Weeks Papers, letter from Henry M. Hyams to John Moore, September 25, 1852.
118 Ibid., letter from J. N. Ray to John Moore, January 19, 1853, previously cited.
119 Ibid., letter from G. M. Seagraves to John Moore, January 19, 1852.
120 Ibid., letter from E. B. Carr to John Moore, April 9, 1852, previously cited.
Samuel J. Peters, Jr., was also opposed to the doctrines for which Kossuth stood. 121

The Whigs continued their political meetings in an ever increasing number as the election continued. Two hundred Baton Rouge area Whigs rode the steamboat "Ben Adams" to Bayou for a "Jollification." Speeches were made there by Hamilton M. Pierce, Robert Barrow, and Preston Pond to a crowd of 1,500 people. After several songs were sung the crowd paraded through St. Francisville with torches. 122 Another Whig barbecue was held in front of the Plaquemine courthouse on October 2, 1852. Sidney Robertson presided as president, while David N. Barrow, Adolph Grass, and A. S. Robertson were elected as secretaries. The speakers included William Christy, Judah P. Benjamin, Robert Preaux, and the "piney woods pony" George W. Watterson. Their addresses were made from a wooden platform erected on the courthouse grounds which collapsed during the orations, but no one was injured. Some wag remarked that the Whigs were also a "levelling" party. 123

The Democratic Governor Walker delivered a speech in New Orleans on October 9, and sounded a Jacksonian tone in his denunciation of the Whigs. The governor said that the

121 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for November 30, 1851.
122 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, September 29, 1852.
123 Ibid., October 6, 1852.
Whigs were a secretive party, always working "underground." The Whigs he said were rich and lived in "palaces," while the Democrats lived in log cabins. The Whigs were rich, but the Democrats were "earnest" and "numerous" and were thus assured of success. The nation had always advanced under Democratic rule, but retrograded under the Whigs.

The governor was followed by Greer Davidson, who talked of annexing Cuba to the United States. Two days after this speech there was a "tremendous" gathering at Lafayette Square in New Orleans to demonstrate against Spanish insults to the American flag. The number of demonstrators was estimated at 20,000.

Judah P. Benjamin denounced Pierre Soule for alluding to Scott as a "Feathered Mendicant" during a speech the former made at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts. But Benjamin was scored for writing a letter of instructions to his proxy at the Whig nominating convention telling him that under no circumstances would Louisiana vote for Scott.

Colonel R. R. Puckett, an influential merchant of Baton Rouge who was not a "party man," spoke to the Scott and Graham Club of that city, and extolled the virtues of Scott and the compromise. Despite the belief that the campaign

124 New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 10, 1852.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, October 13, 1852.
did not have the absorbing interest as previous presidential contests, Pierce's military record was the subject of continued criticism, and a rumor was circulated that Scott had formed a coalition with the Abolitionist Party.

Shortly before the election, on October 24, 1852, Daniel Webster died at his residence Marshfield, in Massachusetts. Several newspapers carried rather stilted editorials framed with black borders, in which his career was discussed, and not always to the advantage of his memory.

Randall Hunt toured the parishes of northwest Louisiana speaking on behalf of General Scott, and when he returned the Whigs were said to have owed him a debt of gratitude for bringing the "bolters" back into the party. The Catholic issue was raised again when a letter from Franklin Pierce was published in the Baton Rouge Gazette as follows:

The papists will naturally be more or less opposed to our ticket—but let them go. We never could depend upon them with any certainty, and they are a bigoted set, that we can get along without, better than with their numbers, governed as they are by bishops and priests of the Catholic Church,

128. New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 14, 1852.
129. West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, October 20, 1852.
130. New Orleans Weekly Delta, October 24, 1852.
132. New Orleans Bee, October 26, 1852.
and we can have plenty of strength without them. The constitution of my own state very properly excluded these arrogant pretenders from holding office and we should rejoice that they voluntarily leave our platform.

The editorial comment of the Gazette was, "Catholics! remember, that in New Hampshire free negroes can hold office! but you cannot!"[^133]

The day before the election Samuel J. Peters, Jr., wrote the following comments:

The Presidential elections will take place tomorrow. The Democrats are so certain of success that they are betting three and four to one. Distinguished Whigs at the north write to us very encouragingly for Genl. Scott's prospects of success and therefore the whigs are taking up bets very freely.[^134]

On election day the telegraph settled the question as to who had won with "marvelous quickness."[^135] Within six hours after the polls closed the Democrats were able to celebrate the victory of Franklin Pierce. In Orleans Parish Scott received 4,730 and Pierce received 4,843 votes. In Jefferson Parish Scott received 560 and Pierce 714 votes.[^136] When all parishes had reported the total vote was 15,967 for

[^133]: Baton Rouge Gazette, October 30, 1852. Letter from Franklin Pierce dated June 7, 1852, Concord, New Hampshire; published in Boston Post.
[^134]: S. J. Peters Diary, entry for November 1, 1852.
[^136]: New Orleans Bee, November 3, 1852.
Scott and 17,426 votes for Franklin Pierce; a Democratic majority of 1,459.\textsuperscript{137} Scott had carried only four states, and Louisiana's six electoral votes were cast for Pierce.\textsuperscript{138} A New Orleans \textit{Bee} editorial stated, "Defection has done its worse. The Whig Party is entitled to the signal honor of defeating itself."\textsuperscript{139} The election of Pierce meant "... antagonism to Fillmore's measures for the next four years."\textsuperscript{140} The defeat of the Whigs was due to "apathy and disaffection" within the party.\textsuperscript{141} The victory of the Democrats was interpreted as a victory for the secessionists of the South and the abolitionists of the North, a coalition that would achieve that treasonable and unholy end, "... a secerance of the bonds of this Union."\textsuperscript{142} The voters also approved the new constitution at the same time they cast their ballots for the president; indeed, "The whigs, in the late Presidential contest, manifested a decidedly greater interest in the Constitution question than in that of the Presidency."\textsuperscript{143}

Samuel J. Peters, Jr., wrote the following entries in his diary:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{137}New Orleans \textit{Daily Picayune}, November 16, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{138}Stanwood, \textit{The Presidency}, p. 258.
\item \textsuperscript{139}New Orleans \textit{Bee}, November 4, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{140}Plaquemine \textit{Southern Sentinel}, November 6, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{141}New Orleans \textit{Bee}, November 12, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{142}West Baton Rouge \textit{Capitolian Vis-A-Vis}, November 10, 1852.
\item \textsuperscript{143}New Orleans \textit{Weekly Delta}, November 27, 1852.
\end{itemize}
Nov 3, 1852 N.O. The Whigs throughout the United States have been badly beaten. Pierce is President Elect of the United States. What is of greater importance to Louisiana than the Presidential election is the probably adoption yesterday of the new constitution.

Nov 4, 1852 N.O. The Whigs have met with an overwhelming defeat. Millard Fillmore should have been the candidate and not Genl Scott to whose nomination the great Daniel Webster was opposed.

Mar 4 1853 I am a good Whig but notwithstanding that I believe that Genl Pierce will make an excellent Chief Magistrate at all events let him be tried.144

William B. Hamilton wrote from the University of Virginia to his father the following comments on the election:

The great battle is over and the victory has been won by the Irish Democracy. It shows that we are an ungrateful people. Gen. Scott was as true to the South as Pierce, and then there could be no comparison between the two men in point of merit. I will class Scott with the immortal Calhoun and Clay, who were too well known to receive the sufferages of their countrymen. We had a mock election in the university. Scott had a majority of twelve with my vote.145

With the acceptance of the new constitution both political parties began preparations for a general state election to be held on December 27, 1852. Even before its defeat in the presidential election the Whigs of New Orleans had struggled against an "Independent" movement led by James Robb. Whigs and Democrats alike were summoned to a meeting at the American Theatre in the middle of March, 144

144 S. J. Peters Diary, entries for November 3, 4, 1852, and March 4, 1853.

Two types of people supposedly attended the meeting, those who were strangers in the city, and a few "moneyed capitalists" trying to elect James Robb as mayor of New Orleans. Earlier Robb had denied he wanted to be New Orleans' mayor, and at that time he was in the state senate. The independent movement, confined to the city, was deemed one "... fraught with danger to the Whig party—pregnant with bright auguries of success for the entire democratic ticket." A man who attended the independent meeting called it the most "disreputable and disgraceful ever held in this country." The movement was "... the design of a select few to make Mr. Robb the Lord Dictator, the moneyed autocrat of New Orleans."

A Democratic journal described the same meeting as a dignified and impressive "parlour assemblage." At this meeting candidates were nominated for treasurer, comptroller, and alderman in all four districts of New Orleans. The independents did not nominate Robb for mayor as the Whigs had fearfully predicted. However, several of the nominees were.

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146 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 11, 1852.
147 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 12, 1852.
148 Ibid., January 27, 1852.
149 Ibid., March 13, 1852.
150 Ibid., March 15, 1852.
151 New Orleans Daily Delta, March 17, 1852.
old Whigs, like Robb, John Calhoun, and J. L. Winters. These deserters from the Whig party were roundly denounced. As a result of the election A. D. Crossman, the Whig candidate for mayor, defeated John L. Lewis by a majority of 1,154 votes. The independents were largely unsuccessful at the polls, but James Robb was elected as alderman in the first district by a write-in vote of 1,068 votes. Almost a month later the hope was expressed that there be no more independent candidates, since they were "... always disappointed seditionists." Although the independent movement was confined to New Orleans it must have weakened the Whig party.

Judge Thomas Curry wrote the following comments concerning the independents:

The Whigs carried the municipal elections in this city yesterday in spite of the many obstacles the party had to encounter. But there was some dissension in the whig ranks, growing out of old cliques, which caused us much trouble and undue trouble for the whole ticket.  

Samuel J. Peters, Jr., wrote:

152 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 20, 1852.
153 Ibid., March 19, 1852.
154 Ibid., March 25, 1852.
155 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 25, 1852.
156 New Orleans Daily Crescent, May 19, 1852.
157 Weeks Papers, letter from Judge Thomas Curry to John Moore, March 23, 1852.
The election is over and the Whigs have triumphed. We have elected our mayor, treasurer, comptroller, surveyor, street commissioner, one of the four recorders and a majority of aldermen. Glory enough for one day. Mr. James Robb got up an independent ticket with a view to injure (it is said) the Whig Party. George G. Bryght esq and John Calhoun esq allowed their names to be used and the Whigs will not forget.158

As they organized for the coming contest over the constitution, the presidential election, and the state election, the Whigs must have been a little uncertain of their future. Since they felt the constitution would be adopted in November, the Whigs began to make preparations in August for the state elections scheduled for December 27, 1852. Isaac N. Marks, President of the Whig Central Executive Committee of Louisiana, sent out a call for parish organizations to select delegates to attend a state convention in Baton Rouge on November 15, 1852.159 The Whigs of New Orleans were slow to respond to the call, but it was believed that the rural Whigs were very active.160 The Baton Rouge Gazette supported the candidacy of George C. McWhorter as the Whig nominee for governor subject to a decision of the convention.161 Indifferent Whigs were instructed to become active and to help organize a successful state campaign.162

158 S. J. Peters Diary, entry for March 22, 1852.
159 New Orleans Bee, August 28, 1852.
160 Ibid., October 9, 1852.
161 Baton Rouge Gazette, November 6, 1852.
162 New Orleans Bee, November 26, 1852.
The Whig convention did not meet on the original date selected, but delayed their state convention until November 29, 1852, in the hall of the house of representatives. S. M. D. Clarke was chosen as the president of the convention. Nominations for governor were Louis Bordelon, John Moore, John Ray, Joseph Bernard, and Randall Hunt. After the nominations the meeting was adjourned until later in the day. Upon re-convening the convention then began balloting for the gubernatorial nomination. On the first ballot Bordelon received fifty-one votes, John Moore received forty-five votes, John Ray eighteen votes, and Joseph Bernard two votes. On the second ballot Bordelon received sixty-one votes, the largest number; John Moore got fifty-five votes, and Ray received twenty-one. The convention finally composed the following slate of candidates; Louis Bordelon for governor, John Ray for lieutenant governor, R. N. Ogden for attorney general, Daniel Avery for secretary of state, George C. McWhorter for state treasurer, and Thomas Bangs Thorpe for superintendent of education. 163

The Democratic convention met on December 1, and nominated the following candidates: Paul O. Hebert for governor, W. W. Farmer for lieutenant governor, Isaac E. Morse for attorney general, A. S. Herron for secretary of state, C. E.  

Greneaux for state treasurer, and J. N. Carrigan for superintendent of public education. Pierre Soule published a letter calling for the Democrats to give their full support to the Democratic ticket. The Union-loving citizens of Louisiana were asked what they thought about this endorsement of the Democratic ticket from a disunionist. The Democrat platform was denounced as a "rigamarole of absurdities and contradictions," and as a "bastard platform." The Whigs took credit for calling a constitutional convention against the opposition of the Democrats, and stressed the Whigs' desire for internal improvements and the economic progress of the state. The importance of the election to the state was stressed because the newly elected officials would inaugurate the government under the new constitution. But even during the short campaign period there were complaints from the Whigs because the state convention did not fully represent all of the parishes. Postponement of the original date for the convention had led

164 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, December 14, 1852.
166 Baton Rouge Gazette, December 11, 1852.
167 West Baton Rouge Capitilian Vis-A-Vis, December 8, 1852.
168 New Orleans Bee, December 25, 1852.
170 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 23, 26, 1852.
to a misunderstanding about the time it would be held. On the day of the election the Whigs labeled the Democrats the anti-constitution, anti-railroad, anti-internal improvements "faction," and predicted that the future of the state would be "dim" if they succeeded.

In an election that was marked by indifference and listlessness, the Whigs were thoroughly defeated and "... saved scarcely anything from the general wreck." Paul O. Hebert, the youngest man ever to be nominated for governor, and his entire ticket, won the election by substantial majorities. A Whig journal took the results philosophically and reasoned that since the Democrats now favored internal improvements and a system of free banking, the defeat was not so bad after all; "... a rose will smell as sweet by another name...." The election returns gave Hebert a majority of 2,030 votes over his opponent, and the other candidates received majorities of a greater or lesser number. As a result of the election the Democrats placed

171 Baton Rouge Gazette, December 11, 1852.
172 New Orleans Bee, December 27, 1852.
173 New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 29, 1852.
174 New Orleans Bee, December 28, 29, 1852.
175 New Orleans Weekly Delta, January 2, 1853.
176 Baton Rouge Gazette, January 1, 1853.
177 New Orleans Weekly Delta, January 16, 1853.
seventeen members in the senate, while the Whigs elected nine. In the house of representatives the Democrats numbered fifty and the Whigs forty-one. On a joint ballot the Democrats would have a majority of seventeen, but there were four members of the legislature whose party affiliation was not known. Congressman John Moore, who had been a contender for the gubernatorial nomination was told:

I suppose you have heard of the dreadful defeat of the Whig Party in the late state elections. You have cause to congratulate yourself on failing to get the nomination. Nothing else could be expected so soon after the election of General Pierce.179

The Whigs were never to recover from their defeats in 1852. Although the party was responsible for calling a constitutional convention, and dominated the convention itself, many Democrats had voted for the constitution because it contained provisions they felt were beneficial to Louisiana. The independent movement in New Orleans led by James Robb, the bitter disappointment of the Whigs in Louisiana because Fillmore was not nominated for the presidency, and the refusal of some of them to support Scott; followed by Franklin Pierce's sweeping victory in the presidential election, and the defeat of the Whigs in the general state election, all combined to destroy the Whig party in

179 Weeks Papers, letter from W. F. Weeks to John Moore, January 4, 1853.
Louisiana. Underlying the local reasons for the party's loss of strength were the sectional and slavery disputes which erupted over the Compromise of 1850, and then destroyed the national Whig party after the presidential contest of 1852. The Whigs could never recover their losses of that year.
CHAPTER VIII

THE DEMISE OF THE WHIG PARTY IN LOUISIANA

Governor Isaac Walker delivered his farewell address to the legislature on January 17, 1853. He addressed the Democrat-controlled legislature in terms that were reminiscent of those used by Whig governors. He noted that internal improvements were extending their benign influence to the state; that great statesmen like Clay, Calhoun, and Webster had passed away, and expressed the hope that the presidential election had done much to "... overthrow the dangerous sectional agitation throughout the land." Governor Walker also recommended a free system of banking and an amendment to the constitution changing the "Negro basis" of state representation to one of the qualified voters.

The governor-elect, Paul Octave Hebert, was recovering from an attack of typhoid fever on his Bayou Goula plantation. Since the constitution forbade the legislature from proceeding to business before his inaugural, a committee from both legislative chambers went to the governor's plantation and formerly installed him in the office. Governor Hebert, in

1New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 18, 1853.
2Louisiana Senate Journal, 1 leg., 1 sess., pp. 3-7.
his inaugural address, also urged that a constitutional amendment be passed to change the total population basis of representation. In addition he favored state aid to private corporations like banks and railroad companies, and such internal improvements as levees, highways, and improvement of navigable streams.

The legislature favored the annexation of Cuba, and the introduction of that question was compared to the situation which existed when Texas annexation was considered. The resolution calling for Cuban annexation was introduced into the house of representatives by S. F. Marks of West Feliciana, the same "sagacious legislator" who, in 1844, introduced in the legislature the resolution calling for the annexation of Texas. The sugar planters of Louisiana definitely opposed the annexation of the Caribbean Island, since its sugar would compete with the state's production of sugar. Louisiana's sugar producers had not been threatened with real competition since passage of the Walker Tariff, in 1846. In that year there was an extension of sugar production into the Red River section of Louisiana, where it was produced on a large scale for the first time.

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4 New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 22, 1853.
5 New Orleans Weekly Delta, January 24, 1853.
6 Ibid., January 30, 1853.
7 Ibid., July 17, 1853.
8 DeBow's Review, II, 442.
production in 1847 was some 100,000 hogsheads more than it had been in 1848. With the protection offered by the Walker Tariff a number of planters converted their land to sugar production, like John Hampden Randolph. The Walker tariff apparently pleased the planters, and the Democrats did not attack the measure and make it a political issue after 1850.

A free banking law was introduced into the house of representatives late in January, and its purpose was to induce capital to invest in Louisiana, reduce the rate of interest, and allow the state to compete with northern competition. Banks operating under the new law would also be able to aid in the construction of railroads, "... a vital necessity to Louisiana." There was strong opposition to the section of the free banking bill which limited the right of incorporation to residents of Louisiana. The banking law was then reported out of the house committee on banks by S. F. Wilson, and it was then passed by the general

9 New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 23, 1848.
11 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 1, 1853.
12 Ibid., February 3, 1853.
13 Ibid., March 4, 1853.
14 New Orleans Weekly Delta, March 27, 1853.
15 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 27, 1853.
assembly and the senate by an overwhelming majority. A companion bill to the banking law was the one which granted aid to the railroads within the state. With Duncan F. Kenner the acknowledged Whig legislative leader, a large number of Democrats worked for passage of a bill which prescribed in what manner the state might aid railroads. The general bill was followed by an act of the legislative which granted aid specifically to the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad Company, the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad, and to the Vicksburg to Shreveport Railroad. The bill passed the house by a vote of sixty-three to thirteen, and then was passed by the senate. The passage of both the banking acts and the railroad acts was considered a step in the direction of the internal improvements for the state. The acts were "... a grand consummation for Louisiana, the commencement of an era of increase and prosperity which may well make her sons rejoice and feel proud." Passage of such laws in a Democratic-controlled legislature indicates that party was now occupy-

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16 Ibid., April 30, 1853.
17 Ibid., April 23, 1853.
18 New Orleans Weekly Delta, April 10, 1853.
19 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 20, 1853.
20 Ibid., April 22, 1853.
21 Ibid., April 24, 1853.
22 Ibid., April 26, 1853.
ing Whig political ground.

The legislature of 1853 also considered changing the basis of apportionment for the legislature. The fact that the total population basis was originally a compromise between the country and city delegates at the convention was emphasized. Called the "Negro basis" of apportionment, public opinion in opposition to it was dying down, since people realized it was the only way to prevent Orleans Parish from absorbing the whole legislative power of the state. When the subject came before the house for a vote it lost by forty-eight "yeas" to thirty-two "nays," with seventeen members absent. A two-thirds vote, or sixty-six, was necessary to carry the proposed amendment in the house. The country members of the legislature were definitely opposed to changing the electoral basis, and the matter was dropped in the legislature.

With the Democrats in control of the legislature an act was passed which reapportioned the state's congressional districts. The Whig legislature of the preceding year had done the same thing, and now the Democrats were only "repaying the compliment." Under the new apportionment system

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23 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, March 9, 1853.
24 Ibid., March 16, 1853.
25 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 17, 1853.
26 Ibid., April 20, 1853.
27 New Orleans Weekly Delta, July 10, 1853.
the Whigs were supposed to have a majority in one congressional
district, the second, which produced "nine-tenths" of the
sugar of the state. 28 The possibility of the Whigs elect-
ing congressmen in the future looked very slim. 29

Despite Democratic opposition Millard Fillmore was in-
vited by the legislature to visit Louisiana while he was on
a southern tour. 30 The invitation was supported originally
by the Whig members of the legislature, but many Democrats
favored the resolutions. The Democrats were severely criti-
cized for their legislative efforts. It was a "legislature
of incompetents," 31 which nearly committed political suicide
because there were too many Democratic leaders. 32 The group
formed a "do-nothing" legislature 33 in which it was almost
impossible to obtain a quorum in the house, and the Demo-
crats were acting with "... premeditated malice to damn
their party in the state forever." 34 Even the governor's
system of dispensing political patronage was severely criti-
cized. 35 The passage of bills to aid railroads, banks, land

29 Ibid., April 30, 1853.
31 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, February 2, 1853.
32 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 7, 1853.
33 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, February 23, 1853.
34 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 8, 1853.
35 New Orleans Weekly Delta, February 25, 1853.
reclamation, and internal improvements by the legislature of 1853 made it seem to assume the character of Whig legislatures before the economic depression of 1837.

The Democrats did not lose sight of their party affiliation in the matter of electing a United States Senator. Judah P. Benjamin had been elected by the legislature in 1852, by a majority of twelve votes. He had been the favorite prior to the meeting of the legislature. His term was not to begin before March 3, 1853, and the new legislature tried to deprive him of his office. The Democrats in the new legislature denied Benjamin the right to go to the Senate because the constitution of 1852, the one under which he was not elected, specified that Senators were to be chosen during the year in which they took their seats. Thus the legislature of 1853 felt it had the right to select the Senator who would replace Senator Downs that year.

A Senate committee investigated the legality of Benjamin's election and found there was nothing irregular at the time it took place, and said that the new constitution "...vests powers for future action..." but could not abrogate what had been done under the old one. The house, by a

36 New Orleans Daily Delta, January 29, 1852.
37 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 24, 1852.
New Orleans Daily Picayune, January 25, 1852.
38 Opelousas Courier, January 29, 1853.
39 Louisiana Senate Journal, 1 leg., 1 sess., p. 34.
very decided majority, refused to pass a resolution calling for an investigation into the election of Benjamin. The Democrats were severely criticized for this attempt to unseat Benjamin, but he was then attacked on the grounds that he was not a duly naturalized citizen nine years before his election to the Senate. The matter was allowed to drop and Benjamin went to the Senate and served his term as a Whig.

When Pierre Soule was appointed as Minister to Spain in April, 1853, there were many Democratic aspirants for his place in the Senate. Twenty-one appointments were made by the president in Louisiana and confirmed by the Senate in April; they included Soule, Solomon W. Downs as Collector of the Port of New Orleans, and John Slidell as Minister to Central America. These appointments were a source of "fierce contention" among the leaders of the Louisiana Democratic party. Downs had hoped to receive appointment to a federal judgeship; Soule was alienated by the appointment of Slidell, and Slidell was considered the strongest contender for the Senate vacancy, but he was

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40 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, February 9, 1853.
41 New Orleans Weekly Delta, February 13, 1842.
42 Ibid., February 24, 1852.
43 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 11, 1853.
44 Opelousas Courier, April 16, 1853.
opposed by Soule's followers. The most prominent contenders for the seat in the Senate, in addition to Slidell, were Governor Paul O. Hebert, John R. Grymes, and the ex-Senator Solomon Downs. Soule opposed Slidell's election and wired from Washington, "I am not, and cannot be, in favor of his election." Governor Hebert placed his candidacy in the hands of friends, and in a Democratic caucus they withdrew his name from nomination. On the first vote in caucus Hebert had received twenty-six votes, Slidell eighteen, and W. W. Farmer seventeen, with ten scattered votes. Finally the election took place on April 28, 1853, and John Slidell received seventy votes, and his Whig opponent Theodore G. Hunt received thirty-three votes; a majority of thirty-three for Slidell. One factor which favored the election of Slidell by the Democrats was that, "The whigs hated him so cordially." A Whig journal said, "This is the gentleman who is to (heaven save the mark!) represent Louisiana in the Senate of the United States."

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45 New Orleans Weekly Delta, April 17, 1853. New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 27, 1853.
46 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 22, 1853.
47 New Orleans Weekly Delta, April 24, 1853.
48 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 28, 1853.
49 New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 30, 1853.
50 New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 29, 1853. New Orleans Weekly Delta, May 1, 1853.
52 New Orleans Daily Crescent, May 2, 1853.
The elections held in 1853 were complete victories for the Democrat, and the Whigs were never again successful in placing members of their party in important public offices. On the eve of municipal elections in New Orleans the Whigs held an organizational meeting. They were "... determined to never say die..." and a Whig orator instructed them not to be downcast by their recent political disasters. The Whigs lost in the municipal elections, with the Democrats carrying practically their whole ticket.

As provided for in the new constitution an election for members of the supreme court was held on April 9, 1853. Prior to the election candidates for the court positions were subject to nomination by their respective parties, and the system of involving judges in elections was denounced. The Opelousas Courier said, "We want no Whig or Democratic Judges to be upheld and sustained by the one, and assailed by the other party." The Whigs disclaimed any connection with party nomination of judges, but a Whig journal, the New Orleans Daily Crescent, supported the candidacy of Christian Roselius for chief justice of the supreme court.

53 New Orleans Weekly Delta, March 21, 1853.
54 Ibid., March 28, 1853.
55 New Orleans Daily Crescent, April 9, 1853.
56 Ibid., March 8, 1853.
57 Opelousas Courier, April 16, 1853.
58 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 10, 1853.
He was a leader of the German colony in New Orleans and an authority on Louisiana's civil code. Roselius was opposed by Thomas Slidell, brother to the senator elected the same year, and both candidates were considered worthy of becoming chief justice. Slidell won the election, along with Justices A. M. Buchanan, Miles Taylor, William Dunbar, and G. Voories. Shortly after the election opposition to the elective judiciary was still expressed, such as the statement, "We are beginning to despise the elective judiciary, in consequence of what we have seen and know of its practice."

As the general state elections approached the Whig party was the subject of some speculation concerning its future. The Daily Crescent printed the following editorial comment:

Ever since the commencement of the last Presidential campaign there has existed a report that the whig party was in articulo mortis, that its principles were defeated and abandoned, its vitality exhausted, its popularity gone, and itself sinking rapidly into the grave, with the great chieftans and statesmen who were its support.

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60 Opelousas Courier, March 12, 1853.
62 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 21, 1853.
63 New Orleans Daily Crescent, March 24, 1853.
The Crescent denied that this rumor was true and expressed the belief that the future for the party was bright. Edward Everett was chosen as the Whig upon whose shoulders the mantle of Whig leadership would fall, now that Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were dead. However, after elections in Kentucky, it was admitted that the Whigs in that state "... now falter and fail...." Louisiana Whigs were very slow in getting prepared for the November elections.

The Whigs finally met on August 8, 1853 and chose General J. Van Winkle as president. They nominated Harry T. Hayes for state treasurer, John E. King for auditor, and A. H. Lamon for superintendent of public schools. These officials were elected every two years under the new constitution. Only seven parishes were represented at the one-day Whig convention. Former political defeats were cited as the cause for such poor representation, and this led to "... a lack of enthusiasm generally throughout the state...." The Democrats immediately raised the question, "Where is the whig party? Is it dead?" Present Pond was nominated at the

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64 Ibid., May 26, 1853.
65 Ibid., June 14, 1853.
66 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 16, 1853.
67 New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 9, 1853.
68 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 13, 1853.
69 Thibodaux Minerva, August 13, 1853.
convention as a Whig candidate for the third congressional district, subject to nomination in a later convention; but he was termed an "independent whig" in politics. It was admitted that the Whig party was almost annihilated in the presidential election of 1852, and that since that time the Whig organization had been very weak. It was little wonder that Harry T. Hayes declined to run on the Whig ticket as a candidate for state treasurer for reasons of a private nature. His place on the Whig ticket was taken by J. N. Hawthorne of New Orleans.

The Whig nominee for state auditor, John E. King, was born in Opelousas, St. Landry Parish, in June, 1820. His grandfather had been the parish judge for thirty years, and his father was register of land office appointed by President Monroe. The young John King was educated at schools in Kentucky and Massachusetts, and the College of Louisiana, and he was a lawyer by profession. He married the daughter of Lafayette Saunders, and became a law partner with his father-in-law at Clinton, in East Feliciana Parish. In 1848 he became the editor of the St. Landry Whig and supported the candidacy of Zachary Taylor for whom he cast his vote as a state elector. He was elected to the legislature

70 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, August 14, 1853.
71 New Orleans Daily Crescent, September 9, 1853.
72 Thibodaux Minerva, September 24, 1853.
in 1849 for the first time, and served as speaker of that
body in 1851, and attended the constitutional convention
of 1852.\footnote{Ibid., October 8, 1853.}

The Whigs of Iberville Parish had a difficult time
finding a candidate to run for the state senate,\footnote{Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, October 1, 8, 1853.} and
noted that apathy was much more apparent among the Whigs
than the Democrats.\footnote{Ibid., October 29, 1853.} On the eve of the elections the West
Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis expressed little confidence
in the ability of the Whigs to win the election, since that
party had become a minority faction in the state.\footnote{West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, November 2, 1853.}

The elections took place on November 7, 1853, for four
members of Congress, one half of the state senate, and ninety-
eight members of the house of representatives. In addition
the state auditor, treasurer, and superintendent of public
education were also chosen.\footnote{New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 6, 1853.} The Democrats were denounced
and the Whigs were told, "Today Now Or Never!"\footnote{New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 7, 1853.} The Demo-
crats elected Samuel F. Marks as auditor, Charles E. Greneaux
as state treasurer, and J. N. Carrigan as state superinten-
dent of education.\footnote{New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 17, 1853.} Orleans Parish elected twenty-two Demo-
crats and five Whigs to the legislature. The new legislature was to be dominated by the Democratic party. A rather wry comment on the popularity of military titles was made by the Weekly Comet of Baton Rouge: "The coming session will be composed mostly of great men, there are ninety-three generals, sixty colonels, and minor military men in proportion."

The Democrats were charged with fraud in the elections, and the fraud of 1853 was compared with that of 1844. Money was used lavishly to aid the Democratic cause, dead foreigners were registered and voted along with the live naturalized citizens, who were also controlled by the Democratic party.

The congressional elections, which were also held on November 7, resulted in the election of three Democrats and one Whig. The Whigs of the second congressional district encountered serious difficulties in the process of nominating a candidate for the election. Before the convention met at Donaldsonville, J. Aristide Landry, the incumbent, sought the aid of John Moore in obtaining the nomination. The

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80 Ibid., November 8, 1853.
81 Harrisburg Independent, November 16, 1853.
82 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, November 16, 1853.
84 Weeks Papers, letter from J. Aristide Landry to John Moore, July 7, 1853.
Whig party it was believed "... is yet destined to rise, Phoenix-like, from its ashes." 85 Theodore G. Hunt had received all of the Whigs votes when the legislature elected John Slidell, his opponent, to the United States Senate, and he was the strongest contender for the nomination in the second district. 86 When he won the nomination in a convention split between the city and the country delegations, 87 a Whig of Lafourche Parish, Louis Bush announced that he was an independent candidate for Congress in the same district. 88 Twenty-four Whigs of St. Martinville signed a letter protesting the "high-handed" methods of the city delegates at the Donaldsonville convention in selecting the nominee. Whigs in St. James Parish then defended the nomination of Hunt, and expressed their determination to work on behalf of his election. 90 The country Whigs had favored the nomination of the incumbent J. Aristide Landry, but in the interest of party harmony the matter was dropped; only after it had indicated how badly the Whigs were divided. 91 As a result of

85 Thibodaux Minerva, July 9, 1853.
86 Ibid., July 2, 1853.
87 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 6, 1853. Thibodaux Minerva, August 6, 1853.
88 Thibodaux Minerva, August 20, 1853.
89 New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 23, 1853.
90 Ibid., August 26, 1853.
91 Thibodaux Minerva, August 27, October 1, 1853. New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 30, 1853. Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, September 2, 1853.
this election Hunt defeated S. Boyer Davis, by a vote of 6,555 to 4,946.

In the first congressional district the Democrats were also involved in a party dispute. Charles Gayarre ran as an independent candidate in opposition to the regularly nominated Democratic candidate William Dunbar. Gayarre charged the Democratic party with frauds perpetrated in the name of the naturalization laws and denounced the legislature for not passing a law requiring the registration of foreigners. On the day of the election James Aburton wrote the following to Gayarre:

I intend voting for you today. I am a democrat but object to wearing the convention collar. I fear the collar men will carry the day. But if unfortunately you should be even so badly beaten, yet you may be sure that you have rendered good service to the democratic party, in throwing your weight against the abuses which have erupted the convention system.

Gayarre received 2,691 votes and Dunbar received 4,555 votes, and the defeated candidate then published a pamphlet charging the Democrats with fraud in the election. He also charged that Dunbar was a resident of Rapides Parish, and not Orleans Parish at the time of the election. This would disqualify

92 Opelousas Courier, December 24, 1853.
93 New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 14, 17, 1853.
94 New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 28, 1853.
95 New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 5, 1853.
96 Charles Gayarre Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives, letter from James Aburton to Charles Gayarre, November 7, 1853.
Dunbar, since Rapides Parish was outside the first congressional district.

The Democrats of the third congressional district nominated Judge John Perkins, a native of Madison Parish. The Whigs of the same district nominated Preston Pond, Jr., who favored a system of public improvements and the construction of a railroad to the Pacific Ocean. John Perkins won the election by a vote of 4,956 to 3,780. In the fourth congressional district Roland Jones was nominated by a Democratic convention held in Alexandria. John Blair Smith was nominated by the Whigs in the fourth district, but he lost the election by an overwhelming majority. The Boston Post commented on the elections as follows:

The Administration carried everything, nearly, in Louisiana. In the House there is a democratic majority of 26, and in the Senate, one of eight. The congressional delegation in the House consists of one whig and three democrats.

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97 New Orleans Daily Crescent, December 16, 26, 1853.
99 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 10, 1853.
   Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, September 4, 1853.
100 New Orleans Weekly Delta, July 31, 1853.
101 New Orleans Daily Crescent, October 14, 1853.
102 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 18, 1853.
103 Thibodaux Minerva, December 21, 1853, quoting the Boston Post, December 9, 1853.
When the new legislature convened in Baton Rouge on January 16, 1854, the Democrats had complete control of both houses. Governor Hebert delivered his message to the legislature on that same day. The governor opened his message with a reference to the terrible epidemic of the preceding summer, and he then reported on the favorable progress the state had made in the construction of railroads and predicted that in the future all parts of the state would be connected by such means of transportation. He said the free banking system had been put into successful operation and that it would realize the expectations of its proponents. He also reported on internal improvements and requested that the legislature give the state engineer greater discretion in deciding what types of improvement should be made, and the length of time required in completing them.

J. M. Sandidge was elected speaker of the house of representatives, and the Democratic members of the legislature then went into caucus. Shortly after the caucus the Democrats introduced a bill providing for the apportionment of the state into new electoral districts for the state

104 Thibodaux Minerva, January 11, 1854.
106 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, January 18, 1854.
senate and house of representatives. The bill immediately passed the house and the senate with only weak Whig opposition. The new apportionment law gerrymandered representation in the legislature so that the "... Democrats have fixed it up very smugly for a strong possession of power in that branch." One Whig wondered, "If the democratic party can rely upon their principles in all their contests with the whigs, why under heaven do they want to fix things in their apportionment law, so as to force into the legislature a democratic majority at all hazards?"

Millard Fillmore arrived in New Orleans on March 26, 1854, after a visit to Baton Rouge where he had been warmly received. In New Orleans he was serenaded at the St. Charles Hotel by the Fillmore Rangers. Wherever he went in the city he was welcomed by large crowds of people. A compliment was paid to him when a town was named in his honor. It was located on the Great Northern Railroad line in Livingston Parish about sixty-eight miles out of New Orleans.

108 Ibid., January 26, 28, 1854.
109 Ibid., January 29, 1854.
110 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, February 19, 1854.
111 Ibid., March 24, 1854.
112 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 29, April 1, 1854.
113 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, April 2, 1854.
Orleans. So popular was Fillmore that a year after his Louisiana visit John C. Tibbetts wrote, "Millard Fillmore will be our next president." William B. Hamilton wrote the following account of Fillmore’s visit to New Orleans in the midst of municipal elections:

President Fillmore, or rather ex-president, arrived in this city yesterday morning. The people of New Orleans were prepared to give him a grand reception, but the Robert J. Ward, the steam boat that brought him from Louisville, happened to arrive on Sunday. Fillmore is a great as well as a good man, and does not care much about show, although the respect of a grateful people must make him proud of his administration. This is an election day, when it is against the law for the militia to turn out as it might excite a mob, but tomorrow there will be a grand procession, and sweet music will keep time with the martial drum that makes every male heart beat pulsate fast and free. Many a whiskey barrel will be emptied today, and the blood will flow from broken noses if not from bleeding hearts.

The old Whig President’s visit to Louisiana did not not help revive the rapidly weakening Whig party. As the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was being debated in Congress, and Louisiana’s Whig congressman T. G. Hunt opposed it, the

114 Thibodaux Minerva, August 5, 1854.
115 John C. Tibbetts Papers, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives, letter from John C. Tibbetts to H. B. Tibbetts, May 13, 1854.
116 Hamilton Papers, letter from William B. Hamilton to Little Brother, March 27, 1854.
117 New Orleans Daily Crescent, February 3, 1854.
118 Thibodaux Minerva, April 8, 1854. Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, April 2, 1854.
New Orleans Bee carried the following editorial comments:

Will any person skilled in finding clues to mysterious disappearances tell us what has become of the whig party? We are well aware that upon the election of Franklin Pierce the whig party suddenly lost its previously respectable dimensions and dwarfed down to an exceedingly small size; but still there was something left. But from the time that the Nebraska Bill got fairly before the Congress, the whig party seemed to collapse. The whigs of the present period are in a transitional state, and hardly yet know what is in store for them. Confusion worse confounded prevails in their ranks. Some have turned filibuster—others preserve an armed neutrality, living in the hope of one day seeing the good old party revive—others again calling themselves Reformers, and for aught we can say to the contrary, "Know-Nothings." In brief, the party is disintegrated and disorganized.119

When J. O. Nixon assumed control of the New Orleans Daily Crescent, he wrote the following editorial comments:

It is not proposed in this notice to mark out minutely the future courts of the Crescent—what particular questions of public policy it may espouse or what public measures endorse— for, during the present and approaching political mutations, it would be impracticable to do so. In view of the fact that a complete revolution is at present taking place in the condition of the political parties of the day, which, if it should not sunder and disorganize them, will, without doubt, totally change their relations to each other, or forever obliterate their existing distinctive lines....120

The Plaquemine Southern Sentinel printed an editorial from the New Orleans Daily Crescent proclaiming that the Whig party was dead. The Daily Picayune of New Orleans

119 New Orleans Bee, June 10, 1854.
120 New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 1, 1854.
121 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 4, 1854.
stated, "Party spirit among us is nearly extinguished. The old lines have been broken up, and it would be a hopeless effort to re-establish them." 122

When the national Whig party began to disintegrate after the presidential election of 1852, many Louisiana Whigs drifted into the Know Nothing party. In Louisiana a nativist movement was begun as early as 1835 by William Christy, who remained the leader of that movement when it reached its peak about 1855. 123 Governor Edward Douglas White was severely criticized in 1835 for appointing naturalized citizens to government office. 124

When Carroll Parish Judge Felix Bosworth was impeached in 1840, the proceedings were based on accusations that the Judge had been falsely issuing certificates which enabled foreigners to vote in state elections. 125 Measures were introduced into the 1840 Louisiana legislature calling upon Congress to prevent the immigration to the United States of alien undesirables. 126 A Native American Association was formed in Louisiana and it requested the same legislature to send memorials to Congress seeking an extension in the period

122 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 5, 1854.
124 Philadelphia National Gazette, April 21, 1835.
125 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 11, 1840.
126 Ibid., February 8, 1840.
of naturalization, from five to fourteen years.

As previously mentioned, Judge Benjamin C. Elliott of the city of Lafayette, then a suburb of New Orleans, was impeached in 1843 for issuing land ownership titles to foreigners so that they might vote. In 1844 the Plaquemines Parish fraud in the presidential election was a national scandal. John Quincy Adams had written to Henry Clay and stated, "... the glaring frauds by which the election was consummated afford a sad presentment of what must be expected hereafter."  

Within two years after the Order of the Star Spangled Banner was organized in 1852, it was a political force to be reckoned with in Louisiana. Thomas Greer Davidson published a letter to the editor in 1852 in which he gave his reasons for joining the nativist movement, and they centered around his dislike of "foreign influence" in the United States.  

When Thomas Slidell was seeking election to the supreme court in 1853, his opponent was Christian Roselius, and a letter from the Attakapas area stated that Slidell had the support of the Native Americans who were "sneering at Roselius because he is a foreigner by birth...."  

127 Baton Rouge Gazette, February 15, 1840.  
129 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Via-A-Vis, September 8, 1852.  
130 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 31, 1853.
The platform of the American Party was printed in the Southern Sentinel on September 10, 1853. That party favored a system of free public schools, opposed legislation which caused the Bible to be read in the schools, and opposed legislation which vested the clergy with property devoted to charitable or religious use. 131 A newspaper named the Interpreter appeared in New Orleans with the motto, "It is the duty of a citizen, Native or Naturalized, to think and act independently in all matters; and to defend the State from ecclesiastical encroachment by any church or sect whatever." 132 The New Orleans semi-weekly Creole was another small anti-Catholic journal that was a supporter of the Native American cause. 133

The West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, an ex-Whig journal, also became a supporter of the Native American movement. 134 The Know Nothing Party penetrated deep into Catholic Whig South Louisiana when it organized a lodge in Franklin, of St. Mary Parish. 135 Riots occurred in New Orleans when the Know Nothings there fought with the foreigners, especially the Irish, in September, 1854. 136 In Clinton, East

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131 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 10, 1853.
132 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 11, 1853.
133 New Orleans Semi-Weekly Creole, December 31, 1853, March 25, 1854.
134 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, July 5, August 23, September 13, 1854.
135 New Orleans Daily Crescent, September 9, 1854.
136 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 16, 17, 1854.
Felicianna Parish, when a mayor's election took place a number of foreign voters were driven away from the polling places by armed men, and the Know Nothing candidate won the election.

Despite such brutal tactics the Know Nothings were defended as the only party which defended American institutions against foreign encroachment. They called for the repeal of the naturalization laws, and an end to Catholic influence in America. In New Orleans the Nativist movement took on a slightly different character, since it was involved in the struggle for control of city government between the Creoles and the Americans.

In East Baton Rouge Parish a special election for a member of the state house of representatives took place in November, 1854. There were no Whig or Democratic nominations, but the remains of both parties backed a candidate, R. L. Knox, against the Know Nothing candidate Dr. Jehu Perkins.

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137 New Orleans Daily Picayune, September 19, 1854.
138 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 30, 1854.
139 New Orleans Semi-Weekly Creole, September 20, 1854.
140 Ibid., October 7, 1854.
141 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 8, 1854.
143 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 28, 1854.
The nativist candidate won by a solid majority. The Baton Rouge election may have been influenced by a Know Nothing newspaper which was printed at Clinton, a few miles north of the capital. The paper was named the American Patriot and it was avowedly anti-Catholic, but it was opposed to Roman Catholic "Polity" and not to Roman Catholic religion. The Know Nothing Party was never very successful in Louisiana because it could devise no way to appeal to the large Catholic population within the state.

By November, 1854, there were no longer any Whig candidates for state political office. The party was, "Broken by defeat, it has been denationalized by ambitious leaders of sections." The Feliciana Democrat printed the following comments under the title, "What has Become of the Whig Party?"

Hardly has a twelve month rolled over our heads than from their state of power, of respectability, and of worth, they have stooped to the embraces of Know Nothingism. Their name is now but a momento of the past and the flag of Henry Clay ingloriously trails in the dust.

The same newspaper printed a second editorial under the same title in April, 1855. It stated of the Whig party:

It is dead as a whig party, but alive under a new name. Its followers have, with some honorable exceptions enlisted under the banner of the Know Nothings, and are now arrayed in deadly

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144 Thibodaux Minerva, December 23, 1854.
145 Clinton American Patriot, December 27, 1854.
146 New Orleans Semi-Weekly Creole, November 25, 1854.
147 Clinton Feliciana Democrat, April 21, 1855.
hostility to the democratic party and its principles as ever before, in every political contest. The Federalist changed their name to that of National Republican, in order to defeat the democratic party in days gone by. The National Republicans changed theirs to that of whig for the same object, and beyond a doubt the Whigs have gone into the Know Nothing organizations for the same end.148

The Louisiana Whig party had won its last victories in the constitutional convention of 1852, and the subsequent adoption of the constitution at the polls when Franklin Pierce was elected president. The state party suffered a series of reverses when the Democrats elected a governor and a majority of the members of the legislature in December of that same year. The national party organization could not remain intact under the stress of the sectional issues of the day, and it collapsed after the defeat of Scott.

The Whigs did hold a national nominating convention in 1856, but the nominations were futile gestures lost in the political struggle between the Democratic party and the new Republican party. Unable to join the state Democratic organization, the Louisiana Whigs in many instances allied themselves with the short-lived Know Nothing Party. However, the Whigs of Louisiana had won a victory of sorts, because the Democrats by 1852 had adopted the internal improvement program, did not attack the protective tariff, and

148 Ibid., May 12, 1855. Same theme in issue of June 9, 1855.
had provided a banking system that was adequate to the needs of the state.
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