The Whigs of Arkansas, 1836-1856.

Gene Wells Boyett

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Volume I

A Dissertation

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requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Gene Wells Boyett
B.A., University of Missouri at Kansas City, 1958
M.A., University of Kansas, 1966
December, 1972
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FOREWARD

This study of Arkansas Whiggery seeks to explain the role played by the party in the twenty year period of its existence following the admission of Arkansas into the Union in 1836. In these two decades the party's candidates failed to win an election for a full-term state office; the reasons for their failure to do so shed light on society and politics in frontier Jacksonian America in not only Arkansas but the entire West.

In part the inability of Arkansas' Whigs to achieve success in state elections reflected the nationalist program of Henry Clay's American System, a political-economic program which many antebellum Arkansans viewed as conflicting with frontier Arkansas' needs. But in part other factors, which included economic and social influences as well as considerations relating to territorial factional politics, help to explain both the failure of Whiggery at the state level and its success in certain regions of the state.

I wish to thank Professor William J. Cooper, Jr. for his able supervision of the preparation of this study. I am also grateful to Arkansas Polytechnic College which provided a gratuity which enabled me to devote an entire summer to research.

October 20, 1972
With the achievement of statehood in 1836, Arkansas' two territorial political factions transformed themselves into the Democratic and Whig parties. In the state and national elections held in the fall of that year, issues relating to earlier territorial questions tended to dominate. But even so, Martin Van Buren's victory and the Democratic sweep of state offices augured the state's political future. In 1836—as in later campaigns—Whig candidates tended to acquire approximately forty percent of the votes cast, displaying their major strength in the heavily slave-populated lowlands of southern and eastern Arkansas and in such urban centers as Little Rock and Batesville. In the more densely white populated area of hilly northwestern Arkansas where farmers engaged largely in subsistence farming, Democratic candidates tended to amass formidable majorities which their Whig opponents proved unable to overcome.

In part the sectional support afforded the parties reflected the conflicting economic interests of subsistence farmers as contrasted with exporting planters. The nationalist orientation of Henry Clay's American Plan, with its support of a protective tariff and high prices for western lands, offered no appeal to either of these groups. But for the state's lowland agrarians, Clay's support for internal improvements
made with federal assistance and his championing of the United States Bank provided off-setting compensations. Lowland farmers-planters naturally supported the internal improvement plank of Clay's platform and, dependent upon a functioning credit system, deemed the rechartering of a national bank as supportive of their interests. Upland farmers, however, perceived little merit in federally supported internal improvements and often manifested a hostile attitude toward a national bank which they viewed as an agency of eastern domination. Thus in part, Whiggery's persistent defeats within Arkansas reflected the numerical dominance of the upland farmer vis-a-vis the lowland planter.

Other factors tended to reinforce this advantage enjoyed by the Democracy. Arkansas' Democratic party displayed considerably more political acumen than its Whig counterpart throughout the period under study. Despite the all but inevitable schisms which accompany sustained political success, the state's Democrats possessed sufficient skill to prevent an opening for Whiggery. In large measure the ability to avoid a serious cleavage resulted from both the political sagacity and the cohesiveness of the "Family," a closely-knit group of Democrats connected by ties of blood and marriage which dominated state politics from 1836 to the Civil War. In the years following its defeat in the election of 1848, Arkansas' Whiggery sought to secure an alliance with one of the factions within the state's Democratic party but proved unable to do so. In 1854, the most serious challenge to Democratic hegemony arose with the appearance of the Know-Nothing party. Composed of former Whigs and disgruntled Democrats unable to secure office, the state's Know-Nothings offered a spirited but brief threat to Democratic predominance.
CHAPTER I

ARKANSAS' FIRST STATE ELECTION 1836

In 1832 the American author Washington Irving scouted the American West in search of material for what became A Tour of the Prairies. Having just resided seventeen years in Europe, Weltschmerz was the mood of the moment as the essayist gazed upon the sleepy village of Arkansas Post in November of that year. Irving rejoiced that its inhabitants had not yet joined in the frantic search for wealth which he believed served as the mainspring of the basic evil in American life—the ceaseless change which prevailed in American society. As for the future of Arkansas Post, Irving expressed pessimism, for change was all the rage in America, but as his boat departed he wished its citizens well. In what they would have regarded as a curse rather than a benediction, he expressed the hope that the town's citizenry would long retain their "happy ignorance, their absence of all enterprise and improvement, their respect for the fiddle and their contempt for the almighty dollar."¹

Irving's idyllic view of an ambitionless people missed the mark; although the Arkansas territory contained the usual western element of drifters willingly living on the margin of subsistence, by far the majority of its citizens devoted themselves to the search for wealth

as evidenced by their willingness to leave depleted soils to the east in search of fertile lands. In the census of 1830, the territory boasted a considerable increase in the number of yeomanry who had made their way into Arkansas since its establishment as a territory in 1819. The United States Census of 1830 revealed that Arkansas had a population numbering 30,388—25,671 of them white. Some 4,425 individuals described themselves to Uncle Sam's recorders as heads of households in the twenty-three counties then comprising the territory. Moreover, population continued to increase rapidly as settlers poured into the area; the territorial census of 1835 estimated that the population of Arkansas had increased to 52,240.

In the fifteen years before 1835 the territory also advanced in areas other than population. Transportation registered a notable advance in 1822 when the first steamboat plied up the Arkansas River to dock at Little Rock. In 1828 a river steamer began a regular run between New Orleans and Fort Gibson (in present day Oklahoma), a round trip requiring a month to complete. And in the same year Congress appropriated funds to begin construction of a road from Memphis to Little Rock, a distance of some 130 miles. The Memphis road, however, proved inadequate for many years. In 1831, in response to a call for volunteers to serve in Arkansas, eight Methodist ministers gathered in Memphis on Christmas

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day prior to taking up posts in the territory. Finding the Arkansas swamps impassable to the west, the caravan purchased a cheap flatboat and proceeded down the Mississippi to Helena, Arkansas (almost due east of Little Rock some 150 miles) before the ministers disembarked and scattered to their various posts.5

In the course of the 1830's there developed more efficient links with outlying areas. Senator William Savin'ulton writing from Washing- ton, D. C. in the winter of 1837 informed his wife in Little Rock of his pleasurable astonishment at having received a letter mailed by her in Little Rock only twelve days previously. He had been happy to pay the seventy-five cents charge, Fulton added, in view of the fact that all her previous letters had required between forty and fifty days to reach him. With the advent of express mail steamers from New Orleans, Fulton concluded, he could now hope to receive her letters within fifteen or twenty days after she mailed them.6

Along with such improvements in transportation, cultural develop- ments proceeded apace in Arkansas in the 1830's. Batesville, located in approximately north central Arkansas, could boast in 1836 of a race track which featured spring and autumn meets. The results of the races at Batesville were reported in New York newspapers.7 In northwest Arkansas transportation advances also brought the rudiments of culture to Arkansans eager for contact with more settled regions. Following its

6 Ibid., pp. 133-34.
appearance in Batesville in August 1838, W. Waterman and Company's circus (which earlier in the year had appeared in Tallahassee, Florida) made its way into northwest Arkansas. There it performed on successive days in late September before audiences at Clarksville, St. Martins and Dardanelle before concluding its tour in the Fort Smith-Van Buren area.8 And while the hinterland enjoyed the novelities of horse racing and circuses, the territorial capital at Little Rock led the way in construction. By 1827 Little Rock contained sixty buildings—six constructed of brick, eight of frame construction, and the remaining forty-six of the log cabin variety. The Arkansas State House consisted of a log cabin ten by sixteen feet in size.9

Not all of Little Rock's energy, however, manifested itself in construction. By 1832 the city boasted at least four physicians. They, with editor William Woodruff and a prominent minister, comprised the Little Rock Board of Health which established an isolation hospital to combat a cholera epidemic.10 The following year the sheriff's census listed the population of Little Rock at 666. By 1839 the citizenry could boast of a newly acquired fire engine, although it featured neither hooks nor ladders. Initially, the volunteer firemen drilled enthusiastically in preparation for the city's next large fire; that enthusiasm soon waned, however, and Little Rock's firemen proved to be


incapable of quickly extinguishing the next blaze when it occurred.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite such advances, the Arkansas territory of the 1830's constituted little more than a raw wilderness. In 1835 James C. Johnson murdered and robbed George Robinson on the Memphis to Little Rock road as the victim rode through Crittenden County. A rapidly assembled posse gave chase, apprehended Johnson and returned him to the scene of the crime. Upon his confession the posse promptly hanged Johnson, since Crittenden County did not possess a jail and the posse feared that Johnson would either escape or his gang would rescue him if a delay occurred in exacting justice.\textsuperscript{12} Arkansas of the 1830's was indeed, as the noted English traveler Charles Latrobe contended, the equivalent of western Kentucky at the close of the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{13}

To meet the problems presented by settlers descending upon this raw region, Congress in March 1819 had created the Arkansas Territory. The officials appointed to administer the region included twenty-two-year-old Robert Crittenden of Kentucky, who was appointed territorial secretary. Of aristocratic lineage, Crittenden arrived in the territory in July 1819. Soon Crittenden began filling offices himself, since the designated governor, General James Miller of New Hampshire, did not arrive in Arkansas until the day after Christmas. In dispensing patronage in this fashion young Crittenden created the first political machine in the territory.\textsuperscript{14} In the fall of 1819 Arkansas' voters elected

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Ross, \textit{Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866}, p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Waddy W. Moore, "Some Aspects of Crime and Punishment of the Arkansas Frontier," \textit{Arkansas Historical Quarterly}, XXII (Spring, 1964), 56-57.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 64.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
James Woodson Bates—Crittenden's law partner—delegate to Congress; in addition, the voters selected members of a five-man legislative council and a nine-member territorial house of representatives.

For the following four years territorial politics proved uneventful, but in 1823 thirty-year-old Henry W. Conway defeated Bates in his bid for reelection. Conway then replaced Bates as Crittenden's closest associate in territorial politics, a relationship that endured until 1827. In that year a quarrel developed between Conway, seeking reelection as a delegate to Congress, and Crittenden. The dispute ostensibly arose as a result of Conway's retention of $600 in public funds which he maintained Crittenden had authorized him to keep.\(^\text{15}\)

Actually, the difficulties which developed between the two men had not resulted from a mere misunderstanding concerning the use of public funds. Rather, they had originated in Conway's attempt to split the ruling junta in order to replace Crittenden as the chief political figure in the territory. Prior to the 1827 election, Crittenden had noted this intent of Conway's when he railed that the "war that has been incessantly waged against me had its origin in an alliance formed among those who had professed the most devoted friendship for me, and whose fortunes I had made."\(^\text{16}\)

Conway's opponent Robert C. Oden secured the support of Crittenden in a campaign marked by sustained vituperation and threats of violence. Conway easily won reelection but the ill will between Conway and Robert

\(^{15}\) Lonnie J. White, *Politics on the Southwestern Frontier*, p. 70.

Crittenden remained. On October 29, 1827, less than three months after the election, the two men fought a duel near the mouth of the White River in southeast Arkansas. Conway's pistol shot only grazed Crittenden's coat, but Crittenden's ball entered Conway's rib cage, and he died on November 9. Ambrose H. Sevier replaced the fallen Conway as Arkansas' delegate to Congress in December 1827 and remained in that post until Arkansas acquired statehood in 1836, whereupon he entered the Senate.

With its population above 50,000 by 1835, Arkansas was entitled to apply for admission to the Union. By early fall all four of the territory's papers—three in Little Rock and the Helena Herald—supported statehood. The largest and most influential, the Arkansas Gazette, with its redoubtable editor William Woodruff beating the editorial drums, urged throughout 1835 that Arkansas petition Congress for statehood. With Michigan preparing to apply for admission in December 1835, the proponents of statehood argued that Arkansas would be prudent to apply at the same time in order to enable Congress to hurdle the slavery controversy by pairing free Michigan with slave Arkansas. Although some opposition to statehood appeared in the public prints, chiefly on the grounds that acquiring statehood would raise taxes and eliminate the funds provided a territory for internal improvements, most of the citizenry approved the change. Albert Pike, owner and editor of the Little

17 White, loc. cit.

18 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 15.

19 Ibid.

20 As late as 1846 a correspondent from Coon Hollow, St. Francis County, complaining of the deplorable condition of the Memphis road,
Rock Arkansas Advocate since January 1835, was among the foremost advocates of statehood. Writing some eight years later under the nom de plum Sabinus, he asked why Arkansas had sought admission into the Union rather than "remaining happy and contented as a territory."

In 1843, Sabinus declared that most Arkansans had deemed statehood impractical since the entire territorial population barely equalled that of a fair-sized city. Within a year, however, a complete reversal of opinion had transpired within the ranks of the Democratic faction.

According to Pike, this reversal occurred for two reasons: (1) National supporters of Democrat Martin Van Buren, looking ahead to the presidential race in 1836 and feeling confident of the acquisition of Arkansas' three electoral votes if she gained statehood, decided to press for immediate admission; and (2) the territory's Democratic faction, taking a closer look at the patronage possibilities, realized that on balance more political plums would be available under state than under territorial criticizd the decision for statehood on the grounds that internal development would have been accelerated if Arkansas had remained a territory. With statehood obtained, he added, Democratic opposition to internal improvements for states made at federal expense insured that Arkansas would continue to have an inadequate transportation system. Little Rock Gazette, December 26, 1846.

21 Lonnie J. White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, 173; Little Rock Arkansas Advocate, January 23, May 8, May 29, June 12, July 3, 1835. See also the Gazette of June 16, 1835, for Pike's "very appropriate" reply made to an opponent of statehood at a Little Rock public meeting of June 13. An influential member of the Central Committee, Pike held elitist views which he expressed fully in his anonymously published The Evil and The Remedy. He might have run for office but did not do so and later boasted that he would have been defeated had he sought office. For a short presentation of Pike's fantastic career as an officer in the Mexican and Civil Wars, as a poet, politician, attorney and writer of Masonic lore see John Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas (Albany, New York: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1887), pp. 225-33.
status. Two weeks after the territorial legislature convened on the fifth of October in 1835, Absalom Fowler, a Little Rock attorney and chairman of a joint legislative committee to consider Governor William Fulton's message on the statehood question, introduced a bill providing for the popular election of delegates to a constitutional convention to meet in Little Rock on the first Monday in January 1836. Like Pike, Fowler would exercise an influential voice in Whig circles in the new state but, unlike Pike, he would also seek political office. The constitutional convention that sat in Little Rock through most of January featured a bitter sectional fight concerning the basis of the apportionment in the state legislature. This contest reflected the fact that geographically Arkansas is divided into highlands in the North and West and lowlands in the South and East. The highlands, though containing 58 per cent of the free population in 1835, possessed only 34 per cent of the slaves. Fearing domination by the highlands, the more heavily slave populated areas of the South and East sought additional representation in the new legislature. Supporting their demand for additional representation, the lowlands noted that the United States Constitution provided that for apportionment purposes in the House of Representatives five slaves counted as three free males. Thus the residents of eastern and southern Arkansas maintained that equity required additional representation for the lowlands. Furthermore, it was argued that if the slave

23 White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, p. 178.
24 Ibid., pp. 185-86.
population of the lowlands was not counted, Arkansas in 1836 would not possess sufficient population to qualify for statehood. Although emotions ran high on the issue, the delegates reached a decision which compromisingly granted the lowlands a slightly higher representation than its white population justified. By the terms of the agreement, the North and West were allotted nine of the seventeen senators in the state senate and thirty of the fifty-four members of the house of representatives. Under this arrangement a senator from the North and West represented about 1,481 white males, while his counterpart from the South and East represented only about 1,196 white males. In the house each northern-western representative would have 444 white male constituents, while each eastern-southern house member would have only 399.

This compromise won approval by a vote of 28 to 22 in the Constitutional Convention, with the North and West opposing even this temporary violation of the one white male-one vote formula. The constitution, however, provided for the taking of a new census in 1838 by which the legislature would be reapportioned solely on the basis of the state's white male population.  

This bitter apportionment struggle played a role in the first state elections in 1836, as both parties attempted to utilize the memory of that contest for partisan purposes. Since the convention delegates had reflected sectional prejudices in their speeches and votes, neither side could wrap the mantle of the new constitution around its claims for preference by claiming to have been the unique promoter of statehood. Nevertheless, each appeared quite willing to appeal to sectional

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25White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, pp. 188-89.
bias in a given area by contending that a candidate for a state office had opposed the interest of a particular section on the basis question. And in addition, each party sought to demonstrate that on the national level the opposing party in Congress had sought to block the admission of Arkansas into the Union.

As Arkansas approached entry into the Union in the spring of 1835, its political life reflected issues of interest elsewhere in the nation. The new national party alignments which were then forming would not become firm until after 1837, but already the issues which the Whigs would champion manifested themselves: the tariff question, opposition to the alleged usurpation of power by President Jackson, attacks on the removal of federal funds from the United States Bank and their placement in the state "pet" banks, and the apathy of many to the presidential ambitions of the Easterner Martin Van Buren, all formed a part of the platform of the "opposition parties" developing in 1834.26 Outside the state, contests between these new alignments took place in other state and congressional elections of 1834 and 1835. Thus, at the very moment Arkansas sought statehood the party alignments developed which would prevail until the sectional crisis of the early 1850's reoriented the American political structure.

With statehood looming as a distinct possibility in the fall and winter of 1835, however, the alignments forming elsewhere also appeared in the territory.27 Some ten years after Arkansas' admission


into the Union, William Woodruff, founder and editor of the Arkansas Gazette and in 1846 owner and editor of another Little Rock newspaper, recalled that territorial politics had not possessed a national cast before 1836 since Arkansas had no vote in Congress. According to Woodruff, only a few people in Arkansas before 1836 were interested in national politics—indeed, most of the citizenry believed that the territory could best serve its interest by refusing to "meddle with national politics" but instead seek the friendship of all the politicians in Washington. Woodruff claimed that even he was not certain of his own national political loyalty during the territorial period. Other commentators also later testified as to the absence of national political ties in the state prior to 1836. A scornful correspondent writing in 1844, for instance, denied that Ambrose Sevier supported the principles of Jacksonian Democracy in the Arkansas election of 1827: "No man, in the elections of that day, ever heard of a democrat or whig party. A candidate for public office was elected by his own merits or popularity, not by any peculiar set of political doctrines he advocated."

Although lacking national political connections before 1836, Arkansas' two territorial factions provided the framework for the creation of the state parties. In 1836 Ambrose H. Sevier, Conway's successor, was the acknowledged leader of the party which supported Martin Van Buren and the Democrat Republican party in that and subsequent

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(Fayetteville: Arkansas Historical Association, 1911) III, 144-45; Ross, Arkansas Gazette the Early Years 1819-1866, p. 137; Helena Constitutional Journal, May 5, 1836.

28 Gazette, May 4, 1846.

29 Ibid., May 8, 1844.
years. The Arkansas supporters of Hugh Lawson White and the Whig movement remained without a recognized leader in 1836, however, as a result of the death two years previously of Robert Crittenden. In 1829 the territorial secretary had resigned his position to enter private legal practice, but he had continued his involvement in territorial politics until his death. In Crittenden's fifteen years in the Territory, he had fashioned an effective, if not always victorious, political machine. By 1827 the Crittenden group and the emerging Sevier organization had brought into existence in Arkansas two distinct political factions.  

The faction dominated by Ambrose Sevier emerged as the Democratic party with the achievement of statehood in 1836, while Crittenden's faction championed the cause of Whiggery. In 1849, Terrence Farrelly, a Whig, writing to his fellow Whig, Jesse Turner, reaffirmed this truism of early Arkansas political life when he described as identical the personnel of the Crittenden territorial faction and the subsequent Whig state political organization.  

To declare that the territorial factions moved intact into the Democratic and Whig camps does not, of course, indicate why the Democrats supported the party of Andrew Jackson and the Whigs that of Hugh Lawson White. In 1844, a Gazette correspondent provided a plausible explanation, however, when he wrote that Sevier entered Congress in 1827 as a supporter of William H. Crawford but switched his allegiance to Andrew Jackson within a year or two. Thus

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30 White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, p. 87. White notes that Sevier's faction sincerely supported Jackson in national politics while the Crittendenites, though largely favoring Clay, only professed allegiance to Jackson in order to secure support from the Territory's numerous admirers of Jackson.

31 Terrence Farrelly to Jesse Turner, December 14, 1849. Jesse Turner Papers, University of Arkansas Collection.

32 Gazette, May 8, 1844.
when Arkansas attained statehood, Sevier's faction had preempted the Jacksonian label, leaving the Crittenden faction no choice but to support White and the Whigs.\textsuperscript{33} The correspondent implied that the party which carried the Jacksonian standard enjoyed an advantage in western politics.

The developing Whig party labored under another handicap as it organized in 1836. In a biographical sketch of Crittenden penned over a half century after his death, Albert Pike contended that the untimely demise of the former secretary had adversely affected the anti-Jackson party in Arkansas in two ways: (1) It had deprived the anti-Jacksonians of a tested, capable, and irreplaceable leader, and (2) it had also created a leadership vacuum in the faction which promoted a debilitating rivalry within the circle of Crittenden's lieutenants at the very period in which unity was vital for the faction to demonstrate its maximum potential for the state political struggles ahead. Pike also maintained that by his death at the age of thirty-seven, the former secretary had escaped a dolorous personal future that would have resulted from continuous Whig defeats in Arkansas. In Pike's opinion, the ambitious Crittenden had avoided the disappointments and bitterness that a capable politician experiences when he is "condemned to struggle in a hopeless minority all his life against an invincible majority."\textsuperscript{34}

A more optimistic Pike looked to the future in 1835. With a tone of confidence Pike announced his purchase of the Little Rock Advocate


from Charles B. Bertrand in January, 1835. Bertrand, brother-in-law of the recently deceased Robert Crittenden, had established and edited the paper since 1830; in 1834 he had acquired the editorial assistance of Pike, a transplanted native of Massachusetts and former school teacher in the Bay State, who had migrated to Arkansas two years previously at the age of twenty-five. In his first editorial as owner-editor, Pike announced that he would continue support of the "men and measures" Bertrand had supported. And in possibly the boldest early Arkansas editorial venture in national political affairs, Pike proceeded to outline the future position of the Advocate concerning both men and measures. The paper would support a western man for the presidency, Pike declared, thereby confirming his opposition to the candidacy of New York's Martin Van Buren and signaling his support of Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee. Lest his readers conclude that Henry Clay of Kentucky represented the western man had in mind, he announced his opposition to Clay's land policy which advocated the sale of public (largely western) land at high prices. Elsewhere in this initial issue Pike elaborated on his presidential choice by offering his opinion that Clay's land bill was opposed to western interests, and expressed the hope that if Congress passed the measure President Jackson would veto it.

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36 Advocate, January 23, 1835. Within a year and a half Pike reversed his views on Clay's land bill, stating that "surplus" revenue derived from land sales had to be distributed in some manner and that he now realized that his earlier opposition to the land bill based upon constitutional objections had been unsound. Actually, in January Pike had opposed the land bill on the basis of sectional interest rather than on constitutional grounds. See the Arkansas Advocate on June 3, 1836.
Like most westerners, Pike believed that the dollar and a quarter an acre price established in 1820 for public land was too high and discouraged western settlement. Indeed the West believed that the supporters of high prices for public land sought to discourage western settlement in order to provide the East with a labor surplus which aided American manufacturers in lowering their production costs.37

Elaborating further upon the paper's policies, which he defined as designed to benefit the South and West, Pike announced his opposition to a protective tariff. While benefitting the Northeast it would also raise the price of manufactured goods for Arkansas' citizens, most of whom were farmers and planters. Finally, Pike extended editorial support to the second United States Bank whose charter would expire the following year as a result of Jackson's veto of a rechartering bill passed by Congress in 1832. Jackson had vetoed the bill contending that it represented special interest legislation, benefiting the wealthy but inimical to the interest of most citizens.

In his analysis Pike neglected to mention internal improvements made at federal expense. The neglect did not represent an oversight, however, for by opposing a protective tariff and high prices for federal lands, Pike automatically announced opposition to an internal improvements program which required revenue from these two sources. In part Pike's program represented an attempt to resolve the problem of embryonic Arkansas Whiggery, the problem of selling a nationalist program to a new section whose interest would often be adversely affected—as with the land bill and the protective tariff—by such programs. Pike's 1835

program, catering as it did exclusively to western interests, resolved the problem in an unsatisfactory manner from the viewpoint of national Whiggery, but of course he did not speak for all Arkansas Whigs. As one observer has noted, Whig ideology of this period constituted a "strange hybrid" appealing to those within the party who were bank and anti-bank, tariff and anti-tariff, in favor of and opposed to internal improvements. The one characteristic they had in common was their anti-Jackson stance.³⁸

Necessity dictated the concealment of anti-Jacksonianism in Arkansas' politics, however, since Old Hickory's prestige among the state's voters remained unassailable. Pike's declaration had not even contained such code words as "executive usurpation" or "states' rights" to denote this hostility to Jackson, though in the period between late 1834 and the August-November elections of 1836 the usually well preserved mask concealing anti-Jacksonian hostility occasionally slipped. In an April 1835 reprint from the Nashville Banner, Pike's paper demonstrated both this feigned allegiance and the undercurrent of hostility to the President. The Nashville editor had defended White's loyalty to Jackson declaring that White had always supported Jackson. As for White's opponent Van Buren—and here the anti-Jacksonianism emerged—no one, the Nashville editor contended, would have ever heard of Van Buren had Jackson not promoted the New Yorker's presidential aspirations.³⁹


³⁹ Advocate, April 24, 1835.
editorial assailing Jackson as a "low partisan" for supporting Van Buren's candidacy.40 One major problem for Arkansas Whiggery is summed up in these extracts: Essentially it was to oppose Jacksonianism the system without appearing to oppose Jackson the man.

As Arkansas' Democrats began to utilize Jackson's prestige to promote the candidacies of local political aspirants, as well as Van Buren's, the Whigs searched for the most astute reaction to this Democratic tactic. Usually, the Whigs simply ignored the charge. Albert Pike recorded one of the more noteworthy exceptions to the policy of silence when he attacked the Senate's action in approving Senator Thomas Hart Benton's resolution expunging from the records a Senate-approved resolution submitted in 1834 by Henry Clay. Clay's resolution had condemned as unconstitutional some of the actions President Jackson had taken in his struggle against the Bank.41 Benton's success, declared Pike, not only completed the degradation of the Senate, but it also placed the citizenry perilously close to slavery, for many European kings allegedly possessed less power than Jackson. Fortunately, Jackson's tenure in office expired in another year, Pike wrote, and Van Buren could not hope to inherit the powers of his predecessor, since "the adulation granted Jackson will not be stowed upon those who follow him." Not that Pike believed the Democrats would not attempt to transfer the adulation granted Jackson to his successor. Indeed the "current of sycophancy and adulation will set toward the east, where a new luminary is rising."42

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40 Advocate, April 24, 1835.
41 For a detailed account of Clay's motives and tactics pursued in connection with this resolution see Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay, pp. 278-85.
42 Advocate, February 17, 1836.
Pike's unguarded response here was the exception. More typical was the attempt of editor John H. Reed of the Little Rock *Times* to demonstrate that Van Buren's Whig rival for the presidency, Hugh White, supported Jackson. According to Reed, White had displayed ardent support for Jackson in the 1828 presidential race in which Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams; Reed believed that White's support of Jackson on that occasion entitled White to be called a true Democrat. But even in the attempt to prove the compatibility of Jackson and White the essential anti-Jacksonianism of the anti-Van Buren movement emerged, for Reed, in an aside, declared against Jackson's policy of supporting with all personal and governmental power the candidacy of the New Yorker Van Buren—an enemy, Reed assured his readers—of the West. Furthermore, the whispering campaign Democrats had launched among the numerous Tennessee migrants in Arkansas to the effect that White had betrayed Jackson was an insult to the intelligence of the Tennessee settlers who knew White as a man of spotless character.

This attempt of Arkansas' Whigs in 1836 to cloak anti-Jacksonianism by attempting in a halting fashion to present White as a supporter of Jackson demonstrates the overwhelming popularity of Jackson in the state. The charge made elsewhere that King Andrew attempted to dictate the choice of his successor by promoting Van Buren's candidacy would not, Arkansas' Whigs realized, prove acceptable in their area. True, in June 1835 when he had resided in the Territory only eighteen months, Albert Pike hinted at executive dictation in declaring that the Arkansas

43 *Times*, June 6, 1836.

delegates to the Democratic convention in Baltimore had received their nominations at a secret caucus attended only by Van Buren supporters because Democratic leaders realized that the Little Magician had but little popular support in Arkansas. Soon, however, Pike sensed the impropriety of such a course. The general absence of an attack on Jackson as dictator meant, of course, that Van Buren's supporters in Arkansas could largely ignore this portion of the Whig offensive employed in other areas of the nation, although the Gazette's editor, Thomas Jefferson Pew, did, on one occasion in defending Van Buren, deny in a cursory manner that Jackson dictated Van Buren as the party's nominee.

Arkansas' Democrats appropriated the Jacksonian halo not only to enhance Van Buren's chances in the state but also to aid Democrats who sought local and state offices. Democrats sought to utilize Jackson's name to aid local Democratic candidates by labeling their opponents as anti-Jacksonians, and by asserting that the Jacksonian program would continue only if Democrats controlled Congress. This was the contention of Pew in July when he cautioned that no one should believe that Arkansas' contests had no connection with national politics. To the contrary, state elections were not contests between local individuals; rather, in casting their ballots for the congressman to which the state was entitled and for state legislators the electorate expressed either support for or opposition to Jackson's principles. This resulted from the fact, Pew assured the Gazette's readers, that the Jacksonian program of the future directed by Van Buren required congressional approval—

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45 Advocate, June 26, 1835.
46 Gazette, July 28, 1836.
including the support of Senators elected by the states' legislators.  

The nature of these principles Pew only sketchily alluded to, although he asserted that Van Buren would reform the currency, remove the Indians from settled areas to western regions while at the same time providing adequate defense forces for the exposed frontiers. And finally, in what would have represented a most impolitic statement had Arkansas' Whigs dared to raise the King Andrew issue, Pew solemnly declared that Van Buren would check the growth of federal authority.

If Arkansas' Whigs recognized their problem, at least one Democrat in the territory perceived Democratic weaknesses as well. As the Arkansas constitutional convention met at Little Rock in January 1836, the Gazette's editor, William Woodruff, sought to persuade his cohorts among the Democracy that in the coming elections the party could win only if it sought support for the party ticket as a whole rather than by appealing for votes on the merits of its individual candidates. Party leaders unanimously rejected Woodruff's strategy since they knew of the electorate's hostility to party politics, an antipathy whose foundation rested on the public's belief that party politics was machine politics and therefore unsavory. Undaunted by the rebuff at Little Rock, Woodruff coolly decided to ignore the decree of the leadership, for he realized that as editor of the party's organ he would stand condemned should the party suffer defeat.

Woodruff based his decision to conduct the campaign as a party

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47 Gazette, June 21, July 26, August 9, 1836.
48 "Fence Men," Ibid., August 9, 1836.
49 Ross, Arkansas Gazette the Early Years 1819-1866, p. 128.
issue on the perception that both the Democratic state and national tickets possessed weaknesses that would prove fatal unless an appeal was made for electoral support of the straight Democratic ticket. On the state level, the struggle between the sections over the basis for representation in the Assembly had created enemies for the Democracy that only an appeal for a party vote could overcome. On the national level, the candidacy of the New Yorker Martin Van Buren in opposition to Tennessee's Hugh Lawson White was not enthusiastically supported by many Arkansans who quite naturally as westerners and southerners viewed White's aspirations with considerable sympathy.

On several occasions in 1835, Woodruff, commenting on the presidential race that would transpire in the fall of 1836, sought to equate support for Van Buren with loyalty to Jackson; in addition, he attempted to dismiss White's candidacy as lacking popular support. Drumming up Arkansas' support for Van Buren represented by far the most difficult of the two tasks as Woodruff tacitly conceded in July 1835. Although admitting that many "Republicans" preferred White to Van Buren, the editor insisted that duty required that adherents of republicanism support the Van Buren-Richard M. Johnson ticket selected by the Baltimore convention; Woodruff maintained that failing to support the ticket would lead to the victory of aristocratic Federalists with Henry Clay and the Bank's supporters joining John C. Calhoun and his nullifiers among the inner circle of White's advisers.

50 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 128.
51 Gazette, July 28, 1835; December 22, 1835.
52 Ibid., July 28, 1835.
But if national political partisanship made its presence gradually felt as Arkansas began to move toward statehood, some felt equivocation the better part of valor. Andrew Jackson Hunt, formerly of Zanesville, Ohio and owner-editor of the Times of Little Rock in the first eight months of 1835, devoted much of his editorial energy to an anti-gambling crusade in which he advocated the lynching of the professional gamblers of the city who refused to seek their fortunes elsewhere. While publishing clippings from other papers concerning territorial or national politics, the twenty-one-year-old Hunt seldom ventured an effort of his own. On April 18, however, he did provide a brief sketch of the developing Van Buren-White struggle pointing out that the Whigs supported White because they believed his views complemented their own more closely than did those of Van Buren. Thus, Hunt concluded, the Whigs could construe a White victory as a vindication of themselves. With respect to his own opinions, Hunt promised that in time he would express them whatever they might be. As innocuously impartial as Hunt's comments may appear, he failed to take into account the intensely partisan atmosphere of the times in which many construed neutrality as opposition. Two weeks after his cursory analysis of the White-Van Buren rivalry, Hunt protested that he did not support either candidate—the Times, he declared, could best serve its readers by eschewing the role of a party organ. And then Hunt proceeded to blurt that since his subscribers were drawn from both parties, he did not care to alienate either

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53 Times (Little Rock), April 18, 1835. The Times was the successor to the Political Intelligence which was established at Little Rock in 1834 by John M. Steele. Hunt changed the paper's name because the public objected to its length. See Fred W. Allsopp, History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years and More, pp. 342-43.
faction. While this may not have constituted the "bold" position Hunt described, his caution was understandable. Beginning with only 150 subscribers after his purchase of the Times in January 1835 from John Steele (who had mislead Hunt as to actual circulation figures), Hunt desperately sought to increase his circulation which numbered some 325 before his death on September 16, 1835.55

William T. Yeomans, founder and editor of the Constitutional Journal in Helena, Arkansas, made still another effort to secure the advantages of non-partisanship. Yeomans sought to avoid political discussions preferring to boost Helena, a Mississippi river town in southeast Arkansas; the paper boasted that the hamlet possessed the potential to equal London in size, and Paris in beauty.56 In the Journal's first issue, Yeomans professed to see no reason why the Arkansas Territory should dissipate its energies in a partisan struggle in which it could participate only as an observer, since its citizens could not vote in the presidential contest; he counseled the people instead to seek the promotion of their local interests. Yeomans reinforced his non-partisan orientation by asserting that he would support policies that he deemed constructive regardless of which party advocated them.57 This statement of editorial policy neutrality engendered criticism from several other newspapers with which Yeomans exchanged issues—particularly cutting was his critics' charge that Yeomans delayed announcing his own allegiance

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54 Times, May 2, 1835.
55 Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 127; Times, September 19, 1835.
57 Constitutional Journal (Helena), March 8, 1836.
to gain time to discover the probable victor in Arkansas in order to reap whatever benefits might accrue from having supported the winning party. Yeomans declared this an erroneous assessment of the basis for the Journal's neutrality. He declared that the paper's policy resulted from the tactical necessity of presenting Arkansas as a neutral in national politics, since to achieve statehood Arkansas required the support of both political parties in Arkansas and hence could ill afford to antagonize either party.  

In the same issue in which Yeomans asserted the necessity for Arkansas to maintain its political neutrality, however, he extended the Journal's benediction on the actions of Jacksonians in Carrol County who had nominated Archibald Yell for Congress. The editor sought to resolve this contradiction by giving a non-partisan cast to the proceedings. Yeomans declared that, while personally uninformed as to Yell's qualifications, he assumed that other counties would hold similar meetings to select qualified candidates for the congressional seat which Yeomans now felt Arkansas would acquire in the near future. To further solidify the Journal's image as a politically non-aligned paper, Yeomans professed confusion at the Gazette's use of the term Democrat to describe Yell; previously, he declared, Arkansas' factions had lacked ideological foundations since "personal predilections" had governed factional loyalty. If a distinction now existed that would more clearly define the programs of the emerging parties, Yeomans asked that his readers assist him in identifying it. But if he formally eschewed party politics,

58 Constitutional Journal (Helena), March 8, 1836.
59 Ibid.
Yeomans proved willing to lend support to an individual, for he concluded his editorial by suggesting that the Territorial governor, William S. Fulton, who had secured appointments from President Andrew Jackson as secretary of the Territory in 1830 and its governor in 1835, would make Arkansas an excellent governor when statehood was achieved.60

The Gazette's editor, William Woodruff, received Yeoman's neutralism with ill grace, for Woodruff sought to make Arkansas safe for the Democracy by sharply delineating party loyalties. In pursuit of this policy, the Gazette, in the spring and summer of 1836, offered on several occasions a defense of party politics which twice featured attacks on Yeomans' professed neutrality. In late March a correspondent writing in the Gazette declared euphemistically that Jackson's administration was characterized by what he described as "general leading features"; he also suggested that the Journal express its own preference for the presidency.61 Yeomans responded angrily to Woodruff's attempt to discredit the Journal's neutral stance and to force the paper into announcing its presidential preference. In late April Yeomans provided a contributor, "Rad," an opportunity to assail the thesis of the Gazette's contributor that Jackson's administration possessed an ideological hue, although Yeomans ignored the challenge to express his own presidential choice in this issue. "Rad" asked what specifically constituted the

60 Constitutional Journal (Helena), March 31, 1836. For Fulton's career see White's Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, pp. 92, 171.

61 "Public Sentiment to Editor," Gazette, March 26, 1836. Woodruff relinquished the Gazette's editorial duties to Thomas Jefferson Pew on May 10, 1836. Pew continued his predecessor's defense of party loyalty. See the Gazette of July 28, 1836, for a defense of parties as representatives of principle, the "very life of republican government."
policies of the Jackson administration. Did they include a rigid adherence to party discipline and the approval of the caucus or convention system which won Jackson the presidency, and did these policies include support for the abolitionists' attempts to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia? All of these policies offended the Arkansas voter with his frontiersman's distaste for machine politics and his southern dislike for abolition, and all were policies which "Rad" professed to see supported by Jackson's administration.

To reinforce his political neutrality but at the same time protect himself from the charge of serving the anti-Jackson cause as a consequence of publishing "Rad," Yeomans announced in the same issue in which "Rad" appeared that in the future the Journal would publish letters of a political nature irrespective of the writer's views, but Yeomans then cautioned his readers not to assume that any letter represented his own personal views. At this point Yeomans' neutrality displayed signs of wear, for after announcing that he welcomed all viewpoints, he indicated that he had generally supported the Jackson administration in the past, although Yeomans alluded to unspecified events which occurred several years previously that had reduced his esteem for that administration. Possibly Yeomans referred to Jackson's war on the Bank in 1832; at any rate, the editor now declared that he favored the presidential aspirations of Senator Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky—by implication

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62 Oftentimes pseudonyms were employed by editors of the period as defensive coloration in order to avoid giving personal offense. Thus "Public Sentiment" may have been penned by Woodruff, and the reply made by "Rad" in the Journal could well have been Yeomans'.

63 *Constitutional Journal*, May 5, 1836.

64 *Ibid.*
Yeomans indicated that, if necessary, he would support Van Buren, since, he declared, he would not support all seekers for public office simply because they termed themselves followers of Van Buren. And once more Yeomans declared that the alleged programmatic basis for Arkansas' political parties eluded him, since previously there had existed no doctrinal parties in Arkansas—there had been, in Yeomans' view, "no positive Whigs—no positive Democrats." Consequently, he promised to support for state office the best men from each of the old factions.65

William Woodruff assailed the contention that Arkansas would benefit if its electorate ignored party labels. The editor of the Gazette conceded that honest, capable men had served in both of the old factions but with Arkansas approaching statehood there existed, Woodruff insisted, a need for political cohesion which could only manifest itself if the voters supported parties rather than individuals. He did not explain why Arkansas required more political cohesion as a state than it possessed as a territory, but the wily editor did somewhat mute his declaration by declaring that Arkansas might not wish to play a "conspicuous" role in the 1836 election; Woodruff explained that if the next president should fail to secure Arkansas' three electoral votes, he might look with disfavor upon the state's desire for large gifts of public lands and for the stationing of substantial defense forces along the state's Indian frontier regions.66

The first journalist of Arkansas, however, failed to intimidate Yeomans. If, he retorted to Woodruff, the political units now contesting

65 *Constitutional Journal*, May 5, 1836.

66 *Gazette*, May 17, 1836.
in Arkansas represented principles rather than the selfish personal interests of previous years, why had individuals remained in their previous factional molds—why, in other words, did the Sevier and Crittenden organizations not experience marked, if not profound, personnel changes as individuals switched their allegiances to conform to principles? Furthermore, Yeomans dismissed as absurd Woodruff's contention that the Crittenden party, which Yeomans termed the minority party, stood opposed to popular rule and to Andrew Jackson. Equally ridiculous in Yeomans' opinion was the attempt to label people Whigs, Democrats or Republicans. If the Arkansas electorate should qualify to vote in the 1836 presidential race, however, Yeomans concluded that Van Buren would win the state.67

Scorning such neutrality, Albert Pike, editor of the Advocate, found an opportunity in November 1835 to combine praise for Hugh White with a tribute to folk hero David Crockett who, on his way to Texas, passed through Little Rock where the citizenry feted him at the Jeffries Hotel. Ironically, with Crockett having less than four months to live before perishing under the Mexican assault at the Alamo, Pike informed his readers that Crockett "contemplates ending his days" in Texas.68 At the supper attended by a large number of Little Rock's citizens, Crockett's remarks included an attack on Jackson's administration and his chosen successor, Martin Van Buren. Woodruff in the Gazette humorously attempted to dismiss Crockett's partisan remarks by dwelling instead on the enthusiastic reception Crockett had received; Woodruff ascribed the reception

67 Constitutional Journal, June 9, 1836.

68 Advocate, November 13, 1835.
to the Tennessee native's ability to "whip his weight in wild cats, or grin a panther out of the highest tree." Pike would have none of this. True, Crockett remained an unaffected person—rough, natural, and pleasant—but his warm reception in Pike's opinion resulted less from his personal characteristics than from Crockett's friendship for White, and his factual rather than abusive indictment at the supper of both Jackson's administration and Van Buren's character.

But the presidential race could not command the major interest of Arkansas' citizens in late 1835, not only because the election itself lay in the rather distant future, but also because the statehood question and apportionment issue proved more relevant. Then, too, because of Crittenden's death in December 1834, the August election of the following year to the territorial General Assembly possibly lacked the bitter factionalism of earlier elections. True, in Fayetteville, David Walker, who would win office as a Whig state senator in 1840 but who would fail to achieve the gubernatorial chair in the 1844 election, could proudly inform his father of his election to the territorial House of Representatives as one of Washington County's five members despite "Jackson's overwhelming popularity" and the dominance of the Sevier faction in the area. And in Pulaski County, William Woodruff could bemoan the victories of Absalom Fowler and William Cummins in the House race as a "Waterloo defeat" for "the party with which we have uniformly acted."

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69 Gazette, November 17, 1835.
70 Advocate, November 20, 1935.
72 Gazette, August 4, 1835. Cummins led the four man field with 396 votes, Fowler received 322 while their opponents, David Rorer and F. A. McWilliam received 204 and 182 votes respectively.
Woodruff's use of the invidious term "party" provided Pike with an opportunity to taunt him by contending that Fowler and Cummins had secured their victories at the expense of party machinery and consequently in the interest of the people. The usual reticence of editors in the territorial period to label candidates by faction, however, makes it difficult to assess accurately the August 1835 election's significance in terms of party strength on the eve of statehood. Lonnie White has suggested that since both the territorial Council and the House selected Sevier men as presiding officers following the 1833 elections, Sevier's faction must have secured a majority in the elections of that year. John Wilson secured election as speaker of the House that year and John Williamson won the presidency of the Council. If these selections did constitute a meaningful criteria of factional strength in 1833, the picture in 1835 proves somewhat confusing. In the latter year, John Wilson won reelection as speaker of the House by a unanimous vote. This might indicate either the absence of a factional division in 1833 or the striking of a bargain between them in 1835. As for the Council election, John Williamson sustained a defeat in 1835 on the second ballot by a 15 to 11 vote with Charles Caldwell of Pulaski County attaining the presidential office. In his reference to a Waterloo defeat, Woodruff failed to note Caldwell's election, nor did Pike refer to it in his rejoinder. Presumably Caldwell was not committed to, or at least not closely identified with, a faction.

73 Advocate, August 7, 1835.
74 Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, p. 157, 157n.
75 Advocate, October 9, 1835
Such results as these demonstrated the need for considerable spadework in order to prepare voters to accept the concept of party identification. But to an electorate hostile to the concept of party politics, pitfalls existed. Woodruff perceived that hope for a Democratic victory rested on removing the stigma of party politics by equating the Democracy with Andrew Jackson. (In effect, Woodruff sought to transmute a liability into an asset.)

But prominent Democrat Archibald Yell did not share Woodruff's conviction. Yell, a native of Tennessee, had settled permanently in Arkansas in late 1834. In 1835 he secured appointment as a federal circuit judge, and in the same year built a house, Waxhaws, on a site overlooking the town of Fayetteville in the northwestern portion of the state. The Little Rock Times reported, in late March 1836, that a group of Carroll County citizens had urged Yell to seek election as the state's first congressman. Yell, however, hesitated to do so. He had hoped to become Arkansas' first governor, but the Sevier faction in the constitutional convention succeeded in disqualifying him for the office by adopting a constitutional provision requiring that a governor have a four-year residency in Arkansas. In April 1836 Yell informed a correspondent in Tennessee that he did not wish to run for Congress because the contest promised to be a "warm" and uncertain one, since

76 Melinda Meek, "The Life of Archibald Yell," Arkansas Historical Quarterly XXVI (Spring, 1967), 11-23.
77 Times, March 21, 1836.
Van Buren's nomination remained unpopular among even Jackson's supporters in Arkansas, and a Democratic candidate for Congress in the state might well lack support as a consequence of Van Buren's nomination. "To be candid with you there are [sic] in Ark. at this time a majority against the little Dutchman—All the White men here or nearly so are Jackson men—[and] the old Crittenden party have [sic] gained strength by the White question and if they can make a rally on the question they may possibly succeed." 79

Even as Yell expressed reluctance at entering the Congressional race, county nominating conventions took place. The Carroll County meeting constituted the first of six reported county meetings held by administration (Sevier) forces in the course of the campaign to nominate candidates, while "opposition" forces held one meeting. 80 In reporting the Carroll County meeting, the Times editors expressed approval of Yell's nomination and suggested that the county conventions also consider nominating a gubernatorial candidate; the editors declared that either the territorial governor, William S. Fulton; James Sevier Conway, the Surveyor-General of the Territory; or Edward Cross, a circuit court judge in the Territory, would prove a suitable chief executive. Both Fulton and Conway enjoyed membership in the "Family," a group that the early Arkansas historian John Hallum described as the "reigning dynasty

79 A. Yell to William Moore, April 6, 1836, abstract in the Yell Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.

80 Administration meetings were reported in the following counties in the Gazette: March 22, 1836 (Carroll County); May 24, 1836 (Washington County); June 24, 1836 (Lawrence); and July 12, 1836 (Randolph). The Times reported administration meetings in the issues of March 21, 1836 (Carroll), and June 13, 1836 (Jackson). The "opposition" meeting in Pulaski County was reported in the Gazette, June 28, 1836, and in the Advocate, July 1, 1836.
in Arkansas from 1820 to 1860."

As late as May 31, the Gazette's Thomas Pew remained unable to confirm Yell's candidacy, although he declared the Times in error in asserting that the judge would refuse to make the race. In a letter to Lewis B. Tully of Carroll County dated June 1, Yell finally announced his willingness to accept the nomination, provided his candidacy expressed the "general sentiment of the people." Not until late June, however, did the Gazette feature Yell's name on its masthead along with that of James Sevier Conway as the "Jackson Republican" candidates for Congress and the governorship.

On the previous day, the Times, under the caption "The People's Ticket," offered the names of William Cummins for Congress and Absalom Fowler for governor. Cummins, thirty-six and a former resident of Kentucky, came to Arkansas in 1824 and in 1835 made Albert Pike his law partner. Fowler, like Cummins one of the leading members of the Little Rock bar, had moved to Little Rock from Tennessee where he had voted for

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81 For the relationships by blood and marriage of the prominent members of this group, their careers and offices held both in the territorial and state periods see Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, pp. 42-59.

82 Gazette, May 31, 1836. That the Times could applaud Yell's nomination in its March 21 issue and now deny that he would run was due to editorial changes. In the paper's May 23 issue Jefferson Smith announced that he had relinquished his interest in the Times to his partner, J. H. Reed. In the same issue White received the Times' support for president. For Albert Pike's jubilation at the Times having "hoisted the White flag" see the Advocate of May 27, 1836. (As late as April 11 the Times reaffirmed its political neutrality.)

83 Gazette, June 7, 1836.

84 Ibid., June 28, 1836; Constitutional Journal, July 7, 1836.

85 White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, p. 142n; Hallum, op. cit., p. 83.
Andrew Jackson in 1828. In 1830 Fowler acquired the position of prosecutor in Arkansas' second judicial district. The following year Robert Crittenden accepted him as his law partner, and Fowler also assumed command of the Little Rock militia company. Along with Cummins, Fowler secured appointment as one of the trustees of Crittenden's estate following Crittenden's death in December 1834. The use of the term "People's Ticket" by White's supporters apparently represented an attempt by the Whigs to enlist the support of Jacksonians opposed to Van Buren's candidacy.

The climax of each party's nominating efforts occurred in June when both the Pulaski County Whig and Democratic organizations met to formulate party platforms and announce support for state and county candidates. The Pulaski County Whig meeting convened on Saturday, June 25, at the courthouse with individuals from nearby White and Saline counties also in attendance. This meeting provided a preview of the manner in which both Arkansas parties formulated policies and selected state candidates in the period encompassed by this study. As Walter Lee Brown, biographer of Albert Pike, noted, the "People's Party" was tightly organized, with Pike and a small "clique of Little Rock attorneys determining, in private conference, its views, policies and measures [and]

86 Dewey Allen Stokes, "The First State Elections in Arkansas, 1836," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XX (Summer, 1961), 134-35. Considerable discrepancy exists as to the year of Fowler's arrival in Arkansas. His entry into the state has been variously stated as dating from 1824 to 1833. Fowler's professional card first appeared in the Gazette on July 4, 1829. See Margaret Ross, "Absalom Fowler and His Home," Pulaski County Historical Review, IV (June, 1967), 17.

dictating to packed conventions its candidates." Of course, the parties sought to present such meetings as spontaneous rather than carefully staged affairs; the resolution adopted at the June 25 Whig meeting, for instance, described the assemblage gathered at the courthouse as "radically distinct and different from caucuses of interested and selfish men." 

Despite such assertions, accounts of the June 18 meeting reveal the existence of what would later on rare occasions be termed the Whig Central Committee. Composed of some twelve citizens of Little Rock in 1836, the personnel of the committee would alter in time, but natives of Little Rock would continue to monopolize the membership of the committee. The resolution adopted at the Whig meeting reveals the directive function of the Central Committee. The resolution authorized the committee to appoint seven men to correspond with Whigs throughout the state in order to "take measures to insure a concert of action" within Arkansas' Whiggery. Obviously, the Central Committee, centrally located in Little Rock, consisting of knowledgeable urban residents and assisted by the Whig press in the capital of the state, would "insure a concert of action" by providing centralized direction. Of course, in the Arkansas of the antebellum period with its primitive transportation and communication systems, central control lacked the rigor possible in more advanced environments.


89 "People's Meeting," Times, June 27, 1836; Advocate, July 1, 1836.

90 Ibid.
Little Rock Whigs exercised control over the party apparatus throughout the state and so too did their Little Rock counterparts in the Democratic party. According to Pike, who attended the Democratic meeting, some one hundred and twenty-three Democrats from Pulaski and Jefferson counties, as well as many local Whigs and strangers "who came only out of curiosity," gathered at the Little Rock courthouse on June 18 to adopt a resolution and nominate candidates for state and legislative offices. Pike's critical description of the Democratic meeting emphasized the centralized control of those he described as "wire-pullers." Local Democrats, he wrote, had arranged the proceedings in advance. As evidence of this assertion, Pike claimed that at the meeting a committee retired to draft a resolution and returned in only a few minutes with a lengthy document. As for the candidates endorsed by the meeting, Pike contended that Little Rock's Democratic leadership had selected them a week in advance of the public meeting ostensibly held to select the candidates. Subsequent events in the years ahead would demonstrate the validity of Pike's critique of Arkansas' Democracy in 1836. But, of course, his charge that direction in the Democratic party emanated solely from a few Little Rock "wire-pullers" applied not alone to the Democracy, for Pike himself served as one of the chief "wire-pullers" for Arkansas' Whiggery prior to 1850.

91 "Van Buren Meeting," Times, June 20, 1836. For additional accounts of this meeting see "Van Buren Meeting," Advocate, June 24, 1836; "Pulaski County Democratic Meeting," Constitutional Journal, July 7, 1836; "Pulaski County Democratic Meeting," Gazette, June 21, 1836. In 1847 while at odds with the Democratic leadership, Woodruff declared that the 1836 convention and subsequent Democrat conventions as well had "been used for the benefit of a family Clique" located in Little Rock: "Look at the secret convention in 1836, and it will be seen at once how well the members of the family Clique provided for themselves, not a simple office of any magnitude escaped their voracity." See Arkansas State Gazette (Little Rock), September 10, 17, 1847.
On July 1, 1836, Pike hoisted the names of Cummins and Fowler to the Advocate's masthead, explaining to the rural subscribers that news had reached Little Rock that very day that the House of Representatives had approved the entry of Arkansas into the Union—since President Jackson would certainly endorse Congress' action, Pike declared, the Advocate deemed it appropriate to list state candidates for public office. With the state elections scheduled for August 1, only three months remained for the candidates to present themselves to the voters. In the Arkansas of the 1830's with its extremely limited transportation facilities, this constituted a brief period for campaigning, in view of the fact that the sort of organizational structures that later developed had yet to make their appearance in 1836.

Limited time, as well as an absence of any real policy difference between the two parties, accounts in part for the rather flaccid campaign waged in 1836. In later campaigns the Second United States Bank, the two Arkansas State banks, the questions of internal improvements, western lands, the tariff and Henry Clay's political virtues and/or sins would all provide controversy in abundance, but in 1836 these factors had not yet established themselves as the burning questions they would shortly become.

In the 1836 campaign, for instance, the state press neglected to note even the candidates' itineraries. In the middle of July, Pew in an absent-minded fashion, noted that Conway had completed a "short tour" through the western counties and now planned to "turn north" to visit that area of the state; as for Yell, he had spoken at Owens,

92 Advocate, July 1, 1836. But it was not until the issue of July 15 that news of Arkansas' official entry into the Union was announced.
Arkansas the previous Saturday. Pike proved equally indefinite with respect to activities of the anti-Van Buren candidates; Cummins and Fowler, he wrote, had jointly addressed a "very large meeting at Fayetteville," Yell's hometown, on July 1, but Pike neglected to note the general direction the duo planned to take following the speech. Obviously, the editors of the party organs in 1836 remained unversed in the art of stimulating public interest in the candidates.

The most significant fireworks in the state elections resulted not from analyzing relevant contemporary issues, but from the injection into the campaign of two territorial events—one that had occurred in the distant past and the other of more recent vintage—but both of which the parties attempted to use for their own purposes. The older issue made its appearance in July when the Advocate took Pew to task for his continually referring to the supporters of White as the "old Crittenden party." Since his recent arrival in Little Rock, Pike charged, Pew had attempted to steer state politics along the old territorial lines. John H. Reed, of the Times, echoed the charge of his Whig colleague that Pew sought to revive the feuds of the Crittenden-Sevier factions in order to benefit the Democracy and, like Pike, Reed could not resist hurling the outsider smear at Pew by referring to the recent arrival of the Gazette's editor. Reed, however, amplified the charge by alluding to the Conway-Crittenden duel. Memories of that episode could not be recalled with pleasure by the citizenry, nor with profit for the pro-White ticket. Pew's references to the Crittenden party with its allusions to

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93 Gazette, July 19, 1836
94 Advocate, July 22, 1836
95 Advocate, July 8, 1836.
the fatal duel brought forth the cry from Reed, "let the ashes of the
death rest in peace."96

A more recent territorial factor injected into the 1836 gubernatorial race related to Absalom Fowler's role in the constitutional convention. Fowler had headed the committee which approved the compromise providing the South and East with only temporary over-representation in the Assembly.97 Fowler's vote approving the compromise was, of course, part of the public record; consequently, he stood to gain votes in the populous northern-western areas as a champion of the interests of those regions which, because they held proportionately fewer slaves than the South and East, desired representation based only on the free white male population.

The possibility that Fowler might win votes on his convention record obviously concerned Pew who nervously predicted in the middle of June that sectional convention animosities would not play a role in the coming election. National political questions, Pew wrote, would override archaic political considerations.98 But in the last week of the campaign chance provided Pew with an opportunity to transform Fowler's role in the convention from a liability into an asset. On July 20 Pew printed an "extra" announcing an impending clash between the Mexican and Texas armies. According to his later account, Pew received an order while the "extra" was on the press for 500 copies of a handbill attacking as hypocritical Fowler's convention position on the apportionment question.

96 Times, July 11, 1836.
97 White, Politics on the Southwestern Frontier, pp. 188-89.
98 Gazette, June 14, 1836.
Pew subsequently stated that, since he considered fulfilling special orders a legitimate journalistic enterprise and since the author of the handbill—the "Voice of the North"—had paid for publishing the communication, he had forwarded it as requested, to the northern portion of the state. 99

The "Voice" charged that Fowler, in committee, betrayed the interest of the North and West by supporting disproportionate legislative representation for the South and East for the 1836-1838 period. This advocacy, the anonymous writer implied, had not been necessary in order to prevent a failure of the convention. Rather, it represented Fowler's genuine sentiments in support of the southern and eastern cause, whereas his public convention vote constituted merely an attempt to curry favor in the North and East.

An outraged Pike responded to what he described as a slanderously false last minute electioneering trick. According to Pike, Fowler had voted in committee to support over representation for a two-year period only because such a compromise could prevent the convention from ending in failure. Furthermore, Pike reminded Pew, the Gazette had supported the compromise agreed to by the convention. In making such last minute charges, Pike claimed the Gazette only emulated Yell who had sought to arouse the prejudices of the North and West on the representation question, since he "has no other claims on the people—and no other chance for success." 100 Particularly reprehensible in Pike's view was the attempt of Pew to conceal his charges from Pulaski County and the southern-eastern counties in order to avoid creating a pro-Fowler response in

99 Gazette, August 2, 12, 1836.
100 Advocate, July 29, 1836.
those counties by forwarding the "extra" containing the "Voice of the North" to only the North and West. Pike asserted that only by chance had he secured a copy of the surreptitious handbill. And while Pike added that insufficient time remained before the election to refute the canard of the "Voice" in the more distant northern-western areas, he urged those of Fowler's supporters who could do so to set the record straight in their own districts by reminding the voters that the convention had adopted Fowler's position.\(^{101}\) Pew, in his postelection reply to the "tremendous row" Pike had raised, conceded that, while editorially he had supported the compromise, the fact remained that the "Voice" wrote truthfully in declaring that Fowler had actually opposed the interest of the North and West on the apportionment question.\(^{102}\)

Amidst this controversy, Arkansans cast their first votes as citizens of the new state. By August 9, Pew, in the Gazette, could trumpet that "Van Burenism was triumphant in Arkansas," that the enemy had been "routed, horse, foot, and dragoons." Three days later the Advocate's Pike quipped that he had survived the defeat "not having yet taken to our bed, and our adversaries having kindly permitted us to remain in the state."\(^{103}\) The election indeed represented, as Pew had boasted, a Waterloo defeat for the White forces in Arkansas. Of the thirty-four counties reporting returns in the governor's race, Conway polled majorities in all but seven, securing 4,855 votes to Fowler's 3,024. Cummins lost by an even greater margin—6,094 for Yell to his

\(^{101}\) Advocate, July 29, 1836.

\(^{102}\) Gazette, August 9, 1836.

\(^{103}\) Advocate, August 12, 1836.
Fowler ran stronger than Cummins for two reasons. First, he secured a larger percentage of the vote in the more populous North than did Cummins, largely as a result of his support of that area on the basis question. Fowler won Carroll County in the northwestern corner of the state, for instance, by 233 votes to 60—Cummins lost it 29 to 327. Second, Fowler's superior showing resulted in part from his facing a less popular opponent than Cummins, for Yell had rapidly acquired a great popularity in the north where he resided.  

As for Cummins, he failed to carry a single county in the northwestern area, losing populous Washington, Yell's home county, by 57 votes to 1,217. Fowler's opponent, Conway, also won Washington County but by only an 844 to 444 vote margin. If one analyzes the vote in terms of the free-slave ratios of the counties, it appears that Fowler's position on representation reduced his support in those counties possessing large slave populations. Of the twenty-seven counties listed in the 1835 census, all but one filed returns for both the Congressional and gubernatorial races:

Of the eight counties reporting the heaviest percentage of slaves, six gave Cummins a larger vote than they gave Fowler and they gave Conway a larger vote than Yell. Just the reverse was true in the eight counties having the smallest percentage of slaves; six gave Fowler a larger vote than Cummins and gave Yell a larger vote than Conway. The ten counties between the two

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105 Yell believed that much of his popularity derived from his position as a federal judge. Over one-half of his 6,000 votes were attained in his populous circuit where he received 3,100 of the 3,500 votes cast. See Melinda Meek, "The Life of Archibald Yell," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXVI (Summer, 1967), 170-71.
extremes divided evenly, five of them preferring Cummins to Fowler and preferring Conway to Yell, five of them preferring Fowler to Cummins and preferring Yell to Conway.\textsuperscript{106}

Compared with later elections, the 1836 contests produced considerably more discrepancy in the performances of candidates for the two state offices. The apportionment issue enabled Fowler to secure a heavier vote in the North and West than subsequent Whig candidates would get. His poorer showing than Cummins in the South and East demonstrated that Fowler's convention record placed him at a disadvantage in that region. Little doubt exists as to the validity of Brian G. Walton's assertion that party lines in the first campaign lacked the rigidity of later years, since for many Arkansas voters in 1836 "party identification had not yet triumphed over geographical location and intrastate sectional rivalry."\textsuperscript{107}

When one compares the electoral returns with the pre-election claims of the party newspapers, Pew's conservative estimate of Yell's margin of victory proves most interesting. Pew predicted that Cummins would win in only seven counties (none located in northwest Arkansas), that possibly ten counties stood too evenly divided to evaluate, and that Yell would win sixteen counties, thereby attaining a victory margin of some 2,500 votes.\textsuperscript{108} In view of Yell's winning margin of 3,715 votes, one suspects that Pew's shock exceeded that of Pike. Pike, on the other hand, had forecast a large majority for Fowler in both the northwestern and the southwestern portions of the state, and although he admitted that


\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Gazette}, July 19, 1836.
Cummins would not equal Fowler’s margin in the North, he declared that Cummins would gain a split in that area and go on to win the Congressional seat by attaining majorities in the river counties of the South and the East. 109

Elections to the state legislature also attracted considerable interest since legislators exercised influence not only on the state level but on the national as well since they elected United States Senators. As for the post-election party alignments in the sixty-eight seat legislature, Pew, in a late August issue of the Gazette, ventured his estimate of the legislature’s “Democrat Republican” members as distinguished from those whom he designated as among the “opposition” or those whose political loyalties remained unknown to him. In the Senate’s “Democrat Republican” camp, Pew placed twelve senators representing twenty-five counties, while he listed four members from senatorial districts encompassing nine counties as in the “opposition” or unknown categories. For the House, Pew designated thirty-eight members from twenty counties under the Democrat-Republican column while depicting fourteen individuals from twelve counties as in the “opposition” or unknown category. 110 Following the adjournment of the first legislative session in the fall, Pew published a revision of his estimates confining himself on this occasion to the Senate. He wrote that the Senate had eleven senators representing twenty-two counties who qualified as “Jacksonians”; two representing five counties Pew described as members of the “opposition,” while three representing six counties he categorized as pro-Van Buren but as voting

109 Advocate, July 22, 1836.

110 Gazette, August 23, 1836.
with the "opposition" in the legislature.\textsuperscript{111}

Pike's chagrin at the defeat had evaporated sufficiently by late August for him to offer an explanation of his party's loss. Pike assigned the major cause of defeat in the North to the use made by the Van Buren party since January of the apportionment question; in addition, Yell's early campaigning in that section (Pike declared Yell initiated his campaign in January) also proved of decisive importance. In other areas of the state, Pike asserted, Sevier's popularity assisted in securing the Yell-Conway majorities, while in all areas the Democrats scored effectively with their charge that the White party label masked aristocratic "Federalists" and unpatriotic "Nullifiers." Basically the defeat according to Pike resulted from a strategic error by Arkansas' Whig leadership. This error was the leadership's decision to subordinate national questions to "petty local ones" when local questions no longer held interest for the citizenry. And in addition to the failure of the leadership, Pike ascribed the defeat to the failure of many rank and file Whigs to cast their ballots—a failure which Pike attributed to petty jealousies and "short-sighted ambition" within Whig ranks.\textsuperscript{112} In the same issue, writing in a more emotional manner under the pseudonym "Casca," Pike described Yell as a demagogic illiterate incapable of writing a grammatical sentence and a man in whom a "dwarfish intellect" had joined to unlimited ambition; "Casca" attributed Yell's victory to his success at having duped the electorate.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Gazette}, December 6, 1836.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Advocate}, August 26, 1836.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.} Pike is identified as "Casca" by Allsopp, \textit{History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years or More}, p. 20.
In the face of a defeat of such proportions, Arkansas' Whigs looked to the November presidential contest with considerable trepidation. Both parties initiated their presidential campaign in April. At that time both the Advocate and the Gazette placed on their mastheads the names of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, since both papers declared that Congress' recent action had assured Arkansas of a sufficiently early entry into the union of states to qualify Arkansans as presidential voters. For the "Democrat Republican" party the Gazette listed Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson as its choice as Democratic party standard bearers. The Advocate carried the names of Hugh Lawson White and John Tyler under the caption, "The People's Anti-Caucus Ticket"; not until a week before the presidential election did Pike editorially use the term Whig to describe the pro-White forces in Arkansas. The remaining Little Rock newspaper, the Times, discarded its political neutrality with its May 23 issue following John H. Reed's purchase of complete ownership of the paper. By late June, Reed featured the names of Cummins and Fowler on the masthead as the candidates of the "People's Ticket"; a month later Reed confessed that he had entered into the political wars more intensely than he had planned. In Helena the cautious editor of the Constitutional Journal, William T. Yeomans (stigmatized by the Little Rock papers as a political trimmer) published in July a depreciatory attack upon a pro-White nominating convention held in Little Rock, thereby signaling the Journal's venture into political

114 Advocate, April 29, 1836; Gazette, April 26, 1836.
115 Advocate, October 28, 1836.
116 Times, June 27, 1836, July 25. The latter is the last extant edition of this paper.
partisanship. Yeomans continued, however, to decry partisan politics as unsuited for the new state which, he declared, should select its leadership on the basis of qualification rather than by party label. When the results of the August elections demonstrated that espousing the cause of the Democracy was consistent with preserving the Journal's circulation, Yeomans turned to a more vigorous defense of Van Buren's candidacy.

Arkansas journalism's treatment of the 1836 presidential race mirrored to a considerable extent the gubernatorial and Congressional campaigns without, of course, the apportionment question presenting itself as a direct issue in the national contest. There occurred, for instance, the attempt by the pro-White forces to demonstrate the affinity of Hugh White for Andrew Jackson. Among other arguments advanced in support of a White-Jackson friendship, Whigs offered the sectionalist thesis which contended that White, as a man of the West, supported western values, whereas Van Buren, a New Yorker, lacked knowledge of or interest in the West.

As Democrats continued their efforts to present Van Buren as the rightful heir to Jackson, Pike asserted that Jackson should be removed as an issue from the campaign and Van Buren required to seek office on

118 *Constitutional Journal*, July 7, 1836.
119 Ibid., August 21, 1836 ("J.S.A."); September 21, October 15 and October 27 by editor and "Opposition Tactics."
120 Advocate, April 29, May 27, June 3, July 1, October 28, 1836; Times, May 23, 1836.
121 Advocate, April 29, 1836, and May 27; Times, May 23, 1836.
his own merits, for Pike argued that while Jackson remained a "patriot, a great and good man—does it follow we must elect Van Buren?" To enhance the contrast between Jackson with his image as a simple, honest westerner and Van Buren, the Advocate depicted the New Yorker as an adroit Machiavellian skilled in all the arts of behind-the-scenes political manipulation. With Arkansas awaiting its entrance into the Union in the spring of 1836, the Advocate played upon this theme by asserting that Van Buren had sought the admission of Arkansas into the Union only because he expected that no presidential aspirant would gain a majority in the electoral college, thereby requiring the House of Representatives to select the president. Since under the Constitution a presidential choice made by the House gives each state's delegation—regardless of its size—only one vote, the "Van Buren Regency" had pressed for the admission of Arkansas into the Union because it felt confident that a Democrat would represent the state in the House. When delays occurred in the admission of Arkansas into the Union in the late spring, Reed made use of a similar argument to explain the difficulty in terms of Van Buren's deviousness. According to the Times's editor, Van Buren's supporters, belatedly realizing White's strength in Arkansas, experienced some sober second thoughts on permitting its entry into the Union before the election.

Smearing Van Buren as a wirepuller appeared a potentially rewarding tactic for Arkansas' Whigs. They labeled Van Buren because the Democratic

122 Advocate, July 1, 1836.
123 "83," Ibid., March 25, 1836.
124 Times, June 20, 1836.
convention at Baltimore nominated him, the "caucus" candidate picked by
the bosses.\textsuperscript{125} White's candidacy, on the other hand, they depicted as
reflecting popular sentiment. In reality, his candidacy, in conjunction
with that of two other Whigs, reflected the inability of the party to
unite nationally on a platform and to select a single candidate.\textsuperscript{126}
This inability led in 1836 to the presentation of such regional Whig
candidates as Hugh Lawson White, the favorite of Tennessee and southern
Whiggery; Daniel Webster, the choice of Massachusetts and New England's
Whigs; and William Henry Harrison, the nominee of the Whigs of Pennsyl-
vanian and supported by many in the upper midwest.

Any attempt of the Democrats, in turn, to portray the nomination
of White as a product of machine politics would understandably strike
a particularly raw nerve among Arkansas' Whigs. In response to such a
Democratic charge concerning the June 25 Little Rock meeting at which
White won nomination, Pike admitted that only seventy men had attended,
whereas some one hundred and twenty had gathered at the "party meeting"
in Little Rock on June 28 to nominate Van Buren. The difference in
attendance, however, did not result from Van Buren's greater popularity
in Arkansas. Rather, Pike ascribed the difference in attendance figures
to several other factors: Democrats held the Van Buren meeting on the
last day in which public land holders could "prove up" their claims and

\textsuperscript{125} A recent historian of party formation in this period concurs
in the Whig assessment in analyzing in this (and possibly all other) eras
the role of the conventions. While ostensibly they had a decision-making
function, in reality they served the "cosmetic" purpose of sanctioning
decisions previously made by party bosses. Richard P. McCormick, \textit{The
Second American Party System}, p. 349.

\textsuperscript{126} Van Deusen, \textit{The Life of Henry Clay}, p. 299; For a reaffirmation
of this view by the same author see Van Deusen's, \textit{The Jacksonian Era,
consequently many more rural people were in town than usual; Van Buren's supporters had more ample time than White's supporters to solicit interest in their meeting, since the Democracy provided a two weeks notice of the "party meeting" as contrasted with only a one week notice of the White meeting published by Whigs; about half of the observers at the Van Buren meeting Pike described as curious White supporters, while he contended that only four inquisitive Van Buren adherents attended the White convention. 127

The parties considered this numbers game important because the larger the attendance the more easily a party organ could claim that the popular will rather than bossism had prevailed at the convention. And bossism in any form constituted the bête noire of good public relations. Consequently, the Gazette faced a formidable task in attempting to give sanction to parties as legitimate entities embodying meaningful principles. Thus it proved possible for the "People's Party," claiming in effect the status of a "no party-party" that rejected boss-directed conventions, to contend that bossism had prevailed both in Baltimore and at the Democratic convention at Little Rock.

Pike leveled the charge of dictation from Little Rock with the knowledge that it would be received sympathetically by those Arkansans living in outlying areas of the state who knew that commodity markets, questions of peace and war, and social problems were, if controlled by anyone, under the control of someone other than themselves. The Gazette would support any candidate for office, Pike charged, if he wore the correct party label—if he served the ruling clique. 128

127 Advocate, July 1, 1836.
128 Ibid., May 27, 1836.
editor of the Helena Constitutional Journal, rather cleverly blunted Pike's thrust here by referring to a letter signed by "Aristides"—probably Yeomans himself—which had appeared in the Advocate several years before Pike had purchased the paper from Charles P. Bertrand in 1835. 129 "Aristides" had deplored those people so completely subservient to parties that they refused to think for themselves; now, Yeomans declared, the present editor of the Advocate had repudiated the paper's previous position by maligning "Aristides" for his support of Van Buren. "Aristides," Yeomans added, possessed the same right to support Van Buren as did Pike to support White. To Pike's description of "Aristides" as a political apostate, Yeomans—alluding to Pike's poetical efforts—declared the charge to be what one would expect from a person "who deals so largely in poetry." 130

In addition to the charge that Van Buren was a product of machine politics, White's supporters sought to castigate the New Yorker as a pro-Negro candidate. A full year before the presidential election, the Advocate presented such charges in two successive issues which recorded votes relating to blacks taken in the 1821 New York legislature in which Van Buren served. The roll calls the Advocate recorded demonstrated that Van Buren had supported Negro suffrage in New York state, and that he had endorsed a legislative resolution urging New York's Congressional delegation to oppose the entrance of Missouri into the Union as a slave state. 131 Subsequently, Reed in the Times (after he

129 White in Politics on the Southwestern Frontier hints that "Aristides" may have been Yeomans. See page 110.

130 Constitutional Journal, September 12, 1836.

131 Advocate, October 21, November 12, November 20, 1835.
acquired full control of the paper) sought to stigmatize Van Buren as pro-black by referring to Van Buren as the "Negro suffrage candidate."\footnote{\textit{Times}, July 18, July 25, 1836. For Van Buren's admission that his position on the Missouri question was determined solely by political expediency see George Dangerfield, \textit{The Awakening of American Nationalism, 1815-1828} (New York: Harper-Row, 1965), p. 120.}

The Democratic press in Arkansas usually ignored this accusation along with similar allegations to the effect that Van Buren was anti-southern and/or anti-western. Some three weeks prior to the election Pew curtly dismissed as false charges that Van Buren had opposed the War of 1812, the interests of the West and the institution of slavery. Accentuating the positive, he boasted of Van Buren's support for Jackson on the Bank issue, an occasion on which Van Buren had "proclaimed a Hannibal-like war of uncompromising hostility to the Bank." Furthermore, Pew described the New Yorker as having defended Jackson from the "dung-hill aristocracy"—to which, by implication, White belonged.\footnote{\textit{Gazette}, October 11, 1836.}

Accusing Tennessee's White of holding aristocratic sentiments was at best weak, at worst absurd. A potentially more effective tack presented itself with the entries of three Whig presidential slates, since Democrats could present this consequence of Whig debility as a Whig plot to steal the election. Yeomans contended precisely this in late October when he declared that Whig "Nullifiers, Hartford Conventionists, Latitudinarians, Bankites, and other malcontents," realizing their inability to carry a fair election, had entered three candidates in the hope of securing sufficient sectional support for each to prevent Van Buren from winning the election in November.\footnote{\textit{Constitutional Journal}, October 27, 1836.} Not only would the vote...
that would follow in the House of Representatives thwart the popular will, but by contriving to force the issue into the House the White-Harrison-Webster axis announced its willingness to take the first step in a campaign to destroy the principle of popular sovereignty detested by aristocratic Whigs.  

The mention of Harrison's name as a presidential candidate early in 1836 had provoked as much resentment on Pike's part as the Harrison-Webster entries later stimulated within Democratic ranks. In mid-January the Advocate's editor tersely dismissed the comments of some anti-Harrison Whig journalists who had described Harrison as insane to seek the presidency: "Fiddlestick! Harrison knew he did not possess talents of an order to enable him to rise in an 'honest way' so he attempts to gain immortality as did the man who set fire to Diana's temple." Comparing White's presidential aspirations to Diana's temple was absurd; proclaiming the doughty old soldier a megalomaniacal firebrand was hardly less so, but neither gaffe was as serious as the needless affront the statement would give to any supporters that Harrison might have in Arkansas. Within a week Pike recovered his political balance sufficiently to announce that, while he gave priority to White's election, Harrison represented his second choice.  

When the summer elections demonstrated the strength of Harrison's support in several states (Pike, in late October, reported state candidates supporting him received majorities of 50,000 in Pennsylvania and

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136 Advocate, January 15, 1836.
137 Ibid., January 22, 1836.
20,000 each in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana) the Advocate's owner published a laudatory editorial describing Harrison as the son of a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a man who had supported the improvement of western rivers and harbors. On the land question too, Pike found Harrison sound, for according to the editor, Harrison had supported cheap land for western settlers in conjunction with pre-emption and graduation laws. The latter measure assured the safeguarding of squatter's rights (pre-emption) and that the longer public lands remained unsold the cheaper they would be priced (graduation). Pike described Van Buren, however, as opposed to all these western measures.  

In cursory fashion Pike dismissed allegations concerning Harrison's and White's loyalty to the Union. He labeled as false charges that Harrison had supported the disunionist sentiments voiced in the Hartford Convention of 1815 when New England's Federalists, disgruntled with the maritime depression induced by the war, had threatened the secession of their section from the Union. Would, Pike asked, Jefferson have appointed Harrison to important civil and military posts had Harrison failed to exhibit patriotic qualities? Pike also branded as ridiculous the assertion that White, in 1832, had supported the attempt of Calhoun and other South Carolinians to defy federal authority by preventing the enforcement of the tariff act in that state. To the contrary, in order to combat Calhoun's doctrine that a state possessed the right to nullify a federal law, White had backed Jackson's threat to employ force.

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139 The Gazette made these charges in the issue of October 11, 1836. Duplicating the earlier retreat by Pike, Pew lauded Harrison as a personally honorable man in the issue of October 23, 1836.
140 Advocate, October 28, 1836.
Confronted with the possibility that the anti-Van Buren forces might indeed succeed in preventing a November decision at the polls, Pew bitterly assailed what he construed as a plot. It was not, Pew explained, that he found Harrison personally offensive—several relatives, including his father, had served with General Harrison—but the election of this politically inexperienced person would return to power Clay, Webster and Calhoun, a triumvirate denied influence in the presidential office following Jackson's victory in 1832. Furthermore, Pew contended, Arkansas' Whigs used White's candidacy only as a stalking horse, actually hoping to elect Harrison rather than White.  

Pike denied this accusation; White remained his first choice, the Advocate's editor wrote, but since he "infinitely" preferred Harrison to Van Buren, he refused to view with alarm the possibility that Harrison rather than White would attain the presidency. Nor did any reason exist why the contest should be thrown in to the House of Representatives; a simple pre-election agreement between White and Harrison by which each pledged to instruct his electors to vote for whichever of the two Whig candidates received the most support in the electoral college would preclude a decision in the House.

The spurt of interest demonstrated in the possibilities inherent in the multiple entries of Whig presidential hopefuls represented an extra-issue concern matched near the close of the campaign by a somewhat similar factor in the economic arena. This concern resulted from the issuance in July 1836 of an executive order by President Jackson which

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141 "White or Harrison," Gazette, October 23, 1836.
142 "White or Harrison," Advocate, October 28, 1836.
143 Advocate, October 28, 1836.
stipulated that after August 15 prospective purchasers could acquire public land with specie or Virginia land scrips—until December 15, 1836, actual settlers (as distinguished from speculators) could utilize bank obligations for the purchase of up to 320 acres.144

Many contemporaries believed that Jackson's Specie Circular drained specie from the East to pay for western lands and also reduced the volume of these purchases. Of course, these present alternate, not complementary, explanations of the Circular's effect. In reality, the effect of Jackson's action here was not so much economic as psychological, for it dampened the inflationary mania then present in America: "The Specie Circular therefore decreased the demand for land, not by its direct effect upon the market for land, but by its direct effect upon expectations about the economy as a whole. People expected that the boom was going to end, and they refrained from buying land."145

Reduction of land purchases in Arkansas as a consequence of the issuance of the Specie Circular is clearly seen by noting that in the first quarter of 1836 the Little Rock Public Land Office received $264,000 while in the third quarter the office received only $28,000. Furthermore, the issuance of the Circular reduced tax receipts since the state had relied on the five percent sales tax it garnered from the disposal of public lands to finance its operations.146 In dampening the speculative


146 Ted R. Worley, "Arkansas and the Money Crisis of 1836-1837," Journal of Southern History, XV (May, 1949), 182-84. As an offsetting factor it was believed by both Whigs and Democrats that the Distribution Act of June 23, 1836, would relieve the pressure on specie. In anticipation of the passage of the Act the Gazette of March 29, 1836, estimated
mania of the period and indirectly in placing a burden on Arkansas' taxpayers, there existed the possibility that the Specie Circular might give Van Buren's presidential aspirations a severe jolt if the party failed to devise a rhetorical conductor to shunt the blame elsewhere.

This the Gazette attempted to do in late October when it declared that the present scarcity of paper money had resulted from the over-issue of notes by the nation's banks. The nation could expect a salutary benefit from issuance of the Circular in the future, Pew promised, since the banks—now forced to repurchase their paper with specie—would exercise restraint in the issuance of their paper. In response to this analysis, Pike attacked both the issuance of the Circular and its timing. Pike declared in November that the Specie Circular had already reduced the supply of silver in the state, and he predicted that in time its baleful effects would increase. In Pike's view, only speculators would benefit from Jackson's action. Where, Pike asked Arkansas' farmers, will you find the specie necessary to purchase land in January? Although his protest against the issuance of the Circular lacked the ring of sincerity, his condemnation of its timing carried more conviction. Issuance of the Specie Circular, he ruefully declared, had been cleverly arranged so that its effect would register following the November election.

With the approach of the election, Pew sounded a confident note tempered with the warning that overconfidence resulting in a low electoral turnout could endanger the expected Van Buren victory in Arkansas. In

that Arkansas might receive $50,000,000 yearly as its share of the proceeds. Following the elections the Advocate on December 1 estimated Arkansas' share at $469,000.

147 **Gazette**, October 25, 1836.

late September he predicted a majority of 3,500 for the New Yorker; in the last issue preceding the election Pew prophesied a 4,000 vote margin in Arkansas if Democrats trooped to the polls in full strength, since "our numbers are three to one in the State." The Advocate sought to bolster the courage of Arkansas' Whigs by suggesting that Van Buren might win only in New Hampshire; perhaps taken aback by his own audacity, Pike hedged somewhat by declaring that Van Buren could not hope to win in the electoral college. Pike added that it remained the responsibility of the supporter of Harrison and White to render certain—presumably through a pre-election agreement—that the House of Representatives did not select the next president. In the West, he added, Jackson's followers would not support Van Buren. The sanguine predictions of neither organ proved accurate, for Pew's prognostication as to the size of the Democratic majority in the state proved as erroneous as Pike's forecast of a disaster for Van Buren in the nation at large.

Evidence of Van Buren's victory in Arkansas was available to the Advocate by November 11, four days following the election. On that day the Advocate reported that Van Buren had won Little Rock's Pulaski County by 220 to 175 votes—elsewhere in the state, Pike reported, only rumors circulated. The rumors whispering of another Whig loss were

149 Gazette, September 20, 1836; "On Monday Next," Ibid., November 1, 1836.
151 Ibid., November 11, 1836. The presidential results in Pulaski County proved a foretaste of things to come for consistently the Whigs would win the August state elections (Fowler 219-Conway 201, Cummins 244-Yell 165) only to see the Whig presidential candidate lose in the county (Van Buren 234-White 191). Pike provided the explanation in 1836 by noting that forty-five of the Democrat legislators then meeting in the capital in the first session of the legislature had cast votes in Little Rock for Van Buren. On this occasion a company of Lawrence County
confirmed in the Gazette's issue of November 15 which estimated a Van Buren majority in Arkansas of at least 1,000. Pew, however, and Yeomans in Helena as well, professed themselves somewhat vexed by the low turnout. In contrast to the more than 8,400 votes cast in the August congressional race, only 3,762 Arkansans took the trouble to vote in the November election. As reports dribbled in from the hinterland in the week following the election, Pew claimed that only one-half of the Van Buren supporters in the state had voted, while the "opposition turned out almost in full strength." In Helena, Yeomans rather petulantly declared himself unable to account for voter apathy in Phillips County where only two of the county's precincts opened, he reported, with but 150 of the 400 eligible voters casting their ballots. Yeomans concluded that, while the Democracy had won Arkansas for Van Buren, the margin of victory was less decisive than he had contemplated.

In amassing 2,547 votes in Arkansas, Van Buren secured majorities in twenty-one of the twenty-seven counties which filed returns; White's 1,215 votes enabled him to win six counties—all of them river counties scattered throughout the state.

militiamen, largely Democrats, were in the capital. See Advocate of November 11, 1836; Ira Don Richards, Story of a Rivertown: Little Rock in the Nineteenth Century ("N. P." 1969), p. 44.

152 "Presidential Election," Gazette, November 11, 1836.

153 With a total white population of approximately 1,250 reported in the 1835 census, the county probably did not have 400 eligible voters in 1837. Some 278 persons had cast votes in the August Congressional race. See table in Stokes's "The First State Elections in 1836," 149.

154 Constitutional Journal, November 14, 1836.

155 White won Arkansas, Chicot, Conway, Crawford, Monroe and White Counties. See Maps I and 1A in the Appendix for their locations.
Seven counties did not forward returns in the presidential contest. Late in November the Gazette listed by counties the "official vote of the state as approved by the governor" awarding 2,400 votes to Van Buren and 1,238 to White. \(^{156}\) Pike, in the Advocate, presented the identical figures acknowledging that he had derived them from the Gazette. In his computation, however, Pew had erred, for his totals should have read 2,380 votes for Van Buren and 1,339 for White. \(^{157}\)

In assessing the reasons for the defeat of White in Arkansas, one is struck, first of all, by the low turnout in the contest; the presidential vote equalled only 44.4 percent of the vote cast in the Congressional race. This small participation probably resulted from at least three factors: The size of the Democratic victory in the August elections undoubtedly reduced interest in the November balloting, since a Democratic victory appeared assured; the personalities involved, as well as the apportionment question had stimulated interest in the August election, while the apportionment question was not relevant in November and the participants apparently failed to arouse voter interest; the presidential contest lacked issues to stimulate interest. Nevertheless, Arkansas had experienced its first presidential campaign, and it would join the rest of the nation four years later in the colorful campaign of 1840.

\(^{156}\) Gazette, November 29, 1836.

\(^{157}\) W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 274-92. Burnham's county figures agree with Pew's, only the totals are at variance and a tabulation shows Burnham to be correct. In Stokes, "The First State Election in 1836," the addition of Carroll, Clark and Pike Counties to the totals gives Van Buren 2,547—White 1,215. They were not received in time, however, to be official. (Nationally, Van Buren won 170 of the 283 electoral votes cast.)
CHAPTER II

THE INTERIM—PREPARING FOR THE 1840 CAMPAIGN

As spring made its appearance in Arkansas in 1837, a burgeoning financial depression accompanied its arrival. Thomas Pew's cheery pronouncement in June that only stock jobbers, manufacturers, merchants and cotton factors in New Orleans would suffer from a necessary shake-down in the banking structure failed to take into account the interdependence that already characterized the American economy, including the economy of Arkansas.¹ In Helena, Andrew J. Greer, who had succeeded William Yeomans as editor of the Constitutional Journal, expressed an awareness of this interdependence as he exalted at the rapid growth of the Mississippi River town. Only a half dozen years previously, Greer wrote, one or two stores served Helena while boats plied their trade up and down the river without stopping at the town. Now all this had changed, he declared. Trade and population had shown yearly increases, while land sold tenfold its price three years previously; Helena might well prove a "London or Paris in embryo," declaimed Greer. Even discounting the chamber of commerce booster mentality that undergirds this declaration, it is obvious that many Arkansans did not feel isolated from the financial currents of the nation at large—probably very few were isolated.²

¹ "The Failures and Times," Gazette, June 6, 1837.
² Constitutional Journal, April 6, 1837.
That the citizenry of the state already experienced the ill effects of the developing depression appears evident from Albert Pike's perverse jubilation expressed in March 1837. The economic difficulties of the times, Pike wrote, were a natural consequence of Jackson's removing federal funds from the United States Bank and placing them in the "pet" state banks; this action reflected Senator Thomas Hart Benton's purportedly unrealistic belief that the use of specie alone could satisfy the currency requirements of the American economy. In time, Pike added, the public would become aware of the "tomfoolery" of the nation's political leadership, but meanwhile, "all the consolation we have to offer is, groan, sinners, groan."  

By late April, Democrat James M. Martin, new owner of the Helena Constitutional Journal, could retort to Pike's jibes only by spluttering at those who blamed the deepening depression on Jackson's financial policies. Martin described as idle the speculation of those who assigned a cause for the "present emergency," since the times called for remedies for the crisis and not theories as to its causation. Certainly, Martin declaimed, issuance by President Jackson of the Specie Circular, which reduced the power of the United States Bank to regulate bank notes, did not constitute a cause of the depression.  

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3 Advocate, March 3, 1837. This impolitic utterance is explicable only in terms of Pike's career interests at the time. His growing legal practice was absorbing an increasing portion of his energies; on April 27, 1837, the Times merged with the Advocate because the "onerous duties of a profession interfere too much with [my] vocation as editor." See Advocate of March 10, 1837; Allsopp, History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years and More (Little Rock: Parke-Harper Publishing Company, 1922), p. 341. The only extant issue of the Times and Advocate is that of July 11, 1838.

4 In requiring the actual transfer by banks of specie rather than paper, Jackson destroyed the "normal system of internal exchange." Those
issued the Circular, Martin wrote, in good faith in order to restore a metallic currency; the order did not create, but merely hastened, a financial crisis precipitated by those banks that overextended their loans. Had the treasury department not issued the order, Martin added, the crisis would have proven even more serious. The obviously perplexed Martin then suggested that if the Circular did indeed represent a "secondary cause" of the financial difficulties of the country, Van Buren should revoke it.⁵

Martin feared that the electorate might establish a connection between the Circular and the depression which would prove damaging to the Democrats, a fear shared by Congressman Yell. In a letter to a Tennessee friend in early June 1837, Yell—while welcoming bank failures as harbingers of a metallic currency—uneasily speculated as to the effect of such failures on party fortunes. Actually, Yell added, he personally did not wish to seek reelection, but if Arkansas' Democrats proved unable to find a substitute, he would agree to run again, for "my friends are solicitous."⁶

Yell's term of office expired on March 3, 1837, since his election the previous August entitled him to complete only the Congressional session that ended on that date. Arkansas' legislature elected Ambrose H. Sevier and William Savon Fulton to the Senate in October 1836, and while familiar with banking operations in late 1836 doubted the feasibility of this; the Panic of 1837 demonstrated that "what had seemed improbable was—impossible." See Ted R. Worley, "Arkansas and the Money Crisis of 1836-1837," Journal of Southern History, XV (May, 1949), 191.

⁵ Constitutional Journal, April 27, 1837.

⁶ A. Yell to William Moore, June 7, 1837, Yell Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.
Fulton's term would not end until March 3, 1841, Sevier's term—as well as Yell's—expired on March 3, 1837. In the normal course of events Arkansas' lack of a Congressman (and one of its Senators) between March and the regularly scheduled December session of Congress would have required no action, but President Van Buren's decision to call a special session of Congress for September 1837 presented complications for the state.

Consequently, on June 5 Governor Conway issued a proclamation declaring that Yell's term had expired on March 3. Since Arkansas' Constitution and laws made no provision for the holding of a regular election before the first Monday in October, Conway designated the second Monday in July as a special election day. On its masthead the following week the Gazette presented Yell on the "Jackson Republican Ticket for Congress."

Editor Pew defended Conway's call for a special election by denying the contention of those who asserted that Yell remained the legally elected Congressman of Arkansas entitled to represent the state in the special session. As for possible Whig opposition to Yell's candidacy, Pew invited anyone possessing sufficient "temerity" to contest his seat.

Many Whigs viewed the special election as unnecessary, illegal and an example of political jobbery par excellence. The governor's call

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8 "Governor James S. Conway, Proclamation" Gazette, June 6, 1837.

9 Ibid., June 13, 1837. For Conway's official defense in calling the special session see Journals of the Special Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, which was begun and held at the capital, in the city of Little Rock, on Monday the sixth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, and ended on Monday, the fifth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight in accordance with a proclamation of the Governor, dated July 18, 1837 (Little Rock, 1838), 17.
for a special election, wrote Absalom Fowler in mid-June, was designed to insure the reelection of a Democrat to Congress before the voters had sufficient time to examine critically Van Buren's policies. Consequently, Fowler added, many Whigs of his acquaintance had decided to shun the July election in order to concentrate their efforts on the October election that would determine the two-year occupant of Arkansas' Congressional seat. In effect, Fowler declared that many Whigs believed that their best chance of unseating Yell resided in ignoring the July election in order to marshal Whig forces for the October struggle which would determine Arkansas' next full-term Congressman. In such an atmosphere Yell proceeded to win an easy victory featured by only a one-sentence reminder to Democrats by Pew in the Gazette's Independence Day issue that the Congressional election would be held the following Monday. To the "great surprise of the Democratic party," a Colonel William B. R. Horner of Phillips County secured nomination after the noon hour on election day in Little Rock. Whatever the reason for Horner's election day nomination, it availed him nothing, for even in Little Rock Yell precisely matched the 66 votes Horner received from Whigs. By August 1, Pew estimated that Yell would receive approximately 1,500 votes, and although the 1,083 ballots bearing Yell's name fell considerably short of this figure, the "different individuals" who opposed him throughout the state received only 156 votes.

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10 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, June 15, 1837, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.


12 Ibid., July 11, 1837.

13 Ibid., August 15, 1837.
Since the Whigs had not deigned to offer opposition in the special election, Yell's victory was important only in the sense that it served to reinforce a developing aura of omnipotence for Arkansas Democracy. But to avoid habitual defeat the party needed to rethink its strategy. In his letter of June 1837 addressed to the Van Buren, Arkansas Whig attorney Jesse Turner, Fowler provided such a reassessment. Fowler perceived that a basic source of Democratic strength in Arkansas was the success which that party enjoyed in identifying Jackson with Van Buren in the public mind. "You know," Fowler wrote, "what a panacea the name of Jackson presents to a large majority of our people." Hence, Fowler added, the state's Whigs needed to separate Van Buren from his Jacksonian shield for "Republicanism" in Arkansas to enjoy any hope of success. Of course, the Democrats would seek to preserve this image relationship so fruitful for themselves, but at the least Whigs should avoid assisting them. Fowler concluded by issuing a mild rebuke to Turner. Fowler declared that he suspected that Turner had published, under the pseudonym "Davis," the attack on Jackson and Van Buren which had appeared in the most recent issue of the *Times and Advocate*. If so, Fowler wrote, he had erred by linking the names of the two men. When

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15 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, June 15, 1837, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
Turner responded that it would prove all but impossible to attack Van Buren without attacking Jackson, Fowler agreed that it would indeed be difficult to separate the "lion" from the "red fox" but, he declared, Whiggery should strive to do so for the "magic of Jackson's name is yet irresistible." Acutely aware of the importance that symbols play in developing a party's image, Fowler also suggested that as a counter thrust to the label "Federalist," which Democrats attached to the Whigs, it would prove astute on every occasion to refer to the "spoilers," not by their "false name" Democrat, but rather by the term "Tory" which most accurately described their political principles.16

Arkansas Whigs would have an opportunity to test Fowler's strategy in 1837 even though the Democrats claimed that Yell's victory in the special election entitled him to serve the full term of two years. Actually, Pew wrote, the election involved an appointment for both the special session and the full two year term that followed. But since Yell would be the last man to wish to represent the state in opposition to the popular will, Pew announced, the Gazette had once again hoisted the Congressman's name to its masthead.17

16 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, August 10, 1837, in J. H. Atkinson, ed., Pulaski County Historical Review, No. 1 (March, 1955), 36. The original is in the Allsopp Collection at Little Rock University. Fowler's suggestion may have had some effect for in the September 26, 1837, issue of the Gazette, the Times and Advocate published on the previous day, was quoted as referring to the "Van Buren Tory Party Candidate."

17 "The Congressional Election," Gazette, August 22, 1837. In a December letter Yell informed a friend that Congress decided he had won a full term but he ran again "as a matter of policy." Archibald Yell to William Moore, December 25, 1837, Yell Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts. Presumably, Yell's reasoning here was based on the decision of the House with respect to the two Mississippi Congressmen whose elections in the summer of 1837 were construed by the House as entitling them to hold their seats for the full two year term rather than for only the special session. The 118 to 101 vote favoring Mississippi's incumbent Congressmen was taken on October 2, 1837. See Congressional Globe 25 Congress, 1 session, 99.
The problem of selecting Yell's third opponent within the space of a year bedeviled Whigs and intrigued Democrats. In mid-September the *Gazette* predicted that the Whigs would delay another week, or perhaps two, before announcing their candidate for the October 2 election. Few professed perplexity at such a delay, for surely the Wigs could not expect to "steal a march upon us by surprise." The Democratic party, he added, should not permit reopening of the basis question in the campaign although southern and eastern Arkansas ought to support Yell's candidacy, since the North and West had supported the candidacies of Senator Fulton and Governor Conway.18

At least some Whigs also believed that their party would benefit by concentrating on national questions and burying "local matters, regional prejudices, and former party distinctions." Absalom Fowler expressed this view even as he intimated that he remained unaware of a suitable Whig candidate for the October contest.19 Fowler, however, did not believe that William Cummins—despite hints that Cummins stood ready to oppose Yell again—could provide a serious challenge to the Congressman. A "political neutral" not identified with the Whig movement would prove more formidable, but such a man, if elected, could not be relied upon to follow Whig principles. Perhaps, Fowler concluded, either David Walker, James Woodson Bates or John Ringgold would be a more suitable candidate.20 Fowler's depreciation of Cummins' suitability represented

19 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, June 15, 1837, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
20 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, August 10, 1837, *Pulaski County Historical Review*, 36. James Bates was the brother of President Lincoln's Attorney-General Edward Bates of Missouri. For sketches of James Bates by Albert Pike and Jesse Turner see Hallum *Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas*, pp. 85-6 and 135-37.
an attempt to exploit the sectional issue, as Fowler admitted, for all three of the alternates he suggested hailed from northern Arkansas.

A letter written in early September by the Whig Central Committee in Little Rock, and addressed to a committee of Crawford County Whigs, reveals clearly enough that the sectional consideration dictated Ringgold's selection as Yell's opponent. In its letter, the Central Committee, claiming backing for its choice from Whig committees in southern and eastern counties, asserted that necessity dictated the selection of a candidate from the northern part of the state, since Whigs from that area had maintained that no person from the eastern-southern regions could hope to attain majorities in the northern counties.51 Ringgold, a native of Maryland and a former Baltimore merchant, had moved to the Batesville, Arkansas area in the north-central part of the state somewhere between 1820 and 1824.52 According to his son-in-law, Ringgold demonstrated a marked business acumen during his thirty years of residency in Batesville prior to his death in 1857.53

Word of the Central Committee's decision had either not been received in southeastern Arkansas in early September, or possibly some Whigs in that area objected to the selection of a northern candidate,

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51 Whig Central Committee to gentlemen, September 2, 1837, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

52 The "most prominent home" built in the early history of Batesville was constructed by Ringgold in 1820 according to J. N. Barnett, "Early Days of Batesville," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XI (Spring, 1952), 15.

53 Ringgold's son-in-law, Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, on the other hand, declared that Ringgold migrated to Illinois in 1820 and to the Batesville area in 1824. See Margaret Ross, "Chronicles of Arkansas," Arkansas Gazette, October 22, 1958, from the reprint of a sketch by Noland which first appeared in the Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat, January 9, 1858.
because a group of Phillips County Whigs, meeting at Helena sometime in early September, nominated Cummins. To this nomination, however, Cummins apparently penned an immediate rejection which appeared in the Times and Advocate on September 11. In reporting these Whig events, the Gazette's Pew pointedly republished for the "benefit of those who intend to run Judge Yell out of Congress," the county-by-county returns of the Yell-Cummins race of the previous year with its final total of 6,094 votes for Yell—2,379 for Cummins.  

By mid-September Little Rock's citizens knew of Ringgold's selection and had perused a campaign document setting forth his political views. Pew disputed the Whig candidate's contention that the federal government was bankrupt; it might prove unable to collect all of its funds deposited in the state banks, Pew wrote, but the government would always possess the power to "defray its own expenses in the constitutional currency." That the government would somehow meet its bills with "constitutional currency" or whatever no one could doubt. A more telling criticism by Ringgold concerned Yell's alleged unwillingness to seek funds from the federal government to make navigable the White and Black Rivers which flowed through the north central and northeastern parts of Arkansas. Pew denied any laxity on Yell's part, claiming instead that engineers were already surveying the White River to determine its suitability for navigation.

A question arises as to why there occurred a delay in announcing

24"Phillips County," Gazette, September 12, 1837.

25Gazette, September 19, 1837.

26Ibid.
Ringgold's candidacy until only two weeks remained of the campaign. The letter of the Central Committee reveals that the county committees authorized the Central Committee to choose the party's nominee, and that the Central Committee made its selection by September 2. Ringgold's identity, however, remained unknown to Pew when he published the Gazette on September 12. Possibly the answer lies in the Central Committee's declaration that, in order to place Ringgold's name "before the people in a manner as imposing as possible," it had arranged for the convening of nominating conventions in Chico, Hempstead, Phillips, and Arkansas counties. Such meetings, the Committee claimed, would assist in creating the impression of such mass support as to "intimidate our foes and encourage our friends." The Committee also urged Crawford County Whigs to emulate their brethren elsewhere in holding such proceedings, and in a pronounced understatement the Little Rock leadership further advised Crawford County Whigs not to "waste time, as every moment is valuable." 

Possibly necessity dictated the campaign tactics of the Whigs in the October 1837 election, since one could maintain, as Pew did on August 22, that the August election legally provided Arkansas with a Congressman for both the special and regular sessions. Such an interpretation would imply that Yell's alacrity in assenting to still another election caught Arkansas' Whigs by surprise. Fowler's letter of June 15 refutes such a theory, however, for in it he indicated that Whigs of his acquaintance were preparing to ignore the July election in order to "give battle in October." If the Whigs had indeed expected to engage in an October Congressional contest, as Fowler's letter strongly suggested,
the late announcement can best be understood as an attempt to defeat Yell by giving the impression that a ground swell of public support had developed for Ringgold which the Whigs tardily recognized and sought to exploit. With such short notice Ringgold did not possess an opportunity to campaign—a factor which possibly complemented the Central Committee's attempt to present his candidacy as a grassroots phenomenon. Yell remained in Washington attending the special session of Congress which blended later in the year with the regular session.

In opening the fall campaign, Pew disavowed the sectional issue already blunted by the selection of Ringgold, who hailed from the North.\(^\text{28}\) It remained possible, however, to accuse the Whigs of choosing Ringgold only in order to take advantage of his northern residency. A correspondent writing from the northwestern part of the state on September 21 declared that the Whigs selected Ringgold only in order to divide Yell's vote in the populous North. The writer predicted that such a tactic would prove unproductive in his native Johnson County, for in that county Democrats "are doing all we can to arouse the people here," he declared, "and [we] will have plenty at the polls to give Judge Yell a handsome majority in this county."\(^\text{29}\)

Apparantly the *Times and Advocate* did not offer a concrete prediction on the final vote, although the *Gazette* quoted and denied the Whig organ's contention of September 25 that the party's prospects were "brightening" in the state. Pew proved more specific with respect to Yell's expected majority predicting that he would win by 2,000 votes.\(^\text{30}\)


A week following the October 2 election Pew, while contending that Yell had won reelection, no longer appeared confident of a 2,000 vote majority since a "tremendous rain" had fallen throughout the state. On October 17 the Gazette declared that Yell's majority would approach 1,000 which, considering the "thin attendance of the voters from the stormy day, may be considered a large majority." But in addition to the rain, Pew also assigned Democratic apathy as a reason for the light turnout. In Scott, Green, Pike, and Hot Spring counties in southwestern Arkansas, a correspondent reported that the citizenry had made "scarcely any mention of the election." Arkansas' Democrats, Pew concluded somewhat petulantly, believed that their candidates could win elections without voter support.

On November 7 the Gazette published returns which it asserted would prove very close to the official tally. According to the Gazette's tabulation, in the thirty-three reporting counties Yell had received 2,836 votes to 1,588 for Ringgold. Subsequently, the Gazette and the Times and Advocate engaged in a running battle as to the size of Yell's victory margin since the party papers disputed the returns from Green and Miller counties. On October 17 the Gazette reported that neither county had held elections; in the paper's tabulation of November 7, however, Pew recorded Green County as giving sixty votes to Yell, none to Ringgold. In the most complete tally available, the Gazette of November 7 recorded that Ringgold won thirteen of the thirty-three counties which submitted returns.

31"Congressional Election," Ibid., October 10, 17, 1837.

32Ibid.
An analysis of this tabulation shows that in the vital northern area of the state, on which the Whigs had placed their hopes, Ringgold carried only one non-river county—Independence, his home county. Analysis also reveals that not only did the total state vote fall far below the 1836 turnout, but that support for Yell in 1837 declined to a greater extent than did Whig support for Ringgold compared with Cummins' performance in 1836. The difference in performances appears most apparent in the four northwestern counties—Washington, Carroll, Johnson and Pope—for which figures exist for both the elections of 1836 and 1837. In 1836 Yell won 1,957 votes in these four counties while in 1837 he won only 856. In 1836 Cummins won 228 votes in these counties while Ringgold won only 54 in 1837. Thus Yell's margin was reduced in 1837 by 1,101 votes, a decline of approximately 57 percent from his 1836 total; Ringgold's margin in comparison with Cummins' performance in the same four counties was reduced by only 54 votes or 24 percent. Apparently the confidence of Yell's supporters reduced his margin to a greater extent than any defeatist impulse may have affected Ringgold's followers.

Elsewhere in the state, Ringgold carried all five of those counties adjoining the Mississippi River in 1836, as well as several other counties on the White, Arkansas, and Little Red Rivers. But his majorities in these southern and eastern counties proved insufficient to overcome Yell's vote in the northern and western areas of the state. The hope that Ringgold would split the northern vote with Yell had proved a vain one.

Yell (now twice victorious in Congressional elections) offered

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33 The state percentages would read: Yell reduced from 6,094 to 2,836—a 53.3% reduction—and Ringgold 1,588, reduced from Cummins 2,379—a 36% reduction.
the final word on the campaign. In a letter written Christmas Day 1837 from the nation's capital, Yell declared that the Whigs had believed that they could oust him from office; despite the fact that only one-third of Arkansas' Democrats voted in the fall election, Yell pointed out that he had secured a better than two-to-one majority over his opponent and would have earned a 3,000 to 4,000 vote majority had there been a general election. Although Congress ruled it unnecessary for him to stand for reelection in order to retain his seat, Yell added, he had not "regretted this tactic" of going once more before the voters.  

The Congressional contest in October 1837 provided only a backdrop for events more exciting for citizens of the new state. On December 5, the Gazette reported that an "unfortunate and fatal recontre" had occurred in Little Rock in which John Wilson, Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives, had killed Major J. J. Anthony, a representative from Randolph County. During a debate in the House, Anthony provoked Wilson by a remark that Anthony uttered from the floor with respect to a proposed payment of bounties on wolves, whereupon the Speaker descended from the podium to stab Anthony to death with a bowie knife in the midst of the shocked legislators. Anthony ignited the affray when he, an opponent of the recently created Real Estate Bank of Arkansas, suggested that every wolf scalp be accompanied by a certificate signed by the president of the Real Estate Bank. Speaker Wilson, who also served as the

34 Archibald Yell to William Moore, December 25, 1837, Yell Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.

35 Gazette, December 5, 1837.

president of the Bank, subsequently engaged in a verbal exchange with Anthony after which Wilson demonstrated his mastery of the "Arkansas toothpick" to the sorrow of Anthony who died almost immediately.\textsuperscript{37}

One can fully understand Wilson's homicidal conduct only in terms of the tensions—both national and state in origin—which existed in late 1837. These tensions reflected the increasing seriousness of the banking problem besetting Arkansas and the rest of the nation. The Assembly established the state's banking system shortly after it convened on September 12, 1836. On September 14, two days after its first session, a member of the House gave notice that on the following day he intended to introduce a bill to create the State Bank.\textsuperscript{38} Less than a month later, a bill was introduced in the House calling for the establishment of the Real Estate Bank of Arkansas.\textsuperscript{39} In the midst of this activity, Governor Conway informed the legislators that he extended his "cordial approba-
tions" to these efforts to create the two banking institutions author-
ized by the Constitution of Arkansas.\textsuperscript{40}

Its architects envisioned the Real Estate Bank as primarily a private corporation with real estate serving as the primary security for its loans, while the State Bank represented a completely public cor-
poration with all of its directors elected by the state legislature.

\textsuperscript{37} Wilson returned to Clark County where he was shunned by his neighbors, but after moving to Pike County he was again elected to the House. See William F. Pope, \textit{Early Days in Arkansas} (Little Rock: Fred W. Allsopp Publisher, 1895), pp. 263–64.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{House Journal, 1836}, 11.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 81.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 26.
as currency. In view of the later attempts of partisans of both sides to assign blame to the opposing party for the state's banking debacle, one notes that in 1836 Whigs and Democrats alike voted in overwhelming numbers to establish the banks. The legislative record indicates that members of both parties eagerly sought membership on the boards of directors. Often this led to fiercely contested efforts to secure such positions as when on November 2, 1837, Whig William Cummins incurred defeat—31 to 27—at the hands of Democrat Chester Ashley in an attempt to win one of the twelve seats on the board of directors of the State Bank. Whig John Ringgold proved himself one of the most ardent supporters of the Batesville branch of the State Bank when, as head of the joint banking committee of the legislature, he recommended the establishment of the State Bank. The bill creating the State Bank designated Little Rock as the site of the principal bank with branch banks provided for Fayetteville and Batesville. The Real Estate Bank also had its parent bank at Little Rock with branches established at Helena, Columbia and Washington. Thus north Arkansas served as the locus of the two State Bank branches, while south Arkansas provided the sites for the three branches of the Real Estate Bank. Although no direct evidence exists to support the thesis, some historians have suggested that the founding of the State Bank and the Real Estate Bank probably represents a compromise between the northern–western and southern–eastern regions. The cotton producing regions sought banking facilities with real estate and slaves

42 House Journal, 1836, 11.
providing the primary security for loans, whereas the northern-western areas supported the establishment of banks requiring more orthodox security. In later years, Whigs and Democrats would attempt to cast the odium of establishing the banks on the opposing party, but members of each party benefitted from the banks. An analysis of the political affiliations of the officials of the Real Estate Bank, for instance, reveals that during its existence eighty-three Democrats and fifty-six Whigs served the Bank in an official capacity. An 1852 investigation of the Bank's loans revealed that the family of deceased Democratic Senator Ambrose Sevier constituted one of the largest debtors to the Bank.

The measure creating the State Bank provided that the bulk of its operating funds come from the $286,757.49 which represented Arkansas' share of the surplus revenue from the sale of federally donated lands. The money crisis of 1836-1837, however, severely hampered the attempts of the state to establish the bank. William Woodruff, former editor of the Gazette, who was elected Treasurer of the state by the legislature in 1836, sought to exchange several drafts from the United States Treasury drawn on the two banks in Mississippi, but the Mississippi banks ceased paying out specie as he arrived in the state. Subsequently, Woodruff, in the spring of 1837, made the rounds of banks in New Orleans, Natchez, Cincinnati, and Louisville in an attempt to collect in specie the surplus


46 Ibid., 414.
funds granted the state by the federal government. The attempt failed and Woodruff later defended his decision to accept the notes of these banks, arguing that if he had not accepted their notes Arkansas would have lost all of its surplus revenue. 47

As Woodruff defended his earlier efforts, Governor Conway explained to the harassed legislators that the bonds worth $2,000,000 authorized for sale by the act creating the Real Estate Bank had not been sold and that their five percent coupons would make it impossible to sell them with the high rates of interest prevailing in the current bond market. 48 Unfortunately for Arkansas' credit reputation for the remainder of the nineteenth century, the banks, despite these obstacles, were able to open their doors. The state subsequently repudiated much of its bonded indebtedness thus retarding its later efforts to secure a desirable credit rating.

The state's banking problems provided a background for the efforts of Arkansas' Whigs to make 1838 a year of victory. Pulaski County Whigs took the first step in this direction in February 1838 when the Whig Central Committee, at the conclusion of the county convention, issued a manifesto attacking Van Buren's policies. 49 The eight-page document contained a two-page forward that included sixteen resolutions adopted by the delegates. The six-page main body of the text consisted of an address by Chairman Albert Pike to the people of Arkansas. In essence


49 *Helena Spy*, March 10, 1838. Clipped from the *Times and Advocate* (n. d.). The Spy was the successor to the *Constitutional Journal*. The Spy's new editor contended that the Whig meeting was well attended only because of the presence in Little Rock of large numbers of "curious strangers." The *Gazette* failed to mention the Whig meeting.
the prologue constituted a sop to the states' rights branch of Arkansas Whiggery in its spirited attack upon Van Buren's alleged usurpation of executive power. Lest anyone think that former President Jackson represented the oblique target of this attack, the Committee carefully added that Van Buren's usurpations had alienated Andrew Jackson's supporters from the administration. 50

Although the proponents of states' rights received precedence in the address of the Whig Committee, the heart of the document—Pike's contribution—represented a warmly phrased critique of the purported failures of the Democrats in the economic sphere. 51 Pike quickly stated the basis for the economic conflict between pro-Bank Whigs and their anti-Bank Democratic counterparts by declaring that government ought to function as an active rather than a passive instrument since "the science of government is the science of benefitting and blessing the people." 52 This philosophy required, Pike continued, that all branches of government cooperate in providing benefits for the people and that the various governmental branches should not dissipate their energies with the debilitating sort of struggle concerning the Bank that occurred earlier

50 "Whig Committee Address to the people of Arkansas," February 21, 1838, (1), the University of Texas Library.

51 One commentator has declared that Southern Whiggery was initially based on a nucleus of National Republicans and states' rights men but that the party's major growth in Dixie resulted from its success in attracting Democrat businessmen who rejected Jackson's position on the Bank. Here in 1838 the states' rights adherents of Arkansas Whiggery were granted at least nominal priority in the platform. In time Arkansas Whig literature would increasingly subordinate this aspect of early Whig thought to a more nationalist outlook. For the change in the South as a whole see Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" American Historical Review, LIX (January, 1954), 346.

52 "Whig Committee Address to the people of Arkansas," February 21, 1838, 4.
in the decade between President Jackson and Congress. Perhaps both the Bank's officials and the President had erred but, regardless of the assignment of blame, the struggle had, in Pike's opinion, led to a loss of confidence in the nation's banking system which in turn precipitated the financial crisis that manifested itself in the spring of 1837. Pike declared that the veto of the act rechartering the Second Bank of the United States—done at Van Buren's insistence in order to assist his banking friends in New York—served only to destroy confidence in the nation's currency system. Furthermore, Pike believed the veto later produced another effect. This latter consequence of the veto involved the "crazy" belief of Senator Benton (and by implication accepted by Jackson) that specie alone would suffice for all the legitimate currency needs of the economy. Specie, Pike declared, represented only a fraction of the capital of the nation, for "lands, our crops, our industry, and our energy, is also capital, and is represented by paper money." How else, other than with paper money, he asked, could these assets of Americans be effectively channeled into the economic process.  

Pike then turned to an examination of the Independent Treasury plan—Van Buren's attempt to steer the middle ground between the Bank and the "pet" bank system—which incurred defeat in Congress the previous year. This plan envisioned the establishment of a Treasury independent of banks, whose currency, consisting only of specie, would be kept in its own vaults in Washington and in various sub-treasuries established in other cities. This plan elicited the support of such hard money Democrats as Benton, who opposed banks of issue, and of John C. Calhoun's

53 "Whig Committee Address to the people of Arkansas," February 21, 1838, 4.
southern supporters, who believed that by withdrawing money from the "pet" banks (located largely in the North) the South would be relatively strengthened. In withdrawing its funds from state banks, Pike claimed, the government would insure the permanent destruction of the American banking order; even those few banks currently paying specie would find themselves forced to discontinue specie support for their notes. Furthermore, the sub-treasury scheme would enormously enhance the powers of the central government, since under it specie alone would serve as an accepted medium for paying federal taxes thus providing a financial bludgeon for the president. In time, Pike prophesied, the government alone would retain specie in its vaults and then "ruin and revolution will ensue."  

The resolutions adopted by the convention provided Arkansas' citizens with an alternative to ruin and revolution. The primary thrust of the resolutions lay in their contention that the central government ought to adopt an active rather than a passive policy; they rejected outright the notion that the government and the people comprised separate entities with the government under no obligation to advance the welfare of its citizens. And though nowhere in the document did its authors mention the United States Bank by name, they provided support for it in the resolution which declared that the delegates would only support a presidential candidate who upheld "sound Whig principles" by advocating a uniform national currency.

That the banking issue would play a large role in the Congressional

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55 "Whig Committee Address to the people of Arkansas," 6.

56 Ibid., 2.
campaign of 1838 no one could doubt. The Whigs made this clear with their address of February 1. Congressman Yell provided additional evidence in a circular letter to his constituents penned in the spring of 1838. Yell's circular touched upon such issues as the public land question, western defenses, and abolition of slavery, but he dwelt primarily on the currency question. Yell attributed the depression to the speculative mania which contributed to the creation of "innumerable banking corporations, based on the wealth of the nation." In Yell's view, state banks had recently proved their lack of integrity while the United States Bank had long since demonstrated its inability to provide for the nation's currency needs in a manner compatible with the public interest. Consequently, the one remaining system which promised to provide sound banking in the national interest lay in the Independent Treasury plan. 57

The Whigs contended that the sub-treasury plan would destroy the state banks and, while Yell denied this (although he asserted a national bank might do so by draining state banks of specie), he only reluctantly accepted the utility of state banks. 58 Although not an advocate even of state banks, Yell explained, their existence was now so inextricably bound up with the public welfare that he believed it the duty of elected officials to aid them insofar as the public interest required governmental assistance. In the final analysis, Yell argued, banking failures affected

57 "A Message of Archibald Yell to His Constituents," April 5, 1838." An original circular was discovered in the home of Yell's father-in-law in Danville, Kentucky. Reprinted in the Gazette, May 2, 1838, and in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, III (Winter, 1944), 373-84.

only the mercantile interests whose speculative fever dashed them from time to time against the shoals of their own undisciplined natures. The agricultural class, on the other hand, which constituted the "bone and sinew of the State," had no need of banks nor did the laboring class require them. In his analysis of national finances, Yell professed to see the nation's future medium of exchange as consisting solely of specie which, in his gross distortion of history, the Congressman described as "the only currency that is [sic] known to, or recognized by, the framers of the Constitution." In the conclusion of his address, Yell announced that he would not seek reelection, but that at the end of his term in March 1839 he would return to the "peaceful pursuits of private life."

Yell's decision to decline renomination set the stage for the June state conventions at which both parties selected their state candidates. The Democrats selected as their candidate Edward Cross, a resident of Hempstead County, and the brother-in-law of Chester Ashley, while the Whigs chose William Cummins to make another run for the Congressional position. According to Woodruff, Absalom Fowler wanted the Whig


60 Ibid., 378.

61 Such pursuits included closer attention to his speculative land ventures. In partnership with Whig David Walker and with Judge Benjamin Johnson, Yell purchased 1,600 acres of land bordering the Mississippi River in 1835. With Walker and William Haile he also established and promoted the town of Ozark, Arkansas; Yell speculated for others also as when he purchased several thousand acres of land for his close friend, the future president, James K. Polk. See Melinda Meek, "The Life of Archibald Yell," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXV (Summer, 1967), 182-83.

nomination, but Cummins' active campaign for it denied him the nomination. One month earlier Woodruff had alluded to the manipulation exercised by Little Rock's Whig Central Committee when he related an incident which occurred several days earlier. According to Woodruff, a friend asked him if he knew that the Whigs had selected Cummins as their Congressional candidate; when Woodruff replied in the negative, the friend produced the editorial page of the latest issue of the Little Rock *Times and Advocate* which described Cummins as the party's nominee. Woodruff then examined his own copy of the *Times and Advocate*, presumably identical to that of his friend, but which actually did not include the reference to Cummins' selection. Woodruff concluded by asserting that only those issues of the *Times and Advocate* destined for distribution in outlying regions contained the article under question. Issues sent to subscribers in Little Rock and its environs contained no such article. The Whig paper, Woodruff added, had sought to "steal a March on the Democratic party" by concealing the selection of Cummins; the *Gazette* 's editor concluded that with the election still some four months in the future, he could perceive but little advantage in employing such a tactic.  

Subsequently, when he asked Woodruff to publish his challenge to the Democratic aspirants to meet him in a series of scheduled debates, Cummins informed Woodruff that he "had nothing to do" with the earlier *Times and Advocate* editorial.  

The episode nevertheless reveals clearly enough the ability of the Whig Central Committee to manipulate the selection of state candidates while holding ostensibly open conventions at which

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64 Ibid., June 18, 1838.
delegates freely selected the party's candidates.

In 1838, however, neither party apparently made a major effort to portray its convention as an assembly attended by large numbers of representative party members from throughout the state. Woodruff did not make any special effort to do so, and although issues of the *Times and Advocate* for this period do not exist, neither apparently did the Whigs. In his challenge to the Democrat nominees, for instance, Cummins only defended his own conduct with respect to the May *Times and Advocate* announcement that Arkansas' Whigs had selected him as the congressional nominee. Cummins did not, however, offer a defense of the Whig June convention as a representative body. In 1840 and in other presidential election years, both parties would offer such claims, but with only state candidates offered for the consideration of the electorate in 1838, the parties could less credibly present the conventions as well attended, representative gatherings. 65

Woodruff's attempt to split the Whigs proved short-lived, for soon he found the Democratic party suffering from a rift induced by the announcement of Judge Lewis B. Tully of Carroll County that he too would seek the nomination assigned by the party leaders to Cross. 66 With Cummins residing in Little Rock's Pulaski County in central Arkansas, and Cross hailing from Hempstead County in the southwestern portion of the state, Tully stood alone as a Democratic northern candidate since Carroll County was situated in the northwestern part of Arkansas. With

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65 The absence of extant issues of a Whig paper for the 1838 campaign reduces considerably the information available concerning party affairs in that year.

66 *Gazette*, June 27, 1838.
the *Gazette* construing Tully's quest for the congressional seat as divisive and one which might lead to a Whig victory, Whigs and disaffected Democrats could charge that the *Gazette* supported Cross only because he hailed from south Arkansas, and opposed Tully solely because of his north Arkansas residency. This charge Woodruff rejected, pointing to the *Gazette*’s support of Yell in previous campaigns as evidence of the paper's willingness to support northern candidates.67

Whig hopes for victory in Arkansas lay in Tully's continuance in the race and in the party's ability to blunt one issue—the land question—while exploiting to its own advantage another—the fiscal debacle. The Whig quandary concerning the land question resulted from Henry Clay's land bill of 1832 which provided for high western land prices in order to support an internal improvements program and to guarantee cheap labor for eastern industrialists. Approved by the North Atlantic states and the Old West which possessed but little desirable public land in the 1830's, Clay's bill antagonized the New West.68 On balance his land bill perhaps assisted Clay's futile quest for the presidency in 1832, but it constituted an albatross around the neck of western Whiggery in later years. For Arkansas Democrats exploiting the land issue to their advantage lay in connecting Clay's public land philosophy with Cummins' candidacy, while for the Whigs the choice lay between repudiating the position of national Whiggery on the land question or attempting to ignore it. Arkansas' Whigs did not attempt to repudiate Clay's land bill either because most sincerely accepted the philosophy supporting

67Gazette, July 11, 1838.
it or because the electorate might construe repudiation as an insincere tactical gesture. The Whigs sought to ignore the land issue and to focus their campaign on the depression. In addition, they viewed Tully's candidacy sympathetically as constituting the determination of north Arkansas Democrats to refuse assent to the dictates of the Little Rock junta.

Democrats demonstrated a determination to utilize the land issue early in the campaign when the Gazette announced that Whigs in several eastern states had nominated Clay as the party's presidential candidate for the 1840 presidential campaign. Clay, the Gazette's editor noted, had opposed pre-emption, while Van Buren represented the first president to support a pre-emption law designed to benefit actual settlers in preference to speculators. The South and West, Woodruff predicted, would support in 1840 such a champion of their own interest as Van Buren. 69

The Democrats reveled in printing Clay's bitter denunciation of squatters, that "lawless rabble" whose illegal acquisition of public lands, Clay believed, entitled them to receive the same treatment afforded a felon who seized military forts or Treasury vaults. 70 In Helena, the Spy's new editor, J. C. Turbeville, predicted that the citizens of the West, seeking a place in society, would recall at the polls Clay's attempt to keep land prices high. 71

To this drumfire of criticism Whigs replied by describing Clay as anti-speculator, not anti-settler. Woodruff, however, greeted this

69 Gazette, March 14, 1838.
70 Gazette, May 3, 1838; "Henry Clay's Declaration of War Against the Occupants of the Public Lands," Helena Spy, July 16, 1838.
71 Spy, July 30, 1838.
contention with derision.\textsuperscript{72} In a last minute desperate effort to blunt
the land issue, the Batesville News claimed that in the course of his
tour of north Arkansas, Cross had expressed support for Jackson's Specie
Circular which required payment for government land in specie.\textsuperscript{73}

The Batesville News, founded in May 1838 with William Byers as
editor, declared that all this emphasis upon Clay's land policies—
including the charge that Clay had catalogued many westerners as land
pirates—simply represented a Democratic attempt to avoid the pressing
currency issue.\textsuperscript{74} According to Byers, the Democrats, "unwilling to de-
bate the major issue before the people," sought to convert the campaign
into an anti-Clay diatribe by dwelling on the Kentuckian's land views.
Furthermore, the News asserted that William Henry Harrison, rather than
Clay, represented its choice for the Whig nomination in 1840.\textsuperscript{75}

Cummins shared the desire of the News to prevent the Democrats
from centering the campaign on the land issue, preferring instead to
focus it on the bank issue. In early July, John Ringgold of Batesville
stated his belief that Cummins' bank views had gained converts for
Whiggery in that section of north Arkansas. According to Ringgold,
Cummins' vigorous denunciation of the sub-Treasury plan, coupled with
his spirited defense of a national bank, had been so well received in
Independence County that bets "are freely taken that he might beat Cross"
in the county.\textsuperscript{76} A sound national banking system, Cummins maintained,

\textsuperscript{72} Gazette, August 8, 1838, quoted from the Times and Advocate (n.d.).
\textsuperscript{73} "Look at This," Batesville News, September 6, 1838.
\textsuperscript{74} News, August 9, 1838.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} John Ringgold to David Thompson, July 7, 1838, David Thompson
Papers, Arkansas Historical Commission.
would aid rural banks whose heavily discounted notes contributed to a seepage of specie from rural to urban areas. The absence of such a national bank with its concomitant disciplinary influence on state banks had, in Cummins' opinion, led to the frantic wildcat banking of the post-1832 era. This in turn had undermined public confidence in the fiscal integrity of the banks, thereby precipitating the Panic of 1837 with its resultant depression.  

Fiscal restraint had not previously appealed to westerners, since the raw West had eagerly sought all the venture capital it could acquire to exploit its virgin resources, but perhaps in a morning-after mood the electorate could now see its necessity. At any rate, correspondent "Kent" supported Cummins' thesis when "Kent" cited figures demonstrating that the Second United States Bank had served as a brake on unrestrained speculation. "Kent" declared that in the five years following Jackson's destruction of the Bank in 1832, state banks had increased in number from 330 to 882, while their capital had augmented slightly over 300 million dollars from the 145 million dollars represented by their notes in 1832. Each state, "Kent" urged, should be authorized one branch bank capitalized in proportion to its population. Furthermore, Congress should require the banks to pay specie on demand for their notes; this requirement according to "Kent" would result in the resumption of specie payments by suspended state banks, since they would wish to trade at par with the notes of the national bank.

The Batesville News maintained that Cross opposed not only a

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78 "Kent," News, August 9, 1838.
national bank but, his protests to the contrary, all banks of issue, since he had urged that the government accept only specie for payment of taxes and land. The News contended that Cross's position had resulted in a "cold reception" from the electorate. As for Cross's contention that the Constitution prohibited Congress from creating a national bank, Whigs asked why George Washington, with James Madison's approval, had signed the bill creating the First National Bank of the United States. Furthermore, Whigs professed bewilderment at Cross's assertion that, while state legislatures possessed the power to establish a banking structure, the Constitution denied this to Congress.

Cummins' ardent support of a national bank, on the other hand, had won him support in many areas of the state, at least according to correspondents from five counties from whose letters excerpts appeared in the Batesville paper early in August.

Whigs seeking legislative seats also supported a national bank. In Helena, R. I. Bell, while paradoxically denying the importance of a party label, did proclaim that his legislative record proved him a Whig. Furthermore, Bell affirmed his belief that a national bank alone could bring order to the fiscal scene by keeping state and local banks within their "proper bounds." And in Batesville, legislative candidate Charles Fenton Mercer Noland sought to dispel recent rumors that he

80 William Cummins, "Fellow Citizens of Arkansas," Ibid., September 6, 1838.
81 "Long Creek," Ibid., August 30, 1838.
82 Ibid., August 9, 1838.
83 Spy, September 17, 1838.
opposed a national bank by informing Independence County voters of his belief that only a national bank could rectify the nation's tangled fiscal affairs. Noland's position won him the endorsement of the editor of the Batesville Spy along with another Whig, but the Whig aspirant for the third legislative seat from populous Independence County received only a reluctant endorsement; the Spy described the third Whig legislative candidate's position on the bank question as somewhat ambiguous.

The bank issue constituted but one of the two primary bases on which Whig hopes for victory rested in 1838. Lewis Tully's candidacy's encouraging a split in the Democracy represented an even more important factor. In early August, Tully and Cummins announced their intention to inaugurate a series of joint debates in northwest Arkansas and proceeded down the Arkansas River. Tully planned to spend the remainder of August and early September in his campaign jaunt before returning to the Batesville area about September 10. In late August, "Long Creek," posing as an anti-Cross Democrat, declared that Cross's slanderous vilification of Clay had offended many nominally anti-Clay Democrats. While these Democrats disagreed intellectually with the Kentuckian, "Long Creek" wrote, they respected him personally and consequently would cast their ballots for Tully.

84 "To the Voters of Independence County," News, September 27, 1838.
85 News, September 27, 1838.
86 News, August 2, 1838. "A Democrat" reported in the Gazette a Cummins-Cross debate in Fayetteville on August 16 but no reference was made to Tully. Possibly Woodruff deleted mention of Tully's remarks. See Gazette of September 12, 1838.
87 "Long Creek," Ibid., August 30, 1838.
Tully's hope of successfully defying the regular party leadership lay in defeating both Cross and Cummins. Only if victory over both opponents appeared possible would his continuance in the race be politically rational, for Tully could ill afford to serve as a tool for Whig success. Apparently his western tour convinced Tully that his candidacy served only this purpose, for in early September the Batesville News reported the rumor that ill health would force the maverick Democrat out of the race. The Batesville paper attempted a brave front by declaring that Cross's defeat remained inevitable, since the Whig supporters of a "sound currency" could still unite with those Democrats who opposed the dictation of the Little Rock "junto" thus assuring the defeat of Cross. In its issue of September 19, the News verified the rumor of Tully's withdrawal by printing his letter dated September 8. Tully indicated that his deteriorating health forced his resignation, but he dwelt bitterly and at length upon the efforts of Woodruff to force it. No evidence exists to indicate that Tully actually suffered from ill health in 1838. In 1844 he ran again as an independent Democrat for Congress, receiving that year only 112 votes out of the almost 19,000 cast.

The final returns, while providing Cross with a comfortable margin of victory, did indeed offer Arkansas' Whigs solace when contrasted with the 1836 Congressional election. The 1838 tally provided Cross with 6,777 votes to 4,218 for Cummins—a majority for the Democrat of

88 "To the People of Arkansas," News, September 13, 1838.

89 On August 29 the Gazette reported that Tully would remove himself from the race and indicated that his letter to this effect would be printed when it became available. In view of its contents, it is not surprising that Woodruff never printed the letter.
sixty-two percent. Furthermore, except in the northwest quadrant of Arkansas, Cummins carried counties in all areas of the state. He won eleven counties, while Cross carried the remaining twenty-seven. In the Northwest Cross, while not duplicating the enormous majorities secured by the popular Yell in 1836, demonstrated the continued popularity of the Democracy in that section by attaining convincing majorities. Yell's correctness in attributing his large margin in the Northwest to personal popularity is demonstrated by a comparison of the vote he received in Washington County, his home, with Cross's 1838 vote in the same county. In 1836 Yell amassed 1,217 votes to Cummins' 62, while in 1838 Cross secured only 831 votes to Cummins' 141. Elsewhere in the Northwest, Cummins showed even greater improvement. In 1836, for instance, Yell defeated Cummins in Pope County by 246 to 77 votes; in 1838 Cross carried the county by only 224 to 158. In part, one may attribute this loss of Democratic strength in the Northwest, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the state, to the absence of Yell on the 1838 ballot, but undoubtedly the depression too contributed to the Whig surge.

In addition, as the aura of the Jacksonian mantle lost some of its luster, a larger proportion of the electorate opted to vote in closer accord with what it considered its economic interests. The eleven counties won by Cummins in 1838, for instance, contained 9,037 of the state's 15,805 slaves and 14,864 of Arkansas' 53,905 whites. Thus some 57.2 percent of Arkansas' slave population of 1838 resided in the counties won by Cummins, while only 27.6 percent of the state's whites lived

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90 Gazette, November 7, 1838; News, November 15, 1838.
in those counties. These figures reveal that Cummins won in those counties featuring a significant amount of wealth embodied in the "peculiar institution." The early twentieth century historian of Southern Whiggery, Author Cole, explained the support of the heavily slave areas of the South for Whig candidates by suggesting that slaveholders felt an affinity for the alleged elitist outlook of the party. In addition, Cole implied, slaveholders believed the Whig party a more ardent supporter of property rights than its Democratic opponent. And by supporting the Whig party, Cole declared, the slaves' owners did indeed tend to imbue Whiggery with a conservative hue.

In Arkansas, Cole's thesis receives confirmation from a comparison of the performance of Whig presidential candidates with counties containing large and/or small percentages of slaves. Tables II, III, and IV in the Appendix reveal that in those counties containing a large majority of slaves, Whig presidential candidates in the four presidential contests of 1840 through 1852 received their greatest support. Table II reveals that in 1840 and 1848, Harrison and Taylor actually received a majority of the vote cast in those counties, 25 percent or more of whose population consisted of slaves. Table III reinforces Table II's evidence by demonstrating that in those ten counties containing the highest percentages of slaves in 1840 and 1850, Whig presidential candidates performed significantly better than in counties with fewer slaves. Table III demonstrates that in the 1840 and 1844 presidential elections, the Whig


candidates averaged 9.2 percent more votes in the ten counties with the largest slave populations as contrasted with their percentages in the state as a whole. Table IV reveals that in the 1848 and 1852 contests the Whig presidential candidates received 5.3 percent more votes in the ten counties containing the largest slave populations as contrasted with their votes in the state as a whole. Map II in the Appendix reveals the locations of the ten counties containing the largest percentages of slaves in 1840 and 1850.

For Arkansas, an alternative to Cole's thesis resides in an examination of the ability of the Whig party, throughout the period under study, to achieve respectable minorities—if not actual majorities—in the river counties of the South and East while consistently losing the more isolated northern and western regions of the state. The northwestern areas, relatively deficient in waterways navigable throughout the year, represented the least accessible areas within Arkansas. Why Whig candidates performed poorly in more isolated regions—and conversely better in more accessible ones—poses a question which scholars of Alabama Whiggery sought to answer with respect to the Whig party's performance in that state. Alabama Whig candidates, they suggested, enjoyed the most success in those counties most economically advanced and/or with the greatest commercial intercourse with outlying regions. In effect, they suggest that the nationalist economic program of the Whigs appealed to residents of counties "more nearly in the main stream of the national and world economy." In addition to the economic interests conditioned by accessibility, these scholars suggest that the psychology of the

voters in such regions proved more compatible with Whiggery, since such voters were "inclined toward an awareness of a way of life beyond their horizons of space and time." The sectional basis for Whig strength in Arkansas suggests that this thesis may explain the poor Whig performances in the northern and western regions of Arkansas as contrasted with the more favorable Whig performance in the southern and eastern areas of the state. Cummins received support, however, not merely from slaveholders, but from substantial holders of land, money and other goods. The eleven counties he carried contained, according to the 1838 census, property worth $6,959,042; the twenty-seven counties Cross won contained property valued at $8,605,242.

To determine the support Cummins received in towns, one must note the distribution of wealth which the 1838 census described as invested in merchant stocks and money on which banks paid interest. Such wealth, of course, represents urban rather than agrarian property; its relative abundance in a county indicates the presence of a town of some size. In counties possessing relatively large amounts of such wealth, Cummins performed well in 1838. Of the $401,932 included in the merchant stock-money at interest category in the 1838 census, some $284,316 was located in counties won by Cummins. And although Little Rock's Pulaski County accounted for slightly over $107,000 of this sum, the remaining $157,000 located in counties won by Cummins, clearly indicates Cummins' support

94 Ibid.

95 Journal of the House, 1838, 158; Gazette, November 21, 1838.
in urban areas elsewhere in the state. This appears apparent since in the twenty-seven counties Cross won, urban wealth amounted to only $137,616. This figure represents approximately 14 percent less urban wealth than contained in the ten counties (excluding Pulaski) which Cummins won.

If one examines the counties won by Cross in terms of town wealth, one notes that he tended to perform best in counties containing relatively little of this type of property. Cross won seventeen of the twenty-seven counties he carried by more than the 63 percent majority he received in the state as a whole. In these seventeen counties the merchant stock-money at interest wealth amounted to approximately $39,639.00—an average of $2,350.76 per county. But in the seven counties he won by less than 63 percent, this type wealth amounted to approximately $97,923.00—an average of $13,989.00 per county.

An analysis of the counties won by Cummins in 1838 also lends support to the thesis advanced by one commentator of Southern Whiggery that banking represented the primary political issue of this period for both the urban business-professional classes, as well as the planter class. A community of interest between these affluent groups on the banking issue, Charles Grier Sellers suggests, provided the backbone for the Whig party in the South. William Woodruff's testimony lends support to this suggestion with respect to the 1838 Congressional race,

96 *Journal of the House, 1838*, 158. Cummins won Pulaski County by 337 to 196 votes. The Whigs consistently won this county handily in state elections held between 1836 and 1854. In presidential elections when state legislators assembled in Little Rock in November, their votes cast in the city would carry Pulaski County for the Democratic candidate.

for Woodruff admitted that Cummins' "bank hobby carried him farther this time than we thought it would." 98

As for the 1838 legislative races, the Democrats won forty-four of the seats in the Assembly while the Whigs won twenty-one and the political allegiance of five legislators was unknown. 99 In the House, Woodruff declared that Democrats dominated with thirty-one seats; the Whigs held seventeen seats and the political affiliation of five members was unknown. Whig Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, who was elected to the House in 1838, however, assessed party strength in that body a week after its opening session in November at thirty Democrats and twenty-three Whigs. 100 A vote recorded in the House Journal on December 12, 1838, would appear to support Woodruff's assessment of party strength rather than Noland's. On that date the House adopted a resolution which tabled until 1849—and thus effectively killed—a Whig condemnation of the Sub-Treasury plan. The thirty to seventeen vote showed such prominent Whigs as Absalom Fowler, Jesse Turner, Lorenzo Gibson, and Noland opposing the tabling resolution, along with thirteen fellow members. An analysis by county reveals that these seventeen Whigs won election from counties throughout the state. Indeed, the geographical distribution reveals itself as remarkably uniform, for even counties in the northwestern quarter of the state elected representatives, presumably Whigs, who sought to attack Van Buren by condemning his Sub-Treasury plan. 101

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98 "Congressional Election," Gazette, November 7, 1838.
100 "N," News, November 22, 1838.
101 House Journal, 1838, 299. Noland's declaration in the News of November 22 that there were "some 4 or 5 Bank men among the Democrats" in the House proved unduly optimistic if it is assumed that all seventeen votes opposing the tabling motion were cast by Whigs.
the local level, personalities as well as party label (or ideology) was of interest to the electorate.

With Whig representatives winning election in all areas of the state and with the improvement demonstrated by the party in its latest election, the road appeared open for Arkansas' Whigs to present a serious challenge to the Democracy. One source of weakness, however, was a rift within Whig ranks due to the resentment felt by some party members at the role played by the Times and Advocate during the 1838 campaign. To secure control of the paper, the Whig Central Committee offered to purchase a half share in the late spring of 1839, but the owners, Eli Colby and Michael J. Steck, replied to the offer with "a damned insulting letter." With the opportunity to purchase control of the only Little Rock Whig paper foreclosed, the Central Committee could only proceed to establish a new paper. Such a paper would, of course, enable the Little Rock Whig leadership to fashion a more aggressive journal, an intent Alfred Pike expressed late in June when he promised privately that the forthcoming paper would be a "thorough Whig journal." Absalom Fowler echoed this sentiment in the same month in sending the prospectus of the proposed Arkansas Star to Jesse Turner. While the prospectus might indicate, Fowler wrote, that the Star would "belong to the conservative class," those better informed knew that the paper would adopt a more aggressive stance than the Times and Advocate.

102 Albert Pike to Jesse Turner, June 21, 1839, Arkansas Gazette Foundation Library.

103 Ibid.

104 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, June 26, 1839, Arkansas Gazette Foundation Library; Brown, "Albert Pike 1809-1891," 137; Ross, Arkansas Gazette the Early Years 1819-1866, p. 169; Ross, "Chronicles
The first issue of the *Arkansas Star* appeared July 25, 1839. Soon William Woodruff noted the bitterness which quickly developed between the two Whig journals in Little Rock; previously expressed only editorially, the rivalry assumed a more threatening form as challenges were sent and a street brawl ensued. As the temperature soared beneath Little Rock's searing August sun, Woodruff felt compelled to express his own uneasiness at the situation: "We begin to find our own slight frame gradually wearing away from unnecessarily making a portable armory of our pockets, and have laid the fixings aside, not to be resumed until a sensible reduction in the attitude of the mercury."  

Unfortunately for its founders, the *Star* temporarily suspended publication in June of 1840 when a tornado damaged the press. Although publication subsequently resumed, the last issue of the paper appeared shortly after November 19, 1840. Nevertheless, Arkansas Whiggery had provided itself with a hard-hitting organ which could and would give expression to the party leadership's desire to carry the rhetorical war home to the Democratic foe in 1840.

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105 *Gazette*, August 21, 1839.

106 Ross, "Chronicles of Arkansas," *Gazette*, November 7, 1965. There are no extant issues of the *Star*. 

of Arkansas," *Gazette*, November 7, 1965. That the editorial staff of the *Times and Advocate* was concerned with its new competitor can be noted by a fretful letter Turner received from its editors on June 19, 1839. Turner was asked to evaluate the competition the *Star* might offer in the Van Buren area. See Eli Colby to Jesse Turner, June 19, 1839, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
CHAPTER III
"COONS, CANOES AND CANDIDATES—ARKANSAS
AND THE HARRISON CAMPAIGN OF 1840"

If perhaps Arkansas Whiggery could acquire strength through intramural warfare between competing organs, the national party could ill afford to repeat the error of the 1836 presidential campaign. Three presidential candidates proved a luxury which Whigs must relinquish in order to pose a serious challenge for Van Buren's office. Thus in the interest of insuring party harmony in Arkansas, seven "Whigs and Conservatives" met in Little Rock on December 12, 1838, to select the three delegates to attend a proposed national Whig convention. Although they termed themselves delegates, the seven Whigs actually were self-appointed in that they acknowledged that their actions required approval by Whig county conventions. In reality, of course, the seven realized that their actions would go unchallenged by rank and file Whigs. In Little Rock, the seven "delegates" adopted a resolution urging the holding of a national convention at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania on July 2. In May 1838, however, Congressional Whigs had already suggested that the national convention be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on December 4, 1839, and this suggestion was followed. See Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), pp. 322-23.
delegates to the national convention provided the sort of sectional balance necessary in that northwest, northeast, and southeast Arkansas would attain representation at the national conclave.

Upon adjourning, the seven "delegates" issued a manifesto in which they modestly denied any intention of attempting to dictate the selection of Arkansas' national delegation; the Little Rock assemblage invited other "Whigs and Conservatives" throughout the state to meet in county assemblies and propose other delegate slates. As for the issue which they believed would prove important in the 1840 campaign, the "delegates"—who signed their epistle simply "7"—expressed the belief (or hope?) that it would center upon the depression which gripped the nation. The "7" attributed the depression to the destruction of the national bank resulting from President Jackson's veto of the rechartering bill. In somewhat apprehensive fashion, the group noted that of late there had occurred some improvement in the economic picture. The "delegates" stoutly insisted, however, that Van Buren's administration deserved no credit for the recent improvement since only the energy of the American people and the willingness of western and southern banks to borrow in the eastern money market had spurred a revival of the economy. 2

In their lengthy manifesto, the seven Whigs assembled in Little Rock emphasized the importance of the banking issue by devoting 329 lines to the currency question. The manifesto defended the concept of a national bank, labeled the Sub-Treasury plan as inadequate, and castigated Democratic handling of the currency question. The only other issue treated by the manifesto—Democratic usurpation of power which threatened

2News, January 10, 1839, reprinted from the Times and Advocate (n.d.).
the liberty of the citizenry—received attention in only 67 lines. Albert Pike, who the convention secretary Charles Bertrand hinted in his report authored the resolution, joined John W. Cocke, Frederick W. Trapnall, and Bertrand as Pulaski County residents in attendance at the meeting. On this occasion, however, Whigs outside Pulaski County comprised a majority of the membership of what apparently constituted—although the report did not employ the term—the Whig Central Committee of Arkansas. Pulaski County Whigs, however, enjoyed the manipulative leverage of a permanent organization, for Noland's motion to distribute 2,000 pamphlet copies of Pike's resolution received the assemblage's approval with the notation that the Pulaski County Whig correspondence committee would distribute the material.

One might wonder why prominent Arkansas' Whigs should convene a full year prior to the holding of the national convention to issue a resolution and appoint delegates to the national convention. Undoubtedly convenience provides the answer to this query. With Arkansas' legislature in session—and all the persons listed at the meeting, except the Pulaski County residents, served in the legislature—an opportune occasion presented itself to give direction to the 1840 campaign and to agree on delegates to attend the national conclave. Apparently the latter point was of interest to the seven, since they supported Henry Clay for the presidency and wished to send Clay supporters to the national convention. Thus an interval of one year would elapse before delegates Martin, Noland, and Miles were scheduled to journey to Pennsylvania, but with

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3 The other members present included Jesse Turner (Crawford), John Clark and William H. Gaines (Chicot), Morgan Magness and Charles Fenton Mercer Noland (Independence), A. M. Oakley (Hempstead), and N. Menefee (Conway).
respect to Arkansas' convention support, the seven had assured that Henry Clay would receive it.

When eleven months later delegate Bennett Martin of Pope County descended the Arkansas River in November 1839, presumably on his way to represent Arkansas at the national Whig convention at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Gazette's Democrat editor Edward Cole described Martin as a clever fellow. Cole offered his opinion, however, that it appeared strange that Arkansas' Whigs sent delegates to a national convention when they experienced difficulty at securing "a candidate for office, much less electing one." In saying this, Cole taunted the Whigs for their indecision regarding the forthcoming gubernatorial contest. As early as the fall of 1838, Governor James Sevier Conway—plagued by ill health—contemplated resigning his office. Although he completed his term, everyone knew that Conway would not seek reelection in 1840. If the Democratic gubernatorial nomination fell to the popular Archibald Yell—denied the office by fellow Democrats in 1838—no prominent Whig wished himself sacrificed on the altar of yet another Yell landslide. As early as August 1839 a Yell supporter in Washington County urged the nomination of the "able efficient Judge Yell" since heavily Democratic Washington

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4 Gazette, November 20, 1839. In March 1841 The Witness of Fayetteville reported that Martin had recently stabbed a man to death at Clarksville in Johnson County. Following the deed, Martin allegedly outran a number of pursuers for several hundred yards before being apprehended. The Democratic Witness noted that Martin had served as Whig delegate to the Harrisburg convention which had nominated Harrison. See "Another Murder," The Witness (Fayetteville), March 27, 1841. Neither Martin nor any other Arkansan attended the Harrisburg convention. The Whig Central Committee informed a Louisiana delegate in a letter addressed to him that Arkansas would be unable to send a delegation. The Louisiana delegate was asked on the first ballot to cast Arkansas' vote for Henry Clay for president and John Tyler for vice-president. See "Whig National Convention," Niles' National Register, December 14, 1839.
County deserved the honor of having its favorite son in the governor's chair.\(^5\)

With every indication that Yell would seek the gubernatorial office, the Whig delegates assembled for their state convention in Little Rock in March 1840 declined to nominate a candidate for that office. Instead Whigs concentrated upon presenting the convention as a well-attended gathering drawing delegates from throughout the state and one in which direction came from county organizations. But little doubt exists that the editor of the Gazette wrote accurately when he denied both these assertions. The editor asserted that only nine counties sent delegates to the convention and that of the forty-six delegates present, Pulaski County had sent twenty-two. Furthermore, the Gazette maintained that the convention represented a private conclave which selected Fowler as the party's Congressional candidate a month prior to the opening of the convention.\(^6\) Correspondent "Phocion" asserted that delegates from only eight counties attended the convention and that some of the delegates listed as attending in the official account of the proceedings actually remained at home, a hundred miles from Little Rock.\(^7\)

State races in Arkansas, however, assumed a back seat in the contests of 1840. In part this resulted from the Whigs declining to offer a candidate to oppose Yell when he secured the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, thus reducing the statewide contests between the

\(^{5}\) P. F. Gains to Col. Gilbert Marshall, August 24, 1839, Samuel Williams Papers, Arkansas History Commission.


\(^{7}\) Gazette, April 1, 1840. The Southern Shield of March 28 promised a full account of the proceedings in its next edition, but that issue is not extant. See "Whig State Convention," Southern Shield, March 28, 1840.
parties to the Congressional and presidential races. But in addition, the Whig nomination of General William Henry Harrison of Ohio as the party's presidential standard-bearer also served to detract from local races. This resulted from the drama of the 1840 presidential race with its display of coon skins, log cabins, and hard cider—all associated with the frontier qualities allegedly possessed by the Hero of Tippecanoe. The Harrisburg convention opted not to adopt a platform since within Whig ranks there existed too many differences of opinion, and the Whigs also hoped that the absence of a platform would serve to attract Democrats to the Whig cause. Cooperating with this tactic, Harrison in abstruse fashion announced his support of a strong union, a protective tariff, a limited chief executive, and a "national bank if the public interest demanded it." But primarily the campaign of 1840 was emotional rather than cerebral in nature.  

Not only did the splashy nature of this presidential contest overshadow local races in Arkansas, but to a considerable extent it subordinated the issues of the campaign. The issues competed with Whig press-agentry and its Madison Avenue efforts to make of the doughty old politician-soldier Harrison a creature capable of meeting and besting Jacksonianism on its home grounds. If the Democratic party could sell the Tennessee speculator-slave owner Jackson to the American people as a commoner, the Whigs of 1839 believed that Harrison could pass muster as his Whig equivalent. Nationally, Harrison's election proved the soundness of this assumption. And while Arkansas' Whigs believed that they could carry the state for Harrison, the sobering defeats of recent

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years tempered their optimism. In announcing Harrison's nomination in early January 1840, the Whig *Batesville News* expressed both the optimism and the sober realism of the party in Arkansas. No reason existed for despondency, the editor declared, for in northern Arkansas, at least, the Whigs possessed both adequate numbers and with their support of internal improvements, a popular program. Numbers and an internal improvements program—coupled with public disgust at the "deranged" state of the currency—assured a Whig victory in 1840, if the party vigorously marshalled its forces through an intensive organizational effort.9 In Little Rock Whigs did not require advice to organize, for earlier in the month some thirty-five Whigs in the capital city established a Tippecanoe Club.10

In Batesville, in north Arkansas, Charles Fenton Mercer Noland also declared that organization constituted the Whig key to victory in Arkansas. Writing to Jesse Turner at Van Buren, Noland confessed that, like Turner, he too regarded Henry Clay as "the first inhabitant of our hearts," but Harrison alone possessed the ability to win the presidency. Northern Arkansas, Noland declared, was supporting Harrison's campaign with more enthusiasm than that granted to any previous candidate. Independence County, he predicted, would return a majority of 300 for Harrison (in 1836 Van Buren had beaten White in Independence County by 134 to 113 votes), and north Arkansas would also send a considerable number of Whigs to the state legislature. Such a victory, Noland declared, required organization, but if the party made the organizational effort, not only

9"For President William Henry Harrison of Ohio, For Vice-Presi­dent John Tyler of Virginia," *News*, January 9, 1840.

10*Gazette*, January 29, 1840.
would Harrison carry Arkansas, but Absalom Fowler would beat Edward Cross in the Congressional race and "run [Yell] to the eye brows" in the gubernatorial contest. \(^{11}\)

B. W. Lee, writing from Arkansas Post in March 1840, shared Noland's assessment of the approaching contests. Lee informed his correspondent in St. Louis, Missouri of rumors that a "mighty change" in political sentiment had occurred in Washington County in northwestern Arkansas. In the state as a whole, Lee forecast that spirited contests for legislative seats would occur with the Whigs winning a majority of the offices. \(^{12}\) In late April, William Cummins substantiated Lee's assessment of Whig strength respecting the legislative races in Desha, Jefferson, and Arkansas counties which Cummins had recently visited. Cummins asserted that in these southeastern Arkansas River counties no Democrats sought a seat in the legislature since "they surrender to the Whigs each of these counties without a struggle." \(^{13}\)

In April the Democratic Gazette reported the holding of Whig meetings in every county in the state. According to Woodruff, however, this did not indicate party strength, for he contended that the meetings merely reflected the leadership's attempt to hold disgruntled rank and file Whigs in line. This dissatisfaction resulted from the membership's displeasure at Harrison's nomination at Harrisburg. Unlike the cynical, self-serving Whig leadership, Woodruff explained, most Whigs sincerely

\(^{11}\) Charles Noland to Jesse Turner, February 18, 1840, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

\(^{12}\) B. W. Lee to James H. Lucas, March 15, 1840, Knight Collection Arkansas Historical Commission.

\(^{13}\) William Cummins to Jesse Turner, April 23, 1840, Turner Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.
objected to President Jackson's military background, believing that it disqualified him for the presidency. The Democratic editor depicted rank and file Whigs as believing that only a civilian should occupy the presidential office. Thus the callous disregard of this sentiment by the Harrisburg convention in nominating General Harrison, Woodruff wrote, created a revolt in the ranks of Arkansas' Whiggery.  

Attempting to develop opposition to a presidential candidate on the basis of the candidate's military background was, however, futile in the martial-oriented West of the 1840's. A potentially more serious indictment of Harrison's candidacy lay in Woodruff's observation concerning Harrison's advanced age. By the age of sixty-six, Woodruff noted, the first five presidents—George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe—retired rather than seeking reelection. This was an acute observation, but since no president had as yet died in office, Arkansans in 1840 gave it no serious consideration. Nor did they take seriously the rumor, denied by the Whig Star in Little Rock, of Harrison's amorous adventure with a young lady. In noting editor Lambert's heated denial of this billingsgate, Woodruff wrote that he "heard a Whig residing in Little Rock, who knows the old General assert that he seduced two of them." Since the stories alluding to Harrison's purported debility and to his reputed romantic prowess were contained in separate editions, only the discerning reader would note the inconsistency.

14 *Gazette*, February 26, 1840.

15 Ibid., March 18, 1840.

16 Ibid., March 25, 1840.
To put their case before the voters, the state's Whigs needed to make maximum use of their newspapers. With two Whig presses in the capital attacking the Democrats (and each other), the residents of Pulaski and surrounding counties received adequate exposure to the Whig message. Whigs in the delta region, however, required a newspaper with a staff more familiar with and receptive to the printing of local political news. Consequently, in the spring of 1840, Quincy K. Underwood founded and provided editorial direction for the Southern Shield, located in the Mississippi River town of Helena.  

In the Shield's prospectus, Underwood announced support of the Harrison–John Tyler ticket, called for support of a public school system, and urged the establishment of a "properly restricted" national banking system which alone could prevent panics and depressions. Underwood also urged construction of an adequate road system in the state; particularly pressing in his view was the need for an adequate road from Helena to various points westward. In opposition to Clay's American Plan, however, Underwood called for the financing of such a program by Arkansas alone. Clay's program contemplated the financing of internal improvements at the central government's expense with monies derived from a high tariff and by the sale of western lands at high prices. Underwood, like many westerners, opposed such a program. The editor neglected, however, to reveal the method whereby frontier Arkansas could generate the capital necessary for developing its own transportation system. Somewhat

17 Fred W. Allsopp, History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years and More (Little Rock: Parke–Harper Publishing Company, 1922), p. 258. The first extant issue of the Southern Shield is dated March 28, 1840; the limited number of surviving issues of the Shield are scattered in 1840–1841 as are the available issues of the Batesville News, the other Whig newspaper with available issues for the 1840 campaign.
defensively, Underwood declared that while he concurred with national Whig views on questions other than the tariff and land issues, as an independent thinker he reserved the right to subject Whig, as well as Democratic proposals, to critical scrutiny.\(^{18}\)

In its first issue, the Shield also took note of the Whig convention held in Little Rock in March which nominated Absalom Fowler for Congress. Somewhat awkwardly, Underwood asserted that the convention, "being of the opinion that no great principles are involved in the election of governor, did not nominate an individual for that office."\(^{19}\)

In reality, of course, Yell's announced candidacy for the office discouraged the entry of a Whig into the gubernatorial contest. If their prospects in the gubernatorial race appeared nil, however, Whigs believed Harrison's and Fowler's opportunities more encouraging.

In order to maximize their opportunities in these contests, the Whig convention advised the candidates to run under the "Democrat Whig" ticket—an obvious attempt by the Whigs to counter the charge that the Whig party's leadership reflected the outlook of the aristocracy and to capitalize upon the popularity of the Democratic party by confusing the uneducated and illiterate segment of Arkansas' electorate. Whigs also hoped that the "Democrat Whig" label would help to refute the Democratic charge that Whig leaders possessed far more wealth than Democratic leaders.

To determine the accuracy of the Democratic charge that the leaders of the Whig party possessed far more wealth than their Democratic counterparts, this writer analyzed the leadership of both parties,

\(^{18}\) *Southern Shield* (Helena), March 28, 1840.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
deriving data from, among other sources, the 1850 Arkansas census. The most significant revelation contained in Table IV in the Appendix is found in Category I which reveals that, on the average, Whig leaders in Arkansas evaluated their wealth as exceeding that of Democrats by approximately 250 percent per man. Although one can assert with confidence that Whig leaders in Arkansas did possess far more wealth than their Democratic counterparts, one should not assume that Whig voters shared the economic advantage enjoyed by the party's leadership. To determine accurately if a class basis existed for party politics in Arkansas during these years, it would be necessary to compare individual precinct returns with statistics revealing the wealth of these precincts. Unfortunately, precinct returns are not available for this period of Arkansas' history. Occasionally, in Little Rock (but rarely elsewhere) the newspapers would publish township returns but such returns are scattered.

In addition to the differences in the value of the assessed real estate between the leadership of the two parties, another disparity reveals itself in the number of slaves owned by individuals in the two groups. Historian Ulrich B. Phillips suggested that twenty slaves represented the least number of slaves an antebellum agriculturalist might possess to qualify as a planter rather than a farmer.\(^\text{20}\) The 1850 Arkansas census lists 544 persons as owning twenty or more slaves.\(^\text{21}\)


\(^{21}\) One could not accept the designations planter or farmer in the census as meaningful since census recorders failed to use the terms with any degree of precision. In Arkansas County, for instance, the census official listed J. W. Clay as a farmer although he owned 207 slaves and possessed real estate assessed at $250,000. See Robert B. Walz, "Arkansas Slaveholdings and Slaveowners in 1850," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XII (Spring, 1953), 49. Professor Walz's list of 544 names represents
Of this number 46 men—23 Whigs and 23 Democrats—were political figures in the state whose names comprised the list forming the basis for this leadership analysis. Of the sixty Whig leaders comprising the Whig leadership, 38.3 percent owned twenty or more slaves while of the ninety Democratic leaders, 23.7 percent owned twenty or more slaves. This reveals rather dramatically the important role played by slave-owners in both parties. The table also demonstrates that 14.6 percent more Whig than Democratic leaders qualified as planters by Phillips' definition.

Analysis of the remaining categories reveals that little if any difference existed between the leadership of the two parties in terms of average number of slaves owned, occupation, area of birth or age.22 True, 25.0 percent of the Whigs listed themselves as lawyers, as contrasted with only 14.4 percent of the Democratic leaders. Possibly this reflects the distaste felt by conservative members of the bar at what they deemed the radical stance of the party of Andrew Jackson.23 But in terms of other occupational listings, some fifty-eight percent of the leaders of both parties designated themselves as farmers while

1.6 percent of the heads of families in Arkansas in 1850. They owned 39.7 percent of the slaves in the state and owned real estate assessed at $5,370.63 (30.9 percent of the total) in the 1850 census.

22Whig real estate assessments averaged $13,937 per man, as contrasted with $12,223 for the Democrats.

23Charles Sellers noted that seventy-four percent of the Southern Whig members of Congress serving in the decade between 1833-1843 were practicing lawyers, whereas only fifty-five percent of the Congressional Democrats fell into this category. Sellers attributes this to the "commercial affiliations" of the Whig party which naturally attracted lawyers into its fold as a result of the traditionally close relationship which existed between trade and the legal profession. See Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs," American Historical Review, LIX (January, 1954), 341.
over six percent of the members of each party termed themselves merchants. As for their origin of birth, approximately twenty-five percent of the members of both parties listed Tennessee as their place of birth. Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia were the three states listed below Tennessee as the states of birth by both Whig and Democratic leaders. Oddly enough, not a single leader on the list designated the adjacent state of Mississippi as his place of birth although 12.2 percent of the heads of families listed in the 1850 census designated Mississippi as their place of birth.

With respect to ages the data reveals that no significant difference existed between Arkansas' Whigs and Democrats in this category. The prominent members of both parties averaged approximately forty-four years of age.

In view of the substantial wealth enjoyed by Arkansas' Whig leaders (although Democratic leaders, of course, also possessed far more wealth than most Arkansans), one can readily understand the indignation of the Democratic correspondent who reacted to the 1840 Whig Convention's suggestion that Whig candidates run under the "Democrat Whig" ticket.

In reporting this attempt, an infuriated Gazette correspondent accused the Whigs of masquerading under the mantle of Jefferson and Madison while wearing undergarments fashioned from Federalist cloth spun by John Adams. In an attempt to prove that Whigs followed Federalist (i.e. elitist) practices, the Gazette attacked the March convention as undemocratic. At that convention two obscure individuals named Brown and Wilson—a farmer and a mechanic—secured nomination from the floor as nominees for the Congressional post. No evidence exists to indicate
that their nominations were not supported by some significant number of
delegates. But, of course, one could interpret their nominations as
serving only the cosmetic purpose of demonstrating that Whiggery had
roots in the commonality. And this was the interpretation provided by
the Democrats who contended that a secret Whig caucus had selected
Absalom Fowler as the nominee before the convention assembled.24

In March also, the state's Democrats convened in Little Rock
with between 200 and 300 men present, including, the Gazette carefully
noted, a large number of farmers and mechanics. The luminaries addressing
the gathering included Little Rock mechanic Thomas Thorn. Thorn, who
aspired to a seat in the legislature, reputedly constructed over two-
thirds of the brick buildings in Little Rock. Although the Gazette
declared that this simple man lacked oratorical gifts, it stoutly main-
tained that his inarticulateness would prove no barrier to meaningful
public service.25 Following addresses by Thorn and others, the dele-
gates proceeded to endorse the candidacies of Martin Van Buren for
president, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky for vice-president, and
Archibald Yell for governor. Edward Cross once again received the con-
vention's endorsement for the House seat.

With both parties having selected their nominees by late March,
the campaign began in earnest. Arkansas' Whigs quickly demonstrated
that they understood the importance of combating the Democratic slur
linking Whiggery with aristocracy. In the presidential contest, chance
provided the Whigs with an excellent tool for presenting William Henry

24 Gazette, March 11, 1840.

25 Ibid., March 25, 1840.
Harrison—whose father had served as governor of Virginia—as a man of the people possessing a plebian background. This opportunity occurred when a supporter of Henry Clay, peeved because of Harrison's convention victory over Harry of the West at Harrisburg, described Harrison as a coarse individual content to live in a log cabin and drink hard cider.\(^{26}\) The 1840 Whig campaign's log cabin and cider jug symbolism, accompanied by additional trappings of the frontier motif, including the raccoon, thus emerged from this chance remark.

Obviously, such potentially powerful symbolism presented a difficult target for Democrats accustomed to a monopoly in the arena of symbolic democracy. Democrats usually, but not always, ignored this Whig trespass on their domain. "One of the People" quickly pointed out that living in a log cabin no more represented a qualification for the presidency than the fact that Harrison's father had signed the Declaration of Independence.\(^{27}\) As for drinking hard cider, the \textit{Gazette} avowed that while many Democrats imbibed this beverage, they did so not by choice but only because they lacked the opportunity to secure a more desirable potation.\(^{28}\) Neither "One of the People" nor any of his fellow Democrats seemed to consider Whig stories of Harrison's humble origins or his present status grossly exaggerated; by the standards of the day, Harrison's home, for instance, was quite comfortable. True, a portion of the dwelling consisted of logs (covered with weatherboarding) and thus, Harrison could boast that he lived in a log cabin. In time,


\(^{27}\) \textit{Gazette}, April 1, 1840.

\(^{28}\) \textit{Ibid.}, June 17, 1840.
Harrison increasingly fell victim to his own rhetoric. In an August 1840 campaign speech, carried away by his mounting sense of rusticity, the Whig presidential candidate referred to his "love of the simple life and his desire to continue with his family in the peace and quiet of our log cabin at the Bend." 29

For those who demanded more nourishing political fare than the thin gruel of western symbolism, the slavery issue appeared in the 1840 campaign, partly as a consequence of the positions assumed by President Van Buren and Harrison with respect to use of the presidential veto. As a good Jacksonian and the political heir of the man who vetoed re-chartering the Second Bank of the United States, Van Buren felt no objections to the exercise of the veto. Reacting against what he termed Jackson's abuse of the veto, however, Harrison pledged, if elected, not to utilize his veto power. Thus while Van Buren pledged himself to veto any anti-slavery measure passed by Congress (such as a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia), Harrison's pledge prevented him from making such a commitment. A number of Democrats, including the prominent Southern Jacksonian journalist Amos Kendal, sought to weaken Harrison in the South by depicting his veto stance as fundamentally anti-Southern. The electorate in both North and South, however, "tired of peremptory government," ignored Democratic warnings. 30

In late January 1840, the Gazette initiated a campaign linking Whiggery with the anti-slavery movement by reporting a meeting of some


fifty Whigs in Little Rock. The Democratic paper reported that one Whig present suggested that the group appoint a member to correspond with Harrison in order to determine thoroughly his views on slavery. Editor Cole reported that the assemblage rejected this proposal after a delegate argued that even raising the possibility that Harrison might hold unsound views of the slavery question would create doubts among Arkansas' voters as to Harrison's suitability for the presidency. After noting Harrison's objections to use of the veto, Cole published correspondence addressed to Harrison, in January 1840, by the Oswego Union Association of New York. On that occasion, the New Yorkers presented Harrison with several questions concerning the propriety of Congress' receiving petitions from anti-slavery societies—most of which implored Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. Accompanying the Oswego Union questions appeared the reply made in February by a committee acting as a spokesman for Harrison. This committee responded to the Oswego query by denying the necessity for Harrison to reply, since the committee contended that Harrison's views on such questions already constituted part of the public record. With admirable aplomb, the committee denied that its reticent approach here constituted "concealment." 31

Cole pictured Harrison as not only sympathetic to abolition in the nation's capital, but hostile to slavery within the South and eager to undermine the institution there. In June a letter, allegedly written by Harrison, appeared in the Gazette in which the General denied holding a pro-slavery attitude—rather, Cole quoted Harrison as declaring that

31 Gazette, January 29, 1840.
he wished to abolish slavery by every legal means and had once joined an abolitionist society in Richmond dedicated to such a program.\textsuperscript{32}

The Democrat "Spectator," writing in the \textit{Gazette}, spelled out Harrison's plans for destroying slavery. According to "Spectator," Whigs gathered at Bentonville, Arkansas on Washington's birthday noted Harrison's views on slavery but failed to do so in sufficient detail. "Spectator" asserted that the Bentonville meeting neglected to note that Harrison favored utilizing revenue secured by the central government from the sale of public lands to purchase the freedom of slaves and to provide for their "comfortable accommodation and subsistence."

As if this were not sufficient to arouse the ire of westerners, the correspondent added that Harrison also favored the "selling into slavery of a white debtor who was unable to meet his obligations.\textsuperscript{33}

Democrats regarded as particularly noteworthy the charge that Harrison wished to use monies derived from the sale of public lands to manumit slaves. Throughout the campaign, the \textit{Gazette}'s editorial section contained the following statement attributed to Harrison: "Should I be asked if there is no way by which the general government can aid the cause of emancipation, I answer, that it has long been an object near my heart to see the whole of its surplus revenue appropriated to that object."

Below this statement, a quotation attributed to Van Buren declared his uncompromising hostility to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia so long as the surrounding Southern states should object to its abolition in the nation's capital. Furthermore, 

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Gazette}, June 10, 1840. Reported as reprinted from the Philadelphia \textit{Philanthropist} (n.d.).

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, March 18, 1840.
Van Buren allegedly pledged to "resist the slightest interference with it [slavery] in the states where it exists."

Arkansas' Whigs vigorously attempted to defend Harrison from the taint of abolitionism, while smearing Van Buren with the same charge. Twenty years of public service, Helena's Southern Shield declared, proved Harrison no abolitionist. Commenting upon a speech delivered by Harrison at Carthage, Ohio, William Byers of the Batesville News avered that it demonstrated Harrison's friendship for the South. According to Byers, Harrison declared at Carthage that the North could not "consistent with the spirit of the Constitution, discuss or agitate the subject of slavery." A more satisfactory tactic than simply denying the abolitionist charge, as applied to Harrison, however, consisted of taking the offensive by depicting Van Buren as soft on the slavery issue. Countering the charge that Whig Senator William Seward of New York secured election through abolitionist assistance, Byers declared that President Van Buren had carried Ohio in 1836 only because of the support of Buckeye abolitionists. In addition, Whigs condemned Van Buren for supporting black suffrage in New York state's constitutional convention of 1821; in his capacity as a member of the New York legislature, Van Buren also received the censure of Arkansas Whiggery for supporting a measure which was designed to legalize the testimony of blacks in cases involving white defendants. Whigs also charged Van Buren, as president, with approving the testimony of a black in the court martial of a naval

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34 Southern Shield, July 31, 1840.
35 "General Harrison's Speech at Carthage," News, October 1, 1840.
36 News, January 10, 1839.
As the campaign approached its climax in the late summer, the *Gazette* predicted that Harrison would receive the Northern anti-slave vote. Anti-slavery delegates from six states assembled in convention at Albany, New York on April 1, 1840, to nominate for the presidency James G. Birney, a Kentuckian and former slaveholder converted to abolitionism. Editor Cole predicted that, just prior to the election, the abolitionists' leadership would order the anti-slavery voters to withdraw their allegiance from Birney, following which the abolitionists would troop to the polls in November in support of Harrison. Moreover, Cole prophesied that, in timing such an announcement, the anti-slavery leadership would delay instructions to their Northern followers in order to prevent Southerners from learning that Harrison would benefit from abolitionist support.

In reiterating this charge, Cole offered as supporting evidence a resolution purportedly adopted at an abolitionist meeting held in Sardinia, Ohio. Cole asserted that the Ohio abolitionists urged anti-slavery voters to vote—not necessarily for Birney—but for the candidate "who had given evidence in his previous life of his devotion to the cause of human rights." In a post-election postscript, which indicates the growing interest of Arkansans in the abolitionist specter, newly elected Governor Archibald Yell took note of the anti-slavery movement.

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37 "Martin Van Buren touching Negro Suffrage," *News*, April 30, 1840; September 3, 21, 1840; October 1, 1840.


39 *Gazette*, August 19, 1840.

40 Ibid., November 6, 1840.
Yell informed the Arkansas assembly in early November that the citizenry of Arkansas could not afford to ignore the threat which abolitionism presented to the "liberties" of Arkansas. If a crisis developed over the issue, Yell added, Arkansas would defend its "altars and firesides" from the "footsteps of pollution." 41

In assessing the importance of the slavery controversy in Arkansas' 1840 campaign, one is struck by the relatively extensive attention given to it by the leadership of both parties. Whether or not the state's party leaders actually believed the opposing party had selected an abolitionist as it presidential standard bearer, they contended that it had done so. Regardless of their sincerity, the fact remains that the leaders of both parties regarded the slavery question as worthy of discussion if only because it served as an issue which, properly handled, could win voter support.

An even more extensive debate than that concerning slavery surrounded the discussion of the banking issue. Indeed, debate on the financial problem constituted the most important (and certainly the most discussed) issue in Arkansas' 1840 campaign. Debate on the banking issue involved two controversies—the performance of Arkansas' state banks and the desirability of re-establishing a national banking system similar to that which existed prior to the expiration of the charter of the Second Bank of the United States.

Arkansas' legislature established the two state banks—the State Bank and the Real Estate Bank—in 1837, following the panic that began 41

in the spring of that year. In his report to the Assembly in November 1838, Governor Conway briefly noted the effects of the national fiscal crisis on the state banks. Conway declared that the unsettled money market rendered it impossible for the State Bank to attain its authorized capitalization; nevertheless, Conway described the State Bank as fundamentally sound, offering as evidence the Bank's performance in discounting $500,000 in notes and bonds. As for the Real Estate Bank, Conway informed the Assembly that, while this bank found it difficult to sell its bonds, sufficient funds existed to enable the principal bank located in Little Rock to "commence operations on a limited scale" in the near future. 42

In his report to the assembly, dated November 1, 1838, Real Estate Bank President A. H. Davies also reviewed the Bank's future in an optimistic light, describing Arkansas' credit status as "the least sullied of any state." Davies boasted that no state "of the same population and wealth, has a greater amount of banking capital employed, than the state of Arkansas." 43 The commendable credit record resulted, of course, from the state having only recently achieved statehood. And Davies' boast that Arkansas featured a larger credit structure per capita than any other state simply reflected the state's lack of experience in matters financial; it revealed an ominous lack of caution, since frontier Arkansas could not safely support the bloated credit structure of $3,000,000 authorized by the legislature in its maiden session in 1836

42 Journals of the Special Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas . . . (Little Rock, 1838), 163.

43 Ibid., 363-66.
at a moment when the state had $81.79 in cash.  

By 1838, this imprudence manifested itself to everyone as the value of the notes of both the State and the Real Estate Bank declined. Between April and September of 1839, New Orleans newspapers quoted State Bank notes at thirty-five to thirty-eight percent of par value, while they quoted Real Estate paper at forty to forty-five percent discount. Rumors abounded that Arkansas' banks would suspend specie payments, but the state's journals all but refused to discuss the delicate question of suspension (which would depress state paper still further and reduce the chances for the sale of bonds). The failure of Arkansas' newspapers to take note of suspension when it did occur magnificently illustrates that refusal. In September of 1840, however, when Democrat Robert Johnson sought a seat in the legislature from Pulaski County, he defended his action as a director of the State Bank in voting November 21, 1839, to suspend specie payments. According to Johnson, eighty-nine directors and eight presidents of the principal and branch banks (forty-three directors and four presidents of the State Bank—thirty-five directors and four presidents of the Real Estate Bank) voted to suspend specie payments. Johnson declared that these eighty-nine people represented every section of the state and both political parties. Johnson justified suspension on the grounds that it prevented the flow of specie out


46 According to Stokes, "the date of suspension is difficult to fix." Ted Worley states that the main office of the State Bank suspended on November 1, 1839 and the two branches followed suit "soon thereafter." See Worley, "The Batesville Branch of the State Bank, 1836-1839," 297.
of the state, thereby assuring Arkansas of an adequate circulating medium.\footnote{Gazette, September 23, 1840.}

The failure of suspension to develop as a partisan issue in the campaign resulted from the belief of most Arkansans that necessity required suspension. This general acceptance did not, however, prevent the parties from accusing their opponents of responsibility for foisting the banks upon the state. Stung by the Democrat's charge that Whig legislative efforts created the Real Estate Bank, the Whigs countered by declaring that the Bank's leadership consisted largely of Van Buren supporters. Whigs noted that R. D. C. Collins, the president of the Real Estate Bank's principal office, was a Democrat and that three of the Bank's four branches—those at Columbia, Helena, and Washington—had presidents of Democratic persuasion. Only the branch bank at Van Buren, with John Drennen as its chief official, had a Whig as president. Furthermore, Whigs asserted that prominent Democrats served as directors of the Real Estate Bank and that Democrats comprised some of its largest stockholders.\footnote{News, September 3, 1840. The Batesville paper listed 300 shares each as owned by Conway, Sevier and Ashley. Fulton was indicated as owning 100 shares and Yell as possessing 51 shares.}

In reply, the Gazette noted that Whig legislators introduced into the Arkansas House and Senate in 1836 the resolutions authorizing creation of both the Real Estate and the State Bank.\footnote{"The Whigs and the Banks," Gazette, September 23, 1840.} There existed in 1836, the paper contended, no "party question" relative to these resolutions since the alternative to creating Arkansas' banks lay in...
forcing the state's citizens to undergo the inconvenience involved in using currency provided by other states. Furthermore, the Gazette maintained that the two bank limit provided for in the state constitution constituted a prudent safeguard provided at Democratic insistence, since Democrats wished to prevent unscrupulous people from "speculating on the labor of others." Although the Gazette's special pleading with respect to the prudence of the two bank limit lacked validity, its contention that establishment of the banks in 1836 represented a bipartisan effort was true.

In his remarks to the Assembly in 1840 concerning the state's banking problem, newly elected Governor Archibald Yell—a perfect barometer of the canebrakes and clay hills—demonstrated a curious blend of demagoguery and, for a politician, uncommon intellectual honesty. Yell attributed Arkansas' banking problem to grasping speculators in the securities markets who shaved twenty to fifty percent from the value of the state's commodities. The governor urged the legislator to investigate the banks to determine if they had formulated their policies in the public interest. Such an investigation, Yell added, could restore confidence in Arkansas' money and remove the "strong prejudice" that existed against it. Yell concluded by asserting briefly that the financial morass in which Arkansas found itself reflected the inadequacies of its citizenry. The people's "cupidity and stupidity," he explained, led them to overextend their credit facilities. Such an experience, he added, "should teach us that 'credit' is not wealth."\(^{51}\)

\(^{50}\)Gazette, February 12, 1840. In the issue of February 19, 1840, the Gazette boasted that Arkansas' paper in New Orleans was quoted at a 28 to 38 percent discount—a testimony to the "soundly conservative" nature of the state's banking structure.

\(^{51}\)House Journal, 1840, 272.
Arkansas' Whigs doubted that a lack of restraint had served as the fulcrum for the Panic of 1837, or that the acquisition of discipline could restore a stable financial order. Rather, they believed that the resolution of the banking problem required the reconstitution of the United States Bank whose charter expired in 1836, following President Jackson's veto of the rechartering bill. Jackson's action in removing federal funds from the U. S. Bank following his veto had, Whigs declared, precipitated the Panic of 1837 and the subsequent depression. They also insisted that Jackson's action in transferring funds from the United States Bank to the state "pet" banks encouraged the growth of an easy credit mentality among state banks; this mentality resulted from the belief of the state banks that the government would continue to support with public funds any lending policies they adopted. Thus when Jackson issued his Specie Circular requiring the buyer of public land to purchase it with specie, a run upon the state banks ensued which led to the suspension of specie payments. 52

Although the state banking issue assumed a more important role in the campaign of 1840 than did the question of reestablishing a national bank, the national bank issue elicited comment. In general, the West opposed a national bank, partially because it felt the bank would unduly restrict the influx of venture capital into the region. Then, too, there was an irrational aspect to this opposition. In this connection, Bray Hammond compared the West's distaste for a national bank, with its source of authority located in the East, to "the nationalistic resentment in a twentieth century under-developed economy which wants and needs

52News, January 10, 1839.
imported capital but growls at the 'imperialism' of the country that is expected to provide it."\textsuperscript{53} By 1840, however, the growl of some Arkansans had been reduced by several decibels. The state's experiences the previous year convinced at least one Democrat of the necessity of a national banking system. Democrat Richard C. Byrd implied his willingness to accept a national bank in an Independence Day toast: "The Currency. Let Democrats, Whigs, and Conservatives unite as one family and establish a currency that will answer to pay our expenses, and from Maine to Arkansas without subjecting to a shave, by a broker at every point."\textsuperscript{54} In reporting this toast, the Batesville News retorted that the establishment of a national bank represented the sole avenue for attaining this laudable objective. Byrd, however, was something of a maverick who later defied the party's leadership in 1844 by offering himself as an Independent Democrat for governor.\textsuperscript{55}

Most Democrats in 1840 chose to avoid a serious discussion concerning the creation of a national bank and the benefits which Whigs contended that it would bring. Instead, Democrats preferred to attribute the nation's financial woes after 1837, not to the absence of a national bank, but rather to the overextension of credit. In November 1839, as Arkansas' banks prepared to suspend specie payments, the Gazette contended that overextension had resulted in part from east coast merchants paying high interest charges to their British creditors. American consumers subsequently proved unable or unwilling to purchase articles


\textsuperscript{54}"A Reasonable Toast," News, July 18, 1839.

carrying such heavy interest charges. Essentially, however, the

**Gazette** declared that the depression resulted from unhealthy speculation
couraged by the use of paper money.\(^{56}\) As for the Whig's contention
that a national bank alone could provide a stable currency, the **Gazette**
asserted that a national bank would serve only to destroy Arkansas' state banks by forcing them to ship their specie to out-of-state banks when the non-Arkansan institutions experienced financial difficulties.\(^{57}\)

In late June 1840, the hard money, anti-bank position of many Democrats secured Congressional approval with passage of the Independent Treasury Bill which had been first introduced into Congress in 1837. This bill provided that after January 1841 the government would receive in taxes and disburse in payment for its debts only specie or United States government notes authorized by Congress. The bill would, Democrats argued, exert a healthy influence on the economy by discouraging speculative excesses.\(^{58}\) Amidst debate on the bill in the spring of 1840, Gubernatorial Candidate Archibald Yell indirectly endorsed it. A limited national bank, Yell asserted, would benefit the nation so long as it did not mingle its funds with the funds of the state banks. Such a bank would encourage sound state banking practices by discouraging the speculative excesses which had caused the recent depression. (Presumably Yell tacitly accepted the thesis that Jackson's actions in 1836, in placing funds in pet banks, promoted a speculative mania.) In conclusion, Yell denied that his advocacy of a "sound constitutional

\(^{56}\) **Gazette**, October 30, 1839; November 6, 1839; April 29, 1840.

\(^{57}\) *Ibid.*, November 13, 1839.

currency" placed him in the ranks of "agrarian levellers, enemies to wealth, and [those] hostile to the mercantilist interest."

At Helena, Whig editor Quincy K. Underwood provided a detailed analysis of the provisions of the Independent Treasury Bill. Congress ought to act, Underwood declared, to replace the depreciated bills and shin-plasters issued by the numerous banks authorized by irresponsible state legislatures. The paper of such banks, he wrote, could never "be at par 500 miles from home for any considerable length of time and can never regulate exchange." But in Underwood's opinion, the Independent Treasury Bill failed to provide for an adequate banking system. It would—and here Underwood echoed the charge made by Bank advocates throughout the nation—serve only to pay office-holders in specie while those not employed by the government received only depreciated state bank paper.

But as both Whigs and Democrats realized, parties win elections not only by advancing sound fiscal views, but also through emotional appeals. Such appeals include attempts to create a bandwagon psychology designed to demonstrate the invincibility of the party's candidates. Thus in early May, Little Rock Democrats convened in a "well attended" meeting at the City Hall to approve the selection of three electors previously selected by a committee. In reporting this meeting, the Gazette declared that nationally the Whigs began their campaign too early, that consequently their strength had peaked, and that a recent Democratic victory in New York City represented a preview of things to come.

59 Gazette, April 29, 1840.

60 Southern Shield, July 31, 1840; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era 1828-1848, p. 127.
Stressing the imposing numbers willing to attend one's own functions and the inevitability of victory constitutes, however, only one side of the coin. There also exists the need to demonstrate public disinterest in the opposition's program.

The Democratic correspondent "Phocion" attempted to demonstrate this by asserting that even Whigs lacked interest in their party's affairs. "Phocion" denied that the officially reported nine counties had sent delegations to the Whig convention held at Little Rock on March 16. Representatives from only eight of Arkansas' forty counties assembled there according to "Phocion"; furthermore, "Phocion" claimed that many of the individuals listed as delegates to the convention remained at home hundreds of miles from Little Rock during the proceedings. And Democratic debunkers dwelled in areas other than Little Rock. A correspondent from Phillips County in the delta reported in early June a Whig meeting which, while allegedly attended by some ninety to one hundred persons, actually included only six individuals who termed themselves Whigs. Several of these six misguided men reputedly left the Phillips County meeting early after learning that Whiggery encompassed within its ranks only "contemporary Federalists."\(^6\)

In Little Rock, too, the Whigs allegedly experienced difficulties in securing a hearing. Only some thirty or forty Whigs purportedly attended a mid-May meeting despite the pagentry involved in raising a hickory pole and erecting a log cabin—symbols of Harrison's campaign motif. The Gazette asserted that the Whig claim that from three to four

\(^6\) *Gazette*, May 6, 1840.

\(^6\) *Ibid.*, June 17, 1840.
hundred persons attended the meeting constituted an example of "Whig arithmetic" which multiplied any pro-Harrison crowd by ten.63

In mid-July, what the early Arkansas historian William F. Pope described as a "monster" Whig gathering assembled in Little Rock. According to Pope, Whigs from every "nook and corner" of Arkansas gathered in the state's capital. Between four and five thousand strong, they assembled a huge canoe brought by wagons in sections from Batesville; they then proceeded to parade with this symbol of Harrison's victory at Tippecanoe and with a log cabin in front of which sat a raccoon.64 Edward Cole of the Gazette suggested that the Whigs exaggerated the number of Whigs who attended the assemblage, although he conceded that Whigs did gather from a number of points in Arkansas. Since for several weeks the Whigs boasted that 3,000 would attend the festivities, Cole declared that he counted those who paraded past the Gazette office. The editor maintained that he counted only 423 marchers. True, some of them may have dropped out of the procession before the parade passed his office, but Cole wrote that at no time could more than 500 people have participated in the procession.65

In both the Little Rock and Phillips County meetings, only such arithmetical errors had occurred, but in Clarksville a correspondent

63 Gazette, May 20, 1840.

64 William F. Pope, Early Days in Arkansas (Little Rock: Frederick W. Allsopp Publisher, 1895), p. 243; quoted in Dallas T. Herndon, Centennial History of Arkansas (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), pp. 244-45. Pope did not footnote his narrative and the only contemporary account of this parade is found in the Gazette. The News of Batesville, with a few scattered issues extant in 1840, is the sole Whig paper available for the 1840 campaign. The News issues available do not comment on this parade.

asserted that poor taste prevailed among Whigs assembled in his locality. Some twenty Whigs, he wrote, committed a gaffe by marching down the main street of Clarksville at noon with two Negro musicians leading the procession. As the group planted a Harrison standard in front of a store owned by a Whig, several Democratic ladies and gentlemen confronted the Whigs with a Democratic standard fashioned from a red petticoat. In the event that his readers failed to note the purported connection between Whiggery and a pro-black outlook, the correspondent termed Harrison an abolitionist.\footnote{Gazette, July 29, 1840. The correspondent also described Harrison as anti-Masonic.}

In the midst of such campaign high jinks and of the more serious debates, one Democrat proved unable to resist the temptation to employ parody. Utilizing the style of the author of the Book of Revelation, this Independence County Democrat lampooned Whiggery by declaring that the party constituted a tool of the banking interests and an offspring of British toryism, and that it lacked significant popular support, and featured leaders inspired, not by principle, but merely by the desire for personal advancement:

And they had hair, as it were, the hair of dandies, and their teeth were as the teeth of loafers. . . .

And they had hunting shirts, as it were, hunting shirts of savages, and under their hunting shirts were Bowie knives and pistols, and their power was to scare men if they could.

And they had a king over them . . . and his name in the English tongue is BANKER but the Latin tongue has his name Vicus Imperator.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the British Whigs; and he cried with a loud voice to the four rulers to whom it was given to pester Little Rock and Batesville.
Saying, but hurt not Little Rock, neither Batesville, nor the country, till we have sealed the servants of our clan with our seals in the forehead.

... of the tribe of Independence there was sealed fifty and four; of the tribe of Izard there was sealed one; of the tribe of Lawrence there was sealed one.

And I heard a voice in the midst of them say, a measure of pamphlets for a penny, and three measures of newspapers for a penny and see them spare not the hard cider and the wine. 67

For most Democrats, the times called for a more serious approach. Thus Gazette editor Edward Cole took issue in late August with the Whig contention that Harrison supported pre-emption rights for settlers on the public lands. In reality, Cole declared, Harrison's land position mirrored that of Henry Clay who termed squatters "pirates and land-robbers." According to the editor, both Jackson and Van Buren, however, supported the right of squatters to purchase their homesteads at a lower price than that offered to the general public. They supported such a policy, Cole wrote, because settlers improved their lands by clearing timber and building cattle pens, thus justifying a reduction in the price of their land. 68 To the Whig contention that Harrison also supported the principle of pre-emption, Robert Marshall of Washington County, Arkansas responded with an emphatic denial. Marshall declared that when he resided in the Indiana Territory in 1805-1806, Governor Harrison collected $1.50 from each settler living on the public land. Furthermore, Marshall declared, Harrison required each settler to sign a statement agreeing to leave when ordered to do so by territorial authorities; the statement also pledged the squatter to refrain from

67 "The Scriptures are Fulfilling," Gazette, July 22, 1840.
68 Ibid., August 26, 1840.
unnecessarily cutting timber. Marshall estimated that Harrison personally pocketed between six and seven thousand dollars at a time when only silver circulated and people found it difficult to purchase bread.69

As Arkansas' August Congressional election approached, both state parties professed optimism. Democrats rated their chances excellent, not only because of the party's past performances, but also because recent immigrants were declared to possess Democratic allegiances. Mindful of the party's previous disappointing performances in the Little Rock—Pulaski County Congressional contests in 1836 and 1838, the Gazette prophesied in April that even in these Whig strongholds, a Democratic triumph appeared certain in 1840. Editor Cole wrote that within the past six months 300 new voters entered Little Rock—three-fourths of them Democrats. In the county, too, Cole reported the same percentage of immigrants as holding Democratic loyalties.70 He added that Democratic laborers and farmers moving into Little Rock and Pulaski County since the 1838 election migrated primarily from the states of Tennessee and Alabama—both of which, he implied, constituted strongholds of the Democracy.71 From the delta's Phillips County, a correspondent also claimed that recent immigrants supported the Democracy in overwhelming numbers. The correspondent asserted that in the 1838 Cross—Cummins

69 Gazette, August 26, 1840.
70 Ibid., April 15, 1840.
71 Actually Whig presidential nominees won Tennessee in both 1836 (White) and 1840. Van Buren, however, won Alabama in both elections. See Arthur Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1962), pp. 44, 62; W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 1836—1892 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 887. The total vote in the 1838 Pulaski County Congressional race was 1,533—in 1840 it was 1,954. In 1838 Cummins beat Cross in the county winning 63.2% of the vote; in 1840 Fowler beat Cross in the county with 56.4% of the vote.
contest in Richland township, Cross garnered approximately sixty-five percent of the vote; in 1840, he predicted, Cross's percentage would equal eighty percent of the ballots cast in Richland township as a result of the recent influx of Democratic voters and the enhanced popularity of the Democratic party.\footnote{Cross won 59.1\% of the Phillips County vote in 1838. In 1840 with 137 more votes cast, Cross won the county from Fowler, securing 52.1\% of the vote. In the state as a whole substantial immigration had occurred. The 1838 census (\textit{House Journal}, 1838, Appendix C) indicated that 11,567 white males over the age of 21 resided in the state. In 1840, however, over 13,600 votes were cast in the Congressional race.}

In discussing the political allegiance of immigrants, Democrats in 1840 and throughout the decade presented themselves as the defenders of the foreign-born. This approach reflected the Democratic charge that Whigs—because of their alleged tory outlook—disliked foreigners in general, and the Irish in particular. In April, "An Individual" wrote that the Whigs' \textit{Star} slurred the Irish by satirizing the brogue of an Irishman who addressed a recent Little Rock gathering. "An Individual" identified himself as the Irish speaker. It was true, he wrote, that Irish Americans supported the Democracy in overwhelming numbers; they did so, he contended, because the Democrats, unlike the Whigs, supported equal political rights for all and opposed a national bank structure similar to that under which Irishmen suffered in Ireland.\footnote{\textit{Gazette}, April 22, 1840.} In the course of the 1840's, equating Whiggery with nativism provided national Democrats with a serviceable issue, but in Arkansas it proved of limited value since the state's electorate was overwhelmingly native born.\footnote{In 1850 the state contained 8,026 white families. The sources of migration were as follows: Tennessee 35.7\%; Alabama 14.0\%; Missouri 12.2\%; Illinois 5.2\%; Kentucky 4.9\%; Georgia 3.9\%; Louisiana 2.5\%; North}
Yet Arkansas' Democrats accused Whigs of possessing nativist sentiments on occasion to reinforce their charge that Whig "aristocrats" secretly wished to disenfranchise all commoners—natives as well as the foreign-born.

If Arkansas' Whigs fretted at the possible political effects of recent immigration on the 1840 election, their correspondence fails to reveal it. To the contrary, they viewed optimistically their prospects in both the Congressional and the presidential races. James Fenton Mercer Noland at Batesville informed Jesse Turner of Van Buren in mid-June that Harrison's election was "beyond the possibility of a doubt," and he further advised Turner that the presidential contest represented an excellent opportunity to "skin all Democrats that will bet." 75 A number of Noland's Whig acquaintances agreed that the wagering on a Harrison victory represented an astute use of one's capital. William Cummins and Frederick Notrebe, law partners at Little Rock (and related by marriage as well since Cummins was Notrebe's son-in-law), bet Democrat Chester Ashley $10,000 on the presidential contest. Ashley also bet John H. Cocke $500.00 on the presidential race, while several other Democrats banded together to wager $3,000 with Notrebe on the contest. 76 According to his son, Notrebe, "hot on the presidential election," wished to bet more, but the elder Notrebe "had been unable to find

 Carolina 2.0%; Texas 1.9%; Indiana 1.5%; South Carolina 0.8%; Scattered 3.1%. See Robert Bradshaw Walz, "Migration into Arkansas, 1834-1880," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1958), 57.

 75 Charles Noland to Jesse Turner, June 11, 1840, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

 76 (Cornelius) Stone and (Samuel) McCurdy to Jesse Turner, September 10, 1840, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
others to wager with him."  

In addition to the actual betters, other Whigs expressed a willingness to support their convictions with cash. William Byers, editor of *The Batesville News*, announced his willingness to wager on the outcome of the presidential contest with the *Gazette*'s Edward Cole. Previously, Cole predicted a Van Buren victory by a margin of 183 to 121 in the Electoral College. Byers declared that this prediction constituted an attempt to stampede fence sitters into supporting Van Buren; the *News*'s editor invited his Little Rock counterpart to support his convictions with cash, but Cole ignored Byer's challenge.

Whig optimism, however, encompassed more than that segment of the party membership with a predilection for betting. Prominent Fayetteville attorney David Walker, although apparently not wagering on the contest, wrote Jesse Turner in mid-June that the Whigs had gained ground rapidly in northwest Arkansas. A small township in Washington County which gave only two votes to the Whigs in 1838 would, Walker predicted, provide thirty-five in the fall. He further prophesied that Fayetteville would contribute two hundred votes to the Whigs. In Turner's home town of Van Buren, Democratic attorney George G. Paschal tended to concur with the Whig assessment. Paschal, however, feared for the nation's welfare if Harrison won, although he gloomily noted Harrison's popularity even in staunchly Democratic Arkansas. "Even in this state,"

77 Charles F. Notrebe to James H. Lucas, September 8, 1840, Fulton-Wright Papers, Arkansas History Commission.

78 *News*, October 1, 1840

79 D. Walker to Jesse Turner, June 16, 1840, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
Paschal wrote, "they flock around him as though he had been [sic] some distinguished foreigner. I must confess my patience is well nigh exhausted with a party who [sic] seems to know no moral rule in their [sic] contest." Undoubtedly, Paschal's petulant sortie directed against alleged Whig moral inadequacy reflected the irritation the Democracy felt at Whig success in waging a campaign based largely on fabricating emotional symbols rather than on meeting issues squarely. In effect, Paschal's vexation resulted from Whiggery's success in learning all too well the value of attractively packaging a candidate.

Paschal's concern proved unnecessary. The final returns indicated that Cross defeated Fowler by some 2,300 votes out of the approximately 13,600 ballots cast—a margin of 58.5% for Cross. The trend toward sectional voting which manifested itself in the 1836 contests that was reinforced in 1838 emerged again in the 1840 balloting. Fowler's 5,668 votes enabled him to carry nine counties; Cross's 7,977 votes secured victory for him in the remaining twenty-five counties. In the northwestern quadrant—an upland area composed largely of small farms and with but few slaves—Fowler failed to win any of the thirteen counties. Events proved young Charles T. Notrebe correct in declaring to James Lucas of St. Louis that while "some" Arkansas Whigs, enthusiastic at Harrison's prospects nationally, "seem to believe that Fowler will be elected—it is a thing that can hardly be expected by Whigs."
It was some time, however, before Cross realized that he had won the election. From Hempstead County in the southwestern part of the state, Cross wrote three days following the election to Senator William Savin Fulton in Little Rock. Cross poured out his anger and anxiety in this letter. His anger resulted from what he considered a low electioneering trick undertaken by Hempstead County Whigs, while his anxiety reflected uncertainty as to his reelection. Shortly before the election, Cross reported, Whigs distributed three to four hundred circulars in the county which misrepresented his position on several issues. Although ill, Cross wrote, he rode through a portion of the county to refute the charges but proved unable to reach the more remote areas before election day. Cross predicted for himself a victory margin in Hempstead County of between ninety and ninety-five votes (he won by seventy-three), and he added that the "republican ticket" had carried the entire county. Cross found particularly pleasing the election of a Democratic constable in the township which included the hamlet of Washington, Cross's home town. The Congressman described the newly elected constable as "a very worthy young man who is thoroughly democratic in his principles." Cross added that in the Hempstead County sheriff's race both "republican" candidates were besting their "federal" opponents. As for the state as a whole, Cross conceded that he possessed no trustworthy news of the Congressional election. If he secured reelection, Cross admitted that he would do so by a "greatly diminished majority" compared with his 1838 victory.\(^{83}\) If he won, he concluded, he planned to join Senator Fulton in January on his journey back to

\(^{83}\)Cross beat Cummins in 1838, winning 62% of the vote, only four percent more than his 1840 margin over Fowler.
Washington, D.C. 84

The results of the Congressional race demonstrated, of course, Cross's undue apprehension—an uneasiness not shared after election day by George P. Paschal. On the same day Cross wrote Fulton, Paschal informed the Senator that the "Whigs gave us a much harder run than we had anticipated." Yet Paschal added that his confidence in the strength of the Crawford County Democracy remained so pronounced "that for several weeks before the Election I left the matter entirely in the hands of the candidates." Paschal, however, erred in informing Fulton that Crawford County would send a "thoroughly democratic delegation" to the Arkansas legislature. 85 Although a Democrat won the senate seat of the Crawford–Scott Counties senatorial district, a Whig won one of the two Crawford County house seats. 86 Senator Fulton expressed keen interest in the state legislative races, since his term expired on March 3, 1841, and if the legislature should have a Whig majority, his reelection hopes would be dashed. The election results proved Fulton's concern to be unwarranted; in both the House and the Senate the Democracy's candidates returned to the legislature in impressive numbers.

In his analysis of party affiliations of the legislators elected in 1840, the Gazette's new editor, George H. Burnett, identified twelve of the sixteen senators as Democrats while designating twenty-two of

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84 Judge E. Cross to W. S. Fulton, October 8, 1840, Fulton–Wright Papers, Arkansas History Commission.


86 "Arkansas is Right Side Up," Gazette, November 4, 1840.
the sixty-one members of the new House as Whigs. These totals represent a decline of the percentage of Whigs represented in the 1840 House compared with the 1838 legislature, although Whig representation in the Senate increased from four members to five. In the House, however, while twenty-two Whig members sat in that body in 1840 as compared with only nineteen in 1838, the increase in the number of Whigs sitting in the House actually represented a decline in the percentage of Whigs sitting in that body. While the nineteen Whig members in 1838 constituted 40.4 percent of that forty-seven member body, the twenty-two Whigs in the 1840 House represented only 36.1 percent of the membership. In 1840, the House contained sixty-one members, since Arkansas, in 1840, consisted of thirty-five rather than the twenty-eight counties which had existed two years earlier.

The extent of Cross's victory clearly forecast a Van Buren victory in Arkansas on November 2. Consequently, the month that elapsed between the Congressional and presidential elections featured but little political activity. Burnett noted this relative inactivity in writing on November 4 that "little exertion was made by either party in the election, here, the Democrats being certain of a large majority in the state, and the opposition not caring to work hard without the prospect of success."

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87 Gazette, November 4, 1840

88 C. Armitage Harper, ed., Historical Report of the Secretary of State (Little Rock: Pioneer, 1968), pp. 305–07; for party designations in the 1838 and 1840 legislatures, see the votes recorded for executive offices of the houses in the Gazette, November 5, 1838, and November 7, 1840. Whig membership is clearly differentiated in 1836 (see "Election," Gazette, August 16, 1836), and after 1840, but for 1838 and 1840, one must rely on the elections for offices and subsequent identification of party affiliation.

89 Ibid.
Perhaps this anti-climactic denouement to a previously exciting campaign accounts for the confusing presidential returns presented in editions of the Gazette in late November and early December. In late November, an incomplete tabulation showed Van Buren's electors winning 6,049 votes while Harrison's electors won 4,362—a 1,687 margin.\(^90\)

Actually the figures presented in the Gazette indicated that Van Buren received 6,636 votes to 5,239 for Harrison—a Van Buren victory margin of 1,397. In "correcting" the error on December 9, the Gazette noted that the figure of November 21, derived from Governor Yell's election proclamation, should have read 1,386. With the addition of several previously unreported counties, Burnett stated on December 9 that Van Buren's victory margin in Arkansas totaled 2,007 votes. In reality, Van Buren officially won thirteen of the thirty-seven counties by securing 6,656 votes to Harrison's 5,160—a winning margin of 1,496, or 56 percent.\(^91\)

And as the Gazette's Burnett noted, Cross's victory did indeed reduce interest in the presidential contest. Some 1,729 (12.8 percent) fewer Arkansans bothered to cast votes in November than in October.

But while the Democracy once again swept Arkansas, Harrison achieved the presidency by attaining a large majority in the Electoral College (234 to 60) despite the thin popular vote plurality he gained over Van Buren. In assessing the reasons for Van Buren's defeat nationally, Democrats ascribed it to several causes. The reasons advanced included the "disruption of the money market," Whig charges that the

\(^90\)"A Proclamation by the Governor of the State of Arkansas," Gazette, November 25, 1840.

\(^91\)Burnham, Presidential Ballots 1836-1892, pp. 274-92.
Democrats desired to reduce the standard of living of the American worker to the level of his European counterpart, and Van Buren's willingness to approve the court-martial of a naval officer in which a Negro served as a prosecution witness. Democrats, however, failed to dwell upon the setback in subsequent editions, for they, like other Americans, turned to see what Harrison and Whiggery might offer the nation over the next four years.

92 Gazette, December 2, 1840.
Harrison occupied the presidential office for only one month. Notice of his death appeared in the Gazette on April 21 and in the Fayetteville Witness three days later. Both Democratic papers in announcing the death speculated that Harrison's successor, John Tyler, might support policies other than those favored by Harrison. The Witness copied a story from a Louisville, Kentucky paper which suggested this possibility, while the Gazette editor himself asserted it.\(^1\) Burnett declared that Tyler of Virginia secured the Whig vice-presidential nomination at Harrisburg only because the party's leaders sought to gain the support of Southerners in sympathy with Tyler's states' rights outlook. A review of Tyler's Senate speeches and votes indicated, the editor declared, that the Virginian held strict constructionist views and opposed federally financed internal improvements, a protective tariff and a national bank.

Following Tyler's inauguration, both Arkansas parties eagerly awaited clues signaling his intentions; initially, the state's Democrats expressed disappointment, while the Whigs manifested jubilation at the results of this search. The Democratic Witness, dejectedly noting Tyler's announcement that he intended to retain Harrison's cabinet, commented

\(^1\)Gazette, April 21, 1841; The Witness (Fayetteville), April 24, 1841. There are no extant issues of The Batesville News for this event.
that there existed but little chance of a change in Harrison's policy.\(^2\)

The Whig *News* of Batesville, however, commented exultantly in reviewing a statement of principles issued by President Tyler on April 19. The *News* described Tyler's statement as "Whig to the core," since it proved Tyler a "true democrat of the Jeffersonian school." In particular the editors rejoiced at what they described as Tyler's rejection of the thesis that presidential powers encompassed the area of law making, a charge critics hurled at the forceful manner in which Jackson interpreted presidential power vis-à-vis Congressional authority.\(^3\) Events quickly proved, however, that the issue involved more than political philosophy. According to the *News*, Tyler asserted that Congress ought to pass laws and the president administer them—a view that appealed to pro-Clay Whigs favoring a national bank and internal improvements financed by both public lands sold at high prices and by a high tariff. With Whig majorities secured in both the Senate and the House in the election of 1840 and with an acquiescent president in the White House, passage of such a nationalist program appeared possible. The *News* found additional comfort from Tyler's message in his assertion that he intended to replace a number of federal office holders in order to increase governmental efficiency and to punish those "who used their position in the last election to promote a political candidate."\(^4\) The adoption of such a policy would, of course, provide positions in the federal bureaucracy for office-starved Whigs.

\(^2\) *Witness*, May 1, 1841.

\(^3\) *News*, May 4, 1841.

If one examines Tyler's statement devoid of the will to believe which governed the News's analysis, he will note that, from a nationalist viewpoint, it contained ominous undertones. One would expect to find the states' rights ideology expressed in it if only for cosmetic purposes, but Tyler so emphasized this outlook as to lead the disinterested reader to conclude that it constituted the new president's guiding philosophy. Even a brief reference made to the nation's banking needs reflected Tyler's states' rights commitment. This reference followed the president's condemnation of the Independent Treasury arrangement—a system which he labeled inept and oppressive, although he pledged to enforce the provisions of the Independent Treasury Act. As for the future, Tyler promised to support any constitutional measure that might restore public confidence in "a sound circulating medium." But what constituted the test of a constitutionally sound banking system? On this critical question, Tyler declared himself ready to "resort to the Fathers of the great Republican school, for advice and instruction, to be drawn from their sage views of our system of Government and the light of their ever glorious example." Of course, with the "Fathers" having held views as diverse as Jefferson and Hamilton, one could interpret this statement as he wished, but events quickly proved—if his record had not—Tyler's firm opposition to a national bank.

That soon became clear in the course of the special session of Congress called by Harrison which convened May 31. In an attempt to dominate national affairs, Henry Clay pushed through Congress in the summer a bank bill establishing the parent bank in Washington, D.C.,

and requiring the location of a branch bank in each of the states. As a states' righter, Tyler objected to the mandatory establishment of the branches in the states, urging instead that each state decide if it wished a branch within its borders. Following passage of the measure on August 6, the country eagerly awaited Tyler's approval or veto.

Arkansas received news of Tyler's veto in early September. Burnett gleefully informed Little Rock that Tyler "laid the monster low," thereby defending the Constitution from its enemies. In Batesville, A. R. Porter, the stunned editor of the News, reprinted from the Nashville Whig a lengthy condemnation of the presidential action which concluded with the Tennessee editor's rhetorically asking if Tyler could have obtained 5,000 Whig votes had party members known that he would veto a bank bill. In his own comment, Porter added that, henceforth, Whigs must look to Henry Clay for leadership, for the Kentuckian represented the "last hope of a betrayed party."

In Congress, pro-bank Whigs expressed keen disappointment at the veto, but immediately they proceeded to draft a new fiscal measure which Tyler might approve. The new bill, sent to Tyler on September 3, was

7 Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler Champion of the Old South (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), pp. 219-25. Chitwood quotes the New York Herald of August 11, 1841, concerning the suspense following passage of the measure on August 6 and Congress' receipt of the veto message on August 16: "An enthusiastic bank man from Arkansas, a gallant, generous planter, who thinks with perfect independence and acts accordingly, stands ready every day to bet any sum from one hundred to a thousand dollars, either that there will, or will not be a veto, and he has no choice in the side."

ostensibly designed to overcome Tyler's objections to the previous requirement that the states accept branch banks within their borders; actually, however, the second bill provided—albeit indirectly—for precisely this type of federal control. Thus Tyler vetoed the second bill. Following this action, every member of Tyler's cabinet except Daniel Webster resigned, and on September 13, the day the special session ended, over fifty Whigs met to approve a resolution reading Tyler out of the party.

In Batesville, Whig Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, successfully reelected to the Arkansas legislature the previous fall, matched the Whig Congressmen's expression of ire. Noland (born in Loudoun County, Virginia in 1810) attended West Point between the ages of 13 and 15, but it appears that he failed to apply himself, for the academy dismissed him for flunking mathematics and drawing. In 1831, Noland killed William Fountaine Pope, nephew of the territorial governor John Pope, in a duel. For fifteen years before his death in 1858, Noland suffered from tuberculosis, a debility which provided him with a "prize cough" which Noland, an inveterate sportsman, humorously declared made

10 Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler, p. 245. Chitwood suggests that pro-Clay Whigs, eager to deny Tyler the party's presidential nomination in 1844, sought to discredit him by offering another bank bill he could not sign (p. 240).

11 Ibid., pp. 249-50; "Second Veto and Cabinet Expulsion," Gazette, October 6, 1841.

12 Records at West Point indicate that Noland was 15 when he entered the academy, but the 1850 census listed him as 40 which, if correct, made him 13 upon entry to West Point. See Ted R. Worley, "An Early Arkansas Sportsman: C. F. M. Noland," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XI (January, 1952), 26; John Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1887), pp. 265-66.
it difficult for him to stalk game: "He believed to be sad was sinful. His spartan courage, his sense of humor and his religion dealt alike with political defeat, hard times, storms, floods, drought and disease."\(^{13}\)

Noland earned a considerable reputation over the years with his humorous western sketches published under the nom de plume "Pete Whetstone" in the New York sporting magazine, *The Spirit of the Times*. Following Tyler's vetoes, Noland needed all of his courage and humor. Noland's literary creation "Pete Whetstone" displayed these qualities when he declared that, prior to Tyler's first veto, the Whigs of Arkansas' mythical "Devil Fork" believed the creation of a national bank would assure prosperity, but the veto dashed these hopes. "The Democrats shouted for Tyler and Whigs were wrathy. Lome Jones said he ought to have the witch weed used on him. Squire Long said he went to blame because his conscience would not let him sign; but Mr. Thompson, the school master said, d__n his conscience for he heard of one . . . who had been in Parleyment nigh on thirty years, and never heard of such a word."\(^{14}\)

Following the second veto in September, "Pete Whetstone" reported that the Whigs of "Devil Fork" burned an effigy of Tyler.\(^{15}\)

In October, the Gazette's Burnett matched Noland's snicker directed at Tyler's acute states' rights conscience when news simultaneously reached Little Rock of the second veto and of Tyler's approval of a bill distributing to the states revenue secured from the sale of public lands. Democrat Burnett, of course, approved the veto. In his


signing the distribution act, however, Burnett declared, Tyler performed an unconstitutional act. Furthermore, Burnett added, by approving the distribution measure—after vetoing the Bank measure—Tyler demonstrated that he "is neither of one party or the other." Although Tyler promised to support a constitutional bank measure in the regular session of Congress, Burnett declared such a course impossible for the president to pursue, since an "overactive conscience" required all measures to filter through his radical states' rights "Virginia abstractions." 16

A sense of urgency attached itself to the Bank question since, for the past four years, neither the nation's nor Arkansas' financial system performed adequately. When the United States Bank, incorporated under the laws of Pennsylvania and entirely privately owned, suspended specie payments in February of 1841 (only three weeks after resumption), editor James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald commented that nothing in life was certain except death and bank suspensions. 17 In Fayetteville, however, C. F. Town, editor of the Democratic paper The Witness, found it impossible to discover humor in the situation. Town contended that the U. S. Bank had dispatched its agents throughout the country seeking to exchange the bank's "trash for good money." According to Town, gullible merchants, "infatuated" with the Bank and eager to secure eastern bills, not only purchased its notes but paid a premium for them.

16 "Second Veto and Cabinet Expulsion," Gazette, October 6, 1841.

17 Ibid., February 17, 1841; New York Herald (n.d.). In Little Rock, Archibald Yell informed Governor James K. Polk of Tennessee that he feared that large state debts would lead to federal assumption of state debts and then the creation of a national bank. To avoid this, Yell declared that his "only hope now is that we shall have a war and that speedily." See Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, March 28, 1841, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
In Town's opinion, merchants were children of mammon anyway, but the Bank committed a far more grievous sin by selling its notes to farmers and drovers. Despite claims to the contrary, Town predicted that the U. S. Bank would never reopen its doors; in his opinion, it should not reopen them, for this "mammoth Whig shaving shop" served only as an "electioneering lever in the hands of the aristocrats."[18]

Had Arkansas' state banks functioned in a reasonably adequate fashion, the state's citizens' concern for such distant troubles would have been slight. But the state banks failed to revive following specie suspension in 1839, and, in Governor Yell, the banks in 1841 faced a firm hard money foe. "Pete Whetstone" summed up the dilemma well when he declared that Yell "was death again the Bank, and the Banks say they darsent lend more; so twixt them and the Governor, it is hard times."[19] Yell's anti-bank stance reflected, of course, the views of the state's electorate. The inability of state banks to resume specie payments, however, revealed the seriousness of the financial crisis which gripped the state.

The position of both the State and the Real Estate Bank—precarious to 1841—steadily deteriorated in the course of the year. State Bank note discounts ranged between twenty and thirty percent in the spring of the year; the discount rate for both banks rose to forty-five percent by the end of 1841 and attained the lamentable figure of eighty

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[18] The Witness, March 6, 1841. Town wrote of losses incurred by "numbers of our citizens" but did not indicate if Arkansans were among those purchasing the Bank's scrip.

percent in the spring of 1842. By the fall of 1841 directors of the Real Estate Bank realized the need to borrow funds in order to pay the interest on the bonds falling due in January 1842. To complicate matters still more, the North American Trust and Banking Company, suffering from the February 1841 suspension of specie payments of the United States Bank of Pennsylvania, proved unable to redeem 250 Real Estate bonds. Earlier, North American Trust hypothesized these bonds to J. Holford & Co. of London which now demanded that the state honor its pledge on the securities. Governor Yell, however, declared that the state failed to receive any money from the sale, that North American Trust erred in sending the bonds overseas, and that he opposed "an unholy attempt to plunder the people of the state." Potentially, Arkansas' financial difficulties offered political advantage to Whiggery since Whigs might contend—and subsequently did contend—that, as the majority party, the Democracy possessed sole responsibility for adequately supervising state finances.

Democrats denied sole responsibility by pointing to the non-partisan legislative support which created the banks in 1836, but, as

20 Dewey Allen Stokes, "Public Affairs in Arkansas, 1836-1850," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1966), 205. The Gazette of January 12, 1842, declared that Arkansas' money in New Orleans was quoted at 40-45% discount and "but little demand for it at that low price."


22 Ibid.; House Journal, 1841-1842, Appendix C. 29-35, Appendix D, 27-30. In private correspondence of March 6, 1842, however, Governor Yell asserted that the Democracy gained an advantage from the failure of the Pennsylvania bank and other state banking institutions. Presumably, Yell believed the Arkansas electorate, at least, identified banking solely with Whiggery. See Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, March 6, 1842, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress.

Jacksonians, they opposed a national banking system by favoring state banking. Thus it was possible that the inadequacy of Arkansas' banking system might create resentment against the Democrats. Consequently, Democrats tended to discover causes for the state's banking difficulties in non-political areas. In May of 1842, for instance, an anonymous Gazette correspondent absolved Arkansas' political leadership of the responsibility for the state's banking problems; furthermore, the correspondent declared that Arkansas' situation would have been no worse if the legislature had never created the banks, thereby compelling Arkansas to utilize Louisiana and Mississippi paper. Louisiana notes, he observed, sold at the same discount as Arkansas' currency, and the Mississippi Bank had collapsed. Finally, the correspondent suggested that time and patience assured the eventual recovery of Arkansas' banking system.  

As late as October 1841, the Gazette's editorial policy indicated its support of the time and patience philosophy. Acting Editor Stephen Tucker denied a correspondent's allegation that the Gazette sought to curtail discussion of Arkansas' banking problems. Tucker contended, however, that continual discussion of the state's financial difficulties served only to reduce the value of Arkansas' money by some fifteen percent. Nevertheless, Tucker conceded, excessive discussion of the problem provided only a partial explanation for the heavy discount rate. Essentially, Arkansas' notes sold at a higher discount than those of neighboring states, he wrote, because Arkansas possessed a relatively low population, and, consequently, the state ran a trade deficit with neighboring states.  

24 Gazette, May 18, 1842.
25 Ibid., October 20, 1841.
 inadvertent admission that the state's money supply had been overinflated by the authorities. Tucker, however, declared that in time the situation would correct itself.

Many Arkansans failed to accept the premises of the time and patience school, since time had exhausted their patience. A Phillips County correspondent in June 1841 spoke for this segment of Arkansas' opinion in depicting the plight of creditors of the Bank of Helena whose property was threatened with seizure for non-payment of debts in the Circuit Court of Judge Isaac Baker. The correspondent alleged that property worth a half-million dollars offered as security on loans of fifty thousand dollars stood endangered despite the unsuccessful efforts of creditors to prevent the convening of Judge Baker's court. The Phillips County correspondent condemned the attempt of the Bank of Helena to foreclose the mortgages, since the bank allegedly failed to perform legitimate banking functions and sought only to promote the interest of speculators. 26

In The Batesville News, "Quere" amplified the charge that corruption explained much of Arkansas' banking difficulties. "Quere" accused a group, including prominent Real Estate Bank directors and Democrats Chester Ashley and William Woodruff, of utilizing bank funds for speculative purposes. According to "Quere," this group owed $200,000 to the Real Estate Bank. It was in this group's interest, "Quere" wrote, to repay the debt at depreciated rates. In order to repay at such rates, it behooved the cabal to drive Arkansas' notes as low as possible; the correspondent declared that, with this object

26 Gazette, June 16, 1841.
in mind, the speculators sent agents to New Orleans to offer Arkansas notes for sale. 27

The allegation of "Quere" with respect to Democrats Woodruff and Ashley received endorsement in an editorial which appeared in the News in March 1842. According to the News, Woodruff, Ashley and Governor Yell, as well, desiring to "knock Arkansas money a little lower down" in order to reap benefits as bank creditors, attacked the state banks. 28

D. F. Shall, nephew of Senator William Fulton, also testified in private correspondence to the efforts of a group to lower the price offered for Arkansas money. Although Shall neglected to note the names of the parties concerned, he did inform his uncle in early 1842 that "those who owe the bank are exulting. There is no doubt that every effort has been made to push Ark. money down and that by the citizens of the state." According to Shall, a group of Arkansas speculators journeyed to New Orleans with $5,000 in Arkansas money; on successive days, Shall wrote, different members of the group offered the state's currency to "every broker in the city." As a result, a reduction occurred in the price paid in New Orleans for Arkansas' notes. 29

27 "For the 'News,'" Gazette, August 26, 1841. Whig Albert Pike, however, believed that charters of the Banks insured that they would fail within two years of their incorporation since notes receivable were due from six months to twenty years while specie was payable on demand. See Sabinius (Albert Pike), The Evil and the Remedy (Little Rock: n.p., 1844), pp. 97, 101.


29 D. F. Shall to William Fulton, February 8, 1842, Fulton-Wright Papers, Arkansas History Commission.
Such a moral climate outraged many Arkansans. In his analysis of the failures of banks in Arkansas, "Cato" wrote that in part failure resulted from organizational weaknesses. "Cato" declared, however, that the fiscal fiasco in the state was due, in large measure, to a lack of moral honesty among the state's citizens. Men, otherwise quite honest in transactions with individuals, willingly disavowed their obligations to the banks, since "in these times of moral degeneracy, few men think under any obligation to pay a security debt." 30 Prominent Little Rock Whig Albert Pike also described as immoral the public's attitude toward the repudiation of bank debts. Pike wrote that, formerly, repudiation of a debt to such public institutions as Arkansas' banks marked one as a felon worthy only of the scorn of decent men. But "in these degenerate days," Pike declaimed, society leniently described such a person as a debtor or defaulter, and he "cocks his hat as proudly as his neighbor, and suffers little, if anything, in public estimation by his mis-fortune." 31 To those who counseled that the state itself repudiate its bonded indebtedness, Pike had only scorn. Such a course he termed dishonest and disgraceful; furthermore, Pike labeled as knavish the plea that the state's poverty dictated such an approach. Rather than to repudiate the state's debts, Pike urged his fellow Arkansans to pull themselves up by their moral-financial bootstraps, to accept the challenge by levying upon themselves a tax sufficient to meet bonded obligations rather than see the state "strained with so foul and ignominious


31 Sabinius (Albert Pike), The Evil and the Remedy, p. 67.
a blot "as repudiation. 2

Despite the difficulties presented by the state's financial
problems, these problems did not monopolize the interest of all Arkan-
sans. Whigs, for instance, eagerly sought the patronage rewards of
Harrison's victory. The state's Democrats, on the other hand, expressed
their indignation at signs of an approaching purge. An Arkansas Demo-
crat, writing from the nation's capital in March, described as maniacal
the horde of office seekers infesting Washington, D.C., on the eve of
Harrison's inauguration. The earliest arrivals, he bitterly noted,
claimed a kind of pre-emption right upon the offices, regarding each
newcomer as an interloper. Describing the claimants for public office
as "sycophantic wretches," the Democrat declared that Harrison ought to
employ some flunky to protect him from the crowd of fawners who surrounded
him. 33 Loss of patronage, however, represented not only a threat to the
individual but, as Fayetteville's Democratic editor C. F. Town hinted,
a challenge to the well-being of the Democratic party in Arkansas. The
threat resulted from the fact that patronage served a party as a cohe-
sive glue, and Town implied that in the absence of such a glue—with
Whigs replacing Democrats in Arkansas' federal bureaucracy as surveyors,
receivers of public monies, and registers—the possibility of Democratic
fragmentation existed. 34

32 The Evil and the Remedy, p. 182. The rate of taxation was one
eighth of one percent. The typical taxpayer would not have suffered from
doubling the tax rate, but those who owned a number of slaves found it
difficult during the depression years to pay the one eighth of one per-
cent assessment. See Ted R. Worley, "The Control of the Real Estate Bank
of the State of Arkansas," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVII
(December, 1950), 424-25.
33 The Witness, April 17, 1841.
34 Ibid.
For Whigs the only obstacle to a policy of replacement consisted of their past objections to the Jacksonian policy that the spoils belonged to the victor. The Whig editor of Helena's *Southern Shield* brushed aside this obstacle to replacement, however, by reprinting an editorial from the Whig organ, the Lexington *Intelligencer*, in which the editor confessed his former opposition to the Jacksonian principle. Jackson contended, the Kentucky editor observed, that the vigorous implementation of Democratic principles required a bureaucracy of men supporting such principles. Now that power belonged to the Whigs, the Kentuckian concluded, he saw the validity of the thesis, and certainly the Democrats who practiced replacement so assiduously in the past could hardly object to its practice in 1840.

Thus Arkansas' Whigs waited expectantly for their just rewards, but the wait proved a vain one. Tyler lacked the political incentive to replace Democrats with Clay Whigs in Arkansas or elsewhere, although, in an attempt to create support for his nomination in 1844, Tyler appointed to office some states' rights individuals from both parties. In reality, Tyler replaced relatively few people in the federal bureaucracy for, as late as July 1842, one prominent newspaper declared that nineteen-twentieths of the federal office holders opposed the president.

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35 *Southern Shield*, May 21, 1841, clipped from the Lexington *Intelligencer* (n.d.).

36 Oliver Perry Chitwood, *John Tyler, Champion of the Old South*, pp. 368-71; quoted from the *Madisonian*, July 21, 1843. Postmaster General Francis Granger removed 1,700 postmasters from office while he served in the Cabinet between March and September 1841. Later Granger boasted he would have removed 3,000 more if he had remained in the Cabinet for two or three more weeks. Tyler did not remove officeholders in 1841, but in 1842 he removed "thirty weighers and measurers in the Philadelphia customhouse to make room for his men." Leonard White concludes that the Harrison-Tyler administration adopted the spoils system of the Jacksonians. See Leonard White, *The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 310-11.
But the threat to their patronage expectations, combined with Tyler's veto of the bank measures, forced the state's Whigs to taste a bitter brew indeed. The editor of The Batesville News, A. R. Porter (killed along with Archibald Yell at the Battle of Buena Vista), gave full expression to this bitterness by describing Tyler as a "base, black-hearted" ingrate who added insult to injury following the vetoes by refusing to remove from office the Democratic villifiers of President Harrison. In October 1841, Porter quoted a Democrat recently returned from Washington, D.C., who predicted an attempt by Tyler to fashion a new party based on states' rights Democrats and anti-Clay Whigs. The Democrat predicted the failure of such an attempt. Porter, too, concluded by prophesying Tyler's failure in Arkansas to fashion an anti-Clay faction within Whig ranks. Clay, Porter declared, held principles shared by "every Whig in Arkansas," and time would demonstrate that the majority of Americans also shared those principles. 37

Time revealed that President Tyler's patronage policy offended Democrats as readily as Whigs, for Tyler replaced Democratic appointees upon the expiration of their commissions. In March 1842, Congressman Edward Cross expressed his resentment at this policy when he noted that J. J. Dawson of Jefferson County replaced Colonel James Logan as Agent for the Creek Indians. Senators Sevier and Fulton joined him in recommending the renewal of Logan's commission, Cross added, but Tyler ignored their wishes. 38 Whigs, however, rejoiced at news of Logan's replacement. Describing Logan as only a partisan Democrat, The Batesville News avowed

37 News, October 14, 1841.

38 Ibid.
that Captain Dawson possessed eminent qualifications for his office.

In concluding its evaluation of Dawson's appointment, the News urged Arkansas' Democrats to discontinue their whining at the replacement, and, in addition, it congratulated Tyler on his action: "We say God bless John Tyler for that deed. It is the first Whig lick we have seen him strike for a long time, and we hope others may follow." Still, the editor complained that, as yet, Tyler's removals in the state involved only a dozen office holders, and that only nine of the replacements were drawn from the Whig party. 39 When Tyler, however, appointed Gerrard N. Causin to replace Democrat Peter T. Crutchfield as Receiver of Public Moneys in June 1842, the News apparently felt obligated to issue an oblique warning to those willing to abandon their principles in order to obtain office under Tyler. Possibly, Causin reversed himself on some Whig principles. At any rate, the editor called attention to the speech of a North Carolina Whig who depicted "in manly language, the baseness of Whigs," who abandoned principle for office. 40 Democrats also resented Causin's appointment with the Gazette describing the appointee as only a "good Whig," a man with barely a year's residency in Little Rock, and, somewhat mysteriously, the paper further described him as a person unable for several years past to direct any business, "not even the superintendence of his domestic concerns." As for the "few remaining Democrats" holding federal office in Arkansas, Editor William Woodruff advised them to prepare to retire to private life as their commissions expired since Tyler intended to replace them with

39 News, April 7, 1842.

40 Ibid., June 23, 1842.
"ciderites."  

But Tyler's patronage policy—however unsatisfactory both parties might consider it—failed to depress unduly the spirits of party members for they believed that prosperity stood ready to return to Arkansas. Van Buren Democratic attorney George W. Paschal, for instance, reported to an out-of-state acquaintance in 1841 that his move from Georgia to Arkansas four years earlier constituted an astute move. He described his legal practice as large and one that secured for him "as much of this world's goods as is necessary at my time of life." True, Paschal added, excessively liberal credit terms induced too many Eastern merchants to enter business in Arkansas, but the inevitable bankruptcies corrected this situation. Arkansas, he concluded, approached another boom era—there existed, for the planter, in particular, "no better opening in the West."  

Little Rock Whig attorney Absalom Fowler shared Paschal's enthusiasm by declaring to a Tennessee acquaintance the superiority of his adopted state vis-à-vis Tennessee. Arkansas, Fowler reported in 1841, possessed better soil and climate than did Tennessee and superior navigational resources, since a number of rivers traversed the state, all of which emptied into the Mississippi River. Land prices—far too high in the past as a consequence of the "poisonous effects of Locofo-co-ism" (Jackson's veto of Bank rechartering?)—promised to decline along with other values, since bankruptcy cases filled the court dockets. This decline, Fowler wrote John Sumner Russwurm of Tennessee, provided real opportunities for such young men as Russwurm's

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41 **Gazette,** June 22, 1842.

son who contemplated migrating to Arkansas in order to practice law and
to engage simultaneously in planting. Such hope in the state's econ-
omic future as was evidenced by Paschal and Fowler provided the impe-
tus for the creation of the tall tale attesting the fecundity of nature
in Arkansas. To a skeptical Indiana Hoosier, one Arkansan declared
that the natives never wasted shot on a turkey weighing less than forty
pounds; furthermore, the "sile runs down to the centre of the 'arth and
the goverment gives you a title to every inch of it." Benefits of this
magnitude existed, the native concluded, only "in the Creation State,
the finishing up Country."  

In such an atmosphere, the hope for advancement through political
preferment continued, despite defeats on the state level, to manifest
itself in Whig hearts. Rumors reporting that Edward Cross wished to
relinquish his Congressional seat appeared in January 1842. Cross's
retirement, opening the way for other Democratic hopefuls to announce
their candidacies, provided the opportunity for a split within the ranks
of the Democracy. With the appearance of rumors concerning Cross's de-
sire to retire, Woodruff expressed his disbelief in their authenticity;
instead, the Gazette's editor publicly professed to believe in the cer-
tainty of Cross's renomination.

Privately, however, Woodruff felt considerable doubt as to

43 Absalom Fowler to John Sumner Russwurm, February 13, 1841,
John Russwurm Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

44 Gazette, May 26, 1841.

45 News of Cross's reputed intentions appeared in the Fayetteville
Witness January 15, 1842, as reported in the Gazette, January 26, 1842.

46 Gazette, January 26, February 2, 1842.
Cross's intention. In late November 1841, Woodruff addressed a letter to Senators Sevier and Fulton in Washington, D.C., informing them that the editor of the Fayetteville Witness had written to him of rumors that Cross would not seek reelection. Woodruff informed the Senators that he had that day written Cross urging him to seek reelection and telling the Congressmen that the "safety" of Arkansas' Democracy rested upon an affirmative reply. Such a reply, Woodruff had declared to Cross, would result in a "perfect union of the party in his support." Furthermore, if Cross agreed to run again, the Whigs, "knowing the hopelessness of their cause, in contending against him, may decline running any one against him" Woodruff added that, if Cross declined the race, the Whigs would probably nominate David Walker of Fayetteville as their candidate who "with all his northern sectional prejudice—will greatly weaken our force in the north." Moreover, Cross's refusal to run—or even a delay in announcing his willingness to seek reelection—would probably lead several Democrats to announce their candidacies, thus weakening party harmony. Woodruff concluded by urging the Senators to persuade Cross to accept renomination and to permit the announcement of his candidacy in the immediate future. 47

As Cross hesitated, however, other Democrats prepared to enter the fray. Lemuel D. Evans' entry into the race in April 1842 provided Whigs with an excellent opportunity to sow dissension within Democratic ranks by presenting him as a candidate independent of a Little Rock junta headed by William Woodruff. According to Woodruff, the Whigs's Times and Advocate sought to intensify a quarrel between him and Evans, 47

a quarrel resulting from Evans' request that the *Gazette* delay its announcement of Cross's candidacy until the Congressman clearly indicated his willingness to seek reelection. Such delay, Woodruff asserted, he refused to consider, since Democratic party unity demanded an early announcement of Cross's entry into the race.

Woodruff's assessment of Whig intentions proved accurate. Declining to nominate a candidate of their own for the fall Congressional race, the Arkansas Whig press sought instead to encourage Evans' candidacy and the entry of other Democrats into the race in order to fragment the Democracy. At Batesville, Whig editor A. R. Porter feigned surprise at Cross's apparent intention to seek reelection. Porter noted that, earlier, the *Witness*, Democratic newspaper at Fayetteville, professed its belief that Cross would decline to run for reelection; Porter further observed that the Fayetteville paper suggested the names of Robert Johnson, Lewis B. Tully and Evans as Cross's successor. Declaring that President Tyler's "desertion" to the ranks of the Democracy made certain a Democratic victory in the Congressional race, Porter asserted that he preferred Cross to any of the three individuals mentioned by the *Witness*. But since Democrats required suggestions as to suitable opponents for Cross, Porter willingly extended his assistance. Richard C. Byrd, Mark Izard, and Samuel Rutherford, he noted, had served the Democracy well in past campaigns. Furthermore, Porter asked, why should Democrats from north Arkansas not receive consideration. J. S. Ficklin, John Miller, Dr. Daniel J. Chapman, and Thomas Stevenson Drew hailed from the North, and each possessed the requisite qualifications for

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48 *Gazette*, April 6, 1842, clipped from the *Times and Advocate* (n.d.).
office. 49 Subsequently, the News feigned impatience with the suggestion
that Little Rock's Euclid Johnson succeed Cross when so many able can-
didates from north Arkansas possessed the necessary qualifications for
high office.

Woodruff perceived clearly the intent of the Whigs in employing
such tactics, but it proved impossible to devise effective counter-
measures. Since the Times and Advocate declared that Evans' position
entitled him to receive the consideration of Whigs, Woodruff asked the
Whig paper if it wished to endorse Evans' candidacy. 50 When Whigs made
no response to the invitation, Woodruff sought nervously to dismiss
Evans' challenge to the regular Democrats as a mere "tempest in a tea-
pot," which served only to advance the interests of the Whig party. 51
The danger, however, as Woodruff conceded, could not be dismissed in
such a cavalier fashion. With two announced candidates and a "dozen
more ready to announce themselves," the situation, he believed, consti-
tuted a real and present danger to Democratic hegemony in Arkansas. 52
Governor Archibald Yell disagreed; he asserted that the split in Demo-
cratic ranks resulted in part from difficulties associated with the
Fayetteville branch of the State Bank and from the desire of some state
Democrats who "become [sic] a little important and would like to see
the time arrive for promotion." 53 Within three months, Yell predicted

49 News, February 3, April 7, 1842. On April 7, the News also
reiterated its earlier assertion that Tyler's retention of Democrats in
office in Arkansas rendered a Whig victory impossible.

50 Gazette, April 6, 1842.

51 Ibid., April 13, 1842.

52 Ibid., April 6, 1842.

53 William Mck. Ball, associated with the Bank of Fayetteville,
fled to Texas when an investigation revealed a shortage of funds at the
bank.
harmony within Democratic ranks would return as Cross's political strength underwent a resurgence.  

Evans quickly demonstrated his willingness to court Whig support by declaring in a speech at Little Rock's City Hall that, in his campaign, he intended to discuss only state issues. Evans claimed that his views on national affairs required no discussion since Arkansas' electorate knew his opinions in this area. Thus Evans sought to avoid alienating potential Whig support by refusing to discuss such ideologically divisive issues as a national bank, internal improvements, and western lands. To buttress further his bipartisan appeal, Evans deplored manifestations of party spirit in Congress by deriding its expression as anti-democratic; if elected, he pledged to devote his major effort to advancing state rather than party interests. This approach won Evans the tentative endorsement of Little Rock's Times and Advocate which indicated its willingness to recommend that Whigs support Evans if no Whig offered himself for the office. The Batesville News, while falling short of outright endorsement, heaped praise on Evans for his willingness to challenge the dictation of such Democratic "wirepullers" as Woodruff and Chester Ashley. In Congress, the News's editors wrote, Evans' independent outlook would serve Arkansas' interests better than Cross's submission to party dictation. In general, however, the

54 Archibald Yell to James A. Simpson, April 7, 1842. Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library. No clue exists as to how this Democratic correspondence came into Turner's possession.

55 "A Family Quarrel," Gazette, April 6, 1842, clipped from the Times and Advocate (n.d.).

56 News, April 24, 1842, clipped from the Times and Advocate (n.d.).

57 News, April 24, 1842.
Batesville News's support of Evans was less enthusiastic than that of the Times and Advocate, possibly because the Batesville paper believed that a thoroughly fragmented Democratic party required the entry into the race of more than one opponent for Cross. At any rate, the News continued to pronounce its benediction upon a host of potential Democratic candidates, including those from north Arkansas who, if they announced their candidacies, might well split the Democracy sectionally.58

Proliferation of Democratic candidates constituted only one method of splitting the Democracy, for Eli Colby, one of the three editors of the Times and Advocate, perceived that other means existed to further this goal. Colby assumed leadership of a movement to nominate a "union" ticket of anti-state bank men pledged to nominate to the state legislature individuals not possessing the stock of or holding directorship in the state banks. Unencumbered by bank obligations, such legislators could strive to set Arkansas' fiscal affairs aright; in time, Colby believed the state's paper might achieve par value with specie.59

The potential appeal to Democratic electors of such an anti-bank union ticket alarmed Woodruff; immediately, he leaped to defuse the issue. Colby, Woodruff noted, described Cross as a stockholder in the Real Estate Bank—the "mammon of unrighteousness that has been swindling the people for years"—but he neglected to note that Evans owned one hundred shares of Real Estate Bank stock used as collateral for a loan.60 Furthermore, Woodruff contended, Colby himself had signed,

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59 Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866 (Little Rock: Arkansas Gazette Foundation, 1969), p. 182; Gazette, June 22, 1842.

60 Gazette, June 1, 1842, clipped from the Times and Advocate, May 30, 1842.
with others, notes to the Real Estate Bank totaling $375.00, while the State Bank held his note for $1,175.00. Woodruff declared that only after Colby paid these debts might he "hold forth about Bank debtors, Bank aristocrats, Bank swindlers and contracts."\(^{61}\)

That the banks held Colby's notes hardly qualified as the surprise of the decade, for they provided the major source of credit for other Arkansans as well. Nor did Colby's criticism of the banks constitute hypocrisy, for many Arkansans conceded the need to investigate the banks to determine if their lending policies served the public interests or only those of a select number of persons. One week prior to Woodruff's sally, the Gazette correspondent, "Franklin," declared that, although a Democrat, he intended to support Colby for a seat in the Arkansas House as one of Pulaski County's representatives. Arkansas' banks, "Franklin" wrote, possessed interests that conflicted with those of most citizens and thus required legislative regulation. As for the charge that Colby lacked the rhetorical gifts essential for successful service in the legislature, "Franklin" maintained that long-winded obstructionist members of legislative bodies contributed much to their ineffectiveness.\(^{62}\)

Despite such professions of support for his personal candidacy, Colby's attempt to create a fusion ticket ended in failure. Colby ascribed the sparse attendance at the June 18 meeting to a combination of rain and Woodruff's opposition. By printing a handbill describing the proposed conclave as a Whig meeting, Colby wrote, Woodruff effectively

\(^{61}\) _Gazette_, June 22, 1842.

\(^{62}\) _Ibid._, June 15, 1842.
reduced attendance. Responding to this attack, Woodruff declared that if his handbill produced such an effect he felt pleased, since the proposed "union" ticket represented a snare for Democrats. Woodruff added that he, as much as Colby, objected to legislators being influenced and directed by banks, for only "good, solvent, industrious and intelligent FARMERS" deserved nomination to the legislature.

Woodruff also vigorously denied Colby's claim that the Pulaski County Democratic meeting scheduled for June 30 served to advance continued banking dominance of Arkansas' politics. No Democrat, Woodruff wrote, need fear banking domination at the meeting. Whigs who claimed this threat existed and who raised the cry "wind up the banks, make them pay specie" did so only because they sought political power. On June 29, the day before the scheduled Democratic conclave, Woodruff reaffirmed his support of the assemblage, castigated the Whigs as power-seeking demagogues using the bank issue to gain office, and hinted darkly at the disaster awaiting the Democracy should the party nominate men not firmly committed to its principles. In urging the adherence to party lines, Woodruff noted the "mistake" of the Whigs in seeking to blur party distinctions in their meeting of June 18. No need existed, he wrote, to nominate men devoid of Democratic loyalties since members of the Democratic party "are all FARMERS who support their families by

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63 *Gazette*, June 22, 1842, clipped from the *Times and Advocate*, (n.d.).
64 *Ibid.* Democrat Jared C. Martin attended the union meeting, however, and announced his candidacy for the Arkansas House of Representatives. Woodruff expressed the hope that the regular Democratic meeting scheduled for June 30 would nevertheless nominate Martin as a Democratic candidate.
tilling the soil." Such men, he added, naturally desired to protect the "laboring classes from the impositions so long practiced on the people by the mismanagement and swindling of the Banks." 66

In shifting within a two-week period from contending that anti-state bank Whigs occupied a demagogic position to alleging that the banks engaged in swindling, Woodruff displayed the sensitivity of his political reflexes. He apparently realized as the canvass progressed that the public's distrust of the banks made it imperative that the Democracy not present itself as the banks's champion. Indeed, prudence dictated that Democrats present themselves as just as anti-bank as Whigs. The opportunity to initiate this tactic at the scheduled June 30 Pulaski County meeting, however, did not occur. Instead, a notice published on the morning of June 30 announced the meeting's indefinite postponement; subsequently, Woodruff declared that the announcement of three Democratic candidates for the House seats rendered a nominating convention unnecessary. 67 Other Democrats quickly demonstrated their realization that attacks on the banks constituted political wisdom. From Washington County in northwest Arkansas, a correspondent deplored the economic stagnation prevalent in the Fayetteville area caused, he wrote, by the "wretched banks." These institutions existed, he implied, only because Whig legislators created them in 1836. 68

Governor Archibald Yell, writing to a friend in early April 1842, observed that recent events relative to Arkansas' banking situation were

66 Gazette, June 29, 1842.
67 Ibid., July 6, 1842.
68 Ibid., June 26, 1842.
to his political advantage. Yell gleefully predicted that the forthcoming announcement of the action of the Central Board of the Real Estate Bank in deeding the Bank's assets to fifteen trustees—officers of the principal and the branch banks—removed a potential source of criticism from opponents inclined to condemn him for the state's banks' inadequacies.69 That the Board's action enjoyed general approval is revealed by the absence of criticism from either the Whig News or the Democratic Gazette. The News speculated as to the effect the announcement might produce on the value of the Banks' paper and concluded with the assertion that, if the Bank were unable to resume specie payments by January 1, the legislature ought to abolish it.70 The Gazette declared that the assets of the Real Estate Bank approached $2,318,000 (largely, of course, in loans with land as collateral and, hence, inadequately secured) while liabilities approximated $518,000. The Gazette carefully listed the priority of creditor disbursements should the Bank cease operation: Officers and agents of the Bank received first priority while creditors (individuals and banks) earned the second priority with the mode of repayment to these individuals and banks designated as "in the same funds they deposited." In the seventh and last category, the Board placed the English concern, Holford and Company, "fraudulent" recipients of $116,000 in bonds from North American Trust and Banking.71

69 Archibald Yell to James A. Simpson, April 7, 1842, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library. Yell expressed the hope that the next legislature "will go to work on the State Bank and mince her up." See also Gazette, March 30, 1842, for the account of a meeting of the trustees of the bank at Little Rock.

70 News, April 14, 1842.

71 "Assignment of the Real Estate Bank, Gazette, April 13, 1842."
Yell's popularity served to protect him from the wrath of increasingly anti-bank Arkansans, but Democratic leaders realized that, if the legislative races turned only upon the anti-bank enthusiasms of the individual candidates, their grip upon the legislature was jeopardized. Furthermore, because Senator Ambrose H. Sevier's term expired in March 1842, it was important to make an all-out effort to retain Democratic control of the legislature since state legislatures selected Senators. In a letter written from Washington, D.C., on August 3, Sevier noted the full implications of the legislative contests by calling attention to the Whig attempts to disparage party labels. Their anti-bank campaign, Sevier claimed, constituted a threat to his own candidacy; by electing a majority of either Whigs or non-partisan candidates to the legislature, the "intriguing Whigs," Sevier declared, might select a Whig to replace him. Sevier professed to believe that the tactic would fail despite the justified popular ire directed against these "defaulting institutions." The Whigs's anti-bank position represented only a straw man, for "there are few, if any, who are opposed to winding up the Banks in the speediest manner possible that will secure the State from loss." Sevier may have feigned concern for his own reelection chances in a last minute effort to shore up support for Democratic aspirants. Nevertheless, some disenchantment with Sevier existed within Arkansas' Democratic party, as illustrated by the Gazette's rejoicing in September at the withdrawal of Captain Silas Craig from the state Senate race in the district comprised of Chicot, Union, and Bradley counties. His replacement, the "true and genuine democrat," Green Newton, pledged to

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72 Gazette, August 24, 1842.
vote for Sevier, but, even so, party divisions within the district
required the leadership's attention to insure defeat of the Whig candi-
date.73

The failure of the state banks to provide adequately for Arkan-
sas' fiscal needs convinced Democratic Congressional candidate Lemuel
Evans of the need for a national monetary system. Arkansas' citizens,
however, opposed a national currency so adamantly that Evans felt com-
pelled to disguise his support of such a program. In a campaign address
delivered on September 4, Evans suggested that Congress adopt some finan-
cial system dissimilar to either the Sub-Treasury or the National Bank
plan in order to regulate the currency. The Gazette's newly appointed
editor, Cyrus W. Weller, assailed Evans for proposing a national bank
authorized to provide a uniform national currency while denying that
his proposal constituted a national bank. For Evans to propose a
national bank, Weller wrote, "would be unpopular, but he would have
the substance without the form." Would any Democrat, Weller concluded,
vote for Evans knowing "him to be guilty of such outrageous treason to
his party?"74

Weller viewed the national bank proposal as so important that,
in attacking the proposal in early August, he wrote possibly the longest
editorial published by an Arkansas editor in the years encompassed by
this study. The three full columns devoted to Weller's analysis appeared
on the first page—rather than on the editorial page—of the Gazette.

73 Gazette, September 14, 1842. The Gazette also reiterated its
contention that Democrats as much as anyone were anti-bank.

74 "Shoot the Deserter," Ibid.; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early
Years 1819-1866, p. 185. Ross concludes that the bank issue became the
principal factor in this legislative race (p. 182).
The twenty-three year old editor sought to demonstrate the unconstitutionality of a national bank, a rather formidable task since the first two national banks existed during a period of forty years between 1790 and 1836. Weller explained President George Washington's approval of a national bank in 1790 as partly the consequence of pressure applied by Alexander Hamilton; in addition, Weller suggested that monarchical tendencies influenced Washington considerably since he lived the first forty years of his life before 1774 under royal rule. Chief Justice John Marshall, however, bore the brunt of Weller's criticism since, under his leadership, the Supreme Court in McCulloch vs Maryland (1819) certified the constitutionality of a national bank. Weller declared that Marshall's decision—far from constituting the law of the land in a permanent sense—simply represented the court's opinion at one moment in time. No reason existed that the present court should not reverse the ruling of the Marshall court. Finally, Weller concluded that the Marshall court's decision rested upon a misreading of the Constitution since its 1819 opinion required a broad interpretation of implied power to justify it.  

In addition to the bank question, Whigs and Democrats also discussed the land issue in the 1842 campaign. In the 1841 special session of Congress, President Tyler signed an act authorizing the distribution of funds to the states from the sale of public lands, and he also approved a measure increasing the tariff. Tyler's willingness to relinquish to the states the revenue secured from land sales derived from the assurance of his Secretary of the Treasury, Thomas Ewing, that

favorable business conditions in the 1841 fiscal year made such a policy feasible. When Congress reassembled in December 1841, however, a deficit for fiscal 1842 of fourteen million dollars appeared likely. In March 1842, Congress passed an act enabling the governors of Illinois, Arkansas, and Missouri to select 500,000 acres of land for sale under provisions of the previously approved Distribution Act. The act required the states to utilize funds received to make internal improvements.

Initially, the Gazette's Woodruff greeted news of Congress' March 1842 legislation with apparent approval. Presumably, Woodruff wrote, Governor Yell would immediately appoint suitable persons to select the 500,000 acres of land authorized the state in order that the legislature meeting in the autumn might sell the land and direct the expenditure of the proceeds.

An article appearing the Gazette on March 23, moreover, reinforces the assumption that Woodruff initially supported the Distribution Act. The contributor of this article, who signed himself "S"—probably Ambrose Sevier—declared that, if wisely used, the funds promised significant benefits to an Arkansas sorely in need of an improved transportation system. If, however, misguided partisans, sectionally motivated, sought to improve every "cowpath and brook" in the state, "S" predicted the failure of the improvement program. That Woodruff, Sevier, and

76 Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler, p. 296.
77 Gazette, March 30, 1842.
every Arkansan should approve the land donation obviously appears logical since, previously, monies secured from the sale of public lands flowed into the central government's general fund. On March 28, however, an unidentified correspondent from Marion County condemned the Gazette for praising the states of Virginia, South Carolina, and Alabama for refusing to claim land granted them under terms of the Donation Act. The correspondent asked if Woodruff's approval of the rejection presaged the policy of the state's Democracy on this question—if, perhaps, Governor Yell might recommend that Arkansas adopt the policy of the rejecting states. The Marion County correspondent then proceeded to move from query to indictment by suggesting rejection constituted the position of the state's Democrats. The Democrats, he wrote, favored rejection since they now believed the federal revenue lost from land sales would necessitate higher federal taxes. This argument the Marion County writer emphatically rejected, arguing that the rich, by paying higher taxes on wines and silks, would cover the deficit. The question, he concluded, required a decision by the electorate, for no candidate supporting rejection deserved election to the legislature.79 In mid-April 1842, Woodruff did indeed adopt a disparaging tone with respect to the Distribution Act by applauding President Tyler's recent recommendation urging repeal of the act in view of inadequate federal revenues resulting from depressed business conditions. The cause of the federal government's financial difficulties, Woodruff declared, resided in the extensive magnitude of the government's duties as contrasted with its limited resources. Viewed in this manner, distribution, of course,

79"For the 'News,'" News, April 7, 1842. Possibly the Gazette of March 16 contained an attack on distribution, but this issue is not extant.
represented unwarranted generosity on the part of the federal government.\textsuperscript{80} Returning to the attack the following week, Woodruff endorsed an article in William M. Gouge's \textit{Journal of Banking} calling for economy in the federal government. The \textit{Journal} offered the opinion that the central government, having "parted with its lands, it has now no source of revenue but the customs."\textsuperscript{81} Woodruff, however, quickly ceased to attack the Distribution Act, undoubtedly because most of the state's citizens approved the measure. He failed to resist a parting shot at the bill, however, by asserting that, while the act protected the claims of genuine squatters, so-called Tomahawk improvements (clearing a few square yards of land, erecting a pen fashioned from a few poles, etc.) would not prevent the state from claiming the land under the Donation Act. In some areas of Arkansas, Woodruff wrote, people "claimed lands of great value" as a result of their Tomahawk improvements; such claims, he concluded, the state would reject.\textsuperscript{82}

For Whigs, President Tyler's reversal of his earlier stance on land distribution constituted the ultimate betrayal. The \textit{News} declared that, having vetoed two bank bills and reversed himself on distribution, Tyler no longer represented any substantial portion of American public opinion. Rather, he carried the standard of a small group of South Carolina–Virginia nullificationists constituting only a "Corporal's guard" of Americans.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{80}\textit{Gazette}, April 13, 1842.

\textsuperscript{81}\textit{Ibid.}, April 20, 1842, and clipped from the \textit{Journal of Banking} (n.d.).

\textsuperscript{82}\textit{Gazette}, May 25, 1842.

\textsuperscript{83}\textit{News}, April 14, 1842.
The land and the bank issues primarily interested Arkansas Whigs because they might serve to fragment further the Democratic party already divided by an abundance of candidates vying for Edward Cross's Congressional seat. If the Whigs failed to oppose Cross with a candidate of their own, the Democracy would once again secure this position. Nevertheless, developing such issues might serve to secure victory for Whigs in the state legislative races, and, in addition, fissures created in Democrat ranks in 1842 might persist to hamper the party in 1844. Thus the Whig Times and Advocate, seeking to deepen the Democratic rift induced by the challenge of Lemuel Evans, continued in May to expound Evans' virtues. If this "puffing" continued in such exaggerated fashion, Woodruff claimed, Evans—despite his fleshy frame—might simply blow away. Woodruff's nervous attempt to dismiss the challenge to Cross lacked the ring of sincerity in the late spring; as the summer's campaign advanced, his concern readily manifested itself. This concern resulted from the entry into the Congressional race of other Democrats, thus intensifying fragmentation possibilities inherent in the multiplication of candidacies. By the middle of June, Cross and Evans found themselves joined in the race by Democrats Euclid Johnson and Dr. Daniel Chapman. Chapman's candidacy, in particular, represented a threat to Democratic stability since he hailed from Independence County in north-central Arkansas and posed a sectional threat to party unity in view of the central and southern Arkansas origins of his three competitors.

The mere entry of additional candidates to oppose Cross, however, failed to slake the thirst of the Whig Batesville News, for it wished

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84 *Gazette*, June 1, 1842.
to witness disintegration within Democratic ranks. In early June, the 
*News* complained that Evans and Chapman merely exchanged platitudes in 
addresses delivered before the citizens of Yellville, Arkansas. Both 
avovated White River navigation improvements and both "are also going 
their death for Democracy." Such noncommittal approaches, the *News* added, 
denied the voters the opportunity of determining the qualifications of 
the candidates. Furthermore—and here the *News* hinted at Whig retaliation 
if the campaign failed to generate some controversy—since the 
Democrats "are all running the same trade and with the current" might 
not a Whig enter the race in order to offer the people a choice? In 
that event, the Batesville paper declared, Cross's Democratic opponents 
might find it necessary to withdraw since their hopes resided in a race 
free of Whig opposition. They sought, in other words, to beat Cross 
with the assistance of Whig voters, but, if they wished to continue 
free of a Whig challenge, they must demonstrate sensitivity to the Whig 
outlook. 85

Despite this threat, Cross's opponents, possibly fearing to 
alienate fellow Democrats, continued to present a low profile by shunning 
controversy. Cross himself broke the ideological silence in late August 
by issuing a circular expressing opposition to the tariff and to a 
national bank. Although *The Batesville News* announced its opposition 
to the views expressed by Cross, it praised his courage in publishing 
them and predicted that his opponents would issue similar circulars. 
To beat Cross, however, the *News* declared that one of his opponents 

85 *News*, June 7, 1842. On August 11 the *News* complained once 
more of the failure of the Democratic Congressional aspirants to engage 
in meaningful debate.
"will have to come out with a whig rider, and proclaim themselves [sic] a democratic National Bank man." This advice Lemuel Evans anticipated, for, four days prior to this suggestion by the Batesville paper Evans issued his call for some national financial program dissimilar to either the Sub-Treasury or the National Bank enterprises.

Other party leaders joined Evans in subordinating party labels. John W. Cocke, Pulaski County Whig candidate for the legislature, announced in a speech in early August that, if elected, he intended to support a Whig to replace Senator Sevier if a Whig sought the office. If, however, only Democrats opposed Sevier, Cocke declared his intention to support Sevier. Cocke relegated party distinctions further into the background by stating his belief that candidates for state office ought to avoid running on a national platform; a candidate for state office, he maintained, should confine himself to a discussion of such state related topics as education, state banks, and state internal improvements. For assuming this stance, Cocke received the praise of the Gazette's new editor Cyrus W. Weller. Whether by coincidence or not, Weller, too, relegated party loyalty to the background in late July by urging Democratic voters to cast their votes in the legislative contests for Whig candidates pledged to support Sevier's reelection if their Democratic opponents refused to endorse Sevier's candidacy. Weller asserted that Whig legislative candidates possessed two excellent reasons for pledging to support Sevier's reelection. So long as "Whigism is in its degeneracy," he wrote, the party would prove unable to elect a Senator, and,

87 Gazette, August 3, 1842.
in addition, by pledging to support Sevier, several Whig candidates, otherwise doomed to defeat, might win their contests. 88

For those Whigs who continued to concentrate their attention on the Congressional race, such trade offs assumed secondary importance. As the summer progressed, the News continued to hint that a Whig might enter the race. In that event—with four Democrats in the race—the "odds must and will be in favor of the Whig nag." 89 By late July, however, the Batesville paper continued to maintain, and to regret, that only a slim chance existed for a Whig to enter the Congressional contest. 90 Democrats, of course, privately eyed with suspicion the Whig failure to enter this race since the absence of a Whig candidate encouraged the emergence of Democratic factions. In late June, Governor Yell, while informing Governor James K. Polk of Tennessee that liquidation of the state banks represented the only real political issue of the campaign, also assessed the Congressional race. Four Democratic candidates, Yell wrote, threatened party unity, but he added, "when" the Whigs announced their candidate, the Democratic party would close ranks behind Cross; in Yell's opinion, the Whigs "unquestionably" would offer a Congressional candidate of their own. 91 In early August, however, Woodruff speculated in a letter to Thomas Stevenson Drew—elected Arkansas' governor by the Democrats in 1844—that the Whigs might fail to nominate a Congressional candidate. In that event, Woodruff predicted, "most

88   Gazette, July 29, August 3, 1842.
89   News, June 23, 1842.
90   Ibid., July 21, 1842.
91   Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, June 25, 1842, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
intelligent Whigs will vote for Cross." Woodruff added that on the previous day David Walker had informed him that he, John Ringgold, and other prominent Whigs sought to entice a Whig to enter the race. Walker, however, expressed doubt that the party could "get anyone to risk a race." Since Woodruff reported Ringgold as predicting that Cross could beat all the Democratic candidates and any Whig, the lack of a Whig candidate was understandable. 92

But Woodruff's information proved erroneous for in early September William Cummins announced his candidacy. Why did Cummins delay until less than a month remained in the contest to make his announcement? Although neither Cummins nor any other Whig provided the answer to this question, there obviously exists the possibility that the Whig leadership, seeking to maximize Democratic divisions, delayed announcing a candidate in order to permit the divisive tendencies to mature. Certainly the timing of Cummins' announcement, with less than a month left of the campaign, suggests this possibility since Democratic voters committed to one of Cross's opponents found it difficult to switch their support to Cross. From Batesville on September 10, Chapman announced his withdrawal because the "interest and safety of the Republican party" dictated such a course. Had Cummins announced his candidacy a month earlier, Chapman added, or if Cross were present in Arkansas, he might continue the race. Since news of Cummins' announcement could not reach Cross in Washington, D.C., in time for the Congressman to consider withdrawing, Chapman declared that he felt it necessary to announce his own withdrawal. The presence of both Democrats in the race, he

92 William E. Woodruff to Thomas S. Drew, July 8, 1842, Arkansas Gazette Foundation Library.
explained, jeopardized the Democratic House seat.\footnote{Gazette, September 14, 1842.} In the same issue of the Gazette in which Chapman's statement appeared, Editor Weller gave notice of the withdrawal from the race of Euclid Johnson. Lemuel Evans, however, continued in the race with the News printing on the fifteenth of September his itinerary through September 24.\footnote{News, September 14, 1842. Evans' schedule listed seven speaking engagements between September 16 and September 24. Cross returned to Arkansas in September, speaking in St. Francis County on September 16, then Poinsett County the following day. His speaking schedule called for him to visit the Fayetteville area on election day. See "Judge Cross," Gazette, September 28, 1842.}

In a short statement announcing his candidacy, Cummins dwelt solely upon the bank issue. He announced his opposition to the "present rotten system of State Banks and shinplasters [notes of private businesses] and in favor of a sound and uniform currency." Such a goal, Cummins concluded, required a "well regulated National Bank."\footnote{"Whigs to the Breach—Once More to the Breach," News, September 15, 1842.} Responding to Cummins' announcement, the Gazette declared that the Whigs had devised a plan to defeat the Democrats by declining to run a candidate of their own, thus encouraging "as many democrats as possible to take the field." Whigs hoped through such a tactic to foment such jealousy and bickering among Democrats as to achieve an "easy and perhaps uncontested victory." Editor Weller maintained that "in the very hour when their plans were just ripening to the result, the ever-busy little Cummins came out, on his own accord, and defeated all their calculations." Weller concluded that the "Whigs were so astonished and so vexed at this monoeuvre [sic] that they have many of them, resolved not to vote for the intruder."\footnote{Gazette, September 28, 1842.}
Weller's analysis of Whig tactics reveals a logical inconsistency in that Whigs could not hope to achieve a victory, "easy" or otherwise, in the 1842 election without eventually offering a candidate of their own. Quite possibly, however, Cummins' announcement did indeed provoke a split within the Whig leadership in that some Whigs may have wished to concede the 1842 election in order to maximize the split within Arkansas' Democracy. By forfeiting the 1842 election through failing to present a candidate, the Whigs would have assured the continuance in the race of Cross's opponents, thereby encouraging the continued disunity within the Democratic party. Some credence is given this interpretation that a split within the Whig leadership occurred as a result of Cummins' announcement, for, in encouraging Pulaski County Democrats to turn out in force to vote for Democratic House candidates, Weller asserted that Pulaski County Whigs "are divided and are quarreling among themselves." Possibly, Cummins did indeed decide that a sufficient division had occurred among the state's Democrats to insure his election. In view of Cummins' previous defeats, it would hardly appear surprising that a number of Whig leaders would reject this reasoning and conclude that Cummins selfishly sought his own, rather than the party's, best interest. If such a split occurred in Pulaski County, however, it was confined to the ranks of the leadership, for Cummins won fifty-three percent of the votes cast in the election—a figure only three and three-tenths percent less than that acquired by Fowler in his contest with Cross in the Pulaski County contest of 1840.97

Although the election occurred October 3, it was not until

97The Pulaski County returns reveal that Cummins won 480 votes, Cross 397, and Evans 29.
late October that Weller printed the "official" returns of the contest, awarding 9,413 votes to Cross, 5,315 to Cummins, and 1,686 to Evans. Cross's margin vis-à-vis Cummins equaled sixty-four percent of the votes cast for these two candidates; this percentage exceeds the fifty-eight percent of the votes cast with which Cross beat Fowler in 1840. In the 1842 election, moreover, Cummins displayed slightly less strength than in the 1838 election when Cross secured sixty-two percent of the vote in his first race with Cummins.

Cummins' reduced margin in this election, compared with the two earlier performances, might, of course, have resulted from his late entry into the race. In particular, his tardy entrance possibly made it difficult for some Whigs—especially in the North—to switch to support the party candidate. In addition Evans had sought to capture the votes not only of the Whigs but also of all north Arkansans by blatantly appealing to sectional prejudice on the internal improvement issue. This attempt met with some success, for he won Izard County in the North by obtaining some 198 votes while polling 490 votes in the northern counties of Washington, Benton, and Carroll. In determining the effect of Evans' candidacy on the 1842 election, it is revealing to compare the vote totals secured by Cummins-Cross in Carroll, Izard, and Washington counties in the election of that year with the returns in the same three counties in 1840's Fowler-Cross race. In 1840 Fowler won 791...
votes in these counties while Cummins acquired 316 in 1842; on the Democratic side, Cross won 1,233 votes in this area in 1840 and 1,081 in 1842. Thus it is apparent that, while Evans drew votes from both parties in 1842, the Whig party felt the impact of his candidacy to a greater extent than the Democratic party. Other factors, obviously, might account for Cummins' having received six percent fewer votes than Fowler two years previously. Possibly, as Weller suggested, some Whigs regarded Cummins as a "bore" in contrast to Fowler. Additionally, the attraction of William Henry Harrison as the Whig presidential candidate in 1840 possibly increased support for Fowler, whereas Cummins stood alone in 1842.

In the legislative races also, the Democrats once again scored a resounding victory. Weller reported that in the coming session, forty-six Democrats in the House would face twenty Whigs, while the Senate had fifteen Democrats and six Whigs. Thus in the Assembly as a whole the Democrats held approximately seventy percent of the seats compared with fifty-nine percent won in 1840 and sixty-six percent acquired in 1838. The reduction in Whig legislative strength supports the thesis that Harrison's candidacy in 1840—rather than a weak Cummins' candidacy—accounts for the gains registered by Democrats in the 1842 contest. With the conclusion of the 1842 campaign, the attention of Arkansas focused on the coming session of the legislature where Sevier's candidacy, the state banking problem, and other issues awaited the attention of officialdom.

100 "Election Returns," Gazette, October 22, 1842.
The Whig dilemma in Arkansas, therefore, resulted in part from issues which had their origin in the perplexities of the national Whig program. In effect Whigs asked Arkansans to accept a program which appeared to many citizens of the state to run counter to their own best interests.

The support of a national bank with the possible retardation of credit which it implied could hardly receive the enthusiastic endorsement of a western area sorely in need of investment capital. The Whig program calling for high prices for western lands represented still another example of the difficulty the Whig party faced in such a western region as Arkansas.

More importantly, however, the election of 1842 demonstrated that the state's Whigs still had failed to comprehend the significance of their problem. Rather they convinced themselves that their problem lay exclusively in besting the Democracy by simply outmaneuvering the "Family." And in contending that Cummins lacked political sagacity, Arkansas' Whigs merely reinforced their error of assuming that extra-issue considerations were of secondary importance to tactical and personality factors.

In addition to its failure to convince the state's electorate that the Whig program was compatible with the state's long-range welfare, the party proved unable to counter effectively the Democratic charge that Whiggery denoted elitism. In fervently equalitarian Arkansas, this charge, if accepted by the voters as valid, would alone assure the defeat of Whiggery. The state's Whigs generally sought to counter the argument by ignoring it, but the Democratic persistence
in utilizing it would indicate its effectiveness. Possibly Arkansas' Whigs could have coped with the charge better by emphasizing the plebian origin of some of the state and national leaders. Except, however, for an occasional reference to Henry Clay as the "mill boy of the slashes," Whigs seldom bothered to note this Democratic charge.
CHAPTER V

NEW WINE AND OLD BOTTLES—THE INITIAL STAGE OF ARKANSAS' 1844 CAMPAIGN

Cyrus Weller declared in December 1842 that while traveling aboard steamships on the Mississippi River he often was queried by citizens from other areas regarding the moral character of Arkansas' legislators. He always responded, Weller stated, by assuring the interrogators that in this respect Arkansas' legislators equalled or surpassed the representatives of any other southern or western assembly. This response, Weller wrote, inevitably surprised his hearers, since they tended to believe that but little difference existed between "an Arkansas man and a Bengal tiger."\(^1\) When the legislature convened on November 7, however, few if any members harbored a tigerish hostility toward individuals though many carried into the legislative halls a puzzled, simmering antagonism toward the state's banking predicament. The new legislature contained many new faces, including a large number of those Senator Ambrose Sevier described as "tender-footed" Democrats—men without a strong sense of party loyalty and more interested in correcting abuses than in securing reelection: "This situation placed the old string-pullers in a quandary, for they did not know how to appeal to a legislative body that recognized no political heroes as uncensurable, that had no reason to legislate by the time-honored method of "trading

\(^1\)Gazette, December 28, 1842.
out," and that did not place party loyalty above good government."²

Throughout the session that followed, the Gazette periodically implored the legislators to remember that meaningful issues separated the Democracy from Whiggery and that consequently only Democrats deserved appointment to office. Whigs, the Gazette declared, under their champion Henry Clay, supported a national bank, a protective tariff, internal improvements to be made at federal expense, and similar "visionary schemes"; furthermore, under the guise of defending American liberty, the Whigs opposed the reorganization of the state militias necessary to fashion them into more effective units.³ And always the Gazette maintained that to appoint a Whig to office when a Democrat stood ready to serve constituted a betrayal of principle.

Those Sevier termed "tender-footed" Democrats posed problems in areas other than the dispensing of patronage, for in their relentless search for the truth they embarrassed Sevier who served in 1836 as one of Arkansas' commissioners entrusted with the sale of the Real Estate bonds. In part, criticism of Sevier's role in the 1836 bond sale represented an attempt by Whig Lorenzo Gibson to embarrass Sevier, thereby preventing his reelection to the United States Senate. In the course of investigating the Bank, a committee of the House issued a report condemning Sevier and his fellow commissioner General T. T. Williamson for converting into depreciated western and southern bank notes the $500,000 in gold received from the sale of the Real Estate Bank bonds. In addition, the committee censured the commissioners for loaning $9,050


³Gazette, November 17, 23, 1842; January 4, 1843.
to four Arkansans in New York, paying $5,000 to themselves for their own services and providing $5,000 to an eastern securities broker for his services. The committee noted that the legislature authorized none of these actions. These actions, the committee decreed, apparently resulted from Sevier's and Williamson's avarice, since to suppose they acted in good faith "presupposes a degree of ignorance and stupidity unparalleled in the annals of financing [sic] from Maine to Mississippi."^4

In commenting upon the report, The Batesville News asserted that it revealed Sevier as a "faithless servant" and explained why Williamson, a former Whig, abandoned his party since the Democrats rewarded his disavowal of Whiggery. Subsequently, a committee comprised of more orthodox Democrats submitted a report favorably reviewing the commissioner's actions. This committee declared that the 1836 legislature authorized the commissioners to sell the bonds in New York, that in paying the broker the state secured a maximum price for its bonds, and finally, that in appropriating $14,300 for his own account Sevier merely secured a share of the proceeds due him as a stockholder. With admirable aplomb, the committee declared that the only difference between Sevier's mode of securing these funds and the method employed by his fellow stockholders consisted in the money of other stockholders having "passed through the hands of the cashier of the bank in payment of a debt, while for him it was retained for a like purpose without

^4Journal of the House of Representatives for the Fourth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas 1842-1843 (Little Rock: Printed by Eli Colby, 1843), 168-73; Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 188.

^5The Batesville News, December 29, 1842.
that ceremony."6

In the course of its investigations of the Real Estate Bank, the legislature condemned as unsavory the actions of the stockholders in milking the institution, investigated Governor Yell's actions respecting the Bank, received but failed to approve a resolution of a representative condemning the "odious doctrine of repudiation," and listened to a lengthy attack by Governor Yell upon "foreign brokers."7 Yell suggested that the legislature create a committee to negotiate with Holford and Company with a view to purchasing the hypothecated bonds at a reduced price. In defending this proposal, Yell declared that the Bank "is a public corporation, and does not include the idea of 'contract.' The parties on both sides are the public, and it [the Banks' charter] is, therefore, at all times subject to modification."

Amidst the more spectacular changes relating to the banks, a less visual but equally significant event moved beneath the surface. The "tender-footed" legislators, intent upon managing the people's business in the most economical manner, awarded to the Whig paper, the Little Rock Times and Advocate, the contract for state printing. It did so because the Whig paper submitted a lower bid than Woodruff, although Woodruff felt he alone could satisfactorily serve the state's printing needs. Furthermore, Woodruff resented the action of the

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6Journal of the House 1842-1843, (Appendix), 1-13. The House adopted this resolution by a vote of 57 to 6. It could hardly do otherwise since on November 22 the legislature reelected Sevier to the Senate by a 71 to 13 vote. Albert Pike received 10 votes while Colonel John Miller received three. Writing in the News on December 27, 1842, "C" regretted that the Democratic leadership secured Sevier's reelection before the extent of his 1836 activities became known.

7Ibid., 60-68, 150-51, 142, 96, and 2-3, (Appendix). See also Yell's letter of November 10, 1841, printed in the Journal, 26-27.
legislature in passing an act requiring him to reimburse the state for
a portion of the funds he collected as state treasurer in 1837; Woodruff
considered the money rightfully his. In announcing the sale of the
_Gazette_ to Benjamin J. Borden in the issue of January 4, 1843, Woodruff
stated that the depression forced him to sell the paper. The possibility
exists, however, that in selling the paper to Borden, Woodruff sought
to punish his party for its lack of gratitude to him, since everyone
realized Borden's Whiggish orientation. In later years, Woodruff denied
that Yell and other Democrats expressed a willingness to meet his asking
price of $6,000.

Initially, Borden assumed an air of political neutrality, feigning
surprise in mid-January that a meeting of self-designated "true
Democrats" assembled in Little Rock attacked the _Gazette_ as anti-Democ-

cratic. Borden also professed shock that, in discussing the establish-
ment of a new paper in Little Rock to further their interests, the
gathering proceeded to castigate "our personal friend, William E. Wood-
ruff" whose only purpose in selling the _Gazette_ consisted of his desire
to protect his financial standing. Borden undoubtedly delayed his

8 Ross, _Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866_, p. 191.

9 Ibid., p. 194. Borden was born in Duplin County, North Carolina on October 23, 1812. He graduated from the University of North Carolina and later earned a law degree from Georgetown University in the District of Columbia. He followed relatives to Arkansas, moving to Little Rock in 1836.

10 Ibid., p. 192; The Arkansas Banner, March 16, 1846. Archibald Yell told James K. Polk that Woodruff sold the _Gazette_ because he found himself in the "clutches of the banks" and lacked political scruples. See Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 5, 1843, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.

11 _Gazette_, January 18, 1843.
announcing support of Whig principles since, with the next election
some twenty months in the future, no benefits to Whiggery would result
from such a statement; indeed, by delaying such open support, the
_Gazette_ might best weaken the Democracy by sowing dissension within
its ranks and perhaps forestall the establishment of a Democratic press
in Little Rock. Seeking to utilize this advantage, Borden in mid-
February denounced Sevier for criticizing Democrats merely because they
"have not seen fit to pronounce him immaculate, or to sing praises to
his name." Sevier's criticism, Borden wrote, resulted from the commit-
tee report censuring his conduct as bank commissioner—a committee com-
posed, Sevier declared, of "spurious democrats with open whigs." As
for Sevier's charge that the _Gazette_ no longer represented the Democracy,
Borden asserted that, if one defined the Democracy as a party requiring
"blind devotion to men regardless of principles," he failed to qualify
as a Democrat.  

The contest, Borden added, no longer represented a
struggle between political parties but rather between a suffering people
and their oppressors. With an empty treasury, a state debt of $300,000,
Sevier's talent for losing the state large sums of money, and with bank-
ruptcy threatening most everyone, anarchy and ruin faced the citizenry.
The "miserable demagogues and hucksters," Borden concluded, whose
leadership had produced this condition represented merely "self-styled
Democrats whose name so ill accords with their professions."  

In May, Borden returned to the attack when President Tyler
appointed Democrat Henry M. Rector as United States marshal for the

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12 _Gazette_, February 15, 1843.

13 _Ibid._, May 24, 1843.
District of Arkansas to replace Whig Thomas W. Newton, a Harrison appointee. Borden asserted that, in part, the replacement resulted from Tyler's desire to build support for his own renomination, but in part it resulted from the entreaties of Sevier and former Governor James S. Conway. Conway, Sevier, and Rector, a correspondent noted, were first cousins and comprised a portion of the eighteen Democratic relatives in Arkansas who held appointive office. As late as August 1843, Borden continued to present a facade of political neutrality when he observed the appearance in Little Rock of an avowedly Democratic newspaper. Beneath the noncommittal announcement of this paper's birth, Borden slyly inserted an article noting Whig electoral successes in several states. As late as the issue of August 30, 1843, Borden continued to attack only indirectly the Democratic party as such, seeking primarily to encourage splits by attacking Sevier and his supporters. By November 8, however, Borden openly avowed his Whiggish sympathies, urging Whigs to hold county meetings to nominate delegates for the

14 Gazette, May 24, 1843. The Van Buren Intelligencer (founded March 11, 1843), commenting on Newton's removal, noted that Newton hardly needed both his position as a Bank officer and a marshal. Correspondent "S", however, castigated Tyler for the removal. See Intelligencer, June 3 and July 1, 1843.

15 Ibid., May 31, 1843. Possibly Newton's influence exercised as an officer of the Real Estate Bank in arranging liberal credit terms for Borden's purchase of the Gazette led Sevier and Conway to seek his replacement. See Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 197.

16 Ibid., August 23, 1843. This paper, The Independent Democrat, survived only a few weeks and may have been printed in the Gazette office. It supported General Richard C. Byrd for governor. See Fred W. Allsopp, History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years or More (Little Rock: Parke-Harper Publishing Company, 1922), p. 346; Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 199.
forthcoming Whig convention.\textsuperscript{17}

The Democratic leadership, of course, perceived readily enough Borden's tactics and refused to leave him an open field. Thomas Sterne, editor of the ostensibly neutral Van Buren \textit{Intelligencer}, took Borden to task for printing an abusive attack upon Sevier's performance in the 1836 Bank arrangements. The New York \textit{Express}, accepting Borden's interpretation of Sevier's actions, commented acidly that, while "such fiscal peccadillo as these may get a man to Congress from Arkansas, they would get him into Sing Sing, if performed in New York."\textsuperscript{18} Aware of Arkansas' sensitivity to its image elsewhere, Sterne assailed Borden for having subjected the state to ridicule by outsiders; the state's pride, the Van Buren editor declared, dictated that one avoid providing an outsider with the opportunity to slander Arkansas.\textsuperscript{19} Following the issue of July 15, 1843, when George W. Clarke replaced Sterne as editor of the \textit{Intelligencer}, the guise of political neutrality continued, as did the defense of state honor. He never read an eastern newspaper, Clarke declared, without noting numerous accounts of murder, assault, arson, and general mayhem; in contrast with other areas, the more enlightened morals of Arkansas, Clarke wrote, revealed themselves in the comparative rarity of such occurrences. In Clarke's opinion, Arkansas' newspapers ought to make the rest of the nation aware of the high standards the state set for itself. Certainly no paper ought to slander the state by

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Gazette}, November 8, 1843. The only significant omission in the \textit{Gazette} files occurs for the issues printed between August 30, 1843, and November 8, 1843. None of the issues for this seventy day period are available.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{New York Express} (n.d.) quoted in \textit{Intelligencer}, July 8, 1843.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}
defaming its political leaders. Such parrying as this hardly approached the incendiary journalistic level of former days. In large measure, of course, this period of relative calm resulted from the absence of an election in 1843. The Intelligencer believed, however, that two other factors played a part in producing the relative calm: the presence of the "Benedict Arnold" Tyler in the presidential office reduced partisanship in the state, since not one of the state's eight newspapers cared to defend him; in addition, the editor declared, his printer's devil suggested that, since no funds existed in the empty treasury to pay officeholders, the "outs" felt no desire to replace the "ins." Patriotism never accounted for "all the clamor," he concluded. Only the rewards of office prompt men to engage in politics.

Perhaps hope of the rewards of office prompted William H. Etter, owner of the Washington Telegraph located in Hempstead County in southwest Arkansas, to authorize editor James P. Jett to abandon political neutrality to support Whiggery. Whatever the reason, the Telegraph, in mid-July 1843, announced its abandonment of neutrality; Jett declared that thereafter the paper intended to support "patriotic principles"

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20 Intelligencer, July 22, August 19, 1843. Continuing its political neutrality theme in the issue of August 19, the Intelligencer declared that the guests at a recent public barbecue, given "without distinction of party," included General Zachary Taylor.

21"Political Parties in Arkansas," ibid., July 1, 1843. Not everyone shunned political office in Arkansas at this time. On July 10, Archibald Yell approved a list of potential officeholders submitted earlier to him by Henry A. Wise, Tyler's Congressional leader. In his justifying replacements, Yell wrote Wise that "it is due to Mr. Tyler that he should be informed of those who are holding office under him . . . [but] abusing and slandering him." See Archibald Yell to Henry A. Wise, July 10, 1843, Arkansas Gazette Foundation Library.
in opposition to the "hollow tinkling of modern democracy." According to Jett, America's difficulties commenced when the American people, in their adulation of Andrew Jackson, elevated him to the presidency. A competent military man, Jackson lacked the political wisdom essential for the presidential office, Jett wrote. Henry Clay, on the other hand, possessed the principles essential for such service; as proof of Clay's sagacity, Jett noted the Kentuckian's support of a national bank as the only means of securing a sound currency. To indicate his devotion to Clay, the editor placed Clay's name at the top of the editorial column as the Telegraph's candidate for the Whig presidential nomination.  

On the surface, Jett's action might appear little more than a gesture, for, in the five elections in Arkansas since 1836, Whigs had experienced only defeat. An unbiased observer thus might conclude that Arkansas' Whigs possessed but little opportunity in 1844 to reverse their record, but, in reality, some basis for hope existed. In part, Whig prospects for victory in 1844 rested on the belief that Sevier's conduct as agent of the Bank would severely damage Democratic chances in the coming election. By emphasizing his conduct and relating corruption in office to one-party Democratic rule, the Whigs expected to reap benefits from public disillusionment with the Democracy. In order to take maximum advantage of any such disenchantment that existed, Whigs tended to deemphasize the Clay program which proved in earlier campaigns to lack sufficient appeal to capture Arkansas for Whiggery. And in addition to the benefits which the state's Whigs expected to reap from

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22 Telegraph, July 19, 1843. A more forceful attack on the Jacksonian cult is found in the issue of September 6. See "Qualification for Office."
these tactics, they hoped that the deep divisions within the state Democratic party might provide Whiggery with a weakened opponent. Certainly the expectation that the factionalism present in the Democracy by this time represented a golden opportunity for Whigs rested on a solid foundation.

If such hopes were to achieve fulfillment, however, Arkansas' Whigs needed to set about creating an organizational apparatus capable of effectively channeling the energies of Whiggery. Jett's advocacy of Clay some sixteen months prior to the presidential election foreshadowed the construction of a Whig organization in the state designed to reverse the trend prevalent since 1836. By November 1843, the state's Whigs busied themselves with preparations to form Clay Clubs to promote "Prince Hal's" candidacy in Arkansas. Borden declared in the Gazette that these clubs existed elsewhere throughout the United States in order to enlighten the public with respect to the political issues of the day; he added that reports from outside Pulaski County indicated that, recently, "various" parts of the state witnessed the establishment of several of these clubs. Certainly, Little Rock ought not to lag behind in hoisting her banner for "the farmer of Ashland." 23

Even before Borden issued his call, Hempstead County Whigs formed a Clay Club, and soon Pulaski, Lawrence, and Phillips County Whigs announced the formation of similar organizations. 24 This local organizational effort of Arkansas' Whigs, which culminated in the state

23"Clay Clubs," Gazette, November 15, 1843; February 14, March 6 and 13, 1844.

24 Washington Telegraph (n.d.) quoted in Gazette, November 15, 1843.
convention held in Little Rock on January 15, provides insights into the structural nature of the Whig party of the 1840’s. The evidence indicates that, although Pulaski County Whigs did not possess absolute control of party machinery, they did wield considerable—probably decisive—influence in such matters as developing campaign strategy and selecting the party’s state nominees. Several factors account for the leadership role enjoyed by Pulaski County Whigs within Arkansas’ Whig party. The consistency with which Whiggery won populous Pulaski County provides only a partial explanation of the county organization’s ability to exert a decisive voice in the decision-making process. Certainly, the ability of Pulaski County Whigs to win consistently the county provided the basis for the deference shown them elsewhere in the state; undoubtedly, in the absence of this tangible contribution other counties would have demonstrated reluctance to defer to the leadership of Pulaski County. But more than mere numbers promoted the ascendancy of this county in Whig affairs. Centrally located and heavily populated, Pulaski County's influence radiated throughout the state. Quite naturally this induced others to look to it for leadership in politics as in other areas. Particularly in politics, the county served as a trend setter since the most capable and influential members of the state’s bar resided in the capital city of Little Rock.25 And in addition, Little Rock constituted an important trading center since the Arkansas River normally remained open to vessels throughout the year. Moreover,

25 And in terms of numbers, Little Rock's bar featured far more individuals than did other areas. In early 1844, for instance, the professional notice section of the Gazette listed twelve attorneys, while the Van Buren Intelligencer listed only six notices of attorneys in the Van Buren-Fort Smith complex. See Gazette, January 31, 1844, and Intelligencer, January 27, 1844.
this city contained the most widely circulated and influential of the
state's newspapers, which served to provide leadership for both Whigs
and Democrats.

Although Pulaski County Whigs exercised an influence dispropor-
tionate to their numbers, they lacked the overweening power of their
counterparts in the county who provided leadership for the Democracy.
The assumption of power by the Little Rock "Family" in 1836 provided
this Democratic faction with sufficient leverage to repulse challenges
to its dominance; since Arkansas' Whigs failed to achieve power, Little
Rock's Whigs found it more necessary to make concessions to outlying
areas than did the Democrats. The campaign of 1844 demonstrates this
in that Little Rock's Whigs thought it important to secure consensus
for Pulaski County's choice for a Congressional nominee. Little Rock's
"Family" deemed so unlikely the possibility of defeat for a Democratic
state candidate, however, that it chose to ignore, in a cavalier fashion,
the protest by north Arkansas respecting the "Family's" choice of a
gubernatorial candidate.

The absence of this degree of dominance in the party by Pulaski
County Whigs reveals itself in a number of ways. As Borden noted on
November 15, Whigs in some areas of the state—not waiting for inspira-
tion or direction from Little Rock—had already held organizational
meetings. Some two months later the Gazette reported the holding of
some sixteen county Whig conventions which selected delegates to attend

26 Notice of a "recent" meeting of Hempstead County Whigs
appeared in the Gazette on November 15—clipped from the Washington
Telegraph (n.d.)—while on November 22, the Gazette reported a Phillips
County meeting held November 11.
the Little Rock convention. Evidence that these county conventions in 1844 (and throughout the period under study) selected delegates free of direct dictation from a central control consists of the absence of any such charges emanating from within Whig ranks. Arkansas' Democracy produced from within its ranks numerous charges to this effect, and events in the party's 1844 nominating process verified such a charge.

The failure of the Whig leadership to engage in such heavy-handed procedures did not result from any commitment to the democratic process. Rather, it flowed from the leadership's inability to exercise such a commanding influence, and because more subtle coercion produced the desired results. An illustration of this latter point is revealed by examining the Little Rock Whig leadership's attitude toward the choice of a Congressional nominee. Albert Pike, Absalom Fowler, Frederich Trapnall, and other Little Rock Whigs supported the nomination of Fayetteville Attorney David Walker for this post, since Walker might receive the support of those Democrats disenchanted with "Family" misrule. Walker's ability to win support of these Democrats rested on his earlier opposition to a national bank—an opposition likely to strike a responsive chord with disaffected Democrats.

In seeking to obtain a candidate with the ability to attract non-Whigs, the Whig leadership incurred the opposition of Whigs in Crawford County, adjacent to Walker's home county of Washington. The Crawford County Whigs agreed that the Congressional candidate ought to reside in north Arkansas for "locality will give strength." They contended, however, that Van Buren's Jesse Turner should receive the

27 *Gazette*, November 15, 22; December 13, 20, 27, 1843; January 3, 10, 17; February 14; March 6, 13, 1844.
nomination since his support of the party platform in the past assured support by "Whigs wherever he is known." The Gazette's Borden did not bother to explain that such support alone would assure still another defeat. Instead, Borden merely quoted from a letter written by Walker acknowledging that, previously, he doubted the constitutionality of a national bank, but adding that the fiscal debacle of recent years had led him to reverse his earlier opinion. Then, Borden in a few well chosen sentences revealed the power of Pulaski County Whiggery by reminding the Crawford County Whigs that more than two men might seek the Congressional nomination. Pulaski County's Frederich Trapnall, Borden wrote, certainly would prove an attractive candidate. In effect, Borden cautioned Crawford County Whigs that, if necessary, Pulaski County might offer a candidate of its own, thereby jeopardizing the nomination of a candidate from the north.

Indirect evidence exists, however, that Crawford County Whigs continued to press for Turner's nomination, despite the opposition of Pulaski County's leadership. This would explain why Crawford County sent ten delegates to the January state convention in which a total of eighty delegates represented twenty-two counties. Neighboring and heavily populated Washington County, which provided eighty percent as many votes for the Whig state candidates in 1842 as had Crawford County, sent only three delegates to the January conclave. Probably Crawford

28 "Political," Intelligencer, December 16, 1843.
29 Gazette, January 3, 1844.
30 "Whig State Convention," ibid., January 17, 1844. In 1842, the Cummins-Fowler ticket won 529 votes in Washington County, 629 in Crawford County. See the Gazette of October 21, 28, 1842.
County Whigs sought to boost Turner's chances of securing the nomination by gathering at Little Rock in numbers sufficient to press for Turner's candidacy. The convention, however, presented a picture of outward equanimity under the watchful gaze of Pulaski County's large twenty-one man delegation. After the convention agreed that each county should possess a vote equal to its representation in the state legislature, Little Rock's Thomas Newton nominated, and the convention approved, the selection of Robert Smith of Lawrence County as temporary chairman.

Smith appointed a committee, consisting of one delegate from each county, which then selected James H. Walker of Hempstead County as the permanent convention chairman. Walker subsequently appointed another committee, consisting of one man from each county, which then proceeded to nominate the party's state candidates. David Walker won the Congressional nomination, while Hot Springs's Dr. Lorenzo Gibson received the gubernatorial nomination. Following this selection, Chairman James Walker received the convention's approval of the nine names he selected to constitute the Whig Central Committee charged with coordinating the activities of Arkansas' Whigs. All nine men comprising the committee hailed from Pulaski County. Of course, if effective coordination of a campaign occurred in antebellum Arkansas with its primitive transportation facilities, direction had to originate from the centrally located

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31 Crawford County sent ten delegates, Saline County six, Lawrence County four, while the remaining eighteen counties sent three or fewer. See "Whig State Convention," Gazette, January 17, 1844.

32 In addition to such prominent Whigs as Newton, Trapnall, Fowler, Pike, and Bertrand, the committee was composed of James Lawson, Charles Rapley, James B. Keatts, and Ebenezer Cummins, younger brother of the deceased William Cummins. Ibid.
capital city.

A comparison of the membership of the Whig Central Committee in 1844 with 1848 provides evidence as to the cliquish nature of party leadership. In 1844, nine men received appointment to the Central Committee, whereas, in 1848, eleven men comprised the committee. Eight of the eleven individuals who served on the committee in 1848 had served on it four years earlier; only Ebenezer Cummins, younger brother of William Cummins, failed to secure reappointment to the Central Committee in 1848.33

But Pulaski County's dominance at the 1844 Whig convention did not end with selection of the Central Committee. The convention then proceeded to approve an address to the electorate outlining the Whig program. The lengthy address delivered the following day—the *Gazette* published half the address January 31, the remainder February 7—reflected the literary style of Albert Pike. It featured a sustained defense of a national bank and a protective tariff with copious quotations derived from the state and private papers of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, all designed to demonstrate the support of Whigs who might have feared that Whiggery no longer supported

33 Thomas P. Merrick, David J. Baldwin, Benjamin J. Borden, and Luther Chase represented the new members in 1848. Charles P. Bertrand, Frederich M. Trapnell, Albert Pike, James B. Keatts, Thomas W. Newton, Absalom Fowler, and James Lawson served on the Central Committee in both 1844 and 1848. See "Whig State Convention," *Gazette*, January 17, 1844, and "Whig Electors," *Gazette*, June 15, 1848. Five of the eleven members of the 1848 committee were farmers, and three members listed their occupations on the 1850 census as merchant, editor, and U. S. marshal. One member was not identified in the census. Whig control of the *Gazette* between 1843 and 1850 provides considerable insight into the composition of the Whig Central Committee for the 1844 and 1848 campaigns. Similar information is not available for the 1840 and 1852 campaigns.
a nationalist program. 34

One can note the importance Pike assigned the protective tariff and the national bank issues by observing the amount of textual space devoted to these two issues relative to other issues. Pike discussed fourteen issues in the address which extended to approximately 38,000 words. He expressed support for a protective tariff in approximately 18,500 words, while his defense of a national bank encompassed approximately 13,500 words. 35 Thus these two issues received attention in 84 percent of the address. The only other issue which received substantial attention in the address concerned distribution of the new revenue derived from the sale of public lands. Pike devoted approximately 2,000 words—five percent of the address—to the distribution issue. He supported distribution of the funds to the states in proportion to their representation in Congress. By dwelling on the method of distributing funds, Pike avoided the thorny question of the price at which western lands ought to sell. Clay's American Plan had advocated that public lands sell at high prices since the Kentuckian wished to finance internal improvements with proceeds derived in large measure from land sales; this, of course, offended westerners interested in cheap western lands.

This connection between high land prices and federally supported internal improvements probably explains why Pike devoted only 233 words


35 On these two issues, distribution of revenue, support for Henry Clay, and the attack on Democratic misrule, I estimated seven words per line. On the remaining nine issues I counted each word devoted to the issue.
to a defense of federally financed internal improvements. In addition, south and east Arkansas, with their fairly adequate river transportation system, may not have felt the need for such a program. And north and west Arkansas—engaged in subsistence farming in these largely non-slaveholding regions—may also have lacked interest in such a program. And, of course, if Arkansans did not feel the need for such a program, they would oppose it, not wishing to provide financial support for a program of but little benefit to residents of Arkansas.  

Undoubtedly, Pike penned his extended defense of a national bank in the belief that Arkansas' banking difficulties of the past eight years had created an electorate receptive to Whiggery's national banking program. This issue provided the additional advantage—in contrast to the Whig's land and tariff programs—of providing a program that protected western as well as eastern interests. In the 1830's, westerners viewed with suspicion attempts to centralize the nation's banking structure, deeming such efforts as attempts to restrict the supply of development capital required by the West. Following the Panic of 1837 and the subsequent depression, however, Pike might well have reasoned that Arkansas would look with favor on a more rational financial structure.

Pike's extended defense of a protective tariff represented an

36 On other issues Pike discussed: (1) Support for Henry Clay, 1,428 words; (2) attack on sixteen years of Democratic misrule, 1,378 words; (3) defense of law and order, 272 words; (4) defense of securing federal taxes through impost rather than direct taxes, 206 words; (5) attack on the "dangerous" doctrine of agrarianism, 206 words; (6) honesty in government, 43 words; (7) plea to preserve the best in the traditions of the past, 42 words; (8) attack on executive usurpation, 34 words; (9) attack on sectional extremists (abolitionists and nullificationists), 33 words; and (10) plea for an independent judiciary, 28 words.
attempt to defend a plank in the Whig program which could have but little support in a state devoid of industry. Whether planters of considerable means in the southern-eastern areas of Arkansas or smaller subsistence farmers in the northern regions of the state, few voters could perceive their interests as compatible with protectionism. But if protectionism here failed to capture the hearts of the electorate, compensations existed elsewhere in the party program, particularly in Whiggery's support of a national bank which Pike had discussed at such length. Of course, for such nationalists as Pike, the hope always existed that what appeared self-evident to him might, through careful repetition, appear so to others. And thus he presented all of Clay's old pro-tariff arguments, including the assertion that protection would develop an industrial America so in need of cotton goods as to render unimportant the reduction of foreign exports protection would entail.37

In contrast to the subtle manipulation practiced by Pulaski County's Whigs in 1844, the Democracy of that county sought to dictate in heavy-handed fashion the state ticket. An important agency of control consisted of the "Family's" ownership of the Arkansas Banner which was established in Little Rock in September 1843. Earlier in that year, William Woodruff had sold the Gazette to the Whigs. To retain its hold on the party, the "Family" in the fall of 1843 urged the holding of a

37 Mississippi Whigs also evinced less support for a high tariff than for other planks in Clay's American Plan. "In contrast with the hesitant attitude on the part of the body of Whiggery to commit itself full-fledged to the doctrine of protectionism, was the attitude of their Democratic opponents who, on the whole, quite consistently assailed the advocates of any discriminating protective issue." See James E. Winston, "The Mississippi Whigs and the Tariff, 1834-1844," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXII (March, 1936), 523-24.
state convention to nominate candidates. To those Democrats who asserted that the Little Rock Democrats sought a convention, not to achieve unity, but rather to monopolize all the state offices, the Banner replied in a scathing fashion. Editor Solon Borland depicted anti-"Family" elements as tainted with Whig principles and selfishly willing to jeopardize Democratic rule in order to promote the interest of their own candidates.

By late October, what Borland termed the selfish voice of Arkansas' Democracy made its tactic clear when both "Fayette" and "Western Democrat" asserted that apportionment at a state convention ought to reflect, not the population distribution as manifested in the legislature, but rather actual Democratic strength as revealed in elections held since 1836. Southern and eastern Arkansas, they wrote, received too many state offices in view of the relatively poor showing displayed by Democrats in those areas in past elections, whereas northwest Arkansas, despite the overwhelming majorities Democratic candidates received there, secured only a few offices. "Western Democrat" noted that the North and West sent no one to Congress, had no judges among the three on the state supreme court, and could boast of possessing no important state office such as that of secretary of state.

The date on which the convention convened engendered controversy. Critics, whom Borland described as Whigs, charged that Pulaski

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38 Intelligencer, September 16, 1844; Arkansas Banner, October 7, 1843.

39 Banner, October 7, 1843.

40 Intelligencer, October 28, 1843.

41 Ibid.
County Democrats selected December 4 as the date for convening because state law required county sheriffs to assemble in Little Rock on the first Monday in December to settle accounts with the state. Since the "Family" possessed supporters among the county sheriffs and since many counties would probably ask the sheriffs to serve as the county delegate, the "Family" might expect to secure support with an early December convention. To this charge, Borden replied that, as responsible and dedicated men, the sheriffs would prove capable convention delegates.\(^{42}\)

An analysis of the convention delegations reveals that five of the thirty-two delegates held positions as sheriff in their respective counties. Four county delegations sending two delegates each were represented by a sheriff, while one county with three delegates had a sheriff.\(^{43}\) Thus a significant percentage of "Family" support at the convention derived from this source.

In addition, however, analysis of the counties represented reveals that complete "Family" dominance reigning at the convention developed in large measure as a revolt of a widespread boycott of the convention by disgruntled rank and file Democrats. That only sixteen counties were represented in the Little Rock assembly constituted a poor showing in itself, but east Arkansas in particular displayed a most uncooperative posture since only Arkansas County sent a delegation from the two-county tier of counties bordering the Mississippi River.

\(^{42}\)Gazette, October 7, 1843.

The convention selected Dr. Daniel J. Chapman of Independence County as its Congressional candidate, while Elias Nelson Conway, younger brother of former Governor James S. Conway, received the gubernatorial nomination. Immediately, dissident Democrats, objecting to the "Family's" nomination of Conway, announced their objections to Conway's selection. On December 16, an anonymous correspondent, writing in the Van Buren Intelligencer, pledged that, within a "few days," delegates representing the North and West would assemble in a caucus to urge the holdings of another convention to select more suitable candidates. Borden also contributed his bit to sowing dissension within Democrat ranks by chiding the packed convention for choosing Conway in preference to Judge Samuel Calhoun Roane who, for the past twenty-five years, had steeped himself in constitutional law. By late January, Senator Ambrose H. Sevier in Washington had expressed to William H. Woodruff his disgust of the dissident Democrats: "What can Roane, Ashley, and others calculate by defiling their party while it gives them office. If I suppose them as simple as that, I should consider it my duty to have guardians appointed for them." Arkansas, Sevier added, contained too many "starved and hungry Whigs" for the party to afford the luxury of a schism. While understandable, Sevier's

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44 Banner, December 9, 1843; Gazette, December 13, 1843.
46 Intelligencer, December 16, 1843.
47 Gazette, January 3, 1844.
pique here ignores the source of dissidence within Democratic ranks—the surplus of hungry, if not starved Democrats, for whom no office existed.

Opportunity for the insurgent Democrats to acquire a newspaper of their own presented itself in March with the death of Eli Colby, editor of the Whig Little Rock Times and Advocate. The former Democratic editor of the Gazette, Cyrus W. Weller, disillusioned with Sevier's explanation of his 1836 banking activities, acquired editorial control of the Times and Advocate from Colby's brother and quickly endorsed the gubernatorial candidacy of Democrat General Richard C. Byrd. Soon both Borland of the Banner and the Intelligencer's George W. Clarke, now committed to the Democracy, heaped abuse upon Weller, describing the Times and Advocate as a paper secretly subsidized by Whiggery. These attacks reflected the concern of the "Family" that the Democratic ticket, featuring Conway's candidacy, might suffer defeat in the fall.

Consequently, in late April, another Democratic convention controlled by a chastened "Family" met in Little Rock and revamped the ticket by selecting Chapman as the gubernatorial candidate and Archibald Yell (north Arkansas' non-"Family" Democrat) as the party's nominee for the House of Representatives. The Times and Advocate continued its attack upon "Family" dictation, however, as well as its support of Byrd's candidacy, thereby lending encouragement to Arkansas' Whigs

49 Banner, March 20, 1844; Intelligencer, March 30, 1844, clipped from the Times and Advocate, (n.d.).

50 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 199.

hoping that Democratic fragmentation might leave an opening for the
Whigs.

In 1844, Whig hopes for victory in Arkansas rested only partially
on the prospect of a Democratic split, for the party also believed that
its strong ticket gave promise of a successful conclusion to the campaign.
In Henry Clay, the state's Whigs felt they possessed a candidate whose
time had come, who offered strength to local candidates. And in Lorenzo
Gibson and, particularly in David Walker, the state's Whigs felt they
could boast two excellent vote getters. Democrats hoped Walker would
decline to run; one correspondent declared, in December 1843, that
Walker termed himself an independent, rather than a Whig, and had prom-
ised to support Van Buren, Arkansas Attorney George W. Paschal. In
a letter written in 1865 to his granddaughter, Walker noted his appoint-
ment as an elector for presidential candidate Hugh Lawson White in 1836;
following the 1836 election, Walker wrote, he took no part in political
activity until 1840 because his extensive law practice seldom permitted
him to remain in Fayetteville for more than a week at a time.

In 1844, Walker still retained his reluctance to enter actively
into a political contest, in part because he viewed with distaste the
compromise necessary when one, as he phrased it to his brother-in-law
in Batesville, descended "to the beggarly calling of an office hunter
for support." In addition, Walker possessed no illusions as to his

52 *Intelligencer*, December 16, 1843.
53 Quoted in Walter J. Lemke, ed., *Judge David Walker: His Life
and Letters* (Washington County Historical Society: Fayetteville, Arkan-
chances for success. Following "immense toil" and receipt of "extensive abuse," Walker predicted defeat should he receive the nomination. To forestall his own nomination, Walker asked his Batesville kinsman to initiate a movement in the north to secure the Whig Congressional nomination for Little Rock's Frederich W. Trapnell. Despite his reluctance to run, Whigs realized that Walker's candidacy offered the best hope for securing victory in the Congressional race. As a native of northwest Arkansas, he obviously appealed to voters of that area. Furthermore, as an honest and hard-working, if not brilliant attorney, he would attract voters disillusioned with more colorful but less upright officials.56

Speculation concerning Walker as a candidate began after he delivered a speech at a Fayetteville barbecue on August 18, 1843. A week later, six Whigs asked Walker for a copy of the speech. Walker replied that he had spoken extemporaneously but proceeded to attempt to reproduce the speech in so far as memory enabled him to do so. Reprinted in the Van Buren Intelligencer, the speech occupied some six columns. It consisted of a closely reasoned attack upon Sevier's role in selling Arkansas' bonds in 1836, including Sevier's appropriation of

55 Walter J. Lemke, ed., Judge David Walker: His Life and Letters, p. 22. "H" writing from Fayetteville on December 21, however, asserted that "Walker says he don't want to run, but I rather guess he wants to be run." See the Intelligencer, December 23, 1842.

a portion of the proceeds of the sale. Concluding his attack, Walker demonstrated his willingness to play the demagogue by noting that Sevier "raises cotton to the value of $12,000 and five thousand bushels of corn annually, and owns some 70 or 80 slaves." 57

With Walker emerging as the favorite for the nomination by November, the Democrats began to attack him. The Banner attacked him in November for failing to attend all of the 1838 and 1842 meetings as required of a legislator. In 1838, the Banner stated, a resolution requesting Walker to return a portion of his compensation for the absences failed to pass only because Walker returned the day before a roll call occurred. 58 In the 1842 session, the Banner declared, Walker missed thirty-two days but possessed the "hardihood to receive, unblushingly, his per diem pay for the whole session." 59 Writing in his own defense, Walker declared that he arrived in Little Rock several days late for the opening session of the November 1842 session as a result of personal illness and left Little Rock prior to the completion of the session after receiving word of illness in his family. As for the small sum received for the sessions he failed to attend, Walker declared he attempted to return the money to the governor, but Yell deemed a refund unnecessary. 60 In his review of this matter, the Gazette's Benjamin Borden ascribed the origins of the entire affair to Sevier's abuse of Walker when Sevier delivered stump speeches in Walker's region. In turn,

57 Intelligencer, October 21, 1843.
58 Banner, November 4, 1843.
59 Ibid., November 11, 1843.
60 Ibid., November 11, 1843; Gazette, November 15, 1843.
Walker defended the legislative committee's censure of Sevier's conduct as bond commissioner. 61

Initially, Walker's chances of winning appeared bright. The first Democratic convention's nomination of Batesville's Daniel Chapman as the party's Congressional candidate and Little Rock's Elias Conway as its gubernatorial candidate elated north Arkansas' Whigs and depressed that region's Democrats. Conway, in particular, represented a vulnerable target because of his "Family" connections, his youth, and his Little Rock residence. In Fayetteville, correspondent "H" declared the intention of the Whig leadership to offer Walker as Chapman's opponent. Walker, "H" wrote, would prove a formidable opponent as a consequence of his vigorous attacks upon the state banks, because his excellent health enabled him to engage in a strenuous campaign, and because he had no debts and thus could better spurn bribe attempts. "H" conceded, however, that Walker's support of a national bank constituted a weakness. "H," alluding to Chapman's reputed musical abilities and to Walker's tendency to straddle issues, predicted the outcome of a Chapman-Walker debate: "First Chapman could play a leg-stirring Hornpipe. Then Walker would pour out his whole soul on the Banks and an incidentally, protective, discriminating, judicious, undefined, and undefinable, neither high nor low tariff. And then, I suppose Chapman would strike up, in responsive tones of sinking bass, Bonaparte's Retreat, and slope off in a straight line." 62

Although some observers might have dismissed "H's" observation

61 Gazette, November 15, 1843.

62 Intelligencer, December 23, 1843.
as mere levity, "Alfonso" (writing in the same issue) declared that Arkansas' voters rewarded the entertaining candidate. Chapman, "Alfonzo" opined, just might fiddle his way into Congress; "Has not Sevier more than once laughed himself into the Senate? —Has not Fulton grinned his way there also, and how could Governor Yell retain the affections of the people without the aid of General Sneed and his Militia." Surely Walker manfully attempted to ingratiate himself with the voters, but he proved incapable of currying public favor to the same extent as Archibald Yell who replaced Chapman as the Democrat Congressional nominee. In February, the Democratic Spy at Fayetteville described Walker as a "pert, clever, lawyer-looking fellow" who had long thought of running for Congress. Ordinarily, the Spy declared, the successful lawyer Walker concerned himself only with such mundane affairs as securing naturalization papers for an alien or "cutting the Gordian knot that holds some broken hearted Eve to her courtly knight of the bottle."

Candidate Walker, however, now found time for more political concerns; he "now can trip across our public square to greet a fellow with a coon-skin cap on his head, and a load of peltries on his back, and whose hard hand he would never have taken under other circumstance."^63

The elation Walker and other Whigs felt at the selection of the Conway-Chapman ticket proved short-lived. In early January, Conway declared that he accepted the nomination of his party on the assumption that the majority of Democrats preferred him to other available Democrats. In the interest of party harmony, Conway suggested the calling of another convention with a "majority of the counties represented in

^63Fayetteville Spy, February 3, 1844, quoted in Intelligencer, February 17, 1844.
it." Borland also admitted the December convention erred in its selections by conceding that the "general and pervading" Democratic opposition to the slate surprised him. In line with Conway's proposal, Borland suggested that a second Democratic convention convene in Little Rock the first Monday in May to select other candidates.64 From Batesville, Chapman wrote of his recent discovery that his nomination was the result of a "minority" convention, and he too assented to Conway's and Borland's suggestions concerning the holding of another convention.65 In early April, thirty-five Democrats from twenty counties met in Little Rock to fashion another ticket. Once again Chapman received the party's endorsement, although the convention decreed he should seek the gubernatorial post rather than the Congressional position; the delegates then selected for the Congressional nomination Governor Archibald Yell who resigned his office within a few days to canvass the state.66

As these events transpired, journalistic dueling between the Gazette's Benjamin Borden and the Banner's Solon Borland intensified. On January 31, 1844, a notice dated January 17 appeared on the Gazette's editorial page announcing the "honorable and satisfactory" adjustment of differences between the two men—the notice listed the names of three Whigs and three Democrats attesting to the reconciliation of the differences.67 Earlier in January, however, Borland, provoked beyond

64Banner, January 9, 1844.
65Ibid., February 13, 1844.
66Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 204; the Intelligencer, April 27, 1844, and the Banner, May 4, 1844, offer editorial comment justifying the selections. In March, the Intelligencer openly announced its support of the Democracy.
endurance by Borden's allies, physically attacked Borden and in the
fisticuffs that followed—in the words of William Woodruff—"used Ben.
[Borden] pretty roughly—having beaten his face into a jelly, and bro't
the claret with every blow."68 Difficulties between the two men, the
January notice to the contrary, continued to exist following Borland's
display of pugilistic skill. In early May, the editors met to duel in
the Indian territory across the river from Fort Smith. In the exchange
of fire, Borden's ball fell short of its mark while that of his Demo-
cratic counterpart "took effect in Borden's person, striking the breast,
passed through the flesh and made but a comparatively slight wound."69

Fortunately for the health and safety of the remainder of Arkan-
sas' citizens, dueling in the remaining portion of the 1844 campaign
confined itself to the political sphere. Such aggressiveness as the
Whigs possessed found an outlet in their Clay Clubs and other organi-
zational efforts. In early May, D. F. McKenney of Fort Smith informed
Jesse Turner that he had learned that Colonel Drennen planned to leave
on the first boat for Washington, D. C. McKenney urged Turner to per-
suade Drennen to have "some congressmen to send us documents and speeches.
Colonel Drennen is generally acquainted through the state, and while in
Washington he can do a great deal by giving names of persons in the
state to whom documents should be sent." Such a ploy, McKenney con-
cluded, would do much to counteract the many speeches delivered to the


69 "The Duel," Intelligencer, May 11, 1844; Ross, Arkansas Gazette: The Early Years 1819-1866, pp. 202-03.
electorate throughout Arkansas by Cross, Fulton, and Sevier. From Evansville, Arkansas later in the month, Lewis Evans also expressed an interest in seeing sound Whig doctrine transmitted. Evans wrote Turner that if a set of the Whig-oriented magazine Niles' Register proved unobtainable in Van Buren, he might obtain it from Whig James Spring of Bentonville; Evans also expressed the hope that within a few days Turner would receive a copy of the Spirit of 76.  

Campaign activity extended beyond the printed word, for after Yell resigned his gubernatorial chair, he proceeded to north Arkansas to campaign in that populous region. By the time Alonzo Gibson reached Lewisburg for an address the night of May 1, Yell had already edified the citizens of the hamlet and had proceeded toward Norristown. Walker, however, soon "treed" Yell, and the two Congressional candidates engaged in a series of May debates in northwest Arkansas where both men resided. The area's Whigs contended that Walker thoroughly trounced his opponent. A Fort Smith Whig asserted that, in a May 20 speech, Yell merely attacked Henry Clay by asserting that Clay bargained with John Quincy Adams in 1824 to secure a cabinet position, thereby depriving Andrew Jackson of the presidency. Such an attack, the correspondent declared, "is old and threadbare, dirty and rotten." Walker, on the other hand, delivered a "systematic and logical speech" in that, where Yell merely asserted, "Davy has 'dokuments."  

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70 J. W. McKenney to Jesse Turner, May 4, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
71 Lewis Evans to Jesse Turner, May 22, 1844, ibid.
72 Gazette, May 8, 1844.
73 Ibid., May 29, 1844.
Fort Smith, writing on May 20 to Jesse Turner, residing across the Arkansas River in Van Buren, also expressed admiration for Walker's Fort Smith speech delivered two days previously. After asking Turner why he failed to cross over to hear the speech, McKenney declared, "I have never heard a man get such a drubbing as Yell got. And what is still better the boys all say so . . . . Davy has infused new life and energy into the Whigs here. They say Yell better not travel with Davy but take a bypath." 74 Democrats, of course, denied that Walker scored such successes. "Junius," writing in mid-June from Washington in southwestern Arkansas, described as a myth the assertion that Walker gained converts in the course of the debates. When one questions individual voters, "Junius" declared, he discovered Walker's support had recently declined and Yell's increased. The change in fortunes, "Junius" concluded, resulted from Walker's opposition to and Yell's support for the proposed annexation of Texas. 75 The failure of both Arkansas' Whigs and Van Buren Democrats to support annexation proved most unpopular with the state's electorate. The citizenry viewed their distaste for annexation as at best effeminate, at worst un-American.

74 J. W. McMenney to Jesse Turner, May 22, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.

75 "Great Cry and Little Wool in Old Hempstead," Banner, June 26, 1844.
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CHAPTER VI

CLIMAX OF ARKANSAS' 1844 CAMPAIGN

In September 1843, the Gazette first commented upon the Texas issue. Benjamin J. Borden described the Texas annexation question as a delicate one that required a non-partisan approach. Two reasons dictated such an approach, in Borden's opinion. The "excitability" of Southerners favoring annexation combined with the "fanaticism" of Northerners opposing it threatened the stability of the union as had no other issue since the Missouri question of 1820. In addition, should Texas achieve statehood, many immigrants now settling in Arkansas would elect to move westward into Texas.1

In early January 1844, the Banner's Solon Borland took note of Borden's editorial. Borland asserted that the September position of the Gazette no longer met "the issue now before the country." Since the Texas issue now commanded increased public interest, Borland asserted that the Gazette owed the citizenry a new summary of its views. In particular, Borland asked the Gazette to explain why it considered the Texas question "delicate," and he also inquired if Borden proposed to support Clay for the presidency if the Kentuckian decided to oppose annexation.2 Interest in the Texas question had increased in the waning

1Gazette, December 27, 1843.

2"Speak Out," Banner, January 2, 1844.
months of 1843 as President Tyler, seeking to win support for his re-nomination, sought to take advantage of public opinion increasingly favorable toward annexation. By late 1843, in Arkansas as elsewhere in the country, attitudes had crystallized on the Texas issue. By this time, some pro-annexationist sentiment existed in the North, and more support for annexation prevailed in the West, while tremendous pro-annexation sentiment predominated in the South.³

For Arkansas' Whiggery, the Texas issue presented a formidable problem since support for annexation appeared substantial as 1843 ended, but the state party could ill afford to support a measure which its presidential nominee might oppose. Evidence does exist to show, however, that rank and file Whigs hoped that Clay would advocate annexation. In Pine Bluff, on December 9, 1843, a "large number" of Whigs gathered in the Court House to approve a resolution urging the holding of a state convention and to urge that the Congressional candidate selected at Little Rock demonstrate both ability and "fidelity to Whig principles." Following their vote on this resolution, the east Arkansas Whigs declared that they supported Henry Clay for president since he "is identified in every country and in every land with the cause of human freedom."⁴

The Pine Bluff Whigs thus sought surreptitiously to apply pressure to the national party to force Clay to adopt a pro-annexationist policy by declaring that support for Texas' right to link itself with the United Stated represented a defense of the traditional American policy of supporting liberty.


⁴Gazette, December 20, 1843.
The Banner's Borland sought to force Arkansas' Whigs to commit themselves more openly on the issue. In early January 1844, he printed a letter from a correspondent describing a meeting of local planters who adopted a resolution supporting the removal of a raft on the Red River. According to the correspondent, Clay supporters comprised the bulk of those attending the meeting; following passage of the raft resolution, however, a Democrat proposed that the group adopt a resolution approving the annexation of Texas. Captain Moore, identified by the correspondent as a Whig leader in Hempstead County, subsequently denounced the resolution, President Tyler, and the Democrats. Assessing this tack, the Democratic correspondent declared that, while the local Whigs "profess to be with us" in support of annexation, they "are obviously very shy of the subject." Should Clay decide to oppose annexation, he concluded, "I fear the consequences." 5

Clay feared the consequences of unequivocally supporting immediate annexation since such support might create a backlash among Northern free soil supporters which could damage his presidential candidacy. For Tyler, with but little support in Congress—and as time proved among the public as well—a bold policy alone provided hope for a second term in the White House. When his Secretary of State, Abel Upshur, was killed in late February 1844, with the explosion of a cannon aboard the U.S.S. Princeton, Tyler appointed John C. Calhoun Secretary of State. As early as 1836, Calhoun publicly supported annexation and continued to do so thereafter. 6 In Van Buren, Arkansas, the Intelligencer's George

5Banner, January 16, 1844.

Clarke greeted news of Calhoun's appointment with approval. With his political talents, Clarke wrote, Calhoun would enable other nations—Mexico and Great Britain—to see that annexation did not threaten their own vital interests. As for the argument that if Texas acquire statehood Arkansas stood to lose immigrants, Clarke dismissed it by declaring that Texas would devote itself largely to cotton culture and therefore would require other Arkansas commodities.  

The Tyler administration's march toward annexation suffered a fatal setback in late April when presidential hopefuls Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay finally committed themselves on the Texas question: "A witches brew was boiling. Whether by understanding or not has never been resolved, but within a few hours of each other Van Buren and Clay came out against annexation in letters published April 27, and consequently it was not likely that two-thirds of the Senate could be gotten to ratify the treaty of annexation."  

The attempt of the two leading presidential candidates to remove Texas as a campaign issue left Arkansas' candidates of both parties in something of a quandary since to support annexation might well involve defiance of the party's standard bearer, while to oppose annexation could lead to a loss of support within the state. The national Democratic party resolved the problem for Arkansas' Democracy, however, by selecting pro-annexationist James K. Polk rather than Van Buren as its presidential nominee.

In June, congratulating Polk upon his convention victory,  

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7"The New Secretary of State," Intelligencer, April 13, 1844. In Arkansas' delta region with its reliance on cotton production, this would have constituted an impolitic statement.

Archibald Yell described the difficulty Van Buren's pronunciation had posed for him. He had announced, Yell wrote, that he supported no candidate opposed to annexation. Had Van Buren received the nomination, Yell declared, his Whig Congressional opponent in Arkansas would have beaten him: "I played a bold and hazardous game but luck favored me and now all's safe." Yell's wheedling attempt to curry favor with Polk with this gasconade reveals itself readily enough, but it conceals the political realities. As an adept consensus politician, Yell always adopted the most politically expedient position. Thus Yell's support for annexation demonstrated the popularity of annexation in Arkansas. With annexationist supporter Polk beating out Van Buren for the Democratic nomination, the onus of opposing Texas' entry into the Union fell upon David Walker, for Clay went on to win the Whig presidential nomination.

For Arkansas' Whigs, Clay's Texas views constituted a burden which the party proved unable either to carry or jettison. The party sought in various ways to overcome what Borden admitted represented a serious handicap when he concluded in late May that probably a majority of Arkansas' voters favored immediate annexation. Early in the campaign, the party sought to present the annexationist movement as a Tyler plot whereby the president, devoid of electoral support, sought to generate such support by securing the immediate annexation of Texas. Thus Borden denounced "his accidency," John Tyler, when the Madisonian reported that Tyler, unable to secure approval of two-thirds of the Senate for an annexation treaty, contemplated seeking approval of a joint

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9Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, June 21, 1844, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
Congressional resolution favoring annexation. Tyler hoped to secure approval of a joint resolution since this procedure required only majority approval of both Houses.\(^\text{10}\) Placards appeared in Little Rock in mid-May announcing the holding of a Tyler and Texas meeting in the State House. "An Observer" and some fifty other persons, including several Tyler appointees, attended a meeting which the "Observer" described as a spiritless assemblage. It lacked nerve, Borden declared, because those present realized Tyler had no chance of securing reelection.\(^\text{11}\) When Tyler's organ, the Madisonian, sought to demonstrate that Tyler's reelection alone assured annexation, the Gazette indignantly denied that Clay—or even Van Buren—would oppose the will of Congress or the people on this issue.\(^\text{12}\)

Tyler, of course, hardly represented a serious threat to Whig hopes. To support Clay on the issue, however, and at the same time to gain the support of the majority of Arkansans whom Borden declared favored immediate annexation, Whigs needed to devise some persuasive arguments. The arguments devised against immediate annexation fell into four general categories: Whigs contended annexation would involve the United States in a war with Mexico, that it would dishonor America by requiring the nation to repudiate a solemn treaty of friendship with Mexico, that pursuing an immediate annexationist policy would promote sectionalism along North–South lines that might lead to disunion, and finally, it was a cheap electioneering trick which the Democrats stole

\(^{10}\) Gazette, May 8, 1844; "Annexation," \textit{ibid.}, June 26, 1844.

\(^{11}\) \textit{Ibid.}, May 15, 1844.

\(^{12}\) "Old Veto," \textit{ibid.}, June 5, 1844.
Whigs upheld these arguments by emphasizing the dangers annexation posed to American interests. In early May, Henry Clay argued that annexation would involve the United States in an immediate war with Mexico, although he expressed a willingness to fight should any foreign power seek dominion in Texas. David Walker, debating Yell on July 12 at Mount Vernon in St. Francis County, echoed Clay by stating that, while he opposed American annexation of Texas, he "would defend the gallant single star against all foreign powers with his life's blood." Like Clay in his May pronouncement, Walker declared that annexation would compromise American honor. Arkansas' Whigs also subscribed to the view, expounded by Clay in his May statement, that annexation threatened the stability of the Union. To those Southerners who maintained that annexation alone could provide the South with slave states necessary to preserve the sectional balance of power, Clay retorted that only two of the five states into which Texas might divide itself would possess climate and soil suitable for slavery. When Chester Ashley denounced Clay's position an anti-Southern, the Gazette sought to defend the Kentuckian. Clay had indeed, Borden wrote, promised to oppose annexation if elected president if a "respectable minority" in the North objected, since such extensive opposition would threaten the Union. If, however, no such extensive opposition existed, Borden

13 Gazette, April 3, 1844.
15 Gazette, July 24, 1844.
16 Ibid., May 15, 1844.
assured his readers that Clay, as a Southerner deeply concerned with protecting the peculiar institution, would support annexation. In effect, Arkansas' Whigs contended that all other considerations—questions of war, honor and national unity—possessed priority over annexation.

In addition to declaring that annexation threatened war with Mexico, would compromise the nation's honor, and promote disunion, Arkansas' Whigs also castigated the proposal as an electioneering "humbug." The Democrats gathered in the Baltimore convention, wrote William H. Etter, needed a "sudden and exciting" issue to gain public favor, and thus, they "wrested Tyler's Texas thunder from his despairing grasp" by nominating James K. Polk. In Arkansas, Whig Lewis Evans scorned Archibald Yell's use of "his favorite Texas humbug" which, Evans asserted in August, failed to generate voter interest. The Gazette's Borden reiterated the charge in declaring that everyone knew that within a few years Texas would fall "like a ripened pear into our hands."

Yell's position, the Gazette implied, resulted from his desire to exploit the issue to promote his own candidacy.

These Whigs, of course, correctly measured Democratic elation

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17 Gazette, July 10, 1844. The Gazette asserted in mid-August that Southern secessionists led by Calhoun planned to lead the South out of the Union if their annexationist plans failed. Clay prevented Calhoun from disrupting the Union in 1837, the Gazette declared, and, if elected president, could do so again. See Gazette, August 14, 1844.

18 Washington Telegraph, October 30, 1844; Gazette, June 12, 1844.

19 Lewis Evans to Jesse Turner, August 19, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

20 Gazette, July 31, 1844.
at the emergence of the issue, but Whig allegations that the Democracy in Arkansas lacked any real conviction on annexation appears inaccurate. In May the *Banner*'s Solon Borland, predictably enough, expressed no surprise in commenting upon Clay's April statement opposing annexation. In noting Van Buren's simultaneous announcement of opposition, however, Borland expressed profound disappointment. In addition, he resolutely vowed to oppose any candidate adopting this view: "It is enough for us to fix and declare our opposition to him." With Van Buren's fall from grace, Borland suggested John C. Calhoun (his first choice), Lewis Cass, or John Tyler as suitable presidential candidates. In Van Buren, Arkansas, the *Intelligencer*'s George Clarke initially balked at removing Van Buren's name from the paper's masthead; Clarke declared that Van Buren would support annexation when Mexico recognized Texas' independence—a move he described as imminent. Nevertheless, the week following his reaffirmation of Van Buren's candidacy, Clarke removed Van Buren's name from the masthead and subsequently heatedly denied the charge of inconsistency hurled by the *Gazette*'s correspondent "Vindex."  

Van Buren's pronouncement quickly cost him the support of not only the *Banner* and the *Intelligencer* but the state's leading Democrats as well. On May 1, Edward Cross joined Yell in declaring his intention of refusing support to any candidate opposing the immediate annexation of Texas. Cross described as meaningless Van Buren's willingness to

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22 *Intelligencer*, May 18, 1844.

23 Ibid., May 25, June 26, 1844; *Gazette*, June 12, 1844.
support annexation when Mexico recognized Texas; Mexico, he wrote, would extend such recognition only when Britain urged it—an event, Cross wrote, that might transpire in one year, fifty years, or never. 24

Certainly, both Arkansas' parties recognized the important, perhaps decisive, impact of the Texas question upon the campaign of 1844. In its last edition printed before the November election, the Banner declared that if Clay won, his victory would indicate that the electorate had lost sight of the Texas issue. Should Clay win, Borland wrote, the people should realize that they had elected a president who opposed Texas' entry into the Union. 25 The Gazette's Borden professed disbelief, as returns poured in from the rest of the nation in mid-November, that the Texas question alone interested the electorate. But Borden's expression of doubt lacked complete conviction. With state after state reporting majorities for Polk, Borden declared that he could not believe that the American people, committed to a protective tariff, could support a free trader. 26 To the extent that it was genuine, Borden's perplexity expressed the mystification of those who saw the Texas issue as solely emotional in nature and lacking any rational basis.

In large measure, as a consequence of the Texas issue, the campaign of 1844 evoked considerable interest in Arkansas. In mid-October, J. W. Lasater, a schoolteacher at Mt. Comfort, wrote E. Cunningham at Van Buren informing him of conditions at the school. Then Lasater indicated the interest of his fellow townsmen in the campaign: "Do rite [sic]

24 Banner, May 22, 1844.
26 Gazette, November 20, 1844.
to me as soon as possible and inform me whether Major Henry was a whig
or a democrat before he left Van Buren and what he was called by the
people, not because I take so great an interest in politicks [sic] but
the people up this way say he is and always has been one of the strongest
democrats in Crawford county and I merely wished to satisfy my mind on
the subject. I do not ask what he is now, but what he was last winter."27

If new issues helped to stimulate such interest in the campaign,
old issues also added their impact. Although lacking in the intensity
of earlier years, discussion concerning the state banks made their pres-
ence felt in 1844. Once again, each party sought to cast the onus for
creating the banks upon the opposition.28 In addition, the Whigs attacked
Sevier's role in the bond sale of 1836 and Yell's purchase of stock in
the Real Estate Bank.29 In attacking Yell's and Sevier's relations to
the bank, Whigs sought to win the support of those Yell referred to in
correspondence with James K. Polk as "desaffected [sic] Bank Democrats."30

The tariff issue also emerged again with the 1844 campaign with
not only the Whigs supporting a protective tariff but anti-Family

27. W. J. Lemke, ed., J. W. Lasater to Mr. E. Cunningham, October 7,
1844, Washington County Historical Society Bulletin, No. 3 (Payetteville,
1961), 68.

28. Banner, December 16, 1843; "The Little Rock Clay Club alias
the Real Estate Bank," February 20, "Clay Clubs and the Real Estate
Bank," February 27, "Clay Club or the Real Estate Bank," March 6, "A
Plain Question," July 24, 1844; ibid.; "Gov. Yell Triumphant as Ever,
Intelligencer, September 28, 1844. Whig retaliation occurred in the
Gazette, February 21, 1844, and "The Real Estate Bank and the Democracy,"
ibid., May 21, 1844.

29. The Gazette, September 26, 1844, rehashed Sevier's performance
in 1836 while discussing Yell's role as a bank stockholder in the issue
of July 31. Democrat replies occurred with "Hon. A. H. Sevier," Intell-
igencer, July 27, 1844; "Walker vs. Yell," Banner, September 25, 1844;
"Mr. Walker's Last Circular," ibid., October 5, October 26, 1844.

30. Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 5, 1843, Polk Papers,
Library of Congress.
Democratic gubernatorial candidate General Richard C. Byrd favoring it as well. Whigs defended the protective tariff by declaring that only the rich paid the import tax levied on luxury goods and by seeking to demonstrate Thomas Jefferson's support for it. Jesse Turner made the boldest defense of the protective tariff by declaring that no conflict of interest existed between farming, laboring, and manufacturing interests, and that a protective tariff served the interest equally of all three groups. Even the Democrats expressed admiration for Turner in defending what the Intelligencer described as an unpopular policy in Arkansas.

But discussion of the tariff question stimulated far less interest in the campaign than did the debate concerning the wisdom of establishing a national bank. Charles Fenton Mercer Noland's literary creation, "Pete Whetstone," succinctly expressed Whig disgruntlement with the inadequacies of local currency when he declared that "we did

31 Gazette, January 10, 1844. As early as the summer 1843, Byrd's candidacy was advocated by the Independent Democrat published briefly that summer, allegedly in a Whig printing office. See Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 199.


33 "The Candidates," Intelligencer, May 25, 1844. Editor Clarke, in the May 25 edition, accused David Walker of attempting to straddle the tariff issue. According to Arthur Charles Cole, however, by 1844, the principle of a protective tariff "had lost many of its terrors for the people." Indeed, they ascribed the returning prosperity to the effects of the moderate tariff of 1842. Those Southern Whigs who previously balked at this aspect of Whiggery thus felt less uneasiness at adhering to protection. Cole states that it "was a glorious achievement for the Whig party that the Southern wing was brought into line on the leading question of national policy." See Arthur Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1962), p. 103.
hope to get rid of those shinplasters, but all hopes are abandoned—they will last forever and a day longer."\(^{34}\) To wish for something better than local currency did not mean, of course, that all Whigs favored the establishment of a national bank. In the course of the campaign, Whig Congressional Candidate David Walker found it necessary to defend himself from the charge of Eli Colby (editor of the Little Rock Whig paper the *Times and Advocate*) that he supported a national bank, not from conviction, but only as an electioneering necessity. On January 15, 1844, Colby, in an address to the Whig nominating convention meeting in Little Rock, declared that for years he sought to convince people of the need for a national bank. Some Whigs, Colby declared, motivated by "self-interest," offered strenuous opposition to this program although recently they had "courted the popular breeze" by supporting creation of a national bank.\(^{35}\) According to the Democratic Banner's Solon Borland, Colby singled out Walker for specific condemnation by accusing him of declaring that only a constitutional amendment would make possible the establishment of a state bank.\(^{36}\) His objections to Walker's candidacy, Colby concluded, would cease when Walker pledged to support a national bank.\(^{37}\)

The Gazette's Benjamin J. Borden failed to note Colby's remarks since to do so would prove divisive, but in correspondence with Jesse


\(^{35}\) "What They Think of Themselves," *The Arkansas Banner*, January 23, 1844.

\(^{36}\) "More Whig Portraits," *ibid.*, February 6, 1844.

Turner, Walker poured out his resentment. Walker professed to believe that Colby attacked him in order to "produce a change in the nomination."

Defending his own record vis-à-vis a national bank, Walker informed Turner that he had, for some time, supported the establishment of a national bank. Prior to the elections of 1842, he added, and while serving in the Arkansas Senate the same year, he had "on various occasions" defended the need for a national bank. As evidence of his assertion, Walker referred Turner to a speech he delivered in the Senate in 1842, as reported in the Gazette on July 22 of that year. Walker declared that this article contained "an allusion to the currency of the country and a discreet declaration in favor of a currency such as furnished by the old United States Bank." Actually, the Gazette appeared on July 23 rather than July 22, and no letter signed by Walker appeared on that date. In that issue, "Pulaski" vigorously attacked the state banks by calling for their dissolution, but "Pulaski"—who may or may not have been Walker—failed to suggest a national bank as a remedy for Arkansas' financial ills.

In the course of his remarks made to Turner, Walker described the evolution of his own political beliefs. Walker declared that, until recent years, he considered himself a strict constructionist. This earlier outlook, Walker wrote, did not reflect studied conviction, for he had failed to examine carefully the "formation of our Constitution." Following a thorough perusal of proceedings leading to

38David Walker to Jesse Turner, February 26, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University.

the adoption of the Constitution, Walker declared that his views were altered. He now conceived of the states' rights philosophy, for instance, as impracticable since it failed to provide for the efficient exercise of the responsibilities entrusted to the central government. Walker added, somewhat vaguely, that, while he remained incapable of granting complete endorsement to the centralist views of Alexander Hamilton, he nevertheless believed Hamilton the "most abused" official of the early period. Furthermore, Walker declared that Hamilton, as much as Thomas Jefferson, subscribed to libertarian principles.

Walker's principal critic, Eli Colby, died of consumption March 15, 1844, as the campaign began. To replace Colby as editor of the Times and Advocate, the paper's proprietor immediately selected Cyrus W. Weller who proceeded to transform editorially the Times and Advocate into an independent Democratic journal supporting Richard C. Byrd for governor. Opposed to the domination of the Democratic party by the "Family," Weller, in December 1843, had utilized the columns of the Gazette to launch a bitter attack upon the Sevier-Conway faction. Factionalism so bedeviled the Democracy that Archibald Yell—though not in the "Family"—bitterly told James K. Polk that Arkansas' Democrats might lose the election, "because we have so many scaly politicians in our ranks—I wish to God it was unconstitutional for a man to quit his party."

40 David Walker to Jesse Turner, February 26, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University.
41 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 203.
42 Gazette, December 20, 1843.
43 Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 31, 1843, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
Weller's rejection of the Sevier-Conway leadership led the loyalist segment of the party to deny him the privilege of addressing the second Democratic convention which met in Little Rock in late June. According to the Banner, Weller's paper received financial support from Whigs who viewed the Times and Advocate as a Trojan horse, sapping and undermining the morale of Arkansas' Democracy. Despite Democratic attempts to ignore the Times and Advocate's support for Byrd's candidacy, it proved impossible. The Banner argued that Democrats who voted for Byrd served the cause of Whiggery; in addition, Borland declared that Byrd would not receive three hundred Democratic votes and no more than one thousand Whig votes. As Borland obliquely noted, Byrd's candidacy constituted a mixed benefit for the Whigs since gubernatorial candidate Lorenzo Gibson might conceivably lose more votes to Byrd than would the regular Democratic candidate. With the approach of the elections, Borden gave expression to this fear when he reminded Whigs that Byrd's pronouncements labeled him as a Democrat. Those few Whigs who contemplated voting for Byrd, Borden wrote, ought to reflect upon the possibility that the loss of their votes might lead to Gibson's defeat.

Threats and opportunities emanated not solely from events reflecting state political affairs, for the national presidential campaign also affected Arkansas' election of 1844. On two occasions in the fall of 1843, Governor Yell informed his friend James K. Polk...
of the popularity of various Democratic presidential hopefuls. In early October, Yell declared that "Van Buren rather than [Richard Mentor] Johnson is the favorite of Arkansas for the presidency."\(^4^7\) Later in the month, Yell reiterated his earlier assertion in more emphatic fashion by declaring that he "was satisfied now of one fact and that is that Van Buren is the strong man in Arkansas."\(^4^8\) In December, the state Democratic convention meeting at Little Rock appointed a committee to determine the feasibility of instructing Arkansas' delegation to the national convention to support Van Buren's candidacy. In its report the committee declared that since there existed "a diversity of opinion among the Democracy of Arkansas" on the question of presidential preferment, the convention ought not instruct the state's delegation. Paradoxically, however, the committee then proceeded to declare in its report that the "individual preferences" of the committee members indicated Martin Van Buren as the first choice and John C. Calhoun as the second choice for the presidential nomination. James K. Polk and Levi Woodbury received the committee's approval as the first and second choices for the vice-presidential office.\(^4^9\) Commenting upon the committee's

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\(^4^7\) Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 5, 1843, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.

\(^4^8\) Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 31, 1843, ibid. In the spring of 1842, however, Yell listed Arkansas Democrats' presidential preferences in the following order: (1) Johnson, (2) Polk, (3) Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, (4) James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, and (5) Van Buren, whom Arkansas' Democrats "will take but not as a matter of choice." Yell added that the "leading men" of the state's Democracy had confidence in Van Buren but no "great love" for him. See Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, March 6, 1842, ibid.

\(^4^9\) Banner, December 9, 1843. Charles Sellers errs in stating that the "Arkansas and Mississippi conventions had joined Tennessee in recommending Polk." Polk was nominated at Baltimore on May 29, and the second Arkansas convention did not meet until June 8. At Baltimore, Arkansas supported Louis Cass on the first eight ballots and only on the ninth (and unanimous) ballot did it turn to Polk. See Charles
approval of Polk for the second spot on the ticket, Yell informed Polk, in a rather self-satisfied manner, that "you see we can do some things as well as others."\(^{50}\)

Following Polk's nomination for the presidency by the Democratic convention, Whigs assailed him as a nonentity inferior in every respect to Henry Clay. In return, the Banner's Borland declared that Clay, like so many men who achieved early fame, had experienced an early decline of his mental powers and now embarrassed his friends with his inept public speaking performances. Turning to contumely, Borland then quoted John Randolph's notorious description of Clay as a "rotten mackerel which shines and stinks, and stinks, and shines."\(^{51}\)

Nevertheless, the presidential campaign in Arkansas in 1844 failed to generate the intense interest provoked by state and local races. In analyzing their prospects for success in these state races, Whigs realized that party organization and unity represented the keys to victory. Borden expressed the paramount importance of party unity early in the campaign when he declared that, in past campaigns, Arkansas' Whigs displayed only partial unity since at times "the north has presented an unbroken front; and then again, the south; but never both at once."\(^{52}\) Eli Colby's objections to David Walker's candidacy was an


\(^{50}\) Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, December 5, 1843, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.

\(^{51}\) Banner, July 10, 1844.

\(^{52}\) Gazette, April 3, 1844.
example of the divisiveness which Borden deplored; on occasion, other divisions within Arkansas Whiggery surfaced in the campaign of 1844. In August, for instance, correspondent "Riley Riquets" described two Whig rallies held in the Fayetteville area in which candidates for the state Senate and House were nominated. Prior to the meetings—the second of which drew an estimated eight hundred to one thousand people—the correspondent mysteriously wrote that there existed "a kink in the Whig line of operation in this county and [the] apathy consequent thereon argued defeat to the party." According to "Riley Riquets," however, harmony prevailed at the conclusion of the second meeting.  

One of the more divisive incidents within the Whig party in the 1844 campaign centered around one of the presidential electors, Alfred Arrington of Washington County. Solon Borland "dragged out a well documented eleven-year-old scandal about Arrington's having given up the Methodist ministry in Missouri after exposure of his attempt to abandon his wife and elope with his married paramour." The Gazette's Borden attempted to ignore the charges, while the Van Buren Western Frontier Whig more actively defended Arrington. George Clarke of the Democratic Van Buren Intelligencer suggested that the Frontier Whig might employ its efforts to better cause than defending a man who had spent his mornings in Little Rock in the legislative halls, his evenings delivering temperance lectures, and his nights in the "haunts of vice

53 Gazette, August 14, 1844.


55 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 205; Banner, June 19, 1844.
and infamy."  

In mid-October, the Banner gleefully reported that Arrington had addressed a letter to either Benjamin Borden or Absalom Fowler announcing his withdrawal as a Whig elector. Borland called upon the Gazette either to verify or refute rumors that Arrington had declared that "I will no longer act with the Whig party," but Borland predicted that the Gazette would delay publishing Arrington's letter until after the election.  

According to Batesville Democratic Judge Uriah M. Rose, Arrington's decision to withdraw as a Whig elector resulted from Arrington's attendance at a Democratic rally addressed by Chester Ashley who sought the United States Senate seat vacated by the death, in August 1844, of Senator William Savin Fulton. Rose declared that, after Ashley spoke, Arrington "became converted, resigned his candidacy, and afterward voted the Democrat ticket; no doubt the only incident of the kind on record."  

In late October, a one sentence notice appeared in the Gazette calling the reader's attention to the replacement on the masthead of the editorial page of Arrington's name by that of John Drennen of Van Buren. The Arrington episode constituted an embarrassment to the

56 Intelligencer, July 20, 1844.

57 "Whiggery is Dead in Arkansas. Rats leaving the sinking ship," Banner, October 16, 1844; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 205.


59 Gazette, October 23, 1844. The Intelligencer of October 26, 1844, also noted Drennen's replacement of Arrington. Just above this announcement, the Intelligencer briefly noted Arrington's recent appointment as Quartermaster General of the Arkansas militia.
state's Whigs in 1844, which Archibald Yell hoped would produce ramifications outside Arkansas. A week following the state elections held in early October, Yell, after informing Tennessee political associate Samuel H. Laughlin of the results of Arkansas' elections, described the defection of elector Arrington. Terming Arrington a distinguished lawyer and one of the most prominent Whigs in the state, Yell exclaimed that Arrington "has renounced Whiggery and declined running and will now take the field for Polk and Dalles." Yell urged Laughlin to publish this news in Nashville's Democratic paper since "it will do us good."^60

If Arrington's conduct constituted an embarrassment to the party, a much more damaging factor resulted from the willingness of some Arkansas Whig voters to split their ticket. As the election approached its climax in September, the Gazette addressed itself to this problem. Splitting the ticket, Borden wrote, constituted a serious abandonment of Whig principles. Whigs, he declared, ought to remember that, in offering to vote for a Democratic legislator in order to induce a Democrat to vote for a Whig for a municipal or county office, they abandoned hope of electing a Whig to the United States Senate.61 Even swapping votes on the local level to repay a "private kindness" represented a serious error; furthermore, in Pulaski County at least, Whig candidates matched or exceeded in ability every Democrat seeking office.62 In late September, Albert Pike, speaking at Little Rock, urged a "large

60Archibald Yell to Samuel H. Laughlin, October 8, 1844, Tennessee Historical Society Miscellaneous Files, 1688-1951, Manuscript Unit, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.


62"Whigs of Pulaski," ibid., September 11, 1844.
audience" of Clay Club members to demonstrate party unity by denying office to every Democrat seeking a position in Pulaski County. Following the October elections, however, Borden wrote that Arkansas Whigs, in voting in local and state elections, lacked a sense of party loyalty.

If Whigs proved unable to offer a solid front to the opposition, events within the Democratic party tended to reduce Democratic cohesiveness as well. In the middle of July, the party found itself without a gubernatorial candidate as Dr. Daniel J. Chapman—who had replaced Elias Nelson Conway in April—withdraw from the campaign because of ill health. The Banner immediately placed the name of Thomas Stevenson Drew from Randolph County in northeast Arkansas on its masthead. From Little Rock, James Sevier Conway wrote Drew that, although Drew had not lived in south Arkansas for a number of years, he still retained many friends in that section who would support him at the polls. Conway admitted that the Democratic maverick Richard C. Byrd would reduce Drew's vote margin in some areas in the south, but he added that he "heard of but one single vote for Byrd in Hempstead and Lafayette and that vote is old Wheat the drunken brick mason." Conway advised Drew to concentrate his campaign in eastern and western Arkansas, visiting Little Rock on "the day of the election." The Intelligencer predicted that, despite his late entry into the race, Drew would easily beat "the old Hot Springs coon" Gibson, since Democrats in north Arkansas knew Drew

63Gazette, September 26, 1844.
64Banner, July 17, 1844.
65James S. Conway to Thomas S. Drew, August 9, 1844, Arkansas Gazette Foundation Library, Little Rock.
well. 66 How much of this represented conviction and how much an attempt to bolster the spirits of fellow Democrats remains unknown.

Certainly submitting three gubernatorial candidates to the voters in one campaign hardly promoted candidate identification with the electorate. Yet Whigs believed that they possessed the opportunity not only to win the governor's race in 1844 but also to attain the Congressional seat as well. In David Walker Whiggery featured a candidate whose reputation in north Arkansas approached that of Archibald Yell. True, in their joint appearances Walker could hardly match Yell's "tendency to vary his policies and personality to suit the attitudes of the communities they visited." 67 Nevertheless, Walker's quiet dignity, sober intelligence, and reputation for honesty made him the most formidable opponent Yell had faced. As the two men engaged in joint debates in their native Washington County in August, Whig Lewis Evans expressed elation at Walker's performance. Evans wrote Jesse Turner on August 19 that, two days previously, Yell failed to meet Walker in a scheduled Saturday debate. Evans added that a "considerable number of farmers and preachers, those who seldom go out to hear political debates" gathered at Boonsborough, sixteen miles from Fayetteville, to hear the speakers, but only Walker made an appearance. Much speculation ensued as to Yell's failure to keep the appointment. Some of those present, Evans declared, believed that Yell's health prevented his making the short trip from his home at Fayetteville, while others suggested that Yell—discouraged at his performance in previous debates

66 Intelligencer, August 17, 1844.

67 Ross, Arkansas Gazette. The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 205.
with Walker—sought to avoid further contact with him. Some believed that, for the remainder of the campaign, Yell planned to devote his efforts to "bushwhacking as the county candidates say. This is by going through the back settlements talking to one man at a time." 68

As Yell and the other candidates concluded their campaign efforts, each undoubtedly pondered the effect that recent immigrants would have upon the final returns. In April, the Democratic Van Buren Intelligencer noted the arrival at the wharf of the steamboat Export carrying some forty-two immigrants. According to the paper, twenty-nine of this number termed themselves Democrats, while only thirteen described themselves as Whigs. The Intelligencer, declared that although most of those designating themselves as Whigs previously resided elsewhere in the state, the majority of Democrats hailed from outside Arkansas and "have arrived just in time to record their votes in support of the cause of the people." 69 In late September, Editor George Clarke declared that "certain native citizens" planned to challenge the attempt to vote of all "adopted citizens" at the polls in Fort Smith. Under Arkansas' election laws, the prospective voter was not required actually to possess citizenship papers, title papers to verify minimum property requirements for voting, or a certificate attesting to compliance with the residency requirement. A simple oath by the challenged voter asserting his compliance with these requirements enabled a person to cast his ballot. Clarke observed that many native born Americans who migrated from other states could not prove their citizenship; he asked

68 Lewis Evans to Jesse Turner, August 19, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
69 "Latest News," Intelligencer, April 6, 1844.
whether the election judges should deny the vote to those immigrants. 70

Two days before the state elections held on October 7, Clarke returned to the question of voter qualifications, although, on this occasion, his remarks concerned a group largely of native birth. He declared that there existed a "large number" of American citizens residing north of Van Buren, Arkansas, in the Indian territory, who believed themselves entitled to vote in the forthcoming elections. Clarke printed Article IV of the Arkansas Constitution as evidence of his assertion that any free, white, male citizen over twenty-one years of age who had resided in Arkansas for six months possessed the right to vote in any election. Of course, residents of the Indian territory did not reside in Arkansas, but Clarke once more noted that, in determining residency, the election judges could accept the prospective voter's oath attesting his residency. 71 In effect, Clarke obliquely counseled perjury. Presumable, he believed that, on balance, the Democracy would benefit from the voter fraud entailed in residents of the Indian country crossing over to vote in the elections.

Clarke's effort here lends some support to Democratic boasts that newcomers to the state, often people on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder, tended to support the Democracy. In the last edition prior to the October election, the Banner's Solon Borland also sought to curry favor with the foreign born by declaring that considerable evidence existed to link Whiggery with nativism. If Clay won in November, Borland added, he would extend the five year waiting

70 "Adopted Citizens," Intelligencer, September 21, 1844.

71 "Qualifications of Voters of Arkansas," ibid., October 5, 1844.
period required to obtain citizenship privileges (including suffrage) to twenty-one years. Naturally, Borland concluded, Whigs sought to avoid open identification with nativism, but on election day he advised the foreign born of Pulaski County to note the names of Democratic candidates for the legislature—all of whom supported the rights of the foreign born. 72 In championing the cause of the foreign born, Clarke may have sought to identify the Democracy with the aspirations of all lower class peoples—native as well as foreign born. Certainly, he appealed to no substantial body of foreign born persons, for only a few such persons resided in Pulaski County. The 1850 census in Arkansas listed only fifty families in the entire state headed by a person born overseas. 73

In raising such an issue, Arkansas' Democrats risked fomenting a nativist backlash, and thus, they tended to mute their appeal to foreigners. In view of the relatively small percentage of foreign born persons residing within the state, the risks inherent in a more forceful appeal appeared prohibitive. As to the effects of out-of-state immigration on the Arkansas campaign in 1844, only one cursory comment appeared following the state election when an anonymous correspondent from Batesville, in north Arkansas, ascribed the Whig defeat in part to the influence of recent immigration. He wrote, that for

72"Native Americanism," Banner, October 2, 1844. In the East, increasing immigration affected political life as a nativist party in New York City, aided by Whigs, won the city elections in the spring of 1844. In Philadelphia, serious anti-Catholic riots occurred the same year. See Nichols, The Invention of the American Political Parties, p. 357.

the past two years, more Democrats than Whigs had entered his area of
the state and that this led to the Whig defeat: "Every nook and corner
has a Tennessee democrat." 74

Whether immigrants or residents of long standing, eighteen
thousand Arkansas voters trooped to the polls on October 7, the first
Monday of the month, to cast their ballots. By the following week,
Arkansans knew that Yell definitely had won his race and that Drew
probably had won his also. In Little Rock, both the Gazette and the
Banner published their regular editions on October 9, with the Gazette's
expressing jubilation at the Pulaski County returns and the Banner's
contending that the Whigs won in the county legislative races by a
reduced margin vis-à-vis the returns of earlier years. Borland con-
tended that, in the sheriff's race, the Whig candidate won only because
he received substantial support from Democrats who, Borland declared,
apparently remained content with a Whig in that position. 75

But if Pulaski County Whigs could find solace in achieving
local victories, the Democrats could rejoice in once again winning
the two state races. Borden continued to hope for several weeks that
Gibson might beat Drew. Gibson, however, failed to win, although Drew
became the first Democrat to win a state office in Arkansas with a mere

74 Gazette, October 16, 1844. The Gazette of October 30 contains
yet another unsigned letter from Batesville declaring that more Demo-
crats than Republicans had moved to the area for "four years past." The
style of the letters suggests that both may have been written by Charles
Fenton Mercer Noland.

75 Gazette, October 9, 1844; "Pulaski County Elections," Banner,
October 9, 1844. The Whig candidates for state representative—Charles
Bertrand, Absalom Fowler and Frederick Trapnell—received 380, 350, and
349 votes, respectively, to their opponents 346, 307, and 304. Gibson
and Walker received majorities of 85 and 45 votes, respectively. See
the Gazette of October 9, 1844.
plurality.\textsuperscript{76} Of the 18,387 votes cast, Drew secured 47.8 percent of the votes in winning twenty-five counties, Gibson won 38.4 percent of the votes and won fifteen counties, and Byrd attained 13.7 percent of the votes while winning five counties.\textsuperscript{77} Gibson won only one county in the populous northwest, while Byrd won five of the counties in this area, but Bryd performed poorly in heavily populated Washington County, receiving only twenty-seven votes to Drew's 759 and Gibson's 503. The counties Gibson won were concentrated in the South and along the Mississippi River. In the Congressional race, Walker's 7,576 votes comprised 40.6 percent of the vote, Yell's 11,112 votes amounted to 58.9 percent, and Tully's 103 votes represented 0.5 percent of the votes cast. Walker won only five counties since he failed to win a number of south Arkansas and Mississippi River counties that Gibson won.\textsuperscript{78} Probably the Whig position on the Texas issue reduced Walker's totals in these areas since the Whig party's anti-annexation views clashed with those of most Arkansans. And as a Congressional rather than a gubernatorial candidate, Walker undoubtedly lost the support of those who hesitated to elect to Congress, where annexation constituted a potent issue, a representative of the anti-annexation Whig party.

In the aftermath of the election, some Arkansans paused to

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Gazette}, November 6, 1844.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Journal of the House of Representatives of the Fifth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, 1844-1845} . . . , (Little Rock: Printed by Solon Borland, 1845), 14; \textit{Gazette}, November 27, 1844. Of the 18,387 official votes cast, Drew won 8,797, Gibson 7,066, and Byrd 2,524.

\textsuperscript{78} In the south and along the Mississippi River, Walker failed to win Arkansas, Bradley, Crittenden, Clark, Mississippi, and Phillips Counties—all won by Gibson.
assess the election results, while two of Arkansas' citizens hastened into the Indian territory to settle their political differences on the dueling field. George Clarke, Democratic editor of the *Arkansas Intelligencer*, and John S. Logan, the Whig editor of the Van Buren Frontier Whig, fought a duel with rifles at sixty paces across the river from Fort Smith. Fortunately, both men proved less adept at dueling than at editorializing; following a fruitless exchange of fire, a reconciliation occurred. An exuberant Archibald Yell gave a more restrained expression to his feelings concerning the election by informing James Polk that the Democracy of Arkansas had "fought the good fight and kept the faith." Yell maintained that one-fourth of the electorate failed to vote due to widespread illness, but neither this factor nor the efforts of the "disorganizer" Byrd would, Yell predicted, prevent Drew from winning by a 2,000 vote majority. As for his own campaign, Yell claimed that, while he had not wished to seek the Congressional office again, he did not regret the decision to do so since his candidacy helped save the state for the Democracy. In conclusion, Yell declared, while he would like to seek the Senate seat vacated by the death of Senator William Savin Fulton in August, he could not do so since this might provoke a split within the party in Arkansas.

Yell informed Polk that, in the November presidential contest, Polk would beat Clay in Arkansas by 5,000 votes, if the electorate turned out in force. In the *Banner*, Borland appeared even more sanguine

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80 Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, October 20, 1844, Polk Papers, Library of Congress. Fulton died near Little Rock after a ten day illness. See "Death of Governor Fulton," *Banner*, August 21, 1844.
in his prediction of a Polk majority of at least 6,000 votes. Those "local prejudices and personal feelings" which assisted Walker and Gibson would not play a role in the presidential contest, Borland surmised.\textsuperscript{81} The Gazette's Borden, on the other hand, contended that Clay might carry the state since localism—which he declared harmed rather than assisted Walker and Gibson—would not affect the national race.\textsuperscript{82} In Washington, Arkansas (Hempstead County), Whig editor James P. Jett appeared undecided as to Clay's chances in Arkansas. In two separate commentaries within the same issue, Jett both abandoned hope of winning the state and claimed that, conceivably, Clay might win. In a defeatist mood, Jett noted that "Arkansas is not the Union" as he printed accounts of Whig victories elsewhere in the country which portended a Clay victory. Elsewhere in this edition of October 30, Jett claimed that "hope is not yet extinguished within us," since Arkansas would vote in November on political questions "untrammeled by private friendships and personal predilections."\textsuperscript{84}

Jett's bold front notwithstanding, everyone knew that, in Arkansas, only the extent of a Polk victory in November remained at issue. The absence of any significant newspaper editorializing in the intervening month between the holding of the state and presidential elections demonstrated the confidence of Arkansas' Democracy and the resignation of the state's Whigs in the coming Polk-Clay contest. In

\textsuperscript{81} Banner, October 16, 1844.

\textsuperscript{82} Gazette, October 23, 1844.

\textsuperscript{83}"We Told You So," Washington Telegraph, October 30, 1844.

\textsuperscript{84}"Once More to the Polls," ibid., October 30, 1844.
Van Buren, Arkansas, Democrat George Clarke made a ceremonial thrust at last minute politicking when, two days prior to the November 4 election, he sought to portray Clay as a pro-black candidate. According to Clarke, Clay rejoiced in the triumph in Rhode Island of a faction which secured the vote for propertyless blacks, despite the requirement that whites own property worth several hundred dollars. Concluding his appeal to sectional prejudice, Clarke wrote that those planning to vote for Clay should remember that Clay "opposes every measure calculated to benefit the South, and supports the measures of the North." Specifically, Clarke noted Clay's opposition to the annexation of Texas and his support of a high tariff as anti-Southern measures.  

Clarke's thrust constituted the last sally of the campaign, for on November 4, Arkansans recorded their electoral verdict. Out of the 15,150 votes cast, Polk won 9,546 (63.0 percent) while Clay won 5,604. Of the thirty-eight counties which submitted official returns, Clay won only four.  

Some 3,538 fewer Arkansans (approximately eighteen percent) cast votes in the presidential contest than did in the Walker-Yell election the previous month. To compare the performance of Polk and Clay vis-à-vis those of the state candidates, the returns of eight counties in the northwestern quadrant of the state and those of five Mississippi River counties were selected for comparative analysis. In

85 "Rise Fathers, Rome Demands Aid," Intelligencer, November 2, 1844.

86 W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots 1836-1892 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 274–92. Clay won Chicot, Monroe, Ouachita, and Phillips counties. Two days following the election, Yell informed James K. Polk that, with a favorable turnout, Polk would win Arkansas by 4,000 to 5,000 votes. See Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, November 6, 1844, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
the northwestern area, Democratic candidates normally secured majorities whereas Whig candidates usually performed well in the Mississippi River counties. Comparative analysis reveals that, in the eight northwestern counties, Polk won 5.2 percent more of the votes cast than had the Drew-Yell combination the previous month, whereas Clay secured 6.2 percent fewer votes in the area than the Walker-Gibson combination. In the five Mississippi River counties, Polk's showing also exceeded that of the Democratic ticket the previous month, although to a less dramatic extent. In these river counties, Polk won 2.5 percent more of the total vote than Drew-Yell; Clay secured 2.3 percent fewer votes than Walker-Gibson. Thus in both sample areas, Polk's support exceeded that provided the state Democratic tickets. It appears evident that Polk's support of, and Clay's opposition to, annexation of Texas aided Polk in Arkansas. Some voters who supported the Whig state candidates in October supported Polk the following month, and some simply failed to vote in the presidential election. Either response to the November election might indicate opposition to Clay's position on Texas, although in failing to cast a vote some Whigs might simply have expressed disbelief in the possibility of Clay's carrying the state.

If Arkansas' presidential vote became known early, doubt as to

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87 The eight northwestern counties providing returns in the Clay-Polk, Walker-Yell, and Gibson-Drew contests were Benton, Washington, Madison, Newton, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, and Pope counties. The five Mississippi River counties providing returns in all three contests were Crittenden, Phillips, Arkansas, Desha, and Chicot counties.

88 In the northwest the Gibson-Walker candidacies averaged 1,822 votes (38.0%) and Drew-Yell 3,053 votes (62.0%); Clay won 1,466 (31.8%) and Polk 3,151 (68.2%) of the votes cast there. In the river counties the Gibson-Walker candidacies averaged 882 votes (55.4%), Drew-Yell won 706 (44.6%), Clay won 806 votes (52.9%), and Polk 711 votes (47.1%) in these river counties.
the outcome nationally continued for several weeks. In Hempstead County, Whig editor James P. Jett, while conceding in mid-November that "the locos have stirred the coons up in this State with a long pole," expressed the hope that, outside Arkansas, Clay's cause would prove triumphant. As late as November 20, Solon Borland confessed to the Banner's readers that incomplete returns continued to make impossible a prediction concerning the presidential results. To those Pulaski County Whigs claiming a Clay victory, Borland commented that they appeared to receive their news more rapidly than he, since he relied for election returns upon the mails while Whigs received theirs in every passing breeze. By the end of November, Arkansas' Whigs conceded that Polk had indeed won the presidency. In Washington, Arkansas, the Telegraph declared that the American people, in refusing Clay, had elected the least qualified of the two candidates; still Jett expressed belief that America would resolve its problems under Polk's leadership since—although inferior to Clay—he possessed "pretty fair abilities."

In Little Rock, an embittered Borden declared that Whigs had sought to prevent the evil now assured the nation by Clay's defeat. As consolation, Borden suggested two courses open to Whigs: They might employ their time observing Democrats falling upon each other as "ravenous wolves" in their struggle for office, and they could concentrate their energies upon the cultivation of "private and individual pursuits." Borden explained that, with the hope of office extinguished,

89Telegraph, November 13, 1844.


91Telegraph, November 27, 1844.
Whigs would find the time to cultivate the social and scholarly spheres. Although they would not find the opportunity to "accumulate so much of the filthy lucre of this world," Borden advised Whigs to hold themselves in readiness, for in time they would "redeem a suffering country, from those who will rule over it, merely to prey upon its vitals." From Batesville, Charles Fenton Mercer Noland's mythical "Pete Whetstone" expressed astonishment at the results of the presidential race: "Well, who would have believed it?—we are knocked into fits! D—n it, but I am mad, but there is no use in crying over spilt milk. Jim Cole has had misgivings ever since he kotched a big coon in his steel trap—Well, don't it beat all natur?" "Pete Whetstone" concluded that Clay stood "head and shoulders taller" than any man, except George Washington, who ever lived. And in far off Clarksville, Texas, Bennet Martin, a recent immigrant from Arkansas, wrote Jesse Turner of his reaction to the presidential outcome. If he had developed the habit of cursing, Martin declared, he would call curses down upon the American people for having turned their backs upon Clay, but in electing Polk, Americans had sufficiently cursed themselves.

In assessing the reasons for the defeat of Arkansas' Whiggery in 1844, one must take note of the influence of the Texas issue, as well as the opposition of westerners to much of the Whig program—a high tariff, internal improvements made at federal expense, and high prices

92 "Consolation for the Whigs," Gazette, November 27, 1844.
94 Bennet Martin to Jesse Turner, December 7, 1844, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
for public lands. And in addition, as one historian has observed, by the mid-1840's in Arkansas, party identification constituted a vital factor and one which promoted electoral stability: "While there were variations from one year to another at the same level . . . these variations tended to be uniform across the state. In this way, Arkansas approached the national pattern of stability."95 Certainly, one additional factor promoting party stability reflected the support Whigs received from Arkansas' slavocracy. The evidence indicates that those counties containing a large number of slaves contributed a significant percentage of votes to the Whig cause in the presidential campaigns of the 1840's and in 1852.96


96 See Tables II, III and IV and Map II in the Appendix for data relating to this statement.
Baffled by Henry Clay's third failure to win a presidential contest, Whigs turned to examine the cause for his failure. The Gazette's Benjamin J. Borden explained it by stating that if "Foreigners, Abolitionists, and Catholics had not voted in a body against us, we should have triumphed."\(^1\) The editor of the Washington Telegraph in Hempstead County echoed this conviction by declaring that Eastern newspapers reported that in New York State, just prior to the election, some three thousand foreigners fraudulently received naturalization papers entitling them to vote; the Telegraph added that New York City alone contained fifteen thousand voters of French descent who supported James K. Polk for president. Perhaps, the editor asserted, the "Native Americans are not far wrong."\(^2\)

Further reflection convinced Borden that, while foreigners indeed deserved censure for their support of Polk, others had also led the nation astray. Along with foreigners and Catholics, Borden subsequently listed the offending groups as "Abstractionists," radicals, the reformers Robert Dale Owen and Fanny Wright, the "fanatical abolitionist" James G. Birney, and such "unrelenting southern slave holders"

\(^1\)Arkansas Gazette, November 27, 1844.
\(^2\)Washington Telegraph, November 27, 1844.
as John C. Calhoun. In addition, Borden blamed Clay's defeat upon the southern free traders and Pennsylvania's high tariff supporters. Subsequently, Borden returned to his earlier thesis that the foreign born represented an unfortunate element in American political life. On this occasion, Borden called his readers' attention to the American Democrat and Weekly Courier published in Louisville, Kentucky. Borden described this journal as devoted to the cause of native Americanism. He added that, to some extent, the Louisville paper had declared "war" against the foreign born; Borden wrote that he could not entirely support the Kentucky journal in its "war" against the foreign element, but he recommended that Gazette patrons examine the American Democrat and Weekly Courier since the paper displayed zeal, independence, and overall ability.

Democrats denied the Whig charge that bloc voting for Polk by Catholics and the foreign born assured Clay's defeat. Both Solon Borland of The Arkansas Banner and George Clarke of the Arkansas Intelligencer, however, conceded that Whigs received but little support from these elements, since Whiggery possessed a nativist orientation. Whigs, they wrote, advocated such a lengthy probationary period for those foreigners aspiring to citizenship that a lifetime would elapse before the immigrant could acquire the vote. Borland and Clarke subsequently declared that, having lost its bid to enact its nationalistic program, Whiggery would, in its bitterness, openly champion a xenophobic program

3 "Who is James K. Polk?," Gazette, December 9, 1844.
4 Ibid., January 20, 1845.
5 "Mr. Clay's Defeat," The Arkansas Banner, December 4, 1844; "Whig Disappointment," Arkansas Intelligencer, December 7, 1844.
in the hope of gaining power.\textsuperscript{6}

This postmortem prediction proved prophetically accurate, although ill timed, for not until the defeat of the Whig presidential candidate General Winfield Scott in 1852 did elements within the Whig party move into the nativist-oriented American Party. In 1844, however, Arkansas' Whigs sought to regroup their forces as best they might. In Little Rock, the legislature convened in November, 1844, with Whigs eager to retain the minority of state offices they possessed and hopeful that the faction-ridden Democratic party contained elements eager to enlist Whig support and willing to bid for it. Since the Democracy of Arkansas contained several disparate elements (the supporters of Ambrose Sevier, Chester Ashley, Archibald Yell and Elias Conway), some basis existed for Whig hopes. Early in the legislative session, a contest occurred between supporters and opponents of Sevier when Sevier's adherents in the legislature attempted, but failed, to deny the office of attorney for the State Bank at Fayetteville to Judge Jonas M. Tebbetts. Tebbetts had not sought the position but found himself opposed by "Sevier men for the purpose of making a demonstration of the Sevier influence and power in the legislature."\textsuperscript{7}

A contest for this minor office interested Whigs far less than did the Democratic struggle to replace Whig state Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel Ringo whose eight year term expired in 1845. The \textit{Banner}

\begin{itemize}
\item [\textsuperscript{6}] "The Whigs and Native Americans," \textit{Banner}, December 4, 1844; \textit{Intelligencer}, December 14, 1844.
\end{itemize}
urged the Democratic-controlled legislature to replace Ringo and to 
deny appointments to all Whig aspirants for office, since Whigs boasted 
that they received appointment because the Democracy lacked qualified 
candidates. The Gazette denied this charge, declaring that not a 
Whig received office without thanking Democrats "for it, from the 
bottom of his soul." When the legislature elected Democrat Thomas 
Johnson as Ringo's replacement, the Gazette described the action of 
proscribing a "sensible and honest Whig" as a monstrous act which pro-
stituted the judiciary to the spoils system.9

Denying office to Whigs occupied only a portion of the energies 
of Arkansas' Democrats. Not only did Sevier seek to acquire control 
of the party, but there existed a bitter struggle between Senator 
Chester Ashley and Congressman Archibald Yell. In November 1844, Yell 
wrote President-elect James K. Polk that Polk would win Arkansas by 
four to five thousand votes. Yell then proceeded to suggest that Ashley 
always followed a selfish course since he lacked ideological convictions. 
As for Ashley's pledge that he would retire from the Senate at the end 
of his term two years later, Yell expressed skepticism, adding, "I 
know the man." Yell ended by pledging to attend Polk's inauguration 
on March 4, 1845, in order "fully and equally" to discuss the patronage 
claims of Polk's true friends in Arkansas.10

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8 Gazette, November 13, 1844. This Uriah Heap pronouncement 
appeared in the absence of editor Benjamin J. Borden honeymooning in 
Kentucky. See Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866 

9 Ibid., November 20, 1844; John Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial 
History of Arkansas, p. 149.

10 Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, November 24, 1844, Polk Papers, 
Library of Congress.
to appoint Yell's supporters to positions within the federal bureaucracy, and in turn those supporters of Yell's in Arkansas placed pressure upon him to secure positions for them from Polk. 11 One such Yell supporter, seeking some "office honorable and lucrative," warned Yell that Ashley sought to control post office patronage in Arkansas and added that, if Ashley succeeded, he "will give us more trouble than we desire." 12

The Gazette's Benjamin J. Borden found consolation in the Democratic struggle for spoils. Six weeks prior to Polk's inauguration, Borden noted that between fifteen and twenty Democrats from throughout Arkansas planned to gather at Little Rock in late January to journey together to the nation's capital, ostensibly to observe the presidential inauguration. In reality, Borden wrote, the Democratic politicians would petition Polk for offices. Borden expressed the belief that the exodus would improve Arkansas' political atmosphere. 13 But even if such an improvement occurred, it offered little immediate hope for Whiggery whose fortunes within the state had reached a new low. In June 1845, Borden moved the Gazette's office to a new location, probably because subscription revenue proved inadequate to cover rental charges at the paper's previous fine location. 14 In Van Buren, the owners of the Frontier Whig abandoned the struggle in Arkansas early in 1846 due to

11 Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, September 5, 1845, Polk Papers, Library of Congress; Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, September 18, 1845, ibid.
12 Lockfield Maclin to Archibald Yell, November 5, 1845, ibid.
13 Gazette, January 27, 1845.
"inadequate patronage" and moved the press to Victoria, Texas. Borden felt so little political pugnacity following the move to his more modest quarters that when Little Rock's Banner noted the presence in the state capital of David Walker by referring to him as "Soapy Davy" and the "Slippery Coon," the Gazette failed to issue a spirited rejoinder. Instead, Borden contented himself with deploring Borland's rhetorical attacks upon an individual visiting Little Rock merely to conduct private legal affairs. Borden concluded by expressing surprise at the attack in view of the "stillness of the political atmosphere, which now reigns in our state." 17

In reality, beneath the surface of affairs, politics occupied the attention of Arkansas' Whigs. In the legislative session which opened in November 1844 and ended in early January of 1845, the Whigs attempted once more to utilize the difficulties of the state banks to promote party advantage. The opportunity to do so presented itself in August 1843 when the London securities firm of Fred Huth and Company petitioned the Assembly to accept responsibility for the State Bank bonds on which interest had remained unpaid since July 1, 1843. The firm, which stated that it had sold the bonds in Britain and on the continent, appealed to the state's honor by reminding the legislators that in selling the bonds, Arkansas pledged its solemn word to pay the principal and interest due on them. 18

15 Intelligencer, February 7, 1846, quoting Frontier Whig (n.d.).  
16 "Soapy Davy," Banner, July 9, 1845.  
17 Gazette, July 14, 1845.  
Seeking to embarrass the Democrats, Little Rock Whig Legislator Charles Pierre Bertrand moved that the Ways and Means Committee of the Arkansas House of Representatives respond to the Huth Company's petition. The committee chairman, Democrat James B. Logan, replied by declaring that the legislature had previously promised to uphold the Arkansas debt and he referred to the Arkansas Assembly's act of January 31, 1843. This act liquidated the banks and pledged repayment of the principal and interest on the bonds. In his message to the Assembly in November 1844, Governor Thomas I. Drew responded to the concerns of both Arkansas' citizens and the bondholders: "But while we cannot pay, we will neither deny nor repudiate them. We only ask a little time, which judiciously improved, will enable us once more to stand before the world unembarrassed and out of debt."  

Thus, Drew sought to escape the onus of repudiating the state debt by promising that at some future date—albeit unspecified—the bond holders would receive their money. Determined to force the Democrats to accept responsibility for repudiating the state debt, Bertrand introduced still another resolution. He urged the House to provide that specie available in the Bank's vaults be used to pay a portion of the interest due on the bonds. Bertrand's motion met with a 58 to 12


20 Ibid., "Address of Governor Thomas I. Drew to the Assembly, November 20, 1844," Appendix, 55. In a candid statement to the Assembly two years later, Drew stated that the banks were created because the people of Arkansas believed they would relieve themselves "of taxation altogether." See Journal of the House of Representatives for the Sixth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas 1846 (Little Rock: The Gazette, Printed by Authority, 1846), 6.

21 Ibid., 112, 116.
rebuke in the House, but by introducing it he officially brought the bank problem once more to the attention of the citizenry. His resolution led one iritated Democrat to declare that some legislators made a "hobby" of the bank issue. The Whig "hobby," of course, consisted not in offering a solution, for none existed short of inaugurating the draconian tax rate advocated by Albert Pike in The Evil and the Remedy. But Pike lacked political ambition; those possessing such ambitions agreed with the anonymous Gazette correspondent who maintained in March 1845 that any candidate urging an increase in taxes to pay the bondholders "would not get five votes in any county in the state."

In assessing the correspondent's comment, Borden carefully avoided offering any suggestions of his own, confining himself instead to the task of asking his readers if they possessed a solution. In

\[22\] Journal of the House of Representatives for the Fifth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas 1844-1845, 116. That a straight party vote was not recorded here is noted by observing that later in the session a resolution urging approval of the creation of a national bank met with a 56 to 10 defeat. Three of the supporters of Bertrand's resolution opposed the national bank issue. Ibid., 119.

\[23\] Intelligencer, January 4, 1845.


\[25\] "State Banks of Arkansas—Virtual Repudiation occasioned by a total inability to pay," Gazette, March 3, 1845. The bonds were never redeemed. In 1850 Governor John S. Roane professed perplexity as to the course he should recommend that the legislature take with respect to Arkansas' banking obligations. The state, he wrote, lacked the funds to repay its bonded obligations but repudiation would disgrace Arkansas: "Shall . . . I keep up the policy of my predecessors and continue to mystify, promise to pay without ever intending to do it, keeping up the bonds without benefitting anyone? The truth must be told sometime, why not now?" See John S. Roane to General Henry Wilcox, August 26, 1850, Eno Collection, Arkansas History Commission, quoted in Ted R. Worley, "The Arkansas State Bank: Ante-Bellum Period," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXIII (Spring, 1964), 73-74.
addition, Borden hinted that equity demanded that any program advanced offer some solution other than raising taxes. Borden supported this restriction by pointing out that only a few of Arkansas' citizens living in the state when the Bank functioned had benefitted from its existence and, in addition, many had migrated to Arkansas since it ceased operations. Nevertheless, while assuring the readers that he concealed no partisan purpose in advancing the issue, Borden urged his readers to seek to devise a program avoiding both repudiation and increased taxes.  

Some, who wished "virtual repudiation" transformed into actual repudiation, eventually advanced the thesis that, since only a few had benefitted from the Bank's activities, the bonded indebtedness failed to constitute a morally "just" debt which the citizenry should assume. One correspondent, possessing a philosophical cast of mind and some familiarity with the thought of Thomas Jefferson, advanced a more subtle argument to justify repudiation. The correspondent, "Monticello," quoted Jefferson's noted dictum that "the earth belongs to the living" to justify repudiation. Jefferson had speculated in correspondence with James Madison that equity required the contracting of no public debt extending beyond nineteen years duration, since after nineteen years one-half of the adult citizens who contracted the debt would have expired. To contract a public debt past this period, Jefferson wrote, constituted an injustice since this permitted a contemporary

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26 Gazette, March 3, 1845. In late August, the correspondent "Facts" estimated that Arkansas' approximately $3,500,000 debt amounted to $218.75 per taxpayer. He estimated that to pay the debt would require a 1,000 percent increase in the tax rate. See Gazette, August 25, 1845.

27 Ibid., September 1, October 14, 1845.
generation to burden a successive generation with a debt to which the unborn had failed to give their consent. 28

Borden initially possessed little interest in such sophistry; he had sought to impale the Democracy on the Bank question, but in time he realized that, in raising the issue, he might offend those who represented any discussion of a subject which involved the possibility of raising taxes. Thus, in late summer, Borden sought to end the debate by declaring that, while the authorities should attempt to collect from Bank debtors—in order to protect those holding the Bank's notes—, neither repudiation nor raising taxes constituted an acceptable solution. 29

In time, Borden predicted, the bondholders would receive their money, although he denied the suggestion of Huth and Company that "your lands stand memorably pledged, and hypothecated for the payment of our bonds." Borden wrote that Arkansans certainly would not tax themselves to pay foreign bondholders, and he referred the London securities dealer to Jefferson's doctrine that the earth belongs to the living—a pertinent doctrine, Borden now concluded, since at least ten years must pass before Arkansas possessed the resources to repay the debt, and a new generation, by Jefferson's definition, would then exist within the state. 30

Democrats attempted, as best they might, to deny the Bank issue to Whiggery. In December 1844, correspondent "E" of Batesville noted that, in a special election held the previous day, a Whig who

28 Gazette, September 8, 1845.

29 Ibid., September 1, 8, 15, 22, 1845.

30 Ibid., September 8, 1845.
advocated repudiation—not only of the state's bond debt but of individual debts to the banks as well—beated his Democratic opponent in a local race. Henceforth, "E" wrote, "Whigs here will say nothing more about repudiating democracy." When the Whigs failed to drop the Bank question, Solon Borland initially attempted to ignore that portion of the controversy concerning repudiation. In time, however, he dealt briefly with the subject and curtly dismissed repudiation as an impractical doctrine. Actually, of course, Borland, along with everyone except the five voters in every county mentioned by the Gazette's anonymous correspondent of March 1845, had long since opted for repudiation. But since only Whigs could possibly derive an advantage from raising the repudiation issue, Democrats preferred silence on the subject. To the inevitable Whig charge that Democrats possessed the responsibility for the state's banking problems, since the Democracy had constituted the majority party in Arkansas since 1836, Borland replied with a homely analogy. If two doctors and an undertaker murdered a man, Borland conjectured, could the undertaker legitimately plead innocent on the grounds that the two physicians constituted a majority in the cabal and thus he lacked the votes necessary to over-rule them. "Whigs and Democrats were employed to sell the bonds, to put the bonds in operation, and Whigs and Democrats had the management of them."

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31 Banner, December 11, 1844.

32 Ibid., September 3, 1845; "Repudiation," September 10, 1845; and additional comments, in reply to "Justus," in the same issue.

Borland devoted his major effort, however, to defending the Assembly's action in enacting legislation requiring the payment of state taxes in specie. Borland denied that in prohibiting the payment of taxes with the Bank's scrip, Arkansas repudiated its bonded indebtedness. Necessity dictated, he added, passage of the specie measure since, with the Bank's scrip selling at only fifty percent of par value, Arkansas found it impossible to fund effectively necessary state operations with scrip serving to satisfy tax obligations.

Borland asserted that the specie bill represented bipartisan legislation since Whigs supported the measure; subsequently, he contended that Borden's attempt to utilize the legislation for partisan advantage would prove futile because only speculators—not the average citizen—retained an interest in the continued circulation of the Bank's scrip. In rebuttal, Borden asserted that the Assembly's action in divorcing the "Treasury from the Bank" violated the state constitution, presumably since the constitution authorized (but did not require), the establishment of the state banks. An indignant Batesville correspondent described the Assembly's action as providing "gold and silver for officeholders—bank rags for the people—double taxes and double salaries."

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34 Repeated searches of the House Journal 1844-1845 failed to find this legislation recorded in the Journal. The Senate Journal for this session is not extant.

35 Banner, February 26, 1845.


38 Ibid., February 10, 1845.
Nevertheless, difficulties could hardly monopolize the energy of Arkansans in 1845 for increasingly foreign affairs attracted the interest of the state's residents. An increased interest in foreign policy considerations resulted in large measure from the policies adopted by President James K. Polk who had been elected in 1844 pledging to "reannex" Texas to the United States and to secure the 54° 40' parallel as the northwestern boundary between the United States and Canada. Polk's demands with respect to Canada conflicted with the claims of Great Britain in that area, while his Texas policy produced a confrontation with Mexico from whom Texas had successfully rebelled in 1836 but whose independence the Mexicans had refused to recognize. Mexico warned Polk that any attempt by the United States to send troops into Texas following annexation would lead to war. Britain too threatened to resist an American occupation of the disputed territory in the Northwest.

The Oregon question naturally produced less interest in Arkansas than did the Texas controversy, in part because of Oregon's remoteness and, possibly, because only a few could believe Polk would dare risk war with Britain. Solon Borland doubted the possibility of an Anglo-American war in May 1845, declaring that the British lion might growl following an American seizure of the territory, but adding that it no longer possessed the strength to resist American desires in the northern hemisphere. Borland concluded with a spread-eagle rhetorical flourish worthy of the most ardent advocate of Manifest Destiny: "The eyrie of our Eagle is already built upon the Rock Mountains—his eye already scans the quiet shores of the Pacific; and his bold wing is already
poised to bear onward his sacred trust of our American flag."\(^{39}\)

A concerned Benjamin Borden, however, expressed alarm lest the
diplomatically inexperienced Polk (lacking the finesse of Henry Clay,
that veteran of the negotiations which led to the Treaty of Ghent in
1815), lead American into a war with Britain as a consequence of Polk's
insistence on the 54° 40' parallel.\(^{40}\) Outlining his own position,
Borden pointed to a speech, delivered in the Senate in 1843, in which
South Carolinian John C. Calhoun urged a policy of "masterly inactivity"
in Oregon which would guarantee future American ownership without the
risks of war.\(^{41}\) But for Borden, Oregon apparently presented the
possibility of war only if Polk miscalculated, thereby provoking a
conflict with England. The Oregon question, as such, thus held little
interest for him. Primarily, Borden regarded the attempt to acquire
the 54° 40' boundary as pernicious only because it emboldened the
Mexicans to adopt a belligerent stand in Mexico since the United States
could hardly sustain a simultaneous war with Mexico and Britain.\(^{42}\)

While the relatively sparse attention the state's press devoted
to the Oregon question demonstrates Arkansas' lack of interest in that
region, most Arkansans certainly favored the acquisition of Texas. In
January 1845, the Arkansas House of Representatives—by a vote of 51 to
14—approved a resolution appointing a five man committee to frame a

\(^{39}\) "What of the War," Banner, May 14, 1845.

\(^{40}\) Gazette, May 12, 1845; December 1, 1845.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., May 19, 1845. Later Borden quoted the Charleston
Mercury (n.d.) to the effect that war would reduce Southern cotton
exports by two million bales a year. Ibid., December 1, 1845.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
resolution urging the "reannexation of the government of Texas to that of the United States." This resolution brought to the forefront once more interest in the annexation of Texas, which had been an issue for discussion in the state as early as the fall of 1843. At that time, the Gazette opposed the annexation of Texas, declaring its acquisition would threaten the stability of the Union by encouraging the growth of free soil sentiment in the North; in addition, the Gazette maintained that Texas' entry into the Union would result in a loss of immigrants who would otherwise settle in Arkansas. But the Banner believed annexation necessary in order to preserve the sectional balance of power in the Congress. During the elections of 1844, both Arkansas parties essentially retained these positions with the Whigs modifying their stance slightly in order to curry favor with numerous pro-annexationist partisans within the state. Following the election, however, Whigs altered their stand to support the acquisition of Texas.

In Hempstead County, William Etter, of the Washington Telegraph, announced his continued opposition to annexation in February 1845. One month later, Etter reversed his earlier position by expressing the hope that the Senate would approve a joint resolution in Congress authorizing annexation. Two days before Etter's reversal, the

43 *Journal of the House of Representatives 1844-1845*, 136. See also pages 18, 137-40. All twelve Whigs in the House, and two Democrats, voted support of Absalom Fowler's essentially anti-annexation resolution urging Arkansas' Congressional delegation to support annexation "as soon as it can be done consistently with the honor of the country and harmony of the Union."


46 Ibid., February 26, 1845.
Gazette's Benjamin J. Borden, after noting and dismissing free soil opposition to annexation, joined with Etter in approving the acquisition of Texas. Borden, like Etter, announced support for the joint resolution mode of acquiring Texas rather than through the more traditional treaty approach. Since the pro-annexationist forces in the Senate lacked the two-thirds vote necessary to secure approval by the latter method, those supporting annexation seized upon the idea of authorizing the acquisition of Texas through a joint resolution of Congress which required approval of a mere majority in both Houses.

On March 1, 1845, three days prior to the inauguration of James K. Polk as President, Congress approved a resolution authorizing the annexation of Texas. Because of Archibald Yell's close personal relationship with the new president, and as a consequence of Yell's pro-annexationist sentiment, Polk designated Yell as his official emissary to convey news to the Texans of the Congressional action. Following the inauguration ceremony, Yell proceeded to New Orleans and from there, on March 24, he sailed for Galveston, Texas. With annexation appearing probably and war with Mexico possible, Whigs demonstrated their willingness to submerge politics in the national interest. In 

47 Gazette, February 26, 1845.


49 As late as August 1845—four months after Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked elements of General Zachary Taylor's army—Borland continued to deny that Mexico could mount serious military opposition to the American presence in Texas. Borland conceded that, in retaliation, Mexico might confiscate American owned property in Mexico. In that case, he urged that the United States send the battleships Princeton and Constellation to shell Mexican port cities, following which, he predicted, "country excursions would be fashionable among the citizens." See "Mexico and Her War Talk," Banner, August 20, 1845.
the summer of 1845, Borden, on two occasions, assured the Gazette's readers that Whigs would join with the Polk administration in a vigorous prosecution of any war which might develop with Mexico. In an August pronouncement on the Mexican situation, Borden imitated Borland's Manifest Destiny sentiments by declaring that, if war came, thousands of Americans eyeing California's pleasant climate and bountiful soil would "march thither." 50

Following the outbreak of war between Mexico and the United States in May 1845, most of Arkansas' Whigs did, indeed, support the war effort with as much enthusiasm as that manifested by the Democrats. True, in February 1847, some twenty-one months following the commencement of hostilities, Borden did take note of those "few" Whigs who criticized the Gazette for failing to take Polk to task for carelessly involving the United States in a war with Mexico. To this criticism, Borden replied that national unity alone gave promise of an early and honorable peace; once peace arrived, however, Borden promised to subject Polk's conduct to censure if presidential actions made this necessary. 51 But the Whig editor of Hempstead County's Washington Telegraph did not delay until the end of hostilities to attack Polk. Three days prior to Borden's refusal to criticise the president's actions, Editor William H. Etter declared that Polk's ambitions had sparked the war with Mexico. Nevertheless, Etter asserted that only a vigorous prosecution of the war gave promise of a honorable peace; he maintained that an American withdrawal from Mexico would not guarantee

50 Gazette, June 2, August 18, 1845.
51 Ibid., February 6, 1847.
the cessation of hostilities since the Mexican government might, in the absence of a peace treaty, renew hostilities at a later date.⁵² Possible, in making his attack, Etter accepted the criticism of those Whigs in Arkansas which Borden rejected.

But the war failed to dampen completely the ardor of those Arkansans possessing a taste for politics, for in 1846 the citizens would elect a Congressman and candidates to the state legislature; the latter officials would then determine whether Senator Chester Ashley should receive election for a full six year term. The earliest substantial comment offered by a Whig concerning the 1846 campaign appeared in August 1845, when Batesville correspondent "W" analyzed the elections scheduled for the following year. "W"'s lengthy commentary concerned itself little with Whig hopes; indeed, he expressed the belief that if a Whig should seek the Congressional post, he would stand but a meager chance of success. Basically, the Batesville correspondent devoted himself to analyzing the candidacies of potential Democratic aspirants for that position since, he wrote, only an informed Whig could cast a "prudent vote" in a race in which "we poor Whigs will not be allowed the poor privilege of any thing better than Hobson's Choice."⁵³ If the Congressional seat lay beyond the reach of Whigs, hope existed for strengthening the party's position in the state legislature. In April of 1846, Pulaski County correspondent "Z" suggested the names of several Whigs capable of receiving the support of the county's Whigs should they desire to seek positions in the Arkansas Assembly.⁵⁴ In the following

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⁵² "When will the War Close," Telegraph, February 3, 1847.
⁵³ Gazette, August 11, 1845.
⁵⁴ Ibid., April 27, 1846.
issue of the Gazette, "A Farmer" submitted his list of Whigs, "all men of business qualifications," whom he declared capable of eliciting the support of Pulaski County Whigs. 55

By June, Borden had reversed his earlier opinion that Pulaski County's Whigs need not call a convention to select the nominees; in retrospect, he explained, it appeared possible that permitting Whig legislative candidates freely to place their names on the August ballot might encourage a proliferation of aspirants, thus jeopardizing the party's chances in Pulaski County's legislative races. Apparently, Pulaski County Whigs proved unable to arrive informally at a consensus concerning the slate, and to prevent a split within Whiggery the Gazette felt constrained to issue a call for a county convention. Borden suggested a June 6 convention and invited all townships to send as many delegates to Little Rock on that date as they wished, although, he added, that the vote of each township "will be cast in proportion to the population." Borden concluded that he intended to forward a few circulars announcing the calling of the convention to Whigs in every township "so that they will have no excuse for a failure to attend." 56

Following the convention, Borden dwelt upon the spirit of unity, which, he declared, prevailed. In his remarks, he hinted at the nature of the previous discord by declaring that the convention's county delegates, hailing from outside Little Rock, had granted their "cordial assent" to the selections, and thus Whigs, throughout Pulaski County, had no

55 Gazette, May 4, 1846.

56 Ibid., May 25, 1846.
reason to "withhold their support" in August. 57

As Arkansas' Whigs prepared to battle for legislative seats—
hoping to secure a sufficient number to elect a United States Senator
or at least influence the Democratic choice—they observed, and some-
times intruded upon, the factional struggle within the ranks of the
Democracy. This struggle resulted from the desire of Archibald Yell to
replace Chester Ashley in the Senate; the contest between the two men
led Arkansas' Democracy to "an open clash, in which Yell appeared, in
effect, as the candidate of the Sevier-Conway forces in the party," 58

In August 1845, the struggle intensified when Yell's supporter, Solon
Borland of the Banner, published letters from correspondents urging the
holding of a state convention the following January. Borland himself
expressed the hope that the convention might replace Ashley with Yell. 59
At Van Buren, the Intelligencer announced its opposition to such a con-
vention, stating that Yell ought to remain in the House and Ashley in
the Senate. 60 Subsequently, Borland launched a vigorous attack upon the
anti-convention forces, describing them as pro-Whig "disorganizers"
willing to wreck Arkansas' Democracy if the convention failed to renom-
inate Ashley. 61

57 "A Gala Day for Our City, Gazette, June 8, 1846. In the same
issue in which an account of the convention appeared, the Gazette pub-
lished a notice that Little Rock Whig Albert Pike sought recruits for
an artillery company destined for Mexican service.

58 Brian G. Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas, 1836–
1848," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XXVIII (Summer, 1969), 145.

59 Banner, August 13, 27, 1845.

60 "Convention," Intelligencer, September 6, November 29, 1845.

61 Banner, September 3, 1845; "The Van Buren Intelligencer,"
October 15, 1845; "They're Already At It," ibid.; "More of Them Are
At It," ibid., October 29, 1845.
To this unsolicited attention, Whigs initially protested that they found no merit in either faction. If, Borden wrote, Whiggery could find any more merit in one faction than another, it would "enlist for the war" under the banner of the more meritorious; since neither faction contained any more virtue than its opposition, Borden expressed hope that the struggle would weaken both factions. 62 A Batesville correspondent succinctly expressed the same idea when he wrote that, for Whigs, the Ashley-Yell struggle represented a choice between a "black dog and [a] monkey." He concluded by declaring that, since the Whigs "are whipped until there is scarce a grease spot left," they could do nothing to influence the choice of a Senator. 63

Borden's belief that appearing disinterested in the Democracy's difficulties offered the strongest encouragement to a split in that party incurred the opposition of the Whig correspondent "Tuckahoe." The correspondent listed eighteen reasons why he believed Yell's election to the Senate more favorable to Whiggery than that of Ashley. In a non-partisan vein, "Tuckahoe" pointed out that, as a personal friend of President Polk, Yell might secure more federal money for Arkansas than Ashley. In a more partisan fashion, "Tuckahoe" depicted Yell as less committed to Democratic principles than Ashley; in 1842, he claimed, Yell supported the Whig John W. Cocke in Cocke's successful bid for a seat in the legislature. 64 Subsequently, "Tuckahoe" reaffirmed his position that Yell would prove for Whigs a more acceptable Senator than

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62 Gazette, October 27, 1845.
63 Ibid. The style suggests that Charles Fenton Mercer Noland penned this contribution.
64 Ibid., November 3, 1845.
Ashley. To these criticisms, Borden replied by contending that if Whiggery remained united, it could force the Democratic party to select a more suitable candidate for the office than either Yell or Ashley. Maximum Whig leverage, Borden asserted, lay in adopting a posture of neutrality.  

As the date for the Democrats' January convention approached, Arkansas' Whigs (none of whom wished to hold a convention of their own) evinced considerable interest in the forthcoming proceedings. Reporting the Pulaski County Democratic convention held in mid-December 1845, the Gazette, with ill-disguised glee, provided its readers with a running commentary of the attempt made by some delegates to have Robert Ward Johnson endorsed for the Senatorial position. The Ashley faction, however, thwarted this (Yell inspired?) attempt to weaken Ashley's grip in Pulaski County. In a similar vein, a Whig from Clarksville, Arkansas, in the northwestern portion of the state, wrote Jesse Turner, at Van Buren, of a bitter struggle which had recently ensued there in the county seat of Johnson County. According to Turner's correspondent, the Ashley forces sought to secure approval of a resolution recommending that Sevier remain in the Senate and Yell in the House of Representatives. An Ashley supporter who chaired the proceedings declared that the motion received majority approval on a voice vote of the delegates, but the Yell supporters, constituting an actual majority of the delegates, elected Yell's supporters to attend the January meeting. The Clarksville Whig concluded that the convention demonstrated "clearly that
the Ashley men were best at . . . carrying resolutions and that the
Yell men were dangerous at the ballot box."68

The Democratic convention, which met in Little Rock January 8-9,
1846, refused to endorse either Ashley or Yell for the Senatorial post,
nominating only Robert Ward Johnson to replace Yell in the House of
Representatives. In his acceptance speech, Johnson bewailed the dis-
sension within Democratic ranks.69 Ashley's supporter William Woodruff,
unable to secure a complete hearing in Little Rock's paper the Banner,
turned to the Gazette to plead Ashley's cause with a series of articles
which he paid Borden for printing. Borden hinted that Woodruff's return
to active political life resulted from the attempt of the Yell faction
to secure Woodruff's removal as postmaster at Little Rock.70 Woodruff
denied this; writing under the pen name "Fair Play," Woodruff defended
his 1842 sale of the Gazette to the Whigs, roundly castigated the Yell
supporters as "disorganizers," and offered a sustained defense of
Ashley's public record.71 To all this, editor Borden, alluding to the
financial windfall Woodruff's articles brought to the Gazette, archly
commented that the "quarrels of the precious family of Democrats in
Arkansas will help us individually, if nothing else."72 With a $3,000
deficit in early 1845, Borden "was glad to have a cash-in-advance cus-
tomer, for he had the same collection problems his predecessors

68 F. L. Green to Jesse Turner, January 1, 1846, Jesse Turner
Papers, Duke University Library.

69 Gazette, January 12, 1846.

70 Ibid., March 2, 1846.

71 Ibid., March 9, 16, 23; April 2, 13, 1845; Banner, March 18, 1845.

72 Gazette, March 9, 1846.
had." 73 Borden's good fortune proved short lived, however, for soon Woodruff announced his intention of establishing his own paper; Borden had refused to sell the Gazette back to him, declaring his devotion to Whiggery prohibited such a resale. 74

Amidst this jockeying for party preference, 1844 witnessed the first pronounced manifestation in Arkansas of the sectional conflict which would grow more intense in the course of the Mexican War. The intrusion of the slavery issue at this juncture in the nation's development resulted from the reaction among northern free soil elements at the prospect that the slavocracy might acquire room for expansion should Texas, and adjacent southwestern areas, enter the Union. In 1844, the developing tension on the slavery issue surfaced as a result of dissatisfaction in Massachusetts with a South Carolina law passed years earlier which forbade free Negro seamen from entering South Carolina's harbors. The Massachusetts legislature requested the eminent lawyer Samuel Hoar to confer with South Carolina authorities in Charleston with a view to reaching a compromise on the controversial statute. To his surprise, Hoar was greeted on his arrival with threats by the citizenry and South Carolina's legislature stretched the tradition of Southern hospitality beyond recognition by directing the governor to expel Hoar. 75

73 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 221.

74 Ibid., pp. 221-22. Woodruff's announcement of his intention to reenter the newspaper field appeared in a paid insertion in the Gazette April 27, 1846. Borland, on May 19, refused to extend the "hand of greeting" to Woodruff. See "The Forthcoming Disorganizer," Banner, May 19, 1846. The first issue of Woodruff's Little Rock Arkansas Democrat appeared May 21, 1846.

Several Southern states subsequently extended to South Carolina their official approval of the action taken by the legislature. In January 1845, the Judiciary Committee of the Arkansas House of Representatives received a resolution from Whig Absalom Fowler which supported South Carolina's right to exclude free blacks within her borders. Fowler's resolution declared that since blacks lacked citizenship, South Carolina might, constitutionally, deny their entry into the state. Democratic Speaker of the Arkansas House, John Selden Roane, offered a substitute resolution incorporating Fowler's thesis, but containing two additional paragraphs: Roane's resolution declared the Arkansas legislature's approval of South Carolina's action, asserted that Massachusetts deserved censure for dispatching Hoar on his mission, and affirmed that should any "other State or government" send a person to Arkansas on a mission similar to that of Hoar, Arkansas' governor should consider himself required to expel the individual.76 The Gazette declared that Fowler's "firm, dignified, yet courteous" resolution provided an adequate response to the Hoar case; unfortunately, Borden added, it proved unable to satisfy a "few Hotspurs" motivated by a desire to acquire leadership in the House.77 But Fowler's resolution did not satisfy the Banner, which declared that it fell far short of providing satisfaction for the affront afforded Southern honor.78

But if the Gazette assumed a moderate stance on the Hoar case, it quickly demonstrated that slavery represented an institution worthy

76 Gazette, January 27, 1845; February 3, 1845.
77 Ibid., January 27, 1845.
78 Banner, January 20, 1845.
of journalistic defense. The month following its justification of Fowler's resolution, the Whig organ defended Kentucky's action in sentencing one Delia Webster to the penitentiary for assisting slaves to flee to the North. Even Delia Webster's sex, Borden declared, should not prevent her from experiencing justly deserved punishment. In the spring, the Gazette noted with approval the action of Southern Methodist delegates meeting at Louisville, Kentucky, who had voted, unanimously, to split with their Northern counterparts. Such a move, stated the Gazette, would certainly produce political repercussions. From Batesville, a correspondent, noting the Methodist split, declared that already one-tenth of the sect's laymen and clergy in the Batesville area supported secession. On reflection, Borden apparently regretted his earlier irritation displayed in hinting that the split presaged political changes within the Union, for he subsequently expressed his devotion to the Union and dismissed the church difficulties as lacking political importance.

If the new area of sectional tension made its first appearance following the 1844 campaign, the older issues found themselves relegated to the background. Formerly, Whigs and Democrats vehemently disagreed of the tariff and public land questions; Whigs had supported a high tariff and advocated the federal sale of public lands at premium prices

79 Gazette, February 10, 1845.

80 Ibid., May 26, 1845.

81 Ibid., June 9, 1845. In Batesville the local Methodist Church hosted the Reverend J. F. Truslow who delivered a fifty-six page defense of slavery in the summer. See Gazette, November 17, 1845.

82 Ibid., June 16, 30, 1845.
in order to finance internal improvements and to develop a reservoir of urban labor to serve the nation's manufacturing needs. Clay's defeat in 1844 finally relegated these issues to the background. In May 1845 the Gazette disconsolately noted that, prior to the Senatorial election in Pennsylvania, Whig Simon Cameron expressed approval of the Whig inspired tariff act of 1842 and the Whig land distribution bill. Cameron, Borden noted, won election to the Senate, but Polk, running on a Democratic platform opposed to these measures, also won approval of Pennsylvania's voters by besting Clay in Pennsylvania. Borden concluded that the paradox resolved itself only if one realized that the "name of democracy" proved an irresistible lure for the unsophisticated. In 1845, the Gazette continued to maintain that the depression resulted from an inadequate tariff which failed to protect American manufacturers from foreign competition. Such a position, however, represented only token deference to an obsolete issue. For eighteen months the Gazette failed to comment upon either the tariff or land issues which formerly occupied the attention of Whigs. Finally, in November 1847, Borden broke the long silence by printing an editorial from the Louisville Journal which declared obsolete the issues which separated Whigs and Democrats in the years between 1832 and 1844. Distribution, the Journal stated, constituted a dead issue, since even Clay's bill provided that during a war the federal treasury received the proceeds derived from land sales; the tariff too represented a dead issue, since even Democrats now supported the principle of a protective

83"A Democrat with Whig Principles," Gazette, May 19, 1845.

84 Ibid., January 22, 1845.
tariff; and finally, the national bank question lacked relevancy since, in a period of prosperity, Whigs would not care to advocate interference with the nation's banking structure. 85

In effect, the chief organ of the Whig party in Arkansas had concluded that the state's problems—and hence the solutions—derived from a source other than an ideological one. The problem, as Borden now viewed it, consisted of propelling Arkansas—and to an extent the South as well—into the middle of the nineteenth century. The state required, for instance, internal improvements and, in addition, it needed to develop industry to balance its agricultural efforts. And since the nation had rejected the Whig program with its internal improvement and high tariff planks, private efforts alone could secure such blessings for the state.

Consequently, in April 1845, the Gazette published a notice calling for a public meeting in Little Rock to apply pressure to Congress to appropriate funds to complete the "military road" from Memphis through Little Rock. 86 Prior to the meeting, Borden noted and approved the suggestion of the Memphis Enquirer of April 15 which proposed the convening of a Southern convention at Memphis to discuss the promotion of manufacturing in the South. 87 At the Little Rock meeting, such prominent Pulaski County Whigs as Borden, Albert Pike, and Absalom Fowler joined with such Democratic luminaries as Senator Chester Ashley, William Woodruff, and Elbert H. English in urging construction of

85 Gazette, November 4, 1847, clipped from the Louisville Journal (n.d.).
86 Ibid., April 14, 1845.
87 Ibid., April 21, 1845.
the Memphis-Little Rock road and in appointing a committee to organize a subsequent meeting in Little Rock. At the subsequent Little Rock meeting held May 3, some thirty-three individuals, residing throughout the state, received appointment to attend the Southwestern Improvement Convention scheduled to meet in Memphis the following month.

The thirty-three appointees included Whigs Frederick Trapnall, David Walker, and Lorenzo Gibson as well as Democrats Solon Borland, Senator Ambrose Sevier, and Representative-elect Archibald Yell. The Mexican crisis diminished public interest in the Memphis convention. Nevertheless, one notes in 1845 the beginning of the attention Arkansans would increasingly give to non-political state economic development in the years ahead. After 1850, members of both Arkansas parties would increasingly join together in nonpartisan efforts to promote such private and governmental projects as came under discussion in 1845. And, in addition, supporters of both parties would join in efforts, after 1850, to seek passage of a proposed intercontinental railroad to traverse the state, rather than to utilize competing routes north and/or south of Arkansas.

Even before the delegates at Memphis assembled, however, the Yell-Ashley factions within the Democracy of Arkansas engaged in probably the most intense factional fight yet waged in the state. Editor Solon Borland of the Banner championed Yell's claim to Ashley's Senatorial

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88 *Gazette*, April 28, 1845.


90 On July 21 the *Gazette* briefly noted the names of three Arkansans who attended the Memphis meeting on July 4. The paper promised to report the convention proceedings the following week but failed to do so.
seat, while William Woodruff returned to the journalistic wars in May 1846 to establish the Arkansas Democrat dedicated to the defense of Ashley. 91 Throughout the summer, charges and countercharges reverberated between the two factions as each sought to gain a majority of the legislators elected to the Arkansas Assembly on August 3. In the election, the Ashley faction secured more legislative support than that of the Yell and Whig elements combined. According to Woodruff's calculations, Ashley supporters gained fifty-one Assembly seats, Yell acquired twenty-eight, while the Whigs secured twenty-one legislative seats. 92

Possibly Yell anticipated his defeat. At any rate, Yell left his post in the House of Representatives in June to secure election, with President Polk's endorsement, as commander of an Arkansas cavalry unit preparing to leave for service in Mexico. From Mexico on November 9, Yell wrote President Polk that he would return from Mexico only after achieving "some credit" for himself and not "before if it should be as a private." 93

Thus, with Congress scheduled to convene December 1, Arkansas lacked representation in the House of Representatives. In a petulant

91 "Prospectus," Arkansas Democrat (Little Rock), May 21, 1846.

92 Democrat, August 21, 1846. The Whigs, however, claimed twenty-six of the one hundred seats. See the Telegraph of September 6, and the Gazette of August 17, which provide a county breakdown of the new Assembly's membership in terms of party affiliation. Woodruff claimed that fourteen of the Whigs elected had either pledged to vote for Ashley or received election in Democratic counties where the only issue at the polls "was Ashley or Yell." Woodruff declared that Phillips, Hempstead, Pope, St. Francis, and Carroll county voters elected Whigs morally obligated to support Ashley. See Democrat, September 4, 1846.

93 Archibald Yell to James K. Polk, November 5, 1846, Polk Papers, Library of Congress.
tone, Governor Thomas I. Drew informed the Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives on December 7, that, at long last, Yell had submitted his resignation; since neither the Arkansas Constitution nor state law provided for such a contingency, Drew asked the House to suggest a method of filling the vacancy created by Yell's resignation. Shortly thereafter, Drew ordered an election held December 15 to fill the vacancy. Woodruff criticized Drew for not declaring Yell's seat vacant earlier since the winning candidate would secure a term of only some six weeks. The editor of the Democrat hinted that Drew's delay resulted from his desire to aid the Democratic faction to which the governor belonged. Nevertheless, Woodruff suggested that either Judge George W. Paschal of Van Buren, or Alfred M. Wilson of Fayetteville, would make suitable candidates, since both men supported Democratic principles, and both hailed from the northwestern region which contended that a candidate from that area ought to receive the prize.

The Gazette's Borden responded to Yell's resignation by declaring, in mid-November, that no Arkansas Whig "respectable for talents or standing with his party" would seek an office which he could occupy for only a few weeks. He further hinted that Whigs might best forego the office in order to encourage the Democratic factions to rend the Democracy in intra-party feuding. But two days following the
Borden editorial, prominent Little Rock Whig Thomas Newton wrote John Drennen that both Little Rock Whigs and "some democrats" had urged him to seek the office. Newton declared that, in view of the announced candidacies of Democrats Paschal and Albert Rust, and since Wilson's friends were "soured," a Whig might well attain the office. True, the term of office extended only a few weeks, but Newton explained that the prospect of beating the Democrats intrigued him sufficiently to overlook this factor. Newton concluded by expressing his belief that Democratic divisions had strengthened his position in western Arkansas to the extent that "tis as well to avail myself" of the opportunity presented to him.  

Five days after Newton wrote Drennen, announcements of the candidacies of Newton and Whig Charles Fenton Mercer Noland of Independence County appeared in the Gazette. The letters of both candidates read in an almost apologetic manner. Noland's letter, in particular, struck a refreshingly candid tone: "If you should elect me, it would only be for a period of about six weeks—too short, in which to do either much good or harm." If sent to Washington, Noland, a resident of northern Arkansas, promised to support federally financed projects "for Arkansas generally, and the northern portion of it in particular."  

Borden sought to make the best of the situation by claiming that the two candidacies, announced following his own attempt to discourage Whig entry into the race, demonstrated that no one could dictate to the party. As to why Newton and Noland sought the office,  

98 Thomas Newton to John Drennen, November 18, 1846, Turner Papers, University of Arkansas Manuscripts.  

99 Gazette, November 23, 1846.
Borden speculated several reasons might have determined their decision: A desire to serve the public, a quest for renown, or perhaps the opportunity to utilize the campaign as a springboard for future political preferment might, Borden declared, explain their entry into the race. Borden concluded by endorsing both men since, he stated, any Whig would make a better Congressman than a Democrat.\textsuperscript{100} In Hempstead County, the Whig \textit{Washington Telegraph} echoed Borden's joint endorsement, but deplored the presence of two "good" Whigs in the race. The \textit{Telegraph} declared that the prospect of success "with one candidate would be small enough indeed, but with two, it becomes beautifully less."\textsuperscript{101}

Both the \textit{Telegraph} and the \textit{Gazette} proclaimed neutrality with respect to the two Whig candidates, but in Helena, Whig editor Quincy Underwood threw the support of the \textit{Southern Shield} to Newton.\textsuperscript{102} In analyzing Underwood's position, Borden detected a criticism of the \textit{Gazette} for the Little Rock paper's neutral stance. In failing to support one of the Whigs, Borden wrote, the \textit{Gazette} had not failed to perform the duty required of a responsible paper. Instead, Underwood's endorsement of Newton merely served to encourage factionalism within Arkansas' Whiggery. And, as Borden added, a minority party could ill afford factionalism.\textsuperscript{103}

Certainly, no Whig could quarrel with Borden's truism, but any Whig could—and the candidacies of Newton and Noland indicate that many

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Gazette}, November 23, 1846.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Washington Telegraph}, December 2, 1846.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Gazette}, December 5, 1846, quoting from the \textit{Southern Shield} (Helena, Arkansas), n.d.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, December 5, 1846.
did—quarrel with his thesis that Arkansas Whiggery would benefit by sitting out the election. Borden's thesis rested explicitly on the assumption that a Whig refusal to contest the election would so exacerbate Democratic factionalism as to jeopardize the existence of that party in Arkansas. Implicitly, Borden's position assumed that, at the least, failing to run a candidate for Congress would not adversely affect Whiggery in Arkansas. But in the past decade the most intense Democratic feuds had failed to prevent the Democracy from closing ranks in the face of a Whig challenge. And the implicit assumption that inactivity could not weaken Arkansas' Whig party rested on the equally fallacious supposition that Whig morale would not suffer irreparable damage from artificially induced idleness. Probably, refusing to offer a candidate would have weakened the party more than suffering yet another defeat in a state race.

Borden's assumptions undoubtedly represented personal assessments of his own, not supported by any significant segment of the party. That two such opposites as Newton and Noland could seek the post, provides the best evidence of this assertion. As a resident of Little Rock, Newton represented Pulaski County Whiggery, headquarters of the Central Committee, while Noland, of north Arkansas, lacked this intimate connection with the mainsprings of party officialdom. And, as the 1848 campaign would demonstrate, still another difference existed between the two men. Newton would prove a far more pragmatic Whig than Noland, both in his willingness to adopt new tactics and to dispense with the old issues. Thus, wings of the Whig party within Arkansas as diverse sectionally and ideologically as those headed by Newton and Noland could agree on the necessity of contesting in 1844 for Yell's office.
If a plethora of candidates bedeviled the Whigs, the Democrats too suffered from an abundance. In late November, Pulaski County Democrat Herndon Haralson joined the foursome seeking the six weeks remaining of Yell's term of office. With such short notice and with so little at stake, the campaign never achieved the intensity associated with earlier state contests. And news of battles in Mexico also tended to subordinate discussion of the contest. The low tenor in the campaign displayed itself revealingly in the course of a letter Little Rock attorney Absalom Fowler wrote to his fellow barrister, Jesse Turner. After discussing a legal problem involving the two attorneys, Fowler bemoaned the failure of Whigs in the legislature to remain united, thus assuring their inability to wring patronage concessions from the Democrats. Then, almost as an afterthought, Fowler concluded his letter with a request that Turner support Noland's candidacy: "Can't you and the Whigs of Crawford give Noland a lift for Congress? He has ever been true, and will doubtless continue so. Nearly all the old, long-tried, true blue Whigs of the place, are for Noland. The new comers, and Ashley-Whigs, of course, go for Newton."105

If the campaign leading to the election of December 13 proved bizarre, determining the winner of the election established a new standard in the state for electoral eccentricity. For six weeks a dispute raged as to the winner of the contest, since both Democrats and Whigs charged that election irregularities had occurred in several counties. The dispute concerned the failure of officials in several

104 Telegram, December 2, 1846.
105 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, December 2, 1846, Jesse Turner Papers, Library, Duke University.
counties to abide by Arkansas law. The law required election judges to forward township returns to the county clerk's office within three days of the election, and further stipulated that the county clerks should compile the returns of the entire county on the fifth day following the election. The statute then required the clerks to forward the returns immediately to the secretary of state who would compile the official return for the entire state. From late December until late January, the state's papers reported the close election between Newton and Paschal with the organs of each party contending that the secretary of state ought not to accept the returns of certain townships since the county election judges had failed to abide by the three day time requirement in submitting returns. Secretary of State David B. Greer refused to count returns from two townships in Crawford County due to their late receipt, while in Mississippi and Marion counties, the county clerks rejected the returns of three townships due to the late receipt of returns in their offices. The Gazette reported, in mid-January, Newton's victory, declaring that the official returns in Greer's office showed that Newton had won 1,743 votes, Paschal 1,713, Rust 1,651, Noland 854, and Haralson 136. Had Greer counted the disputed returns, Paschal would have won the election. Woodruff contended that the law required the secretary of state to send for late returns, but Greer did not interpret the statute in that fashion. In support of his interpretation, Greer received substantiation from the Arkansas Attorney

107 Ibid., Gazette, January 16, 23, 1847; Democrat, January 8, 1847; Telegraph, January 27, 1847.
108 Gazette, January 16, 1847.
General George C. Watkins who decreed that the law, quite clearly, prevented counting the late returns. With masterful evasion, however, Watkins added that if an election hinged upon rejected ballots, it behooved "those who are by law, the judges of such contested elections, and to them alone, upon all the proofs, and a fair hearing of both parties, to determine what votes, if any, not within the letter, might yet be within the spirit of the law."  

No one, however, including Paschal, desired to contest the election. Paschal stated that he did not wish the state to incur the expense of investigating the returns since such an investigation would extend beyond the March 1 conclusion of the Congressional session.  

And as the Van Buren Intelligencer observed in noting the local Whig celebration of Newton's victory, Whig "triumphs are much fewer than angel's visits." Furthermore, the Democrats found it easy to dismiss Newton's victory as an aberration since even the Whigs admitted that it did not portend a desertion of the state from the ranks of the Democracy. The Telegraph of Hempstead County conceded that the Democrats lost "not because they lacked a majority, but because their party was divided, and but little interest was felt in the result."  

109 Gazette, January 16, 1847.  
110 "To the People of Arkansas," Democrat, January 22, 1847.  
111 Intelligencer, January 23, 1847. Sevier informed a Little Rock correspondent in January that he doubted if the House would consider Yell's seat vacant but Newton, in February, expressed appreciation for the welcome extended him by Sevier and Ashley. See Intelligencer, January 30, 1847 and Gazette, February 17, 1847. "The Whig Representation from Arkansas," Gazette, February 27, 1847, describes Congressional reaction to Newton's appearance on the floor.  
112 Telegraph, January 20, 1847.
Certainly, Newton's election gave Arkansas' Democrats little cause for concern. In a Congressional speech of February 26, 1847, Newton described himself as a Whig "in principle and in feeling."

Nevertheless, Newton added, he would vote in support of funds for the Mexican war, since he knew "the sentiments of my constituents" and had determined to abide by his campaign pledge to avoid partisanship in Congress. As his term ended on March 4, Newton could report to the people of Arkansas that if "I have not been able to effect much good for my constituents, I enjoy the consolation of having discharged my duties as a representative diligently and faithfully."^114

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113 Appendix to the Congressional Globe, 29 Congress, 2 session, 429-30; Gazette, April 3, 1847.
114 Gazette, March 27, 1847.
CHAPTER VIII
CANDIDATES IN THE CENTER: THE ARKANSAS CAMPAIGN OF 1848

Congressman Newton's stint in Congress received scant attention since news of military events in Mexico transfixed the gaze of the American people. In February 1847 there occurred the battle of Buena Vista. For Arkansans, Buena Vista proved a significant engagement. As a result of the battle, Colonel Archibald Yell fell slain by a Mexican lancer and charges that some of the state's troops failed to display appropriate military ardor soon appeared. Charges concerning alleged battlefield misbehavior resulted from the incompetence purportedly displayed by some of the Arkansas regiment's officers; these allegations led to a duel fought in July between Lieutenant Colonel John Selden Roane and Captain Albert Pike.¹ Neither man incurred injury as a result of the fracas, but Buena Vista did not rebound to their favor as it did that of Zachary Taylor, whose subsequent political success resulted in large measure from his February victory.

¹William F. Pope, Early Days in Arkansas (Little Rock: Frederick Allsopp Publisher, 1859), pp. 277-78; Margaret Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866 (Little Rock: Arkansas Gazette Foundation, 1969), pp. 236-38; Walter Lee Brown, "The Mexican War Experiences of Albert Pike and the 'Mounted Devils' of Arkansas," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XII (Winter, 1953), 314. The Arkansas Intelligencer (Van Buren, March 3, 1847) expressed the hope that the members of the regiment who fled the field at Buena Vista, while others in the unit remained to fight, would "continue to run, and never stop until they pass the State which they have dishonored." The Gazette of July 22 related Pike's denial of reports that he had accused any significant number of troops of fleeing the field.
Taylor was no stranger to the citizens of the state since he had served as commander of American forces in the West prior to the outbreak of the Mexican War. In that capacity, Taylor failed to endear himself to the editor of the Arkansas Intelligencer located at Van Buren in northwest Arkansas. The Intelligencer, in late 1843, called Taylor to task for recommending that the army cease construction of the fortification at Ft. Smith across the Arkansas River. Taylor informed General Winfield Scott that maintenance of peace of the frontier did not require completion of the fortification. The Intelligencer contended that Taylor's recommendation resulted from his desire to please his superiors, who wished to hear that low, and hence economical, force levels could provide adequate security. The Van Buren editor concluded that Taylor did not "answer to the needs of the frontier" and should receive a transfer.²

Neither time nor Taylor's success in capturing Monterey in September 1846 altered the Intelligencer's view of Taylor. In noting his victory, the Democratic editor observed that Taylor's refusal to consider accepting the Whig party's presidential nomination had induced several Whig papers to suggest that Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, rather than Taylor, receive the nomination.³ Following Taylor's victory at Buena Vista, as Whig interest in securing Taylor as the party's presidential nominee intensified, Democratic papers in Arkansas displayed increasing apprehension. As a professional soldier, Taylor's political views remained largely unknown and thus, Democrats insisted,

²"Defense of Our Frontier," Intelligencer, November 14, 1843.

³Ibid., October 17, 1846.
Taylor remained unavailable for consideration for public office.4

Surprisingly, in Hempstead County, the editor of the Whig Washington Telegraph, William H. Etter, also described as premature discussions of Taylor's candidacy. Etter declared in April that Taylor ought to return from Mexico "covered with his well earned laurels" before talk of his availability for the presidency occurred.5 Democrats also employed this argument, but for them it represented an attempt to dampen popular enthusiasm for Taylor's candidacy which hopefully would dissipate completely in time. Etter's position, however, originated from different motives. It appears probable that Etter simply sought to assist Taylor's candidacy by retarding what he regarded as premature popular acclaim for Taylor. Undoubtedly, Etter reasoned that an early boom might force Taylor to define himself politically, thereby reducing his opportunity of securing the Whig nomination.

By delaying his entry into politics, Taylor realized, as had Etter, that he could emerge as a stronger presidential candidate. Delay enabled Taylor to avoid taking positions on the issues, to capitalize on his martial feats, thereby presenting himself as a candidate above the parties. In 1847, Taylor refused to label himself either a Whig or a Democrat: "Appreciating as he did the intrinsic Whig weakness, the General's tactics were of such a nature as to broaden the base of his popular support. Meanwhile, if pressed, Old Zach avowed himself a Whig or a democrat of the Jeffersonian school, and said he would have


5Telegraph, April 21, 28, 1847.
voted for Henry Clay if he had voted at all in 1844.\textsuperscript{6} 

Of course, such a tactic left the Whigs vulnerable to the charge that they lacked principles and were motivated solely by opportunistic considerations; this charge Arkansas' Democrats made when they professed astonishment at the willingness of the Whigs to nominate for the presidency a man possessing unknown political principles.\textsuperscript{7} In defending themselves against the charge of opportunism, Whigs professed to see in Taylor a man devoted to Whig principles. The \textit{Telegraph} assured its readers that it had learned "from the most reliable sources" that Taylor had indeed embraced Whig principles.\textsuperscript{8} The \textit{Gazette}'s Benjamin Borden hinted at the nature of those principles which Taylor espoused by predicting that Taylor would support the principle of "just" powers for the central government.\textsuperscript{9} 

Even as speculation concerning Taylor's political beliefs raged, military events occurred in Mexico that produced political repercussions in the United States. President Polk, describing Taylor to intimates as "made giddy, with the idea of the presidency," emasculated Taylor's forces by ordering him to transfer all but six thousand of his troops to General Winfield Scott.\textsuperscript{10} In Arkansas, the \textit{Democrat}'s William Woodruff defended Polk's actions as dictated solely by military

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7}\textit{Gazette}, May 29, 1847, quoting the \textit{Banner} (n.d.); "Arkansas Gazette and the Presidency," \textit{Intelligencer}, August 21, 1847.
\item \textsuperscript{8}\textit{Telegraph}, June 2, 1847.
\item \textsuperscript{9}\textit{Gazette}, August 12, 1847.
\end{itemize}
considerations. The Telegraph countered by contending that Polk ordered the troops transferred in an attempt to deflate Taylor's presidential boom. Whigs realized, however, that success would result, not from besting the Democracy in jousts of this sort, but rather in avoiding them. They realized that with Taylor—as with Harrison in 1840—they possessed a standard bearer whose best chance of leading the party to victory lay in not appearing to lead a party at all. Thus Whigs presented Taylor—and in Mexico he played the role aptly—as the man above the parties. Taylor's refusal to accept a party nomination in 1847 reflected, Borden wrote, his refusal to bow to party dictation and his determination to serve the public independent of party bossism. Moreover, Whigs professed to see in Taylor's character those qualities necessary for presidential greatness. Courage, energy, determination, durability, and simplicity encompassed, but did not exhaust, the virtues Whigs saw in Taylor's character. Borden suggested that Taylor might renew those qualities in the American psychic from which, in forty years of peace, they had all but disappeared. Political standards had so steadily eroded since the conclusion of the War of 1812, Borden declared, that "the fair merchant, the honest mechanic, the stout farmer, the philosopher, and the genius, find themselves worsted in the contest for office, and cease to feel any interest in the question of who shall


12. Telegraph, June 30, 1847.

13. Gazette, August 12, 19, December 9, 1847; June 22, 1848.

14. Telegraph, August 4, September 1, 8, 1847.
govern the country."  

If Borden could persuade himself that Taylor as president might restore the old virtues, others within the Whig fold remained convinced that their old champion Henry Clay represented the embodiment of political integrity. This segment constituted only a small minority of Arkansas' Whigs, as Clay's chief Arkansas supporter Charles Fenton Mercer Noland of Batesville admitted in conceding that "thousands" of the state's Whigs preferred Taylor to Clay as the party's presidential nominee.  

Clay's supporters within the state represented the more ideologically committed portion of the party's membership. They refused to concede defeat for their nationalist program relating to the old issues—a protective tariff, a national bank and high prices for public land. Furthermore, in their long devotion to Clay's program, they had come to identify emotionally with Clay the man; Noland frankly expressed this devotion when he informed Jesse Turner in December 1847, that he had "so long clung to the hope of seeing that greatest and best of men, old Hal elevated to the Presidential claims that I can not even yet give him up."  

Six months later, in placing Clay's name on the masthead of The Batesville Eagle as his choice for president, Noland reiterated the attachment he felt for Clay. In the darkest days of Whiggery, Noland wrote, Clay proved a "shield and a buckler" to the Whig party.  

But the overwhelming majority of Arkansas' Whigs had had enough

15 "A True Whig," Gazette, December 9, 1847.
16 "Our Position," Batesville Eagle, May 2, 1848.
17 Charles F. M. Noland to Jesse Turner, December 1, 1847, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
18 "Our Position," Eagle, May 2, 1848.
of Clay and of defeat. Only two months following Clay's defeat by Polk in November 1844, the Clay Club of Vicksburg, Mississippi tendered its endorsement of Prince Hall for 1848. In commenting upon, and rejecting, this suggestion by the Vicksburg Whigs, William H. Etter, of the Telegraph of Hempstead County, proceeded to analyze the basis for Clay's three defeats. According to Etter, the American electorate's rejection of Clay only ostensibly resulted from its distaste for the Clay-John Adams "corrupt bargain" of 1824. In reality, the reason for Clay's three defeats resided in the American people's fear of Clay's greatness. Etter explained that in fifth century Athens, citizens rejected the leadership of Miltiades because they too feared the leadership of one whose greatness awed them.¹⁹ Of course, the American people believed that their rejection of Clay, Etter added, originated, not in their fear of his greatness, but in their dislike of the "corrupt bargain" and of Clay's pro-British outlook. To this analysis, the Gazette added that the peculiar virtue inherent in Taylor's candidacy resided in Taylor's not having alienated a large segment of the electorate. Borden declared that this factor accounted for the success experienced by William Henry Harrison in 1840.²⁰

This debate between the majority Taylor advocates and the smaller pro-Clay forces presented the threat of a division which Arkansas' Whigs could ill afford. Thus, the chief party paper, the Gazette, sought to reduce the intensity of the conflict by suggesting that in seeking the nomination for Clay, his supporters failed to support Clay's true

¹⁹ Telegraph, January 29, 1845.
²⁰ Gazette, April 27, 1848.
interest. If he secured the nomination, Clay would simply endure another contest in which his opponents would once again subject him to vilification; this, Borden wrote, would not appeal to Clay, nor would it enhance the esteem which history would grant him. The objection to Clay's nomination, as Borden carefully pointed out, did not reside in objections to Clay or his program; rather, it resulted from the realization of most Whigs that Clay would suffer still another defeat and one that would guarantee the destruction of the Whig party.

Noland denied that Clay could not possibly win with a fourth effort. In each succeeding election, the Batesville editor wrote, Clay had increased his vote. In Independence County, Noland added, some persons willing to cast a vote for Clay would refuse to do so for Taylor. The Eagle's editor conceded, however, that Taylor would win the votes of "many who would not touch Mr. Clay with a ten foot pole." The difference between the "some" who would support Clay but not Taylor, and the "many" who would vote for Taylor but not Clay, led most Arkansas Whigs to prefer Taylor to Clay. Noland, however, found consolation in supporting Clay since Clay's views expressed the Whig philosophy, while Taylor's candidacy lacked commitment to Whig principles.

Despite his own rhetorical gestures, even Noland realized that, for 1848, "Old Zac is the boy." To insure the election of Taylor


22. Ibid., April 27, May 4, May 18, 1848.


would prove, of course, a more formidable task than nominating him. Obviously, to win the presidency, Whigs needed to organize, but the very basis of Taylor's candidacy lay in the non-partisan posture he adopted, whereby he sought to stand above the parties. Thus premature organizational efforts would only serve to weaken Taylor by compromising his major asset. But the need for some concerted effort appeared so obvious to Borden by late 1847, that in December he urged Whigs in every county in the state to hold meetings to select Taylor electors.26 A week prior to Borden's call, "A Whig of Old Independence," deplored the torpid state of Arkansas' Whigs, issued a similar call for Taylor meetings.27

Both Borden and "A Whig of Old Independence," feared the consequence of inactivity, but implicit in their tocsin calls for organizational activity lay another fear. Noland expressed this apprehension in incisive fashion when he reminded Turner of the distaste the electorate felt for the bossism inherent in conventions: "Conventions from the trickery and juggling of small politicians have become odious to the people. How then shall we preserve harmony among ourselves and still avoid odium from the holding of a convention?"28 With respect to state candidates, Noland initially believed the county meetings urged by Borden and "A Whig of Old Independence" would prove acceptable, since "a true Whig will readily acquiesce in such an expression of opinion."29

26 Gazette, December 9, 1847.

27 Ibid., December 2, 1847.

28 Charles F. M. Noland to Jesse Turner, December 1, 1847, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

29 Ibid.
On reflection, however, Noland came to believe that even a convention
to select the presidential electors would provoke no ill will with the
electorate: "I think we will have to hold a State convention to nomin­
ate Taylor Electors. No objection can arise to it. It is a kind of
convention which is not subject to those objections which [I] think
correctly [arise] when men are to be chosen as [state] candidates." 30

The county meetings Noland and Borden urged never occurred in
the profusion featured in the Whig campaigns of 1840 and 1844. True,
the state's Democrats also failed in 1848 to display the organizational
efforts of earlier campaigns, but Noland declared, in noting this "in­
difference" of both Arkansas parties, that the Democrats "at voting
time will be found at their Posts." 31 The subdued Whig effort on
Taylor's behalf reveals itself when one notes that only five county
Taylor meetings occurred prior to Taylor's nomination in June. 32 In
Pulaski County—stronghold of Whiggery within the state—the Gazette
announced, for three successive weeks, that Pulaski County Whigs would
hold a Taylor meeting on February 22. On the appointed day, when incle­
ment weather prevented all but a "few friends of Taylor" from assembling
for the occasion, the meeting was rescheduled for the first Saturday
in April. 33 If the April meeting took place, the press failed to
report it.

30 Charles F. M. Noland to Jesse Turner, January 13, 1848, Jesse
Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

31 Charles F. M. Noland to Jesse Turner, February 23, 1848, ibid.

32 Taylor meetings were held in Pope, Independence, Drew,
Ouachita, and Montgomery counties. See the Gazette of January 13,
February 3, 24, March 2, 16, 1848.

33 Ibid., February 25, 1848.
In four of the five Taylor meetings held, the Whigs sought to depoliticize the proceedings by presenting Taylor as the people's candidate, rather than as the champion of political "wirepullers." In his description of the Taylor meeting at Dover, in Pope County, correspondent "I" reported the meeting as completely open. Nothing, he vowed, was "roped in." The resolution adopted by the Dover throng emphasized the anti-political nature of the Taylor movement by pledging that, if Taylor won, his victory would inaugurate a new political order by transferring power to the people. Such a transfer would occur since "the caucus and convention, the delegates and the nominees, the cliques and the anti-cliques, the wire-workers and the managers, the county committees and the central committees, will be routed with such a Buena Vista defeat that scarcely a trace of them will be left." The irony in all this, of course, resided in the contention of the Taylorites that it was both desirable, and possible, to end politics—and to do so by political means. The limited number of such meetings held in Arkansas demonstrates clearly enough public skepticism at the effort to present Taylor as something other than a Whig candidate for president.

Democrats reacted to this tactic with amused derision. Describing the Dover meeting's attempt at nonpartisanship, a Democrat declared that a "few thick-headed Whigs" in the crowd had opposed it "ever since they had found they were in the minority in this county." These disgruntled Whigs, presumably supporters of Henry Clay, had wished to

34 The meeting at Camden in Ouachita County, held February 15, emphasized Taylor as a champion of Southern rights who would defend the right of slaveowners to settle in the Southwest. See Gazette March 2, 1848.

35 Ibid., January 13, 1848.
retain not only the substance, but the form, of the old political process. Certainly, they did not believe that time-honored political procedures had ceased to exist: "They would not believe their old chief could possibly be dead—said they had not even heard of his illness, when they were called to attend his funeral, and declared we had interred an empty coffin to deceive the unwary." Democratic correspondent "L," reporting the Dover meeting earlier, also satirized the attempt of Dover Whigs to present the meeting as a patriotic gathering, rather than as a nominating convention. In addition to printing satire relating to the Whig effort to depoliticize Taylor's candidacy, editor William Woodruff added his personal editorial touch in commenting on the Pulaski County Taylor meeting scheduled for February 22. Woodruff predicted that "all the party men of the anti-party party" would attend the meeting; he advised everyone who wished to view a gathering of "unprinciplled politicians" to attend.

George W. Clarke, Democratic editor of the Van Buren Intelligencer, alone provided a serious critique of the effort to present Taylor as a man above the parties; Clarke dismissed Taylor as a "gunpowder" candidate whom no Whig could support in good conscience. Wherever political freedom existed, Clarke wrote, two political parties existed; they did so because, in the body politic, men inevitably disagree as to solutions for fundamental socio-economic problems. In

36 "For the State Democrat," Democrat, January 21, 1848.
37 Ibid., January 14, 1848.
38 Gazette, February 11, 1848.
39 "Mr. Candidate—a Candidate Again," Intelligencer, May 6, 1848.
America, Clarke wrote, men had disagreed on the utility of a national 
bank, on the question of business monopoly, and on the virtues of free 
trade vs. a high tariff. In this controversy, such Whigs as Daniel 
Webster and Henry Clay had supported a national bank, monopoly, and a 
high tariff while Democrats Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson championed 
opposing policies. Clarke denounced as "humbug" the contention that 
these issues no longer carried meaning in the political sphere. In 
asserting this, Clarke, and other Democrats as well, sought to preserve 
the old political framework within which they had achieved such notable 
success. But on the national level, Whigs refused to accept the old 
framework since, as Allan Nevins observed, they realized that "national 
sentiment was against their main ideas," and that while "Clay and Webster 
as candidates could have revived the old integrity of the party—neither 
could attract new supporters" to it.

If such Arkansas Whigs as Noland felt that the party had betrayed 
its program, the state's Democrats proved unable, in 1848, to secure 
maximum advantage from such sentiment. This inability resulted, in 
large measure, from the spectacle presented in 1847 by the Democratic 
factions as they contested for the House seat vacated by Yell's death 
and by the struggles, of the following year, for both of the state's 
Senate seats. The struggle for Yell's Congressional seat began in the 
summer of 1847 when William Woodruff and George Clarke of the Van Buren 
Intelligencer engaged in a heated editorial exchange regarding

40 "General Taylor's Availability," Intelligencer, March 25, 
1848.

41 Allan Nevins, The Ordeal of the Union, I (2 vols.; New York: 
the propriety of selecting a westerner as the party's Congressional nominee. Woodruff contended that the party ought to select the most qualified individual for the post while Clarke, in private as well as in print, defended the thesis that sectional considerations might properly play a part in determining the nominee. In reality, the sectional issue masked a factional struggle between Little Rock Democrat Robert W. Johnson, heir to Yell's mantle, and the Chester Ashley wing of the Democracy supported by Woodruff. Woodruff's choice for the Congressional post—the former editor of the Little Rock Banner, Solon Borland, who had only recently returned from military service in Mexico,—was only one of the several aspirants defeated by Johnson in the Democratic state convention held in Little Rock on December 31, 1847.

In his desperate attempt to deny the nomination to Johnson, Woodruff broke with his old friend Senator Ambrose Sevier and treated the electorate to some interesting stories concerning trade-offs made by Democratic factions in earlier campaigns. The divisiveness created within the Democratic party by this pre-convention maneuvering, as well as the ticket selected, heartened Whigs in northern Arkansas who believed that Johnson—and Thomas S. Drew, again nominated for the gubernatorial post,—composed a ticket which Whigs might defeat. Whig hopes increased


44 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, pp. 239-41.

45 Noland described Johnson-Drew as the most vulnerable ticket the Democrats might have selected. See Charles F. M. Noland to Jesse Turner, January 13, 1848, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
in the spring of 1848 as a result of two additional events involving Arkansas' Senators. In March, Sevier resigned his Senate post to serve as commissioner to Mexico to negotiate the execution of the peace treaty with Mexico. 46 And an additional instability in Arkansas' political life was introduced with the death April 29 of Arkansas' other Senator, Chester Ashley. In announcing Ashley's death, the Gazette's new editor, George B. Hayden, predicted "an awful amount of cauening and logrolling . . . and wire pulling" when the legislature convened in the fall. 47 Actually, Senatorial aspirants initiated such efforts long before the legislature convened. Despite Sevier's attempt to secure appointment of an individual willing merely to warm his Senatorial seat until his expected return in the fall from Mexico, Governor Thomas S. Drew appointed independent-minded Solon Borland to fill the unexpired portion of Sevier's term.

Following Ashley's death, Democratic intrigue intensified.
Williamson S. Oldham of Fayetteville (who aspired to the seat formerly held by Ashley) reported that some of his opponents in north Arkansas, seeking to damage his candidacy, had spread the rumor that Borland would run for Ashley's, rather than Sevier's, seat. Oldham expressed confidence that Borland would not do this since "he is my friend and will anticipate that I will be a candidate." 49 Borland did, indeed, continue to seek Sevier's seat. The Sevier-Borland struggle, combined

46 Gazette, March 30, 1848; Democrat, March 24, 1848.
47 Gazette, May 11, 1848.
48 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, pp. 248-49.
49 Williamson L. Oldham to Elbert H. English, May 18, 1848, Samuel W. Williams Papers, Arkansas History Commission.
with the contests between several Democratic aspirants for the seat formerly occupied by Ashley, led a gleeful Hayden to quote John Randolph of Roanoke to the effect that "we admire your candor, but d— your manners."  

Democratic divisions in the past, however, had failed to shake the grip of the Democracy in Arkansas. The failure to win had not greatly concerned such ideological purists as Albert Pike, Jesse Turner and Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, since they did not really wish power based upon anything other than Clay's nationalist program. David Walker possessed more political ambitions than these, but he too lacked the lust for power of the Democratic opposition. Successive defeats in the years after 1836 dulled whatever earlier ambition existed among the leadership to the point that defending a nationalist program, regardless of the consequences, came to represent an end in itself. Taylor's candidacy, of course, represented a repudiation of the program by national Whigs seeking victory rather than ideological purity. Significantly, Arkansas' Whig leaders viewed Taylor's candidacy with a marked coolness. Noland sought Clay's nomination as late as June 1848, and the following month presidential elector Jesse Turner impressed one Democratic Fort Smith auditor as a Clay man who "was too whiggish to wear the Taylor mantle . . . with becoming ease."  

Hayden admitted that a cleavage existed between the leadership and rank and file Whigs when he acknowledged that many of the "most patriotic Whigs in the State" supported Clay; nevertheless, Taylor supporters outnumbered

50 "Our Bear Fight," Gazette, October 12, 1848.

51 Intelligencer, July 22, 1848.
Clay's, Hayden wrote, by nine or ninety-nine to one. Taylor's support, the Gazette editor hinted, resulted from the desire of rank and file Arkansas Whigs to win a major contest. 52

In 1848, one prominent Whig shared the desire of the rank and file Whigs to acquire power without regard to ideological consistency. Undoubtedly, Thomas Newton's willingness to engage in the unorthodox campaign which he fought in 1848 resulted from his having acquired a taste for victory with his 1846 success and by his short stay the following year in Washington. In 1848, Newton sought, on the state level, to accomplish what Taylor did on the national level—to deemphasize his party affiliations.

Initially, Newton denied any reduction in his commitment to the Whig party. His denial resulted from the charge made by the Banner's correspondent, "A Democrat of a Democrat County," that Newton planned to seek the Congressional seat by running, not as a Whig, but as merely a Taylor supporter or, perhaps even, as a Taylor Democrat. The Ashley-Woodruff faction would, according to the correspondent, support Newton's candidacy in order to defeat that of Robert Ward Johnson, leader of the faction formerly headed by the fallen Archibald Yell. As proof of this charge, the correspondent pointed to the opposition expressed by many Whigs to the holding of a Whig state convention which might jeopardize such a scheme. As further evidence of his charge, "A Democrat" declared that Newton's 1846 victory resulted from the connivance of the Ashley-Woodruff faction with Newton. 53

52 Gazette, June 29, 1848.

53 Banner, November 4, 1847.
In his rebuttal, Newton neglected to counter the charge concerning the proposed absence of a Whig state nominating convention. But he dismissed curtly the correspondent's charge concerning the Ashley-Woodruff faction's purported benign attitude toward his 1846 campaign by noting the Democrat's opposition to his candidacy. In the light of his subsequent campaign, however, the real significance of Newton's reply lies in the ambiguity of his response with respect to his future intentions. He did not, for instance, vigorously affirm his loyalty to the Whig party: "My political sentiments as a Whig are too well known in this State, and elsewhere, for me to attempt to disguise them, even if I had the disposition so to do." This less than ringing endorsement of Whiggery assumes added significance when matched with Newton's declaration as to his future political intentions: "If I should ever be a candidate again for any public office it will be as, heretofore, an independent freeman, not afraid to express his thoughts when occasion requires it, and most certainly without collusion or intrigue with political opponents." The operative portion of this statement consists of Newton's assertion that in his 1846 campaign he ran, not as a Whig, but rather as "an independent freeman," and would seek future office under such a standard. And as for the reference to "collusion or intrigue with political opponents," the discerning reader could hardly detect in such ambiguity an obstacle to a nonpartisan campaign.

Newton did not, of course, wish to break with the party, only to run independently of it. Such a campaign required Arkansas Whigs to

54 "To the Editor of the Arkansas Banner," Banner, November 11, 1847; Gazette, November 11, 1847; Democrat, November 19, 1847.
endorse the candidacy of Zachary Taylor, Newton's counterpart on the national level. Although no data exist as to the nature of the discussion which occurred within the Whig Central Committee of Arkansas, Newton must have ardently supported Taylor's cause. And one suspects that wherever their sentiments may have resided, most, if not all, members of the Committee realized the necessity of supporting Taylor. That such an ardent Clay supporter as Charles Noland recognized as early as January 1848 the inevitability of Taylor's nomination, demonstrates that the Whig leadership within Arkansas realized the necessity of acceding to the demands of rank and file Whigs. Thus, in early June, Newton, and Pulaski County's William H. Gaines, journeyed to Philadelphia to cast Arkansas' votes for the nomination of Zachary Taylor—the choice of the Whig Central Committee of Arkansas. 55 And in the middle of June, when the Central Committee, announcing that it anticipated no state convention, designated the party's electors, Newton's name as one of the twelve members of the Central Committee appeared affixed to the proclamation. 56

Almost immediately following the Central Committee's endorsement of Taylor, Newton issued a circular, dated June 20, in which he

55 *Gazette*, June 22, 1848. When the *Banner* asked by what authority the two supported Taylor, Hayden, in effect, conceded that the Committee did so on its own authority, but he declared that Arkansas' voters would endorse the choice in November. A dispatch, dated June 8, from the Philadelphia convention provides this puzzling commentary: "One member from Arkansas (not the delegate of any convention) was allowed to cast three votes, which caused considerable excitement." A dispatch dated June 7, however, appears to indicate that a proxy cast the vote only of Texas. See "Philadelphia Whig Convention," *Intelligencer*, June 24, 1848.

announced his candidacy for the House of Representatives "without the bias of party ties or party obligations." Throughout the circular Newton portrayed himself as a candidate without a party. The phraseology was hackneyed enough (e.g., political offices represent the "various sluices through which the pap is drawn from the public treasury"), but the statement exhibited considerable forethought in terms of its overall construction. To those, for example, who might view his present nonpartisan conduct as evidence of instability or disloyalty, Newton countered by suggesting that the fundamental problems which led to the creation of the parties in the early 1830's no longer existed. Newton concluded by drawing a parallel between his own nonpartisan candidacy and that of Taylor's. 57

Newton's circular of June 20 appeared in the Little Rock Democrat July 4, in the Washington Telegraph July 12, and not at all in the Gazette. On June 22, in publishing Newton's name on the masthead of the Gazette as its candidate for the House seat, Hayden defiantly described Newton as a "candidate in every way worthy of the great party which he represents." In the Batesville Eagle and the Telegraph, however, editors Noland and Etter cooperated with Newton by referring to his personal virtues and legislative experience, but not to his party background. 58 Newton's circular itself presented a problem to the Whig editors. The Banner accused the Telegraph of treating it coolly. Etter responded to this by declaring that Newton expressed himself so well

57 "To the People of Arkansas," Democrat, July 7, 1848; Telegraph, July 12, 1848.

58 Telegraph, June 21, 1848; "Taylor Candidate for President," Eagle, June 27, 1848.
that the circular called for no editorial comment. Hayden continued
to ignore the intent of Newton's circular when the Gazette editor
responded to the complaint of the Banner that Newton failed to identify
himself in the pronouncement as a Whig. Such identification on Newton's
part, Hayden declared, was unnecessary since everyone knew of Newton's
loyalty to Whiggery.

Newton had indicated that he would campaign vigorously for
election but, if he did so, the state's papers failed to note this.
Certainly, he did not renounce all ties with the party, for in Little
Rock in early September, Newton addressed the Rough and Ready Club.
Whig papers, however, had little to say of Newton's candidacy—possibly
because he wished to run without party identification, hoping to beat
his "Family" opponent, Robert Ward Johnson through a nonpartisan
approach. In the course of the summer, Newton received favorable
mention on two occasions when the Gazette and the Telegraph pointed
out that he, unlike Johnson, possessed no constitutional objections to
improving the Red, Arkansas, or Mississippi Rivers. But the real sig-
nificance of Newton's campaign lay not in his rehashing old issues.

59 Telegraph, July 26, 1848; Banner, July 12, 1848.
61 Gazette, September 7, 1848.
62 Gazette, July 20, 1848; "Thomas W. Newton," Telegraph, August 2,
1848. No Whig sought the gubernatorial chair, although at least two con-
templated such a race. In early June, Clarksville, Arkansas Democrat
William Floyd informed Elbert H. English that potential Whig candidates
for governor, or for any other office, who planned to ride to victory
on the "back of General Taylor" would find it impossible since Taylor
had "no character in western Arkansas except what is due him for services
in the field." See William Floyd to Elbert H. English, June 7, 1848,
E. H. English Papers, Arkansas History Commission. In early May, Noland
suggested Little Rock's Charles P. Bertrand as a gubernatorial candidate.
Rather, it lay in his willingness—born of necessity—to discard the dead weight of a party label. In effect, Newton, in 1848, conceded that a Whig, running as a Whig, could not hope to gain an elective state office, and he invited the electorate to join with him in ignoring party affiliations.

If Newton subordinated party affiliations, so too did the nerve center of the party in Arkansas—the Whig Central Committee. On June 16, three of its members expressed belief to Jesse Turner that the votes of Arkansas' Whigs, combined with those of the Taylor Democrats, would prove sufficient to carry the state for Taylor, or "at least to slide locofocoism to its center, and insure its fall—before many years." To accomplish this, the committee urged the following organizational activity:

1. That every county create a Committee of Vigilance and Correspondence which would communicate with similar county committees elsewhere in the state.

2. That the county committees prepare from the tax lists the names of every voter in the county, listing them under one of three headings—Whig, Democrat, or doubtful. In addition, the committee suggested that Taylor Democrats ought to receive a separate designation.

3. That the county committees select candidates for the state House of Representatives who would appeal to one, or both, of the Democratic factions. Thus Whigs might "obtain a majority in the General Assembly" which would select two United States Senators.

4. That each county committee enter immediately into correspondence with the Whig Central Committee in order to furnish it with information concerning the political situation within the county.

The Central Committee (and here it duplicated Newton's tactics) also cautioned Turner to operate only under the auspices of a Rough and Ready Club, and not under that of the Whig Party. And, demonstrating
the vigor of the committee's efforts, it concluded by providing Turner with the names of nine individuals in Crawford County to whom it already had sent letters.  

Surely the program advocated here by the Central Committee would, if implemented, have produced the most thorough organizational effort made by either Arkansas party in the period under study. No evidence exists, however, that the county leaders executed these ambitious plans. In February, Noland observed that politics received but little attention in the state and though some interest in the presidential contest did develop in the course of the summer, political efforts within the state itself engendered little attention. A number of factors may explain this general disinterest. A dozen successive years in which Whig state candidates met defeat with monotonous regularity certainly contributed to the political inertia. In addition, the political questions which stimulated interest in earlier years had—as Newton observed—fallen into limbo. And finally, the tedious two-year war with Mexico, which ended in February 1848, had reduced public interest in domestic political issues.

The newspaper coverage of the 1848 state campaign demonstrates this disinterest. The newspapers failed to note the itineraries of Newton and Johnson though Newton, at least, traveled to the populous northern region, for the Van Buren Intelligencer casually reported that on August 10 he passed through Van Buren on his way home to Little

63 Charles P. Bertrand, Albert Pike, F. W. Trapnall (By order of the Whig Central Committee) to Jesse Turner, June 16, 1848, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.
Rock after visiting Fayetteville. A week earlier, the Intelligencer, with equal nonchalance, noted that Williamson S. Oldham and John Selden Roane, Democratic aspirants for Ashley's seat, had "traveled together and spoke[n] on the same occasions in this part of the State." Scattered returns in the Newton-Johnson contest appeared in the Arkansas press throughout August; the forty-five reporting counties presented in the Gazette in early September revealed that Johnson had won 13,573 votes, Newton 8,946. In winning 39.7 percent of the vote, Newton secured majorities in nine counties, seven of them located in the southern and eastern lowlands. In addition, Newton, predictably enough, won Pulaski County and, surprisingly, beat Johnson in Washington County by 661 to 564 votes. Elsewhere in the populous northwest, however, Johnson won handily, as had previous Democratic aspirants running for the state offices.

Newton's performance, duplicating earlier Whig efforts in state races, was matched by the Whig candidates for the legislature. In analyzing these races "Veritas" declared that the results demonstrated the decline of party spirit in the state. According to "Veritas," in legislative elections where both parties entered candidates, the

64 Intelligencer, August 12, 1848. Whig presidential elector Jesse Turner apparently engaged in the most vigorous campaigning in 1848. From September 23 through November 2, Turner was scheduled to speak at twenty-five locations in nineteen counties, largely in north Arkansas. Absalom Fowler criticized, however, the south Arkansas elector, Dr. John H. Cocke: "I fear Cocke is going to play the lag­gard as he has done twice before." See "Political Appointments," Gazette, October 12, 1848; Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, July 17, 1848, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

65 Gazette, August 5, 1848. Oldham scheduled, and subsequently postponed, a tour of the north in June. See "Judge Oldham" and "Judge Oldham in Ill Health," ibid., June 17 and 24, 1848.

66 Ibid., September 7, 1848.
"democrats are elected in Whig, and Whigs are elected in democrat counties, or beaten by greatly decreased majorities." Actually, in 1848, Whigs won House seats in only four counties which had not elected a Whig in the four previous legislative contests of the 1840's. And in the senatorial districts, the party won only one district not previously won in one of the four earlier contests of the decade. In the five elections of the 1840's, the Whig party won an average of twenty-four seats in the House and Senate, but secured only twenty-two seats in the 1848 election. Throughout the decade, Whigs won approximately one third of the House and one fifth of the Senate seats. Possibly, the poorer Whig performance in the Senate resulted from the gerrymandering of senatorial districts by the Democratically dominated legislature.

Throughout the 1840's, the Whigs failed to win a House seat in ten counties. In the six state contests waged for Congressional and gubernatorial posts between 1840 and 1848, only on one occasion did a Whig state candidate beat his opponent in these counties. Six of these counties lie in the western third of the state, while the remaining four are located in the northern region. The Whig party's poor performance in these counties simply highlights the failure of the party to display strength in the north and the west. These areas represent the least accessible areas within the state. Why Whig candidates performed poorly in more isolated regions—and conversely more successfully in

67 Gazette, September 7, 1848.
68 See Table V and Map III in the Appendix for data relative to this statement.
69 See Table V, ibid.
70 In 1846, Newton won Montgomery County.
those more accessible—poses a question which scholars of Alabama Whiggery sought to answer with respect to the Whig party's similar performance in that state. Alabama Whig candidates, they suggested, enjoyed the greatest success in those counties most economically advanced and/or with the greatest commercial intercourse with outlying regions. In effect, researchers of Alabama Whiggery suggest that the nationalistic economic program of the Whigs appealed to residents of counties "more nearly in the main stream of the national and world economy." 71 In addition to the economic interests conditioned by accessibility, these scholars suggested that the psychology of the voters in such regions proved more compatible with Whiggery, since such voters were "inclined toward an awareness of the way of life beyond their horizons of space and time." 72 The sectional basis for Whig strength in Arkansas suggests that this thesis assists in understanding the poor Whig performances in the northern and western regions of Arkansas, as contrasted with the more favorable Whig performance in the southern and eastern areas of the state.

If 1848 proved a typical year for Arkansas' Whigs in the state races, some hoped that, in the presidential contest, Taylor's candidacy might prove sufficiently attractive to place the state in the Whig column. In large measure, they based their hope on the bipartisan nature of Taylor's campaign which might prove capable of attracting support in heavily Democratic Arkansas. In addition, there existed the possibility that the increasing tensions concerning the slavery

72 Ibid., 276.
issue might persuade some Arkansans that Taylor would view the "peculiar institution" with more sympathy than his Democratic opponent, Lewis Cass. Tension between the free and slave states accelerated during the course of the Mexican War, as the probability increased that the United States would end the conflict by retaining some Mexican territory seized in the course of the war. Such a prospect provoked hostility in northern free soil circles, while evoking the support of the slavocracy which sought not only new land to replace depleted cotton soils but also to increase their representation in Congress with the transition of territories into new slave states.  

Southern hopes of acquiring new lands in the Southwest received a jolt in the summer of 1846 when Congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania attached an amendment to an appropriations measure relating to negotiations with Mexico. Wilmot's proviso prohibited slavery in any areas purchased by the United States. In early 1847, Congressman Thomas Newton voted against a three million dollars appropriation for the army to which free soilers had attached Wilmot's proviso. Newton's vote opposing the appropriation measure with the attached proviso enabled the Gazette to refute the Banner's suggestion that Newton held abolitionist sentiments. On the national level, of course, the leadership of both parties faced a problem unknown to Newton, representing, as he did, pro-slavery Arkansas. Since, nationally, the parties possessed important sources of strength in both the North and

73 The Gazette of May 25, 1842, noted uneasily that the reapportionment of the House, resulting from the 1840 census, provided a net gain of twelve seats for the free soil states.

74 Ibid., March 6, 1847; July 13, 27, 1848.
the South, the leadership of each sought to select presidential candidates in 1848 capable of appealing to both the Northern and Southern electorate. In Lewis Cass and Zachary Taylor both parties secured candidates willing to make such an appeal; in the course of the campaign, both men issued ambiguous policy statements concerning their intended courses of action should they gain the presidency. Cass devised a position of popular sovereignty, declaring that the residents of the territories, rather than Congress or the President, should determine the entry of slavery into a territory. Taylor proved equally adept at appealing to both sections by declaring that he would not veto an act of Congress unless it violated the Constitution. Taylor here solicited the support of free soilers with their majority representation in the House of Representatives and, at the same time, the Louisiana planter relied upon his Southern residence and economic ties to convince "fellow Southerners that he was with them in mind and spirit."75

In Arkansas, Whigs sought to transmute the equivocal positions of Taylor and Cass to bolster Taylor's chances with the state's pro-slavery electorate. In March of 1848, one month following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which officially ended the war and increased the land mass of the United States by one fifth, the Telegraph and the Gazette hinted at their opposition to acquisition of the western lands. The Telegraph's William Etter and the Gazette's George Hayden—reminiscent of Whiggery's opposition to the annexation of Texas in 1846—sneered at expansion in the Southwest. Etter, alluding to the idealistic aspect of the expansionist ideology, proclaimed that, in

time, Polk's disciples would urge the resolution of Ireland's difficulties with Britain through American annexation of the Emerald Isle; Hayden, after referring to the social difficulties involved in the acquisition of territory populated by the "mixed Mexican race," concluded by prophesying that "it is our destiny to extend the 'area of freedom,' and swallow up Mexico in the extension." Both men viewed the Manifest Destiny outlook of Polk's followers as irrational, but neither called for the United States to relinquish the territories for such a plea would have been impolitic.

This March sortie of Etter and Hayden into the annexation question—while it indirectly impinged upon the slavery question—did not immediately initiate a discussion of the slavery question itself. Nevertheless, that discussion followed receipt of the news, in June, of the nominations of Taylor and Cass. In their treatment of the question, Arkansas' Whigs contrasted Cass's reputed anti-slavery views with Taylor's purported pro-slavery outlook. But on occasion they presented Cass as lacking any real convictions on the slave question—as simply acting from political expediency. Political expediency, Whigs suggested explained Cass's failure to take a definite stand on the Wilmost Proviso. To the extent that Cass possessed convictions on the spread of slavery, however, Hayden concluded that he supported the principles contained in the proviso. The Gazette's editor maintained that, initially, Cass openly supported the measure, but as his prospects

76 Telegraph, March 15, 1848; "Trouble in the Locapoco Camp," Gazette, March 23, 1848.

for the presidency brightened—and realizing his need for Southern backing—Cass assumed an ambiguous position on the question.\textsuperscript{78} Since Cass's views on the proviso lacked clarity, the \textit{Telegraph} quoted liberally from pro-Cass newspapers in the North to "prove" that Cass opposed the spread of slavery; Etter offered as additional evidence of Cass's support of the proviso the passage of a resolution by the Michigan legislature (in which Cass once held a seat) condemning as immoral the spread of slavery into the territories.\textsuperscript{79} The \textit{Telegraph} also viewed Cass's resignation from the Senate in 1848 as an attempt to avoid expressing himself clearly on the proviso.\textsuperscript{80}

To these charges, Arkansas' Democrats offered but little response. At least three reasons serve to explain this relative silence. The Democracy within the state felt confident that Cass would carry Arkansas; following its success in the August elections, this confidence increased. In addition, while the Democracy could have defended Cass from the charge that he opposed the extension of slavery by interpreting popular sovereignty to mean that neither Congress nor territorial legislatures could prohibit the introduction of slavery into a territory, such a causative approach might well have offended Arkansans.\textsuperscript{81} Consequently,

\textsuperscript{78}"Taylor and Fillmore," \textit{Gazette}, August 10, 1848. In the \textit{Gazette} of August 17, Woodruff wrote that Cass had stated that he would have supported Wilmot's Proviso had it appeared before the Senate in 1846.

\textsuperscript{79}\textit{Telegraph}, October 18, 1848.

\textsuperscript{80}\textit{Ibid.}, August 2, 1848.

\textsuperscript{81}In 1850 Cass candidly clarified this important point by asserting that territorial legislatures possessed the right to sanction or prohibit slavery. See Holman Hamilton, \textit{Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850}, p. 145. John C. Calhoun interpreted popular sovereignty in 1848 to mean that territorial legislatures could interfere with slavery; since, with this interpretation, the existence
silence—rather than an active defense of Cass's views—appeared to the state's Democrats as the most sagacious response to Whig attacks on Cass. And, finally, the Democratic response undoubtedly reflected a genuine lack of enthusiasm for Cass's candidacy. In a period of rising sectional tensions, a Michigan presidential candidate could hardly evoke an enthusiastic response in Arkansas.

In the Democrat, William Woodruff broke his silence on Cass's candidacy on only two occasions. Woodruff skirted the potential anti-slave implications inherent in popular sovereignty by briefly noting Cass's opinion that Congress lacked constitutional authorization to legislate on the question of slavery in the territories. Thus, Woodruff implied that Cass would veto, as unconstitutioanal, Congressional legislation in that area. In Woodruff's opinion, however, Zachary Taylor could not offer such protection to the South, for he had pledged not to veto an act of Congress unless the measure involved a "clear" violation of the Constitution. Would not legislation prohibiting slavery in the territories constitute a clear violation of the Constitution? Woodruff thought not. Ample precedent existed, he declared, in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and in the measure prohibiting slavery in Oregon, to justify excluding its introduction into the Southwest. As for Taylor's vice-presidential running mate, Millard Fillmore, Woodruff viewed the possibility of his occupying the presidency as presenting an even graver threat to Southern


82 Democrat, September 8, 1848.
interests. According to Woodruff, Fillmore answered affirmatively in 1838 when an anti-slavery society asked him if Congress should receive anti-slavery petitions, should refuse to annex Texas so long as slavery existed there, if Congress could abolish the internal slave trade, and if he favored the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.83

In defending the Taylor-Fillmore ticket, Arkansas' Whigs reversed Woodruff's arguments by contending that Taylor, as president, offered the best protection for slavery. Ironically, in view of their earlier objections to Andrew Jackson's use of the veto, Whigs boasted of Taylor's presumed willingness to exercise the presidential veto power. Hayden declared on one occasion that his presidential oath would require Taylor to veto the Wilmot Proviso as clearly unconstitutional. Subsequently, Hayden depicted as "ridiculous, false and absurd" the charge that Taylor would not veto any act of Congress while Etter, in a more positive fashion, assured the residents of southwest Arkansas that Taylor would not hesitate to veto an act of Congress threatening Southern interest.84 Etter also quoted free soil Northern newspapers to demonstrate the opposition of free soilers to Taylor's candidacy.85

As the campaign approached a climax, both the Telegraph and the Gazette sought to depict Taylor's election as essential for the preservation of the Union. Only Taylor's election, Etter wrote in early September, could prevent the dissolution of the Union which was

83 Democrat, October 13, 1848.

84 Gazette, August 3, 1848; "Taylor and Fillmore," ibid., August 10, 1848; Telegraph, November 1, 1848.

85 Telegraph, August 23, 1848; "A Nut for the South," ibid., October 11, 1848.
threatened by Democratic attempts to deny the entry of slavery into the Southwest.\textsuperscript{86} And George Hayden dismissed the old issues which had formerly separated the parties by declaring that they "are overshadowed and swallowed up in the all important, and to us, vital question, slavery." Hayden described Cass as a tool of the abolitionists and he predicted that if the Michigan candidate won the presidency, the policies he adopted would sever the Union.\textsuperscript{87} The real issue in the campaign, Hayden reiterated in October, flowed from the sectional controversy, not from traditional party differences.\textsuperscript{88} In blunt fashion, he added that this central issue found locus along "Mason and Dixo
\noneslaveyqestion."\textsuperscript{89} On the eve of the election, the Whig correspondent "Phocian," stung by the free soilers' attacks, attacked the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which prohibited slavery north of the $36^\circ30'$ parallel. The Compromise, "Phocian" asserted, tended to sectionalize national politics, whereas its repeal would remove slavery from the political arena.\textsuperscript{90} Following the election, "Phocian" described the Missouri Compromise as unconstitutional; he added that simply because it had existed for almost three decades did not mean the measure represented a constitutional act of Congress.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Telegraph}, September 20, 1848.

\textsuperscript{87} "Try Again," \textit{Gazette}, September 28, 1848.

\textsuperscript{88} "The True Issue," \textit{ibid.}, October 12, 1848; \textit{ibid.}, October 19, 1848.

\textsuperscript{89} "The True Issue," \textit{ibid.}, October 12, 1848.

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid.}, November 2, 1848.

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}, November 23, 1848.
soilers represented conviction, and to what extent it constituted a self-serving ploy, must remain a mystery. Certainly, Arkansas' Whigs had everything to gain and nothing to lose by raising the issue. True, public opinion—if the absence of letters to newspaper editors accurately measures this—appeared unconcerned with the issue. But, possibly, the concern existed and the Whigs gave expression to it, while the Democrats—believing silence their best response to the slavery controversy—simply ignored an issue that actually profoundly moved Arkansans.

Whatever the truth of the matter, neither the slavery question nor the nonpartisan approach of the Taylor campaign proved sufficient to move Arkansas out of the Democrat column. Cass won 9,301 (59.1 percent) votes to Taylor's 7,587. The astute observer, William Woodruff, had predicted in June that by abandoning Whig principles in favor of Taylor's nonpartisan platform, Taylor's supporters might boost him into the White House. But Woodruff implied that even this tactic would prove futile in Arkansas. On the eve of the election, the Van Buren Intelligencer prophesied a Cass victory nationally, adding that Cass's Arkansas margin of victory would, with substantial turnouts, equal 7,000 votes. The state's Whigs, on the other hand, predicted a Taylor victory nationally. As for the state election, Whigs felt less sanguine. In early October, Charles Noland's Batesville Eagle professed that Taylor might, indeed, fail to carry Arkansas although the paper maintained that Cass's winning majority would fall below 2,500 votes.

92 Democrat, June 30, 1848.
93 "The Presidential Election," Intelligencer, November 4, 1848.
94 Gazette, June 22, 1848; Telegraph, October 25, 1848.
Still Noland—and the Gazette's George Hayden as well—urged the state's Whigs to perform their duty by voting November 7 even though the prospects for Taylor's success in the state appeared all but nonexistent.  

If the state's Whigs could anticipate little except perhaps a reduced margin of defeat in Arkansas, there remained the question of the national results. In Van Buren, Arkansas, tensions induced by the wait for the national returns ignited a bloody brawl in the course of a Democrat procession on the Friday night following Tuesday's election. As the Democrat procession passed the Union Rough and Ready Club in front of Christopher Lilly's Coffee House, a Whig onlooker hurrahed for Taylor and Fillmore. A Democratic marcher then hurled a torch at the offender, whereupon the Whig drew a pistol and discharged all five barrels of his revolver at the procession. The enraged Democrats proceeded to chase the pistoleer and other Whig bystanders into the coffee house where at least twenty-three shots were exchanged and the building itself set afire in several places. George Clarke, describing the affray the following morning, declared that the "body of a man apparently dead was taken out of the gutter and sent off, another was shot through the breast while W. H. Wilder was shot in the head."  

In another column in the same issue of November 11, Clarke cheerfully reported that on election day itself, tranquility prevailed in Van

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96Gazette, November 2, 1848; "To the Polls," Eagle, November 7, 1848.

97"Deplorable Affair," Intelligencer, November 11, 1848. Clarke did not subsequently refer to the fray although three weeks later he noted a Whig celebration on the river bank attended alike by Democrats and Whigs. Following the river bank festivities, Clarke received an invitation to drink punch at a Whig's home; subsequently, the party adjourned to a local restaurant where "nothing took place to mar the feelings of any person." See "The Whig Jollification," ibid., December 2, 1848.
Elsewhere in Arkansas, the populace awaited the returns with more equanimity than displayed by the citizens of Van Buren. News of Taylor's victory reached Little Rock by November 23, on which day the city's Whigs celebrated in the hall of the House of Representatives at "early candle light." In Washington, Arkansas, Whigs observed Taylor's victory the following day by burning a "little gunpowder," though Clarksville, Arkansas, in the northwestern part of the state, did not receive news of Taylor's victory until December 6. Some one hundred and fifty men and fifty women in Clarksville observed Taylor's victory that day by holding a celebration in the precise location where eight years previously "General Harrison was burnt in effigy and where some misguided young ladies, hoisted petticoats in derision of the old hero."

Taylor's 44.9 percent of the vote represented a marked improvement over the 37.0 percent acquired in Arkansas by Clay four years earlier, although Taylor's percentage all but duplicated the 44.0 percent won by Harrison in 1840. Robert Johnson's decisive victory over

98 "Taylor Jubilee," Gazette, November 23, 1848; Telegraph, December 6, 1848.
99 "Whig Jollification," Telegraph, November 29, 1848; Gazette, December 28, 1848.
100 Gazette, December 28, 1848.
101 W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 1832-1892 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 274-92. Taylor won Bradley, Chicot, Crittenden, Desha, Hempstead, Independence, Jefferson, Mississippi, Monroe and Ouachita counties and tied Cass in Marion County. Four of these are Mississippi River Counties, six are located in the southern half of the state, while one (Monroe) is a Mississippi River delta county though not bordering the River. Independence and Marion are in north Arkansas.
Thomas Newton in August reduced voter interest in the Taylor–Cass contest in Arkansas, for 24.9 percent fewer men bothered to cast a vote in the presidential balloting; this reduction benefitted Taylor, however, for he won 5.2 percent more votes in his race with Cass than Newton had won in his contest with Johnson. Newton's proximate 40 percent of the vote approached closely the maximum vote achieved by state candidates in the elections of the 1840's—Clay's 37.0 percent in 1844 mirrored these candidates' performances closely. These Whig votes in the state elections, combined with Clay's performance in 1844, demonstrates that between 35 and 40 percent of the Arkansas electorate in the 1840's felt itself sufficiently identified with the philosophy of Whiggery to support the party's candidates, regardless of the Democratic opponent. When the national party selected—as it did in 1840 and 1848—a presidential candidate only nominally Whig, he could acquire an additional five to seven percent of the Arkansas vote. But there remained at least 55 percent of the electorate firmly committed to a Democratic candidate regardless of his Whig opponent. Thus, the elections of 1848 demonstrated to even the most obstinate Arkansas Whig that the party must remain a minority within the state, that its hopes for success lay in remaining viable to take advantage of disintegration within the Democracy.

To remain intact, however, the state party required the cohesion that the hope of office alone provides to party workers willing to sacrifice their time and energy for the party's welfare. The chief

102 In the Congressional races of 1840, 1842, and 1844, Whig candidates won 41.5 percent, 36.0 percent and 40.6 percent of the vote cast. In the 1844 gubernatorial race, Gibson attained 38.4 percent of the vote running against a regular and a maverick Democrat.
political plums available in 1848 resulted from the exits of Senators Sevier and Ashley from their posts; when the legislature met in November, it would fill other offices as well as the Senatorial posts.

From the spring of 1848 until the holding of the August state election, interest remained riveted on the Senatorial aspirants who, seeking to develop support within the legislature for their candidacies, scheduled speaking tours in various areas of the state. Initially, Whigs condemned this practice as subversive of the intent of the framers of the Constitution who had devised the indirect election of Senators to avoid the passions associated with direct elections. In early June, however, the Telegraph's William Etter reversed his earlier stand opposing the pledging of legislative candidates to support a particular Senatorial aspirant—Etter, bowing to the inevitable, now deemed it only "unwise and impolitic" for Whigs to seek to fill both vacancies. He suggested that Arkansas' Whigs strike a bargain with either the Ambrose Sevier or the Solon Borland wing of the Democracy whereby a trade out would take place in the legislature between the Whigs and one of the Democratic factions. The Whigs, of course, would agree to support one faction's Senatorial candidate and, in turn, the Whig party would receive the support of that faction for the remaining post. Democrats ignored this proposition, although in July the Intelligencer bitterly accused the Sevier faction in Crawford County of inducing Whigs to offer candidates for the legislature in an attempt to prevent the legislative


104 Telegraph, June 7, 1848.
candidates supporting Borland from acquiring the votes of Whigs.¹⁰⁵

Following the August elections, Democratic papers supporting each of the two factions accused opposition Democrats of seeking an agreement with Whigs to secure the support of that party for their candidates.¹⁰⁶ These virulent attacks resulted from the election to the legislature of a majority of Democrats favoring Borland's election, a result which the Telegraph accurately predicted "will create considerable excitement between the different wings of the party."¹⁰⁷ Until this point, discussion of a Whig understanding with one of the factions lacked credibility for legislators favoring either the Sevier or Borland wings might win in such large numbers as to constitute a majority. But since Borland's majority vis-à-vis the Sevier faction proved thin, the Whigs legislators represented the balance of power in the forthcoming legislature. George Hayden of the Gazette announced his support for the Sevier faction, although he published the letters of Whig correspondents opposing Whigs backing any Democrat.¹⁰⁸ In Batesville, Charles Noland, editor of the Eagle, opposed Whigs supporting either faction; Noland conceded that in politics one often must choose, not the good, but rather the lesser evil. He added that such a dilemma did not prevail in the present situation, for no reason existed for the twenty-three Whigs in the Assembly to support either Borland or Sevier. Still,

¹⁰⁵ "Violation of Party Integrity," Intelligencer, July 15, 1848.
¹⁰⁶ Democrat, September 8, 1848; "Those Instructions," ibid., September 22, 1848; Intelligencer, September 2, 1848.
¹⁰⁷ Telegraph, August 23, 1848.
¹⁰⁸ Gazette, September 7, 14, 28, 1848, and correspondents "A Whig" and "T" in the issues of September 21 and November 2 respectively.
Noland conceded that several Whigs would vote for one of the Democratic Senatorial nominees, and he promised to "say a few things" privately to sway their choice, although Noland declared he would offer no public expression of his preference.  

Probably Noland, along with Hayden, supported Sevier, but after four days of balloting in which eighteen Whigs voted for Noland through eleven ballots, Borland proved the winner. The weary enterprise concluded on November 17 when Sevier, hoping to strengthen his chances for the full six year term, withdrew from the race for the Senate term due to expire in March 1849. Years later, William Woodruff would claim that Sevier's supporters kept Noland in the race by promising a major state office for the Whigs if he remained. According to Woodruff, Sevier's supporters tried, but failed, to exhaust the legislators committed to Borland's candidacy. In return for simply keeping Noland in the race, Woodruff declared, the Whig David Walker received the support of the Sevier faction which elected him, with Whig assistance, to the state supreme court immediately following Borland's on November 28. Thus, Arkansas' Whigs achieved success in 1848 in this one instance by exploiting divisions within the Democracy.

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109 Eagle, October 3, 1848. On September 7 the Gazette quoted the Intelligencer as stating that the Eagle backed Sevier.

110 Journal of the House of Representatives, 1848-1849 (Little Rock: Printed by the Gazette, 1849), 58-61, 63-65, 78, 86-87; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 258.

111 Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat, April 9, 1852, and April 22, 29, 1853; Hallum, Biographical and Pictorial History of Arkansas, p. 103; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years 1819-1866, p. 257; Journal of the House of Representatives, 1848-1849, 133-39. Apparently believing the bargain would more likely be honored if the two judgeships were voted upon prior to the Senatorial election, Charles Bertrand submitted a resolution proposing this. It was defeated 36 to 32 in the House. See House Journal, ibid., 129-30. Walker won the office on the seventh ballot. See House Journal, ibid., 139.
CHAPTER IX

THE DISINTEGRATION OF ARKANSAS WHIGGERY, 1848-1854

With no state races scheduled until 1850, politics promised, following Taylor's victory, to receive little attention in Arkansas. This prospect abruptly ended on November 23 when Governor Thomas S. Drew, only a few days following his inauguration for a second term, informed the legislature of his resignation.\(^1\) Drew told the legislators that personal reasons dictated his action, but it appears that he resigned because one of the Democratic factions blocked an attempt to raise his eighteen hundred dollars a year salary which Drew considered inadequate compensation.\(^2\) In Van Buren, Democrat George Clarke expressed annoyance at Drew's resignation which would require the expense of a new election; in the Gazette, the Whig "Phocion" speculated that Drew resigned in order to run for the Senate. To replace Drew, the Democratic Intelligencer suggested either John Seldon Roane, Mark Izard, Samuel Mitchell, or the Intelligencer's editor, George Clarke. "Phocion" suggested the name of Dr. Lorenzo Gibson of Hot Spring County

\(^1\) Arkansas State Democrat, November 24, 1848.

\(^2\) Margaret Ross, "Chronicles of Arkansas," Gazette, May 26, 1968; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819-1866 (Little Rock: Arkansas Gazette Foundation, 1969), p. 261. It is uncertain which one of the two Democratic factions opposed raising Drew's salary since Drew "made a sudden switch from one clique to the other in the spring of 1848, after his nomination." In formally tendering his resignation on January 10, 1849, Drew stated that he resigned because his salary had not been raised as promised. See Margaret Ross, "Chronicles of Arkansas."
as a Whig candidate, not only because Gibson had remained loyal to his party through all adversity, but also because Gibson could win the vote of all Taylor supporters and "perhaps a quarter over."³

With the legislature still in session, both parties possessed the opportunity to employ a legislative caucus to select a gubernatorial candidate, but only the Democrats employed this procedure. The Democratic legislators, on December 8, nominated John Seldon Roane after what the Gazette described as "considerable time and trouble, and diverse ballotings."⁴ A week following Roane's nomination, the Intelligencer defended the caucus procedure declaring it more suitable than either the convening of a convention or neglecting to select any party candidate. The Intelligencer described the caucus mode of selecting a candidate as eminently democratic since the legislators were popularly elected officials representing all geographic areas of the state. As for neglecting to select a party candidate, the paper noted that this encouraged splintering. Finally, the Intelligencer defended Roane's selection on the grounds that as a presidential elector in the fall, Roane's speaking tours throughout the state had secured for him a wide acquaintance with the voters.⁵ This editorial ignored the bitter struggle that occurred at the caucus between Roane and several opponents, including the Intelligencer's own editor, George Clarke. Two letters written by Democratic legislators and published on the same

³Arkansas Intelligencer, December 2, 1848; Gazette, December 14, 1848.

⁴"Gubernatorial," Gazette, December 14, 1848.

⁵"Election for Governor," Intelligencer, December 16, 1848.
page as the editorial shed light on that struggle. Correspondent "L," writing from Little Rock on December 4, complained that Clarke failed to secure the nomination only because he had supported Solon Borland for the Senate. And an unsigned letter dated from Little Rock on December 9 declared that Clarke failed to win the nomination only because the North and West split their vote between several candidates from the region. 6 Actually, Roane, in 1848, hailed from Van Buren in the northwest, although he initially lived in Pine Bluff after his arrival in Arkansas in 1837.

The Intelligencer's charge that "Family" opposition defeated Clarke's candidacy received support from the Arkansas historian of the 1930's, David Y. Thomas, although in a more recent assessment Brian G. Walton declares that "it is difficult to substantiate [Thomas'] opinion." 7 In buttressing his thesis that Roane supported neither Democratic faction, Walton asserts that William Woodruff "clearly" viewed Roane as neither an enemy nor even a significant figure in the struggle the Democratic editor waged against the Robert Johnson-Elias Conway faction.

Whatever the merits of the question involved here, the fact remained that Roane proved an unpopular candidate; in January, Whig Thomas W. Newton informed a correspondent that there existed "no


enthusiasm for Roane, in any part of the state and the leaders pretty
generally are disgusted."\textsuperscript{8} One of the chief criticisms of Roane re-
sulted from the charge that his duel with Albert Pike in 1847 made him
ineligible to hold office since Arkansas law prohibited a duelist from
holding public office.\textsuperscript{9} This offense, combined with his alleged sup-
port from the "Family," would provide an opportunity for a Whig opponent
to secure the support of disgruntled Democrats, particularly those
Democrats of the north and west who felt that Clarke had received an
undeserved defeat in the caucus.

Had Clarke won nomination, the Whigs might have followed the
advice offered by "Phocion" in mid-December that the party award the
nomination to Dr. Lorenzo Gibson of Hot Spring County. "Phocion" de-
clared that Gibson's loyalty to the party dictated his selection.\textsuperscript{10}
But offering an orthodox party wheel horse to the electorate would
hardly entice disgruntled Democrats into abandoning the Democracy.
And as a duelist, Roane's candidacy presented an inviting target for
the Whigs who could point to his moral weakness. Thus, the Whig Central
Committee at Little Rock, designating itself as the "friends of the
Administration of General Taylor," tendered the nomination to Cyrus W.
Wilson. Wilson's candidacy proved attractive to the committee in large
measure because as a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,
his reputation contrasted sharply with that of Roane; in addition, as
Senator of the Pulaski-Prairie county district, Wilson possessed ample

\textsuperscript{8}Thomas W. Newton to Jesse Turner, January 23, 1849, Jesse
Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

\textsuperscript{9}Ross, \textit{Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819-1866}, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Gazette}, December 14, 1848.
political experience.

With the legislature in session until January 10, 1849, the Whigs might have emulated the Democrats by holding a legislative party caucus. But of the twenty-one Pulaski County residents who signed the letter of January 22, 1849, offering the nomination to Wilson, only two held seats in the legislature and both these men held seats on the Central Committee. The absence of such a Whig legislative caucus demonstrates once more the control over the party which Pulaski County and the Whig Central Committee exercised. The extent of that control equaled that displayed by the "Family" dynasty, but it evoked little criticism among Whigs, in large measure because no Whig could intensely desire a nomination unlikely to prove an avenue to office in traditionally Democratic Arkansas.

In announcing their selection, the Whig press emphasized Wilson's sterling character, while Woodruff professed surprise that a minister would enter the contest. In explaining Wilson's selection by the Whig leadership, Woodruff declared that such "old Stagers" as Gibson, Newton, Fowler, Noland, Turner, Bertrand, and Trapnell, realizing their own inability to win, had turned to a new name and face to

11 *Gazette*, January 25, 1849. Frederick W. Trapnell and Charles Bertrand were Pulaski County representatives. The remaining signers included such prominent Pulaski County Whigs as Albert Pike, Thomas W. Newton, George B. Hayden, Absalom Fowler, Stephen S. Tucker, James B. Keatts, John B. Robins, Dr. Roderick L. Dodge, and Charles Rapley—all members of the Central Committee.

12 Woodruff charged that the Whig legislators failed to agree on a candidate, whereupon the Pulaski County Whigs caucused to select Wilson. See *Democrat*, February 9, 1849.

present to the electorate. Woodruff's thesis does indeed help explain Wilson's choice, for the party required a candidate not closely identified with the Whig leadership in order to secure the support of the disgruntled Democrats. The prospect of enticing Democrats to support Wilson particularly intrigued Absalom Fowler who urged Jesse Turner of Crawford County to "see as many democrats as possible in the course of the canvass." In Pulaski County, Fowler added, "some of the most substantial democrats . . . have now entered into [Wilson's] support with zeal." 14

In asserting that Wilson acquired the support of some Democrats, Fowler alluded to the distaste many Arkansans felt in casting a vote for a duelist. In the brief campaign, extending only some six weeks, Roane's character defects proved the Whigs' chief campaign issue. Whigs contended that Roane lacked the moral qualities essential for the state's chief executive office and that, in addition, by violating the law prohibiting dueling, Roane had legally disqualified himself from taking the oath of office. 15 In replying to this charge, Democratic correspondent "H" pointed out that the Roane-Pike duel occurred in the Indian Territory rather than within the state, and thus, Roane did not violate the Arkansas statute prohibiting dueling within the state. Furthermore, "H" declared that the provision of the act prohibiting a duelist from taking an oath of office applied only to those persons entering into a commissioned office; the gubernatorial office, he reasoned, did

14 Absalom Fowler to Jesse Turner, January 24, 1849, Jesse Turner Papers, Duke University Library.

15 Gazette, February 1, February 15, 1849 (editorial), and correspondent "E" writing from Pope County; Telegraph, February 7, 1849; "The Election for Governor," Batesville Eagle, February 13, 1849.
not fall into this category.\textsuperscript{16}

In contrast to Roane's moral deficiencies, \textit{Gazette} editor George B. Hayden found reassuring the Christian ministry of Wilson, for it stamped him as one "deeply read in matters concerning a future state."\textsuperscript{17} Probably, Hayden would have emphasized Wilson's profession on subsequent occasions had not Democrats suggested that a minister's seeking political office was inappropriate. But in mid-February, Hayden permitted Pope County Whig correspondent "E" to reply to the Democratic charge concerning the impropriety of a minister's seeking office. "E" did so by describing Wilson as primarily a small farmer who preached occasionally only because the sparsely settled area in which he resided required the services of lay ministers.\textsuperscript{18}

Wilson himself did not attempt to capitalize upon his ministerial role, although in explaining his inability to tour the state, he cited not only the brevity of the campaign but his necessity as a "small farmer" to continue tilling his own soil. If elected, Wilson pledged to support a public school system and internal improvements. In addition, promising to expedite the demise of the state banks, he stated that, in the future, Arkansans should shun paper currency in favor of "California dust or its equivalent."\textsuperscript{19} Although such a hard money view would have earned Wilson censure from members of his party in earlier years, it evoked no comment in 1849. The silence resulted from the disgust of Arkansas' citizenry with state and county currencies

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Democrat}, February 19, 1849.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Gazette}, February 1, 1849.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, February 15, 1849.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, February 1, 1849.
and city and town shinplasters; state currency sold at twenty percent
discount while county note discounts ranged from twenty to seventy-five
percent and as Borden noted, "When they can be used at all, are shaved
together."  

The brief period allotted to the campaign, however, spared
Arkansas' electorate from yet another discussion as to which party
deserved censure for creating the banks. Indeed, the abbreviated cam-
paign's most extended discussions concerned not an issue but rather the
attempts of several aspirants other than Wilson and Roane to secure
election. In rapid fashion in early February, Wilson acquired a rival
within his own party while Roane's difficulties mounted when two Demo-
crats announced their candidacies. Wilson's rival was Haley S. Edington
of Desha County in the delta while Roane's opponents included another
Desha County native, James A. Moon, and Washington County Democrat,
Bryant H. Smithson. Each party solicitously sought to promote the
campaigns of the rival party's newly announced candidates, the Whigs
presenting Roane as merely a "Family" candidate with the Democrats
castigating Wilson as the tool of a Little Rock junto.

Although the leadership of both parties felt distressed by the

20 Gazette, February 22, 1849. Roane apparently neglected to
issue a statement of principles; if his speaking tour took place, the
papers failed to note it.

21 Ibid., February 1, 1849; Democrat, February 2, 1849; "Haley S.
Edington, Esq. of Desha County," Intelligencer, March 3, 1849.

22 Whig attacks on the "Family" candidate are found in the
Intelligencer, February 17, 1849, quoting the Batesville Eagle (n.d.);
Gazette, February 1, March 8, 1849; Democratic attacks accusing Little
Rock of dictating Wilson's selection are found in the Democrat of
February 9, 16, March 3, 1849, and in "Haley S. Edington, Esq. of Desha
County," Intelligencer, March 3, 1849.
plethora of candidates, the Whigs as the minority party believed
Edington's announcement seriously jeopardized their opportunity for
victory. Edington had written the Gazette January 17, asking Hayden to
announce his candidacy, but Hayden delayed when Wilson received the nomi-
nation in the expectation that Edington would withdraw. But this
Edington refused to do.23 The Democrats Smithson and Moon, however,
withdrew from the contest, although a week prior to the election, the
Gazette announced that Democrat Henry L. Biscoe of Phillips County had
announced his candidacy in opposition to Roane.24

But such an attempt to confuse the Democracy could have little
effect on an electorate jaded by the announcements and withdrawals of
so many candidates. The real issue in the campaign, George Clarke of
Van Buren wrote, concerned the loyalty which individual Democrats felt
toward the party's nominee. If, he declared, Democrats wished a Whig
elected governor, they would "either stay away from the polls or vote
for Wilson."25 In essence, Clarke did indeed sum up the issue for this
special election of 1849 represented a test of Democratic party loyalty.
In selecting the unpopular Roane, the "Family," in effect, defiantly
announced its belief that no Whig state candidate could defeat a
Democrat.

Although Roane won the election, the possible error in such
Democratic reasoning quickly became apparent with the first returns.

23 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819-1866, p. 262.

24 Smithson's and Moon's withdrawals were announced in the
Democrat of February 16 and March 2. The Gazette declared Briscoe a
candidate on March 8.

25 "Election for Governor," Intelligencer, March 10, 1849. Clarke did not bother to take note of Edington's candidacy.
Three days following the election of March 14, the Intelligencer at
Van Buren noted that Wilson had won Van Buren with 77 votes to only 45
acquired by Roane while neighboring Fort Smith reported a tie vote for
the two major candidates. Clarke noted that high waters resulting
from recent heavy rains had reduced the turnout; elsewhere in the state,
March rains also reduced the vote. Within a week following the
election, Little Rock Whigs claimed victory for Wilson, but Woodruff
cautioned that "one should not shout until he is out of the woods." By the following week, Woodruff's composure had dissipated as he scolded
the citizenry for failing to participate in the election. With only
some 6,000 out of 30,000 eligible voters casting a ballot, Woodruff
reasoned that the election had attracted only those residing near a
polling booth and those who happened to pass the polls on election day.
With such disinterest displayed, he suggested that the gubernatorial
chair "should simply be auctioned to the highest bidder." Possibly,
Woodruff concluded, politics might disappear amidst voter apathy.

Although returns in early April indicating a Roane victory
mollified Woodruff somewhat, the Whigs refused to concede Wilson's
loss until mid-April. The returns published by the Gazette on April 12

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26 Intelligencer, March 17, 1849. Actually, Wilson won Fort
Smith by 196 to 89 votes. See "Governor's Race," Fort Smith Herald,
March 21, 1849.

27 Dewey Allen Stokes, Jr., "Public Affairs in Arkansas, 1836-
1850" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1966),
417-18.


29 Ibid., March 30, 1849.

30 In addition to the returns noted earlier, the election re-
results appeared in the Gazette, March 15, 22, and quoting the Van Buren
Intelligencer (n.d.), April 5, 12, 1849; Intelligencer, March 31,
1849; Telegraph, April 11, 1849.
revealed that Roane had won 3,290 votes, Wilson 3,228, Edington 58, and Smithson 6. The figures reveal that of the forty-four counties reporting returns, Wilson had won nineteen and Roane twenty-three with the candidates tying in one county. The final returns revealed that, Woodruff's earlier rhetoric to the contrary, a respectable percentage of the electorate had voted considering the weather conditions which prevailed. Indeed, the 6,583 votes cast compared quite favorably with the 6,070 votes recorded in the Congressional race of December 1846, when Newton, Noland, Rust, Paschal, and Hareison sought the remaining six weeks of Yell's unexpired term. In both special races, a larger percentage of Whigs than Democrats had taken the trouble to vote, suggesting that the Whigs—although a minority in Arkansas—displayed greater party loyalty. And in addition, the state's Whigs might have cheered themselves with the thought that the counties Wilson won encompassed all areas of the state as witnessed by his carrying Washington and Crawford counties, both of which usually fell to the Democracy. True, the failure of George Clark to receive the nomination undoubtedly led some Democrats in the northwest to remain at home on election day, but Whig hopes for success were predicated on just such

31 The tie occurred in Marion County. Wilson won in Clark, Dallas, Drew, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Jefferson, Johnson, Ouachita, Prairie, Pulaski, Van Buren, Crawford, Sevier, Monroe, Crittenden, Bradley, Phillips, Chicot, and Washington counties.

32 Newton-Noland won 50.5 percent of the vote in the special election of 1846 while Wilson acquired 47.5 percent in the 1849 election. Whig state candidates normally won 40 percent less of the vote in regular elections.
occurrences as this.  

In censuring the electorate for failing to exhibit marked interest in the election, however, Woodruff accurately gauged its mood. And that relative disinterest resulted not merely from the brevity of the campaign, the lackluster nature of the gubernatorial as compared with the Congressional post, or the extended series of Whig defeats which forecast yet another setback. Rather, the failure of the campaign to generate more interest resulted in large measure from the electorate's concern with increasing sectional tensions. David Wilmot's proviso prohibiting slavery in the southwestern territories newly won from Mexico inaugurated a debate which reached a climax in 1849-1850; the passions generated in both the North and the South by this factor left but little opportunity for Arkansas' gubernatorial candidates of 1849 to focus attention on their candidacies.

No reason existed for Roane to introduce the burgeoning sectional issue into his campaign since, as the candidate of the majority party, the issue might reduce rather than enhance his chance for victory. But Wilson probably erred in failing to introduce the issue which would have provided him an opportunity to display his commitment to Southern principles.

As the sectional debate intensified in 1849, Arkansas' Democrats found themselves in a particularly vulnerable position for two of the leading spokesmen of the national Democratic party—Senators

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33 Had Wilson won, the state would have experienced another gubernatorial election in 1849, for he died on September 22, 1849. See the Gazette of September 27, 1849, and "Death of the Rev. Cyrus W. Wilson," Intelligencer, September 29, 1849.
Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina—adopted positions at variance with the majority of Arkansas' voters. Benton attacked slavery declaring that if Missouri did not already permit the institution within its borders, he would vote to bar its entry, while Calhoun appeared ready to support dissolution of the Union rather than permit Congress to prohibit the entry of slavery into the Southwest. The Gazette attacked both the Senators, terming Benton an abolitionist and Calhoun a man so consumed with the desire to gain the presidency that he would destroy the Union rather than relinquish his ambition.\textsuperscript{34} Unfortunately for Arkansas' Democrats, no Whig of national stature presented such an inviting target as did Benton or Calhoun. And when Virginia Whig John Minor Botts—an opponent of Texas' annexation—incurred defeat in the spring of 1849, both the Whig Gazette and the Whig Batesville Eagle rejoiced.\textsuperscript{35} In response, the Intelligencer's George Clarke grudgingly extended his congratulations to the editors for their attitudes although Clarke sought to draw a distinction between the Whig editors' views and those held by a number of the state's leaders by declaring that "some of our tight Whigs are grumbling at the Gazette for rejoicing over the defeat of Botts."\textsuperscript{36}

In the two-year period between the spring of 1849 and that of 1851, conflict between the North and the South concerning the slavery issue occupied center stage in Arkansas' political life. The debate

\textsuperscript{34} Gazette, February 8, July 5, August 16, 1849.

\textsuperscript{35} For an account of Botts's career, see Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), II, pp. 472-73.

\textsuperscript{36} Intelligencer, May 26, 1849.
generated reveals that three rather distinct political tendencies emerged in Arkansas from discussion of this issue: both parties sought to devise a moderate response to whatever policy Congress adopted; in addition, a tendency by each party to utilize the issue for partisan purposes eventually also emerged; and finally, the hostility of Congressman Robert Ward Johnson toward the attempt of northern free soilers to block slavery expansion in the territories proved of major importance in Arkansas' politics.

The state's newspapers took the lead in urging a moderate response. All declared that the South should seek to preserve its "rights" within the Union, but all professed to believe that these rights could be secured within the framework of due process and deplored alike the rhetoric of Northern abolitionists and Southern firebrands. 37 The correspondent "Americanus" summed up this moderate response when he wrote in the spring of 1850 that, if the American people assembled as a body to vote viva voce in favor of union or disunion, the resulting shout supporting union would "strike dumb for a season the contemptible minority" favoring disunion." 38

Phrased in such terms, "Americanus" undoubtedly gauged correctly the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of citizens in every section of the country. But the immediate issue concerned not union or disunion

37 Gazette, February 15, 1849, quoting the Richmond Republican (n.d.); "Oration Delivered by R. C. Farrelly, Esq., on the Fourth of July, 1849," Herald, March 21, 1849; Southern Shield (Helena, Arkansas), March 2, 9, 1850; Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat (Little Rock), "Mr. Webster's Compromise," March 15, March 22, April 15 (the correspondent "Americanus"), June 21 and 28, 1850, July 18, 1851.

38 Gazette and Democrat, April 5, 1850.
but rather one's willingness—or unwillingness—to accept whatever compromise Congress might devise. This a considerable number of Arkansans felt they could not do. And if the state's legislators accurately reflected the sentiments of their constituents, it appears that a much larger percentage of Democratic than Whig citizens found it impossible to support union at any price.\^[39]

Although Congress agreed to the Compromise of 1850 in the late summer of that year, Arkansas' legislators did not have an opportunity to debate the sectional issue until the Eighth General Assembly which convened on November 4, 1850. The day following its convocation, the Assembly addressed itself to the sectional issue which many of the state's legislators did not believe Congress had equitably settled with the Compromise of 1850.\^[40]

In an address to the legislators delivered on November 5, 1850, Governor John Seldon Roane delivered a lengthy, bitter attack upon free soilers, noting their recent opposition to the legalization of slavery in California and their resistance to the fugitive slave act. Despite his rhetorical vehemence, however, Roane assumed a moderate stance, counseling the industrialization of the South in order to reduce Southern

\^[39] Arthur Charles Cole has noted the divergence between the parties when he described the efforts to prevent secession in 1851: "Whigs in the more remote states of Florida, Arkansas, and Missouri stood for the same ideals that characterized the party elsewhere in the South. In these states, also, they were then working under the disadvantages of being in the minority." See Arthur Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1962), pp. 190–91.

\^[40] The Compromise of 1850 provided that California should enter the union as a free state, that residents of the Utah and New Mexico territories should decide the issue of slavery for themselves, and that a federally enforced fugitive slave law should provide security against runaway slave losses.
dependence upon Northern industry and urging the establishment of a joint legislative committee within the Arkansas legislature to study federal-state relations. The committee formed on the governor's recommendation produced a lengthy report which contained the following resolution: "Arkansas will abide the fate of the majority of the Slaveholding States, and will seek their destiny." Whig representative Frederich Trapnall led the opposition to this radical report by moving, in late December, to table it indefinitely—a motion sustained by a forty-one to twenty-eight vote. The overwhelming opposition of Whig representatives to the committee's resolution proved critical in defeating the immoderate report. On the key vote, nineteen of the twenty-two Whigs casting a ballot (86.4 percent) supported Trapnall's motion while only twenty-two of the forty-seven House Democrats voting (46.8 percent) supported Trapnall's motion to table the resolution. Analysis of the Democratic vote to sustain Trapnall's motion reveals that a substantial number of Democratic legislators from every section supported (and opposed) the motion; more Democrats in the northwestern counties, however, tended to support than to oppose Trapnall's motion.

The moderating influence of the Whigs revealed itself again when on Christmas Eve the House sustained by a fifty to eighteen vote Trapnall's motion to table indefinitely a resolution adopted in June by


42 Ibid., 294-301.

43 Ibid., 301.

44 See Maps IV and V in the Appendix. Six of the seventy-five members of the House did not cast votes on Trapnall's motion.
delegates from a number of Southern states meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Although the Nashville convention's resolution represented a relatively mild protest in that it adopted a wait-and-see attitude rather than urging disunion, the adoption of the resolution by the Arkansas legislature would have implied a willingness to "abide the fate of the majority of the Slaveholding States." On this occasion, not a single Whig voted with the minority of eighteen Democrats who opposed Trapnall's motion. Once again, only three House Whigs—Elliott H. Fletcher, Thomas S. James, and James Singleton—opposed the moderating influence exercised by Trapnall. Following this victory, Trapnall introduced his own resolution which, while vaguely condemning all Northern actions prejudicial to Southern interest, declared that Arkansas would employ only legal methods in defending its rights. The House approved this resolution by a vote of forty-three to twenty-two.

In contrast to the moderating influence exhibited by Whig members of the House, Whig Senators supported resolutions expressing a willingness to adopt extra-legal measures if Congress refused to adopt a suitable compromise. All four Whig members of the Senate, for instance, supported a subsequently defeated resolution introduced in mid-December which defended the right of revolution.

For a brief discussion of this first session of the Nashville convention (a second session the following year evoked little notice in the nation) see Holman Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1964), p. 102.


Ibid., 303.

the four Whigs joined again in support of an immoderately phrased resolution; on this occasion, they supported the resolution of the joint committee which had declared Arkansas' willingness to "abide the fate of the Slaveholding States." As to why Whig Senators should differ so markedly from their colleagues in the House, one can only conjecture. Possibly since only four Whigs sat in the Senate, party influences did not exist to the same extent as in the House; the very presence of a large number of party members in the House on the other hand might well have served as a disciplinary factor, intimidating recalcitrant Whigs possessing radical sentiments. That most Whigs held strongly unionist sentiments evokes no surprise for their nationalistic orientation naturally produced such an outlook.

But if most Whig legislators stood firmly committed to a moderate position, the votes recorded in the legislature demonstrated the split in the state's Democracy—and presumably, its electoral constituency as well. This split had manifested itself earlier in 1850 in the popular arena in the form of four meetings which produced petitions, three of which adopted a belligerent stance by endorsing the call of the Nashville convention. The gatherings supporting the Nashville convention demonstrated again that some Whigs, as well as Democrats, could support a radical stance for a Crawford County assembly convoked in February 1850, an Izard County meeting held the following month, and a Desha County meeting that convened in May contained both Whigs and

49. *Journal of the Senate, 1850-1851*, 438. The Senate approved the first resolution by a twelve to seven vote. The resolution lost the second time by an eleven to twelve vote.

50. For additional material relating to this debate, see *Senate Journal*, pp. 53, 245-46, 289-96, 405-06, 437-38; *House Journal*, 462.
Democrats. The Crawford County assembly, for instance, selected
Whig Jesse Turner as well as Democrat George W. Clarke as delegates to
the Nashville convention. But three hundred citizens of Johnson County,
meeting on June 22 in Clarksville, ignored the Nashville convention,
urging instead that Arkansans accept the compromise proposed in Con-
gress.

Throughout 1850, Democratic Congressman Robert Ward Johnson
opposed such a view which he regarded as a sellout of Southern rights.
Johnson and his Democratic critics found ample opportunity to air pub-
licly their differences, for on January 30, 1850, the Whigs sold the
Arkansas Gazette to William Woodruff who promptly dubbed his new paper
the Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat. In a circular addressed to
Arkansas' citizens in February 1850, and published in the Gazette and
Democrat, Johnson urged Arkansas to send a full slate of able delegates
to the Nashville convention; furthermore, Johnson announced his opposi-
tion to California's admission to the Union as a free state unless Con-
gress resolved all questions concerning slavery. Should Congress fail
to resolve the slave question in its entirety, Johnson declared, "the
Union ought and will dissolve." Subsequently, Johnson and "Esto Per-
petus," a sympathetic Little Rock contributor to the Gazette and Democrat,

51 "Southern Meeting in Crawford County," Gazette and Democrat,
February 22, 1850; Gazette and Democrat, April 19, 1850; "Enthusiastic
Meeting of the Citizens of Desha County, Irrespective of Party," Gazette
and Democrat, June 14, 1850.

52 Only a "few dissenting votes" opposed adoption of the reso-
lution according to the correspondent's account of the meeting which
appeared in the Gazette and Democrat, June 28, 1850.

53 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819-1866, p. 269.

54 Gazette and Democrat, February 22, 1850.
explained that their opposition to other than a final settlement of the
slave question resulted from their fears concerning growing Northern
political power. Although Johnson and "Esto Perpetus" disagreed as to
the best manner of meeting this threat, both noted with alarm the rapid
increase of the Northern population and the consequent increase of that
area's representation in Congress. 55

_Gazette and Democrat_ acting editor, John Elliot Knight, a thirty-
four year old former native of Massachusetts, deplored Johnson's posi-
tion and suggested that in considering disunion as an option open to
the South, Johnson had misread Arkansas' commitment to the Union. 56
Johnson, however, replied in May 1850, by lamenting the lack of Southern
unity on the sectional issue. In October, angered by the compromise
accepted by Congress, Johnson announced that he would not seek reelec-
tion. 57 Johnson's outspoken opposition to the Compromise, which per-
mitted California to enter the Union as a free state but did not guaran-
tee the existence of the slaveocracy in the New Mexico territory, might
provide Arkansas' Whigs with an issue they sorely needed. This would
result if the electorate should identify Arkansas' Whigs with unionism
(and deem the Democracy less firm in its devotion to the Union) and if
Knight's estimate of the attitude of the state's citizenry proved
accurate.

55 "To the Corps Editorial of the State of Arkansas," (Johnson)
_Gazette and Democrat_, March 1, 1850; _Ibid._, March 22, 1850.

56 _Ibid._, February 22, March 1, April 19, 1850. "Chicot
_Planter_" affirmed Knight's view in the _Gazette and Democrat_ issue of
May 24, 1850.

57 _Ibid._, clipped from the Washington (D.C.) _Union_ (n.d.); _Gazette
and Democrat_, October 4, 1850; Ross, _Arkansas Gazette: The Early Years,
1819-1866_, p. 280.
The effort in Arkansas to utilize the sectional question for partisan advantage displayed itself as early as July 1849, when Whig Editor John F. Wheeler of the Fort Smith Herald noted criticism directed against Henry Clay by some of his fellow Kentuckians. Clay's critics had demanded his resignation from the Senate contending that his views of slavery expansion opposed those of most citizens of Kentucky who wished all of the territories open to the slaveocracy. Why, Wheeler retorted, should not Democratic Senator Benton of Missouri resign, for he held free soil opinion or why, he continued, should not South Carolina's Democratic Senator Calhoun resign since he held secessionist views. Democrats, Wheeler implied, represented the real threat to national stability. And in the spring of 1850, the Whig Southern Shield at Helena denounced the Democratic True Issue, also located in Helena, when the Democratic paper declared that a Whig had authored a bitter anti-Nashville convention letter which appeared in the Whig paper. The Shield's editor declared that not a Whig but a prominent Chicot County Democrat slaveholding cotton planter had objected to the forthcoming convention.

Not until the spring and summer of 1851, however, did this sporadic sniping between the two Arkansas parties concerning the slave issue transform itself into a sustained fusillade. In part, this was the result of the approaching Congressional election scheduled for

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58 Herald, July 4, 1849.

August 4, 1851. By the time the Arkansas Congressional delegation returned to the state in March, Robert Ward Johnson had reversed his earlier decision to decline reelection and stood ready to accept another term in the House. Thus if Johnson secured the Democratic nomination, the campaign would most certainly center upon his outspoken objections to the compromise adopted by Congress in September 1850, and which—with the exception of the pro-Southern Fugitive Slave Act—Johnson had opposed in its entirety.

The approach of the election does not alone explain the burgeoning hostility concerning the slave issue which manifested itself between the Arkansas parties in 1850. In part, the increased hostility reflected Gazette and Democrat owner William Woodruff's dislike of the pro-compromise position featured in acting editor John Knight's editorials. Reversing the paper's earlier position, Woodruff in August 1850, announced that Knight's connection with the paper had ended with the previous issue; Woodruff subsequently denied that Knight's editorial policies had led to the separation. Knight's editorial posture had blurred the distinction that existed between the state's Whigs and Democrats. His replacement, twenty-eight year old Leonidas Trousdale, born in Tennessee and a former resident of Mississippi, quickly displayed a hostility to the compromise. Trousdale announced that a sharp cleavage existed between the parties on the sectional issue.

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60 Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819–1866, p. 260.

61 For Johnson's votes on the compromise, see Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850, Appendix C, p. 198.

62 Gazette and Democrat, August 2, 23, 1850; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819–1866, p. 276.
In a series of brisk exchanges in late May and throughout June of 1851, the Gazette and Democrat accused Whigs—and particularly the recently established Whig paper in Little Rock the Arkansas Whig—of surrendering to abolitionism. Trousdale declared that appeasement by the South served only to encourage free soilers although he denied that Johnson deserved the disunionist label Whigs attached to him. In rebuttal, both the Whig's editor Robert C. Farrelly and correspondents of the Whig as well defended the compromise and repeatedly described Johnson as a disunionist. From Dover (Pope County) in the northwest, a correspondent predicted that Johnson's denunciations of the compromise would cost him the votes of those opposed to "further agitation of the slave issue." And from Clarksville, some thirty miles to the west, "Totatot" claimed that politicians who belligerently attacked the compromise only a few months previously had, after noting that public opinion opposed their views, retraced their steps: "Valiant fellows were they once, ready to march under General Quattelbaum or Quitman to the seat of war, with their coffins on their backs, full of a truculent, blood-thirsty spirit, but now so mild and calm, such steadfast lovers of the Union and admirers of peace that you would not suppose them to

63 For establishment of the Arkansas Whig, see Fred W. Allsopp, History of the Arkansas Press for a Hundred Years and More, p. 346.

64 Gazette and Democrat, May 30, June 6, 13, 20, 27, 1851.

65 The Arkansas Whig (Little Rock), June 19 (editorial and correspondent "Totatot"), 26, July 10, 17, 31, 1851. In "Disunion Faction," Shield, May 17, 1851, the Helena paper satirically derided Johnson and his followers as disunionists.

66 Whig, July 10, 1851.
have the hearts to kill a snake."\(^67\)

Arkansas' Congressional campaign of 1851, however, featured more than a clash between Whigs and Democrats on the sectional issue. Once again the Democratic party experienced a bitter factional struggle which opened in November 1850, when numerous placards appeared in Little Rock announcing a caucus of Democratic legislators for November 15 "to take into consideration the well-being of the Democrat party." In announcing the presence of the posters, William Woodruff declared in the *Gazette and Democrat* of November 15 that he had known nothing of the scheduled meeting until he observed the public notices. Woodruff implied that the public could attend the meeting only as spectators; he cautioned the legislators not to select the party nominee as previously selecting state candidates through caucuses had only served to encourage divisions within the party. Instead, Woodruff urged the holding of county conventions to select delegates to attend a state convention.\(^68\) When the Little Rock caucus voted to call a state Democratic convention to meet in Little Rock on April 28, Woodruff, endorsing the action, declared that with ten or fifteen candidates rumored as seeking Johnson's chair, only a state convention could prevent party fragmentation.\(^69\)

On the eve of the Democratic convention, with the *Banner* supporting Johnson and Woodruff's *Gazette and Democrat* backing George Clarke, Woodruff urged all Democrats to unite behind the candidate

\(^{67}\) *Whig*, July 19, 1851.

\(^{68}\) *Gazette and Democrat*, November 15, 1850.

\(^{69}\) *Ibid.* , November 22, 1850.
selected, for failure to do so would insure a Whig victory. Woodruff's call for unity appeared pertinent in view of the savage infighting prevailing within Arkansas' Democracy. The extent of the bitterness revealed itself in an incident that occurred in the state legislature. In early January 1851, the lower house considered a resolution commending Arkansas' Congressional delegation for its defense of Southern rights against the "aggressive legislation and spirit of the late Congress of the United States." Democratic supporters of Johnson (opponents of the Solon Borland-Woodruff faction) sought to amend this resolution in order to embarrass Borland. Borland's absence from his Senate seat in the fall of 1850 (due to illness in his family that required his presence in Hot Springs) provided such an opening. Thus Borland's opponents sought to amend the resolution commending Arkansas' entire delegation to exclude any member of the delegation not "at his post" during the debates. In commenting upon this attempt, Woodruff ascribed it to the efforts of demagogues determined to ruin if they could not rule the Democracy. The motion introduced by Democrat Valentine Sevier of Lafayette County lost 39 to 5 with only four Democrats joining Sevier to sustain it, while the Whigs declined to vote. If Woodruff could call others to rally around the party standard, he subsequently demonstrated his willingness to support Johnson when the Democratic convention passed over Woodruff's choice, George W. Clarke, Clarke.

70 "A Few Plain Truths," Gazette and Democrat, April 25, 1851.
72 "A Significant Rebuke," Gazette and Democrat, January 10, 1851.
To oppose Johnson, the Whigs of Little Rock hastily established The Arkansas Whig which published its first edition May 22, 1851.75 The party did not hold a nominating convention, but in late May John Preston, Jr., of Phillips County, in response to letters he received "from several of my friends residing in different places in the state," announced his candidacy.76 In the announcement of his candidacy and in his speeches—termed restrained by the Gazette and Democrat—Preston emphasized that the only issue of the campaign concerned his devotion to the Union as opposed to Johnson's secessionist position. In one speech, Preston denied that he sought office as a Whig, describing himself instead as the Union candidate for Congress.77

The Congressional candidates accompanied by Senator Borland, seeking to repair his own political fences, initiated their debates in Perryville in Perry County (west-central Arkansas) on June 8.78 On July 19, Preston delivered a two-hour address devoted entirely to a defense of the Compromise of 1850; in his oration, he declared all provisions of the settlement advantageous to both the North and the South. The people of California, Preston declared, had possessed the right to

74 Gazette and Democrat, May 2, 1851; Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819-1866, p. 280.


76"To the Editor of the Helena Shield," May 31, 1851, quoted in the Whig, June 12, 1851.

77 Whig, June 27, 1851.

78 Ibid., June 20, 1851.
exclude slavery from their region and as for banning the slave trade in the District of Columbia, Preston asserted that observing manacled slaves marching through the streets of Washington had offended both Northern and Southern men. In his reply, Johnson defended each of the votes he cast in the struggle that concluded with the compromise as supportive of Southern interests. But in the event of his reelection, Johnson declared, he would attempt nothing further since the issue now lay resolved. Johnson's attitude, expressed in the summer of 1851, demonstrates that however much they had disliked the compromise arranged ten months earlier, Arkansans realized that Congress would not reverse its decision. And in the intervening ten months, the state's electorate had come to terms with that decision. Thus Johnson sought in the campaign to align his position with the altered mood of the electorate.

On the eve of the election, two Whig papers, the Shield at Helena and the Whig at Little Rock, maintained that the outcome would produce ramifications beyond the borders of Arkansas. The Shield contended that a victory by Johnson would serve only to hearten those supporting a Southern confederacy; editor Robert C. Farrelly of the Whig declared a Preston victory would encourage conservatives in other states in the South to repudiate secession and in turn conservatives in the North would acquire the courage to crush abolitionism.80

Obviously, the Whigs sought with such statements to encourage crossover voting by Democrats by pronouncing the death of old issues and emphasizing union or secession as the sole issue. To demonstrate that

79"The Discussion, Last Saturday," Whig, July 25, 1851.

80"To the Friends of the Constitution and Union in Arkansas," Shield, July 26, 1851; Whig, July 31, 1851.
Whigs too had lost their previous partisanship, the Shield declared in late July that "we grieve to tell you that many of those who heretofore called themselves Whigs, are openly enlisting in the ranks of the disunionists." The Helena paper added, however, that thousands of "good and true . . . stern Jackson Democrats" hesitated to vote for Preston only because of his Whig affiliations. The editor urged those Democrats to forget such petty considerations in view of the threat posed to the nation by secession. In a post-election analysis written several months later, each of the Democratic factions accused the other of having followed this advice by supporting Preston.

An analysis of the returns indicates, however, that Arkansas' voters remained firmly committed to their parties. Johnson won 11,891 votes in securing majorities in forty counties, while Preston's 8,827 votes provided him with majorities in twelve counties. Preston's percentage of the vote—42.6 percent—compared favorably with the 39.7 percent of the vote Thomas Newton won in his 1848 campaign against Johnson. And as usual, the Whigs again performed well in south Arkansas and in counties bordering (or near) the Mississippi River. The 20,718 votes cast in this election represent a 12.5 percent reduction in votes cast.

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81 Shield, July 26, 1851.
82 Gazette and Democrat, January 30, 1852, quoting the Banner (n.d.).
83 Preston won Crittenden, Phillips, and Desha counties on the Mississippi River and Monroe bordering Phillips County on the west. He also won the southern counties of Hempstead, Ouachita, Union, and Bradley; elsewhere, Preston won Pulaski, Independence, Crawford, and Washington counties. Preston's victories in Crawford and Washington counties probably reflected disgruntlement on the part of George Clarke's followers, disappointed at his failure to secure the nomination. See "Election Returns—Arkansas," Gazette and Democrat, August 29, 1851.
cast vis-à-vis the Newton-Johnson contest in 1848; thus it appears that the state's voters rejected the Whig argument that the election possessed importance extending beyond local politics. Not only the size of the vote but the pattern whereby Whigs performed well only in their traditional areas of strength would also indicate that the electorate agreed with the contention of Democrats that the election simply represented a partisan effort by the Whigs to gain a state office. 84

In his post-election analysis explaining Johnson's triumph, Democratic editor Leon Trousdale declared that the victory represented the victory of Southern rights over pseudo-unionism. The election, Trousdale explained, disproved Preston's contention that the compromise satisfied the South. 85 Whig editor Robert Farrelly, however, refused to retract his earlier opinion that the campaign had constituted a struggle between secessionist and unionist forces; unless Southerners repudiated Johnson's philosophy, he declared, disunion would prevail eventually. 86

Despite the tenor of the campaign in which Whigs had promoted Preston as a unionist candidate while Johnson and the Democrats had adopted an anti-compromise position which the Whigs construed as anti-unionist, the most important political phenomenon lay largely submerged beneath the surface of events. This factor reflected a reduction in

84 The Memphis (Tennessee) Daily Appeal interpreted the turnout as low contending that some Democrats failed to vote since Whigs had convinced them that Johnson was a disunionist. It also declared that some Whigs failed to vote since the "dangerous humbug" of disunion raised by their party frightened them. See Harold Truman Smith, "Arkansas Politics, 1850-1861" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Memphis State University, 1964), 31.
85 Gazette and Democrat, August 29, 1851.
86 Whig, January 1, 1852.
party loyalty on the part of the leadership of each party. In 1849, Whig George Hayden displayed this emerging attitude on two occasions; in August of that year, he declared that a recent Whig defeat in Tennessee resulted in part from the effort of Tennessee Whigs to seek support from free soilers. Consequently, Hayden stated that the Whigs of that state deserved defeat. And in October, Hayden described anti-slavery legislation supported by Northerners of both parties as promoting the disintegration of both parties in the South. Subsequently, the Democratic organ in Little Rock also declared that the "old parties" in the South no longer possessed the meaning of earlier years since under the threat of Northern abolitionism, men of Southern birth naturally forgot older party distinctions.

The action of Whig Albert Pike following the 1851 campaign provides a specific example of the influence of emerging sectionalism on party politics in Arkansas. In the course of the 1851 campaign, Pike denied that Johnson deserved the label of disunionist; since other Whigs considered Pike's position as treasonous to the party's interest, Pike withdrew from active participation in Arkansas politics although he continued to consider himself a national Whig until 1852.

In 1850, other signs indicated the increasing weakness of Whiggery in Arkansas. In January, George Hayden sold the Gazette to an agent of William Woodruff since the fortunes of the Whig paper had

87 Gazette, August 16, 1849.
88 Ibid., October 11, 1849.
89 Gazette and Democrat, March 22, 1850; May 30, 1851.
"descended to rock bottom." And when the **Shield** at Helena expressed the opinion that such prominent Whigs as Pike, Newton, Trapnall, Fowler, Ringo, and Bertrand must have felt uneasy at the transfer, Woodruff jauntify replied that "they don't seem to be much troubled about it." In September, the **Shield**'s editor called for the state's Whigs to establish a Whig paper in Little Rock to replace the **Gazette**; the Helena editor suggested in unconvincing fashion that, when Whig legislators assembled for the forthcoming session, they might wish to contribute financially to such a venture.  

Democrats noted and responded to the lassitude displayed by the Whig failure to establish a newspaper in the state's capital in 1850. In July, Peter Crutchfield, Pulaski County Democratic legislative candidate, sought bipartisan support for his candidacy by declining to attack Whig programs or opponents. Crutchfield declared that while serving in the legislature, he introduced a measure to encourage wheat-growing in Arkansas; supporters of the bill, he added, included Whig Lorenzo Gibson as well as prominent Democrats. In conclusion, Crutchfield states: "There is now, happily for our state, no bitter party question to agitate the public mind, and disturb our repose."  

In September, the correspondent "Pulaski" echoed Crutchfield's bipartisan stance in defending Democrat John H. Crease, candidate for... 

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91 Ross, *Arkansas Gazette* The Early Years, 1819–1866, p. 269.  
92 *Gazette and Democrat*, February 15, 1850, quoting the **Shield** (n.d.).  
93 "A Word to the Whigs of Arkansas," **Shield**, September 21, 1850.  
94 *Gazette and Democrat*, July 12, 1850.
State Treasurer, from the charge that he had supported the Whig party. "Pulaski" conceded that in 1844 Crease had supported Thomas Newton in Newton's bid for election to the state legislature, but the correspondent declared his support understandable since Crease and Newton were related. "Pulaski" also conceded that Crease had never displayed an intensely partisan devotion to the Democracy, but far from disqualifying him for office, the correspondent deemed, Crease's lack of partisanship eminently fitted him for office. Competency, "Pulaski" wrote, rather than partisanship, should serve as the standard for the office holder: "In discharge of his public duties, he should know no man nor party. He should be the office [sic] of the whole people." Editor Knight seconded the sentiments expressed by "Pulaski" by asserting that "capacity, business habits, integrity, and fidelity" rather than political "biases" should determine who attained political office. Knight cautiously added that, whenever two candidates of equal merit sought office, he would always support the Democratic candidate in preference to his opponent. Earlier, when announcing his support of Sam C. Roane of Jefferson County who sought election to the legislature, Woodruff—while describing Roane as a loyal Democrat—declared that Roane had always accorded "that measure of liberality towards the views of his opponents which distinguishes the practical politician from the mere partisan."

Roane possessed the attribute of not only holding tolerant views
toward Whig opponents, but the Gazette and Democrat implied that the public also knew his position on public questions. But in June 1850, a correspondent found it necessary to scold Pulaski County's candidates for the legislature for failing to inform the public of their views on questions related to the Banks, the penitentiary, the public debt, road laws, Homestead Exemption, internal improvements, public education, and the slavery expansion controversy. All these questions, "The People" informed the candidates, required discussion either through published or oral discourse. One can perceive readily enough the perplexity the correspondent experienced at the failure of the candidates to address themselves to the issues. But one can also understand the failure of the candidates to do so. In the previous fifteen years, legislative candidates announced themselves as supporters of either the Whig or Democratic parties, and while this had not in itself defined the candidate's views on all the issues, it had assisted in doing so. With the disintegration of the state's Whig party—and the increasing factionalism within Arkansas' Democracy—the candidates no longer could depend upon the party label as a sheet anchor. And called upon to discuss specific issues without the aid of party labels, the perplexity of the candidates expressed itself in silence.

If Pulaski County's Democracy experienced difficulty with reticent candidates, the Whigs of Phillips County faced the far more vexing task of persuading Whigs to offer themselves as candidates for the legislature. The Helena, Arkansas Southern Shield's editor

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98 Gazette and Democrat, June 7, 1850.
Quincy K. Underwood depicted the lack of interest among Phillips County Whigs when, on May 25, he urged the county's Whigs to "do something towards bringing out candidates for the Legislature." If the Whigs did not wish to hold a county nominating convention, Underwood urged individual Whigs to announce their availability for the office. Underwood's call provides evidence of the decline in Whig party spirit, not because his plea represents a unique phenomenon, for one can discover similar calls on occasion in previous years. Rather, the significance of Underwood's plea resides in his uttering it so late in a campaign within a county previously noted for spirited contests between the parties. But in 1850, the partisan fervor displayed in previous years no longer existed in Arkansas. Some observers regretted the loss of such partisanship. A Dallas County correspondent describing a debate held at a Baptist Church between a Whig and a Democratic legislative candidate, nostalgically declared that momentarily the speakers "revived . . . some of the fervor and spirit of '44." Writing for a Democratic paper, however, the correspondent nonchalantly commented that the Whig candidate "will no doubt be elected by a very respectable majority." But the lethargy of the 1850 campaign best reveals itself in the Gazette and Democrat's contention that, except for a few counties, party lines no longer held significance for the electorate. And the

99 Southern Shield, May 25, 1850.

100 Gazette, August 2, 1850. On July 3, 1851, Editor Terrence Farrelly of the Arkansas Whig expressed a willingness "in the absence of a good Whig candidate" to support Democrat John R. Hampton should Hampton decide to oppose the Democratic incumbent.

101 Ibid., August 2, 9, 1850.
editor might have added that in those few counties in which candidates sought to maintain party lines, they met with a degree of hostility.

"One of the Poor" expressed this attitude in June 1850, when he asserted that while he had resided in Arkansas only five months, he had heard local candidates discuss only such irrelevant issues as the U. S. Bank, the subtreasury plan, and the tariff. This Prairie County resident protested that these issues, along with such subjects as coon skins and hard cider, "appear to be all done away." He concluded by declaring that a concern for education, and for equitable if not lower tax rates, represented the type of issues which interested Arkansans. In such a climate, the Shield felt required to urge Whigs to "hold themselves aloof from all proposals for an alliance" with either the Johnson or Borland wings of the Democracy. Should Whig legislators succumb to the temptation to cooperate with either faction, the Shield asserted that Whigs would receive only promises of office—but not the offices.

Increasingly, however, such warnings went unheeded. Not only did sectional tensions and disinterest in the old issues weaken party loyalties, but interest in the state's burgeoning prospects for economic development served also to dilute interest in politics. To develop economically, the state required adequate wagon roads and railroads. The first major promotional step taken to spur railroad construction occurred in January 1849, when a mass meeting of Little Rock's citizens met with state legislators to discuss construction of a proposed railroad to run through Arkansas with an eastern terminus on the Mississippi

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102 Gazette and Democrat, June 21, 1850.
103 "The Whig Party in Arkansas," Shield, November 30, 1850.
and a western terminus in California. Such prominent Democrats as Thomas Drew and Elbert H. English joined with such notable Whigs as Thomas Newton and Albert Pike in this meeting; the assemblage appointed a committee which subsequently produced a petition to Congress urging construction of the railroad by the federal government. Those Democrats opposed on constitutional grounds to internal improvements made at federal expense could support the resolution in good conscience since it declared that the railroad would serve the defense needs of the isolated West. 104

Senator Borland sponsored the bill which actually authorized the granting of federal land to construct two railroads in the state. Congress, however, amended Borland's original proposal which would have prohibited state legislative control of the enterprise. As Borland informed a confidant, he realized that the people of Arkansas wished the state's legislature to "have nothing to do in the matter." But Congressmen and voters from other states affected by the proposal possessed more confidence in their own legislatures; Congress overruled Borland by vesting control of the enterprise in the state legislatures. 105

Subsequently, Little Rock hosted two railroad conventions in 1852—one in February and another in July—in which delegates, including prominent Whigs and Democrats, discussed various proposed routes and the sale of the federally donated land. 106 Following the July convention

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104 Gazette, January 18, 1849.


106 Gazette and Democrat, February 13, July 30, 1852.
William Woodruff reprinted an address made by delegate Albert Pike, whom Woodruff described as "our talented fellow-townsman." In such a benign atmosphere, the Washington, Arkansas Telegraph's William Etter exalted in January 1854, that, whereas formerly emigrants had "passed hurriedly through our state, as if through a doomed and infected region ... the puff of the Railroad car has roused her to her feet." Furthermore, the prospects for railroad construction, Etter declared, had enhanced land values.

Not only railroad construction, but proposals to establish a suitable wagon road network and to render navigable the state's streams, also drew attention from Whig papers. In a more realistic vein, William Woodruff expressed doubt that Arkansas' taxpayers would prove willing to support such projects at state expense since they would increase taxes. In June 1849, he voiced agreement with the contention of Whig Frederick Trapnell that a Little Rock to Fort Smith road would benefit the state. Since Little Rock's citizens refused to tax themselves to construct even a bridge across the Arkansas River—a project that Woodruff declared would increase property values in the area by one thousand percent—Woodruff expressed doubt that the people of Arkansas would raise their taxes to support an extended road. In the editorial, however, Woodruff extended unqualified support to construction of a proposed transcontinental railroad, built at federal expense, running through Arkansas with California as its western terminus. In

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107 *Telegraph*, July 30, 1852.
Woodruff's opinion, the citizens of other states should support such a project since a transcontinental railroad would assist America in challenging British commercial hegemony in the Far East.\footnote{Arkansas State Democrat, June 15, 1849.}

The internal improvement question proved of importance in the gubernatorial election of 1852. This importance resulted from William Woodruff's refusal to support Elias Conway's gubernatorial candidacy (backed by the Robert Ward Johnson faction) on the grounds that Conway opposed internal improvements. The Borland faction, with Woodruff as its spokesman, originally supported the reelection of Governor John Roane, but in mid-December 1851, Roane declined to seek reelection.\footnote{"Who Shall Be Our Next Governor," Gazette and Democrat, December 5, 1851; ibid., December 12, 19, 1851.}

In an effort to thwart Conway's nomination, Woodruff supported a plan whereby delegates to a state Democratic convention scheduled to meet in Little Rock in the spring, should be apportioned among the various counties on the basis of each county's support for the Democratic ticket in the previous Congressional election.\footnote{Ibid., February 20, 27, May 5, 1852.} Despite acceptance of Woodruff's ploy, Conway won the gubernatorial nomination.\footnote{Ibid., May 5, 1852.}

Woodruff reacted to Conway's nomination by suggesting a fusion ticket of Whigs and Democrats (Borland's faction) for the Pulaski County legislative race, but both Whigs, and apparently a majority of the Democratic leaders in the county as well, rejected this suggestion.\footnote{Gazette and Democrat, May 7, 14, 1852; Whig, May 13, 1852.} In late May, Woodruff made an open break with Conway, stating that
Conway opposed a meaningful internal improvement program for the state. Specifically, Woodruff cited Conway's opposition to repeal of Arkansas' distribution act which, Woodruff declared, squandered the funds the state received from the sale of federal lands by requiring apportionment of the revenue among the various counties. Woodruff announced support for Democrat Bryan H. Smithson whom he labeled as a progressive candidate while designating Conway as the dirt road candidate. As a resident of Fayetteville running against Conway of Little Rock, Smithson might expect to receive considerable support in northwest Arkansas. Certainly, Smithson desired the position for, as early as October 1851, he informed Elbert H. English of his willingness to run if assured of a "fair prospect for a respectable vote."

Whigs observed the Democratic factional struggle in apathetic fashion, for too often on previous occasions their hope that it portended a Whig victory had proven false. Nevertheless, in at least three counties, Whigs bestirred themselves sufficiently to nominate candidates for the legislature. In each of these three assemblies, the delegates present suggested a Whig gubernatorial candidate: Phillips County delegates offered the name of George W. Hill (Crittenden County); Desha County delegates suggested that of Pine Bluff attorney William Porter Grace, while Ouachita's County convention recommended that Dr. Lorenzo Gibson of Hot Springs County seek the post. But within

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116 Gazette and Democrat, May 28, June 4, 1852.
117 Ibid., July 9, 1852; "Huzza for Internal Improvements!!! The Dirt Road Candidate Beaten in Old Pulaski!!!!" Ibid., August 6, 1852.
118 Bryan Smithson to Elbert H. English, Samuel W. Williams Papers, Arkansas History Commission.
119 Shield, May 15, 22, 29, 1852; Gazette and Democrat, May 28, 1852.
Arkansas' Whig party, county conventions might propose, but the Whig Central Committee disposed. And in 1852, the Central Committee disposed of the matter by failing to nominate a candidate.

Two of the three major Whig newspapers in the state also agreed that the party ought not to select a Whig gubernatorial candidate. The Telegraph and the Whig asserted that not only did a Whig stand no chance of winning the election, but that the entry of a Whig into the race would only serve to elect the "Family" candidate, Elias Conway; his election, they maintained, would reduce the opportunity to implement an effective internal improvement program since Conway opposed repeal of the Arkansas distribution act which parcelled federal funds to county units. 120 At Helena, however, the Shield urged the calling of a state convention to nominate a gubernatorial candidate and to appoint delegates to attend the Whig national convention scheduled to convene in Baltimore on June 17. 121 In disparaging this proposal, the Telegraph opposed to Whigs running a candidate for the governor's chair, declared that the state Whig Central Committee could perform the task of appointing delegates to the Baltimore convention. 122

Although Whigs did not hold a state convention, some Whig political activity occurred at the state level as a consequence of interest felt in the presidential contest. Many of Arkansas' Whigs supported President Millard Fillmore's candidacy since Fillmore had

120 Telegraph, April 28, May 19, 1852; Whig, May 13, 1852.


122 Telegraph, May 19, 1852.
sought to "keep the Whig party intact and smother the sectional issue in a great public display of magnanimity, forbearance, and nationalism." The Whig in particular extolled the moderate virtues of Fillmore who possessed the nationalistic outlook the nation required in a divisive period in its history. The Shield also preferred Fillmore's reelection, but declared that the selection of either Daniel Webster or General Winfield Scott would prove satisfactory since both men supported the Compromise of 1850. Albert Pike, however, considered Scott a threat to Southern interests. After the Whig National Convention passed over Fillmore and Webster to nominate Scott, Pike no longer considered himself a Whig. The Shield expressed more concern with the Arkansas Whig Party's failure to hold a nominating convention, however, than with the prospective presidential nominee. Following Scott's nomination at Baltimore in July 1852, the Democrats attacked him as the free soil candidate and a nativist while the Whigs retaliated by depicting the Democratic nominee Franklin Pierce as an abolitionist. Although no extensive campaign developed


124 Whig, September 4, October 23, December 4, 1851.

125 "The Presidency," Shield, April 3, 1852.


128 Gazette and Democrat, August 6, September 24, 1852; "For Presidential Electors," Shield, September 18, 1852; Telegraph, October 6, 1852.
in the state with respect to the presidential contest, the Whig party (apparently the Central Committee made the appointments) selected the four electors to which the 1850 census entitled the state. One of the electors, John C. Palmer of Phillips County, took his selection seriously; Palmer listed nine speaking engagements in fulfillment of his duties. 129

The state's lackluster presidential campaign resulted in part from the belief of such Whigs as Albert Pike that Scott's nomination betrayed Southern interests; in part too, it resulted from the absence in Arkansas of a Whig gubernatorial candidate. Previously state races held in presidential election years tended to generate sufficient excitement in the summer, despite the inevitable Whig defeat, to produce a carry-over effect in November. In the summer of 1852, however, Whigs could only note the victory of the "Family" candidate Elias Conway in his contest with the maverick Democrat Bryan H. Smithson. In August, Conway eked out of a close victory with the Gazette and Democrat awarding him 12,933 votes to 11,111 won by Smithson. 130 As the extent of the voter participation demonstrates, Whigs voted in full force in the election. But they appear to have split their votes rather equally between the candidates. Pulaski County, stronghold of Whiggery, provides the best evidence of this; in Pulaski County, Conway beat Smithson by only 401 votes to 382. The Gazette and Democrat and its Clarksville correspondent "Polk" both asserted that Whigs provided Conway's margin

129 "For Presidential Electors," Shield, September 18, 1852. The other three Whig electors were Peter K. Rounsaville (Ouachita), Turner L. Green (Johnson), and Fred W. Trapnall (Pulaski).

130 Gazette and Democrat, August 20, 1852.
of victory although the *Banner*, organ of the "Family," denied the contention. As evidence of the assertion, "Polk" claimed that Smithson carried only two "whig" counties while Conway carried by 1,027 votes some eleven traditionally Whig counties. In reality, "Polk's" assessment illustrates the truth of the aphorism that, while figures may not lie, statistics do. To "prove" his contention, "Polk" neglected to mention that Smithson won such traditionally Democratic counties as Benton, Crawford, Johnson, Madison, Pope, and Washington—all counties located in the northwest containing many voters who bitterly resented the candidacy of the Little Rock resident Elias Conway. Woodruff's obvious effort to secure Whig votes for Smithson by depicting Conway as opposed to an effective internal improvement program failed because many Whigs (as well as Democrats) remained unconvinced that support for the distribution act denoted opposition to a feasible internal improvements program. In addition, many Whigs residing in the river counties of southern and eastern Arkansas found it difficult to support a candidate hailing from the northwest corner of the state.

With the gubernatorial race concluded, most Arkansans viewed the forthcoming presidential election with equanimity assuming that in Arkansas, at least, Pierce would win. Some Whigs, however, felt more interest in the campaign. In Little Rock, Albert Pike, provoked by the Baltimore convention's nomination of Winfield Scott, no longer styled

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132 "Polk" listed the eleven counties as Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Crittenden, Desha, Lafayette, Mississippi, Monroe, Ouachita and Phillips.
himself a Whig. Pike did not believe Scott himself a "Free Soiler or a tool of them, but he did believe that Seward, Greeley, and other Free Soilers had engineered Scott's nomination." And in Dallas County, the Whig planter-land speculator John William Brown shared Pike's concern. On the day of the election, Brown recorded in his diary his apprehension. Corrupt and "designing" politicians, Brown declared, had sought to destroy the Union, but temporarily at least, such patriots as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster had rebuffed the disunionists. The election, he implied, would determine whether the victory of the nationalists should prevail or whether disunionism would emerge triumphant.

Twelve days following this entry, a despondent John Brown recorded his reaction to the news that nationally Pierce had defeated Scott by a large majority. If only Clay and Webster had lived, Brown wrote, perhaps they might have prevented the disintegration of the Union now certain to flow from the consequences of Democratic expansionism.

Brown (alluding to the Mexican venture) concluded by writing that Cuba would constitute the next "adventure for democrats to rally upon."

Presumably, Brown regarded Pierce as a tool of the Southern slaveocracy, and while this represented a misreading of the New Hampshire politician's outlook, Brown had every reason to feel dejected at the magnitude of Pierce's victory. Nationally, Scott won only the states of Massachusetts.

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134 John W. Brown diary, entry for November 2, 1852. Microfilm of the diary located at the Arkansas History Commission.

135 Clay died in June and Webster in October, 1852.

136 John W. Brown diary, entry of November 14, 1852. The Gazette and Democrat recorded Pierce's victory on November 12.
Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In Arkansas too, Scott lost by a wide margin; the final Arkansas returns indicated that Pierce won 12,179 votes and Scott 7,430. In polling 37.9 percent of the vote and securing a winning margin only in Phillips County, Scott duplicated the poor showing made by Henry Clay in 1844 when the Kentuckian won but 37.0 percent of the votes cast.

According to Arthur Charles Cole, the conspicuous feature of the 1852 Southern presidention election related to a large Whig stay-at-home vote; Cole declared that probably one hundred thousand Southerners failed to exercise the franchise in the contest. In the state of Alabama, he added, Scott received scarcely half the vote Zachary Taylor won in 1848.

In Arkansas, Scott did not perform this poorly, for the 7,430 votes he received compared favorably with the 7,587 votes Taylor acquired. But in the intervening four years, Arkansas' electorate had grown extensively. Thus while the Whig presidential vote in the state remained constant, Pierce received 23.6 percent more votes than had Cass

139 In 1846, the total number of white males in Arkansas amounted to 60,655; in 1850, there were 82,247, and in 1854, the state had 99,132 white males. See "Census of Arkansas," True Democrat, October 11, 1854, Editor Richard H. Johnson of the True Democrat declared that he had compiled these figures from records in the office of the Secretary of State "according to the census taken in the months of January, February, and March of the years 1852, 1846, 1850, and 1854." Johnson added that the 1854 census did not reflect the populations of Polk and Scott counties which failed to submit returns. Johnson's assertion that 82,247 white males were recorded in the 1850 census is thirty more than the 82,217 reported in the Gazette and Democrat ("Census of the State of Arkansas, 1850") of November 22, 1850.
in 1848. In Arkansas, however, Scott's poor showing did not reflect a stay-at-home response on the part of Whigs to his candidacy; rather, the evidence indicates that the party had failed to attract new supporters since 1848. This appears the more plausible explanation if one compares participation in the Arkansas presidential elections of 1844, 1848, and 1852 with the state's races held the previous months in these years. In all three years, fewer men cast votes in the presidential contests than had voted in the state races. In 1852, 22.6 percent fewer Arkansans voted in the Presidential race than had cast ballots in the state race the previous month. The 1844 contests featured almost this much reduced participation when 18.0 percent fewer Arkansans voted in the presidential than in the state elections. Actually, the most extensive reduction in voter participation in these years occurred in 1848 when some 33.4 percent fewer voters cast ballots in the presidential race than had done so in the state races of that year.

The decline in partisanship in Arkansas after 1850 reveals itself clearly in the commentary of Whig Charles Noland's mythical "Pete Whetstone" of "Devil's Fork." "Pete Whetstone" declared in January 1853 that the residents of Devil's Fork had "got what they call measures and principles so mixed up, that if it wasn't for the label, whig or democrat, it would take an uncommon man to tell tother from which." \(^{140}\) The confusion to which Noland humorously referred assumed a more serious form in the spring of that year when the Gazette and Democrat took issue with the Banner—organ of the Johnson faction of the Democracy—and with the Whig. Both the Banner and the Whig asserted that a spokesman for

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the Woodruff faction had sought to secure the election of George Clarke to one of the Arkansas seats in the United States Senate by offering to support Whig Albert Pike for the other seat. Woodruff denied that the anti-Johnson faction had tendered a serious offer to the Whigs. One suspects that the real source of Whig chagrin in this episode resided not in the proposal itself but in its failure to achieve fruition. Certainly the desultory Whig response to the challenge presented by the Congressional election of 1853 substantiates this view.

Democrats chose their Congressional candidates—the census of 1850 entitled Arkansas to two representatives in the House—in two conventions. A convention meeting at Hot Springs selected Edward A. Warren of Ouachita County as the party's candidate for the second (southern) district while a convention that met at Yellville designated Alfred B. Greenwood as the candidate for the first (northern) district. The Whigs declined to offer an opponent for Greenwood in the first district but Frederich W. Trapnall expressed willingness to contest the southern district's seat. Neither the Helena Shield of June 18 nor the Gazette and Democrat in announcing Trapnall's candidacy the previous day, commented upon the manner whereby he received the nomination. Presumably, the Central Committee tendered him the nomination.

Warren scheduled a campaign tour to include visits to twenty-eight towns beginning June 6 at El Dorado and concluding July 30 at

141 Gazette and Democrat, March 4, April 22, May 13, 1852; "Who Has Whig Allies," Ibid, June 10, 1852.

142 Ibid., May 6, 20, 1853.

143 Gazette and Democrat, June 17, 1852; "For Congress in the Second District: F. W. Trapnall of Pulaski," Shield, June 18, 1853.
Camden. He invited Trapnell to debate with him in every town at ten in the morning. On July 1, however, the Gazette and Democrat described Trapnell as seriously ill; three days following this announcement, Trapnell died at Monticello in Drew County. Within a few days following Trapnell’s death, James M. Curran announced that he would oppose Warren. In printing this announcement, the Gazette and Democrat declared that Curran, due to his "pressing business engagements," would probably withdraw his candidacy, but this ploy undoubtedly deceived few, if any, voters.

In the abbreviated campaign, Whigs gave tacit support to the Compromise of 1850 by asking for the vote of "Whigs and conservative Democrats." But editor Christopher Columbus Danley of the Gazette and Democrat indicated his own opposition to the Compromise by contending that the slaveocracy must expand—by seizing Cuba—or perish.

On this note, which probably had little effect on the electorate since the Compromise had passed Congress two years earlier, some 10,227 Arkansans cast their ballots. The Whig Curran won four counties in acquiring 4,198 votes (41.0 percent); Warren won 6,029 votes and secured majorities in twenty-three counties. On the surface, it would appear

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144 Gazette and Democrat, June 17, 1853.
145 Ibid., July 1, 1853; Shield, July 9, 1853.
146 Gazette and Democrat, July 15, 1853.
147 Ibid., July 29, 1853.
148 Ibid., July 22, 29, 1853.
that once again a Whig seeking state office had attained the usual approximate forty percent of the vote so often attained by Whig candidates in most races since 1836. But here in 1853, the Whigs sought office only in the southern counties where traditionally their standard-bearers had displayed the greatest strength; had they sought office in the northern Congressional district, the party's percentage of vote would, without doubt, have been considerably below the forty-one percent which Curran won.

Following the 1853 contest, politics in Arkansas received little attention. Even in early June 1854, when the Telegraph reported Congressional approval of the Kansas-Nebraska Act opening these territories to slavery, editor William H. Etter declared only that Congress might at last address itself to affairs "so long neglected as a consequence of this measure." Three weeks later, Etter briefly took note of the act again declaring that only the activities of fanatical Northern abolitionists made possible passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act; Etter added that the act might prove inimical to Southern interests by arousing the opposition of Northern citizens of every political conviction. Etter's prognostication proved accurate; not only did the Kansas-Nebraska Act intensify the opposition to the spread of slavery by Northerners of both parties, but also it sounded the death knell of the Whig party. Within a few months following passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the "Whigs had disappeared as an effective force in American politics."  

150 "Nebraska Bill," Telegraph, June 7, 1854.
151 Ibid., June 28, 1854.
Against this background, Arkansas held its Congressional elections in 1854. Danley set the tone of the lackluster campaign in May when he declared that the old issues which divided the Democracy and Whiggery "are all settled on the democratic side and become obsolete." One month later, he reinforced his portrayal of the increasing inability of the parties to arouse partisan interest when he criticized the low attendance which prevailed at both the Whig and Democratic Pulaski County conventions which nominated candidates for the state legislature. In Hempstead County, editor William H. Etter echoed Danley's estimate of low interest in politics; Etter sought to stimulate Whig candidates to offer themselves for the legislature by humorously declaring that even if they lost, legislative candidates "have the fun of running and the inestimable advantage of staying at home and attending to your own business." On August 7, Albert Rust, selected as the Democratic Congressional candidate for the southern district, beat the Whig candidate, E. G. Walker, by winning 65.7 percent of the vote (9,387 votes to 4,862). Ostensibly, however, the Whig party continued to exist in Arkansas for twenty-two members of the 1854-1855 legislature designated themselves as Whigs.

Reaction from the Helena Shield's editor to this latest defeat found expression in his declaration that, like Cromwell's Ironsides,

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153 **Gazette and Democrat**, May 12, 1854.
154 Ibid., June 9, 1854.
157 **Gazette and Democrat**, January 5, 1855. One legislator listed himself as a Whig of 76.
he advocated "no surrender."\textsuperscript{158} David Walker, the once prominent Whig of Fayetteville now content to occupy himself solely with the practice of law, voiced a more typical reaction, however, when, twice in the course of 1855, he informed Judge Christopher G. Scott that politics no longer held the slightest interest for him.\textsuperscript{159} For many, if not most voters, not politics, but disinterest in the old politics, best summed up their attitudes. With the old questions, as Danley wrote, "obsolete," the parties no longer appeared to address themselves to relevant issues.

A party which asserted its relevancy amidst changing conditions made its appearance in Arkansas in 1853. This party dubbed itself the American party. In September, the Whig \textit{Telegraph} described a six-point program championed by the new party. According to the \textit{Telegraph}, the American Party wished to: (1) extend the period required for naturalization in order to reduce the influence of the foreign-born on American political life, (2) promote internal improvements, (3) stimulate universal education, (4) encourage the sale of public lands to actual settlers rather than to speculators, (5) continue the "harmonious" union of the states, and (6) oppose legislation (supported by Catholics) which would outlaw the use of the Bible (Protestants' King James Version) in the public schools. The \textit{Telegraph}'s sympathetic review of the American Party platform was echoed one year later by the Whig \textit{Shield} of Helena which declared that while foreigners deserved "all the privileges con-

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Shield}, September 30, 1854.

\textsuperscript{159} Judge David Walker to Judge Christopher C. Scott, March 20, 1855, and November 23, 1855, as reproduced in \textit{Judge David Walker: His Life and Letters}, W. J. Lemke, ed. (Fayetteville: Washington County Historical Society, 1957), pp. 32-33.
ferred by law" native Americans should not permit them to dominate American political life.160

By the summer of 1855, Democratic editors Christopher Danley and Solon Borland of the Gazette and Democrat had endorsed the American Party claiming that Northern abolitionists had captured the Democracy and denying that the American Party's membership consisted only of former Whigs.161 But if ideology enticed a number of former Democrats into supporting the new movement, self-interest proved of importance as well. Throughout its reign in the state, the "Family" dynasty had appropriated the lion's share of important offices; following Archibald Yell's death, it proceeded to all but monopolize these offices. In accounting for the rapid rise of the Know-Nothing party in August 1855, the Gazette and Democrat editors dwelled on the dissatisfaction felt by non-"Family" Democrats who found the road to office blocked by their non-dynastic ties. True, one could in part ascribe the party's rapid rise in Arkansas to its pro-slavery 1855 platform as well as to the resolution of the old party issues. But the Gazette and Democrat also contended that the lack of opportunity by non-"Family" Democrats to acquire important offices had driven Democrats from the party.162

From the summer of 1855 to the fall of 1856, the Gazette and

160. Telegraph, September 14, 1853. The party was also dubbed the Know-Nothing party because members of this semi-secret society replied that they knew nothing when questioned as to the party's principles.


Democrat assiduously sought to refute charges of the True Democrat (organ of the Elias Conway-Robert Ward "Family" Democratic faction) that the Know-Nothing party's leadership consisted largely of former Whigs. Gazette and Democrat correspondents describing American party meetings also carefully indicated that the membership of the new party consisted of former members of both the old parties. From Monticello, Arkansas in Drew County, correspondent "Osorio" described the Know-Nothing party as a union party comprising elements of both the Democracy and Whiggery. Carroll County correspondent "American," quoting a speech delivered by County Prosecuting Attorney Hugh F. Thomason, echoed this theme. But to assert merely that Arkansas' American party consisted only of former Democrats and Whigs implied that the Know-Nothing movement represented an equal distribution of former members of both parties. And in a state in which Democrats had consistently won sixty percent of the vote, this implied parity by members of a formerly minority party.

This implication Danley and Borland sought to dispel. In describing American party meetings held at Little Rock in August 1855 and April 1856, the editors sought to emphasize the dominance of former Democrats. The Gazette and Democrat declared that at the 1855 meeting, former Democrats comprised seventy-five percent of the thirty delegates present who represented twelve counties. As for the convention's leadership, the editor emphasized that Democrats dominated it also.

163 Gazette and Democrat, January 26, February 23, 1856.

164 Ibid., October 26, 1855. A Sebastian County correspondent went so far as to describe the opponents of the American party as usually either foreigners or Whigs. See "From Sebastian County," ibid., January 12, 1856.
The convention elected former Democrat William D. Rice of Phillips County as its president; Borland-Danley declared that "up to the last few days [Rice] was regarded as a very true Democrat" by the Conway-Johnson faction. Furthermore, former Democrat Andrew J. Hutt of Little Rock, president of the American party in Arkansas, addressed the convention. Like Rice, Hutt too had until recently supported Conway and Johnson. According to the Gazette and Democrat, eleven men addressed the August convention; eight of the speakers formerly supported the Democracy while only three former Whigs delivered speeches.  

In May of 1856, the Gazette and Democrat emphasized that in selecting James Yell as its gubernatorial candidate, the party had chosen a former Democrat of notable eloquence who had served that party with distinction before Northern abolitionists captured the national party. Borland and Danley declared that of the two Arkansas Know-Nothing party presidential electors chosen by the 1856 nominating convention on April 28, one had not previously participated in politics, but they neglected to note the previous political affiliation of his companion.  

Reports describing both conventions listed a total of eighty-eight delegates with only a few individuals listed as delegates of both conclaves.  

165 "American Ratification Meeting," Gazette and Democrat, August 10, 1855. At a local Know-Nothing meeting also held in August 1855 in Helena, the principal speakers were Borland and Danley and former Whigs Albert Pike, Absalom Fowler, Lorenzo Gibson and Charles Fenton Mercer Noland. Ibid., August 31, 1855.


between 1836 and 1852—eleven of them as Whigs and five of them as Democrats.\textsuperscript{168} If the delegates whose previous political affiliations remain unknown had party ties in this proportion, it is obvious that the Conway-Johnson faction rather accurately depicted the Know-Nothing party in Arkansas as consisting of a disproportionate number of former Whigs.

Further evidence that former Whig leaders comprised a substantial element in the Know-Nothing party is provided by analysis of a resolution condemning it submitted to the Arkansas House of Representatives in January 1855. This resolution condemned a "secret society meeting clandestinely" as a tool of religious bigotry and pro-abolitionist in intent.\textsuperscript{164} Initially approved, the House subsequently expunged the resolution with a 37 to 29 vote taken on January 12, 1855.\textsuperscript{170} On the vote to expunge, fourteen of the fifteen Whigs voting (93.3 percent) supported the expunging resolution while only 24 of the 41 Democrats voting (58.5 percent) approved expunging the resolution.\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{168} The Whigs were James F. Fazan and David Dodd from Saline County, M. R. Woods of Hot Spring County, F. W. Desha of Independence County, William B. Norman of White County and Thomas Fletcher, Absalom Fowler, A. S. Huey, Lorenzo Gibson, and Joseph Stillwell of Pulaski County. Democratic delegates who served in the legislature included George M. Lemoyne of Yell County and Benjamin F. Danley, Christopher C. Danley, A. H. Rutherford, and J. E. Knight of Pulaski County. For membership in the legislatures, see C. Armitage Harper, ed., \textit{Historical Report of the Secretary of State} (Little Rock: Pioneer Printers, 1968), 303-16.

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Journal of the House of Representatives for the Tenth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas} (Little Rock: Johnson and Yerkes, State Printers, 1855), 65-66.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ibid.}, 385-87.

\textsuperscript{171} For party affiliations for the 1854-1855 session of the legislature, see "Representatives," \textit{Gazette and Democrat}, September 8, 1854.
Undoubtedly, the leadership of the new party did indeed include a large percentage of men previously providing the leadership for Whiggery. In part, of course, the destruction of Arkansas Whiggery after 1852 accounts for this since it left adrift many former Whigs now devoid of party ties. But the anti-foreign orientation of the American party also accounts for its pronounced appeal to former Whigs who, as early as 1844, displayed a xenophobic outlook in asserting that bloc voting by foreigners had led to Henry Clay's defeat by James K. Polk.

As for those prominent Democrats who joined the Whigs to form Arkansas' new party, they did so in part because they too believed that foreigners threatened to dominate American political life. Like others who comprised the Southern wing of the American party, these former Democrats professed to believe that the hostility of foreigners in the North to slavery provided abolitionism with much of its increasing political strength. By urging an extended waiting period before granting the ballot to foreigners, and by declaring in its national convention held in the summer of 1855 that Congress ought to pass no further legislation dealing with slavery, the American party won the support of a number of Arkansans of both parties.\(^{172}\)

By 1854, Albert Pike claimed the new party's membership in Arkansas ranged between eight and ten thousand men. Nevertheless, events quickly proved that in Arkansas, the American party possessed more apparent than real strength. With the possible exception of South

\(^{172}\) The Dred Scott decision rendered by the Supreme Court in 1854 had declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional. Thus by urging acquiescence in this decision, the Know-Nothing party assumed a pro-Southern position.
Carolina, the new party in Arkansas scored less gains than in any other Southern state.\textsuperscript{173}

In Arkansas the American party experienced rapid growth and precipitous decline. The party attained its apogee within the state by late 1855. In February 1856, when the national convention meeting at Philadelphia weakened the pro-slavery platform adopted the previous year, delegate Albert Pike led a group of Southerners out of the convention. But Pike's fellow Arkansans Charles Noland and James Logan remained in the party contending that the platform alteration constituted a defeat for "Black Republicans.\textsuperscript{174} The platform revision adopted at Philadelphia, however, weakened the party in Arkansas as it prepared for the summer-fall elections.

If the leadership of Arkansas' American party believed that it had attained preeminence within the state, the October elections conclusively demonstrated the fallacy of this assumption. For the first (northern) congressional district Democrat Alfred B. Greenwood beat his Know-Nothing opponent Hugh F. Thomasson, winning 15,399 votes to 6,161 received by Thomasson.\textsuperscript{175} In attaining 71.4 percent of the votes cast, Thomasson won only Crawford and Phillips counties. See "State of Arkansas," \textit{True Democrat}, October 14, 1856.


\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
Greenwood won all but two of the twenty-six counties comprising the district. In the second (southern) Congressional district, Know-Nothing candidate Absalom Fowler suffered a less decisive defeat at the hands of his Democratic opponent Edward A. Warren. In winning 57.6 percent of the votes cast, Warren acquired 11,835 votes to 8,781 achieved by Fowler.\footnote{True Democrat, October 15, 1856. Fowler achieved a majority of the vote in Arkansas, Chicot, Columbia, Lafayette, Pulaski, and Sebastian counties. American party candidates captured only nine legislative seats. In December 1856, a Democratic aspirant beat Danley in an election held in the legislature for the office of state printer. Danley lost on an 81 to 10 vote and subsequently declared that all nine American party legislators and one Democrat supported him for the office. See Ross, Arkansas Gazette The Early Years, 1819–1866, p. 326.} The most recent previous election in which a Whig candidate had sought election in both Congressional districts occurred in the summer of 1851 when Democrat Robert Ward Johnson beat Whig John Preston in a Congressional contest. In that race, Johnson won 57.4 percent of the 20,718 votes cast.\footnote{"Election Returns—Arkansas," Gazette and Democrat, August 29, 1851.} In the twenty-six counties which would comprise the first Congressional district (southern) in 1852, Johnson won 6,054 (57.7%) votes to 4,446 votes (42.3%) garnered by Preston. In what became the second district (northern), Johnson won 5,877 votes (57.3 %) while Preston won 4,378. Thus in the southern-eastern areas of the state, the Know-Nothing candidate matched the performance of the Whig Congressional candidate of 1851; in the northern-western areas, however, the Know-Nothing candidate of 1856 ran 13.7 percent behind the 1851 Whig candidate. Following the 1856 state elections, even the most devoted disciples of Know-Nothingism in Arkansas realized that the party would make a poor showing in the November presidential contest.
Consequently, Democratic candidate James Buchanan's feat in winning 67.0 percent (21,906 to 10,787) of the vote in his contest with the American Party candidate Millard Fillmore elicited little comment within the state.

To test the validity of the Democratic charge that the Know-Nothing party received major support from those who formerly supported the Whig cause, I compared the votes received in the various counties by the Whig and Know-Nothing presidential candidates in 1852 and 1856. Since Winfield Scott and Millard Fillmore won a combined total of only three Arkansas counties in these two contests, one could not compare the percentage of votes acquired by Fillmore in 1856 with the percentage of votes won by Scott in those counties Scott captured in 1852. Consequently, to acquire some basis for a county-by-county comparison of the performances of the two candidates, I decided to compare their performances in counties in which the votes of the Whig and Know-Nothing presidential candidates were doubled by their Democratic opponents in both campaigns. Additionally, I compared the votes Scott and Fillmore acquired in those counties in both elections in which their Democratic opponents failed to exceed their vote margin by 100 percent.

The comparison reveals that a considerable percentage of Arkansas' Whigs in the southern-eastern portion of the state refused to support Buchanan in 1856. As in previous elections this region provided substantial support for the Whig candidate. This comparison indicates that in 1852, these sections of the state provided the most

178 "Proclamation by the Governor," True Democrat, December 2, 1856. Fillmore won only Chicot and Sebastian counties.
support for Scott and that in 1856, Fillmore recorded his most substantial percentage of votes in the southern and eastern counties—the traditional strongholds of Whiggery.  

Privately, however, many of Arkansas' former Whigs must have felt the despair noted in his diary by the Camden, Arkansas planter-businessman and one-time Whig, John William Brown. Following Fillmore's defeat, Brown recorded that previously he had held some slight hope for a "Whig" victory, but the election demonstrated that Southern slavery expansionists and Northern "higher law abolitionists would succeed in destroying the Union within five years." More accurate than Brown's prophecy concerning the permanency of the Union was the persistent and justified criticism of Arkansas' government recorded in his diary. Since achieving statehood, the "Family" had indeed failed to address itself to the state's problems and the Whig party, unable to offer an effective challenge to one-party rule, proved unable to effect reform. The deplorable state of Arkansas' finances, its lack of an adequate transportation network and a complete absence of publicly supported education attests to the extent of the state's dilemma.

Fortunately, the happiness and sense of self-fulfillment enjoyed by an individual in any age does not depend completely (or for that matter primarily) upon the state of the political order. If in the public sector Arkansas had offered little to its citizens, this does not demonstrate that private compensations did not exist. In 1885,  

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179 See Map VI in the Appendix with reference to these statements.

180 Horace Adams, "The Year 1856 As Viewed by an Arkansas Whig," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, I (June, 1942), 132.

seventy-six year old Albert Pike, who spent his last twenty-three years as an attorney in Washington, D.C., dying there in 1891 at the age of eighty-two, summed up his twenty-nine years of residency in Arkansas. Pike informed a correspondent that in the years that he and Robert Ward Johnson were law partners in Washington, they often discussed with relish all the friends they had made on both sides of the political fence in Arkansas. In conclusion, Pike added: "I am glad to have lived, as I did live, so many years, among the people of Arkansas. It has never occurred to me to wish that it might have been otherwise; for it was a free and happy life that we lived, a life worth living, and the men among whom we lived were good men." 185

EPILOGUE

The central interest of this study concerns the utter inability of Arkansas Whiggery to offer a viable challenge to the Democracy in the Whig party's eighteen years of existence in the state after 1836. Two principal reasons explain this failure: Whigs lacked an adequate program to meet state needs, and the party's leadership proved less accomplished than that of its Democratic rivals.

Programmatically, the nationalist orientation of Whiggery—particularly its banking and land positions—was antithetical to the interests of a raw, frontier region such as Arkansas. But in addition to this rational opposition of a considerable portion of the state's yeomanry to Whiggery, one suspects that the Democracy achieved more than signal success in its efforts to equate Whiggery with the symbols of the aristocracy.

In the realm of the leadership, state Democrats possessed a peculiar advantage in the "Family." In addition to its political acumen, this tightly knit group of relatives provided the Democratic party with still another advantage in that it supplied a cohesiveness in party affairs lacking within Whig ranks. And in securing control of the territorial government on the eve of statehood, the "Family" acquired all the patronage and prestige advantages which accrue to political "ins." This initial success provided Arkansas' Democracy with a momentum which placed the state's Whigs at a disadvantage throughout the
period of the party's existence in Arkansas.

In contrast with the political sagacity demonstrated by the "Family," one detects a peculiar ineptitude in Whig leadership. This inefficiency reveals itself, for instance, in the failure of Little Rock's Whigs to secure a reliable party organ in Little Rock in the two year period between the demise of the Arkansas Star in November 1840 and Benjamin Borden's acquisition of the Gazette in January 1843. Of course, one might also adduce such an apparent lack of sensitivity to the importance of a reliable journal in the capital city to a lack of serious commitment of Arkansas' Whig leadership to the political profession. In this connection, one notes that no parallel existed in the state's Democratic party to Albert Pike—an accomplished ideologue but a man all but openly contemptuous of politics as practiced in the Jacksonian era. Nor can one readily discern a counterpart to David Walker—that talented, energetic, but unbending foe of Archibald Yell in 1840. In Pike and Walker, and to a lesser extent with other Whigs as well, there appears less of an interest in carving out a political career than was true of their more eager opponents.

Perhaps, one need not seek for an explanation in terms of contrasting personality types attracted to the Whig and Democratic camps. More likely, whatever ambitions Whig leaders initially held were progressively dulled as they came to realize their true mission—that of serving is a lonely outpost in the very heart of the Jacksonian West.
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James K. Polk Papers, 1841-1845. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. This collection contains numerous letters from Archibald Yell to Polk when Polk served as governor of Tennessee and later as President. The collection provides insight into Democratic factional struggles and the thinking of Arkansas Democrats on the presidential question in 1843-1844.

Jesse Turner Papers, 1837-1849. Duke University Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. The twenty-one letters in this collection encompass the years between 1837 and 1849 and provide the rare insight available into Arkansas' Whig party. The letters addressed to Turner came from both prominent and obscure Whigs. Letters received from Absalom Fowler, Frederich Trapnall and other prominent members of the Whig Central Committee in Little Rock provide valuable insights into the thinking of this committee which operated with little publicity.
Jesse Turner Papers, 1840–1849. University of Arkansas Manuscripts, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Provides five letters addressed primarily to Turner, all but one from a prominent Arkansas Whig. Thomas Newton's letter of 1846 offers the only available explanation from Newton as to why he sought the six weeks' unexpired term of Congressman Yell.

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(ARKANSAS)


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BOOKS

(GENERAL)


(ARKANSAS)


**ARTICLES**

(GENERAL)


(ARKANSAS)


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UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS


TABLES AND MAPS
This analysis of the leadership of the Whig and Democratic parties assists one in better understanding the differences and the similarities between the leaders of the parties.

In selecting men for inclusion, I first noted the names of every individual who served in the Arkansas legislature between 1836 and 1850. Since a number of prominent men of both parties never served in the legislature, I supplemented this list with the names of those Arkansas Congressional candidates and Congressmen, gubernatorial candidates and governors, presidential electors, and editors who did not serve in that body. Finally, I added the names of those members of the Whig and Democratic Central Committees identified in the press. The 157 men comprising this analysis represent that portion of the individuals comprising the list whose names the census officials recorded in 1850. Obviously, the 157 names in the analysis do not comprise the entire leadership of either party since some important officials had moved out of the state or had died (or were missed in the census) prior to 1850. But I would contend that the selective process involved here does provide an accurate picture of the leaders of Arkansas' Whig and Democratic parties.
I. Average declared assessment of real estate of prominent leaders in the 1850 census:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whig (60 men)</th>
<th>Democrat (97 men)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Assessment by Category)</td>
<td>(Assessment by Category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>(38) $279,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>(7) 127,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prominent leaders who did not serve in the Arkansas legislature</td>
<td>(15) 89,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>$495,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8,260 dollars average assessment of real estate for sixty prominent Whigs

The average assessment of real estate of the Whigs was about two and one-half times the assessment levied upon Arkansas' Democrats.

II. Slave ownership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of slaveowners</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of slaves owned</td>
<td>1,008.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of slaves owned</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of slaveowners</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of slaves owned</td>
<td>915.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of slaves owned</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1This study is derived primarily from an analysis of the Arkansas census material contained in the Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. The Arkansas History Commission at Little Rock contains county indexes for all forty-nine counties comprising the state in 1850. Several of the indexes provided by the county societies failed to note the order of visitation of the census official and thus could not be used in this study. In addition, a number of counties surveyed in the 1850 census did not contain the names of a single individual who served in the Arkansas legislature or who might otherwise receive notice as a prominent political figure. In all, however, thirty-seven counties are represented by this study.
III. Leadership occupations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>35 (58.3%)</td>
<td>57 (58.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>15 (25.0%)</td>
<td>14 (14.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>4 (6.7%)</td>
<td>8 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>3 (5.0%)</td>
<td>6 (6.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>4 (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Clerk</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U. S. Marshal</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>8 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>6 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknowns</td>
<td>4 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>2 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U. S. Senator</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circuit Court Judge</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentleman</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>1 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>60 (100.1%)</td>
<td>97 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Leadership areas of birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>14 (23.3%)</td>
<td>27 (27.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>11 (18.3%)</td>
<td>14 (14.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>7 (11.7%)</td>
<td>14 (14.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>6 (10.0%)</td>
<td>11 (14.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>4 (6.7%)</td>
<td>7 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>4 (6.7%)</td>
<td>5 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2 (5.0%)</td>
<td>3 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>60 (100.1%)</td>
<td>97 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Leadership ages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>House (70)</th>
<th>44.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senate (18)</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prominent (9)</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average age of Whig leaders: 2580 ÷ 60 = 43.0

Average age of Democratic leaders: 4330 ÷ 97 = 44.6
VI. Leadership educational attainments and religious affiliations.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended college</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law school graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The secondary sources surveyed represented an attempt to discern the educational attainments and religious affiliations of all five hundred and forty-one men who comprised my leadership roster of Arkansas Democratic and Whig parties for the years 1836-1850. The sparse data gleaned from this survey are, of course, too sketchy to reveal any differences which may have existed between the leaders of the parties. Nevertheless, the survey, as relating to educational attainments, offers evidence of a sort in that it leads one to conclude that very few of these individuals attended college. To have attended college was so unusual that not only the few individuals who did so recorded the fact in autobiographical sketches, but their contemporaries also observed the fact.
Table II

Distribution of Presidential Votes in Arkansas, 1840-1852

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1844</th>
<th>1848</th>
<th>1852</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of total vote cast for Whig candidate in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire state</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 1—counties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% or less slave</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 2—counties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% to 25% slave</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 3—counties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 25% slave</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all votes cast in Area 1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all votes cast in Area 2</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all votes cast in Area 3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all Whig votes cast in Area 1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all Whig votes cast in Area 2</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all Whig votes cast in Area 3</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: W. Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 274-92. The slave population is assessed with federal census data provided in the *Gazette* of December 9, 1840, and Robert B. Walz, "Arkansas Slaveholdings in 1850," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XII (Spring, 1952), 41-47. In 1840 area one contained eleven counties, area two fifteen counties, and area three fifteen counties. In 1850 area one had eighteen counties, area two sixteen counties, and area three had seventeen counties.
Table III


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1844</th>
<th>Percentage of slaves between age 6 and 60 within each county</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicot</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hempstead</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulaski</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevier</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Whig percentage in ten county sample</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of votes Arkansas' Whigs secured in presidential contest in 1840 = 43.7%.

Percentage of votes Arkansas' Whigs secured in presidential contest in 1844 = 37.0%.
Table IV


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percentage of slaves between age 6 and 60 within each county</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicot</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouachita</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hempstead</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevier</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Whig percentage in ten county sample</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of votes Arkansas' Whigs secured in presidential contest in 1848 = 44.9%.

Percentage of votes Arkansas' Whigs secured in presidential contest in 1852 = 37.8%.
Table V
Arkansas House of Representatives
(Counties created by 1842)

Whig representation in the 1840's. The symbol (*) represents counties not previously won.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1842</th>
<th>1844</th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>1848</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sevier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Washington (4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Carroll (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Independence (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pike</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Phillips (2)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Crittenden (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hempstead (2)</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Marion and Searcy (2)</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Pulaski (3)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Saline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. St. Francis (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Van Buren</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. White</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Clark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Mississippi</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Hot Springs</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Chicot (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Scott (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Johnson (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Madison (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Benton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Conway and Perry (2)</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Lawrence (2)</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Randolph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Izard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Monroe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Pope</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Bradley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Franklin (2)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Crawford (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Lafayette</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Arkansas</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Yell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Jefferson</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Poinsett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Clark</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Desha</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Montgomery (Created in 1842)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Ouachita (Created in 1842)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table V, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1842</th>
<th>1844</th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>1848</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newton, Fulton, Drew</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk, Dallas, Ashley (Senators)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

six counties, one county, six counties, four counties not won, not won, not won, not won previously won, previously won, previously won, previously won

These counties were also created in the 1840's, but Whigs did not win Senatorial seats in these counties.
MAP I

COUNTIES of ARKANSAS formed in the period 1838–60

NEW COUNTIES of ARKANSAS formed in the period 1819–36

423
Ten counties containing the largest percentage of slaves in 1840.

Ten counties containing the largest percentage of slaves in 1850.
X Designates counties in which Whigs failed to win legislative seats in the 1840's.
Distribution of twenty-two House Democrats and nineteen House Whigs who voted to sustain Trapnell's motion to table the report of the Committee on federal-state relations.

Democrats - X
Whigs - √
Distribution of twenty-five House Democrats and three House Whigs who opposed Trapnell's resolution to table the report of the committee on federal-state relations.

Democrats - X
Whigs - V
1852
Blue—twenty-nine counties where Pierce's vote failed to double Scott's vote (−)

Red—twenty-one counties where Pierce's vote doubled Scott's vote (*)

White—no returns

1856
Blue—twenty-two counties where Buchanan's vote failed to double Fillmore's (+)

Red—twenty-seven counties where Buchanan's vote doubled Scott's (①)

White—no returns
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Gene Wells Boyett

Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: The Whigs of Arkansas, 1836-1856

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

November 10, 1972