1974

The Virginia Democratic Party, 1824-1847. (Volumes I and II).

Lynwood Miller Dent Jr

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
1824-1847
VOLUME I

A DISSERTATION
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in partial fulfillment of the
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in
The Department of History

by
Lynwood M. Dent, Jr.
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ABSTRACT

Between 1824 and 1844 a second party system developed in Virginia. After the 1824 presidential election, which shattered the Republican party, Virginia's Old Republicans determined to restore states rights principles to dominance among Republican ideologies by electing their candidate to the presidency. Led by the Richmond Junto, these Virginians joined with Martin Van Buren to create a coalition of southern planters and northern republicans. Andrew Jackson lent his popularity to the movement in Virginia, and the victorious coalition came to power in 1828 as the Democratic party.

The second party system evolved in Virginia, as in the nation, out of the successive contests for the presidency. National politics held the parties' attention; state and local issues played no role in party formation. The Democrats, espousing Old Republican states rights doctrines, parlayed the Jeffersonian tradition into a position of dominance in Virginia prior to 1833. But in that year Jackson's executive actions in the nullification and deposit withdrawal controversies alienated many states rights Democrats and spurred the formation of the Whig party. In 1836, and again in 1840, Democrats and Whigs contested the presidential election within the confines of the states rights
political consensus. Throughout the period the Whigs successfully battled the Democrats for control of the General Assembly, but were never successful in their attempts to carry Virginia for the Whig presidential candidate.

The banking crisis of the late 1830s initiated a revision of party lines which the aftermath of the presidential election of 1840 completed. Initially the Democrats suffered most from the creation of an ephemeral Conservative third party. From its inception the Virginia Whig party had been composed of two distinct wings, a nationalist faction containing the remnants of the National Republican party, and a numerically-dominant states rights wing. But after Henry Clay established his nationalist programs as Whig dogma in 1841 many of the states rights Whigs defected to the Democrats. In that same year a faction of Democrats loyal to John C. Calhoun emerged to challenge for control of the party. They were not able to nominate Calhoun in 1844, but when Van Buren opposed the immediate annexation of Texas his Virginia supporters, led by the remnants of the Junto, withdrew their support and served the New York-Virginia alliance.

After 1844 the Chivalry gradually gained control of the party. Like the Democrats of an earlier decade, the Chivalry continued to operate within the Democratic party to establish its states rights principles as the foundation for federal activity and to protect the interests of Virginia. But they feared less for the safety of the union than for the rights of the South within the union. The Wilmot Proviso foreshadowed both the tenor of national politics for the next fifteen years and the eventual realization of the Virginia Democrats' fears.
CHAPTER I

THE OLD DOMINION:

SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND POLITICS

By 1827 Virginia, unlike many of her southern and western neighbors, had matured. With more than two centuries of development her society and economy had settled into patterns that remained stable throughout the antebellum period. Continuity, not change, characterized the history of Virginia during the antebellum period.

The topography of Virginia, dividing the state into four natural regions, produced two different societies. East of the Blue Ridge Mountains there developed by 1820 a stable, conservative, planter-oriented, slaveholding society. West of the mountains and along the upper Potomac River a more heterogeneous, fluid, democratic society of small farmers existed. By 1820 interaction between these two societies had produced sectional antagonisms which characterized state government.1

1The initial and most thorough study of sectionalism is Charles H. Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia From 1776 to 1861 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910). Two recent studies have criticized Ambler's interpretation, not for its inaccuracies but rather for its inadequacies. See Richard Orr Curry, A House Divided: A Study of Statehood Politics and The Copperhead Movement in West Virginia (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1964), and Robert Paul Sutton, "The Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-30: A Profile Analysis of Late-Jeffersonian Virginia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1967). They see the traditional east-west interpretation cast too much in economic and ideological terms, and therefore neglecting a whole list of vital social considerations such as occupation, religion, ethnic groupings, population trends, class structure, and social mobility.
But despite these sectional tensions Virginians approached national politics in a remarkable consensus. In the cities and towns west of the mountains the Hamiltonian concept of a strong national government attracted limited support, but by 1820 most Virginians embraced the states rights doctrines of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. In the four decades before the Civil War a second party system composed of Democratic and Whig parties evolved in Virginia out of the fragments of the Republican party. But the general devotion to states rights philosophy tempered even this development.

At her widest point Virginia stretched more than 250 miles inland from the Atlantic shore, occupying almost 65,000 square miles of land area. Tidewater encompassed the land between the Atlantic and the head of navigation, or fall line, on the four tidal rivers. The Chesapeake Bay split Tidewater into two sections, an eastern segment called the Eastern Shore and the western mainland through which the Potomac, Rappahannock, York, and James Rivers flowed into the Bay. West of Tidewater the Piedmont constituted almost a right triangle with its base on the North Carolina border, its eastern edge along the fall line, and its western boundary the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Shenandoah Valley lay immediately west of the Piedmont. Restricted to an average width of forty-three miles by the relatively low Blue Ridge Mountains on the east and the higher Appalachian Mountains on the west, the Valley

For an analysis of the influence of these social determinants upon party formation and voting patterns in the second party system, see Chapter IX, infra.

2 For a contemporary description of Virginia see Joseph Martin, A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia. . . . (Charlottesville: Joseph Martin, 1835), pp.18-22.
stretched over 300 miles in a northeast-southwest direction. Between
the Valley and the Ohio River lay the Trans-Allegheny, an immense re-
gion of nearly 30,000 square miles with its surface broken by the rug-
ged Appalachian Mountains.

Virginia's population reflected a diversity of origins. Popu-
lated initially by Englishmen, by 1820 Irish, German, Scotch, French,
Scandanavian, Swiss, and Dutch immigrants had settled in Virginia. To
insure a sufficient labor supply a large number of black Africans were
imported; in 1820 Negroes comprised 47.8 per cent of Virginia's total
population, but almost 92 per cent of the blacks were held as slaves.³

During the three decades between 1820 and 1850 Virginia's popu-
lation growth of 4.4 per cent per decade failed to match the national
average of 33.8 per cent. Although the total state population increased
from 138,261 in 1820 to nearly 1.2 million in 1850, during the 1830s
population actually decreased by 1.8 per cent as as approximately 118,000
slaves were exported to meet the growing demand for slaves in the lower
South.⁴

Throughout the antebellum period the population of Virginia

³ Unless otherwise specified discussions of population and demo-
ography rely upon R. Bennett Bean, The Peopling of Virginia (Boston:  
People: A Study of the Growth and Distribution of the Population of  
Virginia from 1607 to 1943 (Richmond: Population Study Report No. 4,  
Virginia State Planning Board, 1944), p.106; Compendium of the Sixth  
Census of the United States, 1840 (Washington: Thomas Allen, 1841); U.S.  
Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the  
United States, 1900: Statistical Atlas, Plate 22 (Washington: Government  
Printing Office, 1903); Documents Containing Statistics of Virginia,  
Ordered to be Printed by the State Convention Sitting in the City of  
Richmond 1850-51: The Census (Richmond: n.p., 1851).

⁴ Frederic Bancroft. Slave Trading In the Old South (Baltimore:  
remained overwhelmingly rural. By 1850 less than 8 per cent lived in urban areas. Between 1820 and 1840 Richmond, the state's capital and largest city, increased its population from 12,067 to 20,153, but dropped from twelfth to twentieth place among American cities. Only five other cities, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth, and Wheeling had populations over 5,000. Virginia's white population spread itself relatively evenly over the state's four major geographic areas. In 1820 and 1830 the Piedmont held the largest number of whites, approximately 30 per cent. During these years the Valley and Trans-Allegheny sections were settled and by 1850 almost 55 per cent of Virginia's whites lived west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

This was not true of the state's black population. Because of worn-out Tidewater lands the locust of slaveholding had shifted to the Piedmont in 1820. The region held 48.3 per cent of Virginia's slaves; another 41.5 per cent labored in Tidewater. Over the next thirty years slave population and distribution by regions changed very little. 5

Virginia's sagging economy paralleled her sluggish population growth. Agriculture continued to provide the economic base, but by 1830 the aggregation of worn-out Tidewater lands, eroded fields, deserted farms, and large-scale slave exportations attested to the existence of widespread agricultural depression which had lingered since the American revolution. 6

5From 1820 to 1850 the rate of increase of Virginia's slave population was three to ten times less than any other southern state except Maryland. James C. Ballagh, History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1902), p.26.

6For an analysis of Virginia's agriculture see Avery O. Craven, Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1926);
oats, and buckwheat constituted the principle grain crops. Tobacco and cotton, the main staple crops, grew largely in eastern Virginia. By 1840 large-scale tobacco production had become isolated in the central and southern Piedmont while cotton production declined precipitously after 1830. Farmers in the mountainous, remote Trans-Allegheny concentrated on corn and livestock production.

By 1840 signs of agricultural reform appeared, manifested by crop rotation experiments, the application of calcareous manures, exportation of surplus slaves, and attempts to secure new markets for Virginia agricultural products. Although these experiments set the stage for an agricultural resurgence during the 1850s, they did not bring immediate prosperity to Virginia.

Mining and manufacturing, though never challenging agriculture for supremacy, provided increasing diversity in Virginia's economy. Coal, iron, lead, and salt all were mined in significant quantities during the antebellum years. Most of this production occurred west of the Blue Ridge Mountains although Henrico County, bordering Richmond, was a major coal producer in the east. Between 1822 and 1842 almost two million tons of coal left the port of Richmond, but the growth of the


Pennsylvania coal industry gradually forced Virginia coal out of the northern markets.

Manufacturing enterprises could be found in cities and towns both east and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Manufacturing generated business notions and prompted capital accumulation, but it never challenged the supremacy of agriculture in the economy. Tobacco stood supreme in manufacturing as in agriculture. By 1840 factories centered mostly in Henrico and Dinwiddie Counties, located around Richmond and Petersburg, produced almost $2.5 million of finished tobacco products. Flour milling held second place in manufacturing importance, producing slightly over a million barrels in 1840. In that same year twenty-two cotton manufacturers produced goods valued at nearly one-half million dollars. Almost all of the cotton manufacturers were located east of the Blue Ridge while woolen manufacturing remained centered west of the mountains in the areas of sheep farms. In 1840 the Old Dominion manufactured nearly $150,000 in woolen goods. Finally, Virginia also produced a significant amount of liquor in the antebellum period, nearly all of it west of the Blue Ridge where producers took advantage of the mountains' excellent spring water.

Despite the sectional tensions, stability, continuity, and homogeneity characterized Virginia's society and economy during the antebellum years. Despite the influx of German and Scotch-Irish coming down the Valley from Maryland and Pennsylvania, Virginians settled most of western Virginia. The locus of slaveholding lay east of the mountains where most of the state's large planters produced staple crops such as

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6Manufacturing figures for 1840 can be found in Compendium of the Sixth Census, Virginia Statistics, pp.157-77.

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tobacco. But western Virginians at least tolerated, if not endorsed, Negro slavery. Although signs of agricultural reform appeared before 1840, not until the decade before the Civil War did Virginia agriculture recover from a half-century-old depression. Finally, although mining and manufacturing loomed larger in economic significance, an overwhelming majority of Virginians continued to live on and work the land just as their fathers had done during the revolutionary era.

II

Continuity also characterized the governmental structure of Virginia from the revolution until 1850. The constitution of 1830 replaced the original state constitution of 1776, but it contained so few changes that governmental processes continued nearly unaltered from 1776 until the adoption of a third constitution in 1851. The constitution of 1776 clearly reflected the colonists' political heritage. It established three branches of government but granted overwhelming power to the General Assembly. Members of the House of Delegates were subject to

annual elections, but to provide stability the members of the Senate served four-year terms. All laws originated in the House of Delegates and all money bills, unlike other forms of legislation, were not subject to amendment by the Senate.

Reflecting a strong trend toward supremacy of the legislature during the prerevolutionary period, the constitution of 1830 maintained the supremacy of the Assembly over the other branches of government. In a very real sense the power of the executive and judiciary flowed directly from the Assembly. The legislature elected the governor annually by joint ballot. Limited to three successive terms by the first constitution, the constitution of 1830 granted him a three-year term but still rendered him ineligible to succeed himself. The constitution divided power within the executive branch by establishing a Council of State, or Privy Council, reduced from eight to three members by the constitution of 1830, to advise and assist the governor. Councillors, also elected on joint ballot by the Assembly, served three-year rotation terms. The governor could not prorogue or dissolve the Assembly during its sessions, and he possessed no veto. All judges above the county level, all principal executive officers of the state, and the United States Senators owed their election to the General Assembly.

The level of government closest to the average Virginian in the antebellum period was the county court, a self-perpetuating body of magistrates which held supreme legislative, executive, and judicial power in the county. Composed of justices of the peace appointed by the governor, the county courts perpetuated themselves by retaining power over the nominees for new or replacement justices. Hence families or cliques, once in control of the county court, usually maintained their dominance.
County government often inclined toward oligarchy, and the average citizen held little hope of effecting a change since there were no local elective offices. The sheriff, whose office normally rotated among county court members, possessed the greatest power of any single county official. The sheriff served not only as the chief administrative officer but also as county treasurer and tax collector. In addition he conducted all elections and certified their results. Although state circuit courts gradually usurped the judicial function of the county courts, other changes in the organization and operation of county government remained few and comparatively unimportant until 1851 when the new constitution made county courts subject to popular election.

Despite Virginia's political heritage and role in the American revolution, democracy in any real sense did not exist until 1851 when the new constitution granted suffrage to all adult white males. Prior to that date suffrage remained severely restricted by freehold requirements. Before 1830 only those adult white males who owned fifty acres of unimproved land, twenty-five acres of improved land, or a town lot with a house on it could vote. Furthermore, only Assemblymen, congressional representatives, and the president were elected by popular vote. Although similar limitations on the freehold existed in many southern states, it is probable that prior to 1829 nearly 39 per cent of Virginia's adult white males were disfranchised; west of the mountains the total probably approached 50 per cent. The 1830 constitution did little to

For evidence of the oligarchic nature of county courts see William Brockenbrough to Governor George William Smith, July 28; and Spencer Roane to Governor Smith, July 29, 1810, in W.A. Palmer, et al., eds., Calendar of Virginia State Papers (11 vols.; Richmond: n.p., 1875-93), X, 87-89.
increase the number of popularly elected offices. All those who qualified for suffrage under the old constitution were qualified under the new one. In addition, all white adult males who owned land worth $25, leased land for five years in annual rates of $20, or were house keepers or heads of families and had paid taxes for one year in the district where they resided were eligible to vote. 11 Authorities differ over the extent of these suffrage reforms, 12 but probably 30 per cent to 50 per cent of Virginia's adult white males remained disfranchised until 1851.

III

Because of the oligarchic nature of county government and the severely limited franchise, the road to power in Virginia lay with the local interest groups which dominated the county courts. 13 This situation changed very little after the formation of the second party system. County court members and their families simply managed party affairs at the local levels. 14 Before the second party system developed


14 Charles S. Sydnor noted the relationship between justices of the peace and Virginia legislators in The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), p.50n.:
all candidates normally claimed membership in the Republican party. Consequently political campaigns frequently dissolved into battles of personalities. After 1833 candidate personality remained important, but political contests for both state and national office more often revolved around national political issues. Rarely were Assembly campaigns contested on state political issues. 

Candidate selection remained an all-important part of the political process. Before the second party system fully developed, local interests merely decided upon a candidate and publicized his bid for office. The incumbent had the right to continue in office if he desired. Only if local families became too hostile, or too numerous for available places, or too ambitious to compromise would there be a fight for office, both before candidates declared and during the election. After national parties developed during the mid-1830 local party members often met in county conventions to name delegates for General Assembly offices and in district conventions to select candidates for Congress. These conventions were designed to enhance popular participation and avoid open conflict.

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<th>1844-45</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>50.0</td>
<td>56.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Senators with surnames of justices</td>
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<td>28.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Exceptions were the banking crisis of the late 1830s and the tax law of 1845. See Chapters IX and VII respectively. In 1830 three National Republican newspapers agreed with the Enquirer that the General Assembly elections did not revolve around contests between Jacksonians and opposition opponents. Lynchburg Virginian, Winchester Republican, Charlestown Virginia Free Press, quoted in Richmond Enquirer, November 2, 1830 (hereinafter cited Enquirer).

intraparty contests.

The chief elements in successful competition for public office consisted of a good reputation, powerful friends, and skillful backstage bargaining.\(^{17}\) Candidates were expected to put in at least a few public appearances. Normally candidates issued printed addresses either as a circular or in a newspaper. Often it was obligatory that they deliver public speeches, frequently in open debate with their opponent on the county court days. Finally, many candidates conducted personal canvasses of prospective voters.\(^{18}\)

Spencer Roane, the jurist-politician who headed the Richmond Junto until his death in 1822, offered the following advice to his son William Henry Roane when the younger Roane mounted his first bid for public office.

Judge Brockenbrough will have published in the Enquirer and Argus of tomorrow a simple notification that you are a candidate. These papers will get to the Bowling Green before Monday. I send, also, 200 short printed addresses to the freeholders. It was written by Brockenbrough, and corrected and approved by me. No doubt it will please you. Some of these may be stuck up in all public places in the district; and the rest distributed in the form of letters, through the district. Being addressed to the freeholders generally, they will be thereby gratified, while by endorsing them to influential characters, that will be a mark of attention to them which will also please. . . . You had better go to Caroline Court if possible, and wherever you go address the people in a short speech. But if you do not go, make the proper arrangements, and perhaps an apology for not going may be necessary.\(^{19}\)

An anecdote reprinted in the Norfolk American Beacon illustrates the need for candidates, who often come from the gentry, to pay attention

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 269, and Upton, "The Political Structure of Virginia," p. 30

\(^{18}\) Upton, "The Road to Power," 261.

to all freeholders. Colonel L., a man of fortune and aristocratic manners, possessed considerable talent and general popularity. During the canvass proceeding the election he encountered a poor freeholder whom he had habitually ignored. He approached and solicited the voter in a familiar manner and offered his hand, which was refused. The freeholder replied: "Excuse me, Colonel L., I will vote for you--because you are a faithful and able member, but I will give my hand to no man, who offers me his but once in seven years."²⁰

Virginia elections took place in the spring of each year. In April each county opened a poll, presided over by the sheriff and election commissioners appointed by the county court. Elections usually were held at the courthouse except where special polling places were established. In the case of state senators or congressmen where electoral districts encompassed three or more counties, each county held a separate poll, often on a different day, so that the candidates might attend all the polls. Candidates and electoral commissioners usually sat on a platform either inside or outside the courthouse, and the freeholders approached the platform to make their choice viva voce. Obviously under such conditions men were subject to a great deal of influence in casting their vote. After the freeholder voted the candidate normally thanked him for his vote, and liquid refreshments were provided for all.²¹

Plural voting remained common in Virginia until 1851 when the

²⁰Norfolk American Beacon, May 27, 1935.

²¹Upton, "The Road to Power," 259-60; Porter, County Government in Virginia, p.172. Charles S. Sydnor, American Revolutionaries, provides a description of voting in Virginia during the colonial period, and the procedures had not changed during the period under consideration here. See Sydnor, Development of Southern Sectionalism, pp.48-50, for a description of a Virginia election during the antebellum period.
new constitution outlawed it. Prior to that time voters were limited in the number of times they could vote only by the number of counties in which they could qualify as freeholders and their physical ability to ride to several county seats to cast votes. Prior to 1837 voting normally took place on the April court days in each county. In that year, however, the legislature established one day in the month for all counties to hold their polls, providing that the polls could be kept open three days if necessary due to inclement weather. Ostensibly this reduced instances of plural voting, but Richmond voters still cast large numbers of votes in Henrico and Chesterfield Counties, and the railroad ran a special train on election day from Richmond to Caroline County to enable Richmond voters who owned property in both places to vote in Richmond and Caroline County, then return to Richmond all in the same day.22

The road to power lay clearly marked in antebellum Virginia. Open to anyone, both before and after the establishment of the second party system, the road followed quite well-defined paths. For the gentry as well as the planters, friendship and/or family connection with the local oligarchy, a sound reputation, and skillful bargaining led to political success. After the formation of the second party system in the mid 1830s party connections also became important. Though dominated by the aristocracy, Virginia politics became increasingly open to all

classes during the antebellum period.

IV

From the earliest days of the republic Virginia politicians demonstrated an almost obsessive fascination with national politics. A two-party system flared briefly in Virginia between 1790 and 1800, but even in this system the Republican and Federalist parties arose from and were largely concerned with national domestic and foreign policy. In the presidential election of 1800 the Republican party gained control of Virginia. During the next six decades the Republicans and their Democratic heirs in the second party system never relinquished control of Virginia in the presidential contests. After 1800 Virginia politics were conducted within the philosophical consensus of states rights doctrines, yet Virginia Republicans did not achieve party unity until sometime between 1812 and 1815 when a faction known as the Old Party merged with a group called the Richmond Party to form the Richmond Junto. The Junto, a small body of men who exercised an extraordinary degree of control over party affairs, led the conservative reaction in Virginia politics after 1817.

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25 The Richmond Junto is analyzed in Section V, infra.
After the War of 1812 Virginia's states rights Republicans, also known as the Old Republicans, turned away from the nationalism exhibited by many other sections of the country. Federal legislation, economic depression, Supreme Court decisions, and a renewal of the slavery controversy wounded Virginians' pride. The Old Republicans responded to these affronts by resurrecting states rights doctrines they had first enunciated in 1798 while responding to the Alien and Sedition Acts. In that year the General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions, authored by James Madison, which declared that the power of the federal government derived from the constitution and that states "have the right, and are in duty bound, to interpose for arresting the progress of evil, and for maintaining within their respective limits, the authorities, rights, and liberties appertaining to them." In 1800 the Assembly adopted a report written in 1799 explaining the resolutions. Henceforth the resolutions of '98 and the report of '99, actually a philosophical treatise, provided the theoretical basis for Virginia states rights politics.

After 1815 assertions of strong national power by Congress and the Supreme Court angered Virginia's Old Republicans. In 1816 nationalists in Congress secured the creation of the Second Bank of the United States and the passage of a moderately protective tariff. The Old Republicans grudgingly accepted these two pieces of legislation, but then the nationalists revealed the wide dimensions of their program by advocating a nationwide network of roads and canals to open up the new lands of the West. The Old Republicans feared this proposal would

aggravate a severe agricultural depression in Virginia which had already
drained off much of the state's population and wealth to the virgin lands
in the southwest. Furthermore, the Supreme Court raised the question of
state versus federal power. In Martin v. Hunter's Lessee (1816), McCulloch
v. Maryland (1819), and Cohens v. Virginia (1821) the Court promulgated
the dominance of national power over the states. In the first and third
cases, both involving appeals from decisions rendered by Virginia's Court
of Appeals, the Court established its right under the Judiciary Act of
1789 to hear appeals from state courts. McCulloch v. Maryland repre-
tented Chief Justice John Marshall's strongest pronouncement of national
power. Speaking for an unanimous Court, Marshall affirmed the constitu-
tionality of the Second Bank of the United States and rejected the con-
stitutionality of a Maryland law which taxed the Baltimore branch of the
bank.

Virginia's Old Republicans, led by Spencer Roane, Justice of the
Virginia Court of Appeals and leader of the Richmond Junto, reacted
sharply to these decisions. In a series of essays published in the
Richmond Enquirer Roane maintained that under the federal constitution
the national government possessed only those powers delegated by the
states, and that under the "necessary and proper clause" necessity re-
stricted propriety. He acknowledged the magnitude of the Supreme Court's
power, "but it does not extend to everything; it is not great enough to
change the Constitution. . . . I consider that opinion [McCulloch v.
Maryland] the 'Alpha and Omega,' the beginning and the end, the first and
last of federal usurpations." Roane warned that Virginia would employ

27 Wheaton 304; 4 Wheaton 316; 6 Wheaton 264. For comment on the
cases see Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall (4 vols.; Boston:
force to support her doctrines if all other methods failed. 28 Thomas Ritchie, Roane's cousin and editor of the Richmond Enquirer, urged repeal of the Judiciary Act of 1789 and intimated that the Supreme Court should be abolished and replaced with a tribunal elected by the state legislatures. 29

As their final thrust against the Supreme Court's assertion of federal supremacy over the states, Virginia's Old Republicans submitted to the General Assembly a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution designed to limit the power of the federal judiciary. The amendment, written by Roane, denied federal jurisdiction in any case in which a state claimed to be a party except in controversies between two or more states. The amendment also denied appeal to a federal court from any decision rendered in a state court. The Assembly adopted the amendment, but it failed to gain any support outside Virginia. 30

While Virginia's Old Republicans battled the Supreme Court, they also became involved in the Missouri controversy. One "compelling idea" which underlay the diversity of interests in southern life united virtually all southerners and governed their participation in national affairs. Southerners believed that the institution of Negro slavery should not be dealt with from outside the South, but rather should remain a uniquely southern concern. Acceptance of this principle by the constitutional

28 The series, signed "Amphictyony" and "Hampden," ran in the Enquirer March-April and June 1819 respectively. Quotation from Enquirer, June 11, 1819. The essays are analyzed in Rex Beach, "Spencer Roane and the Richmond Party," William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, series 2, XXII(1942), 11-17.

29 Enquirer, January 22, 1822.

convention of 1787 has been a *sine qua non* for southern participation in the new government.  

In 1819, when news reached Richmond of attempts in Congress to exclude slavery from Missouri, Spencer Roane told Senator James Barbour that "a revival of the spirit and principles of 1799 has . . . taken place here. . . ." Virginians objected on both constitutional and political grounds to the efforts aimed at excluding slavery from Missouri. Although most Virginians remained unsure at this time whether Congress had the power to exclude slavery from the territories, they emphasized the constitutional guarantees which prohibited Congress from restricting any state with a republican form of government from entering the union. In letters to Senator Barbour, Andrew Stevenson, Thomas Ritchie, and Linn Banks, all Junto members, warned Barbour that Virginians would accept no proposed 36°30' compromise line drawn through the Louisiana Purchase territory which would grant the federal government authority to interfere with the domestic institutions of the states. Most Virginia politicians viewed the 36°30' proviso as manifesting "a spirit of injustice and want of faith in the Northern politicians, which if yielded to would lead only to farther and more daring and vital usurpations of the Constitution."  

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34 William F. Gordon to James Barbour, February 18, 1820;
Virginians also perceived the political implications of limiting slavery. Although Ritchie repeatedly condemned the South's peculiar institution, he confessed that southerners had no practical solution for ending slavery. Many Virginians believed that if slavery were allowed to expand westward the resulting lower ratio of blacks to whites in the slave states would ameliorate the effects of the institution on both blacks and whites and improve conditions for voluntary and state-sponsored emancipation. Roane warned President Monroe that "southerners could not consent to be 'damned up in a land of slaves'." Horrors of political impotence lay behind the Virginians' fear that slavery might be restricted. Ritchie contended that the South's only security from northern control of the union lay in a strict adherence to the constitutional guarantee of states rights. He warned that congressional exclusion of slavery from Missouri meant the loss of Virginia's influence upon the federal government, for additional states would enter the union as free states and cast their votes for northern principles.

Spencer Roane, describing Virginia's possible reaction to the 36°30' proviso, warned Monroe that "she will say, with the revered patriots of 1776, 'we have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so intolerable as voluntary slavery'." Although Virginia eventually

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35 For example see Enquirer, February 10, 1820.
36 Quoted in Brown, "Missouri Crisis," 60.
37 Enquirer, December 16, 23, 1819; February 3, 10, 12, 15; March 7, 1820.
accepted the compromise, Ritchie summarized the reaction of Virginia's states rights politicians: "Instead of joy, we scarcely ever recollect to have tasted of a bitterer cup." 39

Many Virginia states rights politicians, particularly the members of the Richmond Junto, wanted to dump Monroe in 1820 but could not agree upon a suitable successor. They charged Monroe with endorsing party amalgamation. They pointed to his acceptance of the protective tariff of 1816 and his approval of federally-financed internal improvements as evidence that he had abandoned states rights principles and adopted a nationalistic program in order to remain popular with northern voters. 40 In February 1820, during the midst of the Missouri crisis, the General Assembly Republican caucus met and adjourned without naming a slate of presidential electors. However, under the impression that Monroe would veto the compromise if the 36°30' proviso remained in the measure, the legislative caucus subsequently reconvened and selected a slate of electors loyal to the President. 41 But Monroe confounded the caucus by signing the compromise legislation.

As Richard Brown has perceptively concluded, the central fact of

39 Quoted in Brown, "Missouri Crisis," 68. Virginia's delegation in the House of Representatives cast 18 of its 21 votes against the 36°30' proviso, and both Senators opposed the measure. See Moore, The Missouri Controversy, Chapters IV, V.


Jefferson, Monroe's political mentor, regretted his role in the disappearance of the two-party system during the Era of Good Feeling. See C.W. Gooch to Churchill C. Cambreling, November 3, 1832, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.

American political history to 1860 lay in the dominance of national politics by the South. Virginia's states rights men felt their dominance slipping in 1820. Determined to regain control of their party and the national government by restoring states rights philosophy to preeminence among Republican ideologies, they planned to elect their candidate to the presidency in 1824.

V

By 1815 the Richmond Junto had become the core of the Virginia Republican party. Its name became synonymous with oligarchic control of Virginia politics, but the Junto did not originate this tradition of central direction. During colonial times a few planters dominated the government, and this oligarchic, aristocratic tradition survived into the nineteenth century. Restrictive suffrage requirements based upon the stake-in-society theory limited political participation to the landowners, and self-perpetuating county courts only furthered the tradition of oligarchic control.

The Richmond Junto has been the subject of two studies which document its membership and activities within Virginia. I agree with many of their conclusions and deviate most significantly on the membership


after 1824. But Harrison's study in particular raises a number of ques-
tions about the Junto's concept of party, politics, and relations with
the national Democratic party. I address myself to these questions
throughout the dissertation, but here I shall briefly describe the
Junto's membership and methods of operation.

The Junto's ancestry can be traced directly back to the first
Republican caucus held in Richmond. In 1800 the party caucus nominated
an electoral slate pledged to Jefferson and created a central committee
of correspondence to notify electors of their nomination, inform members
of the county corresponding committees of their appointments, and select
new electors in case vacancies occurred. By dominating the central cor-
responding committee during each presidential election the Junto became
the controlling force within the Virginia Republican party.

A small body of not more than twelve men, all possessing unusual
influence within the state and living in Richmond for much of the year,
comprised the Junto membership. Richmond society in the antebellum
period was divided into three social circles by the three large hills in
the city. On Shockoe Hill stood the residence of Dr. John Brockenbrough,
President of the Bank of Virginia. An imposing structure later occupied
as the White House of the Confederacy, Brockenbrough's residence provided
a social rendezvous for Junto members. Hence the organization derived
its name from its limited membership in the city where it functioned.
Operating in secret informality without regular meetings, the Junto's
influence flowed from the ceaseless political activity, wealth, and

45 Ammon, "The Richmond Junto," and Risjord, The Old Republicans,
place its membership at approximately 20. Harrison, "Oligarchs and
Democrats," halves that number. After 1824 his figure is more nearly
correct.
social prominence of its members, who conducted much of their business at the various social gatherings in Richmond. Although no evidence pointing to the Junto's existence can be found in the surviving manuscripts of its members, voluminous circumstantial evidence in the form of public attacks on the group by its enemies document its existence.\footnote{Relatively few manuscript collections exist. For a discussion see the bibliography. For evidence of early attacks upon the Junto see Ammon, "The Richmond Junto." For examples of later attacks upon the Junto see John C. Calhoun to Samuel Gouverneur, November 9, 1823, quoted in Robert Remini, Martin Van Buren and The Making of the Democratic Party (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p.31; Enquirer, March 7, 1823, quoting the Philadelphia Franklin Gazette; ibid., May 6, 1823, quoting Lynchburg Virginian; Benjamin Watkins Leigh to Henry Lee, November 29, 1824, Benjamin Watkins Leigh Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Alexandria Gazette, January 15, 1825; Henry Clay to Francis T. Brooke, September 24, 1827, in Calvin Colton, ed., The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1856), p.179; Enquirer, November 6, 1827, quoting Lynchburg Virginian; ibid., December 11, 1828, citing Argus of Western Virginia; ibid., August 12, 1842, citing Richmond Whig.}

The strongest criticism ever directed against the Junto came in 1823 in conjunction with John C. Calhoun's presidential campaign. The \textit{Washington Republican} published a series entitled "Letters on the Richmond Party. By a Native Virginian."\footnote{Letters on the Richmond Party. ... By a Native Virginian (Washington and Richmond: n.p., 1823) Ammon, "The Richmond Junto," discusses the various possibilities of authorship.} Later republished in pamphlet form, these pieces pretended to be letters written by a Virginian, addressed to a gentleman living in Maryland, in reply to his questions concerning the existence of such a party in his native state. The \textit{Letters} represent the first and only substantial published criticism to list names of Junto members or discuss specific Junto activities, and most of the charges which can be checked independently are accurate.

The \textit{Letters} charged that a powerful, aristocratic, secret party
existed in the state for the purpose of consolidating and extending family interests through political control of the state. According to the Letters the central Junto, or Richmond Party, while upholding the democratic process, engaged in secret measures to concentrate within its own members political power and thus deprive the state's citizens of their constitutional rights. Finally, the author outlined a direct parallel between the Junto's activities and the operations of the Albany Regency. 48

Thomas Ritchie constantly denied that any Junto existed, but Ritchie's denials do not ring true. Too many editors and politicians pointed to the group's existence. The Junto's success lay in its secrecy; certainly no minute books or membership lists were necessary. Junto members "seem to have been united by the triple bond of connection, propinquity, and consensus--and the greatest of these was connection." 49

One family, the offspring of William Roane and Mary Upshur, exerted a remarkable influence upon Virginia politics during the Jacksonian era. 50 This marriage produced six children. William, the third son, married Judy Ball, and their second son was Spencer Roane; Molly, a daughter of William and Mary Roane, married Archibald Ritchie, a Tappahannock merchant; Thomas Ritchie was their fifth child. Sarah Roane, the fifth child of William and Mary Roane, married John Brockenbrough;
their offspring included Dr. John Brockenbrough, Jr., long-time President of the Bank of Virginia, and William Brockenbrough, Judge of the Virginia Court of Appeals. These four cousins, all Junto men, played leading roles in Virginia Republican and Democratic politics.

This family relationship becomes even more complicated. Spencer Roane's son, William Henry, became a Junto member and served as a representative in Congress and Democratic Senator from Virginia. Ritchie married Isabella Foushee, daughter of Dr. William Foushee, a Richmond physician, postmaster, and prominent Republican. Another of the Doctor's daughters married Richard E. Parker, a Virginia jurist, Democratic Senator, and Junto member.

Other members of the Junto before 1824 included the Nicholas brothers, Wilson Cary and Philip Norborne, and Edmund Randolph. While only Philip N. Nicholas survived after 1824 to play an active role in politics, Peter V. Daniel married the daughter of Edmund Randolph. That young lady was also the niece of the Nicholas brothers. William Selden of Norfolk married a daughter of Spencer Roane, thus William H. Roane became Selden's brother-in-law. Finally, Andrew Stevenson and John Brockenbrough, Jr., became brothers-in-law through marriage.

After 1824 these men, Thomas Ritchie, John Brockenbrough, William Brockenbrough, William Henry Roane, Richard E. Parker, Philip N. Nicholas, Peter V. Daniel, William Selden, and Andrew Stevenson served as the inner circle of the Richmond Junto. Three of them, Ritchie, Daniel, and Stevenson, have their biographers, and their Junto membership is as well-documented as circumstantial evidence can make it. 51

The other six men have not been subjected to close scrutiny, but as I will show, four of them, John Brockenbrough, Nicholas, Roane, and Parker, certainly belonged to the inner circle of members. The status of William Brockenbrough and William Selden is less certain, but their family connections and respective positions for many years as jurist and land registrar indicate that they probably belonged to the inner core.

Three other men, not related to the family, held a kind of minor membership in the group. Ritchie in 1821 took on Claiborne W. Gooch as a business partner in the Enquirer. But Gooch left the partnership in 1828, and it is not clear whether his departure severed his connection with the other Junto members. Linn Banks, Speaker of the House of Delegates from 1817 to 1838, often chaired the Democratic legislative caucuses. However, his departure from Washington in 1838 to serve in the House of Representatives severed his connection with the Junto. Like Banks, George Wythe Munford, member of a prominent Richmond family and clerk of the House of Delegates from 1827 until 1853, probably also functioned as a Junto associate.

An urban group, the Junto consisted mostly of business and professional men, including jurists, bank presidents, an editor, and

Fry Wayland, Andrew Stevenson, Democrat and Diplomat (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949). Other biographical sources are noted in the bibliography.

52 Enquirer, November 7, 1828. C.W. Gooch to David Campbell, October 20, 1834, David Campbell Papers, Duke University. During the 1830s Gooch became increasingly critical of Ritchie's actions in Democratic party affairs. See C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, n.d., 1835, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress; Gooch to Ritchie, September 7, 1837, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.
lawyer-planter. But the roots of the Junto lay among the planters, for although Junto members lived in Richmond most of the year, they all owned plantations.

In addition to their family connections, the members' continual service in a number of powerful offices enhanced the Junto's influence. Andrew Stevenson served as Speaker of the House of Delegates from 1812 to 1816, and Linn Banks held the post for another twenty-one years. George Wythe Munford and his father were elected House Clerk continually from 1811 to 1853. Within the executive branch of state government Peter V. Daniel sat on the Executive Council from 1812 to 1836 except for an interlude of a few months. William H. Roane and William Selden also served on the Council, and Selden for many years served as registrar of the state land office. In the judiciary Spencer Roane dominated the Court of Appeals from 1803 until his death in 1822. William Brockenbrough sat on the court from 1834 to 1838, as did Richard E. Parker from 1837 to 1840. Philip N. Nicholas sat on the General Court of Virginia from 1823 until his death in 1849.

Junto members also held important federal offices. Stevenson served in Congress from 1823 until 1834, the last seven years as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and as Minister to the Court of St. James during Van Buren's administration. Linn Banks sat briefly in Congress as did William H. Roane, while Richard E. Parker and Roane served in the Senate consecutively from 1836 to 1841. Peter V. Daniel sat as U. S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia from 1836 until Van Buren elevated him to the Supreme Court in 1841 as

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53 A social recruitment analysis of the Junto appears in Chapter VII.
as Associate Justice where he remained until his death in 1860.

Although from the bench Daniel fulminated against federal and state-chartered corporations, the Junto wielded vast corporate influence in Virginia through its near dominance, prior to 1837, of the state banking system. Under Virginia's central banking system the legislature chartered central banks in major cities or towns and authorized them to operate branches in other towns. Dr. John Brockenbrough served for thirty-two years as President of the Bank of Virginia, the oldest and largest in the state. Philip N. Nicholas presided for many years over the Farmer's Bank of Virginia, the second largest bank, and his brother Wilson Cary Nicholas directed, until his death, the operations of the Richmond branch of the Second Bank of the United States. Ritchie owned and edited the Enquirer, the state's leading Democratic newspaper, from 1804 until 1845 when he turned it over to his sons.

Another source of Junto influence lay in its control of the Democratic party caucus, legislative and state conventions, and the central corresponding committees during the presidential campaigns. Between 1824 and 1844 Democrats enlarged the central committee membership from ten to fifteen. Until 1844 the Junto never failed to place at least five of its members on the committee, and Ritchie or another Junto member normally chaired the committee. Six Junto men served long tenures on the central committees between 1824 and 1844. Ritchie served on all six central committees during these two decades, Philip N. Nicholas and Peter V. Daniel on the committees from 1824 to 1840, Andrew Stevenson on the committees of 1824, 1832, and 1844, George Wythe Munford on the committees of 1828, 1836, and 1840, and William Selden on the committees.

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54 See Chapters VI and VII for discussions of Virginia banking.
from 1828 to 1836.

The existence of a two-party system within Virginia prohibited the Junto from controlling politics within the state by simply dominating one party. The Junto successfully maintained a tight grip on Virginia Democratic party affairs until the early 1840s, but it never absolutely dominated the party. The 1823 *Letters on the Richmond Party's* description of the Junto's control of state politics prior to 1824 applies equally to its management of the party after that date:

> They often direct, control, and regulate the public affairs, according to their sovereign will and pleasure; but when the people resolve, as they sometimes do, to manage their own concerns, ... the gentlemen, readily accommodating themselves to the necessity of the case, sail with the wind, or drift with the current, as good naturedly as if they were conforming to the dictates of their very best judgment, or acting in perfect obedience to their own inclination. Thus acting, their conduct has always appeared to be either influenced or governed by the wishes or desires of the people.55

From the presidential election of 1824 through the election of 1844 the Junto never failed to carry the state party legislative nominating convention or Virginia's electorate for the presidential candidate of its choice. Working hand in hand with the Albany Regency, a faction of the New York Democratic party led by Martin Van Buren, the Junto re-established the old Virginia-New York Republican alliance, supported Andrew Jackson in 1828 and 1832, and endorsed Van Buren in 1836 and 1840. The Junto lined up Virginia's Democrats behind Van Buren in 1844 until he came out against the immediate annexation of Texas. Then, following Junto leadership, Virginia's Democrats destroyed the New York-Virginia alliance by deserting Van Buren. Ultimately the Virginia Democrats moved behind James Knox Polk at the Baltimore Convention and

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carried the state for Polk in the fall.

Although functioning as "Jacksonian Democracy's general staff," the Junto never controlled all of the politicians within the Virginia Democratic party. Indeed at times the Junto faced serious competition within party ranks. Prior to 1832 several conservative states rights extremists such as John Tyler, Benjamin Watkins Leigh, Littleton Waller Tazewell, and John Floyd, dissatisfied with Jackson's lack of effort in reducing the tariff, challenged the Junto for control of the party.

The Junto responded by laboring to temper Jackson's course in the nullification and deposit withdrawal controversies. Ultimately Tyler and the others abandoned Jackson and the Democrats during these crises and spearheaded the formation of the Virginia Whig party. Although Jackson's course temporarily splintered Virginia's Democrats and allowed the Whigs to make great gains, by 1836 the Junto had reunited the remaining Democrats. Then during the depression and banking crisis of the late 1830s disaster again struck Virginia's Democrats. A small minority of the Democrats, dissatisfied with Van Buren's subtreasury proposal as a solution for the economic crisis, followed Senator William C. Rives into a Conservative third party. In addition, the Junto itself split over the proper banking policy for the national government. After three bitter years of conflict Virginia's Democrats regrouped in support of the Independent Treasury, the Conservative party dissolved, and the Junto restored a measure of party harmony. But the Junto never recovered the effective control it had exercised before 1837. After 1840 the extreme states rights wing of the party, now known as the Calhoun Democrats, or

56 Harrison, "Oligarchs and Democrats," 184.
Chivalry, again mounted a challenge to Junto domination. After 1844 the Chivalry ousted the remnants of the Junto and gradually assumed control of the party.

Ironically, for a state political organization the Junto lacked a state policy. Though portraying themselves as conservative agrarians, some members of the group, especially Ritchie through his Enquirer, appeared sufficiently liberal to Democrats west of the mountains to furnish leadership against Democrats who favored nullification, and later against the Whigs. In fact, Ritchie became one of a very few eastern conservatives who favored the calling of a constitutional convention with expanded representation from the west and more liberal suffrage requirements. Ritchie attempted to minimize the potential divisiveness of local issues by often neglecting to indicate in the Enquirer party breakdowns on legislative votes dealing with state political issues. But the Junto tolerated no such divisiveness on national issues, and much of its success in disciplining party members on national political issues lay in the absence of any attempt to enforce discipline on state or local issues.

Throughout its life the Junto tended to substitute ideals for issues, with the doctrines stated in the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and the Report of 1799 its favorite shibboleths. Political orthodoxy ad defined by the Junto consisted of carefully measuring all types of federal activity against these Old Republican doctrines. Federal programs which failed the test, such as the bank and federal aid in internal improvements, were vigorously opposed. Yet the Junto's position on

57 Ibid., 197.
the tariff illustrated its essentially moderate position within na-
tional politics. As entrepreneurs who represented agrarian interests, 
Junto members seem to have been nationalistic in their desire to pre-
serve the union, since they cast their support with the federal govern-
ment in 1832 and 1833. Ironically, in doing so they seemed to repudiate 
much of the states rights doctrines they cherished.

However, the Junto's nationalism must be described as provincial, 
for the reappearance of slavery as a national political issue in 1844 
forced the Junto to cut loose from its loyal political ally of twenty 
years and endorse action to further the expansion of slavery. Since 
their ultimate loyalty lay with Virginia, men such as Ritchie, Daniel, 
and Stevenson believed that they had no other alternative. However, 
this difficult decision lay far in the future in 1824 when the Junto 
turned to the immediate task at hand, the election of a president.
CHAPTER II

ORIGINS OF
THE VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
1824-1828

Born in the 1790s in opposition to Federalist domestic and foreign policy, the Republican party by 1820 had absorbed its Federalist counterpart in the nation's first party system. At its birth the Republican party rested on the famous New York-Virginia alliance and proclaimed a states rights philosophy, but amalgamation soon created a party composed of several diverse factions which advocated conflicting principles and demonstrated little discipline. Early in the 1820s certain Republicans from different sections of the country, notably Martin Van Buren of New York and a group of Virginians known as the Richmond Junto, attempted to revive the Old Republican party by resurrecting the New York-Virginia alliance and restoring states rights philosophy to preeminence in Republican ideology. To achieve their goal these men determined to elect their candidate to the presidency in 1824. They failed, but their efforts laid the groundwork for a new coalition which came to power in 1828 as the Democratic party.

By 1822 Virginia's Old Republicans had lost the ascendancy which they had held over the federal government since 1800. During Monroe's two terms the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Second
Bank of the United States and promulgated the dominance of national power over the states in two cases involving appeals to the court from decisions rendered by the Virginia Court of Appeals. In Congress National Republicans passed a protective tariff and called for a nationwide network of roads and canals to open up new lands in the west. Finally, in the Missouri controversy Congress prohibited the extension of slavery into lands north of 36°30' in the Louisiana Purchase territory. In light of these events many of Virginia's Old Republicans, particularly the members of the Richmond Junto, determined to regain control of the Republican party and the national government by electing their candidate to the presidency in 1824. Ironically, Martin Van Buren of New York, a northern man with southern principles, became their chief agent of southern power during the Age of Jackson.

Van Buren first emerged on the national political scene through his 1821 election to the United States Senate. His charm and ingratiating manner eased his movements into high political circles. Already skilled in state political intrigue, Van Buren directed the New York Bucktails, the Richmond Junto's more disciplined counterpart in New York Republican politics. Personally ambitious, Van Buren wanted to spread the discipline and organization of his Bucktails throughout the Republican party. Thus he became a power to be reckoned with soon after his

appearance in the Senate.

Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond Enquirer and Van Buren's closest ally in Virginia, ranked foremost among the new leaders in Virginia politics after 1820. Although the General Assembly repeatedly elected him public printer, Ritchie exercised his political leadership through non-institutional channels. The Enquirer, Virginia's most partisan states rights Republican newspaper, gave Ritchie the means of transmitting his views to citizens throughout the state. Two additional sources enhanced his power in Virginia Republican councils. In 1822, upon the death of his cousin, Spencer Roane, Ritchie inherited the leadership of the Richmond Junto. A third source of his influence lay in his contacts with Republican politicians throughout Virginia and in the nation's capital. In 1822 he met a man who profoundly influenced the creation of the Virginia and national Democratic parties. In December of that year Martin Van Buren came to Richmond.

Shortly after his election to the Senate Van Buren made a get-acquainted trip to Richmond, ostensibly to visit Spencer Roane. At the time Roane lay on his deathbed, and whoever else Van Buren saw there remains uncertain. Probably he met Ritchie, Peter Vivian Daniel, Andrew Stevenson, Wilson Cary Nicholas, and Philip Norborne Nicholas. All were associates of Roane and members of the Richmond Junto.

During this trip Van Buren apparently made a short visit to

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2 The only study of Ritchie is Charles H. Ambler, Thomas Ritchie, A Study In Virginia Politics (Richmond: Bell Book and Stationary Co., 1915).

Monticello to consult with the Republican patriarch, Thomas Jefferson. This visit may have settled Van Buren's thinking on some of the more vital issues of the day; it certainly exposed him to southern Old Republican views on national issues, and soon thereafter Van Buren began to advocate states rights. Although he strenuously opposed federally-financed internal improvements, his opposition rested on more than ideological grounds, for New York shortly thereafter completed the state-financed Erie Canal. Van Buren became more conscious of inequities in the protective tariff, and undertook a generally narrower interpretation of the constitution. Convinced that liberty existed in inverse proportion to the amount of power exercised by a central government, Van Buren had derived his concept of government secondhand from Jefferson.  

In the next few years he would refine and restore to power the Jeffersonian coalition of Republicans who assumed the name Democrats. But Jefferson conceived of party as an instrument for better government, while Van Buren, confusing Jeffersonian means and ends, came to view party as an end in itself.  

Factional conflict among New York Republicans shaped Van Buren's view of party. His Bucktails battled DeWitt Clinton's faction for control, and in their challenge the Bucktails revolutionized the idea of party by proclaiming a new definition of party and new standards of behavior for party politicians. They accomplished their revolution simply by applying the rhetoric of democracy and egalitarianism to intraparty organization. No longer would parties be dominated by factions loyal to

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aristocrats. Instead they would become "democratically-structured" permanent institutions. The new code of ethics for party politicians required the subordination of individual ambition to the will of the party majority. In the new type of politician, institutional orientation toward the perpetuation of the party replaced the ideological orientation of men like Jefferson. This was the new Republican party which Van Buren hoped to create not merely in New York but throughout the country.

II

The presidential election of 1824 marked a transition point in Virginia and national politics. Republican party discipline, never strong during Monroe's two administrations, broke down completely over the selection of his successor. By 1824 the Republican party, an amalgam of factions and personalities, contained Jeffersonian Republicans, national Republicans, and remnants of the Federalist party. The Richmond Junto claimed to lead Virginia Republicans, but by 1824 it represented only those Virginians of the states rights persuasion. In the midst of this confusion the Republicans faced the task of nominating Monroe's successor.

Initially five men, all Republicans, contended for Virginia's endorsement in 1824. Two, William Harris Crawford and Henry Clay, claimed

7 Ibid., 461.
8 Ibid., 470.
Virginia birth though they had moved to Georgia and Kentucky, respectively, in their youths. The other candidates included John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, John Caldwell Calhoun of South Carolina, and Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. All of the candidates had followers in Virginia, but Crawford possessed the most strength.

Crawford entered politics in his youth and quickly won acceptance among Georgia conservatives. He had served in the U.S. Senate, as minister to France, as Secretary of War and then Treasury under Madison, and Secretary of the Treasury under Monroe. Crawford had been the leading Republican presidential candidate since 1816, when a sizable minority of the Republican congressional caucus voted for him though he subsequently withdrew in favor of Monroe. By 1821 Crawford commanded what appeared to be nationwide political support, centered to be sure in the South but also strong in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Old Northwest. Closely identified with the principles of the Virginia Dynasty, Crawford deviated from the conservative pattern only through his defense of the first Bank of the United States in 1811.

As early as 1822 Thomas Ritchie began editorializing in Crawford's behalf. Clearly the Junto had decided on their candidate at least two years before the election, for the Enquirer, because of Ritchie's unique position, served as the Junto's mouthpiece. Ritchie believed that Crawford had support in all sections of Virginia and the nation. He proposed

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9 For evidence of Crawford's support west of the mountains see Lexington, The Intelligencer, July 17, 1824. Crawford's latest biographer, Chase C. Mooney, William H. Crawford, 1772-1834 (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), p.240, believes that because Ritchie admitted anti-Crawford material into the Enquirer in 1823 he was not firmly committed to Crawford. Ritchie normally kept the columns of the Enquirer open until the nominations were made, and his other actions and correspondence indicate that he was committed to Crawford.
that a Republican national convention be held to focus public interest on one candidate in order to prevent the election from going to the House of Representatives where Ritchie feared the popular will could easily be frustrated by conniving politicians. But the Junto remained one of the caucus system's strongest supporters. Ritchie simply raised the possibility of a convention nomination as a trial balloon in case Crawford's supporters could not control the Republican congressional caucus scheduled to meet in Washington.

John Quincy Adams seemed to many Virginians the logical Republican candidate for president in 1824. Just as Madison served and succeeded Jefferson, and Monroe served and succeeded Madison, as Monroe's Secretary of State Adams expected to continue the secretarial dynasty. The New Engländer received considerable support in the campaign from Virginians in all sections of the state. The Lynchburg Virginian, the first state newspaper to come out for Adams, advanced his campaign in the southwest, but he also attracted newspaper support in Tidewater, northern Virginia, and Richmond. Adams had organizations in most of

10 Roy F. Nichols, The Invention of the American Political Parties (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 264. Richmond Enquirer editorials of July and August 1822 especially raise the convention possibility, but conclude that it has only a slight chance because few will support it. Throughout his career Ritchie abhorred the prospect of settling a presidential election in the House of Representatives, and he worked constantly to avoid it.

Not all Old Republicans favored Crawford. Some remained leery of his stand on the tariff. See James M. Garnett to John Randolph, January 27, 1824, Letters of James M. Garnett and John Randolph of Roanoke, University of Virginia.

11 Elijah Fletcher to Jesse Fletcher, July 23, 1825, in Martha von Briesen, ed., The Letters of Elijah Fletcher (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), p. 96. Fletcher was a New Engländer who moved South and in the early 1820s became editor of the Lynchburg Virginian. Norfolk, American Beacon, August 9, 13, 1824; Alexandria Gazette, November 18, 1824; Richmond Whig, February 24, 1824, quoted in
the state's counties, and his friends encouraged the Jackson and Clay men in Virginia to cast their votes for him in order to present a united front against Crawford. Although some states rights men preferred Adams as a second choice, Ritchie opposed him because his interpretation of the constitution seemed "too plastic."

Henry Clay's nationalistic doctrine appealed to Virginians who favored banks, tariffs, and internal improvements. In 1822 Clay visited Richmond as Kentucky's official representative in a boundary dispute with Virginia. There he met Ritchie and probably the other members of the Junto. While conversing with Ritchie in the Eagle Hotel, Clay assured the editor that he had not departed from the old Virginia doctrines. He told Ritchie that he preferred a national bank mainly to relieve Kentucky from the curse of poorly managed state banks, and that he favored federally-financed internal improvements chiefly to upgrade poor mountainous roads. Clay did not convince Ritchie, yet on this trip he won friends who eventually supported him for the presidency in 1832 and 1844. However, in 1824 Clay attracted little attention east of the Blue Ridge Mountains because, as one states rights man said, his nationalism seemed to destroy state authority by lavishing power on the central government.


12 Norfolk, American Beacon, August 13, 1824.
13 Lexington, The Intelligencer, July 17, 1824; Richmond Enquirer, January 14, 1823 (hereinafter cited Enquirer).
14 Wheeling Gazette, June 19, 24, 1824.
15 Ambler, Ritchie, pp.87-88.
16 J.M. Sheppard to Andrew Stevenson, April 28, 1824, Andrew Stevenson Papers, LC.
The political managers of Andrew Jackson also sought Virginia's endorsement. The tall, stern, Tennessee cotton planter, the nation's military hero by virtue of his victory at New Orleans in 1815 and his expedition into Florida in 1817-1818, embodied the American frontiersman and the frontier spirit. But Jackson faced strong opposition from Virginia's Old Republicans. As early as 1822 Ritchie dismissed him from serious consideration because Ritchie instinctively distrusted military power. He felt that the United States should have acquired Florida without strife, and had demanded that a military court of inquiry review Jackson's conduct there. Ritchie's attack upon Jackson's actions in Florida and his criticism of Jackson in 1824 constituted one of his greatest political blunders, for it cut him off from all chances of promotion in 1829 when Jackson was searching for an editor to conduct an administration newspaper in Washington. Other Virginians, fearing that Jackson lacked "prudence and moderation, and therefore wisdom," condemned his "moral sense." They distrusted his capacity for political leadership, pointing out that in his career he had displayed only military talents. Yet, despite such opposition, Jackson remained attractive to many of the state's voters.

John C. Calhoun, Monroe's Secretary of War, became the fifth Republican candidate for president in 1824. Calhoun entered Congress as a War Hawk prior to the War of 1812, and his political career as congressman and later Secretary of War reflected consistent nationalism.

17 Enquirer, July 30, 1822.
18 Ambler, Ritchie, pp.69,109-10.
On this point Calhoun waged his campaign for the presidency. He determined at one and the same time to oppose sectionalism, state sovereignty, Republican machine politics, and his southern competitor for national honors, William H. Crawford. Vain, ambitious, with a mind controlled entirely by logic, Calhoun's self-confidence combined with political naivety to lead him into the contest.  

From the beginning Calhoun had little chance in Virginia, even though his friends started a Richmond newspaper, The Daily-Virginia Times, to promote his candidacy. States rights men disliked Calhoun, and Ritchie dismissed him from consideration. He conceded Calhoun's high character, but described the South Carolinian as too ambitious and not yet ripe for the job. Ritchie believed Virginia should oppose Calhoun for his nationalistic course, and one letter writer in the Enquirer labeled Calhoun "an ultra politician of the federal school." Calhoun denied the unconstitutionality of his nationalism. He believed that his character had been grossly misrepresented to the people of Virginia, but after Jackson captured the endorsement of Pennsylvania's Republicans in March 1824, Calhoun dropped out of the presidential race and focused his attention on the vice presidency.

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22 Enquirer, February 13, December 11, 1823; February 12, 1824.

Presidential politics heated up in Virginia as the calendar turned to 1824, for on the night of Thursday, January 1, the state Republican legislative caucus met in the Capitol at Richmond. This meeting, attended by approximately 170 men, resolved that Virginia's congressional representatives should enter the party caucus at Washington to select the presidential nominee. The caucus did not endorse a candidate, but most of those in attendance preferred William H. Crawford.24

On February 10, 1824, the Enquirer reprinted from a Washington newspaper a notice signed by eleven Republican congressmen inviting "the Democratic members of Congress" to meet in the representatives' chamber at the Capitol on the evening of February 14, at 7 P.M., "to recommend Candidates to the People of the United States for the Offices of President and Vice President of the United States."25 This call for what became the last Republican national caucus marked the official disintegration of the Republican party.

The chore of selecting Monroe's successor, never a simple task, became infinitely more complicated late in 1824 when Crawford, the leading contender, suffered a debilitating illness which nearly took his life. While visiting Senator James Barbour in Virginia during September 1823, Crawford became ill with a severe case of erysipelas. When a local physician accidentally gave Crawford an overdose of lobelia the


24 Enquirer. January 6, 1824.
25 Ibid., February 10, 1824.
burly Georgian suffered a massive stroke. For months Crawford remained immobile, speechless, and nearly blind. He did not resume his duties at the Treasury until September 1824, and even then his speech remained thick and hesitant and his memory uncertain. The political pressures of the campaign made it impossible for Crawford to resign his post or for Monroe to replace him in the cabinet. Crawford's resignation would have openly advertised the seriousness of his illness while his supporters were publicly proclaiming his recovery. Monroe, exercising little control over party machinery, tried to remain neutral. By replacing Crawford he would have violated his cherished neutrality and also publicized Crawford's incapacity.

On the night of February 14 the congressional caucus met in what James Barbour described as a "troubled scene." Only sixty-six Republican congressmen attended the caucus, hardly one quarter of the total membership of both houses of Congress. The caucus nominated William H. Crawford for president in spite of his paralysis, but the poor attendance of the caucus tarnished his nomination and surely contributed to his defeat.

The Old Republican leadership had organized the congressional caucus not only to nominate Crawford but more importantly to revive the New York-Virginia alliance and regain power at Washington. They hoped to use the caucus to obtain party unity. Ironically, the careful plans of Van Buren and the Junto failed, as half of the New York and Virginia


27James Barbour to James Madison, February 14, 1824. James Madison Papers, LC.
congressmen stayed away from the caucus. 

Friends of Clay, Adams, Jackson, and Calhoun strenuously attacked the national caucus. On December 30, 1823, their adherents in the Virginia House of Delegates united by a vote of 77-76 to postpone debate on a series of resolutions endorsing the convening of a national caucus. But Virginia's Old Republicans insisted upon the caucus as necessary for party unity. Andrew Stevenson, Ritchie's Junto cohort, defended the congressional caucus as a party man, noting that "without party, cemented by union of sound principles and sound men, evil men and evil principles can never be successfully resisted." 

The Virginia Republican legislative caucus reconvened in the state capitol on the night of February 21, 1824, to endorse Crawford's nomination. Linn Banks, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and a Junto associate, chaired the caucus and Ritchie served as secretary. Although the friends of Crawford called the caucus, they extended invitations to supporters of the other candidates, but only a few of these men attended. In the balloting for the presidential nomination Crawford

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29 Both the Alexandria Gazette and the Norfolk American Beacon spoke out periodically against the caucus proposal, and after February 14, 1824, condemned its result. Clay's opposition to the caucus is noted in Henry Clay to Francis T. Brooke, January 22, 1824, in Calvin Colton, ed., The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1856), p.86. For postponement of the Virginia resolutions see the Enquirer, January 1, 1824.

30 Andrew Stevenson, March 6, 1826, Register of Debates in Congress, 19 Cong., 1 Sess., 1530. Ritchie defended the caucus as necessary for keeping the election out of the House of Representatives. See the Enquirer, July 23, 1827, and February 12, 1824. "Publicus" defended the caucus in a series of essays published in the Enquirer, December 23, 27, 1823, January 1,3, 1824.
received 139 votes, Adams seven, Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina and Jackson six each, and Clay five. For vice president the caucus overwhelmingly endorsed Albert Gallatin of Pennsylvania over Langdon Cheves of South Carolina and Macon. At a subsequent meeting the legislative caucus appointed a central corresponding committee which included at least five Junto members, named county corresponding committees, and drew up a slate of electors loyal to Crawford. By controlling the central corresponding committee the Junto directed Crawford's campaign in the state, for the central committee issued directives to the county corresponding committees.  

In response to the Crawford legislative caucus Henry Clay's supporters convened a small caucus in Richmond during March. Judge Francis T. Brooke, Clay's chief lieutenant in the state, directed the caucus and authored the address which proclaimed the virtues of Harry of the West. However, the small size of the Clay caucus and its relatively minor impact on the presidential campaign in Virginia indicated the shallowness of Clay's strength in the state.  

The Virginia Jackson men held a convention in Fredericksburg during late July, but no prominent Virginia Republican politicians endorsed Jackson. The convention endorsed a Jackson-Calhoun ticket and tried to select a slate of electors that would unite the opponents of Crawford's nomination. Their address emphasized that the convention

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31 *Enquirer*, February 24, 26, 1824. The four identifiable members of the Junto on the central corresponding committee included Ritchie, Stevenson, Peter V. Daniel, and Philip N. Nicholas.

had been held and electoral ticket drawn up solely because of Crawford's caucusc nomination. 33

As the November election approached, the Junto panicked. The congressional caucus had selected Albert Gallatin of Pennsylvania as Crawford's running mate in the hope of influencing Pennsylvania's voters to support Crawford. Van Buren and the Junto calculated that if Pennsylvania could be won for Crawford a solid alliance might be established between New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania that would augur well for Old Republican hopes in the future. However, in March 1824 the Pennsylvania state Republican convention, called ostensibly by Crawford's supporters to secure his endorsement, voted instead for Andrew Jackson. Thus in September 1824 Claiborne W. Gooch, Ritchie's co-editor on the Enquirer and erstwhile political associate, wrote Van Buren begging that Gallatin be dropped from the ticket. He believed that Gallatin could not carry Pennsylvania for Crawford and that he would only hurt Crawford's strength in Virginia and elsewhere if he remained on the ticket. 34

Both Gooch and Philip N. Nicholas proposed a fusion ticket to Van Buren. In New York the state legislature elected the presidential electors, and Gooch and Nicholas urged Van Buren to have the New York legislature nominate Clay for vice president on the Crawford ticket. They hoped this move would strengthen the Crawford ticket in western Virginia and in other areas where Clay's nationalistic philosophy seemed popular, and would obtain Clay's assistance for Crawford in case the

33 Fredericksburg, The Virginia Herald, July 31, 1824; Enquirer, August 3, 1824. The Adams ticket had been promulgated by a Norfolk Adams meeting, and various Adams county meetings endorsed this ticket.

34 C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, September 14, 1824, Van Buren Papers, LC.
election went to the House of Representatives. Finally, by employing this plan the Junto hoped to defeat Calhoun, who by the late summer of 1824 seemed to have the vice presidency locked up. The Junto disliked Clay personally, but preferred him to Calhoun. Apparently they did not consult Clay, believing he would be compelled to accept the action of the New York legislature.

Joseph Gales and William Winston Seaton urged Ritchie in his capacity as editor of the *Enquirer* and member of the Republican central corresponding committee of Virginia to secure Gallatin's withdrawal and Clay's substitution. Ritchie would not have opposed Clay for the vice presidency, but the Virginia corresponding committee lacked the power to nominate. The Virginia legislative caucus had made no vice-presidential nomination, and the legislature would not convene until after the election, so Virginia could make no move to replace Gallatin.

Meanwhile Gallatin withdrew from the vice-presidential contest because of the embarrassment his nomination caused the party.

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37 Albert Gallatin to Martin Van Buren, October 2, and Gallatin to Walter Lowrie, October 2, 1824, Van Buren Papers, LC.; Henry Adams,
York, therefore, had to take the lead. Van Buren embraced the course of action laid out by the Junto, but he could not manipulate the New York legislature to secure Clay's nomination nor could he even carry all of New York's electoral votes for Crawford, so the plan miscarried. Virginia's electors met on December 1 in the state capital to vote for Crawford and the Old Republican from North Carolina, Nathaniel Macon. An *Enquirer* editorial of November 26 pointed to Macon as the Junto's last minute choice for vice president as they desperately maneuvered for a candidate to oppose Calhoun's nationalism. This seems to have been sufficient notice for Virginia's electors, and clearly illustrates the Junto's influence. Finally, this whole incident reveals the New York-Virginia alliance in operation. As John Floyd prophetically remarked in his letter of June 1824 to Gooch, Van Buren "will serve the purpose of Virginia better than any, as his notion of states rights, are correct, . . . besides we owe him a heavy debt in politics."  

Philip N. Nicholas correctly predicted Crawford's "decided and firm majority" in the state. Crawford received 6,397 votes, 51.1 per cent of the vote. He swept practically all of Tidewater and Piedmont and ran strong in the southwestern and central areas of the Trans-Allegheny. Adams, Virginia's second choice with 27.5 per cent of the vote.

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39 Philip N. Nicholas to Andrew Stevenson, April 8, 1824, Stevenson Papers, LC.
vote, carried constituencies scattered throughout the state. Andrew Jackson ran third with 18.1 per cent of the vote, and showed considerable strength west of the mountains where one observer in Washington County indicated that nearly all the young men voted for him. Henry Clay placed a dismal fourth, garnering only 3.3 per cent of the vote. Only eight of Clay's 419 votes came from east of the Blue Ridge Mountains; he received 248 of his votes from Ohio County surrounding the town of Wheeling. 40

Few of the state's voters cast ballots in 1824. The previous high turnout in a Virginia election occurred in 1800 when 25.9 per cent of the eligible voters came to the polls. By contrast, in 1824 only 11.5 per cent of those eligible to vote did so. 41

No one reason explains the low voter turnout. Two procedural explanations include restrictive suffrage requirements and the general inaccessibility of polling places. Only adult white male freeholders voted, and generally the only county poll took place at the courthouse, often forcing many voters to travel considerable distances in bad weather. 42

40 Vote totals are available in the Election Returns, 1824 General Election, Virginia State Library. David Campbell to James Campbell, November 2, 1824, David Campbell Papers, Duke University.

41 Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review, LXV (January 1960), 292, Table I. The vote for Grayson county is missing in the General Election Returns, Virginia State Library. It was rumored that on election day between 200 and 300 freeholders assembled to vote at the Grayson County courthouse, but the electoral commissioners appointed by the governor to conduct the election, all Crawfordites, did not show up to do their duty. Lynchburg Virginian, December 5, 1824. Regarding apathy toward the presidential contest in Virginia see Francis T. Brooke to Henry Clay, August 14, 1823, in Hopkins, ed., Clay Papers, III, 468-69.

42 McCormick, Second Party System, p.185-86. After 1800 the
A third explanation rests upon the multiplicity of candidates. Even with Crawford as the clear-cut Old Republican candidate many voters could not decide between Adams, Jackson, or Clay, and simply stayed home. Unity of opposition to Crawford probably would have brought more voters to the polls and might have altered the election results.43

Another explanation lies in the implicit obedience Virginia Republicans gave to the Junto and the Richmond Enquirer. Although Ritchie recognized freedom of expression and opened the Enquirer's pages to articles in behalf of other candidates, by 1824 his editorials had produced the belief, according to his editorial opponents, that the state's voters decidedly favored Crawford. Habits and traditions are not easily overturned and many Virginia voters could not bring themselves to revolt "in the face of . . . hitherto unquestioned authorities." Finally, many Crawford supporters, confident of his victory simply did not bother to vote.44

The lack of active, well-organized local organizations hurt Clay, Jackson, and Adams, though Crawford's friends often became over-confident. In Rockbridge County, surrounding the Valley town of Lexington, Adams received 156 votes, Crawford 146, and Jackson 97. The local newspaper attributed Crawford's showing to his friends' "false security," for they made no exertion in his behalf until the percentage of adult white males casting ballots declined from 25.9 to less than 18 in 1808 and 1812, 6 per cent in 1816, and 4 per cent in 1820. McCormick, "New Perspectives," 292, Table I.

43 Alexandria Gazette, November 11, 1824.

44 Ibid., November 6, 13, 1824; Lexington, The Intelligencer, November 6, 1824.
morning of the election. Adams' supporters worked quietly throughout the campaign, and if Jackson's friends had begun their work a few weeks earlier he might have polled as many votes as Crawford and Adams combined.45

Although Crawford's Virginia supporters rejoiced over his Virginia triumph, the national electoral returns for both president and vice president disappointed them. The official returns gave Calhoun a majority of the vice-presidential votes. Jackson won ninety-nine electoral votes, Adams eighty-four, Crawford forty-one, and Clay thirty-seven. According to the twelfth amendment to the federal constitution the election proceeded to the House of Representatives where, voting by states, the House elected John Quincy Adams.

Virginia cast its vote in the House for Crawford, and for the first time since 1796 Virginia Republicans backed a loser. The presidential election of 1824 completed the disintegration of the Virginia Republican party, but it did not provide the basis for lasting party alignments in the state. Such alignments came in the decade ahead as the result of a new party system which developed out of successive contests for the presidency. Immediately, however, Virginia's Old Republicans faced the task of regrouping their organization.

III

Henry Clay threw his support to John Quincy Adams in the House of Representatives' balloting for the presidency, and in return was named Secretary of State by the newly elected president. The cry of

45 Lexington, The Intelligencer, November 6, 1824.
"corrupt bargain" then echoed throughout the nation. The National Republicans celebrated Adams' election, but according to Andrew Stevenson's sister, Betsy Coles, Virginia's states rights Republicans seemed to "run mad" about it. In Richmond she attended a party with many states rights politicians at the Shockoe Hill residence of Dr. John Brockenbrough, a leading Junto member. She found them all denouncing Clay and Adams. According to her, Philip N. Nicholas, William Henry Roane, John Campbell, and others said they would take Jackson or anybody else in preference to Adams.

But their endorsement of Jackson remained private. Although the Virginia states rights men publicly denounced Adams, at such an early date they had not settled upon their candidate for 1828. Condemning as premature the Tennessee legislature's nomination of Andrew Jackson, the Richmond Enquirer refused to enter into speculation over potential candidates.

Adams' first annual message to Congress set the tenor of his administration. He proposed, in addition to more federally-financed roads and canals, a national university, an astronomical observatory

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46 Clay's reasoning behind his support of Adams can be found in Clay to Francis T. Brooke, January 28, February 4, 1825, in Colton, ed., Clay Correspondence, pp.111, 113. The first letter was publicly printed in the Norfolk, American Beacon, February 11, 1825.

47 Betsy Coles to Andrew Stevenson, February 3, 1825, Stevenson Papers, LC. Opposition papers poked fun at the disgust of Virginia's Old Republicans. John H. Pleasants printed in the Richmond Whig a mock eulogy of Thomas Ritchie, claiming Ritchie first contracted his illness on February 14, 1824, when the congressional caucus met. Reprinted in Ambler, Ritchie, pp.96-97. In a December 4, 1824, editorial the Wheeling Gazette satirized the dissolution of the political copartnership between Van Buren and Co. of New York, and Ritchie and Gooch of Richmond.

48 Enquirer, October 28, 1825.

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or "light-house in the sky," the establishment of uniform standards of weights and measures, and the exploration of the northwest coast of North America. 49 Ritchie contemptuously ignored the message. However John Tyler, soon to be elected Virginia's governor and later U.S. Senator and President, labeled the message "a direct insult upon Virginia," for "it mocked at her principles, and was intended to make her the laughing stock of the rest of the union."50

Martin Van Buren moved into Jackson's camp soon after the presidential election; he probably formed a tentative conclusion to support Jackson as early as March 1825.51 In December 1825, after hearing Adams' first annual message, Van Buren submitted to the Senate resolutions which denied the power of Congress to construct roads and canals solely within states, and called for appointment of a committee to report a constitutional amendment on the subject of internal improvements that would respect the sovereignty of the states. 52

At the same time Ritchie moved to clarify his thinking on the subject. He addressed a long letter to James Madison requesting


50 John Tyler to Dr. Henry Curtis, March 18, 1828, John Tyler Papers, LC. James Barbour, former Virginia Governor and United States Senator, accepted the position of Secretary of War under Adams. The Junto roundly condemned him for this. See Andrew Stevenson to James Barbour, March 28, 1825, Barbour Family Papers, University of Virginia. Barbour was the only major Virginia politician to collaborate with Adams. See Charles D. Lowery, "James Barbour, Politician and Planter of Antebellum Virginia (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1966).


52 Ibid., p.66; Register of Debates in Congress, 19 Cong., 1 Sess., 20.
Madison's constitutional views on internal improvements. Ritchie admitted that the west, even in Virginia, demanded roads and canals from the general government. According to Ritchie, alarming results might follow if the federal government assumed power to construct them. Not only would this open the door for the assumption of other unspecified powers, but it placed state rights Republicans in a dangerous position. If they supported the expediency of federally-financed internal improvements they exposed themselves to "the imputation of abandoning their Constitutional Principles." Ritchie asked Madison if Virginia should propose a constitutional amendment to settle the issue, even if the state did not favor granting the power. An amendment would establish the precedent that specific amendments were necessary to confer additional powers on the general government, and destroy the principle of granting other powers by implication. Madison replied in non-committal language, but did not advise against the proposed constitutional amendment. Thus Ritchie and Van Buren moved in the same direction, the establishment of an opposition to Adams' administration based upon strict construction of the constitution.

Both men hoped to use the issue of strict constitutional construction to clarify the confused state of national politics. Ritchie wanted to reconstitute the Old Republican party and force the nationalists out. But he also wanted to settle once and for all the debate over the federal government's right to assume implied powers. Hence his

53 Thomas Ritchie to James Madison, December 10, 1825, Madison-Todd Family Papers, University of Virginia.

54 James Madison to Thomas Ritchie, December 18, 1823, Madison Papers, LC.
endorsement of a constitutional amendment. Van Buren, on the other hand, hoped to use the internal improvements issue simply as a device of political opposition to Adams. Ideology meant less to Van Buren than to Ritchie, who at this stage had not embraced the new concept of party put forth by Van Buren and his Bucktails in New York Republican politics. Van Buren's Senate resolutions of late 1825 signaled the beginning of his second attempt to reconstitute the working political alliance between northern and southern Republicans. Jackson, ambitious for the presidency, lent his popularity to the movement. Van Buren then equated Jackson's candidacy with his reformed political tradition, and moved to use the Old General's popularity to create his new political party. Ritchie shared Van Buren's desire to force the 1828 presidential campaign onto a party basis in order to destroy the amalgamationist concept in national politics, but Ritchie at this stage hoped simply to recreate the national Republican party as it existed in Jefferson's time. However, ultimately both Van Buren and the Richmond Junto grounded their plans of action upon effecting Jackson's election in 1828.

Because the Junto had not publicly accepted Jackson for 1828 neither Van Buren nor Jackson's immediate followers included the Junto in their plans. Philip N. Nicholas opened the Junto's negotiations with Van Buren in the fall of 1826. He asked Van Buren for information

55 See Wallace, "Changing Concepts of Party."
56 Remini, Van Buren, pp.124-25.
58 Philip N. Nicholas to Martin Van Buren, October 13, 1826, Van Buren Papers, LC.
regarding "the views of those with whom we would cooperate in the other states," and assured him that some Virginians could be trusted. Nicholas told Van Buren that many Virginians opposed the administration but had difficulty in deciding who to support in 1828. He closed by admitting that Jackson had not been the favorite of Virginia in 1824, but confessed that many Virginians had carried their hostility toward Jackson to unreasonable lengths.

Van Buren soon replied to Nicholas. "If General Jackson and his friends will put his election on old party grounds, preserve the old systems, avoid if not condemn the practices of the last campaign we can by adding his personal popularity to the yet remaining force of old party feeling," Van Buren proposed, "not only succeed in electing him but our success when achieved will be worth something. We shall see what they are willing to do."

Apparently Van Buren's proposal satisfied the Junto, for shortly after his reply to Nicholas a long letter advocating Jackson for president in 1828 appeared in the Enquirer. The letter, signed "T.," outlined Jackson's life and insisted that his defeat in 1824 had violated the popular will. Although "T." cannot be identified, he was probably Ritchie or another member of the Richmond Junto. "T." concluded that "the flagitious combination between our President and his chief Secretary, will be punished with that disgrace, which sooner or later, never fails to overtake the ministers of rank corruption."  

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59 Martin Van Buren to Philip N. Nicholas, late October-early November 1826. This letter is in the undated portion of the Van Buren Papers, LC., but I date it accordingly, and Brown, "Southern Planters and Plain Republicans," pp.95-96, concurs.

60 Enquirer, November 24, 1826.
John C. Calhoun's position and influence represented a second key element in Van Buren's projected coalition, for Van Buren recognized the nationwide support Calhoun received in the 1824 vice-presidential contest. As long as the thorny issues of the tariff and the succession after Jackson remained submerged in national politics the South Carolinian and the New Yorker could work together. Van Buren took the initiative in consummating their alliance. He spent the Christmas holidays of 1826 in Virginia conferring with the vice president at the home of William Fitzhugh. There they decided to join forces to promote Jackson's election, and Van Buren agreed to write Thomas Ritchie to see if Ritchie would bring the Virginia Crawford men into the coalition. 61 As a result of the Van Buren-Calhoun union the United States Telegraph, a new news-dedicated to the support of Andrew Jackson, appeared in Washington. Followers of Jackson and Calhoun combined to underwrite the paper, but its active management soon passed into the hands of Duff Green, a Calhoun devotee.

Van Buren held a long-range goal for the alliance—the creation of a new party, led someday perhaps by himself. Calhoun had a more immediate goal. He feared that if Adams served two terms and Clay followed him his own path to the White House would be blocked for sixteen years. Calhoun hoped to improve his chances for the presidency by supporting Jackson. Also, by 1826 Calhoun's constitutional views had undergone a remarkable shift. In order to protect his political base in South Carolina, Calhoun had been forced to rethink his position on the amount

and types of powers granted to the federal government by the states. He now concluded that the federal government lacked the power to establish a protective tariff or to finance interstate improvements. Consequently he had come to resent Adams' endorsement of vigorous federal activity, though at the time he attacked publicly only the corrupt bargain.  

Van Buren and Calhoun agreed on a national convention in 1828 to promote Jackson's candidacy. A convention hopefully would reconcile past differences between the disparate groups within the Jacksonian coalition and discourage favorite sons from seeking local nominations, thereby reasserting the two-party system in presidential politics. The convention idea anticipated popular opinion, but the coalition did not hold its first national convention until 1832.  

Early in 1827 Van Buren made his proposal to Ritchie for bringing the Virginia Crawford men into the Jacksonian coalition. He suggested to Ritchie the idea of a national convention for a presidential nomination, an idea which, according to Van Buren, Calhoun first proposed to him. In pressing upon Ritchie the advantages of a convention Van Buren revealed his plan for reorganizing the Republican party. According to Van Buren a national convention represented the best and most practical mode of concentrating the entire vote of the opposition to


64 Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie, January 15, 1827, Van Buren Papers, LC.
Adams and of effecting the reorganization of the old Republican party. Van Buren believed that Adams would neither give up the presidency nor submit to a convention. Thus the best way to get rid of him lay in uniting Jackson's personal popularity with residual old party feeling. The combination of these two sentiments would be sufficient to nominate Jackson in a convention. Furthermore, a national convention nomination would establish what state nominations could not, a new basis for party alignments. According to Van Buren a national convention would improve the conditions of Republicans in the southern and middle states by substituting party principles for personal preferences, and would place New England Republicans on stronger ground. Van Buren concluded that political combinations between the inhabitants of different states could not be avoided and that the most beneficial combination to the country would be that between "the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the north."

Van Buren used the term "planters of the South" to describe half of his proposed alliance--he undoubtedly meant the southern Crawfordites, in whose behalf Ritchie and the Junto acted as executors in Virginia. Though the planter aristocracy dominated Crawford's following, the planters did not hold Van Buren's entire attention. He wanted to create a majority party oriented toward the Old Republican principles of strict construction and states rights, and he needed to base his party in the South on more than the planters. 65

Van Buren's letter convinced Ritchie and the Junto to support Jackson, and the Enquirer came out for Jackson in April. By mid-1827 most of the Old Dominion's politicians began falling in line. John

Tyler, although recently elected to the U.S. Senate over Junto opposition, came out in support of Jackson. As William Cabell Rives indicated, many Virginians moved into Jackson's camp hoping to remove corruption and restore states rights principles in the national government. Furthermore, they believed that Jackson, because of his age, would relinquish the presidency after a single term, thereby establishing a good moral example. Also, Jackson's political views remained publicly vague, and many Virginians believed he favored no tariff, or at worst a moderate one. Although Ritchie talked privately about the "hard alternative" of supporting Jackson, most of Crawford's Virginia supporters acquiesced in Jackson's candidacy. Ultimately these men endorsed Jackson because he professed to be a Jeffersonian Republican. As Rives put it: "We all look back to the administration of Mr. Jefferson as the golden age of the republic, and would eagerly catch at the faintest prospect of restoring it, and bringing back the maxims of

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66 See the Enquirer, April 17, 1827, for an example of its defense of Jackson from administration press attacks. Tyler defeated John Randolph, the Junto's candidate. Tyler's support came from Adams men, western Republicans, and Randolph's enemies. See John N. Stratton to Littleton W. Tazewell, December 31, 1826, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library. Enquirer, January 16, 1827; John Campbell to David Campbell, January 18, 1827, Campbell Papers, Duke University. John Tyler to Dr. Henry Curtis, March 18, April 13, December 17, 1827, Tyler Papers, LC. Tazewell also opposed Adams and moved behind Jackson. Jackson. Littleton W. Tazewell to Thomas Ritchie, March or April, 1827, quoted in Ambler, Ritchie, pp.108-09.


68 William C. Rives to Thomas W. Gilmer, July 20, 1827, Rives Papers, LC.; Sam Houston to Andrew Jackson, January 5, 1827, Andrew Jackson Papers, LC.
his policy."  

Early in 1827 Van Buren approached Ritchie about moving to Washington to edit the United States Telegraph. Van Buren distrusted Duff Green, correctly sensing that Green preferred Calhoun to Van Buren as Jackson's successor. Littleton W. Tazwell urged Ritchie to take the position, for Tazwell wanted to ensure a strong voice of southern conservatism in Jackson's administration in case the northern wing of the coalition gained control of the party. Ritchie agreed with Tazwell's reasoning, but declined to move, citing ill health, family matters, and financial obligations. Ritchie's refusal closed the only door ever opened to him in national politics during the prime years of his life.  

The 1827 election for Speaker of the House of Representatives illustrates the growing power and cohesiveness of the alliance between "the planters of the South and plain Republicans of the north." John W. Taylor of New York served as Speaker in the Nineteenth Congress, but Taylor's sympathies lay with Adams' administration. Consequently the members of Van Buren's alliance determined to remove Taylor, and Ritchie issued a public plea for all opposition men to unite in order to defeat him.  

Philip P. Barbour of Virginia, speaker of the Eighteenth Congress, seemed the logical candidate for Virginians to support. But the

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69 William C. Rives to Thomas W. Gilmer, July 22, 1827, Rives Papers, LC.


71 Enquirer, October 18, 1827.
Junto and Van Buren had other ideas; they determined to put a member of the Junto itself in the post. Barbour was not a Junto member, and besides his brother James served as Secretary of War in Adams' administration.

Before Congress convened Van Buren wrote to William C. Rives telling him that Barbour simply would not do. He indicated that in due time Rives would be the speaker, but that now Andrew Stevenson should be the man.  

Rives confessed that Stevenson had been forced on many for the sake of party unity, for "the plan had been too long and too deeply laid by certain master workmen, to be broken up. . . ."  

On the night before the election for speaker, representatives from several states, especially Virginia, New York, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania, met to determine whether to run Stevenson or Barbour. They decided on Stevenson, and the next day he won election to the post.

The tariff represented a potential stumbling block for Van Buren's coalition. In 1828 the tariff could easily have destroyed the Jacksonians but they managed to surmount the issue. Not until 1832 did the Democratic party stumble over the tariff, and by then it had gained enough strength and unity to withstand the fall.

The Virginia General Assembly passed a series of resolutions in

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72 John S. Barbour to Philip P. Barbour, February 5, 1827, Ambler Family MSS, University of Virginia; Martin Van Buren to William C. Rives, October 17, 1827, Rives Papers, LC.

73 William C. Rives to Mrs. Rives, December 3, 1827, Rives Papers, LC.

74 Alexander Smyth to David Campbell, December 3, 1827, Campbell Papers, Duke University.
March 1826 condemning protective tariffs and internal improvements as unconstitutional manifestations of federal power. The tariff placed the architect of the Jacksonian coalition in a difficult spot, for Van Buren came from New York, a state favoring protectionism. As William C. Rives perceived, "the little man is in great trouble now." 

Henry Clay raised the tariff issue in the summer of 1828 in an attempt to split the Jacksonian coalition and secure Adams' reelection. Ritchie realized the potential divisiveness of the issue, and tried to quell grumblings about the tariff in Virginia during the election year.

The tariff bill offered in the House of Representatives in the summer of 1828 represented one fruit of the Jacksonian coalition. Speaker Andrew Stevenson packed the Committee on Manufacturers with representatives opposed to a protective tariff. One of its members, Silas Wright of New York, a Van Buren associate, wrote the bill. Framed to be objectionable to New England, the proposal placed extremely high duties on the raw materials which New England needed for her industries. Thus Jacksonians in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Old Northwest could support the bill since it made their supply of domestic raw materials more lucrative. Southern Jacksonians would naturally oppose the bill, and the measure would be defeated by New Englanders who would not accept the high prices it placed on raw materials. Calhoun as Vice President and member of the alliance knew of the plan. According to their calculations the

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75 Enquirer, March 4, 1826.
76 William C. Rives to Mrs. Rives, May 7, 1828, Rives Papers, LC.
77 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, March 11, 1828, Van Buren Papers, LC.
78 Wiltse, Calhoun, Nationalist, pp. 368-72.
Jacksonians could not lose, and New England's representatives would be placed in the onerous position of defeating a measure they desperately wanted to pass.

However, the Jacksonian plan backfired. New England's representatives and senators swallowed their pride and voted for the bill. Congressmen whose states produced raw materials for manufacturing supported the measure, the South opposed the bill, and Van Buren neatly escaped his dilemma by engineering through the New York legislature a resolution instructing him to support the proposal.\(^79\) Passage of the tariff killed the issue as an election measure for Clay, but ultimately the Jacksonians gained from the incident, for in each section of the country men proclaiming allegiance to Jackson took stands on the tariff which were popular in their states. The tariff of 1828, soon called the Tariff of Abominations in the South, became identified with Adams' administration.

IV

John Quincy Adams' supporters in the Old Dominion continually lashed out at the Richmond Junto, charging it with undermining the principles and character of the state and diminishing the power of Virginia in the national government.\(^80\) Henry Clay expressed the vain hope that in 1828


\(^80\) Representative of the attack on the Junto is the Alexandria Gazette, January 15, 1825.
men who favored Jackson might discard him for Adams in their desire to
destroy the Junto's grip on the state. 81 However, Ritchie continually
denied the organization existed. 82

Throughout 1827 and 1828 Adams' supporters held county meetings
to popularize their candidate. Often they advertised these meetings as
"Anti-Jackson Meetings" in order to stress Jackson's negative features
as much as Adams' positive characteristics. As the Address of the state
Anti-Jackson Convention indicated, many Virginians disagreed with the
course of Adams' administration but continued to support him because
they feared danger from Jackson's election. 83

Adams' supporters, confronted with difficulties of organization,
hoped that a state convention would unite all the forces opposed to
Jackson, and "put an end to the reign of the metropolitan demagogues,
who have so long dictated to the balance of the state!" 84 Their con-
vention met in January 1828 in the chamber of the House of Delegates
with Judge Francis T. Brooke in the chair and John Hampden Pleasants,
the young editor of the Richmond Whig, serving as secretary. The con-
vention endorsed Adams for president and Richard Rush of Pennsylvania

81 Henry Clay to Francis T. Brooke, September 24, 1827, in
Colton, ed., Clay Correspondence, p.179.
82 Typical is the Enquirer, November 6, 1827, denying charges
leveled by the Lynchburg Virginian.
83 Virginia Anti-Jackson Convention Address, Enquirer, January 17,
1828; Joseph Carrington Cabell to John Hartwell Cooke, October 11, 1827,
Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, University of Virginia.
84 Lynchburg Virginian, October 8, 1827. Clay endorsed the con-
vention in Henry Clay to Francis T. Brooke, September 24, 1827, in
Colton, ed., Clay Correspondence, p.179. The impetus for a convention
apparently originated in King George County at an Adams meeting of
September 18, 1827. See McCormick, Second Party System, p.189, noting

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for vice president, selected an electoral ticket, set up corresponding committees, and adopted an address. Former presidents James Madison and James Monroe headed the electoral ticket despite Monroe's confidential wish against being nominated. Later both men resigned from the ticket, but the Anti-Jackson Convention gained publicity from the incident.

The address of the Anti-Jackson Convention, like the addresses of county meetings and newspaper editorials sympathetic to Adams, focused not so much on Adams' positive qualities as on Jackson's negative ones. The Address denied that Adams' election in 1824 had been corrupt. It described Jackson as unfit for the presidency, stated that he had never demonstrated any fitness for civil office, exposed his "impetuous temper," and charged that he repeatedly subordinated civil to

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85 *Enquirer*, January 10, 12, 15, 17, 1828.

86 The ticket appears in the *Enquirer*, January 12, 1828. Monroe's feelings are discussed in Hugh Mercer to James Monroe, January 13, 1828, James Monroe Papers, LC. Madison's and Monroe's letters of resignation from the ticket appear in the *Enquirer*, March 4, 1828. Adams' Virginia campaign received a temporary setback in 1827 when a mini-boom took place for Governor DeWitt Clinton of New York. Many of Adams' supporters deserted to Clinton, but Clinton's death in February 1828 aborted the split, and by election day most of the Clinton men had returned to Adams' camp. See the Warrenton Gazette, noted in Fredericksburg, *The Virginia Herald*, October 10, 1827.

87 *Enquirer*, January 17, 1828. Major topics in the address, and the percentage of space devoted to each, follows: Justification of the address, admitting the differences of opinion among the opposition to Jackson but refusing to discuss them, 8.6 per cent; Defense of Adams' election in 1824, 23.3 per cent; Defense of Adams' views on the protective tariff and federally-sponsored internal improvements, 17.9 per cent; Condemnation of Jackson's personal character, 27.1 per cent; Contrast of Jackson and Adams, with Jackson's election portending foreign war and civil disturbance, Adams' reelection championing civil rule and constitutional law, 22.8 per cent. Percentages derived by dividing total column inches devoted to each topic into the total column inches occupied by the address.
military authority during his military career.

Anti-Jackson meetings throughout the state denounced Jackson as lacking the talent and information required to perform the duties of the presidency, condemned his temper, and pointed out that his military exploits alone did not qualify him for the office. More than anything else Jackson's opponents publicized his actions in the Florida campaign. They pictured him as blindly devoted to "military renown," and described him as a despot, "the most formidable and vindictive Tyrant of the age." Invariably they concluded that Jackson's election posed great danger to the nation's free institutions. According to the Lynchburg Virginian a vote for the Adams-Rush ticket meant a vote for civil liberty while a vote for the Jackson-Calhoun ticket denoted a preference for military rule and disunion.

Jackson county meetings began in Virginia as early as February 1827. Considering the eventual results of the presidential election in the state, Ritchie's claim that more people attended these Jackson local meetings than the local anti-Jackson meetings seems valid. A typical

88. The Enquirer estimated in December 1827 that anti-Jackson meetings had been held in eighty to ninety of the state's counties. The address of a Lynchburg anti-Jackson meeting, reprinted in ibid., October 16, 1827, is typical.

89. Joseph Carrington Cabell to James Madison, January 12, 1828, Madison Papers, LC. John H. Pleasants to Joseph Carrington Cabell, October 6, 1827, Cabell Papers, University of Virginia; Alexandria Gazette, January 14, 1828; Hugh Mercer to James Madison, January 11, 1828, Madison Papers, LC.

90. Lynchburg Virginian, October 20, 1828. Though Adams' supporters spread some slanders on Jackson's private life, the Enquirer defended Mrs. Jackson's course, and this type of campaigning played little part in the contest. See the Enquirer, May 4, August 10, 1827.

91. Ibid., February 22, 1827, gives notice of a district Jackson meeting held in Fredericksburg on February 14. For the attendance estimate see ibid., December 18, 1827.
Jackson county meeting in Fauquier County in October 1827 with about sixty people present adopted an address which stated that Adams' election in 1824 voided the popular will, and that his administration had not only departed from principles set forth in the constitution but also had abused federal patronage. The address praised Jackson's integrity, wisdom, and honesty, and promised that if elected Jackson would administer the government on Republican principles.92 A Lynchburg Jackson meeting proclaimed that Jackson deserved election as an indication of gratitude for his services to the country.93

Virginia's Jacksonians held their state legislative convention in Richmond. The legislative caucus, attended by 153 state Senators and Delegates, convened on December 17, 1827, and set a January date for the legislative convention since the caucus wanted to give those counties represented in the state legislature by pro-Adams men time to select special deputies to the legislative convention.94

The Jackson convention met in January with Jackson's nomination assured.95 Since only twenty-two special deputies joined the fourteen state Senators and 175 members of the House of Delegates, the convention resembled a public caucus. A vice-presidential nomination loomed as the convention's major task.96 Ritchie preferred that the convention make

92 Ibid., November 9, 1827.
93 Ibid., November 6, 1827.
94 Linn Banks, Speaker of the House of Delegates, chaired the caucus, and Thomas Ritchie served as secretary, Enquirer, December 16, 1827.
95 Ibid., January 17, 1828.
96 George W. Crump to Littleton Waller Tazewell, January 9, 1828, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library. According to Ritchie only
no nomination but resolve instead to have Virginia's Jackson electors endorse the man whom the greatest body of Jackson's friends in the nation agreed to support.\textsuperscript{97} Despite the fact that Calhoun had broken with Adams and thrown his support to Jackson as early as 1826, Ritchie and many other Virginians mistrusted the South Carolinian's political principles, especially on the tariff and internal improvements.\textsuperscript{98} However, the convention defeated a resolution declaring it inexpedient to nominate a vice-presidential candidate. Calhoun, despite opposition from some of Crawford's old supporters, received 162 of the convention's 188 votes for Vice President.\textsuperscript{99} The convention then adjourned after selecting an electoral ticket, appointing a central corresponding committee, and rejecting a proposal that the central corresponding committee be requested to address the state's citizens.\textsuperscript{100}

Adams had come under fire from Virginia's Old Republicans almost from the moment he took office. They mocked his first message to Congress in which he advocated a broad national construction program of about seventy-four of the state's 107 counties were represented in the Anti-Jackson convention. See Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 10, 1828, Rives Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{97} Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 10, 1828, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{98} Thomas W. Cobb to C.W. Gooch, January 7, 1828, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. Duff Green warned Calhoun of opposition to his nomination in Virginia. See Duff Green to John C. Calhoun, September 9, 1827, Duff Green Papers, LC.


\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Enquirer}, January 17, 1828. The Central Corresponding Committee, as usual dominated by Junto members and their friends, contained the following members: Philip Norborne Nicholas, Peter V. Daniel, Jermain Baker, Andrew Stevenson, Thomas Ritchie, Samuel Taylor, William Henry Roane, Nash Logrand, John Campbell, William Selden, John G. Williams, George Wythe Mumford.
roads and canals as well as the establishment of a national university and observatory. In March 1827 the Virginia House of Delegates adopted a series of resolutions which opposed federally-sponsored internal improvements, denounced taxation designed to support unconstitutional exercises of federal power, and condemned the protective tariff. Adams particularly outraged the Virginia opposition by his appointment of American ministers, independent of Senate approval, to attend the Congress of American Republics that was assembling in Panama. Virginia's Old Republicans objected chiefly to Adams' interpretation of the constitution. They accused him of pretending a conversion to republicanism in order to obtain the presidency, and said that once in office he supported "ultra federal" doctrines in order "to prostrate the Constitution to the purposes of Executive will." If Adams won reelection many Virginians feared that Clay would succeed him. Thus in twelve years the constitution might be destroyed, Federalism restored, and an unlimited federal government with overwhelming power dominating the states. They labeled Clay and Adams corruptionists and hammered

101 For the Virginia reaction to Adams' first message see Francis T. Brooke to Henry Clay, December 13, 1825, in Hopkins, ed., Clay Papers, IV, 906.

102 Enquirer, March 6, 1827. These resolutions passed by large majorities, with votes opposing them coming mainly from western National Republicans.

103 Ibid., April 8, 1828.

104 John Tyler to Dr. Henry Curtis, March 18, 1828, quoted in Lyon G. Tyler, Letters and Times of The Tylers (3 vols.; Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1884-1885; Williamsburg: n.p., 1896), I,385; Enquirer, April 8, September 9, 1828; Charlottesville. Virginia Advocate October 11, 1828. Address of the Jackson Central Committee of Virginia to the State's Citizens, Enquirer, October 7, 1828. This was an address not authorized by the state convention.
throughout the campaign at Adams' election in 1824 through the "corrupt bargain."  

Finally, Virginia's Old Republicans mistrusted Adams on slavery. They feared he might, for the sake of reelection, attempt to array the non-slaveholding states against the slaveholding states, and move to quiet southern opposition by ultimately encouraging slave rebellion. Thomas Ritchie described the question of slavery as "the most delicate and the most difficult" in American society. Ritchie, like many Virginians, deprecated the institution but could find no satisfactory plan for terminating it. However, he confessed that "it is a malady which we ourselves best understand. . . .," and he vowed that the South would tolerate no interference from the North in settling the issue.

By 1828 Virginia's Old Republicans, led by the Richmond Junto, had moved solidly into Jackson's camp. Actually they had little alternative, for they could not tolerate Adams' constitutional principles. Jackson's views remained vague, and as Ritchie had indicated earlier, simply voting for Jackson would not obligate Virginia to support his policies. Ritchie believed that Jackson's views "may be much more congenial to our principles, and we have every inducement to make the experiment." By March 1828 Ritchie determined to see Jackson elected, and he wrote Van Buren that he hoped to see him at Jackson's

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105 Lynchburg, Jeffersonian Republican, July 11, October 10, 31, 1828.


107 Enquirer, March 25, 1825.

108 Ibid., April 27, September 11, 1827.
inauguration.109

Throughout the month of October the Richmond Enquirer urged voters to go to the polls and cast their ballots. Instead the state's voters turned out in record numbers, casting 38,717 votes. This represented an increase of 67.6 per cent over 1824. Jackson easily carried the state, winning 26,747 votes, or 69 per cent of the vote, to Adams' 11,970 votes.110 This election drew a then all-time high percentage of Virginia's voters to the polls. In 1824 only 11.5 per cent of Virginia's adult white males cast ballots, but in 1828 the number increased to 27.6 per cent. If the estimate given in the Constitutional Convention in 1829 of 45,000 qualified voters is accepted, then 86 per cent of those eligible came to the polls.111

Jackson carried all but nineteen of the state's 107 counties. Among the urban areas he lost only Richmond. Adams carried Accomac County on the Eastern Shore, Norfolk County, Princess Anne County, and split Elizabeth City County, all in the extreme southeastern corner of the state. He also won seven counties along the Potomac River in the northern neck region of the state. The other Adams counties lay in the northern and central Valley, and west of the mountains in the northwestern section of the state.

A closer analysis of the voting returns demonstrates the importance of Virginia's Old Republicans in carrying the state for

109 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, March 11, 1828, Van Buren Papers, LC.
110 Election Returns, 1828 General Election, Virginia State Library.
Jackson. In 1824 Jackson polled 18.1 per cent of Virginia's votes, while Crawford received 51.1 per cent. Their combined total of 69.2 per cent in 1824 slightly surpasses Jackson's 69 per cent in 1828. Likewise, Adams' 27.5 per cent in 1824, when combined with Clay's 3.3 per cent, totals 30.8 per cent, nearly identical to the 31 per cent Adams received in 1828. Furthermore, Jackson carried only Patrick County east of the mountains in 1824 while splitting Accomac County with Adams. In 1828 he won all but two of the counties he carried in 1824 plus all but seven of the counties Crawford carried in 1824.  

The victorious Virginia Jackson coalition of 1828 contained two distinct wings, Jackson's 1824 nationalist supporters from west of the mountains and the Old Republicans, dominant in eastern Virginia, who had thrown their support to Jackson by 1828. The Old Republicans brought organization, numerical strength, prestige, and superior leadership to the coalition, while Jackson contributed his popularity and skillful avoidance of the major issues of the day.

The presidential election of 1828 ended the fragile solidarity of the Virginia Republican party. Now irrevocably cleaved, the party

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The coefficients of correlation between percentages of the 1824 vote cast for Adams, Clay, Crawford, and Jackson in 1824, and Jackson and Adams in 1828 illustrate the composition of the emerging Democratic and National Republican parties in Virginia. The coefficients of correlation were derived by computer employing the simple correlation program in the Osiris II Social Science Package supplied by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research (ICPR) at the University of Michigan. See Appendix I for a methodological explanation. The correlations which follow illustrate the relative importance of the 1824 Crawford vote in the 1828 Jacksonian coalition, and the 1824 Adams vote for the National Republican party in 1828:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1824 Crawford</th>
<th>1824 Jackson</th>
<th>1824 Adams</th>
<th>1824 Clay</th>
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<td>1828</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacksonian Demo.</td>
<td>0.4235</td>
<td>0.1086</td>
<td>-0.6111</td>
<td>-0.2137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Repub.</td>
<td>-0.4235</td>
<td>-0.1086</td>
<td>0.6111</td>
<td>0.2137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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never regrouped. The election laid the basis for, but did not produce, lasting party alignments within the state, for the victorious Jacksonians lacked the cohesion which the Virginia Democratic party eventually attained. As Littleton W. Tazewell prophesied to Ritchie, victory in 1828 would expose the party to "danger of separating from the very fact of its overwhelming force and unmanageable numbers."\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{117}Littleton W. Tazewell to Thomas Ritchie, March or April 1827 (should be dated February), quoted in Ambler, Ritchie, pp.108-09. For an explanation of dating see footnote 70, supra.
CHAPTER III

THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE,
1829-1832

Through the Jacksonian coalition Virginia's Old Republicans hoped to gain influence upon Jackson that would allow them a major, if not controlling, role in the operation of the federal government. However, Virginians faced other competitors for Jackson's ear, and ultimately the other half of the New York-Virginia alliance gained the reins of power. Because Virginia's states rights Republicans remained unsure of Jackson's positions on the tariff and internal improvements, they had endorsed him relatively late in his successful campaign for the presidency. Although the Richmond Junto trusted Martin Van Buren, many of Virginia's Democratic Republicans adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward Jackson's administration. Confronted during 1830 by an open split in the Jacksonian coalition, Virginia Jacksonians faced the difficult choice of following Vice President Calhoun along the road to nullification or remaining with Van Buren, the architect of the Jacksonian coalition. Consequently, major problems developed within the Virginia Democratic party during the succession struggle.

New political parties began to develop in Virginia during Jackson's first administration in response to national political issues. Yet at this early stage party lines were often blurred. While Jacksonian,
or Democratic party organization, remained fluid, Jackson's opponents displayed a bit more stability. However, John Tyler's description of the unsound state of parties at Washington in early 1830 held true in Virginia, where parties "displayed the want of some convenient cement to bind men together."\(^1\)

A small opposition party began to form around the National Republican nucleus which remained in Virginia after the election of 1828. Henry Clay, the recognized national leader of the opposition to Jackson, advised his friends in Virginia to rely upon divisions within the Jackson coalition to augment opposition strength in the state.\(^2\) Clay's strategy worked, for trouble arose almost immediately in the Jackson camp.

Inevitably Jackson's actions during his first term could not please all the members of a coalition which included nationalists, moderates, states rights men, nullifiers, and secessionists. The Richmond Junto became Jackson's one constant source of support in Virginia, but even the Junto initially moved toward Jackson with "prudence, moderation, forecast, and practical counsels."\(^3\) Trouble soon arose among

\(^1\)John Tyler to John Rutherfoord, March 16, 1830, "Original Letters," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, 1(January 1895), 177-79.


\(^3\)William C. Rives to William M. Rives, January 8, 1829, William C. Rives Papers, Library of Congress (hereinafter cited LC.). Thomas Ritchie indicated to Rives that some Virginians did not wish to come out for Jackson until they saw that he would "administer the government
Virginia Jacksonians over the federal patronage, especially in the cabinet.

Prior to 1824 a succession of Presidents from Virginia favored Virginia politicians with numerous federal offices. But none of Virginia's Democrats claimed personal acquaintance with Andrew Jackson. Under the guiding hand of Martin Van Buren they had supported Jackson in a campaign designed to recreate the New York-Virginia alliance. The reestablished alliance elected Jackson, but upon his inauguration Virginia Democrats found themselves suddenly left out. Van Buren assumed directorship of the alliance, and Virginia commanded no representation in Jackson's cabinet.

Van Buren became Secretary of State, and Jackson distributed the remaining cabinet posts to friends of Calhoun from the South and Pennsylvania, and to his own friends from Kentucky and Tennessee. In this manner he hoped to bind all the components of the coalition to him, but his slighting of Virginia enraged the state's Old Republicans. Thomas Ritchie had hoped that Jackson would include a Virginian among his cabinet appointees, but he made no effort through Jackson or Van Buren to secure Virginia representation in the cabinet. When Jackson announced his cabinet Ritchie described its personnel as generally undistinguished. Although he wanted Virginia represented at the cabinet level, Ritchie would have preferred to see Jackson go for the best men rather than distribute cabinet positions according to geographic according to the sound principles of the Republicans of '98 and '99. Ritchie to Rives, April 15, 1830, ibid.

determinants. But here Ritchie's idealism triumphed over his perception of political reality. He surely understood Jackson's purpose, but it bitterly hurt him to see Virginia excluded from Jackson's cabinet. However, Ritchie conceded that Virginia would judge the cabinet not by personalities, but by its actions. Ritchie also disapproved of Jackson appointing his friends to office. He did not object to replacing incompetents, but he strongly opposed Jackson's removal of men who opposed him on principle. Finally, Ritchie urged Jackson to abolish unnecessary jobs rather than fill them.

This grumbling over patronage did not enhance the Virginia Democrats' influence upon Jackson's administration. Perhaps Old Hickory remembered the Junto's earlier criticisms and wanted to punish Virginia's Democrats. But he dared not push the breach too far, for Virginia represented a keystone in his coalition. Belatedly Jackson moved with patronage to assuage his Virginia supporters, but he achieved only partial success.

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5 Richmond Enquirer, February 28, 1829 (hereinafter cited Enquirer). Thomas Ritchie to M.N. Noah, March 14, 1829, Martin Van Buren Papers, LC. At this time Van Buren was not strenuously opposed, even by Calhoun's friends. The Lynchburg Jeffersonian Republican, a Calhoun paper, on March 5, 1829, described Van Buren as a "man of the first order of talents, of very considerable political experience, of tact--and if it be any further recommendation to Virginians--he is a states rights man."

6 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, March 27, 1829, Van Buren Papers, LC. The state's Senators, Tazewell and Tyler, opposed Jackson's appointment of newspaper editors to various positions, and were received with hostility by the administration. Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler: Champion of the Old South (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), p.101. For example see John Tyler to Conway Whittle, May 22, 1833, in Lyon G. Tyler, Letters and Times of the Tylers (3 vols.; Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1884-1885; Williamsburg: n.p., 1896), 1,410.

7 C.C. Cambreleng to Martin Van Buren, March 1, 1829, Van Buren Papers, LC.

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During his first year in office Jackson offered the English mission to Senator Littleton Waller Tazewell, the Russian mission to the eccentric John Randolph of Roanoke, and the French mission to William Cabell Rives. Randolph, in need of money, accepted, and Jackson doubtlessly was glad to have him out of the country, for Randolph had directed his scathing sarcasm against several presidents. Rives, young and ambitious, viewed the mission as a political stepping-stone, but Tazewell, content with his Senate seat, declined. In 1831 Jackson tendered Philip Pendleton Barbour the U.S. Attorney-Generalship, but Barbour declined. Early in his first administration Jackson offered Peter V. Daniel, a Junto member, the position of U.S. Attorney for the Richmond area. Daniel, who disapproved of the spoils system, declined on the grounds that the incumbent appeared competent for the job. Then, early in Jackson's second administration, Daniel declined the U.S. Attorney-Generalship. Although Daniel desperately wanted the job in order to assist in the destruction of the Second Bank of the United States, he could not financially afford to accept the post.

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9 Enquirer, June 10, 1831.

In distributing the patronage Jackson also attempted to assuage Virginia Democrats who lived west of the Blue Ridge. He recruited John Campbell of Abingdon for Treasurer of the United States. However, Jackson passed over John Floyd of Montgomery County, one of his strongest supporters in the Trans-Allegheny. In 1828 Floyd initially favored Calhoun, but he recognized Jackson's large popular following and actively campaigned for him. Floyd, believing that Jackson had promised him a position in the federal government, declined re-election to Congress in 1829. He dreamed of a cabinet position, but Jackson ignored him.

Then in 1829 the General Assembly elected Floyd governor. After Jackson shied away from tariff reform Floyd broke with the President. Floyd resented the Junto's support of Jackson and its assumption that it spoke for all Virginia Democrats. He also engaged in numerous battles with Peter V. Daniel, who sat on the Executive Council as Lieutenant Governor during his administration. Floyd described Jackson as a "coarse, vulgar man," denounced his inactivity on the tariff and his handling of the Turkish mission, and condemned his recommendation to distribute the surplus U.S. Treasury revenue. By 1831 Floyd had assumed leadership of the states rights men in the Virginia Democratic party who opposed Jackson, and he encouraged nullification and secession

11 Charles M. Ambler, "Life of John Floyd," John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, V(June, 1918), 74-75 (hereinafter cited Branch Papers). John Floyd to Colonel John Williams, December 29, 1830, John Floyd Papers


13 John Floyd to John Strode Barbour, June 24, 1831; Floyd to Littleton W. Tazewell, May 21, 1832, Floyd Papers, LC.
if tariff reform failed.

In addition to patronage Virginia Democrats soon discovered other points of contention with Jackson's administration. The state's senators, Littleton W. Tazewell and John Tyler, led a vigorous U.S. Senate opposition to Jackson's handling of the Turkish mission, charging him with exceeding his executive authority and usurping Senate prerogatives. The Virginians' chief dissatisfaction, however, lay in Jackson's lack of attention to the tariff.

Shortly after Old Hickory's election Ritchie reprinted Edmund Pendleton's pamphlet of an earlier time, The Danger Not Over, as a warning to Jackson that Virginia demanded tariff reform. Specifically Virginia Democrats looked to Jackson for relief from the tariff of 1828. In 1829 the Old Republican wing of the party easily passed a series of General Assembly resolutions which reserved to the states authority to interpret the federal constitution, declared the tariff "Impolitic and oppressive to a large portion of . . . the Union," and called for its repeal. But Jackson's inaugural address in March of that year continued the vague stance on the tariff which he had adopted during his campaign, for he promised only "the observance of a strict

14 Chitwood, Tyler, p.107; Tyler, Letters and Times, I, pp.419-22.
15 Enquirer, December 10, 1828.
16 Thomas Ritchie to Littleton Waller Tazewell, February 21, 1829, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library.
17 Ibid., and Enquirer, February 24,26, 1829, for resolutions and vote. Virginia tariff men denied that the resolutions accurately indicated public opinion. They attributed their passage to "the machinery of party," led by the editor of the Enquirer, and claimed that "something like an organized party" in the state actively worked against the pro-tariff party. See Joseph Carrington Cabell to James Madison, February 24, March 13, 1829, James Madison Papers, LC.
Dissatisfaction with the tariff, however, constituted only part of the Virginia Democrats' discontent with Jackson's administration. In 1831 the Richmond Enquirer listed several goals for his administration.\(^{19}\) Reduction of the tariff headed the list. Other goals included a ban on federal appropriations for internal improvements until an amendment sanctioning such federal activity had been added to the constitution, and rigid economy and reduction of the public debt. Ritchie also called for the reduction of executive power, judging the Second Bank of the United States by the constitution, and limiting the number of removals from office. Jackson, a skillful politician, recognized the potential explosiveness of many of these issues in regard to his coalition, and refused to take action on some of the proposals. His veto of the Maysville Road bill pleased many Virginians,\(^{20}\) but his inactivity on the other proposals alarmed the states rights men.

II

During 1831 Jackson's administration split open over the succession struggle. Prior to his election Jackson intimated that, because of his age, he would serve only one term. Either Van Buren, the architect


\(^{19}\) Enquirer, May 20, 1831. Ritchie had earlier proposed a national constitution convention to settle many of these issues. See ibid., January 6, 1829.

\(^{20}\) Richardson, Messages and Papers, II, pp.483-95. Charlottesville, Virginia Advocate, June 4, 1830. The Enquirer noted its approval of Jackson's veto on June 4, 1830.
of the Jacksonian coalition, or Calhoun, Vice President for two consecutive presidents, seemed his logical successor. Jackson's original cabinet encompassed friends of both Van Buren and Calhoun, but gradually the situation became untenable. Although Ritchie tried desperately to maintain party unity in Virginia by dispelling rumors of strife which drifted down from Washington, he could not overcome the growing hostility between Calhoun and Van Buren.  

At the Jefferson Day Dinner, held in April 1830, Jackson toasted, "Our Union; It must be preserved," and Calhoun countered with, "The Union, next to our liberty, most dear." This incident publicized the growing divergence between Jackson and his vice president over the proper balance of powers between the national and state governments. Later that spring Jackson learned that Calhoun, as Secretary of War, had favored punishing him for his conduct during the 1818 Seminole War in Florida. Finally, in the Peggy Eaton affair Mrs. Calhoun led several cabinet wives in a snub of Peggy O'Neal Eaton, the second wife of Secretary of War John Eaton, one of Jackson's Tennessee allies. Because Mrs. Eaton had been a barmaid with a loose reputation, Floride Calhoun and the other ladies refused to accord her equal social status.

In 1831 Jackson moved boldly against Calhoun's friends by re-organizing the cabinet. Van Buren resigned as Secretary of State, and Jackson forced the other cabinet members to tender their resignations.

He packed his new cabinet with men who favored Van Buren in the succession struggle. Virginia's states rights men condemned the reorganization, and heaped abuse upon Van Buren. Calhoun's Fort Hill Address of July 1831 publicized his support for nullification, and his tie-breaking vote in February 1832 to defeat Van Buren's nomination as Minister to the Court of St. James completed his break with the Jackson party.

Jacksonian party structure dictated the course of the Van Buren-Calhoun split. The two men held conflicting ideas on how best to protect southern security in the union, and thus, implicitly, the union itself. The split also raised questions about the value of the New York-Virginia alliance. Van Buren, in his desire to create a new Republican party, revived the Jeffersonian idea of the Virginia-New York alliance. He sought to convince southern Old Republicans that southern security in the union rested upon the maintenance in national power of a political party responsive to the South because it depended upon the South for election. Thus Van Buren offered a political remedy, the protection which the Democratic party could offer southerners. Calhoun countered with a constitutional remedy, the logical product of his legal, doctrinaire, essentially non-political mind. According to Calhoun, in the last analysis southern security depended upon the maintenance of effective southern power to veto anything the South did not like. This meant nullification, and ultimately secession.

Theory did not appeal to Andrew Jackson, but practical politics did. Therefore Van Buren's triumph in the struggle should be attributed

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22 John Floyd to Duff Green, August 21, 1831, Duff Green Papers, LC. John Tyler to Littleton W. Tazewell, May 3, 1831, John Tyler Papers, LC.
more to the politics of power than to intrigue, for Calhoun brought only South Carolina and Pennsylvania to the Jacksonian coalition while Van Buren brought the rest of the South and New York as well. 23

Once ensconced as Secretary of State, Van Buren played a lesser role in the Jacksonian coalition. Although Van Buren supervised the coalition's creation and initial triumph, when Jackson took office he surrounded himself with unofficial advisors from his part of the country, the West. Hence Jackson created the Kitchen Cabinet, a small, flexible council led by the newspaper editors Frank Blair and Amos Kendall, with membership floating in and out depending on the issues involved. In the early 1830s neither Jackson nor the Kitchen Cabinet concerned themselves with protecting the South, for they saw no threat to southern society in their lack of action regarding the tariff. Instead, taking southern membership in the coalition for granted, they focused their attention on welding the West to the Democratic coalition. 24

III

In early 1830 at least four factions existed in Virginia, all formed to promote the candidacy of different men for the presidency. One faction included those men who desired Jackson's reelection; a second faction supported Van Buren; a third, quite powerful group favored


Calhoun; a fourth party, the National Republicans, stood loyally behind Henry Clay. Nominally the first three factions called themselves Jacksonians, or Democrats, but after Jackson decided to run for a second term and Van Buren triumphed over Calhoun in the succession struggle the Jackson and Van Buren men merged, and the Calhoun faction moved away from the Jacksonians to occupy a middle ground between the Democrats and the National Republicans.

As the election of 1832 approached party lines began to solidify. Virginia's National Republicans moved behind Clay while the state's Old Republicans, led by the Junto, attached themselves to Jackson. However, many Old Republicans reserved their complete endorsement pending tariff reform. Clay's leadership of the opposition to Jackson promoted cohesion among Virginia Democrats, for Virginia's Old Republicans would not support Clay's American System. Indeed some of Virginia's National Republicans declared that if Clay were replaced by another candidate in 1832 many Virginians would leave the Jackson camp and come over to the National Republicans.

When the General Assembly convened in December 1831 the Virginia Democrats initiated their campaign for Jackson's reelection. On the night of Saturday, December 17, the Virginia Jacksonian legislative convention assembled in the chamber of the House of Delegates. Linn Banks chaired the meeting, and Thomas Ritchie served as secretary. The convention quickly agreed on Jackson as their presidential candidate, but

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26 Dr. Frank Carr to Joseph Carrington Cabell, October 25, 1831, Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, University of Virginia.
by general agreement adjourned until a later date to nominate a vice-
presidential candidate and form an electoral ticket. Although at
this time Calhoun remained in the presidential contest, and the Virginia
National Republicans seemed intent on running Clay, the Democrats' post-
ponement of the vice-presidential nomination foreshadowed the chief
threat to Jacksonian supremacy in Virginia. Both in the state and at
the national level, the Democrats experienced trouble in finding a vice-
presidential nominee who could attract unanimous support from the party.

In Jackson's eyes Van Buren had replaced Calhoun in the success-
ion, but many southerners remained reluctant to accept a northern man
as the vice-presidential candidate. The Virginia Democrats led the
southern states in offering a southern man for the vice presidency in
1832, and the struggles within the Virginia party over selecting a vice-
presidential candidate reflected in microcosm the conflict within the
national party.

States rights Democrats, many of whom had been followers of
William H. Crawford, controlled the Virginia legislature from 1830 to
1834, yet few sympathized with Martin Van Buren. They mistrusted Van
Buren's states rights principles and found particularly obnoxious his
maneuvering of the New York state legislature into instructing him to
support the Tariff of 1828. Calhoun's popularity increased rapidly
among these men when he revealed his opposition to the protective tariff.
Although many states rights men in the General Assembly opposed nullifying

27 Enquirer, December 20, 1831. Ninety-two of the 134 Delegates,
and twenty-two of the thirty-two state Senators attended the first ses-
sion of the Jacksonian legislative convention.

28 Joseph H. Harrison, Jr., "Martin Van Buren and His Southern

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the tariff in 1832 on political grounds, they determined to accept Calhoun or any other states rights politician in preference to Van Buren.\(^{29}\) Doubtless many of them agreed with the *Lynchburg Virginian's* assessment of Van Buren as "a most paltry politician, a pettifogger in politics."\(^{30}\)

Thomas Ritchie regretted the Calhoun-Van Buren struggle for its implications of party strife. He described Van Buren's resignation as Secretary of State in April 1831 as "an honorable peace-offering upon the altar of his country," and as necessary, not only to prevent premature agitation of the succession question but also vital to reuniting the party.\(^{31}\) In May Ritchie suggested publicly that Virginia might not support Van Buren for vice president.\(^ {32}\) Privately, however, by this time Ritchie had begun to lean in the New Yorker's direction, as had other members of the Junto. Although Peter V. Daniel deplored the resignation, Richard E. Parker approved Van Buren's course,\(^ {33}\) and Ritchie told Van Buren that his resignation had launched him on the road to the vice presidency.\(^ {34}\)

\(^{29}\)William Segar Archer to Martin Van Buren, March 12, 1831; Richard E. Parker to Van Buren, April 23, 1831, Van Buren Papers, LC.

\(^{30}\) *Lynchburg Virginian,* March 24, 1831.

\(^{31}\) *Enquirer,* April 22, May 3, 1831. In February and March 1831, Ritchie described the Calhoun-Jackson correspondence as dangerous for the party, and condemned Calhoun for publishing it. See *ibid.*, February 19,24, 1831, for examples. On March 29, 1831, Ritchie called for party harmony in order to secure Jackson's election, then pointed to the task of finding a successor to Jackson.


\(^{33}\)Peter V. Daniel to Martin Van Buren, April 22, 1831. Richard E. Parker to Van Buren, April 23, 1831. Van Buren Papers, LC.

\(^{34}\)Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, April 20, 1831, *ibid.*
Calhoun's fluctuating politics hindered his prospects in Virginia. Virginia's Democrats, perhaps self-righteous, cherished the notion of their political consistency since Jefferson's time. In 1816 Calhoun had angered many Virginians with his endorsement of federally-financed internal improvements and a Second Bank. But as Vice President in opposition to Adams and then as a member of the victorious Jacksonian coalition of 1828 his politics became more acceptable to Virginia Democrats. In fact, William S. Archer told Van Buren that his resignation as Secretary of State had alone prevented the alignment of Virginia for Calhoun. Then Calhoun, in his Fort Hill Address, publicly endorsed nullification. This frightened many Democrats, for although they believed nullification to be constitutional, they condemned it as politically inexpedient at the time. Besides, Calhoun now appeared to have shifted his politics from an ultra-nationalist to an ultra-states rights viewpoint.

After Van Buren resigned Jackson nominated him as Minister to the Court of St. James, and Van Buren left to assume his post before Congress reconvened. William C. Rives, the Junto protege whom Jackson had appointed Minister to France, wrote Van Buren early in the fall asking for advice about the vice presidency and inquiring if Van Buren had firmly decided not to accept a nomination. In his reply Van Buren expressed repugnance at running for vice president and told Rives to

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35 See Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, April 23, 1831, ibid.

36 William S. Archer to Martin Van Buren, October 3, 1831, ibid.

37 William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, October 25, 1831, Rives Papers, LC.
proceed with his plans if he was at all interested in the office.\textsuperscript{38} Rives was indeed interested. An intensely ambitious man, his charming personality won him many friends in high political circles, but his youth counted against him and his own friends in Virginia never rallied to his cause in 1832.

Ritchie believed that Van Buren, by going to England, had renounced all ambition for the vice presidency. He indicated in the \textit{Enquirer} that Van Buren did not wish to run, and that the friends of the administration in the South had no plans to run him.\textsuperscript{39} Duff Green, editor of the \textit{United States Telegraph}, charged that Ritchie hoped to succeed Van Buren as Minister to the Court of St. James. Ritchie, however, denied both this charge and the accusation that Van Buren had renounced all hopes of the vice presidency in order to expedite the confirmation of his appointment.\textsuperscript{40}

When the First Session of the Twenty-Second Congress convened in December 1831, Van Buren's nomination came up for Senate confirmation. The Senate deadlocked, and Calhoun, exercising his vice-presidential power, cast the tie-breaking vote against the nomination. Despite their senatorial opposition to several of Jackson's policies, both Littleton W. Tazewell and John Tyler voted for confirmation because they considered Van Buren fit for the post. The opposition achieved its goal, however, for Van Buren's recall disgraced both him and the administration.\textsuperscript{41} But

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Martin Van Buren to William C. Rives, November 1, 1831, \textit{ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{Enquirer}, May 17, 1831.
\item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, January 3, 10, 1832.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}, January 31, 1832. See John Tyler to son, February 2, 1832, \textit{Tyler Papers, LC.}
\end{itemize}
they won a Pyrrhic victory and Calhoun, especially, suffered for his vote. No longer could he hope to win administration support for office. Calhoun took great pleasure in casting his ballot to kill Van Buren's nomination, but John Randolph graphically described the political implication of Calhoun's vote: "Calhoun, by this time, must be in Hell. ... He is self-mutilated like the Fanatic that emasculated himself." 42

The backlash from his rejection practically handed Van Buren the Democratic vice-presidential nomination. During late 1831 and early 1832 the Junto toyed with endorsing Philip P. Barbour, a Virginia states rights politician. But after Calhoun killed Van Buren's nomination, word went out from Washington that Jackson wanted Van Buren on the ticket. Andrew Stevenson, Speaker of the House of Representatives, informed Ritchie that Barbour's name must be kept off the ticket in Virginia or grave difficulties might follow. 43 Ritchie wanted Jackson to renominate Van Buren, but Stevenson counseled against renomination because it would jeopardize Van Buren's "present vantage ground." 44 He begged Ritchie to come out in support of Van Buren and to secure his nomination in the Virginia Democratic legislative convention. Stevenson believed if the convention endorsed Van Buren Virginia could reassume leadership of the South and settle the vice-presidential issue. 45

42 John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, March 28, 1832, Andrew Jackson Papers, LC.
43 Andrew Stevenson to Thomas Ritchie, February 4, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC.
44 Ibid., and Andrew Stevenson to unknown, February 28, 1832, Andrew Stevenson Letter, University of Virginia. Jackson notified Van Buren of his selection in Jackson to Van Buren, February 12, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC.
45 Andrew Stevenson to Thomas Ritchie, February 4, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC.
Nothing less than Virginia's position in the Jacksonian coalition was at stake, for if she refused to support Jackson's choice for vice president her politicians could expect little attention and few patronage rewards from Jackson. Judge Richard E. Parker controlled the Winchester Virginian, and his newspaper endorsed Van Buren early in 1832. Ritchie, influenced by his Junto associates, changed his tone and opened the Enquirer to a full discussion of the issue, admitting that Van Buren's "nomination now for Vice President presents so many high, public considerations...".

After failing in December 1831 to select a vice-presidential candidate to run with Jackson, the Virginia Democratic legislative convention reconvened on February 28. At this meeting special delegates represented counties whose elected representatives did not favor Jackson. Since Congress had not yet passed the new congressional apportionment bill the convention adjourned to await the new apportionments. At this meeting, however, William Henry Roane, a Junto member, spoke out strongly against Philip P. Barbour. The convention reassembled on Wednesday, March 14. A long debate ensued over the vice-presidential nomination, with both Van Buren and Barbour placed in nomination. The next night a stalemate appeared likely. With party harmony in jeopardy, John Thompson Brown of Petersburg offered an amended motion declaring it inexpedient to nominate a vice-presidential candidate, and the motion carried by a vote of ninety-seven to thirty-seven. The convention finished its business on Friday, March 16, by establishing an electoral

46 Harrison, "Van Buren's Southern Supporters," 454; Enquirer, February 4, 1832.
ticket and naming a central corresponding committee. The Junto, realizing that it could not carry the convention in Van Buren's behalf, reluctantly accepted the decision not to nominate a vice-presidential candidate. Ritchie indicated that the failure to arrive at a nomination meant no disrespect to Philip P. Barbour, but rather that the convention had opted for party harmony, and the Democratic press of Virginia likewise endorsed the convention's actions.

Emulating the earlier conventions held by the Anti-Masons and the National Republicans, the Democrats held their first national convention in May. The Virginia delegates to the Baltimore convention caucused on May 21, at 4 P.M., in Betzhoovers Hotel. They elected William McCoy their national committeeman, but defeated a resolution instructing McCoy to oppose the participation of the anti-Jackson states in the convention. The caucus then turned to the main question, the endorsement of a vice-presidential candidate. After agreeing that the delegates should vote per capita, and not by district, John Thompson Brown offered a resolution that the vote of Virginia in the convention should be given for P.P. Barbour while he entertained any hope of success. After that Virginia would cast her support for Van Buren or any other man likely to obtain a majority of the votes in the convention. The eighty-four members of the Virginia caucus cast forty-five votes for

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47 Enquirer, March 1, 17, 1832.
48 Ibid.
49 For example, see the Wellsburg Gazette, March 29, 1832; and the Fincastle Patriot, quoted in the Enquirer, March 30, 1832.
50 Notes of John Thompson Brown on the Baltimore Convention, 1832, Brown, Colater, Tucker Papers, College of William and Mary.
Barbour and thirty-nine for Van Buren.\footnote{Littleton W. Tazewell to John Tazewell, May 23, 1832, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library.}

On May 22 the convention assembled and resolved to vote by states, with each state having a vote equal to its electoral strength. The convention also adopted the famous two-thirds majority rule for nomination. Although on the first ballot for a vice-presidential candidate Virginia cast her twenty-four votes for her native son, Van Buren received 208 votes, Barbour only forty-nine, and Richard Mentor Johnson twenty-six. Thus Van Buren took the nomination. A resolution was then introduced in the convention to make Van Buren's nomination unanimous. When William F. Gordon of Virginia objected, the Virginia delegation retired from the floor to recaucus. In this caucus William S. Archer moved that the Virginia delegation concur in the convention's vice-presidential nomination. The caucus endorsed Archer's motion by a fifty-four to thirty vote, whereupon Gordon and some of the other delegates who opposed Van Buren's nomination seceded from the caucus.\footnote{Notes of John Thompson Brown on the Baltimore Convention, 1832, Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers, College of William and Mary. Littleton W. Tazewell to John Tazewell. May 23, 1832. Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library. Ritchie's Enquirer completely ignored the walkout of some members of the Virginia caucus.}

IV

Gordon and the other Virginians who seceded from the Baltimore Convention in protest against Van Buren's nomination represented the Calhoun-oriented states rights extremists within the Virginia Democratic Party. Van Buren's nomination meant rejection of their favorite, and they feared for the safety of southern interests under Jackson and Van
Buren. Initially they hoped to elect Calhoun president, but later switched goals and concentrated their opposition upon Van Buren's nomination. Ultimately both tactics failed.

Governor John Floyd provided institutional leadership for Calhoun's Virginia followers, but the executive branch of Virginia's state government possessed little real power, and Floyd spent most of his time in Richmond fulminating against Thomas Ritchie, "that profligate son of a Scotch Tory," and the Richmond Junto. The Calhoun movement in Virginia grew out of Jackson's patronage and tariff policies. Floyd himself had lost out on a cabinet position, and he along with other Calhounites became distressed when Jackson ignored tariff reform.

Soon after his election as governor Floyd withdrew his support from Jackson, but most of the other Virginia Calhoun men did not formally break with Jackson until the cabinet reorganization signaled Van Buren's victory over Calhoun in the succession struggle. Calhoun's Fort Hill Address publicly proclaimed the vice president's break with the administration. In it Calhoun called for tariff reform, defended nullification (or state interposition as he preferred to call it), and denied that nullification entailed revolution or violence. Although Duff Green described the Fort Hill Address as an unionist proposition, there

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53 Ambler, "Floyd Diary," February 5, 1832.

54 Duff Green to John Floyd, April 10, 1831, Duff Green Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina (hereinafter cited SHC.).


56 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, September 5, 1831, in Frederick W. Moore, ed., "Calhoun As Seen By His Political Friends: Letters of Duff
is no doubt that the South Carolinaian's public endorsement of nullification cost him support in Virginia, for many states rights men refused to endorse such an extreme remedy for oppression.

When Calhoun visited the Virginia House of Delegates in March 1831 he received a great deal of adulation from the states rights men who controlled the House. However, a few months later, several of the Virginia states rights men broke with Calhoun when he publicly endorsed nullification. Thomas Walker Gilmer, the bright young editor-politician from Charlottesville, typified these men. Gilmer had accompanied his intimate friend William Cabell Rives into the Jacksonian coalition in 1828, and as late as 1830 he still supported Jackson. However, Gilmer had friends of the opposite persuasion, notably John Floyd, and when Calhoun broke with Jackson in early 1831 Gilmer followed Calhoun.

Earlier Calhoun's prospects in Virginia had seemed auspicious, but organization and direction in behalf of his cause were lacking. Both might be supplied by a sympathetic press. Many states rights men, especially those sympathetic to Calhoun, distrusted Ritchie's relationship with Jackson. Consequently they attempted to establish a Calhoun newspaper in Richmond. In 1829 they urged Richard Kenner Crallé,

Green, Dixon H. Lewis, Richard K. Crallé During the Period From 1831 to 1848," Publications of the Southern History Association, VII (1903), 168-69


editor of the Lynchburg Jeffersonian Republican, to move his paper to Richmond. 59 Crallé, a young editor devoted to the philosophy of states rights, later became an intimate acquaintance and devoted follower of John C. Calhoun and published the first collection of Calhoun's works during the 1850s. But Crallé did not own the Jeffersonian Republican, and he could not persuade its owners to sell or move the paper. So by 1831 the Virginia Calhounites turned to Gilmer. He edited the Charlottesville Virginia Advocate, a states rights newspaper, and agreed to come to Richmond to edit a Calhoun paper.

On April 12, 1831, a prospectus for the Virginia Times appeared in the Richmond Enquirer. 60 Gilmer's prospectus described the federal union as a confederation of sovereign states, referred to the danger of executive usurpation, proposed that presidents not succeed themselves, but made no endorsement for president in 1832. Calhoun's name was not mentioned, for his supporters had not yet decided whether to run him for president, or again as vice president on the Jackson ticket. Gilmer indicated that he needed a minimum of 1500 subscribers to begin the

59 Robert Mayo to R.K. Crallé, June 14, 1829, R.K. Crallé Papers, LC. On November 7, 1828, Ritchie and C.W. Gooch dissolved their partnership in the Enquirer, and Ritchie assumed complete control of the paper. They parted friends, for they had differed only on the calling of the state constitutional convention, since Gooch opposed constitutional reform. Ritchie had exercised complete control of the editorial department, relegating Gooch to the business end of the paper. Ritchie attempted to lure Thomas W. Gilmer to Richmond as his partner on the Enquirer, but Gilmer, who later became a Whig, declined. Ultimately Ritchie took in his ex-foreman, John L. Cook, as his partner to run the business end of the paper. Ritchie remained a notoriously poor businessman. See the Enquirer, November 7, 1828. Also C.W. Gooch to David Campbell, October 20, 1834, David Campbell Papers, Duke University; William C. Rives to Thomas W. Gilmer, November 13, 1828, in "Letters of W.C. Rives to T.W. Gilmer," Tyler Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, VI(October 1924), pp.97-99.

60 Enquirer, April 12, 1831.
paper. Calhoun actively desired the paper, but the subscription list could not be met. Then in July, Calhoun published his Fort Hill Address, and on August 5 Gilmer announced that the paper would not appear. Calhoun's address, combined with the lack of subscriptions, caused Gilmer to withdraw from his advanced position in the Virginia Calhoun ranks for Gilmer opposed nullification.  

As Calhoun's chief lieutenant in Virginia, Governor John Floyd directed Calhoun's as yet unannounced campaign. In the spring of 1831 he questioned Calhoun on the plans to be followed for the campaign, and outlined some of his own ideas. He asked Calhoun if his Virginia followers should bring him before the General Assembly before it adjourned and run him as vice president on the Jackson ticket in order to keep a line on the presidency in case of Jackson's death. Floyd objected to this scheme, for he feared that Jackson might die (at this time no tradition of vice-presidential succession existed) or might not be reelected. He indicated that if Clay, Jackson, and Calhoun all ran for the presidency the election might go to the House of Representatives, and he asked Calhoun about his prospects there. Floyd closed by recommending a course of action for Calhoun to follow in Virginia. He assured Calhoun that Virginia would go for him in 1832, and recommended that Calhoun remain in opposition to Henry Clay, integrate former Clay men into the Calhoun group, and keep up a quasi-war with Jackson throughout the summer. He could thereby keep himself in the public eye and weaken Jackson at the same time. In the fall Calhoun would be formally

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62 John Floyd to John C. Calhoun, April 16, 1831, Floyd Papers, LC.
presented to the Virginia General Assembly for their endorsement. Later in the summer Floyd indicated to Duff Green that Gilmer's refusal to edit the paper had not damaged Calhoun's standing in Virginia, and that all the "real" Virginia states rights men approved of Calhoun's Fort Hill Address. In November, Calhoun asked Floyd not to take any steps that might weaken either one of them, and warned Floyd against being drawn too quickly into the presidential contest.

But Calhoun's partisans in Virginia would not give up the fight. Led by Governor Floyd, they determined either to nominate Calhoun for vice president on the Democratic ticket or run him for president opposite Jackson. Despite Floyd's assurance to Duff Green, Gilmer's failure to open a Calhoun paper in Richmond to combat Ritchie's Enquirer severely retarded Calhoun's chances. Consequently Calhoun's followers throughout the state concentrated their efforts in late 1831 and early 1832 upon finding an editor for their proposed paper.

With Gilmer faltering in mid-summer, Duff Green opened correspondence with J.J. Cabell and Company of Lynchburg, regarding the moving of their newspaper, the Lynchburg Jeffersonian Republican, to Richmond. Green, consumed with ambition and possessed by illusion of power, by this time had assumed the position of Calhoun's campaign manager. Often in fact, he acted without Calhoun's knowledge or approval, and caused the

63 John Floyd to Duff Green, August 21, 1831, ibid. Crallé's Lynchburg Jeffersonian Republican stated that the Address contained the true doctrines of the old Jeffersonian school. Noted in Fredericksburg, The Virginia Herald, August 20, 1831.

64 John C. Calhoun to John Floyd, November 16, 1831, George Frederick Holmes Papers, LC.

South Carolinian several political embarrassments. Crallé, the editor of the Jeffersonian Republican, earlier had revealed to Green his feeling that Jackson was "the acknowledged enemy" and Calhoun "the last hope of the old Republican party," though Crallé indicated that he had never had any contact with Calhoun. After Gilmer formally announced that his paper would not appear, Green wrote to Crallé indicating that he possessed information which showed that Jackson could not carry Virginia. Green urged Crallé to throw himself into the crisis and open a Calhoun paper in Richmond. Green told the Virginia Calhoun men that the immediate establishment of a press was vital to securing widespread distribution of Calhoun's Fort Hill Address, and he praised Crallé as a dedicated professional who did not fear Ritchie's strength. Furthermore, according to Green, Crallé's western connections, aided by Governor Floyd and the Calhoun men in middle and eastern Virginia, should secure for the paper the printing contract of the Virginia legislature. Finally, Gilmer's subscription list, when added to Crallé's own and the Virginia legislative printing contract, would insure the financial solvency of the new paper.

Green continually urged Crallé into action, and told him that funds would be placed at his disposal through Governor Floyd. Others


67 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, August 7, 1831, Green Papers, LC.

68 Duff Green to Colonel S.A. Storrow, August 9, 1831, ibid.

also urged Crallé to move to Richmond and open a paper, and in late February 1832 arrangements were finalized. Green indicated that $1000 had been sent to Floyd to help Crallé get started, and promised that another $2000 would be forwarded later. The Richmond Jeffersonian and Virginia Times, edited by Crallé, appeared March 29, 1832, but after four short months disappeared from the scene. By that time Calhoun's hopes for the presidency had likewise vanished because the Virginia Democratic legislative convention had endorsed Jackson.

The failure of the Virginia Jackson convention to nominate a vice-presidential candidate indicated the muddled state of affairs regarding the succession. The Junto had not been able to force Van Buren on the Democratic legislative convention. Jackson would not accept Calhoun, nor would the South Carolinian consent to serve again as vice president. Late in 1831 Calhoun's friends in Virginia seized upon the idea of running Philip Pendleton Barbour on the Jackson ticket. They remained unsure, however, of Barbour's independence from the Richmond Junto or from Jackson, for they wanted above all else a man who would advance Calhoun's interests and principles within the government and the Virginia Democratic party.

Initially Duff Green advised the Virginia Calhounites to wait until after the Baltimore convention to nominate a vice-presidential candidate.

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70 Mark Alexander to R.K. Crallé, February 20, 1832, R.K. Crallé Papers, Clemson University.

71 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, February 29, 1832, in Moore, ed., "Calhoun By His Friends," 270. Those who pledged subscriptions to the paper can be considered among Calhoun's inner circle of supporters. In Virginia, they included Charles C. Johnston, Thomas T. Bouldin, and Richard Coke, Jr., who each pledged twenty-five subscriptions. See Wiltse, Calhoun, Nullifier, pp.129-30

72 Duff Green to John Floyd, December 29, 1831, Green Papers, SHC.
candidate. By nominating before the convention met they would be accused of causing a disturbance within the party in order to promote Calhoun's interest. Then Green changed his mind and told Crallé that if he could get ten legislators to cooperate they should name a candidate to run for vice president on the Jackson ticket. Barbour would be acceptable if he could be entirely separated from Van Buren. Green then reversed himself once more and urged Crallé not to have the Virginia Calhounites nominate a candidate to run on the Jackson ticket. He feared that Barbour would simply provide a new pillar to prop up Jackson. Green urged the Calhoun men to rally upon the ground of opposition to Jackson and Van Buren, and to push principles rather than vice-presidential candidates.

The Barbour movement, supported by the Calhounites, represented a potent states rights, anti-Van Buren sentiment within the Jackson party, a movement which forecast the anti-Jackson explosion which began in 1833. Significantly, the movement possessed considerable strength throughout the South, particularly in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama.

By late spring the opposition within the Virginia Democratic party to Van Buren as the vice-presidential nominee centered in a movement for Barbour. This movement attracted not only states rights Democrats still loyal to Jackson but also the Calhounites. In April, Governor

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73 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, March 12, 1832, ibid.
74 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, March 15, 1832, Green Papers, LC.
75 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, March 28, April 6, May 11, 1832, ibid.
Floyd wrote Gilmer that the Democrats had conceived the Baltimore convention specifically for nominating Van Buren. He asked Gilmer if anything could be done for Barbour, and suggested that Gilmer promote county meetings that would bluntly state their preference for Barbour as the vice-presidential candidate whether or not he received the Baltimore convention nomination. Floyd believed that when these county meetings had spoken a general convention could be held to form a states rights ticket in order to provide an alternative to Van Buren or the National Republican nominee. Barbour vacillated throughout late 1831 and early 1832, initially deciding to abide by the sentiment of the Baltimore convention, but in early May he changed his mind and agreed to accept a separate nomination.

Grass-roots support among Virginia states rights men who were dissatisfied with Van Buren slowly coalesced in a formal movement to nominate Barbour. A Culpeper County meeting proposed that other county meetings which favored a Jackson-Barbour ticket should nominate delegates who would assemble in Charlottesville after the Baltimore convention. Shortly after this meeting the Charlottesville Virginia Advocate carried a notice that friends of Barbour would gather at the Albemarle Court House on the May court day. However, this Albemarle meeting, by a vote of eighty-six to thirty-five, rejected the idea of a Charlottesville convention. It resolved instead to send delegates to the Baltimore convention and to recommend Barbour to other states, but above all to abide by the nomination of the Baltimore convention. Thomas W. Gilmer by this

77 John Floyd to Thomas W. Gilmer, April 26, 1832, Tyler Papers, LC.
78 Philip P. Barbour to Thomas W. Gilmer, May 13, 1832, ibid.
time had assumed leadership of the Barbour movement in Virginia. He regretted the action of the Albemarle meeting, but other counties east of the mountains continued to elect delegates to the proposed Charlottesville convention. 79

On June 12, the Charlottesville convention opened, with thirty-one delegates in attendance representing nine counties and three towns. James H. Gholson of Brunswick County served as president, but Gilmer assumed the leading role in the convention. He chaired the committee which reported a plan of action unanimously adopted by the convention. The report recommended that Virginia Democrats accept the electors chosen by the Jackson legislative caucus, but that voters write in Barbour's name on the ballot as an instruction to the electors who remained officially unpledged for vice president. The convention appointed a Jackson-Barbour central committee which issued an address in late June. Evidently the work of Gilmer, by inference the address pictured the struggle over vice president as the key to a triumph of strict or loose constitutional construction within the party. 80

The Barbour convention failed to gain statewide support in Virginia, even among states rights men. Although the movement received some slight support west of the Blue Ridge mountains, no delegates from that area attended the Charlottesville convention. The push for Barbour


80 Ibid. The counties represented included Caroline, Halifax, Amherst, Brunswick, Orange, Spotsylvania, Albemarle, Louisa, the boroughs of Norfolk and Williamsburg, and the town of Lynchburg. For an account of the convention see the Enquirer, June 19, 1832, quoting the report published in the Charlottesville Virginia Advocate, no date cited.

81 Charleston, Kanawha Banner, May 10, 1832.
represented a thrust of states rights insurgency within the Virginia Democratic party. Many Virginia Democrats feared Jackson's inactivity on matters regarding states rights, and resented Van Buren's endorsement of the 1828 tariff. Ritchie moved quickly to discredit the Barbour movement within Democratic party circles. Though he confessed that a few of the men supporting Barbour remained friends of Jackson, he attributed the "Barbour Convention" to a party tactic inspired by National Republicans and friends of Calhoun. 82

Many of Virginia's Democrats and National Republicans alike opposed Martin Van Buren for the vice presidency. They accused the Junto of forcing Van Buren upon the Virginia Democratic party. 83 National Republicans feared that if Van Buren won election the nation would be locked into twelve more years of Jacksonianism. Indeed most Virginia National Republicans preferred Barbour as their second choice for vice president. 84 In a letter to Van Buren, Peter V. Daniel summarized Virginia and southern opposition to the New Yorker. Daniel warned Van Buren that southerners regarded him as hostile to southern interests, manifested especially by his support of the tariff of 1828 and federally-financed internal improvements. 85 Ritchie, in moving behind Van Buren's candidacy, analyzed the opposition's protest against him: "The sum total... is, that he is the Arch Magician--the Prince of Intriguers--

82 *Enquirer*, May 4, 1832.


84 *Lynchburg Virginian*, May 31, October 11, 1832.

85 Peter V. Daniel to Martin Van Buren, July 12, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC.
the very *diable bordieux*—the maker of cabinets and the destroyer of cabinets—the manager who puts out and who puts in all sorts of officers. . . ." 

In July 1832 Jackson's signature on the compromise tariff bill and his veto of the bank recharter bill temporarily clarified the Virginia political scene. Although many Democrats west of the mountains viewed the tariff as a "scarecrow" political issue, and attributed Virginia's lack of prosperity instead to "ill-adopted civil institutions. . . and the evil of slavery," states rights Democrats had long railed against the protective tariff as "tyrannical and oppressive." During 1831 the *Enquirer* reported and approved of numerous anti-tariff meetings held throughout the Tidewater and Piedmont sections of the state to appoint delegates to the Free Trade Convention held in Philadelphia in August 1831. Ritchie openly expressed fear that if Congress did not alter the tariff, South Carolina would nullify it. He declared that although Virginia Democrats did not approve of South Carolina's remedy, Virginia would "be loath indeed to send a man or musket for her subjection." Ritchie opposed on political grounds Clay's compromise tariff which passed Congress in the summer of 1832. The Virginia congressional delegation split eleven to eight in support of the bill in

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86 *Enquirer*, February 21, 1832.

87 *Wellsburg Gazette*, February 2, 1832.

88 John Tyler to John Thompson Brown, February 12, 1832, Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers, College of William and Mary.

89 *Enquirer*, April 24, 1832. For anti-tariff sentiment see *ibid.*, July 12, 27, October 4, 1831; *Lynchburg Virginian*, August 12, 1831. Virginia sent thirty-one delegates to the national anti-tariff convention, held in Philadelphia in September.
the House, while Senators Tyler and Tazewell opposed the bill. By this
time Ritchie's antipathy to Clay's political ambitions had become chronic,
and he viewed Clay's every move as an attempt to reach the presidency.
Also, he feared that a compromise tariff could lead to a coalition be-
tween the Clay and Calhoun men which might defeat Jackson. 90

In his veto of the bank recharter bill Jackson described the
bank as an unconstitutional monopoly of banking privilege supported by
the federal government. He stated that the executive and legislative
branches of the government should not rely upon the Supreme Court to de-
cide the constitutionality of the bank. Rather, each branch of govern-
ment should interpret the constitution for itself. 91 Jacksonians nation-
wide blamed the bank for transgressions against the political, social,
and economic values of the Old Republic. They traced "constitutional
impiety," consolidated national power, aristocratic privilege, corruption,
social inequality, economic instability, and perpetual debt and taxes to
the bank's influence. 92

Virginia supporters of the Bank of the United States raged at
Jackson's veto. National Republicans disagreed with Jackson's constitu-
tional right to veto a bill involving a subject judged constitutional by
the Supreme Court. 93 Describing the veto, one newspaper stated, "it is

90 Ambler, Ritchie, pp.143-44; Register of Debates, VII, 3830-31, 1293. The Virginia congressional delegation had split eleven to six op-
posing the recharter bill; both senators opposed the bill and efforts to
pass it over Jackson's veto. See the House Journal, 22 Cong., 1 Sess.,
1074-75, and Senate Journal, 22 Cong., 1 Sess., 346, 463.

91 Richardson, Messages and Papers, II, 576-91.

92 Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief

93 Fredericksburg, The Virginia Herald, July 21, 1832.
certain that a measure more prolific of evil consequences in the community at large, could not well be conceived."  

Jackson's action against the bank and the compromise on the tariff removed the impetus from the states rights insurgents, and Barbour's quest for the vice-presidential nomination failed. Duff Green urged the Virginia Calhoun men to withdraw their support from Barbour. Green felt that Barbour had disgraced himself by a speech at a dinner in Amherst County where he endorsed Jackson. He also feared that Ritchie and the Junto were preparing to rally upon Barbour in case Van Buren faltered. The Junto would certainly array the Barbour men against Calhoun. Green also suggested that committees of correspondence of disaffected Jackson men, called Whig Clubs because of their opposition to executive influence, be organized throughout the country.  

The Barbour movement began to collapse in late September. The Charlottesville convention had decided to use the Jackson legislative electors for their electoral ticket, but only three of the twenty-three electors indicated a willingness to abide by the majority expression on the ballot, while four electors remained uncommitted to any candidate. Since the legislative convention had not pledged the electors for vice president, the Jackson-Barbour Central Committee considered the refusal of the Jackson electors to bind themselves to the majority vote subversive of the popular will and rights of the people. Hence they met in Charlottesville on October 1 to name a new electoral ticket.  

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94 Norfolk American Beacon, July 14, 1832.
95 Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, August 3, 1832, Green Papers, LC.
96 Minutes of the Jackson-Barbour Central Committee, Monday, October 1, 1832, Ambler Family Manuscripts, University of Virginia.
The next day Thomas W. Gilmer communicated the results of the meeting to Barbour. He reported that the committee had acted in spite of the lack of a quorum. Apparently Barbour had earlier indicated to Gilmer a desire to withdraw from the contest. Gilmer replied that the committee could not withdraw him from the canvass since they had not nominated him. Gilmer disclaimed the propriety of advising Barbour, but proceeded to give his opinions. He told Barbour that the time would soon come when public sentiment, in response to the electors' obtuseness, would react in his favor, and advised him to assume a position to capitalize on the anticipated reaction. Gilmer agreed with Barbour's opinion that he could not carry Virginia because of newspaper opposition and the strong regular party organization arrayed against him, but denied that Barbour's withdrawal would conciliate any of his enemies. He closed by suggesting that if Barbour withdrew, he do so only in Virginia, citing as his reasons the course of the electors and his unwillingness to press a divided Jackson ticket in the state.\footnote{Thomas W. Gilmer to Philip P. Barbour, October 2, 1832. Ambler Family Manuscripts, University of Virginia.}

On October 24 Barbour withdrew from the contest and urged his friends to vote for the legislative electoral ticket for fear that a split in the ticket would hinder Jackson's election. Ritchie published Barbour's letter on October 30, only a few days before the election.\footnote{Enquirer, October 30, 1832.}

his friends, and in doing so had ruined himself politically. The Lynchburg Virginian came closest to a true explanation of his actions. The paper theorized that Barbour's nerves were too weak to play the game, and that threats from Richmond and promises from Washington had triumphed over his philosophy.

Late in October Van Buren publicly endorsed Jackson's positions on the bank, the tariff, and internal improvements. This declaration eased the opposition to Van Buren from those men who supported Barbour because they feared the New Yorker's position on states rights. Certainly the Junto feared a split ticket might lead to Jackson's defeat and did all it could to encourage party unity. Finally, promises from Washington may have turned the tide. Although Barbour had declined Jackson's offer of the Attorney-Generalship in 1831, eventually in 1836 Jackson appointed him an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

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Any serious threat which Barbour's candidacy posed to the Jackson-Van Buren ticket in Virginia had disappeared before Barbour withdrew from the race. Duff Green urged the Virginia Calhoun men to be cautious in support of Barbour because he would not break with

99 Alexandria Gazette, November 3, 1832.
100 Lynchburg Virginian, November 1, 1832.
101 Enquirer, October 19, 1832, reprinting the request of the Shocco Springs, Warren Co., North Carolina, committee to Van Buren, dated August 26, 1832, questioning his position on the protective tariff, the bank, internal improvements, and nullification. Van Buren's response to the committee, dated October 4, 1832, is also reprinted in ibid. In a separate column on the same day Ritchie made it quite clear that Van Buren's response concurred with Jackson's position on all of the subjects involved.
Jackson. By mid-September Green encouraged them to assist him in creating a new party based upon the principles of the constitution—a party pledged to support talent and virtue without regard to party shackles. By assuming this ground Green believed that he could break down whoever won election to the presidency in 1832 unless that person administered the government on the principles supported by the Calhoun men.\textsuperscript{102} Obviously Green looked past 1832 to the presidential election of 1836.

But Green did not limit his activity to dreaming of a future party. He longed to bring the Virginia Barbour men into his projected anti-Jackson coalition. In a letter to Thomas Walker Gilmer he charged that Jackson approved of "a deliberate plan to cheat the people into the support of Mr. Van Buren's pretensions for the vice presidency. . . ." Green questioned if Gilmer and his friends, under these circumstances, would continue to support the Jackson ticket.\textsuperscript{103}

Green wondered whether Gilmer's friends had made up their minds against Clay. He then brought up the name of William Wirt, who had accepted the Anti-Masonic nomination. "I tell you decidedly and unequivocally," wrote Green, "that it is in your power to elect Mr. Wirt. I mean it is in the power of Judge Barbour's friends in Virginia to do so; and that by moving in that direction you will prostrate Ritchie and the Junto forever."\textsuperscript{104}

By October 1832 Green seemed almost consumed by his obsession to

\textsuperscript{102}Duff Green to R.K. Crallé, September 18, 1832, Green Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{103}Duff Green to Thomas W. Gilmer, September 24, 1832, Green Papers, SHC.

\textsuperscript{104}Ibid.
stop Jackson as he searched in Virginia for a coalition to do the job. Although many states rights men distrusted Jackson, his veto of the bank recharter bill and signing of the compromise tariff had somewhat pacified them. In a letter to Benjamin Watkins Leigh, a conservative states rights lawyer in Richmond, Green painted a horrible picture of Van Buren, if elected, using his patronage against the South. Recognizing that in many ways Van Buren was stronger in the South than in the North, Green told Leigh that if Van Buren won election in 1832 he would move against southern interests in order to strengthen his position in the North for 1836. According to Green, since Van Buren could legitimately expect to inherit the old Crawford party as well as the Jackson party, he would have to secure his northern base in order to acquire nationwide support for 1836. In patronizing the North he would naturally make great sacrifices of southern interests. Thus only by defeating Van Buren in 1832 could the South be saved and Van Buren kept out of the White House in 1836.  

Green also tried to bring the Virginia Clay men behind Wirt in order to stop Jackson. Although Wirt possessed the necessary ambition, he lacked the politician's nerves and constitution. He had reluctantly accepted his nomination, viewing it as the only possibility of defeating Jackson. Wirt had no support in Virginia, and Ritchie correctly labeled his nomination "a burlesque."

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105 Duff Green to Benjamin Watkins Leigh, October 9, 1832, ibid.
106 Duff Green to James Barbour, September 24, 1832, Barbour Papers, New York Public Library.
108 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, October 26, 1831, Rives Papers, LC.
Green's attempt to create an anti-Jackson coalition proved futile, and within Virginia opposition to Jackson centered on Henry Clay. Yet the Kentuckian had little hope of carrying the state. Though Ritchie denounced Clay's ambition, he welcomed him into the contest and squarely pointed out to his readers the differences between Clay and Jackson: "The father of the American System; or the friend of its modification on Liberal Principles? The friend of a national Bank... or the open Vetoist of this mammoth Institution?--The advocate of an unbounded, or the friend of a limited, system of Internal Improvements? The man, who would extend the powers of the Federal Government, or he who would restrain, them?"

Anti-Jackson meetings begin in Virginia in the late summer of 1831. A Richmond meeting in September elected delegates to the National Republican convention, and denounced Jackson for his ignorance of the U.S. Constitution, his arbitrary temper, and his inconsistent position on the tariff and internal improvements. In the National Republican convention, which met in Baltimore in December 1831, men such as James Barbour, Philip C. Pendleton, Robert Stanard, James Carr, and John Taliaferro represented Virginia. After nominating Henry Clay for president and John Sargeant for vice president the convention endorsed federally financed internal improvements, the Second Bank of the United

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110 Enquirer, July 10, 1829.

111 Ibid., July 24, 1832.

States, a protective tariff, and condemned Jackson for his removals from office and his vacillation on the tariff and internal improvements. 113

In late March, Virginia's National Republicans decided not to nominate a slate of electors through the legislature, but to defer action until the summer, when the party's central committee would either form a ticket or call a convention for Lynchburg or Staunton. By deferring action on the ticket they hoped to withdraw pressure for cohesion from the Democrats, and thereby expose them to the threat of disintegration from within. 114

The Virginia National Republican central committee opted for a convention, and ninety Virginia National Republicans representing seventeen of Virginia's twenty-one congressional districts gathered in Staunton in mid-July. The Staunton convention unanimously nominated Clay and Sargeant and drew up an electoral ticket. The convention adopted resolutions which condemned Jackson's patronage appointments, his efforts to secure Van Buren's election as his successor, his inconsistency on the tariff and internal improvements, and his veto of the bank recharter bill. Two additional resolutions endorsed the concept of judicial review of state laws by the Supreme Court and condemned nullification as a "dangerous political heresy." 115

Clay men pushed the Kentuckian as an alternative to executive

113 Journal of the National Republican Convention, December 12, 1831, noted in ibid.
115 Enquirer, July 24, 1832.
usurpation, and the *Lexington Union* described Jackson in the summer of 1832 as "the patriot that was the tyrant that is. Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." Some Calhoun men likewise continued to oppose Jackson, and in late August Duff Green indicated to John Hampden Pleasants, the editor of the *Richmond Whig*, that "we are no longer political opponents." Green told Pleasants that their common object should be to defeat Jackson in order "to break down the corrupt influence which now administers the government in his name....""117

Obviously the election in Virginia turned on Van Buren's candidacy. Undoubtedly most Virginia Democrats preferred Barbour as their native son, but consented to support Van Buren as "the strongest republican candidate."118 In October the Democratic Central Corresponding Committee, dominated by the Junto, issued an address to the state's citizens. Operating under the assumption that Jackson's candidacy remained unassailable, the Committee devoted nearly two-thirds of the address to denouncing Barbour's nomination and defending Van Buren. The address described Van Buren as a states rights man of the Virginia school, and concluded that "to a judgment clear, vigorous, and comprehensive, he adds the advantage of years of experience in the councils both of his own state and of the nation, of an untiring industry and imperturbable equanimity, and a simplicity and affability of demeanor, the offspring of

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117 Duff Green to John H. Pleasants, August 27, 1832, Green Papers, LC.

118 C.W. Gooch to C.C. Cambreieng, November 3, 1832. Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.
republican habits and opinions. . . ."\textsuperscript{119} The Junto remained solidly
behind Van Buren, looking to him as "the prop and pillar of our prin-
ciples hereafter."\textsuperscript{120} Van Buren, because of Jackson's endorsement, at-
tracted a great deal of support west of the mountains in Virginia where
Jackson's actions had always been popular.\textsuperscript{121} The Democrats had achieved
their party unity just in time for the election.

The Virginia election results offered a tremendous mandate for
the Jackson-Van Buren ticket as they polled 45,647 votes, 79.6 per cent
of the vote.\textsuperscript{122} The Jackson-Barbour ticket won 244 votes even though
Barbour had withdrawn and endorsed Van Buren. The Clay-Sargeant ticket
garnered 11,433 votes, 19.9 per cent of the total vote, while Wirt, run-
ning on the Anti-Masonic ticket, received a paltry three votes. Jackson's

\textsuperscript{119}Enquirer, October 16, 1832.

\textsuperscript{120}C.W. Gooch to John Campbell, October 8, 1829, Gooch Family
Papers, Virginia Historical Society. Although this letter was written
three years before the campaign, both Gooch, a Junto associate and
Campbell, named Treasurer of the United States by Jackson, firmly sup-
ported Van Buren.

\textsuperscript{121}Daniel Steenrod to Martin Van Buren, November 18, 1832, Van
Buren Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{122}Election Returns, 1832 General Election, Virginia State
Library. Although 57,327 votes were cast, that turnout represented only
approximately 30.8 per cent of the state's adult white males. Of course
not all of Virginia's adult white males were eligible to vote, but since
voter registration figures are not available this is the most accurate
method of approximating voter turnout. See Richard McCormick, "New
Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," \textit{American Historical Review}, LXV
(January 1960), 292, Table I.

The pattern of voting in presidential elections by Virginia con-
stituencies altered little between 1828 and 1832. Areas which supported
Jackson in 1828 again voted for him in 1832, and the same held true for
the National Republican party. The coefficient of correlation between
the percentage of the vote cast, by constituency, for Jackson in 1828
and 1832 computed at 0.8986; the coefficient of correlation between
National Republican votes cast in the same elections was 0.8987. See
Appendix I for an explanation of methodology.
winning percentage margin of 56.7 per cent represented the greatest Democratic triumph in a presidential election in Virginia during the years between 1824 and 1844. Clay's percentage of the vote represented a decrease of 11 per cent from Adams' total in 1828. He carried only Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties in the southeast, along with the cities of Norfolk and Richmond. He won King George, Lancaster, and Loudoun Counties in the Northern Neck, and Berkeley, Jefferson, and Ohio counties west of the mountains.

Although the Democrats successfully attained unity and gave Jackson an overwhelming victory, the political scars of the campaign survived. Calhoun Democrats remained bitter over Jackson's patronage policies, his endorsement of Van Buren, and his failure to assert executive leadership for tariff reform. They found Van Buren particularly hard to accept, for they mistrusted both his states rights principles and his view of party. The Calhoun men recognized that Van Buren often subordinated ideology to the concept of party loyalty, and they feared he might sacrifice southern interests in the name of political expediency. The Richmond Junto, on the other hand, had firmly cast its lot with Jackson and Van Buren, and embraced Van Buren's new concept of party. Except for failing to reduce the tariff to a revenue level, Jackson had satisfied most Old Republican demands for an administration based upon states rights ideology. Furthermore, Van Buren had publicly accepted Jackson's principles as his own. Finally, Jackson's personal attraction should not be minimized. His attitude toward the bank and his administration of the federal government pleased many Virginians who thought they saw in Jackson an inclination to turn the country back to the outlook and status quo which had existed in Jefferson's time.
Indeed, as John William Ward suggests, for many, Jackson had become a "Symbol for an Age." 123

CHAPTER IV

NULLIFICATION AND DEPOSIT WITHDRAWAL:

THE SEEDS OF DISRUPTION

Andrew Jackson easily carried Virginia in 1832, yet his actions during the first two years of his second term engendered strife in the Virginia Democratic party. Jackson's actions during the crisis with South Carolina alienated many of his Virginia supporters and initiated the formation of an opposition party within the state. His withdrawal of federal deposits from the Bank of the United States provided further impetus for opposition party development, and by 1834 the Whig party emerged as a serious competitor to the Democrats. The Virginia Democrats, faced with internal party dissension and defections, labored during the first two years of Jackson's second term to maintain their position as the state's majority party.

Before the nullification controversy erupted Virginia Democrats asserted their control in the state legislature by overwhelmingly electing one of their members to the United States Senate. Littleton Waller Tazewell, pleading the press of private affairs, resigned in July 1832.1

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1Tazewell's letter of resignation, addressed to Governor Floyd and dated October 22, 1832, is reprinted in the Richmond Enquirer, December 6, 1832 (hereinafter cited Enquirer). Tazewell's colleague, John Tyler, regretted his resignation. See Tyler to Tazewell, November 16, 1832, John Tyler Papers, Library of Congress (hereinafter cited LC.).

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Many Democrats, especially the Richmond Junto, applauded his resignation, for Tazewell, though a states rights man, opposed some of Jackson's policies and had never been answerable to the Junto. However, the Democrats had not settled on any one candidate to run for the post when the General Assembly convened in early December 1832.

Several Democrats, including Henry St. George Tucker, William Segar Archer, Philip P. Barbour, John Randolph, William Cabell Rives, and William Branch Giles, received prominent mention for the post. Archer seems to have been dismissed at this time for lack of stature; Barbour apparently did not desire the nomination; and both Tucker and Giles lacked the strength to win election. Thus the choice lay between Rives and Randolph. The Junto and some other Democrats preferred to run Randolph for Tazewell's remaining term of two years and hold Rives for the following year to contest John Tyler's re-election. However, Randolph's supporters discovered that he could not beat Rives, and after failing in an attempt to postpone the election the Randolph faction joined together with the Rives men to preserve party unity and give Rives an overwhelming victory.

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2 Benjamin Watkins Leigh, an eastern states rights politician, earlier had urged Tazewell not to resign. He told Tazewell that Ritchie had hopes of replacing him with a more "manageable" man. Leigh to Tazewell, February 22, 1831, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library.

3 Charles Yancey to William C. Rives, December 3, 1832; John Rutherfoord to Rives, December 3, 1832; Francis E. Rives to Rives, December 4, 1832; Thomas Walker Gilmer to Rives, December 4, 1832; Thomas Ritchie to Rives, December 6, 1832; Gilmer to Rives, December 8, 1832; Claiborne W. Gooch to Rives, July 28, 1833, William C. Rives Papers, LC.


5 Thomas Walker Gilmer to William C. Rives, December 8, 1832, John Rutherfoord to Rives, Thomas Ritchie to Rives, December 10, 1832,
Although the administration party won a great triumph, before
Rives' election a good deal of questioning took place in the legisla-
ture regarding his "Tariff Faith." Many legislators considered him
a lukewarm states rights man. Rives had replied to this criticism in
a letter to Thomas Walker Gilmer and Charles Yancey, his chief support-
ers in the House of Delegates. He described himself as "Anti-Tariff,
Anti-Nullification, Anti-Bank, and yielding to no one in his thorough
support of General Jackson." Gilmer made a strong speech endorsing him,
and Gilmer's reputation as a states rights man carried the election for
Rives.  

Virginians looked to Andrew Jackson for tariff reform, but dur-
ing his first administration the President failed to provide leadership
in that direction. Some few of the state's citizens, led by Governor
John Floyd, countenanced nullification if the tariff was not modified. However most Virginians abhorred nullification, and Floyd's endorsement
of it prompted a flood of newspaper editorials against him. Many of

ibid. Rives received all 31 votes cast in the state Senate, and all but
6 of the 128 cast in the House of Delegates. Randolph received 3 votes,
Barbour 2 votes and Governor Floyd 1 vote. See the Enquirer, December
11, 1832.

6 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, December 10, 1832, Rives
Papers, LC.

7 Thomas Walker Gilmer to William C. Rives, December 10, 1832,
ibid. Rives to Gilmer and Yancey, December 10, 1832, is reprinted in the
Richmond Whig, December 14, 1832. As Gilmer's biographer, Martin Boyd
Coyner, notes in "Thomas Walker Gilmer, 1802-1836: Origins of a Virginia
Whig" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1954), p.213,
Gilmer would regret that endorsement until the day he died, for Gilmer
and Rives split over Jackson's handling of the nullification controversy,
with Gilmer ultimately joining the Whig party.

8 Governor's Annual Message to the General Assembly, reprinted in
the Enquirer, December 3, 1831.

9 See the Lynchburg Virginian, December 12, 1831. Winchester
the state's newspapers agreed with the Wellsburg Gazette's description of nullification as "absolutely subversive of the Union." Even Benjamin Watkins Leigh, the conservative lawyer from Richmond who later became a leading states rights Whig, regarded nullification as a "great and incalculable evil."

The nullification crisis threatened Jacksonian supremacy in Virginia and provided the impetus for opposition party development. On November 24, 1832, South Carolina nullified both the Tariff of Abominations and the Tariff of 1832. Jackson responded with his proclamation of December 10, in which he condemned nullification as "incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed." He accused the South Carolina nullifiers of plotting to destroy the union, and he promised to fulfill his duty as President by faithfully executing the laws. Jackson's proclamation reverberated throughout Virginia. With the conflict between South Carolina and the national

10 Wellsburg Gazette, September 14, 1832.


government delineated, Virginians began to take sides. The Democratic party temporarily lost its majority status to a coalition composed of National Republicans and defectors from Jacksonian ranks.

Governor John Floyd had split with Jackson during Old Hickory's first term. As Virginia's chief executive Floyd provided institutionalized opposition to counterbalance Democratic strength in the General Assembly. He referred to Jackson's proclamation as "the disgusting prostitution of President Jackson," and Mrs. Floyd, using language frequently employed by her husband, described Jackson as "a bloody, bawdy, treacherous, lecherous villain." In mid-December, Floyd sent a message to the General Assembly calling for sympathy for South Carolina and opposition to Jackson's proclamation. He noted in his diary the sensation which his message produced: "The minions of Jackson, Ritchie, the Tory son of a Tory father, P.N. Nihcolas, P.V. Daniel, Wyndham Robertson, and D. Willson, the three Councillors of State, Banks, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and Dromgoole, the Speaker of the Senate, are agitated. These wretches have deserted their principles and the liberties of the people for that tyrant, Jackson."14

14 John Floyd to Littleton W. Tazewell, December 28, 1832; Mrs. Floyd to Floyd, January 1, 1833, John Floyd Papers, LC. Typical of Floyd's hatred for Jackson is this withering comment on the President, recorded in Floyd's diary, December 26, 1832: "I have often said and here state that Jackson is the worst man in the Union, a scoundrel in private life, devoid of patriotism and a tyrant withal, and is only capable of using power that he may have the gratification of seeing himself obeyed by every human being. He speaks the language ungrammatically, writes it worse and is exceedingly ignorant, but strange to tell, he is feared and most all seem disposed to give up their liberty rather than to encounter his frown and many, very many, seem willing to let him rule, the arbitrary despot, provided they can obtain office. Thus office and a base love for gold and power have mainly contributed to enslave us by a brutal, ignorant soldier." Charles H. Ambler, ed., "Diary of John Floyd," John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, v (June 1918), 201.

15 "Floyd Diary," 199-200.
States rights politicians for the first time since 1820 had to weigh seriously the benefits of union against their ideology which pos- ited the supremacy of the states over the federal government. Many refused to "gulp down all the monstrous absurdities of the ultra-federal proclamation." Practically all Virginia states rights Democrats, regard less of whether they eventually broke with Jackson or followed his leadership, regretted his proclamation. Like William F. Gordon, they felt that South Carolina had acted impetuously, and they hoped that Jackson would not respond likewise. As Gordon wrote, "a little prudence in our rulers would yet compose everything. Of that, however, there is but slight hope, and if the good sense of the people does not overrule the madness of the rulers, great confusion may ensue." The desertion of two of the Democracy's leaders, Littleton W. Tazewell and Senator John Tyler, portended an ominous future for Virginia's Democrats. Tazewell denounced Jackson's proclamation in a series of essays originally published in the Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald and later compiled in a pamphlet entitled A Review of the Proclamation. Vigorously upholding the right of nullification and ultimately secession, Tazewell disputed Jackson's claim of executive authority to enforce the laws against a dissenting state. John Tyler likewise broke with Jackson

16 George F. Boswell to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, January 21, 1833, "Correspondence of Judge Tucker," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, XII (October 1903), 84-85


18 Littleton W. Tazewell, A Review of the Proclamation of President Jackson of the 10th of December, 1832, in a Series of Numbers Originally Published in the "Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald" (Norfolk: J.D. Ghiselin, 1888), passim.
over the proclamation. Speaking in the Senate, Tyler warned Jackson that the tariff was not "exclusively a South Carolina question... It is a Southern question. Every state on the other side of the Potomac feels alike interested in it."20

In his Enquirer, Thomas Ritchie assumed the lead among Virginia Democrats in supporting Jackson's proclamation. On December 13 Ritchie editorialized his approval of the sentiment behind the proclamation if not the wording itself.21 Ritchie considered himself a states rights Democrat opposed to a protective tariff. But he described nullification by one state "as an absurd and a dangerous heresy... We dislike this remedy of Nullification not only in itself; but we dislike the manner, the time, the circumstances under which it is to be employed."22

Democrats in other areas of the state also came out in support of Jackson's position. Like Ritchie they opposed the protective tariff but refused to sanction nullification as a legal means of redress. Although many Democrats east of the Blue Ridge mountains considered themselves states rights men, most supported Jackson's proclamation as a legitimate exercise of his executive duty under the constitution. Henry A. Wise, in a campaign speech at York County court in March 1833, indicated that Virginia's Eastern Shore endorsed the states rights doctrine.


21 Enquirer, December 13, 1832.

22 Ibid., December 11, 1832.
of a tariff for revenue only, yet opposed nullification. Many Democrats west of the Blue Ridge favored a protective tariff. The Wellsburg Gazette approved Jackson's proclamation while the local Rockbridge County newspaper stated that the proclamation deserved a place alongside the Declaration of Independence.

Throughout the nullification controversy the Virginia Democratic party walked an ideological tightrope in an attempt to maintain both its unity and allegiance to Jackson. Virginia Democrats traced their ideological heritage back to Thomas Jefferson's and James Madison's actions and writings during the early days of the republic. Specifically, they worshipped the ideas put forth by Madison and Jefferson in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798. Unfortunately, the two men did not agree on nullification. Jefferson seems to have accepted nullification as a final revolutionary right. Madison denied this possibility and attempted instead to limit the doctrines of the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions to the right of protest.


24 Wellsburg Gazette, January 17, 1833; William Taylor to James McDowell, n.d., quoted in Charles H. Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia From 1776 to 1861 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910), pp.213-14. Even states rights-oriented opposition newspapers supported Jackson. The Alexandria Gazette on December 17, 1832, generally approved the proclamation, but took exception to "its ultra national doctrines, in which, indeed, the President goes somewhat too far for us."

Claiborne W. Gooch, Ritchie's former partner on the Enquirer, offered the clearest interpretation of the Virginia Democratic party's consensus on the theory and application of nullification during the controversy. In a letter to William Segar Archer, Gooch granted the moral right of any state to secede, but pointed out that its exercise "involves great consequences, and might result most disastrously. . . . A state may peaceably withdraw, pay her fair share of the public debt and federal engagements, and resume her original sovereignty and independence. But this is no constitutional right--for the constitution binds us together in one perpetual union--and the right of secession is a right paramount to the constitution--it is revolutionary."²⁶

Many of the Virginia Jackson men, adopting the Jeffersonian position urged by Ritchie and the Junto, viewed nullification and secession as revolutionary measures. At the same time they retained their unmilitated hostility toward the idea of a protective tariff.²⁷ On the first day of the new year, 1835, Ritchie editorialized in his Enquirer that Virginia should assume the role of mediator in the nullification crisis.²⁸ The state legislature, then in session, wasted little time in following Ritchie's suggestion.

On January 18 the House of Delegates adopted by the overwhelming vote of 129-1 a series of resolutions on federal relations. These resolutions assumed for Virginia a position as mediator in the nullification crisis.

²⁶ Claiborne W. Gooch to William Segar Archer, December 27, 1832. Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.

²⁷ See the editorial in the Enquirer, January 3, 1833. In June 1832 Ritchie warned Van Buren that the South demanded a reduction in the tariff. See Ritchie to Van Buren, June 25, 1832. Martin Van Buren Papers, LC.

²⁸ Enquirer, January 1, 1833.
controversy. The resolutions called upon the state's representatives in Congress to modify the tariff, requested South Carolina to suspend the operation of its ordinance until the close of the first session of the next Congress, and called upon both parties in the dispute to refrain from acts which may "disturb the tranquility of the country, or endanger the existence of the Union." On January 26 both houses of the General Assembly unanimously elected Benjamin Watkins Leigh their commissioner to South Carolina, and charged Leigh to convey to the Palmetto State Virginia's desire that she postpone nullification until Congress ended its session. The legislature hoped that delay would buy time for Congress to enact a compromise tariff and thus avoid any armed confrontation between South Carolina and the federal government.

The resolutions of the House of Delegates supported Jackson's goal of union though they did not sanction what many Virginians called the ultra-federal doctrines of his proclamation. Governor Floyd, however, continued to lead Virginia's opposition to Jackson. On January 25, in a message accompanying a set of resolutions sent to the General Assembly by the South Carolina legislature, Floyd called for repeal of the tariff laws and stated that "the doctrines lately promulgated [in Jackson's proclamation], deny any sovereignty to the states--and state rights, it would seem, in the opinion of the President, are held as grants from the Federal Constitution."

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29 Ibid., January 19, 1833.

30 Ibid., January 29, 1833. In the midst of the debate over the resolutions on federal relations the House of Delegates defeated overwhelmingly, 107-24, a resolution which affirmed confidence in Jackson, endorsed his proclamation, and denied the right of secession. Ibid., January 15, 1833.

31 Ibid., January 29, 1833. Ritchie, on February 2, denounced
Ritchie feared the potential divisive effect of the nullification controversy on the Virginia Democratic party. He warned Rives in early January that Jackson's rumored request for more power to put down South Carolina might prostrate Virginia's Jacksonians. According to Ritchie, Jackson's popularity in Virginia could not stand the shock; even his best friends in the state would condemn the measure, and "the Jackson Party in this quarter would, in all probability, be shivered to pieces." He urged Rives to seek in the Senate a policy of moderation, to put the nullifiers in the wrong by waiting for overt action on their part before granting Jackson's request for a force bill. After the House of Delegates passed its resolutions Ritchie asked Rives to confer with Andrew Stevenson, Junto member and Speaker of the House of Representatives, and urged that both of them confer with George McDuffie of South Carolina. He begged them to work for a compromise that would bring both parties to an amicable settlement and prevent an angry and useless debate on the floor of Congress.  

With Congress slow to move toward a compromise settlement the condition of the Jackson party in Virginia became critical. Thomas Jefferson Randolph told Rives that if the tariff bill failed and a force bill passed, delegates in the Virginia legislature who represented areas east of the Blue Ridge mountains would flock en masse to South Carolina's aid. He also thought it "more than probable" that Ritchie would come out

Floyd's message, and denied that it caught the tone of Virginia public opinion.

32 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 6, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.

33 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 18, 1833, ibid.
against the administration. 34 Charles Yancey warned Rives that because of the excitement among the states rights faction in the General Assembly over the idea of a force bill, "Jackson must come out at his inaugural and give a calm to his Republican friends, or he will have a rough time." 35

The legislature became restless, and as the weeks passed support for Jackson began to wane among the states rights Democrats. They worried that he might usurp power in his pledge to enforce the law against South Carolina, thereby trampling upon the rights of the states. Furthermore, they feared that he did not support tariff reform. Although the General Assembly had overwhelmingly elected a Jacksonian to the U.S. Senate in December 1832 and passed in mid-January a series of resolutions on federal relations which called for a compromise tariff, by February the Jackson men were rapidly losing control of the legislature.

As Ritchie warned Rives, Jackson's popularity in Virginia could not stand a force bill. On February 7 rumors began circulating in Richmond that the Assembly would instruct Virginia's senators to vote against any bill "to provide for the Collection of the Revenue." 36 States rights men in the legislature knew that John Tyler would never endorse a force bill. They worried, however, about Rives, for in the debates prior to

34 Thomas Jefferson Randolph to William C. Rives, February 21, 1833, ibid. George Blow told his congressman, John Y. Mason, that if the federal government tried to coerce South Carolina with arms, the South would go with her, "for her principles are theirs, her interest, theirs; her cause--theirs." "Nullification and War," Tyler's Quarterly, I(April 1920), 276-81.

35 Charles Yancey to William C. Rives, February 18, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.

to Rives' election his views on the tariff had been seriously questioned. Indeed, there was some talk in mid-February about inviting Rives to resign his seat. 37

Alexander Knox, a states rights Democrat from Mecklenburg County, introduced on February 19 in the House of Delegates a set of resolutions instructing Virginia's senators to oppose any force bill. These resolutions represented the first thrust of the House of Delegates against Jackson's administration, and were designed in part to put Rives on notice that the legislature now opposed Jackson's apparent intent to expand national authority over the states. Members of the legislature knew that Rives opposed the right of instruction, but feared that he would vote for a force bill. 38 Joseph Watkins of Goochland County, a Junto associate and one of only a few delegates from east of the Blue Ridge to support Jackson in the controversy, moved to table the resolutions. Watkins hoped to avoid debate on a force bill which might splinter the Democratic party. He failed to have the resolutions tabled but succeeded in indefinitely postponing their consideration. 39

Most of the members of the House of Delegates opposed both nullification and a force bill. Following their self-proclaimed role as mediators the delegates preferred to give Congress time to act on a compromise tariff, and hoped that the issue of a force bill would not arise.


Besides, by late February the enactment of a compromise tariff appeared likely. Senator Tyler opposed a force bill, emphasizing that he preferred a state veto to despotism.\textsuperscript{40} Many of the delegates had voted for Rives as a states rights man on the assurances of their colleague, Thomas Walker Gilmer. Although Rives defended Jackson's proclamation in a Senate speech earlier in February,\textsuperscript{41} most of the state legislators hoped that he would not support a force bill if it ever reached the Senate. However, when the Senate took up the bill Rives joined thirty-one other senators in support of the measure while Tyler cast the only nay vote.\textsuperscript{42}

In the House of Representatives the Virginia delegation split thirteen to eight against the force bill, with Speaker Andrew Stevenson not voting.\textsuperscript{43} All but two of the Virginia representatives from east of the mountains opposed the bill, while all of the representatives from districts west of the mountains supported the measure. Only four of the eight yea votes cast by Virginia representatives came from Democrats. Remarkably, all thirteen of the nay votes came from men who had been elected as Jacksonians in 1831.\textsuperscript{44}

Contemporaneous with its passage of the force bill Congress enacted a compromise tariff. This settled the nullification controversy,

\textsuperscript{40}Tyler, Letters and Times, I, 447.

\textsuperscript{41}Register of Debates in Congress, IX, 22 Cong., 2 Sess., 493 ff.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., 688.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 1903.

\textsuperscript{44}These computations are based upon party identifications made by the Lynchburg Virginian, September 19, 1831, after the Virginia congressional elections.
for although South Carolina nullified the force bill she rescinded her
nullification of the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 and accepted the compro-
mise tariff. Both of Virginia's senators supported the compromise tar-
iff, while among the Virginia representatives only Charles Fenton Mercer,
the old Federalist, opposed the compromise.\footnote{\textit{Register of Debates, IX, 22 Cong., 2 Sess., 808-09, 1810-11.}}

Newspapers throughout Virginia accepted the compromise tariff
with great relief. They generally agreed with Ritchie, who wrote in the
\textit{Enquirer}: "It is not the best bill to which we are entitled--nor in all
probability the best which the whole moral force of the United South
could have wrung from the next Congress.--But, we take it for the pre-
sent for what it is worth. . . . And we, for one, shall hail the measure
with sincere satisfaction."\footnote{\textit{Enquirer}, March 2, 1833. See also the \textit{Lynchburg Virginian},
March 2, 1833. Governor Floyd claimed the compromise tariff as a victory
for South Carolina, and said that Jackson would have been defeated by
Virginia troops if he had shed one drop of blood. "Floyd Diary," 208.} As a Democrat, Ritchie rejoiced over the
compromise tariff. If Jackson had moved with force against South
Carololina, he likely would have destroyed the Virginia Democratic party.
Nevertheless, Jackson's failure to assert effective leadership for tar-
iff reduction, when combined with the ultra-nationalistic pronouncements
in his proclamation, severely damaged his party in Virginia.

Jackson's proclamation thoroughly disrupted existing party align-
ments in the state. The Democratic party encompassed both states rights
men and nationalists oriented toward the leadership of Andrew Jackson.
The National Republican party had been composed basically of Clay support-
ers and a few ultra-states rights men who opposed Jackson's patronage
policies and feared that he would prove soft on tariff reform. Then came
the nullification controversy and the old bases for party alignment crumpled as politicians once again debated the fundamental question of the American federal system, states rights versus national power.

National Republicans and Jacksonians alike testified to the disruptive effect of Jackson's proclamation on parties in Virginia. John Tyler asked his former senate colleague, Littleton W. Tazewell, if men had ever been "so deceived as we have been, I mean the old democratic school, in Jackson. His proclamation has swept away all the banners of the constitution and gives us in place... a military despotism."\(^{47}\)

John W. Murdaugh, a National Republican, described several factions in the legislature while picturing the state of parties during the mid-January debates over the resolutions on federal relations. He identified a few of the states rights men "who are willing to resolve, and ready to maintain their resolves;" another "party of States Rights, who are willing to resolve next winter. ... another party that will resolve, but will not maintain--another which may be designated, The Ritchie and Co. Party which. ... considers it High treason and magnatum scandalatum to utter ought in opposition to the sovereign will of his most august majesty, our good master the autocrat of all the Americas." He also identified an old Federalist party, and many other parties "too tedious to mention."\(^{48}\)

John Hampden Pleasants, editor of the Richmond Whig, likewise


\(^{48}\)John W. Murdaugh to John Tazewell, January 12, 1833, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library.
depicted a number of factions and "some shades of parties" in the legislature. One group of "honest States-rights men... determined to stand up for their principles, though Jackson stand at the door..." He identified another major faction as "honest Federalists and latitudinarians" who opposed states rights but not the doctrines in Jackson's proclamation. Reserving his harshest words for his editorial opponent on the Enquirer, Pleasants described a third major faction as "the trainbands--the Swiss--the mean dogs who obey the guidance of Ritchie and Company--who are loud professors of the faith, but would sacrifice all rather than incur the displeasure of the hero..."\(^{49}\)

Virginia Jackson men also testified to the disruptive effects of the proclamation. After Jackson's proclamation the more radical states rights wing of the Virginia Democratic party stepped forward to assume leadership.\(^{50}\) Writing to Senator Rives in late February, Thomas Jefferson Randolph described the confused state of parties in the legislature. Randolph pictured in the House of Delegates a majority faction composed of "the advocates of Mr. Calhoun, disunion, southern confederacy, metaphysical politicians, and well-meaning republicans." In the minority he pictured "well-meaning republicans, Clay men, Jackson, tariff and anti-tariffs, and old fashioned Federalists." According to Randolph, no administration party existed; the majority faction opposed Jackson

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\(^{49}\) John Hampden Pleasants to John Tyler, January 1, 1833, in Tyler, Letters and Times, I, 451-52. Democrats had little love for Pleasants. C.W. Gooch described him as "a political bigot; the meanest, most malignant, sneaking, honor-wanting Rascal that lives." Gooch to William C. Rives, July 28, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.

\(^{50}\) C.W. Gooch to William Segar Archer, December 27, 1832, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. Thomas Jefferson Randolph to William C. Rives, February 21, 1833, Rives Papers, LC. Andrew Jackson to Martin Van Buren, December 23, 1832, Van Buren Papers, LC.
"decidedly," while the minority "inclined to a qualified support."  

Jackson's proclamation, in addition to disrupting existing party alignments, initiated the formation of new ones. Temporarily, sectional lines replaced party as the basis for operation in the Virginia General Assembly during early 1833. In the legislature most delegates from east of the Blue Ridge united in a states rights faction to command a majority in the Assembly. Yet divisions existed within this faction. All of the states rights men denounced the tone of Jackson's proclamation and the Force Bill. Some, like Senator Tyler and Littleton W. Tazewell, refused to accept the ideological implication of strong national power which underlay Jackson's actions during the nullification controversy. Hence they left the Democratic party. However, most states rights Jacksonians, though uncomfortable with Jackson's strong executive action, remained with the party for both ideological and political reasons. Although states rights theory postulated the supremacy of the states over the national government, most Virginia states rights men did not embrace Calhoun's metaphysical approach to the process of nullification and secession during the crisis. Instead, they looked upon nullification and secession as revolutionary rights, and chose to rely upon the political process to achieve their goal of tariff reduction. Virginia had delivered a massive majority for Jackson in 1832, and most states rights politicians, particularly the Richmond Junto, refused to believe that Jackson would ignore their demands for a lower tariff.

A minority of strong nationalists, composed of Jacksonians and National Republicans, constituted the other faction within the General

51 Thomas Jefferson Randolph to William C. Rives, February 21, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.
Assembly. These men, coming from the extreme western Piedmont or west of the mountains, agreed only that Virginia should attempt to mediate the nullification controversy. Jacksonians within this faction, drawn to Jackson by his politics and charisma, had no qualms about his vigorous executive activity during the crisis. National Republicans, on the other hand, strenuously opposed Jackson politically and personally, but held greater contempt for states rights theory and nullification. Hence they endorsed Jackson's proclamation and the Force Bill.

The General Assembly adjourned in March in this confusing state of party affairs. Ritchie, attempting to reestablish a broad ideological base for the Virginia Democrats, printed the Enquirer's political creed in mid-March. Because of the Junto's position within the Democratic party, the creed of the Enquirer must be deemed the political doctrines of those Virginia states rights men who remained loyal to Jackson. According to the creed, people within the states, acting as states, ratified the federal constitution. Therefore sovereignty belonged to the states, and the limited powers of the federal government should be strictly construed. The creed rejected nullification but upheld state interposition through congressional or electoral actions, state appeals to Congress, or a convention of states. If such actions failed, secession, after a warning, was justifiable. The protective tariff, federally-financed internal improvements, and the U.S. Bank were pronounced contrary to the federal constitution. Ritchie closed by admitting that Jackson's proclamation was "ill-advised," but he defended Jackson as a patriot who had done much to restore states rights. 52

52 Enquirer, March 15, 1833. Like the Enquirer's creed, C.W. Gooch's definition of states rights republicanism stressed a pragmatic ideology: "Republicanism and States Rights, to be of any value, must

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The Democrats saw their fears confirmed in the spring 1833 congressional elections. In 1831 the National Republicans elected four of Virginia's twenty-two representatives. However, in 1833 the opposition to Jackson more than doubled its membership in the Virginia congressional delegation by electing nine of the state's twenty-one representatives. Significantly only four of the nine originally supported Clay. The other five, James H. Gholson, John Randolph, William P. Taylor, John M. Patton, and William F. Gordon, left the Jackson party during the nullification crisis.

Precise determination of party sentiment among men elected to the General Assembly during the April elections is more difficult, for in 1833 national party organizations had little to do with election to the state legislature. Instead, personalities and local issues more often dominated the contests. Although the Democrats elected a majority

have some practicability about them. They ought not to destroy the Constitution; undermine the ramparts of liberty; or, in the slightest degree, weaken the sacred bond of Union. Everything is unconstitutional or revolutionary, which cannot be practiced without inequality, injustice, or without violating the Charter, or stopping the wheels of government." Gooch to William C. Rives, July 28, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.

53 Lynchburg Virginian, September 19, 1831; May 9, 1833. In February the opposition to Jackson returned John Tyler to the Senate. Tyler received 81 votes, James McDowell, the Jacksonian candidate, 62, with 17 votes scattered. Enquirer, February 16, 1833.

54 They were Charles F. Mercer of Aldie, Samuel McDowell Moore of Lexington, John J. Allen of Clarksburg, and Edgar C. Wilson of Morgantown.

55 Lynchburg Virginian, May 8, 1833.

56 For this session, party identification in the state legislature cannot be made from actions in the state legislature for two reasons. On purely state political issues, and often on state patronage positions, personalities replaced national party affiliation as the dominant factor. Secondly, Jackson's withdrawal of deposits from the Second Bank of the United States in September 1833 undoubtedly altered the opinions of many state legislators. At any rate, by December 1833 a majority in the state legislature, as will be demonstrated below, was hostile to Andrew Jackson.
of the legislature during the spring elections, Jackson's withdrawal of the federal deposits from the Bank of the United States revolutionized Virginia politics and altered the outlook of legislators by the time the General Assembly convened in December.

II

Jackson interpreted his reelection, in light of his veto of the bank recharter bill, as a mandate given him by the American people to destroy the Second Bank. Instead of letting the bank die a natural death by expiration of its charter in 1836, Jackson decided to kill it immediately. Consequently in September 1833 he ordered his new Secretary of the Treasury, Roger B. Taney, to withdraw from the bank all government monies placed there on deposit. Historians have long disagreed over the motives for and consequences of Jackson's veto of the bank recharter bill, his withdrawal of the deposits, and the attitude of Jacksonians throughout the nation toward banks in general and the Second Bank of the United States in particular. What does seem clear, however, is that the bank issue, with all its political, economic, and social ramifications, became the leading party issue of the decade.


58 The literature on Jackson and the Jacksonian period is immense. Two of the best general surveys of Jacksonian historiography, although now somewhat outdated, are Alfred Cave, Jacksonian Democracy And The Historians (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), and Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Andrew Jackson versus the Historians," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIV(March 1958), 615-34. A more recent bibliography can be found in Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Personality and Politics (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1969), pp.352-93.

59 David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues Of The Jacksonian
Since 1804 Virginia had enjoyed a conservatively-managed state banking system. In 1804 the General Assembly created a branch banking system based upon the Scottish model when it issued a charter for the Bank of Virginia, capitalized at $1.5 million, with headquarters in Richmond and branches in Norfolk, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg. The state subscribed for one-fifth of the bank's capital. The Bank of Virginia monopolized Virginia banking until 1812 when the General Assembly chartered the Farmer's Bank of Virginia, headquartered in Richmond and capitalized at $2 million, with branches in Norfolk, Lynchburg, Winchester, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg. In 1814 the General Assembly gave the Bank of Virginia a new fifteen year charter and increased its capitalization, and in 1818 the legislature increased the capitalization of the Farmer's Bank and granted it an equal share in deposits of Virginia's revenues, heretofore kept in the Bank of Virginia.

In response to pleas for increased banking services from areas west of the mountains the General Assembly chartered three additional banks before 1837: the Northwestern Bank of Virginia, at Wheeling, and the Bank of the Valley of Virginia, at Winchester, both in 1817, and the Merchants and Mechanics Bank at Wheeling, in 1834. All three of these banks had branches, but they operated under small capitalization. Consequently the Bank of Virginia and the Farmer's Bank, both run by Junto members, dominated Virginia banking. John Brockenbrough presided over the Bank of Virginia from 1804 until 1845, and Philip N. Nicholas directed the Farmer's Bank from 1812 to 1837.60

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60 The best study of Virginia banking is George T. Starnes,
With the Junto dominating a stable, conservatively-managed, profitable state banking system, Virginia's Democrats predictably rejoiced over Jackson's veto of the bank recharter bill. Virginia bank notes circulated at par throughout the state, with the Bank of Virginia and the Farmer's Bank to a lesser degree providing the same role of economic regulation in Virginia as the Bank of the United States offered to the nation. Consequently Virginia's two largest banks resented the branches of the Bank of the United States at Richmond and Norfolk, viewing them as regulative competitors. Despite a recent study which points to fifty per cent support from Virginia state banks for recharter of the U.S. Bank, three of the four Virginia state banks opposed the recharter bill. Only the small-capital Northwestern Bank of Virginia


61 See Chapter III.

62 Jean Alexander Wilburn, Biddle's Bank: The Crucial Years (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p.44. Wilburn says that between 1826 and 1832, 34 requests were made for additional branches of the Bank of the United States, and four came from Virginia: "Wheeling, Petersburg, and Danville, located in what is now West Virginia, and Abingdon," p.57. Wilburn is geographically incorrect, for Petersburg and Danville are both located in southside Virginia. She is correct to the extent that more Virginians west of the mountains supported the national bank. Virginians west of the mountains tended to favor an enlarged state banking system which would provide them with increased services. Wilburn says that two of the four parent banks in Virginia indicated support for the Bank of the United States. The Northwestern Bank of Virginia at Wheeling did petition Congress in behalf of recharter. See House Journal, 22 Cong., 1 Sess., 385, for this memorial. She accepts Nicholas Biddle's statement to Richard Anderson, President of the Richmond branch of the Bank of the United States, that public reports of the Bank of Virginia showed "very kindly testimony in favor of the Bank." p.44. On the basis of this evidence she claims 50 per cent support from Virginia state banks for the Bank of the United States. Also on p.44 she says there were two branches of the Bank of Virginia, Richmond and Norfolk. This is incorrect, for the Bank of Virginia, headquartered in Richmond, in 1834 had branches in Norfolk, Petersburg, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, and Danville. Doubtlessly Wilburn's ignorance of Virginia banking operations and political alignments led her to these erroneous conclusions.
petitioned Congress to recharter the Bank of the United States. Its motives, moreover, were more fiscal than ideological. In Virginia only the notes of the Northwestern Bank, because of Wheeling's relative geographical isolation from the rest of the state, circulated at discount. It closely fit the stereotype of a "wildcat" bank operation but responded to the Bank of the United States recharter bill in an uncharacteristic fashion. The Northwestern Bank feared financial competition and regulation from the powerful Bank of Virginia more than from the Bank of the United States. Consequently it endorsed the Second Bank's recharter.

Although Virginia's Democrats unanimously supported Jackson's veto of the bank recharter bill, with nearly equal unanimity they opposed his withdrawal of deposits. The Democrats believed they had the bank at their mercy, and that it would die unless Jackson gave it the advantage of some false move to acquire new life. They looked upon the rumored deposit withdrawals as the very mistake Jackson could not afford to make. Jackson's proclamation had damaged the Virginia Democratic party, and Ritchie warned Rives that deposit withdrawal would compound that damage.

As Ritchie feared, deposit withdrawal revolutionized Virginia politics. The General Assembly, elected in April, began its session in December with practically a two-thirds administration majority, but by

64 Ibid., pp.21-22.
65 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, August 26, 1833, Rives Papers, LC.
the end of the session the odds had been reversed. Furthermore, public opinion became almost overwhelmingly anti-Jackson.66 In late September Ritchie's Enquirer expressed reservations about Jackson's authority to order deposit withdrawal. Ritchie preferred that Jackson leave the deposits in the bank, but unlike other newspaper editors he made no public judgment on Jackson's actions at this time.67 The Charlestown Virginia Free Press, describing the effect of deposit withdrawal, said, "The will of one man is now supreme, while we delude ourselves with the mere mockery of representative government."68 The Charlottesville Advocate revealed that Jackson's order to remove the deposits from the bank had done more to alienate the citizens of the town, many of them formerly strong Jackson men, than all the rest of Jackson's actions combined.69 In late 1833 and early 1834 county meetings throughout the state passed resolutions protesting Jackson's withdrawal of the deposits. Ritchie charged that these meetings were inspired by opposition party spirit,70 but as the Staunton Spectator indicated, no meeting had been held that sustained the president's actions: "This is a remarkable fact, and speaks a langu­age not to be mistaken."71

67 Enquirer, September 27, 1833.
68 Charlestown, Virginia Free Press, January 2, 1834.
69 Charlottesville Advocate, noted in the Alexandria Gazette, January 10, 1834.
70 Enquirer, February 4, 1834.
71 Staunton Spectator, quoted in Charleston, Virginia Free Press, February 13, 1834. Soon after Ritchie's denunciation of the opposition local meetings, anti-bank county meetings which regretted deposit withdrawal but praised Jackson for his opposition to the bank began being held throughout Virginia. See the Enquirer, February-March 1834, for examples.
Democrats who determined to adhere to Jackson, no matter how much they deplored deposit withdrawal, had to accept his actions and make the best of a bad situation in Virginia. Ritchie and many others privately admitted their disapproval of deposit withdrawal but publicly continued to oppose the bank and place their faith in Jackson. As C.W. Gooch wrote Martin Van Buren in March 1834, "I will never believe that General Jackson, after so boldly unfurling his flag, would strike it to the whippersnappers, the buckram script nobility of the Bank!!"

Ritchie launched a vigorous counterattack in the Enquirer to offset the mounting criticism of deposit withdrawal. He listed the options as either destroying the bank or submitting to its power. Ritchie conceded that the bank would not die an easy death, and he warned Virginia's citizens that unpleasant consequences and hard times might ensue from the "desperate convulsions" of "the monster. We are now paying the penalty of the sin," Ritchie editorialized, "which Clay and Calhoun and others entailed upon us in 1816. . . ." To quell the opposition of states rights men, Ritchie pointed out the alternatives and the inconsistency of their opposition to Jackson. By destroying the U.S. Bank Jackson eliminated a monopoly, and by depositing federal revenue in state

72 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 6, 1834, Rives Papers, LC. John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, March 19, 1834, Andrew Stevenson Papers, LC.

73 C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, March 24, 1834, Van Buren Papers, LC.

74 Enquirer, December 24, 1833. C.W. Gooch, Ritchie's former partner on the Enquirer, regretted Ritchie's tardiness in moving behind Jackson. Gooch felt that Ritchie was too cautious and timid: "He will not press the sound, enlightened opinions of his party with zeal, when they conflict with fence men." Gooch to Martin Van Buren, November 20, 1833, Van Buren Papers, LC.
banks he had placed the monies in banks regulated by each other and the states under whom they were chartered. To Ritchie it seemed "the very excess of folly" for a states rights man to oppose deposit withdrawal and the pet bank system, for in doing so he would simply be supporting the national bank.  

As the General Assembly moved into the second half of its session the "Nullifiers" and "Consolidationists" united in order "to break down the administration." While Rives defended Jackson in the Senate the Virginia legislature, urged on by radical states rights men and National Republicans, moved to undercut Virginia's support of Jackson. The opposition intended to embarrass Rives and force his resignation by employing the doctrine of instructions. States often instructed their senators to follow a specific course of action on matters before the Senate, but Rives had earlier made public his distaste for the concept of instructions.  

In early February both houses of the General Assembly passed a series of resolutions which denounced Jackson's withdrawal of deposits and at the same time reiterated states rights opposition to a national bank. The first resolution, adopted 83-41 in the House of Delegates

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75 Enquirer, December 27, 1833.
76 Ibid., January 23, 1834.
77 Register of Debates, X, 23 Cong., 1 Sess., 259 ff.
79 See Rives' letter of resignation from the Senate, infra., for the history of his position toward instructions.
80 For the resolutions and votes on them in the House of Delegates see the Enquirer, February 13, 1834. Senate action on the resolutions is
and 22-10 in the Senate, denounced Jackson's withdrawal of deposits as "a dangerous and alarming assumption of power... which cannot be too strongly condemned." The second resolution, passed by similar majorities in both houses, recorded the General Assembly's "apprehension and distrust" at Jackson's "disposition to extend his official authority beyond its just and proper limits." A third resolution, adopted by the narrow majority of 68-60 in the House and 17-15 in the Senate, instructed Virginia's senators and requested her representatives to work for the restoration of deposits in the national bank, if an investigation proved the bank to be a safe depository. The fourth resolution, endorsed overwhelmingly 97-27 by the House and 22-10 by the Senate, opposed Congress' power to create a National Bank. A fifth resolution, adopted overwhelmingly in the House but only by a 17-15 split in the Senate, stated that the unconstitutionality of the U.S. Bank in no way qualified the General Assembly's disapproval of Jackson's withdrawal of the deposits. The sixth resolution, passed without division in either house, instructed the Governor to send copies of the resolutions to Virginia's senators and representatives.

reported in ibid., February 15, 1834. A table of the votes on the resolutions in the House, broken down by sections and parties, follows. Party identifications are made from the House election of Benjamin Watkins Leigh to the U.S. Senate, a vote according to Ritchie which fell along strict party lines. ibid., February 27, 1854

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The votes on these resolutions demonstrate conclusively the strength of states rights ideology among members of the General Assembly. Although no unified opposition to Jackson existed at this time, radical states rights men and nationalists did join together in a coalition to attack the administration. 

Conversely, Jacksonian strength in the legislature had been disintegrating since Jackson's proclamation in December 1832. On these banking resolutions several Jacksonians joined with the opposition to denounce Jackson's withdrawal of deposits. More Jacksonians united with the opposition to express their "apprehension and distrust" at Jackson's extension of executive powers. Delegates from east of the mountains tended to be slightly more critical of Jackson's actions, while the only significant support for a national bank came from delegates representing counties west of the mountains.

However, the Jacksonian opposition in the General Assembly achieved its purpose through the resolutions by striking a blow at Jackson. Furthermore, they succeeded in embarrassing Rives into resigning his seat in the Senate. Tyler and Rives presented the Virginia resolutions on banking to the U.S. Senate on February 22, 1834. Tyler defended the resolutions but Rives, in a short speech, attacked the instructions as too vague and confessed that he could not follow them. Rives elaborated on his opposition to the instructions in a letter addressed to the Speakers of both houses of the General Assembly. He informed them that if the resolutions had instructed him to vote for a specific law he would

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81 Ibid., January 23, 1834.

82 Register of Debates, X, 23 Cong., 1 Sess., 636 ff. Ritchie diagnosed the opposition tactics and publicly encouraged Rives to uphold the right of instruction and remain in the Senate. Enquirer, February 22, 1834.
have compiled, no matter whether it violated his best judgment. However, Rives insisted that the instructions required him to vote for resolutions of opinion, specifically Clay's proposed censure of Jackson, and maintained that he could not do so without compromising his personal honor. The next day he submitted his resignation to the General Assembly. 83

By the spring of 1834 the Virginia congressional delegation, like the General Assembly, contained a majority opposed to the administration. Rives had been replaced in the Senate by Benjamin Watkins Leigh, a states rights man elected by the Jacksonian opposition. 84 On March 28, 1834, Leigh joined with John Tyler in supporting the U.S. Senate's censure of Andrew Jackson for ordering deposit withdrawal and assuming power for the executive not conferred by the federal constitution of laws. 85 In April the House of Representatives passed a series of banking resolutions supporting Jackson. The resolutions stated that the Bank of the United States should not be rechartered, that public deposits ought not to be restored to the Bank, and that state banks should be continued as places of deposit for federal monies. 86

Virginia's representatives divided thirteen to five in support of the resolution opposing recharter of the bank. The delegation split eleven to seven in favor of restoring the deposits to the bank, with nationalists and states rights men equally divided on both sides of the

83 Both letters are reprinted in the Enquirer, February 25, 1834.
84 Ibid., February 27, 1834.
85 Register of Debates, X, 23 Cong., 1 Sess., 1187.
86 Ibid., 5473-76.
vote. The same scattering existed in their twelve to six opposition to continuing state banks as places of deposit. The representatives' votes on these three resolutions indicated that a majority of Virginians in Congress, Jacksonians and opposition members alike, opposed recharter of the Second Bank. Secondly, the delegation's votes against the last two resolutions signified that a majority of the delegation opposed the administration's handling of the deposits. Like the General Assembly, a majority of the Virginia congressional delegation now opposed Jackson's administration.

The deposit withdrawal controversy pervaded Virginia politics throughout 1834. The Bank of Virginia, presided over by John Brockenbrough, gave up its pet bank status in January 1834. Fiscally, Brockenbrough worked with other bankers to pressure Jackson into restoring the deposits in order to bring a measure of economic stability to the country. Brockenbrough believed that a national system of branch banking could be instituted through a network of state banks. Ultimately he suggested the idea of a subtreasury system. Politically, as a Junto member Brockenbrough realized the threat that Jackson's actions in the deposit controversy posed to the Virginia Democratic party. In agreement with Ritchie and Philip Norborne Nicholas, President of the Farmer's Bank and a Junto member, Brockenbrough wrote Andrew Stevenson suggesting that, if possible, Jackson deposit all public monies received after June 1, 1834, in the Bank of the United States. They should remain there, unless otherwise ordered by Congress, until the Bank's charter expired in March 1836. By taking

87 John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, March 19, 1834, Stevenson Papers, LC.

88 McFaul, Jacksonian Finance, pp.39-41.
such action Brockenbrough hoped that Jackson might quiet public opposition. Otherwise, Brockenbrough warned, something must be done at once or the Democratic party faced disintegration over the banking issue. Only the president could restore the party to the confidence of the country.\textsuperscript{89}

With the Virginia Democratic party disintegrating in the General Assembly, the opposition pushed to gain control of the state. While describing the factionalism in the Virginia legislature Ritchie told Rives that the nationalists and states rights wings of the opposition were effecting a reapproachment which would probably be demonstrated in the gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{90} Ritchie indicated that the radical states rights men would probably run Littleton Waller Tazewell, the Clay men Edmund Watts of Botetourt, and the Jacksonians, Peter V. Daniel. Senator Tyler and Governor Floyd had urged Tazewell to let his name be placed in nomination, and late in 1833 Tazewell reluctantly consented to serve.\textsuperscript{91}

On January 7, Tazewell, Watts, Daniel, and Janes McDowell of Rockbridge County, the candidate of the western Democrats, were nominated. Tazewell polled sixty-seven votes on the first ballot, Watts forty-six, Daniel forty and McDowell seven. On the second ballot Daniel's total plummeted to two, McDowell increased his votes to twenty-two, Watts

\textsuperscript{89}John Brockenbrough to Andrew Stevenson, April 26, 1834, Stevenson Papers, LC. Ritchie publicly advocated the same course for the President. See the \textit{Enquirer}, January 9, 1834.

\textsuperscript{90}Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 6, 1834, Rives Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{91}John Tyler to Littleton W. Tazewell, December 3, 1833; Tyler to Thomas Walker Gilmer, January 7, 1834, Tyler Papers, LC. On November 25, 1833, in reply to Floyd's letter of November 8, Tazewell consented to let his name be used. Tazewell to Floyd, November 25, 1833, Floyd Papers, LC.
received fifty-three votes, and Tazewell won election with eighty-five votes, a majority of eight over the field. The Alexandria Gazette hailed Tazewell's election as "the entire defeat of Jackson Van Burenism in Virginia," but Ritchie's assessment that Tazewell, because of the confused state of political parties, had been elected by a combination of states rights men and administration members proved more accurate.

When Rives resigned from the Senate rather than carry out the Assembly's instructions the opposition factions within the legislature moved quickly to replace him. On February 26 they nominated Benjamine Watkins Leigh and the Democrats countered with Philip P. Barbour. Leigh won election on joint ballot by a majority of twelve votes, giving the opposition two major victories within a two-month time span. Although Tazewell's election assumed bipartisan features, Leigh's victory came on a straight party vote. The opposition, which assumed the label "Whig," hoped that Leigh, a states rights man, would take a "decided stand against executive abuse and usurpation of power."

Virginia Whigs, seeking to replace the Jacksonians as Virginia's majority party, worked to elect their candidates in the 1834 state legislative elections. C.W. Gooch wrote to Martin Van Buren that "the elections of Tazewell and Leigh and the united movement of the whole opposition through this state have encouraged the brandies among us to continue

92 Enquirer, January 9, 1834.
93 Alexandria Gazette, January 12, 1834.
94 Enquirer, January 9, 1834.
95 Ibid., February 27, 1834. Leigh received 86 votes, Barbour 71, with three scattered.
96 Alexandria Gazette, March 1, 1834.
to turn the screws. ..." 97 However, the Whigs remained ideologically disjointed, able to cooperate effectively only on the basis of opposition to Jackson. In fact, the Jacksonian opposition, which by March 1834 constituted a majority in the General Assembly, failed in their attempt to caucus and draw up a platform of their principles. 98 Girding for the state legislative elections, the Jacksonian minority caucused and drew up an address which praised Jackson's policies regarding internal improvements, the tariff, and the bank. 99

The opposition conducted their campaign on the basis of opposition to Jackson's vice president and hand-picked successor, Martin Van Buren. Ritchie labeled this tactic a "ruse de guerre." 100 The opposition carried the fight on a negative platform because they could not agree on positive national programs. Ritchie relished the thought that Whig nationalists and states rights men could never agree on the merits of a national bank, and he urged Virginia's Democrats to conduct the campaign on the basis of "Bank or no Bank!" 101 Although estimates of the election results vary, the Whigs barely managed a victory in the

97 C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, March 24, 1834, Van Buren Papers, LC.

98 C.W. Gooch to A Friend, April 12, 1834, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. William Henry Roane to Andrew Stevenson, March 8, 1834, Stevenson Papers, LC.

99 Enquirer, March 14, 1834.

100 Ibid., March 8, 1834.

101 Ibid., March 6, 1834. Ritchie may have been following the suggestion of C.C. Cambrelen, a Van Buren lieutenant, who wrote C.W. Gooch that "the contest with the Treasury and the quarrel with the Executive will soon be merged in the greater question of bank or no bank--and the bank against the people." See Cambrelen to Gooch, February 8, 1834, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.
elections, winning only a thin majority on joint ballot in the General Assembly. 102 And as Ritchie pointed out, many of those elected as Whigs also opposed a national bank. 103

Jackson's withdrawal of deposits destroyed Democratic supremacy in Virginia. Many states rights Democrats, although uncomfortable with Jackson's actions during the nullification crisis, stayed with him because of the danger nullification posed to the continued existence of the union. But they saw in deposit withdrawal a totally unnecessary, unconstitutional exercise of executive power. States rights theory preached the danger of a strong executive, and these defectors from Jacksonian ranks viewed cooperation with the National Republicans as a desirable alternative to continued support of executive usurpation. Yet not all states rights Democrats deserted Jackson. Those who remained in his camp also deplored deposit withdrawal, but continued to place their political faith in Jackson rather than embrace the nationalist doctrines of Henry Clay. Politically they had nowhere else to go, for they feared that nationalists would control the developing Whig coalition. With the exception of nullification and deposit withdrawal, Jackson had satisfied both their ideological and political demands. The Junto, trusting Vice President Van Buren implicitly, led the remaining Virginia Jacksonian nationalists and states rights men into his camp.

John Tyler attributed the Whig victory to opposition to executive

102 Ritchie estimated in the Enquirer, May 16, 1834, that the administration had won 58 or 59 of the 138 seats in the House, and 19 or 20 of the 32 Senate seats. The Richmond Whig, May 13, 1834, claimed the opposition elected 79 delegates to 55 for the administration in the House, with the remainder undecided.

103 Enquirer, May 16, 1834.
usurpation. But Virginia Whigs, like the Democrats, found that victory often brought more conflict than consensus within the party. Ritchie predicted that this "strange and unnatural" coalition could only find defeat in victory, "for when it comes to act upon any subject of policy or principle, not connected with hatred to Jacksonianism, it must fall to pieces and commence a war inter se. . . . Never was there a party in which the seeds of its won dissolution were more deeply sown. Principle must divide them--Policy may sever them--but the Presidential Election. . . must break them to pieces."105

104 John Tyler to Governor Littleton W. Tazewell, May 9, 1834, Tyler Papers. LC.
105 Enquirer, May 20, 1834.
CHAPTER V

A NEW PARTY SYSTEM:

THE WHIG CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC SUPREMACY

Jackson's strong executive actions initiated the formation of
a new opposition party in Virginia. Many of Virginia's states rights
Democrats supported South Carolina's position in the nullification con-
troversy while others such as Henry A. Wise, William Segar Archer, John
Strodte Barbour, and William Fitzhugh Gordon joined the opposition in
protest against Jackson's withdrawal of deposits from the Second Bank
of the United States. ¹ This new party, actually a heterogeneous coal-
tion of the old National Republicans and defectors from Democratic ranks,
assumed the name "Whig" in opposition to the usurpations of "King Andrew
I." In 1834 the Whigs temporarily replaced the Democrats as Virginia's
majority party. For the next two years Virginia's Democrats battled the
Whigs to regain their majority status.

¹See Chapter IV, supra.; Barton H. Wise, The Life of Henry A. Wise
of Virginia, 1806-1876 (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1899), pp.43-44,
65-66; James P. Hambleton, A Biographical Sketch of Henry A. Wise With a
History of the Political Campaign In Virginin in 1855 (Richmond: J.W. Ran-
dolph, 1856), p.xviii; Lyon G. Tyler, The Letters And Times of The Tylers
(3 vols., I and II: Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1884-1885; III:
Williamsburg, n.p., 1896), I, 476; regarding Archer see Martin Boyd Coyner,
see Barbour to William C. Rives, November 18, 1833, Rives Papers, Library
of Congress (hereinafter cited LC); for Gordon see Gordon to Littleton W.
Tazewell, May 14, 1834, Tazewell Papers, Virginia State Library.
Historians have long debated the origins and membership of the southern Whig party. Ulrich B. Phillips first identified the southern Whigs as the large planters "who were states rights men pure and simple and [who] joined the Whigs from a sense of outrage at Jackson's threat of coercing South Carolina." But Phillips also recognized that Jackson's other actions drove additional politicians and voters into the Whig Camp. Then Arthur C. Cole in his study of the southern Whig party described the Whigs as a broadly-based, anti-Jackson-Van Buren coalition drawn largely from the part of the community "which, by virtue of wealth and social position, were separated from the 'common people'." Cole, like Phillips, identified southern Whigs as members of the aristocratic planting and slave holding classes. The conflict of states rights versus nationalism lies implicit in both Phillips' and Cole's identification of southern Whigs, but their definitions neglect the nationalist-oriented Whigs in the South. To remedy this defect Charles G. Sellers advanced the thesis that states rights versus nationalism was not the main political issue in the South. According to Sellers, views on banking and financial policy determined party membership. Stressing the urban commercial nature of southern Whiggery, Sellers described the economic interrelationships between large staple producers and the bankers, factors, and merchants of the towns. He thus linked the cotton planters with

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urban commercial groups and identified these men as the principal elements of the Whig party. But the definitions of Phillips, Cole, and Sellers, by pointing to such numerically-small groups in the South, disregard the strong numerical strength of the Whigs in national, state, and local elections.

Historians have been no more successful in identifying Virginia Whigs. The only state study, Henry H. Simms' *Rise of the Whigs in Virginia*, accepts the Phillips-Cole definition. William R. Taylor, in a study of the old South and American national character, identifies Virginia Whigs as "Southern Mugwumps" suffering from a status revolution.

I will discuss and contrast Virginia Whig and Democratic constituencies later in this study. For the present Virginia Whigs can be described as a broadly-based coalition of nationalists and states rights men who united to oppose Andrew Jackson during his second term. This definition assists in explaining both the Virginia Whigs' lack of party organization and their deemphasis of ideology. For the most part the Whigs' vehemently anti-Jackson personal invective obscured any positive programs they put forth.

Historians have likewise disagreed over the date of birth for the Whig party. One places its effective birth as early as July 1832 in direct and explicit reaction to Jackson's veto of the bank recharter.
Yet in Virginia only National Republicans protested the veto. Henry H. Simms dates the birth of the Virginia Whig party from its triumph in the 1834 spring elections. But Simms' dating seems inaccurate, for in February 1834 the Virginia opposition to Jackson had already elected Benjamin Watkins Leigh to the Senate on a straight party vote. Actually the Virginia Whig party came into existence late in 1833, born out of the reaction to three successive actions of Jackson's administration: his proclamation against South Carolina in December 1832, the Force Bill of February 1833, and his order for deposit withdrawal in September 1833. Although the National Republicans and disillusioned Democratic states rights men did not agree on the bank or nullification, they united on the issue of Jackson's abuse of executive power as usurpation of the rankest sort. Consequently an active, albeit ill-organized Whig party coalesced during the 1833-1834 session of the General Assembly. The Richmond Whig, adopting the label Whig for the new party, defined its content: "A Whig in its pure signification, means one who prefers liberty to tyranny--who supports privilege against prerogative--the rights and immunities of the people, as ascertained by the equity of nature, the constitution and laws of the country, against the predominance of the Crown, or Executive power." 

Because of its diverse ideological heritage the Virginia Whig party initially operated solely on the basis of opposition to executive usurpation. Like the Democrats in 1828, the Whig party emerged in

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10 Simms, Rise of the Whigs, pp.85-86.

11 Richmond Whig, April 5, 1833 (hereinafter cited Whig).
Virginia because it opposed the prevailing drift of national politics towards a stronger national government. Initially, dissatisfied states rights men dominated the Virginia Whig party. National Republicans held membership in the party because they had nowhere else to go. Although the party alignments which appeared in 1834 ultimately proved unstable, they "date the recreation of a durable, competitive two-party situation" in Virginia. 12

II

After the Virginia Whigs won their narrow victory in the 1834 state elections they moved to reorganize the opposition to Jackson along formal lines. Seizing upon a suggestion put forth in the Richmond Whig by "An Original Jackson Man," the Charlestown Virginia Free Press endorsed an opposition state convention in the fall.13 Yet the convention proposal proved a stumbling block for the Whigs. Thomas W. Gilmer, a states rights Whig, advocated a Whig state convention to unite the party. Yet other states rights Whigs, fearful that they could not control such a meeting, suggested instead a convention of the states rights party. They feared that an opposition convention which included friends of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster might force the surrender of states rights principles, whereas a states rights convention would compel the nationalists to work with the states rights faction. Clay's backers especially would be forced to choose between Van Buren and the states


13Charlestown, Virginia Free Press, July 17, 1834.
right party, and undoubtedly would choose the latter. Ultimately nothing came of the proposal because from the very beginning the Whigs' ideological differences inhibited their organization.

Traditionally politics cooled off in Virginia during the summer months. However, the hot months of 1834 proved an exception as political tempers continued to flare in Richmond. Editorial battles raged between Ritchie and John H. Pleasants, the young editor of the Richmond Whig, over the merits of Jackson's administration. Ritchie received some assistance in this skirmish as new administration papers now began to spring up. Although the Whig press continued to predominate in the larger towns of the state, by July 1834 new administration newspapers had appeared in Petersburg, Martinsburg, Wellsburg, and Danville, and a prospectus had been issued for one in Lynchburg.

Virginia Democrats entered the 1834-1835 General Assembly session in a weakened condition. Governor Tazewell, like his predecessor

14 Duff Green to Richard K. Crallé, July 26, 1834, Duff Green Papers, LC.

15 William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, October 14, 1834, Van Buren Papers, LC.

John Floyd, had won election with the assistance of the Jacksonians. Yet like Floyd, Tazewell opposed Jackson's administration for trampling on the rights of the states. Whigs also controlled the General Assembly on joint ballot. This would enable them to elect their candidates to state and national office, and unfortunately for the Democrats an Executive Councillor and a United States Senator were up for election.

Party conflict over patronage dominated the 1834-1835 General Assembly. According to Ritchie the Whigs attempted to play out a five act drama, but successfully completed only three. They began shakily when they tried to organize the House of Delegates by electing their own man to the speakership. On the opening day of the session the administration members in the House nominated Linn Banks of Madison County for another term and the Whigs countered with Severn E. Parker of Northampton County. Although the Whigs controlled the House by a slim majority, the party could not discipline its members. Consequently Banks, who had served since 1818 as Speaker, narrowly won reelection.

The Whigs had more success in ousting Ritchie as public printer, a job which he had held since 1814. Since the post paid a lucrative $4800 per year Ritchie made a profit even though he contracted out the work. Whigs quite correctly denounced Ritchie as a Democrat partisan, though no evidence indicates that his politics affected the performance of his duties. At any rate the Whigs seized their first opportunity to depose him, and on December 6 by a straight party vote on joint ballot the Whigs elected Samuel Shepherd, the Whig candidate, public printer.

17 Enquirer, January 31, 1835.
18 Ibid., December 2, 1834. Banks won 62 votes, Parker 60.
19 Ibid., December 9, 1834.
Ironically, Shepherd had contracted with Ritchie to do the printing while Ritchie held the post. Ritchie attributed his ouster to "proscription for opinion's sake," noting that his was the first case in thirty years where a subordinate officer of the Virginia General Assembly had been removed because of his political opinions.20

Ritchie's neighbor and fellow Junto member, Peter V. Daniel, next felt the lash of the Whig majority. On January 16 the House and Senate proceeded to the election of an Executive Councillor to replace Daniel, whose term had expired. The Democrats renominated Daniel and the Whigs offered John S. Pendleton. Daniel received seventy-five votes in the House of Delegates, all but four coming from administration loyalists. Once again the Whigs could not enforce the discipline of their caucus and four ballots failed to effect an election.21 Two additional ballots the next day failed to resolve the issue. Daniel again received seventy-five votes on joint ballot, and the Whigs scattered their votes.22 Finally, on January 30 the Whigs withdrew Pendleton and substituted William H. McFarland, an ardent Whig from Norfolk. On the fourth ballot McFarland won election by a slim two-vote margin.23

The greatest Whig triumph in the session came with the reelection of Benjamin Watkins Leigh to the United States Senate. Attempting to

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., January 17, 1835. Daniel received the votes of four Whigs. Pendleton may have received one or two administration votes from men who resented Daniel's nomination because of his association with the Junto. Ritchie described Daniel as "sacrificed on the grim alter of Whiggism."
22 Ibid., January 20, 1835.
capitalize upon their majority in the legislature, the Whigs urged the
election of a senator as early in the session as possible. The Demo-
crats successfully delayed the election until late January, then turned
on Leigh with the same tactic the Whigs had used against Rives in 1834,
the right of instruction.

The Democrats, believing that Leigh supported the U.S. Bank, held county meetings that drew up resolutions opposing the bank. These
resolutions invariably denounced Leigh and instructed the county's re-
presentative in the General Assembly to vote against him in the senator-
rial election. The Democrats then circulated these resolutions through-
out the county. They collected the signatures of Democrats and anti-
bank Whigs and then transmitted the resolutions in the form of instruc-
tions to the county representative. In a number of counties a majority
of the voters signed these resolutions instructing their representatives
to oppose Leigh. Many Virginians west of the mountains hated Leigh
for his conservative opposition to both suffrage expansion and the re-
apportionment of representation in the constitutional convention of
1829-1830. Democrats hoped that the campaign of instructions against
Leigh, when joined with the residual opposition to him west of the moun-
tains, would cause enough Whigs in the General Assembly to desert their
party's candidate, thereby allowing the election of a Democrat.

The night before the election the Democrats caucused and

24 Ibid., January 27, 1835.

25 See ibid., November 1834-January 1835, for numerous accounts
of these meetings. A Berkeley County Jackson meeting adopted a typical
resolution: "Resolved, That monopolies of every sort and grade are in-
congenial to democratic principles, subversive of the dearest rights of
freemen. and odious in the sight of God and man." Charlestown, The Free
Press, December 25, 1834.
unanimously agreed to run William C. Rives. Although they had tried to postpone the election as long as possible in order to promote their instruction campaign, they failed and Leigh won reelection by an eighty-five to eighty-one vote on the first joint ballot.

John Hampden Pleasants praised Leigh's reelection as a rejection of Ritchie's influence: "As nations never know their own strength until after a successful rebellion, may the People of Virginia at length discover that it is possible to reject the dictation of Thomas Ritchie, and live!" But the Lynchburg Democrat attributed Leigh's reelection to the "ruthless violation of representative obligation." Possibly more than twelve members of the legislature did violate instructions from their constituents and support Leigh. Ritchie questioned whether Leigh could accept the office under such embarrassing circumstances since he owed his 1834 election to Rives' obedience to instructions, and in 1812 had authored a report to the General Assembly upholding the right of instruction. Ritchie pointed out that in 1834 Leigh defeated Barbour in the senatorial election by a majority of twelve, but one year later, in a legislature supposedly more Whiggish, his majority had shrunk to four. Looking to the spring legislative elections, Ritchie raised the Democratic battle standard by posing the question, "Leigh, or no Leigh?"

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26 Joseph Anderson to William C. Rives, January 30, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.

27 Whig, January 27, 1835

28 Enquirer, January 31, 1835.

29 Whig, February 3, 1835.

30 Lynchburg Democrat, reprinted in Enquirer, February 10, 1835.

31 Joseph Anderson to William C. Rives, January 30, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
Instructions, or no Instructions?\textsuperscript{32}

Whigs charged the Democrats with conducting the 1835 spring campaign on false issues. According to the Richmond Whig neither Leigh nor the right of instruction were the real campaign issues. Instead the Whig pointed to Virginia's vote in the presidential election of 1836 as the crucial question and put forward the name of Hugh Lawson White, a former Tennessee Jacksonian turned states rights Whig, as Virginia's choice for president in 1836.\textsuperscript{33} Ritchie pointed out that the Whigs seemed to be fighting two campaigns in one,\textsuperscript{34} and would have been driven from the field in February had they not invoked White's name.\textsuperscript{35} Just prior to the elections Ritchie analyzed the campaign from the Democratic viewpoint: "The Whigs... have on their side, the towns, the weight of the National Bank, and the number of presses—the mass of wealth, of lawyers' talents, and of the prejudices they are attempting to raise against the Little Magician.—The Republicans have Truth—the Justice of their cause, and the rights of the yeomanry of the land..."\textsuperscript{36}

Ultimately the Democrats' efforts paid off for they won massive victories in the state elections. They reversed their twenty-vote

\textsuperscript{32} Enquirer, January 31, 1835.
\textsuperscript{33} Whig, February 4, 1835.
\textsuperscript{34} Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, March 21, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
\textsuperscript{35} Enquirer, May 1, 1835.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., March 24, 1835. Lewis E. Harvie, a Piedmont Whig, complained that the Democrats were attempting to excite the ignorant poor against the educated rich. Harvie to Richard K. Cralle, March 16, 1835, Cralle Papers, Clemson University.
deficit in the House of Delegates into a twenty-two-vote majority while maintaining control of the Senate.\textsuperscript{37} One Whig newspaper attributed the Democrats' victory to their "unwaryed activity and irrepressible zeal."\textsuperscript{38} That same zeal carried over to the congressional elections where the Democrats regained control of the state's congressional delegation by a fifteen to six margin.\textsuperscript{39}

It is difficult to assign reasons for the Whig defeat. With the apparent political momentum in their favor they suffered a crushing defeat. Perhaps Leigh's acceptance of office in contradiction to his previous stand on instructions hurt the Whigs. Certainly the Democrats emphasized this theme during the campaign. Lewis E. Harvie, analyzing the Whig defeat in Powhatan County, stated that "death alone can put an end to the overwhelming influence of General Jackson."\textsuperscript{40} The influence of Jackson's personality upon politics in Virginia cannot be minimized. Although his actions in the nullification and deposit withdrawal crises stimulated the formation of the Whig party, contrary to Whig predictions the republic did not collapse and no military despotism materialized. Doubtlessly many Virginians had realized this by 1835, and after overcoming their original shock returned to support the Democratic candidates.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{37} Enquirer, May 12, 1835.\
\textsuperscript{38} Lynchburg Virginian, May 7, 1835. The Whig, May 5, 1835, in conceding defeat, raised the cry of "White or Van Buren--the South and her Principles, or the Albany Regency and Corruption--Dictation or no Dictation."
\textsuperscript{39} Enquirer, May 12, 1835\
\textsuperscript{40} Lewis E. Harvie to Richard K. Crallé, April 7, 1835, Crallé Papers, Clemson University.}
Democratic victories in the 1835 state and congressional elections initiated a two year period of dominance for the party in Virginia. In the 1835-1836 General Assembly session Democrats recouped their patronage losses in state government, restored William Cabell Rives to the U.S. Senate, and enunciated their faith in Andrew Jackson and his policies. However, they had to battle the Whigs for each of their victories, as both parties maneuvered with an eye toward carrying Virginia for their candidate in the approaching presidential election.

When the General Assembly convened in December the Democrats quickly asserted their control by reelecting Linn Banks to the speakership of the House and restoring Thomas Ritchie and Peter V. Daniel to their old positions of public printer and Executive Councillor. Virginia's Democrats then joined the national movement underway to expunge the 1834 Whig censure of Jackson by the U.S. Senate. In the General Assembly the Jacksonians worked to pass a series of resolutions which instructed the state's Whig senators to support expunging. Naturally the Whigs opposed these resolutions, and the debates over them provided a key test of party strength and discipline in the General Assembly.

Martin Van Buren visited William Cabell Rives at his Albemarle County home during November 1835, and shortly thereafter Rives journeyed

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Ibid., December 12, 17, 1835. Both Ritchie and Daniel won reelection by identical twenty-seven vote margins. The Whig, December 16, 1835, comparing their reelection to the operation of Van Buren's Albany Regency, stated that the "New York Screws [were] applied in full vigor."
to Richmond for the opening of the General Assembly. The Richmond Whig speculated that Van Buren offered advice on expunging and that Rives transmitted it to the party leaders in Richmond. At any rate, on December 14, 1835, Joseph Watkins of Goochland County, the Jacksonian leader in the House of Delegates, introduced resolutions instructing Virginia's senators to vote for Thomas Hart Benton's expunging resolution in the U.S. Senate.42

The Democrats hoped to use the expunging resolutions to achieve two goals. They wanted to instruct Virginia's senators to support removal of the Senate's censure of Jackson. Secondly, they hoped to regain the Senate seats, for they anticipated that Tyler and Leigh would resign rather than follow the instructions.43 They especially wanted to force out Leigh, for the Whigs had reelected him earlier in 1835 despite the successful Democratic campaign for local instructions opposing him. But Leigh had indicated privately to Tyler that he had no intention of resigning, despite his 1812 report to the General Assembly which upheld the right of instruction.44 The Democrats had more respect for Tyler's character and ability, and in light of the proposed instructions they provided him with an out. Rather than force Tyler forever into the Whig party the Democrats offered him a state circuit court judgeship if he would voluntarily resign his seat. However, Tyler

42 Whig, February 25, 1836. Describing the Virginia expunging resolutions, the Whig stated: "... the thing is so much like Van's sly ways... . . It is so sinister... , so double-faced, that he deserves the invention if not actually entitled to it.

43 John T. Anderson to William C. Rives, November 22, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.

44 Benjamin Watkins Leigh to John Tyler, July 5, 1835, in Tyler, Letters and Times, 1,523.
refused the offer. After lengthy debate the General Assembly adopted the series of expunging resolutions. They key votes in the House of Delegates on the first resolution instructing the senators to support expunging and the third resolution ordering the Governor to transmit the instructions fell along party lines, although an overwhelming bipartisan majority of the legislature supported the second resolution which reaffirmed the right of instruction.

Whigs described the resolutions as "servile in spirit and tendency... and dangerous to the public liberty and safety." Governor Tazewell refused to comply with the third resolution which requested him to transmit the resolutions to Virginia's senators. In his letter to Linn Banks, the House Speaker, Tazewell indicated that neither the law nor the state constitution required him to submit the resolutions. Tazewell believed they violated the U.S. Constitution, and he upheld his refusal on the basis of freedom of conscience. But Tazewell's refusal did not harm the Democrats' scheme. If Tyler and Leigh refused to obey the instructions they placed Virginia's Whigs in an embarrassing spot for both the state and presidential elections, because a majority of the Whigs in the General Assembly had reaffirmed the right of

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47 *Lynchburg Virginian*, February 25, 1836.

48 Tazewell's letter, dated February 22, 1836, is reprinted in both the *Enquirer* and *Whig*, February 25, 1836.
instruction by supporting the second resolution.

If the Whigs did not have enough trouble, their two senators could not agree on a course of action. Tyler and Leigh received conflicting advice from their own party. John H. Pleasants advised Tyler to resign and thus provide the party with an issue in the spring elections and the fall presidential contest. But William F. Gordon urged Tyler to obey the instructions if his conscience would permit it and use his Senate post to defend himself. Gordon realized that the Democrats wanted Tyler's seat, not his obedience. Tyler pondered the advice, and decided to resign. Leigh, on the other hand, refused to resign or obey the instructions.

The Whig press tried to make the most of their party's difficult situation. Although the Richmond Whig had publicly urged both men to resign, when Leigh refused the Whig, after praising Tyler, applauded Leigh's decision to remain in the Senate for the present session. The Alexandria Gazette also regretted Leigh's decision, but praised him for

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50 William F. Gordon to John Tyler, January 15, 1836, Tyler Papers, LC.

51 Tyler revealed his decision to resign in a letter to Robert Tyler, February 15, 1836, in Tyler, Letters and Times, I, 534-35. His letter of resignation was reprinted in the Enquirer, March 5, 1836.

52 Ritchie denounced Leigh's letter in which he refused to resign. See the Enquirer, March 10, 1836. Leigh did resign his seat in the Senate on December 5, 1836. His letter of resignation to Wyndham Robertson, the Lieutenant Governor, cited personal affairs and family matters as the reasons for his resignation. Leigh claimed that he had not been influenced by the General Assembly expunging instructions or fear of censure from the 1836-1837 General Assembly, which the Democrats controlled. He probably would have received some censure, since motions were afoot to do so during the opening days of the legislative session. See the Enquirer, December 8, 1836.
his character. With the Whig party embarrassed by Tyler's and Leigh's divergent courses and Leigh's refusal to abide by the instructions, the Democrats easily avenged Rives' 1834 resignation. On March 3 they restored him to the Senate. Although there had been some talk of running Richard E. Parker, a Junto member and Ritchie's brother-in-law, Parker declined consideration. The Democrats then united behind Rives, and several Whigs in the House of Delegates voted for him because their party could not agree on a candidate.

IV

In August 1831 Nat Turner led a band of insurgent slaves in one of the most violent slave revolts in American history. Although quickly put down, Turner's revolt struck fear into the hearts of whites throughout Virginia and the South. The question of slavery, dormant since 1820, now reappeared in violent focus.

Governor John Floyd attributed the origin of the spirit of insubordination among Virginia slaves to the influence of the "Yankee population, ... but most especially the Yankee pedlers and traders."
Floyd, however, was no defender of the peculiar institution, and pledged that he would "not rest until slavery is abolished in Virginia." When the General Assembly met in December slavery became the all-absorbing topic, and the legislature devoted most of its time to the famous debates over the future of slavery in Virginia.

The opposition to slavery in Virginia during the 1831-1832 legislative debates focused upon political, social, and economic arguments. Delegates from west of the mountains charged that because slaves were counted for purposes of representation the east was overrepresented in the legislature. Easterners justified their representation by pointing to the taxes they paid on slaves. A few western delegates insisted that slavery denied the right of liberty to blacks. However, most of them avoided such abstract moral and ethical charges and focused instead on the economic impact of slavery. They attributed the decline in Virginia's white population to the institution of slavery. Some eastern delegates joined their western counterparts in attributing the economic ills of Virginia to the blight of slavery. In general, these easterners were not devoted to the plantation ideal. They wanted Virginia to diversify economically by encouraging industrial development, trade, and agricultural reform. Even some planters blamed slavery for the depressed state of Virginia's agriculture. C.W. Gooch, describing


the degraded state of Virginia's economy in an 1833 prize-winning essay on agriculture, pointed to "the cultivation of tobacco and the existence of slavery;--I mean negro Slavery..." as the most operative factors.60

The defenders of slavery eventually triumphed in the 1831-1832 legislative debates. No doubt many of them, coming as they did from east of the mountains, privately agreed with Gooch. But publicly they minimized the deficiencies of slavery and attacked the impracticability of plans for ending the institution. Furthermore, the antislavery men could not agree upon one plan of action. Although all their plans called for the deportation of freed blacks from the state, and all the popular plans emphasized gradualness, the basic problem remained the nature of property rights in slavery.61

Most Virginia newspaper editors supported the movement to end slavery, "but urged caution in planning and gradualness in executing the design."62 After Nat Turner's rebellion, but before the General Assembly convened, Ritchie's Enquirer suggested that steps be taken to expel free Negroes from Virginia, and that laws be passed to make it more difficult to emancipate slaves unless their emigration from Virginia was virtually guaranteed. Ritchie also suggested that the slave code be strengthened and more effectively enforced, and that measures be taken, without the use of federal aid, to reduce the number of slaves in Virginia.63 While

61 Robert, Road From Monticello, pp.24-26.
62 Ibid., p.38.
63 Enquirer, October 25, 1831.
the legislative debates raged Ritchie's editorial opponent, John H. Pleasants, suggested that Virginia seek federal funds to end slavery, but Pleasants opposed the forcible exportation of free Negroes from the state.\textsuperscript{64}

Virginians from both sides of the mountains agreed on two points regarding slavery. They viewed the abolitionists as impractical fanatics who did more harm than good. Secondly, they saw slavery as more than a system of labor. They believed that large numbers of blacks and whites could not live together peacefully. Consequently, slavery served as a system of race regulation whereby the superior race controlled an inferior one.\textsuperscript{65}

When the controversy over receiving abolitionist petitions arose in Congress during the mid-1830s, Virginians from both sides of the mountains agreed that the future disposition of slavery should be left to the slave states. The \textit{Lynchburg Virginian} asked the North to "let us alone."\textsuperscript{66} At a public dinner in Williamsburg given to Henry A. Wise, the following toast summarized such sentiment: "Slavery—Whatever differences of opinion may exist among us Virginians upon this vexed subject, we are unanimous on one point, a positive determination that no one shall think or act for us."\textsuperscript{67}

Wise, a states rights Whig who represented a district in eastern Virginia, elaborated on this theme when speaking against the reception

\textsuperscript{64}Whig, December 16, 1831; January 13, 31, February 29, 1832, quoted in Hickin, "Antislavery in Virginia," III,531.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid.}, I,244.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Lynchburg Virginian}, June 22, 1835.

\textsuperscript{67}Quoted in Wise, \textit{Life of Henry A. Wise}, pp.60-61.
of abolitionist petitions by the House of Representatives. Wise denied that Congress had the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia unless the district's slaveholders petitioned for abolition. According to Wise, "The nation has nothing to do with slave property. It is simply a delicate question of private individual right, wholly and solely under the control of the states where slavery exists."68

William C. Rives, the Democrat from Albemarle County, echoed Wise's sensitivity to the threat of northern interference with slavery. In a letter to William F. Ritchie, the elder son of Thomas Ritchie, Rives precisely summarized the position of Virginia's Democrats with regard to slavery. According to Rives, "for the people of the non-slaveholding states to discuss the question of slavery, at all, is to attack the foundations of the union itself. . . the subject of slavery is, necessarily, in all its bearing, a political question. . . expressly within the sanctuary of our fundamental compact, where it should be secure alike from the intermeddling of politicians or pretended moralists--and that everything which relates to it, its ends, its remedies, its whole regimen, moral and political, are solemnly and exclusively reserved to the control of the states in which it may exist."69

As the presidential election of 1836 approached, Virginia Whigs tried to turn the issue of slavery to their political advantage. The Democrats had already settled upon Martin Van Buren of New York for Jackson's successor, and Virginia's Whigs hoped to use the issue of slavery to defeat him. When the American Antislavery Society began its

68 Ibid., pp.49-50.
69 William C. Rives to William F. Ritchie, September 7, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
pamphlet campaign in 1835, Ritchie ignored the antislavery propaganda and tried to ease the sectional tensions in order to protect Van Buren's candidacy in Virginia. However, the Richmond Whig carried long articles which described the contents of the society's tracts, emphasizing the dangers they offered to the south's peculiar institution.  

Democrats believed that the Whigs were attempting to turn the abolitionist excitement to their political advantage. They hoped that the General Assembly would not adopt any measures which might widen the breach between the North and South. Specifically the Democrats wanted to avoid on the floor of the House of Delegates any debate relative to slavery. The Whigs, however, did not intend to pass up this opportunity for political gain.

Soon after the legislature convened the Whigs raised the issue of slavery. In his annual message to the General Assembly, Governor Littleton W. Tazewell endorsed a plan for concerted action by the slaveholding states against the abolitionists, and requested that the Assembly authorize him to communicate with the governors of the non-slaveholding states upon the subject. Following Tazewell's message Thomas W. Gilmer introduced a resolution authorizing Tazewell to enter into correspondence with the governors of other states upon the subject of abolition and to report his findings to the General Assembly.

Gilmer's resolution placed the Democrats on the defensive. If

70 See the Whig, July-August, 1835.
71 William C. Rives to William F. Ritchie, September 7, 1835; Richard E. Parker to William C. Rives, October 7, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
72 Tazewell's Annual Message is reprinted in the Enquirer, December 8, 1835.
the Democrats tried to sidestep the issue and avoid debating the resolution, they might be accused of trying to promote Van Buren's candidacy at the expense of Virginia's interests. However, if they endorsed this Whig measure calling for an activist role for the Whig governor, Whigs could label the Democrats followers, not leaders, in the effort to protect the interests of the state. The Democrats controlled the House of Delegates, and in late December they postponed consideration of Gilmer's resolutions, although some Democrats defected and voted with the Whigs. The Richmond Whig claimed that the resolutions had been defeated by "the tenderness for the Northern Candidate." 73 Robert M. T. Hunter, the young states rights Whig from Essex County, made the reference more explicit: "I had thought that this was common ground—that spirit of party could not divide us on questions in which lives and property were involved. I had never contemplated that in the legislature of Virginia were more friends of Martin Van Buren than of the country." 74

Although some members of the Virginia Democratic party, especially the Junto, deprecated the debate over Gilmer's abolitionist resolutions, 75 most of the Democrats in the House of Delegates realized that the party had to take a stand upon the issue. They appealed to northern Democrats to demonstrate sympathy for the South and thereby show that the

73 Whig, December 29, 1835.

74 Robert M.T. Hunter, manuscript draft of speech entitled, "On Abolitionist-Slavery Controversy," 1835-1836, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia.

northern Whigs were the only fanatics on the slavery question. Meanwhile, the Democrats passed in the House of Delegates their own series of moderate resolutions on abolition which denied an activist role to Governor Tazewell. These resolutions asserted that only Virginia "has the right to control or interfere with the subject of domestic slavery within her limits, and that this right will be maintained at all hazards." They denied that Congress had the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia or the federal territories, and stated that any act of Congress which attempted to do so would bring the union into "imminent peril." The resolutions claimed for Virginia the right to demand legislation by states to restrain and punish citizens whose actions defied social duty obligations and the constitution, or threatened Virginia's safety and tranquility. They requested that non-slaveholding states pass such laws, and declared it expedient for slaveholding states to enact laws to "suppress and prevent the circulation of any incendiary publications within their respective limits." Just prior to adjournment the General Assembly overwhelmingly enacted a law suppressing the circulation of incendiary publications within Virginia.

Slavery as a political issue reappeared in Congress during the first session of the Twenty-Fourth Congress in the abolitionist petitions controversy and the adoption of the gag rule. Understandably the

76 Dabney S. Carr to Martin Van Buren, December 21-22, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.

77 Whig, January 23, 1836. These resolutions attracted nearly unanimous bipartisan support, passing the House of Delegates on January 20 by a 108-7 vote.

Democrats hoped to avoid widespread debate over the issue, but the Whigs determined to use the debate to embarrass both Jackson's administration and Van Buren's candidacy. Ritchie praised the northern Democrats for their support in tabling abolitionist petitions which called for an end to slavery in the District of Columbia, but the Richmond Whig pointed out that the Democrats were "willing to skin this matter over" until Van Buren had been elected. Trying to break down the Virginia-New York alliance on which Van Buren had risen to power, southern Whigs called for the administration to take a stand opposing these petitions and Calhoun urged that they be rejected outright. In February Henry L. Pinckney of South Carolina proposed to submit the abolitionist petitions to a select House committee. The House would then instruct the committee to report that Congress had no constitutional authority to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed, that it would be "impolitic" and "dangerous to the Union" to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia, and that all petitions relating to slavery or its abolition would be tabled. Ritchie praised Pinckney's resolutions as a way of smothering the controversy, but many southerners agreed with the Richmond Whig that in admitting by inference that Congress could terminate slavery in the District, Pinckney had abandoned principle for expediency and "betrayed

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79 Enquirer, January 23, 1836. My understanding of the abolitionist petition controversy and its relation to national and southern politics was enhanced by George C. Rable, "Slavery, Politics, and the South: The Gag Rule as a Case Study" (unpublished manuscript in author's possession), an essay which traces the legislative history and political implications of the gag rule controversy.

80 Whig, December 29, 1835.

81 Enquirer, March 1, 1836.
the South." When the select committee made its report, the Democrats in Congress jumped at the chance to terminate debate on the abolitionist petitions controversy and they rammed the report through the House, thereby applying the gag rule.3

The Democrats successfully blocked Whig attempts in the General Assembly and Congress to make political gains with the abolitionist resolutions and petitions issues. Consequently Virginia Whigs linked the coming presidential election with the spring elections and tried to associate Van Buren with the abolition and free Negro suffrage issues.4 Ritchie described the Whigs' tactic as a "Humbug Panic,"5 and to divert attention from Van Buren as a northern man he raised the old battle cry of "Leigh or no Leigh! Instructions or no Instructions!"6 Ritchie sincerely believed in the right of instruction, and he worked hard to embarrass the Whigs by publicizing the divergent courses of their two senators.7 Virginia voters rewarded Ritchie's labors in the 1836 state elections as the Democrats retained control of the Senate and

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82 Whig, February 16, 1836.
83 Virginia Democratic and Whig congressmen unanimously supported the report for different reasons. The Democrats were glad to end the controversy; the Whigs saw the report as an abdication of principle but still the strongest "pro-southern" position for which a statement could be gotten through Congress. The Senate adopted a gag of its own, with both of Virginia's Democratic Senators supporting it. For the House vote see Congressional Globe, 24 Cong., 1 Sess., 402, 405-06; Senate votes, ibid., 236.
84 Enquirer, April 12, 1836.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., March 8, 1836.
87 James McDowell to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, April 22, 1836, Randolph Family Papers, University of Virginia.
maintained an approximate majority of twenty-one in the House. 88

V

The presidential succession attracted Virginians' attention soon after Jackson took the oath of office for his second term. Many Virginians, Democrats as well as Whigs, disliked the idea of Jackson designating Martin Van Buren as his successor. As early as the spring of 1833 several correspondents in the Enquirer urged other presidential nominations, notably those of Benjamin Watkins Leigh or Philip P. Barbour, 89 and the Kanawha Banner in 1834 accused Ritchie of working to aid Van Buren's grasp on the succession. 90 However, Ritchie deplored agitation of the presidential question in 1833 as "singularly precipitate and premature," and he proposed a national nominating convention for the Democratic party to select its candidate. 91 Ritchie preferred to delay discussion of presidential candidates for three reasons. By postponing the issue he hoped to reduce strife within the Virginia Democratic party for most of Jackson's second term. He also felt that time would probably work in favor of Van Buren, a man for whom Ritchie held enormous respect. Finally, by keeping the Democratic presidential

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88 Enquirer, May 17, 1836. Whig, May 13, 1836. The Whigs claimed a gain of 10 seats, chiefly in the Piedmont, but a Democratic gain of 10 seats, largely in the southwest, counterbalanced that of the Whigs.

89 See the Enquirer, Spring-Fall, 1833. For an example of the opposition to Van Buren see Thomas G. Tucker, Jr., to George C. Dromgoole, January 28, 1834, Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

90 Kanawha Banner, August 28, 1834.

91 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, August 26, 1833, Rives Papers, LC, Enquirer, September 3, 6, 1833.
nomination unsettled for as long as possible he hoped to obstruct the Whigs' goal of organizing a unified opposition in Virginia.

Ritchie's tactics succeeded. After an initial Whig triumph in the 1834 state elections, Virginia's Democrats regained control of the Assembly in 1835 and maintained their control in 1836. The Whigs remained dispersed, lacking effective organization within Virginia and at the national level. Meanwhile Jackson endorsed the idea of a national convention, and the Democrats selected late May 1835 in Baltimore, Maryland, for the date and site. This early date gave them an advantage over the Whigs, for fully one year before the election the Democrats hoped to have their ticket established and take the offensive in the campaign. Despite a few hitches in their plans, the Democrats' early start gave them an advantage, both nationwide and in Virginia, which they never relinquished.

Following Jackson's leadership Virginia Democrats conceded the presidential nomination to Van Buren, for he represented the northern half of the old Jeffersonian alliance which he had resurrected in the years between 1825 and 1828. Since the Whigs had raised the slavery issue, Virginia Democrats first ascertained Van Buren's views upon slavery before wholeheartedly endorsing him. At a caucus of the Democratic members of the General Assembly, called in March 1835 to pass resolutions opposing a national bank, the question of the party's presidential nomination arose. Most of those in attendance indicated

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92 C.W. Gooch supported Van Buren as the living embodiment, north of the Potomac River, of Jeffersonian Republicanism, and viewed his election as necessary to maintain the New York-Virginia alliance. See Gooch to William C. Rives, May 5, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
a preference for Van Buren, but some questioned his position on slavery. Ritchie immediately wrote to Silas Wright, one of Van Buren's New York political allies, informing him of Van Buren's strength in the caucus. He enclosed questions which asked if Van Buren favored abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and whether he believed that the federal constitution gave Congress the right to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed. Wright informed Ritchie that Van Buren's answer to both questions was no.

After Van Buren clarified his position on slavery the Virginia Democrats moved unreservedly behind him. When the Baltimore convention opened Van Buren received the unanimous presidential nomination, but as in 1832 major problems arose over the vice-presidential nomination.

As early as 1833 William C. Rives had been prominently mentioned for vice president. Although Philip P. Barbour remained attractive to many Virginians because of his greater experience and gesture toward party harmony in 1832, Rives seemed almost equally attractive. Rives had served in the General Assembly, the House of Representatives, as Minister to France, and as United States Senator. Furthermore, he

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93. C.S. Morgan to Martin Van Buren, March 1, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.

94. Thomas Ritchie to Silas Wright, March 2, 1835; Wright to Ritchie March 10, 1835, ibid.

95. For an account of the convention see the Enquirer, May 26, 1835.


supported Jackson's administration down the line, and had sacrificed himself in 1834 rather than obey instructions to support the Senate's censure of Jackson. Just prior to the convention Ritchie assured Rives of the Junto's endorsement and told him that Peter V. Daniel would work to advance his interests in Baltimore.\(^98\)

Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky, the self-proclaimed slayer of Tecumseh, was the leading candidate for the vice-presidential nomination, and the contest in the convention between Johnson and Rives represented in microcosm the conflict within the Democratic party between the West and the South. As early as the summer of 1833, Frank Blair and Amos Kendall, two members of Jackson's Kitchen Cabinet, began promoting Johnson as a means of balancing the ticket with a westerner. Although the evidence is not definitive, it appears that Jackson also favored Johnson. Certainly the delegates at the Baltimore Convention operated under this assumption.\(^99\)

However, Virginians opposed Johnson for social, philosophical, and political reasons. Johnson lived openly with a mulatto mistress, and this offended the Virginians' sense of propriety and decorum; it also gave them the impression that he favored equality for blacks. The Virginians also accused Johnson of supporting a national bank, protective tariff, and federally-financed internal improvements.\(^100\) Of greatest significance, however, was their political objection. Early in

\(^{98}\) Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, May 19, 1835, ibid.


\(^{100}\) See Richard E. Parker to William C. Rives, June 1, 1835, Rives Papers, LC, for a list of objections to Johnson.
Jackson's first term the Virginia Democrats had protested his patronage policies. In his second term Jackson's nationalism and use of executive authority in the force bill and deposit withdrawal controversies severely injured his party in Virginia. Now the Junto had decided to support Rives, and Jackson appeared to be turning his back on Virginia's loyalty. Apparently Jackson and his advisers believed that Johnson would offset the Whig threat of Henry Clay, Hugh Lawson White, or William Henry Harrison and carry the Democratic ticket in the west. In effect, by endorsing Johnson, Jackson took Virginia's and the South's votes for granted.

Before the convention the Jacksonians received warnings of Johnson's unpopularity. In April 1835 Alfred Balch, one of Jackson's old Tennessee friends, told Jackson that Johnson's nomination for vice president would not be popular in any southern state because of his domestic relations with a black woman. Balch warned Jackson that the vice-presidential candidate should be taken from Virginia. Just prior to the convention Thomas Ritchie told Frank Blair that he feared the divisive effect a quarrel over the vice-presidential nomination might have on the party, and that "all the Virginians go nearly one way. With all our grateful feelings to the patriot Johnson, and with the deepest sense of his sacrifices and service there is one circumstance which to a Southern man is unacceptable--and besides the situation of Rives calls for a decided rally around him--not to speak of the peculiar claim which we of the South have at this time on the Sympathy and Support of our

101 Alfred Balch to Andrew Jackson, April 4, 1835, Jackson Papers, LC.
Republican Brethren."

On Thursday, May 21, the Virginia delegation to the convention caucused and established an official conference committee, composed of Joseph S. Watkins, Andrew Stevenson, and Peter V. Daniel, to negotiate on the vice-presidential nomination with other state delegations. The caucus gave the committee carte blanche to reach an agreement, subject only to the instruction that it was authorized "to sacrifice men, but not principles." Silas Wright, Van Buren's chief lieutenant, represented his interests in the convention, and he informed Van Buren on May 22 of the excitement among the Virginia delegation over the vice-presidential nomination.

The Virginians' conference committee could not erode Johnson's strength, and when the balloting took place he received 178 votes to Rives' 87. When the New York delegation announced for Johnson the Virginians hissed. The Democrats had established the two-thirds rule for nominations in the 1832 convention to promote party harmony, and although Johnson received slightly more than the required two-thirds majority, the Virginia delegation announced that it could not support him. Johnson's nomination represented a symbolic victory for western influence.

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102 Thomas Ritchie to Frank Blair, May 12, 1835, Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University. I wish to thank Dr. William J. Cooper, Jr., for permission to use this letter from his research notes.

103 Enquirer, June 2, 1835.

104 Silas Wright to Martin Van Buren, May 22, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.

105 Enquirer, May 26, 1835.

within the Democratic party. Van Buren had built his national political base on a resurrected New York-Virginia alliance, and ever since he gained national power in 1829 Virginians had taken second place within the alliance. The Richmond Junto despised Johnson, and Van Buren could ill-afford to alienate that influential body of Virginia Democrats. No Virginians served in Jackson's cabinets, and Virginians were accustomed to holding office in or influencing the executive branch of the federal government. Although Van Buren represented the principles of Virginia's Democrats, they were not always willing to play politics when they did not receive any patronage. When Van Buren accepted Johnson on the ticket, he too appeared to be turning his back upon Virginia and the South. Therefore Johnson's nomination represented a severe blow to the New York-Virginia alliance.

Though disappointed by Johnson's nomination, the Virginia delegation did not secede from the convention as many of the state's delegates had done in 1832 when Philip P. Barbour failed to win the nomination. Stevenson and Daniel represented the Junto's interest in Baltimore in 1835, with Stevenson presiding over the convention. A proposal to secede was made in the Virginia delegation, but Stevenson's parliamentary maneuvers sidetracked the move. The Junto realized that secession from the convention would destroy the New York-Virginia alliance.

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107 Latner, "Andrew Jackson and His Advisers," pp.357-58. The Lynchburg Virginian, May 21, 1835, correctly predicted Johnson's nomination, pointing out that Rives would bring more character to the Democratic ticket and Johnson more political capital, and that Van Buren's friends would be swayed by political capital.

108 Ambler, Thomas Ritchie, p.171.

alienate Virginia from the national Democrats, and possibly put a Whig in the White House. They implicitly trusted Van Buren, and realistically viewed the office of vice president as a minor position.

Rives, bitter over his rejection, indicated his disappointment to Van Buren and pointed out that Johnson's nomination would make the struggle in Virginia more difficult.\textsuperscript{110} Three weeks later he told Van Buren that Virginia definitely would not accept Johnson because he would hinder Van Buren's chances of carrying the state.\textsuperscript{111} Ritchie urged Rives to remain cool, emphasizing that "we must not divide our party."\textsuperscript{112} But Rives' friends, in consoling him, attributed his defeat to Stevenson's anxiety to please Van Buren rather than support the interest of Virginia,\textsuperscript{113} and "the fact that there were New Yorkers in our camp."\textsuperscript{114}

Despite their opposition to Johnson, the Junto told Van Buren that Rives would not be made the instrument of division and that the issue, as far as Virginia was concerned, should be left to the next General Assembly when the party would hold its legislative convention.\textsuperscript{115} The Enquirer publicly confirmed this position. Ritchie noted that his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, June 2, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
\item \textsuperscript{111} William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, June 25, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, June 5, 1835, Rives Papers, LC.
\item \textsuperscript{113} R.R. Collins to William C. Rives, June 6, 1835, \textit{ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{114} William P. Slaughter to William C. Rives, May 24, 1835, \textit{ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, June 18, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.
\end{itemize}
paper was not wedded to Rives, that it would cheerfully support either Barbour or William Smith of Alabama, and he urged his correspondents to avoid any discussion of the vice-presidential nomination for fear of furthering party disunity. 116

Clearly the Junto had accepted Van Buren's view of party. They did not press Rives upon the party, but they would not endorse Johnson because of the opposition to him within Virginia. When Jackson realized the depth of Virginia's opposition to Johnson, he moved quickly to mollify the Virginians. Vacancies existed on the Supreme Court, and in late 1835 rumors reached Richmond that Jackson was considering Philip P. Barbour for appointment as an associate justice. Junto members and other Virginia Democrats endorsed Barbour, and Ritchie warned Jackson that if he passed over him he would injure his party in Virginia. In 1836 Jackson appointed Barbour to the post and nominated Peter V. Daniel to succeed Barbour as the federal district judge for eastern Virginia. 117

Although Johnson in his letter of acceptance to convention

116. *Enquirer*, June 2, 1835. The Alexandria Gazette, May 27, 1835, delighted in the Virginia Democrats' difficulty over accepting Johnson: "Gentlemen who can go Martin Van Buren ought not to be squeamish about Colonel Johnson. The Heir Apparent to be sure, is a man of more talents than the nominated Vice-President; but as to political principles, it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. Why strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?"

president Andrew Stevenson denied that he supported a national bank.\(^{118}\) Virginia Democrats continued to distrust him.\(^{119}\) A notice placed in the *Richmond Enquirer* called for an administration caucus on Saturday, December 12, to make preliminary arrangements for selecting the party's electors for president.\(^{120}\) The caucus agreed to hold its legislative convention on January 11, 1836, and issued calls for those counties not represented by Democrats in the General Assembly to send special delegates to the legislative convention.

In order to present a united front the Democrats privately caucused in the Senate chamber on the Saturday prior to the opening of the legislative convention. They hoped to reach an understanding on the vice-presidential nomination. After much debate the caucus determined that Van Buren could not carry Virginia with Johnson on the ticket, and that Virginia voters would view an unpledged set of electors as a trick to give Johnson the state's votes. A caucus vote on the vice-presidential nomination gave William Smith, a states rights Democrat from Alabama, eighty-two votes, Rives seven, Johnson four, and Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina two, with one vote unpledged.\(^{121}\) By holding the private caucus the Democrats hoped to thrash out their differences in secret, thereby avoiding any public division over Johnson as the vice-presidential candidate.

\(^{118}\) Johnson's letter of acceptance is reprinted in the *Enquirer*, June 23, 1835.

\(^{119}\) Dabney S. Carr to Martin Van Buren, December 21-22, 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC.

\(^{120}\) *Enquirer*, December 10, 1835.

\(^{121}\) C. S. Morgan to Martin Van Buren, January 9, 1836, Van Buren Papers, LC. John T. Anderson to William C. Rives, February 7, 1836, Rivers Papers, LC.
The Democratic legislative convention met on January 11 in the chamber of the House of Delegates, with twenty state senators, seventy-six members of the House of Delegates, and thirty-three special delegates in attendance. Linn Banks, perennial Speaker of the House of Delegates and chairman of the party's caucuses and conventions, once again presided, and Ritchie assumed his usual seat as Secretary. Van Buren received the unanimous nomination for president. Although Rives had not given up his hopes for the vice-presidential nomination, his Virginia supporters had given up on him, and the convention accepted the caucus' endorsement of William Smith of Alabama for vice president. After selecting its electoral ticket and establishing its central corresponding committee the convention adjourned.\footnote{For an account of the legislative convention see the Enquirer, January 12, 1836. Rives' hopes can be inferred from John T. Anderson to Rives, February 7, 1836, Rives Papers, LC. The Central Corresponding Committee consisted of four Junto men: Philip N. Nicholas, Peter V. Daniel, Thomas Ritchie, William Selden, and four of their close associates: John Rutherford, Charles Ellis, James Rawlings, Claiborne Gooch. Enquirer, August 2, 1836.}

In their legislative convention the Democrats successfully avoided any display of party disunity over the vice-presidential nomination. Although Johnson, Rives, and Macon received eight of the first ballot votes, the convention unanimously endorsed Smith after his first ballot triumph. Virginia Whigs had attempted to make an issue of the abolitionist question in the 1835-1836 General Assembly. Furthermore, Virginia and other southern Whigs had practically settled upon Hugh Lawson White, a Tennessee states rights Whig, as their candidate for president. In order to counteract the Whigs' tactics, Virginia Democrats endorsed Smith as a "distinguished southern states rights
politician." They looked upon Smith as a balance to Van Buren and hoped that other southern states would follow their example and reject Johnson.

VI

Virginia's Whigs entered the 1836 presidential campaign with an outlook grounded in false optimism. Although they won control of the state legislature in the 1834 spring elections, their victory resulted from a combination of backlashes by disillusioned states rights men and National Republicans to Jackson's vigorous executive policies. Virginia Whiggery contained two distinct wings, a strong states rights element located mainly in the Tidewater and Piedmont, and a numerically smaller, old National Republican faction located along the upper Potomac River and west of the mountains who remained loyal to Henry Clay. Whigs lacked effective organization at the state level and in the General Assembly. They had no equivalent of the Richmond Junto, although John Hampden Pleasants, editor of the Richmond Whig, attempted to direct party opinion in the state. Furthermore, Whig leaders in the General Assembly came from the numerically superior states rights wing of the party. Consequently there was little effective cooperation among Virginia Whigs upon national programs that had nothing to do with opposition to Jackson or Martin Van Buren.

The Virginia Whigs ran their 1836 presidential campaign almost completely upon opposition to Van Buren. States rights Whigs complained of Van Buren as "a Latitudinarian" who had supported the tariffs of 1824

123 John T. Anderson to William C. Rives, February 7, 1836, Rives Papers, LC.
and 1828 and favored the use of federal money for internal improve-
ments. They pictured him as a man unlike Virginia politicians, to-
tally opposed to Virginia's interests, and likely if elected to insti-
tute the "New York system of tactics" characterized by "a secret and horrible system of intrigue, proscription and corruption" which would "probably put the death seal upon all our hopes of the perpetuity of Republican government!" Whigs denounced Jackson for designating his successor and then trying to force him upon the American people, and they described Van Buren as an old, ambitious sycophant, "with the spirit of a fawning slave... a Machiavellian for policy and expediency alone, totally regardless of principles...." One Jackson man from Prince William County, while declining an invitation to attend a local Democratic meeting, "declared that he had no idea of engrafting a Slippery Elm upon an Old Hickory!"
The Whigs most distrusted Van Buren on slavery. In 1821 Van


127 Alexandria Gazette, September 24, 1836.
Buren voted in the New York state legislature to instruct the state's Senators to support the restriction of slavery in Missouri, and later in the constitutional convention he supported free Negro suffrage. For propaganda purposes the Whigs charged him with being an abolitionist after he indicated in 1836 that Congress possessed the constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.\(^{128}\)

As long as Virginia's Whigs emphasized Van Buren's failures, they remained harmonious. Eventually they had to nominate a candidate to oppose him; and ultimately they offered two candidates, neither of whom had statewide support. Their "double-shotted" ticket, as Ritchie labeled it, supported the Democrats' claim that the Whigs were running two candidates in order to throw the election into the House of Representatives where they hoped to circumvent the will of the people by preventing Van Buren's election. Early in 1835 the Richmond Whig committed itself for no single candidate, "but against the 'little Magician'."\(^{129}\)

This statement seemed to confirm Ritchie's charge that the Whigs had only one requirement for a presidential candidate: "Let him only be an Anti-Van Buren man--and it really seems to be of very little consequence what sort of a man he is--what are his political principles--what his previous course--whether he be a Nullifier or a Consolidationist--a friend of a National Bank--of National Improvements--of a National

\(^{128}\) For example, see John H. Pleasants to John Thompson Brown, May 16, 1835. Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers, College of William and Mary. Abel Parker Upshur to John H. Pleasants, February 5, 1836, Abel Parker Upshur Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Wheeling Gazette, quoted in the Whig, April 7, 1835; Charlestown, The Free Press, March 21, 1835; the Lynchburg Virginian, March 24, September 8, 1835; Whig, March 31, 1835, August 11, September 13, 1835.

\(^{129}\) Whig, January 21, 1835.
Tariff, or what not?"¹³⁰

Virginia Whigs debated several choices and combinations before arriving at their final tickets. John Tyler preferred his old friend, Governor Littleton W. Tazewell, as the man who could unify the South against the Democrats, but Tazewell showed no inclination to run.¹⁵¹

The Charlestown Virginia Free Press and the Lynchburg Virginian both put forward Henry Clay, while the Alexandria Gazette in May 1835 assured Virginians that Philip P. Barbour, William Henry Harrison, "or some other sound and consistent Republican" would be offered on the Whig ticket.¹³² States rights Whigs, however, seem to have settled on Hugh L. White by the spring of 1835. They worked throughout the rest of the year for White, and by mid-1835 the Lynchburg Virginian had dropped Clay for a White-Harrison ticket.¹³³

Gradually Ritchie's charge that the Whigs were planning to run multiple candidates to force the election into the House of Representatives took effect. James Barbour wrote Henry Clay in approval of the Whigs running a multiplicity of candidates nationwide in order to gain possible control of several state governments even though they lost the presidency. But he warned Clay that no Whig could carry Virginia unless he opposed the bank.¹³⁴ By early fall 1835 John H. Pleasants recognized

¹³⁰Enquirer, December 2, 1834.
¹³¹John Tyler to William F. Gordon, November 9, 1834, James Henry Rochelle Papers, Duke University.
¹³²Charlestown, Virginia Free Press, noted in the Whig, January 19, 1835; Lynchburg Virginian, January 22, 1835; Alexandria Gazette, May 27, 1835.
¹³³Whig, March 31, 1835; Lynchburg Virginian, June 4, 1835.
¹³⁴James Barbour to Henry Clay, August 2, 1835, in Colton, ed.,
the seriousness of Ritchie's charge. He denied that the Whigs were trying to force the presidential election into the House of Representatives, and he called for Virginia and national Whig unity behind one candidate in order to keep the election out of the House. In mid-November he pledged the Whig's support for the Harrisburg Anti-Masonic convention nominee as a means of attaining unity in the opposition to Jackson.

When the General Assembly convened, the Virginia Whigs nominated the first of their two presidential candidates. The Whig caucus, dominated by eastern states rights Whigs led by Thomas W. Gilmer, met on December 11 and unanimously endorsed Hugh Lawson White for president. The caucus adjourned without nominating a vice president and set February as the meeting date for the Whig legislative convention. On that date the legislative convention assembled in the chamber of the House of Delegates, with twelve Whig state senators, fifty-three members of the House of Delegates, and eighty-eight special delegates in attendance. The legislative convention unanimously endorsed the caucus' selection of Hugh L. White for president, and unanimously nominated John Tyler for vice president. It adjourned after drawing up an electoral ticket.

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135 Whig, October 9, 1835.

136 Ibid., November 17, 1835.

137 Whig, December 15, 1835. John Strode Barbour to Daniel F. Slaughter, December 11, 1835, Daniel F. Slaughter Papers, Duke University, discussed the states rights Whig viewpoint on the Whig presidential nomination. The Enquirer, December 12, 1835, taunted the Whigs by pointing out that their caucus represented scarcely 15 of Virginia's 113 counties. Ritchie termed the caucus the "minority Meeting."
and appointing a central corresponding committee. 138

Western Whigs, dissatisfied with the Whig legislative convention, issued a call for a Whig convention to meet in Staunton early in July. Although many of the western counties had been represented in the legislative convention by special delegates, these nationalist Whigs did not accept the nomination of Hugh L. White. Instead, they proposed to run a nationalist for the presidency. When the Staunton convention assembled it contained forty delegates representing eighteen counties; but only Nelson and Londoun Counties from east of the mountains sent representatives. The convention nominated William Henry Harrison, the old Indian fighter, for president, and John Tyler for vice president. However, it adopted the legislative convention's slate of electors with the understanding that the electors should vote for the Whig candidate who received the largest popular vote. 139

The nationalists in the Staunton convention played right into the Democrats' hands. Their nomination of Harrison publicized the nationalist-states rights division among Virginia Whigs at a time when party unity was paramount, and gave added proof to the Democrats' charge that the Whigs were trying to throw the election into the House of Representatives. John H. Pleasants, bitterly disappointed at the Whigs' failure to achieve party unity, congratulated the Democrats, pointing out that "reasonable activity is now alone wanting to insure their triumph." 140

138 Whig, February 13, 1836. Girding themselves for the struggle ahead, the Whigs appointed an unusually large corresponding committee of twenty-one members.

139 Ibid., July 12, 1836; Enquirer, July 12, 1836.

140 Whig, July 15, 1836. Pleasants desperately maneuvered for party unity, but could not bring together the nationalists and states rights Whigs. See the Whig, May 24, 1836.
The Democratic national convention address, dated July 31, 1835, and signed by Andrew Stevenson, Silas Wright, and four other men, was the first in a barrage of campaign appeals issued by both parties. The address justified national political organizations and conventions as necessary to promote the national welfare and preserve national unity. It bitterly denounced the Whigs for running multiple candidates and accused them of trying to foment the development of sectional tensions. Nearly one-third of the address praised Jackson's administration for his handling of foreign affairs, the tariff, bank, and internal improvements, and stated that the only way to further his policies lay in "united and harmonious councils and sleepless vigilance." Interestingly, the address barely mentioned Van Buren and Johnson, simply describing them as "distinguished and patriotic fellow citizens" but offering no other information on their politics. Indeed Van Buren and Johnson had already made public their political principles in their letters of acceptance. However, by omitting discussions of their politics the address made clear, at least implicitly, that Van Buren and Johnson were running on Jackson's record and as instruments for extending his politics. By neglecting to discuss Whig charges against the ticket the Democrats hoped to avoid

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141 The Democratic National Convention Address, dated July 31, 1835, is reprinted in the Enquirer, August 11, 1835. Topics discussed in the address, and the percentage of space allotted to them, are as follows: justification of the national convention and national political organizations, 37 per cent; attack on the Whigs for trying to excite sectional tensions and create sectional parties by running sectional candidates, 22.1 per cent; praise for Jackson's administration, 30.6 per cent; mention of the party nominees, 1.2 per cent. Percentages computed by dividing the amount of column inches devoted to each topic by the total number of column inches occupied by the address.
arousing sectional tensions.

Virginia Democrats issued two campaign addresses. In March the address of the Democratic members of the general Assembly justified their actions in restoring Ritchie and Daniel to their respective posts, defended the expunging resolutions, and affirmed the right of instruction. It also defended Van Buren from Whig criticism of his positions on states rights and slavery. In August the Democratic Central Corresponding Committee released its address. This address contained the Democratic attack upon the Whigs' "double-shotted" ticket, defended Van Buren's politics and Smith's vice-presidential nomination, and pointedly ignored Johnson.

The Whigs devoted most of their rhetoric to defending their dual nominations, attacking Jackson for executive interference in the election, and picturing Van Buren as a politician unsympathetic to Virginia's interests. The Virginia Whig Central Corresponding Committee issued two addresses to the state's voters, one in late August and the other barely two weeks before the election. Both addresses emphasized attacks on

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142 Ibid., March 19, 1836.

143 The Democratic Central Committee Address appears ibid., August 2, 1836. Main topics and percentage of space devoted to each are: attack on the "double-shotted" ticket and analysis of differences in the Whig candidates, 23.4 per cent; reasons why Van Buren should be supported, 13.8 per cent; refutation of objections to Van Buren, 54.3 per cent; justification of Smith's vice-presidential nomination, 1.6 per cent. Philip N. Nicholas authored the address. See the Enquirer, March 11, 1837.

144 The two Whig addresses are reprinted in the Whig, August 25, October 14, 1836. Main topics discussed in the addresses, and the percentage of space by column inches follows. First Address: refutation of the Democratic claim that the Whigs are trying to send the election to the House of Representatives, 25 per cent; discussion of positive attributes of the Whig candidates, 18.5 per cent; condemnation of the "double-shotted" ticket claim, 8.6 per cent; Jackson's administration, Van Buren's
Jackson's administration and Van Buren's past political career, with less than one-fifth of each address devoted to praise of the Whig candidate. One-fourth of the first address refuted the Democrats' claim that the Whigs planned, through their "double-shotted" ticket, to send the election into the House of Representatives; the second address completely ignored the Democrats' charge and preached the virtues of a "double-shotted" ticket. With regard to the Democrats, the first address condemned Van Buren chiefly as an abolitionist, while the second address gave more publicly to Jackson's interference in the election by picking his successor.

The most effective Whig charges against Van Buren related to slavery. Specifically they charged him with favoring restrictions upon slavery in Missouri by voting in the New York state legislature to instruct New York's senators to oppose the expansion of slavery there during the crisis of 1819-1821. They pointed to his vote for free Negro suffrage in the New York state constitutional convention as indicative of his support for black-white equality, and they accused him of endorsing the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The Wheeling Gazette appealed to Virginians' racist, sectional fears by editorializing: "Vote for Northern President from a free state, and when the test comes, he will support the abolitionists. Virginia has never

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public character and his lack of sympathy for Virginia's interests, especially slavery, 47.9 per cent. Second Address: condemnation of Jackson for executive interference in the election by designating him successor, and Van Buren for his course as a politician, 64.6 per cent; discussion of White's attributes and a comparison with Van Buren, 17.2 per cent; virtue of the "double-shotted" ticket, 3 per cent.

145 These charges are explicitly lodged by the Whig, August 11, 1836. See also "Address of the Anti-Van Buren members of the General Assembly," March 16, 1836, Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers, The College of William and Mary.

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voted for a Northern President."\textsuperscript{146}

Democrats accused the Whigs of resurrecting the old "scarecrow" of abolition.\textsuperscript{147} Nevertheless they had to deal with the Whig charges, and found them difficult to dismiss. In early 1836 James Mallory, a Democrat from Brunswick County, wrote Van Buren soliciting his views on the power of Congress to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia and in the states. Van Buren indicated to Mallory that his reply to a group of North Carolina citizens in answer to the same questions would suffice, and he sent a copy of this letter to Mallory, asking him to give it to Ritchie for publication in the \textit{Enquirer}.\textsuperscript{148} In his letter Van Buren denied that Congress had the power to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed. He admitted that Congress possessed the power to end slavery in the District of Columbia, but stressed that as president he would support abolition in the District only if the slave-holding states desired it.

The Democratic Central Committee Address dealt with the other charges. It pointed out that since Virginians upheld the right of instruction Van Buren should not be condemned for his vote on the Missouri instructions and anyway, the Missouri Compromise had settled the issue of slavery in the western territories. According to the address, Van Buren's vote on the free Negro suffrage question was entirely a New

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Wheeling Gazette}, quoted in the \textit{Whig}, April 7, 1835.

\textsuperscript{147} William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, September 20, 1836, Van Buren Papers, LC. The Junto, especially, suspected that Calhoun's influence lay behind the Whigs' emphasis of slavery as a campaign issue. See Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, June 7, 1836, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{148} Both Mallory's and Van Buren's letters are reprinted in the \textit{Enquirer}, March 15, 1836.
York state matter, and besides, he had supported stiffer requirements for blacks. Since both of these matters lay in the past, they should have no determination upon the presidential election. In light of the election results, many Virginia voters must have found this labored reasoning at best.

The Whigs' second major charge accused Jackson of "openly and boldly" attempting to lead and control public opinion by using his executive influence to designate and elect his successor. According to the Richmond Whig, "the question is between the people and executive rule, misrule rather." The Whig pictured Van Buren as governed by political expediency, not principles, and the Lynchburg Virginian called him a time-saving parasite who would continue the extension of executive power, extend the spoils system, banish economy from government, and perpetuate the trend of appointing his successor. In effect, the Whigs made the election a referendum on Jackson's administration. The Democrats accepted the challenge, proudly defending Jackson's actions and Van Buren's close identification with Jackson's presidency.

As election day approached, Ritchie called for Van Buren's election to preserve the union and destroy sectional distinctions which the Whigs were trying to arouse. He continued to grind away at the "double-shotted" ticket, describing the Whigs as a "piebald, mongrel"

149 Ibid., April 10, August 2, 1836.
150 Whig, September 13, October 14, 1836; Lynchburg Virginian, October 17, 1836.
151 See the Democratic National Convention Address, reprinted in the Enquirer, August 11, 1835, and the Virginia Democratic Central Committee Address, Ibid., August 2, 1836.
152 Ibid., August 16, 1836.
coalition composed of ultra states rights men and nationalists from the opposite ends of the political spectrum. He delighted in pointing out the contradictions of the Whig ticket. According to Ritchie, White had supported Jackson while Harrison voted for Adams and Clay in 1828 and 1832. As a strict constructionist, White, until his nomination for president, supported Jackson's administration except for the proclamation. But Harrison, the "latitudinarian," opposed Jackson. The Virginia Whigs, Ritchie concluded, assumed the image of a "hydra-headed party." 153

VIII

Rives correctly analyzed the situation when he told Van Buren that "politics have never been so thoroughly organized in Virginia as now. . . ." 154 Each party's central corresponding committee spurred the local corresponding committees to hold partisan meetings where party orators could expound on the vital questions of the campaign. Democrats' fears of a low voter turnout in the midst of the fall planting season proved groundless as 53,629 voters, 35.1 per cent of Virginia's adult white males, came to the polls. At the time this represented the largest turnout of voters for any election in Virginia. 155

153 Ibid., September 20, 1836.
154 William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, October 13, 1836, Van Buren Papers, LC.
155 Richard E. Parker to William C. Rives, September 30; Philip N. Nicholas to Rives, November 2, 1836, Rives Papers, LC. Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review, LXV (January, 1960), Table I, 292. This is the best estimate for voter participation. Since voting requirements included land ownership, no tabulation has been made of Virginia adult white males who owned enough land to vote.

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The "Republican Whig Ticket" drew 23,361 votes, 43.6 per cent of the vote, while the Van Buren-Smith ticket won 56.4 per cent, or 30,263 votes. The difference in Van Buren's winning vote percentage over the Whigs shrunk to 15 per cent, quite a drop from Jackson's 50 per cent in 1832. In 1832 Jackson lost only eight of Virginia's 199 counties, but Van Buren lost forty-four. Van Buren ran strongest in the southwest, the Valley, the central and southern Piedmont, and the western edge of Tidewater. The Whigs proved to be effective campaigners, and despite Ritchie's taunts their "double-shotted" ticket, combining the appeals of nationalism and states rights, nearly defeated Van Buren. The Whigs carried the Eastern Shore, Richmond and the James-York Peninsula, Norfolk and its surrounding counties, four of the five Northern Neck counties, and four other counties along the Potomac River. These were areas of National Republican strength in 1828 and 1832. The Whigs also carried six scattered counties in the southern Piedmont, the counties surrounding Wheeling and Charleston, and areas scattered in the central and northern Valley and along the Great Kanawha River. Although the Whigs made some gains in constituencies which had previously voted Democratic, coefficients of correlation between percentages of the vote cast for the Whig ticket in 1836 and the National Republican candidates in 1828 and 1832 illustrate the importance of National Republican votes


157 McCormick, "New Perspectives," Table III, 300.

158 See Map I, Chapter IX, infra., for patterns of Democratic and Whig voting in the presidential elections from 1836 to 1844.
for the Whig coalition. Despite the numerical dominance of states rights politicians in the Whig party leadership, the Whigs' strongest support came from areas which formerly supported the National Republicans.

The Whig attributed the defeat to the open interference of Jackson, the influence of the federal bureaucracy, and the distribution of the surplus federal revenues to the states. The election made one thing clear to Virginia's Democrats. The Whigs had sprung full-blown from several anti-Jackson factions in 1833 to win control of the General Assembly the next year and offer a serious, although divided challenge for the presidency in 1836. As the Lynchburg Virginian indicated, by 1836 the two parties possessed near equal strength in Virginia.

Certainly Virginians voted the Whig ticket for different reasons. The Whigs' offering of Hugh L. White to states rights men in the east and William Henry Harrison to western nationalists attracted votes to the ticket that might have gone to Van Buren if one of the two had been left off the Whig ticket. Harrison furthermore was a native son, though long-removed from the state. His nationalism carried for the Whigs the counties which lay along the Great Kanawha, Ohio, and

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159 See Appendix I for methodological explanation.

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<th>Pct. Whig 1836</th>
<th>% Nat. Rep. 1828</th>
<th>% Demo 1828</th>
<th>% Nat. Rep. 1832</th>
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| Pct. Demo 1836 | -0.5656         | 0.5656      | -0.5201         | 0.5205      |


161 Lynchburg Virginian, November 17, 1836.
Potomac Rivers. These areas, because of their relative industrialization or farm-to-market systems of agriculture, favored federally-financed internal improvements. On the other hand, White's states rights philosophy won for the Whigs those counties where sentiment against Jackson's handling of nullification and deposit withdrawal remained strong. 162

In his study of the development of the second party system Richard McCormick points to the candidacy of Martin Van Buren as the crucial factor responsible for the stimulation of party development in the South between 1834 and 1836. 163 Neither a southerner nor a hero, Van Buren represented a new type of candidate for the Democrats. Except for William Harris Crawford in 1824, Virginia Democrats since Jefferson's time had endorsed candidates who were both southerners and heroes. Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson all served the nation during times of national crises with foreign powers, from the revolution through the Spanish-Indian troubles on the southern frontier. All of these men also owned slaves. Many Virginians looked upon Van Buren as a new type of politician, a professional who made his living in politics. Furthermore, he lacked southern birth and the distinction of slave ownership. Hence many Virginians distrusted his attitude toward slavery. Thus when the

162 Areas of nationalist Whig strength, such as those counties west of the mountains and along the upper Potomac River, which had supported Adams in 1828 and Clay in 1832, preferred the Harrison-Tyler ticket. See the Wheeling Tri-Weekly Times and Advertiser, September 27, 1836, and the Alexandria Gazette, July-October, 1836. Whig papers east of the mountains, where states rights ideology dominated, supported the White-Tyler ticket. See the Lynchburg Virginian, October 6, 1836, and of course the Whig, 1836 passim.

Whigs offered Hugh L. White, a southern slave owner, they accepted the alternative. Harrison, a national hero by virtue of his victories over the Indians, likewise provided a viable option to Van Buren.

Doubtlessly many Virginians, as the Whigs had hoped, viewed the election as a referendum on Jackson's administration. Most Virginia national Whigs spoke little of policy objectives in 1836. Advocacy of a bank or internal improvements would have driven them further apart from their states rights colleagues. Instead, they denounced specific policies of the Jackson administration. National Whigs could condemn Jackson's veto of the bank recharter bill and his withdrawal of deposits as objectionable per se, and yet unite with their states rights brethren in proclaiming these acts, as well as his proclamation against South Carolina, executive usurpation of the most flagrant sort. These specific issues and the negative tactics employed by the Virginia Whigs, when combined with Van Buren's northern birth, enabled them to make a creditable showing in the 1836 presidential campaign. Because of the disjointed nature of the Virginia Whig party, it achieved success only when it focused on negative goals of opposition. Although the Whigs never carried Virginia for their presidential candidate, they enjoyed the most success when they emphasized personalities, not ideology.

The Virginia Democrats slipped badly in 1836 compared with 1832. But thanks to the labors of Thomas Ritchie and other members of the Richmond Junto, as well as the vigilance of hundreds of members of the county Democratic corresponding committees, they managed to put Virginia in Van Buren's column. The 1836 election marked the end of an era in

164 On December 6, 1836, the Virginia Democratic electors met in the capitol at Richmond and cast their twenty-three votes for Van Buren and William Smith. Enquirer, December 8, 1836.
many ways for the Virginia Democrats. Never again would they offer a national hero as their candidate for the presidency, and only once before 1860, in 1844, would they offer a southern slaveowner. Their relationship with the national Democrats demanded such changes, though to be sure Virginia Democrats remained satisfied that the interests of the state were being protected. Now the Democrats faced an united opposition, for the Whigs, in a more organized, harmonious party, bitterly contested each succeeding presidential election.
CHAPTER VI

BANKING: CATALYST FOR CONSERVATIVE REVOLT, 1837-1840

The Democrats' triumph in the presidential election, along with their victories in the 1835 and 1836 General Assembly elections, reestablished their majority status. But as Peter V. Daniel complained to Martin Van Buren, "our efforts seem to be perpetually crippled by some adverse and untoward occurrence..." Once again national politics brought troubles for the Virginia Democratic party. Economic panic and depression cost the Democrats control of the General Assembly in 1838. Differences over the means of solving the depression and the concomitant banking crisis splintered the Virginia Democratic party and initiated the disintegration of the Richmond Junto.

Before the banking crisis struck the Democrats reasserted their control by electing two United States senators and a governor in the 1836-1837 General Assembly session. Benjamin Watkins Leigh resigned from the Senate in July 1836, and soon after the legislature convened the Democrats moved to fill Leigh's seat. On December 12 they nominated and elected Richard Elliot Parker to replace Leigh. One of the


2Richmond Enquirer, December 8, 1836 (hereinafter cited Enquirer). Leigh's letter of resignation, dated December 5, 1836, cited personal
least-known members of the Richmond Junto, Parker held his membership through his family connection as Ritchie's brother-in-law by marriage. Parker had served as a state court judge since 1813, and as a reward for his long service the Democrats elevated him to the Senate. The Richmond Whig criticized Parker as a man of little talent. Parker's interests lay in the courtroom, not with the legislative process. Apparently he realized his limitations, for he resigned from the Senate in March 1837 after the General Assembly elected him to the Virginia Court of Appeals.

The Democrats then boosted another member of the Richmond Junto to replace Parker. This time they settled on William Henry Roane, the son of Spencer Roane and the grandson of Patrick Henry. Roane inherited his Junto membership from his father, who first directed that elite clique. Although Roane won election by a comfortable 80-64 margin, thirty Democrats in the House of Delegates deserted Roane to support reasons, and denied that resolutions of instruction forced his resignation. Enquirer, December 13, 1836. On joint ballot Parker received 100 votes, John Tyler 25, John M. Patton 15, with 6 scattered. Parker was determined to keep a Whig out of the post. See Richard E. Parker to William Cabell Rives, September 30, 1836, William Cabell Rives Papers, LC.


4 Richmond Whig, December 16, 1836 (hereinafter cited Whig).

5 Enquirer, March 16, 1837.

6 Little is known of Roane. Like Parker, he left no collection of correspondence or other private papers. For biographical information see the Biographical Directory, p.1615, and the S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library.
another Democrat. Partisan politics did not influence Roane's election. Many Whigs voted for him since their party, demoralized by its defeat in the 1836 presidential campaign, offered no candidate. Although the Richmond Whig praised Roane as "worthy and competent," both the Whig and the Alexandria Gazette publicized Roane's Junto connections. The Gazette indicated that Roane is "one of the family--a relative of Mr. Ritchie's--upon which family, offices have lately been bestowed." 9

When Governor Littleton W. Tazewell resigned his office in 1836,10 the senior Executive Councillor, Wyndham Robertson, filled the remainder of Tazewell's term. In January 1837, when the General Assembly took up the election of a governor, Democrats split over their nomination. At least six men received serious consideration. William Henry Roane had many supporters, as did Thomas Jefferson Randolph of Albemarle County. David Campbell of Washington County lacked a statewide reputation but emerged in the caucus as a compromise candidate. Joseph Watkins of Goochland County, the Democratic floor leader in the House of Delegates, and Linn Ranks of Madison County, House Speaker, also figured prominently.11 In the party caucus Campbell, Roane, and Judge William

7 On joint ballot Roane received 80 votes, Daniel 62, with 12 scattered. Whig, March 17, 1837.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., and Alexandria Gazette, March 18, 1837.
10 See Chapter V, supra.

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Daniel received nominations. Daniel, however, did not seek the office, and on the third ballot the caucus nominated Campbell. Although a few Democrats threw away their votes, Campbell easily won election on joint ballot. The Enquirer offered lukewarm praise of Campbell's election. Ritchie preferred his cousin Roane, but the Junto could not reverse the caucus nomination. On the other hand the Richmond Whig conceded that Campbell probably would make a good governor, and the Abingdon Statesman, striking a pose that the Whigs later frequently employed, admitted that Campbell, "whilst he is a party man, . . . is not a blind, bigoted partisan."

Democratic victories in the 1836 presidential campaign and the senatorial and gubernatorial elections during the 1836-1837 session of the General Assembly so demoralized the Whigs that they only half-heartedly contested the 1837 spring elections. Besides, the Whigs anticipated that the next General Assembly would face no crucial problems. However in some counties, notably Fluvanna, Louisa, and Hanover, the Whigs attempted to divide the Democrats by encouraging rival Democratic candidates to take the field. The Petersburg Constellation, a

13 Campbell received 88 votes, William Daniel 33, William H. Roane 21, with 12 votes scattered. Whig, January 24, 1837.
14 Enquirer, January 21, 1837
15 Whig, January 20, 1837, and January 31, 1837, quoting the Abingdon Statesman.
16 Ibid., April 21, 1837.
17 Enquirer, February 16, 1837.
Democratic newspaper, confessed that differences existed "upon some minor points of party policy." But the Whigs failed to divide the Democrats by raising the issue of banking and the economy, and the Democrats increased their margin of control in the House of Delegates to nearly forty votes.

Democrats also elected fifteen of the state's twenty-one congressional representatives. The election of two members of the delegation assumed special significance for the party. James Murray Mason of Winchester won election to Congress as a Democrat from the fifteenth district. Although Mason briefly aligned with the Conservative third-party movement, by 1840 he returned to the Democratic fold. Voters in the ninth district elected Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter of Loyds, Essex County. As a states rights Whig, Hunter opposed a national bank and threw his support behind Van Buren's subtreasury proposal. Upon their arrival in Washington both Hunter and Mason joined the mess of Senator and Mrs. John C. Calhoun. In 1839 both men won reelection, with Hunter also elected to the speakership of the House. When Calhoun returned to the Democratic party in support of the subtreasury Mason deserted the Conservatives and Hunter left the Whigs. Both became Calhoun Democrats and eventually assumed leadership of the Calhoun wing in the Virginia Democratic party.

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18 Petersburg Constellation, reprinted in ibid., March 23, 1837.


II

Historians have long disagreed over the Jacksonians' attitude toward banks, the effects of Jackson's destruction of the Second Bank of the United States, the origins of the economic boom of the mid-1830s, and the causes for the economic panic and depression which began in 1837. In fact one recent study, absolving Jackson and his policies from responsibility for the financial boom and bust of the 1830s, places the responsibility instead on events, mostly foreign in origin, which lay beyond Jackson's control. At any rate, a majority of Jacksonians agree with William C. Rives' description of the Second Bank as "a great central monied power. . . the worst form of consolidation, a quasi-governmental authority independent of and irresponsible to the people. . . ." Having destroyed the bank Jackson had to find some place to keep the federal revenues. Here, in Jackson's attempt to find a substitute for the bank, lay the seeds of Van Buren's economic and political difficulties.

In 1834 Jackson turned to the state banks as depositories for the federal monies. Initially most of these state banks, labeled pet banks by the Whigs, were controlled by Democrats, but by June 1836 politics did not always govern the selection of state banks as federal depositories. In 1836 the federal treasury held a surplus, and in

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22 William C. Rives to George M. Dallas, March 20, 1834, Rives Papers, LC.

June a Democratic-Whig coalition in Congress passed the Deposit Act which gave legal standing to the pet bank set-up. The act also provided for the distribution of the federal surplus in excess of $5 million at the beginning of 1837 through a loan to the states in four quarterly installments. The money was to be deposited in selected state banks, and the banks were allowed to use the federal loan money in their everyday banking operations. \(^{24}\) Although the *Enquirer* grudgingly accepted the Deposit Act, Ritchie warned against it as a precedent and called for a reduction in the federal revenue by lowering the tariff rates. \(^{25}\) The *Whig*, fearing that distribution of the surplus revenue would breed corruption in government, opposed the revenue. \(^{26}\)

John Brockenbrough, prominent Junto member and president of the Bank of Virginia, disliked the idea of using state banks as depositories for federal monies. Brockenbrough had opposed the Second Bank of the United States, but he did not object in principle to regulation of banks. He feared that the state banks, lacking unifying, regulating principles under the Jacksonian arrangement, would operate to maximize their profits at the expense of the economic health of the nation. \(^{27}\)

Brockenbrough's predictions came true as state banks issued

\(^{24}\) *Ibid.*, 202. Under the act Virginia's two largest banks, the Bank of Virginia and the Farmer's Bank of Virginia, were discontinued as deposit banks. *Senate Documents*, 25 Cong., 1 Sess., "Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the Finances, 1837," p.54. Both of Virginia's senators and twelve of her representatives voted for the bill. See the *Register of Debates*, XII, 24 Cong., 1 Sess., 1845-46, 4379-80. Four of the aye votes came from Whigs, and six of the seven nay votes from Democrats.

\(^{25}\) *Enquirer*, May 17, June 28, 1836.

\(^{26}\) *Whig*, October 16, 1835.

paper banknotes far in excess of their specie reserves. This overextension of paper money and credit resulted in rampant inflation and the near monopoly by large-scale speculators on public land sales in the western states and territories. To combat this situation Jackson issued his famous Specie Circular of July 1836. It provided that after August 15 only specie would be accepted by the Federal government in payment for large tracts of public lands. The Specie Circular did reduce speculation in public land sales, but its demand for specie overtaxed many state banks, led to specie hoarding, drained specie from eastern banks, and generally weakened confidence in the state banks.28 Martin Van Buren inherited these economic problems upon his inauguration in March 1837.

Prior to 1837 Virginia enjoyed relative stability in her banking system. However, Virginia banking capital remained heavily concentrated east of the Blue Ridge mountains until the banking crisis struck the state. Before that time two banks headquartered in Richmond, the Bank of Virginia and the Farmer's Bank of Virginia, dominated Virginia banking. Both were presided over by members of the Richmond Junto,29 and their main competition came from the Richmond and Norfolk branches of the Second Bank of the United States. But after Jackson withdrew the federal deposits from the Second Bank in 1833 the bank began calling in its loans, thus decreasing the supply of available capital. Jackson's Specie Circular also caused a drain of specie away from the Virginia banks, and by 1836 a growing demand for additional banking capital

28 Ibid., pp.172-77

29 See Chapter IV, supra., for a discussion of Virginia banking prior to 1835.
appeared in Virginia. The General Assembly faced the question of whether to increase the capital of the existing banks, thereby continuing the practice of branch banking, or to charter independent banks in the state. Much of the stability inherent in Virginia banking came from the state's ownership of part of the stock of every bank chartered by Virginia. Although the nationwide banking crisis of the late 1830s caused Virginia banks to suspend specie payments three times, prior to 1860 no Virginia bank ever failed and most Virginia bank notes circulated at par. 30

Like many of Virginia's Democrats, the Whig opposed the concept of banks, by whomever chartered, but confessed that both observation and experience indicated that the banking system is "irretrievably and unchangeably established." In order to derive as much benefit from it as possible, the Whig advocated an immediate increase in state banking capital in order to insure a sufficient money supply to finance commerce and state internal improvements. 31

Although many Democrats supported a small increase in Virginia's banking capital, 32 Ritchie lectured the 1835-1836 General Assembly on the evils of banking, and proposed as his solution to the crisis a ban on the issue of bank notes under $10. 33 Ritchie's Junto associates,


31 Whig, February 17, 1835. Other Whig newspapers also advocated an increase in the banking capital. See the Norfolk American Beacon, January 22, February 18, 1836.


33 Enquirer, December 23, 1835.
John Brockenbrough and Philip Norborne Nicholas, controlled Virginia's two largest banks, and doubtlessly they influenced his opposition to increased banking capital which might lead to increased competition for their banks.

Early in 1836 the House of Delegates debated a general banking bill. The bill attempted to satisfy all interests in Virginia by more than doubling the available banking capital, chartering new banks in both eastern and western areas of the state, and proscribing the circulation of bank notes under $10.\(^{34}\) Although the Whig supported the increased banking capital and hoped that parties would not seize upon the issue as a means of strengthening themselves,\(^{35}\) Ritchie denounced the bill for proposing too great an expansion of the state's banking facilities.\(^{36}\) Since the Democrats controlled the House of Delegates they managed to kill the bill,\(^{37}\) and the legislature adjourned without authorizing an expansion of the state's banking facilities.

In the 1836 state elections the Democrats retained their control of the General Assembly, and when the legislature convened in December pressures for increased state banking facilities mounted. The Enquirer called for the establishment of new banks limited in their capitalization and under strict regulations in order to prevent abuse of the banking system. It advocated a "reasonable, moderate, guarded addition" of

\(^{34}\) Ibid., February 27, 1835, and Alexander Brown to William C. Rives, March 4, 1836. Rives Papers, LC.

\(^{35}\) Whig, January 9, 1836.

\(^{36}\) Enquirer, January 9, 1836.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., March 12,15,17, 1836. contains the debates and vote on the bill. Fifty Democrats and eighteen Whigs voted to enact the bill, sixteen Democrats and thirty-two Whigs nay.
$4 to $5 million to the state's banking capital and the removal from
circulation of all notes under $10. The Whig, renewing its call for
expanded banking facilities, pleaded for a new bank at Richmond to serve
the planters, farmers, and merchants who traded in the city. The Whig
pictured the new bank as vital to counteract the power of the other two
city banks which were dominated by Democratic presidents, and pointed
out that although "Richmond is a Whig City, she buys the tobacco of
Democratic Republicans as well as of Whigs." The Whig pictured the new bank as vital to counteract the power of the other two
city banks which were dominated by Democratic presidents, and pointed
out that although "Richmond is a Whig City, she buys the tobacco of
Democratic Republicans as well as of Whigs."39

This session of the General Assembly passed a comprehensive gen-
eral banking law. Although Ritchie again warned of the dangers of ex-
cessive banking capital and small note circulation,40 the legislature
chartered a new bank at Norfolk, the Exchange Bank of Virginia, author-
ized additional branches and increased capitalization for the other
state banks, and established additional regulations governing the banks'
debts, loans and discounts, circulating note paper, and specie re-
serves.41 The House of Delegates passed the general banking law by a
84 to 31 vote, yet more than one-third of the total Democratic member-
ship voted against the bill.42

38 Ibid., January 5, 1837.
39 Whig, January 27, 1837.
40 Enquirer, December 24, 1836.
41 Ibid., March 28, 1837, and Starnes, Branch Banking, pp.80-85.
42 Enquirer, March 18, 1837. Democrats controlled the House of Delegates by a 76-57 margin. Whig, May 13, 1836. Of the 84 yea votes, 44 were Democrats, 40 Whigs; opposed were 26 Democrats and 5 Whigs. James R. Sharp, The Jacksonians versus the Bank (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p.240, note 77. Specifically, the banking law specified the extent to which the various banks could increase their capital; bank debts could not exceed deposits, nor amount to more than twice the capital stock; circulating bank notes could not exceed five times the amount of specie in possession of the bank; finally, the
Votes on two specific sections of the bill shed light on Democratic attitudes toward the banking situation. Locofocoism, or hard-money ideology, was popular throughout the state but especially in western Virginia. Many Democrats there, accustomed to using hard money, opposed banks outright. Most Democrats sought effective regulation over Virginia banking, for after all Virginia had invested her literary and internal improvement funds in state bank stock and had agreed to accept state bank notes in payment of state taxes. On the section of the bill which would have prohibited the issuance of state bank notes in denominations under $10, Democrats in the House of Delegates voted 63 to 5 in favor of the ban, while the Whigs, who strenuously advocated an increase in the money supply, opposed the ban.

circulation of notes under $10 was prohibited. Enquirer, March 28, 1837; Starnes, Branch Banking, pp.80-85; McFaul, Jacksonian Finance, pp.89-100

Interestingly, as of January 1, 1837, the Bank of Virginia's debts and its capital stock exceeded deposits by more than three times, and its notes in circulation exceeded its specie by six times. The Farmer's Bank had similar conditions, with debts four times greater than deposits and three times more than its capital stock, although its specie met the requirements for notes in circulation. Howard Braverman, "The Economic and Political Background of the Conservative Revolt in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LX(April, 1952), 269.

After passage of the 1837 banking act the banking system of Virginia was structured as follows (first city following bank is the headquarters):

Bank of Virginia: Richmond, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Petersburg, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Danville, Buchanan.
Farmer's Bank of Virginia: Richmond, Norfolk, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, Lynchburg, Winchester, Danville, Farmville, Abingdon, Charlottesville.
Exchange Bank: Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Clarksville.
Northwestern Bank: Wheeling, Wellsburg, Parkersburg.
Merchant's and Mechanic's Bank: Wheeling, Morgantown.
to 6. Also, in its final form the bill required that only the circulating paper notes of the banks, and not their deposits, be backed by specie reserve. One Democrat proposed an amendment which would have extended the specie ratio to cover deposits as well, and his Democratic colleagues in the House supported his amendment by a 40 to 19 vote. However, the Whigs overwhelmingly opposed the amendment 34 to 4, and managed to defeat the measure. These Democratic votes supporting regulations on the circulation of small note paper and stricter specie reserves indicate that in 1837 Virginia Democrats, while not absolutely opposing an extension of Virginia's banking facilities, favored stricter regulations of the state's banks.

This 1837 General Assembly session initiated the gradual erosion of the Richmond Junto's influence over Virginia Democrats. Twice in rapid succession Linn Banks, House Speaker and formerly a trusted Junto associate, voted against Junto member's bids for office. He opposed both Richard E. Parker for Court of Appeals judge and William Henry Roane for the United States Senate. After twenty years service as House Speaker, Banks was ambitious for higher office. But the other members of the Junto believed that control of the speakership was vital to their continued influence over Assembly Democrats. Consequently they were reluctant to relinquish that control by supporting Banks for Governor or Senator. Frustrated by their lack of support, Banks resigned from the Assembly in 1838 and ran for Congress in a special election.

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44 Ibid., p.101, citing Ibid., p.129.
45 Whig, February 10, March 17, 1837.
election to replace the Democrat John M. Patton who had resigned from office.

Also Philip N. Nicholas resigned in March 1837 as President of the Farmer's Bank of Virginia to accept legislative election as a judge of the General Court of Virginia.\(^{46}\) James Rawlings, a senior director and prominent Democrat, assumed the presidency, but he was soon replaced by a Whig. Although John Brockenbrough continued to serve as President of the Bank of Virginia until 1843, no longer did the Junto control Virginia's major banks. After the General Assembly expanded the banking system in 1837 the relative influence of the Bank of Virginia diminished within the state.

With the Junto's influence over the House speakership and the state banking system now beginning to erode, the Junto began its slow decline from power though it remained a force to be reckoned with in the Virginia Democratic party until 1844. Prior to 1837 the Junto had never tried to force on Democratic party members its opinions on state political issues. Yet state and national banking problems became so intertwined after 1837 that the Junto could no longer continue to separate the two. For the first and only time in its existence the Junto divided over a national political issue in 1837 when Van Buren proposed an Independent Treasury as his remedy for the banking crisis. Subsequent divisions within the Virginia Democratic party mirrored the Junto's split. This conflict over banking which pervaded the party led to the rise of a Conservative third party and allowed the Whigs to win control of the Assembly for the next four years. The banking crisis temporarily

\(^{46}\)Philip N. Nicholas to the Directors of the Farmer's Bank of Virginia, March 18, 1837, Randolph Family Papers, University of Virginia.
blurred party lines in Virginia and threatened the Democrats' defeat in the presidential election of 1840.

III

When David Campbell took office, he lacked a statewide reputation. Born on the Virginia frontier in the midst of the American Revolution, Campbell acquired only the rudiments of a formal education, and although he studied law, he never practiced. He served for many years as clerk of the Washington County court in southwestern Virginia, and sat for one term in the state Senate. Coming from the frontier Campbell despised what he called the "arrogance" of the Virginia aristocracy. After taking office Campbell never presented an original idea. Instead he attached himself to William Cabell Rives, apparently finding in Rives a political father figure. Campbell's views on politics and banking were unknown to most Virginia Democrats at the time of his election. After he took office, aside from his official messages he made no public statements on his political philosophy. Instead he endorsed completely Rives' philosophy and politics, and his course

48 David Campbell to William B. Campbell, February 21, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University.
caused severe repercussions for the Virginia Democratic party.

As economic distress deepened in Virginia during the spring of 1837, Ritchie defended Jackson's economic policies, particularly the Specie Circular. He believed that other causes, especially "over-dealing and over-banking," and the "general rage for speculation--in importations, lands, produce, exchange, and Internal Improvements," were responsible for the panic. Then, on May 15 the Richmond banks suspended specie payments in reaction to specie suspension by the New York banks. The action of the Virginia banks, under state law, called either for revocation of their charters or heavy fines, and prohibited their notes from being received in payment to the state. Virginia bankers asked Campbell to call the General Assembly into special session in order to secure laws that would legalize their suspension of specie payments without the imposition of the proscribed penalties. Campbell complied with the bankers' request. In a printed circular, dated May 15, he called the Assembly into session and assured Virginians that "no cause for uneasiness or alarm" existed on the part of holders of Virginia bank notes.

Both Democrats and Whigs endorsed Campbell's call for the special Assembly session. Ritchie indicated the Virginia banks had suspended specie payments as a precautionary measure to prevent specie from being

50 Enquirer, April 11, 1837.

51 Braverman, "Conservative Revolt," 269-70. Penalties varied on the Virginia banks. The Bank of Virginia could continue in operation, but would suffer a fine of 6 per cent on its irredeemable notes. The Merchant's and Mechanic's Bank would also suffer a heavy fine, while the other banks would forfeit their charters.

52 Printed Circular, signed by Governor David Campbell, May 15, 1837, Randolph Family Papers, University of Virginia.
drained out of the state, and not because their credit had failed. He conceded that the banking system demanded reform, but preferred to postpone it until the crisis had passed. Ritchie's solution for the crisis was for the banks to avoid the overissue of paper money, to call in their notes, and to lay in more specie preparatory to resuming specie payments as soon as possible. However, not all Democrats agreed with Ritchie. Hard-money Democrats maintained their animosity toward banks. A "Democrat in Ernest" commented in the Enquirer that Campbell's proclamation "looks too much like a call from the city of Richmond and the Banks... to legalize a violation of the laws which gave the Banks existence." The implication was that Campbell should force the banks to give up their charters. The Richmond Whig, perceiving the cleavage that existed among Democrats over banking, praised Campbell's call for the session as vital to the interest of Virginia.

William Cabell Rives, a young articulate planter, led the faction of the Virginia Democrats which eventually deserted and formed the Conservative party. A staunch Jacksonian who had resigned his Senate seat in 1834 rather than obey instructions to censure Jackson, Rives sought the vice-presidential nomination in the 1835 Democratic national convention. Although Virginia preferred Rives the convention endorsed Richard M. Johnson. Van Buren, turning his back on his Virginia allies, went along with Johnson's nomination rather than disrupt

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53 Enquirer, May 16, June 2, 1837.
54 Ibid., May 26, 1837.
55 Whig, May 30, 1837. The Whig party generally supported Campbell during his administration, and the Whig, March 31, 1840, praised him when he left office.
the party. Consequently he dealt a blow to Rives' political ambitions.

As John Brockenbrough later realized, Van Buren's administration
lost Rives when the Baltimore convention nominated Johnson. Among
Virginians, Rives' ambitions for higher office and his bitter disap-
pointment over the vice-presidential nomination were open secrets.

Since Jackson moved in late 1836 to mollify his Virginia supporters by
promoting Philip P. Barbour and Peter V. Daniel in the federal judiciary,
Democratic leaders hoped that Van Buren would continue this trend. But
for Rives his failure to obtain a cabinet post was the last straw. The
Junto took pains to see that Van Buren's cabinet would include a Vir-
ginian, possibly Rives as Secretary of State. Van Buren requested a
meeting with Rives on the night of February 1 and offered him the Sec-
retaryship of War, the highest vacant cabinet post. Van Buren told
Rives that he wanted to offer him the State Department. But John For-
sythe, Jackson's Secretary of State, showed no inclination to resign,
nor could Van Buren politically afford to eject him. Rives' diplomatic
service gave him experience for State, but he had no qualifications for
or interest in the War Department. Rives politely declined Van Buren's

56 John Brockenbrough to Andrew Stevenson, January 9, 1839,
Stevenson Papers, LC.

57 Even Virginia Whigs commented upon his situation. See Alex-
ander Moseley to Richard K. Crallé, November 11, 1836, Crallé Papers,
University of Virginia.

58 Richard E. Parker to William C. Rives, December, 30, 1836,
Rives Papers, LC. Parker told Rives that he felt anything less than
State would be unacceptable if Rives looked forward to political pro-
motion. See Parker to Martin Van Buren, February 7, 1837, Van Buren
Papers, LC. Parker told Van Buren that "the mass of the Southern
people would feel more confidence in the good disposition of the ad-
ministration by seeing the cabinet men born amongst them entertain-
ing, if you will, the same prejudices."
offer, signalling the beginning of his personal break with Van Buren.

As a loyal Jacksonian, Rives supported Jackson's banking policy upon his return to the Senate in 1835. As late as December 1836 he defended Jackson's Specie Circular. But as Jackson's administration came to a close, Rives became upset over the economic situation. In light of the outcry against the Specie Circular, Rives decided to move for its repeal in conjunction with currency reform which would allow the federal government to accept all bank notes until 1841 and then only the notes from banks which issued no bills under $20. Rives objected to an all-metallic currency, and he hoped that his proposal would bring stability to the nation's monetary supply. Although Rives' bill, supported by the Virginia delegation, passed both the House and Senate, Jackson pocket-vetoed the measure.

Rives' attempt to repeal the Treasury Circular foreshadowed his ideological break with Van Buren over financial policy. Both men dismissed a national bank as the solution to the financial crisis. However, as the economic situation continued to deteriorate, Van Buren realized that in order to bring stability to the national economy and to protect the federal revenues the existing deposit system had to be either altered or replaced. He finally decided to replace the state deposit

59 Memo by William C. Rives, pursuant to note, Martin Van Buren to Rives, February 1, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.
60 See William C. Rives to Andrew Jackson, January 4, 1836, ibid.
61 Register of Debates, 24 Cong., 1 Sess., 120ff.
62 Both of Virginia's senators supported the bill. In the House, thirteen of Virginia's representatives, nine Democrats and four Whigs, voted for the bill, while three Democrats opposed the measure. Ibid., 24 Cong., 2 Sess., 2090, 778
banks with an Independent Treasury system.

Campbell's message to the special session put forth ideas identical to those Rives was espousing in the Senate. Campbell rejected the notion of abolishing all banks, state as well as federal, and forcing an exclusively metallic currency on the country.63 Then, avoiding the other extreme of a national bank, he praised the state banks as the only practical substitute for a national bank.

In denouncing an all-metallic currency Campbell alienated the hard-money Democrats, and by endorsing the state banks as the only substitute for a U.S. Bank he alienated many Democrats who supported Van Buren's solution for the banking crisis. Acting as loyal Van Buren Democrats, Thomas Ritchie and Peter V. Daniel sought to alter that portion of Campbell's message which praised the state banks as the only substitute for a national bank. Ritchie twice visited Campbell while the message was in preparation. Campbell did not ask him for suggestions, but told Ritchie to call later and he would show him the message before he delivered it. Ritchie never called, but sent a messenger to borrow the message in order to make a copy preparatory to printing it. While Ritchie still had the message Daniel came to call on the governor. Campbell realized that Daniel knew the contents of the message when Daniel, speaking for himself and Ritchie, asked Campbell to delete the passage which praised the state banks as the only effective substitute for a national bank. Campbell refused,64 and from that moment he

63 The original manuscript of Campbell's message is in the Campbell Papers, Duke University. See also William C. Rives to Campbell, May 22, 1837, ibid.

64 David Campbell to Mrs. Campbell, June 13, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University. Alexander Rives to William C. Rives, June 15, 1837,
realized that he could not count on the Junto for support within the
party. The Whig, however, praised Campbell's message, noting that "the
taint of the Junto does not defile the message--the finger of Ritchie
is not visible throughout the document." Campbell himself indicated
the message had been nearly universally accepted in Richmond, with only
the hard-money Democrats objecting.

After an initial burst of party rhetoric in the opening days of
the session when the Whigs blamed Jackson's Specie Circular for causing
the panic, party rhetoric and partisanship temporarily disappeared in
the legislature. The Assembly enacted two laws designed to alleviate
the banking crisis. A temporary relief law suspended, until March 1835,
state laws which revoked charters of banks failing to redeem their
notes in specie. Virginia bank notes would continue to be received in
payment of taxes and debts due the state, and each bank had to furnish
the governor with a statement of its condition every two months. An­
other act declared Virginia bank notes legal tender in business trans­
actions. The Enquirer praised the laws enacted by the Assembly while
the Whig, though lauding the attitude of the governor and the Democratic
legislators in the session, criticized the failure of the Assembly to

Rives Papers, LC. Campbell believed that Daniel, who hated all forms of
corporate activity, had such strong influence over Ritchie that he would
make him a "Benton man" (hard-money Democrat) or destroy him. Campbell
to Mrs. Campbell, June 19, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University.

65 Whig, June 13, 1837.

66 David Campbell to Mrs. Campbell, June 19, 1837, Campbell Papers,
Duke University.

67 Braverman, "Conservative Revolt." 273-74. Both of these acts
were passed by overwhelming margins. For debates on passage of the re­
lief law see the Enquirer, June 20, 1837.
enact a law allowing the issue of small-change paper notes and objected to the curtailment of bank loans at the season of the year when credit expansion was required. Adopting an extreme laissez-faire attitude, the Whig editorialized that the banks "might safely have been left wholly unrestricted, and free to adopt such steps as might most relieve the people." 68

Legislative action in the regular 1836-1837 session and the June special session temporarily resolved the banking crisis in Virginia. The attitudes demonstrated during these sessions by each faction or party with respect to banking capital, small note circulation, and stay laws persisted throughout the depression and into the early 1840s. 69 These same attitudes carried over into the national banking controversy when both parties, but especially the Democrats, became enmeshed in Van Buren's attempt to find a home for the federal revenues.

IV

After Van Buren's inauguration Ritchie predicted an optimistic future for his administration. 70 Almost immediately, however, panic shook the nation. Hoping to avoid both political and economic disaster, Van Buren tried to rally the country and the Democratic party. Ultimately he failed. By attempting to assert strong executive leadership Van Buren alienated many of his Virginia supporters; his remedies for the banking crisis fractionalized Virginia's Democrats and initiated

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68 Enquirer, June 27, 1837; Whig, June 26, 27, 1837
69 Party attitudes on state banking are analyzed in Chapter IX, infra.
70 Enquirer, March 9, 1837.
the formation of a Conservative third party.

Ironically, the subtreasury proposal had originated in Virginia. John Randolph first recommended the idea to Albert Gallatin, Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury. William F. Gordon, a Jacksonian turned states rights Whig, renewed this proposal in Congress in 1834. When John Brockenbrough revived the idea in 1837 Van Buren seized upon his suggestion. The subtreasury plan would establish throughout the nation treasuries controlled by the federal government and independent of state banks and businesses. These treasuries would simply receive, store, and disburse federal revenue, and would not engage in commercial banking operations.

Rives believed the existing system of deposit banks, bolstered by proper federal regulations, provided adequate security for the federal revenues. What Rives desired, in effect, was a continuation of the state banking system which Jackson had initiated, minus the specie requirements of the Treasury Circular. Rives told Van Buren that Congress, not the president, controlled federal financial arrangements. He urged Van Buren, in light of congressional endorsement of his bill repealing the Specie Circular, to rescind Jackson's order. By late spring Rives's future Conservative co-leader, Nathaniel P. Tallmadge of New York, insisted


74 William C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, April 7, 1837, Rives Papers, LC. Rives to Van Buren, June 3, 1837, Van Buren Papers, LC.
that "there is no other way left us but a bold independent course." But despite his differences with the administration on economic policy, Rives indicated to Ritchie in early June that he was prepared to support Van Buren on other party measures.

Both Richard Parker and John Brockenbrough informed Van Buren of Virginia Democrats' views on the banking situation. Parker sent Benjamin Butler, Van Buren's Attorney-General, an extract of a letter he had received from Ritchie in which Ritchie reiterated his opposition to a national bank but stated his belief that the government could not separate itself from the nation's banking system. Ritchie feared that the Whigs would try to reestablish a national bank, and he pointed out that the Democrats needed "some rallying point, some substitute as a final measure for satisfying the wants of the people." Ritchie closed by advocating that the state banks be employed in some way.

John Brockenbrough offered different advice to Van Buren. As Virginia's leading banker Brockenbrough took a dim view of Jackson's use of pet banks and the subsequent deposit bank system. He also dismissed as "chimerical" the idea of establishing a metallic currency. Brockenbrough believed that the federal constitution did not authorize the national government to regulate currency or exchange, tasks which he believed should be left to the states and the laws of commerce. According to Brockenbrough, the state banks exhibited "too little of the principle

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75 Nathaniel P. Tallmadge to William C. Rives, May 21, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.
76 William C. Rives to Thomas Ritchie, June 3, 1837, ibid.
77 Thomas Ritchie to Richard E. Parker, May 21, 1837, enclosed in Parker to Benjamin F. Butler, May 29, 1837, Van Buren Papers, LC.
of cohesion" in their policies of regulating the currency. Consequently he suggested that the federal government would have to adopt some measure of its own, independent of the state banks, for managing its fiscal concerns.  

Thus within two months after taking office Van Buren received conflicting advice on economic policy from leading members of the Virginia Democratic party. Obviously the threat of a major split was developing unless a compromise could be reached. Brockenbrough and Ritchie both tried to influence Rives' course, but met with little success. Rives agreed with Brockenbrough that an exclusively metallic currency was out of the question because he feared that a hard-money medium for the government would establish for official use a currency different from the bank paper used by the people. Rives preferred to see gold and silver coin employed in place of bank notes under $20. However, he rejected Brockenbrough's proposal of a federal agency for collecting and disbursing the federal revenue independent of the state banks, and reiterated his belief that the state banks were "the true practical substitute for the dangerous and unconstitutional agency of a national Bank." Ritchie stood squarely in the middle of a dilemma. On the one side Van Buren, and Ritchie's Junto associates, Brockenbrough, Parker, and Daniel, advocated an independent treasury. On the other side stood Rives and, so Ritchie believed, a majority of Virginia's

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79 William C. Rives to John Brockenbrough, n.d., 1837, Rives Papers, LC. This is obviously the draft of a letter from Brockenbrough to Rives, May 20, 1837, ibid.
Democrats, who favored a continuation of the state deposit banks. Ritchie desperately tried to preserve party harmony and avoid a break with the administration. Although he recognized the need for bank reform, he threw his weight behind the deposit system.  

As the summer lengthened Virginia Democrats began to divide into three factions over the subtreasury. The Junto sought desperately to hold the party together, but dissension within its membership echoed that within the party. Among the Junto, Richard E. Parker, John Brockenbrough, and Peter V. Daniel joined in support of the subtreasury, while Ritchie and Philip N. Nicholas opposed it. In addition, Governor Campbell, Senator Rives, and Representative James Garland, three men who became leaders of the Virginia Conservatives, opposed the Independent Treasury, as did James Rawlings, President of the Farmer's Bank of Virginia.

The hard-money Democrats constituted a third faction. Ritchie flirted briefly with hard-money ideas, but ultimately endorsed a mixed

80 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, April 26, 1837, ibid. See also Ambler, Ritchie, p.198.
81 See John Brockenbrough to William C. Rives, August 5; Thomas Ritchie to Rives, August 29; Richard E. Parker to Rives, August 31, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.
82 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, August 20, 1837, Van Buren Papers, LC.
83 Ibid. Campbell's objections are noted at length in Campbell to William C. Rives, December 15, 1837, Rives Papers, LC., and Campbell to Arthur Perroneau Hayne, September 5, Campbell to George W. Hopkins, September 18, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University.
84 See John T. Anderson to William C. Rives, July 25; Charles Hunton to Rives, July 26, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.
85 David Campbell to Maria Campbell, June 5, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University. Campbell described Ritchie at this date as "red-hot for hard money."
currency. James McDowell of Rockbridge County led Virginia's hard-money Democrats. But the Virginia banks' record of steady specie payments prior to the May 1837 suspension, the state's partial ownership and control of the banks, and the fact that no Virginia bank failed in the panic inhibited any form of anti-bank movement in Virginia. In 1837 hard-money Democrats may have been numerically superior among rank-and-file party members, particularly west of the mountains, where, because of the scarcity of banks, people used hard money in their business transactions. But Democrats from west of the mountains never exerted more than a minimal influence upon party policy, and hard-money leadership paled in comparison with that exercised by the Democrats who remained loyal to Van Buren.

Searching for some middle ground on which to unite the Virginia Democrats, John Brockenbrough and Thomas Ritchie hit upon the idea of a national bank convention. They hoped that in such a convention the state banks might be able to coordinate their policy and agree upon an early date for the resumption of specie payments, thereby regaining confidence among the public. Ritchie viewed a national convention as a prerequisite to rapid resumption of specie payments, and he called for the state governments to close down banks which did not resume payments. Ritchie also advocated a reduction in the number of state banks, a limitation on the number of banks authorized to issue notes for circulation,

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86 *Enquirer*, July 18, 1837. John Brockenbrough to William C. Rives, August 5, 1837, Rives Papers, LC. Not all Democrats supported the idea of a convention, and C.W. Gooch warned Ritchie against equating the interests of bankers with those of the American people. Gooch to Ritchie, September 7, 1837, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. The *Whig*, August 1, 1837, opposed a national banking convention, citing the dangers of the early resumption of specie payments until the foreign demand for specie ceased.

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and periodic public reports of their financial condition. He pledged himself to support reform of the Virginia banking system in 1842 when the charters of all but two of the state banks expired.\footnote{Enquirer, July 18, 1837.}

Van Buren, however, had decided to replace the state bank deposit system with the subtreasury plan, and he called Congress into special session in September to pass the necessary legislation. Unfortunately Van Buren misread the opinions of the nation's and Virginia's Democrats. The special session merely publicized the deep divisions over banking that existed within the party. Van Buren told Ritchie that although he held no hostility toward state banks the system had fallen to pieces and he had to replace it.\footnote{Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie, August 11, 1837, Van Buren Papers, LC.} Ritchie warned the president before the special session convened that a majority of the Virginia Democrats would "probably" oppose the subtreasury.\footnote{See Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, August 27, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.}

In his message to the special session Van Buren put forth the idea of an Independent Treasury and sought at the same time to reassure his states rights allies that he had no intention of destroying the state banking system.\footnote{Van Buren's message to the Special Session is reprinted in James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of The Presidents, 1789-1907 (18 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896-1899), III, 324-46.} He rejected both a national bank and the use of state banks for collecting, storing, and disbursing federal revenue, and advocated an Independent Treasury to separate the federal government from banking. He denied, however, that an Independent Treasury, controlled
by the Secretary of the Treasury, would enlarge executive control over
the purse or patronage. Although Van Buren did not take a strong posi-
tion on the type of currency to be employed by the federal government,
he indicated a preference for hard money. He tried to emphasize that
through the subtreasury the federal government was attempting to solve
its own financial problems and not interfere with those of the states.
However, many states rights Democrats found in his message disturbing
implications of strong executive action. 91

Reaction in Virginia to Van Buren's message varied. According
to the Whig, all the Democratic papers in the state except the Enquirer
and the Charlottesville Advocate supported the subtreasury. 92 These
were major exceptions, however, for the Enquirer was the leading Demo-
cratic newspaper, and the Charlottesville paper represented opinion in
Rives' part of the state. Daniel, obviously referring to Ritchie, apol-
ogized to Van Buren for "the defections here... in the private ranks
of the party." 93 He told Rives that Van Buren's message upheld true,
old-fashioned Republican doctrines and was not incompatible with a

91James C. Curtis, The Fox at Bay: Martin Van Buren and the
Presidency, 1837-1841 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1970),
p.90.

92Whig, October 10, 1837. The Whig itself supported the sub-
treasury. When the junior editor of the paper publicly recommended a
neutral course in response to Van Buren's message, John H. Pleasants
reasserted his control. From his country home he sent a long letter
rejecting both a national bank and the state bank system and called for
the adoption of the subtreasury. Whig, September 15, 1837.

93Peter V. Daniel to Martin Van Buren, September 4, 1837, Van
Buren Papers, LC. John Y. Mason described Ritchie as "daft" in his
opposition to the Subtreasury. Mason to George Coke Dromgoole, May 25,
1837, Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University
of North Carolina.
spirit of moderation. 

Claiborne W. Gooch warned Ritchie "that the Enquirer should not, hastily detach itself from the Democratic party of the country," and reminded him of the losses the Democrats suffered in 1833 when Ritchie opposed deposit withdrawal. Both Ritchie and Rives, however, maintained their opposition.

By August 1, Rives and Nathaniel Tallmadge of New York, leaders of the Conservative Democrats in Congress, had completed arrangements for the publication of The Madisonian, a Washington-based Conservative paper to oppose the Washington Globe. Although The Madisonian initially claimed to support Van Buren on every issue except banking, its attack on the subtreasury proposal marked the beginning of its campaign against the administration. Rives obviously had begun preparations for an all-out attack on Van Buren.

Because Ritchie and many Virginia Democrats opposed Gordon's proposal in 1834 as a Whig scheme to defeat Jackson's pet bank system, it was difficult for them to accept the Independent Treasury in 1837. The letters of "Camillus," printed in the Enquirer during the summer of 1837, opened the Democrats' attack on the subtreasury. Although Ritchie denied that Rives authored the letters, it seems likely that Rives' intimate friend, Representative James Garland of Albemarle County, wrote the series.

In early August, Ritchie told Rives that he opposed the

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94 Peter V. Daniel to William C. Rives, November 7, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.
95 C.W. Gooch to Thomas Ritchie, September 7, 1837, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia.
96 See Curtis, The Fox at Bay, pp.82,91.
97 Ambier, Ritchie, p.197, identifies Rives as the author, but Ritchie in the Enquirer, August 18, 1837, denies it, and Simms, Rise of the Whigs, p.124, points to Garland.
subtreasury, and his publication of the "Camillus" letters made public his union with the Conservatives in opposition to the subtreasury.

They opposed Van Buren's plan for three basic reasons. Primarily they saw in the proposal an unnecessary enlargement of executive power and patronage. Secondly, they feared that the subtreasury plan might endanger the security of the federal revenues, and through its reliance upon specie would produce a metallic currency for the federal government and a paper currency for the rest of the country. Finally, they believed that Van Buren had not given the state bank system a fair trial. The Conservatives, hewing to their states'-rights ideology, placed their faith in the state banks as the proper agencies for currency regulations.

When the subtreasury bill came to the floor of the Senate in the special session, Rives deserted the administration. In the House, four Virginia Democratic congressmen broke with the administration and voted with the majority to table the bill.

Ritchie deplored the growing factionalization of the party over a solution to the banking crisis, and while Congress met in special session he came up with a compromise. Ritchie combined what he considered to be the best features of Jackson's pet bank scheme, the system established under the Deposit Act of 1836, and the Independent Treasury. He

98 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, August 10, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.

99 See the Enquirer, August 18, October 20, 1837. Thomas Ritchie to Thomas Green, September 20, 1837, reprinted in the John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, IV(June, 1916), 383.

100 Roane voted for the bill. Senate Journal, 25 Cong., 1 Sess., 55.

101 Cong. Globe, 25 Cong., 1 Sess., 141. The four were James Garland, George W. Hopkins, James M. Mason, and John M. Patton.
called his proposal the Special Deposit System. Ritchie and Brockenbrough worked to convert Rives and Van Buren, but had no success. Ritchie urged that the Special Deposit System was the best plan that could be gotten through Congress because it should satisfy both critics of the state banks and the Independent Treasury. Under the proposal federal revenues would be removed from executive control, thereby decreasing executive patronage, and improving security of the revenue. The federal monies would be deposited in approved state banks which had agreed to federal inspection and regulations and which would be prohibited, as the old deposit banks had not, from using the money in their banking operations. Ritchie urged the adoption of his plan in order to restore tranquility to the nation's economy, perpetuate the state banks, destroy forever the idea of a national bank and of equal importance, preserve Democratic party unity.

Ritchie's compromise plan failed to attract the attention of Virginia's hard-money Democrats, Rives and the Conservatives, or Van Buren. Hard-money Democrats continued to denounce all forms of banking and paper currency. Since Van Buren clung to the subtreasury, Rives ignored Ritchie's proposal. He continued his opposition to the Independent

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3 See George Booker to Thomas Ritchie, September 16, 1837, published in the Enquirer, October 10, 1837, for a good example of the hard-money position.
Treasury on the theoretical grounds that it violated states rights ideology and on the economic grounds that it would ruin the state banks. Yet Rives still maintained his allegiance to the Democratic party. He told a Virginia colleague that it was not yet too late to save the party, but if Van Buren persisted in advocating the subtreasury he would "fatally divide the opinions of those who did all they could to secure his election." Rives spoke of his belief that the administration seemed to have a design "to press the conservatives, (so called) to the wall," and theorized that he and Governor Campbell might be able to reorganize "the old Virginia party of '98 and '99, which may yet control events and save the country."  

While Rives by the end of 1837 contemplated breaking with the Democrats, rumors had circulated in Virginia since May that he would join the Whig party. Whigs, however, showed little interest, for Rives had been one of Jackson's strongest partisans. In May the Richmond Whig, poking fun at Rives' status within the Democratic party, stated that in 1835 Rives should have stood up to Van Buren after the convention rejected him. But, according to the Whig, Rives' "evil genius" dominated him, and "he hoped by truckling, by sycophany [sic] and intrigue to compass that, which he wanted moral courage to achieve."

105 William C. Rives to David Campbell, October 16, 1837, Campbell Papers, Duke University.
106 William C. Rives to C.S. Morgan, October 22, 1837, Rives Letters, University of Virginia.
107 Ibid.
entertain greater contempt. . . . He has committed the unpardonable
sin, wilfully and wantonly—he labored in the cause of Jacksonianism
with a full knowledge of the disastrous consequences to result. . . ."\(^{109}\)
Despite the Whig's denunciation of Rives, the rumors persisted,\(^{110}\) and
Ritchie and other Democrats pled with Rives not to break with his
party.\(^{111}\)

In spite of his continual pleas for party unity, Ritchie refused
to give up his Special Deposit System for Van Buren's subtreasury.
Ritchie continued to promote his proposal as a compromise to avoid the
evils of the subtreasury and the abuse of unregulated state banks.\(^{112}\)
Contemporaneously, Van Buren received conflicting advice from adminis-
tration Democrats in Virginia. C.W. Gooch told him that the subtreasury
proposal was rapidly gaining support, and at least two major party figures,
John Y. Mason and Thomas Jefferson Randolph, had come over to support the
proposal.\(^{113}\) But Richard E. Parker warned Van Buren of the factionalism
within the Virginia party, and asked Van Buren to offer through him a
compromise to heal the split.\(^{114}\) Furthermore, John Brockenbrough told
Van Buren that Secretary of the Treasury Levi Woodbury's harsh


\(^{110}\) For example see the Boston Atlas, reprinted in the *Enquirer*,
October 3, 1837, along with Ritchie's denial; and Frank Blair to Andrew
Jackson, October 13, 1837, Andrew Jackson Papers, LC.

\(^{111}\) Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, August 27; Richard E.
Parker to Rives, August 31; C.W. Gooch to Rives, October 10; Parker to
Rives, November 15, 1837, Rives Papers, LC.

\(^{112}\) *Enquirer*, October 20, 24, 1837.

\(^{113}\) C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, October 12, 1837, Van Buren
Papers, LC.; *Enquirer*, November 21, 1837.

\(^{114}\) Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, November 14, 27, 1837,
Van Buren Papers, LC.
administration of the specie law under the Deposit Act of 1836 would, in just a few months, drive all the specie out of Virginia banks, and the continuation of such a policy would create hostility to the administration in Virginia.\textsuperscript{115}

In November The Madisonian called for Conservatives to carry out a "distinct party organization.\textsuperscript{116} The Charlottesville Advocate took up the call in Virginia. Parker again warned Van Buren of the split among Virginia Democrats, but told the president that The Madisonian had disgusted some of its friends in Virginia by suggesting a break with the Democratic party.\textsuperscript{117} The Enquirer maintained its opposition to the subtreasury, but vowed to continue its support of Van Buren except for this issue.\textsuperscript{118} By this time factions within the party began to harden their positions.

Throughout the next six months administration Democrats, the Conservatives, and Ritchie each held to their positions. As he would do in each of his annual messages to Congress, Van Buren in December 1837 called for the enactment of the Subtreasury.\textsuperscript{119} In his position between Van Buren and the Virginia Conservatives, Ritchie again put forth his Special Deposits System as a compromise,\textsuperscript{120} continued to issue public

\textsuperscript{115}John Brockenbrough to Van Buren, November 12, 1837, ibid. See also Sharp, Jacksonians versus Bank, p.231.

\textsuperscript{116}Enquirer, November 20, 1837.

\textsuperscript{117}Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, November 27, 1837, Van Buren Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{118}Enquirer, November 20, 1837.

\textsuperscript{119}See Richardson, Messages and Papers, III, 373-95, 483-505, 529-55, for the messages.

\textsuperscript{120}Enquirer, January 24, 1838.
pleas for party harmony, and worked in private to achieve a resolution to the conflict. Meanwhile Rives in February 1838 introduced in the Senate his proposal that the federal government continue the use of state banks. Although Rives indicated that he supported the administration on other issues, he described the subtreasury as "full of danger" and revealed that his allegiance to Virginia and the nation were "paramount to the mere allegiance of party." \(^{124}\)

Ritchie remained firm in early 1838 despite pressure from a majority of Democrats in the General Assembly, who now favored the subtreasury, to abandon his sympathies for the Conservatives and fall behind Van Buren. The administration tried in quick succession to coerce Ritchie, then patronize him in order to gain his support. They threatened to open a rival Democratic press in Richmond, but this threat quickly fell through. Van Buren then offered the post of U.S. Attorney

\(^{121}\) Ibid., December 15, 1837; January 13, March 24, April 30, May 15, 1838.


\(^{125}\) Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, January 18, 1838, ibid. Peter Van Daniel to Martin Van Buren, January 23; Richard E. Parker to Van Buren, January 18, April 10, 1838, Van Buren Papers, LC.

General to Ritchie's brother-in-law, Richard E. Parker; Parker revealed the offer to Ritchie. Although Parker ultimately declined the offer, Van Buren's gesture indicated to Ritchie that he wanted to conciliate Virginia's Democrats. 127

By May 1838 Rives had decided to break with the Democratic party. In the Virginia spring elections the Whigs won a plurality in the House of Delegates with the administration Democrats gaining the next largest plurality and the Conservatives winning only twenty-two seats. 128 Rives realized that the Conservatives could not gain control of the party, and he advised Campbell that the Conservatives should take an independent position and "present a rallying-point, on which the Republicans of the old school will form, and reorganize their broken bands...". 129

Ritchie refused to give in to Van Buren, and told Rives that while he still opposed the subtreasury, he regretted that Rives would not accept the Special Deposit System. 130 On June 25 the House of Representatives defeated Van Buren's Independent Treasury bill by a narrow margin of fourteen votes. Five of Virginia's fifteen Democratic congressmen broke with the administration and opposed the bill. 131

127 Curtis, The Fox At Bay, p.128.
128 Whig, July 20, 1838. The Whigs won 73 seats, administration Democrats 39 and the Conservatives 22. Democrats controlled the Senate by a 22-10 margin.
130 Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, June 5, 1838. Rives Papers, LC. Peter V. Daniel suspected that Ritchie's financial involvement with the banks influenced his position. See Daniel to Martin Van Buren, October 20, 1838, Van Buren Papers, LC.
131 Cong. Globe, 25 Cong., 2 Sess., 478. Those Democrats supporting the bill included Banks, Bierne, Bouldin, Coles, Craig, Dromgoole,
Ritchie and Rives had succeeded in staving off the Independent Treasury, but in the process Ritchie had nearly splintered, and Rives in fact had deserted, the Virginia Democratic party. Although Ritchie opposed the subtreasury as a measure which would concentrate unnecessary financial power in the hands of the executive branch, he had no intentions of breaking with Van Buren. Actually Ritchie and Rives were not that far apart in their philosophical positions. The only technical difference between their financial proposals was that under Ritchie's Special Deposit System the state banks would not be allowed to use the deposited federal revenues in their banking operations. But by May 1838 Rives' opposition to Van Buren rested on more than mere financial differences, for his "private grieves" strengthened his political and philosophical objections. Since they equated the subtreasury with a national bank, Rives and his followers took the name Conservative to indicate that they were attempting to preserve the old banking order along with old Republican ideology. By May Rives' ambition and politics had convinced him to create a third party. In the next two years only Ritchie wavered. While both Rives and Van Buren remained firm, Ritchie ceased his efforts to compromise and broke with Rives. As a loyal Democrat Ritchie felt the pressure of the approaching presidential election; consequently he abandoned his philosophical objections and accepted the subtreasury. In those same two years a realignment of parties took place in Virginia.

Johnson, Jones, Morgan, Pennybacker, and Rives. The Whigs, Mallory, Mercer, Robertson, Taliaferro, and Wise, were joined by the Democrats, Garland, Hopkins, Mason, and Stuart, in opposing the measure. Robert M.T. Hunter, a states rights Whig, voted for the bill. Party identifications are based upon the Whig, May 23, 1837.

132 Enquirer, July 30, 1839.
After the defeat of the subtreasury in June 1838, Ritchie made one final attempt to reconcile the differences between Van Buren and the Conservatives. In July he wrote Van Buren a distraught letter begging the president to compromise in order to save his party. At the same time he also asked Rives to work in the Senate for a compromise. He pointed out to Rives that the only difference between his plan and Rives' was that the Special Deposit System prohibited the state banks from using the federal deposits in their banking operations. Publicly Ritchie begged the Conservatives to return to the Democratic fold. The alternative, as he made clear, was to fall into the Whig camp and the arms of Henry Clay in 1840. When Rives passed through Richmond in December on his way to Washington for the last session of the Twenty-Fifty Congress, Ritchie tried and failed in one last attempt at conciliation.

Having failed in their attempt to capture the Virginia Democratic party, the Conservatives decided to launch a third-party movement. William M. Peyton, a Conservative member of the House of Delegates from Botetourt County, described the dilemma of Virginia's Conservatives when

133 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, July 2, 1838, Van Buren Papers, LC.
135 Enquirer. October 4, 1839.
136 Mrs. Rives to William C. Rives, December 9, 1838. Rives Papers, LC.
he told Rives that the party lacked "coherence and concert and energy in the support of our principles." According to Peyton, these were the prerequisites for widespread confidence in the party. During the summer Van Buren, on his way to the Virginia springs, stopped to visit Rives at Castle Hill, his Albemarle County plantation. Van Buren failed to convert Rives' thinking on economic affairs. This visit, combined with Peyton's appeal, stimulated Rives to define explicitly the Conservative program. As a result an essay entitled "Principles and Policy of the Conservatives" appeared in the Charlottesville Jeffersonian Republican in September 1838.

This platform of the Conservatives made explicit their views on the banking crisis and their reasons for breaking with Van Buren. Rives equated the subtreasury with a national bank, and opposed them both. The subtreasury would give the president unconstitutional control of the federal revenues and that, in conjunction with his constitutional control of the army and duty to execute the laws of the country, would transform him into a monarch. Jackson had replaced the Second Bank with the state banks, and the Conservatives wanted the state banks continued as public depositories and fiscal agents of the federal government. Furthermore,

137 William M. Peyton to William C. Rives, August 26, 1838; James Garland to Rives, October 26, November 14, 1838, Rives Papers, LC. Governor Campbell continued to urge Rives to break with Ritchie. Campbell to Rives, July 15, September 9, 1838, ibid. Rives' brother, Alexander, warned him in December that the subtreasury Democrats would tolerate his differences on banking, that they would accept a compromise, but that they were determined to have Van Buren in preference to Clay, Harrison, or any other Whig. Alexander Rives to William C. Rives, December 3, 1838, ibid.


139 Apparently in a three-part series. The Enquirer, January 17, 1839, reprinted the series.
Rives denied that specie suspension indicated that the state banks had failed. Finally the "Principles" justified Conservative opposition to Van Buren as necessary to protect the republic from "schemes of destructive innovators," and "to preserve the freedom of opinion and the liberty of conscience from the despotism of party and power." Thus Rives' "Principles" finalized his break with Van Buren's administration.

The Conservative break with the Virginia Democrats simply formalized a split that had been growing more apparent for over a year. Of equal significance for Virginia Democrats was the dissension within the Junto over Van Buren's economic policies. Ritchie, of course, had assumed a position independent of both Van Buren and the Conservatives, but had been unable to convince either side to compromise. The legislature coming into session in January 1839 faced the task of electing a U.S. Senator, and prospects appeared grim for the Democrats. Furthermore, the presidential election of 1840 loomed not far in the background. Although most of the Junto's members supported Van Buren, at least Parker and Brockenbrough showed some inclination to settle for Ritchie's compromise plan.

Not until 1840, however, did Ritchie finally yield. By this time his opposition to the subtreasury weakened his party immeasurably at the state level. In March 1839, Ritchie admitted to Andrew Stevenson, Junto member who represented the U.S. as Ambassador to the Court of St. James, that "you will see what indeed you foresaw--. . . I could not travel the same road with Rives."\(^{140}\) Ritchie's course had so alienated Peter V. Daniel, his neighbor and Junto associate, that Daniel cancelled his subscription to the Enquirer. William Henry Roane, Virginia's other Senator

\(^{140}\) Thomas Ritchie to Andrew Stevenson, March 4, 1839, Stevenson Papers, LC.
and Ritchie's cousin, also regretted Ritchie's independent position. Both Junto members and administration Democrats blamed Ritchie for the damage done to the Virginia Democratic party by the banking crisis, and offered little hope to Van Buren that the damage could be repaired. Ritchie himself told Van Buren of the division in the party, and predicted difficulties ahead for the Democrats. The results of the 1839 state elections confirmed Ritchie's fears as the Whigs won 68 seats in the House of Delegates, the Democrats 56, and the Conservatives 10. In the Senate the Democrats controlled 17 seats, the Whigs 12, and the Conservatives 2. These election returns indicated that the Conservatives, in losing eleven seats from the previous year, had failed to establish a viable party. Furthermore, the Whigs strengthened their position. Although they lost seven seats and the Democrats increased their total to fifty-six, the Whigs won an outright majority and no longer had to rely on a coalition with the Conservatives. Stripped of their position as power brokers in the House, the Conservatives had to face the alternatives.

141 John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, June 4, July 28, 1839, ibid.
142 John Brockenbrough to Andrew Stevenson, January 1; John Rutherfoord to Stevenson, August 20, 1839, ibid. John Letcher of Rockbridge County told Van Buren that Rives and Ritchie "have done the Democratic Party more harm, in the few months that have elapsed since the meeting of the extra session of Congress, than the Whigs could have affected in as many years." Letcher to Van Buren, May 12, 1838, Van Buren Papers, LC. The Democratic representative of Louisa County to the House of Delegates, responding to a toast at a public dinner, pronounced Ritchie "the greatest political damned rascal living." William C. Rives to David Campbell, September 10, 1839, Campbell Papers, Duke University.
143 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, March 22, 1839, Van Buren Papers, LC.
144 Whig, June 14, 1839.
of joining the Whigs, returning to the Democrats, or throwing away their votes. Ultimately the party dissolved, and its members pursued all three courses. In the congressional elections the Whigs increased their number to seven representatives, the Conservatives reelected James Garland and George Hopkins, and the Democrats retained control of twelve seats.145

In June 1840 Van Buren finally got his subtreasury plan through Congress, but the damage had already been done to his party. In Virginia Rives had deserted the Democrats, and a number of other disillusioned Conservatives followed him. Many of these Conservatives eventually joined the Whigs in a tenuous alliance, but together with the Whigs they managed to control the General Assembly until 1843. Rives' term had expired, and the General Assembly, because of the disarray among parties, had not been able to reelect either Rives or name a replacement. Consequently when the subtreasury reached the Senate only Roane represented Virginia, and he supported the measure.146 In the House the delegation split along party lines, with the Conservative George Hopkins joining all twelve Democrats in support of the bill while James Garland joined eight Whigs in opposing it.147

VI

The effects of the banking crisis upon party alignments in Virginia can be clearly traced in the efforts of the General Assembly to elect a senator during three successive sessions from 1838 to 1841. The

145 Ibid., June 4, 1839. Two of the Whigs, Robert M.T. Hunter and Henry A. Wise, followed John C. Calhoun into the Democratic party in the early 1840s.


147 Ibid., 495.
1836-1837 General Assembly elected Rives to fill the remaining three years of Benjamin Watkins Leigh's term. But in 1837, although the Whigs held a plurality in the Assembly, they could not command a majority on joint ballot. Democratic numbers suffered from Conservative defections, and the Conservatives emerged as power brokers in the Assembly. As the successive attempts to elect a senator failed, the Conservatives, under pressure from the presidential election, moved closer to the Whig party.

Although Ritchie predicted in the spring of 1838 the election of a "Republican Senator with ease next winter," the Democrats lost control of the General Assembly in the spring elections. Indeed many Democrats blamed Ritchie's independent course in the banking controversy for the party's defeat. In that election the Conservatives broke with the Democrats, and elected twenty-one men to the House of Delegates. The Democrats controlled forty seats while the Whigs held a majority of seventy-three seats in the House. In the Senate, however, the Democrats held a nineteen to ten margin over the Whigs, with the Conservatives claiming three seats.

The Democrats had to content themselves with fighting a holding action during the attempts to elect a senator in the 1838-1839 session. Party members caucused twice before the election began, and ultimately selected John Y. Mason, a southside Democrat, over James McDowell, though

148 Enquirer, May 15, 1838.

149 John Letcher to Ely Moore, April 28, 1838, Van Buren Papers, LC; John Powell to C.W. Gooch, April 29, 1838, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia; Petersburg Constellation, June 15, 1838, in Simms, Rise of the Whigs, p.129.

150 Whig, July 20, November 15, 1838. Henry A. Wise dated the formation of the Virginia Whig party from its 1838 state legislative victory. See Wise, Seven Decades, p.157.
there had been some talk of running Judge Henry St. George Tucker or
Robert M.T. Hunter, the subtreasury Whig. Ritchie, worried over Rives' population, publicly lectured him on the dangers of accepting an election by the Whigs, and told Rives that if he supported Van Buren on everything except the subtreasury he should make this public.  

The Whigs, however, remained leery of Rives. Although several Whig newspapers endorsed Rives if a Whig could not be elected, Virginia's leading Whigs opposed him. The *Lynchburg Virginian* pointed to the inconsistency of Whigs supporting Rives when he agreed with them only on one matter, opposition to the subtreasury, since men like John Tyler and James Barbour were available. Ultimately, all the Whig papers agreed that consistency demanded the Whigs elect a "pure Whig" if possible, but if not, then perhaps Rives. The Whigs caucused in late January.

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151 In the caucus of February 12, Mason and McDowell tied on the first ballot with 27 votes each after Henry St. George Tucker had been withdrawn. On the second ballot Mason received 30 votes to McDowell's 26, J.H. Sherrard to William C. Rives, February 13, 1839, Rives Papers, LC.; *Enquirer*, February 14, 1839; *Whig*, January 18, 1839; W.A. Wright to C.W. Gooch, January 15, 1838, Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. Wright advocated running Hunter if the Van Buren men could not elect one of their own. With Hunter out of the way in his district, a Democrat could be elected to replace him.

152 *Enquirer*, January 26, 31, 1839.


154 David Campbell to William B. Campbell, December 16, 1838, Campbell Papers, Duke University.


156 Edward Tayloe to B. Ogle Tayloe, January 2, 1839, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia. *Fincastle Democrat*, noted in *Whig*, March 24, 1838; *Whig*, January 11, February 15, 1839.
They rejected Rives, and although Tyler received most support in the caucus, they failed to agree on a formal nomination. 157 Meanwhile rumors circulated in Richmond that Henry Clay, desiring Rives' election as a means of detaching the Conservatives from the Democratic party, had pressured Tyler to abandon the fight in return for the Whig vice-presidential nomination. Clay likely made such an offer, but Tyler rejected it and continued to oppose Rives. 158

The Conservatives caucused twice before the election and each time decided to stand firm behind Rives. 159 Determined to create through Rives' election a stable Conservative party in the state, they hoped to siphon off Whig strength to Rives' support. Yet enough Whigs remained unalterably opposed to Rives and were able to block his election. 160

The Conservatives needed the cooperation of at least thirty Whigs, while


the Democrats searched for fifteen additional votes to elect Mason and
the Whigs looked for only three additional votes.\textsuperscript{161} But when the bal-
loting began no party could create a winning coalition, although the
Conservatives fell only four votes short of electing Rives with Whig
assistance. Some fifteen Whigs in both houses, labeled the "impractic-
ables," adamantly refused to support Rives, and after twenty-eight futile
ballots the election was indefinitely postponed.\textsuperscript{162} Although disappointed
by his failure to win reelection, Rives hoped that the struggle had de-
stroyed the Whig party and set the stage for the formation of a new Con-
servative party.\textsuperscript{163}

In 1839, despite their weakened condition from internal differ-
ences over banking, the Democrats made some relatively small gains in the
General Assembly elections. The \textit{Whig} and \textit{Enquirer} claimed different nu-
merical strengths for their respective parties in the Assembly. Yet both
agreed that the Conservatives held the balance of power since neither the
Whigs nor the Democrats controlled a majority on joint ballot.\textsuperscript{164} By this

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Enquirer}, January 26, 1839.

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, February 26, 1839. In an Impracticable Whig broadside
issued by Thomas W. Gilmer and Valentine W. Southall, they accused Rives
of being an armed neutral, and pointed out that his only point of agree-
ment with the Whigs was the only point on which he differed with Van Buren.
They accused Rives of still supporting Jackson's Proclamation of 1832, the
Force Bill, deposit withdrawal, expunging, and the pet banks, and announced
that to support Rives they would have to abandon their Whig principles,
thus endangering the existence of the Whig party. Broadside: "To the
People of Albemarle," February 25, 1839, Rives Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{163} David Campbell to William C. Rives, February 22; Rives to
Campbell, February 25, 1839, Campbell Papers, Duke University.

\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Whig}, June 14, 1839, placed party membership as follows: House;
68 Whigs, 56 Democrats, 10 Conservatives; Senate: 10 Whigs, 19 Democrats,
3 Conservatives; Joint Ballot: 78 Whigs, 75 Democrats, 15 Conservatives.
The \textit{Enquirer}, June 4, 1839, reported the following totals: House: 56 Pure
(or Rives) Whigs, 10 Impracticables, 62 Democrats, 3 Conservatives; Senate:
11 Whigs, 18 Democrats, 3 Conservatives; Joint Ballot: 67 Whigs,
time Rives, through his opposition to the subtreasury, had moved closer to the Whigs. Consequently he looked forward to his election when the Assembly convened. 165

The Whig victory in 1839 marked the first time the Whigs had out-pollled the Democrats in successive state elections. Before the election Ritchie tried to woo the Conservatives back into the Democratic party. 166 In late January a caucus of Assembly Democrats issued an address which proclaimed that the spring elections should be fought with a view toward the approaching presidential election. 167 It listed the issues as Clay with his bank, tariff, and Whig abolitionism, or Van Buren's opposition to these measures. In March a Democratic legislative convention, meeting in Richmond under the leadership of Ritchie, Brockenbrough, and Henry St. George Tucker praised the Conservatives for honestly voicing their opinions but invited them and the states rights men who left the party in 1833-1834 to return to the Democratic party. 168 In April the Whig Assembly members issued an address which condemned Van Buren's administration, his subtreasury proposal, and while admitting party differences in the senatorial election called upon all Whigs to dedicate themselves to defeating Van Buren. 169 The Conservatives also issued an

10 Impracticables, 80 Democrats, 6 Conservatives.

165 William C. Rives to Hugh S. Legare, June 18, 1839, Hugh S. Legare Papers, South Carolinian Library, University of South Carolina.

166 Enquirer, March 12, 1839.

167 Ibid., January 28,31, 1839.

168 Ibid., March 23, 1839.

169 Whig, April 5, 1839.
Address, but theirs focused on the senatorial election.\footnote{Ibid., April 2, 1839.} Appealing for Whig support, they declared that the real choice lay between Rives and a subtreasury Democrat. They closed by claiming as their own the old Republican ideology of states rights and strict constitutional construction.

Because the Conservatives had not reunited with the Democrats, after the election Ritchie turned against Rives and linked the senatorial election with the presidential election of 1840. He warned the Conservatives that a vote for Rives meant a vote for the Whig candidate, probably Henry Clay, and he floated a rumor that a scheme was underway to elect Rives governor and Benjamin Watkins Leigh to the Senate.\footnote{Enquirer, June 4, July 2, 1839. See also Thomas Ritchie to Andrew Russell, June 18, 1839, Ritchie Letter, University of Virginia. To strengthen his case Ritchie publicized two toasts offered at the Nelson County Fourth of July celebration. Zachariah Mitchell proposed: "Henry Clay, William C. Rives or the cholera! If we are to be visited with either, let it be the latter." Daniel Cheatwood toasted: "William C. Rives: Reduced by apostasy to the last gasp--Like Henry Clay, he is willing to accept office from Whigs, Abolitionists, and Tariffites--His cry is office, office, 'My kingdom for an office'." Enquirer, July 12, 1839.}

As the date for the General Assembly session neared, it appeared that Rives would formally break with the Democrats and go over to the Whigs. Ritchie and other Democrats, searching for a strong candidate to oppose Rives, urged Andrew Stevenson to return home from his post in England.\footnote{John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, April 10; Thomas Ritchie to Stevenson, July 28, August 4, 1839, Stevenson Papers, LC.} In the summer rumors circulated that the Democrats might support the Conservative James M. Mason as a compromise candidate, since Mason opposed the administration only on the subtreasury.\footnote{John M. Patton to William C. Rives, June 23; John Pendleton to Rives, July 19, 1839, Rives Papers, LC.} However,
when the Assembly convened the Democratic caucus again settled on John Y. Mason. 174

Rives clung to his independent position. The Conservatives defended their support of Rives in the 1838-1839 session and indicated they would stand behind Rives in 1840. 175 The Whigs realized they would not be able to elect one of their own to the Senate, so they assiduously courted Rives throughout 1839 to join in their deliberations over the party's presidential nomination. However, Rives refused to renounce Van Buren, and he declined to take a part in the 1839 Whig state convention. When the General Assembly convened, he refused, despite repeated inquiries, to announce his choice for president. 176

In the gubernatorial election of 1840 the Conservatives joined with the Whigs to elect Thomas Walker Gilmer, thus consummating, according to Ritchie, a marriage of "Federal Whiggery to Rives Conservatism." 177 Although the Whig-Conservative coalition carried the gubernatorial election, in the senatorial election three impracticable states rights Whigs from Accomac, Gloucester, and Warwick Counties broke party ranks and voted against Rives, thereby frustrating the coalition. The Whig castigated

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174 Mason again narrowly won the endorsement over James McDowell, Enquirer, December 7, 1839, and John M. Patton to William C. Rives, December 8, 1839, Rives Papers, LC.

175 Address by the Conservative Members of the General Assembly, reprinted in Whig, April 2, 1839.

176 William C. Rives to Samuel Dabney, September 23; Rives to Daniel F. Reynolds, December 19; Rives to Henry D. Smith, December 31, 1839; James Lyons and W.C. Worthington to Rives, January 18, and Rives to Lyons and Worthington, January 21, 1830, Rives Papers, LC.

177 Enquirer, February 15, 1840. Peter V. Daniel described Gilmer as "perhaps the most selfish and unprincipled intriguer of these remarkable times." Daniel to William Brent, Jr., February 29, 1840, Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, University of Virginia.
these three men for obstructing the election of a senator, sarcastically labeling them the "Three Wise Men of the East." Rives had committed himself on the presidential election, and the Whig irreconcilables refused to vote for a man who three years before had bitterly opposed their party.

After waiting to make sure that the 1839-1840 session of the General Assembly would not take up for a second time the senatorial election, Rives broke his silence and made official what the Democrats had long assumed, that he would support Harrison in 1840. Apparently Rives hoped that by maintaining his silence he would force the Whigs into the Conservative camp, in the process destroying the Whigs and laying the groundwork for his new party. However, the Whig impracticables thwarted his scheme.

Ritchie slandered Rives as a "Political Arnold," but could not prevent the Whigs from retaining their control of the General Assembly in the 1840 spring elections. Although some Democrats blamed the state central committee's inactivity for the defeat, a more likely explanation was Secretary of War Joel Poinsett's ill-timed announcement of a plan to reorganize the state militia and put them under federal control. The Whigs claimed that Poinsett's proposed reorganization of

178 Whig, February 4, 1840.
180 Enquirer, March 24, 1840.
181 Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, April 6, 1840, Van Buren Papers, LC.
182 John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, May 19, 1840, Stevenson Papers, LC. See Chapter VII.
the militia would create a standing army. They charged that his proposal, viewed in conjunction with Van Buren's subtreasury which lodged control of the federal revenues in the hands of the executive, would give the President enough military and financial power to subvert the constitution and create a despotism. The Whigs employed these charges effectively enough to win an eleven seat majority in the House and gain a split in the Senate. 183

The General Assembly convened with Rives' election ordained. The Democrats caucused and again nominated John Y. Mason, 184 but in the January election Democratic party discipline weakened and the party members split their votes between Mason and James McDowell, the candidate of the western Democrats. The Whigs and Conservatives united to give Rives an overwhelming election. 185 Ironically, Rives' election destroyed the Conservatives as an independent party. Pushing their advantage the Whigs selected Roane's successor in March when they elected William S. Archer, a states rights Whig, to a full Senate term. 186

The banking crisis of the late 1830s initiated a realignment of parties in Virginia which the presidential election of 1840 completed. As a result of the crisis the Whigs retained control of the General Assembly for five years. Although they managed to elect two U.S. Senators and a governor, they could not carry Virginia in the 1840 presidential

183 Whig, May 8, 1840; Enquirer, June 25, 1840.
184 Enquirer, January 9, 1841.
185 Enquirer and Whig, January 19, 1841.
186 Whig, March 2,5, 1841. Enquirer, March 4, 1841. Stevenson wanted the post, but declined Roane's offer to step aside. Stevenson to William Selden, March 4, 1840, Stevenson Papers, LC. Archer won election by a one-vote margin.
campaign. The Democrats demonstrated remarkable staying power in Virginia. Wounded by nullification and deposit withdrawal, they had re-grouped to carry Virginia for Van Buren in 1836. Then Van Buren proposed an Independent Treasury as his solution for the banking crisis. The opposition of many states rights Democrats to the subtreasury nearly destroyed the Virginia Democratic party between 1837 and 1840. But, under the pressure of the approaching presidential election, they accepted the subtreasury. Meanwhile the Conservatives amalgamated with the Whigs and endorsed Harrison in 1840 in return for Whig support of Rives in the senatorial election. Although the Whigs and Conservatives preached states rights in opposition to the subtreasury, the Virginia Democratic party mounted another of its old-time campaigns as they more successfully exploited Virginia's tradition of states rights politics to carry the state for Van Buren in 1840.
THE VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
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CHAPTER VII

UNITY AND INCIPIENT REVOLT:
THE VIRGINIA DEMOCRATS: 1840-1843

The Democrats entered the presidential campaign of 1840 with gloomy prospects for carrying Virginia. For two consecutive years the Whigs had controlled the General Assembly through a coalition with the Conservatives. In the 1840 state elections, because the Conservative party disintegrated when Rives endorsed Harrison for president, the Whigs won outright control of the House of Delegates and gained a split with the Democrats in the Senate. The Conservative defections from Van Buren's administration reflected the dissatisfaction within the Democratic party over the president's solutions for the banking and economic crises. For the only time in its existence even the members of the Richmond Junto divided publicly over a question of national politics. But worried by the prospects of leading a divided party into the presidential campaign, Ritchie and Nicholas of the Junto and most other party leaders eventually returned to support Van Buren's subtreasury.

The Democrats formally opened their presidential campaign in January 1839 when the party caucus of General Assembly members called a legislative convention for March 18.¹ Meeting in the chamber of the House

¹Richmond Enquirer (hereinafter cited Enquirer), January 29, 1839.
of Delegates the convention adopted an address to the people of Virginia and appointed a central corresponding committee. As usual, the Junto controlled the convention. Although Judge Henry St. George Tucker, who later became a Calhoun Democrat, presided over the convention, John Brockenbrough and Peter V. Daniel served as vice presidents, and Ritchie as one of the secretaries. William Selden and John Rutherfoord, both Junto associates, joined Ritchie, Brockenbrough, Daniel, and four other administration loyalists on the central corresponding committee.

The convention address predictably offered a staunch defense of Van Buren's administration. Denying that the questions of a national bank, protective tariff, and federally-financed internal improvements had been settled, the address proclaimed the "final battle is yet to be fought between the Federal and States Rights Virginia School." It called upon all Democrats to merge their minor differences of opinion in preparation for the campaign and, in a ploy to the Conservatives, emphasized the uselessness of third parties in such a clear-cut battle between two opposing ideologies. Furthermore, to downplay the divisiveness caused by the subtreasury, the Democrats agreed that Van Buren's proposal would not be made a test of party orthodoxy in Virginia. Although some debate ensued over that portion of the address endorsing the subtreasury, except for the vote of Francis E. Rives of Prince George County, one of the few Conservatives present, the convention unanimously adopted the address.

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2 Ibid., March 23, 1839.
3 Ibid., March 21, 1839.
4 The address is reprinted in ibid., March 25, 1839.
5 Ibid., March 21; Richmond Whig (hereinafter cited Whig), March 22, 1839.
The Whigs also launched their presidential campaign during the 1838-1839 legislative session. Unlike the Democrats, the Whigs did not endorse a candidate. Instead, Whig assembly members caucused on March 30 and adopted an address which condemned the subtreasury proposal, defalcations by Democratic officeholders, Van Buren's spending policies, and accused Van Buren of a lack of sympathy for southern tariff interests. Finally, the caucus established a central corresponding committee to direct the Whig campaigns in both the 1839 state elections and the presidential contest.

The Richmond Whig, Virginia's leading Whig newspaper, favored Henry Clay for the presidential nomination. The Whig had previously condemned political conventions as "too much exposed to sinister influences," and called for a congressional nomination of the Whig candidate. However, not all Virginia Whigs favored Clay; for example, as early as December 1837 the Alexandria Gazette had endorsed William Henry Harrison.

But the Whigs' victory in the 1839 state elections, their second consecutive victory over the Democrats in the Assembly elections, demonstrated their staying power. Consequently the Whig, now anxious to avoid another display of party disunity like 1836, changed its tone. The Whig recommended that the Whigs hold conventions in the state's twenty-one congressional districts in order to select delegates to the Whig national

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6 The call for the caucus appeared in the Whig, March 26; the address appears in ibid., April 5, 1839.

7 Ibid., April 16, 1839.

8 Ibid., December 27, 1837.

9 Alexandria Gazette, December 1, 1837.
The Whig central committee went a step further and called a state convention to meet in Staunton on September 25 to decide whether Virginia should make a separate state nomination or send delegates to the Harrisburg Whig convention. Although the Virginia central committee did not endorse a candidate, its call for the convention implied a strong preference for Clay. The central committee's choice of Staunton, a center of nationalist sympathy, for the location of the convention symbolized the growing nationalist sentiment within the Virginia Whig party. The Staunton convention, with representatives from 78 of Virginia's 124 counties in attendance, decided to send delegates to the national convention, but did not endorse a candidate. The Virginia Whig press, in an unusual display of harmony, united in support of the convention's decision.

James Barbour, one of Virginia's at-large delegates, presided over the Harrisburg Convention. Although the Virginia delegates supported Clay, the convention instead nominated William Henry Harrison and selected John Tyler as its vice-presidential candidate. Some rumors circulated that Clay, expecting the nomination, had contrived to offer Tyler the vice-presidential nomination if he would endorse Rives' reelection to the Senate. If such a bargain was struck it backfired on Clay.

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10 Whig, June 18, 1839.
11 Ibid., July 4, 1839.
12 Ibid., October 1, 1839.
13 The Fredericksburg Arena, Lynchburg Virginian, Norfolk Herald, and Whig all approved. Ibid., October 8, 1839.
convention recognized that Virginia's Whigs had endorsed Tyler for vice president in 1836 and they placed him on the ticket in the hope that his states rights ideology would balance Harrison's nationalist appeal.

After the national convention nominations the Virginia Whigs moved rapidly to complete their formal statewide organization for the campaign. Whig members of the General Assembly caucused in a public meeting on January 8, 1840, and endorsed the Harrison-Tyler ticket. Meanwhile a call had gone out for a Whig legislative convention to be held in late February in order to form an electoral ticket and complete the party organization. The legislative convention, assembling in a harmonious mood in Richmond, adopted an address, established an electoral ticket, and created central and local committees of correspondence.

The Democrats also completed their campaign organization during the 1839-1840 General Assembly session. They held their second legislative convention of the campaign in February 1840. The party caucus of December 12, 1839, called the convention to nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates, and invited counties not represented by administration Democrats in the General Assembly to send as many special delegates as they were entitled to representatives in the House of Delegates. The legislative convention assembled in Richmond on


15 Whig, January 7,10, 1840.
16 Ibid., January 3, 1840.
17 Ibid., February 28, 1840.
18 Enquirer, December 14, 1839.
February 20-22, with eighteen senators, sixty delegates, and 111 special
delegates in attendance, although many of the latter were Richmond Demo-
crats like Ritchie who represented several counties.\(^{19}\) The Junto, well-
represented on all of the convention's committees again dominated the
central corresponding committee.\(^{20}\) The convention rejected Ritchie's
proposal to send delegates to a national Democratic convention in Balti-
more on May 4. It then unanimously endorsed Van Buren for president,
but as in 1832 and 1835 controversy erupted over the vice-presidential
nominee. Virginia's Democrats had opposed Richard M. Johnson in 1835,
and they refused to renominate him in 1840. Instead they endorsed James
Knox Polk of Tennessee, a stalwart states rights Jacksonian, for the
post.\(^{21}\) In addition to selecting the electoral ticket, adopting an ad-
dress, and establishing central and local corresponding committees, the
convention decided to issue a cheap, weekly Democratic political journal
for the remainder of the campaign. In early March a prospectus for The
Crisis, with subscriptions priced at $1, appeared in the Enquirer.\(^{22}\)

The Democrats' publication of their own campaign newspaper in-
dicated that political campaigning in Virginia would take new forms in

\(^{19}\) An account of the convention appears in ibid., February 29,
1840.

\(^{20}\) The central corresponding committee membership included Judge
Henry St. George Tucker, Philip N. Nicholas, John Brockenbrough, Thomas
Ritchie, John Rutherfoord, Stafford H. Parker, Nathaniel Denby, Peter V.
Daniel, Philip Courtney, George Wythe Munford, Thomas B. Bigger, Wash-
ington Greenhow, A. Robertson, Jr., Thomas Nelson, Harry L. Hopkins, and
James Bosher. Ibid.

\(^{21}\) The Enquirer's account of the convention played down the contro-
troversy over a vice-presidential nomination, but the Whig, February 25, 1840,
gave it full coverage. Whigs condemned the Democrats lack of a national
vice-presidential candidate. See the Alexandria Gazette, October 24, 1840.

\(^{22}\) Enquirer, March 5, 1840.
1840. In addition to their legislative conventions both parties for
the first time held large public state conventions. The Democratic
central corresponding committee joined with the Richmond Democratic
Association to call a state party convention for Charlottesville on
September 9. The central committee called for the assembling of con-
gressional district conventions prior to this date to select delegates
to the Charlottesville convention and whip up interest in the cam-

23 For three days some 500-600 Democrats jammed the small Pied-

24 mont town to hear speeches and adopt an address endorsing their ticket.

The Whigs, not to be outdone, held their state convention in Richmond.
On July 19 the Richmond Tippecanoe Club adopted resolutions calling for
a Whig convention to be held in Richmond on October 5, the anniversary
of Harrison's victory over the Indians at the Battle of the Thames. 25
Outdrawing the Democrats, the Whigs attracted nearly 20,000 people to
their convention as Daniel Webster, the Massachusetts Whig, addressed
the gathering. 26

These public conventions represented only one aspect of the new
campaign techniques. To bolster Democratic press coverage of the

23 "Democratic Circular Addressed to the County Corresponding
Committees," signed by Thomas Ritchie, Secretary, Central Corresponding
Committee, Randolph Family Papers, University of Virginia.

24 Charlottesville Jeffersonian, reprinted in the Enquirer,
September 15, 1840.

25 Whig, July 24, 1840.

26 Ibid., October 7, 1840. The Whig press was well-represented
in the convention, with editors of the following newspapers in attend-
ance: Alexandria Gazette, Fredericksburg Arena, Richmond Whig, Fauquier
Times, Norfolk Herald, Norfolk Beacon, Portsmouth Times and Republiran,
Petersburg Intelligencer, Danville Reporter, Charlottesville Advocate,
Staunton Spectator, Abingdon Statesman. Ibid., October 9, 1840.
campaign and to assist The Crisis, Ritchie increased publication of the Enquirer in October to three times weekly. The Whigs countered with their own campaign journal, The Yeoman. To facilitate the spread of their campaign propaganda both parties created extensive local organizations which far surpassed those of 1836. In addition to the county corresponding committees each party formed local political clubs. The Richmond Democratic Association served as the prototype of Democratic Associations which sprang up throughout Virginia. The Whigs organized Tippecanoe Clubs, replete with log cabins in support of their "log cabin and hard cider" candidate. Both parties' local organizations elected officers, charged dues, and held regular meetings. Although not officially controlled by the parties' central corresponding committees, these local clubs operated in close conjunction with the county corresponding committees.

The local clubs were responsible for another campaign technique new to Virginia in 1840, the party festivals. In previous campaigns the parties' leading orators in a county often opposed each other in debate

27 Enquirer, October 13, 1840.

28 For a complete account of the 1840 presidential campaign see Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log-Cabin Campaign (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957).

29 Whig, May 26, 1840, published an appeal from the Richmond Tippecanoe Club for its members to pay their $1.00 dues since the club needed money. On May 30 the Richmond Democratic Association held its organizational meeting to elect officers, with 91 members present. All Virginia citizens who supported Van Buren were eligible for membership. Dues were set at $1.00, with regular meetings held at 8 P.M. every Saturday night. The association would continue in existence until December 1. This organization was not new in 1840, but throughout Virginia Democratic organizations based upon it sprang up in the six months preceding the election. See the Enquirer, June 5, 1840; also Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, June 1, 1840, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress (hereinafter cited LC.).
on court days, but the magnitude and formal organization of the political meetings in 1840 justifies the label of festivals. Here, the Whigs outdid their opponents. Although the Democrats had long relied upon stump orators and debates on county court days to whip up local support for their candidates, Whigs went beyond these traditional appeals to the voters. They staged elaborate festivals and torchlight parades, sending many of their most accomplished orators, such as Benjamin Watkins Leigh and William C. Rives, on statewide tours. The Whig electors, following the recommendation of the Whig legislative convention, actively canvassed their districts, thus employing a campaign tactic last used in Virginia in 1800. In nearly every county the Whigs constructed replicas of log cabins to use as meeting halls. The Richmond Tippecanoe Club, completing its enormous log cabin in July 9, sponsored a large Whig festival to celebrate its opening. The Democrats countered with festivals of their own, but theirs never reached the magnitude or fervor of the Whigs.

II

Martin Van Buren never comprehended the Whigs' tactics in 1840. He viewed the log cabin and hard cider campaign as "sheer folly--the

30 The William C. Rives Papers, LC., are full of invitations and Rives' acceptances for speaking engagements. Throughout the summer and early fall of 1840, Rives travelled extensively in Virginia and ranged as far north as New York.

31 For an account of the Richmond Whig festival see the Whig, July 10, 1840. An account of the Winchester Whig Festival appears in the Martinsburg Gazette, reprinted ibid., May 13, 1840, while the Portsmouth Times and Republican, ibid., March 21, 1840, describes a Whig festival held at the Portsmouth Theatre.

32 See the Enquirer, Spring-Summer 1840.
madness of profligate opportunists rather than a new means of appealing to an expanding electorate." Like Van Buren, most of Virginia's Democrats, particularly the members of the Richmond Junto, refused to believe that a campaign so destitute of principles could put Harrison in the White House. Repeatedly throughout the summer and early fall the *Enquirer* denounced the Whig campaign tactics as attempts "to deceive the people by humbugs and to stultify their understandings by appeals to their senses and their passions."

Virginia Democrats strove to keep the campaign centered on issues, not personalities. By criticizing Harrison's politics the Democrats forced the Whigs to defend their ideology in the campaign. Because the Whig party was composed of such ideologically dispersed elements, the Democrats' strategy proved effective. Democrats labeled Harrison "a Federalist in his creed, a Federalist in his measures, [and] a Latitudinarian in his construction of the Constitution." They charged him with supporting a protective tariff, federally-financed internal improvements, a national bank, and distribution of the surplus revenue in order to purchase and emancipate the southern slaves. Democrats pointed to the amalgam of interests which composed the Whig party, anti-Masons, Federalists, anti-Jackson men, and abolitionists, as interests which supported the

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34 *Enquirer*, February 29, October 27, 1840. See also Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, April 6, 1840, Van Buren Papers, L.C.; and Charlottesville Democratic Convention Address, printed in *Enquirer*, September 22, 1840.

35 *Enquirer*, January 7, 1840.
expansion of federal power. 36

Above all else, Democratic campaign appeals stressed Harrison's connection with the abolitionists. They pictured him as indebted to a "military eclat" for his nomination, and thus under the control of some unscrupulous politicians who sought to expand federal power at the expenses of the states, particularly the southern states. According to the Democrats, the northern Whigs who controlled the party were abolitionists, or at least sympathized with them. Hence by deductive reasoning Harrison, dominated by the politicians who controlled the party, favored the abolition of slavery and therefore opposed southern interests. Furthermore, they condemned Harrison for not taking a public stand on the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. 37

Virginia Whigs, in defending Harrison, emphasized the simplicity of his pastoral life in contrast to Van Buren's "career" as a politician, and they stressed Harrison's identification with Republican ideology. Accepting Harrison as the nominee of the Harrisburg Convention, the Whig spoke of his honesty and patriotism, and later described him as "not a politician or party hack--he's a plain, honest farmer... a statesman of very respectable abilities." 38 The Whigs pointed to Harrison's

36 Peter V. Daniel to William Brent, Jr., February 29, 1840, Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, University of Virginia; Enquirer, January 7, 1840; Address of the Democratic Central Committee to the Voters of Virginia, signed by Thomas Ritchie, printed in Enquirer, October 24, 1840.

37 Peter V. Daniel to William Brent, Jr., February 29, 1840, Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, University of Virginia; Address of the Democratic Central Committee to the Voters of Virginia, signed by Thomas Ritchie, printed in the Enquirer, October 24, 1840; Fincastle Democrat, printed ibid., October 29, 1840; the Democratic Convention Address, ibid., September 22, 1840, summed up the Democrats objections to Harrison's nationalist political philosophy.

38 Whig, December 10, 13, 1839. Whigs accused the Democrats of
entrance into politics as a Jeffersonian Republican, and praised his successful career in the military and Congress and as Governor of the Northwest Territory. 39

In order to make Harrison palatable to the numerically-dominant states rights element of the Virginia Whig party, the Whigs compared his politics with Van Buren's. They accused Van Buren of lavish expenditures of federal money and criticized his use of the veto and his reliance upon the federal patronage to assist in his reelection campaign. Harrison, they said, opposed the use of the executive veto and would only serve one term, thereby removing the need to rely upon patronage to promote his reelection. 40 Although the Virginia Whig Convention Address remained vague on the specifics of Harrison's political faith, the Whig in June assured its readers that Harrison approved the compromise tariff of 1833, supported the distribution of the public land sales among all the states, opposed federally-financed but supported state-funded internal improvements, and opposed the Second Bank of the United States. 41

Judging by their convention address, Virginia Whigs saw slavery as the most vital campaign issue. 42 The Democrats charged that since

representing Harrison "as a weak, imbecile, superannuated dotard and fool." Alexandria Gazette, November 19, 1840.

39 Alexandria Gazette, October 23, 1840.

40 Address of the 1840 Virginia Whig Convention, printed in the Whig, March 6, 1840.

41 Ibid., June 12, 1840. The Virginia Whig Convention Address stressed Harrison's opposition to the subtreasury, but did not reveal what type of banking system Harrison favored.

42 Ibid., March 6, 1840. One-third of the address, 37.8 per cent, dealt with Harrison's position on slavery. Other major topics of the
northern abolitionist Whigs controlled the Whig party, Harrison would merely serve as their tool. Not only did Virginia Whigs refute this claim, but they endeavored to present Harrison as "safe" on slavery.\footnote{Whig, March 6, 1840, printing the Whig Convention Address.} They denied that Harrison was an abolitionist, although they admitted that he considered slavery an evil. The Whigs emphasized his opposition to the Missouri restrictions on slavery in 1820 and maintained that he opposed the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of Maryland and Virginia. However, they admitted that Harrison had suggested the surplus revenue be distributed with an eye toward compensating the owners for removals of their slaves.

Although preferring to gloss over their ideology, particularly Harrison's views on economic policy, Virginia's Whigs showed little mercy for Van Buren's political acts. Once again, they tried to prove that Harrison was more sound on states rights principles. Although the Whigs attacked Van Buren's subtreasury plan, they offered no solutions of their own for the simple reason that in Virginia the Whigs could not agree on a solution for the banking crisis.\footnote{Ibid.} Whigs compared Van Buren's administration with the old Federalist party under John Adams, and denied that the Democrats were the legitimate heirs of the Jeffersonian address, and the percentage of space devoted to each, follows: Attack on Van Buren's administration, 17.6 per cent; Harrison-Tyler platform, 7.5 per cent; condemnation of Van Buren's principles, 2.3 per cent; defense of Harrison as a Republican in principle, 8.0 per cent; Harrison's opposition to the subtreasury and condemnation of Van Buren's financial policy, 16.1 per cent; comparison of Harrison's and Van Buren's political principles, 9.2 per cent; Tyler's political attributes, 1.1 per cent. See also the Alexandria Gazette, December 19, 1839, for a denial of Harrison's abolitionists connections.
Republicans. As an example of Van Buren's federalism in action they pointed to his lifestyle in office. After his inauguration Van Buren refurbished the White House; consequently the Whigs charged him with extravagance in public expenditures, "especially with imperial, luxurious, magnificence in the furniture of the palace," and pointed out that economy and simplicity in all phases of governmental activity were the characteristics of a republican form of government.

The major charge of the Whigs against Van Buren related to slavery. Although he had not acted against slavery in any way during his term in office, Whigs reminded Virginians that the Democrats had been most anxious to shut off debate on strong anti-abolitionist resolutions offered by the Whigs in the General Assembly during the 1835-1836 session. The Democrats also had forced a gag rule through both houses of Congress during the first half of 1836, thereby quelling debate over the threat which the abolitionists and their petitions posed to the South's peculiar institution. Whigs again brought up Van Buren's votes in 1820 supporting instructions to New York's senators to oppose slavery in Missouri, and his vote in the New York constitutional convention in behalf of free Negro suffrage. Finally, they pointed to his admission that Congress indeed possessed the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

45 See for example ibid., June 5, 26, 1840.

46 William O. Goode to George Coke Dromgoole, June 27, 1840, Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina (hereinafter cited SHC-UNC.). See also Whig, July 28, 1840.

47 See Chapter V, supra.

48 Virginia Whig Convention Address, reprinted in Whig, March 6, 1840.
The Whigs' next most effective campaign issue was Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett's plan to reform the structure of the state militia. Trouble along the Maine-Canadian border raised questions concerning the fitness of the nation's defense forces, and Poinsett proposed the creation of a new militia organization, part of which would rotate each year into an "active or moveable force" of 100,000 men to drill several times annually under the supervision of the federal government. Although logical in its conception, the Whigs distorted Poinsett's plan and charged Van Buren with attempting to create a standing army. John Campbell, brother of David Campbell and recently removed by Van Buren as Treasurer of the United States in favor of Junto associate William Selden, described the plan as threatening a "military Despotism." The Whig taunted Ritchie to publish a copy of Poinsett's plan, and when he refused the Richmond Tippecanoe Club ordered 10,000 copies of the report printed for distribution in the campaign. Made public just prior to Virginia's General Assembly elections, Democrats charged that Poinsett's "ill-timed" report gave the Whigs their victory in the 1840 state elections.

Poinsett defended his plan in two long letters which were

49 Report of the Secretary of War, November 30, 1839, in Executive Documents, 26 Cong., 1 Sess., 41-53.

50 Whig, March 27, 31; April 3; April 17, reprinting the plan; May 22; July 3, 10, 1840. Winchester Virginian, reprinted ibid., May 15, 1840.

51 Abingdon, The South-Western Virginian, March 24, 1840.

52 Whig, May 19, 1840.

53 John Rutherfoord to Andrew Stevenson, May 19, 1840, Andrew Stevenson Papers, LC.
published in *Niles Register* and the *Enquirer*, but the heated objections of states rights men forced Van Buren to disown the plan by July. Late in the campaign Ritchie printed an elaborate defense of Poinsett's proposal, but the Whigs used the report throughout the campaign to good advantage as another example of Van Buren's federalism.

The Virginia Democratic legislative convention address constituted the basis for the Democratic campaign. For the first time the Democrats listed their principles in what can be considered their first official "platform" In very brief and general terms the Democratic platform called for strict construction of the federal constitution, opposition to a national bank and other forms of incorporation by the federal government, support for the Independent Treasury with a sound

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54 Thomas Ritchie to Joel R. Poinsett, May 29; Poinsett to Ritchie, June 5, 1840, in *Niles Register*, LVIII(July 11, 1840), 295-98; *Enquirer*, October 13, 1840.


56 The Virginia Democratic legislative convention address is reprinted in the *Enquirer*, February 29, 1840. Major topics, and the space devoted to each, follow: Historical introduction and background to campaign, 14.0 per cent; Democratic party principles, 2.6 per cent; attack on Harrison's politics, 39.8 per cent; enumeration of Van Buren's states rights philosophy, 3.5 per cent; defense of the Independent Treasury, 13.1 per cent; condemnation of Rives and other Conservatives who defected to the Whigs, 10.4 per cent; closing exhortation to get out the vote in the spring state and fall federal election, 16.1 per cent. From that portion of the address which attacked Harrison's politics, 11.7 per cent condemned him as a military chieftan and taunted the Whigs for passing over Henry Clay; 2.7 per cent condemned his "latitudianian" independence of the federal constitution; 9.3 per cent denounced his support for federal internal improvements; 10.3 per cent attacked his advocacy of a protective tariff; 15.0 per cent condemned his support for a national bank; 31.9 per cent denounced his proposal to distribute surplus revenue from the sale of public lands to support the purchase and colonization of slaves, and his refusal to rule out the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.
currency resting on a broad metallic base, economy in the administration of the federal and state governments, and recognition of the principle of instruction. Nearly two-fifths of the address ridiculed the Whigs for nominating Harrison instead of Clay, described Harrison's military career as undistinguished, and denounced his sympathy for a broad interpretation of the federal constitution, his support for a national bank, federal internal improvements, a protective tariff, distribution of the surplus revenue, and the abolition of slavery. The address briefly summarized Van Buren's strict interpretation of the federal constitution, and his belief in the unconstitutionality of a protective tariff, national bank, and federal internal improvements. It defended at some length the subtreasury as the proper solution to the banking crisis.

Regarding slavery, the Democrats represented Van Buren as a "Northern man with Southern feelings." They portrayed him as denying congressional power to interfere with slavery in the states, and pledging to veto any bill to abolish it in the District of Columbia. Harrison would not pledge to veto such a bill, and Ritchie editorialized: "THE SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST WILL NEVER VOTE FOR ANY MAN AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WHO WILL NOT GIVE THIS SOLEMN PLEDGE."

III

The election of 1840 assumed greater significance in Virginia than merely a contest for the presidency, for it extended a revision of

57"Address of the Democratic Central Committee to the Voters of Virginia," signed by Thomas Ritchie, secretary of the committee, printed in Enquirer, October 24, 1840.
58Democratic legislative convention address, printed ibid., February 29, 1840.
59Ibid., February 11, 1840.
party lines which had begun during 1837. In retrospect, and despite the disunity of the Democrats under Van Buren, in Virginia the Whigs suffered the greatest losses from the new structuring of parties.

By 1839 it became obvious that William C. Rives, the leader of the Virginia Conservatives, would not return to the Democratic party. Having broken with Van Buren and the Democrats for both ideological and personal political reasons, Rives hoped to create a conservative third-party in Virginia. But the dismal failure of Conservative candidates in both the 1839 state and congressional elections quashed his dream. By this time Rives faced reelection to his senate seat. Since neither party controlled the Virginia General Assembly outright, Whigs determined that Rives would have to endorse Harrison for president publicly in return for their support in his reelection bid. In January 1840, Rives, after privately speculating about supporting General Winfield Scott, publicly endorsed Harrison, and the Whigs secured his reelection to the Senate in 1841.

Although Rives and a few of his Conservative allies left the Democratic party during 1840 and actively campaigned for Harrison, many of the Democrats who had broken with Van Buren over the banking crisis returned to the Democratic fold in time for the presidential election.

60 James Garland to William C. Rives, September 15, 1839, Rives Papers, LC. Rives to Hugh Swinton Legaré, June 18, 1839, Hugh S. Legaré Papers, South Carolinian Library, University of South Carolina. Rives to Garland, January 10; William Henry Harrison to Rives, June 23, 1840, Rives Papers, LC.

61 Gunderson, Log-Cabin Campaign, pp.198-99. For Rives' activity in behalf of Harrison see the speaking invitations and copies of the letters of acceptance or regret which fill the Rives Papers, LC, throughout the spring, summer, and early fall of 1840. At least one Virginia Conservative newspaper, the Abingdon, Southwest Virginian, endorsed Harrison in 1840. See the Whig, January 3, 1840.
campaign. Furthermore, Rives' change of allegiance politically damaged both him and the Whigs. Many eastern Virginia Whigs, such as Abel P. Upshur, lost confidence in their party when the Whigs endorsed Rives, a former staunch Jackson supporter, for the Senate. Conversely, many of Rives' former Conservative supporters denounced him for his endorsement of Harrison.

Secondly, Harrison's nomination by the Whig national convention spurred the restructuring of political parties in Virginia. Despite Whig efforts, most Virginians looked upon Harrison as a nationalist. Consequently many Virginia states rights Whigs, particularly from areas east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, deserted Harrison in favor of Van Buren. Although they had opposed him in 1836, many of them, like William O. Goode of Mecklenburg County, preferred Van Buren to a nationalist minion of Henry Clay.

Thirdly, and of most significance for future Virginia political alignments, John C. Calhoun cast his lot with the Democrats when he returned in support of Van Buren's subtreasury proposal. After Calhoun broke with Jackson he operated as a political independent. However, numerous states rights men who opposed Jackson's handling of the nullification crisis and deposit withdrawal had joined the Whig party. But

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63 See Alexander Rives to William C. Rives, January 23, 1840, Rives Papers, LC.

by 1840 many of these same men, having become disenchanted with Whig nationalist ideas and candidates, particularly Harrison's nomination and talk of a new national bank, deserted the Whigs and joined Calhoun in returning to the Democrats. In Virginia, William O. Goode, former Governor Littleton W. Tazewell, and Robert M.T. Hunter, Speaker of the National House of Representatives, led a faction of states rights Whigs into the Democratic party in support of the subtreasury. 65

Whigs railed at the Calhoun-Van Buren alliance as an "unprincipled and disgraceful coalition," 66 but this new alliance probably saved Virginia from the Democrats. The relatively small number of Conservative defections from Democratic ranks were offset by the influx of men who became known as Calhoun Democrats, and in spite of Rives' electioneering campaigns "the revolution went backwards." 67

The Virginia Whigs entered the elections with victory in their grasp. According to Ritchie, the Whigs enjoyed all the advantages, including "a monstrous machinery... to operate upon the public mind--a large central committee--ample means in their purse--a Tippecanoe Club of more than one hundred ardent spirits in this city--similar clubs established at other points--daily and weekly newspapers, strewn over

65 For Goode see Whig, January 30, 1840, and William O. Goode to George Coke Dromgoole, June 27, 1840, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UNC.; regarding Tazewell see Enquirer, July 28, 1840; for Hunter see George Fitzhugh to Robert M.T. Hunter, December 15, 1839, in Ambler, ed., Hunter Corresp., p.30; Hunter to Muscoe R.H. Garnett, May 22, and Lewis E. Harvie to Hunter, July 9, 1840, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia; also Hunter's reply to his Constituents, regarding the presidential election, printed in the Enquirer, July 7, 1840.

66 Charlestown, Virginia Free Press, January 9, 1840. Also Lewis E. Harvie to R.M.T. Hunter, July 9, 1840, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia.

67 Charlottesville Jeffersonian, reprinted in the Enquirer, December 4, 1840.
the land—handbills, pamphlets, speeches, all sorts of combustibles, circulated through the state. . . and Travelling Electors to spout everywhere." In contrast to 1836, the Whigs presented a united ticket backed by a solid state organization. In addition, momentum favored them since Whig candidates had won control of the House of Delegates in the spring Assembly elections. Finally, they faced a Democratic party only recently reunited and led by a president who sought reelection in spite of the economic and banking crises which continued to plague the nation.

The campaign between two well-organized parties, both with new campaign techniques and organizations, attracted a new high in Virginia voter turnouts. In 1832 Jackson's reelection campaign brought only 30.8 per cent of Virginia's adult white males to the polls, while the election of 1836 recorded only a 35.1 per cent turnout. But in 1840, as Richard McCormick describes it, "Tippecanoe democracy" reached its peak when 54.6 per cent of Virginia's adult white males cast ballots. In 1836 Van Buren carried Virginia by more than 6,000 votes, but in 1840 he triumphed by only 1,120 votes, 1 per cent of the total, and carried just one more county than Harrison. 68

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68 Enquirer, May 5, 1840.

69 Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics," American Historical Review, LXV(January 1960), 296, and 292, Table I. Percentages based upon adult white males because land owning requirements in Virginia regulated the voting population, and no study to determine the number of eligible voters has ever been made.

70 Van Buren won 43,757 votes, Harrison 42,637. Figures available in W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), p.816. Percentages from McCormick, "New Perspectives." 300: Table III. David Campbell noted the large turnout in southwest Virginia, more than when Jackson was before the people. See Campbell to William C. Rives, December 4, 1840, Rives Papers, LC.
The *Richmond Whig*, forecasting a Harrison triumph, predicted that he would dominate every section except southwestern Virginia.\(^{71}\)

In fact the Democrats lost sixteen constituencies which they had carried in 1836 and gained only one from the Whigs, the town of Petersburg. But both the percentage of votes cast for Democrats and Whigs in 1840, when correlated with their percentages for 1836, reveal a high degree of continuity among Democratic and Whig constituencies.\(^{72}\) Although no significant correlations exist between the votes for either party and a number of socio-economic variables,\(^{73}\) the Whigs carried three of the four independent cities and a majority of the counties surrounding the larger towns. Comparison of the mean rankings of wealth, manufacturing investment, and 1850 average slaveholding indicates that Whig constituencies west of the Blue Ridge Mountains possessed greater wealth and manufacturing investment than Democratic constituencies, yet Democratic constituencies in the Valley held higher 1850 average slaveholdings. East of the mountains Democratic constituencies possessed significantly

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\(^{71}\) *Whig*, August 7, 1840.

\(^{72}\) The coefficient of correlation for percentages of Democratic vote, 1836, with percentage of Democratic vote, 1840, is 0.8238; for the Whig vote the correlation is 0.8241. Coefficients of correlation derived by computer from the correlation program in the Osiris II Social Science Package, employing the Pearson Product-Moment Formula. See Appendix I for methodological explanation.

\(^{73}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Whig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840 Pct. Slave Population</td>
<td>-0.0645</td>
<td>0.0645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840 Pct. White Illiteracy</td>
<td>0.1435</td>
<td>-0.1435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840 Per Capita Manuf. Invest.</td>
<td>-0.2165</td>
<td>0.2165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840 Per Capita Tax</td>
<td>-0.0388</td>
<td>0.0388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850 Average Slaveholding</td>
<td>-0.0794</td>
<td>0.0795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
greater wealth, manufacturing investment, and higher average slave-
holdings.  

Whigs conceded Van Buren's triumph in Virginia, but rejoiced
in Harrison's election. However, Whig gains in Virginia proved both
illusory and temporary in nature. Of the twenty-two Tidewater constitu-
cencies which voted Whig in 1836, twenty-one voted Whig in 1840. Yet
in fifteen of these twenty-one constituencies the Democrats increased
their percentage of the total vote. This trend indicates that many
Tidewater constituencies where the states rights Whig, Hugh Lawson White,
had run strong in 1836 were now less inclined to support Harrison. Hence
many Tidewater states rights Whigs, like Hunter and Tazewell, followed
Calhoun into the Democratic party. Other Tidewater states rights men
left the Whigs within a year when John Tyler, himself a Tidewater states
rights Whig, succeeded Harrison in office. Far from firmly establishing
their party by their 1840 triumph, the Whigs soon encountered, as the
Democrats had before them in 1832 and 1836, the perils of victory.

IV

Ritchie, speaking in behalf of Virginia's Democrats, launched
a campaign of opposition to Harrison even before the old general took

74 The mean rankings, from highest to lowest, within section and
by party, follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section and Party</th>
<th>Wealth</th>
<th>Manuf. Inv.</th>
<th>Avg. Slave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tidewater Whig</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidewater Demo.</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Whig</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Demo.</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Whig</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Demo.</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Alleghany Whig</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Alleghany Demo.</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
office. He described the Whig party as a "monstrous combination of the
odds and ends of all parties," which "better deserve the title of the
Humbugging Party."\textsuperscript{75} and he attributed Harrison's election to the votes
of northern abolitionists.\textsuperscript{76} Many Virginia Democrats feared their party
might disintegrate under the impact of its first defeat in the presi-
dential contests. Consequently, Democratic members of the General
Assembly met in open convention near the end of the Assembly session
to formulate the basis of their opposition to Harrison.\textsuperscript{77} They estab-
lished a central corresponding committee to direct Democratic efforts in
the spring elections, and in response to Harrison's inaugural speech
adopted an anti-Harrison address. The address condemned Harrison as a
thoroughgoing nationalist, denounced his nationalist stand on slavery
a national bank, and federal internal improvements. It condemned Har-
rison's removal of Claiborne W. Gooch as the Richmond postmaster, point-
ing out that Virginia lacked representatives in Harrison's cabinet and
that all the cabinet members were nationalists. The address closed with
a call for Virginians to assume the lead in opposing the administration.

Exactly one month after his inauguration Harrison lay dead. John
Tyler, his states rights Whig vice president, succeeded him. But Tyler's
constitutional principles differed from those of the Whig party leaders,
particularly the cabinet of nationalists with which Harrison had sur-
rrounded himself. However, such differences were not immediately apparent,

\textsuperscript{75} Enquirer, November 27, 1840.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., November 13, 1840.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., March 18, 1841. Ritchie chaired the central committee,
and its other members included John Rutherfoord, James Bosher, John
Womble, Nathaniel Denby, Washington Croonhow, James A. Seddon, Philip
Mayo, Stafford H. Parker, Thomas T. Giles, Francis Wickham, William Wren,
Samuel D. Denoon, Charles Hyde, and C.W. Gooch.
and Virginia's Democrats continued their opposition to the administration. But when the first session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress met in the summer of 1841, Tyler's differences with the Whig leadership surfaced.

The Virginia Whig press approved Tyler's initial message to the Congress. Yet by the end of the summer most Virginia Whigs, and indeed many Whigs throughout the nation, were calling for his impeachment. The controversy arose over a solution to the banking crisis which had plagued the country since 1833. In preparation for establishing a new national bank the Whig congressional majority repealed the Independent Treasury. Tyler, determined that his states rights principles and not mere allegiance to party would guide his administration, hinted that he might veto a bank bill. Although the Enquirer condemned the Whig efforts to reestablish a national bank, in August the Whig praised congressional passage of the bank bill and indicated that a presidential veto would send a shock through the Whig party. As the tension mounted while Tyler considered the bill, the Whig pled for party unity and urged party members not break with Tyler over banking before they saw how he stood on other issues. But when Tyler vetoed the bill and the Senate

78 See ibid., June 4, 1841.

79 See the Alexandria Gazette, June 8, 1841.

80 John Rutherfoord to John Tyler, June 21, 1841, John Rutherfoord Papers, Duke University. John Tyler to Andrew Jackson, September 20, 1842, Andrew Jackson Papers, LC.

81 Enquirer, June 18, 1841.

82 Whig, August 10, 1841. Earlier the Whig had attempted to dispell rumors of Whig disunity in Congress. Ibid., July 2, 1841.

83 Ibid., August 17, 1841.
failed to override his veto, he in effect cleaved the Whig party. While the Enquirer hailed Tyler's veto and praised the president for his "moral courage," the Whig and other Whig newspapers turned viciously upon him. They denounced him as a Loco-Foco Jacksonian, and told the Democrats that they could have him for their presidential candidate if they wished. From that time Tyler became persona non grata to the Whig party, and by the summer of 1842 many Virginia Whigs supported the Whig's call for Tyler's impeachment.

In September, after Tyler vetoed a second bank bill, all the members of the cabinet which he had inherited from Harrison resigned except for Secretary of State Daniel Webster. Tyler filled his new cabinet with former Jacksonians who, like himself, had broken with Jackson during the nullification and deposit withdrawal controversies. He also attracted three Virginia Whig congressmen and Senator Rives to his side. Rives proved to be the least firmly attached. Although Rives supported Tyler's positions on banking, he ultimately swung back to the

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84 Enquirer, August 20, 1841.


86 Whig, July 1, 1842. See also ibid., September 14, December 10, 1841.


88 See William C. Rives to John Tyler, May 4; Tyler to Rives, May 8; Rives to Tyler, May 15; Thomas Allen to Rives, April 14; Rives
Whig party positions on matters such as the tariff and Texas annexation.
Three members of Tyler's Corporal's Guard, congressmen Henry A. Wise, Francis Mallory, and Thomas W. Gilmer, all elected as Whigs, renounced their party allegiance in late 1841 and sought reelection in 1843 as Democrats. \(^{89}\)

As early as March 1841 Ritchie had predicted that the Whig dynasty would crumble. \(^{90}\) and when the first breaks appeared he did not hesitate to exploit the divisions. In August 1841 he began courting Tyler's supporters in Congress. Ritchie's influence among Virginia Democrats had slipped somewhat as a result of his temporary split with Van Buren over the subtreasury, and doubtless Ritchie hoped by wooing Tyler to regain his position within the party. \(^{91}\) In January 1842 the *Enquirer* endorsed Tyler's annual message to Congress, \(^{92}\) and in July of that same


\(^{90}\) Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, March 19, 1841, Van Buren Papers, LC.


\(^{92}\) *Enquirer*, January 4, 1842: Thomas Ritchie to George Coke Dromgoole, January 4, 1842, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UNC.
year praised Tyler's veto of the proposed tariff bill. Tyler doubtlessly sought Ritchie's assistance, for as early as February 1842 his Virginia supporters denied any intention of creating a third party. Ritchie by this time had resumed his role as a power broker within the party, and he publicly remained uncommitted toward the Democratic presidential nomination for 1844. Privately, however, he was committed to his old northern cohort, Martin Van Buren, although in August 1843 he announced his support for Tyler if he received the Democratic nomination. By this time, however, Ritchie and the other Virginia Democrats faced a stiff challenge for control of the party from a new faction which had first emerged during the 1840 presidential election.

V

When John C. Calhoun returned to the Democratic party, he brought with him a large group of states rights Whigs who had become alienated from their party. In Virginia most of these men, like Littleton Waller Tazewell, took an active part in the 1840 presidential contest. Others, like Robert M.T. Hunter, assumed a neutral stance and refused to endorse publicly either candidate. But between 1840 and 1844 these men labored among Virginia Democrats to seize control of the party. Their efforts created a bitter intraparty conflict which produced startling results in 1844.

Virginia's Whigs feared Calhoun almost as much as the Richmond

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93 *Enquirer*, July 5, 1842.
94 Ibid., February 26, 1842.
95 Ibid., August 4, 1843; Ambler, "Virginia and Presidential Succession," p.172.
Junto did. The Whigs won control of the General Assembly in the 1840 spring elections, but early in 1841 their harmony began to erode. Whig Governor Thomas Walker Gilmer, miffed at the failure of Governor William H. Seward of New York to return two fugitive slaves to Virginia, adopted a hard line in the controversy. The Richmond Whig, worried that Calhoun's sympathizers would make inroads among states rights Whigs, publicly pleaded with Gilmer to exercise restraint and resolve the controversy. But Gilmer refused to compromise, and when the General Assembly would not support his demand for the immediate, unconditional return of the slaves, he resigned the governorship.

So by the end of the summer of 1841 Whig harmony, both in Washington and in Virginia, had been shattered by unforeseen developments. Virginia Democrats met in Richmond on October 5 to gather their forces preparatory to exploiting the Whigs' disarray. Thomas Ritchie proposed that a committee be appointed to report on matters of interest to the meeting. Ritchie obviously had an address prepared, for after a short recess he submitted to the meeting an address which denounced the Whig party's course in the recent congressional session and specifically condemned Whig proposals for a national bank and distribution to the states of the revenues from public land sales. It closed with a blast at Henry Clay as the probable Whig presidential candidate in 1844.

In early 1842 the Virginia Democrats assembled in a state convention in Richmond. Once again Ritchie and the other members of the

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96 Whig, January 22, February 19, 1841.
97 Ibid., March 23, 1841.
98 Enquirer, October 8, 1841.
99 Ibid., February 5, 1842.
Richmond Junto directed the convention, although only Ritchie held an official post, his usual secretaryship. The convention adopted resolutions which denounced a national bank, distribution of the land sales revenue, and increases in the national debt, and closed with an appeal for harmony within the party.

Late in April, just prior to the General Assembly elections, the Democratic Central Committee issued its campaign address. Like the Democratic convention in February, the address warned that the Whigs would foist another national bank on the country if possible. It pictured the evil results that would follow from distribution of the revenues from the sale of the public lands, most notably an increase in tariff rates. Finally, it cautioned that the Whigs would establish, if possible, a national system of internal improvements.

In 1841 the Whigs had maintained control of the House of Delegates, but in 1842 the Democrats reversed the string of four consecutive years of Whig control over the legislature. With Whig unity disintegrating in Virginia and the party stricken with apathy, the Democrats captured eighty-four seats in the House of Delegates to fifty for the Whigs, and twenty of the thirty-two Senate seats. In 1843 the Democrats lost nine of the eighty-four House seats they had won the previous year, but still retained control of the Assembly.

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100 Ibid., April 19, 1842.
102 Enquirer, May 10; Whig, May 3, 1842.
103 Enquirer, August 1, 1843; Whig, September 15, 1843. Twenty-eight of the seventy-five Democrats in the House of Delegates were classified as Calhoun Democrats.
Between 1841 and 1843 the question of accepting distribution became the major issue in the Assembly. With the Democrats in such overwhelming control of the Senate during the 1841-1842 session they were able to frustrate Whig efforts to accept Virginia's share of the distribution of revenues from the sale of the public lands. Then in March 1843 the Democrats pushed through the Assembly a new state tax bill. In addition to increasing the tax rates on land, slaves, horses, and commercial license of all sorts, the bill taxed for the first time in Virginia's history personal property such as clocks, watches, and pianos, and levied a 1 per cent income tax on incomes above $400. The bill resulted in a doubling of the state revenue derived from taxes. Thus, according to the Democrats, Virginia had no need to accept its share of the revenue distribution from the federal government.

Completing their domination of the Whigs, Democrats forced through the Assembly in January 1843 a series of resolutions on federal relations which denounced Whig actions in the Congress. When the resolutions reached the floor of the House of Delegates the Whigs moved to

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104 Whigs used the issue of accepting Virginia's share of the federal revenue as the basis for contesting the state elections in 1842. See the Whig, April 5, 19, 1842. For Democratic opposition to distribution see the Petersburg Statesman, reprinted in the Whig, March 29, 1842, and the Abingdon Banner, quoted in the Enquirer, April 15, 1842.

105 The tax bill of 1843 provided the basis for the contest in the state elections that spring. Whigs claimed the new taxes were unjustly distributed, and would not be necessary if the state would accept its share of the federal revenue. See the Whig, March 31, April 4, 1843. Democrats accepted the responsibility for the tax law, and the challenge in the election. See the Enquirer, April 4, 1843. The Democratic press supported the tax increase. See the Enquirer, February 11, 1843, and the Charlottesville Jeffersonian, Winchester Virginian, and Lexington Valley Star, reprinted, ibid., April 7, 1843. For information on the tax rates and receipts see Frederick Tilden Neeley, "The Development of Virginia Taxation: 1775 to 1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1956), pp. 289-92.
table them but lost this maneuver on a straight party vote. The Democrats then rammed the resolutions through without debate. 106 When the resolutions came to the floor of the Senate all but one Whig left the chamber and let the Democrats have their way. 107 The resolutions affirmed the principle of instructions, condemned Senator William S. Archer for violating that principle, and instructed the state's senators and requested her representatives to procure repeal of the tariff of 1842 and to oppose anything except a revenue tariff. The senators and representatives were respectively instructed and requested to secure repeal of the distribution law, to vote against a national bank, and to procure repeal of the federal bankruptcy act. 108

But the ease with which the Democrats put through these resolutions actually gave a false impression of Democratic strength in Virginia. Despite the best efforts of Ritchie and the Richmond Junto, party discipline remained somewhat illusive. The election of a governor illustrates the discord which existed within the party ranks.

When Thomas Walker Gilmer resigned the governorship in 1841 the two senior members of the Executive Council alternately occupied the executive chair for the next two years. Because the Democrats controlled the Senate during the 1841-1842 session they were able to frustrate six efforts by the Whig-controlled House of Delegates to elect a governor. 109 In late 1841 the Whig accused the Enquirer and the Richmond Junto of

106 Whig, January 24, 1843.
107 Ibid., January 27, 1843.
108 For votes on the respective resolutions see the Enquirer, January 26, 1843.
109 Whig, February 15, 1842.
trying to force Andrew Stevenson upon the Democratic party as its gubernatorial nominee.\textsuperscript{110} The Whig's charges were correct. Ever since Stevenson's return from England he had sought high political office. Among the members of the Junto Stevenson possessed the greatest political ambitions, but Stevenson had little chance for election, for by 1842 the Junto could no longer dictate Democratic policy in Virginia. Calhounites in Virginia suspected Stevenson of seeking the governorship as a stepping-stone to the Democratic vice-presidential nomination in 1844, and they determined to oppose him for governor.\textsuperscript{111} Most Democrats preferred James McDowell of Lexington. Although the Junto ardently desired Stevenson, both McDowell's friends and enemies agreed that McDowell would be elected whether or not the Democrats held a caucus.\textsuperscript{112} Ritchie moved to head off the potential conflict. Just before the caucus he endorsed McDowell.\textsuperscript{113} Ritchie hoped to gain in return additional support for Stevenson's potential bid for the vice presidency. In the caucus McDowell easily defeated the other nominees, and he won an overwhelming victory in the election.\textsuperscript{114} His triumph represented a strike for independence by the majority of Virginia's Democrats against the Richmond Junto, and subsequent events crushed Stevenson's vice-presidential bid.

Calhoun Democrats controlled twenty-seven seats in the 1842-1843

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., November 2, 1841.

\textsuperscript{111}John Letcher to Thomas Hart Benton, December 15, 1842, Van Buren Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{114}Whig, December 16, 1842; Enquirer, December 17, 1842. The Enquirer reported the election in detail, but glossed over reports of the caucus.
session of the General Assembly, and three of Virginia's twenty-one seats in the House of Representatives. These totals marked a tremendous increase of Calhoun's strength in Virginia, for prior to 1840 he had no organized following. Significantly, the increase of Calhoun's strength in Virginia coincided with the decline of the Richmond Junto. The Junto had attempted since 1827 to direct the relationship of Virginia's Democrats to the national party. But after 1837 the Junto's influence gradually declined, a decline which can be traced to old age among other things. By 1840 the average age of Junto members was 59 years, while the average age of eight of the ten leading Calhoun Democrats for whom biographical information is available totaled 39.6 years. The Calhoun Democrats had come to maturity in an age when sectional conflict often dominated national politics. The Missouri controversy of 1820 represented for many of the Calhoun men their first awareness of national politics, and many of them had experienced first-hand the sectional tensions aroused by nullification. Throughout their political lives they heard Calhoun debate, and indeed had questioned for themselves, the value of the federal union to the South. The Junto members represented on the other hand a direct link with the founding fathers since they were only one generation removed from the Jeffersonian

115 George W. Hopkins to Martin Van Buren, February 20, 1843, Van Buren Papers, LC.

116 See the bibliography for the sources of biographical information. The identified members of the Richmond Junto include Thomas Ritchie, Andrew Stevenson, Peter V. Daniel, Richard E. Parker, John Brockenbrough, William H. Roane, Philip N. Nicholas, and Linn Banks, an associate. The Calhoun Democrats included R.M.T. Hunter, James M. Mason, Lewis E. Harvie, James A. Seddon, William O. Goode, William Smith, Richard K. Crallé, and William F. Gordon. When Littleton W. Tazwell and Henry St. George Tucker are added to the Calhoun Democrats, their average age increases to 44.3 years.
generation. They also had participated in the revival of the New York-Virginia alliance on which the Democratic party rested. Although equally cognizant of southern interests, they were less easily moved to question the value of the union or the New York-Virginia alliance to the South.

Furthermore, beginning in 1840 the Junto was racked by death and dispersal of its members. Richard E. Parker died in 1840, Linn Banks in 1842, and William H. Roane in 1845. In 1839 William Selden moved to Washington to become Treasurer of the United States. Peter V. Daniel accepted appointment to the Supreme Court in 1841, and his circuit kept him away from Virginia for much of the year. The stockholders of the Bank of Virginia turned John Brockenbrough out as president in 1843, and he retired to his estate near Warm Springs in Bath County. Andrew Stevenson likewise retired to Blenheim, his Albemarle County estate, upon his return from England. Thus during the early 1840s only Ritchie, Philip N. Nicholas, William H. Roane, and C.W. Gooch spent much of their time in Richmond, and Ritchie moved to Washington in 1845 to edit the Washington Union. Because of the Junto's family structure it made no effort to recruit younger members. It relied on secret informal social gatherings in Richmond to conduct its business, and with its members missing or unable to be in Richmond for much of the year the Junto gradually lost its effectiveness.

The Calhoun Democrats steadily increased their following after 1840. They encouraged Calhoun men to contest the Assembly elections against the Whigs and regular Democrats. By appealing to the latent sentiment against Van Buren as a northern non-slaveholder they aroused antipathy toward him and increased the sympathy for Calhoun. The 1843 gubernatorial election demonstrated that Virginia's Democrats would no
longer blindly follow the Richmond Junto. Both Calhoun's followers and
Van Buren's supporters treated each other with great respect. Ritchie,
speaking for the Van Buren men, welcomed Calhoun back to the Democratic
party but urged, for the sake of party harmony, that each faction avoid
excesses either in policy positions or political conduct. 117 Ritchie
likewise informed Robert M.T. Hunter, Calhoun's chief Virginia lieuten-
ant, of the necessity for maintaining party unity. 118 Similarly, the
Calhoun men solicited Ritchie's friendship. Calhoun had never given up
his ambition for the White House, and Ritchie at this date had not pub-
licly endorsed a candidate. In the fall of 1842 Robert Barnwell Rhett
of South Carolina came to Richmond seeking to ally the Junto to Calhoun's
interests. Rhett told the Virginians that Calhoun intended to resign
his Senate seat and rest his future claims to public office on a book
of political theory which he was writing. 119

The Virginia Democratic convention of 1843 offered the first real
test of strength between the followers of Van Buren and Calhoun in the

117 Enquirer, August 12, 1842. Thomas Ritchie to John C. Calhoun,
November 24, 1841, in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Correspondence of John

118 Thomas Ritchie to Robert M.T. Hunter, December 17, 1842,
Hunter Papers, University of Virginia. Among the Van Buren men Calhoun
was referred to as "the sweetheart which Mr. Hunter keeps in the absence
of Mrs. H." The two men shared a mess in Washington. See Richard B.
Gooch to C.W. Gooch, June 2, n.d. (internally dated 1840), Gooch Family
Papers, University of Virginia.

119 Robert M.T. Hunter to Robert B. Rhett, September 26, 1842,
Robert Barnwell Rhett Papers, SC-UNC. Hunter to John C. Calhoun, Novem-
ber 7, 1842, Calhoun Papers, Clemson University. William Selden to Martin
Van Buren, March 5.6; William H. Roane to Van Buren, September 11, 1843,
Van Buren Papers, LC. Calhoun's book was published posthumously as
A Disquisition on Government.
contest for the 1844 Democratic presidential nomination. Ritchie was the guiding force behind the 1843 convention. In October 1842 he urged George Coke Dromgoole, a democratic representative to Congress from Brunswick County, to convene the Brunswick Democrats and have them issue a call for a state convention in March 1843. Ritchie made it plan, however, that this convention should take no action in nominating a presidential candidate or naming delegates to a national convention, but should confine itself to adopting an address and proposing a date for the national convention. Following Ritchie's direction, the Van Buren men organized and dominated the proceedings of the Democratic "States Rights Convention" which assembled on March 2, 1843.

Initially the 350-member convention met in the capitol, but soon switched to the more spacious quarters of the African Baptist Church. The convention proceeded harmoniously through the election of officer, naming Andrew Stevenson president, John Brockenbrough, William F. Gordon, William P. Taylor, and William H. Roane vice presidents, and Thomas Ritchie secretary. The convention adopted several resolutions, the chief one recommending November 4, 1843, in Baltimore, Maryland, as the time and place for holding the Democratic national convention. Prior to this resolution William F. Gordon, a Calhoun supporter, had proposed February 22, 1844, for the convention date. The Calhoun men wanted to delay the convention as long as possible, hoping that in the added time

121 Thomas Ritchie to George Coke Dromgoole, October 3, 1842, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UNC; Enquirer, December 8, 1842.
122 Enquirer, March 4, 1843.
123 An account of the convention proceedings appears ibid., March 14, 1843.
Calhoun's candidacy would attract additional support. Thomas Ritchie countered with a compromise proposal recommending January 4, 1844, as the convention date. Both Gordon's and Ritchie's proposals failed, and the convention settled on November 4.

With the recommendation for the time and location of the national convention settled, the convention appointed a central corresponding committee which gave nearly equal representation to the followers of Van Buren and Calhoun. The convention then proceeded to adopt an address. All the delegates sanctioned the portions of the address which denounced the tariff of 1842, the National Bankruptcy Act, a national bank, and the distribution of the land sale revenue. Trouble arose, however, over the section of the address which recommended the means whereby each state should be represented in the national convention.

James A. Seddon, a Calhoun follower, wrote the original section of the Virginia convention address which dealt with the national convention. Seddon pointed out that because the Whig party seemed to be crumbling, the Democratic national convention nomination would be tantamount to electing a president. He proposed that the convention should not be held before May or June 1844, in order to give the nations' voters time to decide who they would support for the convention nomination. He also recommended that the states' delegation be elected by their respective congressional districts, and that the delegates cast their votes in the convention as individuals.

The Calhoun men wanted to delay a national convention nomination as long as possible in order to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear upon the convention. Calhoun hoped that by May or June 1844 public opinion would make the choice of a candidate clear enough to make a
convention unnecessary. Naturally he expected public opinion to work
in his favor and against Van Buren. But if a national convention were
held the Calhoun men were determined that delegates should be elected by
congressional district meetings, not state conventions, and that at the
national convention the states should not vote under a unit rule.124

The Virginia convention refused to adopt that portion of the
address containing Seddon's recommendation. Instead, it endorsed by
more than a two-to-one margin a substitute authored by George Coke
Dromgoole, a Van Buren follower who chaired the committee on the address.
Dromgoole's substitute recommended that for the purpose of nominating
candidates each state be given the same representation in the national
convention as it was entitled to by its electoral vote in the election.
Furthermore, he recommended that Virginia cast her convention nominating
votes under the unit rule.

Although the Calhounites secured the selection of Virginia's con-
vention delegates by district conventions, the adoption of the unit rule
by the state convention negated their triumph since the Van Buren men
controlled nine of the twelve Democratic congressional districts. Also,
the Virginia convention, hoping that an early convention would prevent
the rise of personal and sectional jealousies, had endorsed an early con-
vention date.125 Just before the convention adjourned it adopted a reso-
lution which proposed to read out the party "any individual, however

124 John C. Calhoun to Robert M.T. Hunter, October 26, 1842, in
Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp.516-17; Duff Green to Richard K.
Crallé, February 8, 1843, Duff Green Papers, LC. William H. Roane to
Silas Wright, February 14, 1843, Van Buren Papers, LC. Enquirer,
March 7,11, 1843.

125 Enquirer, March 7,11, 1843.
eminent," who refused to support the nominee of the national convention. This resolution obviously was directed at Calhoun and his followers. Thus the Van Buren men had completely controlled the Virginia convention, and their triumph dealt a severe blow to Calhoun's chances, not only in Virginia but in the nation as well.

Buoyed by their convention success, Van Burenites in the General Assembly moved to redraw the boundaries of Virginia's congressional districts to conform with the new reapportionment of representation in which, according to the Census of 1840, Virginia lost six representatives. Both houses of the Assembly approved a redistricting plan which dealt a severe blow to both the Whigs and to Calhoun's followers in the Virginia congressional delegation. Although the Democratic Central Committee Address denied Whig charges that the Democratic legislature gerrymandered Virginia, the boundaries of at least one new district and the election results lend credence to the Whig charges. In the congressional elections of 1841 the Whigs had garnered ten seats to the Democrats' eleven, although three of the Whigs later renounced their party membership and joined the Democrats. The Calhoun Democrats held three of Virginia's twenty-one seats in the Twenty-Seventh Congress. But in the elections to the Twenty-Eighth Congress, the Democrats won thirteen seats and the Whigs two. Significantly, both of the Whigs' victories came in contests against Calhoun Democrats. In the Twenty-Seventh Congress, William O. Goode, Robert M.T. Hunter, and William Smith

126 Ibid., March 14, 1843.
127 Ibid., February 11, March 9, 1843. Whig, February 10, March 10, 1843.
128 Whig, February 14, 1843. Democratic Central Committee Address, Enquirer, April 14, 1845.
had represented Calhoun's interests in the Virginia delegation. But in 1843 the Democratic district convention nominated George Coke Dromgoole, a Van Buren follower, instead of Goode, and both Smith and Hunter lost to their Whig opponents. Hunter, explaining his defeat to Calhoun, attributed his loss partly to the fact that the idea of a national bank was stronger in Virginia than the Calhounites had supposed, partly to the increase in taxes levied by the Democratic legislature, but mostly to the fact that the legislative redistricting plan had given him an "unmanageable" district.  

The Virginia Democratic party had made a remarkable comeback from its troubles of the late 1830s. They carried Virginia for Martin Van Buren in 1840, and in the spring of 1842 ended Whig control of the General Assembly. Party lines within Virginia had undergone considerable change during and after the presidential election. Virginia Whigs, now stripped of most of their states rights members, had assumed an ideological position compatible with their northern Whig brethren, and in the process had repudiated a Virginia states rights Whig president. Although damaged initially by Conservative defections, the Democrats more than recouped their numerical losses through the accession of many states rights Whigs. Several of these new Democrats assumed leadership of a faction within the party devoted to John C. Calhoun. However, the Junto, representing Van Buren's interests, retained enough influence within the party to dominate the 1843 state Democratic convention. The convention crushed the efforts of Calhoun's followers to dictate the time and place of a national convention and the means whereby states would hold

129 Robert M.T. Hunter, to John C. Calhoun, May 23, 1843, in Boucher and Brooks, eds., Correspondence to Calhoun, p.184.
representation in the convention. Calhoun's influence in Virginia sank lower when his followers failed to win their reelection bids to the Twenty-Eighth Congress. But as the Virginia Democrats moved into the 1844 presidential campaign the impact of Calhoun's followers upon the course of the party, in both Virginia and the nation, became startlingly clear.
CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE NEW YORK-VIRGINIA ALLIANCE:

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1844

Although the Van Buren Democrats controlled the 1843 Virginia Democratic convention, the history of the Virginia Democratic party after that convention belongs largely to the states rights wing of the Democracy. The Calhoun Democrats, or Chivalry, forced the 1844 state convention to accept a strong prosouthern platform in return for their pledge to support the nominee of the Democratic national convention. Then, barely one month before the national convention, the issue of Texas annexation exploded into the political arena, bringing with it newly aroused sectional tensions which sprang from the renewed controversy over the expansion of slavery. Bowing to the irresistible pressure for annexation, the Junto and Van Buren's other Virginia allies deserted him when he refused to endorse immediate annexation. The basis for the victorious Jacksonian coalition of 1828, the New York-Virginia alliance, had survived the sectional implications of the tariff controversy only to disintegrate under the political impact of slavery.

At the heart of the conflict in Virginia between the Van Buren and Calhoun Democrats lay a difference in attitudes toward the concept of party. Both factions chose to work within the Democratic party to protect southern rights and interests. The Van Burenites, led by the
Junto, embraced an institutional approach toward party. They placed their faith in a continuation of the New York-Virginia alliance as the means whereby they could dictate the politics of the nation by controlling the Democratic party. They had almost accepted Van Buren's definition and use of party as an end in itself, and to continue the operation of the alliance they planned to elect Van Buren to the presidency in 1844. But in order for the Virginia Van Buren men to succeed, sectional tensions had to be minimized and issues compromised in the play of politics. The agitation for the immediate annexation of Texas proved their undoing. Because slavery expansion had become such an emotionally-charged issue, neither pole of the New York-Virginia alliance was willing to compromise. Rather than sacrifice Texas, the Virginia Van Buren men severed their alliance with New York, backed away from their institutional approach toward the Democratic party, and demanded a candidate who endorsed immediate annexation.

However the Chivalry, following Calhoun's lead, embraced an ideological view of party as simply the means to an end. The political careers of most Chivalry members reflected a weak commitment to party bonds. Many of them had been states rights Whigs before joining the Democrats in 1840.¹ Many of their careers paralleled that of Robert M.T. Hunter. He had entered politics opposed to Jackson, and although he cooperated with the Whigs in the General Assembly, he considered himself not bound by any party allegiance. Hunter won election to Congress as a subtreasury, anti-Clay, states rights Whig,² but speaking in

¹William H. Roane to Silas Wright, February 14, 1843, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress (hereinafter cited LC).
²Richmond Enquirer, June 4, 1839 (hereinafter cited Enquirer.)
Congress on the Independent Treasury he declared that "I never will take upon myself that allegiance which should bind me to obey the will of a party. . . ". The Chivalry chose to rest their defense of southern interests upon constitutional principles. But like the Van Buren men, they decided to use the Democratic party to establish their principles as the guiding philosophy behind the federal government. To accomplish this they planned to elect Calhoun president.

Despite their defeat in the 1843 Virginia Democratic convention, the Chivalry continued its efforts to construct a Calhoun organization in preparation for the 1844 state convention. Only a very tenuous truce connected the Calhoun and Van Buren wings of the party after the 1843 convention. Each faction distrusted the other, yet both recognized that they could not afford to alienate the other wing if they hoped to elect a Democrat. The Van Buren Democrats conceded Calhoun's personal talents but mistrusted his ambition and his political reversal during the 1820s. William H. Roane, a Junto member, succinctly stated the Van Burenites' view of Calhoun and his politics when he confessed to Martin Van Buren that "I cannot comprehend or assent to all this learned jargon about minorities. I have never thought that they had any other Right than that of freely, peaceably and legally converting themselves into a majority

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4 C.W. Gooch to N. Herbeumont, n.d. (1833?), Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia; Enquirer, March 15, 1833; Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, June 5, 1838, William C. Rives Papers, LC.
whenever they can."5

Calhoun and his followers likewise distrusted the Van Burenites, particularly Thomas Ritchie and the other members of the Richmond Junto. Calhoun accused Ritchie of putting Virginia at the tail of New York instead of the head of the South after Jackson's election in 1828. He told Robert M.T. Hunter that "I trace all our misfortune almost exclusively to the fact, that Virginia has lost her true position in the Union, and that to the Wiles [sic] and cunning of one man. I had hoped that he would have returned in good faith, to the old Virginia School of politicks [sic], but of that I despair."6 Calhoun warned his followers that if national conventions became the accepted practice for nominating presidential candidates, the "great central non-slaveholding states" would control the conventions to the exclusion of the South and the rest of the union. He pointed out that his supporters in Virginia could either submit to the dictates of the 1843 state convention, break down Ritchie and the Van Burenites, or drive them openly into the nationalist camp where Calhoun felt they belonged. Calhoun preferred the last alternative. However, his Virginia allies, more acutely aware of Ritchie's and the Junto's enormous influence within Virginia and the Democratic party, urged a policy of conciliation toward the Van Buren men. Calhoun's strength lay in the Tidewater and Piedmont sections of Virginia. Ritchie, because he had endorsed constitutional reform in 1829 and continued to

5 William H. Roane to Martin Van Buren, September 11, 1843, Van Buren Papers, LC.

support a strong state program of internal improvements, attracted widespread respect in western Virginia. Hunter warned Calhoun that he could not carry Virginia without Ritchie's endorsement, for Calhoun's lieutenants could not bring western Virginia into the South Carolinian's camp.  

Calhoun's friends had begun secretly establishing a national campaign organization, composed of a central committee in Washington, a central committee in each state, and a corresponding committee of four or five men in each county. James A. Seddon of Goochland County chaired the Virginia central committee, with Thomas T. Giles, John B. Young, Robert G. Scott, and Washington Greenhow serving as his associates. Hunter, meanwhile, assumed direction of the national committee in Washington and authored a campaign biography of Calhoun. Preparatory to intensifying their efforts in Virginia during the spring and summer of


9 Ibid.

In early May the Calhoun Central Committee addressed a letter to Ritchie posing three critical questions. They informed Ritchie that they wished to bring Calhoun's candidacy before the people of Virginia through the columns of the Enquirer, and inquired if, in his editorial capacity, Ritchie would preserve a strict neutrality between Van Buren and Calhoun. They also asked if he would admit into the Enquirer articles advocating Calhoun for president and if he would publish impartially the proceedings of meetings in Virginia and other states in favor of both candidates. Ritchie acknowledged that he sought to maintain party harmony, but curtly refused to follow a neutral course. He confessed that he had had no communication, direct or indirect, with Van Buren, or made any pledges. But he maintained that his course in supporting a candidate before the national convention must rest with his own discretion and the course of events.

The two wings of the Virginia Democracy had come to an implicit understanding in the 1843 state convention that the presidential campaign should be delayed until the completion of the 1843 state elections. However, each faction worked privately to line up support

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12 Thomas Ritchie to Robert M.T. Hunter, May 16, 1843, ibid.

13 Robert G. Scott, et al. to Thomas Ritchie, May 9, 1843, ibid. In the elections the Democrats won 75 seats in the House of Delegates and the Whigs 59; the Democrats controlled 20 Senate seats to the Whigs' 12; 27 of the Democratic seats in the House and 8 in the Senate were occupied by Calhoun supporters. Richmond Whig, September 15, 1843 (hereinafter cited Whig.)
for their candidate. Although a defector from Democratic ranks, Whig Senator Rives remained an influential figure within Virginia and both groups sought his endorsement of their candidate.\footnote{For the Van Buren faction see C.W. Gooch to William C. Rives, December 9, 1843, Rives Papers, LC. The efforts of the Calhounites can be traced in James M. Mason to Rives, July 23, August 11, November 26; John S. Barbour to Rives, October 23, 1842; James A. Seddon to Rives, April 5, 29, 1843, ibid., and John C. Calhoun to R.M.T. Hunter, December 22, 1843, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp.556-57.} Rives, wary of Henry Clay, had attempted to create a movement for Lewis Cass of Michigan, but met with no encouragement from either the Van Buren or Calhoun men.\footnote{William C. Rives to C.W. Gooch, November 11; David Campbell to Rives, August 17; Gooch to Rives, December 9, 1843, Rives Papers, LC.} Rives indicated to James A. Seddon, Calhoun's Virginia coordinator, that he would not support Clay or Van Buren, but that if the Democrats ran Calhoun or Cass he would endorse them.\footnote{William C. Rives to James A. Seddon, April 29, 1843, ibid.} However, the pressures of the campaign very early became so intense that Rives could not afford to wait for the national convention nominations. In the end he refused to turn his back on the Whigs, and in January 1844 he announced his support for Clay.\footnote{William C. Rives to Edmund Fontaine, January 1, 1844, printed in Whig, January 12, Alexandria Gazette, January 13, Enquirer, January 15, 1844.}

During the spring Calhoun's friends engaged in extensive correspondence in order to ascertain the strength of his candidacy in different sections of Virginia and to create an organization comparable to the regular party machinery and discipline.\footnote{James A. Seddon to Richard Kenner Crallé, March 26, 1843, Richard K. Crallé Papers, Clemson University; Seddon to William C. Rives, April 8, 1843, Rives Papers, LC.} Calhoun earlier had warned...
his disciples that if they hoped successfully to contest Ritchie a newspaper at Richmond had to be established.\textsuperscript{19} When Ritchie failed to promise a neutral course the Calhoun managers proceeded to establish their newspaper. Once again, as in 1831-1832, financing for a Virginia Calhoun newspaper proved to be a stumbling block. But by mid-June, Washington Greenhow, the editor of the \textit{Washington Spectator}, Calhoun's paper in the nation's capital, had moved to Petersburg to take over the \textit{Petersburg Republican} and he brought the paper out for Calhoun.\textsuperscript{20} The Calhoun managers felt that because Ritchie's \textit{Enquirer} had so many subscribers among Calhoun's own friends it was more prudent to avoid open opposition and wait until Ritchie took the offensive. Unless Ritchie pursued a satisfactory course they contemplated moving Greenhow's paper to Richmond providing the paper succeeded financially.\textsuperscript{21} Ultimately, little newspaper support developed for Calhoun's candidacy in Virginia. Only the \textit{Lynchburg Republican} and Portsmouth \textit{Old Dominion} endorsed him. The \textit{Old Dominion}, a small-circulation weekly which had supported Calhoun for years, revealed that many Van Buren Democrats cancelled their subscriptions because the paper refused to "follow the dictation of a party clique. . . ."\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} John C. Calhoun to Robert M.T. Hunter, April 2, 1843, in Jameson, \textit{Calhoun Correspondence}, pp.528-29.

\textsuperscript{20} James A. Seddon to Richard K. Cralle, April 23, 1843, Cralle Papers, Clemson University; Seddon to Robert M.T. Hunter, April 1, 1843, in Ambler, \textit{Hunter Correspondence}, pp.63-64; Edward Dixon to John C. Calhoun, June 2, 1843, Calhoun Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. \textit{Whig}, June 6, 1843, reprints Greenhow's prospectus for the \textit{Petersburg Republican}.


\textsuperscript{22} Duff Green to Richard K. Cralle, February 8, 1843, Duff Green Papers, LC; Thomas Hart Benton to Martin Van Buren, April 17, 1842,
As summer stretched into fall, the Calhoun men continued their organizational efforts. Calhoun again warned Hunter of the difficulties they faced, since organization could not be easily effected without the promise of patronage as reward. Calhoun continued to believe that his strength lay in his principles and independent position. He warned Hunter that any false step would deliver the organization into Ritchie's hands, and that "it is better in my opinion, to be defeated wanting the true and the right, than to succomb on any other ground." At this time Calhoun apparently intended to oppose Van Buren chiefly on the tariff, but in October Hunter told Calhoun that Texas annexation, although it could splinter the party into sectional wings, might prove to be the best issue. The Chivalry realized that Van Buren had repeatedly deserted his southern allies on tariff votes; they suspected that when confronted with the issue of Texas he would oppose immediate annexation.

II

Calhoun's friends mounted a strong effort in Virginia, but his national campaign floundered because of mismanagement and poor direction. In New York, a key state, Van Buren's friends controlled the

Van Buren Papers, LC; Portsmouth Old Dominion, noted in Whig, August 15, 1843.

23 John C. Calhoun to Robert M.T. Hunter, August 6, 1843, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, p.542; Calhoun to Hunter, May 16, October 24, 1843, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia.

24 John C. Calhoun to Robert M.T. Hunter, May 16, 1843, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia.

25 Robert M.T. Hunter to John C. Calhoun, October 10, 1843, in Boucher and Brooks, Correspondence to Calhoun, 187-88.

26 See Wiltse, Calhoun; Sectionalist, chapters VII, VIII, X, for discussion of Calhoun's candidacy.
state Democratic Convention. Although as a peace offering to the New York Calhoun men the convention recommended a May 1844 national convention date, it rejected the district method of electing delegates to the national convention and endorsed Van Buren for the nomination. This defeat seriously weakened Calhoun's candidacy. Subsequently, when the Democratic members of the Twenty-Eighth Congress convened, the Van Buren Democrats controlled the caucus and the House organization. Calhoun realized the extent of his failure, and decided to withdraw from the campaign.27

In Virginia, as in both New York and the Congress, the Van Buren Democrats held the upper hand. Ritchie chose largely to ignore Calhoun's candidacy.28 However, on August 25, Ritchie sent out over his signature a circular printed in the Enquirer. It posed six questions relative to voting in the national convention. Ostensibly he acted to secure the consensus of Virginia's Democrats on these issues. But the way in which Ritchie worded and presented the questions implied a condemnation of the Calhounites for agitating the convention question.29 The Calhoun managers took offense at Ritchie's independent action, and harshly criticized him for it.30 Despite the Chivalry's effort to draw Ritchie into debate and expose Van Buren's positions on the tariff, slavery, and Texas as false to the South, by the fall of 1843 the Calhoun men realized they had not been able to gain control of the party. Most of the state's

27 Ibid., pp.146-47.
28 Alexandria Gazette, December 14, 1843.
29 Enquirer, August 25, 1843.
30 Ibid., August 29, 1843, reprinting criticism from the Petersburg Republican.
Democratic newspapers, such as the Rockbridge Valley Star, the Wheeling Argus, and the Warrenton Flag of '98, publicly endorsed Van Buren. West of the mountains Van Buren remained the overwhelming choice of the Democrats. Furthermore, most of the old party leaders endorsed Van Buren's candidacy. By late 1842 Ritchie was firmly committed to Van Buren. Governor James McDowell, the hard-money man from Rockbridge County, led the Van Buren forces in western Virginia while Thomas Jefferson Randolph and George Coke Dromgoole joined the members of the Richmond Junto to campaign for Van Buren east of the mountains.

Despite the control exercised by the Van Buren men over the Virginia party, Calhoun's followers were not excluded from party activities. A notice in the December 5 Richmond Enquirer called a caucus of the Democratic members of the General Assembly for 7 P.M. that night. That caucus appointed a select committee of five men, three Van Buren men and two followers of Calhoun, to report to the caucus on the measures necessary for holding a state convention. After adjourning a few days the caucus reconvened and adopted without alteration the report which the committee had unanimously endorsed. The report recommended that

31 Ibid., August 15, 25, 1843.
32 John Letcher to Thomas Ritchie, September 23; William H. Roane to Martin Van Buren, September 11, 1843, Van Buren Papers, LC.
34 Enquirer, December 5, 1843.
35 Ibid., December 7, 1843. The Van Buren men included Senators John R. Wallace of Fauquier County, John Woolfolk of Green County, and Robert Ridley of Southampton County. Delegates Norborne Taliaferro of Franklin County and Samuel C. Anderson of Prince Edward County represented Calhoun's interests.
Virginia's Democrats meet at their December and January county court days for the purpose of selecting delegates to the state convention which would be held in Richmond about February 1. The caucus also agreed to abide by the nomination of the national convention, and to pledge its electors to do likewise.36

The Calhoun men's participation in the caucus indicated their determination to work within the Democratic party to protect the interests of Virginia and the South. But they mistrusted the organization and composition of the Baltimore Convention, fearing that Van Buren would surely win the nomination.37 They distrusted Ritchie and the other Van Buren men who talked of Calhoun for vice president. They believed that the Van Burenites wanted to weaken Calhoun by arousing jealousy among other candidates for the nomination, notably Lewis Cass of Michigan, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, and James K. Polk of Tennessee.38

By January 1844 Calhoun's Virginia followers conceded Van Buren the nomination. They briefly considered running a separate ticket, but ultimately decided not to pledge their formal support to the nominee of the Baltimore Convention. Rather they determined to participate in the Virginia convention in order to advance Calhoun's future interests and principles.39 Then, just before the convention met, news reached

36 Ibid., December 9, 1843.
37 James A. Seddon to editors of the Enquirer, December 21, 1843, printed ibid., December 23, 1843.
38 Robert M.T. Hunter to John C. Calhoun, December 19, 1843, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp.907-08.
Virginia that Calhoun refused to let his name be placed in nomination at the Baltimore Convention. 40

Calhoun announced his withdrawal from the contest in an address dated December 21, 1843, although a copy of his address did not reach Richmond until the eve of the state Democratic convention. On February 1, 1844, Ritchie reprinted Calhoun's address in the Enquirer. 41 Calhoun refused to let his name be put before the Baltimore Convention because he objected to the manner in which several states, such as New York, selected their convention delegates. He asserted that convention delegates should be elected by the people of their respective congressional districts, not appointed by caucuses or conventions. Privately, Calhoun told his Virginia followers that his decision was made to protect his principles and position in order to preserve the influence and safety of the South. He objected to the tariff views of an influential portion of the convention delegates, and warned his followers that "the South has nothing to hope from Van Buren. He is in my opinion a doomed man, . . . . I honestly believe that his defeat is necessary to save the party, not by our joining the Whigs, but by standing fast and rallied on our own ground." 42

Calhoun's advice coincided with the course of action his Virginia supporters had already decided upon. 43 Prior to the convention Calhoun's


41 Enquirer, February 1, 1844.

42 John C. Calhoun to Robert M.T. Hunter, December 22, 1843; Calhoun to Hunter, February 1, 1844, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp. 556-57, 562-64.

43 James A. Seddon to John C. Calhoun, February 5, 1844, ibid., pp. 923-27.
managers decided they could not carry the convention for him. Consequently they determined to force a platform of states rights principles upon the convention. After securing their principles they intended to withdraw Calhoun's name and issue a separate address explaining their position. They planned to denounce the organization and constitution of the national convention, and to pledge their support to the party nominee if he accepted the principles endorsed by the Virginia convention. By withdrawing Calhoun's name they hoped to preserve his popularity and integrity for 1848, and by advocating a states rights platform they intended to place the Van Buren men in a dilemma. By refusing to endorse the platform Van Buren's supporters would turn their back on Virginia's tradition of states rights politics, yet by accepting the platform they would endorse positions on slavery and the tariff which Van Buren would find politically embarrassing in the North. Thus, even without the issue of Texas annexation, the Calhoun men hoped to set Van Buren up for potential political destruction.

Before the convention assembled Van Buren's followers momentarily wondered whether they could carry the convention for him because he had not made public his views. In fact, he had ignored questions posed by Ritchie and Hugh Garland asking whether he accepted the Compromise Tariff of 1833 and endorsed the principles of a low revenue tariff. However, Van Buren had assured William H. Roane that he would lay his views before the public.

44 James A. Seddon to John C. Calhoun, February 5; Robert M.T. Hunter to Calhoun, February 6, 1844, ibid., pp.923-27, 928-29.
45 Thomas Ritchie to Hugh Garland, January 8; Garland to Martin Van Buren, January 12, 1844, Van Buren Papers, LC. See also S. Bassett French to Martin Van Buren, February 18, 1844, ibid.
46 William H. Roane to Martin Van Buren, February 3, 1844, ibid.
Seeking insurance that they would be able to nominate Van Buren, his supporters reached an informal agreement with the Calhoun men on the eve of the convention. In return for allowing his nomination the convention would adopt a statement of states rights principles. Furthermore, in violation of the 1843 state convention resolution, Van Buren's managers agreed not to exact a pledge from the Calhounites to sustain the national convention nominee. Finally, the Van Buren men agreed to allow the Calhoun men to issue a separate states rights address without ousting them from the party. The Junto and Van Buren's other Virginia followers were so confident that it never occurred to them that Van Buren might not endorse their political platform. On the other hand, Calhoun's supporters won everything they hoped for, short of his nomination, and he had already refused to go before the Baltimore Convention. Besides, some of Calhoun's followers felt that the Van Buren men had implied they would support Calhoun in 1848.

Thomas Ritchie called the Virginia Democratic convention to order at 10 A.M. on February 1 in the House of Delegates' chamber in the capitol. With over 270 members in attendance the convention quickly moved its sessions to a larger hall, the Concert Room of the Exchange Hotel. The convention unanimously elected a slate of officers which included followers of both Calhoun and Van Buren. It established an electoral

47 James A. Seddon to John C. Calhoun, February 5, 1844, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp.923-27.


49 Calhoun's representatives included William F. Gordon as president and Hunter as second vice president. The other officers, including Ritchie as secretary, supported Van Buren. Enquirer, February 3,6, 1844.
ticket which included four electors who supported Calhoun, and appointed a fifteen-man central committee containing six Calhoun followers. The convention also scheduled a state Democratic convention to meet in Charlottesville during August, authorized the establishment of a campaign newspaper, and encouraged the establishment of local Democratic Associations. But most importantly the convention adopted a set of resolutions to be appended to its address.

The resolutions, largely the work of James A. Seddon, represented the thrust of the Chivalry's efforts in the convention. They read like a litany of states rights principles. The first resolution declared the powers of the federal government to be derived solely from and limited to those enumerated in the constitution. They denied the national government power to carry out a program of internal improvements or use national funds for such purposes. The resolutions endorsed the tariff of 1833, rejected the tariff of 1842, and described any tariff, except one for revenue purposes, as "unconstitutional, unjust, and odious...."

They demanded economy in government, and denied that the national government could assume any state debts except those incurred in times of national defense, war, or insurrection. Regarding banking, the resolutions denied that the federal government possessed authority to establish a national bank and demanded the separation of federal funds from

50 Ibid., February 3, 8, 1844.


52 They are reprinted ibid., February 6, 1844.
banking institutions. They rejected the idea that the federal government could interfere with slavery in the states, the District of Columbia, or the federal territories, and condemned congressional efforts to deprive the South of her just representation in Congress under the three-fifths clause or to repeal the gag rule. Finally, the resolutions announced that the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were the guiding principles of the Democratic party.

As the convention drew to a close, two events symbolized the unity which existed between the wings of the party. Speakers from both factions addressed the closing session. Hunter, representing the Calhounites, promised that the Calhoun address would explain in detail their objections to the Baltimore Convention, but he then pledged his support for the party's nominee and urged his friends to follow a similar course. After Hunter concluded, Ritchie rose to make one of his infrequent addresses to a political meeting. He defended the necessity of the Baltimore Convention as the best method of concentrating Republican votes to nominate a candidate, although he admitted that the means of selecting delegates might be susceptible to improvement. Ritchie closed with praise for a reunited Virginia Democratic party.

Although the two wings of the party appeared to work in harmony during the convention, the Chivalry still resented the dominance exercised by Ritchie and the Junto. While Ritchie continued to praise the unity of the party, Calhoun's allies privately denounced the Van Buren

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53 Ibid., February 6, 1844.
54 Ibid.
55 Thomas Ritchie to Howell Cobb, February 8, 1844, in Ulrich
Shortly after the convention adjourned the Calhoun Address appeared in the *Petersburg Republican*. The address acknowledged the Chivalry's approval of Calhoun's course. Then it explained at length the Calhounites' objections in principle to any convention or caucus. The address condemned the Baltimore Convention because states would be represented there according to their electoral vote and not according to their real strength within the party. Thus the northern, non-slaveholding states could exercise undue influence over and actually control the convention. The address also denounced all methods for selecting convention delegates except election by congressional districts, and rejected the unit rule for voting in the convention. However, the address closed with an appeal for party harmony in support of Democratic principles.

Thus the convention failed to produce a real settlement between the two factions. But as the presidential campaign began to attract attention, because of the private agreements made before the convention the Democrats appeared to be in agreement on states rights principles and a nominee for the national convention.

III

In contrast to the thinly-concealed divisions within the Virginia Democratic party over its candidate for 1844, Virginia Whigs for the first


56. John C. Calhoun to James A. Seddon, February 16; Seddon to Calhoun, February 29, 1844, John C. Calhoun Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

time in their history entered the 1844 presidential campaign ideologically united behind one candidate. Between 1840 and 1844 the Virginia Whig party underwent a radical ideological transformation. Now devoid of all but a few states rights politicians, they had labeled President Tyler a traitor and placed themselves squarely behind Henry Clay's campaign for the presidency. As early as June 1842 the Richmond Whig printed a strong editorial in Clay's behalf, endorsing his ideas on a national bank, a protective tariff, and distribution of the land sales revenue. 58

Like the Democrats, the Whigs also began to organize very early for the campaign. Their 1843 state convention, meeting in Richmond during February, adopted an address, established a central committee, endorsed Clay for president, but left a vice-presidential nomination for the Whig national convention. 59 The 1844 Whig convention merely endorsed the actions of the 1843 convention, appointed an electoral ticket, and selected delegates to the National convention. 60 As early as October 1843 each party began organizing local Whig Clubs and Democratic Associations throughout Virginia. 61

58 Whig, June 7, 1842. The Alexandria Gazette, December 18, 1843, also endorsed Clay.

59 Whig, February 24, 27, 1843.

60 Ibid., February 9, 1844.

61 See ibid., October 1843 ff., for announcements of Whig Club meetings throughout Virginia. Enquirer, October 17, 1843, announces the reorganization of the Richmond Democratic Association, and October 27, 1843, the formation of an association in Petersburg. The operation of one local association, that of New Market, can be traced through "Minutes of the New Market Democratic Association," a complete record of its membership and activities from its founding in April 1844 until after the election. I discovered these records in my research at the University of Virginia.
Finally, the similarity of topics covered in each party's addresses to Virginia voters is striking in one respect, the absence of any mention of Texas.\textsuperscript{62} As late as March 1844 neither party realized the potential significance of Texas annexation as a political issue. During the spring the issue burst upon the political scene in Virginia. It totally disrupted the Democrats' campaign strategy, and contributed immensely to Clay's defeat in the state.

President Tyler forced the issue of Texas annexation into the presidential campaign. In September 1841 Tyler's veto of a second Whig-sponsored bill to create a national bank brought down the wrath of his party upon him. Since that time Tyler, in search of a second term, had maneuvered to create a viable party of his own. He appointed Abel P. Upshur and Thomas W. Gilmer, both Virginia states rights Whigs, to cabinet positions, and searched for an issue on which to create his party.\textsuperscript{63} By 1843 Tyler thought he had found the issue in Texas annexation.\textsuperscript{64}

As early as April 1842 Henry A. Wise, another Virginia states rights Whig congressman and member of Tyler's Corporal's Guard, endorsed

\textsuperscript{62} Specific topics in each party's address are discussed later. The Whig addresses are found in the \textit{Whig}, March 10, 1843, February 16, 1844; the Democratic Central Committee Address is printed in the \textit{Enquirer}, March 8, 12, 1844.


the annexation of Texas in a House speech. Then in January 1843 Gilmer, another member of the Corporal's Guard, sent a letter to the Baltimore Republican and Argus calling for the annexation of Texas. In this letter, and a later letter to Niles' Register, he reasoned that Texas would not only provide territory for the expansion of slavery since it lay south of the 36°30' Missouri Compromise line, but would also offer a market for the manufacturing and agricultural products of the non-slaveholding states as well as raw materials for them. By late 1843 Upshur, Tyler's Secretary of State, looked upon annexation as "the great object of my ambition." Upshur felt assured of southern support for annexation. He believed that "the destinies of the country hung upon it. The union will not last ten years without it. . . ." Upshur assumed that he could present the issue so clearly that even the North would support annexation.

In February 1844 both Upshur and Gilmer, who by this time had become Secretary of the Navy, were killed when a gun exploded aboard the U.S.S. Princeton. Tyler then appointed John C. Calhoun Secretary of State. Calhoun also viewed annexation as necessary to the peace and

65 National Intelligencer, April 15, 1842. The Congressional Globe contains no report of the speech.

66 Letter of Thomas Walker Gilmer to the Baltimore Republican and Argus, January 10, 1843; Letter of Gilmer to the Editor, Niles' Register, dated May 15, 1843, and printed July 1, 1843, pp.64, 284-85; both letters reprinted in Merk, Annexation, pp.200-04, 215-17.

67 Abel P. Upshur to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, October 26, 1843, Tucker-Coleman Papers, College of William and Mary.

68 Abel P. Upshur to John C. Calhoun, November 30, 1843, Calhoun Papers, Clemson University.

69 Abel P. Upshur to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, October 10, 1843, Tucker-Coleman Papers, College of William and Mary.
security of both the United States and Mexico, as well as vital for the expansion of slavery, and he successfully completed Upshur's negotiations to procure Texas. In April, Tyler presented the annexation treaty to the Senate. Although the Senate later refused to ratify the treaty, Tyler had injected the issue of Texas into the campaign. He failed, however, to create his own party around Texas since the Democrats seized the issue from him.

As early as 1829 Ritchie publicly called for the annexation of Texas, and privately he urged Martin Van Buren, then Secretary of State, to work toward that goal. Subsequently Ritchie continued to support annexation, although one of his Junto cohorts, Richard E. Parker, warned Van Buren in 1836 that by taking a public stand on Texas he might destroy the New York-Virginia alliance. Ritchie endorsed Tyler's appointment of Calhoun to the Secretaryship of State. In early April 1844, when an annexation treaty appeared likely, Ritchie proclaimed "in the name of the South. . . . we demand Re-annexation," and Democrats throughout Virginia organized county meetings in support.

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70 See for example John C. Calhoun to Thomas Walker Gilmer, December 25, 1843, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, pp.559-60.

71 Enquirer, September 8, October 8, 1829.

72 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, n.d., September 1829, Van Buren Papers, LC.

73 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, June 9, 1836, Van Buren Papers, LC. Ritchie owned some land in Texas; see Ambler, Ritchie, pp.243-44.

74 Richard E. Parker to Martin Van Buren, June 29, 1836, Van Buren Papers, LC.

75 Enquirer, March 15, 1844.

76 Ibid., April 6, 1844. See also April 2, 1844.
of annexation. 77

Van Buren's southern opponents, aware that his strength rested upon the New York-Virginia axis, hatched a plan to entrap him. Early in 1843 Thomas W. Gilmer publicly solicited Andrew Jackson's opinions on the expediency of annexing Texas. 78 Jackson replied in a letter addressed to Aaron V. Brown, a Tennessee Democrat, in which he unequivocally endorsed annexation. 79 However, Van Buren's opponents did not publicize Jackson's letter at that time. At the Baltimore Convention they intended to interrogate Van Buren on annexation. Anticipating that he would oppose it, they planned to spring Jackson's letter on him, thereby demonstrating his differences with Old Hickory. They expected that their scheme would discredit Van Buren's principles, and throw the nomination to Calhoun, James K. Polk, Lewis Cass, Richard M. Johnson, or some other pro-annexationist candidate.

However, rumors of Tyler's treaty of annexation forced Van Buren's opponents to reveal their letter. At any rate, Van Buren had long been apprised of the scheme. Ritchie knew of the plan as early as September 1843, for John Letcher sketched the outlines of the scheme to him and Ritchie had forwarded Letcher's letter to Van Buren. 80 In October, William H. Roane warned Van Buren that his opponents definitely planned to make political capital out of Texas, and prompted Van Buren that

77 See for example, ibid., April 30, 1844, reprinting the minutes of a Prince Edward County meeting supporting Texas annexation.
78 Letter of Thomas Walker Gilmer to the Baltimore Republican and Argus, January 10, 1843, printed in Merk, Annexation, pp.200-04
79 Andrew Jackson to Aaron V. Brown, February 12, 1843, Jackson Papers. LC.
80 John Letcher to Thomas Ritchie, September 23, 1843, Van Buren Papers, LC.
"neither Ritchie nor I, recollect your position in regard to it."  

Ritchie warned Silas Wright, Van Buren's lieutenant, on March 20, 1844, that if Texas was made a party issue Van Buren must support it or all would be lost.  

Two days later Ritchie published Jackson's letter endorsing immediate annexation. 

Ritchie's publication of Jackson's letter posed a crucial problem for Van Buren. His continued silence upon Texas implied differences with Jackson. But if he endorsed annexation he would lose votes in the North, while public rejection of annexation would cost him the southern vote. In the spring of 1842 Van Buren undertook a southern tour which included visits with both Jackson and Clay. Reporting on his visit with Clay, Van Buren told Jackson that "fiery materials" had been the subject of their conversations. Widespread speculation existed that the two men probably reached an agreement to ignore Texas annexation as a campaign issue. But Tyler's treaty made that impossible. So on April 27 both Clay and Van Buren published their views on annexation. Clay's "Raleigh" letter declared that annexation without Mexico's consent would lead to war and was "dangerous to the integrity of the Union. . . ." 

Van Buren's letter appeared first in the Washington Globe as a reply to William K. Roane to Martin Van Buren, October 17, 1843, ibid. See also Andrew Stevenson to Van Buren, October 8, 1843, ibid. 

Thomas Ritchie to Silas Wright, March 20, 1844, ibid. See also I.N. Powell to Martin Van Buren, March 27, 1844, ibid. 

_Enquirer_, March 22, 1844, reprinting Andrew Jackson to Aaron V. Brown, February 12, 1843. Ritchie originally dated the letter 1844, but ibid., March 26, 1844, he called attention to his error and corrected the date. 

Martín Van Buren to Andrew Jackson. May 27, 1842, Jackson Papers, LC. 

_Niles' Register_, LXVI(May 4, 1844), 152-53.
to William H. Hammett, an unpledged delegate to the Baltimore Convention and member of the House of Representatives from Mississippi.  

Hammett had requested Van Buren's opinions "as to the constitutionality and expediency of immediately annexing" Texas. Although Van Buren upheld the constitutionality of annexation, he opposed immediate annexation as inexpedient at the time.

Ritchie printed Van Buren's reply to Hammett on May 3, 1844. Almost immediately Van Buren's candidacy in Virginia tumbled into oblivion. The Democratic Central Committee Address, prepared for the General Assembly elections, talked of the need for party unity, but the Whigs' "superior maneuvering" and organization brought them victory in the Assembly elections held in late April. The Whigs won a twelve-seat majority in the House of Delegates, and controlled the Assembly by two votes on joint ballot. Although publicly Ritchie blamed the Whigs' superior organization, in anguish he privately attributed the Democrats' defeat to Van Buren's candidacy. He told George Coke Dromgoole that "... I have the strongest fear that we could not carry Mr. Van Buren through Virginia, even before the Texas letter--but if that letter had

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86 William H. Hammett to Martin Van Buren, March 27, 1844, Van Buren Papers, LC. Van Buren to Hammett, April 20, 1844, printed in Niles' Register, LXVI(May 4, 1844), 153-57.

87 Democratic Central Committee Address, March 5, 1844, signed by Thomas Ritchie, Chairman, reprinted in Enquirer, March 5, 1844.

88 Ibid., May 3, 1844.

89 Whig, May 7, 1844.

90 Thomas Ritchie to George Coke Dromgoole, April 28, 1844, Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina (hereinafter cited SHC-UNC). Also P. J. Poulson to Thomas Ritchie, May 3, 1844, Ritchie-Harrison Papers, College of William and Mary, expressed a similar sentiment.

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come out before the State, we should have lost the House by 30 or 40
majority. . . That letter, I fear, makes Mr. Van Buren's defeat certain
in Virginia."91 William H. Roane, analyzing the state election results
for Van Buren, described them as a "Waterloo defeat" for the Democrats.92
Roane warned Van Buren that Texas was becoming the most important cam-
paign issue, and bluntly told him that he could not carry Virginia in
November.

Copies of Van Buren's letter had reached Richmond in the days
preceeding its publication in the Enquirer. On April 30, Ritchie pub-
licly rejected Van Buren's opposition to immediate annexation,93 and
on May 3 he ignored Van Buren completely and focused upon Clay's anti-
annexationist stand.94 An anonymous Richmond citizen accurately ap-
praised the state of affairs within the Virginia Democratic party when
he told Van Buren on May 1 that "you are deserted—Ritchie, Roane, . . .
Stevenson are all out against you on the Texas question; positively,
openly, and unequivocally against you. . . . Arrangements are now, at
this very hour, being made to take up some other candidate. . . ."95
Indeed, Ritchie's editorials foreshadowed the Junto's break with Van
Buren. For fifteen years the Junto had cooperated with Van Buren, view-

91Thomas Ritchie to George Coke Dromgoole, May 5, 1844, Edward
Dromgoole Papers, SHC-HNC.
92William H. Roane to Martin Van Buren, April 30, 1844, Van Buren
Papers, LC.
93Enquirer, April 30, 1844.
94Ibid., May 3, 1844.
95Anonymous to Martin Van Buren, May 1, 1844, Van Buren Papers
LC.
Virginia's interests. But when Van Buren shied away from annexation, the Junto cast off their northern ally.

As Democrats throughout Virginia began to assess their defeat in the state elections, they came to one clear conclusion: Van Buren's candidacy hampered the Democratic ticket in Virginia; he would receive only minimal support even if he won the nomination of the Baltimore Convention; and unless he came out at once for the immediate annexation of Texas he could not carry Virginia. 96 Then, after Van Buren's letter appeared in the Virginia press, Van Buren Democrats throughout Virginia wrote to Ritchie, in his position as chairman of the Democratic central committee, imploring that Van Buren be dumped. 97

Swayed by Van Buren's letter, their defeat in the state elections, and the rising sentiment for immediate annexation, the Richmond Democrats moved into action. A meeting of the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association, the prototype for local Democratic organizations throughout Virginia, adopted on the night of May 1 resolutions which called for the immediate annexation and a Democratic candidate who supported that goal. 98 In the tradition of Junto operations and Democratic party decision-making, the real political maneuvering by the party managers, Calhoun followers as well as Van Buren men, had taken place in private

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98 Enquirer, May 3, 1844.
during the few days immediately preceding the meeting of the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association.

In late April, probably on the 28th, a group of Richmond Democrats including followers of both Calhoun and Van Buren gathered in the room of James A. Seddon. There William H. Roane, a Junto member, denounced Van Buren's attitudes on immediate annexation. The next day about thirty Democrats, again including both Calhoun and Van Buren men, met at the home of Robert G. Scott. After an informal tea the group organized itself for the purpose of consulting upon Democratic party affairs. During the tea both Roane and Andrew Stevenson, another Junto member, denounced Van Buren. In the meeting Seddon spoke against Van Buren and called for a new state convention to endorse a candidate favoring immediate annexation. Samuel D. Denoon, a central committee member and Van Buren supporter, opposed Seddon's proposal and appealed to Van Buren's friends to stand by him at least until his letter appeared in the Virginia press. Denoon feared that the group might withdraw its support from the nominee of the Baltimore Convention. Both Nathaniel Denby, another central committee member, and Carter Braxton spoke in support of Denoon and the group adjourned to meet the following day at Ritchie's home. At this final meeting, with the same group of men present, Seddon renewed his proposal and the group adopted it by a margin of one vote. The Calhounites then offered a proposition to endorse only a southern man for the party's presidential candidate, but this proposal was defeated by a one-vote margin. After these votes Van Buren's remaining supporters left the meeting. Then the group endorsed the resolutions that Ritchie presented to the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Samuel D. Denoon to George Coke Dromgoole, May 17, 1844, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UHC.
Since the Junto directed the Shockoe Hill Association, these resolutions signaled their public rejection of Van Buren. The Calhoun men preferred resolutions which would have reserved the Virginia Democrats' support of the Baltimore Convention nominee until a candidate had been nominated, but Calhoun's followers endorsed the Shockoe resolutions when they had brought Ritchie as far towards their position as he would go. The resolutions sponsored by Ritchie described Texas annexation as a measure required by the best interests of the union, consistent with sound principles of international law, and necessary to exclude British political and commercial control there. Another resolution sought to reassure opponents of annexation by stating that the annexation of Texas would not increase the number of slaves since laws of the United States would be more effective in limiting the introduction of new slaves from Africa than the laws of Texas. A final resolution called upon the Democratic Central Committee to address Virginians in order to determine support for the "re-annexation" of Texas and to judge sentiment for releasing Virginia's delegates to the Baltimore Convention from instructions which bound them to support Van Buren. Release from their instructions would leave the convention delegates free to endorse a candidate who favored immediate annexation. At a subsequent meeting of the Shockoe Hill Association, Democrats still loyal to Van Buren proposed that Virginia's convention delegates be bound to support the nominee of the Baltimore Convention, but the Association voted by a 4-1 margin to

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101 Minutes of the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association, May 1, 1844, printed in Enquirer, May 3, 1844.
table the proposal. On May 9 the Democratic Central Committee issued an address describing immediate annexation as vital to the interests of both the South and the nation and asked Democratic county meetings to release Baltimore Convention delegates from their instructions to vote for Van Buren. The address reflected the divisions Texas had caused in the party, since only eleven of the fifteen committee members signed the address. Samuel D. Denoon, a Van Buren man, dissented from the address while Nathaniel Denby, Daniel Trueheart, and John Womble absented themselves from the meeting which drew up the address.

Ritchie ruefully informed Van Buren that he could no longer support him, nor could Van Buren carry Virginia in November, although he editorialized that he would support Van Buren if he received the Baltimore Convention nomination. Calhoun's followers realized that Van Buren's former supporters would return to him if he received the nomination. However, since the Calhoun men had done little to promote Van Buren's candidacy, they believed it would be better to let his former friends take the lead in withdrawing him.

102 Whig, May 10, 1844.
103 Enquirer, May 10, 1844. For reports of Democratic county meetings in Henrico, Madison, Orange, Powhatan, and Isle of Wight Counties, all complying with the central committee's request, see ibid.
104 Thomas Ritchie to Martin Van Buren, May 5, 1844, Van Buren Papers, LC.
105 Enquirer, May 7, 1844.
107 John S. Barbour to John C. Calhoun, May 16, 1844, in Boucher and Brooks, Correspondence to Calhoun, p.229.
Democratic congressman, broke with his intimate friend Ritchie over Texas and tried to rally the Virginia Democrats behind Van Buren. But Ritchie continued to receive reports, particularly from western Virginia, that Van Buren was politically dead because of his opposition to Texas annexation.

After the Shockoe Hill Association meeting and the central committee address urging that convention delegates be released from their instructions to support Van Buren, the Virginia Democrats initiated their search for a new candidate. Calhoun had refused to go before the Baltimore Convention, but the Chivalry distrusted Ritchie anyway. Just over three weeks elapsed between the Virginians' rejection of Van Buren and the opening of the national convention, insufficient time to convene a state convention and endorse another candidate. Ritchie apparently thought briefly of endorsing Tyler, but on May 10 Lewis Cass publicly committed himself to immediate annexation. Cass had married a girl from western Virginia, and his public letter "put him in the class of northern men with southern principles, for which the Virginians had


109 Robert Hubard to Thomas Ritchie, May 18, 1844, Ritchie Papers, LC. S. Basset French to Editors of the Enquirer, May 23, 1844, Ritchie-Harrison Papers, College of William and Mary.


a peculiar weakness."

On May 21 Ritchie printed "with pleasure"

Cass' letter. Although Ritchie did not openly declare for Cass,

once again the *Enquirer* had announced the party's position.

The Democratic national convention, which opened on May 27, offered the first contest for the presidential nomination in Democratic party history. Prior conventions had merely ratified Jackson's and Van Buren's nominations. At the outset, when Virginia cast her seventeen votes for adoption of the two-thirds rule for nomination, it became apparent that Van Buren faced overwhelming opposition. Through eight ballots the delegates split their votes between Van Buren, Cass, Richard M. Johnson, Calhoun, and James Buchanan. On these ballots Virginia cast her seventeen votes for Cass. Then, on the ninth ballot both the New York and Virginia delegations withdrew from the floor to caucus. As the minutes passed the balloting bogged down until the Virginia delegation reappeared. William H. Roane then strode to the platform and cast Virginia's votes for James K. Polk. In April, Polk had come out for immediate annexation, and after Virginia threw her weight behind him he easily captured the nomination. After consultation with southern leaders, including members of the Virginia delegation, the convention

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112 Ambler, Ritchie, pp.241-42.


115 *Enquirer*, May 31, 1844.

offered the vice-presidential nomination to Van Buren's lieutenant, Silas Wright. Bitter over Van Buren's defeat, Wright three times refused the nomination, and the convention then settled on George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania. With the convention running overtime, the small body of remaining delegates adopted a list of resolutions which can be considered a platform. The first eight resolutions repeated those adopted by the party in 1840, reaffirming the Democratic party's faith in strict construction and opposition to federal internal improvements, assumption of state debts, a national bank, protective tariff, and federal interference with slavery in the states. Three additional resolutions opposed the distribution of public land sale revenues to the states, endorsed the presidential veto power, and called for the "reoccupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period. . . ."

Without doubt the issue of immediate annexation cost Van Buren the nomination. In later years Van Buren attributed his defeat to "the result of an intrigue. . . finally made successful by the co-operation of the slave power. . . ." A more reasonable explanation is simply that Van Buren misjudged the unfolding of events and the strength of pro-annexationist sentiment in the South. If Silas Wright had not agreed in February 1843 to postpone the convention from November to May 1844,


118 Enquirer, June 4, 1844.


Van Buren might have won the nomination although he would have faced bitter opposition from Calhoun's followers. But Tyler's annexation treaty forced the issue into the presidential campaign.

Van Buren realized the threat sectional issues posed to the Democratic party, but in trying to avoid a sectional debate over Texas he badly misjudged his Virginia supporters. After all, they had tolerated his pro-tariff votes, and most of them had eventually endorsed the subtreasury. Furthermore, in 1835 and 1836 they had quelled Whig attempts in the General Assembly to use the abolitionist petitions controversy as a weapon against him. They had talked and acted as if his northern birth, support for restrictions on slavery in Missouri, and endorsement of free Negro suffrage in New York were of little importance. And Van Buren had opposed not the constitutionality of annexation, only its expediency. But the Virginia Democrats determined that the interests of Virginia, and indeed the slave South, required immediate annexation. They sensed the rising sentiment in the North against the expansion of slavery. The abolitionist petitions controversy had not died in 1836, but had continued to plague the Congress into the 1840s. Furthermore, the abolitionists were becoming shriller and more strident in their demands, and were gaining in political strength. The emotional charge surrounding the slavery expansion controversy convinced the Virginia Van Buren men that they had no other alternative but to drop Van Buren. Ironically, Polk's nomination rested upon a slightly ambiguous platform which called for the annexation of Texas not immediately but only at the earliest possible moment.

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Polk's nomination represented one of the truly remarkable political comebacks in American history. In 1841 and 1843 he suffered successive defeats for the governorship of Tennessee. His stance on Texas and his nonalignment with either the Calhoun or Van Buren faction of the party made him an available compromise candidate in the convention. Immediately after his nomination Ritchie encouraged those Virginia Democrats who had stayed with Van Buren to endorse Polk.\textsuperscript{122} The Democratic press in Virginia quickly came out for Polk,\textsuperscript{123} and the Virginia central committee issued an address which endorsed the Democratic ticket, called for the reinvigoration of local Democratic organizations, and denounced Clay's past political career and his stand on Texas.\textsuperscript{124} The Shockoe Hill Democratic Association voted support for a campaign newspaper which the state convention had authorized, \textit{The Republican Sentinel}, to be edited by Ritchie's son William.\textsuperscript{125} Thus the Virginia Democrats entered the final months of the campaign in buoyed spirits.

IV

Virginia's Whigs looked to the presidential election of 1844 with

\textsuperscript{122} Thomas Ritchie to George C. Dromgoole, June 4; Robert D. Turnbull to Dromgoole, June 14, 1844, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UNC. Peter V. Daniel, alone of the Junto, reluctantly supported Polk. See Daniel to Martin Van Buren, October 17, 1844, Van Buren Papers, LC.

\textsuperscript{123} Enquirer, June 4, 1844; Rockingham Register, Warrenton Flag of '98, Fredericksburg Recorder, \textit{ibid.}, June 7, 1844. The Petersburg Republican, Calhoun's Virginia newspaper, also endorsed Polk. \textit{Ibid.}, June 7, 1844.

\textsuperscript{124} Democratic Central Committee Address, printed \textit{ibid.}, June 11, 1844.

\textsuperscript{125} Minutes of the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association, June 12, 1844, printed \textit{ibid.}, June 14, 1844. The prospectus for the paper appeared \textit{ibid.}, February 3, 1844.
great expectations. They had broken with Tyler and in the state convention of 1843 endorsed Henry Clay as their candidate. The Whig national convention, meeting in Baltimore on May 1, nominated Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey. The national Whig platform advocated a well-regulated currency, a tariff for revenue and protection, distribution of the land sales revenue, a single term for the president, and economy in government.\(^\text{126}\) Apparently satisfied with Clay's stand on Texas, both the debate in the Whig convention and the party platform pointedly ignored annexation.

The Whigs had based their campaign on opposition to Martin Van Buren. As early as March 1843 the Virginia Whig convention devoted over one-fifth of its address to condemning Van Buren's administration, particularly its financial policy.\(^\text{127}\) The 1844 state Whig convention address confined itself to events of the preceding year, defending the tariff of 1842 and distribution.\(^\text{128}\) This address compared Clay and Van Buren. It pointed out that Clay favored a protective tariff, but while Van Buren's votes favored a tariff his political pronouncements did not. Clay supported a national bank, and the address charged that Van Buren's interference with the banks brought on the depression. The Whigs continually pictured Van Buren as a political opportunist totally void of principles,\(^\text{129}\) but their campaign oratory quickly became outdated when


\(^{127}\) 1843 Virginia Whig Convention Address, printed in Whig, March 10, 1844.

\(^{128}\) 1843 Virginia Whig Convention Address, \textit{ibid.}, February 16, 1844.

\(^{129}\) \textit{Ibid.}, January 26, 1844.
the Democrats nominated Polk. In June 1844 the Richmond Whig sarcastically praised Van Buren's friends for their "discretion and judgment" in withdrawing him from the campaign. 130

Flushed with the success of negotiating his annexation treaty, and heartened by Calhoun's withdrawal from the contest, President Tyler entered the presidential race in April. Although Tyler sought reelection, he was equally determined to prevent, if possible, Van Buren's nomination or election. 131 On April 11 a small body of Tyler supporters from eastern Virginia met in convention at Norfolk to renominate Tyler. 132 Following this nomination a group of Tyler's friends in Washington sent out letters to Democrats inviting them to a Tyler convention in Baltimore contemporaneous with the Democratic convention. 133 In Virginia rumors circulated that the Calhoun men would desert Van Buren for Tyler. 134 Then came Van Buren's Texas letter, and the Virginia Democrats dropped him. Although the Tyler convention unanimously renominated the president, his campaign never developed any momentum, especially since the Democrats nominated an annexationist candidate. In early June rumors floated in Richmond that Tyler would probably give in to Polk, 135 and in mid-August

130 Ibid., June 4, 1844.


132 Whig, April 19, 1844.

133 Chitwood, Tyler, pp.373-77.

134 Whig, April 19, 1844.

135 Mark Alexander to James K. Polk, June 2, 1844, James K. Polk Papers, LC.
Tyler withdrew from the campaign.\textsuperscript{136}

The Virginia Whigs tried to disrupt Democratic harmony after the Democrats nominated Polk. They attempted to drive the Calhoun Democrats away from Polk by pointing out that he was a true Jacksonian who had supported Old Hickory during his two administrations.\textsuperscript{137} Throughout the campaign the Whig pointed to Ritchie's former criticism of Calhoun in an effort to split the Calhoun men from the other Democrats.\textsuperscript{138} But the Whigs' efforts to divert the campaign away from pressing political issues failed. Ritchie remained convinced of the Chivalry's pledge to support the Democratic nominee,\textsuperscript{139} and Calhoun's Virginia followers took to the campaign trail in Polk's behalf.\textsuperscript{140}

In their 1843 convention address the Virginia Whigs revealed their positions on the topics which they expected would constitute the major issues.\textsuperscript{141} Over one-fifth of their address criticized Van Buren's

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{136} *Enquirer*, August 23; *Lynchburg Virginian*, August 22, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} *Whig*, June 11, 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Ibid., July-October 1844.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Thomas Ritchie to George Coke Dromgoole, June 4, 1844, Edward Dromgoole Papers, SHC-UNC.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} James A. Seddon to Robert M.T. Hunter, August 22, 1844, in Ambler, \textit{Hunter Correspondence}, p.70; *Lynchburg Virginian*, August 15, 1844, describes Cralle's activities.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} 1843 Virginia Whig Convention Address, printed in *Whig*, March 10, 1843. Major sections of the address, and the amount of space devoted to each, computed by dividing the column inches per topic into total column inches, follows: Criticism of Van Buren's economic policies, 21 per cent; discussion of Whig principles, 74.3 per cent; call for Clay's nomination, 4.7 per cent. Percentage of space allotted to each topic within the section on Whig principles: Call for a national bank, 20.8 per cent; call for a protective tariff, 25.0 per cent; distribution of land sale revenues, 32.6 per cent; one-term presidency, 11.4 per cent; federal bankruptcy system, 7.7 per cent; assumption of state debts, 2.5 per cent.
\end{itemize}

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positions on banking, currency, and federal expenditures. Nearly three-fifths of the address discussed Whig principles, and called for a sound currency to be maintained through a national bank, a protective tariff, distribution of the revenues from the public land sales, a one-term presidency to lessen patronage corruption, a federal bankruptcy system, and the assumption of state debts. Judging by the space it occupied in the address, the Whigs hoped to make distribution one of their chief campaign issues. The Democrats had pushed an increase in state taxes through the 1843 General Assembly. The Whigs reasoned that state taxes could be decreased if Virginia would accept her share of the revenue distribution. But the Texas issue, followed closely by Polk's nomination, made obsolete most of the Whigs' campaign oratory. Although they charged Polk with inconsistency on the tariff, they were never able to assume the offensive in Virginia after Texas annexation surfaced.

Before Texas became the all-absorbing issue, Virginia's Democrats planned to rely upon their traditional states rights principles to contest the election. They sought to picture the Whigs as insincere politicians. The Democratic central committee address, surveying Whig principles and practices between 1840 and 1844, pointed to the Whigs' claim in the 1840 campaign that Harrison opposed both a national bank and

142 Ibid., August 9, 1844.

143 1844 Virginia Democratic Convention Address, printed in Enquirer, February 15, 1844. Major topics in the address, and percentage of space devoted to each, follows: History of the Whig party, tracing in heated rhetoric its federalist principles, 25.0 per cent; portrait of Henry Clay's nationalist and Whig careers, 24.5 per cent; praise for Tyler's vetoes of bank and tariff bills, 1.8 per cent; listing of Democratic principles as stated in convention resolutions, 13.6 per cent; contrast of Whig and Democratic platforms, 15.9 per cent; call for party harmony, 2.7 per cent; denunciation of Whig state deficit spending policy, 6.3 per cent; call to the polls, 9 per cent.

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protective tariff, then contrasted these claims with Whig actions in Congress.\footnote{144}{1844 Democratic Central Committee Address, signed Thomas Ritchie, Chairman, printed in \textit{Enquirer}, March 8,12, 1844.} After denouncing a national bank, protective tariff, and distribution, the address rhetorically questioned how any states rights man could vote for Clay since the Whigs had talked states rights in 1840 but followed federalist principles once in office. Democrats denounced Clay as "the arch-enemy of Republicanism,"\footnote{145}{Minutes of the New Market Democratic Association, 1844, \textit{University of Virginia}.} and raked up Clay's participation in the "corrupt bargain" in 1824.\footnote{146}{\textit{Whig}, February 28, 1843; \textit{Alexandria Gazette}, August 1, 1843.} No doubt these charges influenced some voters, but by the summer of 1844 Texas had come to dominate the campaign.

Basic to both Clay's and Van Buren's approaches to the campaign was their intention to avoid political pronouncements on annexation. In 1843 the Virginia Whig press denounced Texas annexation as a nonsuitable political subject. The Whig opposed annexation as a threat to sectional harmony. Harking back to pre-Madisonian theory regarding the proper size of republics, the Whig charged that the nation could not be governed if Texas was annexed.\footnote{147}{\textit{Whig}, June 2, 1843. See Madison's Federalist No. 10.} When Clay opposed immediate annexation, the Virginia Whig press endorsed his letter and assured Virginia that Clay, if elected, would handle the subject with the honor and interest of the country at heart.\footnote{148}{\textit{Alexandria Gazette}, May 1, 1844.}

But neither Clay nor Van Buren could dismiss Texas through their...
letters. Eventually it cost them both the presidency. In response to
the Senate's rejection of the annexation treaty in June 1844, Ritchie
renewed his call for immediate annexation.149 A few of the states rights
Whigs who had remained with their party now began to defect to the Demo­
crats after Polk's nomination.150 Clay, attempting to stem the tide,
publicly qualified his position on annexation in the "Alabama letters."151
He stated that while he did not oppose annexation, his paramount interest
was to preserve the integrity of the union, and he believed that the
question of slavery should have no effect upon annexation. This last
statement cost Clay support from northern abolitionists, and did nothing
to retard the defections of states rights Whigs who supported immediate
annexation. The Virginia Whig press condemned the Democrats for conduct­
ing the election on a foreign policy basis which, according to the Whigs,
was too delicate and exciting to be used as a "party football."152 Whigs
charged that the Democrats would destroy the union in their hast to
annex Texas, but Ritchie dismissed such charges as indicative of "The
Madness of Party."153

Late in the campaign the Virginia Democrats put forth a final
burst of energy to secure Polk's election. From September 10 to 13 they

149 Emrerrer, June 11, 1844. See also Lynchburg Republican, ibid.,
July 2, 1844.
150 Ibid., June 7, 1844.
151 Niles' Register, LXVI(August 5,31, 1844), pp.372,439. A final
public letter, ibid., LXVII(October 5, 1844), p.74, completed his defense
of his position on Texas.
152 Lynchburg Virginian, September 2; Whig, July 23, 1844.
153 Enquirer, July 25, 1844. In September the Shockoe Hill Demo­
cratic Association issued a long address, reprinted in ibid., September
13, 1844, which refuted Whig charges that the Democrats were disunionists.
met at Charlottesville in a state convention. Nearly 400 delegates attended, but northern and southwestern Virginia were not represented because delegates from those regions held conventions with adjoining states. Andrew Stevenson presided over the convention and Ritchie served as one of the secretaries, but the Calhoun Democrats took active roles in the meeting, with Hunter and William O. Goode serving as vice presidents. The convention adopted an address which reaffirmed the Democrats' dedication to republican states rights principles, praised Polk and Dallas, denounced Clay for disturbing the compromise tariff of 1833 by pushing the tariff of 1842 through Congress, and called for the "re-acquisition" of Texas to secure "the safety of the South."  

V

Virginia's Democrats increased their margin of victory in 1844, carrying the state by 5,819 votes, or six per cent of the vote. The voter turnout decreased slightly from 1840, as 54.5 per cent of Virginia's

154 Ibid., September 17, 1844. The convention had been postponed from August until September. See ibid., July 19, 1844. The Whig charged that only 254 Democrats attended the convention, with 100 of these from Charlottesville. Whig, September 17, 1844.

155 Charlottesville Democratic Convention Address, printed in Enquirer, September 17, 1844. Major topics in the address, and the amount of space allotted to each, follow: Historical sketch of federal government operation prior to 1844, 13.1 per cent; denunciation of a national bank as unconstitutional and inexpedient, 12.0 per cent; denunciation of a protective tariff, 32.7 per cent; condemnation of federal activity in internal improvements, distribution, assumption of state debts, bankruptcy law, 17.2 per cent; support for Texas annexation, 17.9 per cent; praise for Democratic ticket, 6.8 per cent.

adult white males cast 95,539 votes. Polk, winning seventy-three counties, polled 50,679 votes, or 53 per cent of the total, while Clay won fifty-six counties with 44,860 votes. Both parties drew their support from their traditional areas of strength within the state. Polk's greatest areas of support came from western southside Tidewater, the middle Piedmont and eastern half of the southern Piedmont, the Valley, and the entire southwestern and northwestern regions of the Trans-Allegheny. In thirty-nine counties scattered throughout Virginia, sixteen of which usually voted Whig, the Democrats increased their percentage of the vote by more than 5 per cent. In ten counties, all but one of which were nominal Whig constituencies, the Whigs upped their percentage of the vote by more than 5 per cent. But in six formerly strong Tidewater Whig constituencies the Democrats increased their percentage of the vote an average of 28.2 per cent, and in four other Whig Tidewater constituencies the Democrats increased their vote by more than 5 per cent. Practically all of these Tidewater constituencies were slave poor, and the large increase in the Democratic vote graphically illustrates the appeal of the Democrats call for immediate annexation.

Although the Whig attributed the Democrats' victory to a disunionist coalition composed of northern abolitionists and southern

157 McCormick, "New Perspectives," 292, Table I; Burnham, Presidential Ballots, p.142.

158 The coefficients of correlation for both Polk and Clay in 1844, when correlated with the Democratic and Whig vote for president in 1840, computed at 0.8950, a significantly strong positive correlation.

159 The six constituencies and percentage increase in Democratic vote were: Accomac 21.1; James City 21.5; Northampton 25.9; Warwick 23.2; York 44.7; Williamsburg 35.3.
annexationists, in both Virginia and the nation the Whigs simply misjudged the sentiment for Texas annexation. As the Whig confessed, Texas had divided and paralyzed the Virginia Whig party. Ironically, the bonds of union between northern and southern Democrats held fast long after the sectional antagonisms of the early 1850s destroyed the Whigs as a national party. Additionally, for the first time since 1832 the presidential campaign offered Virginia voters a clear choice between two candidates who openly espoused different tariff views. Unlike 1840, the Whigs publicly proclaimed Clay's protectionist position. Thus Polk's victory in Virginia, in addition to revealing annexationist sentiment, indicated the residual sentiment among states rights-oriented voters for a revenue tariff. By logical implication, these same voters must have found appealing the Democrats' positions on internal improvements and distribution.

The Alexandria Gazette attributed the Democratic victory to their campaign appeals directed at "the lowest and basest prejudices" of Virginia's poor. But correlation programs designed to test the relationship between Democratic and Whig voting and slaveholding, illiteracy, manufacturing investment, and wealth produced no significant correlations. On a statewide basis both Democrats and Whigs drew support

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160 Whig, November 15, 1844.
161 Ibid., May 2, 1845.
163 Alexandria Gazette, November 15, 1844.
164 The coefficients of correlation were derived by computer programs using the Osiris II Social Science Package. The percentage of
from all strata of society. But within certain regions of the state, a comparison of the mean rankings of socio-economic variables indicates significant differences between Democratic and Whig constituencies.\textsuperscript{165} East of the mountains, Democratic constituencies tended to reflect greater 1850 average slaveholdings, and in the Piedmont particularly Democratic constituencies held a greater per cent of their population in slavery. On the other hand, Piedmont Whig constituencies reflected a much larger manufacturing investment than did the Democrats'. East of the mountains the Democrats controlled the largest tobacco-planting constituencies, while the Whigs controlled the urban areas of the state and the surrounding county or counties. West of the mountains, Whig constituencies were significantly wealthier, and also possessed greater investment in manufacturing and larger percentages of slaves in the population. In this section of the state slaves were employed in coal, ore, and salt.

Democratic and Whig votes cast in the 1844 presidential election, by constituency, were correlated with the following socio-economic variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Whig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Slave Population, 1840</td>
<td>-0.1113</td>
<td>0.1113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1850 Slaveholding</td>
<td>-0.1406</td>
<td>0.1406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White Illiteracy, 1840</td>
<td>0.2500</td>
<td>-0.2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Manufacturing Investment, 1840</td>
<td>-0.1566</td>
<td>0.1566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Wealth, 1840</td>
<td>-0.1194</td>
<td>0.1194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{165} Sectional/party socio-economic rankings and the Virginia presidential vote, 1844:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1840 % Slave</th>
<th>1850 Avg.</th>
<th>1840 Slaveholding</th>
<th>1840 Wealth</th>
<th>1840 Manuf. Investment</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Tidewater Demo.</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>41.4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tidewater Whig</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Demo.</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Whig</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Demo.</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Whig</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Allegheny Demo.</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Allegheny Whig</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
mining operations in areas of Whig strength. Whigs also controlled the urban areas and surrounding counties west of the mountains. The urban, commercial, manufacturing constituencies doubtlessly found attractive the Whigs' pledge of a stable economy through a national bank and protective tariff. West of the mountains where Whig strength lay concentrated in the few urban areas and along the Great Kanawha River, federally-financed internal improvements promised increased prosperity for these areas. East of the mountains and in the southwest, states rights ideology had dominated politics since the confederation period. Polk's platform, combining states rights appeal with the promise of additional land for slavery expansion, offered a viable alternative to Clay's brand of nationalism which called for a dominant national government.

The Democratic triumph of 1844 initiated a new era in Virginia politics. The question of slavery in all its aspects, now reintroduced into national politics by Texas annexation, dominated national politics for the next seventeen years. Van Buren's rejection by his former Virginia supporters severed the New York-Virginia axis within the Democratic party, though to be sure the party rested upon a national base until the Charleston convention of 1860. Calhoun's failure to win the nomination ended his serious challenges for the presidency. Although Calhoun's old Virginia enemies, headed by Ritchie, deprived him of the nomination, his followers forced a strong states rights, pro-southern platform upon the Virginia Democratic party in 1844. Ritchie and the Van Burenites obtained Virginia's endorsement for the New Yorker only to cast him off for Texas. Soon after 1844 Calhoun's lieutenants gained control of the Virginia Democratic party.
CHAPTER IX

PARTY PARADIGMS

By 1844 a stable two-party system had emerged in Virginia. Its origins dated from the cataclysmic breakup of the Old Republican party in the presidential election of 1824. Between 1825 and 1827 Virginia's Old Republicans, led by the Richmond Junto, joined with Martin Van Buren to create a coalition of "the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the north." This union took the form of a New York-Virginia Alliance and provided the basis on which Andrew Jackson rose to power in 1828. Tracing its heritage back to Jefferson and espousing Old Republican states rights ideology, the Democratic party dominated Virginia politics until 1835. In that year a sizeable portion of its membership, viewing Jackson's strong executive actions in the nullification and deposit withdrawal controversies as an affront to states rights doctrines, defected from Democratic ranks and joined a small nucleus of National Republicans to form the Whig party.

Until the early 1840s the Virginia Whig party exhibited a schizoid personality. Although former National Republicans constituted a sizeable element of the party, the states rights extremists, defectors from Democratic ranks, formed a numerical majority of the party membership and dominated its leadership. Consequently during the mid- and late 1830s both parties in Virginia espoused states rights philosophy.
But the states rights Whigs never gained control of the national party. When Henry Clay pushed his nationalist programs through Congress during the early 1840s, most of the Virginia states rights Whigs deserted their party and returned to the Democrats. This left the nationalist Whigs in control of the party in Virginia. Hungry for power and patronage rewards, the Virginia Whigs cast their allegiance behind Clay's bid for the presidency. Thus for the first time since 1832 the presidential campaign of 1844 offered Virginia voters a clear choice between two parties running on different ideological platforms.

This chapter will analyze the similarities and differences between the two parties in Virginia with regard to both state and national politics. Party organization and activity in state politics will be examined. Constituencies will be identified and voting patterns analyzed in an effort to construct profiles of Democratic and Whig constituencies.

National politics, particularly the successive contests for the presidency, provided the impetus for the formation and subsequent development of the second party system in Virginia. The Democratic party emerged specifically to combat the nationalistic ideas of Adams' administration and his reelection in 1828, while Virginia Whigs coalesced in opposition to Jackson's politics in 1832 and 1833. Initially the structure of both parties developed entirely in response to national politics. Both parties quadrennially called legislative conventions to nominate presidential candidates or name delegates to national conventions. These state conventions appointed central and local corresponding committees to

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empowered to act only for the duration of the specific campaign. Although the Richmond Junto provided the Democrats with a kind of continuing directive body, neither party ever established a permanent state central committee. Instead, between the presidential elections they relied upon caucuses of party members in the General Assembly.

Although organized around national politics, the two parties gradually extended their organization into the General Assembly. The parties disciplined their members most effectively in the gubernatorial and senatorial elections and in debates concerning national political issues. With a few exceptions, however, partisanship did not arise in the Assembly over the consideration of purely state political issues. By the 1840s both parties began to hold annual legislative conventions to whip up support for their candidates in the spring Assembly elections. But these elections, like the Assembly elections of a decade earlier, were conducted almost entirely on the basis of national political issues.

It is nearly impossible to determine the influence local cliques and candidate personalities exercised upon the election of county Assembly delegates. During the early 1830s both Democratic and National Republican newspapers, and later Whig papers as well, denounced the lack of attention Virginians paid to local issues such as education and internal improvements. Neither party created any permanent institutional body to direct party activity within the Assembly.

Virgini ans directed the executive branch of the federal government from 1789 to 1824 except for one four-year span. During the early national period Virginians also played crucial roles in the operation

\[2\text{Richmond Enquirer, August 24, 1830 (hereinafter cited Enquirer); Kanawha Banner, July 22, 1831.}\]
of the federal judicial and legislative branches. Virginia's influence upon the national government, in terms of actual leadership, suffered a marked decline after 1824. Because of the early role Virginians played in national affairs, and perhaps because of the geographical proximity of Washington, Virginians never looked upon the national government as some remote agent of power. Instead they viewed it as a real influence upon their lives. Consequently their early national political heritage predisposed Virginians to focus nearly all of their attention on national politics.

Although the second party system evolved in Virginia over the successive contests for the presidency between 1828 and 1840, party conflict slowly but inexorably seeped into the General Assembly. Initially conflict between the two parties remained confined to senatorial elections and resolutions concerning federal politics. But as party lines gradually stabilized, conflict appeared over the organization of the Assembly's two houses and the gubernatorial election. However, in 1834 several Democrats voted for Littleton W. Tazewell, the Whig gubernatorial candidate, and until 1838 Whigs in the Assembly joined the Democrats to reelect Linn Banks to the speakership. But by the late 1830s party discipline more often held members in line to support the party caucus nominee.

The most bitter party conflicts in the General Assembly arose over the election of senators and the passage of resolutions on federal political issues such as deposit withdrawal, the gag rule, expunging, and 

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distribution of the surplus revenue from the sale of public lands. Party
conflict over state political issues never became as heated as the con-
flicts over patronage. I found no evidence that either party ever cau-
cused to discuss positions on state issues such as slavery, education,
internal improvements, or social reform. Quite simply, Whig and Demo-
cratic Assembly members took no official party positions on state polit-
ical issues. Party discipline was applied most often in senatorial elec-
tions and votes on federal resolutions, and less frequently in guberna-
torial elections.

To be sure, discontent, disunity, and dissent over state polit-
ical problems existed in Virginia during the antebellum period. Democrats and Whigs did divide over state issues, particularly state banking policy. Despite a recent study which points to ideological conflict as
the chief characteristic of party battles in Virginia during the Jack-
sonian era, party members in the Assembly voted the self-interest of
their constituents. Primarily sectional or regional conflict, not that
between parties, characterized voting patterns in the General Assembly

4 J. Stephen Knight, Jr., "Discontent, Disunity and Dissent In the
Antebellum South: Virginia As a Test Case, 1844-1846," VMHR, LXXXI(Octo-
ber 1973), 437-56.

5 Herbert Ershkowitz and William G. Shade, "Conflict or Consensus?
Political Behavior in the State Legislatures during the Jacksonian Era,"
to the authors, by 1840 Democrats and Whigs adhered to dominant ideolo-
gical views of their own party (p.613). But in Virginia the parties took
no official position. Furthermore, Ershkowitz's and Shade's arguments
are weakened by their own evidence. They fail to identify specifically
any of the laws referred to in their percentages of party votes. For ex-
ample, pointing to two internal improvement votes in the Assembly during
1836, they cite Democratic percentages of 64 per cent and 62 per cent in
favor of the bills, and Whig percentages of 59 per cent and 63 per cent
(Table V, p.605). This hardly amounts to ideological conflict, nor does
the vote on debtor relief in 1842 where Democrats cast 52 per cent of
their votes in favor of relief and the Whigs cast 55 per cent (Table VII,
p.608).
on state issues.

The most pressing state issue throughout the antebellum period was internal improvements. The General Assembly and the Board of Public Works, two non-professional bodies, controlled the construction of turnpikes, railroads, and canals within Virginia. Because of poor central planning, Virginia never developed an integrated state system of railroads, turnpikes, or canals. Normally the state purchased stock in joint stock companies only when the project could not acquire sufficient private capital or when, as in the case of the James River and Kanawha Canal Company, the enormous scale of the project demanded state assistance. By 1850 Virginia had invested over $16 million in joint stock companies, with more than one-half of the money spent on improvements west of the mountains.

The controversy over state support for internal improvements should be viewed not in terms of Whig versus Democrat, but as a clash of local interests. In 1845 the Whigs launched a campaign to portray the Democrats as the stumbling block to internal improvement developments in Virginia. In refutation the *Enquirer* cited four bills considered by the House of Delegates between 1840 and 1844 as proof that sectional and not party interests hindered internal improvement construction. As the

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leading Democratic newspaper, the *Enquirer* continually urged the development of internal improvements within Virginia. In the Assembly the Whigs showed slightly stronger support for all types of improvements, but neither party took an official position on such measures. Consistently the strongest support for any internal improvement project came from the transportation-starved Trans-Allegheny region. An analysis of votes on five internal improvement bills in the house of Delegates between 1838 and 1847 confirms these observations.9

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9 In my analysis of state issues I have been limited to the roll call votes in the House of Delegates which are reprinted in the *Enquirer* or the *Richmond Whig* (hereinafter cited Whig). Figures listed below are percentages of sectional or party votes cast. The bills:

I. $8.5 million appropriation for selected improvements, mostly in western Virginia. Motion to indefinitely postpone passed by 64-56. *Enquirer*, March 15, 1838.


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<th>Party/Section</th>
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<th>IV A N</th>
<th>V A N</th>
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<tr>
<td>Piedmont</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.4</td>
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Similarly, there were no significant party divisions on several issues which I have labeled social reforms. With regard to education, debtor relief, and the calling of a constitutional convention, divisions, in the Assembly fell more along sectional than party lines. Once again, neither party adopted an official ideological position of any of these issues. Not until the 1840s did Virginia create a state-supported system of primary public education. Despite Whig claims that areas of strongest Democratic sympathy were the most ignorant counties in Virginia,

10 Figures represent percentages of sectional or party votes cast. The bills examined are:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party/Section</th>
<th>I A</th>
<th>I N</th>
<th>II A</th>
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<td>Tidewater</td>
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12 *Enquirer*, September 5, 1845.
coefficients of correlation between Democratic voting in presidential elections and white illiteracy indicate no significant relationship between party affiliation and literacy. In fact the *Enquirer*, referring to Whig efforts to contest the presidential election of 1840 upon personalities instead of issues, advocated state support for education to protect the citizenry from "efforts recently made by a prominent party in this country to humbug and delude them." The vote on the proposal to call a constitutional convention and the debtor relief bill indicate graphically the different attitudes which existed not between Whigs and Democrats, but between eastern and western Virginia over voting, representation in the Assembly, and the collection of debts incurred during the depression.

Whigs and Democrats in the Assembly clearly divided over state banking policy. The national banking crisis of the late 1830s, spurred initially by Jackson's withdrawal of federal deposits from the Second Bank of the United States in 1833, injected the issue of state banking in General Assembly debates. Between 1836 and 1842 every Assembly session dealt with state banking problems. Although once again neither party adopted official positions, party attitudes toward banking and corporations as revealed by votes on capital expansion for banks, relief measures, specie resumption, and incorporation indicated that within the states rights consensus differences existed over the means for government to achieve its ends.

Democrats resisted expansion of Virginia banking facilities but

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Virginia banking has been the subject of two recent monographs which preclude the necessity for such detailed discussion in this study. See James Rogers Sharp, *The Jacksonians Versus the Bank* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), and John M. McFaul, *The Politics of Jacksonian Finance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).
by 1837 pressure upon the General Assembly for an expanded banking
system had become economically and politically irresistible. The
Democratically-controlled Assembly responded by vastly expanding the
state banking system. It would be the last time in the crisis that a
significant portion of both Whigs and Democrats joined to support any
banking bill. After the Virginia banks resumed specie payments in
1839 the Whig-controlled Assembly successfully raised the ceiling on the
banks' capital deposits, but the Democrats voted against this expansion.

Democratic attitudes toward banks in general were influenced by
both fiscal and political considerations. Fiscally many Democrats had
not accepted the intrinsic theory of money, the idea that a paper bank
note held as much value as an equivalent amount of specie. When specie
suspension became widespread in 1837 and banks throughout the nation be­
gan to fail, Democrats feared the collapse of an economy relying on paper

16 See Chapter VI for a discussion of Virginia banking through
1837.

17 Bank Expansion Act of 1837. Passed 84-31. Enquirer, March 18,
1837. Figures represent percentage of votes cast by section or party:

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1839. Figures represent percentages of votes cast by section or party:

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currency. Politically, many of them looked upon state banks with the same prejudices with which they viewed the Second Bank of the United States. Although prior to 1837 Junto Democrats presided over Virginia's two largest banks, bank expansion after that date cost the Democrats their relative monopoly over Virginia banking. Many Democrats looked upon banks as monopolies, uncontrolled forms of business in the guise of what they considered to be the worst form of business arrangement, a corporation. Consequently in Virginia the Democrats moved from a vague belief in hard money to advocacy of stronger government controls over all phases of banking operations. 19

Three times during the banking crisis, in 1837, 1839, and 1841, Virginia banks suspended specie payments. These suspensions represented attempts to stop the drain of specie from the state caused by the suspension of the northern banks. Specie suspension by Virginia banks made them liable to loss of their charters and/or heavy fines. Democrats responded to each of these suspensions with attempts to force banks to resume specie payments immediately, 20 while Whigs preferred relief measures which would allow the banks time to recover

19 This trend in Virginia paralleled the evaluation of Democratic banking policy in Congress. See McFaul, Politics of Jacksonian Finance. See also Ershkowitz and Shade, "Conflict or Consensus?", Table III, 600, voting in Virginia House of Delegates on legislation favorable to banking interests. Figures represent percentages, bills not identified:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1834</th>
<th>1835</th>
<th>1836</th>
<th>1839</th>
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<td>D</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

20 See for example the vote on the Specie Resumption Act of 1842. Whigs rejected the proposed earlier May 1 date, and the Assembly
from the specie drain without suffering the prescribed penalties.  

Finally, Democratic votes against incorporation of banks and other forms of business activity revealed their animosity toward corporate, non-personal forms of business enterprise. Democrats often equated banks with corporate monopolies, describing them as "spread... like a pestilence by the raising of a Bank in almost every village..." Although the Democrats supported the bank expansion act of 1837 to relieve the economic crisis and maintain their political power west of the mountains in the bank-starved Trans-Allegheny, they opposed further expansion in 1839. In 1842 they opposed the incorporation of a new, independent bank at Scottsville on the James River in southern

ultimately decided on November 1, 1842. Enquirer, March 17, 26, 1842. The bill passed 73-42. See Whig, March 17, 1842. Figures represent percentage of votes cast by section or party:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<td>59.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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</table>

On relief bills which allowed Virginia banks to keep their charters or avoid fines see:

I. Relief Bill of 1839. Passed 79-46. Enquirer, December 12, 1839.
II. Relief Bill of 1842. Passed 71-42. Whig, March 22, 1842.

Figures represent percentages of votes cast by section or party:

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
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<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Albemarle County. Finally, the Democrats' vote in 1839 to oppose incorporation of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company offers another example of their opposition to corporate forms of business organization.

II

By 1834 the outlines of a viable two-party system appeared in Virginia, and in the presidential election of 1836 the Whigs offered a serious, though somewhat splintered challenge to the Democrats. From 1824 down to the Civil War the Democratic party never failed to carry Virginia for its presidential candidate. However, the three presidential elections between 1836 and 1844 illustrate the closeness of the contests. In these elections the Democrats averaged 52.5 per cent of the vote and the Whigs 47.5 per cent. The Democrats carried sixty-four of Virginia's

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Section</th>
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<th>Whig</th>
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Bill passed House of Delegates 69-48. Enquirer, February 22, 1842. Figures represent percentage of votes cast by section or party:

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Bill passed House of Delegates 63-54. Whig, January 22, 1839. Figures represent percentages of votes cast by section or party:

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<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
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<td>23.1</td>
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Percentages compiled from vote totals available in W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), p. 816. I have chosen to examine closely only the three elections in which the Whigs ran a candidate against the Democrats.
117 political constituencies, the Whigs forty-four, and ten constituencies could be classified neutral. Although both Democrats and Whigs drew support from constituencies scattered throughout Virginia, each party dominated certain areas within the state.

The Democrats' greatest source of strength came from five specific regions. In the Tidewater, Democrats received strong support from two areas, one running south of the James River from Isle of Wight County westward to the fall line, and the other in the middle peninsula between the York and Rappahannock Rivers from the Chesapeake Bay to the fall line. Democratic strength in the Piedmont lay concentrated in the eastern half of the central and southern sections. In the Valley the Democrats dominated all but six counties, and west of the Appalachian Mountains the Democrats controlled all of the southwestern counties and all but Ohio County in the northwest.

Whigs drew their strength mainly from the Tidewater and Piedmont sections of the state. In the Tidewater the areas of strongest Whig

Inclusion of the elections of 1824, 1828, and 1832, while not radically altering the identification of political constituencies, does produce some alterations in the results, most notably a higher percentage of Democratic voting if one considers, as I have, votes for Jackson and Crawford in 1824, and Jackson in 1828 and 1832 to be proto-Democratic votes, and votes for the other candidates to be proto-Whig votes. Since party lines in Virginia did not begin to become even relatively stable until 1834, a truer picture of party constituencies can be obtained by examining only those presidential contests after that date.

See Table I. Rankings are based upon the percentage of the vote cast for the Democratic nominee for president, 1836-1844. I have classified 92.7-70.6 per cent Strong Democrat, 68.0-52.5 per cent Moderate Democrat, 52.0-48.2 per cent Neutral, 47.3-25.8 per cent Moderate Whig, and 24.8-12.3 per cent Strong Whig. Percentages for the rankings were derived by computer from the ICON program in the Osiris II Social Science Package supplied by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research (ICPR) at the University of Michigan.

See Map I, compiled from percentages in footnote 25, supra.
support included the Eastern Shore, the three counties surrounding Norfolk, the James-York Peninsula, and the Northern Neck. Whigs also dominated the northern third of the Piedmont and the counties of Rockbridge, Augusta, Hardy, Berkeley, and Jefferson in the Valley. In the transmontaine region the Whigs garnered their strongest support from counties which lay scattered along either the Ohio or Great Kanawha Rivers.

After 1833 Whigs battled the Deocrats for seats in the General Assembly. Democrats generally controlled the Senate but party strengths in the House of Delegates illustrate the relative parity of party strengths within Virginia. In the thirteen annual state elections between 1834 and 1846 Democrats won control of the House of Delegates for seven sessions, and the Whigs won control for six sessions. 28 Democrats elected 51.5 per cent of the House membership, the Whigs 46.6 per cent, and the Conservatives 1.9 per cent. Not surprisingly, sources of party strength in the Assembly correspond almost identically with their relative areas of strength in presidential contests.29

Geography alone cannot explain the identified patterns of party voting in the Assembly and presidential elections. Individual elections

28 For the Assembly election returns see the Enquirer, May 12, 1835; Whig, May 13, 1836; Henry Harrison Simms, Rise of the Whigs In Virginia, 1824-1840 (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1929), pp.178-81; Whig, July 20, 1838; ibid., June 14, 1839; ibid., May 8, 1840; ibid., May 11, 1841; Enquirer, May 10, 1842; Whig, September 15, 1845; ibid., May 7, 1844; Enquirer, November 21, 1845; ibid., May 8, 1846.

29 See Table II and Map II, compiled from information available in footnotes 25 and 27, supra. Party strength determined by percentage of times Democratic delegates elected to House: 100-75: Strong Democrat; 74-54: Moderate Democrat; 54-45: Neutral; 44-25: Moderate Whig; 24-0: Strong Whig.
<table>
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<th>% Slave</th>
<th>Avg. Slavehold.</th>
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<th>Manuf. Invest.</th>
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**t = tie**

Rankings for per cent of slaves in population, average slaveholding, wealth, and manufacturing investment are from highest to lowest.

Petersburg, Richmond, Norfolk, and Williamsburg are included in their surrounding counties.
**TABLE II**

**CONSTITUENCY RANKINGS ACCORDING TO DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 1836-1844, DEMONSTRATING PARTY STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, 1834-1846**

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<td>56t</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Fluvanna</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Spottsylvania</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62t</td>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62t</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65t</td>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65t</td>
<td>Powhatan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
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<td>62</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Braxton</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>70t</td>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>70t</td>
<td>Rappahannock</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72t</td>
<td>Dinwiddie</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72t</td>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Albemarle</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Petersburg</td>
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<td>SW</td>
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<td>77t</td>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>77t</td>
<td>Fayette</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79t</td>
<td>Culpeper</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>79t</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>Rockbridge</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pres. Rank</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>% Democrats Returned to House of Delegates</td>
<td>Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Henrico</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>Fauquier</td>
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<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Pittsylvania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
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<td>93</td>
<td>Randolph</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>New Kent</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<td>Berkeley</td>
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<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Elizabeth City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>King George</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Nansemond</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Princess Anne</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Greenbrier</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Norfolk City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Hardy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Kanawha</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Augusta</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Accomac</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Richmond City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Loudoun</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Westmoreland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
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<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>York</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Charles City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>James City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARTY STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,
1834-1846
are analyzed elsewhere, but here I examine general theses which historians have offered in speculation about the nature and composition of Democratic and Whig party membership. These theses have evolved from simple economic or ideological explanations for party divisions to more complex, multivariate analyses. Ideology is treated later in this chapter, but an examination of leadership, social, economic, and geographical data is necessary to determine what effect, if any, these factors exercised upon the formation of the second party system in Virginia.

One method of studying party formation is to analyze party leadership. Factors such as personality cannot be measured qualitatively in any exact sense. However, it is difficult to study the early history of the second party system in Virginia without concluding that Democratic party leadership possessed superior leadership qualities. Above all else, the strength of Andrew Jackson's character and personality tremendously influenced party formation in Virginia.

A social recruitment analysis, though limited by the lack of economic information, demonstrates that party leaders came from identical social backgrounds. Between 1835 and 1845 the Democrats won

30 See the narrative chapters in the study for detailed treatments of specific elections.


32 See the bibliography for sources of biographical information.
eighty-four seats and the Whigs thirty-seven in the Virginia congressional delegation. Party strength in the House of Representatives was almost identical to its areas of strength in the presidential contests. Forty-three different men served as Democrats, twenty-one as Whigs. Only two of the sixty-four men, both Democrats, were born outside Virginia, one in New York and the other in Ireland.\textsuperscript{33} Practically all the others, including congressmen from the Trans-Allegheny, were born in counties lying east of the Appalachian Mountains. Both parties drew their representatives overwhelmingly from the legal profession, but practically all of the congressmen had planting interests as well. Only twenty-seven of the sixty-four held college degrees. The only minor difference is that the Democrats were, on the average, a half-year younger than their Whig counterparts upon entering Congress.\textsuperscript{34}

Unfortunately biographical information is not available on the men who served in the General Assembly. However, in the Gooch Family Papers at the University of Virginia, I discovered an old typewritten list of the 1841-1842 House of Delegates' membership which listed their occupations. If these identifications are correct, they demonstrate that at least for this session, and most probably for other Assembly sessions as well, Democrats and Whigs came from the same occupational classes. Fully 70 per cent of each party's membership were either


\textsuperscript{34}Forty-three Democrats: 31 lawyers, 2 merchants, 1 railroad manager, 1 mail carrier; 16 college-educated (8 outside of Virginia); average age entering Congress, 38.93 years. Twenty-one Whigs: 19 lawyers, 1 minister, 1 doctor, 11 college-educated (3 outside Virginia); average age entering Congress, 39.47 years.
lawyers and/or farmers. Certainly more merchants and doctors served in the Assembly than in the Virginia congressional delegation, but neither party monopolized the professional classes.\[^{35}\]

Religious and ethnic influences upon party membership can be dismissed at the outset. Although studies have demonstrated the influence of these two factors upon party membership in northern states and cities during the antebellum period,\[^{36}\] Virginia's homogeneous society negated the influence of these factors. Virginians overwhelmingly attended the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, or Presbyterian churches.\[^{37}\] Relatively few Roman Catholics or Jews lived in Virginia, and the dissenting protestant sects, located mostly in the Valley and Trans-Allegheny, become insignificant when compared with the total church population. Furthermore, neither the Virginia Democrats nor the Whigs

\[^{35}\]Gooch Family Papers, University of Virginia. The list apparently was copied from an original list, handwritten contemporaneously with the House session, as several other lists were found in the collection.


\[^{37}\]Religious figures become available for the first time in the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), and then provide by county only the number of churches, accommodations (seats), and value of church property. No specific figures are available for church membership. hence the use of the number of available seats is an accepted practice when computing church membership in the antebellum period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>64 Democrats</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>68 Whigs</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Lawyers</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>21 Lawyers</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Farmers</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>27 Farmers</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Merchants</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>6 Merchants</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Doctors</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>6 Doctors</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Gentleman</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2 Editors</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Unidentified</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1 Tavern Keeper</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Druggist</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Unidentified</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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made specific appeals to religious groups on any political issue during the period.

From the beginning Englishmen dominated the settlement of Virginia, though to be sure the Irish, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish contributed their numbers. Although by 1820 Virginia's population reflected an ethnic diversity, most of the nationalities had assimilated themselves into the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The only ethnic enclaves existed in the areas of concentrated settlement by Germans and Scotch-Irish on rural agricultural lands in the Valley. Although both parties had followings among these groups, according to a recent study, in 1840 Valley counties with large German settlements like Rockingham, Shanandoah, Page, and Botetourt Counties voted for Martin Van Buren while counties with concentrations of Scotch-Irish like Augusta and Rockbridge Counties went Whig. Although each of these constituencies consistently voted as they did in 1840, no single unassimilated ethnic group dominated any Virginia constituency. Hence ethnic factors had no influence upon presidential voting patterns.

For years historians have identified southern Whigs as the owners of large plantations, and therefore large numbers of slaves. Recent intensive investigations have disproved that thesis for Alabama, and

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39 Klaus Wust, The Virginia Germans (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969), p.120.


41 See Grady McWhiney, "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama,"
the slaveholding segment of it can no longer be applied to Virginia. No significant relationship exists in Virginia between percentage of slaves in the population or average slaveholding by constituency and voting in specific presidential elections during the years between 1824 and 1844.\(^{42}\) In fact, fifteen of the twenty counties with the greatest percentage of slaves in their 1840 population and thirteen of the twenty-one counties with the largest 1850 average slaveholding per slaveowner consistently voted Democratic between 1836 and 1844, and in the Piedmont during these same years a strong correlation exists between constituencies with large percentages of slaves in their 1840 population and Democratic voting in the presidential elections.\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) The program in the Osiris II Social Science Package for determining the coefficient of correlation employs the Pearson Product-Moment Formula. Democratic and Whig votes in the 1836, 1840, and 1844 presidential elections, and Democratic and Whig strength, based upon percentages of votes cast, for both 1824-1844 and 1836-1844, were correlated, each independently, with two separate sets of slaveholding figures: the 1840 percentage of slave population, by constituency, and the 1850 average slaveholding by constituency which was determined by dividing the number of persons assessed for slave taxes into the number of slaves held in the constituency. See Appendix I. The correlations follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>1840 % of Slaves in Pop.</th>
<th>1850 Avg. Slaveholding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836</td>
<td>-0.1995</td>
<td>-0.1119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836</td>
<td>0.1994</td>
<td>0.1119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1840</td>
<td>-0.0645</td>
<td>-0.0794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1840</td>
<td>0.0645</td>
<td>0.0795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1844</td>
<td>-0.1113</td>
<td>-0.1406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1844</td>
<td>0.1113</td>
<td>0.1406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1824-1844</td>
<td>0.1238</td>
<td>0.1484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1824-1844</td>
<td>-0.3266</td>
<td>-0.2924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836-1844</td>
<td>-0.1567</td>
<td>-0.1263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836-1844</td>
<td>0.1566</td>
<td>0.1263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{43}\) See Table I. Coefficients of correlation between Piedmont Democratic and Whig voting in presidential elections between 1836 and
Older historians likewise pictured the Whigs as men of wealth. Some recent scholars, seizing upon the implicit obverse side of this relationship, have described the Democrats as incipient entrepreneurs, or men on the make. Doubtlessly both Democrats and Whigs sought to acquire their material fortunes in this world, but in Virginia between 1836 and 1844 only in the Trans-Allegheny do significant correlations demonstrate a positive relationship between Whig voting and wealth.

1844 and percentage of slaves in 1840 population: Democratic 1836-1844 to percentage of slave population 1840, +0.5220; Whig, -0.5220.

44 For two examples see Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1945), and Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from The Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

45 See Table I. Wealth is difficult to measure, but the land and personal property tax rolls in the Virginia State Library indicate, among other things, the amount of real estate and slave taxes paid by each individual, and I have used the county figures. Employing the ICON program in the Osiris II Social Science Package, I computed white and free colored adult male per capita wealth for each county by dividing the 1840 white and free colored male population into the land and slave taxes paid, and then correlated this wealth index with Democratic and Whig voting, both in specific presidential elections and over a period of time. See Appendix I. The correlations follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>White and Free Colored Adult Male Per Capita Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836</td>
<td>-0.1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836</td>
<td>0.1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1840</td>
<td>0.0388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1840</td>
<td>0.0388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1844</td>
<td>-0.1194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1844</td>
<td>0.1194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1824-1844</td>
<td>0.0716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1824-1844</td>
<td>-0.2393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836-1844</td>
<td>-0.1339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836-1844</td>
<td>0.1339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Allegheny Demo 1836-1844</td>
<td>-0.5058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Allegheny Whig 1836-1844</td>
<td>0.5058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Democrats charged that the "Aristocracy, both of Birth and Money," hated Jackson and Van Buren. C.W. Gooch to Martin Van Buren, n.d., 1835, Van Buren Papers, LC. Correlation of party voting and illiteracy provided insignificant correlations. Illiteracy: Democratic 1836-1844: 0.1694; Whig 1836-1844: -0.1694. Only in the Trans-Allegheny did a strong
During the antebellum period Virginia's economy rested upon an agricultural base, although the positions of manufacturing and mining assumed greater importance in the overall economic picture as the Civil War approached. Tobacco remained Virginia's chief staple crop, but by 1820 large-scale tobacco production lay concentrated in the Piedmont south of Fredericksburg. One area of Virginia Whig strength included many worn-out Tidewater lands; conversely the Democrats ran strong in many of the prosperous Piedmont tobacco counties. According to the 1840 census, twenty-seven Virginia counties which annually produced over 100,000 pounds of tobacco were located in the Piedmont. In presidential politics Democrats controlled sixteen of these constituencies, Whigs seven, and four could be classified as neutral. In the northern Piedmont and Valley sections, Whigs ran strong in counties with diversified farming practices. Meanwhile Democrats controlled many areas west of the mountains, particularly in the southwestern and northwestern corners of the state where livestock production predominated. By 1840 wheat had made a resurgence in Virginia agriculture and was grown statewide from

positive correlation exist between Democratic voting and illiteracy: Democratic 1836-1844: 0.5072; Whig 1836-1844: -0.5072.

For an analysis of Virginia's agriculture see Lewis Cecil Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States To 1860 (2 vols.; reprinted Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958); Avery O. Craven, Soil Exhaustion As A Factor In the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1926); A.G. Peterson, Historical Study of Prices Received by Producers of Farm Products in Virginia, 1801-1927 (Blacksburg: Virginia Agriculture Experiment Station, 1929).


the Piedmont to the Ohio River. Of the thirty-two counties annually producing over 100,000 bushels of wheat, Democrats controlled sixteen, Whigs twelve, with four neutral. In summary, the wealthiest Virginia plantation owners were those who produced staple crops such as tobacco and wheat, or livestock. Despite Democratic strength in the tobacco counties, neither party entirely controlled areas of staple crop agriculture, although Whigs tended to dominate areas like Loudoun and Jefferson Counties where diversified farming and progressive agricultural practices such as the use of manures prevailed.

Virginia's mining industry spread across the state from the western edge of Tidewater to the Ohio River. Iron production predominated, but important amounts of coal, stone, salt, and some gold were extracted from the earth. No significant voting pattern in the presidential elections between 1836 and 1844 can be drawn from mining statistics. Democrats controlled eleven of the twenty Virginia counties where the 1840 total capital invested in mining exceeded $10,000, Whigs seven, and two counties fluctuated between the parties.

Like mining, manufacturing statistics reveal no meaningful relationship between capital investment and voting patterns in the presidential elections. According to the 1840 census, twenty-eight counties reported capital investment in manufacturing over $100,000. Thirteen of these voted Democratic in the presidential elections between 1836 and 1844, thirteen voted Whig, and two could be classified neutral.

50 ibid., pp.154,166. Political identifications are made from Table I.
51 ibid., pp.165,177. Political identifications are made from Table I.
Furthermore, coefficient of correlation programs testing the relationship between the 1840 white per capita investment in manufacturing by county and Democratic and Whig voting patterns in presidential elections reveal no significant correlations between manufacturing investment and party voting. Finally, neither Whig nor Democratic constituencies claimed a monopoly on any one type of manufacturing.

Coefficient of correlation programs testing the relationship between party voting patterns both in specific elections and over a period of time with such variables as percentage of slaves in the population, average slaveholding in 1850, per capita wealth, illiteracy, and per capita investment in manufacturing failed to demonstrate any significant relationships between voting and these socio-economic variables. Because they indicated no meaningful correlations I ran two additional types of more sophisticated computer analyses employing the same socio-economic and voting variables. A stepwise regression analysis produced insignificant correlations, although it indicated that 1840 white per capita investment in manufacturing for 1840 was determined through the ICON program in the Osiris II Social Science Package. The coefficient of correlation program in the same package produced the following correlations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>White Per Capita Invest. in Manuf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836</td>
<td>0.1346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836</td>
<td>-0.1346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1840</td>
<td>-0.2165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1840</td>
<td>0.2165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1844</td>
<td>-0.1566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1844</td>
<td>0.1566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1824-1844</td>
<td>-0.0604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1824-1844</td>
<td>-0.0678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836-1844</td>
<td>-0.2132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836-1844</td>
<td>0.2129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whitman, pp. 158-59, 1/0-1/. Political identifications made from Table I.

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capita investment in manufacturing and 1840 white illiteracy exerted
the most influence upon party voting patterns. Percentage of slaves in
the population and wealth exerted less influence. Finally a partials
correlation program which correlated the Democratic or Whig vote in 1840
and the Democratic or Whig average vote from 1836 to 1844 with the socio-
economic variables also produced insignificant correlations.

In 1954 Charles G. Sellers pointed to the urban-commercial nature
of southern Whiggery as one distinguishing difference between Democratic
and Whig party membership. His thesis helps explain Virginia Demo-
cratic and Whig voting patterns. During the antebellum period Virginia's

54 This is a program in the Osiris II Social Science Package. First
I correlated the Democratic vote for president in 1840 with the socio-
economic variables, then altered the dependent variable in the equation
to other voting patterns. See Appendix I. The correlations follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable is: Demo 1840</th>
<th>Multiple Coef. Correlation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Var 1: Manuf. Inv., 1840</td>
<td>0.21600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Var 2: Pct. White Illiteracy, 1840</td>
<td>0.25127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 3: Per Capita Tax, 1840</td>
<td>0.25174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 4: Pct. Slaves Pop., 1840</td>
<td>0.26754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whig, 1836-1844</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 1: Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.21300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 2: Illiteracy</td>
<td>0.26523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 3: Slaves</td>
<td>0.27770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 4: Wealth</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo, 1836-1844</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 1: Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.21500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 2: Illiteracy</td>
<td>0.26264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 3: Slaves</td>
<td>0.27721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var 4: Wealth</td>
<td>0.28297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55 This is a program in the Osiris II Social Science Package. See
Appendix I. The correlations follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1840</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.153</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1840</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>-0.214</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig 1836-44</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>-0.147</td>
<td>-0.192</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>0.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo 1836-44</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>-0.192</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56 Sellers, "Who Were the Southern Whigs?"
population remained overwhelmingly rural. Between 1820 and 1850 Virginia's urban population increased over 120 per cent, yet despite this growth, in 1850 less than 8 per cent of Virginians lived in urban areas. All four of Virginia's independent cities, or boroughs, Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Williamsburg, consistently voted Whig in presidential elections between 1836 and 1844. Of the counties surrounding eleven of Virginia's larger towns, seven voted Whig and four Democratic in the same presidential elections. Counties with commercial investment in foreign trade voted Whig in these elections, yet an examination of forty-one counties where capital invested in retail dry goods exceeded $100,000 revealed nineteen counties classified as Democratic, nineteen as Whig, and three neutral during these elections.

Vital to Sellers' urban-commercial interpretation of southern Whiggery is the close Whig relationship with banking. This close relationship existed in Virginia. In 1837, after the Virginia General Assembly enacted a new banking law, the six Virginia state banks had branches in twenty-two cities and towns. Based upon the 1836-1844 average vote cast in presidential elections, Whigs controlled thirteen of these cities, towns, or counties surrounding the towns, Democrats eight,

57 Gilliam, Virginia's People, p.85.
58 The towns in counties voting Whig were: Charleston, Wheeling, Martinsville, Danville, Bedford, Lynchburg, Charlottesville; those in counties voting Democrat included Abingdon, Farmville, Fredericksburg, and Martinsburg.

Because of the relatively small number of urban votes in the total presidential vote, correlations of per cent Whig and Democratic votes, 1836-1844, to 1850 towns over 1000 population, fail to demonstrate the urban Whig strength: Pct. Whig 1836-1844 to towns, 0.2368; Pct. Democratic 1836-1844 to towns, -0.2369.

59 Sixth Census, pp.157,169. Party identifications made from Table I.
with one county considered neutral. 60 The two largest banks, the Bank of Virginia and the Farmer's bank of Virginia, had their headquarters in Richmond. Norfolk was the headquarters for the Exchange Bank, Winchester for the Bank of the Valley, and Wheeling for both the Northwestern Bank of Virginia and the Merchants and Mechanics Bank. The Democrats controlled only Frederick County surrounding Winchester. Furthermore, a Whig soon assumed the presidency of the Farmer's Bank in 1837 when Philip N. Nicholas, a Democrat, stepped down, and after John Brockenbrough's retirement in 1843 Whigs controlled the presidency of the Bank of Virginia. A Whig had presided over the Exchange Bank since its inception, so by 1843 Whig presidents directed Virginia's three largest banks. Thus in Virginia Whigs dominated the largest cities, areas with investment in foreign commerce, and more than half of the constituencies with banks.

In an effort to resolve the conflicting interpretations over which social groups constituted the membership of the Jacksonian party, Michael Lebowitz theorized that the Jacksonians drew their support from both rising and declining groups in American society. Both types, dissatisfied with the status quo, attacked artificial interference with a beneficent natural order. 61 In Virginia each party drew almost equal support from constituencies where wealth increased between 1830 and 1850.

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60 See Chapter VI for a discussion of Virginia banking. Also Sharp, The Jacksonians Versus the Bank, and McFaul, Politics of Jacksonian Finance. Because of the relatively small number of votes cast by constituencies with banks, no positive correlation exists between Whig voting and constituencies with banks.

as well as constituencies where wealth decreased over the same time span. Only neutral constituencies showed a tendency toward declining wealth. In none of Virginia's four major geographic regions did party constituencies run counter to the statewide trend. With regard to population mobility Whigs drew slightly more support than Democrats from constituencies where both white and slave populations increased and where white population increased while the slave population decreased between 1830 and 1850. Conversely, Democrats ran stronger in constituencies where both populations decreased and where the Whig population decreased while the slave population increased. This latter trend indicates that the Democrats, especially in the Tidewater and Piedmont, were likely to control the slave-poor constituencies.

Socio-economic characteristics, by themselves, offer only limited assistance in explaining party voting patterns. In the presidential elections between 1836 and 1844 the Democrats advocated specific political ideas. The Whigs talked somewhat less about issues. For ideology the early Whigs relied almost entirely upon opposition to executive usurpation, and much of the early Whig political rhetoric degenerated into personal invective directed against Jackson and Van Buren. Whigs based their ideological appeal on states rights doctrine and claimed that they, not their Democratic opponents, represented the true heritage of Jeffersonian Republicanism. Thus, through the presidential election of 1840

62 See Table III. The following discussions are based upon Table III. Constituency wealth remained relatively stable between 1830 and 1850; a coefficient of correlation between wealth rankings of the two years computed at a very strong 0.8680.

### TABLE III

**POPULATION AND WEALTH MOBILITY, 1830-1850, AND PARTY STRENGTH, BY SECTION**

Constituencies classified by party strength determined by percentage of votes cast for Democratic presidential candidate, 1836-1844. Figures indicate percentages, not necessarily totalling 100 per cent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>WI</th>
<th>WD</th>
<th>IWS</th>
<th>DWS</th>
<th>IWDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<td>MD</td>
<td>77.5</td>
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<td>MW</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>77.7</td>
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<td>12.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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Constituencies by section. Figures indicate number of constituencies.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>MW</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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Key: SD=Strong Democrat; MD=Moderate Democrat; N=Neutral; MW=Moderate Whig; SW=Strong Whig; WI=Wealth Increase; WD=Wealth Decrease; IWS=Increase White and Slave Population; DWS=Decrease White and Slave Population; IWDS=Increase White, Decrease Slave Population; ISDW=Increase Slave, Decrease White Population. Wealth refers to the wealth index. See footnote 21, supra.

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both parties contested for office within the states rights consensus. When many states rights Whigs deserted the party in 1841, leaving nationalist Whigs in control, the Virginia Whigs immediately endorsed the policies of Henry Clay. In 1844 they entered the presidential campaign on a nationalist platform and added five moderate Democratic constituencies to their regular sources of strength. 64

But in this election the question of the immediate annexation of Texas quickly overshadowed all other issues. Consequently it is difficult to determine how much the opposition to immediate annexation, for whatever reason, or the positive appeal of nationalist programs influenced the Whig vote. The question of slavery expansion blurred the differences between Democratic states rights and Whig nationalist appeals.

III

Although Virginia contained two different types of societies, an older, stable society east of the mountains and a younger, more dynamic one in the west, both Whigs and Democrats drew support throughout the state. Only about one-fifth of Virginia's political constituencies consistently cast more than 75 per cent of their votes for Democratic or Whig candidates. Nevertheless, by combining the influence of ideology, voting patterns in the Assembly, and socio-economic determinants, two paradigms emerge which explain party voting patterns in Virginia after 1841. As was true in Alabama, Whig constituencies seemed to be more cosmopolitan in their outlook, while the Democratic constituencies

64 Montgomery, Fluvanna Middlesex, Caroline, and Nottoway Counties. In 1848 the latter three returned to Democratic ranks.
reflected more provincial or localist attitudes. 65

The socio-economic characteristics of the Whig paradigm include areas with population increases among whites and also among slaves in constituencies where the white population increased between 1830 and 1850. With regard to agriculture Whigs drew their strongest support from constituencies encompassing worn-out Tidewater lands and regions of diversified farming practices. Significantly in both of these areas agricultural experiments underway by 1840 produced the agricultural resurgence of the 1850s. Throughout Virginia, Whigs controlled all the major urban areas as well as most of the large towns and a majority of the surrounding constituencies. They also controlled all constituencies with any investment in foreign commerce, and a majority of the cities, towns, and rural constituencies with banks. In the Trans-Allegheny, coefficients of correlations demonstrate that the Whigs controlled the urban, wealthiest and most literate constituencies.

Whig support of Clay's nationalist programs in the presidential election of 1844 indicates a more cosmopolitan outlook. A strong nucleus of nationalists located mainly in constituencies surrounding Norfolk, in Richmond, in the larger towns scattered throughout the state, along the upper Potomac River, and west of the mountains along the Ohio and Great Kanawha Rivers moved from the National Republican party directly into the Whig party. Though submerged by their more numerous states rights

65 I have adopted the terms cosmopolitan and localist from Jackson Turner Main, Political Parties before the Constitution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973). I wish to stress that the connotation of the terms as used in my study, while similar, do not exactly parallel their meaning in Professor Main's work, and the definition of political parties is, of course, entirely different.

Whig brethren, they constituted a significant minority of the party. In 1836 they voted for William Henry Harrison as a nationalist while the states rights Whigs endorsed Hugh L. White, and in 1840, although the Whigs endeavored to picture Harrison as a states rights Whig, the nationalist Whigs endorsed him. After Harrison's death Clay assumed control of the national Whig party, and the Virginia states rights Whigs abandoned the party. Also, the personality of Andrew Jackson and the northern residence of Martin Van Buren cannot be ignored when accounting for states rights Whig votes. Few voters remained neutral toward Jackson. He inspired either devotion or hatred, and many of the states rights men joined the Whigs purely in opposition to his dictatorial handling of the nullification and deposit withdrawal controversies. Van Buren's northern birth inspired states rights Whig opposition because they feared he would prove insensitive to southern interests, particularly slavery. Thus in 1836 and 1840 different attitudes united the Virginia Whigs in their opposition to Jackson and Van Buren.

Although the party took no official position on state issues, Whigs in the Assembly inclined to support internal improvements, bank expansion, the intrinsic theory of money represented by paper bank notes, and corporate forms of business enterprise. All of these attitudes indicate, in the context of the times, a modern approach to economic expansion. Thus Whig votes in the Assembly, in conjunction with the nationalist Whig votes in the presidential elections, particularly in 1844, affirmed a positive outlook on the material promise of American life, a desire to hasten progress.

The Democratic paradigm included constituencies where both white and slave populations were decreasing or only the slave population was increasing between 1830 and 1850. Nearly 75 per cent of the twenty counties with the greatest percentage of slaves in the population and thirteen of the twenty-one counties with the largest average slaveholdings in 1850 voted Democratic in the presidential elections. East of the mountains Democrats controlled the wealthiest constituencies and a majority of the largest tobacco-producing counties, while west of the mountains the Democrats dominated areas of livestock and grain production.

These socio-economic characteristics point to a provincial society based upon slavery. Democratic votes in the presidential elections confirm the localist image. States rights ideology called for a weak central government, and between 1828 and 1844 the Virginia Democratic presidential platforms reinforced this demand. Jackson, Van Buren, and Polk all ran on platforms denouncing national banks, protective tariffs, and federally-financed internal improvements. The Virginia Democrats' defense of Jackson's policies in the nullification crisis constituted no aberration. In 1853, although they sanctioned the right of nullification, the Democrats simply were not prepared to rupture the union. The tariff remained for them an issue susceptible to political compromise because it never acquired the emotional, moral overtones that slavery did.

Democratic votes in the Assembly also contribute to the localist paradigm. Like the Whigs, the Democrats took no official party position on any purely state political issue. Instead, Democratic Assembly members voted the interests of their constituents. But overall Democrats tended to oppose bank expansion, state-financed internal improvements, the over-issuance of paper banknotes, credit expansion, and corporate forms of
business enterprise. These tendencies characterize a more self-contained, localist type of constituency that by 1844 lay increasingly outside the mainstream of contemporary development.

To be sure, numerous exceptions exist to both the Democratic and Whig paradigms that I have described. Just as some western small farmers or eastern tobacco-producers doubtlessly voted Whig, so many merchants and bankers who lived in the cities and towns surely supported the Democrats. While allowing for these exceptions, the paradigms offer the best explanations for the identified Democratic and Whig areas of support in Virginia. After 1840 the Whigs' cosmopolitan nationalism required positive governmental activity. The Democrats' localistic, provincial, particularistic attitudes demand a weak government abstaining from interference in affairs judged to be the sole prerogative of the states. The Democrats' Janus-like states rights nationalism looked not so much forward as backward to the simpler, more halcyon days of the Jeffersonian republic.
CHAPTER X

CHIVALRY TRIUMPHANT:
DEMOCRATIC POLITICS, 1845-1847

After 1844 the Van Buren men, called regular Democrats or "hunkers" by their opponents in the party,1 faced a challenge from the Calhoun Democrats or Chivalry for control of the party. Gradually the Chivalry assumed direction and control, in the process not only replacing the old leadership but also altering the Virginia Democrats' outlook toward the future of their party and the union. The Chivalry achieved its first ideological success in February 1844 when it forced upon the Virginia Democratic convention a strong states rights, pro-southern platform. The elections of two of its members, Robert M.T. Hunter and James Murray Mason, to the United States Senate in January 1847 signified the Chivalry's first political triumph.

The Calhoun Democrats made contingency plans at the September 1844 Democratic Charlottesville convention in case Ritchie turned on the Calhoun men after the election and tried to force them out of the party.2 The Calhoun men sensed that after Van Buren's rejection control of the party lay within their grasp, but they wanted to maintain party

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1 Richard K. Crallé to John C. Calhoun, May 3, 1846, Calhoun Papers, Clemson University.

2 Robert M.T. Hunter to John C. Calhoun, November 20, 1844, ibid.

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unity to insure united support for Texas annexation. Consequently they had no intention of breaking with the party unless Ritchie denounced them.\(^5\) Furthermore, Calhoun still entertained hopes for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1848. He looked to a united Virginia party for support since his followers there believed Ritchie would support him for the 1848 nomination.\(^4\) Ritchie, nearing the end of his career as power broker in Virginia Democratic politics, also sought to hold the party together in opposition to the Whigs and in support of Polk's administration. Consequently throughout the first two years of Polk's administration both wings of the Virginia Democracy operated in a tenuous alliance while giving solid support to Polk.

Elected on a platform calling for a vigorous foreign policy and the return of states rights principles as the guiding philosophy behind the operation of the federal government, Polk immediately set to work to fulfill the Democratic pledges. Throughout the first two years of his administration Democrats in the Virginia congressional Delegation gave him their wholehearted support. Predictably the Virginia Whigs generally opposed both his domestic and foreign policy programs.


Polk immediately faced the problems of patronage. Unlike Van Buren, his skillful handling of this problem foreshadowed his successful direction of domestic and foreign policy. Polk adroitly avoided dictation from any faction within his party and kept the Democrats relatively united until Calhoun came out against his handling of the Mexican War in 1847. Ritchie advised Polk not to offend Calhoun if possible, while another Virginia Democrat urged John Y. Mason, then Secretary of the Navy under Tyler and Polk's former college classmate, to impress upon Polk the necessity of balancing the cabinet appointments between northerners and southerners. Ritchie suggested to Polk that Andrew Stevenson would make a suitable cabinet secretary, probably in State. Although Polk successfully removed Calhoun from State without alienating him, the only Virginian to receive a cabinet appointment was Mason as Attorney-General.

As far as the Virginia Democrats were concerned the most important patronage appointment was Polk's selection of Ritchie to take over the national Democratic newspaper. Ritchie had never sought any elective office, and after Jackson's first election he refused to leave Richmond for Washington to edit a Democratic newspaper. In December 1844 Ritchie, citing his age and embarrassed financial condition, again refused to come

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5 Thomas Ritchie to James K. Polk, February 17, 1845, Polk Papers, LC.

6 George W. Loyall to John Y. Mason, February 5, 1845, John Y. Mason Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

to Washington. However Polk, at the risk of offending Jackson, decided to replace Frank Blair as editor of the national Democratic paper because Blair had been wedded to the Van Buren wing of the party. Polk considered several candidates but settled on Ritchie because he enjoyed the support of the southern Democrats. Ritchie apparently received Calhoun's personal endorsement when the South Carolinian stopped over in Richmond on his way home in March 1845 after leaving the State Department. Soon after taking office Polk negotiated, with financial support from William Wilson Corcoran, the sale of the Washington Globe to Ritchie and John P. Heiss. The new editors renamed the paper the Washington Union only after Ritchie cleared the title with the Virginia Calhoun men since he feared they might object to implications of "National and Federal Doctrine" in the title.

Although Ritchie left the Enquirer in the capable hands of his sons, his departure for Washington ended a remarkable forty-one year career as editor of the Enquirer and leader of the Virginia Democratic press and party. His departure also graphically signaled the end of the


9 J. George Harris to George Bancroft, September 13, 1887, in "Some Letters of Tyler, Calhoun, Polk, Murphy, Houston and Donelson," Tyler's Quarterly, VII(July 1925), 12-15.

10 Richmond Enquirer, March 14, 1845 (hereinafter cited Enquirer); Ambler, Ritchie, p.252.


12 Thomas Ritchie to John P. Heiss, April 13, 1845, Folk Papers, LC.
Richmond Junto's existence. After William Henry Roane's death in May 1845 only one Junto member, Judge Philip N. Nicholas, remained in Richmond, and Nicholas had retired from active political life. After the Van Buren fiasco in 1844 and with the Junto now dispersed, Ritchie looked upon his move to Washington as an opportunity to reestablish his political influence, this time in a larger political arena. In addition he had the solid endorsement of the Calhoun Democrats. His departure for Washington left the way open for younger men to assume positions of leadership within the Virginia Democratic party. The loss of Ritchie's willingness to compromise in the play of politics soon became evident in Democratic party operations within Virginia.

II

The Virginia Whig party never recovered from its defeat in the 1844 presidential election. Faced with a strong Democratic executive operating with a united party in Congress and weakened by the defections of pro-Texas Whigs, the Virginia Whigs did not seriously contest the 1845 Assembly elections or congressional elections.

Meanwhile the Democrats gathered their forces in preparation for the spring congressional and General Assembly elections. In December 1844 they began holding county meetings preparatory to organizing district conventions for the purpose of nominating congressional candidates. On January 8 a caucus of Democrats in the Assembly issued a call for a legislative convention to meet in Richmond on February 6, 14

13 Enquirer, December 1844, passim.
14 Ibid., January 10, 1845.
and Ritchie raised the battle cry for the contests, "This Spring we must save Virginia."\(^{15}\) The convention established a central committee composed of both Calhoun and regular Democrats to direct party efforts in the campaign and authorized the committee to prepare an address. The convention also endorsed the joint resolution as the proper means to achieve annexation. It adopted a series of resolutions which reaffirmed Democratic support of states rights philosophy and pledged that Virginia would never drop support for annexation. The committee's address, which appeared on March 25, gave special attention to the election of a senator to replace Rives, whose term had expired, to tariff reduction, and to the completion of annexation.\(^ {16}\)

The Democrats won convincing victories in the elections. Several Whigs deserted their party in protest against its opposition to Texas annexation while other Whigs such as James Lyons of the Richmond district ran for the Assembly on a pro-annexationist platform.\(^ {17}\) Indeed, many Whigs stayed away from the polls.\(^ {18}\) The Democrats increased their total of congressmen from eleven to fourteen of the fifteen-man delegation. Among the Calhoun men both Hunter and Seddon won election to Congress. In the House of Delegates the Democrats increased their strength in almost every section of Virginia.\(^ {19}\) They converted their twelve-vote

\(^{15}\) Ibid., January 17, 1845.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., February 28, 1845, offers an account of the convention.

\(^{17}\) Lynchburg Virginian, April 7, 1845: Richmond Whig, March-April 1845 (hereinafter cited Whig).

\(^{18}\) Lynchburg Virginian, May 1-5, 1845.

\(^{19}\) Richard K. Crallé to John C. Calhoun, May 18, 1845, in Frederick W. Moore, ed., "Calhoun As Seen By His Political Friends: Letters of Duff Green, Dixon H. Lewis, Richard K. Crallé During the Period From
minority into a majority of twenty-four, and maintained their ten-vote margin in the Senate.  

In 1846, seeking to enhance their control over the Assembly, the Enquirer urged Democrats to prepare seriously for the spring elections because the next Assembly would take up the election of a senator to replace Archer. But, drained by the excitement of the 1844 presidential campaign and their efforts in the 1845 state and congressional races and overconfident because of the Whigs' lethargy, Virginia Democrats appeared apathetic in the spring of 1846. The Whigs regrouped enough to make some small gains in the elections, picking up six seats in the House of Delegates and one in the Senate. However, the Democrats maintained comfortable control of both houses. With Democratic ranks enlarged by the defections of Texas Whigs and the Virginia Whig party drifting without effective leadership, the Democrats' victory in the 1845 state elections gave them control over the General Assembly which they did not relinquish until the Civil War.

III

Actually after the 1845 spring elections the only threat the Democrats faced in Virginia came from a possible split between the

1831 To 1848," Publications of the Southern History Association, VII (November 1903), 422-23.

20 Enquirer, November 21, 1845. The party totals stood: House of Delegates, 78 Democrats, 54 Whigs; Senate, 21 Democrats, 11 Whigs.

21 Enquirer, March 20, 1846.

22 Ibid., April 14, 1846; Lynchburg Virginian, March 19, 1846.

23 Enquirer, May 5,8, 1846.

24 Ambler, Ritchie, p.250.
Calhoun Democrats and the regular Democrats who had supported Van Buren early in 1844. However, the two wings of the party united in the Assembly to elect William O. Goode, a Calhoun man, Speaker of the House of Delegates in both the 1845-1846 and 1846-1847 sessions. But the election of a successor to William C. Rives, whose Senate term expired in March 1845, revealed anew the differences between the two factions of the Democracy.

In January 1845 the Whig caucus endorsed Rives as its candidate, but the Democrats successfully blocked the election. The Democrats wanted to delay the election until the next Assembly session in December. They hoped to pick up additional seats in the spring elections and gain control of the Assembly on joint ballot. Since the Whigs controlled the House of Delegates they decided to proceed with the election and named Rives to oppose Robert M.T. Hunter, the Democratic candidate. But the Democrats controlled the Senate and on February 17 the Senate voted 17-14 to postpone the election, thereby throwing the question open to the voters in the spring elections.

The Democrats' tactic succeeded as they won control of both houses in the spring. With the Junto fading from the scene the Calhounites felt optimistic about their chances for electing a Calhoun man to the Senate. Supporters of Robert M.T. Hunter began to line up caucus

25 *Enquirer*, December 2, 1845; December 8, 1846.
26 James H. Gilmer to William C. Rives, January 25, 1845, William C. Rives Papers, LC.
27 *Enquirer*, January 17, 24, 1845.
28 Ibid., February 18, 1845.
votes for him as early as the summer. But the Calhoun men could not agree on one candidate. When the Democrats in the Assembly caucused prior to the election in December they made no formal nominations. Instead each man voted for his choice, and on the first ballot seven men, James McDowell, Isaac Pennybacker of New Market, Hunter, George C. Dromgoole, John W. Jones of Petersburg, the Speaker of the House in the Twenty-Eighth Congress, Representative Thomas H. Bayly of Accomac County, and Andrew Stevenson received votes. The caucus gradually narrowed its choices until on the fifth ballot Pennybacker, the candidate of the regular Democrats, received the nomination. The Assembly then elected Pennybacker overwhelmingly on joint ballot.

The Democrats rewarded William Smith, the eventual second choice of the caucus and a Calhoun man, by electing him governor. The Whigs, so demoralized after their defeat in the presidential election that they lacked unity and direction, split their votes among eight candidates in the senatorial election. In the gubernatorial election they supported Dr. John Brockenbrough, a Junto member, in a desperate but futile attempt to disrupt Democratic harmony.

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31 Richard K. Cralle to John C. Calhoun, November 14, 1845, Calhoun Papers, Clemson University.
32 R.D. Turnbull to George C. Dromgoole, December 1, 1845, Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
33 Ibid.
34 Enquirer, December 5, 1845.
35 Ibid., December 12, 1845. Smith regretted his election because he would barely be able to support his family on the Governor's salary. See John W. Bell, ed., Memoirs of Governor William Smith, of
In June 1846 the *Enquirer* called for harmony among Democrats in the senatorial contest to replace Archer, but harmony was not be achieved. After the Assembly convened about sixty Democrats caucused on January 13, 1847, to take up the senatorial election, but twenty or thirty Democrats, all friends of Hunter, declined to participate. Theoretically the Calhoun men opposed caucus or convention nominations, but on a more practical political level they realized that Hunter had lost the caucus nomination in 1845. Their fears were confirmed when the caucus nominated Governor William Smith. The caucus hoped that Smith's nomination would unify the party, but Smith had never been more than a minor figure in the Calhoun movement. Hunter's friends felt that he had a better claim to the seat, so they refused to endorse Smith.

When the Assembly took up the senatorial election on January 15, the Whigs had not agreed upon a course of action. The *Richmond Whig* attempted to lay out a course, but could not unify the party. In view of the overwhelming Democratic majorities in both houses of the legislature the *Whig* conceded that a Democrat would be elected senator. The *Whig* proposed that Whigs support a Whig candidate to the bitter end, and let the Democrats elect whomever they wanted. In this way the Whig party could maintain some semblance of unity. On the first ballot Whigs in the


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36 *Enquirer*, June 9, 1846. See also Carter M. Braxton to Robert M.T. Hunter, October 9, 1846, Robert M.T. Hunter Papers, University of Virginia. Braxton urged Hunter not to desert the Democrats.

37 *Enquirer*, January 19, 1847; *Whig*, January 15, 1847; *Alexandria Gazette*, January 16, 1847.

38 *Enquirer*, January 19, 1847; *Whig*, January 15, 1847.

39 *Whig*, January 12, 1847.
Assembly embraced the Whig's proposal. Senator William S. Archer polled sixty-eight votes, Governor Smith sixty-five, Hunter twenty-three, and eight votes were scattered among other nominees.  

After the first ballot the Whigs realized they could not reelect Archer. According to the parliamentary rules Hunter's name was dropped, but he was renominated before the second ballot began. Disregarding the Whig's plea, most of the Whigs shifted their votes to Hunter although some scattered their votes among the other Democratic candidates. Many of the Whigs probably settled upon Hunter because he had cooperated with them while serving in the Assembly, and had never occupied a "very bel- oigerent and aggravating position... toward the Whig party." On the second ballot Smith increased his total to sixty-nine votes, but Hunter polled fifty-four and Archer thirty-one with thirteen scattered. Thereafter on each succeeding ballot Hunter increased his total and Smith's vote declined until the sixth ballot when the regular Democrats substituted John W. Jones for Smith and the Whigs dropped Archer. On that ballot Hunter won election with eighty-three votes. The Enquirer and many Democrats regretted that Hunter went to the Senate without the support of the united Democratic party, but believed that he would support Democratic principles. The Whig regretted his election, but accepted him as a conservative Democrat and the lesser of evils. In fact, in the House of Delegates Hunter received only sixteen of the

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40 Vote totals available in Enquirer, January 19, 1847.
41 Benjamin D. Rust to Robert M.T. Hunter, September 15, 1846, Hunter Papers, University of Virginia.
42 Enquirer, January 19, 1847. Benett M. DeWitt to Thomas Ritchie, January 20, 1847, Ritchie-Harrison Papers, College of William and Mary.
43 Whig, January 19, 1847.
seventy-one Democratic votes. The Whigs made his election possible as they cast fifty-one of the sixty-seven votes he received in the House.

On January 12 Senator Pennybacker died unexpectedly in Washington. His death presented the Calhoun Democrats with an unexpected opportunity to fill the second senate seat. They lost little time in seizing the opportunity. The Lynchburg Virginian approved of the Whigs supporting Hunter and voiced the hope that they would pursue the same course in electing Pennybacker's successor. Ultimately the Whigs followed the Virginian's suggestion. On the first five ballots Whigs split their votes between James McDowell, James M. Mason, or the Whig candidate George W. Summers of Kanawha County. The Democrats had not caucused to name a candidate, but on the ninth ballot forty-two Democrats joined fifty-five Whigs to elect Mason.

Hunter's and Mason's elections marked the first political triumph of the Calhoun Democrats in Virginia politics. Although the Whig had boasted in 1846 that "the Whig fires are still burning as brightly

44 Party identification made from Enquirer, May 8, 1846. See also John Tyler, Jr., to Robert M.T. Hunter, January 15; Willis P. Bocock to Hunter, January 18, 1847, in Ambler, ed., Hunter Correspondence, pp. 83-84, 84. Sixth ballot:

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<th></th>
<th>Hunter</th>
<th>Jones</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>Tidewater and Piedmont Demo.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tidewater and Piedmont Whig</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valley and Trans-Allegheny Demo.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valley and Trans-Allegheny Whig</td>
<td>19</td>
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45 Lynchburg Virginian, January 27, 1847.

46 Enquirer, January 22, 1847. Calhoun proudly pointed to the election of Hunter and Mason as proof that the caucus system was on the decline in Virginia. John C. Calhoun to Thomas Green Clemson, January 30, 1847, in Jameson, Calhoun Correspondence, p. 717

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as ever, and that, with proper organization and activity, it is at any time in our power to secure the ascendancy in the State Legislature," the Whigs had not been able to regroup or agree on a course of action. Hoping to split the Democrats, many Assembly Whigs united in a coalition with the Chivalry to elect Hunter and Mason. However, the Whigs must have regretted their course, for unlike Rives neither man broke with the Democrats. Both stayed in the party and retained their senate seats until they resigned during the secession crisis in the spring of 1861.

Hunter and Mason gradually assumed the titular leadership of the party in Virginia. Calhoun had criticized Ritchie's relationship with Van Buren in 1828-1829, complaining that he aligned Virginia to the tail of New York instead of at the head of the South. Conservative in both person and politics, Hunter and Mason determined to continue the trend which the Chivalry established when it forced the Virginia Democratic convention to adopt the Calhounite platform in February 1844. After their election to the Senate the sentiment for a united South gradually gained support in Virginia.

But the Chivalry did not enjoy an immediate, unopposed rise to power. In the Senate Calhoun had publicly opposed Polk's conduct of the war. In light of an alleged slur by Ritchie upon southern Democratic Senators who opposed the conduct of the war, Calhoun also voted to expel Ritchie and his Union reporters from the floor of the Senate. In the Democratic state convention of February 1847 the regular Democrats

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47 Whig, May 8, 1846.

48 The history of the Virginia Democratic party after 1847 can be traced in Henry T. Shanks, The Secession Movement In Virginia, 1847-1861 (Richmond: Garrett and Massey, 1934).
proposed resolutions praising Polk's conduct of the war and condemning Calhoun's course. Calhoun's supporters protested, and when the convention adopted the resolutions many of Calhoun's friends walked out of the convention after making it clear that they were not leaving the party. Furthermore, several of Calhoun's Virginia followers, including congressmen Shelton F. Leake and Henry Bedinger, deserted their leader over his opposition to the conduct of the war.

The northern opposition to Texas annexation and the Mexican War demonstrated the sentiment which existed against slavery expansion and the potential threat posed to southern institutions if the South ever lost sectional parity in the federal government. Calhoun had been preaching these themes for years, and David Wilmot's proviso brought the point home to Virginians. In August 1846 Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, attached as a rider to a war appropriations bill a proviso which would have prohibited the expansion of slavery into any territory acquired as a result of the Mexican War. By February 1847 the House of Representatives had adopted the measure.

Virginia's Whigs and Democrats both denounced the proviso. Peter V. Daniel, now on the Supreme Court, described the proviso "as the extreme of injury and oppression... in its most galling form, because it declared to me that I am not regarded as an equal, the sharer of a

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49 Enquirer, February 26, 1847.


51 Enquirer, February 19, 1847; Whig, February 19, 1847.
common birthright." In the Senate Calhoun responded to the proviso by introducing a series of resolutions affirming southern rights in the territories.

The Virginia Calhoun men, not satisfied with merely a denunciation of the proviso, proposed an official course of positive action for Virginia. Lewis E. Harvie, a Calhoun lieutenant, anticipated his mentor's resolutions when he introduced in the House of Delegates a series of resolutions defining Virginia's position on the proviso. Harvie's resolutions declared the Wilmot Proviso unconstitutional, called upon every southerner to take a firm stand in opposing the proviso, and pledged that "the passage of the Wilmot Proviso will force the people of Virginia to follow the only alternative that will then remain of abject submission to aggression and outrage, on the one hand, or determined resistance on the other, at all hazards and to the last extremity." The House of Delegates unanimously endorsed Harvie's resolutions. The Whig told the North that "they speak the voice of Virginia and of the South," and Harvie's resolutions soon became known as the "Platform of the South."

The emotions aroused by agitation against the expansion of slavery produced increased support for the Chivalry. Having matured in an era of sectional controversy, the Calhoun men placed less trust in institutions and more in the constitution as the safeguard of their

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52 Peter V. Daniel to Martin Van Buren, November 19, 1847, Martin Van Buren Papers, LC.

53 Enquirer, February 19, 1847.

54 Whig, February 19, 1847.

55 Enquirer, February 26, 1847.
liberty. Like the Junto, the Chivalry sought to use the Democratic party to protect southern interests. And like the Virginia Democrats of an earlier decade, the Chivalry, following Calhoun's leadership, exhibited a particularistic kind of nationalism which reverberated with distinctly southern overtones. In the North the spirit behind Wilmot's proviso fathered a political party committed to opposing the spread of slavery. From their Senate seats Hunter and Mason led the Virginia Democrats into political conflict in the 1850s against Republican free soil ideology.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Primary Sources

**Manuscripts**

Two collections deposited in the Library of Congress constituted my most important manuscript sources. The Martin Van Buren papers, filled with information on Democratic politics, decisively documented his role in the founding and subsequent operation of the Jacksonian coalition. In this collection I found information on the presidential elections between 1824 and 1844, the formation of the Jacksonian alliance, patronage, and Democratic ideology. His two most frequent Virginia correspondents were Peter V. Daniel and Richard E. Parker, both members of the Richmond Junto. They kept Van Buren informed on Democratic party operations within Virginia and relayed his messages to Thomas Ritchie and other Virginia Democrats. The William Cabell Rives Papers were indispensable because of Rives' role in Democratic, Conservative, and Whig party affairs in Virginia. This massive collection contained information on Virginia's response to nullification and deposit withdrawal, the Democratic vice-presidential contest in 1835, banking and the Conservative revolt, Whig party operations from 1840 to 1844, and the senatorial election struggles in the General Assembly during the late 1830s and early 1840s. These two collections offered a plethora of information.
Other collections of assistance in the Library of Congress included the Andrew Stevenson Papers, particularly valuable for the period between 1826 and 1834; the Richard K. Crallé Papers, John Floyd Papers, and Duff Green Papers, all useful in tracing the states rights opposition to Van Buren's vice-presidential nomination in 1832 and to nullification and deposit withdrawal.

The Thomas Ritchie Papers proved a great disappointment. Despite Ritchie's central role in Virginia Democratic party operations, very few of his letters-received are extant. This collection described most vividly Ritchie's role after he moved to Washington in 1845, and offered only minimal assistance to my study. The other presidential papers in the Library yielded only marginal information. The John Tyler Papers offered insights into the Virginia Democrats' cooperation with Tyler's administration, while the James K. Polk Papers document Ritchie's move to Washington and Polk's strength in Virginia. The James Madison Papers and James Monroe Papers contributed information on the National Republican maneuverings in Virginia during 1828. The most disappointing collection was the Andrew Jackson Papers. The absence of almost any important Virginia correspondence demonstrated that Jackson conducted much of his political business through Martin Van Buren, and thus documented Van Buren's role in the Jacksonian coalition.

Collections deposited in the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia offered more information on the Virginia Democrats than any other depository in Virginia. The Gooch Family Papers yielded a wealth of information on Democratic affairs. Because of his associate membership in the Junto, Gooch's correspondence reveals the attitudes and motivations of the Junto members throughout the period. The Ambler
Family Manuscripts and the Barbour Family Papers provided information on Philip P. Barbour's quest for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination in 1832. Two collections, the Letters of James Mercer Garnett and John Randolph of Roanoke, and the Madison Todd Family Papers, described the early operations of the Virginia statesmen prior to the formation of the Jacksonian coalition. Three separate letters of Thomas Ritchie, Andrew Stevenson, and Littleton Waller Tazewell offered information on Democratic politics prior to 1832. The activity of one local Democratic association can be traced in Democratic Association Minutes of New Market, Virginia, 1844-1863.

The Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers provided some information on Virginia Whig activity. Other collections which documented Whig maneuverings were the Benjamin Watkins Leigh Papers, Tayloe Family Papers, Burwell Family Papers, Alexander H.H. Stuart Papers, Francis Walker Gilmer Papers, and the Gessner Harrison Papers.

Finally, the importance of two collections held by the University cannot be minimized. The Papers of Robert M.T. Hunter, part of the massive Hunter-Garnett Collection, detailed Hunter's career. They contained information on Hunter's collaboration with the Whigs prior to 1839, but after that date they document the operations of the Calhoun Democrats in Virginia, and are particularly useful for Calhoun's presidential campaign in 1843-1844. The Richard Kenner Crallé Papers yielded information on both the states rights opposition to Van Buren and Jackson in 1832-1833 and Calhoun's increasing influence on Virginia Democratic affairs after 1840.

Collections in both the Virginia Historical Society and Virginia State Library proved disappointing. Although the holdings in the
Historical Society exhaustively document plantation life, only the Gooch
Family Papers and the Barbour Family Papers, used as a supplement to
those at the University of Virginia, aided my study of Democratic polit-
cics. The Floyd Family Papers, Benjamin Watkins Leigh Papers, and Abel
P. Upshur Papers contained scattered comments on National Republican
and Whig activity prior to 1836. At the State Library a spot-check of
the voluminous Executive Papers and Executive Letterbooks, the incoming
and outgoing correspondence of Virginia's governors, revealed an absence
of political materials. They contained only official papers. The Taze-
well Family Papers discussed particularly the hostility towards Martin
Van Buren and the maneuverings of Virginia Democrats to place Barbour
on the ticket in 1832. The Robert M.T. Hunter Papers, the best of which
have been published (see below), detail Calhoun's bid for the presidency
in 1844 and Hunter's election to the Senate in 1847.

The Ritchie-Harrison Papers in the Earl Gregg Swem Library of The
College of William and Mary contained several letters urging that Van
Buren be dropped in 1844 after he refused to endorse immediate annexation.
Unfortunately the collection held no other Ritchie letter of relevance
for my study. The Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers contained material on
the Virginia Democrats' actions in the Democratic national convention of
1832 and the states rights opposition to Jackson in 1833 and 1834.

The voluminous David Campbell Papers, deposited in the William
R. Perkins Library of Duke University, are particularly rich in infor-
mation on banking and Conservative opposition to Van Buren's subtreasury
and the Democrats in the late 1830s. After 1839 they describe Whig party
operations in Virginia. When used in conjunction with the Rives Papers
in the Library of Congress, they provide a valuable commentary on Virginia

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Democratic, Conservative, and Whig activities between 1837 and 1840. Other useful collections at the Duke Library include the William H. Crawford papers, John Rutherfoord Papers, James Henry Rochelle Papers, and Daniel French Slaughter Papers.

Although the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina offers much information on southern politics, the collection is relatively weak on Virginia Democratic affairs. The Edward Dromgoole Papers, containing the correspondence of his brother, George Coke Dromgoole, described the relationship of the Virginia Democrats with Democratic administrations in Washington. The Duff Green Papers contained the correspondence of Virginia states rights opponents of Jackson and Van Buren after 1831. Other collections at Chapel Hill which offered useful information on the Virginia Democrats included the John Y. Mason Papers and the Robert Barnwell Rhett Papers.

At the South Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina I was received with gracious hospitality by Dr. W. Edwin Hemphill, editor of The Papers of John C. Calhoun. Dr. Hemphill kindly allowed me access to his collection of photocopied letters to and from John C. Calhoun. This collection contained an enormous amount of information on Virginia opposition to Jackson and Van Buren as well as the Calhoun Democrats' role in Virginia after 1840. Since letters from this collection are credited to collections which possess the originals, no citation to this collection appears in the dissertation. The Hugh Swinton Legaré Papers and the John C. Calhoun Papers, both in the South Caroliniana Library, offered limited assistance.

The John C. Calhoun Papers and Richard Crallé Papers, both deposited in the Robert Muldrow Cooper Library of Clemson University,
contained valuable materials. The Calhoun Papers comprised the bulk of his correspondence, much of which had been published (see below). The Crallé Papers were useful in tracing the Calhoun Democrats' actions in the 1844 state Democratic convention and their maneuverings after Van Buren announced against immediate annexation.

Three other collections provided assistance. The James Barbour Papers, deposited in the New York Public Library, offered material on National Republican opposition to William H. Crawford and Andrew Jackson between 1825 and 1832. The William Wirt Papers, microfilmed by the Maryland Historical Society, provided insights into Wirt's abortive 1832 attempt to unite the Virginia opposition to Jackson and Van Buren. Finally, Dr. William J. Cooper, Jr., kindly lent me his notes on one Thomas Ritchie letter from the Blair-Lee Papers deposited in the Princeton University Library. This letter discussed the Virginia Democrats' demand that Rives receive the 1836 Democratic vice-presidential nomination.

Newspapers

In parentheses after each newspaper I have placed dates for which I consulted the paper; "scattered" is used when there was no long continuous run.

The most important newspaper, and a basic source for this dissertation, was the Richmond Enquirer (1822-1847). Edited by Thomas Ritchie from 1804 to 1845, the Enquirer was the most widely-circulated Democratic newspaper in Virginia. Through its columns Ritchie and the Richmond Junto guided Virginia Democrats; it gave full coverage to Assembly and U.S. congressional sessions, and often reprinted editorial excerpts from local newspapers.
The Enquirer's chief rival was the Richmond Whig (scattered; 1835-1847). Its editor, John Hampden Pleasants, engaged in an almost continual editorial war with Ritchie, and was killed in an 1846 duel with one of Ritchie's sons. The Whig supported the National Republicans, subsequently the Whig party, and gave extensive space to both Assembly and congressional sessions. In many respects, and particularly with regard to the evolution of newspaper technology, the Whig was a superior, more modern paper than the Enquirer. Both papers appeared twice-weekly and three-times weekly during the Assembly sessions.

Three other influential newspapers supported the Whig party: The Alexandria Gazette (1824-1847), Fredericksburg, The Virginia Herald (1824-1836), and the Lynchburg Virginian (1824-1847). The Norfolk American Beacon (1824-1847) assumed a non-partisan position but leaned toward supporting the Whigs.

Several local newspapers provided local reaction to national political issues. The best of these papers were the Abingdon Virginia Republican (1831-1834); Charlottesville Virginia Advocate (1827-1831); Charlestown, Virginia Free Press (1834-1840); Lexington, The Intelligencer (1824-1831); the Wheeling Gazette (1826-1833 scattered). Other papers that I read include Abingdon, The Banner (scattered, 1842-1843); the Abingdon Jacksonian (1847 scattered); Abingdon, The South-Western Virginian (1840-1847 scattered); Abingdon, The States-Rightsman (1841 scattered); Abingdon Virginia Statesman (1824-1837 scattered); Abingdon Little Tennessean (1841 scattered); Abingdon, The Times (1834 scattered); Charlottesville Jeffersonian Republican (1847 scattered); Charlottesville Central Gazette (1824-1827 scattered); Charleston Kanawha Jeffersonian (1840-1842 scattered); Charleston Kanawha Banner (1830-1835 scattered);

Publications of the United States Government


Office, 1971), provided biographical information on the members of the Virginia congressional delegation. The Supreme Court cases which aroused Virginia's Old Republicans are reported in 1 Wheaton 304, 4 Wheaton 316, and 6 Wheaton 264.


Publications of the State of Virginia


General Assembly representation was established through Earl Gregg Swem and John W. Williams, eds., A Register of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1776-1918, and of the Constitutional Conventions (Richmond: State of Virginia, 1918). Insights into the road to power in Virginia were obtained from W.P. Palmer, et al., eds., Calendar of Virginia State Papers (11 vols.; Richmond: n.p., 1875-1893). The initial and most basic statement of Old Republican states rights doctrine was reprinted in The Virginia Report of 1799-1800, Touching the Alien and Sedition Laws,
Together With the Virginia Resolutions of December 24, 1798...

(Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1850).

Published Correspondence, Memoirs, and Contemporary Publications


Other useful collections of published correspondence included "Missouri Compromise, Letters to James Barbour, Senator of Virginia in
the Congress of the United States," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, X(July 1901), 5-24, a series detailing Virginians reactions to the 36°30' proviso; Martha von Briesen, ed., The Letters of Elijah Fletcher (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), the Whiggish letters of a Vermonter who edited the Lynchburg Virginian from 1825 to 1841;
"John Taylor Correspondence," John P. Branch Historical Papers, II(June 1908), 253-353; "Roane Correspondence, 1799-1821," ibid., II(June 1905), 123-42; "Letter of John Brockenbrough to Andrew Stevenson, 1834," ibid., III(June 1911), 253-54; "Nullification and War," Tyler's Quarterly, I(April 1920), 276-81; "Original Letters," William and Mary Quarterly, series 1, I(January 1893), 172-79; "Correspondence of Judge Tucker," ibid., IXX(July 1903), 84-95; and "Letter of R.M.T. Hunter to T.W. Gilmer, September 18, 1837," ibid., XXI(October 1912), 79-81.


Secondary Sources

Bibliography


**National Politics: General Studies and Monographs**


In *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), Charles S. Sydnor wrote a masterful account of southern politics and society. Clement Eaton analyzed the growing intolerance toward antislavery during the four decades before 1861 in *The Freedom Of-Thought Struggle In The Old South*


have been labeled "Tippecanoe democracy" since the presidential election of 1840 brought the highest percentage of voter turnout ever recorded in a presidential election.


In the last two decades historians have pointed to Martin Van Buren's role in the creation of the Democratic party. Four invaluable studies which I consulted were Richard H. Brown, "Southern Planters and


Several other monographs assisted my study. Three studies of party development in the North demonstrated the new approaches which historians are taking. See Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian*


National Politics: Biography

Biographies of national figures provided information on their roles in national politics and their connections with Virginia. The


the Supreme Court Cases which aroused Virginia's Old Republicans;  


*Virginia Politics*

Virginians have long been concerned with the political history of their state during the Revolution, early national period, and Civil War, but less interested in the period from 1820 to 1860. For example, Virginius Dabney, *Virginia: The New Dominion* (Garden City: Doubleday


There is no study of the Virginia Democratic party. Harry Ammon, "The Republican Party in Virginia, 1789 to 1824" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1948) analyzed the formation and operation of the Democrats' ancestors. Ammon, "The Richmond Junto,


For studies focusing specifically on Virginia banking and its political implication, Howard Braverman, "The Economic and Political Background of the Conservative Revolt In Virginia" VMHB, LX(April 1952), 266-87, supported my manuscript research on the Virginia Conservatives. The only decent study of Virginia banking in the antebellum years, but by no means definitive, was George T. Starnes, Sixty Years of Branch Banking In Virginia (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931).


Virginia Biography

Three sources provided brief biographical information on many Virginians, Lyon G. Tyler, ed., Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography

There are few good biographies of Virginia's antebellum political leaders. Fortunately three members of the Richmond Junto have been the subjects of scholarly biographies which provided great assistance in my work. They were John P. Frank, Justice Daniel Dissenting: A Biography of Peter V. Daniel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), Charles H. Ambler, Thomas Ritchie, A Study In Virginia Politics (Richmond: Bell Book and Stationary Co., 1913), and Francis Fry Wayland, Andrew Stevenson, Democrat and Diplomat, 1785-1857 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949).


Several biographical articles in *The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College* traced Virginians' careers. The most valuable included W.S. Long, "James Barbour," *Branch Papers*, IV (June 1914),

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Virginia Society, Economics, and Slavery

Two volumes published in the antebellum period, Joseph Martin, A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia. . . . (Charlottesville: Joseph Martin, 1835) and Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Virginia (Charleston: Babcock and Co., 1845) provided socio-economic background information.


APPENDIX I

NOTE ON METHDOLOGY
A. Voting and Socio-Economic Analyses

Throughout this study I have employed techniques of quantification to measure more precisely the similarities and differences between the Virginia Democratic and Whig parties. These quantifying techniques, by themselves, describe only numerical relationships. The fact that they do not explain causal relationships cannot be overemphasized. Nevertheless, when employed in conjunction with the more traditional techniques used by historians in writing political history, they offer useful analyses of numerical data arranged in manageable form. Two useful introductions to the use of quantification in history are Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), and Roderick Floud, An Introduction to Quantitative Methods For Historians (Princeton: Princenton University Press, 1973).

This study relies heavily upon analyses of voting in presidential elections, which were the only statewide elections in Virginia before 1851, and deals less with votes cast in congressional and General Assembly elections. Presidential votes from 1824 to 1832 are available in the General Election Returns deposited in the Virginia State Library, while those from 1836 to 1844 have been published in W. Dean Burnham.
Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955). Congressional returns are available on an inconsistent basis, and Assembly returns are practically nonexistent.

In order to identify voter support for the parties I correlated the presidential election returns with various socio-economic variables. While I fully realize the danger of generalizing from computations based upon constituencies as large as the Virginia counties, they represent the smallest political units for which voting and socio-economic data are available. All of my correlations were made by computer using the correlation programs in the Osiris II Social Science Package. This package of programs, and much of my political, social, and economic data, were supplied by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research (ICPR) at the University of Michigan. Of course the ICPR bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

Most of the correlations between voting and various socio-economic variables are simple correlations computed by the Pearson Product-Moment Formula and expressed as coefficients or correlation. In order to use the voting returns I employed the ICON program in the Osiris package to convert the raw votes into percentages cast for each party. To prepare the socio-economic data for use in the correlation programs I used the ICON program to determine the percentage of slaves and the percentage of white illiterates by constituency. I created a wealth index by dividing the white and free colored population in 1830, 1840, and 1850 into the amounts of real property tax paid by each constituency for the respective years. To determine the average slaveholdings in 1850 I divided the number of persons assessed slave taxes into the number of slaves held by the constituency. Finally, I determined per capita
manufacturing investment by dividing the white and free colored popula-
tion into the amount of capital invested in manufacturing in each
constituency. For each constituency the percentage of the vote cast, by
party, in each presidential election, and the average percentage cast
for the Democrats and for the Whigs in the three elections between 1836
and 1844, were correlated with every socio-economic variable.

The relationship between the socio-economic variables and the
voting returns is expressed as a coefficient of correlation between
+1.00. A coefficient of correlation of +1.00 indicates a perfect posi-
tive statistical relationship between the two variables, while a coeffi-
cient of correlation of -1.00 indicates a perfect negative statistical
relationship between the two variables. For purposes of this study, co-
efficients of correlation greater than +.50 indicate a significant rela-
tionship.

I also ran two more sophisticated correlation programs. A step-
wise regression analysis produced a multiple coefficient of correla-
tion by correlating several variables simultaneously. It then demon-
strated the increment of influence each variable produced on the multiple
coefficient of correlation when added to the regression equation.Final-
ly, a partials correlation program also produced a multiple coefficient
of correlation. The partials program correlated each variable separately
with the dependent variable while controlling for the other variables in
the resulting multiple coefficient of correlation. This program demon-
strated that in the multiple correlations the effects of the several
variables did not tend to cancel each other.
B. Content Analysis

Content analysis represents a second quantifying method employed in this study. A useful introduction to the technique is Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley, 1969). My content analysis was confined to a close reading of the Virginia Democratic and Whig party convention addresses and central corresponding committee addresses in the presidential campaigns. These addresses were printed in the *Richmond Enquirer* and the *Richmond Whig*. To obtain a quantitative measurement of the emphases given to different issues I measured the column inches devoted to each issue and divided that by the total column inches the address occupied. But the fact that a party devoted more space to one issue than to another does not necessarily mean that the voters considered that issue the most important one in the campaign.
VITA

Lynwood Miller Dent, Jr., was born December 10, 1946, in Roanoke, Virginia, the only child of Lynwood M. and Yvetta S. Dent. He received his elementary and secondary education in the Roanoke City Public Schools, and graduated from William Fleming Senior High School in 1964. He enrolled in The College of William and Mary and graduated in 1968 with an A.B. in History. That same year he married Carol Elizabeth Pearn of Roanoke, and enrolled in the Graduate School of Louisiana State University. He was awarded an M.A. in History in 1971. While in Graduate School he has been the recipient of a National Defense Education Act Fellowship, Warrick Fellowship, Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship, and a Dissertation-Year Fellowship. He is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy in History at the Summer 1974 commencement.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

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